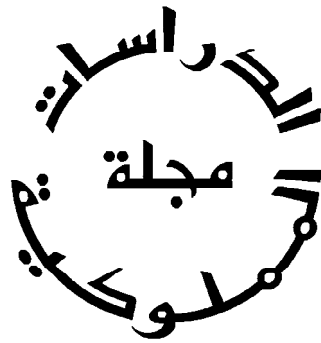


MAMLŪK STUDIES REVIEW

III



1999

MIDDLE EAST DOCUMENTATION CENTER (MEDOC)
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

MAMLŪK STUDIES REVIEW

Published by the MIDDLE EAST DOCUMENTATION CENTER (MEDOC)
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

Mamlūk Studies Review is an annual refereed journal devoted to the study of the Mamluk Sultanate of Egypt and Syria (648-922/1250-1517). The goals of *Mamlūk Studies Review* are to take stock of scholarship devoted to the Mamluk era, nurture communication within the field, and promote further research by encouraging the critical discussion of all aspects of this important medieval Islamic polity. The journal will include both articles and reviews of recent books. Submissions of original work on any aspect of the field are welcome, although the editorial board will periodically issue volumes devoted to specific topics and themes. *Mamlūk Studies Review* also solicits edited texts and translations of shorter Arabic source materials (*waqf* deeds, letters, *fatāwá* and the like), and encourages discussions of Mamluk era artifacts (pottery, coins, etc.) that place these resources in wider contexts. Transliterated Middle Eastern languages should conform to the system utilized by the Library of Congress. All questions regarding style should be resolved through reference to *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 14th edition. All submissions should be typed double-spaced. Submissions must be made on labeled computer disk together with a printed copy.

Note: Readers of *Mamlūk Studies Review* who have access to the World Wide Web are referred to the MEDOC home page <http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/LibInfo/SourcesBySubject/MiddleEast/medoc.html>. This site provides a link to the searchable Mamluk bibliography maintained by MEDOC and has information about subscribing to the Mamluk listserv. The Mamluk listserv is an open forum for discussions of all aspects of the history and culture of the Mamluk Sultanate. The Editors of *Mamlūk Studies Review* encourage readers to use the listserv to comment upon and discuss issues raised in the *Review*.

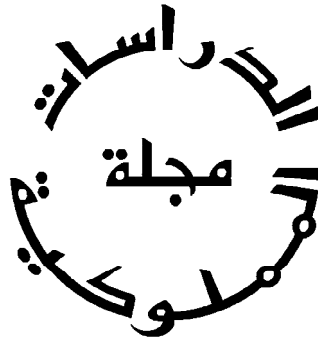
ISSN 1086-170X. Copyright © 1999 Middle East Documentation Center, The University of Chicago. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, in any form or by any means, electronic, photocopying or otherwise, without permission in writing from the Middle East Documentation Center.

The logo that appears on the cover and title page was created by John E. Woods.

The editor wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Barbara Gamez Craig in the design and production of the present volume.

All communications should be sent to: The Editor, *Mamlūk Studies Review*, 5828 South University Avenue, 201 Pick Hall, Chicago, Illinois 60637, USA

MAMLŪK STUDIES REVIEW



Editor

BRUCE D. CRAIG, The University of Chicago

Associate Editors

JOHN L. MELOY, American University of Beirut

WARREN C. SCHULTZ, DePaul University

Review Editor

W. W. CLIFFORD, The University of Chicago

Editorial Board

MARLIS J. SALEH (Secretary), The University of Chicago
DORIS BEHRENS-ABOUSEIF, University of Munich
ANNE F. BROADBRIDGE, The University of Chicago
LI GUO, The University of Chicago
ULRICH HAARMANN, The Free University of Berlin
R. STEPHEN HUMPHREYS, University of California, Santa Barbara
DONALD P. LITTLE, McGill University
RAFAAT M. M. EL NABARAWY, Cairo University
CARL F. PETRY, Northwestern University
JOHN E. WOODS, The University of Chicago

Production Manager

MARK L. STEIN, The University of Chicago

CONTENTS

OBITUARY

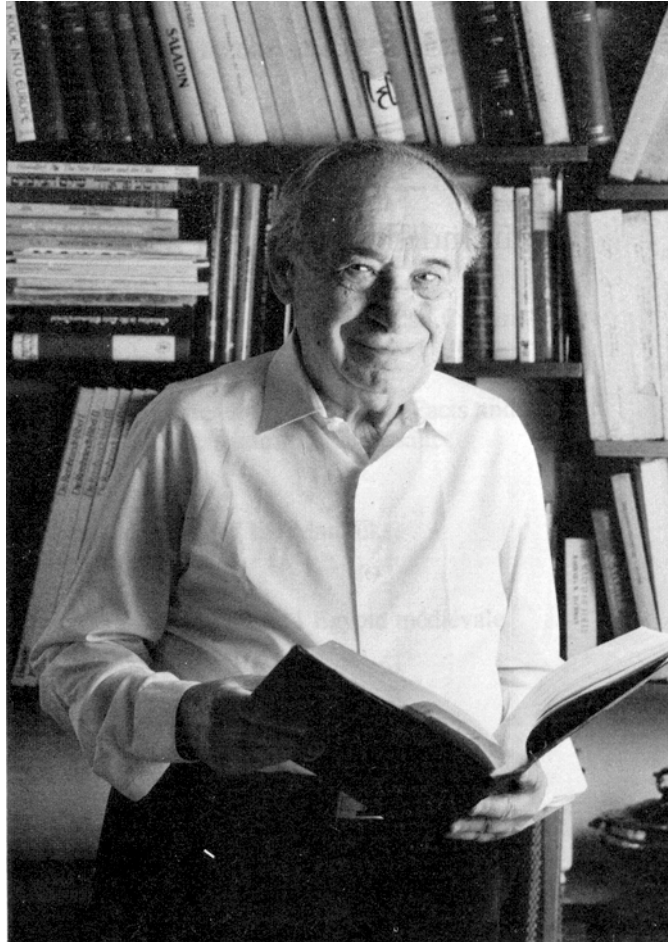
- David Ayalon, 1914-1998** 1
REUVEN AMITAI

ARTICLES

- "Quis Custodiet Custodes?" Revisited:
The Prosecution of Crime in the Late
Mamluk Sultanate** 13
CARL F. PETRY
- Mamluk Art and Architectural History:
A Review Article** 31
JONATHAN BLOOM
- Saving Muslim Souls: The *Khānqāh* and
the Sufi Duty in Mamluk Lands** 59
TH. EMIL HOMERIN
- Academic Rivalry and the Patronage System in
Fifteenth-Century Egypt: al-‘Aynī, al-Maqrīzī,
and Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī** 85
ANNE F. BROADBRIDGE
- Environmental Hazards, Natural Disasters,
Economic Loss, and Mortality in Mamluk Syria** 109
WILLIAM TUCKER

Qāyṭbāy's Madrasahs in the Holy Cities and the Evolution of Ḥaram Architecture <i>DORIS BEHRENS-ABOUSEIF</i>	129
Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Makkī "al-Shahīd al-Awwal" (d. 1384) and the Shi'ah of Syria <i>STEFAN H. WINTER</i>	149
Mamluk Monetary History: A Review Essay <i>WARREN C. SCHULTZ</i>	183
BOOK REVIEWS	
Sato Tsugitaka, <i>State and Rural Society in Medieval Islam: Sultans, Muqta's and Fallahun</i> (Amalia Levanoni)	207
Ṣā'ib 'Abd al-Ḥamīd, <i>Ibn Taymīyah: Ḥayātuhu wa-'Aqā'iduhu</i> and 'Abd Allāh ibn Rashīd ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥawshānī, <i>Manhaj Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymīyah fī al-Da'wah ilá Allāh Ta'ālá</i> (David Reisman)	210
Ibn al-'Adīm, <i>Zubdat al-Ḥalab min Ta'rīkh Ḥalab</i> (Michael Chamberlain)	213
Majd al-Afandī, <i>al-Ghazal fī al-'Asr al-Mamlūkī al-Awwal</i> (Thomas Bauer)	214
Salāḥ al-Dīn Muḥammad Nawwār, <i>al-Ṭawā'if al-Mughūliyah fī Miṣr</i> (Reuven Amitai)	219
Muḥammad al-Ḥabīb al-Hilah, <i>Ta'rīkh Makkah wa-Mu'arrikhuhā</i> (Frederic Bauden)	223
Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn 'Alī al-Maqrīzī, <i>Durar al-'Uqūd al-Farīdah fī Tarājīm al-'yān al-Muḥīdah: Qiṭ'ah minhu</i>, edited by 'Adnān Darwīsh and Muḥammad al-Miṣrī (Donald P. Little)	231
Doris Behrens-Abouseif, <i>Mamluk and Post-Mamluk Metal Lamps</i> (Nuha Houry)	233
Yāsīn al-Ayyūbī, <i>Āfāq al-Shi'r al-'Arabī fī al-'Asr al-Mamlūkī</i> (Th. Emil Homerin)	237

Maḥmūd al-Sayyid , <i>Tārīkh ‘Arab al-Shām fī al-‘Aṣr al-Mamlūkī</i> (Stefan Winter)	240
al-Bayyūmī Ismā‘īl al-Shirbīnī , <i>Muṣādarat al-Amlāk fī al-Dawlah al-Islāmīyah: ‘Aṣr Salāṭīn al-Mamālīk</i> (Marlis J. Saleh)	242
‘Aṣīm Muḥammad Rizq , <i>Khānqāwāt al-Ṣūfīyah fī Miṣr, 1: Fī al-‘Aṣrayn al-Ayyūbī wa-al-Mamlūkī (567-923 H./1171-1517 M.); 2: Fī ‘Aṣr Dawlat al-Mamālīk al-Burjīyah (787-920 H./1385-1516 M.)</i> (Th. Emil Homerin)	245



David Ayalon, 1914-1998



©1999 by Reuven Amitai.

DOI: [10.6082/M1959FP3](https://doi.org/10.6082/M1959FP3). (<https://doi.org/10.6082/M1959FP3>)

DOI of Vol. III: [10.6082/M1765CFB](https://doi.org/10.6082/M1765CFB). See <https://doi.org/10.6082/ZJY1-1449> to download the full volume or individual articles. This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY). See <http://mamluk.uchicago.edu/msr.html> for more information about copyright and open access.

REUVEN AMITAI
HEBREW UNIVERSITY OF JERUSALEM

David Ayalon, 1914-1998

On 25 June 1998 Professor David Ayalon, emeritus professor of Islamic history at the Hebrew University, passed away in Jerusalem, after a long illness. David Ayalon is best known for his seminal studies on the nature of military slavery in the medieval Islamic world and the history of the Mamluk Sultanate. At the same time his interests and studies ranged from the beginnings of Islam up to the modern, even contemporary, history of the Middle East. He was also celebrated as a lexicographer: his *Arabic-Hebrew Dictionary of Modern Arabic*, compiled with his friend and colleague Pessah Shinar in 1947, has continued in print for over 50 years and remains a mainstay for the study of Arabic in Israel.

Born David Neustadt in Haifa in 1914, Ayalon (who changed his surname in the late 1940s) spent his childhood in Zikhron Ya'akov and Rosh Pinah. It was in the latter town that he came into extensive contact with local Arab children and his first exposure to the Arabic language. Upon completing his secondary education in Haifa, Ayalon arrived in Jerusalem in 1933 to study at the recently founded Hebrew University. His chosen subjects were Arabic language and literature, Islamic culture, and Jewish history, and he was the first locally-born student in the newly-formed Institute of Oriental Studies (today the Institute of Asian and African Studies). As part of his studies, and encouraged by Prof. S. D. Goitein, Ayalon went off to spend a year at the American University of Beirut. His experiences there became the basis of his first article, "Some Characteristics of Educated Arab Youth," published in Hebrew in *ha-Po'el ha-Tsa'ir* in 1935; in it Ayalon gave a prominent place to the impression made by European fascism on his Lebanese classmates.

Returning to Jerusalem, Ayalon appears to have devoted himself to the Jewish aspect of the medieval Islamic world. In the late 1930s he published in Hebrew two pieces of research in *Zion*: "Notes on the Economic History of the Jews and their Settlement in Egypt in the Middle Ages" (1937) and "On the Office of Nagid in the Middle Ages" (1939). Subsequently, he turned towards Islamic history, and specifically the study of the Mamluk institution, primarily during the time of the Sultanate. Ayalon's studies were disrupted by service in the British army during World War II, but at times during these years (1941-45), he was in circumstances which enabled him to return to his work, at least partially. His doctorate was

©Middle East Documentation Center. The University of Chicago.



©1999 by Reuven Amitai.

DOI: [10.6082/M1959FP3](https://doi.org/10.6082/M1959FP3). (<https://doi.org/10.6082/M1959FP3>)

DOI of Vol. III: [10.6082/M1765CFB](https://doi.org/10.6082/M1765CFB). See <https://doi.org/10.6082/ZJY1-1449> to download the full volume or individual articles. This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY). See <http://mamluk.uchicago.edu/msr.html> for more information about copyright and open access.

awarded in 1946. Ayalon had reminisced that relations with his supervisor, L. A. Mayer, were on occasion difficult, and at times even strained. There appears to have been fundamental disagreement on the nature of the Mamluk institution. We can be thankful that Ayalon persevered in his way of thinking.

Although he published his first scholarly work in English in 1946 (still under the name Neustadt), Ayalon's main concerns at this time were not academic. In the years just prior to Israel's independence he worked in the Political Department of the Jewish Agency, which in 1948 became the nucleus of the new Foreign Ministry, Ayalon becoming head of research in the Middle East section. It was around this time that he Hebraicized his surname.

In 1950, he was called back to the Hebrew University by Profs. Goitein and Baneth, and invited to establish a new department of Modern Middle Eastern History. The following year he was joined by the Turkologist Uriel Heyd, who had been serving in Israel's embassy in Washington. These two, together with Gabriel Baer who joined them somewhat later, were the pillars of the Department, today known as the Department of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies, throughout the 1950s and '60s. Particularly in the first decade, much of Ayalon's teaching load was devoted to modern history: he later joked that he taught the first course in the world on Middle East oil. Ayalon headed the Department until 1956, and from 1953-57 was chairman of the Institute of Asian and African Studies. During these years some of Ayalon's most important studies were published, most importantly, *L'esclavage du mamelouk* (1951), "Studies on the Structure of the Mamlūk Army" (1953-54) and *Gunpowder and Firearms in the Mamlūk Kingdom* (1956). He then commenced his researches on the later Egyptian historian al-Jabartī, and subsequently on his broader considerations of relations between the peoples of the Eurasian Steppe and the Islamic world. Around 1970, Ayalon embarked on a completely new area of research: the Mongol *Yāsa* (law) and its role in the Mamluk Sultanate. He launched an extensive discussion of the nature of the *Yāsa* and its place among the Mongols, which in many ways radically changed the way students of Mongol history view the *Yāsa*. Ayalon's main conclusion, however, was that the role of the *Yāsa* in the Sultanate was much more limited than had been previously thought by both Mamluk writers and many modern historians.

During the fifties and sixties, Ayalon maintained an avid interest in sports, serving for many years as the head of the committee for sports at the Hebrew University. He himself was a sprinter of no mean distinction and up to the mid-sixties was faculty champion at the University in short distant running. In 1966 he married Miriam Rosen, now professor of Islamic art and archeology at the Hebrew University.



In the 1960s and '70s the Department of Modern Middle Eastern History expanded greatly (changing its name in the process). Many of Ayalon's students from the fifties to seventies completed doctorates in Jerusalem and abroad, and went on to become the pillars of the various departments of Middle Eastern studies and Arabic language and literature in Israeli universities. Ayalon's lectures and seminars had a profound effect on two generations of Israeli students of Islamic history, and not just those who wrote dissertations with him or specialized in medieval history. His influence went well beyond academia. It would be safe to say that hundreds of graduates who have served in public service, journalism and education in Israel saw him as their *ustādh*, and this sense of devotion was not limited only to Jewish Israelis.¹

Ayalon's works can be divided up into several broad categories. First are those studies dealing with the institutions of the Mamluk Sultanate, primarily military slavery and its interaction with the state. In an indirect way, Ayalon was writing the social history of the Mamluk elite. Many of these studies were of a highly technical nature, while others painted a broader canvas. Secondly, he devoted himself to the history of the development of military slavery in Islamic society, and the crucial role it played for some 1000 years. Related to this were his considerations on the encounter between the Muslim peoples and those of the Inner Asian steppe. This was expressed in a scheme of three stages: (1) Mamluks (from the ninth century onward); (2) Turkish tribes under the Seljuqs (from the eleventh century); and (3) the Mongols (thirteenth and fourteenth centuries). Ayalon was adamant in expressing his view that this centuries-long encounter provides the context, and at times the well-spring, for much of Islamic history and culture. A further area of his investigations was the *Yāsa*, of which mention has been made.

Ayalon's basic method was shaped by his philological training and early work as a lexicographer. He placed great importance on the investigation of terminology as it was understood by contemporaries. His extensive reading in the sources enabled him to gather disparate evidence, discerning phenomena and patterns in the morass of details. His greatness as a scholar lay in his ability to see beyond the particulars, to which he paid a great deal of attention, and to look at the larger picture. This double nature of his scholarship is found in both his technical studies and his more interpretive essays. Without disparaging the need to look at the trees, Ayalon was also able to see the forest.

In recognition of the importance of his studies as well as his role as an educator, Ayalon was awarded in 1972 the Israel Prize, the highest civilian award

¹See Aḥmad Ghaban, "Al-Mustashriq al-Kabīr Dāfīd Ayalūn," *Kull al-'Arab* (Nazereth), 31 July 1998.



in the State of Israel. He retired in 1983 and some two years later was presented with a jubilee volume (*Studies in Islamic History and Civilization*, ed. Moshe Sharon) in honor of his seventieth birthday. He was a member of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, an honorary member of the Middle East Medievalists from its inception in 1990, and, in 1997, he was made an honorary foreign member of the American Historical Association.

During his retirement, Ayalon continued his research, which resulted in the writing of *Eunuchs, Caliphs and Sultans: A Study of Power Relationships* (which will shortly be published by Magnes Press). This book was the culmination of his concern, lasting over two decades, with eunuchs and their role in Mamluk military society and Islamic society as a whole, a preoccupation fueled by an on-going polemic with another scholar. This study shows the breadth and depth of his reading in the Arabic sources and the wide horizon of his historical gaze.

Ayalon at times could wage a polemic without restraint and did not always brook dissent from his views. But he was ever generous with his time with colleagues and young scholars, and forever loyal to, and solicitous of, his students and friends. He combined a superb knowledge of Arabic, historical insight, and great learning with wit and a down-to-earth demeanor. He will be greatly missed in the Israeli Arabist and historical community, and among a wide circle of scholars around the world.



BIBLIOGRAPHY OF DAVID AYALON'S PUBLICATIONS

- "Amīr Ākhūr." *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2d ed., vol. 1, 442. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960.
- "al-Amīr al-Kabīr." *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2d ed., vol. 1, 444. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960.
- "Amīr Silāḥ." *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2d ed., vol. 1, 445-46. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960.
- Arabic-Hebrew Dictionary of Modern Arabic*. (With Pessah Shinar). Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1947.
- "Aspects of the Mamlūk Phenomenon, Part I: The Importance of the Mamlūk Institution." *Der Islam* 53 (1976): 196-225.
Reprinted in his *Mamlūk Military Society*.
- "Aspects of the Mamlūk Phenomenon, Part II: Ayyūbids, Kurds, and Turks." *Der Islam* 54 (1977): 1-32.
Reprinted in his *Mamlūk Military Society*.
- "Atābak al-'Asākīr." *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2d ed., vol. 1, 732. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960.
- "The Auxiliary Forces of the Mamluk Sultanate." *Der Islam* 65 (1988): 13-37.
Reprinted in his *Islam and the Abode of War*.
- "Awlād al-Nās." *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2d ed., vol. 1, 765. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960.
- "Baḥrī Mamlūks, Burjī Mamlūks—Inadequate Names for the Two Reigns of the Mamlūk Sultanate." *Tārīḥ* 1 (1990): 3-53.
Reprinted in his *Islam and the Abode of War*.
- "al-Baḥriyya." *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2d ed., vol. 1, 944-45. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960.
- "Baḥriyya, II. The Navy of the Mamlūks." *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2d ed., vol. 1, 945-47. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960.



"Bārūd, iii. The Mamlūks." *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2d ed., vol. 1, 1058-61. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960.

"Be-'inyan negiduto shel ha-Rambam." *Zion* 11 (1946): 147-48.

"Burdjiyya." *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2d ed., vol. 1, 1324-25. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960.

"Čerkes, ii. The Mamlūk Period." *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2d ed., vol. 2, 23-24. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965.

"The Circassians in the Mamlūk Kingdom." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 69 (1949): 135-47.
Reprinted in his *Studies on the Mamlūks of Egypt*.

"A Comparison between the Mamluk Societies of Egypt in the Mamluk Kingdom and under the Ottomans." *Proceedings of the 23rd International Congress of Orientalists*, edited by Denis Sinor, 333-335. Cambridge, 21-28 August 1954. London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1954.

"Da'ato shel Ibn Khaldun 'al ha-Mamlukim." *Eretz-Israel* 7 (1964): 142-43.
Volume title: *L. A. Mayer Memorial Volume*, edited by M. Avi-Yonah, et al.

"Dawādār." *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2d ed., vol. 2, 172. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965.

"Discharges from Service, Banishments and Imprisonments in Mamlūk Society." *Israel Oriental Studies* 2 (1972): 25-50.
Reprinted in his *Mamlūk Military Society*.

"Djamdār." *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2d ed., vol. 2, 421. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965.

"Egypt as a Dominant Factor in Syria and Palestine during the Islamic Period." *Egypt and Palestine: A Millennium of Association (868-1948)*, edited by Amnon Cohen, and Gabriel Baer, 17-47. New York: St. Martin's/Jerusalem: Ben Zvi Institute, 1984.
Reprinted in his *Outsiders in the Lands of Islam*.



"The End of the Mamlūk Sultanate (Why did the Ottomans Spare the Mamlūks of Egypt and Wipe Out the Mamlūks of Syria?)." *Studia Islamica* 65 (1987): 125-48.

Reprinted in his *Islam and the Abode of War*.

L'esclavage du Mamelouk. Oriental Notes and Studies, 1. Jerusalem: Israel Oriental Society, 1951.

Reprinted in his *Mamlūk Military Society*.

Eunuchs, Caliphs and Sultans: A Study in Power Relationships. Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1998 (in press).

"The Eunuchs in the Mamluk Sultanate." *Studies in Memory of Gaston Wiet*, edited by Myriam Rosen-Ayalon, 267-95. Jerusalem: Institute of Asian and African Studies, 1977.

Reprinted in his *Mamlūk Military Society*.

"The European-Asiatic Steppe: A Major Reservoir of Power for the Islamic World." *Trudy XXV. Mezhdunarod-nogo Kongressa Vostokovedov*, Proceedings of the 25th International Congress of Orientalists, vol. 2, section 6: History of Arab Countries, 47-52. Moscow, 9-16 August 1960. Moscow: 1963.

Reprinted in his *Mamlūk Military Society*.

"The Expansion and Decline of Cairo under the Mamlūks and Its Background." *Résumés des communications, sections 1-5, XXIX Congrès international des orientalistes*, 64-65. Paris, 16-22 July 1973. Paris: Yves Hervouet, 1973.

"The Expansion and Decline of Cairo under the Mamlūks and Its Background." *Itinéraires d'Orient: Hommages à Claude Cahen*, edited by Raoul Curiel, and Rika Gyselen, 13-20. Res Orientales, 6. Bures-sur-Yvette: Groupe pour l'Étude de la Civilisation du Moyen-Orient, 1994.

"From Ayyūbids to Mamlūks." *Revue des études islamiques* 49 (1981): 43-57.

Reprinted in his *Islam and the Abode of War*.

"The Great Yāsa of Chingiz Khān: A Re-examination." *Studia Islamica* 33; 34; 36; 38 (1971; 1971; 1972; 1973): 97-140; 151-80; 113-58; 107-56.

Reprinted in his *Outsiders in the Lands of Islam*.



Gunpowder and Firearms in the Mamlūk Kingdom: A Challenge to a Mediaeval Society. London: Vallentine, Mitchell, 1956.

Second edition: London and Totowa, New Jersey: F. Cass, 1978.

"Ḥalkā." *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2d ed., vol. 3, 99. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1971.

"Ḥarb, iii. The Mamlūk Sultanate." *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2d ed., vol. 3, 184-90. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1971.

"He'arot bi-Devar Bate ha-Sefer ha-Tseva'iyim ba-Medinah ha-Mamlukit." *Yedi'ot: Bulletin of the Jewish Palestine Exploration Society* 12 (1945-1946): 132-40.
Additional title: "Notes on Mameluke Military Schools." English summary, p. x. Published as David Neustadt.

"Ḥimṣ (The Battle of)." *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2d ed., vol. 3, 402-3. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1971.

"Ḥiṣār, iv. The Mamlūk Sultanate." *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2d ed., vol. 3, 472-76. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1971.

"The Historian al-Jabartī." *Historians of the Middle East*, edited by Bernard Lewis and P. M. Holt, 391-402. London: Oxford University Press, 1962..

"The Historian al-Jabartī and his Background." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 23 (1960): 217-49.
Reprinted in his *Mamlūk Military Society*.

"Ḥoḵ ha-Yasa ha-Mongoli ye-ha-Ukhluṣiyah ha-'Ezraḥit shel Ḳahir ba-Teḳufah ha-Mamlukit." *ha-'Ulama u-Ve'ayot Dat ba-'Olam ha-Muslemi: Studies in Memory of Professor Uriel Heyd*, edited by Gabriel Baer, 31-39. Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1971.

The Impact of Firearms on the Muslim World. Princeton Near East Papers, no. 20. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975.
Reprinted in his *Islam and the Abode of War*.

"Inyene negidut be-Mitsrayim bi-Yeme ha-benayim." *Zion* 4 (1939): 126-49.

"Islam versus Christian Europe: The Case of the Holy Land." *The Holy Land in History and Thought, International Conference on the Relations of the Holy*



Land and the World Outside It, edited by Moshe Sharon, 247-56. Johannesburg, December 1986. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988.
Reprinted in his *Islam and the Abode of War*.

"Kayim le-toldot ha-kalkalah shel ha-Yehudim ye-yishuvam be-Mitsrayim, be-yihud ba-me'ot ha-12 ye-13." *Zion* 2 (1937): 216-55.

"Khāṣṣakiyya." *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2d ed., vol. 4, 1100. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1978.

"Li-Demuto shel ha-no'ar ha-'Arvi ha-maskil." *ha-Po'el ha-Tsa'ir* 28/41-42 (16 Aug. 1935): 6-9.

"Malik." *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2d ed., vol. 6, 261-62. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1990.

"Mamlūk." *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2d ed., vol. 6, 314-21. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1990.

"Mamlūk Military Aristocracy: A Non-Hereditary Nobility." *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 10 (1987): 205-10.
Reprinted in his *Islam and the Abode of War*.

"Mamlūk Military Aristocracy during the First Years of the Ottoman Occupation of Egypt." *The Islamic World from Classical to Modern Times: Essays in Honor of Bernard Lewis*, edited by Clifford Edmund Bosworth, et al., 413-32. Princeton: Darwin Press, 1989.
Reprinted in his *Islam and the Abode of War*.

"Mamlūk: Military Slavery in Egypt and Syria." *Islam and the Abode of War*, II: 1-21. Aldershot: Variorum, 1994.
Abridged version originally published in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* (2nd ed.), vol. 6.

The Mamlūk Military Society: Collected Studies. London: Variorum Reprints, 1979.

"The Mamlūk Novice: On His Youthfulness and on His Original Religion." *Revue des études islamiques* 54 (1986): 1-8.
Reprinted in his *Islam and the Abode of War*.



"Mamlūkiyyāt: (A) A First Attempt to Evaluate the Mamlūk Military System; (B) Ibn Khaldūn's View of the Mamlūk Phenomenon." *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 2 (1980): 321-49.

Reprinted in his *Outsiders in the Lands of Islam*.

"The Mamlūks and Ibn Xaldūn." *Israel Oriental Studies* 10 (1980): 11-13.

"The Mamluks and Naval Power: A Phase of the Struggle between Islam and Christian Europe." *Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities* 1, no. 8 (1967): 1-12.

Reprinted in his *Studies on the Mamlūks of Egypt*.

"The Mamlūks of the Seljuks: Islam's Military Might at the Crossroads." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 6/3 (1996): 305-33.

"The Military Reforms of the Caliph al-Mu'taṣim—Their Background and Consequences." Jerusalem, 1963 (Mimeographed).

Reprinted in his *Islam and the Abode of War*.

"The Muslim City and the Mamluk Military Aristocracy." *Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities* 2, no. 14 (1968): 311-29.

Reprinted in his *Studies on the Mamlūks of Egypt*.

"Names, Titles, and 'Nisbas' of the Mamluks." *Israel Oriental Studies* 5 (1975): 189-232.

Reprinted in his *Mamlūk Military Society*.

Neṭṭ u-mediniyut neṭṭ ba-Mizraḥ ha-tikhon. Jerusalem: The Political Dept. of the Jewish Agency, 1948.

"Notes on the Furūsiyya Exercises and Games in the Mamluk Sultanate." *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 9 (1961): 31-62.

Volume title: *Studies in Islamic History and Civilization*, edited by Uriel Heyd.

Reprinted in his *Mamlūk Military Society*.

"On One of the Works of Jean Sauvaget." *Israel Oriental Studies* 1 (1971): 298-302.

Reprinted in his *Mamlūk Military Society*.



"On the Eunuchs in Islam." *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 1 (1979): 67-124.

Reprinted in his *Outsiders in the Lands of Islam*.

Outsiders in the Lands of Islam: Mamluks, Mongols, and Eunuchs. London: Variorum, 1988.

Le phénomène mamelouk dans l'Orient islamique. Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1996.

"The Plague and Its Effects upon the Mamluk Army." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1946): 67-73. Published as David Neustadt.

Reprinted in his *Studies on the Mamlūks of Egypt*.

"Preliminary Remarks on the Mamlūk Military Institution in Islam." *War, Technology and Society in the Middle East*, edited by V. J. Parry and Malcolm E. Yapp, 44-58. London: Oxford University Press, 1975.

Reprinted in his *Mamlūk Military Society*.

"The President of Egypt and The Study of History—Gamal Abdul Nasser versus Ibn Khaldun." *Jewish Observer and Middle East Review* (London) 5/47 (23 Nov. 1956): 17-19.

"Regarding Population Estimates in the Countries of Medieval Islam." *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 28 (1985): 1-19.

Reprinted in his *Outsiders in the Lands of Islam*.

"Le régiment Bahrīya dans l'armée mamelouke." *Revue des études islamiques* 19 (1951): 133-41.

Reprinted in his *Studies on the Mamluks of Egypt*.

"A Reply to Professor J. R. Partington." *Arabica* 10 (1963): 64-73.

Reprinted in his *Mamlūk Military Society*.

Review of *The Financial System of Egypt, A.H. 564-741/A.D. 1169-1341*, by Hassanein Rabie. *Der Islam* 51 (1974): 317-19.

Review of *Oil in the Middle East*, by S. H. Longrigg. *ha-Mizrah he-Ḥadash* 6 (1955): 172-73.



Review of *Toldot ha-Yehudim be-Mitsrayim va-Suriyah*, by Eliyahu Ashtor. *Kiryat Sefer* 22, no. 1 (1945): 21-26.

"Some Remarks on the Economic Decline of the Mamlūk Sultanate." *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 16 (1993): 108-24.
Reprinted in his *Islam and the Abode of War*.

"Studies in al-Jabartī: I. Notes on the Transformation of Mamlūk Society in Egypt under the Ottomans." *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 3 (1960): 148-74, 275-325.
Reprinted in his *Studies on the Mamlūks of Egypt*.

Studies on the Mamlūks of Egypt (1250-1517). London: Variorum Reprints, 1977.

"Studies on the Structure of the Mamlūk Army." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 15; 16 (1953; 1954): 203-28, 448-76; 57-90.
Reprinted in his *Studies on the Mamlūks of Egypt*.

"Studies on the Transfer of the 'Abbāsīd Caliphate from Baḡdād to Cairo." *Arabica* 7 (1960): 41-59.
Reprinted in his *Studies on the Mamlūks of Egypt*.

"The System of Payment in Mamlūk Military Society." *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 1 (1958): 37-65, 257-96.
Reprinted in his *Studies on the Mamlūks of Egypt*.

"ha-Tsava ha-Mamluki be-reshit ha-kivush ha-'Utumani." *Tarbiz* 23 (1952): 221-26.
Additional title: "The Mamluk Army after the Ottoman Conquest".

"The Wafidiya in the Mamluk Kingdom." *Islamic Culture* 25 (1951): 89-104.
Reprinted in his *Studies on the Mamlūks of Egypt*.

"Who were the Qarānīš?" *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 16 (1954): 73-90.
Appendix to "Studies on the Structure of the Mamluk Army."

"Yāsa." *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2d ed., forthcoming. Leiden: E. J. Brill.



CARL F. PETRY
NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

"Quis Custodiet Custodes?" Revisited: The Prosecution of Crime in the Late Mamluk Sultanate*

In 1956, Ann Lambton published her now-classic article in *Studia Islamica*, with its subtitle "Some Reflections on the Persian Theory of Government." ¹While Lambton was not concerned about issues of crime or disruption of public order per se, she confronted the endemic dilemma of accountability for protecting society from criminal acts or upholding public order. Lambton traced the evolution of royal authority in Iran from the post-conquest period to the establishment of the Pahlavi regime in 1925. Her commentary clearly focused on the medieval and early modern eras. The article became a reference standard because, beyond its path-breaking descriptive survey, it posed a question of profound relevance to the evolution of political practice in pre-modern Muslim societies. And in fact, this question is significant for any society that equates its moral integrity with the assurance of political stability: How is the conduct of those who bear responsibility for guaranteeing rule by law itself subjected to the dictates of that law? No temporal authority can force them to do so since nothing but God's sanction stands over them.

This question is particularly applicable to the Mamluk Sultanate, which was paradoxical in its conception of public duty and obsession with conspiratorial politics. The Mamluk regime was acutely conscious of its obligation to defend the *shari'ah* in the central Islamic lands. Yet simultaneously, the Sultanate indulged enthusiastically in factional disputes (what Michael Chamberlain has euphemistically described as "positive *fitnah*"²) as the operative medium of its political agenda. Contemporary observers were keenly aware of the contradiction implicit in these divergent tendencies, especially since, in the Mamluk system, *fitnah* was pursued with relish and on occasion erupted into violence that affected

©Middle East Documentation Center. The University of Chicago.

*Delivered as the Third Annual Mamlūk Studies Reveiw Lecture at The University of Chicago, January 16, 1998.

¹"Quis Custodiet Custodes? Some Reflections on the Persian Theory of Government," *Studia Islamica* (1956) 5: 125-48, 6: 125-46; Juvenal, *Satires*, book 6, verse 347.

²See his *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus, 1190-1350* (Cambridge, 1994), 7-8, 47-51, 125.



©1999 by Carl F. Petry .

DOI: [10.6082/M1NC5ZBG](https://doi.org/10.6082/M1NC5ZBG). (<https://doi.org/10.6082/M1NC5ZBG>)

DOI of Vol. III: [10.6082/M1765CFB](https://doi.org/10.6082/M1765CFB). See <https://doi.org/10.6082/ZJY1-1449> to download the full volume or individual articles. This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY). See <http://mamluk.uchicago.edu/msr.html> for more information about copyright and open access.

the lives of many outside the military caste. For all its emphasis on guardianship of legal propriety, the Mamluk Sultanate was itself the product of usurpation, with no tradition of legitimacy posited on lineage or descent.

The Sultanate inherited an elaborate administrative bureaucracy from its predecessors that included institutions charged with enforcement of the *sharī'ah* and suppression of criminal acts. The offices of *wālī al-shurṭah* (Prefect of Police) and *ra's nawbah* (Captain of the Guard) loom large in the higher echelons of the ruling oligarchy of Mamluk amirs. Yet, as on-site observers were eager to point out, these officials, formally bound to preserve order and quell disruption, were themselves guilty of undermining order and promoting disruption. Having successfully advanced through a combative political system, the Mamluk oligarchy looked upon disruption pragmatically rather than ethically. They realized that the routine function of civil society was requisite to sustaining its production of commodities and generation of assets the regime tapped for its own support. Society could not endure conditions of endemic insecurity. Their civilian subjects, who bore the brunt of disruption tolerated—if not condoned—by their rulers, also looked upon their vulnerability pragmatically. They did not expect lofty ethics, but they did want stability. How stability was enforced remained the regime's prerogative.

The Mamluk oligarchy was readily disposed (a) to collude with criminal elements if mutual profit was available to both sides, and (b) to ignore or gloss over disorder it did not regard as a menace to its privileged status in society. We shall see that the regime's enforcement of legal principle or suppression of criminal acts was calculatingly selective. The Mamluk oligarchy showed little philosophical antipathy towards disruption or violence. It is in this context that the study examines the process of enforcement, the prosecution of crime by the Mamluk oligarchy during the late Sultanate: specifically, the reigns of al-Ashraf Qāyṭbāy (872-901/1468-96) and Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī (906-22/1501-16). Why this period? Because I have surveyed the narrative chronicle literature in Arabic for these two reigns, and I have compiled a file of criminal or disruptive acts committed by both civilians and militarists that they recorded. The study's objectives are two: (1) to compare profiles of crime/disruption committed by civilians with those exhibited by the Mamluks themselves; (2) to develop hypotheses about the militarists' conception of criminality. How did they interpret it, as distinct from political disruption? Whom did they regard as culpable and whom did they tolerate? What acts, committed by which individuals or groups, were prosecuted, and concomitantly who were allowed to behave with impunity? If the Mamluk oligarchy did not regard all crime or disruption as meriting prosecution, what rationales are discernible for the distinctions they drew between tolerable and intolerable behavior?



This study is derived from descriptions of crime or disruption committed, prosecuted, or ignored by members of the military elite, primarily in Cairo, in four chronicles: *Ḥawādith al-Duhūr fī Madā al-Ayyām wa-al-Shuhūr* by Jamāl al-Dīn ibn Taghrībirdī (813-74/1411-69),³ *Inbā' al-Ḥaṣr bi-Abnā' al-'Aṣr* by Ibn al-Jawharī al-Ṣayrafī (819-ca. 900/1416-95),⁴ "al-Rawḍ al-Bāsim fī Ḥawādith al-'Umr wa-al-Tarājim" by 'Abd al-Bāsiṭ ibn Khalīl al-Malaṭī (844-920/1440-1514),⁵ and *Badā' i' al-Zuhūr fī Waqā' i' al-Duhūr* by Ibn Iyās (852-930/1448-1524).⁶ These four works constitute the primary narrative (not archival) sources in Arabic for events within the Egyptian capital at this time. They refer frequently to the criminal activity discussed above, but they cannot be interpreted as accurate or replete registers of crime or disruption. On the contrary, their selectivity reveals significant biases in their coverage of such episodes. These biases, effectively an interpretive—or distorting—lens through which we are allowed to observe these writers' impressions of crime, warrant attention as an important question in its own right.

The preceding issues can be more sharply focused and succinctly addressed if the range of criminal or disruptive acts committed by civilians and militarists are compared. Differences emerged between the behavior of the two classes, and this divergence implies contrasting motives—even for acts that appeared superficially similar. In a previous analysis of civilian crime, the categories of theft and homicide predominated.⁷ Incidents of theft were evenly divided between heists by individuals and collective brigandage elaborately planned—in some cases, indicating the presence of organized gangs. Homicides by civilians revealed a diverse set of circumstances, but the prominence of slaves or indentured persons murdering their masters was vividly apparent from the figures that emerged. By contrast, militarists—from recently manumitted recruits to senior officers—were more likely to engage in assaults (against their peers or civilian subordinates), factional quarrels, long-term vendettas, riots, and systematic pillaging (as distinguished from spontaneous thievery). The chronicles commented on these disruptions fulsomely, and yet placed little emphasis on personal motives behind them. That is, in comparison with explanations offered for civilian transgressions or "crimes of

³Edited by William Popper, vol. 7, nos. 1-4 of *University of California Publications in Semitic Philology* (Berkeley, 1930-31).

⁴Edited by Ḥasan Ḥabashī (Cairo, 1970).

⁵Vatican MS Arabo 729.

⁶Edited by Mohamed Mustafa, Hans Robert Roemer, Helmut Ritter, vols. 3-5 (Cairo and Wiesbaden, 1960-63).

⁷"Disruptive 'Others' as Depicted in Chronicles of the Late Mamluk Period," paper presented at a conference on *The Historiography of Islamic Egypt* convened by the Department of Mediaeval History at the University of St. Andrews, Scotland, 27-31 August 1997, and scheduled for publication in a volume of its proceedings.



passion," the narrative authors seem to have been ill-informed, or indisposed, to speculate on the emotions of individuals within the military class—in the context of describing disruption. That the chroniclers had less access to details about the motives of militarists than for civilians is not credible. Their reluctance to dwell on them thus merits subsequent consideration.

To assume that either theft or homicide figured modestly in militarist crime would be misleading. Among militarists, however, individual thievery appeared less frequently, and was less graphically described, than were acts of pillage by bands of soldiers rampaging through Cairo's markets or residential districts. And homicides by militarists at all ranks were recounted rather tersely. Their depictions tended not to reflect the passions or sexual frustrations that often characterized reports of murders committed by both free civilians or indentured persons. Quite possibly, the chroniclers could glean such details from registers of open court hearings in which civilian murderers were tried. We shall see that militarists were less likely to be summoned before tribunals, and when they were such proceedings may have been closed to spectators or even to civil jurists. But the consequence of these seeming contrasts in legal accountability was a void of documentation for homicides committed by members of the military elite, regardless of rank.

With regard to cases of homicide by militarists, discernible motives emerged from rivalries between factions, outbursts of rage over presumed insults from subordinates, and simmering anger over stymied access to revenue sources. Eight incidents on the part of amirs or their adjutants were reported. These included the assassination of a Ḥanbalī deputy judge (*nā'ib qādī*) near the Aydamur Square by a groom (*ghulām*) and his Mamluk patron in Rabi' II of 874/October-November 1469. Al-Ṣayrafī, so informative about cases of homicides by civilians, offered no explanation for this murder of a jurist, but merely observed that the Sultan ordered an inquiry.⁸ He mentioned nothing about the perpetrators' punishment. But the same author did describe the fate of a *sulṭānī mamlūk* named Yūnus who belonged to the faction of the deceased Sultan al-Zāhir Khushqadam. In Muḥarram of 875/July 1470, this man shot an arrow into a rival during a drunken brawl. Sultan Qāyrbāy, still insecure in his position and intolerant of factional disputes that had plagued the capital before his enthronement, ordered this Yūnus cut in half.⁹ Qāyrbāy was apparently more inclined to gloss over a jurist's assassination than a shooting that might precipitate a major riot. His action may also have been aimed at appeasing the deceased's comrades.

Only one of these incidents involved a matter of sullied honor. In Rajab 876/December 1471-January 1472, an officer's son, unnamed by al-Ṣayrafī, fatally

⁸*Inbā'*, 149, line 2.

⁹*Inbā'*, 193, line 4.



stabbed a woman who owed him an indemnity, secured (apparently) by court order, for an act of infidelity with a groom. Whether the woman was the *walad nās*'s wife and the groom was bound to his service, al-Şayrafī did not specify. Yet he did note that the perpetrator went openly out to the street brandishing his blood-spattered dagger with no attempt to conceal his act. No sanction against him was mentioned.¹⁰

During Qānşūh al-Ghawrī's reign, his ambivalent chronicler recounted homicides by amirs to underscore the Sultan's indifference to their prosecution. Ibn Iyās mentioned the escape of al-Ādil Ṭūmānbāy's assailant from prison (Ramaḍān 910/February-March 1505), an affair that ended in his pardon and honorable exile.¹¹ In Muḥarram 913/May-June 1507, al-Ghawrī did preside over a hearing to investigate the fatal beating of a boatman (*nūṭī*) by the grand amir Arizmak al-Nāshif. When the boatman refused to pay a debt Arizmak claimed of him, the amir responded violently. The incident was presumably considered at the plea of the mariner's sons during a *maẓālim* audience. Ibn Iyās stated that al-Ghawrī, preoccupied with other matters, dismissed the case by paying the victim's sons a (trifling) indemnity.¹²

The remaining cases involved an assault upon the Sultan's postmaster (*bardadār*) that went unsolved,¹³ the killing by a valet in the service of al-Ghawrī's nephew and successor, al-Ashraf Ṭūmānbāy, of his young apprentice,¹⁴ and the strangling by the Sultan's second chamberlain of his own executive adjutant (*dawādār*) following a drunken dispute.¹⁵ The notice of the apprentice's death merits quoting for the Sultan's adroit deflection of a risky prosecution:

In Shawwāl 915/January-February 1510, a person named Barakāt, valet (*farrāsh*) to the Amir Ṭūmānbāy al-Dawādār, murdered one of his apprentices, a handsome youth. When this Barakāt and his accusers were summoned before the Sultan, he referred them to the Mālikī chief *qādī*. When the latter learned that Barakāt was a valet of Ṭūmānbāy's, he suspended judgment of the case. He ordered Barakāt incarcerated until evidence of his guilt was found. Soon thereafter, one of Ṭūmānbāy's couriers (*sā'ī*) also committed homicide—this time against al-Shuqayfātī, an aged shaykh. When the courier was brought before the Sultan, who learned of his

¹⁰*Inbā'*, 379, line 4.

¹¹*Badā' i'* 4:75, lines 11-12.

¹²*Badā' i'* 4:115, line 7.

¹³*Badā' i'* 4:115, line 21.

¹⁴*Badā' i'* 4:168, line 9.

¹⁵*Badā' i'* 4:179, line 18.



connection to the *dawādār*, he again referred him to the *sharī‘ah* court. The courier’s indictment was similarly suspended because no one came forth to testify against him. He had done the deed in broad daylight after noon in the Wakālah of al-Ashraf Barsbāy Thus, the victim’s relatives and children received no satisfaction. Final judgment rests with God.

Al-Ghawrī’s placement of these cases in the hands of a judge who owed him his appointment should not be dismissed simply as the craven (or prudent) behavior of a subordinate protecting his job, not to mention the innocuous jurisdiction of the civil court over criminal matters. Al-Ghawrī could not afford to irritate his popular nephew upon whose loyalty he depended. Ṭūmānbāy enjoyed the respect of both officers and troops that al-Ghawrī never managed to inspire. But Ibn Iyās probably brought up these incidents to highlight the consternation of the victims’ families over unrequited justice, which he attributed to al-Ghawrī’s opportunism.

Eleven homicides, by or upon soldiers, were reported. Only one case occurred during Qāyrbāy’s reign, in which a *sultānī mamlūk* was found stabbed to death on the Citadel ramp by worshippers making their way to morning prayer.¹⁶ No further details were noted, except the unknown identity of his attackers. Of the incidents during al-Ghawrī’s reign and Ṭūmānbāy’s regency, several revealed frustration on the part of recruits awaiting an *iqṭā‘* assignment. The starkest example occurred in Dhū al-Qa‘dah of 912/March-April 1507.¹⁷

A veteran *mamlūk* of advanced age ascended to the Citadel at the hour of morning prayer, on the day in which stipends (*jāmakīyahs*) were distributed. When he reached the ramp, three recruits set upon him, killing him with stab wounds to the belly. He died immediately. They also assassinated his slave who accompanied him bearing his uniform that he donned upon entering the Citadel. The retiree possessed an *iqṭā‘*. He had been ill and when his condition worsened, the three recruits demanded his allotment. The Sultan replied: "Await his death and then assume it." But the veteran . . . recovered and thus suffered assassination upon his arrival at the Citadel at the hands of these recruits furious over his revival. The upshot of all this was the Sultan’s bestowal of the *iqṭā‘* upon other soldiers.

¹⁶*Badā‘i‘* 3:217, line 8.

¹⁷*Badā‘i‘* 4:107, line 11.



This incident sheds light on tensions that led to draconian means of restoring assets hoarded by retirees to individuals on active duty, and as such may suggest a phenomenon more widespread than a case Ibn Iyās linked to murderous recruits and his sovereign's duplicitous disposal of it.

But Ibn Iyās reserved his most egregious denunciations for homicides resulting from caste arrogance. Two cases illustrate his rancor:

On Tuesday the seventh (of Muḥarram 919/15 March 1513), Qurqmās al-Muqri' was accused (of connivance) in the murder of a *mamlūk* and his spouse. The cause: the *mamlūk* had been living near the . . . hospital in the Kaḥl Alley. His groom and black slaves had assailed this *mamlūk* and his wife with swords . . . , claiming that they (their victims) were robbers. They struck the woman and her husband, and cut off their daughter's ears to get her earrings. The girl died that night. At dawn, the woman and *mamlūk* were discovered badly wounded. They were said to bear sixteen sword strokes. They were placed on stretchers (*aqfās*) and conveyed to the Sultan. The *mamlūk* and his spouse told him: "We have been wronged by Qurqmās al-Muqri' and his servants." This *mamlūk* was dwelling near Qurqmās's residence in the Kaḥl alley. Upon ascertaining the truth of their account, he cast Qurqmās in irons and put him in the *wālī*'s custody, along with his servants¹⁸

But "soon thereafter, the Sultan demurred on this case . . . taking no cognizance of the complaint of the *mamlūk* and his wife Their daughter had died following her mutilation Thus do the victims pay for the guilty." Was Ibn Iyās's detailed summary of this flagrancy an accurate example of criminal justice by Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī? We cannot know since his version cannot be checked against a court register.

But despite Ibn Iyās's more positive attitude toward al-Ghawrī's regent, Ṭūmānbāy, he did not ignore an incident of blatant assault on a civilian, albeit the only such case reported:¹⁹

During the Sultan's absence, one of his *mamlūk* recruits intended to buy grain from a ship on the Nile shore. . . . He could locate no porter to transport it, so he apprehended a peasant (*fallāḥ*) from Upper Egypt with a donkey and sack. The *mamlūk* seized the donkey and sack but the farmer refused to give them up. The *mamlūk*

¹⁸*Badā'i*' 4:296, lines 7, 22.

¹⁹*Badā'i*' 5:50, line 12.



struck him a violent blow to the head, causing the blood to flow. The farmer fell into the river, fainted and drowned. Thereupon, the populace assaulted the *mamlūk* and conveyed him to the house of the *dawādār*, viceroy of the absence (Ṭūmānbāy). There, he was put in irons and sent to the *wālī* who imprisoned him to await the Sultan's return. When the *mamlūk*'s comrades learned of this, they marched upon the *dawādār*'s house. They found him away repairing the Fayḍ causeway damaged by flood. The comrades were told that this *mamlūk* who had committed murder had been sent by the *dawādār* to the *wālī*. A large number of recruits then descended from the barracks and proceeded to the *wālī*'s residence, released the *mamlūk* . . . and threatened to arson the structure. The *dawādār* thus dropped the charge of homicide and tension subsided.

This case was presented in terms of a recruit's sense of superiority over a civilian of the lowest social level: a Ṣa'īdī peasant. Ṭūmānbāy's dismissal of charges against him occurred only in the prospect of a severe riot on the part of the recruit's fellows, whose class solidarity alone determined their priorities of justice. Although the affair contradicted the *dawādār*'s own scruples, he took a decision that probably headed off more widespread suffering. But was this case representative of settlements in incidents of homicide against civilians by militarists generally? Ibn Iyās would likely have wished to leave this impression, but in the absence of corroborative, and more impartial, archival evidence one is left uncertain.

Many assaults and altercations between militarists appeared in the chronicles, but only four cases involving officers, five involving soldiers, were discussed in the context of behavior that should have warranted at least a reprimand. Two of the incidents implicating amirs were noted by al-Ṣayrafī, his depiction of the intense reprisals for them serving as rationale for disclosure of deceit or greed on the amirs' part. The first occurred on the sixteenth of Ṣafar 875/14 August 1470. The market inspector (*muḥtasib*), a senior officer, brutally flogged a fig seller who was subsequently pilloried above his shop.²⁰ After honey was daubed on his body, he was left to hang in the sun enveloped by a swarm of stinging insects causing him "torment beyond description." Only when Qāyṭbāy's esteemed confidential secretary, Ibn Muzhir, noticed the fig seller's appalling state was he released. Al-Ṣayrafī hardly condoned such heinous demeaning of a human being. But he offered an explanation, if not a justification, for the *muḥtasib*'s wrath. This fig seller apparently oversaw a price fixing network, in which vendors of foodstuffs routinely charged customers one *dirham* per *raṭl* above the rate set by the *muḥtasib*.

²⁰*Inbā'*, 203, line 11.



One wonders whether the inspector was outraged more by the price-fixing or by the possibility that he had not been included in the network's illegal take. I discovered many similar incidents of price-tampering in the chronicles, but nothing that provoked a reprisal like this. Whether the fig seller's ghastly fate set an example that effectively curbed future price-fixing ventures cannot be ascertained, but one suspects that they continued.

The second episode took place on the twenty-ninth of Rabī' II of the same year/25 October 1470. A *mamlūk* in Qāyrbāy's service was flogged and imprisoned for punching the prefect (*walī*). He was summoned from detention in the house of the majordomo (*ustādār*) in walking shackles and fined 18,000 *dīnārs*, a sum he disclaimed by stating: "I have nothing but my soul (*rūḥ*) to offer."²¹ Eventually the *kātib al-sirr* Ibn Muzhir interceded for his release, although the matter of his fine was left to the majordomo to recalculate. The severity of the *mamlūk*'s punishment may have stemmed from his audacity at striking a superior in rank, although the Sultan's propensity to confiscate hoarded assets even from his own soldiers cannot be ruled out.

Assaults on the part of troopers could rapidly degenerate into mob violence, especially if perpetrators went unchastised for their behavior. Sultan Qāyrbāy secured his reign by responding quickly to such behavior with public floggings of his own recruits.²² Following a street brawl during which black slaves attacked civilians in the aftermath of a revolt by recruits in late 872/June-July 1469, the prefect ordered their lashing and dismemberment.²³ Al-Malaṭī noted that when their owners—many of whom were notables—sought their release, most were rebuffed and received their property back only after punishment had been meted out. Confronting endemic hostility from his recruits, Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī was compelled to allow many of their assaults to go unreprimated. The most unsettling incident occurred in Jumādā I 917/July-August 1511. An eminent *walad nās* who belonged to the family of Qāyrbāy's widow, Fāṭimah al-Khāṣṣbakīyah, was watching a (mock?) battle between street gangs (*zu'ar*) from a rooftop near the Sunqur Bridge.²⁴ His son and two hundred other observers had crowded onto the roof. A band of *mamlūks* attacked them and during the fracas, the roof collapsed, killing the structure's owner within. Seventeen persons perished in the rubble and many more were injured—including the *walad nās* and his son. Despite their rank, Ibn Iyās mentioned no sanction against the soldiers who had leapt up onto the roof. Only after al-Ghawrī's death in battle at Marj Dābiq did his regent Ṭūmānbāy restore Qāyrbāy's policy of strict reprisals to head off full-scale riots. In Shā'bān

²¹*Inbā'*, 216 line 1.

²²"Rawḍ," fol. 178b, line 15; *Ḥawādith*, 650, line 7; "Rawḍ," fol. 186b, line 14.

²³"Rawḍ," fol. 186b, line 24.

²⁴*Badā'i'* 4:232, line 20.



922/August-September 1517, Ṭūmānbāy admonished the barracks commanders to lock up their recruits following their assaults on Anatolian merchants. The troops had sought revenge against them for their patron's devastating humiliation in Syria by the Ottomans.²⁵

When riots did erupt, they represented a violent intensification of the recruits' ire over withheld rations (often sold on the black market), unpaid bonuses or orders to prepare for a war abroad. Incidents considered here specified criminal acts committed under the guise of a general melee. Of eleven such cases, the riot of 11 Muḥarram 916/21 April 1510 caused the most damage.²⁶ Following a delay in meat rations and al-Ghawrī's refusal to pay a bonus (*nafaqah*) of one hundred *dīnārs* per man, the recruits apprehended several senior amirs and forced them to negotiate their stipends with the Sultan. When he remained adamant, the recruits claimed they would glean their bonuses from the merchants and fell upon Cairo's markets. Typical in such events, grooms and black slaves exploited the chaos to join in the mass thievery. When irate merchants presented bills for damages to al-Ghawrī's street-wise *muḥtasib*, al-Zaynī Barakāt ibn Mūsá, the total came to 20,000 *dīnārs* from 570 pilfered shops. The specter of *julbān* rioting loomed over Cairo in the late Sultanate. Although the chroniclers acknowledged the troops' justification from their perspective, they denounced arson, homicide, injury, and rapine as the criminal legacy of these affairs. Losses in terms of goods or money were not condoned, but were nonetheless expected as the consequence of frustration by those possessing a monopoly of military force.

As noted above, thievery committed by individuals already privileged in Mamluk society revealed patterns of behavior that contrasted with theft by civilians. Motives for seizing property differed because of the contrasting perspectives of the perpetrators. And proclivities for reprisal also differed markedly. Civilians were most likely to be pursued and punished severely if they trespassed upon militarist space by robbing assets held by the ruling caste or its senior members. Militarists, on the other hand, possessed more leverage to adjudicate their way out of reprisal. No cases of individual thievery on the part of amirs emerged in the narrative sources, but one dramatic example of mistaken blame occurred. In Rajab of 915/October-November 1509, the amir Qurqmās al-Muqri', already discussed, was robbed of 1000 *dīnārs* stashed in his house. Rounding up all those who lived in the quarter, he had the prefect question them abusively until they yielded a sum in excess of his loss.²⁷ Subsequently, the theft was discovered to have been an "inside job" committed by one of Qurqmās's own *mamlūks*. The shake-down

²⁵*Badā'i*' 5:82, line 10.

²⁶*Badā'i*' 4:177, line 8.

²⁷*Badā'i*' 4:162, line 4; 180, line 12.



traumatized several civil notables resident in the district. The thief, arrested in Mecca by the pilgrimage commander some months later, confessed to the crime upon interrogation in Cairo but could make no restitution since he had spent the money. After Qurqmās's neighbors petitioned al-Ghawrī, the Sultan summoned the amir and forced him to pay them back. Ibn Iyās noted that al-Ghawrī was already rankled by Qurqmās's heavy-handed ways and may have exploited this incident to curb his arrogance.

Individual thievery by troops was so seldom reported by the chroniclers that their credibility must be suspected. The cases that did attract the attention of one, Ibn Iyās, pointed to repeat offenders whose acts outweighed their martial utility in the Sultan's eyes. One such recruit so angered Qāyrbāy that he ordered both his hands cut off and, annoyed by an amir's intercession, demanded that the soldier's feet be removed as well.²⁸ Late in his reign, Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī's attention was distracted from preparations for his expedition against the Ottomans by the predation of a recruit named Jānim al-Ifranjī. This individual exploited the security void left by the *sulṭānī mamlūk* guard who had already departed for Syria. The Sultan ordered "district chiefs" (*arbāb al-idrāk*) to arrest the *mamlūk* and execute him on the spot. He was eventually captured near Bilbays where he was hanged from a tree.²⁹

The chroniclers were hardly reticent on the ubiquity of pillaging by troops. Incidents of seizure of assets by marauding recruits were the most frequently recounted criminal acts: thirteen cases distinct from troop revolts. Those considered here were chosen for their occurrence apart from troop revolts. The latter should be interpreted as part of the Mamluk political process. Pillaging certainly might be stimulated by political conditions. The assaults against the palace of Amir Qānṣūh Khammi'ah during Qāyrbāy's declining months were inspired by the troops' perception of his conspiracy to assume the Sultanate.³⁰ When the recruits ransacked Qānṣūh's home, they were already acting on precedent. Ibn Iyās claimed that pillaging intensified when the soldiers believed their predation could occur with impunity. To his knowledge, the troops tested this kind of defiance against the regime for the first time in 887-88/1482-83. The signal event erupted on the tenth of Jumādā I 888/16 June 1483, when a gang of *julbān* torched the house of Amir Barsbāy Qarā.³¹ They then stole precious carpets from two *madrasahs* in its vicinity. The *julbān* bore a grudge against Barsbāy because one of their comrades had disputed with a cloth merchant over the purchase of expensive Ba'labakkī

²⁸ *Badā'i*' 3:218, line 11.

²⁹ *Badā'i*' 5:37, line 20.

³⁰ Ibn al-Ḥimṣī, "Ḥawādith al-Zamān wa-Wafayāt al-Shuyūkh wa-al-Aqrān," Istanbul MS Feizullah 1438, fol. 157a, line 5; 157b, line 10; *Badā'i*' 3:309, line 15.

³¹ *Badā'i*' 3:202, line 11.



fabric. When the recruit made off with the cloth without payment, the merchant complained to Barsbāy—who was then captain of the guard. Barsbāy summoned the offender and had him flogged. Upon learning of his punishment, his comrades turned on the *ra's nawbah*. Ibn Iyās stated that the *julbān* "intended to burn the cloth market and settle the score once and for all with its merchants. The situation was grave and the entire city unsettled. But the Atābak Azbak mediated between Barsbāy Qarā and the recruits to arrange a truce. Calm was restored."

The truce was only temporary, it would seem, since the recruits learned from this precedent and held Qāyṭbāy's eventual successor, al-Ghawrī, hostage to the threat of pillage throughout his reign. This incident clearly stood as a criminal act in Ibn Iyās's judgment. Yet he regarded it as much more significant than an act of simple thievery: a pivotal development that marked the transformation of the Mamluk army from a disciplined service unit to an implacable interest group. Since no documentation of the *julbān*'s views about this incident is available, we are left with the chronicler's appraisal as a negative indictment of the entire Mamluk system in its later years. The recruits quite probably would have pointed to their own sense of progressive degradation and lapsed support on their patron's part.

If pillaging was the *julbān*'s crime of choice, and the most profitable to them, acrimony among peers emerged as their superiors' favored disruption. Circumstances behind the initiation of disputes between senior amirs differed widely. Few were instigated solely by feelings of slighted honor, but often erupted because of covert ambitions that the quarreling parties saw their opponents thwarting. The chroniclers interpreted quarrels as criminal if they became prolonged vendettas that supplanted the amirs' formal duties and disrupted mundane functions of society. Of the innumerable incidents of acrimony between amirs, I counted thirteen such cases. One of the most interesting occurred in Jumādā II 875/November-December 1470. The inspector (*kāshif*) of Gharbīyah Province, 'Alā' al-Dīn ibn Zawayn returned from an expedition to curb bedouin raids with the flayed skin of a defeated chief: 'Abd al-Qādir ibn Ḥamzah.³² The inspector had it stuffed with cotton and displayed as a mannequin. This 'Abd al-Qādir apparently had established client ties with another grand amir, Timrāz al-Shamsī, who found his bedouin associate's display in the procession repugnant. When the inspector's entourage reached the *dawādār* Yashbak min Mahdī's house, Timrāz forced entry and assaulted Ibn Zawayn. Al-Ṣayrafī noted that Yashbak may not have been aware of their altercation, that presumably complicated the government's attempts to quell bedouin brigandage in its rich Delta provinces.

³²*Inbā'*, 232, line 17.



The dispute between officers of the highest rank that boded most ominously for future disruption flared for the first time in late 896/October 1491. The Amir Qānṣūh Khamsmi'ah, then chief fodderer (*amīr akhūr*), and Aqbirdī, who succeeded Yashbak as *dawādār*, clashed because of a perceived protocol slight.³³ This acrimony over a transparently trivial insult obviously triggered latent hostilities between the two ambitious officers, who each recognized that the other harbored designs on Qāyrbāy's office. As the Sultan's strength ebbed in his last years, the dispute between these two matured into a bloody vendetta the chroniclers lamented as a revival of strife they had hoped Qāyrbāy's reign would have alleviated. That neither amir would succeed in duplicating Qāyrbāy's achievement did not diminish the potential for arson, chaos, and pillaging that their confrontation inflicted on the capital over several years. And from Ibn Iyās's jaundiced point of view, an orderly succession that might have secured the succession for Qāyrbāy's son, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, could have prevented the dark horse Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī from attaining the Sultanate. The threat of a personal quarrel between two individuals escalating into a vendetta burdening the lives of thousands therefore constituted for the chroniclers one of the most egregious crimes committed by those duty-bound to uphold order and promote public welfare.

Not all quarrels came across as the harbingers of future trouble. Ibn Iyās related one dispute as darkly humorous, albeit tainted by disclosure of illicit activity. In Dhū al-Ḥijjah 914/March-April 1509, the grand chamberlain Anaṣbāy clashed with Nawrūz, one of the *muqaddamūn*. The chamberlain had intended to shut down a house of prostitution located near Nawrūz's residence.³⁴ The property had belonged to the former Atābak Azbak. When Anaṣbāy's *dawādār* arrived to disperse the prostitutes he encountered Nawrūz's grooms and black slaves. The *dawādār* and his entourage were severely beaten and driven off. When Anaṣbāy learned of his secretary's mishap, he rode to the house in a rage, thrashed the prostitutes and paraded them through Cairo on donkeys. Nawrūz then complained to al-Ghawrī, who, instead of giving him satisfaction, rebuked him verbally and backed his chamberlain's action. Nawrūz had probably extended his protection to a profitable enterprise in return for a share of profits. Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī wished to show himself a defender of moral probity and took Anaṣbāy's part.

Ranking second in frequency to vendettas, incidents of embezzlement or fraud were reported by the chroniclers as the exclusive preserve of senior amirs and

³³*Badā'i*' 3:285, line 3; "Ḥawādith al-Zamān," fol. 155b, line 3; al-Sakhāwī, "al-Dhayl al-Tāmm 'alá Duwal al-Islām," Ms.: Tunis: Dār al-Kutub al-Waṣīfah, 6856, fol. 260b, line 1; Ibn Iyās, "Uqūd al-Jumān fī Waqā'i' al-Azmān," Ms.: Istanbul: Aya Sofya, 3500, fols. 237a, line 18-238b, line 1; Anonymous, "Jawāhir al-Sulūk fī al-Khulafā' wa-al-Mulūk," Ms.: London: British Museum, 6854, fols. 397, line 14-399b.

³⁴*Badā'i*' 4:148, line 12.



their civilian adjutants. These affairs indeed appeared consistently as collusive enterprises. Senior officers entered into lucrative arrangements with civilian officials charged with judicial or fiscal responsibilities, the former lending enforcement muscle to their colleagues' designs. These affairs were covert, and reached the chroniclers' notice only when one of the parties became disgruntled or outsiders saw themselves adversely affected and disclosed them. Some cases may seem trivial, as with an incident that occurred in Rabī' I 874/October-November 1469. The *wazīr*, Qāsim Shughayṭah, one of the most adroit bureaucrats of Qāyṭbāy's reign and a confidant to the *dawādār* Yashbak, detected receipt of livestock from Upper Egypt (primarily sheep according to al-Ṣayrafī) by the Sayfī amir Qānṣūh Aḥmad al-Īnālī, on which no impost (*maks*) had been paid.³⁵ The *wazīr* confiscated the livestock even though the amir accosted him physically. The *wazīr*'s defiance of a powerful officer was risky, but may have stemmed from his connection to an even more influential patron, the *dawādār* himself. Yashbak min Maḥdī had staked out virtually absolute proprietorship over fiscal matters relating to Upper Egypt. He was not disposed to tolerate competition from rival amirs. The *wazīr* Qāsim appealed to him after the abuse he received at Qānṣūh's hands. Yashbak stood behind his adjutant and may have appropriated the livestock himself.

A subsequent event, of more widespread notoriety, lends credibility to the preceding hypothesis. Less than a year later, on 1 Muḥarram 875/30 June 1470, a procession composed of senior amirs rode from the Citadel to Yashbak's residence.³⁶ At its head were two of Qāyṭbāy's highest-ranking colleagues: the Atābak Azbak and the *ra's nawbah*, Īnāl al-Ashqar. They came bearing a subpoena demanding a full account of Yashbak's finances relative to Upper Egypt. The *dawādār* disdained to receive the delegation, which nonetheless claimed that he owed the *dīwāns al-mufrad* and *al-dawlah* no less than 250,000 *dīnārs*, not counting livestock or slaves. Yashbak ultimately insisted that he had reached a personal understanding with Qāyṭbāy over what he owed to the Special and Privy Bureaus. But al-Ṣayrafī reported that Qāyṭbāy appointed the *ustādār*, Ibn Gharīb, and the *wazīr*, Qāsim, to inventory the *dawādār*'s receipts from Upper Egypt every month for the indefinite future. Whether Qāsim found this duty hazardous in light of his tie to Yashbak al-Ṣayrafī did not recount.

A decade later, al-Ṣayrafī commented at length on a complicated case in which the sitting Ḥanafī chief *qāḍī* was implicated for accepting bribes from the *ustādār*, Taghrībirdī, who had served as treasurer to the former *dawādār*, Yashbak.³⁷ The precise circumstances behind the case, initiated as a complaint against the

³⁵*Inbā'*, 148, line 1.

³⁶*Inbā'*, 186, line 10.

³⁷*Inbā'*, 502, line 15.



ustādār before the *qāḍī* himself, are elusive in al-Ṣayrafī's summary. But he elaborated on precedents for judges accepting bribes from senior officers in return for dismissals of charges or favorable decisions in court. Al-Ṣayrafī's remarks listed accusations against the *ustādār* for fiscal malfeasance and neglect of formal duties. The incident disclosed probable collusion between a senior jurist and an officer high placed in the oligarchy. It also revealed active participation in litigation over administrative matters by the *sharī'ah* courts.

Other prominent cases involved a *muḥtasib* condoning price-fixing,³⁸ a delegation of merchants from Alexandria protesting their governor's corruption,³⁹ a guard captain's impounding and forced sale of waqf properties,⁴⁰ and an *ustādār* who collected a special (possibly illegal) "protection" tax (*ḥimāyah*) from both wealthy civilians and militarists.⁴¹ The sultans' efforts to curtail their subordinates' dealings were marginally effective. Only the *ustādār* who extorted the protection money was actually arrested, most likely because he offended members of his own peer group. Ibn Iyās noted that when the *muḥtasib* was flogged for negligence, he allowed marketeers and grain speculators even more leeway to fix prices. The bribes he received from them in return presumably saw no decrease, especially since no mention was made of his dismissal.

References to crimes committed by civilians on their own rarely involved embezzlement or fraud. All of the preceding cases implicated civilians in tandem with militarists as joint perpetrators. All held positions that gave them opportunities for illicit procedures. For corruption of this kind to succeed, it would seem to have required fiscal expertise and political clout of the respective parties. But the exclusivity of culpability attributed to militarists in these corruption cases by the narrative authors once again raises the issue of source bias. Can we assume that responsibility for such corruption was solely the prerogative of these client-patron teams? Or did the chroniclers select their examples to depict these crimes as a burden inflicted on society by the military overclass and its civilian subordinates? The latter remains a distinct possibility, a distortion so far irremedial for lack of archival documentation.

In marked contrast to the profile of transgressions reported for civilians, very few crimes of turpitude or sexual license were linked to members of the military class. The narrative writers alluded to a mere seven cases in these categories, and with one exception, all implicated recruits rather than officers. They were: two incidents of rape, one allegation of poisoning, two of unsanctioned marriage, and two of public intoxication. The chroniclers described the rapes most vividly, if

³⁸*Badā'i*' 3:263, line 13.

³⁹*Badā'i*' 3:267, line 21.

⁴⁰*Badā'i*' 4:109, line 21.

⁴¹*Badā'i*' 4:390, line 13.



succinctly. The first occurred in Dhū al-Qa‘dah 895/September-October 1490. In a brief entry by al-Sakhāwī in his *Dhayl*, he mentioned that a *mamlūk* transferred from Syria (Damascus?) violated a woman to whom he was betrothed but not formally wed.⁴² Fleeing Qāyrbāy’s arrest warrant, the *mamlūk* attempted to escape to Upper Egypt but was apprehended, flogged and cast into the Maqsharah Prison where he expired the next day. The second incident took place in Rabī‘ II 916/July-August 1510. On the Maqs road three Mamluk soldiers attacked a group of women wearing bridal attire.⁴³ One woman managed to escape but the others were taken to the soldiers’ stables. When news of the assault reached the *wālī*, he captured the three offenders and brought them before al-Ghawrī, who lashed them to the point of death. Since the soldiers committed this rape on the day when troops drew their monthly pay, al-Ghawrī directed the *kātib al-mamālīk* to turn their stipends over to their victims in compensation for their violation. Each woman received 2000 *dirhams*.

While only a pernicious rumor, the allegation of poisoning was sufficient to cause the individual implicated some discomfiture. In Rajab 884/September-October 1479, the *julbān* became convinced that the *dawādār* Yashbak had murdered his rival, Jānim, in this fashion.⁴⁴ To avoid provoking their riot, Yashbak was forced into seclusion away from audiences in the Citadel for several days. The illicit marital affairs were interesting because of the conditions of service they compromised. In Shawwāl 875/March-April 1471, Qāyrbāy ordered one of his purchased *mamlūks* beaten for eloping without his consent.⁴⁵ The *mamlūk* had departed his barracks with nothing but his uniform and horse. Al-Ṣayrafī mused about the Sultan’s wrath over this incident. Since the *mamlūk* had been manumitted, he could not be prevented from concluding the marriage. But Qāyrbāy stripped him of his rank and privileges, and refused to allow his residence in Cairo as a private subject. The Sultan remanded him to Aleppo under the custody of the merchant who had sold him originally. Qāyrbāy’s ire over unapproved marriages flared again fifteen years later when he prohibited judges or witnesses from contracting any weddings for his own *mamlūks*.⁴⁶ Ibn Iyās noted that the soldiers refused to abide by their patron’s decree, and continued to marry against his orders. Marriage of course divided a trooper’s loyalty to his sovereign, particularly if his spouse belonged to the civilian elite. Marriage provided the spouse’s relatives opportunities for influence within the military class. From the Sultan’s point of

⁴²"Dhayl," fol. 199, line 34.

⁴³*Badā'i*' 4:187, line 21.

⁴⁴*Badā'i*' 3:157, line 22.

⁴⁵*Inbā'*, 275, line 6.

⁴⁶*Badā'i*' 3:217, line 5.



view, in-service marriages diminished his *mamlūks'* reliability. Whether the chroniclers regarded these elopements as criminal acts is unclear, but the ruler interpreted them as an affront to his authority of ownership. Yet his attempts to prevent such unions proved ineffective, suggesting the troopers' autonomy in their personal relations whatever their patron's reaction.

The incidents of intoxication were mentioned in the context of individual waywardness or violated religious proscriptions. The first occurred during Ramaḍān of 895/July-August 1490 when the *wālī* arrested several *mamlūks* from Anatolia who had been caught drinking wine in broad daylight.⁴⁷ They had sullied the fast with a forbidden substance. The prefect had them flogged, paraded through the city, and imprisoned. The second involved the drowning of one member of the Sultan's elite guard (*khāṣṣakīs*) who had attempted to swim across the main channel of the Nile to the central island while drunk.⁴⁸ Ibn Iyās mentioned the case only to note the *khāṣṣakī's* reputation, which he claimed merited little praise.

These meagerly recounted incidents do not compare with the copious and lurid details provided for similar transgressions by civilians. The narrative authors were more laconic in their descriptions. And only one amir was implicated, albeit the one on whose insatiable ambition and ruthless persecution of rivals the chroniclers concurred. Yashbak's involvement with poisoning was never proved. Those actually convicted of immorality or sexual assault belonged to lower ranks of the military elite. They were punished for their acts—severely. The paucity of these cases, and the intensity of reprisals meted out, mutually point to the incidence of prosecution as the motive for the chroniclers mentioning them.

The chroniclers' silence about officers implicated in such crimes suggests more about their ability to deflect reprisal than their unblemished character. This minuscule sample, in comparison to the multiple references to quarrels, riots, pillaging, embezzlement, and fraud, cannot be taken as more than an indication of reprimands inflicted to set an example. What the contrasts in profiles of crimes committed by civilians and militarists do imply are differences in receptivity on the part of those who recorded their criminal activities. One has no reason to assume that civilians were less prone to embezzlement than militarists, although their opportunities for profit from it may have been more restricted. Nor is there reason to assume that militarists were less susceptible to crimes of passion or deviance than civilians. But the narrative writers seem to have been inclined to dwell on their fiscal or political improprieties rather than on their moral lapses.

Looking at these profiles more broadly, one notes the prominence of indenture as a motive for acts of individual violence, while unrest among *mamlūk* trainees chafing under their patrons' dominance seems to have spurred their most devastating

⁴⁷*Badā'i'* 3:273, line 22.

⁴⁸*Badā'i'* 4:133, line 2.



disruptions. Slaves and bonded persons appeared as the most salient class of murderers, although references to mobs of black slaves seizing the chance offered by their superiors' riots to engage in mob plunder figured significantly in the chroniclers' depictions of crime. The patterns of crime that emerged implied that perceptions of poverty cut across class lines, with *mamlūk* trainees equally apt to regard themselves in penury as were civilian street gangs.

The lens through which a contemporary observer can glimpse these acts powerfully influences the impression he or she may discern of crime in urban society under Mamluk rule. The contrasts between patterns of criminal activity discussed here cannot be interpreted as credible indicators of what actually was happening, by whom or how frequently. Yet these contrasting patterns do reveal the priorities of those who depicted the cases we are allowed to see. What these writers elected to include provides a measure of their own values, ethical and social, and their scale of criticisms heaped on a regime that oppressed their society. Were the guardians disposed to police themselves? Ann Lambton did not think so with respect to her reading of treatises on government in medieval Persia. Chroniclers of the Mamluk Sultanate in its final decades acknowledged self-discipline on the militarists' part when it occurred. Yet the impression one takes away from their choice of crimes and perpetrators is of vulnerability by the civilian majority compelled to abide the indiscipline of those who sapped their assets. And when the ruling elite chose to rein in its wayward members, it did so primarily when its own hegemony was perceived as compromised, or its honor sullied. This is the enduring message that the narrative sources of the late Mamluk period convey most convincingly.



JONATHAN M. BLOOM
RICHMOND, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Mamluk Art and Architectural History: A Review Article*

INTRODUCTION

With the publication of a splendid full color luxury book by the noted team of Henri Stierlin and Anne Stierlin, the study of Mamluk art and architecture has finally made it into the Big Time.¹ The Stierlins, who have previously brought us books on Islamic architecture, Mughal architecture, Ottoman architecture, and the Alhambra, have now brought us the first affordable (\$59.50) coffee-table book on Mamluk art and architecture. Dramatic long shots compete with exquisite details for the viewer's attention which, in the tradition of architectural photography, is rarely, if ever, distracted by the presence of people, apart from the picturesque natives populating reproductions of David Roberts's nineteenth-century lithographs. The stunning photographs of Mamluk buildings and objects will explain to even the most sceptical audiences why Mamluk art has had its devotees for over a century; the text, infelicitously translated from the French, is mercifully brief and appears oblivious of the content (although not the titles) of recent scholarship on the subject.

Now that Mamluk architecture has its picture book, it seems an especially appropriate time to undertake the daunting invitation by the Mamluk Studies Workshop to review recent work on Mamluk art and architectural history. Unlike most contributors to this learned journal, I do not consider myself a specialist in Mamluk anything; I have, however, over the last fifteen years written on, edited, and reviewed general and specific aspects of Mamluk art and architecture.² I have therefore approached this invitation not from the perspective of Mamluk studies but from that of a historian of Islamic art and architecture, with a particular—but

©Middle East Documentation Center. The University of Chicago.

*This article is a revised version of a lecture given on October 17, 1997 at the Mamluk Studies Workshop convened by the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Chicago.

¹Henri and Anne Stierlin, *Splendours of an Islamic World: Mamluk Art in Cairo 1250-1517* (London, 1997).

²See for example Sheila S. Blair and Jonathan M. Bloom, *The Art and Architecture of Islam, 1250-1800*, The Pelican History of Art (New Haven, 1994), chapters 6-8. My first published article was on Mamluk architecture: "The Mosque of Baybars al-Bunduqdārī in Cairo," *Annales islamologiques* 18 (1982): 45-78; see also my "A Mamluk Basin in the L. A. Mayer Memorial Institute," *Islamic Art* 2 (1987): 15-26.



©1999 by Jonathan M. Bloom.

DOI: [10.6082/M15D8Q07](https://doi.org/10.6082/M15D8Q07). (<https://doi.org/10.6082/M15D8Q07>)

DOI of Vol. III: [10.6082/M1765CFB](https://doi.org/10.6082/M1765CFB). See <https://doi.org/10.6082/ZJY1-1449> to download the full volume or individual articles. This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY). See <http://mamluk.uchicago.edu/msr.html> for more information about copyright and open access.

by no means exclusive—interest in the art of the Mediterranean Islamic world. While specialists in Mamluk art may find something of interest in the following remarks, I have intended them as an introduction, guide, and survey for the broader audience of this journal's readers. The increased interest in all aspects of Islamic art over the last two decades has led to an explosion of articles and books on the subject. It is therefore impossible to address all the literature on Mamluk art, and this survey makes no pretense to completeness. Searches in the on-line Mamluk bibliography maintained by the University of Chicago Library, for example, produced nearly one thousand "hits" for the subjects "architecture" and "arts," and the list is admittedly incomplete.

The arts of the Mamluks encompass architecture and the "decorative arts" (for want of a better term) produced between 1250 and 1517 in Egypt, as well as in parts of Syria and Arabia. The evidence comprises hundreds, if not thousands, of buildings surviving *in situ*, as well as thousands of examples of Mamluk manuscripts, metalwares, glasswares, textiles, and ceramics scattered throughout European, American, and Middle Eastern museums and private collections. For the historian of Islamic art, Mamluk art can either be understood diachronically as one phase in the development of Islamic art in the region (usually restricted to Egypt) or compared synchronically with contemporary artistic traditions in the Islamic lands. These include Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, and Transoxiana under the Ilkhanid and Timurid dynasties; northern India under the Sultanate dynasties—some of which were also "Mamluk"; Anatolia under the late Saljuqs, Beyliks, and Ottomans; and the Islamic West, including the Nasrids in Spain and the Hafsids and Marinids in North Africa. For the historian of medieval art in general, the relationship of Mamluk architecture and art to that of contemporary Europe remains largely unexplored, except in the special field of Crusader studies. For better or—as I believe—for worse, the diachronic approach has dominated scholarship on Mamluk art.

Among all types of Islamic art—with the exception of the Nasrid art of Granada and the Ottoman art of Istanbul—Mamluk art has been unusually accessible to Europeans, who were the first to study it, and until very recently the study of Mamluk art, like all Islamic art, has remained a speciality of European and North American scholars. From almost the moment Mamluk objects of metal and glass were made, they entered European ecclesiastical and private collections, and indeed some, such as the brass basin in the Louvre made for Hugh of Lusignan, king of Cyprus and Jerusalem from 1324 to 1359, were made specifically for Europeans.³

³For the brass basin made for Hugh of Lusignan, see D. S. Rice, "Arabic Inscriptions on a Brass Basin Made for Hugh IV de Lusignan," in *Studi orientalistici in onore di Giorgio Levi Della Vida* (Rome, 1956), 2:390-402; see also the two Mamluk glass vessels in the Dom- und Dioszesan-Museum,



Mamluk buildings—which could not of course be collected—were among the first Islamic buildings to become known to European audiences. The artist from the school of Bellini responsible for the huge sixteenth-century painting in the Louvre, *The Reception of a Venetian Embassy*, for example, was familiar with the Mamluk buildings of Damascus.⁴ Far more important for European knowledge of Mamluk architecture were the plates published in the *Déscription de l'Égypte* (Paris, 1802-28), the record of Napoleon's expedition to Egypt in 1798-1801, which was followed by a steady stream of publications such as Pascal Coste's *Architecture arabe* (Paris, 1839), Jules Bourgoïn's *Les arts arabes* (Paris, 1873) and A. C. T. E. Prisse d'Avennes, *L'art arabe d'après les monuments du Kaire* (Paris, 1877). Mamluk settings and objects became familiar to a wide audience through the Orientalist works of such painters as Jean-Leon Gérôme (1824-1904), and Mamluk themes became popular for Oriental interiors and exteriors ranging from smoking rooms to factories. The tradition reached its climax in the popular *Street of Cairo* at the Midway Plaisance for the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago.⁵

British political involvement in nineteenth-century Egypt was—typically—followed by scholarly interest. *The Art of the Saracens in Egypt*, first published in London in 1886, was one of the first serious books devoted exclusively to Islamic art. Written by Stanley Lane-Poole, nephew of the noted Orientalist Edward W. Lane, it largely concerned the Mamluks, as did one of the earliest attempts in English to describe the historical evolution of Islamic architecture, Martin S. Briggs's *Muhammadan Architecture in Egypt and Palestine* (Oxford, 1924).⁶ By the time Briggs published his book, K. A. C. Creswell (1879-1974) had begun systematically studying Egyptian Islamic architecture, a task that would continue to occupy him for the rest of his long life and usher in a new era in the study of Islamic architecture.⁷

Vienna, in the catalogue by Arthur Saliger et al., *Dom- und Diözesan-Museum Wien* (Vienna, 1987), 22-24.

⁴For this painting, see Julian Raby, *Venice, Dürer, and the Oriental Mode* (London, 1982).

⁵Zeynep Çelik, *Displaying the Orient: Architecture of Islam at Nineteenth-Century World's Fairs* (Berkeley, 1992).

⁶One should remember that Sir Banister Fletcher (1866-1953), the doyen of British architectural history, had considered "Muhammadan" architecture to be one of the "ahistorical" styles in his influential *History of Architecture on the Comparative Method* (London, 1905).

⁷Creswell's initial idea was to write a history of the Muslim architecture of Egypt. Before doing so, he had to investigate the Muslim architecture of Arabia and Syria on which he felt it depended; thus volume 1 of his *Early Muslim Architecture* (Oxford, 1932) was followed by volume 2 in 1940. Only with the publication of the first volume of *The Muslim Architecture of Egypt* (Oxford, 1952-59), some twenty years after he began, did Creswell begin publishing exclusively on the architecture of Egypt.



Familiarity, of course, is said to breed contempt, and many, if not all, historians of Islamic art would probably confess, albeit somewhat reluctantly, that Mamluk art—with the notable exception of such acknowledged masterpieces as the Mosque of Sultan Ḥasan, the Mausoleum of Qāyṭbāy, and the Baptistère de Saint-Louis—is rather dull. Although Cairo became the center of Arab-Islamic literary culture following the fall of Baghdad to the Mongols in 1258, in this period the center of Islamic *visual* culture shifted to such Iranian cities as Tabriz and Herat, where Mongol and Timurid patrons set the artistic taste in virtually every medium for most of the Islamic lands until the emergence of the imperial Ottoman and Mughal styles in the sixteenth century. Even Mamluk artists themselves looked to Iranian art for inspiration. Whereas the Ottomans and Mughals looked back on Mongol and Timurid art for inspiration, nobody really important (until the Orientalists came along in nineteenth-century Europe) looked to Mamluk art for anything.⁸

Mamluk art may be aesthetically inferior to Persian art of the same period and it may have been less of an inspiration for later developments, but these are not reasons to consider it any the less worthy of study, particularly since there is so much of it and we are blessed with an unusually rich array of contemporary sources about it. This abundance not only helps the art historian to understand the range of Mamluk art in its own time, but it can also provide us with models for interpreting other less well documented periods of Islamic art. The arts of the Mamluk period, such as buildings, manuscripts, textiles, and metalwares, moreover, are important sources of information about the society that produced them. The evidence they provide can supplement and augment that supplied by texts, which were often produced by segments of society very different from those that produced art. The historian of art and architecture, in interpreting such visual evidence, can play an essential role in contributing to a more nuanced reading of the past.

SOURCES

Apart from the surveys of the arts and architecture of the Mamluk period contained in general works on Islamic art and the recent *Dictionary of Art*,⁹ the last (and

⁸For a history of the arts of this period, see Blair and Bloom, *Art and Architecture of Islam*.

⁹See, for example, Blair and Bloom, *Art and Architecture of Islam*, chaps. 6-8, and Jane Turner, ed., *The Dictionary of Art* (London, 1996), 20:226-31, s.v. "Mamluk, II: Mamluks of Egypt and Syria," as well as articles on individual subjects. See, in particular, the articles on "Cairo" and "Islamic Art," the latter including: "Architecture, c. 1250-c. 1500: Egypt and Syria," by John A. Williams, II, 6, (iii), (a); "Painted book illustration, c. 1250-c. 1500: Egypt and Syria," by Rachel Ward, III, 4, (v), (a); "Metalwork in Egypt and Syria, c. 1250-c. 1400; c. 1400-c. 1500," by J. W. Allan, IV, 3, (iii); "Ceramics in Egypt and Syria, c. 1250-c. 1500," by Helen Philon, V, 4, (ii); "Fabrics, c. 1250-c. 1500: Egypt and Syria," by Anne E. Wardwell, VI, 2, (ii), (b); "Carpets and flatweaves, c. 1450-c. 1700: Mediterranean lands," by Giovanni Curatola, VI, 4, (iii), (b); "Woodwork:



first) broad review of the state of research on Mamluk art and architecture was on the occasion of the traveling exhibition of Mamluk art organized by Esin Atıl in 1981, which was seen in Washington, Minneapolis, New York, Cincinnati, Detroit, Phoenix, and Hartford.¹⁰ Atıl's catalogue serves as a permanent record of the exhibition, although many pieces did not travel to all venues and other pieces were added, notably by the Metropolitan Museum when the exhibition went to New York. Atıl also organized a symposium on Mamluk art, and many of the papers presented were published in the second volume of the journal *Muqarnas*.¹¹ In his introduction to the volume, Oleg Grabar raised several provocative but unanswerable questions about the meaning and interpretation of Mamluk art, which he seemed to imply was interesting because of its immutability.¹² In contrast, Ira Lapidus, in his concluding remarks to the symposium, succinctly summarized what was known about Mamluk art, particularly from the perspective of a social historian. By comparing the Mamluks to the Fatimids and Ottomans, he revealed several essential characteristics of Mamluk art, particularly its lack of universal pretension, its attitude towards religion, and the ranges of tastes it served.¹³ The initial excitement generated by the Mamluk exhibition, however, evaporated without generating any great surge of interest in the subject, as the attention of many historians of Islamic art turned in the 1980s and 1990s from the Arab world to the

Egypt and Syria, c. 1250-c. 1500," by Bernard O'Kane, VII, 2, (ii); "Glass: 12th-15th centuries," by Marian Wenzel, VIII, 5, (ii).

¹⁰Esin Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam: Art of the Mamluks* (Washington, DC, 1981).

¹¹*Muqarnas* 2 (1984); among the papers presented at the symposium that were not published in this volume, were 'Alī 'Abd al-Ra'ūf Yūsuf, "Wooden Vessels of the Mamluk Period"; David Ayalon, "From Ayyubids to Mamluks"; Manuel Keene, "Developments in Mamluk Geometric Ornament"; J. M. Rogers, "Mamluk and Ottoman Decorative Arts"; Hayat Salam-Lieblich, "Patronage in the Building of a New Mamluk City"; and John Woods, "East-West Relations in the Thirteenth-Fifteenth Centuries"; Michael Meinecke's paper was ultimately published as "Mamluk Architecture: Regional Architectural Traditions: Evolution and Interrelations," *Damaszener Mitteilungen* 2 (1985): 163-75.

¹²Oleg Grabar, "Reflections on Mamluk Art," *Muqarnas* 2 (1984): 1-12; Grabar suggested that traditional art historical strategies, such as stylistic analysis and connoisseurship, seemed to have little relevance to the study of Mamluk art, for Mamluk art hardly seemed to change over the centuries. The real concern of Mamluk patrons, he hypothesized, was not the creation of individual works of art or architecture but the cities they ruled and in the lives of the several social classes that inhabited them. Furthermore, he imagined that the defeat of the Crusaders and the Mongols created an equilibrium in the social climate of the urbanites that would remain unchallenged until the early sixteenth century.

¹³Ira M. Lapidus, "Mamluk Patronage and the Arts in Egypt: Concluding Remarks," *Muqarnas* 2 (1984): 173-81.



arts of Iran, India, and the Ottoman Empire.¹⁴ Nevertheless, the general increase of interest in the study of Islamic art has led a growing number of scholars to investigate the architecture and arts of the Mamluk period.

ARCHITECTURE

Architecture was the preeminent art of the Mamluk period, and it is no accident that architecture has received more extensive treatment than the other arts. In comparison to contemporary Iran, Central Asia, or Anatolia, where a single building may represent the artistic activity of the period in a given city, literally hundreds of buildings survive from the Mamluk period in such major cities as Cairo, Damascus, Jerusalem, and Aleppo, and the buildings of the Mamluk period can be said to have defined their urban character. Although scholars continue to write about "the Fatimid city," the historic parts of Cairo are much more a creation of the Mamluk period. Not only did the Mamluks pour considerable sums into building, but their architectural patronage can be said to have defined many of the other arts, which were often conceived and used as fittings and furnishings for their charitable foundations. Thus many manuscripts of the Quran were made for presentation to religious foundations, wooden *minbars* and *kursīs* were presented to mosques, and glass lamps were made to illuminate them.

Creswell's extraordinary presence dominated the study of Mamluk architecture until 1992, largely through his *Brief Chronology* of 1919 and the second volume of his monumental history *The Muslim Architecture of Egypt* (Oxford, 1959).¹⁵ Creswell's massive tome begins with the advent of Ayyubid rule in 1171 and gives monographic treatment to every surviving work of Egyptian Islamic architecture in chronological order, breaking off in the middle of the third reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn (r. 1294-1340, with interruptions). Creswell is said to have been working on a third volume at the time of his death, but he had only prepared studies of six monuments (still not published). Thus, some of the best known and most important architectural monuments of the Mamluk period remained virtually unpublished.¹⁶ The most accessible publication of the Mosque

¹⁴See, for example, such "blockbuster" exhibitions of the period as Esin Atıl, *The Age of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent* (Washington, 1987); Stuart Cary Welch, *India: Art and Culture, 1300-1900* (New York and Munich, 1988 [reprinted 1993]); and Thomas W. Lentz and Glenn D. Lowry, *Timur and the Princely Vision* (Los Angeles, 1989).

¹⁵K. A. C. Creswell, "A Brief Chronology of the Muhammadan Monuments of Egypt to A. D. 1517," *Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale* 16 (1919): 39-164. For Creswell and his legacy, see *Muqarnas* 8 (1991), the proceedings of a 1987 Oxford conference held in his memory.

¹⁶I am not including here such cursory surveys of Egyptian Islamic architecture as Gaston Wiet, *The Mosques of Cairo*, photographs by Albert Shoucair ([s.l.], 1966); Dietrich Brandenburg,



of Sultan Ḥasan, for example, was an illustrated section of Michael Rogers's *Spread of Islam*,¹⁷ and the exquisite complex of Qāyrbāy was barely published at all.

All this changed, however, with the publication of Michael Meinecke's *Die Mamlukische Architektur in Ägypten und Syrien*.¹⁸ Meinecke, director of Berlin's Museum of Islamic Art until his sudden and untimely death in early 1994, had worked on the project for over two decades. During this time he had supervised the restoration of the *madrasah* of Amir Mithqāl in Cairo and had been director of the German Archaeological Institute in Damascus. The second volume of his work, compiled largely by his colleague and wife, Viktoria Meinecke-Berg, is a chronological list of 2,279 Mamluk building activities between the advent of Mamluk rule in 1250 and the Ottoman conquest of Syria and Egypt in 1517. Organized by reign (numbered 0 to 48, in vol. 2) and then by project, each entry gives each building activity a unique reference number (e.g., 19B/13 for the Madrasah of Sultan Ḥasan, corresponding to the thirteenth activity in the nineteenth sultan's second reign) along with a capsule description, indication of relevant contemporary sources including endowment deeds, published inscriptions, and general publications about the building (designated Q, I, and B, respectively). These activities, whether new constructions or restorations, extant or destroyed, have been tabulated for some fifty locations in Egypt, Syria, Palestine, Arabia, and Anatolia according to the two main periods of Mamluk history, 1250-1382 and 1382-1517, to give a fascinating graphic representation of the chronological and geographical range of Mamluk architecture. In contrast, a survey of Timurid architecture in all of Iran and Transoxiana discusses a mere 250-odd buildings.¹⁹

The heart of Meinecke's book is the historical discussion of Mamluk architecture in the first volume, which is based on the data collected in the second. Unlike Creswell, who just discussed one monument after another, or others who followed the stale historical divisions of Bahrīs and Burjīs or Turks and Circassians, Meinecke saw six periods of Mamluk architecture with different characters. The renaissance of early Islamic architecture under Baybars I (r. 1260-77) was followed by a development of local styles under Qalāwūn and his successors (1279-1310) and a golden age under al-Nāṣir Muḥammad (1310-41). He then followed the

Islamische Baukunst in Ägypten (Berlin, 1966); or Doris Behrens-Abouseif, *Islamic Architecture in Cairo: An Introduction*, Supplements to Muqarnas (Leiden, 1989).

¹⁷[J.] Michael Rogers, *The Spread of Islam* (Oxford, 1976), based in part on his "Seljuk Influence on the Monuments of Cairo," *Kunst des Orients* 7, no. 1 (1970-71): 40-68.

¹⁸Michael Meinecke, *Die Mamlukische Architektur in Ägypten und Syrien*, 2 vols., Abhandlungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts Kairo, Islamische Reihe, vol. 5 (Glückstadt, 1992).

¹⁹Lisa Golombek and Donald Wilber, *The Timurid Architecture of Iran and Turan* (Princeton, 1988).



internationalization of Mamluk architecture in the period 1341-82, architecture in Cairo from the accession of Barqūq (1382-1517), and architecture in Syria from the invasion of Timur to the Ottoman conquest (1400-1516). Finally he considered the afterlife of the Cairo, Damascus, and Aleppo traditions following the Ottoman conquest in 1516-17.

No book is perfect, and Meinecke would never have claimed that his was. It was, however, as good as he could make it. One may criticize a certain stuffiness in the presentation, in which every photograph is reduced to 3 by 4.5 inches and every building reduced to a plan. Although there are no sections or elevations, the plans are drawn to a consistent scale, and the reader can see at a glance the relative dimensions of Mamluk buildings. It is quite obvious that the Mosque of Sultan Ḥasan (fig. 78), for example, does not cover nearly as much ground as the Great Mosque of Damascus (fig. 69). Far more important than what Meinecke did, however, is what his book now allows others to do. Meinecke's registers and indices alone provide fertile ground for exploration, as it is now possible to see a particular building in the context of all other acts of patronage by a particular individual, or to extract all the building activities in Mecca or Medina and write the history of Mamluk architectural involvement there.

One can only be glad, however, that Meinecke did not live long enough to see how his work was reviewed by friend and foe alike. Oleg Grabar used the occasion to mourn the passing of an immensely knowledgeable and erudite friend, but he criticized the book for what its author had never intended it to have, notably analytical and judgmental themes.²⁰ Had Meinecke lived longer, he might have turned his attention to such philosophical questions of why Mamluk architecture did not change or whether the Mosque of Sultan Ḥasan is a great building, but he should not have been faulted for not having done what he did not set out to do. As unfashionable as Meinecke's (or Creswell's) work may be, we return to it constantly for accurate reference, while the myriad interpretative works are like so many leaves in the wind. Doris Behrens-Abouseif's review of Meinecke's book barely acknowledges the enormous scope and erudition of Meinecke's work.²¹ She criticized his interpretation of the evolution of Mamluk architecture in terms of foreign workers and regional schools, in which he had tried to demonstrate exactly how workmen might have carried architectural ideas around the eastern Mediterranean region, a theme expanded in his posthumous *Patterns of Stylistic Change*.²² Instead

²⁰Oleg Grabar, "Michael Meinecke and His Last Book," *Muqarnas* 13 (1996): 1-6.

²¹Doris Behrens-Abouseif, review of *Die Mamlukische Architektur in Ägypten und Syrien*, by Michael Meinecke, *Mamlūk Studies Review* 1 (1997): 122-27.

²²Michael Meinecke, *Patterns of Stylistic Change in Islamic Architecture: Local Traditions Versus Migrating Artists* (New York, 1996).



Behrens-Abouseif relied on rather nebulous theories of artistic "influence" to explain Mamluk architecture, but such theories, as the noted art historian Michael Baxandall has demonstrated, seriously confuse the roles of agent and patient.²³ Her conclusion that Meinecke's analytical and synthetic masterpiece does not measure up to Godfrey Goodwin's entertaining narrative history of Ottoman architecture says more about the reviewer than about the relative values of these two works. In contrast, Yasser Tabbaa's review of Meinecke's book in *Ars Orientalis* was more balanced, although he, too, criticized Meinecke for not going "beyond formal analysis and fine points of influence into a broader investigation of the [Mosque of Sultan Ḥasan's] unusual form, its highly original plan, and the peculiar circumstances of its patronage."²⁴

Meinecke, the most generous of scholars, would have been the first to admit that his work was based on the labor of others: his bibliography runs to twenty-five closely-set pages, including some thirty citations of his own works. While Creswell and Meinecke attempted to be encyclopedic, other works on particular aspects of Mamluk architecture can be characterized as monographic, topographic, or typological. Monographs on individual Mamluk buildings have been produced for over a century and have ranged from book-length studies to brief articles on specific problems of restoration. A model monograph is the collaborative project on the *madrasah* of Amir Mithqāl directed by the German Archeological Institute in the 1970s.²⁵ It combines a thorough technical and historical investigation of the building with a study of the urban environment as well as the relevant Arabic documents.

Other monographs have resulted from group or individual efforts and have dealt with a wide range of buildings. A Polish team, for example, published a more modest study of the Mausoleum of Qurqumās in the Northern Cemetery.²⁶ Saleh Lamei Mostafa has published several monographs on the buildings of Barqūq and his son Faraj,²⁷ to which J. M. Rogers's brief but qualitative assessment is an

²³Michael Baxandall, *Patterns of Intention* (New Haven, 1985), 58-62.

²⁴Yasser Tabbaa, review of *Die Mamlukische Architektur in Ägypten und Syrien*, by Michael Meinecke, *Ars Orientalis* 26 (1996): 118-20.

²⁵Michael Meinecke, *Die Restaurierung der Madrasa des Amīrs Sābiq al-Dīn Mitqāl al-Ānūkī und die Sanierung des Darb Qirmiz in Kairo* (Mainz, 1980).

²⁶Marek Baranski and Bożena Halicka, *Mausoleum of Qurqumas in Cairo: Results of the Investigations and Conservation Works 1984-88*, vol. 3 (Warsaw, 1991).

²⁷Saleh Lamei Mostafa, *Kloster und Mausoleum des Farağ ibn Barqūq in Kairo*, *Abhandlungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts Kairo, Islamische Reihe*, 2 (Glückstadt, 1968); idem, *Moschee des Farağ ibn Barqūq in Kairo*, with a contribution by Ulrich Haarmann, *Abhandlungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts Kairo, Islamische Reihe*, 3 (Glückstadt, 1972); idem, *Madrasa, Ḥānqāh, und Mausoleum des Barqūq in Kairo*, with a contribution by Felicitas Jaritz,



important addition.²⁸ Archibald Walls, working under the aegis of the British School in Jerusalem, produced a meticulous study of the largely-destroyed Ashrafiyah *madrasah* in Jerusalem.²⁹ Careful examination of the remaining structure as well as comparable buildings in better condition allowed him to propose (and draw!) a convincing reconstruction of the original building. Oddly enough, the success of such studies may be inversely proportional to the importance of the building itself, for the great monuments of Mamluk architecture, such as the funerary complex of Sultan Ḥasan, seem to defy or discourage monographic treatment. For example, a recent attempt to elucidate that building's symbolic meaning proposes that it is at once a sign of the rising power of the Mamluks' offspring (*awlād al-nās*), a grand gesture to lift up the spirits of a population depressed by the Black Death, and a symbolic re-creation of the birth canal.³⁰ Despite R. Stephen Humphreys's bold attempt some twenty-five years ago to assess the "expressive intent" of Mamluk architecture³¹ and my own youthful effort,³² it remains to be proven that Mamluk builders gave a hoot about symbolic meaning.

Cairo was the Mamluk capital and the focus of Creswell's interest, but the buildings of other Mamluk cities have also received scholarly attention. A model of such a topographical study is Michael Burgoyne's publication of the twenty-year investigation by the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem of the Mamluk monuments of that city. This splendid and massive volume comprises a series of interpretive essays followed by a catalogue of sixty-four buildings.³³ Burgoyne's book is notable for its extensive documentation, which includes photographs, plans, sections, and axonometric (three-dimensional) drawings. It also benefits from extensive historical research by D. S. Richards, and shows, as one might expect, that teamwork can produce splendid results.

Abhandlung des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts Kairo, Islamische Reihe 4 (Glückstadt, 1982), 118 ff.

²⁸J. M. Rogers, "The Stones of Barquq: Building Materials and Architectural Decoration in Late Fourteenth-Century Cairo," *Apollo* 103, no. 170 (1976): 307-13.

²⁹Archibald G. Walls, *Geometry and Architecture in Islamic Jerusalem: A Study of the Ashrafiyya* (Buckhurst Hill, Essex, 1990).

³⁰Howyda N. al-Harithy, "The Complex of Sultan Hasan in Cairo: Reading between the Lines," *Muqarnas* 13 (1996): 68-79, based on her "Urban Form and Meaning in Bahri Mamluk Architecture," Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1992.

³¹R. Stephen Humphreys, "The Expressive Intent of the Mamluk Architecture of Cairo: A Preliminary Essay," *Studia Islamica* 35 (1972): 69-119.

³²Bloom, "Mosque of Baybars."

³³Michael Hamilton Burgoyne, *Mamluk Jerusalem: An Architectural Study*, with additional historical research by D. S. Richards (Buckhurst Hill, Essex, 1987).



The urban development of Damascus, not only in the Mamluk period, has recently been studied by Dorothée Sack,³⁴ but for many individual buildings one must still consult earlier studies by Watzinger and Wulzinger, Sauvaget, and Herzfeld.³⁵ Similarly, the urban development of Aleppo has been recently studied by Gaube and Wirth,³⁶ but the earlier studies of Sauvaget and Herzfeld remain essential reading.³⁷ Perhaps the most innovative of recent studies on Aleppan architecture is Terry Allen's electronic publication on the Ayyubid and early Mamluk periods.³⁸ Allen's extraordinarily close reading of texts and examination of masonries has led him to see how individual masons worked and how they moved from one project to another. Not only is Allen's methodology innovative, but so is the electronic form in which he has published his book, although the lack of illustrations (one must read it with copies of Sauvaget and Herzfeld at one's side) makes it difficult going for the uninitiated. The Mamluk monuments of provincial cities have also been made available: Hayat Salam-Lieblich published the monuments of Tripoli and Mohamed-Moain Sadek published those of Gaza.³⁹ While such studies have made inaccessible monuments available to a wider public, some are methodologically unsophisticated and fail to discern the forest for the trees.

The large numbers of Mamluk buildings in particular cities have also provided invaluable primary source material for writing nuanced urban history, such as the works of Sack, Gaube, and Wirth already mentioned. Compared to contemporary Islamic cities elsewhere, with the possible exception of Fez, the physical and documentary remains for Mamluk cities are extraordinarily rich. This wealth of

³⁴Dorothée Sack, *Damaskus: Entwicklung und Struktur einer Orientalisch-Islamischen Stadt*, Damaszener Forschungen (Mainz, 1989).

³⁵Jean Sauvaget, *Les monuments historiques de Damas* (Beirut, 1932); Ernst Herzfeld, "Damascus: Studies in Architecture," pts. I-IV, *Ars Islamica* 9-13/14 (1942-48): 9:1-53; 10:13-70; 11/12:1-71; 13/14:118-38; Karl Wulzinger and Carl Watzinger, *Damaskus, die islamische Stadt* (Berlin, 1924).

³⁶Heinz Gaube and Eugen Wirth, *Aleppo: Historische und geographische Beiträge zur baulichen Gestaltung, zur sozialen Organisation, und zur wirtschaftlichen Dynamik einer vorderasiatischen Fernhandelsmetropole*, Beihefte der Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients, Reihe B, Geisteswissenschaften (Wiesbaden, 1984).

³⁷Jean Sauvaget, *Alep: Essai sur le développement d'une grande ville syrienne des origines au milieu du XIXe siècle* (Paris, 1941); Ernst Herzfeld, *Inscriptions et monuments d'Alep* (Cairo, 1954-55).

³⁸Terry Allen, *Ayyubid Architecture*, electronic publication on the Internet: www.wco.com/~books/ ISBN 0-944940-02-1 (Occidental, California, 1996).

³⁹Hayat Salam-Lieblich, *The Architecture of the Mamluk City of Tripoli* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1983); Mohamed-Moain Sadek, *Die mamlukische Architektur der Stadt Gaza*, Islamkundliche Untersuchungen, 144 (Berlin, 1991).



information has allowed scholars to study even the districts of particular cities, such as Ḥusaynīyah, Būlāq, and Azbakīyah in Cairo⁴⁰ or Sūq al-Sārūjā in Damascus.⁴¹

The great number of buildings to survive from the Mamluk period has also inspired studies of types or parts of buildings. Creswell himself seems to have led the pack, for the last twenty plates of the second volume of his *Muslim Architecture of Egypt* comprise sequences of *mihrābs*, domes and pendentives, and minarets, as if looking at them alone would explain the development of architecture.⁴² His unspoken assumption seems to have been that builders of *mihrābs* looked only at other *mihrābs*, while builders of domes looked only at other domes, a premise that may represent a rather simplistic view of architectural history, not to mention human nature. Nevertheless, this approach has been continued by many with greater or lesser success. Among the most successful is Christel Kessler's brief but elegant study of the carved masonry domes of medieval Cairo.⁴³ She documented an increased sophistication among stonemasons in their ability to combine structural and decorative elements, showing that specialized teams were responsible for building this particular type of dome. Other specialized studies concern the evolution of portals in Cairo,⁴⁴ the minarets of Cairo,⁴⁵ *sabīls*,⁴⁶ and *madrasahs* in Damascus.⁴⁷ Leonor Fernandes's studies of the evolution of the institution of the *khānqāh* are notable for combining architectural with institutional history.⁴⁸

⁴⁰Doris Behrens-Abouseif, "The North-Eastern Extension of Cairo Under the Mamluks," *Annales islamologiques* 17 (1981): 157-89; Nelly Hanna, *An Urban History of Būlāq in the Mamluk and Ottoman Periods* (Cairo, 1983); Doris Behrens-Abouseif, *Azbakiyya and Its Environs from Azbak to Ismail, 1476-1879* (Cairo, 1985).

⁴¹'Abd al-Razzāq Ma'ādh, "Sūq Sārūjā: Bidāyāt Nushū' Ḥayy bi-Dimashq khilāla al-Qarn al-Sādis al-Hijrī," *al-Turāth al-'Arabī* 32 (1988): 89-96; idem [Abd al-Razzaq Moaz], "Suwayqat Sārūgā, un quartier de Damas extra-muros (XIIe-XIXe siècles)," *Bulletin de la Fondation Max van Berchem* 8 (1994): 1-2.

⁴²One of Creswell's first forays into this approach was his article "The Evolution of the Minaret, with Special Reference to Egypt," *Burlington Magazine* 48 (1926): 134-40, 252-58, 290-98.

⁴³Christel Kessler, *The Carved Masonry Domes of Medieval Cairo* (London, 1976).

⁴⁴Daad H. Abdel Razik, "The Circassian Mamluk Monumental Entrances of Cairo: A Survey and Analysis of Extant Portals 784/1384-901/1496," Master's thesis, American University in Cairo, 1990.

⁴⁵Doris Behrens-Abouseif, *The Minarets of Cairo* (Cairo, 1985).

⁴⁶Sophie Ebeid, "Early Sabils and Their Standardization," Master's thesis, American University in Cairo, 1976.

⁴⁷Abd al-Razzaq Moaz, "Les madrasas de Damas et d'al-Sālihiyya depuis la fin du V/XIe siècle jusqu'au milieu du VII/XIIIe siècle: Textes historiques et études architecturales," Ph.D. diss., Université de Provence, Aix-Marseille I, 1990.

⁴⁸E.g., Leonor E. Fernandes, "The Evolution of the Khanqah Institution in Mamluk Egypt," Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1980; idem, "The Foundation of Baybars al-Jashankir: Its Waqf, History,



The history of Islamic architecture is normally studied as the history of religious architecture, because—apart from a few notable exceptions—later generations saw little need to maintain the secular buildings of their predecessors. They concentrated their efforts on maintaining mosques, *madrasahs*, and the like, and so houses and palaces quickly fell into ruin. An unusually large number of domestic buildings from the Mamluk and Ottoman periods has, however, been preserved in Cairo. Creswell published them when they fit into his chronological scheme, but as most surviving buildings postdate the 1330s he never got around to them. Most other scholars consider domestic architecture to be an entirely separate field from the history of religious or monumental architecture, although the patrons of these religious buildings had to live somewhere and builders could construct one as well as the other. Indeed, there seems to have been a distinct convergence in the late Mamluk period between domestic and religious architecture.

The surviving houses of Cairo have been studied, surveyed, and published under the auspices of the Institut français d'archéologie orientale (IFAO), the Egyptian government, and the French Centre nationale de la recherche scientifique (CNRS), which has sponsored research on domestic architecture throughout the north of Africa. Jacques Revault and Bernard Maury, eventually joined by Mona Zakariya, published architectural studies of the remaining mansions; they were joined by Jean-Claude Garcin in a more interpretative and synthetic study using *waqf* documents and other sources to present a more nuanced history of habitation in Cairo.⁴⁹ Middle-class housing has been a speciality of Laila Ali Ibrahim, the doyenne of Mamluk architecture in Cairo,⁵⁰ and Hazem Sayed has followed her in combining monumental and textual sources in several studies concerning the *rab'*, or multi-family housing, and the evolution of the distinctive *qā'ah*, or central reception hall, in Cairene architecture of the Mamluk period.⁵¹ Some middle-class housing units were combined with *wakālahs*, or urban caravanserais, which Scharabi has studied.⁵²

and Architecture," *Muqarnas* 4 (1987): 21-42.

⁴⁹Jacques Revault and Bernard Maury, *Palais et maisons du Caire du XIVe au XVIIIe siècle* (Cairo, 1975); Jean-Claude Garcin et al., *Palais et maisons du Caire, I: Époque mamelouke (XIIIe-XVI siècles)* (Paris, 1982).

⁵⁰Laila 'Ali Ibrahim, "Middle-Class Living Units in Mamluk Cairo: Architecture and Terminology," *AARP Art and Archaeology Research Papers* 14 (1978): 24-30; idem, "Residential Architecture in Mamluk Cairo," *Muqarnas* 2 (1984): 47-60.

⁵¹Hazem I. Sayed, "The Rab' in Cairo," Ph.D. diss., Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1987; idem, "The Development of the Cairene Qā'a: Some Considerations," *Annales islamologiques* (1987): 31-53.

⁵²Mohamed Scharabi, "Drei traditionelle Handelsanlagen in Kairo: Wakālat al-Bāzar'a, Wakālat Dūl-Fiqār, und Wakālat al-Quṭn," *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung*



The abundance of information for Mamluk architecture may lead us to forget that what remains was not necessarily all that was. Important buildings and works of art have been destroyed and lost, or changed so significantly that it takes an archaeologist to disentangle their original aspect. Mecca and Medina, for example, were major foci of Mamluk architectural patronage, but there are virtually no monumental remains, and texts provide the sole means of recreating these activities. Apart from the classic studies, such as Sauvaget's book on the Mosque of the Prophet in Medina,⁵³ some recent studies begin to explore the possibilities of this material.⁵⁴ But there is much more that can be done, as it is now possible, thanks to Meinecke's work, to write the history of Mamluk architectural involvement in these cities. A more archaeological approach has been taken by Nasser Rabbat in his dissertation and book on the Cairo citadel, which judiciously combines textual, architectural and archaeological evidence to reconstruct the center of Mamluk power in the thirteenth century.⁵⁵

In addition to the architectural evidence and texts, inscriptions, *waqf* documents, and court records are other important sources for architectural history of the Mamluk period. For inscriptions, the work of Max van Berchem and Gaston Wiet on the *Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum* remains essential,⁵⁶ although Bernard O'Kane has announced a project to update the portions of the *Corpus* dealing with Egypt. Over one thousand documents in the Cairo archives survive from the period of the Mamluk sultans,⁵⁷ and almost nine hundred fourteenth-century legal

Kairo (1978): 127-64; idem, *Industrie und Industriebau in Ägypten: Eine Einführung in die Geschichte der Industrie im Nahen Osten* (Tübingen, 1992).

⁵³Jean Sauvaget, *La Mosquée Omeyyade de Médine: Étude sur les origines architecturales de la mosquée et de la basilique* (Paris, 1947).

⁵⁴Inscriptions in the Haram at Mecca before 1421 are discussed in Hassan Mohammed el-Hawary and Gaston Wiet, *Inscriptions et monuments de la Mecque, Haram et Ka'ba*, *Matériaux pour un Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum*, pt. 4: Arabie (Cairo, 1985). Another approach was taken by Amy W. Newhall, "The Patronage of the Mamluk Sultan Qa'it Bay, 872-901/1468-1496," Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1987. See also Doris Behrens-Abouseif, "Sultan Qaytbay's Foundation in Medina, the *Madrasah*, the *Ribāt*, and the *Dashīshah*," *MSR* 2 (1998): 61-71.

⁵⁵Nasser O. Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo: A New Interpretation of Royal Mamluk Architecture* (Leiden, 1995); see also my review in *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 117, no. 2 (1997): 381-82.

⁵⁶Max van Berchem, *Matériaux pour un Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum, I: Égypte 1*, *Mémoires de la Mission archéologique française au Caire*, 19 (Cairo, 1894-1903); Gaston Wiet, *Matériaux pour un Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum I: Égypte 2*, *Mémoires de l'Institut français archéologique du Caire*, 52 (Cairo, 1929-30).

⁵⁷Muḥammad Muḥammad Amīn and Laila Ali Ibrahim, *Architectural Terms in Mamluk Documents/al-Muṣṭalahāt al-Mi'mārīyah fī al-Wathā'iq al-Mamlūkīyah (648-923H) (1250-1517)* (Cairo, 1990); Muḥammad Muḥammad Amīn, *Catalogue des documents d'archives du Caire/Fihrist*



records and endowment deeds survive in Jerusalem.⁵⁸ These sources are being used increasingly for architectural history. For example, Amīn and Ibrahim used the Cairo documents to create a glossary of architectural terms, but the usefulness of the brief English translation is diminished by the arrangement of terms following the order of the Arabic alphabet. Thus the first column in the English glossary contains such words as *abzin*, *utruja*, *izār*, *iṣṭabl*, and *a'yun*. Their order makes perfect sense only to people who know enough Arabic not to need the English translation.

DECORATIVE ARTS

As with architecture, the abundance of surviving works of decorative art from the Mamluk period makes easy categorization difficult. For an introduction to the subject, there can be no better place to start than Atıl's 1981 exhibition catalogue, which is readable, generally accurate, well-illustrated, and has an extensive bibliography.⁵⁹

MANUSCRIPTS

As elsewhere in the Islamic lands, the arts of the book were of primary importance in Mamluk times. The Quran, as in all other times and places in the Islamic lands, was *the* book, and lavish manuscripts of the Quran were produced throughout much of the period. The most important study of early Mamluk Quran manuscripts, that is, those manuscripts produced during the fourteenth century up to the reign of Sha'bān (r. 1363-76), was done by David James, once curator at the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin.⁶⁰ Scholars had also supposed that the presence in Cairo of a magnificent manuscript of the Quran made for the Mongol ruler Uljāytū had inspired the florescence of Mamluk manuscript production, but James suggested that Cairene production had already begun its distinctive course with the seven-part Quran manuscript commissioned in the early fourteenth century from the calligrapher Ibn al-Wahīd by Baybars al-Jashnakīr for his *khānqāh*. As Ibn al-Wahīd had trained in Baghdad with the great calligrapher Yāqūt al-Musta'ṣimī, James argued that he and his illuminator colleagues were responsible for introducing the new styles of calligraphy and illumination to Cairo.

What is most surprising is that James attributes a group of large-format manuscripts to the patronage of sultan Ḥasan's wife Khawand Barakah and their

Wathā'iq al-Qāhiraḥ ḥattā Nihāyat 'Aṣr Salāṭīn al-Mamālīk (Cairo, 1981).

⁵⁸Donald P. Little, "The Haram Documents as Sources for the Arts and Architecture of the Mamluk Period," *Muqarnas* 2 (1984): 47-61.

⁵⁹Atıl, *Renaissance*.

⁶⁰David James, *Qur'ans of the Mamluks* (London, 1988).



son, the sultan al-Ashraf Sha‘bān II (r. 1363-76), for most of them were given to their charitable foundations, the Umm al-Sulṭān (Mother of the Sultan) and the Ashrafīyah *madrasahs* in Cairo. Their fine quality and immense scale suggest instead that the manuscripts might have been conceived for Ḥasan’s colossal complex in Cairo, but his untimely death and the abandonment of the project may have led other patrons to take over the original commission and take credit for them.

While there can be no doubt of the importance of Iraqi and Iranian models and calligraphers for the development of early Mamluk calligraphy, it is unreasonable to imagine that there was no indigenous tradition of calligraphy in Egypt, even though no manuscripts have survived (or been identified) to represent this tradition. The religious foundations of such Mamluk rulers as Baybars and Qalāwūn, quite apart from those of their Fatimid and Ayyubid predecessors, would have required manuscripts, and local calligraphers must have continued to produce despite changes in government and patronage. A complete and more nuanced history of the development of Mamluk calligraphy awaits the publication of more manuscripts in public and private collections.⁶¹ The relatively large number of Quran manuscripts to survive in Egypt’s dry climate, however, has allowed scholars to begin the study of Mamluk bookbinding, largely on the basis of collections in Chicago’s Oriental Institute⁶² and London’s Victoria and Albert Museum.⁶³

Mamluk manuscripts of the Quran often rival those produced in the eastern lands, but there can be no question that the arts of the illustrated book were less important and of lower quality in Mamluk lands than they were in Iran. The relatively few illustrated books that exist are not up to the aesthetic or programmatic levels of Iranian illustrated books. Only about sixty illustrated manuscripts can be ascribed to the entire Mamluk period, and Duncan Haldane has prepared a convenient introduction to them.⁶⁴ Most of them were produced in the late thirteenth century and first half of the fourteenth, although a few point to a revival at the very end of the Mamluk period.⁶⁵ In contrast to Iran, where Mongol and Timurid sultans are known to have ordered illustrated copies of a wide range of Persian classic texts including the “Shāhnāmah,” Niẓāmī’s “Khamsah,” Sa‘dī’s “Gulistān” and the fables

⁶¹Vlad Atanasiu has announced that he is working, under the direction of François Déroche at the École Pratique des Hautes Etudes IV, on a dissertation on Mamluk calligraphy.

⁶²Gulnar Bosch et al., *Islamic Bindings and Bookmaking* (Chicago, 1981).

⁶³Duncan Haldane, *Islamic Bookbindings in the Victoria and Albert Museum* (London, 1983).

⁶⁴Duncan Haldane, *Mamluk Painting* (Warminster, 1978).

⁶⁵For example, *Kitāb al-Zardaḡ*, a veterinary manual with eleven paintings or diagrams (Istanbul, University Library, A.4689) was produced for Yalbāy, a *mamlūk* of Qanibāy al-Ḥamzāwī (d. 1458), probably in Damascus, ca. 1435. Yalbāy was Keeper of the Horse for the Commander-in-Chief of Damascus during the reign of Barsbāy (r. 1422-37).



in "Kalīlah wa-Dimnah," the only illustrated manuscript known to have been commissioned by a Mamluk sultan is a two-volume Turkish translation of the "Shāhnāmah" with sixty-two paintings copied by Ḥusayn ibn Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥusaynī al-Ḥanafī for Qānsūḥ al-Ghawrī at the very end of the Mamluk period.⁶⁶ Most illustrated Mamluk manuscripts are scientific treatises and works of belles-lettres popular in earlier periods, such as al-Jazarī's "Automata," al-Ḥarīrī's "Maqāmāt" ("Assemblies"), and "Kalīlah wa-Dimnah."⁶⁷

Scholars have not yet established where these manuscripts were produced, although it is commonly assumed that they were made in Cairo. None of them, however, is known to have been made for a member of the Mamluk elite, and only two fourteenth-century manuscripts contain dedications linking them to high-ranking Mamluk amirs.⁶⁸ The most probable patrons seem to have been members of the Arabic-speaking bourgeoisie, such as Aḥmad ibn Jullāb al-Mawṣilī, the inspector of alms in Damascus, who acquired a copy of the "Maqāmāt" in 1375 which had been made a half-century earlier.⁶⁹ Indeed, Damascus seems a more likely center of manuscript production, for another copy of the "Maqāmāt" in the British Library (Or. 9718) was written and illustrated by the well-known Damascene calligrapher, Ghazī ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān, and the Escorial "Manāfi' al-Ḥayawān" was compiled by 'Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn 'Abd al-Faṭḥ ibn al-Durayhim (d. 1360), a prominent member of the Damascene 'ulamā' who taught at the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus.⁷⁰ Other illustrated books, such as manuals on horsemanship (Arab. *furūsīyah*) illustrated from the 1360s onward, may have been owned by Mamluks. They depict the equestrian exercises that

⁶⁶Istanbul, Topkapı Palace Museum, H. 1519; Esin Atıl, "Mamluk Painting in the Late Fifteenth Century," *Muqarnas* 2 (1984): 159-72.

⁶⁷One exceptional manuscript is a dispersed copy of *Sulwān al-Muṭa'*, for which see *Muhammad ibn Zafar al-Siqillī's Sulwān al-Muṭa' [Prescription for Pleasure]*, commentary by A. S. Melikian-Chirvani, translated by M. Amari (Kuwait, 1985).

⁶⁸Two manuscripts can be associated with the sons of Mamluk officials. The first is a copy (Oxford, Bodleian Lib., Marsh 458) of the "Maqāmāt" made in 1337 for Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad, the free-born son of Ṭurunṭāy (d. 1290), who served as viceroy of Egypt under Qalāwūn. A copy of Ismā'īl ibn al-Razzāz al-Jazarī's "Kitāb fī Ma'rifat al-Ḥiyāl al-Handasīyah" [Treatise on Automata] was transcribed in 1354 by Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Izmīrī for the amir Naṣr al-Dīn Muḥammad, the son of Tūlak al-Ḥarrānī, a military judge in the service of sultans al-Ṣāliḥ Ṣāliḥ (r. 1351-54) and his brother al-Nāṣir Ḥasan (r. 1347-51, 1354-61). Most of the manuscript is in Istanbul, Süleymaniye 3606. Both of these patrons were therefore members of the *awlād al-nās*, who presumably could have read Arabic fluently and would have enjoyed doing it. See *The Arts of Islam*, exhibition catalogue, Hayward Gallery ([London], 1976), no. 535; Haldane, *Mamluk Painting*, 55.

⁶⁹London, British Library, Add. 7293.

⁷⁰Haldane, *Mamluk Painting*, 50.



formed a regular part of the Mamluks' training. They contain only simple artless illustrations in which clarity is the dominant consideration.⁷¹ Unlike Mongol Iran, where the richest and most powerful patrons had great interest in having books illustrated,⁷² the Mamluks were not, perhaps because they did not participate in the Arabic literary culture of the people they ruled.

TEXTILES

As in most other parts of the medieval Islamic world, textiles were the mainstay of the Mamluk (and Egyptian) economy, but their inherent fragility has meant that relatively few have survived, either in the relative safety of European treasuries or in the dry Egyptian ground. Mamluk textiles have generally received less attention than those of earlier periods in Egypt (e.g., Abbasid and Fatimid *ṭirāz*) or other regions (e.g., Iranian drawloom silks), although under the Mamluks Syrian and Egyptian looms continued to produce fine fabrics and carpets. Over the course of the Mamluk period, however, the Egyptian textile industry, like the paper industry, faced increasing competition from European exports. It is said that, of the 14,000 looms operating in Alexandria in 1388, only 800 were still in use a half-century later.⁷³

Surviving fragments of Mamluk textiles acquired on the antiquities market have traditionally been published as private or public collections,⁷⁴ although Louise Mackie has looked at Mamluk silks in the broader international context.⁷⁵ Only recently have several scholars attempted to present Mamluk textiles in the archaeological contexts from which most have been taken, but a review of this literature is more properly the purview of the archaeologist. The role of international trade in the textile industry has led to studies of Mamluk drawloom silks as shown in Italian paintings or Indian block-printed cottons discovered in Mamluk Egypt.⁷⁶ Apart from the late Yedida Stillman's work on dress as portrayed in the Geniza

⁷¹For the latest word on the subject, see David Alexander, ed., *Furusiyya: The Horse in the Art of the Near East* (Riyadh, 1996).

⁷²Sheila S. Blair, "The Development of the Illustrated Book in Iran," *Muqarnas* 10 (1993).

⁷³Anne E. Wardwell, *Dictionary of Art*, 16:441.

⁷⁴E.g., Georgette Cornu et al., *Tissus islamiques de la collection Pfister* (Rome, 1992); *Tissus d'Égypte: Collection Bouvier*, exhibition catalogue, Musée d'art et histoire de Genève and Institut du monde arabe à Paris (Paris, 1994).

⁷⁵Louise W. Mackie, "Toward an Understanding of Mamluk Silks: National and International Considerations," *Muqarnas* 2 (1984): 127-46.

⁷⁶Ruth Barnes, "From India to Egypt: The Newberry Collection and the Indian Ocean Trade," in *Islamische Textilkunst des Mittelalters: Aktuelle Probleme*, Riggisberger Berichte (Riggisberg, 1997), 79-92; and Ruth Barnes, *Indian Block-Printed Textiles in Egypt: The Newberry Collection in the Ashmolean Museum* (Oxford, 1997).



documents (which are largely earlier than the Mamluk period), L. A. Mayer's seminal work on Mamluk dress has never been continued.⁷⁷ In any event, costume has been woefully underutilized as a tool for dating other aspects of Mamluk art and culture.

Perhaps most attention has been accorded the distinctive group of Mamluk carpets that survives from the very end of the Mamluk period. Texts mention woven and knotted floor coverings earlier in the Mamluk period, but these carpets are the first to survive and seem to have some relationship to those produced in Aqqyunlu Iran and Anatolia.⁷⁸ A special issue of the journal *Hali* (4/1 [1981]) was devoted to the subject, and in subsequent years these carpets have been the focus of some wild speculation.⁷⁹ Increased interest has led collectors and scholars to explore dusty attics and storerooms. In the 1980s, for example, three previously-unknown Mamluk carpets of great importance were discovered in Italy, and recently many more fragments of an important large carpet were discovered there.⁸⁰

METALWARES

Metalwares are among the most familiar of Mamluk decorative arts and the best studied, having a solid foundation in catalogues by Wiet and articles on individual pieces and groups by such noted scholars as D. S. Rice.⁸¹ James Allan has produced some of the most important recent work on Mamluk metalwares, such as his article on the decline of the metalwork industry in the late fourteenth century.⁸² It is an art historical fact that the absolute quality of metalwork declines in this period; Allan convincingly argues that the decline can be attributed to inflation, civil wars, Timur's conquest of Damascus, the plague and the resulting scarcity of workers, as well as a shortage of metal, particularly silver and copper. Allan has

⁷⁷ L. A. Mayer, *Mamluk Costume: A Survey* (Geneva, 1952); Yedida K. Stillman, "Libās," in collaboration with Norman A. Stillman, *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2d ed., 5:732-50. Stillman was at her death in the process of preparing, with the help of Sheila Blair, a new edition of R. P. A. Dozy, *Dictionnaire détaillé des noms des vêtements chez les Arabes* (Amsterdam, 1845).

⁷⁸ Belkis Acar, "New Light on the Problem of Turkmen-Timurid and Mamluk Rugs," in *Ars Turcica*, Akten des VI. internationalen Kongresses für türkische Kunst, Munich, 1979, eds. K. Kreiser et al. (Munich, 1987), 2:393-402.

⁷⁹ See R. Pinner and W. Denny, eds., *Oriental Carpet and Textile Studies, II: Carpets of the Mediterranean Countries 1400-1600* (London, 1986), in which one author proposed that features of their design indicated that some Mamluk carpets had to have been woven in Morocco!

⁸⁰ Alberto Boralevi, "Three Egyptian Carpets in Italy," in *ibid.*, 205-20; Carlo Maria Suriano, "Mamluk Blazon Carpets," *Hali*, no. 97 (March 1998): 73-81; 107-8.

⁸¹ E.g., Gaston Wiet, *Objets en cuivre*, Catalogue générale du Musée arabe du Caire (Cairo, 1932); D. S. Rice, *The Baptistère de Saint-Louis* (Paris, 1953).

⁸² James W. Allan, "Sha'bān, Barqūq, and the Decline of the Mamluk Metalworking Industry," *Muqarnas* 2 (1984): 85-94.



also published a volume on the Nuhad es-Said collection, which contains several important objects made for Qalāwūn, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, and other sultans.⁸³ One may, however, be somewhat sceptical of Allan's argument that the radiating inscription on an incense-burner made for al-Nāṣir Muḥammad should be interpreted as solar imagery which suggests that the ruler was the [metaphoric] source of light for the earth. Lapidus, in his 1984 article, reasonably suggested that such interpretations are quite foreign to the Mamluks' view of themselves.⁸⁴

Rachel Ward has approached the study of Mamluk metalwork in a new way by looking at objects from the Nuhad es-Said collection produced by a single workshop over a period of six decades.⁸⁵ She was able to show the transition from earlier styles of engraving to the inlaid decoration typical of Mamluk work. Her careful study is a necessary prelude to distinguishing regional centers, particularly Cairo and Damascus. James Allan has similarly approached the work of a particular metalworker, Muḥammad ibn al-Zayn, with extraordinary care and sensitivity.⁸⁶ By meticulously studying the nature and placement of Ibn al-Zayn's signatures on his famous vessels, Allan ingeniously proposed that this craftsman must also have been a maker of thrones and ironwork.

As in many fields of art history, technical analysis holds great promise for explaining much about Mamluk art, but there has been a remarkable reluctance to apply these techniques to metalwork. It is simply unacceptable, for example, not to differentiate brass (primarily an alloy of copper and zinc) from bronze (primarily copper and tin), for they have different working properties, and the presence (or absence) of imported (and expensive) tin can tell us something about the economic circumstances in which a particular piece was made. It is therefore surprising that the author of a recent book on metal lamps writes that it is "not possible within the scope of this study to indicate precisely the material."⁸⁷

CERAMICS

Ceramics is one of the fields in which scientific analysis is playing a major role in revising received opinion. Considering that Egypt was a major center of ceramic

⁸³James W. Allan, *Islamic Metalwork: The Nuhad es-Said Collection* (London, 1982). A few Mamluk pieces are also published in James Allan, *Metalwork of the Islamic World: The Aron Collection* (London, 1986).

⁸⁴See note 13 above.

⁸⁵Rachel Ward, "Tradition and Innovation: Candlesticks Made in Mamluk Cairo," in *Islamic Art in the Ashmolean Museum* (Oxford, 1995), 147-58.

⁸⁶James W. Allan, "Muhammad Ibn al-Zayn: Craftsman in Cups, Thrones, and Window Grilles?" *Levant* 28 (1996): 199-208.

⁸⁷Doris Behrens-Abouseif, *Mamluk and Post-Mamluk Metal Lamps*, Supplément aux Annales islamologiques (Cairo, 1995), 6.



production in the Fatimid period, when magnificent luster-painted earthenwares were among the most important ceramics made anywhere in the Islamic lands, the apparent decline of ceramic production in Egypt under Ayyubid and Mamluk rule comes as something of a shock. The center of ceramic innovation shifted from Egypt to Syria and Iran in the twelfth century, as potters began to make finer and harder ceramics from an artificial body (known as fritware or stonepaste) which was then painted and glazed. The majority of glazed ceramics produced in Egypt were rather coarse scratched and slip-painted earthenwares. At the same time, fine quality Chinese ceramics were being imported into the Mamluk realm by way of the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea, and large quantities of blue-and-white porcelain have been excavated at Hama in Syria and at Fustat in Egypt.⁸⁸

The chronology of Mamluk period ceramics has yet to be established with certainty, not only because they are less beautiful and hence less "collectible," but also because the Fustat excavations—the major key to dating Egyptian ceramics from the earlier periods—provide less information about the Mamluk period. On the one hand, most sealed contexts predate the Mamluk period; on the other, the overlying rubbish mounds which presumably contain Mamluk material are not sufficiently stratified to provide dates, although by excavating a cesspit Scanlon has had some success with characterizing the range of wares available in Mamluk Cairo.⁸⁹ Approaches other than archaeology and stylistic analysis have been necessary, and these include neutron-activation analysis,⁹⁰ which can show chemical similarities between different ceramics, and petrography, which analyzes and identifies the specific clays and minerals from which ceramics are made.⁹¹

Perhaps the most innovative work on Mamluk-period ceramics has been at the Royal Ontario Museum, where a group of scholars has used petrography, for example, to suggest that all Syrian glazed ceramics of the Mamluk period—whether underglaze-painted in blue and white or overglaze painted in luster—were made from the same body, and they concluded that they were made in one location,

⁸⁸Tsugio Mikami, "China and Egypt: Fustat," *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society* 45 (1980-81): 67-89; Lisa Golombek, Robert B. Mason, and Gauvin A. Bailey, *Tamerlane's Tableware: A New Approach to the Chinoiserie Ceramics of Fifteenth and Sixteenth-Century Iran* (Costa Mesa, California, 1996), 126.

⁸⁹George Scanlon, "Mamluk Pottery: More Evidence from Fustat," *Muqarnas* 2 (1984): 115-26.

⁹⁰Marilyn Jenkins, "Mamluk Underglaze Painted Pottery: Foundations for Further Study," *Muqarnas* 2 (1984): 95-114.

⁹¹Robert B. Mason and Edward J. Keall, "Petrography of Islamic Pottery from Fustat," *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 27 (1990): 165-84; Robert B. Mason, "Defining Syrian Stonepaste Ceramics: Petrographic Analysis of Pottery from Ma'arrat Al-Nu'man," in *Islamic Art in the Ashmolean Museum* (Oxford, 1995), 1-18.



presumably Damascus.⁹² Furthermore, they suggested that Timur forcibly took Damascene potters, along with Chinese porcelains that had been imported into the Mamluk realm and Syrian copies of them, to his capital at Samarqand, where the potters established workshops using particularly Syrian techniques to produce Central Asian imitations of Syrian imitations of Chinese porcelains.⁹³ As provocative as these hypotheses may be, to believe that all glazed ceramics of the Mamluk period were produced in one Syrian center seems to fly in the face of common sense, for economic or historical explanations for such a concentration of industry are lacking.

OTHER ARTS

In contrast to Mamluk-period ceramics, Mamluk glass is magnificent: nearly-colorless blown-glass vessels decorated with brilliant enamels and gold. Nevertheless, Mamluk glass had not attracted much scholarly attention after the publication of Wiet's catalogues of the Cairo museum's Mamluk lamps, although recently there has been a revival of interest in the subject. A careful study of glass coin-weights led to a proposed chronology of Egyptian glass,⁹⁴ and the excavation of several glass bracelets at the Mamluk-period site of Quseir al-Qadim led Carboni to reattribute several bracelets in the Metropolitan Museum from Coptic to Mamluk.⁹⁵ The results of an international conference devoted to the subject in London in 1994 are just about to appear.⁹⁶ The art of woodworking, which enjoyed extraordinary importance in Mamluk times, when it was used for doors, shutters, *minbars*, *kursīs*, and chests, has not received the attention it deserves, apart from a few specialized studies.⁹⁷ One of the most distinctive features of Mamluk art is the presence of emblems, which have often been likened, incorrectly, to the blazons

⁹²Golombek, Mason, and Bailey, *Tamerlane's Tableware*, 32.

⁹³Ibid., 126-27; Robert B. Mason, "Medieval Egyptian Lustre-Painted and Associated Wares: Typology in a Multidisciplinary Study," *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 34 (1997): 201-42.

⁹⁴J. G. Kolbas, "A Color Chronology of Islamic Glass," *Journal of Glass Studies* 25 (1983): 95-100.

⁹⁵Stefano Carboni, "Glass Bracelets from the Mamluk Period in the Metropolitan Museum of Art," *Journal of Glass Studies* 36 (1994): 126-29.

⁹⁶Rachel Ward, ed., *Gilded and Enamelled Glass from the Middle East: Origins, Innovations* (London, 1998).

⁹⁷Gloria S. Karnouk, "Form and Ornament of the Cairene Baḥrī Minbar," *Annales islamologiques* 17 (1981): 113-39.



of medieval heraldry.⁹⁸ Recent work on the subject includes an investigation of its origins by the late Estelle Whelan and overviews by Meinecke and Rabbat.⁹⁹

SPECIFIC TOPICS

While Mamluk art has normally been studied in terms of architecture and the decorative arts, several scholars have addressed topics that transcend these traditional categories. As we have seen, the traditional art historical investigation of "influence" confuses the agent with the patient, for the question should not be, for example, what is the "influence" of Iranian—or Chinese—art on that of the Mamluks but what was it that Mamluk artists saw in the arts of Iran—or China—that they felt was worth borrowing. Nevertheless, the question of foreign "influence" has interested such scholars as J. M. Rogers, who investigated the relationships between Mamluk art and that of Saljuq Anatolia and Ilkhanid Iran.¹⁰⁰ While Rogers rarely specified exactly how these architectural ideas might have been brought to Cairo, Meinecke approached the subject from the perspective of the movement of artists and workshops in his study of a group of tile makers who came to Cairo from Tabriz.¹⁰¹ More recently, Rachel Ward has investigated the presence or absence of chinoiserie decoration on Mamluk metalwork in terms of Mamluk-Mongol political relations.¹⁰²

Meinecke also turned around the question of "influence" and explored the relationship of Mamluk architecture to that of other traditions in his studies on the dispersal of the workshops assembled to build Sultan Ḥasan's funerary complex to Damascus, Aleppo, Anatolia, and ultimately via Timur, to Turkestan,¹⁰³ as well as the legacy of Mamluk marble decoration in Ottoman Turkey.¹⁰⁴ He also explored the relationships between the art of the capital and that of the provinces,¹⁰⁵ and

⁹⁸L. A. Mayer, *Saracenic Heraldry* (Oxford, 1933).

⁹⁹Estelle Whelan, "Representations of the *Khāṣṣakīyah* and the Origins of Mamluk Emblems," in *Content and Context of Visual Arts in the Islamic World*, ed. Priscilla P. Soucek (University Park, Pennsylvania, 1988), 219-54; Michael Meinecke, "Die mamlukische Heraldik in Ägypten und Syrien," *Der Herold* (N.F.) 13, no. 2 (1990): 38-40, 47; Nasser Rabbat, "Rank," *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2d ed., 8:431-33.

¹⁰⁰J. M. Rogers, "Seljuk Influence"; idem, "Evidence for Mamluk-Mongol Relations, 1260-1360," *Colloque international sur l'histoire du Caire* (Cairo, 1972), 385-404.

¹⁰¹Michael Meinecke, "Die mamlukischen Faiencemosaikdekorationen: eine Werkstatt aus Tabriz in Kairo (1330-1350)," *Kunst des Orients* 11 (1976-77): 85-144.

¹⁰²Rachel Ward, "Mongol Mania in the Mamluk Court," unpublished paper scheduled for publication in 1998, to be edited by Robert Hillenbrand.

¹⁰³Meinecke, *Die Mamlukische Architektur in Ägypten und Syrien*, 130-52 (chap. 5, pt. E).

¹⁰⁴Michael Meinecke, "Mamlukische Marmordekorationen in der osmanischen Türkei," *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts Abteilung Kairo* 27, no. 2 (1971): 207-20.

¹⁰⁵Meinecke, "Mamluk Architecture, Regional Architectural Traditions."



between provincial capitals and local centers.¹⁰⁶ As buildings do not move about, these relationships are fairly easy to study, but it is much more difficult for the decorative arts. In the absence of any specific information to the contrary, historians have tended to attribute most Mamluk art to the capital, but studies have shown, or tended to suggest, that significant numbers of manuscripts, metalwares, glasswares, ceramics, and carpets were made elsewhere, particularly in Damascus.

It is easy for a specialist to distinguish the art of Baybars I from that of al-Ghawrī some 250 years later, but to the non-specialist most Mamluk art looks remarkably alike. Conservatism was an important attribute of Mamluk art, particularly in comparison to the arts of contemporary Iran where styles changed markedly from the Mongols to the Timurids and Safavids. While this conservatism in Mamluk art has not been the focus of particular study, several scholars have investigated the strong dependence of Mamluk art on the past. The mosque of Baybars I in Cairo, for example, has been shown to recreate not only the Fatimid mosque of al-Ḥākīm but also that of Ibn Ṭūlūn,¹⁰⁷ and Baybars's *madrasah* in Damascus is decorated with recreations of the Umayyad mosaics in the Great Mosque nearby.¹⁰⁸ It has long been recognized that the tomb of Qalāwūn is a free quotation of the equally Umayyad Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem,¹⁰⁹ and even contemporaries knew that the monumental vault in the funerary complex of Sultan Ḥasan surpassed the dimensions of the Sasanian Ṭāq-i Kisrā at Ctesiphon in Iraq.¹¹⁰

Because of the Mamluks' peculiar system of succession, their art lacks the dynastic emphasis of contemporary Islamic art, particularly in Iran, where the Chingizid/Mongol-Timurid ideology was particularly important. The subject of Mamluk patronage remains oddly underexplored, although recently it has begun to attract more attention.¹¹¹ Amy W. Newhall's study of the patronage of Qāyṭbāy is unusual because it combines architecture and decorative arts.¹¹² In contrast,

¹⁰⁶Meinecke, *Patterns*, 43-47.

¹⁰⁷Bloom, "Mosque of Baybars."

¹⁰⁸F. B. Flood, "Umayyad Survivals and Mamluk Revivals: Qalawunid Architecture and the Great Mosque of Damascus," *Muqarnas* 14 (1997): 57-79.

¹⁰⁹Michael Meinecke, "Das Mausoleum des Qalā'ūn in Kairo: Untersuchungen zur Genese der mamlukischen Architekturdekoration," *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Archäologischen Institut Abteilung Kairo* 26 (1970): 47-80.

¹¹⁰Bernard O'Kane, "Monumentality in Mamluk and Mongol Art and Architecture," *Art History* 19, no. 4 (December 1996): 499-522.

¹¹¹Leonor Fernandes, "Mamluk Architecture and the Question of Patronage," *MSR* 1 (1997): 107-20.

¹¹²Newhall, "The Patronage of the Mamluk Sultan Qa'it Bay, 872-901/1468;" Khaled Ahmad Alhamzeh, "Late Mamluk Patronage: Qansuh al-Ghuri's Waqf and His Foundations in Cairo," Ph.D. diss., Ohio State University, 1993, appears to concern only the sultan's patronage of



most studies of patronage have been restricted to architecture, such as that of the amirs of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad¹¹³ or al-Ghawrī.¹¹⁴ Al-Harithy has investigated the architectural patronage of women, showing that it was not very different from that of men in Mamluk Egypt.¹¹⁵ She concludes that members of the Mamluk ruling class erected the buildings and that members of the indigenous population used them. Her study would have been more convincing had she attempted to further identify these female patrons and explain whether this was an Egyptian or a Mamluk phenomenon. As in many other fields, Mamluk patronage in Egypt and Syria might profitably be compared with that of contemporary Mongol and Timurid Iran.¹¹⁶ The abundance of evidence makes it possible to explore the patronage of many rulers, including Baybars, Qalāwūn, and al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, and one hopes that more scholars will turn their attention in this direction.

CONCLUSION

The great range of work already mentioned in this overly long survey makes it clear that no one scholar or approach dominates the field, and that there is a healthy range of opinion. I do believe, however, that the study of Mamluk art and architecture suffers from several general problems, and I would like to conclude by discussing three.

The first problem is a failure by some art historians to be also good historians. While good historians have learned to treat their written sources with caution, understanding that each document or text represents one particular view of a situation, art historians tend to be more gullible and believe that all written documents are true. At the same time, art historians have failed to convince the larger scholarly community that visual evidence is as valid, if not more valid, than written evidence. These issues are particularly important in view of the textual basis of much scholarship on Mamluk art, which treats al-Maqrīzī's *Khiṭaṭ* as a revealed text rather than as a rich and important selection of earlier works by one fifteenth-century scholar. In my study of Baybars's mosque, for example, I found (much to my surprise) that al-Maqrīzī was not a completely reliable source, probably because

architecture.

¹¹³Shāhindah Fahmī Karīm, "Jawāmi' wa-Masājīd Umarā' al-Sulṭān al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn," Ph.D. diss., Cairo University, 1987.

¹¹⁴Alhamzeh, "Late Mamluk Patronage: Qansuh al-Ghuri's Waqf and His Foundations in Cairo."

¹¹⁵Howyda al-Harithy, "Female Patronage of Mamluk Architecture in Cairo," *Harvard Middle Eastern and Islamic Review* 1, no. 2 (1994): 152-74.

¹¹⁶See, for example, Oleg Grabar and Sheila Blair, *Epic Images and Contemporary History: The Illustrations of the Great Mongol Shah-Nama* (Chicago, 1980); Roya Marefat, "Timurid Women: Patronage and Power," *Asian Art* 6, no. 2 (Spring 1993): 28-49; and Noha Sadek, "Rasulid Women: Power and Patronage," *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* 19 (1989): 121-26.



of his own bias against Baybars.¹¹⁷ In studying the complex of Sultan Sha‘bān on al-Tabbānah street, Howyda al-Harithy noted that the foundation inscription on the main portal reads: “. . . Our lord the sultan al-Malik al-Ashraf Sha‘bān ordered the building of this blessed *madrasah* for his mother . . . in the year 770/1368,” and this statement is repeated at least eight other times in the complex. Nevertheless, Mamluk chroniclers unanimously attribute the construction of this building to the sultan’s mother, Khawand Barakah. What should we then conclude about the relative value of texts and inscriptions? Al-Harithy, believing that later texts were more accurate than the building itself, concluded that the building was funded by and intended for Khawand Barakah and her husband, although her son was buried there as well.¹¹⁸

The second problem is the Egyptocentrism of Mamluk studies and the consequent reluctance or failure of scholars to look beyond the confines of Egypt. If Mamluk Egypt was indeed unique, as so many studies conclude, then there is no point in studying it, for it has no lessons to teach us. This is clearly not true, as three examples show. Nasser Rabbat’s recent study of the Cairo citadel concluded that it was a unique response to a unique situation.¹¹⁹ The Cairo citadel may have had no parallel in the eastern Mediterranean, yet the features that Rabbat reconstructed so deftly find striking parallels in the Islamic architecture of contemporary Andalusia. The Alhambra in Granada, just like the Citadel, was built from the thirteenth century on the remains of an earlier mountain-top fortress linked to the city’s system of defensive walls, dominating the city from above. The Alhambra, too, originally had several enclosures arranged hierarchically, with barracks and defensive works separated from mosques and areas for reception and residence. Although the Alhambra is also considered unique, a comparison of these two “unique” fortresses should reveal important points about urbanism and architecture in the medieval period.

Another example of Egyptocentrism concerns the funerary complex of Sultan Ḥasan (1357-1361), perhaps the most famous of Mamluk structures. Scholars have long noted that it was the first *madrasah* in Cairo to combine a congregational mosque with a *madrasah*, and al-Harithy has suggested that the incorporation of a congregational mosque “reinforces the symbolic reference to society.”¹²⁰ While this may or may not be true, the presence of a congregational mosque was not

¹¹⁷Bloom, “Mosque of Baybars.”

¹¹⁸Howyda al-Harithy, “Female Patronage,” 166; it should be noted, although al-Harithy does not, that this anomaly was discussed nearly a century ago by Berchem, *Matériaux pour un Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum, I: Égypte 1*, 285-86, and more recently by Leonor Fernandes, “Mamluk Architecture and the Question of Patronage,” 114.

¹¹⁹Rabbat, *Citadel of Cairo*.

¹²⁰Al-Harithy, “Complex of Sultan Hasan.”



unique. The largest *madrāsah* in Fez, the Bū ‘Inānīyah, which was built in 1355, also incorporates a congregational mosque for the first time. One wonders whether there might be any relationship between the two structures.

A third example of Egyptocentrism concerns the interpretation of the bulbous profile of several domes erected in Cairo in the middle of the fourteenth century, with ribs rising from a *muqarnas* cornice around a high drum. The best examples in Cairo are found in an anonymous mausoleum in the southern cemetery known as the Sulṭānīyah, which probably dates to the 1350s. It consists of two ribbed bulbous domes on high drums flanking a vaulted *īwān*. Some scholars have claimed this to be an Egyptian invention, but the structural system attempts to translate the structural requirements of a brick dome into limestone and clearly shows that this was a foreign type of construction imported to Egypt from the Iranian world. Although the earliest examples there, such as the Gūr-i Mīr in Samarqand, date from the early fifteenth century and postdate the Egyptian examples by some fifty years, the Iranian tradition of brick double domes can be traced back as far as the eleventh century.¹²¹ Clearly all that remains is not all that was.

The final problem I see with the study of Mamluk art and architecture is the failure to exploit art historical techniques. Art history as a discipline is now well over a century old, as is the more specialized study of Islamic art, and scholars have developed varied and sophisticated techniques for studying works of art. The interpretation of the so-called Baptistère de Saint-Louis, the most celebrated example of Mamluk metalwork, illustrates this problem well. A large basin of bronze inlaid with silver, the Baptistère belongs to a well-known type with incurving sides and flaring rim used for the ceremonial washing of hands and made in a set with a matching ewer. It differs from most other pieces of Mamluk metalwork in the absence of epigraphic decoration and the total reliance on the extraordinarily detailed and superbly executed figural compositions which cover most of the exterior and interior surfaces. The maker was justly proud of his work, for the master (Arab. *mu‘allim*) Muḥammad ibn al-Zayn signed it six times: one formal signature is located under the rim and five informal signatures are found on representations of metal objects and thrones within the scenes. The Baptistère bears no date or identification of a specific patron, yet the brilliance of the conception, quality of the execution, and specificity of the detail make it impossible to believe that it was made to be sold on the open market.

D. S. Rice was the first to propose that the scenes were specific representations and identified the bearded figure wearing a short-sleeved tunic and carrying a

¹²¹Blair and Bloom, *Art and Architecture of Islam*, 84.



mace as the amir Sālār (d. 1310), thereby dating the basin to the period 1290-1310.¹²² Other scholars, while accepting that the scenes depicted real events, proposed different identifications which would put the basin at least thirty years earlier than the date proposed by Rice.¹²³ While none of Muḥammad ibn al-Zayn's other work is dated,¹²⁴ these "historical" attributions disregard the stylistic evidence Rice and others have adduced so carefully. There is no question that figural scenes were increasingly used on metalwork throughout the second half of the thirteenth century and then abandoned during the long reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.¹²⁵ Other scholars, working from the appearance of chinoiserie motifs in the decoration, have suggested that the basin might date as late as the mid-fourteenth century, nearly a century after the earliest date proposed!¹²⁶ I myself have joined the fray, proposing that Rice's date was right for the wrong reasons: despite their apparent specificity, the images are not narratives but emblems corresponding to the inscriptions that normally appear on early fourteenth-century metalwork.¹²⁷ In sum, it seems inconceivable that such a seminal piece could engender such wildly varied opinions, and it shows why historians have often been reluctant to take the work of art historians seriously.

To conclude where I began, now that Mamluk art has finally entered the coffetable book *Big Time*, the gate of innovation has been opened. The new generation of scholars, whose work has focused so assiduously on the minutiae of Mamluk art and architecture, should use their considerable expertise to speak not only to each other but to make this attractive and potentially interesting subject more accessible and relevant to a wider audience of historians of culture as well as the reading public in Egypt and elsewhere.

¹²²Rice, *Baptistère de Saint-Louis*; Ettinghausen pointed out in his review of Rice's book that it is unlikely that Sālār was its patron, for he would then have been the focus of the decoration rather than one of the attendant amirs; see Richard Ettinghausen, review of *The Baptistère de Saint-Louis: A Masterpiece of Islamic Metalwork*, by D. S. Rice, *Ars Orientalis* 1 (1954): 245-49.

¹²³Elfriede R. Knauer, "Einige trachgeschichtliche Beobachtungen am Werke Giottos," in *Scritti in onore di Roberto Salvini* (Florence, 1984), 173-81; Doris Behrens-Abouseif, "The Baptistère de Saint Louis: A Reinterpretation," *Islamic Art* 3 (1988-89): 3-9.

¹²⁴James W. Allan, "Muhammad Ibn al-Zain."

¹²⁵See Robert Irwin, *Dictionary of Art*, s.v. Mamluk II/3.

¹²⁶Rachel Ward, "Mongol Mania."

¹²⁷Bloom, "A Mamluk Basin."



TH. EMIL HOMERIN

UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER

SAVING MUSLIM SOULS: THE *KHĀNQĀH* AND
THE SUFI DUTY IN MAMLUK LANDS

I

Elements of community and ritual are embedded in the Persian term *khānqāh* with its etymology of “place of the table” or “place of recitation.” Whatever these pre-Islamic origins, the Muslim *khānqāh* seems to have first appeared in Khurasan in northeastern Iran. There, it sometimes served as a *madrasah*, or law school and, increasingly, as a meeting place for the mystically inclined.¹ In this latter function, the *khānqāh* is linked to Abū Sa‘īd ibn Abī al-Khayr (357-440/967-1049), who is believed to have established a rule for Muslim men seeking to live a communal life devoted to the worship of God. According to the *Asrār al-Tawhīd*, a late sixth/twelfth century hagiography of the mystic, Abū Sa‘īd founded or visited hundreds of *khānqāhs* in this region. Abū Sa‘īd would travel from one *khānqāh* to the next, lecturing and teaching, and he authorized chosen disciples to establish *khānqāhs* to spread his rule.²

The *khānqāhs* mentioned in the *Asrār* were usually named for their location or for a shaykh who resided and taught there. Several large establishments accommodating as many as forty dervishes were endowed by members of the ruling elite, but most of these early *khānqāhs* appear to have consisted of a house with a common gathering room for mystics, a room serving as a mosque, and a

©Middle East Documentation Center. The University of Chicago.

¹See Jacqueline Chabbi, “Khānqāh,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., 4:1025-26; Richard Bulliet, *The Patricians of Nishapur* (Cambridge, Mass., 1972), 250-51; and Muḥsin Kiyānī, *Tārīkh-i Khānqāh dar Īrān* (Tehran, 1990), 123-60. For a brief survey of the *khānqāh* and early Sufi communities, see J. Spencer Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders of Islam* (Oxford, 1971), esp. 5-11, 17-23, 168-72; also see Bruce B. Lawrence, “Khānqāh,” *Encyclopedia of Religion* (New York, 1987), 8:278-79, and Marcia K. Hermansen, “Khānqāh,” *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World* (Oxford, 1995), 2:415-17.

²For a study and translation of the *Asrār*, see John O’Kane, *The Secrets of God’s Mystical Oneness* (New York, 1992). For more on Abū Sa‘īd and his rule see R. A. Nicholson, *Studies in Islamic Mysticism* (1921; reprint, Cambridge, 1967), 1-76, esp. 46, and Kiyānī, *Īrān*, 187-93. Also see H. Ritter, “Abū Sa‘īd,” *EI*² 1:145-47, and Fritz Meier, *Abū Sa‘īd-i-Abī l-Hayr (357-440/967-1049): Wirklichkeit und Legende* (Leiden, 1976).



©1999 by Th. Emil Homerin.

DOI: [10.6082/M1S46Q26](https://doi.org/10.6082/M1S46Q26). (<https://doi.org/10.6082/M1S46Q26>)

DOI of Vol. III: [10.6082/M1765CFB](https://doi.org/10.6082/M1765CFB). See <https://doi.org/10.6082/ZJY1-1449> to download the full volume or individual articles. This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY). See <http://mamluk.uchicago.edu/msr.html> for more information about copyright and open access.

few rooms for residents and guests.³ The *Asrār*, unfortunately, does not give us a detailed account of the living arrangements in any specific *khānqāh*. A Sufi master probably resided there in most cases, perhaps with some of his students and disciples, but we have little information regarding the average size of such communities, whether or not they were strictly celibate, or the extent of family members and lay affiliates attached to them.⁴ The *Asrār*, however, explicitly describes these early Sufi *khānqāhs* as centers for study, spiritual contemplation, and communal worship; frequently they were gathering places for Quranic recitations and, in at least one instance, a *khānqāh* also contained a holy relic. Abū Sa‘īd had given his green woolen jacket to a disciple to serve as a “banner” in a new *khānqāh*, and, over time, people came to pay their respects to this garment which they believed protected them from pestilence and other impending disasters.⁵

Nevertheless, as the *Asrār* attests, not all *khānqāhs* at this time revolved around mysticism; some legal scholars and theologians, too, had their own *khānqāhs*.⁶ Further, parallel institutions known as *khāns* were constructed in this period near mosques where important teachers held their classes, to serve as hostels and places of residence for out of town students. These structures were gradually incorporated into separate *madrasah* complexes focusing on legal studies, and into the *khānqāhs*, with their increasing emphasis on Sufism.⁷ But whatever their size and major focus, the *khānqāhs* were to accommodate travellers, though some guests did not receive the gracious hospitality given to Abū Sa‘īd. The celebrated Persian Sufi ‘Alī al-Hujwīrī (d. ca. 465/1072) had a rather different experience in Khurasan, and he reminds us that not everyone residing in a *khānqāh* was a pious Sufi:

One night I arrived in a village in the country where there was a convent (*khānqāh*) inhabited by a number of aspirants to Ṣūfism. I was wearing a dark-blue frock . . . such as is prescribed by the Sunna, but I had with me nothing of the Ṣūfī’s regular equipment . . . except a staff and a leathern water-bottle. . . . I appeared very contemptible in the eyes of these Ṣūfīs, who did not know me.

³O’Kane, *Secrets*, 89, 111, 191, 230, 253, 276, 280, 308, 336, 345.

⁴The *Asrār* quotes Abū Sa‘īd as saying that his era was in such decline that a “time is coming when no one will be able to reside in the *khānqāh* for more than a year. . . .” O’Kane, *Secrets*, 336. Regarding the controversial practice of celibacy among the Sufis of this period see ‘Alī al-Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb*, ed. and translated by R. A. Nicholson, 2nd ed. (London, 1936), 360-66.

⁵O’Kane, *Secrets*, 227-28, and also see 111, 191-92, 230-31, 253, 336, 345.

⁶Ibid., 410-11, and Bulliet, *Patricians*, 250-51.

⁷J. Pedersen and George Makdisi, “Madrasa,” *EL*, 5:1123-34, esp. 1124-25, and Makdisi’s *The Rise of Colleges* (Edinburgh, 1981), 23-24.



They regarded only my external habit and said to one another, "This fellow is not one of us." And so in truth it was: I was not one of them, but I had to pass the night in that place. They lodged me on the roof, while they themselves went up to a roof above mine, and set before me dry bread which had turned green, while I was drawing into my nostrils the savour of the viands with which they regaled themselves. All the time they were addressing derisive remarks to me from the roof. When they finished the food, they began to pelt me with the skins of melons which they had eaten, by way of showing how pleased they were with themselves and how lightly they thought of me. I said in my heart: "O Lord God, were it not that they are wearing the dress of Thy friends, I would not have borne this from them."⁸

During the fifth-sixth/eleventh-twelfth centuries, the *khānqāh* spread throughout Iran and westward to Baghdad where, designated by the Arabic term *ribāṭ*, it became a prominent institution under the Saljuq sultans.⁹ The Saljuqs vigorously promoted Sunni interpretations of Islam, and the ruling elite created *waqfs*, or pious endowments, for Quran and *ḥadīth* schools, *madrasahs*, and *ribāṭs*. These institutions were undoubtedly intended to curb politico-religious movements, including Ismā'īlī Shi'ism and the Karrāmīyah, which might threaten Sunni Islam, its caliphate, and the Saljuq sultanate.¹⁰ But the *madrasahs* and *ribāṭs*, in particular, also served the Saljuqs as sources for patronage in their continual struggle with the Abbasid caliphs for political supremacy. Since the caliphs controlled the congregational mosques of Baghdad, the Saljuqs turned to the newer institutions of the *madrasah* and *ribāṭ* to support members of the religious establishment who espoused and legitimized their cause as the caliph's "protector," and, so, de facto ruler.¹¹

Not surprisingly, then, the three earliest *ribāṭs* in Baghdad were founded for popular pro-Saljuq preachers arriving from Khurasan, and, subsequently, *ribāṭs*

⁸Translated by R. A. Nicholson, *Kashf*, 69.

⁹Jacqueline Chabbi, "La fonction du *ribāṭ* à Baghdad du cinquième siècle au début du septième siècle," *Revue des études islamiques* 42 (1974):101-21, and Kiyānī, *Īrān*, 162-250.

¹⁰C. E. Bosworth, "Saldjūkids," *EI*², 8:936-59, esp. 951-52, and his "Karrāmīyya," *EI*², 4:667-69. Also see Trimmingham, *Orders*, 6-8, 16-17.

¹¹Pedersen and Makdisi, "Madrasa," 1128; Makdisi, *Colleges*, 10-14, 27-34; and Chabbi, "Fonction," 107-9. Also see Trimmingham, *Orders*, 7-8, and Carl W. Ernst, *Eternal Garden* (Albany, 1992), 14-15.



were often directed by Sufi shaykhs who backed the Saljuq cause.¹² While many of these *ribāts* had been established specifically for Sufis and their rituals, the directors and focuses of other *ribāts* were not primarily mystical in orientation, and so during the mid-sixth/twelfth century, the *ribāṭ* was still not exclusively for Sufis. This stemmed from the fact that the *ribāts* could be used to reward not only mystics, but preachers and other men of religion who were not scholars of law or jurisprudence and so not qualified for a lucrative *madrāsah* position. Therefore, even as Saljuq central control and dominance declined late in the century, the *ribāts* continued to be supported. Similar to other endowed institutions, the *ribāts* sheltered the wealth of the ruling elite and so preserved a source of patronage, of whatever cause, especially in times of political instability.¹³

Reasserting control in Baghdad, the Abbasid caliphs became major patrons of these institutions, as did the Zangids and, subsequently, the Ayyubids. Successors to the Saljuqs in Syria and Palestine, the Zangids and Ayyubids continued to champion Sunni Islam, especially in the face of Crusader attempts to reclaim Jerusalem and the Holy Land for Christianity. This underscores another compelling motive for supporting the *ribāts* in addition to acquiring political legitimation and preserving personal wealth and patronage, namely, access to spiritual power. Tales abound of saintly Muslims miraculously defeating infidel foes, and while this became the stuff of legend, Muslim ascetics, mystics, and saints were often sought out for spiritual aid in times of crisis. According to one historian, advisors to the Zangid sultan Nūr al-Dīn Maḥmūd (r. 541-69/1146-74) once urged him to appropriate funds set aside for ascetics, Sufis, and other men of religion in order to bolster his badly depleted Muslim forces prior to a battle with the Crusaders. But Nūr al-Dīn rebuked his aides, declaring:

By God, I can't hope for victory save by means of them, for they sustain and assist the weak among you. How can I cut off the pensions of a folk who, while I'm asleep in my bed, fight for me with arrows that never miss, and then turn around and spend their money on someone whose arrows are hit or miss?¹⁴

¹²Chabbi, "Fonction," 101-12. Likewise, the Ash'arī theologian and major ideologue for the Saljuq sultanate, Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), was rewarded with a major position at the Nizāmīyah *madrāsah*; see Bosworth, "Saldjūkids," 950, and Ernst, *Garden*, 15.

¹³Chabbi, "Fonction," 112-16. Also see Jacqueline Chabbi, "Ribāṭ," *EI*², 8:493-506, and Pedersen and Makdisi, "Madrāsa," 1128.

¹⁴Muḥammad Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij al-Kurūb fī Akhbār Banī Ayyūb*, ed. Jamāl al-Dīn al-Shayyāl (Cairo, 1957), 1:136. For more on Nūr al-Dīn's patronage of the religious classes, including the Sufis and their *khānqāhs*, see *ibid.*, 263-86, esp. 281-84, and 'Alī ibn Muḥammad Ibn Kathīr, *al-Kāmil fī al-Ta'rīkh* (Beirut, 1979), 11:404-5. Also see 'Abd al-Laṭīf Ḥamzah, *al-Ḥarakah*



Nūr al-Dīn and other rulers may well have regarded the Sufis as spiritual reinforcements, a kind of mystical cohort in their holy war efforts. From this perspective, the term *ribāṭ* in the sense of a “guard against danger” or a “frontier garrison” seems appropriate for a Sufi residence, though there is no evidence that these *ribāṭs* were ever convents for Sufi soldiers.¹⁵ In fact, the Zangid and Ayyubid *ribāṭs* were generally located in urban areas, and, far from Spartan quarters, they could be grand affairs, as noted by the traveller Ibn Jubayr (539-613/1144-1217) when he passed through Damascus in 580/1184:

As for the *ribāṭs*, which are called *khānqāhs* [here in Damascus], they are many and intended for the Sufis. They are lavish palaces with water flowing through them all, a most lovely sight to behold. The Sufis associated with these institutions are the kings of this country, for God has provided for their worldly needs and more, thus freeing their minds from the worries of making a living so that they can worship Him; He has lodged them in palaces that remind them of the palaces of Paradise! So by God’s favor these fortunate and favored Sufis receive the grace of both this world and the next.¹⁶

Ibn Jubayr added that the most sumptuous *khānqāh* that he had personally seen had, in fact, been a former palace with an attached garden, bequeathed by Nūr al-Dīn to the Sufis. In such *khānqāhs* the Sufis would hold stirring audition sessions (*samāʿ*) in which sensitive souls would achieve mystical ecstasy. Ibn Jubayr further described these Sufis as following a noble path and an admirable way of life dedicated to religious service.¹⁷

Though Ibn Jubayr thought highly of the Sufis and their *khānqāhs*, other, more conservative Muslims took a dim view of such opulent quarters and the happenings that went on there. A contemporary of Ibn Jubayr, the Ḥanbalī scholar Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1200) denounced the *ribāṭ* as a harmful innovation encouraging celibacy, which aped the Christians and ran counter to prophetic custom in favor of marriage. But this was not all:

al-Fikrīyah fī Miṣr fī al-ʿAṣrayn al-Ayyūbī wa-al-Mamlūkī al-Awwal (Cairo, 1945?), 104-10, and P. M. Holt, *The Age of the Crusades* (London, 1986), 80.

¹⁵See Chabbi, “Ribāt,” 493-506.

¹⁶Muḥammad Ibn Jubayr, *Riḥlat Ibn Jubayr* (Beirut, 1979), 256-57. Also see Trimmingham, *Orders*, 9-10.

¹⁷Ibn Jubayr, *Riḥlah*, 257. Also see Trimmingham, *Orders*, 169, for a description of another *khānqāh* established by Nūr al-Dīn, this one in Aleppo, founded in 543/1148.



We have seen a horde of more recent Sufis lounging around in the *ribāṭs* so as to avoid working for a living, occupied by eating and drinking, song and dance; they seek the things of the world from any tyrant, not hesitating to accept the gift of even the tax-collector! Most of their *ribāṭs* have been built by despots who have endowed them with illegal properties. . . . The Sufis' concern revolves around the kitchen, food, and ice water . . . while they spend most of their time in amusing conversation and visiting the nobility. . . .¹⁸

Despite an obvious difference of opinion regarding the reputation of the *ribāṭs* and their residents, both Ibn al-Jawzī and Ibn Jubayr linked this institution almost exclusively to Sufism in the late sixth/twelfth century. This had resulted in part from the determined efforts of the Abbasid caliph al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh (r. 575-622/1180-1225), who sponsored chivalric associations (*futūwah*) and Sufi brotherhoods (*turuq*) to legitimate and extend the power of a weakened caliphate. Attempting to re-unify Sunni and Shi'i Muslims under a single ruler, al-Nāṣir invoked mystical concepts and analogies to project himself as a divinely appointed "mediator" (*wāsiṭah*) between God and humanity. A major proponent and propagandist of these doctrines was al-Nāṣir's advisor and envoy, the renowned Sufi 'Umar al-Suhrawardī (539-632/1145-1234).¹⁹

'Umar's family had long been involved with Sufism, particularly in its institutional aspects; a great uncle had been the director of an early *ribāṭ* in Baghdad, while his uncle and spiritual guide Abū Najīb (ca. 490-563/1097-1168) had founded his own *ribāṭ* and enjoyed Saljuq patronage in exchange for his support. By contrast, during the Saljuq decline 'Umar pledged his loyalty to his caliphal patron al-Nāṣir, who rewarded him with a *ribāṭ*, complete with a garden and bath-house. 'Umar's extensive experience with *khānqāh* life made him keenly aware of the need for regulating the Sufi communities in order to enhance mystical training and worship while, at the same time, curbing abuses such as those noted by al-Hujwārī and Ibn al-Jawzī.²⁰

¹⁸ Abd al-Raḥmān Ibn al-Jawzī, *Talbīs al-Iblīs* (Cairo, n.d.), 169-70. Also see Leonor Fernandes, *The Evolution of a Sufi Institution in Mamluk Egypt: The Khanqah* (Berlin, 1988), 10-12, and Ernst, *Garden*, 16-17.

¹⁹ Angelika Hartmann, "al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh," *EI*², 7:996-1003, esp. 998-1000, and Chabbi, "Fonction," 116-21. Also see Trimmingham, *Orders*, 7-14; Julian Baldick, *Mystical Islam* (New York, 1989), 72-75; and Ernst, *Garden*, 15.

²⁰ See Menahem Milson's introduction to Abū Najīb al-Suhrawardī's *A Sufi Rule for Novices* (Cambridge, Mass., 1975), 10-16, and Trimmingham, *Orders*, 33-37.



Building, then, on his uncle's brief "Rules for Novices," 'Umar composed his famous Sufi manual, *'Awārif al-Ma'ārif*, which specifically addressed issues relating to Sufi communal life, including *ribāṭ* residence. Drawing an analogy to the Muslim holy warriors of the frontiers, 'Umar praised the pious Sufis of the *ribāṭs* for using their prayers and obedience to God as weapons in the fight against strife and affliction on behalf of all believers; by means of their exemplary behavior and good works, the *ribāṭ* Sufis had brought spiritual blessings (*barakah*) to Muslim lands once again.²¹

However, in the *'Awārif*, 'Umar does not dwell on these benefits despite his belief in the efficacy of the *ribāṭ* Sufis for fending off the enemies of Islam, something which clearly attracted rulers including the Zangid Nūr al-Dīn. Rather, 'Umar turns instead to a foundational tenet of Islamic mysticism: the Sufi's interior holy war against his own selfish nature. With this struggle in mind, 'Umar instructs his followers on a variety of essential matters, including the spiritual guide's qualifications, various mystical states and stages, and the practice of mystical audition (*samā'*) and invocations (*dhikr*). But throughout his discussion of these and other topics, 'Umar never loses sight of the centrality of the community for nurturing Muslim spirituality, and advancing the mystical life.²²

'Umar al-Suhrawardī's attentiveness to the Sufi path and community is evident in the success of his brotherhood, which spread and flourished throughout the Islamic world, especially eastward in Iran and the Indian sub-continent. There, based in large part on the *'Awārif's* guidelines and instructions, *khānqāhs* were founded and organized usually to advance the teachings of a specific Sufi brotherhood, often 'Umar's own Suhrawardīyah, but other brotherhoods too, such as the Chishtīyah. While the brotherhoods often differed on the legality of accepting a regime's support, nearly all of them established *khānqāhs* based on their own rules and under the leadership of their senior members.²³ Yet, the *khānqāh* in Mamluk lands would take a different path, one sponsored almost exclusively by sultans and powerful amirs who, in turn, set the criteria for *khānqāh* life.

II

The Mamluks followed the precedent of *khānqāh* patronage set by their former Ayyubid masters, and a model of particular importance was Cairo's Dār Sa'īd

²¹'Umar al-Suhrawardī, *'Awārif al-Ma'ārif* (Cairo, 1973), 99-101.

²²Ibid., esp. 99-159, 364-400. Also see Trimingham, *Orders*, 13-14, and Baldick, *Mystical Islam*, 71-75.

²³See K. A. Nizami, "Some Aspects of *Khānqāh* Life in Medieval India," *Studia Islamica* 7 (1957): 51-69; Trimingham, *Orders*, 64-65, 21-23; and Ernst, *Garden*, 15-17, 89, 132.



al-Su‘adā’, or al-Şalāhīyah. Established in 569/1174 by Şalāh al-Dīn (Saladin), the founder of the Ayyubid dynasty, this lavish *khānqāh* was Egypt’s first, being designated as a hostel for as many as three hundred Sufis, with preference given to those arriving from foreign lands.²⁴ Şalāh al-Dīn likewise founded several *madrasahs* to support Cairo’s Sunni religious establishment and its legal scholars, though here too he favored non-Egyptians to fill the highest posts.²⁵ This preference for foreign Sunni scholars may have fostered a religious elite loyal to Şalāh al-Dīn and his Ayyubid successors. Further, their support of *khānqāhs* and *madrasahs* nurtured a Sunni ideology free of Shī‘ī and Christian elements, so prevalent in sixth/twelfth century Egypt and Syria. For the *madrasahs* aimed to re-establish Sunni law and doctrine, while the *khānqāhs* functioned as devotional centers for the dissemination of correct beliefs, rituals, and spiritual exercises.²⁶

As conscious heirs to the Ayyubids, the early Mamluk sultans Baybars I (r. 658-76/1260-77) and Qalāwūn (r. 678-89/1279-90) actively supported the existing *khānqāh-madrasah* system, and they appointed the Shaykh al-Shuyūkh, or “Shaykh of Shaykhs,” who was in charge of the prestigious Dār Sa‘īd al-Su‘adā’. These shaykhs were usually learned men of some distinction, including the Persian Sufi and legal scholar, Shams al-Dīn al-Aykī (631-97/1234-98), and the chief judge and vizier to Qalāwūn, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Ibn Bint al-A‘azz (d. 695/1296), who succeeded al-Aykī in 687/1288. As Shaykh al-Shuyūkh, they were to appoint “upright and knowledgeable” Sufis to be in residence there, lead the weekly processions of Sufis to perform the Friday prayer, and oversee the prayers, Quran readings, and *dhikr* ritual, which formed a large part of their daily routine.²⁷

²⁴ Aḥmad al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawā‘iz wa-al-I‘tibār bi-Dhikr al-Khiṭaṭ wa-al-Āthār* (Baghdad, 1970), 2:415-16; Fernandes, *Khanqah*, 21-25; ‘Āşim Muḥammad Rizq, *Khānqāwāt al-Şūfīyah fī Mişr* (Cairo, 1997), 1:127-58; and Trimmingham, *Orders*, 18-20.

²⁵ In 566/1171, Şalāh al-Dīn named the jurist Şadr al-Dīn al-Hadhabānī, a fellow Kurd, chief Sunni judge of Egypt; P. M. Holt, *Crusades*, 50-51; also see Michael Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus, 1190-1350* (Cambridge, 1994), 54.

²⁶ R. Stephen Humphreys, “The Expressive Intent of Mamluk Architecture in Cairo,” *Studia Islamica* 35 (1972): 69-119, esp. 78-87, 93-94; Jonathan Berkey, *The Transmission of Knowledge in Medieval Cairo* (Princeton, 1992), 130-32; and Muḥammad M. Amīn, *al-Awqāf wa-al-Ḥayāh al-Ijtimā‘īyah fī Mişr, 648-923 H./1250-1517 M.* (Cairo, 1980), 204. Also see Chamberlain, *Knowledge*, 54-57; Holt, *Crusades*, 78-81; Ḥamzah, *al-Ḥarakah*, 104-7; Chabbi, “Khānqāh,” 1025-26; and Fernandes, *Khanqah*, 20-22.

²⁷ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, 2:415, and for these and other Sufis there see his *al-Muqaffá al-Kabīr*, ed. Muḥammad Ya‘lāwī (Beirut, 1991), 5:99, 105, 173, 447, 450-51, 573, 660, 694; 6:39, 130, 365, 466; 7:109-10, 236, 529; also see Rizq, *Khānqāwāt*, 1:139-41. For Qāytbāy’s decree appointing al-Aykī as Shaykh al-Shuyūkh of the Dār Sa‘īd al-Su‘adā’ in 684/1285, see Muḥammad Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh Ibn al-Furāt*, ed. Quşantīn Zurayq and Najlā’ ‘Izz al-Dīn (Beirut, 1939), 8:29-32.



Further, Baybars I, Qalāwūn, and their amirs established additional *madrasahs*, *ribāṭs*, and *zāwiyahs*. The *zāwiyahs* were generally of more modest size and endowments than the *ribāṭs*, and they often served as a meeting place for students and a teacher in residence. Several *zāwiyahs* were attached to saints' shrines, where novices and more experienced Sufis might study, practice seclusion, and participate in communal rituals such as *dhikr* and *samā'*. The *zāwiyahs* were frequently named for a specific resident saint or Sufi master, such as Khidr al-Mihrānī (d. 676/1277), Baybars I's spiritual advisor. However, just as Sufi masters taught in mosques and *madrasahs*, *zāwiyahs* were also residences for Sunni scholars of jurisprudence, *ḥadīth*, and other subjects, which were also studied there.²⁸

A number of *zāwiyahs* from the Mamluk period functioned primarily as hospices for the needy, in one case for Abyssinian eunuchs, but more often for foreign Sufis and ascetics and, increasingly, the *zāwiyahs* became centers for specific Sufi brotherhoods. Similarly, the early Mamluk *ribāṭs* were often larger hostels accommodating both resident and itinerant Sufis with provisions and individual cells adjoining space for communal worship. At least eight *ribāṭs* in Egypt were specifically endowed to provide for elderly women and pious widows, and two of them, including one founded by a daughter of Baybars I, were established for women shaykhs who were charged with preaching, and teaching women of good character regarding religious matters.²⁹ The early Mamluk *ribāṭs* and *khānqāhs*, then, like their Zangid and Ayyubid predecessors, were primarily Sufi institutions, which along with the *madrasahs*, and *zāwiyahs*, were intended to support Sunni Islam in its spiritual, doctrinal, and ritual aspects.³⁰

²⁸ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, 2:230-35. Based on al-Maqrīzī's accounts, the Mamluk *zāwiyah* closely resembled the early *khānqāhs* of Khurasan. Also see Leonor Fernandes, "The Zāwiya in Cairo," *Annales islamologiques* 18 (1982): 116-21, and her *Khanqah*, 13-16; Holt, *Crusades*, 151-52; Laylā 'Alī Ibrāhīm, "The Zāwiya of Šaiḥ Zain ad-Dīn Yūsuf in Cairo," *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo* 34 (1978): 79-110; Sheila S. Blair, "Sufi Saints and Shrine Architecture in the Early Fourteenth Century," *Muqarnas* 7 (1990): 35-49; Th. Emil Homerin, "Umar Ibn al-Fāriḍ, A Saint of Mamluk and Ottoman Egypt," in *Manifestations of Sainthood in Islam*, ed. Grace Martin Smith and Carl W. Ernst (Istanbul, 1993), 85-94; and Berkey, *Knowledge*, 56-60.

²⁹ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, 2:427-28, 454, and see Fernandes, *Khanqah*, 10-16; idem, "Zāwiya"; and Berkey, *Knowledge*, 174. For *ribāṭs* established for women in Damascus see 'Abd al-Qādir al-Nu'aymī, *al-Dāris fī Ta'rīkh al-Madāris*, ed. Ja'far al-Ḥasanī (reprint, Cairo, 1988), 2:193 (no. 188), 194 (nos. 197-98, 203-4), and Louis Pouzet, *Damas au vii^e/xiii^e siècle: Vie et structures religieuses d'une métropole islamique* (Beirut, 1991), 211.

³⁰ Especially see Donald P. Little, "The Nature of *Khānqāhs*, *Ribāṭs*, and *Zāwiyahs* under the Mamlūks," in *Islamic Studies Presented to Charles J. Adams*, ed. Wael B. Hallaq and Donald P. Little (Leiden, 1991), 91-105, esp. 99-104; also see Rizq, *Khānqāwāt*, 1:159-207, and Éric Geoffroy, *Le Soufisme en Égypte et en Syrie* (Damascus, 1995), 165-75. For these institutions in Damascus see al-Nu'aymī, *al-Dāris*, 2:139-91 (*khānqāhs*), 192-96 (*ribāṭs*), 196-221 (*zāwiyahs*), and Pouzet,



However, the term *ribāṭ* as used in Mamluk documents soon came to denote a residence for the destitute and elderly, whereas the larger establishments housing Sufis would generally be termed *khānqāhs*.³¹ This increasing specificity in terminology is apparent in the endowment deed of Baybars II (r. 708-9/1309-10), who briefly usurped the sultanate from Qalāwūn's son al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. Baybars II donated funds to establish a *ribāṭ* for one hundred needy people, with special preference given to retired Mamluk soldiers formerly in his service. As for the *khānqāh*, which was among the first founded by the Mamluks, Baybars II modeled it on Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's Dār Sa'īd al-Su'adā', providing for up to four hundred Sufis, of whom one hundred were to be unmarried men in residence. Though foreigners were again preferred, Egyptians were also eligible provided they, too, were in accord with Sunni Islam and conformed to the Sufi rules of conduct and the brotherhoods (*ṭuruq*).³²

Baybars II's *khānqāh*, however, differed from that of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn in one very fundamental feature: the *khānqāh* enclosed the mausoleum of its founder. Earlier during the Ayyubid period, a founder's grave was sometimes placed in or near his endowed religious institution, whether a *khānqāh*, *ribāṭ*, *madrasah*, or a school teaching *ḥadīth* or Quran.³³ Similarly, a number of the Mamluk ruling elite bequeathed funds to their tombs to support a *madrasah*, Quran school or, more modestly, Quran readers, so that pious acts performed on the site would bring divine favor upon the deceased.³⁴ For this reason, too, burial on the premises likewise became a regular and defining feature of the Mamluk *khānqāh*, where

Damas, 208-11, 446-47; for Jerusalem and Hebron see Mujīr al-Dīn al-Ḥanbalī, *al-Uns al-Jalīl bi-Ta'rikh al-Quds wa-al-Khalīl* (Amman, 1973), 2:23-48, 79, 89, 294, 325-27, 377-81.

³¹See Little, "Khānqāhs," 91-105; Amīn, *al-Awqāf*, 219-22; Fernandes, *Khanqah*, esp. 10-19; and Chabbi, "Khānqāh," 433-34.

³²Leonor Fernandes, "The Foundation of Baybars al-Jashankir: Its Waqf, History, and Architecture," *Muqarnas* 4 (1987): 21-42, esp. 24-34, with excerpts from the *waqf* text, 39-40; also see her *Khanqah*, 25-29, and Rizq, *Khānqāwāt*, 1:211-46.

³³E.g., in Damascus, al-Nu'aymī, *al-Dāris*, 1:97 (no. 19), 530-31 (no. 109); 2:150 (no. 165), 164-65 (no. 172), 169 (no. 177), 178 (no. 181), 243 (no. 259), 268 (no. 284), 277 (no. 297). For examples in Cairo see Doris Behrens-Abouseif, "The *Maḥmal* Legend and the Pilgrimage of the Ladies of the Mamluk Court," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 1 (1997): 87-96, esp. 87-89, regarding the funerary complex of the sultan al-Ṣāliḥ Najm al-Dīn Ayyūb (d. 647/1249) and that of his wife Shajarat al-Durr (d. 655/1257). Although Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn was not buried in his Dār Sa'īd al-Su'adā', the Sufis there recited daily prayers on his behalf; see al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, 2:415. Also see Humphreys, "Expressive Intent," 114-15.

³⁴Humphreys, "Expressive Intent," 112-19; John Alden Williams, "Urbanization and Monument Construction in Mamluk Cairo," *Muqarnas* 2 (1984): 33-46, esp. 38-40; Berkey, *Knowledge*, 143-46; Chamberlain, *Knowledge*, 55-56; and al-Nu'aymī, *al-Dāris*, 2:223 (no. 234), 240 (no. 254), 258 (nos. 278-79), 260-61 (nos. 282, 284), 274-75 (no. 294), 287-88 (nos. 298-99), 291-92 (no. 304).



the founder often placed his tomb together with the graves of his relatives; by generously funding Sufis and their religious activities near the graves, the *khānqāh* founders hoped to secure blessings and spiritual power (*barakah*) for themselves and their loved ones. As a result, over the next two hundred years, the Mamluk elite established more than thirty-five *khānqāhs* in or near their capitals of Cairo and Damascus, and though not all of them were operating at the same time, the *khānqāhs* must have supported hundreds of Sufis during the thirteenth through sixteenth centuries.³⁵

According to endowment deeds, the Sufis' terms of employment could be quite generous, with Sufis in residence earning lodging and food, including ample portions of bread and meat daily.³⁶ Along with the non-resident Sufis affiliated with the institution, resident Sufis normally received monthly money stipends and, on holidays and special occasions, gifts of food, cash, and clothes. The Sufis residing in the *khānqāh* could earn additional money by assuming specific religious duties at the *khānqāh*, including reciting the Quran and leading prayers, or by performing more worldly tasks such as cooking or cleaning. Employment as a Sufi could certainly earn a man enough to support a family, which might even have lived nearby, if rarely in the *khānqāh* proper.³⁷

Further, a number of Mamluk *khānqāhs*, such as that of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad (r. 693-741/1293-1341, with interruptions) at Siryāqūs, and those of the sultans Barqūq (r. 784-801/1382-99), Barsbāy (r. 824-41/1421-37), and Qāyṭbāy (r. 872-901/1468-96) north of Cairo, were part of larger complexes often containing a mosque, *madrasah*, Quran school, *ribāṭ*, and/or a *zāwiyah*. So in addition to creating hundreds of religious positions, these foundations also employed a

³⁵See al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭat*, 2:416-27; al-Nu'aymī, *al-Dāris*, 2:141-43 (no. 161), 161-63 (no. 167), 166-69 (nos. 173, 174, 176), 173-74 (no. 179), 188-95 (nos. 183-85); and Fernandes, *Khanqah*, 20. Several Mamluk *ribāṭs* also contained their founder's tomb; for Cairo see al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭat*, 2:428 (Ribāṭ al-Khāzin) and 430 (Ribāṭ al-'Alā'ī); for Jerusalem see Mujīr al-Dīn al-Ḥanbalī, *al-Uns*, 2:42 (Ribāṭ 'Alā' al-Dīn), and for Damascus see al-Nu'aymī, *al-Dāris*, 2:193 (no. 187).

³⁶For published partial texts of some of these endowments see Muḥammad Muḥammad Amīn, *Wathā'iq Waqf al-Sultān al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn* (Cairo, 1982), esp. 58-120 for Siryāqūs; Amīn, *al-Awqāf*, 210-16 (with excerpts from Baybars al-Jāshankīr, Qāyṭbāy, al-Ghawrī, and others); Fernandes, *Khanqah*, 168-72 (Mughultāy al-Jamālī), 173-85 (Jamāl al-Dīn al-Ustādār), 186-91 (Barsbāy); her "Baybars al-Jashankir," 39-40; and Felicitas Jaritz, "Auszüge aus der Stiftungsurkunde des Sultans Barqūq," *Abhandlungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts Kairo, Islamische Reihe* 4 (1982): 117-29.

³⁷Fernandes, *Khanqah*, 20-68, and Amīn, *al-Awqāf*, 204-8, 216. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's *waqf* for Siryāqūs made accommodations for the Shaykh al-Shuyūkh's family to live on the premises, as well as provided for the needs of married Sufis; see Amīn, *Wathā'iq*, 75, 78, and John Alden Williams, "The Khanqah of Siryāqūs: A Mamluk Royal Religious Foundation," in *In Quest of an Islamic Humanism*, ed. Arnold H. Green (Cairo, 1984), 111-14. Also see Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, *Riḥlat Ibn Baṭṭūṭah* (Beirut, 1987), 56.



significant number of support personnel, including engineers, laborers, physicians, water-carriers, grocers, and butchers, who worked to meet the physical needs of the complex, which then became the center of a thriving population both inside and outside of the *khānqāh*'s walls.³⁸

The endowments of even modest *khānqāhs* could be quite substantial, and so the top administrative position of endowment supervisor (*nāẓir*) often went to a relative or close friend of the founder; similarly, the lucrative senior positions of Shaykh and Shaykh al-Shuyūkh were often assigned to a patron's favorites. These coveted positions became objects of competition among members of the religious elite who vied with one another in supporting their patrons. The Mamluks were praised for their defense and support of sound religion, thereby giving religious legitimacy to their right to rule, and the sultans, in turn, held receptions and banquets at their *khānqāhs* to honor their religious officials. Thus, Mamluk patronage of the *khānqāhs* clearly had political dimensions as sultans and amirs sought to win influence among the Sufis and other members of the religious establishment who might profit from the endowments.³⁹ In addition, sultans sometimes retreated to their *khānqāhs* during times of revolt or strife among the Mamluk factions. Since the residents and personnel of the larger *ribāṭs* and *khānqāhs* could be several hundred strong, they were a large contingent for a show of support on their founder's behalf.⁴⁰

Despite such political and economic motives, however, the Mamluk elite frequently attended the *khānqāhs* for spiritual and aesthetic reasons as well, praying with the congregation, listening to readings of the Quran and *ḥadīth*, and participating in Sufi rituals of chant and dance. In times of plague, sultans and amirs also sought out the *khānqāhs* as places of spiritual power and refuge, particularly those *khānqāhs* outside of Cairo in the desert.⁴¹ The Mamluks certainly intended these imposing desert *khānqāhs* to serve as architectural witnesses to Islam's power and their own authority, yet the deadly plague epidemics probably provided another

³⁸ Amīn, *Wathā'iq*, 58-120; Williams, "Siryāqūs," 109-19; Fernandes, *Khanqah*, esp. 47-94; her "Three Ṣūfī Foundations in a 15th Century Waqfiyya," *Annales islamologiques* 18 (1981): 141-56, 216; and Doris Behrens-Abouseif, "Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and al-Ashraf Qāyṭbāy—Patrons of Urbanism," in *Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid, and Mamluk Eras*, ed. Urbain Vermeulen and Daniel De Smet (Leuven, 1995), 267-84; also see Rizq, *Khānqāwāt*, esp. vol. 2.

³⁹ Amīn, *al-Awqāf*, 69-98, 204-8; Carl F. Petry, "A Paradox of Patronage during the Later Mamluk Period," *Muslim World* 73 (1983): 182-207, esp. 190-95; Fernandes, *Khanqah*, 4-9, 20, 51-54, 60-63, 103-4; Williams, "Urbanization," 40; and Berkey, *Knowledge*, 134-42. Also see Th. Emil Homerin, *From Arab Poet to Muslim Saint* (Columbia, South Carolina, 1994), 39-44.

⁴⁰ See Fernandes, "Baybars al-Jashankir," 38; her *Khanqah*, 104-5; and Boaz Shoshan, *Popular Culture in Medieval Cairo* (Cambridge, 1993), 9-22, esp. 16-19.

⁴¹ Michael W. Dols, *The Black Death in the Middle East* (1977; 2nd printing with corrections, Princeton, 1979), 157, 167, 248-50, and Fernandes, *Khanqah*, 104-8.



incentive for Mamluk construction in the desert outside of Cairo. The sultan Barsbāy, for example, began his desert *khānqāh* complex following an outbreak of plague in 832/1429 although he already possessed a *khānqāh* in central Cairo.⁴²

These many *khānqāh* functions, however, were subordinate to the major task assigned by the endowment deeds to the Sufis: the *wazīfat al-taṣawwuf*. This "Sufi duty" or "Sufi office" was the *ḥuḍūr*, the daily gathering of Sufis to perform communal prayers and readings from the Quran. This task was so central that teaching and other activities supported by the endowments were to be scheduled around the *ḥuḍūr* session, which each Sufi was required to attend, with absences duly recorded.⁴³ The *ḥuḍūr*'s importance was directly linked to the founder's desire to earn divine favor by supporting religious institutions and activities. But in addition to the blessings derived from these endowments, in general, the author received, in a focused and regularized fashion, benefits from the *ḥuḍūr*. In fact, many *khānqāh* endowment deeds not only stipulate *ḥuḍūr* performance, but they also set its appointed time, as well as some of the prayers and Quranic passages to be recited.

Almost invariably, the sessions began after one of the five daily canonical prayers. Quranic passages required for recitation included the "Sūrat al-Fātiḥah" (1), the beginning and end of "al-Baqarah" (2) along with its "Āyat al-Kursī," or "Throne Verse" (2:256), "al-Ikhlāṣ" (112), and the final two *sūrah*s known as the "al-Mu'awwidhatān" (113 and 114), i.e., the two requests for refuge with God. The prayers were repetitions, called *dhikr*, combining praise of God (*tamḥīd*) with declarations of His greatness (*takbīr*), glory (*tasbīḥ*), and oneness (*tahlīl*), followed by prayers for the Prophet Muḥammad, and petitions for God's forgiveness (*istighfār*). These prayers and the Quran readings were to be recited on behalf of the donor and his family, whether living or dead, who were named as major beneficiaries of the religious merits and divine blessings accruing from each session.⁴⁴

⁴²Humphreys, "Expressive Intent," 83, 90-91, 117-19, esp. 91, n. 2. Leonor Fernandes has suggested that Barsbāy's desert *khānqāh* was part of a conscious policy to relieve urban congestion (Fernandes, "Three Ṣūfī Foundations," 144-45). It should be noted, however, that Cairo's population had dramatically declined a century earlier following the Black Death, which presumably alleviated some of the city's crowded conditions since the population did not recover until the tenth/sixteenth century; see Williams, "Urbanization," 40-42, and Dols, *Black Death*, esp. 183-85.

⁴³Amīn, *al-Awqāf*, 208-10; Fernandes, *Khanqah*, 18, 54-58, 119 n. 37; Little, "Khānqāhs," 101-2; and Berkey, *Knowledge*, 59-60, 79-81, 84-85. While these and other scholars have mentioned the *ḥuḍūr* as "the Sufis' duty," the *ḥuḍūr*'s function and relevance to Mamluk religious life have, to my knowledge, never been explored beyond several brief descriptions of the ceremonies.

⁴⁴For descriptions of the *ḥuḍūr* in Arabic *waqf* texts, see n. 36, especially Amīn, *al-Awqāf*, 211-16, and idem, *Wathā'iq*, 75, 78-79, 110-11. Also see Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, *Riḥlah*, 56-57; Fernandes, *Khanqah*, 54-58; Little, "Khānqāhs," 98; and Berkey, *Knowledge*, 60, n. 37. Concerning some of



The careful attention given by the endowment deeds to the *ḥudūr* session, and the consistency of its ritual, indicate that these recitations and prayers were not random selections, but established supererogatory invocations and appeals (*du‘ā*).⁴⁵ This is confirmed by several manuals on dying, death, and the afterlife popular in the Mamluk period, as they cite the exact Quranic passages and prayers specified in the endowment deeds as being the most efficacious for assisting the dead. These prayers and Quranic recitations, when said on behalf of the dead, were believed to ease their agony in the grave, and to atone for past misdeeds, so that the deceased would arise on the Judgment Day ready for Paradise.⁴⁶

But the *ḥudūr* was not only for the dead; the living, too, shared in the blessings. The *ḥudūr* was to benefit its founding sponsor and his relatives both in this life and the next, while a portion of the blessings was also dedicated daily to all Muslims, whether living or dead. Further, in addition to the *khānqāh* mausoleums, the *ḥudūr* was held in other religious establishments, as were similar sessions for the recitation of the Quran, *ḥadīth*, and prayers, whose merits were likewise offered, first, to the founder, then his relatives, and, finally, to all Muslims. These latter types of ritual performance were to be carried out by professional reciters of the Quran and *ḥadīth*, who need not be Sufis, and it should also be emphasized that neither the contents nor the ritual of the *ḥudūr*, itself, were of a particularly mystical character requiring Sufi involvement.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, the *ḥudūr* was closely linked to Sufism, for it was an explicit duty of the *khānqāh* Sufis, who were widely considered to be channels for God’s blessings due to their piety and mystical practices, which included training in recitations and prayers.⁴⁸

these prayers and recitations composing the *ḥudūr*, and their significance to Muslim worship in general, see Constance E. Padwick, *Muslim Devotions* (London, 1961), esp. xxiv-xxvii, 12-22, 33-36, 65-93, 108-17, 126-36, 198-207.

⁴⁵Further evidence that these *ḥudūr* recitations, prayers, and related activities were standard may be found in Muḥammad al-Asyūṭī’s (b. 813/1410) notarial manual *Jawāhir al-‘Uqūd*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥamid al-Fiqqī (Cairo, 1955), 1:356-59, where he cites them in his formulary for *khānqāh* endowment deeds for both men and women; also see Little, “*Khānqāhs*,” 98-102. For more on *du‘ā* see Padwick, *Devotions*, esp. 12-13, and Louis Gardet, “*Du‘ā*,” *EI*², 2:617-18.

⁴⁶Muḥammad al-Qurtubī (d. 681/1273), *al-Tadhkirah fī Aḥwāl al-Mawtā wa-Umūr al-Ākhirah* (Cairo, 1986), 1:118-31; Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (839-911/1445-1505), *Sharḥ al-Ṣudūr bi-Sharḥ Ḥāl al-Mawtā wa-al-Qubūr*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥasan al-Ḥimṣī (Beirut, 1986), 406, 409, 411-12, 416-21, 424.

⁴⁷Al-Asyūṭī mentions such daily sessions involving the Quran, *ḥadīth*, and prayers as being a standard part of a variety of endowments; *Jawāhir*, 1:330-31, 335 (congregational mosques), 1:348 (Quran schools), 1:367 (endowed Quran readings at mosques), 1:367-68 (endowed Quran readings for the Prophet’s birthday), 1:370 (endowed *ḥadīth* readings); also see Rizq, *Khānqāwāt*, 2:587.

⁴⁸Al-Asyūṭī, *Jawāhir*, 1:357-61, 365-66. Also see Berkey, *Knowledge*, 59-60, and al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, 2:426 (Ṭaybars) for instances of the *ḥudūr* ritual in *madrāsahs*, and Amīn, *Wathā’iq*, for



Moreover, in addition to their daily *ḥuḍūr*, the Sufis also gathered outside of their *khānqāhs* with other members of the religious establishment to hold special services and prayers in trying times including those of famine and plague, disasters which help to account for the demise of a number of *khānqāhs*.⁴⁹ First the Black Death of 749/1348-49, then successive waves of plague and famine over the next two centuries, ravaged the population and economy of Egypt and Syria. Sultans were forced to levy heavy taxes in efforts to replenish their supply of slave soldiers killed by the plagues, and to ward off the increasing threat of foreign invasion, particularly to the north in Syria and Anatolia where the Ottomans were consolidating and expanding their empire.⁵⁰ As a result, salaries for the religious occupations were sometimes cut or in arrears, and many religious establishments fell to ruin. Still, several Mamluk sultans founded new and architecturally impressive *khānqāh* complexes in the ninth/fifteenth century, occasionally at the expense of earlier *khānqāhs*, whose endowments had been appropriated to finance the new projects. While many of the older *khānqāhs* continued in operation, they were substantially reduced in size and services, or combined with *madrasahs*. Of course, the religiously essential *ḥuḍūr* continued to be performed throughout the empire, whether in the *madrasah-khānqāhs*, mosques, or other religious institutions established by the later Mamluks. Often Sufis were paid for this service, but they did not necessarily receive room and board.⁵¹ This may also help to account for an apparent increase at this time in the *zāwiyahs* with their specific brotherhood and ethnic affiliations, as Sufis sought a mystical communal life and residence elsewhere than in the diminished *khānqāhs*.⁵²

its performance in a mosque; Sufis were participants on many of these occasions as well.

⁴⁹E.g., Dols, *Black Death*, 236-55, esp. 248-53; Fernandes, *Khanqah*, 42, 106-8; and Carl F. Petry, *Protectors or Praetorians? The Last Mamlūk Sultans and Egypt's Waning as a Great Power* (Albany, 1994), 105. Also see Aḥmad al-Maqrīzī's account of these prayers during the low Nile and devastating drought of 806/1404, *Kitāb al-Sulūk li-Ma'rifat Duwal al-Mulūk*, ed. Sa'īd 'Abd al-Fattāḥ 'Āshūr (Cairo, 1970-73), 3:3:1110.

⁵⁰Dols, *Black Death*, 178-231, 261-80; Williams, "Urbanization," 41-44; Carl F. Petry, *The Civilian Elite of Cairo in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1981), 19-36; and idem, *Protectors*, esp. 102-30.

⁵¹For the fate of several specific *khānqāhs* in Cairo, see al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, 2:416 (Sa'īd al-Su'adā'), 417 (Baybars II), 421 (Shaykhū and al-Jaybughā), 422 (al-Bunduqdāriyah), 423-24 (Baktimur), 425 (Qawṣūn), and 426 (the *khānqāh* of 'Alā' al-Dīn Ṭaybars [d. 719/1319] where the *ḥuḍūr* had been performed since the *khānqāh*'s founding in 707/1307. However, following the disastrous drought of 806/1404 the *khānqāh* fell into ruin, and the *ḥuḍūr* was eventually moved to the amir's *madrasah* in 814/1412). Also see Rizq, *Khānqāwāt*, 2:748-49, 774-75.

⁵²Fernandes, *Khanqah*, 37-46, 111-13, and her "Some Aspects of the Zāwiya in Egypt at the Eve of the Ottoman Conquest," *Annales islamologiques* 19 (1983): 9-17; Doris Behrens-Abouseif, "The Takiyyat Ibrahim al-Kulshani in Cairo," *Muqarnas* 5 (1988): 43-60, esp. 44-45, 51-54, 57-58; and her "Change in Function and Form of Mamluk Religious Institutions," *Annales islamologiques*



III

During the Crusades, the Arab poet and holy warrior Usāmah ibn Munqidh (488-584/1095-1188) chanced upon a group of Christian monks. Their piety and dedication to Christianity unsettled him, but later he was relieved to find a similar Muslim devotion among the Sufis of a *khānqāh*. Usāmah's brief record of these two encounters contains one of the earliest comparisons made between the Christian monastery and Sufi *khānqāh*.⁵³ Both communities were often organized around a founding saintly figure or his disciples, and they enabled individuals to participate in a common religious life away from worldly affairs. The monasteries and *khānqāhs* also encouraged prayer, meditation, and study which contributed to the larger society in the forms of education, and prayers for all believers. As a result, many monasteries and *khānqāhs* received the generous favor of the ruling class who sought spiritual support and political influence in exchange. Nevertheless, the monks and Sufis generally set the rules and, accordingly, administered their establishments.⁵⁴

Yet the Mamluk *khānqāhs* did not conform to this model, for the founding sultan or amir set the rule for his *khānqāh* within the rather broad legal parameters established for pious endowments. The foundation deeds specified not only the architectural and financial details of the *khānqāh*, but also such important religious matters as the appointment of shaykhs, the number of Sufis to be employed, their assigned religious and non-religious tasks, required attendance and permissible leaves, and other restrictions involving marital status, place of origin, and prohibitions against employment outside of the *khānqāh*. Further, these rules were not those of a specific brotherhood, though the endowment deeds explicitly state that qualified Sufis must adhere to traditional Sufi rules (*ādāb*), and belong to one of the four major Sunni law schools.⁵⁵

21 (1985): 73-93, esp. 81-93; Doris Behrens-Abouseif and Leonor Fernandes, "Sufi Architecture in the Early Ottoman Period," *Annales islamologiques* 20 (1984): 103-14; and Geoffroy, *Soufisme*, 170-75.

⁵³Francesco Gabrieli, *Arab Historians of the Crusades* (Berkeley, 1957; 1984 reprint ed.), 83-84.

⁵⁴See F. E. Peters, *Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (Princeton, 1990), 3:123-85, who elaborates on Usāmah Ibn Munqidh's comparison of monastic lives with quotations from al-Hujwīrī, Ibn Jubayr, Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, and others. Also see Bernard McGinn, "Monasticism," *Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Mircea Eliade (New York, 1987), 10:44-50; Trimmingham, *Orders*, 166-72; and Baldick, *Mystical Islam*, 59-60, 72-75.

⁵⁵Amīn, *al-Awqāf*, 210-18, and Fernandes, "Baybars al-Jashankir," 39. Also see al-Asyūṭī, *Jawāhir*, 1:357; Little, "Khānqāhs," 98; and Fernandes, *Khanqah*, 170. Exceptions may have been made on occasion regarding law school affiliation, for the Damascus *khānqāh* of the amir Yūnus, Dawādār of the Sultan Barqūq, apparently required that the Sufis and their shaykh there be Ḥanafīs (al-Nu'aymī, *al-Dāris*, 2:189-90 [no. 184]).



The Mamluks obviously desired to control their *khānqāhs* from which they expected to benefit financially, politically, and religiously, and so several scholars have regarded the Mamluk *khānqāh* as an embodiment of an “official” or “institutional” Sufism. From this perspective, Leonor Fernandes, a pioneer in her studies of the *khānqāh*, has suggested that the Mamluks intended their *khānqāhs* as a means to monitor, if not control, Sufi doctrine and activities, and she has drawn attention to the fact that Sunni affiliation was a stated criteria for *khānqāh* residency. But Fernandes and others go too far in their view of the *khānqāh* as a state-sponsored bastion of “orthodox Sufism” standing against a “popular” religion of the *zāwiyahs*.⁵⁶

The Mamluks certainly founded their *khānqāhs* with an eye to the endowment’s influence on the religious elite, but this was no different than other religious institutions supported by the Mamluks. Further, there is little evidence that these endowments were made with any overall state policy in mind, and the fact that the *khānqāhs* were usually named for and ordered by their Mamluk founders suggests a more individual or personal aim.⁵⁷ By contrast, most *zāwiyahs* were under the control of a shaykh or a brotherhood, which initiated and trained new members, and set the rituals and rules to be followed.⁵⁸ Still, the historian al-Maqrīzī (769-845/1367-1441) frequently notes in his account of Cairo’s *zāwiyahs* that many of these establishments had, likewise, been founded by the Mamluks, who had dedicated them to respectable Sunnis, most of whom were Sufis.⁵⁹ Al-Maqrīzī’s two major exceptions were the *zāwiyah* of the Qalandārs, charged with violating prophetic custom, and the *zāwiyah* of the Yūnusīyah order, suspected of Shi‘i affiliation. This underscores the crucial fact that the Sunni Islam of this period did not define itself in opposition to some type of popular or “heretical” Sufism, so much as to Shi‘ism, and militant Christianity.⁶⁰

⁵⁶E.g., Fernandes, *Khanqah*, 1-2, 17-18, 96-103; idem, “Three Ṣūfī Foundations,” 141, 150; idem, “Baybars al-Jashankir,” 21, 34; Behrens-Abouseif, “Change in Function,” 84-85, 92; and Little, “*Khānqāhs*,” 94-95, 99. Also see Chabbi, “*Khānqāh*,” 1026; Hermansen, “*Khānqāh*,” 415-17; and Geoffroy, *Soufisme*, 170-75.

⁵⁷For more on the personal nature of Mamluk endowments see Berkey, *Knowledge*, 132-34.

⁵⁸See Fernandes, *Khanqah*, 13-20, 96-104; her “*Zāwīya*”; and her “Three Ṣūfī Foundations,” 141, 150, 155-69. Also see al-Asyūfī, *Jawāhir*, 1:360-63, and Little, “*Khānqāhs*,” 102-4.

⁵⁹Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭāṭ*, 2:430-36. For more on respected Sunni *zāwiyahs* and their shaykhs in Damascus see al-Nu‘aymī, *al-Dāris*, 2:196-222, and Pouzet, *Damas*, 446-47, and for the *zāwiyahs* of Jerusalem and Hebron, many of which were founded by Ayyubid and Mamluk amirs, see Mujīr al-Dīn al-Ḥanbalī, *al-Uns*, 2:23-48, 78-80.

⁶⁰See John E. Woods, review of *Mongols and Mamluks: The Mamluk-Īlkhānīd War, 1260-1281*, by Reuven Amitai-Preiss, *Mamluk Studies Review* 1 (1997): 133; and al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭāṭ*, 2:432-35, who notes that in 761/1359 Sultan Ḥasan forbade the Qalandārs from shaving their beards and wearing foreign, Persian dress, as both practices were counter to well established prophetic custom;



Of course, the sultans rarely tolerated abnormal religious practices in the *zāwiyahs*, *khānqāhs*, or anywhere else, since this could lead to public and political unrest.⁶¹ Perhaps for this reason, some Mamluk religious officials advocated the careful scrutiny of *khānqāh* residents. The Sufis in residence were not expected to be distinguished scholars or celebrated spiritual masters, with the possible exception of their shaykhs.⁶² In fact, the conservative Ḥanbalī scholar Ibn Taymīyah (661-728/1262-1328) stated that the great Sufi masters rarely had need of a *khānqāh*, which was normally the place for “funded Sufis” (*ṣūfiyyat al-arzāq*). These professional Sufis should obey sacred law, adhere to the Sufi rules of conduct (*ādāb*), fulfill their religious obligations, and avoid greed and other selfish behavior.⁶³

Similarly, the Shāfi‘ī judge Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī (727-71/1327-70) was particularly concerned that the resident Sufis lead ascetic lives, for he believed a number of individuals stayed in the *khānqāhs* only for an easy life; they were lazy drones who should be thrown out together with the frauds who posed as mystics to conceal their filthy lives dedicated to smoking hashish and other illicit acts.⁶⁴ Al-Subkī’s criticisms, however, and those by other Mamluk religious authorities should not be read as attacks on Sufism, for while they might criticize individual Sufis or practices of a specific order, they seldom contested Sufism’s positive contributions to religious life or the important roles of the *zāwiyah* and *khānqāh* within Muslim society.⁶⁵

As for the differences between the *khānqāh*, *zāwiyah*, and, for that matter, the *madrasah*, they resulted largely from differences in size and focus, not their underlying Sunni mission. There was a considerable amount of overlap between these institutions, particularly with the joining of the *madrasah* and *khānqāh* in the Mamluk period. But for the most part, the *madrasah*’s curriculum was law, while the shaykhs of the *zāwiyahs* instructed students in the foundational beliefs and rituals of Islamic mysticism. Senior Sufi shaykhs in the *khānqāhs* also advised younger protégés on mystical matters, while the endowments sometimes established stipends for further non-mystical religious studies in jurisprudence, *ḥadīth*, and,

also see al-Nu‘aymī, *al-Dāris*, 2:209-18, and Fernandes, *Khanqah*, 102.

⁶¹For several incidents see Shoshan, *Popular Culture*, 9, 18-19.

⁶²Al-Maqrīzī, for instance, refers by name to only a dozen or so of the hundreds of Sufis who resided at the Dār Sa‘īd al-Su‘adā’ in the seventh-eighth/thirteenth-fourteenth centuries; see n. 27.

⁶³Th. Emil Homerin, “Ibn Taymīyah’s *al-Ṣūfiyyah wa-al-fuqarā’*,” *Arabica* 32 (1985): 219-44, esp. 233.

⁶⁴Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī, *Mu‘īd al-Ni‘am wa-Mubīd al-Niqam*, edited by David Myhrman (Leiden, 1908), 171-80, esp. 178-79; also see Makdisi, *Colleges*, 177-79, and Geoffroy, *Soufisme*, 170-71.

⁶⁵See Th. Emil Homerin, “Sufism and Its Detractors in Mamluk Egypt: A Survey of Protagonists and Institutional Settings,” forthcoming in *Islamic Mysticism Contested*, ed. Frederick De Jong and Bernd Radtke (Leiden); Trimmingham, *Orders*, 19-21; and Geoffroy, *Soufisme*, 170-87.



occasionally, in other subjects, including Quranic commentary and dialectical theology.⁶⁶ Yet references to specific Sufi orders, doctrines, or rituals, such as seclusion (*khalwah*), are almost never found in *khānqāh* endowment deeds, which stipulate that the residents of the *khānqāh* were to be initiated Sunni Sufis, not untutored novices. Sufi instruction and private mystical devotions were certainly a part of *khānqāh* life, but they were not its only mission.⁶⁷ Rather, as spelled out in the deeds of endowment, the primary "Sufi duty" of the *khānqāhs* was the daily communal performance of the *ḥudūr*.

In terms of function, then, the Mamluk *zāwiyahs* resembled the Christian monasteries, while the *khānqāhs* had a closer parallel in the chantries of medieval England. Founded around this same time by a wealthy nobility, the chantries were to say mass on behalf of Christians, living and dead, so as to free them from purgatory. Like the Mamluk *khānqāhs*, these chantries were endowed in perpetuity to secure blessings for the founder, his or her relatives, and finally, all Christians. In comparison to the *khānqāhs*, most of the chantries were rather modest, supporting several priests who said mass daily in accord with the founder's will. But the endowments often paid for the erection and care of a free standing chapel, along with maintaining a residence for the priests; some endowments also provided alms for the poor, support for primary schooling, or stipends for student priests at college.⁶⁸

The English chantries, too, were funded by private donations, usually of properties. The founder designated the endowment's supervisor, who was often a relative or close friend, as was frequently the case with the priests appointed to say mass. In addition, the founder determined such matters as the particular liturgy to be said, its time and place, and the priests' terms of employment, including room and board, religious and non-religious duties, required attendance and excused leaves, restrictions pertaining to other forms of employment, and the priests' permissible interactions with women and possible concubinage.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ See al-Subkī, *Mu'īd*, 176-78; Makdisi, *Colleges*, 216; Behrens-Abouseif, "Change in Function," 81-93; al-Asyūṭī, *Jawāhir*, 1:357-59; Little, "Khānqāhs," 99; Berkey, *Knowledge*, 44-60, 74; Amīn, *al-Awqāf*, 237-39, 253; Fernandes, *Khanqah*, 16; idem, "Three Ṣūfī Foundations," 152; Pedersen and Makdisi, "Madrasa," 1129; and Rizq, *Khānqāwāt*, 1:247, 257-70, 315-38; 2:438-500, 545-47, 612-18, 636-38, 657.

⁶⁷ See al-Asyūṭī, *Jawāhir*, 1:357-59; Little, "Khānqāhs," 97-99; and Doris Behrens-Abouseif, "An Unlisted Dome of the Fifteenth Century: The Dome of Zāwiyat al-Damirdāš," *Annales islamologiques* 18 (1982): 105-15, esp. 112.

⁶⁸ K. L. Wood-Leigh, *Perpetual Chantries in Britain* (Cambridge, 1965), 2-5, 34-54, 143, 177-79, 210-11, 269; Alan Kreider, *English Chantries: The Road to Dissolution* (Cambridge, Mass., 1979), 26-46; and T. S. R. Boase, *Death in the Middle Ages* (London, 1972), 59-69.

⁶⁹ Wood-Leigh, *Perpetual Chantries*, 65, 95, 140-45, 154, 186, 195-97, 242-89, and Kreider, *English Chantries*, 26-46.



Like the Mamluk *khānqāhs*, the English chantries attested to the nobility's power in both secular and religious affairs, serving their founders as an important source of patronage and support. But endowing a chantry for such selfish motives did not pass unnoticed, and the religious reformer John Wycliffe (ca. 1320-84) denounced the chantry as yet another example of the spiritual pride of the rich, who parted with their wealth solely to buy a plot in Paradise. Ecclesiastic officials, too, occasionally criticized the chantries, with their undistinguished priests prone to lax behavior. Echoing the moral indignation voiced by his Muslim contemporary al-Subkī against charlatan Sufis in the Mamluk *khānqāhs*, the Archbishop Islip in 1362 accused some chantry priests of being "pampered with exorbitant salaries, and discharging their intemperance in vomit and lust, becoming delirious with licentiousness and finally drowning themselves in the abyss of vice."⁷⁰ Yet, these criticisms aside, few medieval Christians prior to the Reformation questioned the importance of the chantry per se, and for one very good reason: purgatory. For whatever the economic, political, or philanthropic aims of the founders, the prime motive for founding a chantry was the soul's release from the pains of purgatory.⁷¹

Christian purgatory derived a scriptural basis from 1 Cor. 3:13 in which Paul declared "the fire shall test what sort of work each one has done." As elaborated by the early Church fathers, this purgatorial fire was different from that of hell, as it would punish and, perhaps, purify sinners after their death and prior to the Judgment Day. For Origen (ca. 185-254 C.E.), this assured eventual salvation for all, but others such as Augustine (354-430 C.E.) disagreed. Augustine divided humanity into four groups with their respective fates after death. First, there were the godless who went straight to hell, and their blessed counterparts, the martyrs, saints, and the righteous who would quickly enter Paradise. Between the two were those sinners who did some good, but not enough and so were bound for a less intense hell, and, finally, there were those sinners who might yet enter Paradise after the purgatorial fire, but who could use some help to attain salvation.⁷²

Based in part on Augustine's categories, Christian doctrines of purgation and intercession continued to develop, eventually coalescing by the late twelfth century in the notion of a distinct, spatial purgatory. There, many of the dead would be punished for their past sins in preparation for eternal life, but their stay in purgatory could be made more amenable and even curtailed by the pious efforts of the living. Suffrages such as prayers, fasting, and alms performed by the living for the dead were believed to help the deceased, especially if offered by devoted loved

⁷⁰Wood-Leigh, *Perpetual Chantries*, 190, 209-11, and Kreider, *English Chantries*, 26-30.

⁷¹Wood-Leigh, *Perpetual Chantries*, 189-90, 303-6. Also see Kreider, *English Chantries*, 40.

⁷²For an excellent study of Christian notions of purgatory and intercession see Jacques Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory*, translated by Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago, 1984), esp. 4-12, 52-95.



ones.⁷³ Further, as early as the third century, the eucharist was given as solace for the souls of dead Christians, and subsequently, Pope Gregory the Great (590-604 C.E.) permitted the saying of mass as a way to deliver sinners from the purgatorial fires. Naturally, right doctrine and good deeds were essential for salvation, but many Christians came to believe that priestly intercession in the form of prayers and masses said on their behalf were even more effective for assuaging the horrors of purgatory and securing eternal life. As a result, the laity gave alms and offerings to churches and monasteries which, by the ninth century, annually performed services for the dead.⁷⁴

Donors, however, had little control over monasteries or churches, whose routines and rituals had long been established by either a religious order or ecclesiastic authorities. Further, their masses and prayers were often said collectively for the good of all Christian souls while, increasingly, the quantitative equation took hold that the more masses said for the fewer beneficiaries, the greater their effectiveness. So beginning in the tenth or eleventh century, the chantry arose as an attractive individual alternative, for those who could afford it. Of course, as Wycliffe had sharply noted, the chantry founders were largely concerned with their own souls and those of their relatives; while chantry foundation deeds invariably stipulated that the spiritual benefits must be shared, the distribution was not equal, for the order of those blessed was believed to be directly proportional to the amount of blessings received.⁷⁵

Still, the larger society apparently felt blessed by these somewhat diluted prayers, as well as by the considerable alms and activities supported by the many chantry endowments, when they were in operation. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, there were an estimated two thousand active chantries, employing priests and members of the laity essential to the daily life and work of these institutions. But by this time, too, other chantries had fallen into ruin or been dissolved. For like the Mamluk *khānqāhs*, many chantries were eventually closed due to a decline in revenues as a consequence of plague and other natural catastrophes, mismanagement, or from outright confiscation of the endowments.⁷⁶

Then, in 1545, Henry VIII closed all of the chantries and pensioned off their priests. Henry was strapped for cash in his war with France, and the extensive lands and revenues held by monasteries, chantries, and other Catholic institutions were easy targets for this recently converted king. Not surprisingly, he justified his actions based on the Protestant denial of purgatory. Luther and other Protestants

⁷³Ibid., 154-59, 275-77, and Kreider, *English Chantries*, 40-42.

⁷⁴Le Goff, *Purgatory*, 102-7, 274-75; Wood-Leigh, *Perpetual Chantries*, 3-6, 303-6; and Kreider, *English Chantries*, 40-42, 86-87.

⁷⁵Wood-Leigh, *Perpetual Chantries*, 5, 34-35, 154, 289, 304-10.

⁷⁶Ibid., 93, 125-29, 194-95, 314 and Kreider, *English Chantries*, 89.



had denounced belief in purgatory as lacking a firm scriptural foundation and being premised on the false belief that one could enter heaven by way of others' good works. By annulling purgatory, they undercut the intercessory role of the Catholic Church, and cleared the way for Henry to dissolve the chantries.⁷⁷

In comparison to the English chantry, the Mamluk *khānqāh* had a far less dramatic decline, yet this institution likewise underwent transformation in the ninth/fifteenth century, often resulting from economic stress, as noted above, though politics, too, continued to play a part. In 923/1517, the empire fell to the Ottomans who, as Sunni Muslims, continued to support pious endowments in the former Mamluk domains. But few Ottoman governors or amirs appear to have been willing to commit the substantial funds necessary to establish a *khānqāh* there, perhaps reserving such investments and their graves for the imperial capital at Istanbul.⁷⁸ Whatever the case, the *khānqāh*'s decline cannot be traced to a major upheaval in religious belief, as happened with the chantries. Yet, despite this significant difference, the English chantry and the Mamluk *khānqāh* bear striking similarities in terms of their foundation, administration, and economic affairs.

As important, they also shared an analogous intercessory function within their respective religions, and this underscores the centrality of purgatory not only to the chantry, but to the Mamluk *khānqāh* as well. Similar in spirit to portions of the New Testament, the Quran warns of a judgment day when each person will learn his eternal fate. On a number of occasions, Muslims have feared that this day was fast approaching, and at least twice during the Mamluk period, some warned that the final hour would soon arrive with the Mongols or the plague.⁷⁹ But, normally, this day has not been considered imminent, and Muslims have wondered about the state of their dead prior to the resurrection, and the possibility of a purgatory.⁸⁰

Some Muslim exegetes found allusions to a type of purgatorial process in several verses of the Quran, especially 9:101: ". . . We will punish them twice, then they will be thrown back into a terrible punishment!" For the most part, however, Muslim notions of a purgatorial existence derive from traditions ascribed to the Prophet Muḥammad (*ḥadīth*), and often grouped together as '*adhāb al-qabr*,

⁷⁷Kreider, *English Chantries*, esp. 93-208.

⁷⁸Doris Behrens-Abouseif has noted the exception of one Ottoman governor, Maḥmūd Pasha, who constructed a mausoleum in Cairo in 975/1568 next to a mosque where sixty non-resident Sufis were to perform the *ḥuḍūr* daily ("Takiyyat Ibrahim al-Kulshani," 43-60, esp. 44). Also see Chabbi, "Khānqāh," 1026.

⁷⁹See Aḥmad Ibn Taymīyah, *Majmū'at al-Rasā'il wa-al-Masā'il*, ed. Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā (Cairo, 1922-30; reprint, Beirut, 1983), 1:186, and Dols, *Black Death*, 243-45.

⁸⁰See Jane Idleman Smith and Yvonne Y. Haddad, *The Islamic Understanding of Death and Resurrection* (Albany, 1981), esp. 34-36, and Le Goff, *Purgatory*, 12-13.



"the punishment of the grave."⁸¹ Beginning as early as the second/eighth century, Muslim creeds asserted that the recently deceased must undergo a trial in the grave. If the dead person can bear witness to his belief in the one God and Muḥammad as His Prophet, then he will eventually enter Paradise, but if he is unable to do this, he will be tortured in the grave before being cast into hell on the Judgment Day. Yet punishment for past transgressions also awaits many of the Muslims destined for heaven, though opinions varied to what extent this punishment took place in the grave or in hell itself.⁸²

In a manner reminiscent of Augustine, the theologian Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (450-505/1058-1111) divided humanity into four groups: the damned, the punished, the saved, and the victorious. The damned are the godless infidels engrossed with the world who will be destroyed in hell, whereas the victorious include the martyrs and great gnostics who love only God and so will dwell in the highest reaches of Paradise. On lower levels, and of less stature, will be the saved, who lead a devout life to acquire the pleasures of Paradise and who repent of their sins before death. As for the punished (*mu'adhhabūn*), they believe in God, but they have committed major or minor sins in pursuit of selfish passions, and these unrepented acts have contaminated their faith. As a result, these individuals are punished after death and prior to the Judgment Day, with their afflictions in hell being commensurate to their misdeeds. Al-Ghazālī adds that of this last group, the majority have oppressed other people, and so after death they will be made to bear the sins of those they had oppressed who, in exchange, will reap the rewards for the good deeds done by their oppressors.⁸³

In a similar fashion, al-Ghazālī and a number of Muslim scholars throughout the Mamluk period, including al-Qurṭubī (d. 681/1273) and al-Suyūṭī (839-911/1445-1505), discussed the tortures in the grave, which afflict the dead proportionally to their past sins. A primary aim of these authors was to exhort the living to mend their ways while time remains and so avoid an anguish far exceeding any earthly pain. But their doctrine of a purgatory also resolved theological issues regarding divine justice and punishment short of eternal damnation, and, more important still, this purgatory offered many sinners a second chance. For even the most sinful believer would eventually be released when the Prophet Muḥammad

⁸¹A. J. Wensinck and A. S. Tritton, "'Adhāb al-Ḳabr,'" *ET*, 1:186-87; Ragnar Eklund, *Life Between Death and Resurrection According to Islam* (Uppsala, 1941), esp. 72-92; and Smith and Haddad, *Understanding*, 24-59.

⁸²Eklund, *Life*, esp. 86-87, and Smith and Haddad, *Understanding*, 33-49.

⁸³Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* (Cairo, 1957), 1:24-30. Also see idem, *The Remembrance of Death and the Afterlife*, translated by T. J. Winter (Cambridge, 1989), xxii.



intercedes for all believing Muslims on the Judgment Day.⁸⁴ Further, prior to this final all-encompassing intercession, God allows the prophets, the pious, the religious elite (*'ulamā'*), and anyone else whom He chooses, to intercede on behalf of relatives, friends, and acquaintances. The prayers, alms, and other pious acts performed by these individuals on behalf of the deceased could substantially reduce both the severity and length of the dead's purgatorial punishment. These suffrages also gave hope to the living that they could intercede on behalf of their dead loved ones, and, in turn, be aided by others when their time came.⁸⁵

Among the acts of intercession, the chanting of the Quran has long been considered most efficacious, with *sūrah*s 1, 112-114, and the beginning of chapter 2 held to be especially powerful.⁸⁶ As we have seen, these passages were a central part of the *ḥudūr* ritual conducted in the *khānqāhs* and other Mamluk religious establishments. Although Islam does not have an equivalent to the saying of mass by an ordained clergy, Quranic recitation and prayers chanted by the Sufis offers an intriguing parallel. In addition, the daily performance of the *ḥudūr*, and the naming of its beneficiaries beginning with the founding sponsor and ending with all Muslims, suggest that medieval Muslims, like medieval Christians, thought quantitatively about the spiritual power and effectiveness of these suffrages. This may also account for the large numbers of Sufis employed by the *khānqāhs*, though there may be a more sociological reason as well.

Collectively, the English chantries and the Mamluk *khānqāhs* could support several thousand persons, despite differences in the size of their respective establishments. There were at least two thousand small chantries by the sixteenth century, each with a priest or two and widely distributed throughout England and Scotland. Reflecting the family and gentry life of the nobility, the chantries frequently employed the founder's relatives or friends as priests, while building the chapel on the family estates. By contrast, the Mamluks concentrated their buildings in major urban areas such as Cairo and Damascus, and though they probably built fewer than seventy *khānqāhs*, many of them could support up to a hundred resident Sufis. These large groups of often foreign, unmarried Sufis, and their barracks-like residence halls mirrored the life of their Mamluk patrons, who had been imported

⁸⁴ Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā'*, 4:433-578, esp. 483-86, and Winter's translation in *Remembrance*, esp. 135-44; al-Qurṭubī, *al-Tadhkirah*, 1:173-86, 189-215, 330-43; al-Suyūṭī, *Sharḥ*, esp. 212, 245-51. Also see Eklund, *Life*, 1-53, and Smith and Haddad, *Understanding*, 33-48.

⁸⁵ Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā'*, 4:509, and 4:473-77; Winter's translation, *Remembrance*, 210, and 111-20; al-Qurṭubī, *al-Tadhkirah*, 1:118-29; and al-Suyūṭī, *Sharḥ*, 404-15. Also see Eklund, *Life*, 7; Smith and Haddad, *Understanding*, 27, 59; and Le Goff, *Purgatory*, 5, 156, 173, 227-29.

⁸⁶ Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā'*, 4:476; Winter's translation, *Remembrance*, 117; al-Qurṭubī, *al-Tadhkirah*, 1:118-29; and al-Suyūṭī, *Sharḥ*, 416-19.



to Egypt as young slaves without family, to be raised and trained together as a cohort.

Further, just as aspiring Mamluk amirs recruited their personal corps of Mamluk soldiers, so too, did a sultan or powerful amir endow a *khānqāh* in his own name to be manned by a contingent of Sufis to pray on his behalf. With these prayers and other rituals, the Sufis could aid their patron while alive, and then, after his death, strive to free him and his loved ones from the agonies of the grave and hellfire. Given this important religious mission, it is not surprising to learn that a reigning sultan would suppress a rival's *khānqāh*. While sultans often appropriated endowments of existing religious establishments to finance their own projects, there may have been other, less material motives for tampering with a *khānqāh*.

When al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn returned to power as sultan in 709/1310, he not only had the usurper Baybars II strangled, but he closed the latter's *khānqāh* and gouged out his titles from the *khānqāh*'s building inscription. Fifteen years later, after completing his own massive *khānqāh* complex at Siryāqūs, al-Nāṣir allowed the *khānqāh* of Baybars II to reopen in 725/1325.⁸⁷ Nevertheless, by closing this *khānqāh* for such an extended period, the sultan had denied his foe the prayers and blessings believed to help the recently deceased, and so al-Nāṣir may have intended to torture Baybars II both in this world and the next.⁸⁸

As this incident indicates, the *khānqāhs* were a vital concern of the Mamluk sultans, but not as outposts of some state-sponsored "orthodox Sufism." For, as we have seen, the inculcation of mystical doctrine and practice was not the major function of the *khānqāhs*; this was going on elsewhere, increasingly within the *zāwiyahs* of specific Sufi orders, likewise supported by the Mamluks. Instead, the *khānqāhs* primarily served the Mamluks as chantries, where pious Sufis could undertake the essential task of intercession. For, like Egypt's early pharaohs who raised pyramids in search of immortality, the Mamluk sultans built their *khānqāhs* to secure eternal life.

⁸⁷ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, 2:417, and noted by Fernandes, "Baybars al-Jashankir," 36-38; Williams, "Siryāqūs," 116; Berkey, *Knowledge*, 132-33; and Rizq, *Khānqāwāt*, 1:215.

⁸⁸ Similarly, when al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's viceroy Qawṣūn tried to usurp the throne after the sultan's death in 741/1341, the populace favored an heir of al-Nāṣir and pillaged Qawṣūn's *khānqāh*; Shoshan, *Popular Culture*, 54; Rizq, *Khānqāwāt*, 1:276. Also see Berkey, *Knowledge*, 133-34 and Chamberlain, *Knowledge*, 56, for other instances of sultanic desecration and/or appropriation of religious endowments for reasons of fame and fortune.



ANNE F. BROADBRIDGE
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

Academic Rivalry and the Patronage System in Fifteenth-Century Egypt: al-‘Aynī, al-Maqrīzī, and Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī

INTRODUCTION

In fifteenth-century Mamluk Cairo the ‘*ulamā*’ and the military elite were interdependent. The elite provided financial and material patronage to the learned in return for legitimation and integration into Cairo’s dominant Islamic cultural environment. In *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus, 1190-1350*, Michael Chamberlain suggests that the “natural” environment for the ‘*ulamā*’ was one of constant competition, in which scholars jockeyed both for proximity to powerful members of the military elite, and for the salaried positions (*manṣib*, pl. *manāṣib*)¹ they could attain through such proximity. Indeed, for the ‘*ulamā*’ it was often within an intimate web of simultaneously personal and professional ties that the road to material and financial success lay. Nevertheless the long-held Islamic societal ideal of intellectual success—that is, the scholar untainted by the corrupting hand of government—still held firm both in Chamberlain’s Damascus and in Cairo throughout the Mamluk period. As Chamberlain is quick to point out, the sources provide us with plenty of references to the notion of the polluting aspect of the *manṣib*, as well as to those who refused such positions and consequently earned praise from other scholars for it.

In this paper I will examine the lives of three fifteenth-century historians, al-Maqrīzī, al-‘Aynī, and Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī. The story of these men offers us a case study of the dynamics of Chamberlain’s arena of scholarly competition for access to the military elite, as well as the workings of Mamluk patronage practices. We may also investigate the ways in which the manipulation—or lack thereof—of patronage opportunities affected not only the careers of all three historians, but also their relationships to and with each other and, ultimately, their writing of history, the ramifications of which are perhaps most significant for scholars today.

©Middle East Documentation Center. The University of Chicago.

¹I use *manṣib* rather than *manṣab*, the form used by Chamberlain in his *Knowledge and Social Practice* (Cambridge, 1994), for the same concept—a salaried position or stipendiary post; for a discussion of the differences between the readings, see Li Guo, “Mamluk Historiographic Studies: The State of the Art,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 1 (1997): 24-25, esp. note 46.



©1999 by Anne F. Broadbridge.

DOI: [10.6082/M1WW7FS6](https://doi.org/10.6082/M1WW7FS6). (<https://doi.org/10.6082/M1WW7FS6>)

DOI of Vol. III: [10.6082/M1765CFB](https://doi.org/10.6082/M1765CFB). See <https://doi.org/10.6082/ZJY1-1449> to download the full volume or individual articles. This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY). See <http://mamluk.uchicago.edu/msr.html> for more information about copyright and open access.

THE EARLY YEARS

Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī al-Maqrīzī was born into a scholarly family in Cairo in 766/1364. As a youth he studied *ḥadīth*, *fiqh*, grammar, and *qirā’āt*, in addition to history and *adab*; soon he was competent enough to practice jurisprudence in the Ḥanafī tradition. In his early twenties, however, al-Maqrīzī renounced his affiliation with the Ḥanafīs and became a Shāfi‘ī like his father. The reasons for this change are unclear, although they may be related to his father’s death in 786/1384. Ayman Fu’ād Sayyid suggests that al-Maqrīzī became aware of the strategic preeminence of the Shāfi‘ī school in Cairene intellectual and political circles and changed his *madhhab* accordingly.² Sayyid’s source for this information, however, is not made clear; nor does this explain the lifelong bias that al-Maqrīzī maintained against Ḥanafīs, which was strong enough to prompt Ibn Taghrībirdī to point out its presence in al-Maqrīzī’s writing.³

The Ḥanafī scholar who was to become one of al-Maqrīzī’s rivals and academic foes, Maḥmūd al-‘Aynṭābī or al-‘Aynī, was born in ‘Aynṭāb (modern Gaziantep) in 762/1360, also into a scholarly family. Like al-Maqrīzī, al-‘Aynī studied history, *adab*, and the Islamic religious sciences; in addition, he was fluent in Turkish and knew a degree of Persian.⁴ Al-‘Aynī’s knowledge of several languages was to make a significant difference to his later career.

The youngest of the three scholars, Aḥmad ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī was born in 773/1372 in Egypt, the only son of one of the Kārimī merchants, Nūr al-Dīn ‘Alī. Ibn Ḥajar and his younger sister Sitt al-Rakb were left orphans by the time Ibn Ḥajar was four years old. Consequently, they were brought up and educated by a guardian, al-Zakī al-Khurūbī. Ibn Ḥajar began studies at an early age and was a precocious student; as a child he went to Mecca with his guardian, and in his twenties embarked on a study tour in Egypt, followed by another in Yemen and the Hijaz. Ibn Ḥajar also visited Syria more than once; indeed, on one of his trips to the Syrian cities in 802-3/1400 he was forced to make a hurried retreat to Cairo

²Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawā’iz wa-al-I’tibār fī Dhikr al-Khiṭaṭ wa-al-Āthār*, ed. Ayman Fu’ād Sayyid (London, 1995), 39.

³Ibn Taghrībirdī, *al-Manhal al-Ṣāfi fī-al-Mustawfā ba’da al-Wāfi*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥammad Amīn (Cairo, 1984), 1:417.

⁴Al-‘Aynī, *al-Sayf al-Muḥannad fī Sīrat al-Malik al-Mu’ayyad*, ed. Fahīm Muḥammad Shaltūt (Cairo, 1967). Several pieces of circumstantial evidence in the text suggest that al-‘Aynī knew some Persian: he was familiar with Firdawsī’s “Shāhnāmah” (109) and the work of Bayhaqī (127); he also included a long list of Persian royal titles in the text (5). Also see his analysis of the name “Jārkas” as a Persian phrase (“four people” *chahār kas*) in Ibn Taghrībirdī, *al-Manhal al-Ṣāfi*, 4:207.



for fear of the approaching armies of Timur.⁵ He later visited Yemen and the Hijaz several more times.

While Ibn Ḥajar was travelling in search of knowledge, so was al-‘Aynī, whose itinerary led him south from his home city of ‘Ayntāb. It was in Jerusalem in 788/1386 that al-‘Aynī made the first contact that gained him an entrée into Cairene academic circles. This was the Ḥanafī shaykh al-Sayrāmī, then visiting Jerusalem, who was head of the Zāhirīyah *madrasah* and *khānqāh* complex in Cairo, which had just been established by al-Zāhir Barqūq. Al-Sayrāmī had emigrated from Central Asia to eastern Anatolia, where he settled in Maridin before Barqūq invited him to Cairo. Thus he may have shared linguistic and cultural ties with al-‘Aynī, although the sources are not explicit. As the spiritual leader of an institution with ties to the highest level of the ruling elite, al-Sayrāmī was a good contact for promising young members of the ‘*ulamā*’. Al-‘Aynī must have made a favorable impression on the older scholar, for al-Sayrāmī invited the twenty-six year old to accompany him to Cairo. There al-‘Aynī became one of the Sufis of the Zāhirīyah; he also took classes and became better known in Cairene circles.⁶

The third of these historians, al-Maqrīzī, was also embarking upon his career in 788/1386. He began as a scribe in the chancellery, as had his father, and was subsequently designated deputy *qādī*. Following this he became the *imām* at the mosque of al-Ḥākīm and the *khaṭīb* at the mosque of ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ and at the *madrasah* of Sultan Ḥasan. We may assume that it was prior to and during this period that al-Maqrīzī was making some of those personal contacts necessary to the achievement of financial and material success within the parameters of the Mamluk patronage system. However it is difficult to identify the exact channels through which al-Maqrīzī may have gained access to the higher levels of patrons, or to the sultan himself, although we may set forth some suggestions.

One possibility is Ibn Khaldūn, who arrived in Cairo in 784/1382 and whom Barqūq made Chief Mālikī *qādī* in 786/1384. Competition soon caused Ibn Khaldūn to lose the position—his enemies succeeded in ousting him in 787/1385, and he was only reappointed years later in 801/1399. Nevertheless, he managed to remain an instructor at several institutions in Cairo, and was appointed the head of the Baybars *khānqāh*, which was arguably the most important Sufi establishment in Egypt.⁷ An important player on the academic and intellectual scene, Ibn Khaldūn

⁵Muḥammad Kamāl al-Dīn ‘Izz al-Dīn, *al-Tārīkh wa-al-Manhaj al-Ta’rīkhī li-Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī* (Beirut, 1404/1984), 129.

⁶Ibn Taghrībirdī, *al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah fī Mulūk Miṣr wa-al-Qāhirah* (Beirut, 1992), 15:287.

⁷M. Talbi makes this claim, although the reasons for it are not specified. Was it merely because of the *khānqāh*’s link to the illustrious al-Zāhir Baybars? Was it the relative age of the *khānqāh*, established at the beginning of Mamluk patronage of Sufi institutions? See M. Talbi, “Ibn Khaldun,”



was not only acquainted with the sultan, but also had other patrons from among the amirs, including the amir Altunbughā al-Jubānī or al-Jawbānī, who had first introduced him to Barqūq.⁸ It is difficult to determine the exact degree of closeness between al-Maqrīzī and Ibn Khaldūn; we do know, however, that al-Maqrīzī studied history with the Mālikī scholar and learned the use of different instruments for measuring time from him. He later repaid his teacher by writing a lengthy biography of him.⁹

Al-Maqrīzī may also have reached the higher levels of the royal court through his contact with Yashbak al-Sha‘bānī, the *dawādār* and tutor to Barqūq’s son Faraj. Al-Maqrīzī seems to have known Yashbak fairly well, although it is unclear how they met.¹⁰ At any rate, in some way al-Maqrīzī gained access to the very pinnacle of the patronage hierarchy. Al-Sakhāwī reports that al-Maqrīzī was on good terms with Sultan Barqūq, while Ibn Taghrībirdī goes so far as to describe al-Maqrīzī as one of Barqūq’s boon companions (*nadīm*, pl. *nudamā’*).¹¹ Thus far, al-Maqrīzī’s story is one of successful advancement within the framework of patronage practices, and achievement of not only a respectable amount of professional success, but also direct access to the sultan himself.

Ibn Ḥajar, meanwhile, was still involved in his travels. As for al-‘Aynī, despite al-Sayrāmī’s initial favor, the young ‘Ayntabī ran into trouble after the shaykh’s death in 790/1388 when Barqūq’s *amīr akhūr*, Jārkas al-Khalīlī, attempted to run the scholar out of Cairo.¹² It seems that the two personalities clashed, for al-‘Aynī characterized Jārkas as proud, arrogant, and tyrannical—a man pleased by his own opinion.¹³ Al-‘Aynī had managed to make enough contacts among the ‘*ulamā’* to be saved from physical expulsion from the city through the intervention of one of his teachers, the well-known Sirāj al-Dīn al-Bulqīnī, but nevertheless decided to leave for a short time.¹⁴ After a brief stint teaching in Damascus, where he was appointed *muḥtasib* through the auspices of the amir Baṭā’,¹⁵ al-‘Aynī returned to

The Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd ed., 3:827.

⁸Ibn Taghrībirdī, *al-Manhal al-Ṣāfi*, 7:208.

⁹Al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw’ al-Lāmi’ li-Ahl al-Qarn al-Tāsi’* (Cairo, [n.d.]), 2:24. Also see Aḥmad al-Jalīlī, “Tarjamāt Ibn Khaldūn lil-Maqrīzī,” *Majallat al-Majma’ al-‘Ilmī al-‘Irāqī* 13 (1965): 215-42.

¹⁰Al-Sakhāwī goes so far as to report a rumor that al-Maqrīzī entrusted Yashbak with an unspecified amount of money at an unspecified date, although other sources make no mention of this. See *al-Ḍaw’*, 2:22.

¹¹Ibn Taghrībirdī, *al-Nujūm*, 14:270.

¹²Al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw’*, 10:132.

¹³Ibn Taghrībirdī, quoting al-‘Aynī, in *al-Manhal al-Ṣāfi*, 4:207.

¹⁴Al-‘Aynī, *al-Sayf al-Muḥannad*, editor’s introduction, page h.

¹⁵Al-‘Aynī, *‘Iqd al-Jumān fī Ta’rīkh Ahl al-Zamān*, ed. ‘Abd al-Rāziq al-Ṭanṭāwī al-Qarmūt



Cairo, presumably older and wiser. There he lost no time in establishing ties with four amirs: Qalamtāy al-‘Uthmānī, Taghrībirdī al-Qurdamī or al-Quramī, Jakm min ‘Awḍ and Tamarbughā al-Mashṭūb; al-‘Aynī went on the pilgrimage with this last amir. Of these four men only one—Jakm min ‘Awḍ—seems to have attained any significant station.¹⁶ Jakm was one of Barqūq’s *khāṣṣakīyah*, and was eventually promoted to the position of *dawādār*. Following Barqūq’s death in 801/1399, he rebelled against Barqūq’s son and successor al-Nāṣir Faraj (801-15/1399-1412) and set himself up as an independent ruler in Northern Syria and Southern Anatolia in 809/1406-7; shortly thereafter, however, all his promise went for naught when he was killed in battle by the Ak Kuyunlu Turkmen. Despite his ultimate defeat and death, however, it was clear during Barqūq’s reign that Jakm was a powerful man, and as such a desirable patron for a talented and ambitious scholar like al-‘Aynī.¹⁷

THE MUHTASIB INCIDENT

Al-‘Aynī and al-Maqrīzī came into direct competition during the two years of the famous *muhtasib* incident. In Rajab 801/March 1399, Barqūq appointed al-Maqrīzī *muhtasib* of Cairo, an important and prestigious *manṣib*, the duties of which included the regulation of weights, money, prices, public morals, and the cleanliness of public places, as well as the supervision of schools, instruction, teachers and students, and attention to public baths, general public safety and the circulation of traffic. In addition to being prestigious, the position of *muhtasib* offered direct contact with the sultan.¹⁸ Like many such *manṣibs*, however, it was not a particularly stable position; *muhtasibs* could be and frequently were appointed, dismissed, reappointed, and redissmised several times in a short period.

Indeed, this is what happened to al-Maqrīzī. His acquaintance with Barqūq had suggested a promising career; he must, presumably, have been troubled on both personal and professional levels by the death of his patron in Shawwāl 801/June 1399. Within the Mamluk system, the death of a sultan provoked shifts in the power relations within the military elite and, by extension, could alter the patronage relations between the elite and the ‘*ulamā*’. Barqūq’s death, therefore,

(Cairo, 1985), 2:18.

¹⁶Qalamtāy al-‘Uthmānī, Taghrībirdī al-Qurdamī or al-Quramī and Tamarbughā al-Mashṭūb were all amirs of ten under Barqūq. See Ibn Taghrībirdī, *al-Manhal al-Ṣāfi*, 4:54 (Taghrībirdī al-Quramī); 4:100 (Tamarbughā al-Mashṭūb). For Qalamtāy al-‘Uthmānī, see Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk li-Ma’rifat Duwal al-Mulūk*, ed. Sa’īd ‘Āshūr, 3:2:740. For Jakm min ‘Awḍ, see Ibn Taghrībirdī, *al-Manhal al-Ṣāfi*, 4:313-22.

¹⁷Al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw’*, 10:132.

¹⁸Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-A‘shā fī Ṣinā‘at al-Inshā’* (Beirut, 1407/1987), 4:38.



meant that the position of *muḥtasib* lay open to the immediate ambitions of other scholars and their patrons.

It was at this moment that al-‘Aynī’s cultivation of the ruling elite began to show fruit. In Dhū al-Ḥijjah 801/August 1399 al-‘Aynī replaced al-Maqrīzī in the post of *muḥtasib* through the intervention of none other than the amir Jakm.¹⁹ Historians, both contemporary and modern, view this moment as the starting point for the antipathy between the two scholars. Ibn Taghrībirdī states, “From that day on, there was hostility between the two men until they both died.”²⁰ Al-‘Aynī did not enjoy the post for long, for one month after his appointment he was dismissed (Muḥarram 802/September 1399) and reappointed two months later in Rabī‘ I/November. He managed to remain *muḥtasib* until Jumādā I 802/February 1400, when al-Maqrīzī succeeded in replacing him for almost a year. Then, again by the intervention of the amir Jakm, al-‘Aynī resumed the post in Rabī‘ I 803/October 1400, which marked the end of al-Maqrīzī’s brief *muḥtasib* career. Al-‘Aynī himself did not remain *muḥtasib* for long, for he was dismissed once again four months later in Rajab 803/February 1401.

It was also during this period that the struggle for power between Jakm, al-‘Aynī’s patron, and Yashbak al-Sha‘bānī, al-Maqrīzī’s second patron after the late Sultan Barqūq, was approaching its height. In brief, this struggle included the imprisonment of Yashbak in 803/1401, while Jakm took his position as *dawādār*, then Yashbak’s release and the imprisonment in turn of Jakm in 805/1402, and culminated in a pact that included both amirs, the amir and future sultan Shaykh, and Kara Yūsuf of the Kara Kuyunlu Turkmen, all of whom attempted but ultimately failed to overthrow al-Nāṣir Faraj in 807/1405.²¹ If we assume that this rivalry extended to the protégés of the respective amirs, this would help account in part for the rapidity with which the two scholars replaced each other as *muḥtasib*. Certainly the hostility that generated from the *muḥtasib* incident was to have discernible repercussions in the later works of both al-‘Aynī and al-Maqrīzī, particularly in their treatment of each other.

Meanwhile Ibn Ḥajar, who was travelling during al-‘Aynī’s and al-Maqrīzī’s *muḥtasib* struggles, returned to Cairo in 806/1403-4. He seems to have spent the next ten years establishing himself in Cairene intellectual society under the new order of Barqūq’s son and successor, al-Nāṣir Faraj. This he did through a number

¹⁹His appointment was through Jakm alone, according to al-Maqrīzī in *Kitāb al-Sulūk* (Cairo, 1973), 3:3:1038. According to Ibn Taghrībirdī in *al-Nujūm*, 15:287, it was through all three amirs: Jakm min ‘Awd, Qalamtāy al-‘Uthmānī, and Taghrībirdī al-Qurdamī.

²⁰Ibn Taghrībirdī, *al-Nujūm*, 15:287.

²¹See Ibn Taghrībirdī, *al-Manhal al-Ṣāfi*, 4:313-19.



of different positions, including *mufī* of Dār al-‘Adl in 811/1408-9, a post he held until his death.²²

After the *muḥtasib* incident, al-‘Aynī’s career remained relatively stable, and even included a brief stint in the lucrative and prestigious position of *nāzir al-aḥbās* (overseer of pious endowments) in 804/1401. Al-‘Aynī spent the next several years teaching in various *madrāsahs* in Cairo, then succeeded in being appointed again, briefly, as *muḥtasib* and *nāzir al-aḥbās* near the end of Faraj’s reign.²³ He was appointed and dismissed from the latter post several more times during his long career, which is reflected in the wealth of economic detail he includes in his chronicle.

As for al-Maqrīzī, despite his failure to remain in the position of *muḥtasib*, he should be given full credit for the success of his interactions with patrons during this period. Throughout the reign of Faraj, al-Maqrīzī managed to maintain some degree of intimacy with the new sultan, if not as close as that which he had enjoyed with Barqūq and in spite of the rebellious career of Yashbak al-Sha‘bānī. In 810/1408 al-Maqrīzī accompanied Faraj to Damascus. There the sultan appointed the scholar instructor of *ḥadīth* in the Ashrafīyah and the Iqbālīyah *madrāsahs*, and also made him the supervisor of *waqf* at the Nūrī hospital. At the same time Faraj offered al-Maqrīzī the position of Chief Shāfi‘ī *qāḍī* in Damascus, but he refused it.²⁴ The reasons for this are unclear. Perhaps al-Maqrīzī had grown disillusioned with competition, the “corruptive” influence of government, and the patronage system in general, although we must wonder why, since he was doing well according to the norms of the day. Or he may have been reluctant to take on an office that throughout the course of Islamic history had been associated with corruption and hypocrisy. It is possible that he was attracted by the cultural ideal of the historian who abandons political involvement and worldly obsessions in order to produce untainted history, and thus was seeking a more scholarly form of success, uncorrupted by political ties. Al-Sakhāwī suggests in his biography: “Then he relinquished [all] that (i.e., his teaching posts) and abided (*aqāma*) in his home city, obsessed by the occupation of history.”²⁵

In 810/1408 al-Maqrīzī returned to Cairo, and appears to have devoted himself to fulfilling the academic ideal of the scholar.²⁶ Muḥammad Muṣṭafá Ziyādah

²²Muḥammad Kamāl al-Dīn ‘Izz al-Dīn, *al-Manhaj*, 152.

²³Al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw’*, 10:132. Also al-‘Aynī, *al-Sayf al-Muhammad*, editor’s introduction, page h.

²⁴Al-Sakhāwī in *al-Ḍaw’* reports that al-Nāṣir Faraj offered al-Maqrīzī the *qāḍī*ship several times (2:22); Ibn Taghrībirdī in *al-Manhal al-Ṣāfi* claims only once (1:417).

²⁵Al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw’*, 2:22.

²⁶Ibid.



suggests generously that the time-consuming demands of both a professional academic and an administrative career were a significant factor in al-Maqrīzī's eventual decision to turn away from the exigencies of the competitive arena.²⁷ While a desire for more leisure time in which to write history may have been a factor in al-Maqrīzī's withdrawal from the fifteenth-century academic rat race, additional evidence suggests otherwise, particularly after the death of Faraj in 815/1412, and the accession, first of the caliph al-Musta'īn (815/1412), then of al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh (815-24/1412-21).

Al-Sakhāwī presents two interesting pieces of information. The first is that al-Maqrīzī versified a *sīrah* of Shaykh written by Ibn Nāhid (d. 841/1438). Al-Sakhāwī says nothing about its reception at court, however—if indeed it was received at all.²⁸ That al-Maqrīzī would take such a step, however, casts doubt upon the image of his voluntary withdrawal from court. Al-Sakhāwī also credits al-Maqrīzī with attaining a teaching position in *ḥadīth* at the Mu'ayyadīyah. This refers, presumably, to the Mu'ayyadī mosque complex, which also included a *madrāsah*, mausoleum, and *khānqāh*. Al-Maqrīzī mentions the complex frequently in *Kitāb al-Sulūk*, although not at all in the *Khīṭaṭ*. Nevertheless in no place does al-Maqrīzī declare that he received a teaching appointment there, although he does take care to identify those scholars who did, among them Ibn Ḥajar. Nor does Ibn Taghrībirdī state that al-Maqrīzī taught at the Mu'ayyadīyah in his biography of his mentor.

We are left, therefore, with a question. What did al-Maqrīzī do after his refusal of the position of *qāḍī* in Damascus? Did he indeed voluntarily withdraw from the world? Perhaps, although the testament of Ibn Taghrībirdī, reporting years later for 841/1437, suggests otherwise:

. . . Shaikh Taqī ad-Dīn (God have mercy on him) had certain aberrations for which he was well known, though he is to be forgiven for this; for he was one of those whom we have met who were perfect in their calling; he was the historian of his time whom no one could come near; I say this despite my knowledge of the learned historians who were his contemporaries. But with all this is the fact that he was far removed from government circles; the Sultan did not bring him near to himself, although he was an interesting conversationalist and a pleasant intimate companion; in fact al-Malik al-Zāhir Barqūq had brought him near, made him a boon companion

²⁷Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Ziyādah, "Ta'rīkh Ḥayāt al-Maqrīzī," in *Dirāsāt 'an al-Maqrīzī* (Cairo, 1971), 16.

²⁸Al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw'*, 2:23.



and appointed him market inspector of Cairo in the latter days of his rule. But when al-Malik al-Zāhir died, he (al-Maqrīzī) had no success with the rulers who came after him; they kept him away without showing him any favor, so he on his part took to registering their iniquities and infamies—"and one who does evil cannot take offense."²⁹

This suggests that al-Maqrīzī's isolation from royal circles may not have been due to an active desire for solitude on his part, but rather to a degree of failure in his attempt to compete for the patronage of powerful men. This later manifested itself in bitter remarks, noticeable biases in his work, and other behavior of the "sour grapes" variety. Of the trio of Cairene historians writing in the first half of the fifteenth-century—al-Maqrīzī, Ibn Ḥajar and al-ʿAynī—al-Maqrīzī is decidedly the most critical of Shaykh and, later, al-Ashraf Barsbāy (r. 825-41/1422-38), neither of whom favored him. Al-Maqrīzī called Shaykh:

. . . avaricious, parsimonious, and niggardly, even in eating; opinionated, irascible, harsh, envious, evil-eyed, addicted openly to various abominations, using obscenity and curses . . . the greatest cause of the ruin of Egypt and Syria . . .³⁰

Writing later, Ibn Taghrībirdī disagreed with al-Maqrīzī's assessment and responded with, "I could with justice refute all that he says, but there is no call for me to do so; and I refrain from blackening paper and wasting time."³¹

Al-Maqrīzī was hardly any more complimentary to Barsbāy:

His days were [of] calm and tranquillity, except that there were tales about him; [tales] of avarice, stinginess and greed, cowardice, tyranny, distrust and aversion to the people, as well as . . . capriciousness of events and a lack of stability, of the likes of which we had never heard. Ruin prevailed in Egypt and Syria, as well as a scarcity of money; people became poor, and the behavior of rulers and governors worsened, despite the attainment of

²⁹Ibn Taghrībirdī, *History of Egypt 1382-1467*, trans. William Popper, University of California Publications in Semitic Philology (Berkeley, 1958), 18:143. Gaston Wiet has already pointed out the usefulness of Ibn Taghrībirdī's habit of commenting on the opinions of al-Maqrīzī, his teacher and mentor in the historical field. See Gaston Wiet, "L'historien Abul-Maḥāsīn," *Bulletin de l'Institut d'Égypte* 10 (1930): 102-3.

³⁰Ibn Taghrībirdī, *History of Egypt*, trans. Popper, 17:87.

³¹Ibid.



[Barsbāy's] hopes and goals, and the subjugation of his enemies and their death at the hands of others, [therefore] know that God has mastery of all things.³²

Ibn Taghrībirdī again took his teacher to task for his criticism, saying:

As for the faults ascribed to him (Barsbāy) by Shaikh Taqī ad-Dīn al-Maqrīzī in his history, I shall not say he was biased in this, but I would quote somebody's words:

And who is the man of whom every trait meets approval?
It is glory enough that the faults of a man can be
counted.

It would be more fitting from various standpoints to have withheld these shameful remarks about him.³³

While an increasingly frustrated al-Maqrīzī was building up bile and bitterness against Shaykh and later Barsbāy, al-'Aynī's career also took an active downward plunge when he was "tested" (*umtuḥina*) at the beginning of Shaykh's reign. It was not long, however, before he was later restored to favor.³⁴ Unfortunately, both the reason for and nature of this "test" remain unclear, as does the way in which al-'Aynī regained royal approval. Nevertheless, al-'Aynī managed to overcome his awkward beginning with Shaykh, and within a short span of time had become one of the sultan's boon companions. It was during al-Mu'ayyad's reign that al-'Aynī was again made *nāzīr al-aḥbās*, a post he was to hold—except for a few brief periods—until 853/1449.³⁵ Al-'Aynī's fluency in Turkish was a distinct asset, which he used to his advantage, for in addition to academic and financial appointments, al-Mu'ayyad made the 'Ayntābī native his ambassador to the Qaramanids at Konya in 823/1420.³⁶

By this time, al-'Aynī seems to have acquired a degree of nimbleness in maneuvering within the patronage system, as well as an awareness of the importance of remaining in royal favor. One time-honored method for solidifying one's position was direct praise, which al-'Aynī employed in his biography of al-Mu'ayyad,

³²Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk*, 4:2:1066.

³³Ibn Taghrībirdī, *History of Egypt*, trans. Popper, 18:157.

³⁴W. Marçais, "al-'Aynī," *Et*², 2:790; also see al-Sakhāwī, *al-Daw'*, 10:132.

³⁵Ibn Taghrībirdī, *History of Egypt*, trans. Popper, 19:118; al-Sakhāwī, *al-Daw'*, 10:132.

³⁶Al-'Aynī, *Iqd al-Jumān*, 1:377.



al-Sayf al-Muhannad fī Sīrat al-Malik al-Mu'ayyad.³⁷ In this one-volume prose work, al-'Aynī legitimized Shaykh by situating him within the context of universal history, Islamic history, and ancient Arab lineage, respectively.

Physical evidence of al-'Aynī's successful competition for patronage also exists in the form of the *madrasah* he commissioned to be built next to his house, which was near al-Azhar. The majority of endowed religious buildings constructed during the Mamluk period were sponsored either by the sultan and his family, or other high-ranking and wealthy members of the military elite. Some civilian officials in the administration also funded the construction and maintenance of smaller projects. As Chamberlain has pointed out, however, the '*ulamā*', by contrast, tended to be the beneficiaries of building projects, usually by obtaining a *manṣib* in the form of a teaching, financial or administrative post within a religious institution. Relatively fewer members of the '*ulamā*' endowed buildings. The exact date of construction of al-'Aynī's *madrasah* is unknown, but must have been during al-Mu'ayyad's reign, since, in a clear indication of his favor for al-'Aynī, the sultan himself had it restored and a dome added before his own death in 824/1421.³⁸

At the same time Ibn Ḥajar was also increasingly coming to Shaykh's attention. Ibn Ḥajar had been appointed *khaṭīb* at al-Azhar by 819/1416, and in 820/1417 was reading notices of the sultan's campaign in Anatolia to the populace at that mosque. In 822/1419 Shaykh asked Ibn Ḥajar as *mufī* of Dār al-'Adl to judge in the case of the Chief Shāfi'ī *qāḍī* al-Harawī, who had been accused of embezzlement. After Ibn Ḥajar's successful resolution of the case, he was appointed instructor of Shāfi'ī *fiqh* at the Mu'ayyadī mosque, which, unsurprisingly, was one of the two most important mosques of Shaykh's reign in terms of patronage (the other was al-Azhar).

After Shaykh's death in 824/1421 both al-'Aynī and Ibn Ḥajar remained in favor; al-Maqrīzī's career seems to have been going nowhere, as demonstrated by his apparent failure in the competitive arena. Al-'Aynī's professional life in particular only improved during the brief reign of al-Mu'ayyad's successor, al-Zāhir Ṭaṭar (824/1421), and reached its height during the reign of Barsbāy. It was under Barsbāy's rule that al-'Aynī's personal relationship with a Mamluk ruler became most developed, and it is this reign more than any other that contemporary historians cite when describing his closeness to the sultans in general. Continuing in what seems to have been a profitable exercise in praise, al-'Aynī wrote biographies of both Ṭaṭar and Barsbāy. Again his command of Turkish proved useful, for he translated a legal treatise of al-Qudīrī into Turkish for Ṭaṭar, and would read

³⁷See footnote 4.

³⁸Layla Ali Ibrahim and Bernard O'Kane, "The Madrasa of Badr ad-Dīn Al-'Aynī and Its Tiled Mihrāb," *Annales islamologiques* 24 (1988): 267.



history aloud to Barsbāy in Arabic and then explain it in Turkish.³⁹ Later al-Sakhāwī wrote:

Our teacher Badr ad-Dīn al-‘Aynī used to lecture on history and related subjects before al-Ashraf Barsbāy and others. (His lectures impressed) al-Ashraf so much that he made something like the following statement: “Islam is known only through him.” Al-‘Aynī and others, such as Ibn Nāhid and others, compiled biographies of the kings . . . since they knew that they liked to have it done.⁴⁰

The relationship between al-‘Aynī and Barsbāy was not merely that of sovereign and entertaining historian, however, for it was to al-‘Aynī that Barsbāy turned for advice on religious matters, to the extent that he reportedly said on more than one occasion, “If not for al-‘Ayntābī there would be something suspect in our Islam” (*law lā al-‘ayntābī la-kāna fī islāminā shay’*).⁴¹ Nor was this the extent of al-‘Aynī’s success within the outlines of established patronage practices, for he was made Chief Ḥanafī *qāḍī* in 829/1426. It was also during Barsbāy’s reign that al-‘Aynī became the first to hold the offices of *muḥtasib*, *nāzir al-aḥbās*, and Chief Ḥanafī *qāḍī* at the same time in 835/1431.⁴²

In addition to engaging the sultan with anecdotes and instructing him on his religious rights and obligations, al-‘Aynī advised Barsbāy on delicate legal matters.⁴³ Barsbāy also relied at least once on al-‘Aynī to substitute for him in greeting foreign dignitaries, perhaps in part because of his competence in several languages.⁴⁴ Ibn Taghrībirdī provides an interesting image of al-‘Aynī’s didactic role when he writes:

. . . frequently he [al-‘Aynī] would read in his [Barsbāy’s] presence the histories of earlier rulers and their good deeds, recounting to him their wars, troubles, expeditions and trials; he would explain this to him in Turkish and elaborate on it eloquently, then began to make him desire to do good deeds and look into the welfare of the

³⁹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk*, 4:2:698; al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw’*, 10:132.

⁴⁰ Al-Sakhāwī, “al-‘Iḥṣān bi-al-Tawdīḥ li-Man Ḍamma Ahl al-Tārīkh,” ed. and trans. Franz Rosenthal, in *A History of Muslim Historiography* (Leiden, 1952), 259.

⁴¹ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *al-Nujūm*, 15:287; al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw’*, 10:132.

⁴² Al-‘Aynī, *Iqd al-Jumān*, 2:21. This occurred considerably before the 846/1442-4 date cited by Marçais in his *EF* article (1:790-91).

⁴³ See footnote 74.

⁴⁴ Al-‘Aynī, *Iqd al-Jumān*, 2:21.



Mohammedans; he deterred him many times from acts of injustice. . . . And because of what he heard through al-‘Ainī’s reading of history to him, al-Ashraf could dispense with the council of the amirs in regard to important matters, for he became expert through listening to the experiences of past rulers.

. . . al-Ashraf when he became Sultan was uneducated and young in comparison with the rulers among the Turks who had been trained in slavery; for at that time he was something over forty years old, inexperienced in affairs, and had not been put to the test. Al-‘Ainī by reading history to him educated him and taught him matters which he had been incapable of settling previously.

. . . For this reason al-‘Ainī was his greatest boon companion and the one nearest to him, despite the fact that he never mixed in government affairs; on the contrary, his sittings with him were devoted only to the reading of history, annals and the like. . . .⁴⁵

Ibn Ḥajar’s relationship with Barsbāy does not seem to have been of the same personal quality. Ibn Ḥajar possessed an enormous amount of what Chamberlain has referred to as “cultural capital”; he was, by all reports, extraordinarily learned in a wide variety of subjects, highly intelligent, and extremely prolific.⁴⁶ He acquired significant *manṣibs* in the reigns of five successive sultans, and spent years in the highest and most prestigious *manṣib* in Mamluk realms, that of Chief Shāfi‘ī *qādī* in Egypt. Nevertheless, although it was Barsbāy who appointed Ibn Ḥajar to the position in 827/1424, the scholar does not appear to have been one of the sultan’s close personal friends. Certainly Ibn Ḥajar was hampered by a linguistic barrier, for unlike al-‘Aynī he did not know Turkish, and at times went so far as to rebuke those who spoke Turkish to him.⁴⁷ Chamberlain has also pointed out that many ‘*ulamā*’ lived in a certain “moral middle ground.”⁴⁸ Muḥammad Kamāl ‘Izz al-Dīn depicts Ibn Ḥajar as a man conflicted about his employment as a *qādī*, troubled by the demands of being simultaneously just and politic.⁴⁹ Certainly this tension emerged in periodic conflicts with more than one sultan.⁵⁰

⁴⁵Ibn Taghrībirdī, *History of Egypt*, trans. Popper, 18:158.

⁴⁶Chamberlain, *Knowledge*, 6.

⁴⁷‘Izz al-Dīn, *al-Manhaj*, 161.

⁴⁸Chamberlain, *Knowledge*, 104.

⁴⁹‘Izz al-Dīn, *al-Manhaj*, 158.

⁵⁰See al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk*, 4:3:1181-83, 1203; al-‘Aynī, *‘Iqd al-Jumān*, 2:372 (quoted below).



RIVALRIES

The relationship between Ibn Ḥajar and al-‘Aynī, both major figures for over twenty years, both successful competitors for patronage, was a changeable one. The two scholars kept up a certain amount of poetic competition, and used the occasion of the collapse of a minaret from the Mu‘ayyadī mosque in 821/1418-19 to make fun of one another in verse. This poetic rivalry goes unmentioned by either scholar or by al-Maqrīzī, although it emerges both in Ibn Taghrībirdī’s *Nujūm* and in works as far removed from Cairo as the *Ṣidq al-Akhhbār* of Ibn Sabāṭ (d. 926/1520), who lived on the northern Syrian coast.⁵¹ This was only the forerunner of a later, more serious rivalry between Ibn Ḥajar and al-‘Aynī over their differing interpretations of the *Ṣahīh* of al-Bukhārī. Although both scholars had their supporters, Ibn Ḥajar can be viewed as the ultimate victor with his *Fath al-Bārī fī Sharḥ al-Bukhārī*, as well as his *Intiqād al-I‘tirād*, a critique of al-‘Aynī’s critique of *Fath al-Bārī*. Relations between the two sometimes deteriorated significantly, most notably in the period directly preceding 26 Ṣafar 833/24 November 1429, on which date both men were simultaneously removed from their posts as *qādīs*. Ibn Ḥajar provides no explanation, but al-‘Aynī is anxious to point out that the dismissal not only was not his fault, but did not actually impair his association with Barsbāy; in doing so, he inadvertently indicates the tense relationship he had with Ibn Ḥajar:

On Thursday, 26th Ṣafar, the *qādī* ‘Alam al-Dīn Ṣāliḥ al-Bulqīnī was granted a robe, and he became the Chief Shāfi‘ī *qādī* in Egypt, replacing the *qādī* Shihāb al-Dīn Ibn Ḥajar, by virtue of his dismissal (*‘azlih*), and likewise ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Tafahnī was granted a robe, and he became the Chief [Ḥanafī] *qādī*, replacing the author [of this book, *musatṭirih*, i.e., al-‘Aynī] by virtue of his dismissal. The reason for that was the effort of some enemies with (*‘inda*) al-Malik al-Ashraf, [saying] that these two *qādīs* would not cease fighting, nor agree, such that the interests of the Muslims were lost between them. They [these ill-wishers] found no way [to achieve] the dismissal of the author [except by] this calumny; thus the dismissal happened because of this.⁵² The Sultan spoke to me about

⁵¹Ibn Taghrībirdī, *al-Nujūm*, 13:225; also see Ibn Sabāṭ, *Ṣidq al-Akhhbār* (Tripoli, Lebanon, 1993), 2:775-76.

⁵²The text seems to be corrupt: *lam yajidū ṭarīqan fī ‘azli musatṭirihī ilá hādhā al-iftirā’*.



that and said: "I did not dismiss you for a matter that required dismissal, nor because of a legitimate accusation, but the situation is thus."⁵³

So, too, both men were not loath to point out weaknesses or physical infirmities in one another. When in that same year al-‘Aynī fell off his donkey and broke his leg, Ibn Ḥajar took care to mention it in his chronicle.⁵⁴ Later al-‘Aynī replied in kind by referring to the fatigue Ibn Ḥajar felt when visiting the prince Muḥammad ibn Jaqmaq. Such visits forced the elderly scholar to climb up not only the steps to the citadel but also additional steps within it to Muḥammad’s elevated apartments.⁵⁵ Nevertheless relations between the two scholars at other times seem to have been good, so much so that, when both men accompanied Barsbāy during his campaign to Āmid in 836/1433, al-‘Aynī invited Ibn Ḥajar to be his houseguest in ‘Ayntāb for the ‘Īd al-Fiṭr.⁵⁶

Nor was sporadic petty griping merely a private matter between these two men. The outsider, al-Maqrīzī, was similarly prone to such tendencies—with one exception. Al-Maqrīzī’s opinion of Ibn Ḥajar seems to have been very high; in no place does he utter a word against him, and when possible al-Maqrīzī takes the time to praise Ibn Ḥajar’s remarkable learning.⁵⁷ Unfortunately for al-Maqrīzī, this high regard may not have been fully returned; rather, al-Sakhāwī reports that Ibn Ḥajar considered al-Maqrīzī to be a plagiarist, and condemned him for stealing the bulk of his *Khiṭaṭ* work from a neighbor, al-Awḥadī.⁵⁸ But it is unclear how much of this accusation was al-Sakhāwī’s opinion and how much Ibn Ḥajar’s own view.

At any rate, although he remained deferential to Ibn Ḥajar, al-Maqrīzī’s opinion of al-‘Aynī seems to have been poor. This can be glimpsed in al-Maqrīzī’s treatment of al-‘Aynī in *Kitāb al-Sulūk*, as well as in his lack of treatment of the ‘Ayntābī in the *Khiṭaṭ*. Nowhere in the *Khiṭaṭ* is al-‘Aynī’s *madrasah* mentioned, although its location near al-Azhar, the addition to it of its dome by al-Mu’ayyad, and its unusual Anatolian-influenced *mihrab* seem to make it worthy at least of mention. In his introduction to the work al-Maqrīzī states his intention of depicting the glories of past ages, that of the Fatimids in particular. Ayman Fu’ād Sayyid points

⁵³ Al-‘Aynī, *Iqd al-Jumān*, 372.

⁵⁴ Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā’ al-Ghumr bi-Abnā’ al-‘Umr*, ed. ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Bukhārī (Beirut, 1986), 8:204.

⁵⁵ Al-‘Aynī, *Iqd al-Jumān*, 617.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 431.

⁵⁷ See al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk*, 4:2:992.

⁵⁸ Al-Sakhāwī, “al-I’lān,” ed. and trans. Rosenthal, *Historiography*, 402.



out, however, that al-Maqrīzī departed noticeably from his own plan in later sections of the work—the text includes dates as late as 843/1439–40. Sayyid also reminds us that the *Khīṭaṭ* was compiled gradually throughout al-Maqrīzī’s lifetime, with a definitive edition composed near the end of his life after the completion of most of his other works.⁵⁹ It seems impossible that al-Maqrīzī would have been ignorant of the existence of al-‘Aynī’s *madrasah*.

Nor, since composition of the *Khīṭaṭ* spanned decades, does it seem plausible that he left these structures out because he had already completed the work. This cannot but prompt the question: What other buildings have been left out of the book? Did al-Maqrīzī’s personal opinion of their founders play any role in his selection of material? Or, if their omission were indeed a function of al-Maqrīzī’s preoccupation with the Fatimids, we must wonder what prompted that preoccupation. Was it al-Maqrīzī’s alleged descent from the Fatimids? Did he himself accept this lineage? Or did his status as a reclusive outsider in his own time have any influence on his preoccupation with a vanished historical age?

It is not my purpose to address these issues here, however, as they do not pertain directly to the subject at hand, namely al-Maqrīzī’s literary treatment of al-‘Aynī. Certainly the case seems clearer in *Kitāb al-Sulūk*. There, although most of al-Maqrīzī’s references to al-‘Aynī are circumspect notices of promotions or dismissals, hints of al-Maqrīzī’s dislike of al-‘Aynī emerge where issues of *ḥisbah* are concerned. In one reference to al-‘Aynī as *muḥtasib*, al-Maqrīzī states:

On Friday, Dhu’l-Hijja 7, there was a disgraceful occurrence. Bread was scarce in the markets; and when Badr ad-Dīn Maḥmūd al-‘Aynī, market inspector of Cairo, left his house to go to the citadel, the populace shouted at him, implored the amirs to come to their relief, and complained to them against the market inspector. In fear lest the people would stone him, he turned from the Boulevard and went up to the Citadel; he complained about them to the Sultan [Barsbāy], of whom he was a favorite, and to whom he used at night to read the histories of kings and translate them into Turkish for him. The Sultan was enraged and sent a party of amirs to Zuwaila Gate; they took possession of the entrances into the streets in order to seize the people. One of the slaves threw at an amir a stone which struck him; he was captured and beaten. Then a large number of people were seized and brought before the Sultan, who

⁵⁹Ayman Fu’ād Sayyid, “Remarques sur la compositions des *Ḥīṭat* de Maqrīzī d’après un manuscrit autographe,” *Hommages à la mémoire de Serge Sauneron, 1927-1976, II: Égypte post-pharaonique*, 231-58, Bibliothèque d’étude, 81:2 (Cairo, 1979), 240.



ordered them to be cut in two at the waist; but then he handed them over to the governor of the city who beat them, cut off their noses and ears, and imprisoned them on the eve of Saturday. In the morning they were reviewed before the Sultan, who set them free; they numbered twenty-two respected men, *sharifs* and merchants. Men's hearts were alienated by this, and tongues were loosed with imprecations and the like.⁶⁰

This passage is not directly critical of al-'Aynī, or at least, not at first glance. Indeed, Ibn Ḥajar seems much more critical in his description of the same incident when he writes:

On Dhū al-Ḥijjah 7, 828 [10 October], a group rose up against the *muhtasib*, who was the *qādī* Badr al-Dīn al-'Aynī, because of [his] negligence of the matter of the vendors, and the excessiveness of bread [prices] despite the cheapness of wheat.⁶¹

Al-'Aynī may indeed have been an inept *muhtasib*; his skill or lack thereof, however, is not the point here. Rather it is the opinions of his peers that are interesting, especially that of al-Maqrīzī, and especially when we note that in *al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah* Ibn Taghrībirdī provides a different perspective on the incident. After quoting al-Maqrīzī's entry, Ibn Taghrībirdī confirms that the information supplied is true, but then adds that al-Maqrīzī neglected to report that the mob did in fact stone al-'Aynī, thus justifying his complaint to the Sultan. Ibn Taghrībirdī goes on to explain that al-Maqrīzī omitted this detail because "He wished thereby to increase the vilification of him [al-'Aynī], for there was long-standing hostility between the two."⁶²

In another passage al-Maqrīzī's criticism is simultaneously more long-winded and more pronounced:

In the middle of this month (Ṣafar 829/December-January 1425-26), the price of wheat rose and one *irdabb* exceeded 300 *dirhams*; flour became scarce at the mills and [so did] bread in the markets. The matter became atrocious on the twenty-ninth [of the month] and people crowded to the bakeries asking for bread; and they

⁶⁰Ibn Taghrībirdī, *History of Egypt*, trans. Popper, 18:29; idem, *al-Nujūm*, 14:117-18; al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk*, 4:2:698.

⁶¹Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā'*, 8:77-78.

⁶²Ibn Taghrībirdī, *al-Nujūm*, 14:118; also idem, *History of Egypt*, trans. Popper, 18:29.



clamored to buy bread. Through this the souls of the bakers became miserly, and a *qadah* of *fūl* was offered for sale at four *dirhams*. For this there were many reasons: One of them is that al-Badr Maḥmūd al-‘Ayntābī tended to be lenient on the vendors, to the extent that it was as if there were no limitation on them in what they did, nor on the prices by which they sold their goods. So when al-Shashmānī⁶³ was appointed [*muḥtasib*], he terrorized the vendors and curbed them with severe blow[s]⁶⁴

And it happened in those days that there was destruction of a great many water buffalos and cattle, to the extent that [there was] a man who had 150 water buffaloes and all of them died. There remained no more than four water buffaloes, and we don’t know what happened to them. Milk, cheese, and butter [also] became scarce. Then in the middle of this month [?] winds blew,⁶⁵ [which] continued (*tawālat*) for more than ten days. The boats could not travel in the Nile, and the coast was laid bare of crops. News arrived of high prices in Gaza, Ramla, Jerusalem, Nablus and the coast, Damascus, Hārrān, and Hamāh, until the price of an Egyptian *ardab* [of grain] among them would exceed 1000 *dirhams*’ worth of copper (*alf dirham fulūsan*) if it were counted. News arrived of high prices in Upper Egypt; in the whole area wheat and wheat bread were scarcely to be found. Despite these disasters, the notables became greedy. Indeed when wheat reached 250 *dirhams* per *irdabb* some of the Amirs of One Thousand said: “I will only sell my wheat at 300 *dirhams* per *ardab*.” The Sultan forbade that any wheat be sold from his granaries because of the scarcity of what he had. People thought bad thoughts, and became agitated and angry. Cautiousness became strong, and greed increased. The wheat vendors kept what wheat they had, hoarding it, and hoped to sell earth (i.e., wheat) for pearls. All this, and the one in charge of the *ḥisbah* was far from [any] knowledge of it. And the long and short of it was what is said: “Tribulation piled up on one person.”⁶⁶

⁶³The amir Ināl al-Shashmānī was appointed *muḥtasib* in mid-Šafar 829, at the end of the period of inflation, Dhū al-Qa‘dah 828- Šafar 829; perhaps in an effort to stabilize the situation?

⁶⁴In this sentence the text seems to be corrupt: *fa-kādūhu (??) wa-taraka ‘iddatun minhum mā kāna yu‘ānīhi (??) min al-bay’*.

⁶⁵I could not make sense of this word: *muraysīyah? marīsīyah? murīsīyah?*

⁶⁶Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk*, 4:2:710-11.



That prices rose dramatically during those few months seems to be generally acknowledged, for Ibn Ḥajar, Ibn Taghrībirdī and al-‘Aynī himself also mention it. For each historian, however, the possible causes seem to differ: for al-Maqrīzī, as seen above, it is a combination of al-‘Aynī’s inefficiency and a number of natural disasters; for Ibn Ḥajar it is a similar combination of al-‘Aynī’s negligence and a plague of vermin in Syria.⁶⁷ Al-‘Aynī himself mentions both the inflation and the vermin but neglects to expand on his own actions,⁶⁸ while Ibn Taghrībirdī’s later contribution is little more than the transmission and critique of al-Maqrīzī’s opinion.⁶⁹

Nor did al-‘Aynī refrain from returning such favors to his peers. Although al-‘Aynī managed to achieve a high level of financial and material success through competition for *manṣibs*, access to powerful people and generally an adroit manipulation of patronage opportunities during his lifetime, this did not automatically result in success on the more idealized level of scholarship. In the field of history Ibn Ḥajar and al-Maqrīzī could be counted among al-‘Aynī’s competitors. In addition, al-‘Aynī was involved in the above-mentioned heated debate with Ibn Ḥajar about the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī.

Matters came to a head in 833/1428, when an ambassador arrived in Cairo from the court of Shāh Rukh, the son of Tīmūr and ruler of Herat, requesting copies of two books: al-Maqrīzī’s *Kitāb al-Sulūk* and Ibn Ḥajar’s *Fath al-Bārī bi-Sharḥ al-Bukhārī*. The royal commission of works from authors who had achieved a level of renown was one specific patronage practice at that time. Al-Maqrīzī records the titles of both books in *Kitāb al-Sulūk*, mentioning Ibn Ḥajar’s first.⁷⁰ Ibn Ḥajar neglects to mention al-Maqrīzī’s book, although he informs us that he immediately set about having a copy of his own work prepared; nor does he mention, as does Ibn Taghrībirdī, that Barsbāy in fact turned down Shāh Rukh’s request.⁷¹ If we take al-Sakhāwī’s portrayal of al-Maqrīzī’s desire for detachment from court life at face value, we might infer here that Shāh Rukh’s request did not impress the historian. However, Ibn Taghrībirdī’s image of him as a man disappointed by his own failure within the competitive arena might instead lead us to conclude that he viewed this specific request of his scholarly work by a foreign ruler—and the son of Tīmūr at that—as an honor.

We may also infer that Shāh Rukh’s desire for works by two of al-‘Aynī’s major rivals was quite a professional blow to the ‘Ayntābī historian. In his own

⁶⁷ Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā’*, 8:77-79, 94.

⁶⁸ Al-‘Aynī, *Iqd al-Jumān*, 2:252-53.

⁶⁹ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *al-Nujūm*, 14:117-18.

⁷⁰ Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk*, 4:2:818.

⁷¹ Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā’*, 8:194; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *al-Nujūm*, 14:170.



entry for the event, al-‘Aynī curiously fails to refer in any way to the two works requested, although he goes into some detail about the foreign gifts presented to Sultan Barsbāy:

On Tuesday 21 Muḥarram [833], a messenger came from Shāh Rukh ibn Tīmūrlank, sultan of the lands of the Iranians and the Turks; he had a letter to al-Malik al-Ashraf containing much information, and he had some gifts from their country. Likewise he had the letter of the son of Shāh Rukh, who is Ibrāhīm Shāh, ruler of the lands of Fārs, whose capital is the city of Shīrāz. He also sent gifts, among them: a bezoar stone,⁷² eleven *mithqāls*, and a letter from him written in gold in Arabic letters, and a letter from the Shāfi‘ī *qāḍī* Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn al-Jazarī, chief *qāḍī* in Shīrāz. The date of their letters was from the beginning of [8]32.⁷³

In his biography of al-‘Aynī and despite his high opinion of him as an historian, al-Sakhāwī critiques the ‘Ayntābī scholar because his books were not the stuff of requests made by foreign kings:

. . . al-‘Aynī’s *Sharḥ* [of al-Bukhārī] is also copious but it did not become as widespread as that of our shaykh [Ibn Ḥajar], nor did rulers of the outlying areas [*mulūk al-aṭrāf*] request it from the ruler of Egypt.⁷⁴

⁷²Bezoar stone, from Arabic *bazhar*, from Persian *pādzahr* (*pād*, protecting against, and *zahr*, poison); refers to stone-like concentrations of resinous organic matter considered to have medicinal qualities.

⁷³Al-‘Aynī, *Iqd al-Jumān*, 2:370-71.

⁷⁴Al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw’*, 10:134. It may be, however, that al-‘Aynī took his revenge on Shāh Rukh in the only way possible, that is, by using his own education against the Timurid. Throughout Barsbāy’s reign one controversial strategic, ideological and legal issue was Shāh Rukh’s attempt to provide the *kiswah* or covering for the *ka’bah*, traditionally maintained by the Mamluks. Barsbāy’s repeated refusal of Shāh Rukh’s requests to provide the *kiswah* was generally unpopular among the amirs. In 838/1434, therefore, when Shāh Rukh once again wrote demanding this privilege, explaining that he was bound by an oath he had made after a dream, Barsbāy met with the four chief *qāḍīs* to discuss the legal ramifications of denying the request of such an individual. It comes as little surprise to discover that it was al-‘Aynī, spurned academically six years earlier, who stated that Shāh Rukh’s vow was null and void, thereby giving Barsbāy the legal grounds on which to refuse the request; see al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk*, 4:2:928.



Al-‘Aynī’s contempt for al-Maqrīzī even survived the latter’s death in 845/1442. The first to go, the seventy-nine year-old al-Maqrīzī died on 16 Ramaḍān/28 January after a long illness.⁷⁵ By nature isolated, by professional circumstance removed from the circles of power and wealth, al-Maqrīzī did not even have the comfort of his children in his final days, for the last of his offspring, his daughter Fāṭimah, had predeceased him in 826/1423.⁷⁶ In terms of the competitive arena and Mamluk patronage practices, al-Maqrīzī seems to have died a failure; in terms of academic endeavor, a resounding although not unqualified success with at least his followers, although not his detractors.⁷⁷ Nor could mortality soften al-‘Aynī’s antagonism for al-Maqrīzī; Ibn Taghrībirdī points out that al-‘Aynī incorrectly noted al-Maqrīzī’s death date as 29 Sha‘bān/12 January.⁷⁸ Al-‘Aynī’s death notice for al-Maqrīzī is a mere five lines long. In it al-‘Aynī makes no mention of al-Maqrīzī’s works, nor of the achievements of his earlier career, but rather accuses him of geomancy, then attempts to “clarify” the *ḥisbah* incident of 801-3/1398-1401:

[In this year died] the shaykh Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn al-Maqrīzī; he died Friday, 29 Sha‘bān; he was occupied with writing history and with geomancy (*ḍarb al-raml*); he was appointed to the *ḥisbah* of Cairo at the end of the days of al-Malik al-Zāhir [Barqūq], then was dismissed for the author (*musattirih*; i.e., al-‘Aynī) [of this book]; then was appointed another time in the days of the amir Sūdūn, al-Zāhir’s nephew the great *dawādār*, replacing the author because the author had [already] dismissed himself because of the oppression of the above-mentioned Sūdūn.⁷⁹

Ibn Ḥajar’s death notice for al-Maqrīzī, by contrast, is twenty-five lines long, and the date is 17 Ramaḍān/29 January. In it he refers to al-Maqrīzī’s love of history, then goes on to praise him:

He was a skillful, outstanding, versatile, precise, pious, superior imām; [he was] fond of the people of the *sunnah*; he inclined

⁷⁵ Al-Sakhāwī, *al-Daw’*, 2:25.

⁷⁶ Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk*, 4:2:651.

⁷⁷ These include al-Sakhāwī, who accused al-Maqrīzī of plagiarizing the manuscript for his *Khiṭaṭ*, and possibly Ibn Ḥajar as well. See above; also al-Sakhāwī, *al-Daw’*, 1:358-59; 2:22; and “al-I‘lān,” ed. and trans. Rosenthal, *Historiography*, 285, 402.

⁷⁸ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *al-Nujūm*, 15:226.

⁷⁹ Al-‘Aynī, *Iqd al-Jumān*, 2:574.



towards *ḥadīth* . . . [he was] pleasant company [and] entertaining; he went on the pilgrimage often and lived [and studied in Mecca] many times.

Ibn Ḥajar spends the rest of the notice musing about al-Maqrīzī's alleged link to the Fatimids.⁸⁰ This notice tempers al-Sakhāwī's version of Ibn Ḥajar's dislike of al-Maqrīzī because of the alleged plagiarism of the *Khiṭaṭ*. Al-Maqrīzī was buried at Maqābir al-Ṣūfīyah.⁸¹

A few years later, in Dhū al-Qa'dah 852/January 1449, Ibn Ḥajar sickened. This prompted streams of visitors to pay their respects, as could be expected for one of his intellectual stature and reputation, before he passed away at the end of the month. His funeral was extremely well-attended; the Sultan Jaqmaq was there, as was the Abbasid caliph, who led the prayers. (Ibn Taghrībirdī reports 50,000 mourners in the cortège.)⁸² Ibn Ḥajar was buried near the tomb of the Imām al-Shāfi'ī, and, appropriately enough for such a well-known and revered figure, prayers were said for him in Damascus, Jerusalem, Mecca, Hebron and Aleppo.⁸³

One year after Ibn Ḥajar, it was al-'Aynī's turn as the last of the trio. He suffered from failing memory at the end of his life, which may have been part of the reason for his dismissal from the post of *nāẓir al-aḥbās* in 853/1449 by Jaqmaq "because of his advanced age."⁸⁴ Another reason may have been the machinations of a younger scholar, 'Ala' al-Dīn ibn Aqbars. But the waning of al-'Aynī's career had begun earlier. The scholar who had managed to befriend three sultans in a row did not seem to make as successful a transition to the new era of al-'Azīz Jaqmaq. Ibn Taghrībirdī tells us that after Barsbāy's death in 841/1438 al-'Aynī was replaced as chief Ḥanafī *qādī* and kept to his house. Al-Sakhāwī adds that he focused on his writing during this period, and managed financially on his income as *nāẓir al-aḥbās* until he lost that position, after which he sold his property and his books, with the exception of those items he had left as *waqf* in his *madrasah*, a testament to the uncertain nature of even his substantial material success.⁸⁵ Like al-Maqrīzī, al-'Aynī had outlived all his children. In 855/1451 at the age of ninety-three al-'Aynī died, and was buried in his own *madrasah*.

⁸⁰Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā'*, 9:172.

⁸¹Ibn Taghrībirdī, *al-Manhal al-Ṣāfi*, 1:420; al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw'*, 2:25.

⁸²Ibn Taghrībirdī, *al-Nujūm*, 15:259.

⁸³Muḥammad Kamāl al-Dīn 'Izz al-Dīn, *Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, Mu'arrikhān* (Beirut, 1407/1987), 106-10.

⁸⁴Ibn Taghrībirdī, *History of Egypt*, trans. Popper, 19:118.

⁸⁵Al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw'*, 10:133.



CONCLUSION

In conclusion we see that the lives of Ibn Ḥajar, al-‘Aynī, and al-Maqrīzī, as well as the numerous rivalries among and between the men, provide a case study of some types of interaction both among the ‘*ulamā*’ and between the ‘*ulamā*’ and members of the military elite. The lives of many scholars during the Mamluk period were caught up with those of the sultan and the amirs in a kind of interdependence, which expressed itself through elite financial and material patronage of the ‘*ulamā*’ in exchange for legitimation and involvement in the dominant Islamic cultural environment. As Chamberlain has pointed out, for the ‘*ulamā*’ the road to material and financial success could lie within the realm of social and academic competition, itself delineated by the parameters of Mamluk patronage practices. Thus hostility, partisanship, and rivalry inevitably arose as scholars maneuvered for proximity to patrons and favorable material and financial rewards within the competitive arena. In the case of al-‘Aynī and al-Maqrīzī, rivalry sprang up between them after the *muḥtasib* incident of 801-3/1399-1401. For al-‘Aynī and Ibn Ḥajar, their rivalries were multi-faceted and ongoing. So, too, the lives of the three scholars provide a case study not only of the types and manifestations of rivalries common among scholars at that time, but also the multiple and often conflicting definitions of success.



©1999 by Anne F. Broadbridge.

DOI: [10.6082/M1WW7FS6](https://doi.org/10.6082/M1WW7FS6). (<https://doi.org/10.6082/M1WW7FS6>)

DOI of Vol. III: [10.6082/M1765CFB](https://doi.org/10.6082/M1765CFB). See <https://doi.org/10.6082/ZJY1-1449> to download the full volume or individual articles. This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY). See <http://mamluk.uchicago.edu/msr.html> for more information about copyright and open access.

WILLIAM TUCKER

UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS AT FAYETTEVILLE

Environmental Hazards, Natural Disasters, Economic Loss, and Mortality in Mamluk Syria¹

The role of natural disasters and environmental disruptions has received considerable attention among historians of various cultures and regions over the past twenty-five years. Beginning with J. D. F. Shrewsbury's *A History of Bubonic Plague in the British Isles* and William McNeill's *Plagues and Peoples* and continuing most recently with William Jordan's study, *The Great Famine: Northern Europe in the Early Fourteenth Century* and Carol Benedict's *Bubonic Plague in Nineteenth-Century China*, scholars have examined the historical significance of such phenomena as severe weather, droughts, pest influxes, epizootics and, more importantly, famines, epidemics, earthquakes, and fires.² In addition to studies of this type, the examination of such phenomena in an historical context reflects the influence of a body of literature devoted to the classification, description, and assessment of catastrophes in recent times, perhaps best exemplified in the work of Gilbert White, R. W. Kates, and John Whittow, and also presented systematically in the journal *Disasters*.³

Aside from the plague studies of Michael Dols and Lawrence Conrad and the books and articles of Charles Melville, scholars of Near Eastern and Islamic history have paid little attention to environmental catastrophes.⁴ In a study published

©Middle East Documentation Center. The University of Chicago.

¹The present study is derived from a paper delivered at the 1997 annual meeting of the Middle East Studies Association in San Francisco. My special thanks go to Bruce D. Craig, Winslow W. Clifford and the Middle East Documentation Center for the invitation to participate in the panel.

²J. D. F. Shrewsbury, *A History of Bubonic Plague in the British Isles* (Cambridge, 1970); William McNeill, *Plagues and Peoples* (New York, 1976); William Jordan, *The Great Famine: Northern Europe in the Early Fourteenth Century* (Princeton, 1996); Carol Benedict, *Bubonic Plague in Nineteenth-Century China* (Stanford, 1996).

³Gilbert F. White, ed., *Natural Hazards: Local, National, Global* (New York, 1974); Ian Burton, Robert W. Kates, and Gilbert F. White, *The Environment as Hazard* (New York, 1978); John Whittow, *Disasters: The Anatomy of Environmental Hazards* (Athens, Georgia, 1979); *Disasters: The Journal of Disaster Studies and Management*, published by Basil Blackwell (Oxford, 1977-present).

⁴Michael W. Dols, *The Black Death in the Middle East* (Princeton, 1977); idem, "The Second Plague Pandemic and Its Recurrences in the Middle East: 1347-1894," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 22, pt. 2 (1979): 162-189; Lawrence Conrad, "The Plague in the Early Medieval Near East" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1981); idem, "Arabic Plague



©1999 by William Tucker.

DOI: [10.6082/M1CZ3594](https://doi.org/10.6082/M1CZ3594). (<https://doi.org/10.6082/M1CZ3594>)

DOI of Vol. III: [10.6082/M1765CFB](https://doi.org/10.6082/M1765CFB). See <https://doi.org/10.6082/ZJY1-1449> to download the full volume or individual articles. This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY). See <http://mamluk.uchicago.edu/msr.html> for more information about copyright and open access.

more than fifteen years ago, I tried to address this issue, albeit in a limited fashion.⁵ The present essay constitutes an attempt to extend this research to a different locale and to provide a somewhat broader perspective on the issue. The methodology to be employed is adopted from my own 1981 article (cited in note 5) and the study of meteorological hazards by Melville referred to in note 4.

I have chosen to examine the nature and impact of disasters in Mamluk Syria with a view to providing greater insight into the various ways they affected public health, economic life, and population levels. The thesis of this study, simply stated, is that natural hazards or disasters played a significant role directly and indirectly in the livelihood and health of Syrian society as a whole, that is, not just Mamluk military or *'ulamā'* elites but within the entire social spectrum. Although certain disasters, as we shall see, were particularly destructive or deadly, for example, earthquakes and epidemics, a variety of natural dysfunctions or catastrophes visited health and financial damage upon the population. In order to understand this process, furthermore, it is imperative to examine each type of disaster with a view to determining the particular nature of the harm inflicted. Most of these phenomena have their own direct effects, but in some cases they generate other destructive events or create serious loss in an indirect, long-term fashion. Also, disaster studies, including those cited above (note 3), suggest that it is more valid to proceed inductively, analyzing the events as classes or groups in a diachronic framework so as to suggest relationships rather than simply concentrating upon one, however spectacular, event. Such a mode of analysis can also indicate the relative destructiveness of an incident. It shows clearly, for instance, the pronounced lethality of plague epidemics, famines, and severe earthquakes. On the other hand, it demonstrates that weather events can generate food crisis or famine, or even spawn mortality themselves.

The source materials utilized in this study are mainly chronicles emanating from both Syria-Palestine and Egypt. Most of these works are arranged annalistically, which has both advantages and disadvantages. From the positive side, this method of organization seems to foster an interest in recording the important "events" or

Chronologies and Treatises: Social and Historical Factors in the Formation of a Literary Genre," *Studia Islamica* 54 (1981): 51-93; idem, "Ṭā'ūn and Wabā': Conceptions of Plague and Pestilence in Early Islam," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 25, pt. 3 (1982): 268-307; N. N. Ambraseys and Charles P. Melville, *A History of Persian Earthquakes* (Cambridge, 1982); N. N. Ambraseys, Charles P. Melville, and Robin D. Adams, *The Seismicity of Egypt, Arabia, and the Red Sea: A Historical Review* (Cambridge, 1994); Charles P. Melville, "Earthquakes in the History of Nishapur," *Iran* 18 (1980): 103-122; idem, "Meteorological Hazards and Disasters in Iran: A Preliminary Survey to 1950," *Iran* 22 (1984): 113-150. This latter essay is one of the finest examples of the utilization of disaster research in the study of Near Eastern history.

⁵William Tucker, "Natural Disasters and the Peasantry in Mamlūk Egypt," *JESHO* 24, pt. 2 (1981): 215-224.



"curiosities" of a given year and thereby encourages the inclusion of more than simple military and political affairs. On the other hand, it also results frequently in extremely terse and summary descriptions of phenomena with little detailed information about immediate effects other than the sort of "much destruction" or "many people perished" reportage. The nature of the problems in working with such material can be readily seen in the excellent remarks of Charles Melville in his *Arabic and Persian Source Material on the Historical Seismicity of Iran from the 7th to the 17th Centuries A.D.*⁶ One might expect the necrologies in the chronicles to afford useful information with regard to disaster-caused mortality, but that does not seem to have been the case except with the plague pandemic and other instances of exceptionally lethal plague events.⁷ Plague material, in fact, constitutes a notable exception to the problems with the volume and coverage of catastrophes; however, in view of Professor Dols's masterful contribution, I touch upon this issue only briefly in this study. Other than the chronicles and the voluminous material on plague, there are useful treatises on certain disasters, such as al-Maqrīzī's *Ighāthat al-Ummah bi-Kashf al-Ghummah* (on famines) and al-Suyūfī's *Kashf al-Salsalah 'an Waṣf al-Zalzalah* (earthquakes), but these kinds of texts are unfortunately not numerous and, in the case of al-Maqrīzī's work, the emphasis is almost entirely upon Egypt.⁸ Presumably documents and *waqf* materials would yield information about loss through disasters, but unfortunately I have been unable to locate such materials for Syria, and regrettably the materials I have seen or analyzed (confined to data from Palestine or Egypt) have yielded much less than one would expect or hope.⁹ Similarly, biographical dictionaries have proved to be far less helpful than might be anticipated. In the first place, they

⁶Charles P. Melville, *Arabic and Persian Source Material on the Historical Seismicity of Iran from the 7th to the 17th Centuries A.D.* (Ph.D. diss., Cambridge University, 1978), 184-194.

⁷Dols, *Black Death*, 220-222.

⁸For al-Maqrīzī, we have now the excellent study and translation of Adel Allouche, *Mamluk Economics: A Study and Translation of al-Maqrīzī's Ighāthah* (Salt Lake City, 1994); al-Suyūfī *Kashf al-Salsalah 'an Waṣf al-Zalzalah* (Fez, 1971); idem, "Soyuti's Work on Earthquakes called *Kashf al-Salsalah 'an Waṣf Az-Zalzalah*, i.e., Removing the Noise from the Description of the Earthquakes . . .," trans. A. Sprenger, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal* 141 (n.s. 57) (1843): 741-749.

⁹The important document studies of Professor Donald Little are noteworthy here, e.g., "The Significance of the *Haram* Documents for the Study of Medieval Islamic History," *Der Islam* 57 (1980): 189-217; and more recently, his "Documents Related to the Estates of a Merchant and His Wife in Late Fourteenth Century Jerusalem," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 2 (1998): 93-193. See also Huda Lutfi, *al-Quds al-Mamlūkiyya: A History of Mamlūk Jerusalem Based on the Ḥaram Documents* (Berlin, 1985), esp. 220, 223, 225, 231. For Egypt, see Carl F. Petry, "A Geniza for Mamluk Studies? Charitable Trust (*Waqf*) Documents as a Source for Economic and Social History," *MSR* 2 (1998): 51-60.



focus upon social elites and therefore afford little insight into the lives of common people, urban or rural, but also they yield minimal information about economic issues related to disaster and also contain negligible data about mortality causes except plague. Even in the case of plague, the situation is not nearly as clear-cut as one might expect, as Michael Dols's treatment of the issue showed many years ago.¹⁰

If one must rely largely upon chronicles in the study of catastrophes and natural hazards, it is at least useful to examine the evidence through comparison with details and techniques gleaned from studies of populations and areas outside the Middle East which may be blessed with more copious information. While the present investigation is technically not a work of comparative history, it does utilize where possible materials from other cultures and periods. In particular, I have found the research of scholars in East Asian history and in Early Modern European history to be invaluable. In the latter case, information based upon medical, climatic, and seismological studies have provided much greater insight into how these events unfold and what their effects, especially indirect or covert results, are.

Warfare and military operations constituted, potentially, a source of disaster in themselves. Obviously, the Mongol-Mamluk wars resulted in a number of calamitous incursions into Syria. Reuven Amitai-Preiss refers to some half dozen invasions and goes on to examine carefully the military and political aspects of these struggles.¹¹ Referring to the same sorts of events, Eliyahu Ashtor years earlier spoke of what he termed "mass flights" of people from Syria into Egypt and suggested that these migrations played a role in the slower population growth of Syria than that of Egypt in the Bahārī Mamluk period (late 1250s to 1381).¹² Such military action and occupation of towns or cities could produce noncombatant casualties, destruction of property (looting or burning), or the spread of epidemics (although there seems to be no evidence of plague spread in this fashion in Syria).

¹⁰Dols, *Black Death*, 222, note 73. I have found no indication of Professor Dols's expectations being realized in later research. A number of years ago Carl Petry kindly shared with me mortality information gleaned from the biographical works consulted in his study of the Cairene 'ulamā', and I was unable to find any correlation between this material and the disaster data afforded by the chronicles; in a number of cases, in fact, the cause of death was unidentifiable. For the use of Mamluk biographical materials, one must consult Professor Petry's *The Civilian Elite of Cairo in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1981).

¹¹Reuven Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks: The Mamluk-Ikhanid War, 1261-1281* (Cambridge, 1995), 1; see also chapter 8 on the second battle of Homs.

¹²Eliyahu Ashtor, *A Social and Economic History of the Near East in the Middle Ages* (Berkeley, 1976), 290.



Plague epidemics seem to have been spread most often by religious pilgrims or by merchants, especially maritime traders.¹³ In point of fact, epidemics seem to have negatively affected Mamluk military strength through decreased revenues and lowered *iqtā'* values and through the disruption of military campaigns.¹⁴ In any case, these issues have been discussed more fully by Professors Ashtor and Dols, and one may consult their respective works for further details.

The role of what William McNeill has referred to as "macro-parasites," that is, tribal raiders, predatory government officials, or unruly urban groups, will not be discussed here except insofar as they intensified or prolonged environmental dysfunctions.¹⁵ Furthermore, one should recall the admonitions of Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie years ago, when he cautioned against relating political change and environmental disturbance.¹⁶ The concatenation of dynastic change and disasters, for instance, may work very well in an analysis of Imperial Chinese history, but any such linkage is not evident in any of the data from the medieval Near East.

Given Mamluk political and familial rivalries, I question Mounira Chapoutot-Remadi's inclusion of political factors in her otherwise excellent study of the terrible famine-epidemic cycle of 1294-1295 in Egypt.¹⁷ Having examined the evidence concerning this catastrophe, it seems to me that environmental disturbance and popular response to it played a far greater role than Mamluk political concerns or factional disputes. Governmental responses to disasters appear to have been *ad hoc* and, if anything, somewhat haphazard. As will be seen in the case of famine, official aid to affected populations was indirect and variable. While Professor Boaz Shoshan's concept of the "moral economy" may be applicable in Egypt and, by extension, in Syria, the Mamluk government apparently did not see a need to establish a regular, rationalized organizational structure to address food crises or, for that matter, other hazards (see the discussion of famine relief below).¹⁸

In his *The European Miracle; Environment, Economic and Geopolitical History of Europe and Asia*, E. L. Jones divides disasters into four groups: (1) geophysical (earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, etc.); (2) climatic (floods, droughts, hurricanes, etc.); (3) biological (epidemics, epizootics, locusts); (4) social (warfare, fires,

¹³Dols, *Black Death*, 53-67.

¹⁴Ibid., 190-192.

¹⁵McNeill, *Plagues*, 6-7, 138, 181, 188.

¹⁶Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Times of Feast, Times of Famine: A History of Climate since the Year 1000*, trans. B. Bray (New York, 1971).

¹⁷Mounira Chapoutot-Remadi, "Une grand crise à la fin du XIIIe siècle en Egypte," *JESHO* 24, pt. 3 (1983): 217-245.

¹⁸Boaz Shoshan, "Grain Riots and the 'Moral Economy': Cairo, 1350-1517," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 10, pt. 3 (Winter 1980): 459-478.



etc.).¹⁹ In the present study, emphasis will be placed upon the first three of these categories in the most common order: climatic, biological, or social (depending upon one's classification of famine), biological (epidemics), and geophysical (earthquakes). Having established a general framework for the following analysis, it is time to examine generically the various disasters which affected Mamluk Syria and in the process to contrast these where feasible with similar phenomena in Egypt, which was, after all, the locus of power in the Mamluk realm.

Although different from Egypt in climate and topography, Syria too suffered from a number of the same weather problems that plagued Egypt. Damaging wind storms, sometimes accompanied by sand, wrought destruction at various times between 1260 and 1516. In 1315 houses and goods in Tripoli were damaged by severe winds, which were followed by rain and cold.²⁰ Three years later the Tripoli area was hit again by wind, waterspouts, and hail.²¹ In the next year, 1319-1320, violent wind destroyed many houses in Damascus, uprooting trees and burying many people in their houses. The same storm system apparently hit Aleppo with wind and sand.²² Damascus experienced substantial damage and injury or death in later wind storms also; 1382 or 1383 saw severe damage to trees and houses.²³ In 1441-1442 the city was buffeted by strong winds for four days with the destruction of houses and trees, and damage to the Umayyad Mosque. The same storm ravaged crops and trees at Tripoli, Latakia, Hamah, Aleppo, and Homs.²⁴ Again, in 1490, violent winds devastated trees and houses in Damascus.²⁵ Aleppo also suffered from wind storms in 1317-1318. In the account preserved in al-Mufaḍḍal's chronicle, the terrifying storm is described as having been accompanied by dust, hail, thunder, and lightning. Just to the west of the city, wind destroyed hundreds of oaks, olive trees, and vines. People, domestic and wild animals, as well as birds, were killed. The people, we are told, prayed for God's mercy.²⁶ Obviously, one sees in these events substantial economic loss in terms of homes and livelihood (crops and animals). Rural dwellers were hurt by loss of animals and valuable trees, while urban residents who escaped collapsed

¹⁹E. L. Jones, *The European Miracle: Environment, Economic, and Geopolitical History of Europe and Asia* (Cambridge, 1981), 23-41.

²⁰Al-Duwayhī, "Tārīkh al-Azmināt," *al-Mashriq* 44 (1951): 169-170.

²¹Sibt ibn al-'Ajāmī, "Les trésors d'or," trans. Jean Sauvaget (Beirut, 1950), 9.

²²Al-'Aynī, *Ta' rīkh al-Badr*, British Library, MS Or. Add. 22360, fol. 8a.

²³Al-Sakhāwī, *Dhayl Duwal al-Islām*, Bodleian Library, Arabic MS Marsh 508, fol. 87a.

²⁴Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Inbā' al-Ghumr bi-Abnā' al-'Umr* (Hyderabad, 1976), 9:13; al-Jawharī, *Nuzhat al-Nufūs wa-al-Abdān fī Ta' rīkh al-Zamān* (Cairo, 1973), 3:401-402.

²⁵Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufaḳahat al-Khillān fī Ḥawādith al-Zamān* (Cairo, 1967), 1:67.

²⁶Al-Mufaddal ibn Abī al-Fadā'il, *Ägypten und Syrien zwischen 1317 und 1341* (Freiburg, 1973), 1-2.



dwellings incurred substantial property loss as well as increased prices for scarce commodities or goods. Clearly, these storms were most devastating to the infrastructure and to the agricultural macroeconomy (this latter term used here in the sense of economic sectors). Also, one sees in the report of the Aleppo event of 1317-1318 one of the rare glimpses of psychological response to catastrophe in Syria, not surprisingly, a religiously based reaction. Disasters may well have stimulated heightened religious consciousness, but the references are too sparse to warrant any confident statements in this respect.

Hail, snow, and severe cold also caused hardship for producers and/or merchants of crops and commodities. In 1274, for example, severe rain and hail hit Damascus, and al-Birzālī reports that the apricot crop in the Ghūṭah suffered major loss.²⁷ In 1292-1293 Syria experienced severe cold and wet weather. Baalbak was hit by rain and snow, and it is reported that the Syrian pilgrimage caravan lost pilgrims to the terrible cold and rains. The intense cold of this time also made itself felt at Damascus, where rain and snow compounded the suffering.²⁸ Six years later (1298-1299) Damascus was hit by a snow storm which left the ground covered for fifteen days.²⁹ Snow and cold then destroyed fruit crops in 1307-1308.³⁰ Syria was famous for its fruit crops and exported these to other areas, for example, Iraq.³¹ Damage of the sort mentioned above would thus be expected to disrupt regional trade and, thereby, adversely affect the Syrian mercantile economy at least in the short run.

The fourteenth century saw a number of episodes of cold, ice, or snow. In 1377 there were hail and ice storms throughout the region, in which olive trees were damaged or destroyed and in which people and animals perished. Villages were buried under a cover of snow.³² Snow in 1345 blocked roads, killing travellers, and domestic and wild animals perished also. Damascus was hard hit in the storm, and it was said that people had not seen the like of it before.³³ Aleppo experienced

²⁷ Al-Birzālī *al-Muqtafā' li-Ta'rikh al-Shaykh Shihāb al-Dīn Abī Shāmah*, Arab League, MS 507, fol. 56a.

²⁸ Al-Jazarī, *Chronique des Damas*, trans. Jean Sauvaget (Paris, 1949), 27.

²⁹ Al-Jazarī, *Jawāhir al-Sulūk fī al-Khulafā' wa-al-Mulūk*, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS arabe 6739, fol. 268a.

³⁰ Al-Duwayhī, "Azminat," 163.

³¹ Eli Ashtor, "The Diet of the Salaried Classes in the Medieval Near East," *Journal of Asian History* 4 (1970), 6.

³² Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkirat al-Nabīh fī Ayyām al-Manṣūr wa-Banīh*, British Library, MS Or. Add. 7335, fols. 40a-b.

³³ Al-'Aynī, *al-Badr*, British Library, MS 22360, fol. 49a; al-Dhahabī, *Kitāb al-'Abr*, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS arabe 5819, fol. 148b.



considerable snowfall in 1348, and bad crops were the result.³⁴ Syria again was the scene of snow and ice in 1352, 1363, 1399, and 1400. The freeze of 1363 was noteworthy because the Euphrates and other rivers froze, allowing travellers to walk across them.³⁵ The 1399 event consisted largely of frost, which spread in most parts of the area and destroyed walnuts, almonds, and apricots.³⁶ The very next year, the Biqā' valley and the mountains north of Damascus received snow, an unusual occurrence according to Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah.³⁷ The fifteenth century seems to have been easier, although Syria had significant snow in 1496, and Palestine was very hard hit with snow accumulations in 1499. In the latter case, paths and streets were blocked in Jerusalem, the snow becoming hard frozen and lasting for almost three weeks.³⁸

The episodes of freezing cold and precipitation were severe blows to the affected populations. Agricultural commodities were damaged or destroyed, and commercial travel was disrupted by the snow storms. People were stranded and, at times, killed by the weather. Although there seems to be no way to prove it, one may also conjecture that some losses resulted from hypothermia, or what John Post has called "accident hypothermia." As Post points out, sharp temperature changes are also known to occasion deaths from pneumonia, bronchitis, and arteriosclerotic heart disease.³⁹ It is interesting to note here that the 1496 storm in Damascus was associated not only with broken or damaged trees but also with the increased costliness of badly needed firewood.⁴⁰ Sickness or death stemming from these episodes clearly reduced affected populations in the short term and probably contributed to the population decline evident throughout the Burjī period (1382-1517).⁴¹

Heavy rains and floods appear to have been far more common and more destructive in Mamluk Syria. Damaging rains and/or floods hit Syria some two dozen times in the period between 1269 and 1477. Damascus experienced the greatest number of these, but that may represent the geographical bias of the chroniclers. In 1269 Damascus was hit by a great flood which carried away

³⁴ Sibṭ ibn al-'Ajamī, "Trésors," 10.

³⁵ Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk li-Ma'rifat Duwal al-Mulūk* (Cairo, 1970), 3:1:77.

³⁶ Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Dhayl 'alá Ta'rīkh al-Islām* (Damascus, 1977), 1:613.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 612, 654.

³⁸ Al-'Ulaymī, *al-Uns al-Jalīl bi-Ta'rīkh al-Quds wa-al-Khalīl*, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS arabe 1671, fols. 401-402.

³⁹ John Post, *Food Shortage, Climatic Variability, and Epidemic Disease in Preindustrial Europe* (Ithaca, New York, 1985) 202-207.

⁴⁰ Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat al-Khillān*, 1:134-135.

⁴¹ Ashtor, *Social and Economic History*, 302-305.



houses, animals, and goods. Trees were uprooted, bridges were destroyed, and many horses and camels drowned. The loss of human life was also said to have been severe.⁴² The city faced virtually the same ordeal in 1282, 1317, 1319, 1326, 1377, 1382, and on still other occasions. The flood of 1317 is reported to have destroyed 895 houses, eleven mills, seventeen ovens, forty gardens, twenty-one mosques, and five *madrasahs*. A large number of men, women, and children drowned, particularly in the baths and the mosque. Also, many markets were ruined by the flood waters.⁴³ The flood of 1326 resulted from rains in the Euphrates region and is reported to have triggered an epidemic which sickened many Damascenes.⁴⁴ Here again one sees economic loss, destruction, and increased morbidity (susceptibility to disease), indeed, outright mortality, associated with weather fluctuations. One can also see here with respect to the flood-caused epidemic a case of one disaster generating another.

The reverse side of the coin was, of course, the occurrence of damaging or severe drought. Drought perhaps worked more slowly in its destructiveness, but it too served to bring on crises not only in economic life, but also, and of greater import, in food consumption and public health. In 1294 Syria endured a severe drought, and eventually prices rose and famine ensued. This crisis situation intensified in the next two years, and Syria was the scene of serious famine and epidemic mortality.⁴⁵ During 1295 things reached such a pass that the *qādī al-quḍāh* in Damascus recited the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī from the pulpit of the Umayyad Mosque.⁴⁶ Drought losses, then, more often than not created shortages or full-blown famine conditions and, thus, touched health issues directly. Here again, one sees a causal relationship between one catastrophe and another.

Locust infestations and epizootics also adversely affected food supplies and economic activity. Locust invasions struck Syria on a number of occasions in the fourteenth century. Destruction of crops, plants, and trees occurred during the

⁴² Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Mukhtār al-Akḥbār* (Cairo, 1993), 45-46; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Die Chronik des Ibn al-Dawādārī* (Freiburg, 1971), 8:160; Ibn Ḥabīb, *Durrat al-Aslāk fī Dawlat al-Atrāk*, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS arabe 1719, fol. 32a; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab fī Funūn al-Adab* (Cairo, 1990), 30:176-177.

⁴³ Abū al-Fidā', *The Memoirs of a Syrian Prince: Abū al-Fidā', Sultan of Hamāh (672-732/1273-1331)*, trans. P. M. Holt (Wiesbaden, 1983), 73; al-Duwayhī, "Azminat," 170; Sibṭ ibn al-'Ajamī, "Trésors" II (Beirut, 1950), 150.

⁴⁴ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk* II, pt. 1 (Cairo, 1956), 275.

⁴⁵ Al-Yūnīnī, *Continuation of Mir'āt al-Zamān*, British Library, MS Or. Add. 25728, fol. 89a; al-Jazarī, *Chronique*, 47; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat* 31 (Cairo, 1992), 286.

⁴⁶ Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat*, Leiden MS in Shah Elham, *Kitbuġa und Lagīn: Studien zur Mamluken-Geschichte nach Baibars al-Mansūrī und Nuwayrī* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1977), 48 of the Arabic text.



infestation of 1301.⁴⁷ Al-Maqrīzī reports that the locust attack of 1365 led to high prices and, eventually, an epidemic.⁴⁸ Other episodes occurred in 1370 and 1402. Epizootics, while not as common, played their own negative role in Syria; for example, many horses died in an epidemic in 1431.⁴⁹ Not surprisingly, of course, the great plague pandemic of 1347-1349 devastated the animal population as well as the human one. As Michael Dols pointed out in his classic study of the great plague, the loss of animals hurt agricultural production badly.⁵⁰ Epizootics, as noted in my *JESHO* study, were a serious matter because animals were an important form of fixed capital and especially significant as analogues to machines and power sources in modern societies.⁵¹

Serious fires were another scourge for the population of late medieval Syria, particularly urban dwellers. In 1281 fire damaged mosques in Damascus, destroying in the process a number of markets, for example, those of the feltmakers and booksellers.⁵² Merchants lost much property in a fire which hit Ḥamāh in 1335.⁵³ Two hundred and fifty shops burned in the same city.⁵⁴ These instances could be multiplied, but the information is invariably the same: merchants incurred severe loss of goods, while the *'ulamā'* and the poor were hard hit by the destruction of mosques and *waqf* properties. The ordinary citizens also lost their houses in some of these conflagrations, for example, in that of 1459.⁵⁵

In the final analysis, of course, the three most devastating types of catastrophes in the medieval Islamic world were famine, epidemic disease, and destructive earthquakes. The remainder of this paper will be devoted to an examination of the morphology and effects of these major disasters. In view of the societal dislocation, stress, and mortality created by famine, it is surprising to note how little has been published about such subsistence crises in the medieval Near East. Some years

⁴⁷Ibn Ḥabīb, *Durrat al-Aslāk*, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS arabe 1720, fol. 135b; al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk* 1:3:923; al-Sakhāwī, *Dhayl Duwal al-Islām* (Hyderabad, 1337), 2:160; al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, as cited in Li Guo, *Early Mamluk Syrian Historiography: Al-Yūnīnī's Dhayl Mir'āt al-zamān* (Leiden, 1998), 1:207.

⁴⁸Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, 3:1:92.

⁴⁹Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Inbā' al-Ghumr*, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS arabe 1602, vol. 2, fol. 59b.

⁵⁰Dols, *Black Death*, 158-160.

⁵¹Tucker, "Disasters and Peasantry," 220.

⁵²Ibn Ḥabīb, *Durrat*, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS arabe 9, fol. 52a; al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, 1:3:709; al-Sakhāwī, *Dhayl* (Hyderabad), 2:142.

⁵³Al-Dhahabī, *Kitāb al-'Abr*, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS arabe 1469, fol. 146a.

⁵⁴Ibn al-'Imād, *Shadhārat al-Dhahab fī Akhbār min Dhahab* (Beirut, 1966), 6:109.

⁵⁵Ibn Taghārī Birdī, *Ḥawādith al-Duhūr fī Madā al-Ayyām wa-al-Shuhūr* (Berkeley, 1930-31), 8:2:247.



ago, I undertook a brief, theoretical study of this subject, and this work, supplemented by considerably more recent examination of famines in other cultures, will serve as the basis of this discussion.⁵⁶

Mamluk Syria appears to have been much more fortunate than Egypt when it came to food shortage and hunger. In the first place, the Syrians did not have to rely upon the vagaries of the Nile. Syrian agriculture benefitted from a more regular water regime based upon annual rain and snow. In spite of this, Syria itself suffered from around twenty-five famine or food crises during the Mamluk era.⁵⁷ Such crises had a variety of causes, although they usually began with a drastic rise of cereal prices and quickly escalated to the inability of people to afford or even to find basic foodstuffs. As noted above, the great famine-epidemic crisis of 1294-1296 began with a severe drought within Syria. Hot winds and drought also provoked famine conditions in Syria in 1317 and 1397.⁵⁸ A locust invasion in 1323 led to high prices and shortages, although in this case grain was imported through Beirut and Tripoli in order to offset the crisis.⁵⁹ Crops in the Ḥawrān were "ruined" in 1347 resulting in famine in that region.⁶⁰ From other sources, one may surmise that snow and cold were the culprits. Food shortages and/or famines were at times generated or exacerbated by hoarding on the part of merchants or even the Mamluks themselves.⁶¹ It was also possible, as in the year 1372-1373, that migration of people into an area might stimulate food crises.⁶² Migration was dangerous on another count, since it could lead to disease epidemics in the migrants' destinations.⁶³

Once the famine or dearth had begun, mortality due to starvation was the most obvious result. In the great crisis of 1295, people died of starvation along the

⁵⁶Tucker, "The Effects of Famine in the Medieval Islamic World," paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Middle East Studies Association, Seattle, November, 1981.

⁵⁷I have tabulated instances of famine or food crises in Syria and Palestine occurring in the following *hijrah* years: 660, 694-696, 724, 742-743, 765, 771, 775-777, 790, 798-800, 818-819, 825, 827, 832-833, 835, 865, 870-871, 873, 882; Tucker, "Famines," 19-24.

⁵⁸Al-Duwayhī, "Azminat," 170; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Dhayl*, Bibliothèque Nationale MS arabe 1599, vol. 2, fol. 130b.

⁵⁹Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, 2:1:254.

⁶⁰Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Dhayl*, MS arabe 1598, vol. 1, fol. 84a.

⁶¹Ira M. Lapidus, *Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), 51-55.

⁶²Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Les Gouverneurs de Damas sous les Mamlouks et les premiers Ottomans (658-1156/1260-1744)*, *Annales d'Ibn Ṭūlūn*, trans. Henri Laoust (Damascus, 1952), 12.

⁶³John Walter and Roger Schofield, "Famine, Disease, and Crisis Mortality in Early Modern Society," *Famine, Disease, and the Social Order in Early Modern Society* (Cambridge, 1989), 27-28.



roads.⁶⁴ In 1375, famine initially killed “the frail,” but eventually the mortality became more generalized.⁶⁵ Needless to say, such occurrences seriously disrupted all forms of economic life, especially commerce and agriculture. Sustained hunger at the very least impairs work and productivity. As Sara Millman and Robert Kates have pointed out in their essay “Toward Understanding Hunger,” manual work is hampered, and the ability to sustain physical effort is lessened.⁶⁶ Labor productivity was in all probability adversely affected by famine but, unfortunately, it is not possible to measure this or the economic loss related to it.

Famine and severe food deprivation affect populations in another direct and often lethal fashion. Starving populations at times resort to eating whatever is to hand, regardless of its repulsiveness or toxicity. In 1372-1373, for instance, Ibn Ṭūlūn reports that people in Aleppo were reduced to eating dogs and even carcasses.⁶⁷ Similar reports are available for the year 1375.⁶⁸ Similar reports are numerous for corresponding events in other societies. Desperate measures were resorted to in a Chinese famine of 1641.⁶⁹ The same situation was to be found in the terrible Russian famine of 1230, where people are reported to have eaten leaves, cats, and dogs.⁷⁰ Diets of this sort obviously gave ample cause for death from any number of toxic organisms.

Clearly the most macabre and intense reaction to famine was resort to cannibalism. Although it appears that instances of this may not have been as common in Syria as in Egypt, we do have evidence of such behavior. The terrible crisis of 1374-1375 in Aleppo gave rise to acts of cannibalism, and the same thing is said to have happened again the next year.⁷¹ Similar reports come from the earlier famine-epidemic cycle of 1294-1296.⁷² Ironically, comparable accounts

⁶⁴ Al-Duwayhī, “Azminat,” 155.

⁶⁵ Ibn Ḥabīb, *Durrat al-Aslāk*, Bodleian Library, Arabic MS Marsh 319, fol. 127b.

⁶⁶ Sara Millman and Robert Kates, “Toward Understanding Hunger,” *Hunger in History*, ed. Lucile Newman (Oxford, 1990), 16.

⁶⁷ Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Gouverners*, Laoust, 12.

⁶⁸ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, 3:1:256.

⁶⁹ Helen Dunstan, “The Late Ming Epidemics: A Preliminary Survey,” *Ch’ing-shih Wen-t’i* 3, no. 3 (Nov., 1975), 12-13.

⁷⁰ Arcadius Kahan, “Natural Calamities and Their Effect upon the Food Supply in Russia”* [An Introduction to a Catalogue], in *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, ed. Fritz Epstein (Wiesbaden, 1968), 368.

⁷¹ Ibn al-‘Imād, *Shadhārat* 6:250; Ibn Qādī Shuhbah, *Dhayl*, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS arabe 1598, fol. 236a.

⁷² Ibn Ḥabīb, *Durrat al-Aslāk*, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS arabe 1720, vol. 2, fols. 111-112.



exist for the terrible Syrian famine of 1915-1918.⁷³ Numerous descriptions of such behavior come from other parts of the world at various times. Cannibalism is reported to have occurred in terrible famines in medieval Poland and Italy.⁷⁴ Dunstan points to instances of the same sort occurring during the Chinese famine of 1641.⁷⁵ In his recent book on early fourteenth-century European famines, William Jordan has cited allegations of cannibalism being practiced in England and Eastern Europe during the years 1315 to 1317. He goes on to say that most recent historians have tended to regard such reports as a literary topos, while some have suggested that these accounts are a signal to the reader of the emotional stress of famine conditions.⁷⁶ My own research indicates to me that neither of these explanations is satisfactory. It is hard to sustain the thesis that events reported in such strikingly similar fashions from different cultures at different times are mere literary devices. Even allowing for exaggeration, it is perfectly plausible to think that horrible stress and desperation drove people to commit the unthinkable.

Such behavioral deviation was bound to have an impact upon the society experiencing it. As I have written elsewhere, "Medieval Islamic society placed great value upon familial relationships, community solidarity, and hallowed and predictable modes of behavior or interaction."⁷⁷ Such activities as cannibalism can only have undermined social and community cohesiveness and identity.

Famines had other more indirect but equally damaging effects upon public health and demography. For some years now a debate about the relationship between subsistence crises and epidemic disease have divided the scholarly community. Scholars such as Ann Carmichael (Indiana University), Roger Schofield (Cambridge University), and the Italian demographer Massimo Livi-Bacci have questioned the "synergism" concept linking disease and the nutritional profile of a given "host."⁷⁸

⁷³I owe this information to the article of my colleague, Professor Linda Schilcher: L. Schatkowski Schilcher, "The Famine of 1915-18 in Greater Syria," *Problems of the Modern Middle East in Historical Perspective: Essays in Honour of Albert Hourani*, ed. John Spagnolo (Reading, 1992), 231.

⁷⁴Piero Camporesi, *Bread of Dreams: Food and Fantasy in Early Modern Europe*, trans. David Gentilcore (Chicago, 1989), 87.

⁷⁵Dunstan, "Ming Epidemics," 12.

⁷⁶Jordan, *The Great Famine*, 148-149.

⁷⁷Tucker, "Famine," 6.

⁷⁸Ann Carmichael, "Infection, Hidden Hunger, and History," *Hunger and History* (Cambridge, 1983), 51-66; Roger Schofield, "The Impact of Scarcity and Plenty on Population Change in England, 1541-1871," *ibid.*, 67-92; Massimo Livi-Bacci, *Population and Nutrition: An Essay on European Demographic History* (Cambridge, 1991), esp. chaps. 2-3.



On the other side, investigators ranging from health professionals such as Carl E. Taylor (Johns Hopkins University) to such medical historians as Thomas McKeown (University of Birmingham) support the proposition that nutritional levels are directly related to susceptibility to epidemic disease.⁷⁹ The evidence forthcoming from medieval Near Eastern authors would seem to support the latter argument. The data show that while epidemics could and did occur without preceding famines, nearly one-third of the famines recorded were followed by epidemics of some severity. In virtually all cases, the chroniclers make explicit linkages between the two phenomena. Famines were followed by epidemics in Mamluk Syria during the years 1294-1295, 1341-1342, 1347, 1369, 1373-1374, 1375, 1421, and 1468 in Palestine.⁸⁰

Parenthetically, it should be noted that famine may have been allowed to worsen in some cases due to hoarding or manipulation of whatever existing stocks there were.⁸¹ In fact, one may argue that it is here that we see one of the few plausible linkages between catastrophes and political life in Mamluk Syria. Although Lapidus and Allouche speak of Mamluk sultans providing grain relief in bad times, in point of fact the evidence does not show that there was a regular institutional or rationalized mechanism for food relief. In this sense, one may argue that this factor, combined with the food hoarding by Mamluk amirs and, at times, by the sultan himself, intensified or even brought on food crises.⁸² In this case, politics can be seen as stimulating a crisis. In China, in contrast, by the eighteenth century the imperial government had taken proactive measures to deal with famine. Central and local granaries were maintained in order to combat famine. Furthermore, in times of crisis the imperial administration used state funds to purchase foodstuffs outside the stricken area and then to transport the grain to local distribution areas. On other occasions, money was distributed directly to the affected population, and in the case of the desperate, officials were authorized to give food or money on the spot.⁸³

Famine and subsistence crises can affect demography in important ways, and one may conjecture that they did so in the medieval Near East, including Mamluk

⁷⁹Carl E. Taylor, "Synergy among Mass Infections, Famines, and Poverty," *Hunger and History*, 247-284; Thomas McKeown, "Food, Infection, and Population," conference paper presented at Bellagio (June 22-July 2, 1982), 1-32, paper now located in the Library of the Cambridge Group for the Study of the History of Population and Social Structure, Trumpington St., Cambridge, England.

⁸⁰Tucker, "Famines," 30-31, note 19.

⁸¹Lapidus, *Muslim Cities*, 52-57.

⁸²Lapidus, *Muslim Cities*, 51-55; Allouche, *Mamluk Economics*, 14.

⁸³Pierre-Etienne Will, *Bureaucracy and Famine in Eighteenth Century China*, trans. Elborg Forster (Stanford, 1990), 130, 282-289.



Syria. Modern research indicates that nutritional deficiency and stress play a major role in male and female infertility. As Rose Frisch (Dept. of Population Sciences and Center for Population Studies, Harvard University) pointed out years ago, undernourished females have a high frequency of irregular and anovulatory cycles, and "menstruation stops completely if undernutrition is severe." Furthermore during pregnancy undernourished women have a higher probability of miscarriage or stillbirth, and even if they deliver successfully, their lactation amenorrhea is longer, thus leading to a longer birth interval.⁸⁴

In the case of adult males, sperm count is reduced, and "such children as are born tend to be underweight and of reduced viability."⁸⁵ Research also shows that stress conditions trigger pituitary hormonal changes in both men and women, leading to at least temporary infertility.⁸⁶ Were these conditions present in Mamluk Syria? Presumably, if Syrians were of the same biological makeup as other populations, the response would have to be in the affirmative.

The greatest killer among all the disasters in Mamluk Syria as elsewhere was epidemic disease. The area was hard hit by epidemics at least forty-one times just in the period after the pandemic of 1347-1348.⁸⁷ Of greater import, perhaps, is the tremendous loss incurred during the pandemic of 1347-1348. Michael Dols has provided the definitive study of this catastrophe, and there is neither time nor need to recount fully the macabre results. Suffice it to say that in Damascus alone one to two thousand people are said to have died daily during the peak period. Dols suggests that the Damascene population decline amounted to more than thirty percent.⁸⁸ Elsewhere, after looking at figures for other Syrian cities, he estimates that the Syrian population as a whole was reduced by one-third.⁸⁹ One must also note that Dols and that Shoshan in his table both indicate that plague recurrences were sufficiently numerous and frequent that the general Middle Eastern population was unable to recover successfully from the Black Death.⁹⁰

Unfortunately, most of Dols's research centers upon Egypt, so it is difficult to determine the range of Syrian economic loss from the pandemic. Presumably, the

⁸⁴Rose E. Frisch, "Population, Food Intake, and Fertility," *Science* 199 (6 Jan., 1978), 22.

⁸⁵J. P. W. Rivers, "The Nutritional Biology of Famine," *Famine*, ed. G. A. Harrison (Oxford, 1988), 79; Robert Dirks, "Famine and Disease," in *The Cambridge World History of Human Disease*, ed. Kenneth Kiple (Cambridge, 1994), 157-163.

⁸⁶J. P. Henry and P. M. Stephens, *Stress, Health, and the Social Environment: A Sociobiologic Approach to Medicine* (New York, 1977), 12.

⁸⁷See the valuable table in Boaz Shoshan's "Notes sur les epidemies de peste in Egypte," *Annales de démographie historique*, Société de Démographie Historique (Paris, 1981), 401-403.

⁸⁸Dols, *Black Death*, 218-220.

⁸⁹*Ibid.*, 220.

⁹⁰Dols, *Black Death*, 223; Shoshan, "Epidemies," 401-403.



loss of people and animals in Syria badly hampered commercial exchange, labor, and production just as happened in neighboring Egypt. It must also be remembered that non-plague epidemics generated significant population loss. For instance, an epidemic of something other than plague killed many in Aleppo in 1422—supposedly as many as seventy thousand.⁹¹ What this and other non-plague diseases were is virtually impossible to say; Lawrence Conrad has indicated some of the issues surrounding the Arabic terms *wabā'* and *ṭā'ūn*, generally used to designate epidemic and plague, respectively.⁹² The information afforded in the chronicles seems much less precise than, for instance, terms for epidemic diseases in early modern Japan.⁹³ Clearly, however, plague was not the only epidemic disease that troubled Mamluk Syria. As indicated previously, disease could be sparked by severe or changeable weather or by malnutrition.

Whatever the nature of the epidemic, the results were largely the same. Civic life was disrupted. The Mamluk elite and army were hard hit,⁹⁴ and continuation of public security and order became problematic. Normal family and community life were disrupted by the frequently overwhelming mortality. Mass burials and similar departures from the norm placed great strain upon medieval Islamic societies, including that of Mamluk Syria (especially the terrible plague of 1429).⁹⁵

If famine and epidemics were lethal events in the medieval Islamic world, earthquakes were at times also lethal and always terrifying phenomena. The damage and destruction were immediately apparent and, therefore, probably a much greater stressor. In 1293 there were severe earthquakes in Palestine at such places as al-Ramlah and al-Ludd. Fortifications in al-Karak were damaged, and three villages in the vicinity were destroyed.⁹⁶ A terrible earthquake struck both Syria and Egypt in 1302-1303, destroying houses and killing many.⁹⁷ In January of 1343 the town

⁹¹Sibṭ ibn al-'Ajamī, "Trésors," 2:11.

⁹²Lawrence I. Conrad, "Ṭā'ūn and Wabā': Conceptions of Plague and Pestilence in Early Islam," *JESHO* 25, pt. 3, 268-307.

⁹³Ann B. Jannetta, *Epidemics and Mortality in Early Modern Japan* (Princeton, 1987).

⁹⁴Dols, *Black Death*, 154.

⁹⁵Al-Jawharī, *Nuzhat al-Nufūs* (Cairo, 1973), 3:186-190; al-'Aynī, *Iqd al-Jumān*, Dār al-Kutub, MS Ta'rīkh 8203 H, fol. 326; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-Ghumr*, British Library MS, Or. Add. 7321, fols. 293b-294a.

⁹⁶Al-Jazarī, *Chronique*, 83; al-Suyūfī "Soyuti's Work on Earthquakes, called Kashf al-Salsalah 'an Waṣf Az-Zalzalah, i.e., Removing the Noise from the Description of the Earthquakes . . .," 748.

⁹⁷Ibn Ḥabīb, *Durrat al-Aslāk*, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS arabe 1719, fol. 116b; Ibn al-Shihnah, *Rawdāt al-Manāzib*, British Library MS, Or. Add. 23336, fol. 117a; al-Muqrī, *Nathr al-Jumān*, Chester Beatty, MS 4113, fols. 65a-b.



of al-Manbij in northwest Syria was ruined and 5,700 people killed there.⁹⁸ Information on other severe earthquakes in Syria during this period can be gleaned from the pages of what is probably the definitive catalogue, the Paris dissertation of Mustapha Anwar Taher.⁹⁹ The results were frequently the same: numerous buildings ruined, fortifications leveled, and people dead in the rubble. Here, again, although architects and builders may have benefited, economic losses were severe for property owners, *'ulamā'* and those associated with mosques and *waqf* properties, and for commercial interests losing shops or goods. Furthermore, one can surmise that governments needing to repair fortifications, walls, and other similar structures, had to expend extra revenues which were probably passed on to taxpayers.

The earthquake risk for Syria (including the Lebanon-Palestine areas) can be said to place this region within a category which might be termed "disaster influenced."¹⁰⁰ As the important article by Poirier, Romanowicz, and Taher shows, the Dead Sea and Syrian faults render the region vulnerable to serious seismic activity. Their work demonstrates the frequency of serious earthquake activity, indicating the probability of earthquakes over seven points on the Richter scale every 350 to 400 years and, rather more seriously, events of from five to seven points every *fifty* to one hundred years.¹⁰¹ My colleague Dr. Walter Manger points out the devastation caused by anything in the range from six to seven plus.¹⁰² The data from the Mamluk period seem to confirm this estimate and, more importantly in this context, to illustrate the damage sustained by structures and lives.

Published and manuscript materials provide considerable information about the nature and frequency of disasters or naturally induced crises for both Egypt and Syria in the Mamluk era. Such phenomena were capable of causing economic loss or disruption and mortality directly and in a combination of ways. Severe weather generated famine which in turn often led to disease epidemics. Also, in the case of famine, birth rates and patterns could be influenced indirectly. In this respect, one must also factor in an element which is impossible to measure and yet necessary in any ultimate assessment of the role of catastrophe in any society: the element of stress.

As I indicated years ago in my *JESHO* study and in my paper on famines, modern disaster studies have shown the stress reactions to various types of

⁹⁸J. P. Poirier, B. A. Romanowicz, and M. A. Taher, "Large Historical Earthquakes and Seismic Risk in Northwest Syria," *Nature* 285 (May, 1980), 219.

⁹⁹Mustapha A. Taher, "Corpus des textes arabes relatifs aux tremblements de terre de la conquête arabe au xii H./xviii J.C.," Ph.D. diss., Sorbonne, 1979. See especially vol. 2 for Arabic texts.

¹⁰⁰I owe this designation and the following remarks to my colleague Dr. Walter Manger, Department of Geology, University of Arkansas at Fayetteville.

¹⁰¹Poirier, Romanowicz, and Taher, "Seismic Risk in Northwest Syria," 219-220.

¹⁰²Personal communication, Oct. 3, 1997.



catastrophic events.¹⁰³ Medical researchers have demonstrated that stress reactions affect human immunity and susceptibility to disease. In the case of serious food crises, this is compounded by reduced efficiency of "cell and humoral defence mechanisms."¹⁰⁴ Adrenalin changes associated with the brain can disturb tissue and immunological defenses leaving the affected organism open to disease onset.¹⁰⁵

The evidence indicates that stress reactions in the form of intense fear and anxiety were, as one would indeed expect, present in a number of Mamluk Syria's crises. Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah reports that people in Damascus were terrified by a violent wind and storm in 1381.¹⁰⁶ The Damascenes were said to have been "dejected" by the great famine of 1294-1295.¹⁰⁷ On any number of occasions furthermore, the general fear and distress were evidenced by people imploring God's mercy and holding communal prayers, recitations from the Quran and/or the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī.¹⁰⁸ Michael Dols, in an important article on comparative European-Muslim responses to plague, and I, in my *JESHO* essay, have addressed the issue of religious and magical responses to disasters.¹⁰⁹ The focus of the present study excludes a sustained examination of religious-supernatural responses, but their presence indicates the sort of emotional trauma and strain accompanying these frightening events.

Given the nature of this stress, one may hypothesize that public health and patterns of illness were altered from the "norm" by these destructive phenomena. Short of resorting to the macabre skills of paleopathologists, it seems unlikely that proof for this hypothesis will be forthcoming. However, research suggests that such considerations have to be recalled when making any serious statements about public health, disease incidence, or mortality over periods following or intervening between recurring disasters. What, finally, can one say about the role of catastrophic events in Mamluk Syria? Given the frequency of one disastrous episode or another, the direct, indirect, and cumulative results of these events

¹⁰³George Baker and Dwight W. Chapman, *Man and Society in Disaster* (New York, 1962); Allen H. Barton, *Communities in Disaster* (Garden City, New York, 1969).

¹⁰⁴Iancu Gontzea and Florin R. Jantea, *Human Nutrition [formerly] The Heinz handbook of Nutrition*, 3rd ed. (Basel, 1974), 20.

¹⁰⁵Henry and Stephens, *Stress, Health*, 12-13.

¹⁰⁶Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Dhayl*, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS arabe 1598; see also al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk* 3:2:442.

¹⁰⁷Al-Yūnīnī, *Cont. of Mir'at*, British Library, MS Or. Add. 25, 728, fol. 89a; al-Jazarī, *Ḥawādith*, Sauvaget, 47.

¹⁰⁸See al-'Ulaymī's account, e.g., of Jerusalem's serious drought in 1490; *al-Quds* [Najaf], 2 (1968): 348.

¹⁰⁹Dols, "The Comparative Communal Responses to the Black Death in Muslim and Christian Societies," *Viator* 5 (1974): 269-287; Tucker, "Disasters and Peasantry," 223-224.



negatively affected Mamluk Syria. Politically, to be sure, with the exception of the plague pandemic and recurring epidemics, many of these incidents seem to have had no direct bearing. The structure of Mamluk political life as such, factionalism, and power struggles among Mamluk amirs all seem to have shaped politics much more significantly than any environmental dysfunction.¹¹⁰ Disasters probably did erode the economic base and in damaging infrastructure and commerce undercut the material base of the Mamluk system. But in the absence of statistics and hard information from the sources, one may only conjecture this. Furthermore, it should be noted that Mamluk rule persisted for more than 150 years after the greatest of these catastrophes, the 1347-1348 pandemic.

In a similar vein, one may not point to any perceptible revolution in Mamluk Syrian social structure resulting from disastrous phenomena. None of the available information suggests that catastrophes changed the class system or vaulted the peasantry, for example, into the elite. The information we do have does not even indicate a major transformation in the makeup of Mamluk period commercial elites or *'ulamā'*.

Does this mean that disasters had a negligible impact upon the population of Mamluk Syria? By no means. Although we shall never have the sort of data, follow-up interviews, or economic statistics generated from modern U.S. disasters by such agencies as the International Red Cross, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), or the U.S. Department of Agriculture, we can nevertheless see from the data presented in this study that Syrians incurred loss of property, disrupted lives and, most regrettably, loss of life as a result of many of these phenomena. Clear evidence of this can be seen in the already noted demographic decline of the region by the mid-fourteenth century. Syrian society and government, to be sure, did not collapse. Life went on for survivors and for those suffering economic loss, but there is no doubt that these lives and Syrian society generally would have been healthier and more prosperous had such events not occurred.

In this respect, one must note again that disaster study treats society holistically. The phenomena themselves, after all, do not observe social distinctions or class differences. The well-to-do may be insulated for a time against famine, but earthquakes, plague, and most meteorological disasters do not discriminate socially. If we are to understand the role of these events, we must look carefully at each type and its recorded consequences. Speculation and analogy can be fruitful in assessing probable physiological or micro-organic repercussions, but behavioral responses, including political actions or psychological reactions, are too variable

¹¹⁰One may readily see the nature of Mamluk-era political activity in Lapidus, *Muslim Cities*, 165-191; and P. M. Holt, *The Age of the Crusades: The Near East from the Eleventh Century to 1517* (London, 1986), 107-129, 178-202.



to allow us to stray far from the explicit information of the sources. On both of the latter counts, unfortunately, these sources in fact do not offer us much, certainly not as much as given for Egypt in the comparable period. The sorts of psycho-religious reactions I noted in my study of the Egyptian peasantry of the Mamluk period were not nearly as evident in the research conducted for this essay. Such information as can be gathered offers some insight into trauma or stress reactions, as noted previously, but does not allow one to draw any meaningful conclusions about significant religious change associated with disasters.

With respect, indeed, to any comparison with Mamluk Egypt, Syria seems to have been a much more fortunate region. A rough tabulation, for instance, would yield the following comparative figures: about fifty-five epidemics in Egypt compared to thirty in Syria; twenty-eight earthquakes in Egypt versus fifteen in Syria; and forty-seven famines in Egypt as opposed to twenty-five in Syria.¹¹¹ The differences may reflect the quantitative and, perhaps, qualitative differences between the historiography of the two areas during the relevant period. More likely, Egypt really did endure more disasters than Syria. Syria, after all, was not dependent upon the Nile and its uncertainty with the attendant effects upon food supplies. Also while Syria, as indicated above, could be confronted with serious earthquake activity, the fact is that Egypt had its own problems with a Red Sea fault line that could be, if not frequently, certainly upon occasion, a source of damaging shocks.¹¹² Compared to "disaster-prone" Egypt, "disaster-influenced" Mamluk Syria was a more fortunate place with regard to natural and environmental disasters, if not with respect to foreign invasion or domestic socio-political crises.

¹¹¹Concerning the epidemics, especially those of plague, see Dols, *Black Death*, 305-334; idem, "Second Plague Pandemic," 168-169, esp. notes 11-12; Shoshan, "Epidemics," 395-403. Concerning earthquakes, see text above and Ambraseys et al., *Seismicity of Egypt*, 41-55; Taher, "Corpus des textes arabes," 2:166-210. For famines see Tucker, "Famines," 18-25.

¹¹²Ambraseys et al., *Seismicity of Egypt*, xi and passim.



DORIS BEHRENS-ABOUSEIF

UNIVERSITY OF MUNICH

Qāyṭbāy's *Madrasahs* in the Holy Cities and the Evolution of Ḥaram Architecture

Qāyṭbāy was renowned for being a great traveler, who in spite of his advanced age spent a great part of his time traveling and sight-seeing both within and outside of Egypt. Among his travels were a visit to Jerusalem and the pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina. As he was also a great builder and sponsor of religious and philanthropic foundations, Qāyṭbāy used his tours to inspect construction works everywhere and to articulate his own ideas about architecture. In the following pages the design of Qāyṭbāy's *madrasah* in Medina will be discussed, with reference to his *madrasahs* in Jerusalem and Mecca, in order to demonstrate the Sultan's role in the articulation of what may be understood as the concept of *ḥaram* architecture.

The *waqf* descriptions of Qāyṭbāy's *madrasahs* in Jerusalem and in Medina document the innovations that the monuments themselves can no longer demonstrate.¹ The original appearance of the Ashrafiyah in Jerusalem has not been preserved, and the *madrasahs* of Mecca and Medina are no longer extant. The innovations at the *madrasah* of Medina were considered at that time bold enough to provoke a discussion among the 'ulamā', as Ibn Iyās and al-Samhūdī report.² In his reconstruction of the Ashrafiyah in Jerusalem, Archibald Walls has reconstructed architectural features that occurred there for the first time.³

Although this was not usual for Mamluk architecture outside Cairo, both Qāyṭbāy's *madrasahs* in Jerusalem and Medina were erected by Cairene craftsmen.⁴ The Ashrafiyah of Jerusalem was rebuilt by order of the Sultan who, displeased with its original layout, ordered its remodeling by craftsmen sent from Cairo. As

©Middle East Documentation Center. The University of Chicago.

*This article is a revised version of a lecture given on April 24, 1998 at the Mamluk Studies Workshop convened by the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at The University of Chicago.

¹Bibliothèque Nationale, Suppl. Ar. no. 471, fols. 28v.-32.

²Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i' al-Zuhūr fī Waqā'i' al-Duhūr*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā (Wiesbaden and Cairo, 1961-75), 3:196; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-Wafā' bi-Akhbār al-Muṣṭafā*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn 'Abd al-Ḥamīd, 3 vols. (Beirut, 1401/1981), 2:643.

³Archibald Walls, *Geometry and Architecture in Islamic Jerusalem: A Study of the Ashrafiyya* (London, 1990).

⁴Mujīr al-Dīn, *al-Uns al-Jalīl bi-Ta' rīkh al-Quds wa-al-Khalīl* (Amman, 1973), 2:326; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-Wafā'*, 2:618; for the Medina *madrasah*, see below.



©1999 by Doris Behrens-Abouseif.

DOI: [10.6082/M1DV1H16](https://doi.org/10.6082/M1DV1H16). (<https://doi.org/10.6082/M1DV1H16>)

DOI of Vol. III: [10.6082/M1765CFB](https://doi.org/10.6082/M1765CFB). See <https://doi.org/10.6082/ZJY1-1449> to download the full volume or individual articles. This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY). See <http://mamluk.uchicago.edu/msr.html> for more information about copyright and open access.

for the *madrasah* in Medina, it was erected by a team of Egyptian craftsmen who were working at the time on the restoration of the Prophet's Mosque.

Prior to his pilgrimage in 884/1480, Qāyṭbāy undertook the restoration of the Prophet's Mosque, which lasted with interruption from 879/1474-75 to 881/1477. In the following year, 886/1481, a fire devastated the sanctuary so that new radical restorations had to be made which were completed in 889/1484. The construction of the Sultan's *madrasah* began in Rabī' I 883/June 1478, that is, after the first restoration of the Prophet's Mosque was resumed, and it was completed in Ramaḍān 887/October 1482, prior to the completion of the second restoration.⁵ The reason for the relatively long time span between the beginning and completion dates of the *madrasah* was probably the second restoration of the Prophet's Mosque, which required the involvement of the craftsmen working at the *madrasah*. The simultaneous occurrence of the *madrasah* construction and the restoration of the mosque gave the master-craftsmen the opportunity to make adjustments to both buildings in order to achieve a unity of design between the two.

The Medina *madrasah* abutted the Prophet's Mosque south of Bāb al-Salām and north of Bāb al-Raḥmah. It was part of a complex that occupied the block between two east-west oriented streets leading to these gates. Both gates, piercing the western wall of the mosque, led directly into the prayer hall. The *madrasah's* facade was striped with black and white masonry, and a two-storied minaret stood above the entrance on the street leading to Bāb al-Salām. It was built on the Egyptian *qā'ah* plan with a northern and a southern *īwān* separated by a *dūrqā'ah*. It had seven windows (*shabābīk*) opening directly onto the Prophet's Mosque; five others overlooked the street (fig. 1).

The *waqfiyah* mentions that on the *madrasah's* northern side there was a two-storied building called a *majma'*, which is an assembly hall.⁶ Its lower floor had three windows (*shabābīk*) opening onto the Prophet's Mosque and the upper floor overlooked the mosque's roof. On the northern side of the *majma'* was a *sabīl* with one window opening onto the mosque and another onto the street. The window on the mosque's side must have served to give the worshipers inside the mosque access to water from the *sabīl* (fig. 2).

Adjacent to the *madrasah* on its western side was a *ribāṭ*, a complex of thirty-eight cells built around a courtyard, in the middle of which was an octagonal domed fountain. It is not clear whether this *ribāṭ* had one or two stories.⁷ No cells

⁵Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i' al-Zuhūr*, 3:145, 196.

⁶van Berchem, *Matériaux pour un Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum, Syrie du sud, I: Jerusalem ville* (Cairo, 1922), 89; in Mujīr al-Dīn's terminology, *majma'* is another word for a mall mosque.

⁷The precise location of this *ribāṭ* is not indicated in the document, neither in relation to the *madrasah* nor to the street.



overlooking the mosque or the street are mentioned, which suggests that they opened onto the courtyard. Another forty-two cells were beneath the *madrasah* and the *majma'*, some of them with windows overlooking the Prophet's Mosque; others were integrated into the *madrasah* itself, overlooking its interior and connected with the Prophet's Mosque by a staircase. This makes for a total of eighty cells. The document does not specify how many cells overlooked the mosque. Al-Samhūdī writes that Qāyṭbāy's complex had a total of thirty openings (*fataḥāt*) pierced on three levels and overlooking the mosque⁸ (figs. 3 and 4).

From the reconstruction of the plan of the Prophet's Mosque as it was in the fifteenth century, it appears that between Bāb al-Salām and Bāb al-Raḥmah ten naves run parallel to the *qiblah* wall,⁹ six of which were part of the sanctuary, the other four belonging to the lateral western *riwāq*. Since the complex was located between Bāb al-Raḥmah and Bāb al-Salām, only its southern part, probably the *madrasah*, was juxtaposed to the prayer hall itself; the northern part, or *majma'*, was juxtaposed to the lateral western *riwāq*.

If thirty openings overlooked ten naves, one is tempted to imagine that three windows arranged vertically opened onto each nave but, according to al-Samhūdī, there were also three doors leading through the *madrasah* into the mosque.¹⁰ The *waqfiyah* uses the word *shabābīk* for windows, a term which usually does not include the arched bays with stucco grills filled with colored glass, which are called *qamarīyah*, nor does it include the oculi. Al-Samhūdī uses the general term for openings (*fataḥāt*), which can refer to any type of openings, including doors.¹¹ When the sanctuary was rebuilt by the Ottoman sultan 'Abd al-Majīd, the number of naves between the two gates was only nine.¹² The reconstruction showing how Qāyṭbāy's *madrasah* abutted to the Medina mosque, as shown in figures 1 and 2, can therefore be only schematic and conjectural.

On both streets adjacent to the Qāyṭbāy complex were apartment houses and shops. Other buildings, including the public kitchen, a *ḥammām*, a mill, a bakery, and a *wakālah*, were built opposite the *madrasah's* entrance, partly on the *qiblah* side of the mosque. Based on the *waqf* document, this description suggests that, in order to erect this *madrasah* with the living units and the *sabīl* communicating with the mosque through windows, it must have been necessary to make important

⁸al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-Wafā'*, 2:643.

⁹Šāliḥ Lam'ī Muṣṭafá, *al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah: Taṭawwuruhā al-'Umrānī wa-Turāthuhā al-Mi'mārī* (Beirut, 1981), 87.

¹⁰al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-Wafā'*, 2:643.

¹¹Muḥammad Muḥammad Amīn and Laila Ali Ibrahim, *Architectural Terms in Mamluk Documents* (Cairo, 1990), 69, 90f.

¹²Muṣṭafá, *al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah*, 94.



modifications in the mosque's western wall, in fact eliminating it entirely in this section and replacing it by the *madrasah's* facade.¹³ It seems very likely that these restorations and the planning of the *madrasah* were coordinated so as to produce a *madrasah* with a facade inside the mosque.

The *madrasah* did not stand directly on the street level, but was built above a row of shops on the street side, and above living units on the inner side overlooking the Prophet's Mosque. Its floor must have been, therefore, on a level higher than the mosque's, and the living units beneath must have had their windows close to their ceiling in order to leave enough vertical space for the *madrasah's* facade with its windows.

The innovation at the *madrasah* of Medina consisted of its juxtaposition to the sanctuary in an intimate way, with its facade forming the lateral wall of the prayer hall. Ibn Iyās and al-Samhūdī refer to the windows as a characteristic feature of the *madrasah* complex; they report that some 'ulamā' objected to their presence, arguing that the windows constituted an intrusion into the Prophet's Ḥaram. But, as might be expected, the Sultan found other scholars to override them. Whereas Ibn Iyās mentions only the *fatwā* authorizing the windows, al-Samhūdī, who also refers to this *fatwā*, writes that God made the Sultan change his mind, so that the windows were ultimately walled up. Unlike Ibn Iyās, al-Samhūdī was an eyewitness in Medina, so that his version is more trustworthy. It is difficult to imagine, however, how so many windows could be done without.

Due to the lack of a *waqf* document, we are less informed about the Ashrafiyah of Mecca, which was built prior to that of Medina. It was completed just in time to host the Sultan during his pilgrimage in 884/1480. Located on the left hand side of Bāb al-Salām on the eastern wall of the Ḥaram, it included also a *majma'* overlooking the Ḥaram. Its curriculum included the teaching of the four rites of Islamic law with four teachers and forty students, as well as Sufi services. Its premises comprised seventy-two living units, a primary school (*maktab*) for forty pupils, a *ribāṭ*, a *majma'* for the four chief *qāḍīs*, and a library. Both the *madrasah* of Mecca and that of Medina were built by the same contractor-architect, Ibn al-Zamin.¹⁴

¹³al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-Wafā'*, 2:640 f.

¹⁴Shams al-Dīn Ibn al-Zamin was a merchant who had been working as a commercial agent for Qāytbāy already prior to the latter's sultanate. Qāytbāy sent him to Mecca on business and at the same time to build for him a religious complex next to the Holy Mosque, and another in Medina next to the Prophet's mosque. He moreover executed infrastructural works, such as the conduction of source water to the holy cities and for pilgrims' use. When a fire broke out in the Prophet's mosque, he was in charge of the reconstruction as well as of building the Sultan's *madrasah*. From all historical accounts it appears that Ibn al-Zamin was a contractor who designed the buildings as well. Quṭb al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Nahrawālī, *Kitāb al-I'lām bi-A'lām Bayt Allāh*



Whether in Medina or Mecca, Qāyṭbāy's constructions provoked a controversy. In Mecca, the contractor and architect Ibn al-Zamin laid the foundations of the complex in such a way as to make them encroach upon the *mas'ā*, thus disturbing the *ḥajj* ritual. This infuriated the 'ulamā', but the petitions they sent to the Sultan were not of much help; Qāyṭbāy confirmed Ibn al-Zamin's appointment and dismissed the *qādī* who had tried to stop the construction. Quṭb al-Dīn comments by expressing his mixed feelings about Qāyṭbāy who, although one of the most pious and charitable rulers was, nevertheless, able to act in such a ruthless manner.¹⁵

For both of his constructions in Mecca and Medina, Qāyṭbāy did not hesitate to demolish his predecessors' buildings in order to replace them with his own or to remove them simply for aesthetic purposes; in Mecca an old *sabīl* was demolished because it obstructed the view of his new *madrasah* and an ablution fountain of al-Ashraf Sha'bān was razed because its space was needed. In Medina a *ribāṭ*, parts of the Madrasah Jūbānīyah, the Dār al-Shubbāk, as well as houses had to make place for the Sultan's new religious complex. Ibn Iyās reports how the acquisition of the houses had raised a controversy which led one of the house owners to kill the *qādī* involved in the transactions. This did not, however, stop the Sultan's scheme.¹⁶ In fact, the demolition of parts of the Jūbānīyah, a pious foundation, could not have been fully correct.

Quṭb al-Dīn, who also criticized Sultan al-Ghawrī's encroachments upon the Holy Mosque in Mecca, commented with resignation that the Sultan would not have listened to the jurists anyway; they were too dependent on the rulers to be capable of true opposition.¹⁷ This, in fact, conforms with what Mamluk sources regularly report about the 'ulamā's opposition being easily overruled; alternative jurists could always be found to issue more convenient opinions.

The idea of establishing visual contact between a building and an adjoining mosque or shrine was obviously not a matter of mere architectural design, but rather of religious significance. As Christel Kessler has demonstrated in the case of Mamluk funerary architecture, sultans and amirs tried to place their mausoleums in a location adjacent to the prayer hall of their mosques, both connected by windows, so that the soul of the dead would benefit from the *barakah*, or blessing,

al-Ḥarām (Mecca, 1370/1950), 197; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-Wafā'*, 2:639; Ibn Iyās, *Badā' i' al-Zuhūr*, 3:188; al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw' al-Lāmi' li-Ahl al-Qarn al-Tāsi'*, 12 vols. (Cairo, 1896), 8:260; U. Haarmann, "Eine neue Quelle zur Bautätigkeit Sultan Qāyṭbāys im ersten Jahrfünft seiner Herrschaft," forthcoming in *Gedenkschrift Michael Meinecke* (Damascus, 1998), n. 2.

¹⁵Quṭb al-Dīn, *Kitāb al-I'lām*, 101.

¹⁶Ibn Iyās, *Badā' i' al-Zuhūr*, 3:145.

¹⁷Quṭb al-Dīn, *Kitāb al-I'lām*, 212.



emanating from the mosque's prayers.¹⁸ In the recess of a window overlooking the street, a *shaykh shubbāk*, regularly mentioned in *waqfiyahs* of religious foundations, would sit reciting the Quran for the soul of the dead, thus extending this *barakah* to the passersby, and soliciting at the same time their prayerful response.

The practice of attaching a mausoleum to a religious building started under the Saljuqs, when Sultan Sanjar (d. 1157) built his mausoleum next to a mosque in Marw, connecting them with a window.¹⁹ A few decades later the Zanjid vizier Jamāl al-Dīn Jawād al-Iṣfahānī erected a *ribāṭ* for Persian visitors and a mausoleum for himself on the eastern side of the Prophet's Mosque. The complex was built across the street, facing the mosque's door, Bāb 'Uthmān, also called Bāb Jibrīl. The mausoleum, where the vizier was buried in 1193, was pierced with a window facing yet another window in the mosque, allowing the passersby to see the Prophet's tomb within the sanctuary. The two windows established a visual connection between the tombs of Jawād and the Prophet.²⁰ Jawād had been a great benefactor of the Holy Cities, where he ordered important improvements at his own expense, such as the reconstruction of the walls of Medina. To the south of this *ribāṭ*, there was another funerary structure purchased by Shīrkūh, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's uncle, in which he and his brother, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's father, were to be buried.

Also in Medina, the funerary *madrasah* called al-Jūbānīyah, erected in 1324 by Jūbān, the *atābak* of the Ilkhanid sultan Abū Sa'īd, was connected with the Prophet's Mosque through a window pierced in the wall of the mausoleum. After his death the remains of Jūbān were sent from Baghdad to Medina for his burial there. This, however, was prevented by the Mamluk sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad who gave orders to bury him at the cemetery of Baqī'. Al-Samhūdī mentions that the reason for this opposition was the location of the mausoleum: in order to be buried facing the *qiblah*, Jūbān's feet would have had to point at the Prophet's grave.²¹ Part of this *madrasah* was later demolished by Qāytbāy in order to build his own *madrasah* at this place.

In Ayyubid Syria, when al-Malik al-Kāmil (d. 1238) built his mausoleum near the great mosque of Damascus, he pierced the mosque's northern wall with a window, ignoring the general opposition against his initiative. A similar conflict occurred in Cairo, at the Azhar mosque, when the amir Jawhar al-Qanqabā'ī built his funerary *madrasah* (1440) adjacent to the sanctuary's northern wall and wanted to pierce a window in the prayer hall to connect it with his mausoleum. He

¹⁸Christel Kessler, "Funerary Architecture with the City," in *Colloque international sur l'histoire du Caire* (27 Mars-5 Avril 1969) (Cairo, n.d.), 257-68.

¹⁹Ferdinand Wüstenfeld, *Yacut's geographisches Wörterbuch* (Leipzig, 1924), 4:509.

²⁰al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-Wafā'*, 3:689.

²¹Ibid., 2:702.



requested, therefore, a *fatwá* from the jurists authorizing him to do so. The jurist and historian al-‘Aynī, who was involved in this case, refused to sign this *fatwá* and accused the others who had signed it of corruption. This episode was recorded by al-Sakhāwī in his biography of Jawhar and by al-‘Aynī himself. None of them, however, discusses the arguments presented by the two parties.²²

The earlier *madrasahs* of Āqbughā (1340) and Ṭaybars (1309-10), which were erected in the northwestern *ziyādah* of al-Azhar, are not mentioned to have provoked any opposition from the ‘*ulamā*’. In Jerusalem several religious foundations built along the portico of the Ḥaram included funerary chambers with windows opening onto the Masjid al-Aqṣá.

To understand the ‘*ulamā*’s opposition to Qāyṭbāy’s windows at his *madrasah* in Medina, it is necessary to understand the layout of the Ḥaram complex prior to Qāyṭbāy’s constructions and the physical relationship between the adjoining buildings and the mosque. In his description of the Prophet’s Mosque, al-Samhūdī mentions that dwellings, *madrasahs*, and *ribāṭs* surrounded the mosque with their walls facing its doors. This description indicates that there was a street between the mosque and the surrounding quarters.

Only on the *qiblah* and western sides did buildings abut the mosque. Between Bāb al-Salām and Bāb al-Raḥmah, there were two buildings adjacent to, and overlooking, the prayer hall; one was a house called Dār al-Shubbāk because it had a window onto the mosque. It was built by Kāfūr al-Muẓaffarī (d. 1311-12), known as al-Ḥarīrī, one of the eunuchs who attended the mosque. It was the only house with a window overlooking the mosque; al-Samhūdī does not indicate, however, the reason for this exception, which could have been related to Kāfūr’s task of policing the precinct. The other building was Jūbān’s funerary *madrasah* mentioned above, whose window by that time had been walled up. It was there, on the site of the Dār al-Shubbāk and parts of the Jūbānīyah, that Qāyṭbāy built his *madrasah*. A bakery, a mill, a *wakālah*, and a public kitchen were erected on the *qiblah* side of the mosque on the site of houses whose demolition he also ordered.

Burton’s map, which was drawn during the reign of ‘Abd al-Majīd, shows streets next to the Prophet’s Mosque, except on the *qiblah* side and along the western side between Bāb al-Salām and Bāb al-Raḥmah. This means that buildings touched the mosque to the south and west of the prayer hall. Burton himself writes of the Medina mosque: “Like that at Meccah, the approach is chocked by ignoble buildings, some actually touching the holy ‘enceinte,’ others separated by a lane compared with which the road round St. Paul’s is a Vatican Square.”²³

²²al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw’ al-Lāmi’*, 3:82f.; al-‘Aynī, *Iqd al-Jumān* (Cairo, 1989), 566.

²³Richard Francis Burton, *Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to al-Madinah and Mecca*, 2 vols.



The layout of the Meccan shrine was a different matter. Originally, in pre-Islamic times, the sanctuary was the roofless unwallled space around the Ka'bah. Houses surrounded this central space with streets between them converging from all sides towards the open space. With the expansion of the sanctuary in the Islamic period at the expense of the surrounding quarters, walls and porticoes were added around the central space. The legitimacy of the surrounding pre-existing dwellings could not be questioned. Gradually, the houses around the sanctuary which served as guest-houses during the pilgrimage season were replaced by philanthropic foundations of the *ribāṭ* and *madrasah* type, including a hospital, to provide lodging and teaching and care for sojourners and pilgrims. The earliest *ribāṭ* was founded in 400/1009-10. It was followed by several others to house the poor and the Sufis. As for *madrasahs*, they began to appear slightly later and multiplied in the following centuries so that by the end of the fifteenth century almost the entire wall of the holy mosque was hidden behind buildings.²⁴ This made it necessary for Qāyṭbāy to demolish two *ribāṭs* in order to establish his own religious complex along the mosque's wall.

The sources do not mention windows between the satellite structures and the mosque; these dwellings overlooked the mosque at the level of the roof, and not below. Windows are mentioned only in the case of the Dār al-Nadwah, formerly an adjacent guest-house that the caliph al-Mu'taḍiḍ (r. 892-902) had turned into a prayer hall. It thus became an extension of the mosque, at which point large windows were pierced in the wall between it and the sanctuary.²⁵

The construction of windows in the Medina mosque was protested by the 'ulamā' with the argument that this was an indiscretion against the Prophet, whose tomb lay within the mosque. Such an argument could not have been used in Mecca, where from the outset the sanctuary had been exposed to its neighbors, or in Jerusalem, where the Ḥaram with its large open space was surrounded by religious and residential buildings built above porticoes, creating a zone of transition between the city and the sanctuary.

Qāyṭbāy's *madrasah* in Medina had an interesting feature in common with the Ashrafīyah of Jerusalem: a visual opening onto the adjoining sanctuary. The *madrasah* in Jerusalem was completed in 887/1482, slightly after that of Medina. The building was devastated by an earthquake in 1545.²⁶ Later restorations did not

(New York, 1964) 1:307, 392.

²⁴ al-Fāsī, *Shifā' al-Gharām bi-Akḥbār al-Balad al-Ḥarām*, 2 vols., ed. N. Ma'rūf (Mecca, 1956), 1:328 ff.

²⁵ Quṭb al-Dīn, *Kitāb al-I'lām*, 133 ff.

²⁶ Abd al-Laṭīf Ibrāhīm, "Wathīqat al-Sulṭān Qāyṭbāy: Dirāsah wa-Taḥlīl al-Madrasah bi-al-Quds wa-al-Jāmi' bi-Ghazzah," *Dirāsāt fī al-Āthār al-Islāmīyah* (Cairo, 1979), 483-538, 509 ff.; Muḥīr al-Dīn, *al-Uns al-Jalīl*, 2:325 ff.; Walls, *Geometry and Architecture*, 198, n. 1, 199.



replicate the original shape. The unusually detailed description in the *waqf* deed, and a comprehensive description by the contemporary historian Mujīr al-Dīn, in addition to the vestiges of the *madrasah* itself, allowed Archibald Walls to produce a reconstruction of this remarkable building, erected within the complex of the Masjid al-Aqṣá.

The *madrasah* acquired its final configuration after Qāyṭbāy visited Jerusalem and expressed his dislike for the first building, the reconstruction of which he ordered to be executed by Egyptian craftsmen. Like the *madrasah* of Medina, it was designed with an Egyptian *qā'ah* plan, on a north-south axis. It was constructed on two floors; the *waqfiyah* refers to lower and upper *madrasahs*. Mujīr al-Dīn calls the lower *madrasah* a *majma'*,²⁷ which consisted merely of a hall reached from the Masjid al-Aqṣá by an entrance on its eastern side.²⁸

The *madrasah* projected onto the Ḥaram of the Masjid al-Aqṣá with three facades pierced by large windows (fig. 5). The *qiblah*-side *īwān* had ten large rectangular windows (*shabābīk*) in its lower part, and six arched windows (*qamarīyāt*) in its upper part. The northern *īwān* had six large rectangular windows surmounted by eight arched windows and a bull's eye in its upper part.

The *madrasah* was built in place of a section of the western portico, which was partly integrated into the *majma'* on the lower floor. When Qāyṭbāy's Egyptian master-mason inspected the first *madrasah*, he disliked in particular the way it abutted the portico.²⁹ The new design was bold. It needed the authority of a sultan to encroach upon the adjacent Madrasah Baladīyah, to block the window of the *madrasah's* tomb-chamber, to demolish parts of the Ḥaram's portico and, moreover, to make the *madrasah* project beyond the portico onto the Ḥaram in such an unprecedented manner.

The plan of the Jerusalem *madrasah* differs from the commonly known *qā'ah* applied in religious architecture, however, in that, instead of a lateral recess, it has on one side a *maq'ad* (fig. 6) or loggia that commanded the Ḥaram panorama through three large arches. The *maq'ad* is a feature of Cairene residential architecture, where it is connected with a reception hall (*qā'ah*), while it overlooks at the same time the inner courtyard of a house. Although it is the only *maq'ad* in the Cairene style known so far to have been used in religious architecture, the idea of a loggia overlooking the Ḥaram was not new in Jerusalem. Smaller loggias with a double-arch

²⁷Mujīr al-Dīn, *al-Uns al-Jalīl*, 2:328. This term is not used in the *waqf* description of this building, but it was used in the earlier document describing the *madrasah* that Qāyṭbāy replaced with this one.

²⁸Michael H. Burgoyne, *Mamluk Jerusalem* (London, 1987), 589-605.

²⁹Mujīr al-Dīn, *al-Uns al-Jalīl*, 2:509, n. 1; 'Abd al-Laṭīf Ibrāhīm, "Wathīqat al-Sulṭān Qāyṭbāy," 499f.



window existed already in several Mamluk satellite buildings around the Ḥaram. They had double arched windows overlooking the Ḥaram,³⁰ such as the one at the Manjakīyah (762/1361), the pair of lateral chambers at the Is'ardīyah (1340s), and the one at the 'Uthmānīyah (840/1437). These were sometimes surmounted by domes, as at the Manjakīyah and the Is'ardīyah. There is also a kind of forerunner to this device in Fatimid architecture at the Azhar mosque where the caliph al-'Azīz built a *manẓarah*, or loggia, where he used to sit on festive occasions with his family.³¹

The *madrasahs* of Qāytbāy in both Medina and Jerusalem were built in order to have a maximum number of bays overlook the adjoining sanctuary. Both had their *majma'*s built so as to give their residents visual access to the sanctuary, creating a permanent interaction between the community of the sojourners (*mujāwirūn*) and the shrine.³²

In Jerusalem, the Masjid al-Aqṣá had been able to integrate additional structures into its premises apparently without legal conflicts because of the open character of its architecture and the natural separation of the platform from the walls. Mujīr al-Dīn defines the Masjid al-Aqṣá as the entire enclosed complex, and not only the Umayyad mosque known as al-Jāmi' al-Aqṣá, which is a *jāmi'* within the *masjid*.³³ By means of this definition, he included the surrounding buildings within the sanctuary. This idea is essential for understanding Qāytbāy's windows in Medina. In the Ḥaram of Jerusalem the surrounding *madrasahs* and hostels were not viewed as "outdoor" structures; their windows and doors, as well as Qāytbāy's *maq'ad*, were not considered an intrusion into the sanctuary, but rather were considered part of it. Already in the eleventh century, oratories were built along the walls of the Ḥaram in Jerusalem, and Nāṣir-i Khusraw mentions a handsome mosque along the eastern wall, within the portico, between Bāb al-Raḥmah and Bāb al-Tawbah (the Golden Gate).³⁴ This could have been the building used by the Shāfi'ī scholar, Shaykh Naṣr ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Dāwūd, who is reported to have

³⁰Burgoyne, *Mamluk Jerusalem*, 391, 368-79, 552.

³¹al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawā'iz wa-al-I'tibār fī Dhikr al-Khiṭaṭ wa-al-Āthār* (Būlāq, 1270/1853-54), 1:465 ff.

³²In Jerusalem the cells were at the same level as the *madrasah*, whereas the *majma'* was beneath it; in Medina the *majma'* was adjacent to the *madrasah*, and the cells were partly beneath it or included in the adjacent *ribāṭ*.

³³Mujīr al-Dīn, *al-Uns al-Jalīl*, 2:11, 24.

³⁴Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *Book of Travels*, trans. Wheeler M. Thackston (Albany, 1986), 25; idem, *Safarname*, trans. S. Najmabadi and S. Weber (Munich, 1993), 59 f.; idem, *Safarnāmah*, trans. Y. al-Khashshāb (Cairo, 1993), 72. Mujīr al-Dīn, *al-Uns al-Jalīl*, 2:27; Michael H. Burgoyne, "The Gates of the Ḥaram al-Sharīf," in *Bayt al-Maqdis: 'Abd al-Malik's Jerusalem*, pt. 1, ed. Julian Raby and Jeremy Johns, Oxford Studies in Islamic Art, 9 (Oxford, 1992), 105-24, esp. 111, 120.



founded in about 1058 an oratory described as a *madrasah*, and also as a *zāwiyah*, above Bāb al-Raḥmah.³⁵ It was during the Mamluk period, however, that religious monuments with funerary chambers began to cluster along the northern and western porticoes of the Ḥaram,³⁶ whose street walls faced the busiest quarters of the city. In all these *madrasahs* and *khānqāhs* the main hall (*majmaʿ*) was built so as to have windows overlooking the Ḥaram. Some of these satellite buildings had their entrances within the portico, while others had two entrances. These were reached from both the street and the portico, or they might be reached only from the street. Several of them, such as the Aḥadīyah (697/1298), the Amīnīyah (730/1329), the Arghūnīyah (759/1358), the Khātūnīyah (completed 782/1380), and the Baladīyah (782/1383), included funerary chambers with a window open to the Ḥaram. The living units were either on the street side, or on the upper floor with a view of the Ḥaram.

Here it is interesting to add a note about the use of the term *majmaʿ* in the sources and in the *waqf* deeds in connection with the Ḥaram structures. *Majmaʿ* means literally "place of assembly" and it refers in these texts to the main hall in a residential institution that includes the *miḥrāb*. The term *majmaʿ* is never used in *waqf* descriptions of Cairene religious architecture. This cannot be explained by local scribal traditions, for the terminology used in Qāyṭbāy's *waqfiyahs* is otherwise the same for foundations in or outside of Egypt. Also, Mujīr al-Dīn uses this term when speaking of the "prayer halls" of the *madrasahs* and *khānqāhs* in Jerusalem. The choice of the term *majmaʿ* instead of *masjid* seems to be of particular significance. It may involve a premeditated avoidance of the term *masjid* in the context of these boarding institutions since they were part of the Masjid al-Aqṣá. The *madrasahs*, *ribāṭs*, and *khānqāhs* in the Masjid al-Aqṣá were seen as dependencies to lodge pilgrims and provide religious education, rather than autonomous mosques. Another example for this complementary relationship between the shrine and the adjoining structures is the absence of a *miḥrāb* at the *madrasahs* of Ālmalik and Sanjar al-Jawlī, both situated along the northern portico.³⁷ Instead, their *qiblah* walls are pierced by three windows each, the central one, which replaces the *miḥrāb*, being the largest; its view of the Ḥaram to the south is oriented to Mecca. The view of the Ḥaram thus replaces the *miḥrāb*: the Dome of the Rock and the Jāmiʿ Aqṣá, both on the same axis signal the more remote Kaʿbah which is in the same cardinal direction. It should be recalled in this context that the *madrasah* of Qāyṭbāy at Medina had neither an *imām* nor a

³⁵Mujīr al-Dīn, *al-Uns al-Jalīl*, 2:28, 34.

³⁶Rāʿif Najm, *Kunūz al-Quds* (Amman, 1983), 131 f.

³⁷Burgoyne, *Mamluk Jerusalem*, 201, 308, 313 f.



khaṭīb. This means that the community prayed in the Prophet's Mosque and gathered for teaching and Sufi rituals in the adjoining boarding structures.

While the satellite foundations created a zone of transition between the city and the shrine, the Mamluk market of Sūq al-Qaṭṭānīn, is connected with the Ḥaram through a gate, Bāb al-Qaṭṭānīn, located along the western portico. This magnificent gate, built by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and Amir Tankiz for the benefit of the Masjid al-Aqṣá and the Tankizīyah,³⁸ signals the market-street to the visitor of the Ḥaram, thus emphasizing the intersection between the urban-commercial zone and the religious precinct. It fulfills an equivalent function from the street's perspective where its market side, which was once also decorated, signals the Ḥaram to the market visitor.

Although it did not stretch along the entire enclosure, the portico built along the northern and eastern walls of the Ḥaram contributed to the creation of a parallel to the layout of a classical mosque. Mujīr al-Dīn's reading of the Masjid al-Aqṣá as a mosque built around a courtyard, within which is the Dome of the Rock, having porticoes and minarets and encompassing educational and boarding structures, is of particular interest because it established a formal parallel between the Masjid al-Aqṣá and the mosques of Mecca and Medina. It is interesting to note here that the Mamluk minarets at the Jerusalem Ḥaram were placed so as to be attached to the Ḥaram rather than to the individual *madrasahs*. The minaret of Bāb al-Silsilah, built at the same time as the Tankizīyah, and most likely also by Tankiz, stands above an entrance to the Ḥaram, and not at the *madrasah*. With the Meccan shrine the Jerusalem Masjid shares the central structure, a common feature that the Muslim theologians were aware of as they made the parallel between the Rock in Jerusalem and the Black Stone in Mecca.³⁹ It shares with Medina the classical mosque plan of porticoes around a courtyard.

By the late Mamluk period the three holiest mosques of Islam in Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem were encircled by hospices and religious institutions devoted to lodging communities of pilgrims and sojourners from various parts of the Muslim world. These buildings, which had expanded gradually and spontaneously from the eleventh century onward, added a new dimension to the shrines, creating an architectural and functional intermediary between them and the city. The intensive building activity of the Mamluks adjacent to the Ḥaram in Jerusalem was the most articulate manifestation of this phenomenon. It was Qāyṭbāy, however, who made a concept out of this phenomenon, as the bold layout of his *madrasahs* in Medina and Jerusalem demonstrate. The Sultan's visit to Jerusalem in 880/1475, prior to

³⁸Burgoyne, *Mamluk Jerusalem*, 273 ff.

³⁹Cf. A. Elad, *Medieval Jerusalem and Islamic Worship* (Leiden, 1994), 157 f.; al-Zarkashī, *I'lām al-Sājjid bi-Aḥkām al-Masājid* (Cairo, 1397/1977), 291.



his pilgrimage to Medina in 884/1480, seems to have been decisive for the architecture of his buildings in both cities. It inspired him to reshape the first and to emulate in Medina the Ḥaram pattern he had witnessed at the Masjid al-Aqṣá. The boldness of this design was due to the Sultan's personal involvement with architecture and to his power of taking radical measures when necessary.



©1999 by Doris Behrens-Abouseif.

DOI: [10.6082/M1DV1H16](https://doi.org/10.6082/M1DV1H16). (<https://doi.org/10.6082/M1DV1H16>)

DOI of Vol. III: [10.6082/M1765CFB](https://doi.org/10.6082/M1765CFB). See <https://doi.org/10.6082/ZJY1-1449> to download the full volume or individual articles. This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY). See <http://mamluk.uchicago.edu/msr.html> for more information about copyright and open access.

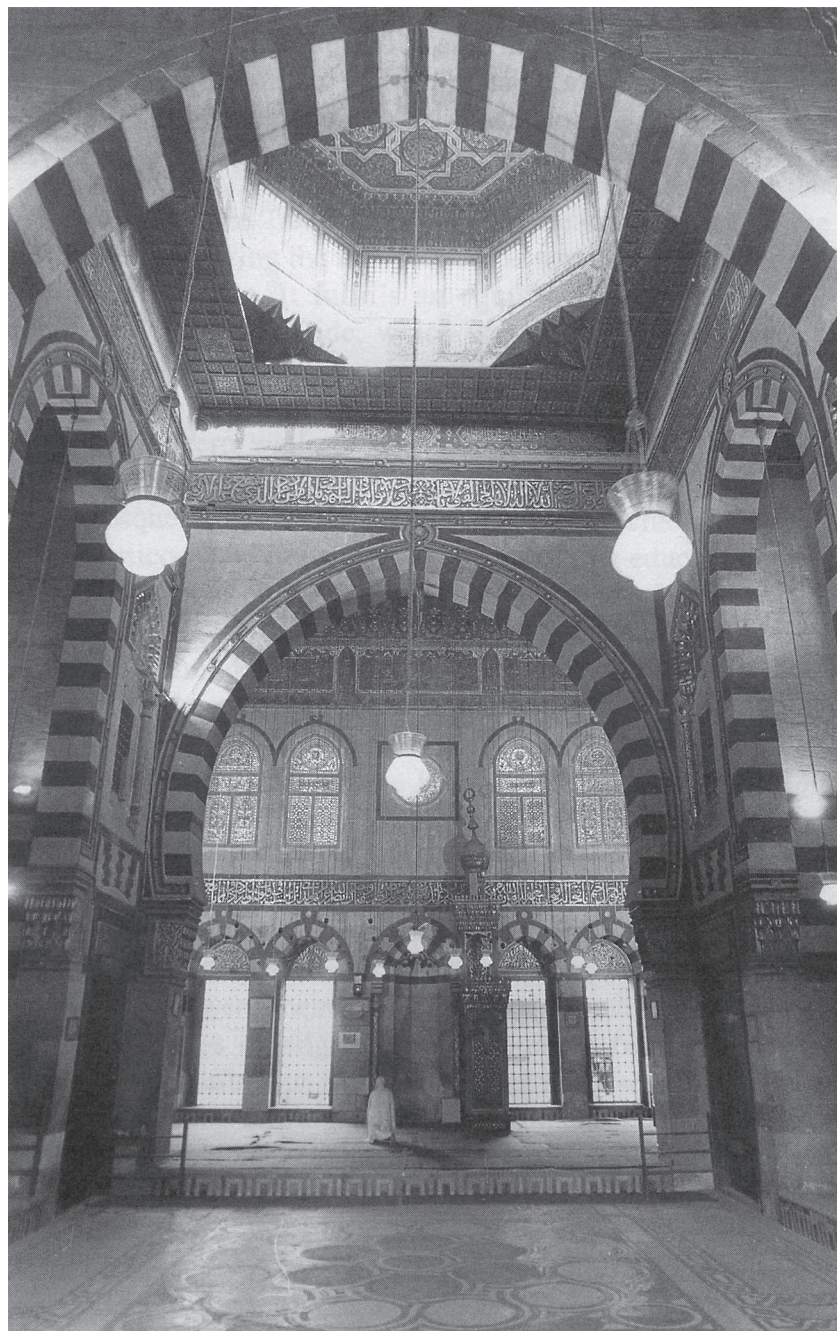


Figure 1. The *qā'ah* interior of Qāytbāy's funerary mosque in Cairo



©1999 by Doris Behrens-Abouseif.

DOI: [10.6082/M1DV1H16](https://doi.org/10.6082/M1DV1H16). (<https://doi.org/10.6082/M1DV1H16>)

DOI of Vol. III: [10.6082/M1765CFB](https://doi.org/10.6082/M1765CFB). See <https://doi.org/10.6082/ZJY1-1449> to download the full volume or individual articles. This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY). See <http://mamluk.uchicago.edu/msr.html> for more information about copyright and open access.

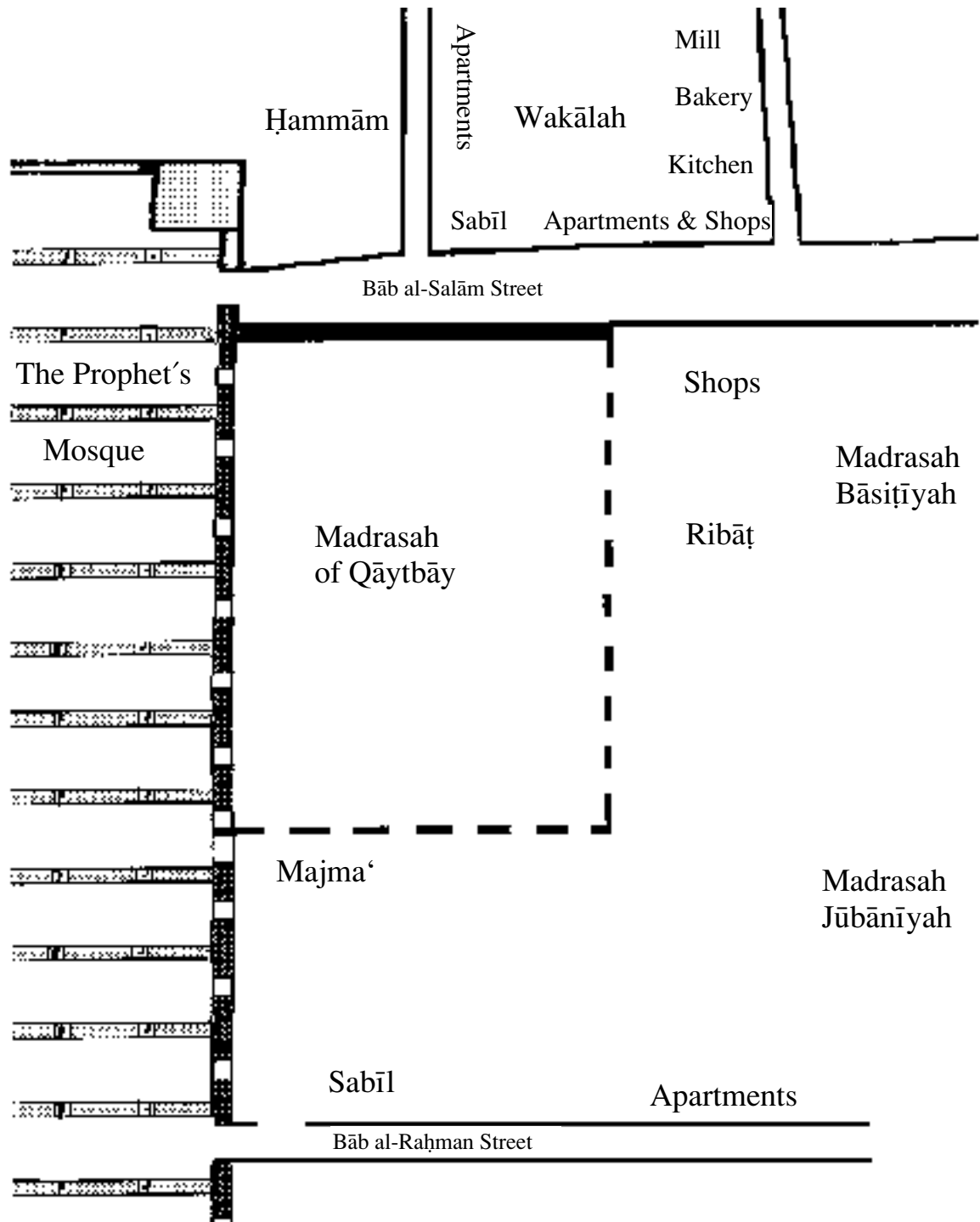


Figure 2. Schematic reconstruction of the layout of Qāyṭbāy's complex in Medina



©1999 by Doris Behrens-Abouseif.

DOI: 10.6082/M1DV1H16. (<https://doi.org/10.6082/M1DV1H16>)

DOI of Vol. III: 10.6082/M1765CFB. See <https://doi.org/10.6082/ZJY1-1449> to download the full volume or individual articles. This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY). See <http://mamluk.uchicago.edu/msr.html> for more information about copyright and open access.

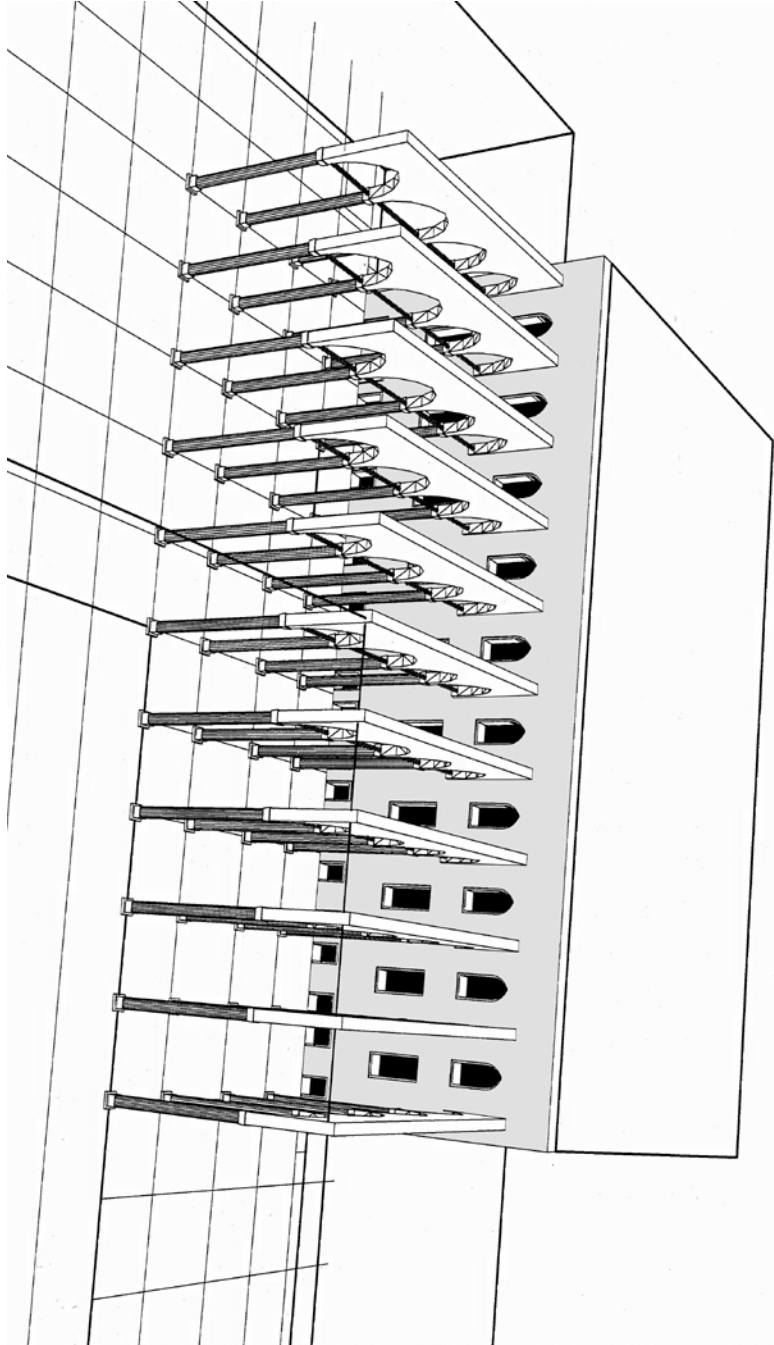


Figure 3. Axonometric drawing of Qāytbāy's *madrasah* and *majma'* in Medina



©1999 by Doris Behrens-Abouseif.

DOI: [10.6082/M1DV1H16](https://doi.org/10.6082/M1DV1H16). (<https://doi.org/10.6082/M1DV1H16>)

DOI of Vol. III: [10.6082/M1765CFB](https://doi.org/10.6082/M1765CFB). See <https://doi.org/10.6082/ZJY1-1449> to download the full volume or individual articles. This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY). See <http://mamluk.uchicago.edu/msr.html> for more information about copyright and open access.

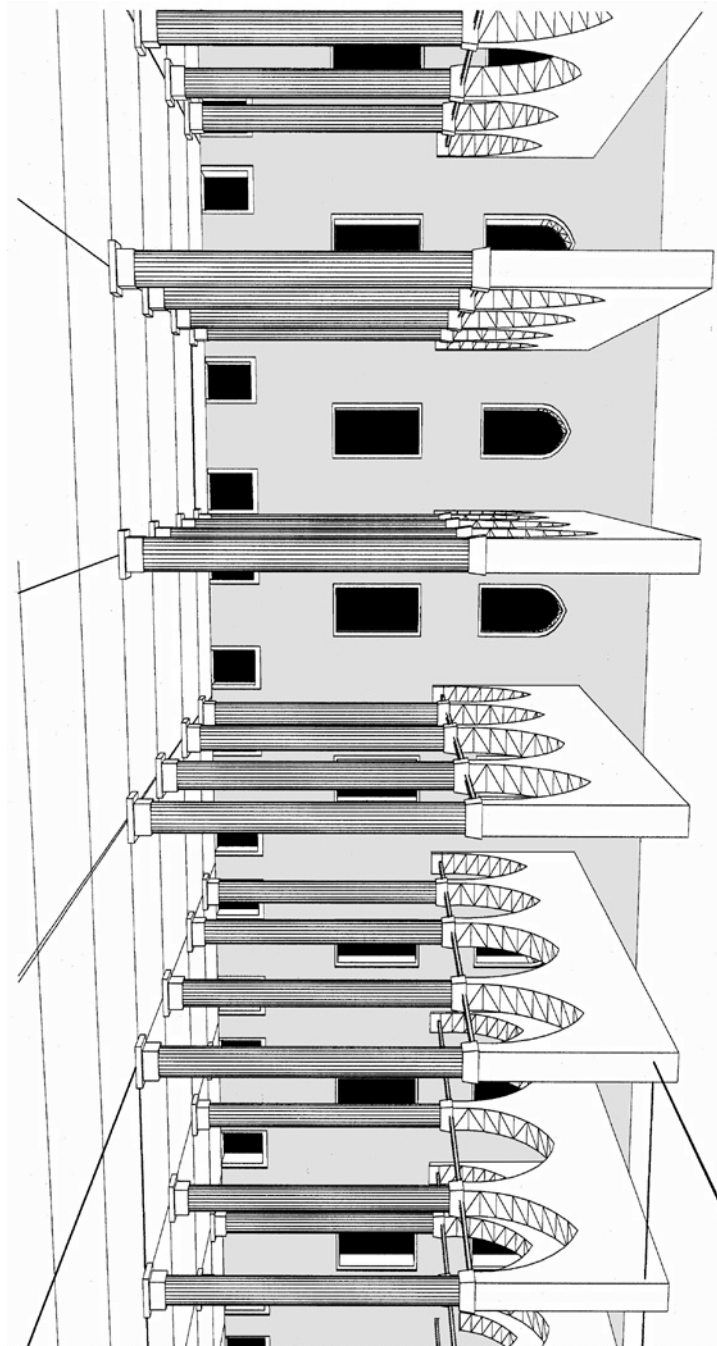


Figure 4. Schematic elevation of Qāyṭbāy's *madrasah* and *majma'* in Medina



©1999 by Doris Behrens-Abouseif.

DOI: [10.6082/M1DV1H16](https://doi.org/10.6082/M1DV1H16). (<https://doi.org/10.6082/M1DV1H16>)

DOI of Vol. III: [10.6082/M1765CFB](https://doi.org/10.6082/M1765CFB). See <https://doi.org/10.6082/ZJY1-1449> to download the full volume or individual articles. This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY). See <http://mamluk.uchicago.edu/msr.html> for more information about copyright and open access.

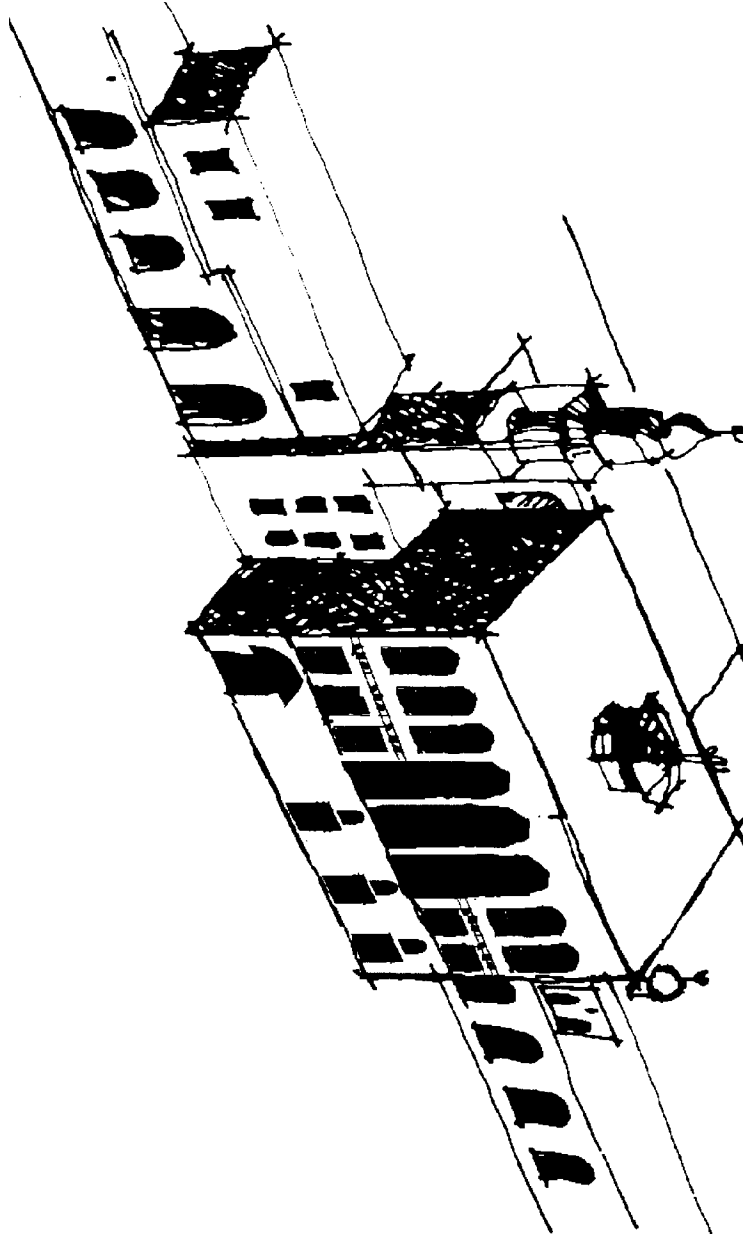


Figure 5. Qāytbāy's *madrasah* in Jerusalem (based on A. C. Walls)



©1999 by Doris Behrens-Abouseif.

DOI: [10.6082/M1DV1H16](https://doi.org/10.6082/M1DV1H16). (<https://doi.org/10.6082/M1DV1H16>)

DOI of Vol. III: [10.6082/M1765CFB](https://doi.org/10.6082/M1765CFB). See <https://doi.org/10.6082/ZJY1-1449> to download the full volume or individual articles. This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY). See <http://mamluk.uchicago.edu/msr.html> for more information about copyright and open access.

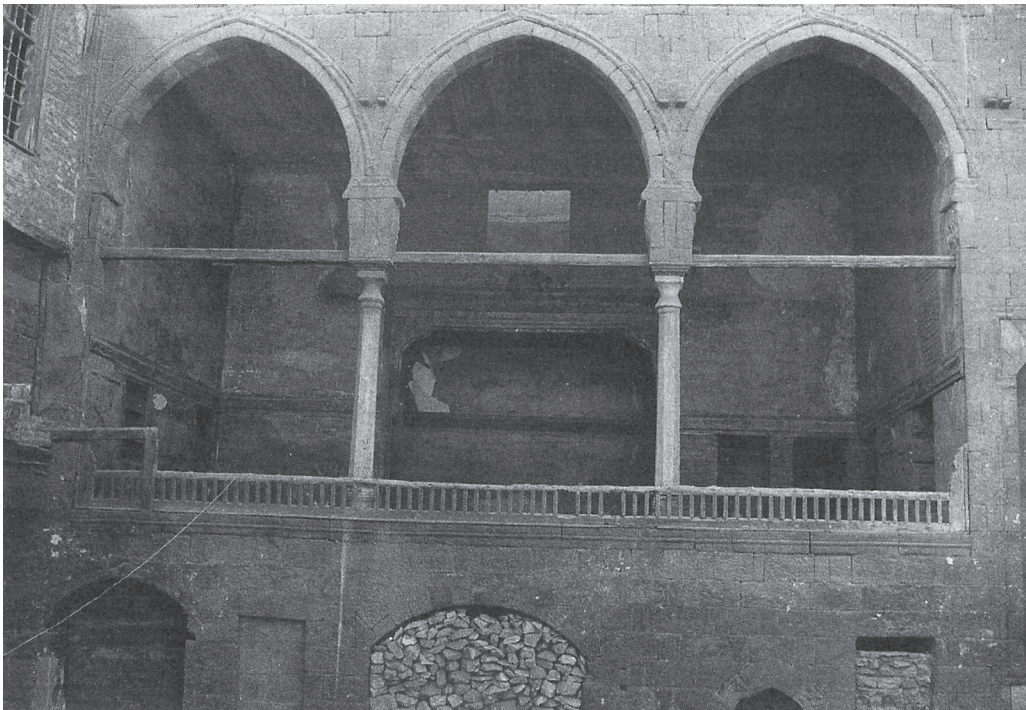


Figure 6. *Maq'ad* from the period of Qāyṭbāy (Bayt al-Razzāz)



©1999 by Doris Behrens-Abouseif.

DOI: [10.6082/M1DV1H16](https://doi.org/10.6082/M1DV1H16). (<https://doi.org/10.6082/M1DV1H16>)

DOI of Vol. III: [10.6082/M1765CFB](https://doi.org/10.6082/M1765CFB). See <https://doi.org/10.6082/ZJY1-1449> to download the full volume or individual articles. This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY). See <http://mamluk.uchicago.edu/msr.html> for more information about copyright and open access.

STEFAN H. WINTER
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Makkī "al-Shahīd al-Awwal" (d. 1384) and the Shi'ah of Syria

THE "FIRST MARTYR"

Muḥammad ibn Makkī was not the first martyr of Shi'ism, nor indeed the first individual to be killed as a heretic in Mamluk Syria. It is rather the literary heritage of Shi'i legal thought, a discipline Ibn Makkī helped to shape decisively during his life, that cast him as its "Felicitous Martyr" (*al-shahīd al-sa'īd*), "the Martyr," and subsequently "the First Martyr." He is an historic representative both of the high intellectual tradition of Shi'i scholarship and of an important confessional community in the Mamluk Empire. The aim of this essay is to explore the career of Ibn Makkī and, through him, the position of the Twelver Shi'is in medieval Syrian society.

While alive, Muḥammad ibn Makkī's fame as a legal expert spread as far as Khorasan, where the reigning monarch invited him to instruct his court in Imāmī Shi'ism. Ibn Makkī's considerable literary production, in large part extant and widely commented upon by other Imāmī *faqīhs* (jurisprudents), makes him one of the most influential figures in the history of Shi'i thought.¹ His contribution to, and reception in, Shi'i jurisprudence has been examined in some detail by Norman Calder, while his scholarly career as recorded through *ijāzahs* (reading diplomas) has been studied in outline by Devin Stewart.² The Shi'i tradition has preserved the memory of Ibn Makkī's erudition and martyrdom through successive biographical dictionaries (*rijāl*, *ṭabaqāt*). The most prominent of these are products of the seventeenth to twentieth centuries, and draw in large part on a single

©Middle East Documentation Center. The University of Chicago.

¹Āghā Buzurg al-Ṭīhrānī, *al-Dharī'ah ilā Taṣānīf al-Shī'ah* (Najaf, 1936-78), 1:427-28, 3:173-74, 5:43-44, 8:145-46, 10:40, 16:17, 17:193-94, 18:352, 20:322; Hossein Modarressi Tabataba'i, *An Introduction to Shī'ī Law* (London, 1984), 48-50, *passim*.

²Norman Calder, "Zakāt in Imāmī Shī'ī Jurisprudence from the Tenth to the Sixteenth Century A.D.," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 44 (1981): 468-80; and "Khums in Imāmī Shī'ī Jurisprudence from the Tenth to the Sixteenth Century A.D.," *BSOAS* 45 (1982): 39-47; Devin Stewart, "Twelver Shī'ī Jurisprudence and its Struggle with Sunnī Consensus" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1991), 164-71, *passim*.



©1999 by Stefan H. Winter.

DOI: [10.6082/M1862DM5](https://doi.org/10.6082/M1862DM5). (<https://doi.org/10.6082/M1862DM5>)

DOI of Vol. III: [10.6082/M1765CFB](https://doi.org/10.6082/M1765CFB). See <https://doi.org/10.6082/ZJY1-1449> to download the full volume or individual articles. This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY). See <http://mamluk.uchicago.edu/msr.html> for more information about copyright and open access.

contemporary account of Ibn Makkī's death with emendations either from family archives or from imagination.³

The significance of Ibn Makkī extends beyond the endogenous scholarly heritage of Shi'ism. He is noted in several Sunni sources, particularly the local history of the Damascene cleric Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah.⁴ Ibn Makkī was but the most prominent of several Imāmīs executed in fourteenth-century Damascus for *rafḍ*, an ill-defined notion of heresy frequently invoked by Sunni authorities to justify persecuting individuals of the Shi'i sects. The picture Ibn Kathīr paints of ubiquitous religious persecution in Egypt and Syria has led some historians to surmise a highly organized, government-run "inquisition in the Mamluk state."⁵ Michael Chamberlain's excellent analysis in *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus*, however, presents heretication as one strategy of the 'ulamā' (clerics) to exercise or defend their social power.⁶ This essay will begin by examining official Mamuk attitudes toward Shi'ism, and turn later to individual cases of persecution in Damascus. The author hopes that a discussion of Ibn Makkī's career and execution, set in this wider framework of Shi'ism under the Mamluks, may serve also to illustrate medieval Syrian society's perceptions of deviance and orthodoxy.

THE SHI'AH OF QALAWUNID SYRIA

Any discussion of Shi'ism in fourteenth-century Syria must begin of necessity with the Kisrawān campaigns. Between 1292 and 1305, the Mamluks carried out a series of three punitive expeditions against the predominantly Shi'i populations of the Kisrawān (and Jird) region in the Lebanese mountains immediately east of Beirut. The circumstances are well known and need not detain us for long.⁷ The final, devastating campaign in the summer of 1305 was attended by the famous Ḥanbalī evangelist Aḥmad ibn Taymīyah, and succeeded, in the course of two

³Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ḥurr al-Āmilī (d. 1692), *Amal al-Āmil fī 'Ulamā' Jabal 'Āmil*, 2 vols. (Beirut, 1983); Yūsuf ibn Aḥmad al-Baḥrānī (d. 1772), *Lu'lu'at al-Baḥrayn fī al-Ijāzāt wa-Tarājim Rijāl al-Ḥadīth* (Beirut, 1986); Muḥammad Bāqir al-Khwānsārī (d. 1895), *Rawḍāt al-Jannāt fī Aḥwāl al-'Ulamā' wa-al-Sādāt* (Qom, 1971); Muḥsin al-Amīn (d. 1952), *A'yān al-Shī'ah*, 10 vols. (Beirut, 1986).

⁴Abū Bakr ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah (d. 1448), *Ta'rīkh*, 4 vols. (Damascus, 1977-97).

⁵Eliyahu Ashtor, "L'inquisition dans l'État Mamlouk," *Rivista degli Studi Orientali* 25 (1950): 11-26.

⁶Michael Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus, 1190-1350* (Cambridge, 1994), 167-75.

⁷The best survey remains Henri Laoust's "Remarques sur les expéditions du Kasrawān sous les premiers Mamluks," *Bulletin du Musée de Beyrouth* 4 (1940): 93-115.



weeks of plunder and bloodshed, in wiping out the Shi'i communities of the region.

Many modern historians, both western and Arab, have sought to explain the Kisrawān campaigns as part of the fledgling Mamluk regime's intolerant drive to stamp out religious heterodoxy.⁸ Fewer have argued that the raids were connected only to the Kisrawānīs' alleged complicity with the Mongols in 1300 and with the crusaders before that, and that the Mamluks in fact possessed no religious policy of the sort.⁹ As far as the victims of the campaigns are concerned, Kamal Salibi has shown that the Maronites were as much the target of the Mamluks' wrath as were the Shi'is. The Maronite communities organized resistance against the state armies, but were also overwhelmed and eradicated in 1305.¹⁰ How permanent the exile was is questionable, and a local dispute between Maronites and Twelver Shi'is in 1671 shows that the Shi'is once again enjoyed a position of primacy in at least a part of the Kisrawān.¹¹ As for the perpetrators, Salibi's work has also served to underline the role in 1305 of the Buhturids, a local dynasty that ruled the Gharb mountains on behalf of the Mamluk Sultanate. Buhturid amirs were recruited on more than one occasion to quell revolts in the Kisrawān, in return for fief rights and a modest rank in the Syrian provincial *ḥalqah* corps. The Buhturids belonged in fact to the Druze sect.¹²

Nevertheless, some uncertainty remains in the literature over the identity of the Shi'i groups that were being pursued in the Kisrawān. Many contemporary observers believed the expeditions were sent to chastise the Druze. Also, Ibn Taymiyah's notorious *fatwā* calling for violence against the Nuṣayrīs, or 'Alawīs, has frequently been cited in association with the campaigns, but it seems actually to be of a slightly later date and has no bearing on the Kisrawān.¹³

⁸Philip Hitti, *Lebanon in History* (London, 1957), 325; Muḥammad 'Alī Makkī, *Lubnān 635-1516: Min al-Faṭḥ al-'Arabī ilā al-Faṭḥ al-'Uthmānī*, 4th ed. (Beirut, 1991), 213-32, may be seen as representative.

⁹Laoust, "Remarques;" Urbain Vermeulen, "Some Remarks on a Rescript of an-Nāṣir Muḥammad b. Qalā'ūn on the Abolition of Taxes and the Nuṣayrīs (Mamlaka of Tripoli 717/1317)," *Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica* 1 (1970): 195-201.

¹⁰Kamal Salibi, "The Maronites of Lebanon under Frankish and Mamluk Rule (1099-1516)," *Arabica* 4 (1957): 288-303.

¹¹Malouf Liman, Haifa Mikhael [Jirjis Zghayb], "A Troubled Period in the History of Kisrawān from an Original Lebanese Manuscript," *Arab Historical Review for Ottoman Studies* 11-12 (1995): 145-77.

¹²Kamal Salibi, "The Buhturids of the Ġarb: Mediaeval Lords of Beirut and of Southern Lebanon," *Arabica* 8 (1961): 74-97; see also Nadīm Nāyif Ḥamzah, *al-Tanūkhīyūn: Ajdād al-Muwahḥidīn (al-Durūz) wa-Dawruhum fī Jabal Lubnān* (Beirut, 1984), 125-32.

¹³*Majmū' Fatāwā Shaykh al-Islām Aḥmad ibn Taymiyah* (Riyadh, 1961-66), 5:149-60; Laoust, "Remarques," 108.



Ibn Taymīyah was certainly aware at this time of the variety of Shi‘i denominations, clearly differentiating between the Twelvers and the antinomian “Ismā‘īlīyah, Nuṣayrīyah, Ḥākīmīyah, and Bāṭinīyah, who are worse infidels than the Jews and Christians.”¹⁴ Nonetheless, in a lengthy letter to Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, in which he sought to justify the carnage after the fact, Ibn Taymīyah demonstrates beyond any doubt that the final Kisrawān campaign was directed against Imāmī or Twelver Shi‘is. After blaming the entire Mongol scourge from the rise of Jenghiz Khan to the 1300 sack of the town of Ṣāliḥīyah on Shi‘ism, he goes on to enumerate their heretical views: they, the Shi‘is, hold anyone who touches the forehead on the ground (rather than on a prayer tablet), who forbids *mut‘ah* temporary marriage, or who loves Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān and all the other Companions, to be apostate.

And whoever does not believe in their Awaited [Imām] is considered an apostate. This Awaited One is a boy of two or three or five years, and they claim that he went into a subterranean vault in Samarra over four hundred years ago. He knows everything and is God’s proof [*ḥujjah*] to mankind. . . . And according to them, whoever believes in the truth of God’s names and physical attributes.. is an apostate.

This is the *madhhab* dictated to them by their shaykhs, such as the Banū ‘Awd. They are the shaykhs of the people of this mountain, and they were the ones who ordered them by a *fatwā* to fight the [fleeing Mamluk] Muslims. A number of their books, written by Ibn al-‘Awd and others, fell into the Muslims’ hands, and they contain all of the above and worse.¹⁵

Such a pronouncement creates the impression that the Kisrawān campaigns were part of an official policy against Shi‘ism in Syria *per se*, which is exactly what Ibn Taymīyah was urging Sultan al-Nāṣir to adopt. However, the campaigns were not Ibn Taymīyah’s private initiative. As stated, the 1300 expedition was launched in direct reaction to the Mongol occupation of Damascus, while that of 1305 seems to have been precipitated by a revolt of the Shi‘is against their Buhturid overlords.¹⁶ Furthermore, in Dhū al-Ḥijjah 704/June 1305 the Mamluk

¹⁴Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd al-Hādī (d. 1344), *al-‘Uqūd al-Durrīyah min Manāqib Shaykh al-Islām Aḥmad ibn Taymīyah*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥamid al-Fiqqī (Beirut, [ca. 1938]), 182-94.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 185-86.

¹⁶Iṣṭfān al-Duwayhī (d. 1704), *Ta’rīkh al-Azminah* (Jounieh, 1976), 286; Kamal Salibi, *Maronite Historians of Mediaeval Lebanon* (Beirut, 1959), 117, 218-19.



governor of Damascus, Aqqūsh al-Afram, sent a mediator to the Kisrawān in an effort to resolve the dispute and to "return them to obedience" to the legitimate authority.¹⁷ The mediator was Zayn al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn 'Adnān al-Ḥusaynī (d. 1308), the *naqīb al-ashrāf*—and thus the lay official representing the Twelver Shi'is—of Damascus.¹⁸

The confessional identity of the *ashrāf*, the descendants of the Prophet Muḥammad through the Imāms Ḥasan and Ḥusayn, has not yet received its due share of scholarly attention. The *ashrāf* as a corporation enjoyed certain fiscal privileges within Islamic society, which the *naqīb* or syndic was in charge of administrating. In Mamluk Cairo, the *naqīb* was likely to be of the Shāfi'ī legal school;¹⁹ the Zuhrid family of Aleppo, which monopolized the post there for many years, was unmistakably Twelver Shi'i. Recent work by Richard Mortel has shown that the Sharifs of Mecca, the guardians of Islam's holiest shrine, remained committed to the politically quietist Zaydī branch of Shi'ism until the latter fourteenth century.²⁰

The community of *ashrāf* in Damascus was rather small and primarily associated with the prestigious Husaynid shrines at the Bāb al-Ṣaghīr cemetery, and as such enjoyed an excellent reputation within Damascene society.²¹ There are some indications that the Banū 'Adnān, who held the post of *naqīb* for much of the fourteenth century, tended toward Twelver Shi'ism, but the question demands further research. At the very least, their ideal devotion to the line of Imāms can be construed as a "mild" Shi'ism, inasmuch as it did not openly contest the validity of the Sunni caliphate and was perfectly compatible with loyalty to the Mamluk state. When Aqqūsh al-Afram issued a call to arms to the citizens of Damascus to defend against a renewed Mongol threat in 1300, the corporation of *ashrāf* also presented itself for review.²² Already in Fatimid times, with Shi'ism finding few converts in staunchly conservative Damascus, the rulers had made a policy of appointing 'Alid *qāḍīs* as an acceptable medium between the needs of Ismā'īlī ideology and of the Sunni populace.²³ Sending the *naqīb al-ashrāf* to negotiate

¹⁷ Ṣāliḥ ibn Yaḥyá (d. 1436), *Ta' rīkh Bayrūt* (Beirut, 1969), 27.

¹⁸ al-Amīn, *A'yān al-Shī'ah*, 6:157.

¹⁹ Ibn al-'Irāqī (d. 1423), *al-Dhayl 'alá al-'Ibar fī Khabar man 'Abar* (Beirut, 1989), 69, 109.

²⁰ Richard Mortel, "Zaydi Shi'ism and the Ḥasanid Sharifs of Mecca," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 19 (1987): 455-72; see also idem, "The Husaynid Amirate of Madīna during the Mamlūk Period," *Studia Islamica* 80 (1994): 97-123.

²¹ Louis Pouzet, *Damas au VIIIe/XIIIe siècle: Vie et structures religieuses d'une métropole islamique* (Beirut, 1988), 200, 245-62.

²² Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah fī al-Ta' rīkh* (Beirut, 1985), 14:14; Li Guo, *Early Mamluk Syrian Historiography: Al-Yūnīnī's Dhayl Mir' at al-Zamān* (Leiden, 1998), 1:171, 2:130-31.

²³ Thierry Bianquis, *Damas et la Syrie sous la domination Fatimide* (Damascus, 1986-89), 211-12, 340-42, 684.



with the Shi'is of the Kisrawān was, both in substance and in style, an honest effort on Aqqūsh al-Afram's part to find a mutually salutary way to subject the Shi'is to Mamluk sovereignty. It is only after Zayn al-Dīn's failure that the course of relations with the Kisrawān was left over to the adepts of intolerance.

Ibn Taymīyah would not have had trouble finding piety-minded fanatics for his crusade against the heterodox. Already the twelfth-century traveler Ibn Jubayr (d. 1217) writes of a sort of *futuwwah* youth organization in Damascus that "kills these *rāfiḍīs*, wherever they find them," and Ibn Taymīyah's biographer 'Abd al-Hādī (d. 1344) claims that there was wide public support for the endeavour.²⁴ However, the seminal interpretations of the Kisrawān campaigns as an anti-heresy drive are above all the products of historians of the piety-minded '*ulamā*' class. A quick survey of Donald Little's *Introduction to Mamlūk Historiography* shows clearly that the important Muslim historians who cite revenge for the Kisrawānīs' political sedition as the grounds for the campaigns (Baybars al-Manṣūrī, al-Nuwayrī) belonged to the Mamluk military and bureaucratic apparatus, while those who cite their "foul beliefs" (al-Birzālī, Ibn Kathīr, and especially al-Maqrīzī) were '*ulamā*'.²⁵ As is equally true for medievalism in the European context, it is the historiography of the clerical class that ultimately gained the wider currency. The moralist prejudice of an al-Maqrīzī, however, did not necessarily coincide with the day-to-day concerns of the actual Mamluk administration in Damascus. (Aqqūsh al-Afram, incidentally, later defected to Persia and ended his career as governor of Hamadān for the Shi'i Ilkhanid monarch Öljeitü.²⁶)

The Buhturids certainly continued to flourish as vassals of the Syrian Mamluk governate, their degree of leverage in Damascus illustrated by the amendment in their favor of the 1313 sultanic land cadastre (*rawk*) for Syria.²⁷ The Syrian Ismā'īlīs, though incriminated for their political role during the crusades, were given tax reprieves and were relied upon by the Mamluk Sultanate to carry out covert missions in Mongol Persia.²⁸ There is little cause to think that the Twelver Shi'is of middle Syria, on whom we shall concentrate here, fared any worse. In his seminal *Ta'rīkh Jabal 'Āmil*, the old-guard *za'im*-class author MuḤammad Jābir

²⁴MuḤammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Jubayr, *Riḥlat ibn Jubayr* (Cairo, 1992), 352-53; Ibn 'Abd al-Hādī, *al-'Uqūd al-Durriyah*, 179-80. Ibn Jubayr appears to exclude Twelvers from the term *rāfiḍīs*.

²⁵Donald Little, *An Introduction to Mamlūk Historiography* (Wiesbaden, 1970), passim. An important exception is Abū al-Fidā', the religiously educated Ayyubid governor of Ḥamāh, who counts heresy as one of several grounds for the campaigns.

²⁶Charles Melville, "Sometimes by the Sword, Sometimes by the Dagger': The Role of the Isma'ilis in Mamlūk-Mongol Relations in the 8th/14th Century," *Medieval Isma'ili History and Thought*, ed. Farhad Daftary (Cambridge, 1996), 247-63, 249-50.

²⁷Salibi, "Buhturids of the Ġarb," 90-91.

²⁸Melville, "Sometimes by the Sword."



Āl Ṣafā (d. 1945) argues that "the land had lived in peace and security" under the Mamluk regime. The context of this assessment is an impassioned apologia, much in the spirit of the pre-Aḥmad Pasha al-Jazzār (d. 1804) "Golden Age" Shi'i historiography described by Fouad Ajami, for the justice and merit of the feudal system in the virtually autonomous medieval Jabal.²⁹

The Sultanate in Cairo never adopted a uniform policy on Shi'ism in the empire. Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī (d. 1349), head of the Mamluk chancery in Cairo and author of an important manual of government, differentiated very well between the various Shi'i sects and accepted the Twelvers as part of the community of the Muslim faithful with only minor reservations.³⁰ Al-Qalqashandī's famous chancery manual contains a copy of a decree issued in 1317, ordering the Nuṣayrīs of the province of Tripoli to build and maintain mosques in their villages and prohibiting their shaykhs from speaking in public.³¹ Only the year before, Mamluk troops had had to put down a rebellion inspired by a self-proclaimed Nuṣayrī prophet in the region. Yet the order against the Nuṣayrīs is buried in a general rescript on taxation matters for Tripoli, and is relatively indifferent in tone to the actual existence of the community so long as they begin behaving outwardly like Muslims. Ibn Baṭṭūṭah's well-known anecdote about the utilization of mosques as stables in the region suggests that neither the Sultanate nor the provincial authorities seriously pursued such matters.

A second sultanīc rescript from 1363 is directed unequivocally against the "rāfiḍīs and Shi'is" of Sidon, Beirut and surroundings.³² Written in a remarkable, rhyming chancery style (*inshā'*), the rescript harangues the Shi'is at length for having distorted Islamic faith and tradition, and for subscribing to abominable practises such as permitting simultaneous marriage with two sisters and cursing the Companions of the Prophet that are dear to the Sunnis. It goes on to threaten military action should the Shi'is not abjure and return to the fold of Sunnism. It is not clear what occasioned the rescript's promulgation. Urbain Vermeulen has suggested that the Cypriot incursions frequent in those years stoked fears of the Shi'is' complicity,³³ yet the rescript concerns only religious deviancy and is conspicuously devoid of any of the standard references to the external enemies of

²⁹Muḥammad Jābir Āl Ṣafā, *Ta'rīkh Jabal 'Āmil*, 2nd ed. (Beirut, 1981), 98; comically telling is the author's comparison of *iqṭā'iyah* to a mistranslated European "federalism" (p. 88); Fouad Ajami, *The Vanished Imam: Musa al Sadr and the Shia of Lebanon* (Ithaca, 1986), 52-58.

³⁰Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī, *al-Ta'rīf bi-al-Muṣṭalah al-Sharīf* (Beirut, 1988), 196-205.

³¹Aḥmad ibn 'Alī al-Qalqashandī (d. 1418), *Ṣubḥ al-A'shā fī Ṣinā'at al-Inshā'* (Cairo, 1964), 13:30-35; see also Urbain Vermeulen, "Some Remarks."

³²Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-A'shā*, 13:13-20.

³³Urbain Vermeulen, "The Rescript against the Shi'ites and Rāfiḍites of Beirut, Saidā, and District (764 AH/1363 AD)," *Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica* 4 (1973): 169-75.



Islam. There is evidence, as will be discussed below, that the rescript provided the context for oppressing Shi'is in the region for a number of years. Yet its geographical scope is limited to two *wilāyahs* of the province of Damascus, and can therefore not stand in for a general imperial protocol.

Where the Mamluks did pursue the formal suppression of the Shi'i faith itself was in Mecca. Ever since the Hijaz had passed under Mamluk control in the 1260s, the pre-eminence of the Sharifs' Zaydī Shi'ism around the prestigious shrine had been an embarrassment to the Sultanate.³⁴ Over the course of the second half of the fourteenth century, the Mamluks succeeded through a variety of means in pressuring the Sharifs to renounce Zaydism. However, this served the purely political purpose of consolidating the Mamluk regime's symbolically vital suzerainty over the Holy Places, and never resulted in the persecution of Zaydīs for heresy.

A cursory glance at the careers of later Mamluk governors of Damascus presents the full range of attitudes toward Shi'ism, from burning a *qādī* alive for his "*rāfiḍī*" beliefs, to official protection of Shi'i 'Āshūrā' festivities in the capital.³⁵ The treatment of Shi'is both as compact communities in the hinterland or as individuals in the Syrian capital was not dictated, from the very rise of the Qipchak Mamluk regime, by a universal policy on Islamic heterodoxy. The career of Muḥammad ibn Makkī may be illustrative of *tashayyu'* under the Mamluks.

BETWEEN JIZZĪN AND ḤILLAH

The town of Jizzīn, at the time of Muḥammad ibn Makkī's birth in 1333, was already developing into a modest haven of Shi'i learning. Situated a mere 15 km. east of Sidon but at an altitude of 1,700 m. in the northernmost part of the Jabal 'Āmil, Jizzīn was attacked only once by the crusaders, in 1217, and not taken.³⁶ It seems already to have been populated by Shi'is then, before their numbers were swelled by the influx of refugees from the Kisrawān in 1305.³⁷ Both Ibn Makkī's father and grandfather are described as '*ulamā'*'. His great-uncle (and father-in-law) Asad al-Dīn al-Ṣā'igh al-Jizzīnī, probably his first teacher, was known more for his pious devotion than as a legislator.³⁸ Little is reported of Ibn Makkī's early life,

³⁴Mortel, "Zaydi Shi'ism."

³⁵Henri Laoust, *Les gouverneurs de Damas sous les Mamlouks et les Premiers Ottomans* (Damascus, 1952), 81, 168.

³⁶Sibt ibn al-Jawzī (d. 1256), *Mir'āt al-Zamān fī Ta'rīkh al-A'yan* (Hyderabad, 1952) 8:585-86; René Grousset, *Histoire des Croisades et du Royaume Franc de Jérusalem* (Paris, 1936), 3:204-5.

³⁷Ṣāliḥ ibn Yaḥyá, *Ta'rīkh Bayrūt*, 96; Ibn 'Abd al-Hādī, *al-'Uqūd al-Durrīyah*, 185; Ja'far al-Muhājir, *al-Ta'sīs li-Ta'rīkh al-Shī'ah fī Lubnān wa-Sūrīyah* (Beirut, 1992), 150.

³⁸al-Amīn, *A'yān al-Shī'ah*, 3:281.



other than that he left the Jabal ‘Āmil at the age of sixteen or seventeen to study in Ḥillah, Iraq.

Jizzīn already had connections with the ‘*ulamā*’ of Ḥillah through the likes of Najīb al-Dīn Ibn al-‘Awd al-Asadī al-Ḥillī. A scholar of some repute, Ibn al-‘Awd had begun to make his career in Aleppo. However, he was abused and driven from town after making an unfavourable remark about the Prophet’s Companions to the local *naqīb al-ashraf*, and moved to Jizzīn where he died in 1280.³⁹ Yet another scion of the Banu ‘Awd, Shihāb al-Dīn Ismā‘īl ibn al-Ḥusayn al-‘Awdī al-Jizzīnī (d. ca. 1184) had been among the first natives of the area to travel to Ḥillah for religious studies.⁴⁰ Finally, Najm al-Dīn Ṭumān ibn Aḥmad al-‘Āmilī al-Manārī (d. ca. 1327) taught *fiqh* in Ḥillah before returning to the Jabal, where one of his students was Muḥammad ibn Makkī’s father.⁴¹

Ḥillah, in the early fourteenth century, had taken the place of Baghdad and Qom as the foremost center of religious scholarship in the Shi‘i world. Under the aegis of the Ilkhanid Sultanate, a distinctive school of theological and legal thought was forming in Ḥillah that emphasized the authority not of accumulated tradition, but of the living scholar’s independent reasoning in jurisprudence. With his writings on *ijtihād* and *taqlīd*, al-‘Allāmah al-Ḥillī Ḥasan ibn Yūsuf al-Muṭahhar (d. 1325) provided the first theoretical basis for the social and political role of the later Shi‘i clerical hierarchy.⁴²

Ibn Makkī spent his entire learned career on the articulation of this school, and he wrote numerous commentaries on the works of al-‘Allāmah al-Ḥillī and his students. Ibn Makkī’s first and most influential teacher in Ḥillah was Fakhr al-Muḥaqqiqīn Muḥammad (d. 1370), son of al-‘Allāmah al-Ḥillī and a major scholar in his own right. Fakhr al-Muḥaqqiqīn certified, in an *ijāzah*, that Ibn Makkī had studied all of his father’s works as well as many others, and reportedly praised his young pupil saying that “I benefitted more from him than he from me.” Ibn Makkī also studied under Tāj al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn al-Qāsim (Ibn Mu‘ayyah) al-Dibājī al-Ḥillī, himself a former student of both al-‘Allāmah al-Ḥillī and Fakhr al-Muḥaqqiqīn. Ibn Mu‘ayyah seems to have become a lifelong friend, for he wrote Ibn Makkī and his two sons *ijāzahs* shortly before dying, in Ḥillah, in 1374.⁴³ Ibn Makkī’s other mentors included ‘Amīd al-Dīn and Ḍiyā’ al-Dīn al-

³⁹ al-Amīn, *A’yān al-Shī‘ah*, 10:206.

⁴⁰ al-Amīn, *A’yān al-Shī‘ah*, 3:319; al-‘Āmilī, *Amal al-Āmil*, 1:41.

⁴¹ al-Bahrānī, *Lu’lu’ at al-Baḥrayn*, 205-7; al-‘Āmilī, *Amal al-Āmil*, 1:103-5; al-Amīn, *A’yān al-Shī‘ah*, 7:402.

⁴² Heinz Halm, *Shiism*, trans. Janet Watson (Edinburgh, 1991), 67-71.

⁴³ al-Amīn, *A’yān al-Shī‘ah*, 10:39-40; not the same as Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad ibn Mu‘ayyah (d. 1372/73); *ibid.*, 9:431.



Ḥusaynī al-Ḥillī, nephews of al-‘Allāmah al-Ḥillī and also commentators on his works.

From Ḥillah, Ibn Makkī traveled to Kerbala and, in 1353-54, to Mecca and Medina. On the way it seems that he also stopped in Jerusalem and al-Khalīl (Hebron), earning *ijāzahs* from other scholars in each of these places.⁴⁴ Before quitting the Iraq definitively, Ibn Makkī sojourned in Baghdad and studied at the two famous Sunni *madrasahs* al-Niẓāmīyah and al-Mustaṣirīyah. By his own reckoning he read under “some forty Sunni shaykhs,” including Ḥanbalīs as well as some noted Egyptian scholars whom he most likely met in Iraq and Mecca. Contemporary Shi‘i writers have made much of his expertise in Sunni *ḥadīth* and *fiqh*, seeing in it his desire for a rapprochement between Sunnism and Shi‘ism along the lines of the modern “five *madhhabs*” formula.⁴⁵ Ibn Makkī was in fact rebuked by later traditionalist Shi‘i scholars precisely for his pioneer role in the adoption of rationalist Sunni legal principles.⁴⁶

Ibn Makkī began teaching other students while still in Iraq and seems also to have had followers in Medina.⁴⁷ However it is after his return to Syria, around 1357, that he began to make his mark in the development of Shi‘i scholarship. Already an accomplished *faqīh* at the age of twenty-four, he took on students in Jizzīn and is universally celebrated today as the founder of the Shi‘i scholastic tradition in the Jabal ‘Āmil.⁴⁸ It is indeed from this point onward that a significant number of ‘Āmilī scholars are recorded in the biographical dictionaries. Ibn Makkī’s many students included his eldest son Abū Ṭālib Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad, a prolific writer of *fiqh* works,⁴⁹ and al-Miqdād ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Suyūrī al-Ḥillī (d.

⁴⁴Muḥammad Bāqir Majlisī (d. 1699), *Biḥār al-Anwār* (Tehran, 1971, 1972), 107:177-78, 181-201; 109:54-56, 70-73; Stewart, “Twelver Shī‘ī Jurisprudence,” 165-69.

⁴⁵Mahdī Faḍl Allāh, *Min A‘lām al-Fikr al-Falsafī al-Islāmī* (Beirut, 1982), 14-15, 20-21; Muḥammad Kalāntar, introduction to Zayn al-Dīn ibn ‘Alī (al-Shahīd al-Thānī), *Rawḍāt al-Bahīyah fī Sharḥ al-Lum‘ah al-Dimashqīyah* (Beirut, 1983), 1:83-84.

⁴⁶al-‘Āmilī, *Amal al-Āmil*, 1:89.

⁴⁷Ḥasan al-Amīn, “al-Shahīd al-Awwal Muḥammad ibn Makkī,” *al-Minhāj* 4 (Winter 1996): 150-72; 5 (Spring 1997): 132-58; 6 (Summer 1997): 201-12; 7 (Fall 1997): 166-75; here 6:204, 211.

⁴⁸See furthermore Āl Ṣafā, *Ta’rīkh Jabal ‘Āmil*, 233-36; Muḥammad Kāzīm Makkī, *al-Ḥarakah al-Fikrīyah wa-al-Adabīyah fī Jabal ‘Āmil* (Beirut, 1982), 29-30; Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Amānī, *al-Shahīd al-Awwal Faqīh al-Sarbadārān*, trans. Kamāl al-Sayyid (Qom, 1995), 47-50.

⁴⁹al-Amīn, *A’yān al-Shī‘ah*, 9:407, 410-11; al-Khwānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-Jannāt*, 7:22-24.



1423), whose unique account of Ibn Makkī's trial and execution has been handed down through successive Shi'i *ṭabaqāt*.⁵⁰

Perhaps his most illustrious student, however, was his daughter, Fāṭimah.⁵¹ She received an *ijāzah* from Ibn Mu'ayyah just like her brothers, and in time came to be known as "Sitt al-Mashā'ikh," matron of the *shaykhs*, for her knowledge. A deed from Ramaḍān 823/1420 discloses that she ceded her entire share of her father's bequest, "in Jizzīn and elsewhere," to her two brothers as a pious act, in exchange for several books including a copy of the Shi'i *ḥadīth* canon "Man Lā Yaḥḍuruḥu al-Faqīh" and a Quran said to have been a gift from 'Alī Mu'ayyad, ruler of Khorasan. Seventy *mujtahids* from around the Jabal 'Āmil are said to have attended her funeral. Ibn Makkī himself held her up as a model of piety and scholarship, and told the women of the area to refer to her or to his wife, another "faqīhah," on legal questions pertaining to menses and prayer.

IBN MAKKĪ'S INTELLECTUAL PRODUCTION

Muḥammad ibn Makkī was one of the most influential scholars of the long middle age of Shi'i history, between the fall of the Buyids in 1055 and the rise of the Safavids in the early sixteenth century. Beyond this, however, there exists no consensus as to the importance of his contribution to Shi'i legal thought, and little work has been undertaken toward a comprehensive evaluation. Part of the difficulty lies in the incremental nature of developments in Shi'i jurisprudence throughout this period, which makes it difficult to identify precise watersheds or delineate schools of thought historically. More importantly, scholarship in the last twenty years has focused almost exclusively on one aspect of Shi'i intellectual history; the authority of the *faqīh* to act as the Hidden Imām's deputy.

Chronologically and conceptually, Ibn Makkī is located somewhere between al-'Allāmah al-Ḥillī (d. 1325) and Zayn al-Dīn ibn 'Alī (d. 1558). The former is credited with having introduced rigorous *ḥadīth* criticism into Shi'i jurisprudence, thus laying the groundwork for the emergence of a specifically Shi'i legal methodology on a par with that of the four classical Sunni schools. At the other end of the spectrum, Zayn al-Dīn ibn 'Alī is largely responsible for originating, in his ten-volume commentary on Ibn Makkī's *al-Lum'ah al-Dimashqīyah*, the theory of the *faqīh*'s comprehensive deputyship to act as temporal leader of the Islamic

⁵⁰ al-'Amilī, *Amal al-Āmil*, 2:325; al-Bahrānī, *Lu'lu'at al-Baḥrayn*, 172-73; Carl Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur*, 2:199, S2:209; Khayr al-Dīn Zirīklī, *al-A'lām*, 11th ed. (Beirut, 1995), 7:282; further references in 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Kūhkamarī's introduction to al-Suyūrī, *al-Tanqīḥ al-Rā'ī li-Mukhtaṣṣ al-Shārī'* (Qom, 1983), 1:xxiv-xxxviii.

⁵¹ al-'Amilī, *Amal al-Āmil*, 1:193; al-Amīn, *A'yān al-Shī'ah*, 8:388-89, 10:39; al-Khwānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-Jannāt*, 7:24-25.



community. To what degree the Shi‘i jurist’s political authority is germinal in Ibn Makkī’s thought is debatable; one recent enthusiast has made him to be the very source of Ayatollah Khomeini’s *wilāyat al-faqīh* theory of state.⁵²

Ibn Makkī was first and foremost a *ḥadīth* scholar, pursuing the system of scientific classification devised by the Ḥillah school. His numerous treatises, particularly on traditions concerning ritual purity (*tahārah*) and prayer (*ṣalāt*), are still considered essentials in the field.⁵³ Besides ritual, his manuals of jurisprudence primarily treat mundane social transactions, from inheritance to sharecropping to conjugal favours. His purported political thought can only be inferred from the rare references to the Imām and *faqīh* in his works.

The most fruitful line of inquiry in this respect concerns the collection of *zakāt*, the alms tax incumbent on all Muslims. The early Shi‘i jurists had suggested that, during the absence of the Imām, the faithful distribute the alms themselves rather than through an illegitimate state tax collector. By the fourteenth century, the legists were claiming the right to allocate *zakāt*, not as the Imām’s deputy but as the most competent representatives of the community. Ibn Makkī further refined this view by making the *faqīh* the moral equivalent of the Imām. In *al-Bayān*, probably one of his last books, he states that

The best method of paying is not by agency but, so as to achieve certainty, payment either to the Imām or to the *faqīh*. We consider this to be best, inasmuch as the two are above perfidy: the Imām by virtue of his infallibility; and the *faqīh* by virtue of his probity [*‘adālah*] and his knowledge of who receives [*zakāt*] and the manner of its distribution.⁵⁴

In the concisely worded corresponding passage of *al-Lum‘ah al-Dimashqīyah*, Ibn Makkī implies that payment of the *zakāt* to the jurist can also be considered as incumbent. It is this wilfully ambiguous passage which Zayn al-Dīn ibn ‘Alī, writing one and a half centuries later, interprets as signifying unequivocally the *faqīh*’s general deputyship on behalf of the Imām.⁵⁵ Ibn Makkī is similarly vague on the *khums*, a surtax on war spoils and mineral resources of which half is paid to “the Imām, when he is present, or to his deputies, when he is absent.” It is in Zayn al-Dīn ibn ‘Alī’s commentary that we are told explicitly that these deputies “are the righteous Imāmī *faqīhs* . . . as they are his agents and must perform that

⁵²Ja‘far al-Muhājir, *Sittat Fuqahā’ Abṭāl: al-Ta’sīs li-Ta’rīkh al-Shī‘ah* (2) (Beirut, 1994), 88.

⁵³Ṭīhrānī, *al-Dharī‘ah*, 1:427-28, 10:40.

⁵⁴Muḥammad ibn Makkī, *al-Bayān*, lithograph (Qom, n.d.), 202.

⁵⁵Calder, “Zakāt,” 476-77.



which their *madhhab* demands.”⁵⁶ Ibn Makkī’s references to the Imām’s representative at Friday communal prayers and in *jihād* (holy war) are utilized to make the same argument.⁵⁷

One of Ibn Makkī’s own rare direct references to the executive authority of the *faqīh* occurs in the context of the fundamental Islamic precept of “enjoining the good and prohibiting the evil”:

During the Imām’s occultation, the *faqīhs* may administer the penalties (*ḥudūd*) among the people in full legality and security, by virtue of their qualities of jurisconsult (*mufṭī*) which are correct faith, righteousness, and versedness in law. . . . It is obligatory to take recourse to the *faqīhs* and, whoever does not, sins.⁵⁸

It is clear from the above statements that Ibn Makkī was advocating the social responsibility of the legal scholar. But to deduce a precocious political theory therein would be ill-considered. Not only are the references to the *faqīhs*’ role too few, but they are also never invested with functions that the Sunni ‘*ulamā*’, for instance, did not already have. In the chapter on judicature (*qaḍā*’), we read that “During the occultation, the *faqīh* possessed of the qualities of jurisconsult administers justice. Whoever foregoes him in favor of tyrannical [i.e. non-*sharī’ah*] judicature is a rebel.” Elsewhere the judge (*ḥākim*) is identified as the guardian of the legally incompetent.⁵⁹

As a Shi’i, Ibn Makkī naturally expressed some of the legists’ prerogatives in terms of an ideal authority inherited from the Imām. In substance, however, he was simply claiming the same social leadership that the primates of the Sunni *madhhabs* had long enjoyed in their communities, and no more. This view is also more in line with Devin Stewart’s argument that Ibn Makkī and the Ḥillah school, in championing the adoption of rationalist legal principles (*uṣūl al-fiqh*), were endeavouring to bring Shi’i legal thought into the mainstream of Islamic jurisprudence at this time. For the Shi’i community of Mamluk Syria, certainly, the question of a jurist’s comprehensive authority did not arise. The notion that

⁵⁶Zayn al-Dīn ibn ‘Alī, *Rawḍāt al-Bahīyah*, 2:78-79; see also Calder, “Khums,” 44-45.

⁵⁷Zayn al-Dīn ibn ‘Alī, *Rawḍāt al-Bahīyah*, 2:381; Norman Calder, “The Structure of Authority in Imāmī Shi’ī Jurisprudence” (Ph.D. diss., School of Oriental and African Studies, 1980), 153-54; Abdulaziz Abdulhussein Sachedina, *The Just Ruler (al-Sultān al-‘Ādil) in Shi’ite Islam: The Comprehensive Authority of the Jurist in Imamite Jurisprudence* (Oxford, 1988), 187-89.

⁵⁸Muhammad ibn Makkī, *al-Lum‘ah al-Dimashqīyah fī Fiqh al-Imāmīyah* (Qom, 1990), 46; cf. the slightly variant text with commentary in Zayn al-Dīn ibn ‘Alī, *Rawḍāt al-Bahīyah*, 2:417-19.

⁵⁹Ibn Makkī, *al-Lum‘ah*, 50, 82; Zayn al-Dīn ibn ‘Alī, *Rawḍāt al-Bahīyah*, 3:61-68, 4:105-7.



the "worldview of the faithful in Imāmī Shi'ism is dominated by the question of the leadership of the Muslim community—the Imamate"⁶⁰ is ahistorical and ageographic.

Ibn Makkī's struggle to assert the primacy of law in Shi'i society was perhaps not directed against obscurantist traditional scholars or a hostile secular authority. There is evidence to suggest that his greatest adversaries were the wandering Sufi mystics, who traditionally exerted a great influence over the rural populations of the Lebanese mountains. In a long poem, Ibn Makkī celebrates mystical experience but decries the modern dervishes' duplicity and corruption:

Sufism is not simply a staff and a rosary.
Poverty does not mean the dream of exaltedness
And that you go about in tatters,
Hiding the sin of vainglory and ostentation underneath;
And that you affect to renounce the worldly,
But are addicted to it like a dog is to bones.⁶¹

In another instance, it is reported that Ibn Makkī fought a certain "charlatan" named Muḥammad al-Yālūshī, from the obscure Tower of Yālūsh near the village Brayqa'. Apparently, he had been Ibn Makkī's student but then turned his interests to the magical arts and went about the Jabal 'Āmil claiming to be a prophet.⁶² The tale of Ibn Makkī's clash with the sorcerer of the tower appears in the southern Lebanese folk tradition in several forms and must be treated with caution.⁶³ Nevertheless, the common belief that Ibn Makkī had enemies among the followers of popular religion in the Jabal, and that these contributed to his downfall in the end, should not be entirely discounted.

The point that has fascinated Shi'i historians of Ibn Makkī most is that he was called upon by the Shi'i ruler of Khorasan, the Sarbadār 'Alī Mu'ayyad, to come serve at his court. In the fourteenth century, the provinces of Iran were under the increasingly autonomous control of local potentates, while the Ilkhanid empire deteriorated. The Sarbadārs, who first took power in Sabzavār around 1337, were an uneasy alliance of the local petty nobility and the popular following of a vaguely Shi'i Sufism. In 1362, 'Alī Mu'ayyad seized power with the support of

⁶⁰Sachedina, *Just Ruler*, 29.

⁶¹al-Khwānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-Jannāt*, 7:16-18; al-Amīn, *A'yān al-Shī'ah*, 10:63.

⁶²al-Khwānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-Jannāt*, 7:4; al-Amīn, *A'yān al-Shī'ah*, 10:60.

⁶³Muḥsin al-Amīn, *Khiṭaṭ Jabal 'Āmil* (Beirut, 1961), 200-201; Ibrāhīm Āl Sulaymān, *Buldān Jabal 'Āmil: Qilā'uhu wa-Madārisuhu wa-Jusūruhu wa-Murūjuhu wa-Maṭāhīnuhu wa-Jibāluhu wa-Mashāhiduhu* (Beirut, 1995), 82-84.



the dervish faction, proclaiming Imāmī Shi‘ism as an ideology acceptable to all. However, the radicalism of his dervish partners soon proved to be inopportune, and ‘Alī Mu‘ayyad took to repressing the movement with force, until they succeeded in ousting him in 1376-77 with the help of the province’s Sunnis.⁶⁴ It is in the context of ‘Alī Mu‘ayyad’s quest to institutionalize a staid Twelver Shi‘ism in this period that his invitation to Ibn Makkī must be placed.

Ibn Makkī declined, penning a concise, comprehensive guide to Shi‘i law, *al-Lum‘ah al-Dimashqīyah fī Fiqh al-Imāmiyya* (*The Gleam of Light from Damascus: Imāmī Jurisprudence*) to send to him instead. Popular tradition holds that he composed the work in just seven days while he was confined in the Damascus citadel, but already some of the early *ṭabaqāt* biographers have pointed out that it must have been written earlier.⁶⁵ The invitation was conveyed by the scholar Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Āwī, an intimate of the Sarbadār who had known Ibn Makkī since his days in Iraq.⁶⁶ The text of the letter, in which the sultan beseeches Ibn Makkī to come and quench their thirst for religious instruction, fearing “the wrath of God on this land for its loss of integrity and its need of guidance,” is preserved in some popular biographies.⁶⁷ However, it is contained neither in Zayn al-Dīn ibn ‘Alī’s commentary nor in the more serious *rijāl* works, and is probably another instance of the imaginative embellishment of al-Shahīd al-Awwal’s story.

Neither *al-Lum‘ah al-Dimashqīyah* nor any other of Ibn Makkī’s works was examined at his trial. Muḥammad al-Āwī is said to have prevented copies from being made, while Ibn Makkī apparently expressed relief that no one saw the book while he was writing it, despite the fact “that his sessions in Damascus at the time were usually frequented by scholars from the general public, due to his association and companionship with them.”⁶⁸ An early eighteenth-century biographer supplies the claim that Ibn Makkī taught comparative Sunni law (*mukhālīfīn*) by day and Shi‘i law by night “in a special house which he had built underground” out of fear of persecution.⁶⁹ The likelihood of this is disputable, but the statement

⁶⁴John Masson Smith, *The History of the Sarbadār Dynasty 1336-1381 A.D. and Its Sources* (The Hague, 1970).

⁶⁵Mīrzā ‘Abd Allāh al-İṣfahānī (d. ca. 1718), *Riyāḍ al-‘Ulamā’ wa-Ḥiyāḍ al-Fuḍalā’* (Qom, 1980), 5:190. Zayn al-Dīn is also sceptical of the claim; see Zayn al-Dīn ibn ‘Alī, *Rawḍāt al-Bahīyah*, 1:23.

⁶⁶Zayn al-Dīn ibn ‘Alī, *Rawḍāt al-Bahīyah*, 1:23-24; Nūr Allāh ibn ‘Abd-Allāh Shushtarī, *Majālis al-Mu’minīn*, lithograph (Tehran, 1881), 406.

⁶⁷Muḥammad Riḍā Shams al-Dīn, *Ḥayāt al-Imām al-Shahīd al-Awwal* (Najaf, 1957), 4-5; al-Amānī, *al-Shahīd al-Awwal*, 85-7.

⁶⁸Zayn al-Dīn ibn ‘Alī, *Rawḍāt al-Bahīyah*, 1:24.

⁶⁹İṣfahānī, *Riyāḍ al-‘Ulamā’*, 5:189.



does underline the fact that Ibn Makkī's authorship of the work would not have been generally known in Damascus. Despite the many students who studied with Ibn Makkī, *al-Lum'ah al-Dimashqīyah* does not seem to have received particular attention in Shi'i circles in this period either. Before Zayn al-Dīn ibn 'Alī's commentary from the sixteenth century, *al-Lum'ah al-Dimashqīyah* was simply a legal primer for a marginal religious community, making its first tentative steps, in Syria as in Khorasan, to constitute itself as civil society.

In any event, Ibn Makkī's scholarly influence in distant Khorasan was to be short-lived. 'Alī Mu'ayyad, after he retook control of Sabzavār in 1380-81, was astute enough not to resist Tīmūr's onslaught from the East. He entered into vassalage to Tīmūr (and died in his service in 1386), and abjured Shi'ism.

AT DAMASCUS

To what extent and under which auspices did Muḥammad ibn Makkī pursue his scholarly career in Damascus? This question is vital to an understanding both of his eventual condemnation and of the position of the Shi'ah in Syria at this time. Ibn Makkī is generally portrayed in the Shi'i literature as a constant visitor and respected participant in the intellectual life of the capital.⁷⁰ Certainly the conspicuous reference to *Dimashq* in the title of his law manual suggests a long-standing attachment to that city. Yet there are few textual references to him in the local histories, and even Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah identifies him mistakenly as an Iraqi who had settled in Jizzīn, or distorts his *nisbah* to read "al-Juraynī."⁷¹

Ibn Makkī was known in at least one circle of Damascene literate society, that of the Quran reciters. He studied with several disciples of Ibn al-Mu'min, the doyen of *qurrā'* of the epoch. One of them, Ibn al-Labbān al-Dimashqī (d. 1374), who rose to become the most acclaimed reciter in Damascus, reported that he taught the erudite Ibn Makkī "for a long time, and never heard him say anything at variance with (*mā yukhālifu*) Sunnism." The statement shows, of course, that Ibn al-Labbān knew very well that Ibn Makkī himself was not a Sunni. The author of the contemporary Quran reciters' *ṭabaqāt*, Muḥammad ibn al-Jazarī (1350-1429), also knew Ibn Makkī as a "shaykh of the Shi'is and *mujtahid* in their *madhhab*" and, mentioning that he was away in Egypt at the time, intimates regret over his execution.⁷²

⁷⁰See also Sulaymān Dāhir, "Ṣilat al-'Ilm bayna Dimashq wa-Jabal 'Āmil," *Majallat al-Mujtama' al-'Ilmī al-'Arabī* 9 (1929): 269-79.

⁷¹Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Ta'rikh*, 3:134, 151.

⁷²Muḥammad ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah fī Ṭabaqāt al-Qurrā'* (Cairo, 1935), 2:72-73, 265.



Ibn Makkī also consorted with other Shi‘i scholars in Damascus. Muḥammad ibn al-Ḍaḥḥāk al-Shāmī (d. 1389) had been a close friend since their earliest days together in Ḥillah as students of Fakhr al-Muḥaqqiqīn.⁷³ In Ḥillah he had also studied under Amīn al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Zuhrah of Aleppo (d. ca. 1394), and it is likely that he maintained contact with him or with other members of the illustrious Zuhra family after their return from Iraq.⁷⁴

Surely his most interesting acquaintance in Damascus was Quṭb al-Dīn Muḥammad (or Maḥmūd) al-Rāzī, whom he met “by chance” and then earned an *ijāzah* from him in 1365.⁷⁵ A native of Rayy, al-Rāzī had moved to Damascus a few years previously and lived in the Zāhirīyah *madrasah*. He was buried in Ṣāliḥīyah, with the elite of Damascus in attendance, after dying later that year. Ibn Makkī described him as “an inexhaustible ocean of knowledge” and declared that “he was, beyond any doubt, of the Imāmī *madhhab*. He made this clear and I heard so from him, and his devotion to the entire Family of the Prophet is well known.”⁷⁶ In fact al-Rāzī consistently protested that he was a Shāfi‘ī. He was certainly accepted as such, and though he “never got a taste of Arabic linguistics,” he has gone down as a great Sunni scholar of rational philosophy (*ḥikmah*) and logic.⁷⁷ In addition to his Shāfi‘ī credentials, al-Rāzī also held an *ijāzah* from al-‘Allamah al-Ḥillī, and may indeed have been a Shi‘i practising *taqīyah*. However, one should note that in an age where the line between Sunni and Shi‘i religiosity was not yet so clearly drawn, he would not have been the only scholar to be appropriated by the Shi‘is by reason of his devotion to the Prophet’s Family.⁷⁸

Did Ibn Makkī feel compelled to dissimulate his Shi‘ism while in Damascus? An *ijāzah* issued to him by a Sunni shaykh in Baghdad gives his *nisbah* as “al-Dimashqī,” perhaps an indication that he was concealing his Shi‘i Lebanese origins.⁷⁹ Devin Stewart has argued that Ibn Makkī, like other stigmatized Shi‘i scholars, usually pretended to be of the Shāfi‘ī legal school. Ibn Makkī, as will be

⁷³ al-Amīn, *A‘yān al-Shī‘ah*, 10:18.

⁷⁴ al-Amīn, *A‘yān al-Shī‘ah*, 3:149-50; see also 9:411, 444.

⁷⁵ al-‘Amilī, *Amal al-Āmil*, 2:300-301; al-Amīn, *A‘yān al-Shī‘ah*, 9:413; al-Baḥrānī, *Lu‘lu‘at al-Baḥrayn*, 194-99.

⁷⁶ Majlisī, *Bihār al-Anwār*, 107:140-41.

⁷⁷ Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūfī (d. 1505), *Bughyat al-Wu‘āt fī Ṭabaqāt al-Lughawīyīn wa-al-Nuhāt* (Cairo, 1964), 2:281; see also Jamāl al-Dīn ‘Abd-al-Raḥīm al-Isnawī (d. 1370), *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi‘īyah* (Baghdad, 1970), 1:322-23; Tāj al-Dīn ‘Abd-al-Waḥhāb al-Subkī (d. 1370), *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi‘īyah al-Kubrā* (Cairo, 1964), 9:274-75; Aḥmad ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī (d. 1449), *al-Durar al-Kāminah fī A‘yān al-Mī‘ah al-Thāminah* (Cairo, 1966), 5:107-8.

⁷⁸ Cf. the case of Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Dimashqī (d. ca. 1418) in al-Amīn, *A‘yān al-Shī‘ah*, 2:510.

⁷⁹ Majlisī, *Bihār al-Anwār*, 107:183-84.



discussed below, did in fact tell the recently inducted Shāfi‘ī judge at his trial in 1384, “My *madhhab* is the Shāfi‘ī. You now are the chief and judge of this *madhhab*, so rule according to your *madhhab*.”⁸⁰ The only other indication that Ibn Makkī ever claimed to be a Shāfi‘ī is given by the *qurrā’*-biographer al-Jazarī, who received a court summons (*istid‘ā’*) signed by Ibn Makkī with the *nisbah* “al-Shāfi‘ī.”⁸¹ The details are no longer known, but it is not improbable that the summons, and the claim to be a Shāfi‘ī made therein, were connected to this very trial, for which Ibn Makkī may have been seeking al-Jazarī as a witness.

There is little to suggest that Ibn Makkī persistently resorted to *taqīyah* in Damascus prior to his capital trial. One might even debate whether affiliation with the Shāfi‘ī *madhhab* would have constituted genuine *taqīyah* in the context of Syrian Shi‘ism in the Middle Ages. The *tashayyu’* of Ibn Makkī and his associates never laid claim to an actual legal “guild” of their own. They were at times described as members of the Shi‘i *madhhab*, but it is interesting to note that the term “Ja‘farī”—the technical name for the Twelvers’ legal school—is never used in this period to denote *madhhab* nor affixed to the name as a *nisbah*, even in Shi‘i biographies. Ibn Makkī of course made significant theoretical advances in the elaboration of a distinctive Shi‘i legal identity, but these were not at issue in his trial. For procedural purposes, he may well have counted as a legal Shāfi‘ī in Damascus, regardless of his religious denomination. One indication that Shi‘ism and Shāfi‘ī law were not mutually exclusive in Syria at this time is the career of Ibn Millī al-Ba‘labakkī (d. 1300), a respected, ostensibly Shāfi‘ī *muftī* and scholar well known for his interest in Shi‘ism. The chronicler Quṭb al-Dīn Mūsā al-Yūnīnī (d. 1326), a fellow native of Ba‘labakk, reported “He was an *imām* of the Shāfi‘ī school, and the Shi‘i school heeded him as well.”⁸² The situation cannot be compared with that obtaining two centuries later, when the Ottoman regime came to treat Shi‘ism as an explicit political threat. When the “Second Martyr” Zayn al-Dīn ibn ‘Alī (d. 1558), who was probably the first *mujtahid* to advance the formula of “the five *madhhabs*,” got himself appointed headmaster of an important Ḥanafī college by the Shaykh al-Islām in Istanbul, some *taqīyah* may well have been in play.⁸³ It is unlikely that the First Martyr saw the need for this during his lifetime.

We have already seen that the mild Imāmī Shi‘ism of the Damascene *ashrāf* was held in high esteem. Indeed, even Ibn Taymīyah was capable of carrying on a

⁸⁰Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, 107:185; al-Baḥrānī, *Lu’lu’at al-Baḥrayn*, 147; al-Khwānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-Jannāt*, 7:13. In *A’yān al-Shī‘ah*, 10:60, “my *madhhab*” has been changed to read “your *madhhab*.”

⁸¹Jazarī, *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*, 2:265.

⁸²al-Muhājir, *Sittat Fuqahā’*; Guo [Yūnīnī], *Early Mamluk Syrian Historiography*, 2:198.

⁸³al-‘Amilī, *Amal al-Āmil*, 1:85-91; al-Amīn, *A’yān al-Shī‘ah*, 7:143-58.



respectful, scholarly dispute with al-‘Allāmah al-Ḥillī.⁸⁴ Far from evoking the threat of Shi‘i sedition, the *naqīb al-ashraf* was very much a part of the religious establishment in Syria and, as in the case of Ibn al-‘Awd, vigilantly guarded against excessive ‘Alid partisanship within their own ranks that might prejudice their rapport with the Sunni majority. Again, it is not until the Ottoman period that the office of *naqīb* becomes principally assigned to Sunni functionaries. What then caused Muḥammad ibn Makkī and a handful of Shi‘i contemporaries to be persecuted and killed? A look at the narratives of their prosecution may be instructive of the persecuting mentality in fourteenth-century Damascus.

In Jumādā II 744/1343, Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah writes, “the wayward apostate Ḥasan, son of shaykh Abū Bakr . . . al-Dimashqī al-Sakākīnī, was beheaded in the horse market on account of his Shi‘i heresy (*rafḍ*) that verged on atheism (*zandaqah*).”⁸⁵ Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah seems to have relied on Ibn Kathīr’s (d. 1373) *al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah* for his account, but has added some details on the victim’s father borrowed from Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī’s (d. 1449) biographical dictionary *al-Durar al-Kāminah*.⁸⁶ Other than Ibn Kathīr’s slightly more abusive characterization of al-Sakākīnī, the accounts of the charges levied against him are virtually identical:

The matter was established before the Mālikī *qāḍī* Sharaf al-Dīn, . . . namely, that he declared the two *shaykhs* (the caliphs Abū Bakr and ‘Umar) to have been infidels, and that he slandered their daughters [the Prophet’s wives] ‘Ā’ishah and Ḥafṣah. And he claimed that Gabriel had made a mistake and revealed himself to Muḥammad, when he had actually been sent to ‘Alī, and other such injuries.

They then proceed to contrast the son’s wickedness with the father’s integrity. Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, elaborating somewhat on Ibn Ḥajar’s brief notice, continues:

His father was a shaykh of the Shi‘is and scholar of the people, known for his non-*ghulūw*, non-cursing Shi‘ism, and he held the two *shaykhs* in high honour . . .

⁸⁴Michel Mazzaoui, *The Origins of the Ṣafawids: Šī‘ism, Ṣūfism, and the Ġulat* (Wiesbaden, 1972), 28-30.

⁸⁵Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Ta’rīkh*, 1:358.

⁸⁶Ibn al-Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah*, 14:222; Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *al-Durar al-Kāminah*, 2:119.



The less charitable Ibn Kathīr is unimpressed even by non-*ghulūw* (i.e., restrained) Shi'ism and prefers rather to emphasize the elder Sakākīnī's inclination towards the Sunnah. After mentioning his correspondance with Ibn Taymīyah (in a passage hopelessly miscopied by Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah), Ibn Kathīr concludes:

More than one of the *shaykh*'s [Ibn Taymīyah's?] companions recalled that al-Sakākīnī abjured his *madhhab* just before he died, and went over to Sunni doctrine. And I was informed that his son, this reprehensible Ḥasan, had wanted to kill his father when he proclaimed his Sunnism.

The father, Muḥammad Abū Bakr (d. 1321), was an ex-knifsmith, a pupil of the famous illuminationist mystic al-'Afīf al-Tilimsānī (d. 1291), an accomplished *ḥadīth* scholar, and a noted mu'tazilī theologian. He was reportedly even described by Ibn Taymīyah as "one of those where the Shi'i acts like a Sunni and the Sunni acts like a Shi'i."⁸⁷ Ibn Kathīr's deliberately abstruse report of a deathbed "conversion" is a literary device, serving to underscore the son Ḥasan's depravity. In a literature singularly obsessed with citing its sources, the unsupported claim that Ḥasan had wanted to kill his father (who was, of course, already on his deathbed) is likewise a mere *topos*. The Archangel Gabriel's confusion of Muḥammad and 'Alī is a commonplace of *ghulūw* or "exaggerated" Shi'i folk-theology, but is in fact spotlighted most frequently by Sunni heresiographers. Yet the really crucial aspect of Ḥasan al-Sakākīnī's heresy was his alleged cursing of the Prophet's Companions. Instituted as a communal religious rite during the Buyid protectorate of the Abbasid caliphate in Baghdad, cursing the Companions became the most deliberately offensive method of asserting Shi'i confessional partisanship down into the twentieth century. The case of the Sakākīnīs shows that the concept of heresy in Damascus was very much a question of communal honour, not doctrinal divergence. The mu'tazilī and pantheist proclivities of the father earned praise and acclaim; a base insult against the venerated elders of Sunnism earned his son the death penalty.

Under the title of "strange and bizarre events" for the year 755/1354-55, Ibn Kathīr recounts:

On Monday, 16 Jumādā I, a *rāfiḍī* from Ḥillah came into the Umayyad Mosque, cursing "the original oppressors of the Prophet's Family."⁸⁸ He kept repeating this and would not let up, and prayed

⁸⁷ al-Amīn, *A'yān al-Shī'ah*, 9:61.

⁸⁸ The formula recalls the moderate curse instituted by the Buyid Mu'izz al-Dawlah in 962. See 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Jawzī (d. 1200), *al-Muntaẓam fī Tawārīkh al-Mulūk wa-al-Umam* (Beirut,



neither with the other people nor over at the funeral then in progress. Though the people were praying, he continued to repeat this in a loud voice. When we had finished praying, the crowd took notice of him and brought him over to the Shāfi'ī chief *qāḍī* who was with the others at the funeral. They cross-examined him, "Who oppressed the Prophet's Family?" He said "Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq" and then, openly so that everyone could hear, "God damn Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān, Mu'āwiyah and Yazīd!" He repeated this twice, and the judge sent him off to jail. Then the Mālikī *qāḍī* had him brought before him and flogged him, while he screamed insults and curses and words only villains use. The name of this miscreant was 'Alī ibn Abī al-Faḍl . . . ibn Kathīr, God rebuke and shame him. The following Thursday a session was convened in the Dār al-Sa'ādah court with the four *qāḍīs*. He was brought before them and God ordained that the Mālikī deputy should sentence him to death. He was taken quickly and beheaded beneath the citadel. The crowd burned his body and paraded around with his head, shouting "This is what happens to those who insult the Prophet's Companions!" I myself observed this idiot before the Mālikī *qāḍī*, and his opinions were something like those of the *ghulāt* Shi'is. He had adopted some elements of apostasy and *zandaqah* from the followers of al-'Allāmah al-Ḥillī, God disgrace him and them.⁸⁹

Again, it is cursing the Companions that leads to persecution. The offender's link to Ḥillah is only tenuously established⁹⁰ and it is rather unlikely that he was instructed in *zandaqah* by the school of al-'Allāmah al-Ḥillī. His odious behaviour toward the community of the faithful is the basis of the pronouncement of heresy. This particular episode was conspicuous enough to be included, in abridged form, by the Maronite historian Iṣṭfān al-Duwayhī in his general history *Ta' rīkh al-Azminah*, three centuries later.⁹¹

Ibn Kathīr makes specific reference to this outstanding case, after describing the third and last execution of a Shi'i heretic known to him.⁹²

1995), 8:309-10; Heribert Busse, *Chalif und Gross könig* (Wiesbaden, 1969), 421.

⁸⁹Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah*, 14:262.

⁹⁰Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī thought him to be from Aleppo. See *al-Durar al-Kāminah*, 3:168-69.

⁹¹Al-Duwayhī, *Ta' rīkh al-Azminah*, 319.

⁹²Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah*, 14:325. In the entry on Ḥasan al-Sakākīnī, Muḥsin al-Amīn states that "he was accused of the same thing as Aḥmad ibn Yūsuf al-M*qṣātī, which points to a conspiracy against them and plot to kill them, in that age of religious oppression;" al-Amīn, *A'yān al-Shī'ah*, 4:628; I have found no other reference to al-M*qṣātī.



On the morning of Thursday, 17 Rabī' I 763 [January 1362], a man named Maḥmūd ibn Ibrāhīm al-Shīrāzī was found in the Umayyad Mosque, cursing the two shaykhs and declaring them anathema. The matter was submitted to the chief *qāḍī*, the Mālikī Jamāl al-Dīn al-Maslātī, who called on him to repent and had him flogged. With the first lash, he said "There is no god but God; 'Alī is the *walī* of God!" and with the second lash, he cursed Abū Bakr and 'Umar. The crowd assailed him, beating and striking him until he almost died. The *qāḍī* attempted to restrain them but was unable. The *rāfiḍī* began to curse and insult the Companions, saying "They were in error." With that he was dragged before the governor and his statement attested. Thereupon the *qāḍī* ordered his blood to be shed, and he was taken to the outskirts of town and beheaded, and the crowd burned his body, God shame him. He had been a student in the *madrasah* of Abū 'Umar before displaying symptoms of *rafḍ*. The Ḥanbalī [*qāḍī*] had jailed him for forty days, but that did not help. He continued to preach in the entire county, calling for the cursing of the Companions, until his day came and he expounded his *madhhab* in the Great Mosque. . . .

This passage is noteworthy for the initial leniency afforded to the victim, first by the Ḥanbalī, and more importantly by the Mālikī *qāḍī*. As we have seen, the Mālikī *qāḍī* usually took the lead role in the condemnation of heretics. The Mālikī school was known to be the most severe of all on heresy. This in fact accounted for the early popularity of the school, and the Abbasid caliphs on occasion relied on Mālikī *qāḍīs* to dispense with politically vexatious freethinkers, such as the famous Sufi mystic al-Ḥallāj, martyred in 922 AD.⁹³ Under Mālikī law, apostates were given the chance to repent, but *zindīqs*, or those declared to be such, had to be executed forthwith. This is clearly what the crowd was expecting in this instance, and they refused to accept the Mālikī's judgement when he disappointed them. It is worthwhile to point out the initiative of the crowd, *al-'āmmah*, in bringing heretics to justice. Maḥmūd al-Shīrāzī's views were already known in certain branches of the religious establishment, namely at his *madrasah* and by the unnamed Ḥanbalī *qāḍī*. Yet, in contrast to the persecution of heretics in Latin Europe at the same time, it is here the "clergy" that had to be pressed into the service of the wrathful crowd.

⁹³Nicole Cottart, "Mālikiyya," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd. ed., 6:278-83.



In another case reported by Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, the Mālikī and Ḥanbalī *qāḍīs* tried a case brought in all the way from Karak. In 1379-80, a sitting was held for Ibn Ḥurays,

a leading figure of the town and a known *rāfiḍī*. It was attended by those who testified that he cursed and disparaged the Companions, as is prescribed by *zandaqah*. He was imprisoned and the Mālikī was undecided in the matter. Then the Ḥanbalī *qāḍī* sentenced him to death. He was beheaded beneath the citadel, in the presence of the governor and the *qāḍīs*, after he had spoken the profession of faith and stated his approval of the two Shaykhs.⁹⁴

One may conclude that Shi‘ism was not subject to a formalized inquisitorial process in fourteenth-century Damascus. The persecution of individual “*rāfiḍīs*” followed from spontaneous and essentially populist initiatives. Once accused (whether rightly or wrongly) of having insulted the feelings of the catholic majority, the member of a minority, inherently dissident faith was left defenceless against his detractors. A few spectacular cases of persecution made it into the local chronicles; the ordinary lives of quietist Shi‘is such as the *ashrāf* did not.

One final (though also not unique) example of persecution is striking for some of its similarities to Muḥammad ibn Makkī’s case. In 1355, Ibn Kathīr informs us, the Mālikī *qāḍī* al-Maslātī ordered the execution of a man from a town near Ba‘labakk.

It had been established at a sitting in Ba‘labakk that he acknowledged, as Aḥmad ibn Nūr al-Dīn . . . from the village al-Labwah testified, the foul words with which he had injured the Prophet, and cursed and slandered him in terms that cannot be repeated here. So he was killed, God damn him, on this day after the noontime *adhān* in the horse market, and the people burned his body . . .⁹⁵

The significant difference to Ibn Makkī’s case is that the man, Dāwūd ibn Salīm, was a Christian and not a schismatic Muslim.

IBN MAKKĪ’S TRIAL AND EXECUTION

In *The Formation of a Persecuting Society*, R. I. Moore determines that

⁹⁴Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Ta’rīkh*, 3:10.

⁹⁵Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah*, 14:265.



Heresy . . . can only arise in the context of the assertion of authority, which the heretic resists, and is therefore by definition a political matter. Heterodox belief, however, is not. Variety of religious opinion exists at many times and places, and becomes heresy when authority declares it intolerable.⁹⁶

In the preceding section, we have seen that the Mamluk Sultanate, the Damascene *qāḍīs*, or simply an agitated crowd, *al-‘āmmah*, were liable to declare certain Shi‘is to be intolerable heretics (*rāfiḍīs*). Yet none of them truly followed a consistent policy with regards to Shi‘ism. The Sultanate’s campaigns and edicts were directed against certain Shi‘i communities of the province of Tripoli only, not against the Shi‘i faith *per se*. The rabble of cities such as Damascus or Ba‘labakk could work itself into a persecuting frenzy when it felt its communal honour had been impinged upon, but most of the time it was perfectly capable of coexisting with the heterodox minorities. The religious judges frequently became a party to the persecutions and sentenced *rāfiḍīs* to die, but at other times even Ḥanbalī and Mālikī *qāḍīs* sought to reform heretics rather than to execute them. All three of these social entities were involved in one way or another with the conviction of Muḥammad ibn Makkī. Even if we cannot discover the exact, underlying reasons for his execution as a heretic, a close look at the circumstances of his trial may help demonstrate the ambiguous position of Twelver Shi‘is in Syrian Mamluk society.

The only contemporary, possibly eye-witness report of the trial is that of Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Miqdād al-Suyūrī, Ibn Makkī’s former pupil. Though no longer extant, versions of it were reproduced, independently from one another, in the Persian Majlisī’s vast compendium of traditions *Bihār al-Anwār*, in the Lebanese biographical dictionary *Amal al-Āmil*, both from the seventeenth century, and in the broader *rijāl* work, *Lu’lu’at al-Baḥrayn* from the eighteenth. Of these, the last comprises the most extensive version.⁹⁷

Al-Suyūrī’s narrative suggests that Ibn Makkī was first denounced in southern Lebanon by a certain Taqī al-Dīn al-Jabalī, a native of al-Khiyyām (some 10 km. north of the Golan). This seems not to have had any immediate consequence, for the denunciations were perpetuated by another man, Yūsuf ibn Yaḥyá,⁹⁸ after the first had died. Both of them were former Imāmī Shi‘is who had abjured.

⁹⁶R. I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society* (Oxford, 1987), 68-69.

⁹⁷al-‘Amilī, *Amal al-Āmil*, 1:182-83; Majlisī, *Bihār al-Anwār*, 107:184-86; al-Baḥrānī, *Lu’lu’at al-Baḥrayn*, 145-48.

⁹⁸The Āl Yaḥyá was a prominent family of al-Khiyyām; see al-Amīn, *Khiṭaṭ*, 231.



Ibn Yaḥyá composed a procès-verbal (*maḥḍar*) detailing Ibn Makkī's "vile doctrines and abominable beliefs." We are not told of what these consisted. In any event, the precise nature of the heresy was not as important as the fact that Ibn Yaḥyá found numerous witnesses to corroborate it. Seventy inhabitants of the mountain, all of them former Shi'is who had abjured, signed the procès-verbal, as did "over a thousand of the outwardly Sunni (*mutasanninūn*) inhabitants of the coastlands." Al-Suyūrī offers no explanation as to why a significant number of Shi'is from the coast should have converted, or affected to convert, to Sunnism. However, a brief and otherwise unrelated passage in Šālīḥ ibn Yaḥyá's *History of Beirut* shows that it was the consequence of Sultan al-Nāṣir's 1363 edict against the *rāfiḍīs* of Beirut and Sidon. After Baydamur became governor of Damascus for the second time (July-August 1362), the Druze chronicler relates,

The Shi'is of Beirut were stirred up. They manifested their adherence to Sunnism, as they had received a sultanic edict, but inwardly they subscribed to the doctrine of the Shi'ah. A campaign of inquisition (*ḥarakah riddīyah*) followed from this in Beirut, which Baydamur exploited . . . to expropriate the fief of [an old political enemy].⁹⁹

Though we are still not informed what occasioned Cairo's promulgation of the edict, we must conclude that religious persecution in the coastal districts, where Shi'is constituted a significant proportion of the population, bore the imprint of official imperial policy. Yet there is little connection between the ideological intent of the edict and the social reality of its consequences. Among the Shi'i community, the effect of the edict was to create a witchhunt in which, eventually, Ibn Makkī was betrayed by his own co-religionists. The Mamluk governor of Damascus, in whose jurisdiction the *wilāyahs* of Beirut and Sidon fell, took an interest in the quasi-inquisition issuing in Beirut only in so far as it allowed him to assail his personal enemies. There is nothing in the sources to suggest that Baydamur or the higher judgeship of the Damascus province became involved in local battles fought through the medium of religious correctness in the coast districts.

A further detail in Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī's *Inbā' al-Ghumr* ties Ibn Makkī to the persecution of Shi'is on the coast: around the time of his execution, "his friend [*rafīq*] 'Arifah, who subscribed to the same [Nusayrī] beliefs as he, was beheaded in Tripoli."¹⁰⁰ Ibn Makkī's detractors, al-Suyūrī's account then continues, proved

⁹⁹Šālīḥ ibn Yaḥyá, *Ta'riḥ Bayrūt*, 195.

¹⁰⁰Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Inbā' al-Ghumr bi-Anbā' al-'Umr* (Damascus, 1979), 1:228.



his guilt “before the *qāḍī* of Beirut (it is also said the *qāḍī* of Sidon), and went with the *procès-verbaux* to the [Shāfi‘ī] judge in Damascus.”

What was Ibn Makkī’s relationship with the authorities in the provincial capital? The Shāfi‘ī judge had Ibn Makkī imprisoned in the citadel of Damascus for one year in order for him to repent. Sometime in the course of that year, he purportedly wrote a versified letter to the aforesaid governor of Damascus, Sayf al-Dīn Baydamur al-Khwārazmī (d. 1387), disclaiming all the charges made against him. The only source for this letter is the Shi‘i biographer al-Khwānsārī, who reports having seen it in a copy made unquestionably by Zayn al-Dīn ibn ‘Alī, the later medieval authority on Ibn Makkī.¹⁰¹ In it, Ibn Makkī protests his love for “the Prophet and all who loved him, all the Companions without exception,” and goes on to name not only Abū Bakr and ‘Umar but also Abū ‘Ubaydah, Ṭalḥah, Zubayr, and ‘Uthmān, the irreconcilable enemies of the early Shi‘ah.

The important part of the letter, however, is where he refers to false accusations made against him in the past. He implores Baydamur to “be like Manjak” (Sayf al-Dīn Manjak al-Yūsufī; d. 1375), the great Mamluk amir who served as governor of Damascus twice, in rotation with Baydamur and others, from May 1357 to November 1357 and December 1367 to April 1374.¹⁰²

Reporters of evil came to him, indeed they lied
Whereupon he smote them for what they implied.
The amir, the chamberlain,¹⁰³ knows this quite well,
So ask him about it, that he may tell.
By God, I received no punishment, nay
And suffered not as then suffer did they.

Furthermore, Ibn Makkī reminds the governor, he had just gone on pilgrimage to Mecca in the retinue of his own son, Muḥammad Shāh ibn Baydamur. According to Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, Muḥammad Shāh (d. 1391) did in fact perform the *ḥajj* in 1382.¹⁰⁴ Baydamur must have remained unmoved by Ibn Makkī’s purported connections with members of the Mamluk military aristocracy, but there is no firm indication that he actively pursued the case against him either.

The picture that emerges of Ibn Makkī’s trial is very much one of collusion among the *sharī‘ah*-jurists. Al-Suyūrī claims that the Shāfi‘ī judge ordered the

¹⁰¹al-Khwānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-Jannāt*, 7:19-20; see also al-Amīn, *A’yān al-Shi‘ah*, 10:61.

¹⁰²Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Ta’rīkh*, 2:473-75; 3:226-27; Laoust, *Gouverneurs de Damas*, 12-15. The months given are the most likely approximations.

¹⁰³“Amīr Ḥājib Najl al-‘Askarī”; the amir Ḥasan ibn al-‘Imād (d. Nov./Dec. 1384), known popularly as Ibn al-‘Askarī, was a chamberlain (*ḥājib*) in Damascus; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Ta’rīkh*, 3:142.

¹⁰⁴Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Ta’rīkh*, 3:88, 409-10.



Mālikī, "Judge him according to your *madhhab* or I will fire you!" This may be an exaggeration for the sake of literary effect, but the co-optation of the Mālikī judge is indeed substantiated by Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah's account. Let us consider it in its entirety before returning to the Shi'i point of view. On 10 Jumādā I 786 (30 June 1384),

a sitting was held concerning Shams Muḥammad ibn Makkī, an Iraqī in origin [sic] and resident in the town of Jizzīn, after he had spent some time in prison. His guilt was established by a procès-verbal [*maḥḍar*] from the *qāḍī* of Beirut, which indicated that he was a *rāfiḍī* and had called 'Ā'ishah, her father (Abū Bakr), and 'Umar terrible things, tantamount to apostasy according to a number of Shāfi'īs, Ḥanafīs and others. . . . So the *qāḍīs* and '*ulamā*' assembled in the Dār al-Sa'ādah [court of Damascus]. He was called before the Mālikī *qāḍī*, and he denied that he had said anything of the sort. The Mālikī hesitated for a long moment, and so it came that they cajoled Ibn Makkī into confessing, thinking that this would help him, and he spoke the Islamic profession of faith. At that point, the Mālikī was asked to rule him an infidel and order his blood to be shed. He responded, "For that, you all must rule by formal legal opinion, on the basis of what you have just heard, that he is a *zindīq*." The Mālikīs and some of the Shāfi'īs [present] ruled thus. When Ibn Makkī realized the gravity of the situation he retracted [*raja'a*] and said something to which no one listened or paid attention.

Then the Mālikī *qāḍī*, after beseeching God for guidance, ruled him to be an infidel and ordered his blood to be shed, even if he repented. He made his decision contingent on two things: one, that no one before him had judged Ibn Makkī to be a good Muslim; and two, that the other judges uphold his judgement and that the Ḥanbalī agree as well. The Ḥanbalī also ruled him to be a *zindīq* and ordered his blood to be shed, and the two [other] *qāḍīs* upheld the judgement. He was taken out below the citadel and beheaded, after he had prayed, made the profession of faith and stated his approval of the two Shaykhs and the Companions. Ibn Ḥijjī reported, "He showed neither anxiety nor fear, God help us. . . . He was known for his *rafḍ*, but he was learned in jurisprudence [*uṣūl*], Quran-recital and more."¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁵Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Ta' rīkh*, 3:134-35. Aḥmad ibn Ḥijjī (d. 1413) was a historian whose unfinished



A few observations can be made before we turn to al-Suyūrī's account. The trial was presided over by the three *qāḍīs* of the Mālikī, Shāfi'ī and Ḥanafī schools. A Ḥanbalī was also present, but apparently not in the rank of full *qāḍī*. This may reflect the fact that the Ḥanbalī school as a whole was negatively seen and somewhat ostracised in Mamluk Damascus.¹⁰⁶ The Mālikī was called upon to impose the death sentence, as his was the only *madhhab* that does not admit the penitence of a proven heretic. He, however, sought to protect himself by requiring that all the other jurists present also commit themselves, by formal legal opinion, to pronouncing Ibn Makkī to be a *zindīq*: *hattā taftaw bi-zandaqatihi*. This would provide the legal basis, under Mālikī law, for executing the accused. The Mālikīs, the Ḥanbalī representative and some of the Shāfi'īs obliged, which suggests that the Ḥanafīs and some other Shāfi'īs were against the sentence. No one, on the other hand, was prepared to certify Ibn Makkī as a good Muslim, another condition which the Mālikī *qāḍī* had set. The trial appears as much an arena of professional tensions and rivalries among the jurists as the object of a common cause against heresy.

Al-Suyūrī's account essentially corroborates Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah's. Ibn Makkī, he writes, was killed on the basis of a *fatwā* from the Mālikī and Shāfi'ī *qāḍīs*, Burhān al-Dīn¹⁰⁷ and 'Abbād ibn Jamā'ah,¹⁰⁸ "and a large group of people ganged up on him in this matter." Ibn Makkī vigorously denied espousing the doctrines laid out in the *procès-verbal* from Beirut, a move al-Suyūrī interprets as "resorting to the required *taqīyah*." But what was this heresy that Ibn Makkī should have dissimulated? Al-Suyūrī never actually discloses the exact contents of the *procès-verbal*, and assumes like many later writers that Ibn Makkī was prosecuted simply for being a Shi'i.

In fact, the Sunni sources are quite clear on the point that he was tried for *rafḍ*, however equivocal its definition. Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī reports the charges as "dissoluteness, adherence to Nuṣayrī doctrine, declaring wine to be absolutely lawful, and other such abominations"¹⁰⁹ while Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah cites his alleged cursing of 'Ā'ishah, Abū Bakr, and 'Umar. Indeed, Ibn Makkī defended himself against nothing more in his poem to the governor Baydamur. To state that denying these charges constituted *taqīyah* would imply, of course, that they were true. It is

manuscript Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah incorporated into his own *Ta'rikh*.

¹⁰⁶ Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice*, 169.

¹⁰⁷ Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad al-Tādhilī (d. 1402). Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Ta'rikh*, 4:195-96; Shams al-Dīn ibn Ṭulūn (d. 1546), *Quḍāt Dimashq* (Damascus, 1956), 250.

¹⁰⁸ Actually Ibrāhīm ibn 'Abd-al-Raḥīm ibn Jamā'ah (d. 1394). Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Ta'rikh*, 3:248-51.

¹⁰⁹ Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Inbā' al-Ghumr*, 228.



unlikely that they were, given Ibn Makkī's stature as a Muslim intellectual, moreover one who had made a career of studying Sunni law.¹¹⁰ More importantly, it cannot be any Shi'i writer's intention to state that they were true. The characterization of Ibn Makkī's defence as *taqīyah* is a misinterpretation by al-Suyūrī, if not a later transmitter, who was unfamiliar with the accusations listed by the Sunnis and wrongly thought Shi'ism and rafidism to be perfectly synonymous in their vocabulary of persecution.

Nevertheless, al-Suyūrī's account is valuable in that it shows more clearly how the law was manipulated in order to produce a conviction. The denial was not accepted, with the judges claiming, "This has been legally established; a *qāḍī*'s decision cannot be repealed." At this point Ibn Makkī made use of his legal training. The defendant, he argued, has the right to be heard; if the evidence he adduces contradicts the judgement, it must be quashed. "And I confute the testimonies of those who testified to the offences. I have proofs against each one of them." What evidence could Ibn Makkī have tendered? He presumably sought a character reference from Ibn al-Jazarī, the Quran-reciter, who did receive a court summons but was away in Cairo at the time. As mentioned, his colleague Ibn al-Labbān (d. 1374) had been prompted to state that Ibn Makkī never said "anything at variance with Sunnism," most likely when the accusations first surfaced during Manjak's governorship. It was this failed attempt to mount a defence which, in the terse summary of the Sunni cleric Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, "no one listened or paid attention to."

Only then did Ibn Makkī, "realiz[ing] the gravity of the situation," change strategy and place his hopes in the clemency afforded to penitent heretics under Shāfi'ī law. He reminded the Shāfi'ī judge, as cited above, that he is of his *madhhab* and wants to be tried as such.

The judge responded, "In my *madhhab*, you have to be imprisoned for a whole year, then asked to repent. Well, you have been imprisoned. Now ask God for forgiveness, so that I may rule that you are a good Muslim."

"I have not done anything for which I should ask forgiveness," he said, fearing that if he did repent, it would confirm his having sinned.

Here the versions of the account begin to diverge slightly. Majlisī claims that the Shāfi'ī judge "seized on his mistake" (*istaghlaṭahu*) and said "You repented;

¹¹⁰On Ibn Makkī's condemnation of wine-drinking, see *al-Lum'ah*, 169; Zayn al-Dīn ibn 'Alī, *Rawḍāt al-Bahīyah*, 9:197-212.



that proves you sinned.” But this sequence is inconsistent with Ibn Makkī’s denial, and can be explained as the result of a copyist’s error. For the more thorough Baḥrānī reports that the judge

found him to be obstinate (*istaghlazahu*) and was confirmed in this. Ibn Makkī refused to repent. An hour passed. Then he said, “You repented; that proves you are guilty.”

What happened during this hour? Muḥsin al-Amīn hypothesizes that the Shāfi‘ī judge encouraged him to confess in secret so that he could absolve him, but then betrayed him and disclosed his penitence — and therefore his guilt — to the entire assembly.¹¹¹ There is no evidence for this but the end result stands: the fact of his heresy was established, albeit dubiously, in Shāfi‘ī law (which does not stipulate execution), so that his sentence could be pronounced under Mālikī law (in which confession is ordinarily inadmissible).

Ibn Makkī was thus handed over to the Mālikī *qāḍī* for sentencing. Al-Ḥurr al-‘Āmilī writes summarily that Mālikī radicalism prevailed over Shāfi‘ī leniency owing to the numerous fanatics in the assembly. In fact, Baḥrānī’s and Majlisī’s version suggests that the Shāfi‘ī judge, not the Mālikī, was the driving force behind Ibn Makkī’s conviction.

He told the Mālikī, “He has repented, so the decision is no longer mine. . . .” “Judgement reverts to the Mālikī!” The Mālikī got up, performed the ablutions and prayed twice (*rak‘atayn*). Then he said, “I have sentenced you to die.”

Ibn Makkī, the Shi‘i sources agree, was taken to the open square beneath the Damascus citadel and beheaded, his body crucified and later burned.

CONCLUSION

A short tale from the Shi‘i *ṭabaqāt* proffers an explanation of the Shāfi‘ī *qāḍī*’s hatred toward Ibn Makkī. According to Nūr Allāh Shushtarī (d. 1610-11), the two used to participate in the same study circle in their youth. Ibn Jamā‘ah “broke out in a sweat of jealousy and hatred” when it became clear that Ibn Makkī “had surpassed his peers and excelled them in merit and perfection,” a rage which intensified as scholars of the “five *madhhabs*” began to seek out his Shi‘i rival to “learn and benefit from.” Ibn Jamā‘ah arranged for Ibn Makkī to be executed by

¹¹¹ al-Amīn, *A‘yān al-Shī‘ah*, 10:61.



the governor for *rafd*, but was overcome with emotion at the trial as he recalled their erstwhile companionship. Playing on his name, Ibn Makkī denounced him as a “bastard” before the entire assembly.¹¹² In Khwānsārī’s version, the two were one day arguing some scholarly matter when the corpulent and unimaginative Ibn Jamā‘ah mocked Ibn Makkī for his slight physique.

“I hear a sound from behind that inkwell; what could that be?” Ibn Makkī responded without missing a beat, “Yes, a son of only one father (*ibn al-wāhid*, as opposed to Ibn Jamā‘ah, meaning literally ‘son of a group’) is no bigger than that!” Ibn Jamā‘ah got extremely angry at this and was so filled with spite and fury that he did to Ibn Makkī what he did.¹¹³

This sort of dramatization is a *topos* of Shi‘i hagiography.¹¹⁴ Yet it serves the authors to articulate an important truth about such trials as Ibn Makkī’s: that justice was more a function of personal loyalties and jealousies than of an unyielding codex. Indeed, the trials that we have reviewed undermine the notion of any formal institution charged with inquiring into crimes of heresy. Most glaringly absent are the Mālikī *qāḍīs* who, despite (or because of?) the perceived immutability of their *madhhab*’s stance on heresy, repeatedly shirked the role of grand inquisitor attributed to them by Ashtor. In Ibn Makkī’s case at least, the true advocate of persecution for whatever reasons was the Shāfi‘ī judge, the senior religious authority in Damascus at the time, despite the fact that his legal rite was the one most proximate to Shi‘ism.

Furthermore, in all the above cases the heretics first had to be called to the attention of the religious authorities. The unspecified crowd was involved from beginning to end, denouncing neighbours for having insulted the venerable Companions, bringing victims into Damascus from Karak, Beirut, and Ba‘labakk, and finally desecrating the bodies after the executions. Al-Suyūrī mentions explicitly that the most barbarous participant in the killing of Ibn Makkī was a merchant and not the religious leaders. When left to their own discretion, *qāḍīs* could ignore or try to reform an individual’s religious idiosyncrasies; when presented with a popular petition, they did better to score points by indulging the crowd in its fanaticism. This is a far cry from the inquisitions of Europe, where the bishops were committed

¹¹²Shushtarī, *Majālis al-Mu‘minīn*, 249.

¹¹³al-Khwānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-Jannāt*, 7:14.

¹¹⁴For another usage of the inkwell topos in a dispute between a Sunni and a Shi‘i scholar, see Josef van Ess, “Anekdoten um ‘Adudduddin al-Igī” in *Die Islamische Welt Zwischen Mittelalter und Neuzeit: Festschrift für Hans Robert Roemer zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Ulrich Haarmann and Peter Bachman (Beirut, 1979), 126-31.



by the papacy, beginning in the twelfth century, to search out heretics and uproot their secret networks.¹¹⁵

The *'ulamā'* of the Levant rarely made it their business to inquire into other people's religious thoughts. The leading Sunni dignitaries were ready to believe that Ibn Makkī cursed the Companions and had declared wine to be lawful, yet none showed the slightest interest in any of the treatises on Shi'i law he had written. Modern Shi'i historians have tried to explain Ibn Makkī's execution by his political ties to the rising Shi'i state in Khorasan. However, the Mamluk authorities of Damascus declined to portray Ibn Makkī as the archtypical Shi'i collaborator. The Mamluk governor was singularly uninterested in anti-Shi'i campaigns even within his own province; it is not fortuitous that Ibn Makkī turned to him in an appeal to save his life.

This essay has attempted to place Ibn Makkī at the juncture of two autonomous historiographical traditions: one that remembers him as al-Shahīd al-Awwal, the other as a *rāfiḍī*. In the history of Shi'ism, Ibn Makkī's work remains a keystone in the development of Ja'farī law. The commentary of his *al-Lum'ah al-Dimashqīyah* is taught today in religious colleges from Sayyidah Zaynab in Syria to Mashhad in Iran; the growing importance of Shi'i jurisprudence has seen the recent edition of more of his works.¹¹⁶ Moreover, as the "First Martyr" of medieval Shi'ism, Ibn Makkī has become an essential part of a confessional identity predicated on a seemingly timeless antagonism with the Sunni majority in Islam. Yet the formal Shi'i *rijāl* dictionaries, which articulate this identity, begin to appear only after the foundation of the Safavid empire.

In the context of Mamluk history, the story of Ibn Makkī's life and death serves to illustrate the ambivalent position of the Shi'is in medieval Syrian society. On the one hand, Shi'ism evoked—unlike Ibn Taymīyah's anthropomorphism or the Ḥurūfī sect of the later fourteenth century—a religio-political ideology essentially opposed to the Sunni orthodoxy espoused by the Mamluk Sultanate. Cairo did set the tone in creating an atmosphere hostile to Shi'ism throughout the empire. The fact that the first trials in Damascus, the rescript against the Shi'is of Tripoli, and acts of violence against the Zaydī Sharifs of Mecca all coincided between approximately 1354 and 1363 cannot be dismissed.

However, one should not historicize the persecution of Shi'is too much. Earlier writers explained religious oppression as a function of the Mamluk regime's political and cultural consolidation; recent writers have tended to emphasize the strains placed on society, particularly after the "golden age" of Sultan al-Nāṣir MuḤammad

¹¹⁵ Moore, *Persecuting Society*, 26.

¹¹⁶ Ibn Makkī, *Kitāb al-Mazār* (Qom, 1990); *ibid.*, *al-Durūs al-Shar'īyah fī Fiqh al-Imāmīyah*, 3 vols. (Qom, 1992).



(r. 1310-41), by foreign invasion, rapid economic growth and the Black Death.¹¹⁷ Yet if there were any immutable constants throughout Mamluk history, political upheaval was surely one of them. Even a historiographically dramatic event such as the replacement of the Qipchak with the Circassian regime, still in progress when Ibn Makkī was executed in 1384, could have surprisingly little local effect. In Damascus, it did not even occasion the replacement of the governor Baydamur. Moreover, for the nearly three centuries of their reign, the Mamluks faced neither foreign enemies nor domestic rebellions that were militantly Shi‘i. Unlike so many other Islamic dynasties, the Mamluk Sultanate never resorted to an ideology of Sunni vs. Shi‘i conflict in order to express its own religious and political legitimacy.

The unassuming presence of Shi‘ism in all regions of Syrian Mamluk society is perhaps another constant of the period. Shi‘ism, whether as a personal expression of religious devotion to the Prophet’s Family, or as the creed of large communities in northern and western Syria that were remnants of the “Shi‘i centuries” (tenth-eleventh centuries), was not considered as something alien, the historiography of the piety-minded ‘*ulamā*’ notwithstanding. Only in the sixteenth century did Sunnism and Shi‘ism become, both in political and personal terms, definitively incompatible; and the *ashrāf* had to choose either loyalty to the state as Sunnis or ostracism as Shi‘is.

Where did Mamluk society fix the boundary between *tashayyu’* and *rafḍ*, between heterodoxy and intolerable heresy? Chamberlain has argued convincingly for regarding *tabaqāt* as the Mamluk-era equivalent of archives; rosters of prestige and authority that constituted the “useful past” for the learned elite of medieval Syria and Egypt. By “decoding” them further, we may also gain new insights into Syrian society’s ambivalent position toward Shi‘ism in its midst: not just why some individuals and communities were persecuted as *rāfiḍīs* while others were not, but also what it meant when some *ashrāf* developed a bizarre interest in mu‘tazilism¹¹⁸ and why ordinary scholars sometimes included Shi‘i studies in their curriculum.¹¹⁹ Nowhere is the ambivalence toward Shi‘ism better illustrated than in Ibn Kathīr’s strangely disgusted, strangely reverent necrological notice for the great Iraqi Shi‘i scholar al-‘Allāmah al-Ḥillī.¹²⁰ The on-going editing of such local histories as Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah’s *Ta’rīkh* and al-Yūnīnī’s *Dhayl Mir’āt al-Zamān*

¹¹⁷See, e.g., Jonathan Berkey, “The Mamluks as Muslims: The Military Elite and the Construction of Islam in Medieval Egypt,” in *The Mamluks in Egyptian Politics and Society*, ed. Thomas Philipp and Ulrich Haarmann (Cambridge, 1998), 163-73.

¹¹⁸Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Ta’rīkh*, 1:494.

¹¹⁹Cited in Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice*, 86.

¹²⁰Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah*, 14:129-30.



will provide further correctives to the picture of an undifferentiated anti-Shi'ism in medieval Damascus. In the Mamluk centuries, *tashayyu'* still represented a moral and historical alter-ego to dominant Sunni society, not an ideological threat. Muḥammad ibn Makkī is integral to both Syrian Mamluk and Shi'i history.



©1999 by Stefan H. Winter.

DOI: [10.6082/M1862DM5](https://doi.org/10.6082/M1862DM5). (<https://doi.org/10.6082/M1862DM5>)

DOI of Vol. III: [10.6082/M1765CFB](https://doi.org/10.6082/M1765CFB). See <https://doi.org/10.6082/ZJY1-1449> to download the full volume or individual articles. This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY). See <http://mamluk.uchicago.edu/msr.html> for more information about copyright and open access.

WARREN C. SCHULTZ
DEPAUL UNIVERSITY

Mamluk Monetary History: A Review Essay

Surviving specimens of Islamic coinage were once treated merely as a small part of medieval economic or monetary history. Today they constitute an extremely important body of tangible, unintentional relics or traces, or source materials. Once these Islamic numismatic relics become heuristically re-monetized they acquire the status of key sources of information about the economic problems of Near Eastern society in the Middle Ages.¹

Mamluk money is important. Knowledge of what it was and awareness of how it circulated are crucial to the broader economic history of the sultanate, the medieval Mediterranean world, and the contemporary Indian Ocean basin. And as is well-known, the surviving Mamluk coins—the tangible remains of the Mamluk monetary system—are also important sources for other avenues of historical inquiry. These coins reveal information about epigraphy, heraldry, dynastic claims of legitimation, and political chronology, to list but a few.² These other uses of Mamluk coins are not addressed in this essay, however, as I concentrate on the field of monetary history proper: that is to say, the study of the surviving coins and other sources that reveal how money circulated and was valued in the Mamluk domains. This decision needs little defense, since interesting coin legends aside, the primary purposes of coins *qua* money are economic: as a store of value and as a medium of exchange. In what follows, I survey the state of the field of Mamluk monetary history, beginning with a discussion of the surviving numismatic evidence and the issues affecting its use, moving on to comments about the relevant literary and documentary sources concerning Mamluk money, and concluding with an overview of modern scholarship. Throughout the essay, I identify issues facing the field and suggest avenues of continuing inquiry.

©Middle East Documentation Center. The University of Chicago.

¹Andrew S. Ehrenkreutz, "Numismatics Re-Monetized," in *Michigan Oriental Studies in honor of George G. Cameron*, ed. Louis L. Orlin (Ann Arbor, 1976), 209.

²The latter has most recently been demonstrated by Stefan Heidemann in his *Das Aleppiner Kalifat (AD 1261): Vom Ende des Kalifates in Bagdad über zu den Restaurationen in Kairo* (Leiden, 1994).



©1999 by Warren C. Schultz.

DOI: [10.6082/M1HQ3X1G](https://doi.org/10.6082/M1HQ3X1G). (<https://doi.org/10.6082/M1HQ3X1G>)

DOI of Vol. III: [10.6082/M1765CFB](https://doi.org/10.6082/M1765CFB). See <https://doi.org/10.6082/ZJY1-1449> to download the full volume or individual articles. This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY). See <http://mamluk.uchicago.edu/msr.html> for more information about copyright and open access.

MAMLUK MONEY: THE NUMISMATIC EVIDENCE**MAMLUK COINS**

The most visible and important source for Mamluk monetary history is the coinage itself. Mamluk coins survive in the thousands. They span the entire 267 years of the regime. The vast majority of these coins were struck in one of six major mints.³ The Egyptian mint cities were Cairo and Alexandria. Mints in the Syrian provinces were located in Damascus, Hamah, Aleppo, and Tripoli. (A few coins survive from Malatyah and Ladhīqiyah, but these seem to have been occasional issues only.⁴) These Mamluk mints produced coins in gold, silver, and copper, although not every mint produced coins of each metal. Nor is a specimen necessarily known from each year for every mint. Yet as is developed below, the presence of gaps in current collections of Mamluk coins is seldom sufficient evidence upon which to base conclusions about the Mamluk monetary system.⁵ Nor should the presence or absence of coins of a particular metal be used to argue about the existence of "metallic standards" in Mamluk money. The Mamluk monetary system was trimetallic in the sense that coins of gold, silver and copper circulated together, but their values in relation to one another were interdependent and in frequent flux.⁶

Before embarking on a brief survey of this coinage, two issues must be mentioned. First, it should be noted that coins of foreign origin often circulated within Mamluk domains. Thus it is not uncommon to encounter in the archeological evidence or read in the written sources about Armenian silver trams (some with Mamluk overstrikes), gold and silver coins from the Italian city-states, or coins

³No Mamluk-era mint manual has been found. Our knowledge of Mamluk mint practices is therefore derived from the Ayyubid period. For a summary of what is known, see Helen W. Brown, "The Medieval Mint of Cairo: Some Aspects of Mint Organisation and Administration," in *Later Medieval Mints: Organization, Administration, and Technique*, ed. N.J. Mayhew and P. Spufford, B.A.R International Series 389 (1988), 30-39.

⁴These specimens are preserved in the collection of the Forschungstelle für islamische Numismatik, Tübingen. It is possible, of course, that other occasional mints will surface. For example, one specimen of a *dirham* minted in al-Marqab in the reign of al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn was recently discovered, and will be published soon by Elisabeth Puin. The phenomenon of coins minted by subject states yet bearing the names of Mamluk rulers is not addressed in this article. See M.R. Broome, "An Enigmatic 'Mamluk' Sequin," *Spink's Numismatic Circular* (July-August, 1979): 355.

⁵This is especially so since new coin types appear not infrequently. In a telephone conversation with Stephen Album, specialist in Islamic coins, in September 1997, for example, he revealed to me the existence of the first known Cairene *dirham* for the Sultan al-Ashraf Ṭūmānbāy (922/1516-17). The coin was found in a miscellaneous lot of 20-30 coins he had recently acquired, and is now in the Tübingen collection.

⁶In this approach to Mamluk money I follow the lead of Hennequin, as discussed below.



from the neighboring Muslim dynasties.⁷ The existence of such a wide variety of coins in circulation with Mamluk-produced coinage no doubt ensured that Mamluk-era money-changers (*ṣayrafī*, pl. *ṣayārīfah*) were kept busy determining the relative values of all these different coins.

The second issue is that of terminology. In the medieval Islamic world the basic vocabulary of money was remarkably similar from place to place and over the passage of time. While local usage of names for specific coins could vary tremendously, the following terms remained essentially constant: a gold coin was usually called a *dīnār* (pl. *danānīr*); a silver coin a *dirham* (pl. *darāhim*); and a base metal coin referred to as a *fals* (pl. *fulūs*). What must be stressed here, however, is that the many coins to which these terms were applied varied tremendously. The failure to address this fact has been the source of many modern misinterpretations of Islamic coinage.⁸ In the case of Mamluk coinage, *dīnār*, *dirham*, and *fals* are the usual terms encountered for gold, silver and copper coins, but there are significant differences of appearance, weight, and purity found among the coins bearing these labels. (The variations in purity are especially important. This is an area in which further research is always welcome.⁹) Adding to the possibility of confusion (for the modern observer at least) is the fact that other terms for these coins are frequently found in the sources. Thus *dirhams* were occasionally labeled *nuqrah* or *wariq*, terms whose meanings are not constant, and which have been the subject of modern disagreement.¹⁰ Furthermore, it is

⁷On the Armenian trams in Mamluk contexts, see Paul Bedoukian, "Some Armenian Coins Overstruck in Arabic," in *Armeniaca: Melanges d'Etudes Armeniennes* (Venice, 1969), 138-47. On the presence of Italian coins, see Jere Bacharach, "The Dinar Versus the Ducat," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 4 (1973): 77-96; idem, "Foreign Coins, Forgers, and Forgeries in Fifteenth Century Egypt," in *Acte du 8^{eme} Congrès International de Numismatique* (Paris, 1976), 500-511.

⁸See Ehrenkretz's succinct discussion of this in his "Monetary Aspects of Medieval Near Eastern Economic History," in *Studies in the Economic History of the Middle East*, ed. M.A. Cook (London, 1970), 40-41. A similar caveat applies to metrology. Amounts such as the *mithqāl* and *dirham* [as weight unit] were not always and everywhere 4.25 and 2.97 grams as is often assumed.

⁹The following studies have provided a baseline for future research: Jere L. Bacharach and Adon A. Gordus, "Studies on the Fineness of Silver Coins," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 11 (1968): 298-317; Bacharach, "Monetary Movements in Medieval Egypt, 1171-1517," in *Precious Metals in the Later Medieval and Early Modern Worlds*, ed. J.F. Richards (Durham, NC, 1983), 159-81, esp. table 1.

¹⁰Compare the discussions of these terms in William Popper, *Egypt and Syria Under the Circassian Sultans 1382-1468 AD: Systematic Notes to Ibn Taghri Birdī's Chronicle of Egypt*, vol. 16 of The University of California Publications in Semitic Philology (1957), 41-79; Christopher Toll, "Minting Techniques According to Arabic Literary Sources," *Orientalia Suecana* 19-20 (1970-71): 125-39; and Andrew S. Ehrenkretz, "Extracts from the Technical Manual on the Ayyubid Mint in Cairo," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 15 (1953): 423-47.



common to encounter the generic terms for gold (*dhahab*) and silver (*fiḍḍah*) in contexts where coined money is clearly meant. Finally, it was quite usual in the Mamluk era for coins to be referred to by an adjective based on the issuing ruler's *laqab*; thus a *dīnār* bearing the name of al-Ashraf Barsbāy (825-41/1422-37) was called an *Ashrafī*, to cite perhaps the best known example of this phenomenon. This practice has been adopted by modern numismatists, albeit with occasional imprecision.¹¹ Since gold and silver coins were seldom withdrawn from circulation in the Mamluk sultanate, it is not unusual to encounter mentions of several such *laqab*-labeled coins in the chronicles. This multiplicity of terms and the ambiguity they engender are two of the major difficulties encountered in the field of Mamluk monetary history.

Coins properly described as Mamluk were first struck in the reign of al-Zāhir Baybars (658-76/1260-77). Prior to his reign, the coinage minted in Egypt and Syria was essentially a continuation of Ayyubid monetary practice, with only the names on the coins changed.¹² Only the briefest overview of developments in Mamluk coinage is appropriate here. I will discuss first developments in Mamluk *dīnārs* and *dirhams*, and end with a discussion of the *fulūs*. The characteristics of Mamluk *dīnārs* suggest a threefold periodization. The first period, lasting from Baybars's reign through the second reign of al-Zāhir Barqūq (792-801/1390-99), is characterized by gold coins of high purity, but of such highly irregular weights that they clearly were weighed in any transaction.¹³ In the third period, stretching from the reign of Barsbay until the end of the sultanate, the *dīnārs* are remarkably consistent in terms of appearance, size and weight, as they all resemble the *Ashrafī dīnār* mentioned above. Their purity began to drop in the final decades, however. Between these two periods is one of transition, spanning the first three decades of the ninth/fifteenth century, during which several short-lived gold issues of varying size, design and weight were minted.¹⁴ These same parameters of periodization and appearance hold true when the silver coinage is examined.¹⁵

¹¹The *Ashrafī dīnār* established a design and size imitated by all subsequent Mamluk *dīnārs*. Thus it is common for numismatists to refer to these later coins as *Ashrafīs*, even though a *dīnār* of al-Zāhir Jaqmaq (842-957/1438-55), for example, is technically a *Zāhirī*, etc.

¹²For an introduction to Ayyubid coins, see Paul Balog, *The Coinage of the Ayyubids* (London, 1980).

¹³Warren C. Schultz, "Mamluk Money from Baybars to Barquq: A Study Based on the Literary and Numismatic Evidence," Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Chicago, 1995; see especially chapter 3, "The Precious Metals: Mamluk Gold and Silver Coinage."

¹⁴See Bacharach, "The Dinar vs. the Ducat."

¹⁵For an analysis of *dirhams* in the first period, see Schultz, "Mamluk Money," pp. 103-64; for periods two and three, see Bacharach, "Circassian Monetary Policy: Silver," *Numismatic Chronicle* 7th ser., 11 (1971): 267-81.



Mamluk *dirhams* from the third period are easily distinguishable from those of the first, and are also higher in silver content, at least initially. Both the gold and silver coins of the third period, however, await detailed metrological investigation, which is dependent on the weight and purity of more specimens being made available. Furthermore, these general observations about the precious metal coins hold true for both the Egyptian and Syrian mint issues.¹⁶

In the case of the copper coins, developments are not nearly as well known as with gold and silver, and much work remains to be done. Mamluk *fulūs* are generally assumed to have been of local currency only. That this is largely so is illustrated when the issues of respective mints are compared. Despite the existence of large gaps in the numismatic record, it is clear that the copper coins of Syria are quite different in appearance and method of issue than those of Egypt. Significant runs of copper are known for Cairo only for the last half of the eighth/ fourteenth century and for the reigns of al-Ashraf Qāyrbāy (872-901/1468-96) and al-Ashraf Qānsūh al-Ghawrī (906-22/1501-16). From Baybars up through the third reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad (709-41/1309-40), the surviving record is spotty, to say the least.¹⁷ In Alexandria, copper was apparently only struck in the last three decades of the eighth/fourteenth century.¹⁸ Thanks to the work of Lutz Ilisch, curator at the Forschungstelle für islamische Numismatik, Tübingen, the runs of the four major Syrian mints for much of the first 150 years of the sultanate have been established and clarified.¹⁹ Significant gaps exist, however, between the known issues of the

¹⁶Cf. Irwin, "The Supply of Money and the Direction of Trade in Thirteenth Century Syria," in *Coinage of the Latin East: The Fourth Oxford Symposium on Coinage and Monetary History*, ed. P.W. Edbury and D. M. Metcalf (Oxford, 1980), 73-104, who argues that through the Ayyubid period, Egypt and Syria constituted different money markets. During the Mamluk period, however, it is clear that gold and silver coins were minted and circulated in the same fashion. While periodic differences in value no doubt occurred, it is highly unlikely that widespread and purposeful arbitrage took place to take advantage of such fluctuations. It is safe to assume that the costs and risks of transporting precious metal would be greater than any profit made in arbitrage.

¹⁷There are many unanswered problems with these early Mamluk *fulūs*. For example, copper coins of Baybars are known, but most lack a mint name. On the basis of style, Lutz Ilisch has attributed most of these coins to Damascus, but the retrieval of some of these coins from the digs at al-Fuṣṭāṭ at least raises the possibility of Egyptian origin. There is a *fals* of Baybars of Fuṣṭāṭ provenance preserved in the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago, accession number 25444.

¹⁸This assertion is supported not only by the numismatic evidence, but by the chronicles as well. For developments in fourteenth century Egyptian copper coinage, see Schultz, "Mahmud b. 'Ali and the 'New Fulus': Late Fourteenth Century Egyptian Copper Coinage Reconsidered," forthcoming in *The American Journal of Numismatics*.

¹⁹Unfortunately, his important article on the subject, "The emission system of copper coins in 8th century H. Mamluk Syria," delivered at the Balog memorial symposium, remains unpublished.



ninth/fifteenth century for those mints. The developments in Mamluk copper coinage for the ninth/fifteenth century have attracted significant attention from modern scholars.²⁰ The copper of this period is intimately linked with the money of account known as *dirham min al-fulūs* found with increasing frequency in the Mamluk chronicles. This term, the subject of much modern disagreement, is best understood as the amount of copper coins necessary to equal the value of a *dirham*'s worth of silver.²¹

BALOG'S *THE COINAGE OF THE MAMLUK SULTANS OF EGYPT AND SYRIA*

When compared to other fields of medieval Islamic numismatics, the coinage of the Mamluk sultans is well studied. At the center of this scholarship is Balog's corpus, *The Coinage of the Mamluk Sultans of Egypt and Syria* (henceforth *CMSES*).²² This work, the product of his many years of collection and research, identifies and orders over 900 types of Mamluk coins. (In numismatic terminology, "type" signifies a group of coins distinguished and united by their design.²³) The value and impact of this work cannot be overestimated. In it, Balog made a hitherto confused and often inaccessible body of information available to a wider audience. Since the *CMSES* has become the necessary starting point for research into Mamluk monetary history, it is worth discussing in detail.

In ordering the Mamluk coinage, Balog followed the approach that was the norm for most numismatic publications until relatively recently. He divided the coins first according to sultanic reign. Within each regnal period, the coins are then divided into three groups based on metallic content, and then further according to stylistic features. Thus coins featuring "heraldic" devices, for example, were grouped separately from those with designs that were purely epigraphic.²⁴ Only within these sub-groupings was a chronological ordering followed. The resulting

²⁰Bacharach, "Circassian Monetary Policy: Copper," *JESHO* 19 (1976): 32-47; and Shoshan, "From Silver to Copper: Monetary Change in Fifteenth Century Egypt," *Studia Islamica* 56 (1982): 97-116.

²¹Boaz Shoshan's assertion (in "From Silver to Copper," 113) that this term originally referred to a copper coin of "about 3 grams" is not supported by either the passage he cites from Popper's *Egypt and Syria*, 41, nor by the numismatic evidence.

²²Paul Balog, *The Coinage of the Mamluk Sultans of Egypt and Syria* (New York, 1964).

²³For an introduction to numismatic terminology and techniques, see Philip Grierson, *Numismatics* (London, 1975); John Casey, *Understanding Ancient Coins: An Introduction for Archaeologists and Historians* (London, 1986).

²⁴For contrasting answers to the question of whether the symbols found on Mamluk coins are heraldic, see J.W. Allan, "Mamluk Sultanic Heraldry and the Numismatic Evidence: A Reinterpretation," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1970): 99-112; and Balog, "New Considerations on Mamluk Heraldry," *American Numismatic Society Museum Notes* 22 (1977): 183-212.



coin types were then provided a number. The *CMSES* listed 910 coin types, plus 24 additional types in the first supplement which are given letters and not numbers, and finally 11 more types in a second supplement, labeled SS.1-SS.11. Within this typology, Balog listed the specimens known to him for each type. This information was taken from his own and other private collections, public collections, and the catalogues of collections he did not have the opportunity to visit.

There are, however, two serious drawbacks to Balog's typology. First of all, this system leaves no room for the inevitable discovery of new coin types. Later scholars are thus forced to come up with labels such as 142A to describe a new coin that is similar to 142, yet not 143.²⁵ The lack of any oversight in assigning these hybrid numbers, combined with the often solitary nature of numismatic inquiry, frequently results in labels such as 142A being applied to different coins. In some cases, where coins of previously known design but unattested dates show up, the labels can become increasingly cumbersome and difficult to use.

Secondly, to borrow the words of Michael L. Bates, curator of Islamic Coins at the American Numismatic Society, this system is in fact "classification, not attribution. A scheme like this provides a pigeon-hole for every coin, but in no way does it represent the historical or geographical evolution of the coinage."²⁶ The historical and geographical evolution of the coinage is illustrated far better when coins are arranged in what is termed a mint series. In this attribution schema, the coins of all metals produced by one mint are laid out in chronological order. When coins are organized in such a manner, developments that are obscured by the jumble of types found in the *CMSES* are more easily seen. Trends such as debasement, stylistic diffusion, etc.—details that can help determine where undated coins fall in the chronology—become immediately more apparent. When combined with the mint series of preceding and following dynasties even longer term monetary trends may be observed. The value of the mint series format can be seen in the sylloges of Islamic coins published and in preparation by the Forschungstelle für islamische Numismatik in Tübingen.²⁷ A useful analogy is that of using libraries organized by either the Dewey Decimal or Library of Congress systems. If you know what you are looking for, you can eventually find what you want in the Dewey library, but browsing the shelves is easier in the LOC library and often leads to unexpected discoveries and links.

²⁵This is what Balog himself had to do in his "The Coinage of the Mamluk Sultans of Egypt and Syria, Additions and Corrections," *American Numismatic Society Museum Notes* 16 (1970): 113-72.

²⁶Bates was referring in this case to the British Museum catalogues of Arab-Byzantine and Arab-Sassanian coinages, but the observation is also valid for the *CMSES*. See Michael L. Bates, "The Earliest Arab Coinage of the Maghrib," a paper delivered at the 1993 MESA conference.

²⁷The series title is *Sylloge Numorum Arabicorum*. To date, volumes have appeared for Palestine (4a) and Eastern Khorasan (14b), with the volume for Hamah expected soon.



Thus a major desiderata for the field of Mamluk monetary history is the creation of a new organizing framework for the numismatic evidence. This system should be organized by mint series, and not be restricted to the coins found in only one collection. It should feature a numbering code that can easily incorporate new types and dates. This numbering system could, perhaps, be modeled on the format of a telephone number, where the different fields of numbers represent different discrete bits of information such as mint, date, sultan, etc. This new framework would be easily adaptable to electronic publication. As the technology for scanning images improves, it may soon be possible to produce an electronic corpus of Mamluk coins. Freed of the restrictions and cost of print, this corpus could be continually updated to reflect additional specimens and new discoveries.

FACTORS AFFECTING RESEARCH ON MAMLUK COINS

Suffice to say, the collection of Mamluk numismatic information did not end with the publication of *CMSES*. At the core of Balog's corpus was his personal collection.²⁸ This collection was stronger in Egyptian coins than those minted in Syria, reflecting Balog's long residence in Egypt. In the more than 30 years since the *CMSES* appeared, it has been added to and corrected by numerous studies.²⁹ Many of these "new" types are from the Syrian mints. There are now more than a thousand known types of Mamluk coins. Some are known only by one specimen, others survive by the hundreds. As a result, the basic parameters of the Mamluk monetary system are known. Yet there remain some important issues affecting the use of this numismatic material that must be raised. These include questions of coin survival and the many factors which affect the assembly and accessibility of coin collections.

An important batch of implications surrounds the issue of coin survival. So many factors affect survival that it is unwise to base elaborate economic arguments solely on the basis of a small number of coins surviving to the present.³⁰ The factors influencing the preservation of old coins include but are not limited to the number originally produced, the type of metal involved, competing demands for that metal, and pure luck. While Mamluk coins have survived in large numbers, the distribution of those coins across metal, mint of origin, and type is not equal. Mamluk copper coins, for example, survive in large numbers from some mints and years, but are rare or nonexistent from others. In terms of sheer numbers,

²⁸The bulk of Balog's personal collection of Mamluk coins is now preserved at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem.

²⁹Most notably by Balog himself in his "Additions and Corrections."

³⁰This has not stopped some scholars from making this mistake. See, for example, Rabie, *The Financial System of Egypt* (London, 1972), 192, where he argues for a "return to a gold standard" in 724 H. based upon one undated *dīnār*.



there may very well be more surviving Mamluk copper coins from the end of the eighth/fourteenth century than total specimens of Mamluk gold and silver coins known.³¹ Yet this does not necessarily mean that silver and gold coins were scarce in the Mamluk era. Such modern scarcity could be due to a number of reasons, chief among them that gold and silver coins are always subject to remelt into jewelry, plate, or even new coins. In addition, the location where coins were lost or stored can affect their survival. If lost in a wet environment, the coins might survive only in the form of a congealed lump, adhering to what remains of the container in which they were stored—if they survive at all. On the other hand, coins hoarded in a dry house wall may emerge in perfect condition after hundreds of years or more.

Of course, the mere fact that a coin has survived is of little use if it is not available for examination and study. Coin accessibility usually means that the coin is located in a collection, but not all coins find their way into museum or private holdings, nor are the latter always available for perusal. Moreover, to put it bluntly, the interest of the collector and that of the monetary historian are not always the same. This has major repercussions on the systematic study of coins. Such factors as the idiosyncratic tastes of the collector or curator, the vagaries of donations to public collections, the metal, beauty and uniqueness of the coin, cost or even space limitations have shaped collections, and thus impose limits on numismatic research. For example, the long-held collecting practices of acquiring one example of each coin type produced by a mint, individual or dynasty, as well as the tendency to collect only unique or rare specimens, often means that relatively few coins of any one type are preserved in any one collection. While such collections may provide a nice overview of the typology of numismatic issues, they do not accurately represent the ordinary coinage that was in use, nor do they preserve the large number of coins necessary for large-scale die studies or for statistical research into issues such as metrology and purity. Thus, as Cahen pointed out, a gap in a collection so structured “does not give us license to deduce systematic conclusions” about monetary developments.³²

Finally, the repercussions of modern treasure-trove laws affect the study of Mamluk coins today. Ancient coins are considered national treasures by most of the modern nations found in the lands of the Mamluk sultanate. Trade in such coins is regulated by a variety of antiquities legislation. The selling and exporting of such coins is usually illegal or at least severely restricted. The export of such

³¹See Bacharach, “The Ducat in Fourteenth Century Egypt,” *Res Orientales* 6 (1994): 99, where he estimates that hundreds of thousands of copper coins entered into circulation at the end of the eighth/fourteenth century.

³²Cl. Cahen, “Monetary Circulation in Egypt at the Time of the Crusades and the Reform of al-Kamil,” in *The Islamic Middle East, 700-1900*, ed. A.L. Udovitch (Princeton, 1981), 319-21.



coins may be considered smuggling, and subject to penalties. Nevertheless, a number of new coins show up in dealers' lists and auctions every year. Rightly or wrongly, laws are being broken. The situation is further complicated by the fact that some of these coins can be valuable, often fetching prices equivalent to tens, hundreds, and occasionally thousands of dollars. It is naïve to expect that such factors, often considered too sensitive or discomfoting to discuss, do not affect those interested in the serious study of these coins. They have a profound impact, for instance, on the study of hoards, those groups of coins deposited on purpose or by accident that the original owners never returned to retrieve.

Coin hoards are particularly valuable sources of monetary information. They are especially useful in determining what coins were circulating at a given time and place. Many hoards of Mamluk coins have been found, but few have been studied in depth. Part of this is due no doubt to the realities of the present-day coin market. Few Mamluk hoards have been found during official archeological digs, with the subsequent result that only rarely has a Mamluk-era hoard been studied *in situ*, with its integrity intact.³³ More hoards show up in the coin trade. Needless to say, the finders of such hoards are often conscious of the presumed illegality of their actions, and are silent about such issues as provenance, perhaps out of the dual desire to protect not only themselves but the area itself, in the hope of finding more coins nearby. As a result, it is rare to have more than a general sense of the location (e.g. upper Egypt, northern Syria) where the hoard was found. Similarly, as a hoard makes its way through the trade, it is always possible that it is subject to culling—the removal of the best specimens—which further compromises its integrity. When such a hoard is finally studied (if ever), it may still reveal a great deal of information, but not nearly as much as if it had been studied in its original state.

MAMLUK MONEY: THE LITERARY AND DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

MAMLUK-ERA LITERARY SOURCES

The major mint cities of the Mamluk sultanate were centers of learning as well as international marketplaces. As a result, the Mamluk regime is well recorded in many contemporary chronicles, biographical compilations, and other texts. The resulting wealth of literary source material—much of it published in editions of widely varying quality—is unparalleled for most other states of this era in Islamic

³³For brief theoretical overviews of the use of coins as physical remains, see both Donald Whitcomb, "Mamluk Archeological Studies: A Review," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 1 (1997): 97, and Hans Ulrich Vogel, "Introduction" to Special Theme Issue: Money in the Orient, *JESHO* 39 (1996): 209-11. The contents of several small hoards found during the Danish-sponsored digs at Hamah are described in *Hama: Fouilles et Recherches 1931-38, IV₃ Les petits objets médiévaux sauf les verreries et poteries* (Copenhagen, 1969).



history. As students of Mamluk history have long been aware, scattered throughout these works are numerous references to monetary events. These range in length from a brief sentence to entire chapters and works. They occur in the form of price quotations, exchange rate citations, discussions of confiscations, gifts or inheritances, the mention of a new coinage, and even the criticism of monetary policy. They are often precisely dated. These passages have provided the raw material for most treatments of Mamluk monetary history.³⁴

The discussions of money found in the Mamluk-era literary texts may be grouped into six categories. The first is that of treatises devoted specifically to money and economic matters. The best known examples of this type are certainly the two screeds composed by al-Maqrīzī, the *Ighāthat al-Ummah* and the *Shudhūr al-'Uqūd*.³⁵ To this short list should be added the near-contemporary work of al-Asadī, *al-Taysīr wa-al-I'tibār*.³⁶ A sub-category of this group are those treatises that address money from within the *fiqh* tradition. While of a normative bent, there are occasional observations about contemporary monetary developments. An example of this category is the "Nuzhat al-Nufūs" of Ibn al-Hāyim.³⁷ In general, material of this last type has not been fully exploited for the Mamluk period.³⁸ The second category contains the extended discussions of money found in the encyclopedic works of authors such as al-'Umarī or al-Qalqashandī. These are often longer than a page in length and discuss both Islamic money in general and

³⁴The importance of these literary passages for economic data was established and exploited by Sauvaire in the previous century. His pioneering work in culling the contemporary texts for references to money identified many of the basic passages still cited today. H. Sauvaire, "Materiaux pour servir à l'histoire de la numismatique et de la métrologie musulmanes," *Journal asiatique* 14 (1879): 455-533; 15 (1880): 228-77, 421-77; 18 (1881): 499-516; 19 (1882): 23-77, 97-163, 281-327. The first systematic exploitation of this material for the Mamluk period is found in William Popper, *Egypt and Syria*, 41-79. For a discussion of the relative value of specific Mamluk era historians, see Bacharach, "Circassian Mamluk Historians and Their Economic Data," *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 12 (1975): 75-87.

³⁵Al-Maqrīzī, *Ighāthat al-Ummah bi-Kashf al-Ghummaḥ*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafá Ziyādah and Jamāl al-Dīn al-Shayyāl (Cairo, 1359/1940); cf. the translation by Adel Allouche, *Mamluk Economics: A Study and Translation of al-Maqrizi's Ighathah* (Salt Lake City, 1994). There have been numerous editions of the *Shudhūr* prepared. The latest is *Shudhūr al-'Uqūd fī Dhikr al-Nuqūd*, ed. Muḥammad 'Uthmān (Cairo, 1990).

³⁶Al-Asadī, *Kitāb al-Taysīr wa-al-I'tibār*, ed. 'Abd al-Qādir Ṭalīmāt (Cairo, 1968).

³⁷Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Ibn al-Hāyim, *Nuzhat al-Nufūs fī Bayān Ḥukm al-Ta'āmil bi-al-fulūs*, Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah, ms. no. 1073 (*fiqh shāfi'ī*). Ibn al-Hāyim died in 815/1412.

³⁸For examples of the use of *fiqh* materials for earlier periods, see Brunshvig, "Conceptions monétaires chez les juristes musulmans (VIII^e - XIII^e siècles)," *Arabica* 14 (1967): 113-43; and A. L. Udovitch, *Partnership and Profit in Medieval Islam* (Princeton, 1970).



developments in Mamluk money in particular.³⁹ The third group are those specific citations of monetary information such as new coinage, exchange rates, or prices. Such observations are quite common in the chronicles. They usually are just one or two sentences in length, although occasionally some are much longer. They are much more common for developments in Egypt than they are for those in the Syrian provinces. Tables of these prices and exchange rates in particular are found appended to many modern studies of Mamluk economic history. Given the overlapping and repetitive nature of such tables, this type of information seems a good candidate for a web-based database, readily searched and easily updated.⁴⁰

The fourth category consists of anecdotal mention of money, as when an entourage is rewarded with coins, money is mulcted from someone out of favor, or troops are paid.⁴¹ Monetary information of this type—encountered as corroborating detail or casual aside to a bigger story—is both abundant (at least for Egypt) and valuable. Both specific and anecdotal monetary information are encountered in the fifth category, which consists of the observations and accounts of foreign travelers.⁴² Included in this grouping are the pilgrimage narratives of European travelers to the Holy Land, which, to my knowledge, have not been examined systematically for the monetary information they sometimes contain.⁴³ Last but not least, monetary terminology is found in Mamluk-era *belles lettres*, especially poetry, although the usual lack of chronological setting means care must be taken when material of this sort is utilized.⁴⁴

In fact, using all categories of the literary sources is not without risks. In some cases, for example, it is clear that the Mamluk-era author is simply wrong about events that occurred before his lifetime.⁴⁵ Other problems include incidents of

³⁹Al-‘Umarī, *Masālik al-Aḥsār*, ed. Ayman Fu‘ād Sayyid (Cairo, 1985), 14-15. Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-A‘shā fī Ṣinā‘at al-Inshā’*, 14 vols. (Cairo, 1913-19), 3:439-40, 463-64.

⁴⁰A model of this sort of invaluable research tool, albeit in paper format, is Elizabeth Gemmill and Nicholas Mayhew’s *Changing Values in Medieval Scotland: A Study of Prices, Money, and Weights and Measures* (New York, 1995), in which over 6000 prices for 24 commodities are tabulated, indexed and annotated.

⁴¹On the payment of troops, see David Ayalon, “The System of Payment in Mamluk Military Society,” *JESHO* 1 (1958): 37-65, 257-96.

⁴²Cf. D. Sperber, “Islamic Metrology from Jewish Sources, II,” *Numismatic Chronicle* 7th series, 12 (1972): 275-82; and W. Fischel, “Ascensus Barcoch,” *Arabica* 6 (1959): 57-72; 152-72.

⁴³Cf. Symon Semeonis, *The Journey of Symon Semeonis from Ireland to the Holy Land*, ed. and trans. Mario Esposito (Dublin, 1960); Ludolph von Suchem, *Ludolph von Suchem’s Description of the Holy Land and the Way Thither*, trans. Aubrey Stewart (London, 1895).

⁴⁴For a rare bit of poetry actually linked to a specific event, see Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i‘ al-Zuhūr* (Cairo, 1931), 1:565

⁴⁵De Bouard, for example, pointed out the unreliability of al-Maqrīzī for certain monetary developments before his lifetime. See “Sur l’évolution monétaire de l’Égypte médiévale,” *L’Égypte*



scribal errors and the inconsistent use of terminology. These contemporary obstacles are in turn occasionally exacerbated by poor editorial decisions, as the following illustrates. In a discussion of the events of Muḥarram 699/October 1299, al-Maqrīzī wrote that a charge of one *kharrūbah* was leveled on every measure of wheat purchased in Cairo.⁴⁶ The word *kharrūbah* is glossed by the editor as a small piece of a copper coin, worth *one-tenth of a dirham* (emphasis added), citing Dozy's nineteenth-century Arabic/French dictionary. There are at least two problems with this assertion. First, while this meaning is indeed found in the dictionary, the source for the monetary value of the term is a history of the Almohades.⁴⁷ It is worth noting that there are significant differences between the coinage of the twelfth-century Maghrib and thirteenth-century Egypt. Secondly, one need only look at the exchange rates cited by al-Maqrīzī himself to see that such a value would be ludicrously high for the end of the thirteenth century. In his entry for 695/1295, for example, al-Maqrīzī wrote that the exchange rate of copper to silver was three "pounds" (*ratls*) of copper coins per two silver *dirhams*. Regardless of how much any individual copper coin weighed at the time (the numismatic record for copper coins for this period is sketchy), it is safe to assume that it took a good many to equal the one and a half "pounds" of coins necessary to exchange for a *dirham's* worth of silver. A *kharrūbah* may have been a piece of a copper coin, but given the previously known exchange rates, it is inconceivable that it could have been worth one-tenth of a *dirham*. While this is just one episode, it is not atypical of the problems encountered in some editions.

MAMLUK-ERA DOCUMENTS

In addition to the various literary sources mentioned above, there exist many contemporary documents, of both indigenous and foreign origin, that contain monetary data.⁴⁸ Perhaps the best known group of these documents are the Geniza materials produced by the Jewish community of medieval Cairo. While most Geniza texts date from Fatimid and Ayyubid times, a few specimens survive from the Mamluk era.⁴⁹ These contain frequent references to money, often revealing

contemporaine 30 (1939): 427-59. As Cahen has pointed out, this observation is the only merit of this article; "Monetary Circulation in Egypt," 331, note 14.

⁴⁶Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk li-Ma'rifat Duwal al-Mulūk*, 2nd. ed., ed. Muṣṭafá Ziyādah and Jamāl al-Dīn al-Shayyāl (Cairo, n.d.), 1:899.

⁴⁷Dozy, *Supplement aux Dictionnaires Arabes* (Beyrouth, 1981 [reprint of the 1881 edition]), 1:xvii, 357.

⁴⁸For a general overview of the Mamluk documentary evidence, see D.P. Little, "Documents as a Source for Mamluk History," *MSR* 1 (1997): 1-13.

⁴⁹S. D. Goitein, "The Exchange Rate of Gold and Silver Money in Fatimid and Ayyubid Times. A Preliminary Study of the Relevant Geniza Material," *JESHO* 8 (1965): 1-46. Despite this title, nine



precisely dated information on the circulation and exchange of the many coinages found in the marketplace. Similar to the Geniza, a collection of around 200 letters concerning the Red Sea and Indian Ocean trade was found during excavations of the port of Quseir. While these were first thought to date from the Mamluk period, subsequent examination by Li Guo has established that most date from the late Ayyubid era. Nevertheless, the possibility remains that a few are of Mamluk provenance. Whatever the case, dynastic boundaries aside, since preliminary surveys revealed the existence of much monetary information in this material, the publication of these letters is eagerly awaited.⁵⁰

Another promising documentary source of monetary information are *waqf* deeds. Several caches of these endowments are known, and while their systematic examination is in its infancy, they are clearly fertile ground for those interested in monetary matters.⁵¹ (The same observations hold for the Ḥaram al-Sharīf collection, which includes not only endowment deeds but wills, inventories and other documents⁵²). Coinage and monetary values are frequently mentioned in these documents, revealing important aspects of the workings of Mamluk money. For example, the existence of several different coins circulating simultaneously is confirmed by the *waqf*-administrators' struggles to keep track of exchange rates and differing monies of account.⁵³

Finally, there are contemporary documents of foreign origin, usually preserved in European archives, that contain useful information. Copies of treaties between the Mamluks and their Italian trading partners survive, for example. While few in number, these treaties occasionally yield the odd bit of monetary data.⁵⁴ A much larger corpus of materials are the commercial records of the merchants from the Italian city-states. These archives have been exploited to good effect by Ashtor and others, but are by no means exhausted. These documents include not only

of the documents discussed date from the Mamluk period.

⁵⁰See Donald Whitcomb, "Mamluk Archeological Studies," 99. These documents are currently being edited by Li Guo; see his forthcoming article "Arabic Documents from Quseir (1): Business Letters," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, in which Guo provides a description of the corpus, along with several edited letters.

⁵¹J.-C. Garcin and M. A. Taher, "Enquête sur le financement d'un *waqf* égyptien du xv^e siècle: Les comptes de Jawhar al-Lala," *JESHO* 38 (1995): 262-304; Gilles Hennequin, "*Waqf* et monnaie dans l'Égypte Mamluke," *JESHO* 38 (1995): 305-12.

⁵²See Donald P. Little, *A Catalogue of the Islamic Documents from al-Ḥaram aš-Šarīf in Jerusalem* (Beirut, 1984).

⁵³See Muḥammad Muḥammad Amīn, *Al-Awqāf wa-al-Ḥayāh al-Ijtīmā'iyah fī Miṣr, 648-923/1250-1517* (Cairo, 1980), 297-99.

⁵⁴Cf. J. Wansbrough, "Venice and Florence in the Mamluk Commercial Privileges," *BSOAS* 28 (1965): 483-523.



price lists and exchange rates, but also information about the metrology and purity of coins which circulated in the Mamluk market places. In one case, for example, evidence found in Venetian trading records reveals that some Venetian merchants knew that the purity of the Armenian trams mentioned above was approximately two-thirds silver content. As this fineness matched that of the contemporary Mamluk *dirhams*, it helps explain why these trams are so often found mixed with Mamluk *dirhams* in hoards which date from the eighth/fourteenth century.⁵⁵

Taken *in toto*, this non-numismatic material has proven to be a mine of information for Mamluk monetary history. This mine is far from being exhausted, thanks in part to the regular appearance of new editions. Admittedly, the classification of texts offered above is somewhat arbitrary. Be that as it may, it should be emphasized that none of these works were written for the express purpose of providing monetary and economic data for modern historians, and therefore the monetary information found in them must be evaluated carefully. Specifically, this information should, whenever possible, be meshed with the data derived from the surviving coins. This is especially so since these sources are often completely silent about developments that are suggested by the numismatic record. Any study of Mamluk money that aims for thoroughness should make use of both the written and the numismatic evidence. Unfortunately, this has rarely been done in most studies undertaken to date.

THE SCHOLARSHIP

Modern scholars have not ignored Mamluk monetary history as a field of inquiry. The more than 135 entries in the "Numismatics: Including Metrology and Monetary History" section of the electronic Mamluk Bibliography project are testament to that.⁵⁶ An examination of each of these works is beyond the scope of this article. I will instead restrict my comments to the following observation: scholarship on Mamluk money is marked by two major divides. The first has to do with theoretical assumptions of how pre-modern money circulated. Significant differences of interpretation exist in the studies. The second has to do with usage of sources. The scholarship may be divided into works based primarily on the coins, those based primarily on the literary and documentary data, and those which made use of both. While these divisions may strike some as crude, they hold up under scrutiny.

⁵⁵See Alan Stahl, "Italian Sources for the Coinage of Cilician Armenia," *Armenian Numismatic Journal* 15 (1989): 59-66. Cf. Schultz, "Mamluk Money," 156-59.

⁵⁶The URL of the Mamluk Bibliography is: <http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/LibInfo/SourcesBySubject/MiddleEast/MamBib.html>. This does not include the many works that touch upon monetary issues but which are listed within the broader "Economics" section of the bibliography.



THE THEORETICAL DIVIDE

In order to describe this divide, it is necessary to begin with some basic definitions. Minor details may vary, but most definitions of money define it in terms of function: money serves as a store of value, a measure of value, and a means of exchange. A coin, of course, is just one of many possible objects that fulfill the roles of store of value and means of exchange.⁵⁷ Before the widespread acceptance of fiat money in the last half century, a coin's value is usually held to have been determined by three elements. The first was the value of its raw material (usually bullion), or what is usually called its *intrinsic* value. The remaining two elements are said to be determined by the actual production of the coins. They are the cost of minting and the profit to the coin maker. Together, the intrinsic value of the bullion combined with the cost and profit of minting make up the coin's *extrinsic* (or *par*) value. Few would disagree that for coins struck in the precious metals of gold and silver, their bullion content was the major factor of their extrinsic value. Once coins entered the market place, and assuming that that marketplace was well-regulated, it is assumed that coins would circulate at their extrinsic value.

Invariably, however, once any coin entered circulation, it would encounter both coins of its own type and possibly other types of coins as well. How these coins circulated together is usually said to be governed by the principle known as Gresham's Law. This law states that when a coin of low intrinsic value circulates with a coin of equal extrinsic but higher intrinsic value, the first coin will drive the second coin out of circulation. Or as it is sometimes stated, "bad money" (coins of low intrinsic value) drives out "good money" (coins of higher intrinsic value). Thus if two gold coins are said to be worth the same (have the same extrinsic value), but one has more gold in it—i.e. it is either heavier or of a higher purity—the holder of the coins will spend the one with less gold and hoard the one with more gold.

Gresham's law appeals to common sense. It is important to note, however, that this model rests upon the assumption that the declared extrinsic value of a coin can be maintained (or guaranteed or enforced) after the coin enters circulation. A substantial body of literature now argues that it is doubtful that any medieval government (or other issuing authority) had the ability to do so.⁵⁸ In the absence

⁵⁷The system of valuation role of money is fulfilled by what is often called the "money of account." For the role of "monies of account" in pre-modern monetary systems, see Peter Spufford, *Money and Its Use in Medieval Europe* (Cambridge, 1988), 411-14. For the money of account known as the *dīnār jayshī*, used to calculate the value of *iqṭā'*s in medieval Egypt, see Richard Cooper, "A Note on the *dīnār jayshī*." *JESHO* 16 (1973): 317-18.

⁵⁸Among the important exponents of this theoretical approach for the medieval Islamic world in general, and the Mamluks in particular, is Gilles Hennequin. A good introduction to his approach



of this ability, the "official extrinsic value" of a coin would become meaningless, as once it entered circulation it would find its own value in relation to the other coins present. This value would be determined by a number of factors, such as bullion content, supply of and non-monetary demand for bullion, whether a coin was acceptable for payment of taxes and dues, consumer preference (which for Muslims might show itself in a reluctance to accept coins with overt Christian images), etc. In such a monetary marketplace, "dinars and dirhams, even when issued by the same mint at the same time, were as much two separate currencies as are pounds and dollars today. The operation of Gresham's law takes on a different character in such a situation, and such terms as 'gold-standard' or bi-metallism' become virtually meaningless."⁵⁹

The implications of this revision of how medieval money circulated for our understanding of the Mamluk monetary system are wide-ranging. If this interpretation is accepted then the conclusions reached in much of the earlier research must be revisited, and the evidence cited therein must be reexamined. I find the evidence marshaled in support of this approach convincing. First of all, there is little in the Mamluk-era sources to suggest that the Mamluk government was ever able to guarantee the extrinsic value of the coins it issued. Certainly attempts were occasionally made to enforce exchange rates, but there is no evidence of their long-term success. Secondly, there is ample numismatic evidence, primarily in the form of hoards, to show that gold and especially silver coins of widely varying weight, purity, and date and mint of origin circulated simultaneously.⁶⁰ Nor is there anything to suggest that this plethora of coinages caused any difficulty in the marketplace. Rather it was a known factor taken into account in business transactions.⁶¹ There is thus "no observable trend of bad coins driving good ones from circulation; rather good and bad coin coexisted peacefully at their respective values."⁶²

Furthermore, the assertions that Mamluk money was based on a series of "metallic standards" must be reevaluated. Balog, for example, wrote that the

is "Problèmes théoriques et pratiques de la monnaie antique et médiévale," *Annales islamologiques* 10 (1972): 1-57.

⁵⁹Michael L. Bates, "Islamic Numismatics (pt. 3)," *MESA Bulletin* 13 no. 1 (1979): 14.

⁶⁰Mamluk silver hoards, in particular, often include *dirhams* worn completely smooth from their extended time in circulation. The commonplace nature of this phenomenon argues against the view that such hoards are only the bullion accumulations of jewelers.

⁶¹Rabie's assertion regarding the "problem of many types of coins circulating together" is not supported by literary evidence (*Financial System of Egypt*, 187-88).

⁶²R. Lopez, H. Miskimin, A. Udovitch, "England to Egypt, 1350-1500: Long-term Trends and Long-distance Trade," in *Studies in the Economic History of the Middle East*, ed. M. A. Cook (London, 1970), 124.



Mamluks first adhered to a gold-silver bi-metallic system, in which the silver “supported” the gold, and then a silver-copper system, with the copper supporting the value of the silver.⁶³ This view has percolated widely, yet is no longer tenable.⁶⁴ Three observations are usually cited to support the existence of these standards. The first involves the exchange rates mentioned in the Mamluk sources, in which the first coin listed has been interpreted as representing the standard coinage. For example, an exchange rate stating that one *dīnār* was worth twenty *dirhams*, as it was in 699/1299-1300, has been used to argue that Mamluk money was based on a gold standard in that year.⁶⁵ Such a conclusion ignores a fundamental aspect of these exchange rates; they are statements of relative value between two different currencies, and are therefore reversible. Not only is a *dīnār* worth twenty *dirhams*, but twenty *dirhams* are worth one *dīnār*. Neither coin is based on the other, rather their respective values are being defined in terms of the other. Secondly, the quoting of prices in coins of one metal rather than those of another is often cited as evidence of metallic standards. Such price listings more accurately reflect what was the appropriate coinage for the transaction being discussed, or perhaps what coin was most commonly available, but do not by themselves prove that coins of that type formed a monetary standard. Thirdly, the absence of known coins of specific metals in specific years is often cited as evidence of the abandonment of a standard. The problems of arguing from a lack of coins have already been alluded to, but in this case, the numismatic record itself disproves any such assertion. A survey of the coin production of the Cairo mint reveals that precious metal coins were minted with almost yearly regularity throughout the entire period of Mamluk rule. Specimens of such coins are known from the reigns of all but the most ephemeral puppet sultans. Any suspensions of mint activity in gold or silver are best explained as temporary or short-term disruptions brought on by such factors as acute bullion shortage, hoarding, political uncertainty, etc. There seems little doubt, therefore, that assertions of metallic standards are little more than the anachronistic application of nineteenth century assumptions of monetary behavior to the Mamluk context.

THE USE OF SOURCES

Even the most cursory examination of the scholarship devoted to Mamluk monetary history reveals the existence of three approaches to the available source material.

⁶³Balog, *CMSES*, 39-41.

⁶⁴Cf. its use by Archibald Lewis to dismiss some of the conclusions reached by Janet Abu-Lughod, in his review of her *Before European Hegemony: The World System, A.D. 1250-1350* (New York, 1989), in *Speculum* 66 (1991): 605-6.

⁶⁵This example, along with others, is found in Rabie, *The Financial System of Egypt*, 184-97. The exchange rate is from al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:900.



There are those works based primarily on the numismatic evidence, those which rely largely on the literary and documentary sources, and those in which both sets of information are utilized. Of course the borders between these categories are sometimes blurred, and the value of any respective work within this tripartite division is dependent on a number of factors which any critical reader is capable of evaluating. But while significant contributions have been made by works that fall in the first two categories, the most important advancements of our knowledge of Mamluk money history have emerged from the third.

There exist many articles about Mamluk money that may be labeled purely numismatic in content. These are based primarily on observations about a specific coin or group of coins. Examples of this type of work are announcements of new coin types, additions and corrections to existing coins or series, studies of dies, hoard announcements, analysis of peculiar coin legends, and the like. The information found within these works has provided some of the basic building blocks of our knowledge of Mamluk money, yet it is often left to someone else to do the building.⁶⁶ What this material frequently lacks is the application of the numismatic evidence to a wider context, to explain why a numismatic discovery is of significance to the non-numismatist. This shortcoming is often caused by a failure to consult the relevant written evidence. This may be due to simple lack of awareness or due to the existence of a language barrier. Balog himself is an example of the latter case. A close examination of his work reveals that, coin legends excepted, Balog did not read Arabic (an observation that makes his accomplishments all the more impressive). Some chroniclers, such as al-Maqrīzī, were available to him in French translation, but the bulk of his output was based on the numismatic evidence. As a result, and not surprisingly, there were certain problems in the numismatic record that he could not resolve. One such problem concerned the large copper objects struck in Cairo in 783 H. during the reign of al-Šāliḥ Ḥājjī: were they coins or weights? Another problem area involved the large Cairo copper coins of Qāyṭbāy and Qānsūh al-Ghawrī: there were several questions about these *fulūs*, among them the chronology of minting, which Balog was unable to solve. In both cases these problems were later resolved (at least partially) by scholars who had access to the chronicle evidence.⁶⁷

At the other end of this source-usage divide are those works that depend primarily upon the contemporary literary and documentary evidence. Much has

⁶⁶Unfortunately, this information is sometimes buried in publications off the radar screen of many academics, and thus is not always incorporated into the wider field, but this is certainly not the fault of the authors.

⁶⁷For the 783 H. event, see Balog's comments in "Additions and Corrections," 146. In the case of the late Circassian coppers, see John L. Meloy, "The Copper Coinage of Late Mamluk Cairo, 1468-1517" American Numismatic Society 1992 Graduate Seminar unpublished paper.



been achieved in this category, but the failure to make use of all the available evidence renders many of the conclusions about Mamluk money found therein incomplete, incorrect, or in need of modification. This grouping includes works such as the economic histories of Labib and Ashtor that range wider than monetary history proper, but which of necessity contain discussions of money.⁶⁸ It also includes the studies by Popper and Ayalon, path-breaking when they appeared, but which also made little use of numismatic material (perhaps in part due to their publication before the arrival of the *CMSES*).⁶⁹ Unfortunately, there are many studies that have appeared since the *CMSES* was published that have continued to neglect the numismatic data. In these works, it is common to encounter only token acknowledgments that the coinage exists, or limited attempts at the incorporation of numismatic material which are imprecise at best, careless and misleading at worst.

An example of the former practice is the recent work by Ḥammūd al-Najīdī, which briefly acknowledges the existence of the *CMSES*, but then presents an overview of Mamluk money based entirely on the written evidence.⁷⁰ Examples of numismatic imprecision detract from the valuable work of Boaz Shoshan. In his dissertation and the three important articles which arose from it, Shoshan made major contributions to our knowledge of ninth/fifteenth century Mamluk monetary history.⁷¹ In general, his work is marked by a careful reading and thorough knowledge of the written sources, a sophisticated use of economic theory, and most especially an emphasis on the wider geographical context in which Mamluk monetary developments are to be understood. Yet his use of the numismatic evidence is frustratingly irregular and inconsistent. For example, in his analysis of Egyptian copper at the end of the eighth/fourteenth century, he asserts that the "numismatic evidence corroborates" literary accounts that this coinage was increasingly lighter in weight. As proof of this, he cites that coins struck in the first decades of the

⁶⁸Subhi Labib, *Handelsgeschichte Ägyptens im Spätmittelalter (1170-1517)* (Wiesbaden, 1965). (Abu-Lughod's utter dismissal of the work of Labib for this shortcoming is extreme and unwarranted: *Before European Hegemony*, 222, note 9); Eliyahu Ashtor, *A Social and Economic History of the Near East in the Middle Ages* (Berkeley, 1976). Ashtor also authored an article on the Circassian monetary system that makes little use of numismatic evidence: "Études sur le système monétaire des mamlouks circassiens," *Israel Oriental Studies* 6 (1976): 264-87.

⁶⁹William Popper, *Egypt and Syria under the Circassian Sultans*; David Ayalon, "System of Payment."

⁷⁰Al-Najīdī, Ḥammūd ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Alī, *al-Niẓām al-Naqdī al-Mamlūkī 648-6922 H./1250-1517 M.: Dirāsah Tārīkhīyah Ḥaḍārīyah* (Alexandria, 1993).

⁷¹Boaz Shoshan, "Money, Prices and Population in Mamluk Egypt, 1382-1517," Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1978; idem, "From Silver to Copper"; idem, "Money Supply and Grain Prices in Fifteenth Century Egypt," *Economic History Review*, second series, 36 (1983): 47-67; idem, "Exchange Rate Policies in Fifteenth Century Egypt," *JESHO* 29 (1986): 28-51.



ninth/fifteenth were lighter than those from the second half of the previous century, an observation gleaned from his "survey" of copper coins preserved at the American Numismatic Society.⁷² There are indeed lighter coins from the early fifteenth century, but their existence does not prove that lighter coins were struck in the last decade of the fourteenth century (which is what some of the Mamluk chroniclers assert). Only the numismatic evidence from that period can shed light on that. Shoshan's failure to specify what coins he surveyed, from what years, and from what mints, renders his "survey" of the *fulūs* so vague as to be meaningless.

Shoshan also occasionally ignores the numismatic evidence in situations where it could shed light on a thorny issue. For example, al-Maqrīzī wrote that a "*Kāmīlī*" *dirham* was circulating in Egypt at the beginning of the ninth/fifteenth century.⁷³ In his analysis of the developments in Mamluk silver in this period, Shoshan points out that these are troublesome citations, due mainly to the fact that it is not clear what kind of silver coin al-Maqrīzī was referring to.⁷⁴ Relying exclusively on literary evidence, Shoshan argues that this coin must be the *dirham* of the Ayyubid al-Malik al-Kāmil (615-35/1218-38). This is a creative explanation to a difficult problem, and Shoshan is correct in stating that the Ayyubid *Kāmīlī dirham* was a low purity silver coin. But it is a problematic assertion for a number of reasons. First of all, the dynamics of how large numbers of an old coin suddenly resurface after more than 150 years are left unexplored: Why then and not earlier? If it did happen, why is it not mentioned by other observers? Moreover, such a development is not supported by the numismatic evidence. I am not aware of a single Mamluk hoard from this era which contains Ayyubid silver.⁷⁵ In each of these examples and in others, Shoshan's lack of familiarity with the numismatic evidence undermines important aspects of his overall conclusions.

Finally, there are those few studies which follow good historical method and attempt to incorporate all the evidence available. Topping this list are the articles on Circassian monetary developments authored by Jere Bacharach, in which he was the first to carefully and systematically compare coin to chronicle, and chronicle to coin.⁷⁶ The result was deeper awareness and more nuanced knowledge of the

⁷²"From Silver to Copper," 108; see especially note 6.

⁷³Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:1111; 4:166.

⁷⁴"Exchange Rate Policies," 44-46.

⁷⁵See the list of silver hoards in Schultz, "Mamluk Money," 152-55. Ayyubid silver is found in hoards dating from the beginning of the Mamluk sultanate, but these *dirhams* usually bear the names of later Ayyubid princes only.

⁷⁶Jere L. Bacharach, "Circassian Monetary Policy: Silver"; idem, "The Dinar versus the Ducat"; idem, "Circassian Monetary Policy: Copper." Cf. his Ph.D. dissertation, "A Study of the Correlation Between Textual Sources and Numismatic Evidence for Mamluk Egypt and Syria, A.H. 784-872/A.D. 1382-1468," University of Michigan, 1967.



parameters of the Mamluk monetary system than was present before. While some of his conclusions have been questioned, his approach cannot be. It remains the model to be followed. It is discouraging that it spawned few imitators.

On a smaller scale, this is the approach followed by Lutz Ilisch. In a series of articles buried in the *Münstersche Numismatische Zeitung*, Ilisch in particular made significant additions and corrections to the series issued by the Syrian mints.⁷⁷ His work is thorough in its attention to both literary and numismatic material. Attention should also be directed to two studies in Arabic that, when combined, offer the reader what is essentially an updated version of the CMSES (albeit only for Egypt), but with new specimens added and frequent incorporation of pertinent chronicle information. These are Sāmiḥ ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Fahmī’s *al-Wiḥdah al-Naqdīyah al-Mamlūkīyah* for the Bahri period, and Ra’fat al-Nabarāwī’s *al-Sikkah al-Islāmīyah fī Miṣr: ‘Aṣr al-Mamālīk al-Jarākisah* for the Circassian period.⁷⁸ It should be stressed, however, that the traditional Bahri-Kipchaq/Burji-Circassian division has little significance in the context of Mamluk monetary developments.

CONCLUSION

I conclude this essay with a plea for those who do not consider themselves numismatists to familiarize themselves with the Mamluk coinage and the approaches and concepts that govern its study. This information is accessible. While there is no substitute for hands-on examination of Mamluk coins—and this is not always easy to do—the general learning curve for the historian’s use of monetary information is not that steep. Numismatics was once a respected ancillary field of history, and numismatic inquiry deserves more than a cursory acknowledgment or outright dismissal as insignificant. Mamluk numismatic information is important and full of surprises. It also cannot be ignored if our understanding of the role of money in the Mamluk economy and society is to be increased. I introduced this essay with a passage from an article entitled “Numismatics Re-Monetized.” In this short but significant piece, Andrew Ehrenkreutz reminded those interested in medieval

⁷⁷Lutz Ilisch, “Beiträge zur Mamlukischen Numismatik,” *MNZ* (Nov. 1975): 5-10; idem, “Berichte über die Einführung neuer Kupfermünzen in Kairo im Jahr 759 H.,” *MNZ* (Feb. 1977): 3-4; idem, “Gegenstempel auf ägyptischem Inflationkupfer,” *MNZ* (Aug.-Dec. 1977): 8-9; idem, “Neue Materialien zur Münzprägung der Bahri-Sultane,” *MNZ* (Mar. 1981): 11-16; idem, “Inedita des ‘Abbasidenkalifen al-Musta‘in bi’llah aus Syrischen Münzstätten,” *MNZ* (Dec. 1982): 39-41.

⁷⁸Sāmiḥ ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Fahmī, *Al-Wiḥdah al-Naqdīyah al-Mamlūkīyah: ‘Aṣr al-Mamālīk al-Baḥrīyah* (Jeddah, 1983); Ra’fat al-Nabarāwī, *Al-Sikkah al-Islāmīyah fī Miṣr: ‘Aṣr Dawlat al-Mamālīk al-Jarākisah* (Cairo, 1993). Cf. his Ph.D. dissertation, a copy of which is preserved in the library of the American Numismatic Society, “Maskūkat al-Mamālīk al-Jarākisah fī Miṣr: Nazmuhā wa-Qiyāmuḥā al-Naqdīyah,” University of Cairo, Faculty of Letters, 1981.



Islamic money to keep foremost in mind the economic functions of the coins studied.⁷⁹ At several points during the composition of this essay, I considered entitling it "Mamluk Monetary History Re-Numismatized," since I strongly believe that the fissure between those familiar with the Mamluk textual tradition and those aware of the numismatic record must be bridged in order for progress to continue in this field.

⁷⁹Andrew S. Ehrenkreutz, "Numismatics Re-Monetized," 207-18.



Book Reviews

SATO TSUGITAKA, *State and Rural Society in Medieval Islam: Sultans, Muqta's, and Fallahun* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1997). Pp. 337.

REVIEWED BY AMALIA LEVANONI, University of Haifa

This is a study of the *iqṭā'* system in Iraq, Syria, and Egypt from its inception in Iraq in the mid-tenth century to the mid-fourteenth century. The author argues that the *iqṭā'*, despite seemingly common features, differed in each region because of both historical and regional peculiarities.

Sato develops his argument in nine chapters (the first and the ninth being the introduction and conclusion). The introductory chapter, through a wide-ranging survey of the research to date, reveals the origins of the *iqṭā'* and its development up to the Ayyubid system in Syria and Egypt. Chapter 2 examines the *iqṭā'* system in Iraq and its influence on the evolution of Iraqi society. The Buwayhids were the first to introduce a hierarchical military *iqṭā'* into the Islamic world, specifically the Sawād region of Iraq (334/946). In the course of time, the position of fief holder (*muqta'*) strengthened to such an extent that it encroached on the provincial governors' (*wālī*) administrative authority, such as the right to collect protection fees from both *muqta'*s and peasants. The Seljuqs inherited the Buwayhid *iqṭā'* and, with slight changes, continued to assign land revenues to military forces of a lower standing. With the consolidation of Seljuq rule, however, the allocation of the administrative *iqṭā'* to amirs, limited under the Buwayhids, became common practice in both Iraq and Iran.

Chapters 3 to 7 trace in detail the history of the *iqṭā'* system in Egypt and Syria under the Ayyubids (564-649/1169-1250) and the Mamluks. Imitating the system of the Seljuqs, Salāḥ al-Dīn, the founder of the Ayyubid dynasty, introduced the *iqṭā'* into Egypt and Syria. During the Ayyubid period, the fief holders had to perform certain duties in exchange for the *iqṭā'*s allocated to them; for example, to render military service in accordance with *iqṭā'* revenues and to maintain the irrigation system in their fiefs.

During al-Zāhir Baybars's reign (658-76/1260-77), *iqṭā'*s were allocated not only to prominent Mamluk amirs and the sultan's *mamlūks*, but also to non-*mamlūk* soldiers serving as auxiliary forces for the Mamluk Sultanate, such as members of the *ḥalqah*, Bedouins (*'urbān*) and the Mongol *wāfidiyah* warriors. Because of his political talents, Baybars, the author concludes, attributed more importance to the assignment of *iqṭā'*s to the *'urbān* and the *wāfidiyah* warriors than to the *mamlūks*.



Book reviews ©1999 by review authors.

DOI: [10.6082/M11N7Z8H](https://doi.org/10.6082/M11N7Z8H). (<https://doi.org/10.6082/M11N7Z8H>)

DOI of Vol. III: [10.6082/M1765CFB](https://doi.org/10.6082/M1765CFB). See <https://doi.org/10.6082/ZJY1-1449> to download the full volume or individual articles. This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY). See <http://mamluk.uchicago.edu/msr.html> for more information about copyright and open access.

Behind this policy lay Baybars's aim of attracting these two forces to his army for use against the Mongol threat from the East.

Sato uses the set of instructions that Sultan al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn (678-89/1279-90) gave to Amir Kitbughā al-Manṣūrī, then Vice-Sultan (*nā'ib al-salṭānah*), delegating to the amir the management of the Sultanate in the Sultan's absence while on an expedition in al-Marqab (Dhū al-Ḥijjah 679/March 1281), as a basis for studying the *iqṭā'* system during Qalāwūn's reign. The author finds that during this period there was a classification of *muqṭa'*s according to income, which was complicated because this revenue was closely related to the local taxation system. The author, however, does not explain the complexity of either this revenue or local taxation.

The need to improve the position of the sultan's *mamlūks* later led to the carrying out of two cadastral surveys (*rawk*). The first, *al-rawk al-ḥusāmī*, was conducted by Sultan Ḥusām al-Dīn Lājīn (698/1298). The second, *al-rawk al-nāṣirī*, which had more far-reaching ramifications for the structure and economy of the Mamluk Sultanate, was carried out by Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn (713-25/1313-25). *Al-rawk al-nāṣirī* brought about uniformity in the *iqṭā'* system by transferring the right to levy taxes (i.e., land tax [*kharāj*], poll tax [*jawālī*] and tribute goods [*diyāfah*]), from state authorities to the private hands of the *muqṭa'*s. This provided the opportunity to abolish miscellaneous taxes (*mukūs*); the introduction of fair administration further improved the conditions of the villagers.

In the wake of the "privatization" of the *iqṭā'*, a withdrawal of the officials previously occupied as tax collectors was also inevitable. The transfer of the right to levy taxes in the *iqṭā'* to the *muqṭa'*s, however, did not encroach on the authority and centralized power of the state because the right to appoint or dismiss amirs and soldiers and to allocate *iqṭā'*s remained at the absolute discretion of the sultan.

Chapter 8 describes the life of the peasantry in Syria and Egypt under the *iqṭā'* system. The author concludes that the sources tell little about the actual conditions of the peasantry in Syria during the Mamluk period. As for Egyptian rural society, the sources are clearer. Relations between the *iqṭā'* proprietors and the peasants (*fallāḥūn* or *muzārī'ūn*) were arranged through *qabālah* contracts. According to this arrangement, the former allocated land and lent seed (*taqāwī*) to the latter; the proprietors employed private agents (*mubāshirūn*) to collect taxes and distribute the seed. Later, when the *muqṭa'*s stepped into the government's shoes and their position vis-à-vis the peasantry strengthened, they thrust responsibility for the maintenance of the irrigation system in the *iqṭā'*s upon the peasants by levying corvée (*sukhrāh*) on them every winter. Under such conditions, the author maintains, village-based peasants (*fallāḥū qarrār*) were treated as "serfs" (*'abd qinn*) by their *muqṭa'*s.



Moreover, after al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's death (741/1341), when the government's control over the *muqta*'s loosened, the latter increased taxes without regard to the changing conditions of cultivation. A further deterioration in the management of the *iqṭā'* system occurred following the Black Death (749/1348), when common people (*al-‘āmmah*) were assigned fiefs in the *ḥalqah*. Political disorder, maladministration, and the repeated outbreak of plagues during the period of the Circassian rule brought about a general decline in Egypt and Syria. One of the major victims of the Circassians' misrule was the peasantry. Officials and fief holders, whose appointments were gained through bribery, exploited the peasants while neglecting their share in maintaining the irrigation system and in promoting the cultivation of land in their *iqṭā'āt*. The failure of the Circassian government to secure public order left the peasants subject to the constant threat of the Bedouins. Unable to bear up under this neglect, the peasants abandoned cultivation.

The author rejects al-Maqrīzī's contention that "political corruption was the cause of economic decline during the Circassian rule." Instead he regards the economic decline as the catalyst for the Circassians' misrule. It was the decline in the *iqṭā'* revenues, in this view, that led the Mamluks to increase taxes, which brought about a stagnation in economic activity in both rural and urban society.

Sato's study is a welcome contribution to the research on medieval Muslim history. It is the first inclusive and comprehensive survey of the history of the *iqṭā'*s, which until now has been fragmentary, based on restricted studies of a specific period and region. The author has also laid out remarkably detailed chronological information on the *iqṭā'* system in the Middle Ages. The contribution of the study could have been more significant if new insights, interpretations, and general conclusions had been provided as well.

A few slips may briefly be noted. The transliteration of the feminine suffix, *al-tā' al-marbūṭah*, is occasionally wrong. There are several cases in which it is silent, whereas it should be pronounced (such as when it is the suffix of a determined noun in an annexation). On p. 193, "Hiba Allāh al-Qibṭī" should read "Hibat Allāh al-Qibṭī"; on p. 212 "qilla al-mā'" should read "qillat al-mā'". In other cases, however, the suffix should be silent: thus, on p. 76, "al-Madrasat al-Fakhrīya" should be "al-Madrasah al-Fakhrīyah"; on pp. 263 and 264, "al-Nuzhat al-Sanīyah . . ." and "al-Tuhfat al-Mulukīyah . . ." should be, respectively, "al-Nuzhah al-Sanīyah . . ." and "al-Tuhfah al-Mulukīyah . . ." The definitions of *muqta' aṣlī* and *muqta' al-jihah* (pp. 113, 235) do not appear in the glossary. Finally, the process whereby the peasant in Egypt was treated as a slave for life (*'abd qinn*) (p. 236) is not clear.

This study is based on a wide-ranging survey of both primary sources—including both major and less well-known printed books and manuscripts—and modern studies of Abbasid, Ayyubid, and Mamluk history and institutions. These sources



are fully listed in the bibliography, which provides a precious mine for scholars who work in these fields.

‘ABD ALLĀH IBN RASHĪD IBN MUḤAMMAD AL-ḤAWSHĀNĪ, *Minhāj Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymīyah fī al-Da‘wah ilā Allāh Ta‘ālā* (Riyadh: Markaz al-Dirāsāt wa-al-I‘lām, Dār al-Ishbīlīyā, 1996). Two volumes.

ṢĀ’IB ‘ABD AL-ḤAMĪD, *Ibn Taymīyah: Ḥayātuhu wa-‘Aqā’ iduhu* (Beirut: al-Ghadīr lil-Dirāsāt wa-al-Nashr, [1994?]). Pp. 465.

REVIEWED BY DAVID C. REISMAN, Yale University

Studies devoted to various aspects of Ibn Taymīyah’s life and thought have proliferated in recent years. In one respect, such a growing interest is to be expected and perhaps even applauded; the importance of this independently minded thinker for the history of medieval Islamic thought cannot be overestimated. In another respect, the sheer number of works on Ibn Taymīyah requires a principle of classification (both of a given work’s content and the author’s intention in studying and writing about Ibn Taymīyah) that has yet to be articulated or even discussed in a scholarly manner; hence, the present review.

There are essentially two categories of works written about Ibn Taymīyah these days: one is a historical study that employs a critical methodology to elucidate some aspect of Ibn Taymīyah’s life or thought within the context of medieval Arabic-Islamic intellectual history; the other studies Ibn Taymīyah as an important contributing voice to modern Muslim debates on religion, society, and politics. There have been no comprehensive critical studies of Ibn Taymīyah since Henri Laoust published his *Essai sur les doctrines sociales et politiques de Taki-d-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Taimīya* in 1939. Works of the first category can be critically assessed in a modern scholarly publication. If works of the second category are to be critically analyzed, such analysis should occur only within the context of a study on modern Islamic movements and thought, but relevant responses properly speaking should come from participants in those modern Muslim debates.

The two publications reviewed here fall under the second category. As such, this review should be correctly viewed as an anomaly to a publication such as *Mamlūk Studies Review*, concerned as it is with *medieval* history and thought. While both works contain a great quantity of raw data on a number of issues of central concern to Ibn Taymīyah (in the form of extensive quotations from a



number of his treatises and monographs) and so might conceivably be *described* for their potential use as source books of collected passages, *critical review* of the authors' overall aims, methodology, and opinions should properly be reserved for publications concerned with modern Muslim thought (and Ibn Taymīyah's place therein).

Al-Ḥawshānī, Director of the Institute for Imams and Preachers at the Jāmi'at al-Imām Muḥammad ibn Sa'ūd al-Islāmīyah in Saudi Arabia, has written a rather wide-ranging, if entirely descriptive, two-volume study of the major aspects of Ibn Taymīyah's thought and socio-religious activity, entitled "Ibn Taymīyah's Missionary Program." The author understands the wide breadth of Ibn Taymīyah's interests to be part of a larger missionary activity and the work is designed as a blueprint for modern missionary activity that takes as its model the career of Ibn Taymīyah. It opens with a brief, laudatory biography of Ibn Taymīyah (the main source of which is the hagiographical *al-'Uqūd al-Durrīyah* by Ibn Taymīyah's erstwhile disciple Ibn 'Abd al-Hādī) and then passes to the substantive areas of study. Part 1 (pp. 49-358) treats particular characteristics of Ibn Taymīyah's "mission," including his views on language and technical terminology, his attempts at reconciling religious knowledge with the dictates of rational demonstration (a collection of passages, pp. 131-35, in which Ibn Taymīyah addresses the *ḥaqīqah-majāz* issue is of particular interest for studies of this Ḥanbalī's treatment of anthropomorphic Quranic passages), the comprehensiveness of his mission in addressing all groups of his society (a section which overlaps considerably with a later section on "objectivity in Ibn Taymīyah's method"), the clarity of his various styles of composition, tailored as they were to specific audiences (for Ibn Taymīyah's views on women, see pp. 210-20), and concludes with a group of passages highlighting Ibn Taymīyah's knowledge of the culture of his age. Part 2 (pp. 361-529) deals with the "basic principles of Ibn Taymīyah's mission" which the modern missionary may use as templates with which to organize and assess particular situations and ideas; it is divided into sections on general beliefs (pp. 365-89), religious practices (393-417), and ethics (421-529, spaced across the two volumes). Part 3 (pp. 535-737) is entitled "al-Asālīb wa-al-Wasā'il"; the author explains that these terms are to be understood as referring to the methods and means of missionary activity respectively (defined p. 544). Missionary methods include the construction of a model believer based upon Ibn Taymīyah's life-style, the use of debating techniques for defending the religion, and the use of the *fatwā* genre for guiding individual believers. The means of missionary activity are exemplified by Ibn Taymīyah's use of different genres of writing (it is not clear why the *fatwā* was not included here), his style of preaching, the importance of travel, and Ibn Taymīyah as the moral champion of soldiers engaged in war against unbelievers. Two final discussions of the arenas of preaching—mosques and schools—conclude the section.



Al-Ḥawshānī concludes the work as a whole with a descriptive list of the parts of his work and recommendations for future study of Ibn Taymīyah's missionary activity that will emphasize the influence of the "pious forefathers" of the religion and involve religious students of modern Saudi Arabia.

'Abd al-Ḥamīd's *Ibn Taymīyah: His Life and Beliefs* is a highly personal and often very emotional critique of Ibn Taymīyah's views on Shi'ism. The author claims that Ibn Taymīyah's thought has been willfully misrepresented in the past and that it is as a remedy of that distortion that he has written the present work (pp. 10-11). The first part of the work is a largely undocumented and highly anecdotal biography of Ibn Taymīyah (pp. 15-89) that includes rough sketches of the political, social, cultural, and religious dimensions of his age. The second part (pp. 97-184) addresses major areas of belief, including Ibn Taymīyah's views on *ijtihād* and *taqlīd*, the ever present debate on God's attributes, and his understanding of Sufism. The third part (pp. 189-271) focuses on Ibn Taymīyah's discussions of Shi'ism, especially those in his monumental work *Minhāj al-Sunnah* to which Ibn Taymīyah's contemporary Ibn al-Muṭahhar al-Ḥillī responded with *Minhāj al-Karāmah fī Ma'rīfat al-Imāmah* (the biography of al-Ḥillī, pp. 197-212, is to be contrasted with that of Ibn Taymīyah). The final section (pp. 277-428) discusses Ibn Taymīyah's views on the Prophet's family, with detailed sections on 'Alī and Ḥusayn. Throughout, Ibn Taymīyah is engaged less as a subject of historical enquiry than as a formidable and unrepentant opponent. Ibn Taymīyah's understanding of and response to Shi'ism is an important subject and the debate between Ibn Taymīyah and al-Ḥillī represents a critical moment in medieval Islamic intellectual history. Henri Laoust's "Les Fondements de l'imamat dans le Minhāj d'al-Ḥillī" has yet to be surpassed as an introductory essay.¹

A serious and comprehensive revision of Henri Laoust's fundamental *Essai* on Ibn Taymīyah has yet to appear despite the continued growth of interest in this major figure of medieval Islamic intellectual history. Arabic-Islamic studies is no more plagued by a lack of continuity in scholarship than any other field, but the absence of very basic research on Ibn Taymīyah should nonetheless be perceived as a serious shortcoming to a proper understanding of the man and his work and not simply as a typical, if woeful, characteristic of the field as a whole. Basic spadework, such as a critical biography, a list and chronology of works, a study of extant manuscripts, and an informed assessment of work to date, seems to be viewed as an unfortunate mechanical aspect of Arabic-Islamic studies best done by someone else, but without such work any study of a discrete aspect of Ibn Taymīyah's life and thought cannot but be tentative.

¹*Revue des études islamiques* 46, no. 1 (1978): 3-55.



In many ways the study of Ibn Taymīyah is blessed with an enormous amount of primary material, perhaps more so than for any other comparably significant medieval figure. The wealth of primary biographical sources, much of it contemporary, is vast. The very topical nature of Ibn Taymīyah's writings has insured that much of the corpus is internally dated (many of his works are introduced with very specific dates of composition). The diligence of his disciples in preserving their master's program of thought has provided modern scholars with two major lists of his works (Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīyah, Ibn 'Abd al-Hādī), in addition to the many partial lists found in the *ṭabaqāt* entries. The continued interest in Ibn Taymīyah on the part of modern Muslim intellectuals as well as the increasing sophistication in the cataloguing of medieval Arabic manuscripts has made the study of the manuscript remains of Ibn Taymīyah's work more viable than ever before.² At this critical juncture in Ibn Taymīyah studies, what is most needed is a diligent researcher to undertake such a primary and comprehensive introduction to Ibn Taymīyah. Until such a study is undertaken, we might profitably, if modestly, begin the process of organizing Ibn Taymīyah studies with the simple classification of modern studies on Ibn Taymīyah introduced here.

IBN AL-'ADĪM, *Zubdat al-Ḥalab min Ta' rīkh Ḥalab*, edited by Khalīl al-Manṣūr (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmīyah, 1417/1996). Pp. 528

REVIEWED BY MICHAEL CHAMBERLAIN, University of Wisconsin, Madison

Historians of medieval Aleppo have long benefited from Sami Dahan's admirable edition of the *Zubdat al-Ḥalab* (Damascus, 1951-68). While it may be premature to believe that this edition is getting long in the tooth, so much has been published since that a new edition would seem to be justified. Unfortunately, it is difficult to recall an edition so remarkably inferior to the one it intends to supersede. It appears that the same manuscript was consulted, so there is nothing new - or more accurate for that matter - here. The project could have been justified if the editor

²A fine beginning in this regard has been made by Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Shaybānī in two manuscript catalogues published in the same year: *Majmū'at Mu'allafāt Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymīyah: Al-Makḥṭūṭah (al-Aṣṭīyah wa-al-Muṣawwarah) al-Maḥfūẓah fī Markaz al-Makḥṭūṭāt wa-al-Turāth wa-al-Wathā'iq* [Jordan], Qism Ibn Taymīyah, 1 (Kuwait: Manshūrāt Markaz al-Makḥṭūṭāt wa-al-Turāth wa-al-Wathā'iq, 1993); and *Majmū'at Mu'allafāt Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymīyah: Al-Makḥṭūṭah al-Maḥfūẓah fī al-Maktabah al-Sulaymānīyah bi-Istānbūl*, Qism Ibn Taymīyah, 3 (Kuwait: Manshūrāt Markaz al-Makḥṭūṭāt wa-al-Turāth wa-al-Wathā'iq, 1993).



had taken into account recently discovered or published works (the complete *Bughyat al-Ṭalab* published by S. Zakkār in 1988-89 comes to mind). However, this opportunity was not only not taken up, the notes fail to include many of Dahan's references. Bizarrely, it appears that al-Manṣūr declined to consult Dahan's notes even as he adopted his corrections of scribal errors, and all too often Manṣūr claims that names and toponyms that Dahan managed to track down are unmentioned in other sources (compare Dahan, ii: 293n with al-Manṣūr, p. 331n for a particularly egregious example). In short, where this new edition is generally accurate, and possesses the virtue of availability, it induces a *fasād al-zamān* mood in the reader, and a sense of puzzlement that it was published at all.

MAJD AL-AFANDĪ, *al-Ghazal fī al-'Aṣr al-Mamlūkī al-Awwal* (Damascus: Dār al-Ma'add, 1994). Pp. 318.

REVIEWED BY THOMAS BAUER, Universität Erlangen

That poetry of the Mamluk period has a flavor different from that of previous periods is due to a shift of importance given to the various genres of Arabic poetry rather than to a specific stylistic change. Of particular importance was the fact that the number of political leaders capable of appreciating the subtleties of sophisticated panegyric odes had decreased conspicuously. One of the few remaining court poets was Ibn Nubātah, who had managed to win one of the last Ayyubid princes in Ḥamāh as patron. Consequently, the laudatory ode addressed to a ruler, in which the basic values of society were to be reformulated in a ceremonial game between prince and poet, was no longer considered to be the most noble and important genre. Instead, those genres gained ground that immediately reflected the ideas and interests of the civilian elite, a group of which the poets themselves were a part. In this context, the panegyric ode survived, but was now mostly directed to scholars (and often composed by scholars) and other members of the *a'yān*. In its function as a means of communication between members of the civilian elite, *madīḥ* poems were supplemented by consolation, invitation, and congratulation poems and other kinds of occasional poetry with a more informal character. Even a superficial glance into chronicles and biographical dictionaries of scholars reveals the high importance these and other genres of poetry must have played for the shaping of social identity in Mamluk society. Since the *a'yān* of this period "constructed their most intimate and socially critical social bonds



Book reviews ©1999 by review authors.

DOI: [10.6082/M11N7Z8H](https://doi.org/10.6082/M11N7Z8H). (<https://doi.org/10.6082/M11N7Z8H>)

DOI of Vol. III: [10.6082/M1765CFB](https://doi.org/10.6082/M1765CFB). See <https://doi.org/10.6082/ZJY1-1449> to download the full volume or individual articles. This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY). See <http://mamluk.uchicago.edu/msr.html> for more information about copyright and open access.

through the cultivation of ‘ilm,¹ as Michael Chamberlain has shown in his seminal study, and since poetry was clearly one of the major fields of ‘ilm,² one can only be amazed by the general neglect of poetry by modern scholars.

It is not sufficiently clear what role love poetry played in all this, but there can be no doubt that the *ghazal* was a genre that profited greatly from developments in this period. Again, the *ghazal* poems of the Mamluk period are not very different from those of the ninth and tenth centuries (which, from a Mamluk point of view, must be seen as its “formative period”).³ Nearly all features that the author of the study in review considers to be new in the Mamluk period were already present two or three centuries earlier (a glance in al-Tha‘alibī’s *Yatīmat al-Dahr* would have been helpful). However, love poetry starts to turn up in a great variety of writings as, for example, in all sorts of anthologies and biographical dictionaries. I would even dare to assert that, by the tenth or eleventh century, love poetry had taken the place of the most important poetic genre next to *madīh*. Nevertheless, the question of its social function has not even been touched upon yet. Majd al-Afandī does not make an exception even if she devotes an entire chapter to the role of women in Mamluk society, stating that this period can be considered the “golden age of the woman” in the history of Islam (p. 12). But since more than half of the love poems composed during this period are homoerotic, this chapter answers less than half of the questions. More interesting would have been a discussion about possible parallels between teacher-pupil relations on one side and lover-beloved relations on the other, or a more general enquiry about the function of different kinds of emotional bonds between men in this society and their literary representation (and construction), which would help to allocate love poetry’s proper place. Al-Afandī cannot see in homoerotic poetry anything other than a sad sign of moral decadence, and has not realized that today the great importance of male-male love relations in pre-modern Islam from the ninth century onwards can no longer be considered a problem of morals, but must be treated as a subject of gender studies, an approach unknown to the author. This is very regrettable since poetry as a simultaneously rather informal as well as generally acknowledged and widely practiced means of communication is one of our most important sources for social history and the history of mentalities of the Mamluk period.

¹Michael Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus, 1190-1350* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 108.

²A fact not unnoticed by Chamberlain, *ibid.*, 85f.

³Cf. my study, *Liebe und Liebesdichtung in der arabischen Welt des 9. und 10. Jahrhunderts: Eine literatur- und mentalitätsgeschichtliche Studie des arabischen Ġazal* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1998).



Majd al-Afandī confines herself to the study of six major poets from the seventh/thirteenth and the first half of the eighth/fourteenth century: (1) Sharaf al-Dīn al-Anṣārī (586-662/1190-1263), who belongs rather to the Ayyubid than to the Mamluk period (as he is not mentioned in the authoritative Western handbooks, al-Afandī has to be thanked for having rescued this interesting poet from oblivion); (2) Shihāb al-Dīn al-Talla‘farī (593-675/1197-1277); (3) Ibn al-‘Afīf al-Tilimsānī, known as al-Shābb al-Zarīf (661-688/1263-1289); (4) Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Ḥillī (677-759/1278-1348); (5) Ibn Nubātah (686-768/1287-1366); and (6) Ibn al-Wardī (689-749/1290-1349). Each of these poets is treated twice; first in a chapter entitled “The Traditional *Ghazal*” (pp. 44-97) and again in a chapter entitled “The Most Important *Ghazal* Poets of the Time” (pp. 170-258), in which al-Afandī discusses the achievements of these poets in a field she calls the “innovative *ghazal*.” Western Arabists might be more familiar with the distinction between *nasīb* and *ghazal*. In fact, nothing else is meant by the differentiation between “traditional” and “innovative” *ghazal*. Al-Afandī simply follows the terminology of traditional Arabic literary theory which does not assign different meanings to the terms *nasīb* and *ghazal*. The author is right in dealing with both types of love poetry in two separate chapters, because the differences between “traditional *ghazal*” on the one hand, and the “innovative *ghazal*” on the other, are still relevant in Mamluk times. “Traditional *ghazal*” (that is, *nasīb*) is love poetry continuing an intertextual line going back to the *jāhilī* prelude of the *qaṣīdah* and featuring themes like the deserted campsite. “Innovative *ghazal*” (what Western Arabists are used to calling simply *ghazal*) continues the tradition of independent love poems in the vein of Abū Nuwās, Abū Tammām, and others (therefore not being really “innovative” in the Mamluk era). One must, however, be aware of the fact that love poetry in the “innovative” style, even in its homoerotic variety, can be found very often now as prelude in the panegyric ode, a place mostly reserved for traditional-style *nasīb* in earlier centuries. Due to this rather complicated situation, one misses a discussion of terminology in al-Afandī’s book. Her own classification of the “innovative” *ghazal* in three categories, “sensual,” “obscene,” and “spiritual” (pp. 98ff.), reflects modern ideas of morality but was rather irrelevant for Mamluk authors, many of whose poems combine lines of more than one type.

In principle, there are two different ways of approaching literature. One can either listen to literature as a recipient, asking if the work appeals to one’s taste and wondering what the author has to say to “us.” Or one can look at works of literature from a more scholarly angle, trying to elucidate the aesthetic principles of the author’s period and the role of literature in his cultural environment and asking about the relation between the particular work of art and the communicative field of which it formed part. Al-Afandī’s book belongs to the first category. It is mainly dedicated to an evaluation of the six poets mentioned. The criteria according



to which they are judged are not those of the Mamluk period (or those of any other period of pre-modern Islamic culture), but those of Western literature of the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries. For al-Afandī, the main criterion is to what extent a love-poem “expresses the true feelings” of the poet. Of course, no Arab poet prior to the nineteenth century ever cared about this. Even the expression *al-shu‘ūr al-ṣādiqah*, “true feelings,” used by al-Afandī *ad nauseam*, would have been completely incomprehensible to the authors of these poems, *shu‘ūr* designating nothing but sensory impressions. In fact, there is no way to translate the expression “true feelings” into Classical Arabic since pre-modern Islam (as well as pre-modern Europe, China, etc.) lacked any such concept. In their eyes, emotions either were there or they were not. Emotions could not be true or false; they could, however, be concealed or expressed in a more or less sincere way. Further, and most important, pre-modern Arab poets (and perhaps poets of any pre-modern culture) were not supposed to express feelings, but rather to evoke emotions. A poem—any poem—was not judged by its potential of “expressing” something but by its potential to arouse the interest of the hearer (if, e.g., it was *muṭrib*, evoking *ṭarab*, or not). To evoke emotions, the poet was not supposed to possess the feeling as “truly” as possible, but to possess a poetic gift and the technical command of composing poems. Part of this ability was mastery of the rhetorical devices. These devices were seen as one of several means of arousing emotion (*ṭarab*) in the hearer/reader. To arouse *ṭarab* in this way was considered a legitimate and admirable achievement. Not for al-Afandī, who is startled as soon as she comes across a *jinās* or any similar device. For her, Ibn Nubātah, generally considered by his contemporaries to be the most gifted poet of the period, limited himself to pure formalism which makes no impression whatsoever in the heart of the reader, appealing to the brain but not to the soul (see pp. 244f.). Even worse is the case of Ibn al-Wardī, whose poetry is “devoid of affection and feelings and inconsistent with the poetical spirit” (p. 247). It is frustrating to see Arab scholars imitating Western conceptions of aesthetics that never existed in the pre-modern Islamic world and that have become fairly outdated today in the West. At the turn of the century, Western culture displayed a considerable contempt for great segments of its own aesthetic tradition, denouncing everything that hinted of pure *ṭarab* (to use the Arabic term) which did not serve any ideological purpose as false and trivial. As this was the time of colonialism, these concepts were immediately exported to the colonized parts of the world. In the West, however, these concepts have been overcome or, at least, modified in the last decades. Ornament is no longer seen indiscriminately as a “crime” (as the architect Adolf Loos put it at the beginning of the century), and coloratura in music is no longer considered to be merely empty formulas that detract from its “real” essence, as is demonstrated with sufficient clearness by the Rossini revival in Europe and the United States. It was this new appreciation of



form and rhetoric that has enabled Western scholars to hold a less prejudiced view of classical Arabic poetry, whereas many colleagues from Arab countries still persist in a negative view of their own aesthetic tradition. Al-Afandī's book gives several examples of applying the standards of the age of colonialism, as can be seen not only from her negative attitude towards pre-modern Arabic aesthetic principles, but also from her moralistic approach to the homoerotic content of the bulk of Arabic Mamluk *ghazal*, and, finally, even from the book's cover illustration imitating the style of some bad "orientalist" extravagances of Ingres.

This approach prevents the author from noticing some of the most original achievements of the Mamluk *ghazal*. To mention only one example, the Mamluk period represents the apogee in the history of the Arabic epigram. This history starts in the ninth century with poets like Ibn al-Rūmī, and the popularity of epigrams rose from century to century. Never, however, were there composed so many and such original epigrams as during the age of the Mamluks. The most important collection of *ghazal* epigrams was assembled in the Mamluk period by Shams al-Dīn al-Nawājī (d. 859/1455). His book is entitled *Marāṭi' al-Ghizlān*,⁴ and is still in manuscript. It contains hundreds of epigrams, mostly from the Mamluk period, many of them from the six poets treated by al-Afandī. Al-Afandī, limiting herself to printed publications, does not know it. Had she known it, she would have disliked it anyway, since epigrams, which were supposed to be witty and pointed, are certainly not the right medium to express "true feelings." Blinded by her normative approach, al-Afandī does not even notice the existence of the epigram as a distinct formal model in Mamluk poetry. So, for example, Ibn al-Wardī, al-Afandī's most hated poet, was first and foremost a composer of epigrams, dozens of which were included in al-Nawājī's collection. Al-Afandī, however, does not recognize Ibn al-Wardī as a poet of epigrams, but, bewildered by the fact that most of his poems comprise only two lines (as epigrams usually do), ascribes this "defect" to "the weakness of Ibn al-Wardī's poetical spirit" (p. 248).

To do justice to al-Afandī's book, one should mention that it contains a lot of interesting and useful observations. The best chapter deals with the *ghazal* in "popular" forms, where al-Afandī talks about *mawāliyyā*, *qūbā*, *kān wa-kān* and *zajal* (pp. 151-69). Al-Afandī likes folk poetry (since she finds true feelings expressed in it) and pleads convincingly for a proper appreciation of its elegance and freshness. If only she would have been able to emancipate herself from aesthetic normativism as readily as she does from the linguistic normativism of disparaging poetry that uses dialect forms!

⁴Cf. Brockelmann, *GAL* 2:56



Al-Afandī's study is, as far as I can see, the first monographic study of love poetry in the Mamluk period. Unfortunately, the author is not able to free herself from the prejudices associated with the Mamluk period since the *nahḍah* period (most of them of Western origin). For her, the Mamluk period is a period of decadence, of economic decline, and of deplorable moral standards. Some gifted poets did their best to compose good poetry despite this sorry state of affairs. In her eyes, they did better the more their poetry complied with literary norms created in the modern West and borrowed by the Arab literati a century ago. Needless to say, this approach does not do justice to the rich and exciting tradition of love poetry in the Mamluk period which has to be measured by its own yardstick and which in turn has to be set in relation to its historical and cultural environment. In reviewing several contributions to the history of Mamluk poetry, Th. Emil Homerin came to the conclusion that "most Arab negative opinions [towards Mamluk poetry] appear to be the product of a pervasive reading of this poetry in terms of romantic notions of creativity that embrace the simple and emotional as indicative of personal experience, sincerity, and truth. Therefore, condemnation of Mamluk Arabic verse as decadent and superficial says more about modern tastes than it does about this poetry and its roles within Mamluk society."⁵ This is also the quintessence of what can be said about al-Afandī's book.

ŞALĀḤ AL-DĪN MUḤAMMAD NAWWĀR, *al-Ṭawā'if al-Mughūliyah fī Miṣr wa-Ta' thīrātuhā al-'Askariyah wa-al-Siyāsīyah wa-al-Ijtimā'īyah wa-al-Lughawīyah wa-al-'Umrānīyah fī 'Aṣr Dawlat al-Mamālīk al-Baḥrīyah (658-783 H./1260-1382 M.)* (Alexandria: Munsha'at al-Ma'ārif bi-al-Iskandarīyah, [1996?]). Pp. 160.

REVIEWED BY REUVEN AMITAI, Hebrew University of Jerusalem

From the title I expected this small volume to deal in a comprehensive way with the history and influence of the successive groups of Mongol immigrants—the so-called *wāfidīyah*, *musta'minah*, or *musta'minūnah*—who found refuge in the Mamluk Sultanate in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. Although the subject has been studied in the short but seminal article by David Ayalon

⁵*Mamlūk Studies Review* 1 (1997): 71



almost fifty years ago,¹ and further discussed by him and other scholars within larger studies, there is certainly room for a monograph which presents the evidence in a systematic and detailed way, analyzing it in light of recent advances in Mamluk studies. From the outset, however, I must say that this book is a great disappointment. The actual events themselves are treated in a most cursory manner, and the author's thesis—that the influence of these Mongol refugees along with the large number of Mamluks of supposedly Mongol origin was a fundamental if not decisive one on the Mamluk Sultanate—is basically wrong.

This erroneous thesis is due to three major problems:

1) The author completely misunderstands the ethnic composition of the early Mamluk army and officer class. He is, of course, correct in asserting that the majority of the early Mamluks and certainly the Baḥrīyah regiment hailed from the Qipchaq Turkish tribes who lived in the steppes of southern Russian. His mistake is to assume that since the Mongols conquered the Qipchaq steppes around 1240, the Qipchaqs and Mongols should be equated. Thus, whenever the sources mention the importance and prominence of both individual Qipchaqī Turks or these Turks as a group within the Mamluk Sultanate, the author takes it for granted that these were Mongols. The equating of Mongols and Qipchaqs, almost invariably unjustified, is found on virtually every page of the book. To the author's mind, then, the importance of Qipchaq Turks in the early Sultanate means only the predominant position of Mongols, and thus the extensive Mongol influence on the Mamluk state. This, however, is an untenable position. There is no denying that among the continuous batches of young Mamluks from the Golden Horde there were some of Mongol origin, or Mongolized Turks, or even Turkified Mongols, but this is still a far cry from all Qipchaqs—the dominant ethnic group in the early Sultanate—being Mongols or bearers of Mongol influence.²

2) The importance of the Mongol *wāfidīyah* has been greatly exaggerated by the author. Without negating the military qualities of these *wāfidīs*, Ayalon has already shown in his article published in 1951 their inferior position in the Mamluk military society, albeit with some notable exceptions in the early fourteenth century. (These, by the way, are barely mentioned by the author). For Baybars's reign, the decisive period when the supposedly Mongol influence was at its height, Ayalon's suggestion can be easily strengthened by examining some evidence from Ibn Shaddād al-Ḥalabī, who writes that among some 3,000 Mongol *wāfidīyah* who arrived during the time of Baybars, "he made some of them *ṭablkhānah* amirs (i.e.,

¹"The Wafidiya in the Mamluk Kingdom," *Islamic Culture* 25 (1951): 89-104 (reprinted in David Ayalon, *Studies on the Mamluks of Egypt (1250-1517)* (London, 1977).

²This whole matter is dealt in some detail by David Ayalon in "The Great *Yāsa* of Chingiz Khān: A Re-Examination," *Studia Islamica* 36 (1972): 126-28.



amirs of 40), and others amirs of 10 to 20.³ There is no reason to assume that anything higher than the middling rank of amir of forty was granted even to Geremün, who led the second group of some 1,300 *wāfidīyah*, which arrived in the Sultanate in 661/1263, and whom one contemporary writer called a commander of a *tümen*, i.e., a unit of 10,000 men.⁴ As Ayalon pointed out, there is no evidence that any *wāfidī* leader received the rank of amir of one hundred in these first decades of Mamluk rule. There is certainly no textual basis for the author's conclusion (p. 31) that Baybars gave the senior Mongol *wāfidīs* commissions of amir of one hundred. Another indication of the secondary status of even the senior *wāfidīyah* is seen in the allocations of private land granted by Baybars in 663/1265, after the conquest of Arsūf and Caesarea. Only two of the sixty-one officers named were of Mongol *wāfidī* origin (one of them the above-mentioned Geremün).⁵ The Mongol refugees—as a group or as individuals—do not appear to have had a particularly prominent position in the early Sultanate, and it is unlikely that they were a source of overwhelming influence on it.

3) The author virtually ignores all that has been written by modern scholars on the *wāfidīyah* and Mongol influence on the Sultanate. Granted, David Ayalon, tastelessly referred to as "the Jewish historian," is mentioned in passing in a note in the author's introduction (p. 2), as is his famous 1951 article, but there is nothing in the book to indicate that it was consulted.⁶ Even in that preliminary overview, Ayalon had discerned the limited role and influence of the *wāfidīyah*, Mongol and otherwise, in the Mamluk military society. No mention whatsoever is made of Ayalon's later study of Mongol influence on the Sultanate, "The Great *Yāsa* of Chingiz Khān: A Re-Examination," which appeared in four parts in *Studia Islamica* in the early 1970s,⁷ and was later reprinted in his third *Variorum* volume, *Outsiders in the Lands of Islam* (London, 1988). Ayalon there dealt in a most cogent way with the contention that there was a decisive Mongol influence,

³Ibn Shaddād al-Ḥalabī, *Ta'rikh al-Malik al-Zāhir*, ed. Aḥmad Ḥuṭayṭ (Wiesbaden, 1983), 337. This passage is cited with some changes by Ibn Taghrībirdī, *al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah fī Mulūk Miṣr wa-al-Qāhirah* (Cairo, 1930-56), 7:190. Later, Nawwār cites this latter passage (p. 59), but only to give the total number of Mongol *wāfidīyah*, and conveniently leaves out the information regarding the low ranks granted to their chiefs.

⁴Shāfi' ibn 'Alī, *al-Faḍl al-Ma'thūr min Sīrat al-Sulṭān al-Malik al-Manṣūr*, MS Bodleian Marsh 424, fol. 4a.

⁵Reuven Amitai-Preiss, "The Mamluk Officer Class during the Reign of Sultan Baybars," in *War and Society in the Eastern Mediterranean, 7th-15th Centuries*, ed. Yaacov Lev (Leiden, 1997), 284, 295, 296.

⁶L. A. Mayer, Ayalon's teacher and professor of Islamic archeology at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, is misleadingly described (p. 80), as "the German historian."

⁷See vol. 33 (1991): 99-140; 34 (1971): 151-80; 36 (1972): 113-58; 38 (1973), 107-56.



particularly of the *Yasa* (the body of Mongol law attributed to Chinggis Khan), on the Mamluk military society in Egypt and Syria, and showed that this influence was much more limited than had been previously thought. His most decisive proof was the demonstration that the famous evidence by al-Maqrīzī in his *Khiṭaṭ* on the adoption of the *Yasa* by the Mamluks was a deliberate falsification. In addition, Ayalon showed that Ibn Taghrībirdī's well-known passage on Baybars's adoption of Mongol institutions also deserved little credence. Ayalon, it should be emphasized, did not deny any Mongol influence, but showed that it was restricted in scope. It is, of course, Nawwār's right to adopt a different position towards the credibility of these passages (and thus draw dissimilar conclusions on Mongol influence), but the normal approach would be to discuss Ayalon's work, try to disprove it, and demonstrate the veracity of this evidence, not just to assume so in the face of what has become the accepted position among historians of the early Sultanate. It is worth mentioning that Nawwār only fleetingly cites A. N. Poliak, and then only through the work of another modern Arab historian (p. 80 in the note), in spite of the fact that Poliak's work (preceding that of Ayalon) attempted to show the important role of Mongol influence on the early Sultanate.⁸

Throughout the book I was struck by the frequency of unsupported statements, let alone those which were wrong. I will mention just a few. First, it is stated that Baybars himself was raised according to the *Yasa* (p. 61). This, however, was unlikely: Baybars was born in the 1220s in the steppe area north of the Black Sea. Around 1241-42, his tribe fled to Anatolia, where he was taken into slavery. Since the Mongols only gained control over this area in 1238, one wonders how formative the *Yasa* was on this young Qipchaqi Turk. Second, Quṭuz is called a Mongol Qipchaq (p. 23).⁹ This is one of countless examples of the arbitrary, and unjustified, juxtaposition of these two ethnic terms. It is interesting to note that some sources report that Quṭuz himself claimed he was descended from the Khwārazm-Shāhs;¹⁰ any Mongolness that Quṭuz was supposed to have had does not seem to have left much of an imprint on his own sense of identity. Third, the author states that the Mamluks did not forget the important role played by the group of Mongols which Berke Khan sent *before* the battle of 'Ayn Jālūt at that battle (p. 24). I do not have a clue as to the possible basis for such an assumption. Finally, it is suggested that the letter sent by the Īlkhān Tegüder Aḥmad was sent in Mongolian, and only upon reaching the Sultanate was it translated into Arabic (pp. 137, 139). This, it is

⁸On p. 117, the author claims that the Mamluk state was a sort of branch of the Golden Horde, an assertion eerily reminiscent of the argument found in A. N. Poliak, "Le caractère colonial de l'État mameluk dans ses rapports avec la Horde d'or," *Revue des études islamiques* 9 (1935): 213-48.

⁹On p. 95, Quṭuz is mistakenly called the *khushdāsh* of Baybars.

¹⁰Robert Irwin, *The Middle East in the Middle Ages: The Early Mamluk Sultanate 1250-1382* (London, 1986), 23.



suggested, shows how widespread was the knowledge of the Mongolian language in the Mamluk Sultanate. In fact there is nothing to indicate that this letter was sent in anything but Arabic. When the Mongols did dispatch a letter in Mongolian to the Mamluk court, this was noted by the sources.¹¹ Further proof of this letter originally being written in Arabic is that identical texts of its contents are found in both Mamluk sources and the pro-Mongol Persian Waṣṣāf. It seems likely that the latter saw a copy of the Arabic letter from before it was sent, rather than a hypothetical Mamluk translation into Arabic from a supposed Mongolian original that found its way back to the Ilkhanate.

To be fair, the book has some value. For example, there is a thoughtful discussion of some of the reasons behind the large-scale trade in *mamlūks* from the Golden Horde to the Sultanate (pp. 20-21), and the section on the influence of Mongol sartorial practices on the Mamluks is interesting (pp. 71-79). But there is no getting around the unconvincing way in which the book's main thesis is presented. If one ignores previous scholarship, exaggerates in a most excessive way the role of the *wāfidiyah* in the Sultanate, and equates Mongols and Qipchaq Turks, let alone everything Mongol and Turkish, then one is surely bound to find decisive Mongol influence on the Mamluk state in the military, political, cultural, and even linguistic realms. I, for one, was not convinced.

MUḤAMMAD AL-ḤABĪB AL-HĪLAH, *al-Tārīkh wa-al-Mu'arrikhūn bi-Makkah min al-Qarn al-Thālith al-Hijrī ilá al-Qarn al-Thālithah 'Asharah: Jam' wa-'Arḍ wa-Ta'rīf* (London: Al-Furqān Islamic Heritage Foundation, 1994). Pp. 518.

REVIEWED BY FRÉDÉRIC BAUDEN, Université de Liège

The work at hand belongs to the type of study that flourished mainly after the publication of the first volumes of the *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur* by Carl Brockelmann—that is, the bio-bibliographical analysis of the historiography of a certain area in the Muslim world at a particular time. Similar works were published for Andalusia by Francisco Pons Boigues,¹ for Morocco by Évariste

¹¹Waṣṣāf, *Ta'rīkh-i Waṣṣāf (Tajziyat al-Amṣār wa-Tazjiyat al-A'ṣār)* (Bombay, 1269 H./1852-53; repr. Tehran, 1338/1959-60), 113-18.

¹Francisco Pons Boigues, *Ensayo bio-bibliográfico sobre los historiadores y geógrafos arábigo-españoles* (Madrid, 1898).



Levi-Provençal,² for Tunisia by Ahmed Abdesselem,³ for Yemen by Ayman Fu'ād Sayyid⁴ and, finally, for al-Shām by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid.⁵ The first aim of these works has always been to give new impetus to historical research by offering researchers compendiums listing the available sources in published or manuscript form for the defined area.

As far as the Hijaz is concerned, and more particularly Mecca, one can only agree with the author's statement (p. 10) that no wide-ranging study on the historiographical school of Mecca has been completed until now.⁶ One may even go further, stressing the fact that scholars specializing in this field have had to wait until recent years for the appearance of a surge of text editions dealing with the history of Mecca.

Indeed, if we glance at the record, we notice that, with the exception of some worthless attempts, the first scholar whose attention was drawn to this field was Heinrich Ferdinand Wüstenfeld, who devoted several volumes to the edition of extracts of basic texts such as *Akhbār Makkah* by al-Azraqī (d. 244/858), *Ta'rikh Makkah* by al-Fākihī (ca. 272/885), and *Shifā' al-Gharām* by al-Fāsī (d. 832/1429).⁷ This first attempt failed to generate any interest among Orientalists.

In the Middle East, we have had to await the second half of this century to witness the appearance of the first editions of historical texts dealing with the history of the Holy City: for the complete edition of *Shifā' al-Gharām* by al-Fāsī in 1956 and for the issue of the first volume of *al-'Iqd al-Thamīn* by the same author in 1959 (the last volume was issued in 1969). These editions may be considered the first of a stream of editions of historical texts about Mecca, several of which were edited as dissertations and, unfortunately, remain unpublished.⁸

²Évariste Lévi-Provençal, *Les historiens des Chorfa: Essai sur la littérature historique et biographique au Maroc du XVIe au XXe siècle* (Paris, 1922).

³Ahmed Abdesselem, *Les historiens tunisiens des XVII^e, XVIII^e et XIX^e siècles: Essai d'histoire culturelle* (Paris, 1973).

⁴Ayman Fu'ād Sayyid, *Sources pour l'histoire du Yémen à l'époque musulmane* (Cairo, 1974).

⁵Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid, *Mu'jam al-Mu'arrikhīn al-Dimashqīyīn* (Beirut, 1398/1978).

⁶We should emphasize that another book rather close to this subject, although the approach is less scientific, was published in the same year as al-Hīlah's: 'Ātiq ibn Ghayth al-Bilādī, *Nashr al-Rayyāḥīn fī Tārīkh al-Balad al-Amīn: Tarājim Mu'arrikhī Makkah wa-Jughrāfiyihā 'alā Marr al-'Uṣūr* (Mecca, 1415/1994).

⁷Heinrich Ferdinand Wüstenfeld, *Die Chroniken der Stadt Mekka* (Leipzig, 1858-61).

⁸Abd al-Qādir al-Ṭabarī's "Nash'at al-Sulāfah" (d. 1033/1624), ed. Ḥamad al-'Uraynān (University of St. Andrews, 1973); 'Alī al-Ṭabarī's "al-Araj al-Miskī" (d. 1070/1660), ed. Muḥammad ibn Ṣāliḥ al-Ṭāsān (University of Edinburgh, 1979); Muḥammad al-Ṭabarī's "Ithāf Fuḍalā' al-Zamān" (d. 1173/1760), ed. Nāṣir al-Barakātī (University of St. Andrews, 1972).



The last to be published was probably *Ithāf al-Warā* by al-Najm Ibn Fahd (d. 885/1480), edited between 1983 and 1989.

Anyone wishing to publish an Arabic text knows that the inevitable starting point must be Brockelmann's *GAL* and its partial supplement, that is, Sezgin's *GAS*. Nevertheless, since their issue, several catalogues of manuscripts have appeared, supplementing these two essential works. In order to avoid neglecting any manuscript, a thorough survey of the sources requires the investigation of catalogues. Al-Hīlah's work happily completes both these sources for Mecca.

By offering researchers a study that includes most of the historians who were born or resided in Mecca, al-Hīlah facilitates forthcoming research in this area and, in particular, serves as a general survey which may help to define a Meccan historical school.

The period in question (from the third to the tenth century A.H.) might appear too broad for the study to be complete. However, the author does not pretend to be exhaustive (see p. 11, note 1) by invoking the fact that numerous texts which may include supplementary information remain unpublished. He invites readers to inform him of missing information; this may appear to some as a weakness.

The reader will perhaps wonder why no explanation is given in the introduction justifying the choice of the period in question. Why did he not take into account the authors preceding the third century?⁹ Perhaps because most of the works dating to this time have not been preserved?

In his survey, al-Hīlah has been able to identify 187 Meccan historians whom he orders chronologically according to their death dates. To perform this selection, he considers as Meccan all those who were born in the Holy City, or who went there in order to live permanently, so that they have been described by historians as "Makkī." For this, he mainly relies on *al-'Iqd al-Thamīn* by al-Fāsī, *Ithāf al-Warā* by al-Najm Ibn Fahd and *al-Mukhtaṣar min Kitāb Nashr al-Nūr wa-al-Zahr fī Tarājim Afādil Makkah min al-Qarn al-Āshir ilá al-Qarn al-Rābi'ah 'Asharah* by 'Abd Allāh ibn Aḥmad Mirdād (d. 1343/1954). However, this method produces some inconsistencies. One will be astonished to find a record of 'Umar ibn Aḥmad al-Shammā' (d. 936/1529) from Aleppo, who resided in Mecca in 916 and in 927, but nothing about Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, who resided at Mecca from 727 to 730 and whose travel account is an excellent source for the history of the Holy City at that time. Such instances are common, notably for Egyptian historians (e.g., al-Maqrīzī).

The total number of works for which the author has found any trace amounts to 846. Yet al-Hīlah notes that only ninety-eight titles are available in printed editions, which is not a reasonable sample for such a large number of works. As

⁹It seems that *Faḍā'il Makkah* by al-Ḥumaydī (d. 219/834) has escaped the author's attention.



for the remaining titles, only 245, according to al-Hīlah, are still extant in manuscript form. The terrible conclusion is that 505 titles have not survived.

Al-Hīlah follows a scheme that he repeats for each author: he starts by giving a short biography of the author, mentioning also his most important non-historical works. This biography is followed by the chief bibliographical references. Then he lists the author's historical works alphabetically. Al-Hīlah takes into account not only those works ordinarily considered historical, but also texts from which historical information may be gleaned. These include law texts by *fuqahā'* (*fatwās* and works dealing with pilgrimage ritual) which remain, in al-Hīlah's eyes, the best sources on culture.

For each work, al-Hīlah gives, insofar as manuscripts have been preserved, the contents and sometimes even the table of contents. Al-Hīlah quotes those manuscripts for which he has found a reference in the many catalogues he has consulted, by adding the name of the library, the shelf mark and, if possible, the date of copying. An important place is also reserved for quotations of the works by later authors, and most of the time he manages to give the pages where these are to be found. If the work has been published, he mentions the various editions, and expresses an opinion on the scientific value of these and their historical importance. All of this will surely delight researchers.

Because some Meccan families have been rendered illustrious by several famous representatives, the author strives to devote to them several lines and to establish chronologically a list of the representatives of a given family (Banū Fahd, pp. 99-108; Banū 'Allān, pp. 311-12; Banū al-'Ujaymī, pp. 367-70; Banū Dahhān, p. 397). But al-Hīlah does not explain his criteria for doing so, and some families deserving of similar treatment are ignored. We particularly note the Banū al-Ṭabarī¹⁰ (of whom seven representatives are mentioned in al-Hīlah's book, however), the Banū Ḥahīrah, the Banū Nuwayrī, and the Banū al-Qaṣṭallānī.

The author begins his work (p. 15) with the famous al-Azraqī (d. 244/858) and ends it (p. 423) with Abū Bakr al-Zur'ah al-Makkī (fl. 13th/19th c.). The book also includes a bibliography, divided into two parts, listing manuscript (p. 427) and printed sources (p. 440), as well as valuable indexes of authors' names

¹⁰For a genealogical tree of this family, from the end of the 12th c. up to the end of the 15th c., see Frédéric Bauden, *Les Ṭabariyya: Histoire d'une importante famille de la Mecque (fin XII^e-fin XV^e s.)*, in *Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid, and Mamluk Eras*, Proceedings of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd International Colloquiums organized at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven in May 1992, 1993, and 1994, *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta*, vol. 73, ed. Urbain Vermeulen and Daniel De Smet (Leuven, 1995), 253-66. The author of this review is currently preparing a study of the whole Ṭabarī family in Mecca from the end of the 12th c. up to the end of the 18th c., which will contain a complete genealogical tree and will study the family's relationships with other Meccan families.



(p. 460) and titles of quoted works (p. 473). However, no reference is made in the bibliography to the manuscript catalogues consulted by the author. The table of contents is at the end. A few pictures are scattered within the text of samples of historians' writings mentioned by al-Hīlah.

The main value of this work is, no doubt, the mention made by al-Hīlah of the manuscripts held in Mecca that represent a significant percentage of those that have been preserved. As a matter of fact, he was able to study these manuscripts because he is Professor of History at the Jāmi'at Umm al-Qurá in Mecca and is the author of a catalogue of historical manuscripts kept in one of the libraries of the Ḥaram.¹¹ As for the manuscripts preserved in other parts of the world, one must be more cautious. There are just a few quotations of Brockelmann's *GAL* and Sezgin's *GAS*, although the author had at his disposal the Arabic versions of both. Indeed, the author does not seem to have a fluent knowledge of European languages, except perhaps English. This is unfortunately apparent in the European names and titles: Wustenfeld instead of Wüstenfeld (p. 17, and *passim*), Ahlward instead of Ahlwardt (p. 25), Tubengen instead of Tübingen (p. 34), Hands Chriften (read Handschriften) by Edwald Warner (read Ewald Wagner) (p. 63), Mignana instead of Mingana (p. 69), and so on. These mistakes are minor compared to other more serious ones. He constantly refers to the Berlin catalogue of Arabic manuscripts, compiled by Ahlwardt, but most of these references are false, and this is due to his misunderstanding of the German language. He does not seem to have understood that Ahlwardt was citing, at the end of each section, a list of titles belonging to the same subject, relying on the information in Ḥājji Khalīfah's *Kashf al-Zunūn*. Al-Hīlah mistakenly understood these titles to be preserved in Berlin. Thus the following references are erroneous and must be corrected: p. 17 (MS Berlin 9751 does not contain *Akhbār Makkah* by al-Azraqī, but rather *Zubdat al-A'māl* by al-Isfarā'inī [see p. 75]), pp. 41, 48, 94, 327 (Berlin 6073 is not a MS), pp. 55, 58 (Berlin 5536/10 is not a MS), p. 118 (MS Berlin 9873 is not dated 1850, but ca. 900/1494), p. 146 (Berlin 9633 is not a MS), p. 165 (Berlin 9877 refers to two copies, and not just one).

In the same way, the author devotes, in reference to no. 141, a record to a certain Ibrāhīm ibn Aḥmad al-Makkī, about whom he says that he was alive in 1117/1705. According to al-Hīlah, this individual is the author of *Majallat al-Ḥunafā'* for which he refers to MS Berlin 9658. He acknowledges that he has found no information relating to the life of this author, and he mentions also that he relies only on Ahlwardt. If we go back to Ahlwardt's work (vol. 9, p. 202), however, we ascertain that this is not the case. Ahlwardt simply says that the

¹¹*Handlist of Manuscripts in the Library of Makkah al-Mukarramah: History Section* (London, 1994).



author's name is missing in the manuscript and adds: "Auf der Innenseite des Vorderdeckels steht als solcher (nebst Angabe des Titels) in ganz neuer Schrift Ibrāhīm ibn Aḥmad al-Makkī. Diese Angabe geht aber auf den Abschreiber: der ungenannte Verfasser ist jüngerer Zeitgenosse des Majd al-dīn Abū al-Ṭāhir al-Fīrūzābādī, [. . .], lebt also um 850/1446." Thus, al-Hīlah has gone astray and regarded this copyist, who is unknown, as the author. It may be added that there is another copy of this work in Paris (MS Ar. 1571).

Because this reviewer has been working on a Meccan *faqīh*, al-Muḥibb al-Ṭabarī,¹² who is mentioned by al-Hīlah (no. 24), an assessment of the accuracy of information gathered by al-Hīlah can readily be made. Al-Hīlah mentions (p. 54) that an *ijāzah* of al-Muḥibb al-Ṭabarī, dated 640 A.H., is preserved in MS Leiden Or. 2544. This is absolutely not true: a *samā'*, dated 604 A.H. (note that al-Muḥibb al-Ṭabarī was born in 615 A.H.), is found on fol. 55b, but nothing else is indicated. However, an *ijāzah* of al-Muḥibb al-Ṭabarī is held in the Maktabat al-Asad in Damascus, MS 3857 (on fol. 71a), and is dated 685 A.H. Al-Hīlah specifies that *Istiqṣā' al-Bayān* is MS Berlin 5536, being thus a *unicum*, although Ahlwardt just mentions the title, as noted earlier in this review. If al-Hīlah sticks to the rule he has defined in his introduction, and since he mentions two works by al-Muḥibb al-Ṭabarī consisting of *fatwās*, we wonder why there is no mention of his *Sharḥ al-Tanbīh*, which has not been preserved but which seems to have contained important historical information about Mecca since al-Fāsī quoted it on numerous occasions in his *Shifā' al-Gharām*, as did al-Samhūdī in his *Wafā' al-Wafā'*. On the other hand, we do not understand why he mentions his *Kitāb al-Ghinā' wa-Tahrīmuḥu* (?) for which he says that a *unicum* exists in Berlin (no. 5536/11). Once again, this is erroneous. Comparing our census of the manuscripts preserved for each of al-Muḥibb al-Ṭabarī's works with al-Hīlah's, we are struck by the difference. For *Khulāṣat Sīrat Sayyid al-Bashar* (al-Hīlah's no. 4, p. 55), four manuscripts are listed as opposed to the twenty-nine we have found. *Khayr al-Qirā fī Ziyārat Umm al-Qurā* (no. 5, p. 56) is identical with no. 9 (p. 57), while the Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah manuscript is not dated to 781 A.H., but was copied before 881 A.H. (three editions were published, all of which are unknown to al-Hīlah). For *Dhakhā'ir al-'Uqbā fī Manāqib Dhawī al-Qurbā* (no. 6, p. 56), four manuscripts are listed as opposed to twenty-seven that we have found; for *al-Riyāḍ al-Naḍrah*

¹²Frédéric Bauden, *Les trésors de la postérité ou les fastes des proches parents du Prophète (Kitāb Daḥā'ir al-'Uqbā fī Manāqib Dawī al-Qurbā) de Muḥibb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn 'Abd Allāh ibn Muḥammad al-Ṭabarī al-Makkī (ob. 694/1295): Édition critique accompagnée d'une traduction annotée et d'une étude sur la vie et l'œuvre de l'auteur* (Université de Liège, 1996). The Arabic text and the French translation will probably be published by the IFEAD in Damascus. See also on this author, Frédéric Bauden, "al-Ṭabarī, Aḥmad ibn 'Abd Allāh," *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., vol. 10.



fī Faḍā'il al-'Asharah (no. 7, p. 56), eleven manuscripts are listed as opposed to forty; for *al-Simṭ al-Thamīn* (no. 8, p. 57), two manuscripts are listed as opposed to fourteen; al-Muḥibb al-Ṭabarī's *'Awāṭif al-Nuṣrah* (no. 11, p. 57), is preserved in a *unicum* (Princeton, 2275, dated 785 A. H.) that al-Hīlah does not mention. Finally, we do not understand what al-Hīlah's aim is when he limits himself to mentioning just a few manuscripts, as these are not even the most important ones, especially in terms of date of copying. Because a comparison of this material with ours produced this result, we actually fear that this might be only the tip of the iceberg. And our fear also seems to be confirmed by the following corrections and additions which may be added to the preceding remarks:

p. 20: *Kitāb Mizāj al-Nabī* (read *Mizāh*, cf. *GAS* I, p. 318).

p. 20: *al-Muwaffaqiyāt* consisting of nineteen parts, but only parts fifteen to nineteen are preserved in two manuscripts: the one quoted by al-Hīlah and another one in Gotha (Ar. 76, cf. *GAS* I, p. 318). The following edition of this text, based on both manuscripts, seems to have escaped al-Hīlah's attention: *al-Akhhbār al-Muwaffaqiyāt*, ed. S. Makkī al-'Ānī, *Dirāsāt Dīwān al-Awqāf, Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-Islāmī*, no. 7 (Baghdad: Maktabat al-'Ānī, [1392/1972]), 719 pp.; reprint (Qom: Manshūrāt al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, 1996).

p. 25: There is another copy of al-'Uqaylī's *Kitāb al-Du'afā' al-Kabīr*, which is preserved in the Chester Beatty Library, no. 3783 (mentioned in *GAS*).

p. 57: There are three editions of al-Muḥibb al-Ṭabarī's *Ṣafwat al-Qirā'*.¹³

p. 57 : al-Muḥibb al-Ṭabarī's *'Awāṭif al-Nuṣrah* is preserved in a *unicum* (Princeton University Library, MS 2275).

p. 59: al-Jamāl al-Ṭabarī's *al-Tashwīq ilá al-Bayt al-'Atīq* has been edited.¹⁴

p. 153: Richard Mortel¹⁵ refers to another manuscript of al-Najm Ibn Fahd's *al-Durr al-Kamīn* (King Saud University Libraries, Riyadh, MS *fā'* 113/2).

p. 188: al-Hīlah mentions no manuscript for al-Shammā's *al-Durar al-Multaqaṭah* although we found a copy of it in the Chester Beatty Library (MS 3400), where it is entitled *al-Durrah al-Nayyirah min al-Riyāḍ al-'Asharah*.

¹³Ed. Riḍwān Muḥammad Riḍwān (Cairo, 1354/1935), under the title *Ḥijjat al-Muṣṭafá*. The second was also published under the title, *Ḥijjat al-Muṣṭafá* (Cairo, [1981?]). The third was published by Dār al-Ḥadīth in Cairo in 1988, under the same title as the first two (pp. 37-107), together with Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī's *Quwwat al-Ḥajjāj li-'Umūm Maghfirat al-Ḥujjāj* (pp. 7-36), and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīyah's *Awhām al-'Ulamā' fī Ḥijjat al-Nabī* (pp. 109-121).

¹⁴Ed. 'Abd al-Sattār Abū Ghuddah, under the title *al-Tashwīq ilá Ḥajj al-Bayt al-'Atīq* (Cairo, 1413/1993).

¹⁵"Madrasas in Mecca during the Medieval Period: A Descriptive Study Based on Literary Sources," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 60 (1997): 246, note 95.



p. 201: Jār Allāh Ibn Fahd's *Taḥqīq al-Ṣafā' fī Tarājim Banī al-Wafā'* is preserved in a *unicum* in the Chester Beatty Library (MS 4868) and it was transcribed from the author's autograph.

p. 233: Al-Hīlah quotes Sylvestre de Sacy's edition and French translation of al-Jazīrī's *Umdat al-Ṣafwah fī Hill al-Qahwah*, but not Antoine Galland's nonliteral translation.¹⁶

p. 257: There are two other copies (Princeton University Library, MSS 2883 and 4713) of *Tuḥfat al-Ṭālib bi-Ma'rīfat man Yantasibu ilā 'Abd Allāh wa-Abī Ṭālib*.

p. 260: another copy of *al-Risālah al-Maqāmīyah fī Faḍl al-Maqām wa-al-Bayt al-Ḥarām* is to be found in the Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah, MS 8304 ḥā'.¹⁷

p. 299: The number of pages (352) given for the 1316 A.H. edition of *'Uyūn al-Masā'il min A'yān al-Rasā'il* should read 252.

p. 300: The information given for 'Abd al-Qādir al-Ṭabarī's *Kashf al-Niqāb 'an Ansāb al-Arba'ah al-Aqtāb* must be supplemented by the following: This work was indeed published in 1309 A.H., but within *Majmū' Jalīl wa-Mu'allaf 'Adīm: al-Mathīl Mushtamil 'alā Khams Rasā'il 'Āliyat al-Isnād 'Aẓīmat al-Imdād* (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-'Āmirah al-Sharafīyah, 1309), 119 pp.

p. 314: It is said that Muḥammad 'Alī ibn Muḥammad 'Allān used to copy manuscripts to earn his living. Evidence of this information may be found in the Maktabat al-Asad, Damascus, MS 4808, which is a copy of al-Muḥibb al-Ṭabarī's *Dhakhā'ir al-'Uqbā'*, where it is to be found on fol. 1: *min kutub al-faqīr ilā Allāh subḥānahu wa-ta'ālā Muḥammad 'Alī ibn Muḥammad 'Allān al-Ṣiddīqī al-Shāfi'ī khādīm al-ḥadīth al-sharīf bi-al-ḥaram al-makkī*.

p. 385: there are two more copies in the Leiden University Library of al-Sinjārī's *Manā'ih al-Karam* (MSS 7018-19).¹⁸

It must be clear that these additions and corrections are those detected upon the first reading of this book. There is no doubt that further readings might reveal additional shortcomings.

To conclude, al-Hīlah's book remains a good, first step towards the history and the historiography of Mecca that will be useful to students and scholars specializing in this field, especially as a compilation of the manuscripts kept in Mecca and Medina and the contents of published editions. Be that as it may, it must be kept in mind that nobody should rely only on this book in light of the inconsistencies and deficiencies revealed in this review.

¹⁶*De l'origine et du progrès du café, sur un manuscrit arabe de la Bibliothèque du Roy* (Caen and Paris, 1699; reprint, Paris, 1992).

¹⁷See Fu'ād Sayyid, *Fihrist al-Makḥṭūṭāt: Nashrah bi-al-Makḥṭūṭāt allatī Iqtanathā al-Dār min sanah 1936-1955*, 2:186.

¹⁸See P. Voorhoeve, *Handlist of Arabic Manuscripts in the Library of the University of Leiden and Other Collections in the Netherlands*, 182.



AḤMAD IBN ‘ALĪ AL-MAQRĪZĪ, *Durar al-‘Uqūd al-Farīdah fī Tarājim al-A‘yān al-Mufīdah: Qiṭ‘ah minhu*. Edited by ‘Adnān Darwīsh and Muḥammad al-Miṣrī. (Damascus: Wizārat al-Thaqāfah, 1995). Two volumes.

REVIEWED BY DONALD P. LITTLE, McGill University

As Claude Cahen, Li Guo, and I have had occasion to note before, publication of Mamluk texts and historiographical studies has been erratic, with preference often shown to derivative over contemporary sources and with instances of plagiarism and incompetence. The work here under review provides still another example of scholarly caprice.

As is well known, al-Maqrīzī supplemented his famous annalistic and topographical works on Islamic Egypt with biographical dictionaries; indeed, he undertook to do so with at least two such projects. His *Kitāb al-Muqaffā al-Kabīr* was to consist of biographies of famous men from many professions who had flourished in Egypt since the Muslim conquest. According to Ibn Taghrībirdī, these would have filled more than eighty volumes, or sixteen according to al-Sakhāwī.¹ Surviving portions have been edited and published recently in Beirut.² A more specialized work, *Durar al-‘Uqūd*, prepared in the tradition of al-Ṣafadī’s *A‘yān al-‘Aṣr*, was devoted to biographies of al-Maqrīzī’s eminent contemporaries. The rationale for such a book the author set forth rhetorically in the preface:

When I was still close to the age of fifty I had lost most of my friends and intimates. My grief was intense at their loss, and my life went sour thereafter. So I consoled myself with meeting them in remembrance and compensated for not seeing them by listening to reports about them, dictating my information about them in this book, taking pleasure from commemorating them. . . . Then I saw fit to compile the reports about those whom I had encountered, whether in absence or in person, Egyptian or foreign, recording news of kings, amirs, notable scribes and viziers, transmitters of tradition and legists, scholars and poets, both famous or renowned,

¹Ayman Fu’ād Sayyid, ed., *Le manuscrit autographe d’al-Mawā’ iz wa-al-I’tibār fī Dhikr al-Khiṭaṭ wa-al-Āthār* (London, 1995), 50.

²Edited by Muḥammad al-Ya‘lāwī, 8 vols. (Beirut, 1991).



whether men of worldly affairs or seekers of the next world, beginning with the year 760.³

According to Ayman Fu'ād Sayyid, *Durar al-'Uqūd* contained about 666 biographies,⁴ of which the present edition, a fragment, contains 382, all of which cover a person whose name begins either with *alif* or *'ayn*. Oddly enough, although most of the biographees qualify as al-Maqrīzī's contemporaries, a few do not. Perhaps these were intended for *al-Muqaffā'*?

Be that as it may, this edition by Darwīsh and al-Miṣrī is based on a *musawwadah*, a rough draft, in the author's hand, with notes and additions from others. Accordingly, many of the biographies are brief and incomplete, with blanks to have been filled in later. But some are fairly long, complete with quotations of poetry. But what is unique about this edition is the fact that the editors do not reveal the identity of the manuscript they used and refer to it only as "the manuscript which we have relied upon in 177 folios."⁵ With a truly bizarre twist, they present a cropped facsimile of the title page which eliminates the bottom of the page containing the identifying seal of ownership. This despite the fact that there are known to be only two surviving copies, one in the Gotha collection in Germany, and the second, an apparently complete, privately owned copy in Mosul, which its owner has so far declined to publish or share.⁶ Darwīsh and al-Miṣrī were obviously unaware of the latter copy since they express the hope of finding a complete copy some day.⁷ Stranger still, three hundred selected biographies were edited and published in Beirut in 1992 with the title *al-Maqrīzī wa-Kitābuhu Durar al-'Uqūd al-Farīdah fī Tarājim al-A'yān al-Mufīdah*, edited by Muḥammad Kamāl al-Dīn 'Izz al-Dīn 'Alī. It is not for me to speculate as to why Darwīsh and al-Miṣrī saw fit to suppress identification of the Gotha manuscript and neglected to cite the Beirut edition; nor do I know the basis of 'Alī's selection of the biographies he included or omitted since he does not himself state this criterion. Suffice it to say that we now have two independent editions of a surviving autograph fragment of *Durar al-'Uqūd*, one apparently complete, the other obviously not. Of the two, the Damascus edition is clearly the more valuable, especially since the editors have provided copious vowels to the text as well as detailed footnotes. On the other hand, 'Alī has written a valuable introduction describing al-Maqrīzī's methodology as a biographer, whereas the Syrian editors were satisfied for the most part with

³Darwīsh and al-Miṣrī, ed., *Durar al-'Uqūd*, 1:50-51.

⁴Sayyid, ed., *Le manuscrit*, 52.

⁵Darwīsh and al-Miṣrī, ed., *Durar al-'Uqūd*, 1:36.

⁶Sayyid, ed., *Le manuscrit*, 52.

⁷Darwīsh and al-Miṣrī, ed., *Durar al-'Uqūd*, 1:37.



repeating banalities about Arabic biographical literature in general. Neither edition contains a bibliography. As to the value of the source itself for historians, it would seem from the footnotes in both editions that biographies of practically all the subjects are available in other sources, some of which show signs of borrowing from *Durar al-'Uqūd*, so that with the exception of unique biographies, if such there be, the main value of *Durar al-'Uqūd* may turn out to be historiographical.

Strange are the ways of Mamlukologists.

DORIS BEHRENS-ABOUSEIF, *Mamluk and Post-Mamluk Metal Lamps* (Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1995). Pp. 107.

REVIEWED BY NUHA N. N. KHOURY, University of California at Santa Barbara

Objects of illumination, lighting devices, or, simply, lamps perform the same function today as they always have: to "magically" transform a patch of darkness into light. Beyond their basic, necessary function, all lamps—from the most humble portable earthenware oil-and-wick holders to the translucent "cloth" and paper lanterns such as appear in Timurid miniatures, to the plain and enameled glass, glazed ceramic and more labor intensive metal ones—are compound devices in which a light-giving substance is combined with a "holder" and/or body that is capable of becoming a decorative object. Lamps are eminently useful objects for the archeologist and the cultural historian; they provide information on architectural and urban activities, on technologies, materials, and decorative techniques, and, in the case of Islamic ones especially, often also elicit discussions of religious and philosophical views pertaining to light and its metaphorical or allegorical applications.

The Mamluks—or, at least, a particular sector of Mamluk society—favored two general types of suspended lamps: the well-known enameled glass ones that are occasionally inscribed with the Verse of Light, and the punched, incised, inlaid, and otherwise decorated metal lamps often designed to hold a number of "lights," usually small glass oil containers that are sometimes placed in special compartments within or around the metal body. Although some recent studies have expanded our knowledge of these often beautiful objects, there is still much information to be extracted from them, and, in fact, some collections are still incompletely known. A case in point is the important collection of lamps that forms the core of the study under review, at the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo (formerly the Museum of Arab Art), which has remained virtually untouched



Book reviews ©1999 by review authors.

DOI: [10.6082/M11N7Z8H](https://doi.org/10.6082/M11N7Z8H). (<https://doi.org/10.6082/M11N7Z8H>)

DOI of Vol. III: [10.6082/M1765CFB](https://doi.org/10.6082/M1765CFB). See <https://doi.org/10.6082/ZJY1-1449> to download the full volume or individual articles. This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY). See <http://mamluk.uchicago.edu/msr.html> for more information about copyright and open access.

since Gaston Wiet catalogued some samples in his *Objets en cuivre* over sixty years ago. Now, Doris Behrens-Abouseif revisits this collection to study the formal rather than the purely epigraphic aspects of metal lamps produced in Mamluk, Ottoman, and later times (covering the span from the thirteenth through the nineteenth centuries, and including the so-called Mamluk Revival lamps). In the process, she adds a number of unknown or previously unpublished examples, many of which post-date the “classical” moment that has dominated studies of the arts of Syria and Egypt. Her text at once communicates the excitement of discovery, rehabilitates the often ignored later examples, and positions lamps within a general functional framework on the basis of a variety of historical and descriptive accounts.

The book is divided into an introduction discussing lamps and their uses, followed by five succinct but richly illustrated chapters, and a short conclusion on “stylistic evolution.” Of the five chapters that form the body of the book, four are devoted to specific Mamluk types: the *tannūr* (“a monumental type of bronze polycandelon”), “vase-shaped lamps” (considered the classic Islamic type in as much as they have counterparts at other times, elsewhere, and in different media, primarily glass), the *thurayyā* (“polycandelons with spherical shade”), and “pyramid lamps.” The author analyzes these lamps from the point of view of design, manufacture, and decoration, in order to create a catalogue and provide a typology of Mamluk metal lamps. Although some of the attributions of anonymous lamps will no doubt be refined in future, the additional samples offered here, ranging from a lamp at the Mu‘allaqah church in Old Cairo to ones at the Egyptian Ethnographic Museum, are valuable additions to the available repertoire of Mamluk objects.

The stylistic analysis that appears in these chapters is carried forward into the fifth one, which combines different formal types from post-Mamluk times. The arrangement allows the author to view the objects within a larger comparative and chronological framework that aids in the dating and attribution of the anonymous examples on the one hand, and leads to a discussion of the changes in decorative techniques, tastes, and market demands on the other. Thus Behrens-Abouseif is able to point to a continuity—even renewed creativity—in the production and design of metal lamps after Cairo became a provincial capital under the Ottomans; proof of the persistence of local “styles” based on a Mamluk paradigm. The durability of local traditions in the manufacture and decoration of metal lamps apparently justifies the “post-Mamluk” designation, though it remains unclear why this was the case with lamps and not with other sorts of metal objects, which were more open to developments in Istanbul, or why the “vase-shaped” type disappeared from Cairene markets but not in Istanbul. The extent to which still later post-Mamluk metal (as opposed to glass) lamps satisfied primarily antiquarian demands that transformed them into “*objets d’art*,” whether for local consumption or for an



export market, is also problematic. As Behrens-Abouseif's inclusion of these later objects in her catalogue demonstrates, it may be time to reevaluate the evidence arising from the nineteenth and early twentieth century, whose scholars and collectors may have been more captivated by Mamluk products than by their later counterparts.

If the later lamps raise general questions of fashion, manufacture, and market demand, the earlier ones are also implicated in similar problems. The break-down into four formal types, for example, has yet to inform us whether any (and, if so, which) of these types was reserved for domestic uses as opposed to use in mosques or the various religious complexes patronized by the Mamluk elites. The correlation (or lack thereof) between formal types and their functions is of particular interest in regard to Mamluk visual culture, which concentrated on an increasingly limited repertoire of decorative designs. Although this repertoire leads to an immediate identification of Mamluk objects, it does not immediately distinguish functions, leaving such differentiation to larger formal categories or to epigraphy.

Similarly, we are still ill-informed about the material constitution of these objects (even though some are defined by both form and metal, such as the bronze *tannūr* type) and the degree to which they reflect shortages in raw materials (studies that require extensive and expensive technical analyses). However, this raises the issue of possible correspondences between medium, terminology, form, and specific functions and uses as sources of information, as is the case, for instance, with the gold and silver lamps that were donated to shrines and/or used on special occasions, or the *fānūs*, a special functional type discussed by the author and associated with Ramadan celebrations. Although there are rare instances in which an inscription provides its carrier object with a name (for example, the *thurayyā* discussed on p. 43), the vocabulary associated with the lamps remains ambiguous, and there is little attempt here to use terminology as an informative category that may correlate to specific metals, formal types, or uses. This lacuna is particularly striking in regard to Mamluk times, for which we possess copious amounts of historical sources, dictionaries, and *waqf* deeds that have been used in other analyses of material remains and some of which are also used by the author in discussions of certain lamps. Despite this wealth of information, it is, of course, often difficult to connect textual data with actual objects. Still, it would have been interesting to know if, for instance, lamps—or certain types of lamps—were among the objects included in bridal dowries among other essential household furnishings, information that is likely available in some of the same sources that are used to set the scene in the introduction and that do not always correspond to the temporal frameworks of the objects under discussion. Ferreting out such information would add immeasurably to our understanding of Mamluk lamps as objects of daily life, as opposed to their persistent association with mosques and shrines, and would



enhance our knowledge of the typological, functional, and terminological varieties in which they exist. Similarly, the author's incidental reference to olive oil also raises the question of lamp fuels, which are likely to have been less costly vegetable and mineral by-products. These incidentals are yet another part of the reason why lamps are such valuable indicators of the economies and means as well as the tastes and activities of their societies and users. Raising such questions, however, goes beyond the stated aims of the book, whose focus is the formal typology of the lamps and their decorations.

In the end, it is decoration, more than any other aspect, that frames this study of Mamluk and post-Mamluk metal lamps. The lamps are decorated in a variety of designs and techniques, with floral and geometric patterns produced through incising, inlay, *repoussé*, *à-jour* perforation, and various other, less delicate open-work techniques. Many of the lamps carry inscriptions that are either inlaid or "silhouetted" through open-work. As is usual for Mamluk objects, the inscriptions on the more expensive commissions often include the patron's name or titles along with Quranic quotations, with the Verse of Light associated with Mamluk glass lamps noted by the author for its conspicuous absence from the metal ones.

The open-work technique is particularly fitting for objects that play with light and shade, and in which decoration—and the objects themselves—take on one aspect when the lamps are not in use and another when they are lit. The complexity of these effects increases when other materials, such as pieces of colored glass, are incorporated into the lamps. In this respect, these metal lamps most clearly illustrate the additional layer of visual complexity that is a hallmark of Islamic decorative arts. Behrens-Abouseif's sensitivity to this quality is indicated by her inclusion of illustrations of lit lamps, a rare and welcome occurrence that underscores the use of light itself as a medium of decoration. It is in this use, which effects the dematerialization of the surface itself through light, that the objects take on their most striking appearance. These qualities lead to comparisons with Quranic imagery, thereby once again reflecting the tension that exists between the practical need for light and the urge to interpret its carriers and their decorations. The "magical" properties of lamps are thus reasserted, but how far these properties can lead us toward a better understanding of the technical and social aspects of these objects, of their various contextual uses, and of contemporaneous interpretations of light and its metaphoric representations remains a topic for further investigation.

Behrens-Abouseif's book is then a valuable contribution not only because it adds to the repertoire of Mamluk and post-Mamluk metal lamps, providing several previously unknown examples and placing them within a considered formal typology, but also because it continues to reflect questions that need to be raised and, eventually, answered.



YĀSĪN AL-AYYŪBĪ, *Āfāq al-Shi‘r al-‘Arabī fī al-‘Aṣr al-Mamlūkī* (Tripoli, Lebanon: Jarrūs Priss, 1995). Pp. 560.

REVIEWED BY TH. EMIL HOMERIN, University of Rochester

This introduction to Mamluk poetry is largely descriptive and somewhat disorganized. Al-Ayyūbī quotes over two thousand verses, but usually in an anecdotal fashion, and so his overall literary analysis is superficial. Further, he draws the vast majority of this verse from published biographical and historical works from the period. Though he occasionally cites several published collections of Mamluk poetry, he never refers to manuscripts, nor to any of the essential studies of the Mamluk period published during the last twenty years, whether by Western or Arab scholars. This is a glaring weakness in the book's first section (pp. 15-98), where the author attempts to frame this verse within its historical, political, and cultural contexts. When listing the great Circassian sultans, for example, he omits reference to Qāyṭbāy, while his comparison of the Baḥrī and Burjī Mamluk periods is based largely on a long quote from al-Maqrīzī. This Mamluk historian lauded the Baḥrī reign as a golden age in contrast to the later period in which he lived. Yet, al-Ayyūbī never questions al-Maqrīzī's personal stake in the matter and, similarly, he accepts other Mamluk historical and biographical sources as unbiased objective accounts.

The situation improves little when al-Ayyūbī turns from politics to culture, as he adduces evidence of an intellectual life from lists of scholars migrating to Cairo. Then, following an uncritical discussion of important religious and cultural institutions, including the *madrasah* and the mosque, al-Ayyūbī cites the titles and authors of over eighty-five works composed during the Mamluk period on subjects ranging from Quranic commentary, biography, and history, to rhetoric and the belles lettres. Conspicuous by its absence here is any review of collections of poetry, whether by a single author or compiled by anthologists.

The second and longest section of the book is loosely organized around poetic genres and themes, beginning with *madīḥ*, or panegyric (pp. 101-37). Al-Ayyūbī cites examples of verse lauding individuals' good qualities, especially those of the poets' Mamluk patrons. At one point, he draws attention to Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Ḥillī's (d. 749/1349) conscious comparison of the poet's praising his patron to the latter's bestowal of honors on his poet (p. 111). Yet this intriguing reference to the intertwined issues of aesthetics, honor, and ritual exchange is left behind. Instead, al-Ayyūbī quickly outlines recurring themes and elements in panegyrics



Book reviews ©1999 by review authors.

DOI: [10.6082/M11N7Z8H](https://doi.org/10.6082/M11N7Z8H). (<https://doi.org/10.6082/M11N7Z8H>)

DOI of Vol. III: [10.6082/M1765CFB](https://doi.org/10.6082/M1765CFB). See <https://doi.org/10.6082/ZJY1-1449> to download the full volume or individual articles. This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY). See <http://mamluk.uchicago.edu/msr.html> for more information about copyright and open access.

of Muḥammad by describing one of al-Būṣīrī's (d. 694/1295) odes to the Prophet. Al-Ayyūbī regards these panegyrics as a subset of poetry in praise of God, and due to its overtly religious themes, he accepts this verse as more sincere than poetry composed for sultans and amirs. Even if true, it is quite clear that these poets, too, offered their praise in hopes of reward, albeit of a more heavenly coin.

Next, al-Ayyūbī reviews the Mamluk *ghazal*, or love poem (pp. 138-61), which he divides into two broad categories. First is the chaste and virtuous 'Udhri style verse, which was a favorite among the Mamluk Sufi poets. Nevertheless, some of them occasionally referred to the beloved's physical features, if only symbolically, and this leads al-Ayyūbī to a brief review of his second type of love poem, that of sensuality. Whether the subject be male or female, al-Ayyūbī notes, most of this love verse followed earlier models, though with the rhetorical flare characteristic of the Mamluk period. Al-Ayyūbī reaches a similar stylistic conclusion regarding Mamluk *rithā'*, or elegy (pp. 162-80). He divides elegies between those referring unambiguously to historical persons or events, and more general elegies that could be offered for any number of deceased persons. This division, however, is of little critical use as it ignores the importance of standardized themes and their repetition, which are crucial to successful elegies as poets attempt to place their personal sorrow within more universal contexts. Al-Ayyūbī does draw attention to the elegy's broader social and cultural dimensions in his comments on elegies for lost lands and cities, particularly on the traumatic fall of Baghdad.

Al-Ayyūbī's next chapter on *hijā'*, or invective verse, is surprisingly brief given the prominence of this genre in the earlier periods of Arabic literature (pp. 181-191). Yet, al-Ayyūbī argues that this was not a favored form during the Mamluk period, perhaps due to the decline in tribal rivalries. As a result, he claims, Mamluk invective verse tended more toward wit and charm than to scathing insults and personal attacks. Most of al-Ayyūbī's examples resonate with light-hearted or comic tones, as when a wife berates her miserly husband, or when a poet deplores the sorry state of his vermin-infested house. Still, in a later section on social criticism (pp. 238-58), al-Ayyūbī cites many other verses that underscore invective's persistent power to demonize one's enemies, as well as to serve as a form of social protest.

Wasf, or descriptive poetry, is the subject of the next chapter (pp. 192-222), which quickly becomes tedious as al-Ayyūbī quotes numerous verses cataloging an assortment of human features, animals, plants, and "inanimate objects," including descriptions of cities, and references to the Black Death of 1348-50. Several quatrains on the plague suggest the destructive and demoralizing impact of this pandemic on Muslim life, society, and religion, although al-Ayyūbī seems unaware of such implications or its possible effects on poetry.



Turning to verse of self-praise and personal bravery, *fakhr* and *ḥamāsah* (pp. 227-37), al-Ayyūbī notes the scarcity of boasting matches among Mamluk poets and suggests that this may be due to their homogeneity in terms of social rank and class, and the lack of religious rivalries among them. His one exception is Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Ḥillī, who devoted a section of his *Dīwān* to such poems inspired by the murder of his uncle and tribal chief, for whom the poet demands revenge in the defiant tone of many pre-Islamic odes. The obvious similarities between the genres of *fakhr* and *ḥamāsah*, *hijā'*, and *madīḥ* raise the question as to why al-Ayyūbī did not treat them in a more coherent fashion, particularly in light of his following sections which take up the larger thematic issues of poetry and social criticism (pp. 238-58) and the poets' relationship to their patrons and power (pp. 259-84). Al-Ayyūbī quotes verses from poets calling for control of marauding bedouins, tax-collectors, and exorbitant prices, and then devotes considerable space to Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī's (d. 771/1370) critiques of unqualified religious officials, and al-Būṣīrī's harangues against corrupt amirs and their civil servants. Al-Ayyūbī then reprints an earlier article on relations between poets and their Mamluk patrons, noting the participation of poets in Mamluk ceremonies and their roles within the civil service as secretaries and press men, who were assigned to record favorably Mamluk military campaigns and public policies.

The final seven chapters of the book's second section take up a number of prominent cultural themes and issues mentioned earlier in discussions of the genres. On wisdom and manners (pp. 285-305), al-Ayyūbī cites verses on the brevity of life, the importance of friendship, and the golden mean, while his chapter on complaint and longing (pp. 306-39) revolves around laments for lost beloveds, one's home far away, or for the holy lands of Mecca and Medina. His chapter on wine poetry also contains a few verses on hashish but not on mystical wine (pp. 340-50), though Sufi elements are evident in the chapter on ascetic poetry (pp. 351-60). Verse on the strange and the marvelous (pp. 361-78) and examples of verse riddles and puzzles (pp. 394-404) conclude this second section.

In the book's third and final section, al-Ayyūbī briefly describes common stylistic and structural elements of Mamluk poetry, including *tawriyah* (double-entendre), *jinās* (paronomasia), and the use of grammatical, rhetorical, and other technical terms in verse (pp. 409-34). He also gives examples of narrative poems, especially on the life of Muḥammad, and Mamluk military campaigns, and some colloquial verse (*zajal*) on political events and crises (pp. 435-66). He then ends the work with a short chapter on didactic poetry, including that on morals, Arabic grammar, and poetics (pp. 467-85).

Al-Ayyūbī could have improved his book significantly had he been more informed and analytical regarding this poetry's social, political, and religious contexts. Rather than following the standard introduction by genre, he might have



integrated his chapter on poet-patron relations into his introduction, to be followed by his thematic studies on poetry in Mamluk life and culture. Genres should be discussed, but the overall emphasis would be on the life and world views of the cultural elite which, in turn, would give more credence to al-Ayyūbī's dependence on historical and biographical sources. Granted, the focus of the book would be different, but by so doing al-Ayyūbī could have made a far more substantial and original contribution to the study of Arabic literature in the Mamluk period.

MAḤMŪD AL-SAYYID, *Tārīkh 'Arab al-Shām fī al-'Aṣr al-Mamlūkī* (Alexandria: Mu'assasat Shabāb al-Jāmi'ah, 1997). Pp. 255.

REVIEWED BY STEFAN H. WINTER, The University of Chicago

The relative paucity of specialized studies on Syrian Mamluk history makes Maḥmūd al-Sayyid's short book on the Arab tribes of al-Shām a particularly welcome contribution to the field. In it, the author takes exception to the conventional image of the refractory bedouin in perennial conflict with the central state authority, and argues instead for the Syrian tribes' loyalty to the Mamluk regime and their contribution to Islamicate culture in that period. While not entirely successful in proving this, the case he presents is happily long on scholarly references and short on (viz. devoid of) nationalist or religious jingoism.

The book's four chapters comprise an overview of Syrian society under the Mamluks, Arab tribal *'aṣabīyah* in Syria, and the tribes' political and "civilizational" roles in the Mamluk age. These chapters are preceded by a section somewhat inaccurately titled "source criticism," in which the author discusses the wide range of documentary, narrative, and archeological sources available to the historian. While he freely cites western scholarly literature throughout, he uses nothing more recent than 1975, and the text consequently lacks any reference to actual problems or debates within the discipline. Nor indeed does al-Sayyid engage in any critical reflection on his primary sources, a fact compounded by the book's fatal dependence on al-Maqrīzī, al-Qalqashandī and Ibn Iyās.

The first chapter is meant to provide a geographical, administrative, social, and religious sketch of Syria under the Mamluks. To this monumental task it can do little justice, and the reader is left with only some ahistoric generalities on Syria's ethnic and societal composition that appear either mundane or ill-informed. In particular, the assertions that Hanbalism was the principal *madhhab* and the Protestants an important Christian minority in Mamluk Syria do not inspire



confidence. Al-Sayyid's mention of some select Arab tribes does little more than anticipate the discussion of later chapters. The references to Kurds, Turkmen, Druze, and their contribution to certain military campaigns, frame the author's ideological concept of a multicultural Syrian nation united in its support for the Mamluk regime against its foreign enemies. The final chapter suffers from a similar lack of focus, encompassing aspects of Mamluk-era culture at large on the one hand and reaching back to describe great Syrian literateurs from previous centuries on the other. Among the more pertinent and interesting passages is perhaps the discussion of the bedouins' dress and the gifts received from al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in return for horses (pp. 194-97).

The second chapter concentrates more specifically on the bedouin tribes, and in particular how politics in Syria have been played out historically against a backdrop of tribal rivalries when these could not be subsumed into a single ideology (such as Islam) directed against an external foe. However, the author makes no attempt to come to any sociological, Khaldunian understanding of *'aṣabīyah* and is content simply to reduce the dynamics and complexity of tribalism throughout Syrian history to the timeless and overarching Qays vs. Yemen rivalry. Thus the genius of the Syrian tribes is defeated by the Abbasids, re-emerges with the Hamdanids to struggle against Persian, Turkish, and Byzantine encroachment, and attains its full flowering with the coming of the Mamluks. The third chapter, covering the political and military role of the Syrian tribes, serves the author's central thesis that the Arabs of Syria pursued a conscious policy in supporting the Mamluk regime, in war and in peace, throughout its 250-year existence. The argument rarely transcends an *histoire événementielle* of battles and rebellions, from 'Ayn Jālūt to Marj Ḍābiq, in which certain tribal groups (thence "the Arabs of Syria") fought on the side of the Mamluks, receiving fiefs (*iqṭā'*) or even political office in return. The heroes of the story are unquestionably the Āl Faḍl and, in particular, 'Īsā ibn Muḥannā and his progeny, who were confirmed as official tribal *zu'amā'* by successive sultans and even enjoyed a measure of political influence in Cairo. The Arabs, we are told finally, would even have held out against the Ottoman Turks had Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī sent reinforcements to chief Ibn Ḥanash in time.

In sum, the reader interested in the Syrian tribes might do better to refer back to the relevant parts in Gaudefroy-Demombynes's *La Syrie à l'époque des mamelouks*. The complex issues of urban center vs. nomadic province and of foreign elite and domestic legitimization raised by al-Sayyid serve foremost to recall that the sub-field of Syrian Mamluk history still desperately awaits the sort of narrative study Thierry Bianquis has devoted to the Fatimid era. While this particular work suffers from some critical shortcomings, al-Sayyid deserves credit for his care and evenhandedness in addressing the question of Arab tribal support



for the sultans. His differentiation between the purported Syrian collaboration with, and Egyptian disdain for, the Mamluks, although not entirely original and here not exploited sufficiently, is noteworthy, as is his readiness also to cite evidence contrary to his central arguments. Finally, though the book cannot pretend to have made exhaustive use of the available literature, the author's meticulous footnoting and well-organized bibliography (but unfortunately no index) make it a potentially useful tool for the specialist wishing to locate particular items connected with the bedouin tribes of Mamluk Syria.

BAYYŪMĪ ISMĀ'ĪL AL-SHIRBĪNĪ, *Muṣādarat al-Amlāk fī al-Dawlah al-Islāmīyah (Aṣr Salāṭīn al-Mamālīk)* (Cairo: al-Ḥay'ah al-Miṣrīyah al-‘Āmmah lil-Kitāb, 1997). Two volumes.

REVIEWED BY MARLIS SALEH, The University of Chicago

The term "*muṣādarah*," as used in medieval Islamic administration, refers firstly to "an agreement with someone over the payment of taxation due." Its most frequent and characteristic meaning, however, is "the mulcting of an official of his (usually) ill-gotten gains or spoils of office."¹ Readers of Mamluk chronicles cannot fail to be struck by the pervasiveness of *muṣādarah* (or confiscation, as we may loosely translate the term); virtually no individual of any prominence seems to have escaped unscathed by it. It therefore appears to be a topic well worth isolation and focused study. Little attention, however, seems to have been paid to the phenomenon per se; I have come across only a slim volume, approximately half of whose 120 pages are devoted to the Mamluk period.² The present substantial two-volume work, originally the author's doctoral dissertation at the University of al-Manṣūrah, thus promised to be a welcome addition to the list of studies devoted to specific aspects of Mamluk history and economic life.

Following a preface discussing the difficulties encountered in doing the research for the book and then outlining it in considerable detail, Shirbīnī begins with a brief introduction defining *muṣādarah* and overviewing its use prior to the Mamluk period. He starts out with the Muslim world in general through the Umayyad age, and then narrows his focus to Egypt.

¹C. E. Bosworth, "Muṣādarah," *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., 7:652-53.

²Muḥammad Bahjat Mukhtār 'Uṣfūr, *al-Muṣādarah fī Miṣr al-Islāmīyah min al-Faṭḥ al-Islāmī ḥattā Nihāyat 'Aṣr al-Mamālīk (20-923 H./641-1517 M.)* (Cairo, 1990).



Chapter 1, "The Nature of and Reasons for Confiscation in the Mamluk Age," establishes the pattern which is followed throughout the succeeding three chapters. The author divides the reasons for confiscation into the general categories of political, economic, social, and unknown, subdividing each category and providing examples. He next discusses the types of confiscation, which are really more reasons looked at from a different angle: confiscation was used to punish, for reasons of fiscal administration, and to provide compensation.

Shirbīnī proceeds to discuss the personnel and the specific procedures involved in actually carrying out a confiscation. This is one of the more interesting sections of the book, and highlights the potential value of an intensive study of a narrowly defined topic, describing as it does in detail the sort of information which would normally not be dealt with in a more general work. He then goes on to discuss the amounts and types of items which could be seized in a confiscation, the various localities where they could be deposited and the procedures for recording them, and the final fates which befell people whose property was confiscated.

A number of problems with the book become apparent in this first chapter. First of all, the author quotes the specific figure 3306 as the number of confiscations carried out in the Mamluk period, without ever explaining how he arrived at it. Judging by the footnotes and the appended chart, he went through the standard chronicles, but nowhere does he discuss his methodology. He then uses this figure to come up with specific percentages of this or that type of confiscation under one sultan as compared to another, lending a scientific aura to the data which it may not deserve.

An even more important flaw, undermining what could have been the primary value of the book, is that the author does not stick to his chosen topic. Instead, he widens his scope to consider virtually any action involving the state whereby anyone suffered a loss of wealth or property as a "form of" *muṣādarah*. This includes everything from any sort of non-canonical taxation, to debasement of coinage, to the sultan's visiting an *iqtā'* holder who was then obliged to give his royal guest gifts. The book thus becomes much too diffuse, offering superficial discussions of practically every aspect of economic life.

Chapter 2, "Confiscations and Men of State," and Chapter 3, "Confiscations and the Rest of the People," follow the paradigm established in Chapter 1 for discussing confiscations: reasons, types, procedures, types of property, localities of deposit, and final fate of the victim(s), each time applied specifically to men of state and to the general populace respectively. This naturally makes for a great deal of repetition, and any differences there may have been between the groups that would benefit from this presentation are obscured rather than highlighted.

In Chapter 4, "Confiscations and Family Resources," the author shows that despite the fact that one of the major motives for putting property into pious



endowments (*waqf*) was to attempt to protect it from government rapacity, *waqfs* were in fact regularly plundered under various pretexts. Once again, he puts the material through its assigned paces as set down in Chapter 1. Oddly, he feels compelled to adduce some positive aspects of state despoilment of *waqfed* resources, which include the return of capital to the active economy as well as forcing idle sufis from their parasitic existence back into the labor market.

Chapter 5, "The Effects of Confiscations on the Nature of the Mamluk State," contains a hodgepodge of observations on everything from the decline of Egyptian agriculture due to the *iqtā'* system, to the European discovery of the Cape of Good Hope sea route around Africa. Once again, the book's lack of focus proves detrimental.

The Conclusion rehashes a number of mostly obvious points that have been made repeatedly before (e.g., men of state suffered confiscation more frequently than the general public). Most of the author's major conclusions—for example, that confiscations were one of the principal sources of state income, and that their implementation was a symptom of the political and economic decline of the state due to the atrophy of agricultural production—are reduced to banalities by his lumping virtually every source of revenue exploited by the state under the umbrella of "*muṣādarah*."

The work concludes with several appendices. First comes a *fatwá* from al-Azhar, requested by the author, on whether or not the practice of *muṣādarah* is permissible. Though throughout the book the author has made it clear that the practice, at least as implemented by the Mamluks, is shocking to his personal religious sentiments, disappointingly, the *fatwá* supports its use under circumstances "approved by Islam."

Next come two charts, which are not labelled. The first presents the name of the sultan, the name of the *shādd al-dawāwīn* [the official usually responsible for execution of confiscations ordered by the sultan], the year, comments [on the fate of the *shādd al-dawāwīn*], and sources.

The second chart is potentially more useful. It lists the name of the person or group whose goods were confiscated/his office/year/name of the sultan/executor of the confiscation/type of confiscation/amount/place of deposit/final fate of the victim. In other words, it is basically a schematic distillation of Chapters 1 through 4 of the preceding book, in chronological order. However, as noted, the author has stated that 3306 confiscations occurred during the Mamluk period; this chart contains only 1222 entries. On what basis were these 1222 extracted from the total? The author gives us no clue.

Despite its considerable length, *Muṣādarat al-Amlāk* feels more like an outline for a book than an actual finished work. There is virtually no sustained prose, with each point developing and leading into the next point. Rather, the book is formatted



as a series of discrete lists. An opening paragraph will state, for example, that there were various economic motives for confiscation, then the author will proceed to recount them in list form. Individual items range in length from an incomplete phrase to several pages. The lists are often nested within each other down to several levels, and are enumerated in various ways, such as by numbers, letters, bullets, and flowers, which do not follow a standardized nesting order. This makes it very confusing for the reader suddenly coming upon a *jīm* or a 7 or a bullet in the middle of a page, who is then forced to flip back to discover whether this is a new item in the overarching list, or in a sub-list at the second or third level down. To make matters even more confusing, the author occasionally slips up in the numbering.

Notes, though copious, are extremely difficult to use, due mainly to the author's resorting to "op. cit." and its Arabic equivalent (*al-marjī' al-sābiq*). To cite only one example, if the reader is interested in tracking down the reference to a work by Ḍūmaṭ in note 3 on page 290, he must page back through hundreds of notes on hundreds of pages until finally arriving at a full citation (buried within a footnote containing dozens of citations) in note 1 on page 18. In addition, the text of the footnotes is riddled with errors; the references to Western works in particular are virtually certain to contain typos and are often garbled to the point of unintelligibility. Bizarrely, a bibliography promised and described in detail in the introduction (divided into documents, manuscripts, printed texts, and modern sources [Arabic and foreign]), is nowhere to be found.

Despite its promising title, *Muṣādarat al-Amlāk* is a disappointment. If the author had confined himself to the topic (narrowly defined) and had made use of a good editor, this could have been a much more useful work.

‘AṢIM MUḤAMMAD RIZQ, *Khānqāwāt al-Ṣūfiyah fī Miṣr*. Vol. 1: *Fī al-‘Aṣrayn al-Ayyūbī wa-al-Mamlūkī*. Vol. 2: *Fī ‘Aṣr Dawlat al-Mamālīk al-Burjīyah* (Cairo: Maktabat Madbūlī, 1997). Pp. 875.

REVIEWED BY TH. EMIL HOMERIN, University of Rochester

During the Mamluk period, nearly fifty *khānqāhs* were founded in or around Cairo alone, suggesting the prominence and importance of this religious institution to medieval Muslims. Nearly two dozen of these *khānqāhs* are profiled and extensively described by ‘Aṣim Muḥammad Rizq in this two-volume work, prefaced by three short introductions which outline, in very general terms: 1) the earlier



Book reviews ©1999 by review authors.

DOI: [10.6082/M11N7Z8H](https://doi.org/10.6082/M11N7Z8H). (<https://doi.org/10.6082/M11N7Z8H>)

DOI of Vol. III: [10.6082/M1765CFB](https://doi.org/10.6082/M1765CFB). See <https://doi.org/10.6082/ZJY1-1449> to download the full volume or individual articles. This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY). See <http://mamluk.uchicago.edu/msr.html> for more information about copyright and open access.

history of the *khānqāh* and the related institutions of the *ribāṭ* and *zāwiyah* (vol. 1, pp. 21-35); 2) the development of Sufism (vol. 1, pp. 39-63); and 3) architectural features of the *khānqāh* in Mamluk Egypt (vol. 1, pp. 67-123). These chapters offer nothing new, as Rizq reiterates the traditional interpretation of the *khānqāh* as an educational institution meant to spread Sunni Islam among the masses in opposition to Shi'ism. Rizq goes on to claim that, despite this noble origin, the *khānqāh* in the twilight years of the Mamluk period was often the site of outlandish un-Islamic practices encouraged by the ruling elite, and hidden from the larger public under the guise of Sufism (vol. 1, p. 57).

By this point in the book, it is painfully apparent that Rizq has accepted medieval criticism of the *khānqāhs* at face value, and that he is largely unaware of the extensive scholarship devoted to Sufism and its institutions over the last thirty years. Most telling in this regard is Rizq's failure to refer to even one of the many in-depth studies of the *khānqāh* by either Leonor Fernandes or Doris Behrens-Abouseif; also missing are references to similarly important work by Donald P. Little, J. Chabbi, Muḥammad Muḥammad Amīn, and others. Further, although Rizq knows of the many *waqf* documents detailing *khānqāh* endowments and lists them in his bibliography, he rarely cites them directly, choosing to rely instead on secondary sources, particularly Ibn al-Jī'ān and 'Alī Mubārak.

Clearly, *Khānqāwāt al-Ṣūfiyah fī Miṣr* is a disappointment, especially given its size and, moreover, the importance of its topic. But the work may still be of some use to the careful reader, for Rizq has expended great effort to detail the physical remains and reconstruct the floor plans of a number of *khānqāhs*, and each *khānqāh* reviewed is recorded by diagram and several photographs. Further, Rizq has combed published Arabic sources from the Mamluk period to record the names and occupations of those who studied or worked in these *khānqāhs*, and he usually cites verbatim or slightly abridges the sources. Nevertheless, Rizq draws few conclusions from this mass of evidence, other than such well-established facts as, for example, that Sufis in the *khānqāhs* also assumed non-mystical functions there, such as serving as an *imām* (vol. 2, p. 663), or that Sufis performed their duties at other religious establishments in addition to the *khānqāhs* (vol. 2, p. 587). Sadly, Rizq never tells his reader what these "Sufi duties" were, nor why they were important to religion and society in the Mamluk domains. Indeed, the daily performance of the *ḥuḍūr* with its Quran recitations and prayers, and not teaching, was the primary mission of the *khānqāh* Sufis, and though many *waqf* deeds assign funds for teaching law, *ḥadīth*, and other religious subjects, references in medieval sources to the teaching of Sufism in the *khānqāhs* are conspicuous by their absence. But readers will not find discussion of this or similarly important issues in Rizq's largely descriptive and superficial work.

