

Stephan Conermann (ed.)

Mamluk Historiography Revisited - Narratological Perspectives

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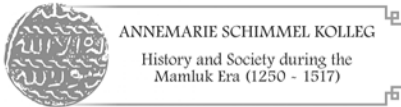
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Cover image: aḍ-Ḍahabī (geb. 1274; gest. 1348): Taʾrīḥ al-islām ("Geschichte des Islam")

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On the Art of Writing History in Mamluk Times¹

When reading historiographies, modern historians of premodern societies sometimes have to decide what they want: to reconstruct everyday life? or to deal with indigenous discourses? Depending on one's choice, historiographical texts can be interpreted very differently. If tracing "actual" social orders and events is deemed more important, then criteria such as "credibility," "reliability," and "adherence to facts" come to play a greater role than the underlying literary composition or the social and temporal threads of discourses woven into it. Most scholars prefer not to know how a chronicle "works," how it is structured, which narrative strategies are used, or which genre-specific principles are operative. Rather, they desire to know only whether the described experiences are "true." Since the latter attitude was (and still is) widespread in the scientific community, all three editions of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* contain multiple negative assessments of premodern Muslim historians.² They are described as "unreliable" or "unoriginal"; they are considered to have copied from their predecessors' works without mentioning their sources; or in fact to offer nothing new at all. In a historical work apparently the only part considered reliable is that in which the author describes his own time, based on his own experience, knowledge, or the statements of eyewitnesses. The non contemporary parts of earlier chronicles are of interest only when they enable the recovery of lost writings. Otherwise, these are simply omitted in editions – although they are often greater in scope than the parts concerning current affairs. Incidentally, this also occurs with poetic inputs, also considered to be "irrelevant."

Particularly compilations that, by definition, are a collection of texts created by "excerpting, citing, and merging" from several sources³ were (and are) the objects of harsh criticism. In antiquity, compilations were used mainly to pre-

1 The first part of this Introduction (up to the summaries of the contributions) is based on a translation of Conermann (2015), 7–17. I thank the EB-Verlag for permitting me to re-use the text.

2 See Krenkow/Little 1995, 759a, or Cahen 1986, 768b.

3 Fedaku 2012, 282–283.

serve existing materials and to make them more broadly available. Later, historians sought to gather all traditions handed down from various sources and to compile this knowledge into one work. However, with the rise of a new “culture of knowledge” in the 18th and 19th centuries, philosophers and intellectuals began questioning this central concept of knowledge systematization in the premodern era, preferring the discovery of new knowledge over the study of existing materials. Compilations now came to be considered “a mental lack of independence and originality.”⁴ This pejorative assessment is still attached to the compilatory activity of early historians, even to the extent of alleging plagiarism: The mere copying of a work causes it to lose its scientific claim. The accusation of plagiarism is, in fact, one of the fundamental points of criticism of historical research in the 20th century brought against the works of premodern Muslim historians. Furthermore, the accusation of “Oriental storytelling” was quite frequently raised.⁵ Only after the responses to Hayden White’s *Metahistory* in the 1970s and 1980s⁶ did the narrative turn approach redirect the focus toward historiography. This gave way to a cautious reappraisal of historiographical writings from the Islamic Middle Ages and the (early) modern era,⁷ where no longer solely the usability, credibility, and originality of the “historical facts” in the relevant works were considered the only criteria for evaluating a source. Like other types of text, historiographies could now be considered as literary products created by individuals. Nevertheless, the accusation of plagiarism persisted, so that even today, the view is still widespread in contemporary research that text passages compiled from original texts are less interesting and therefore less valuable than original texts by an author. This conclusion assumes that an author contributes little to nothing to a text composed of various texts written by others and is largely in line with the definition by Helmut Utzschneider and Stefan Ark Nitsche in their otherwise excellent *Arbeitsbuch literaturwissenschaftliche Bibelauslegung*.⁸ There, they propose a methodology for the exegesis of the Old Testament which stands in contrast to other forms of textual appropriation:

“We shall speak of *compilation* [emphasis in the original, SC] when at least two basic or original texts with similar duktus were intertwined and interwoven, so that from this a new text was created which selectively includes the duktus and the materials of the present records. What is characteristic of this process of compilation is, above all, that

4 Fedaku 2012, 284–285.

5 See, for example, Mommsen 2008, 6.

6 See Paul 2011 and Doran 2013.

7 See Conermann 2002, Shoshan 2004, Hirschler 2006, and Guinle 2011. For the European medieval historiography, see Schütte/Rzehak/Lizius 2014.

8 Utzschneider/Nitsche 2005.

the compiler himself does not speak, or only very sparingly, in the text of the compilation.”⁹

Utzschneider and Nitsche designate the underlying basic text as the “independent text” or the “original text” and the second text inscribed on this basic text or multiple templates as the “non independent text” or the “editing text.”¹⁰ Clearly, an author who uses compilation as a work technique is considered to be less an independently writing individual than a purely reproductive writer.

In contrast to such a perception, and in defense of a new understanding of compilation as a writing technique of independently working authors, stands the investigation of Kurt Franz. His book, published in 2004, focuses on the description in Arab historiographies of the 9th to 15th centuries of the revolt of the Zang in Mesopotamia between 869 and 883 against the Abbasids.¹¹ Unlike many others, Franz considers compiling a literary activity, compilations textual products, and the compilation process a relationship between writers as well as between texts. The very carefully argued and exemplarily structured study impressively argues that premodern compilation means something completely different from mere plagiarism. At the very end of the paper, Franz provides us with a definition of the term “compilation” based on the results of his analysis; this should be kept in mind by any Muslim scholar (or any historian, for that matter) who works with premodern historiographical texts:

“Historiographic compilation means, in the simple case, the reductive, materially dependent, and – with regard to the choice of materials, arrangement, and text shape – more or less independent transmission of good to a particular object or interval of at least one, usually only one identifiable written template by one self-identifying writer within a chronicle or a chronological part of the work alongside other such traditions. The resulting compilation forms a text that represents a revision analects or transcript, according to the compiler’s work as an editor, writer, collector, or narrator. The compilation chronicle is typically composed of a sequence of texts that overlap neither in subject nor in terms of time. Generally, the writer endeavors to be objective and abstains from introducing intentional distortions or inventions, but sometimes limits the documentary value of transmissions. The succession of several stages of such traditions in at least one dependency line results in an intertextual compilation process. Because of spatial distance from the scene of the reported subject, increasing temporal distance from the original submission, and the increasing complexity of the compilation process, the factual correctness of individual traditions suffers and distorts the relationship between actual and alleged dependency.”¹²

9 Utzschneider/Nitsche 2005, 248.

10 Utzschneider/Nitsche 2005, 247.

11 Franz 2004.

12 Franz 2004, 274–275.

Thus, Franz no longer defines compilation as “stealing” the intellectual property of others, but as an independent work technique specific to premodern Islamic chronicles and historiographies. According to his definition, compilations may be seen as textual products; and in contrast to the above presented viewpoint of Utzschneider and Nitsche, Franz judges the act of compilation explicitly as the intentional action of an individual. Tracing the compilation process reveals not only intertextual connections and dependencies, but also makes the story of the connections between authors (more) comprehensible, providing insights into the reception and analysis of texts in different (cultural) historical contexts.

This reassessment of the innovative opportunities available to premodern historians in the form of compilation should be considered together with the information we have about the work techniques of premodern Muslim historians. Although Franz Rosenthal already touched on the subject in 1947 in his study “The Technique and the Approach to Muslim Scholarship,”¹³ it was Ulrich Haarmann who provided interesting insights into this topic in the context of his dissertation from 1970.¹⁴ Among other things, his thesis examine the chronicle *Ḥawādith al-zamān* of the Ḥadīth-scholar and notary al-Jazarī (1260–1338), which is especially fascinating because it served at least eight, mostly much more renowned early Mamluk historians as the main template for their own historiographies. In addition, it was also used by all well-known Mamluk historians of the 15th and 16th centuries.¹⁵ For example, al-Jazarī’s contemporaries Ibn ad-Dawadārī (ca. 1288–1336) and Mufaḍḍal b. Abī Faḍā’il (died after 1358) took most parts from al-Jazarī’s work for their own chronicles of the years 1260–1300.¹⁶ Remarkably, Ulrich Haarmann is also not entirely free of solely judging a chronicle by its “truthfulness.” He writes that especially those parts of al-Ġazarī’s *Ḥawādith al-zāmān* dealing with the period after 1279/1280 offer worthwhile reading, since from that point on the presentation is based on personal experience and eyewitness accounts. However, according to Haarmann, the author is too careless in his beliefs. Compositional shortcomings are also listed: The author mechanically joins individual reports to units that self-contained but not logically linked. Furthermore, details are repeated, often using vulgar language, and too often interspersed with superfluous anecdotes.¹⁷

However, more importantly, the text is available to us in two entirely different versions. The Codex Gotha includes a brouillon (*musawwada*) stemming from the direct environment of the author. Although more than three people were involved in the writing, 95 % appear to have been written by al-Jazarī himself or a

13 Rosenthal 1947.

14 Haarmann 1970.

15 Haarmann 1970, 7.

16 Haarmann 1970, 115.

17 Haarmann 1970, 25–26.

secretary working on his behalf.¹⁸ Scribe B made numerous annotations, marginalia, and additions, excerpting them from other important contemporary works of history, perhaps in order to generate a “personal” chronicle by the template complemented in this way.¹⁹ The additions and corrections can be found on the intentionally blank lines left by the first text producer, but mostly on numerous pasted-over slips. The (few) other additions made by another user of the text date from a later time. Evidently, according to Haarmann, the brouillon was handed directly by al-Ġazarī to an Egyptian manuscript dealer (or a chronicler), who provided for the distribution of the text. After 1325, the same middleman – or some third person – added notes ascribed to Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir (1233–1293) and the works of other important chroniclers.²⁰ It comes as a bit of a surprise to discover that preliminary versions were commercially distributed as well.

The Paris Code, on the other hand, contains fragments of the final version²¹ representing a multiple revision of Gotha. Through the juxtaposition of the brouillons (Hs Gotha) and the final edition (Hs Paris), we obtain information about the composition and style standards among the chroniclers of the time. Thus, in the Parisian manuscript, only events and obituaries are listed among the individual years, while the brouillon Gotha also exhibits extensive geographic notes. Paris presents the individual reports of the obituaries in a significantly more detailed and better structured manner: Mistakes have been eliminated, and additions to the narration have been eloquently incorporated.²²

As interesting as these results are for our topic, no exact synopsis of both texts exists. The dating of the brouillon Gotha and the knowledge drawn by mainly Egyptian historiographers of facts from texts based on al-Jazarī’s *Ḥawādith al-zamān* indicates that – again according to Haarmann – al-Jazarī’s text was used directly by one and indirectly by a number of chroniclers in Kairo between 1305 and 1320.²³ An example for this practice is the *Mukhtār* written by the religious teacher al-Dhahabī (1274–1348), which refers to excerpts drawn from his own hand before the transcript of his voluminous “History of Islam” (*Ta’riḫ al-islām*) as a collection of material from the chronicle of al-Jazarī.²⁴ These are verbatim excerpts of carefully selected quotes not found in other sources. A careful comparison of the two texts reveals exactly which passages of a template seemed worthwhile to a later compiler (al-Dhahabī’s *Mukhtār*) to be copied

18 Haarmann 1970, 28.

19 Haarmann 1970, 30–34.

20 Haarmann 1970, 35–36.

21 Haarmann 1970, 46–48.

22 Haarmann 1970, 56–58.

23 Haarmann 1970, 36–37.

24 Haarmann 1970, 50–54.

and included in a separate work (*Ta'rikh al-islām*). Since he was pursuing a different question, Ulrich Haarmann unfortunately only hinted at this in his work, but did not elaborate on it extensively.

So, how did the premodern Mamluk chronicler work? Haarmann gives us some valuable hints: The author used the brouillon as a basis,²⁵ which means two different things. On the one hand, there were the author's own hand-made excerpts from foreign templates, which he usually held in notebooks as well as on small slips or on the edge of already used sheets of paper. On the other hand, this can also be understood as the next text level, that is, the rough draft or the draft of a work by hand or on dictation of the author. At the end of the process stood the fair copy (*bayād*), which represented an improvement and final elaboration of the text of the *musawwada*.

If we understand compilation as the writing process of a chronicler resulting in a final version, we should analyze this creative act with more exactitude than Haarmann did. This enables us to gain further insights into the working methods of a premodern historian. Against this backdrop, it is worth looking at the various publications of Frédéric Bauden on al-Maqrīzī's (d. 1442) famous work *al-Mawā'iz wal-i'tibār fī dhikr al-khiṭaṭ wal-āthār*. Some years ago, Bauden more or less accidentally found a workbook of the Egyptian author containing the "fruits of his reading" over a substantial amount of time.²⁶ There are hundreds of entries of all kinds: summaries, abstracts, paraphrases, excerpts, remarks, and reflections, as well as shorter and longer notes. The breadth of the material al-Maqrīzī touches on highlights his intellectual curiosity: In addition to entries on historical topics, we find ones on other areas such as numismatics, meteorology, genealogy, medicine, and geography. At the end of the sheets there is still room for later comments and addenda. One may assume that al-Maqrīzī virtually summarized texts while reading templates, so that the notebooks were used for remembering and consulting, and the material gathered could then be used for different purposes. Some of the options were to reproduce it literally, to embellish it, or to recombine and narrate it with the help of other texts. In cases of doubt, inspired by his own notes, al-Maqrīzī also reiterated the original versions. Cards were also inserted into the notebook with comments suggesting that they served as chapter drafts. Thus, when al-Maqrīzī set about writing a new book, he had the opportunity to quickly construct a framework. Thus, we are dealing here with relatively well-known scientific technique al-Maqrīzī developed throughout his life, one he always used during the actual writing process.

25 Haarmann 1970, 124–125.

26 See Bauden 2003a-b, 2006, 2008a, 2009.

This lucky find and that of further manuscripts enables us to relatively accurately reconstruct the work technique of the premodern historian.²⁷ The final versions of books are available to us in the form of a manuscript authorized by the author (*mubayyaḍa*, *mubyadḍa*), based on a raw version (*musawwada*, *mus-wadda*) that, as in the case of al-Jazarī's *Ḥawādith al-zamān*, could well have even reached the book market. The intermediate step consists of summaries of direct templates made specifically for a work (*mukhtaṣar*, *mukhtār*). Previous to these versions lie the notebooks (*tadhkira*, *majmūʿ*, *taʿlīq*) and the original manuscripts from the sources the author read and used and often containing a number of marginalia here from his hand. In the case of al-Maqrīzī, we not only have all the stages of a book preserved among the 23 autographs found so far, we also have some manuscripts of the sources he used and commented on for his work – all of which provides us with a deep insight into his writing workshop.

In one of his essays, Frédéric Bauden addresses the synoptic method used in this volume: the precise direct comparison of the text and the original.²⁸ From a close comparison of some biograms in the notebook with later versions and with the source, i. e., with aṣ-Ṣafadī's (1297–1363) biographical dictionary *Wāfi bil-wafayāt*, Bauden comes to the following conclusion:

“The various traces of al-Maqrīzī's work that have reached us enable us to analyze his writing process almost as precisely if he were a modern author. Among these traces, the notebook plays a major role. Thanks to it, we know that al-Maqrīzī would summarize a source progressively as he was reading it. The case of al-Ṣafadī's *al-Wāfi* is particularly edifying. Reading one biography after another, al-Maqrīzī would take notes of the data he was interested in according to the use he wanted to make of them: in this particular case, to provide the biographies of the persons whom he mentioned in his opus magnum, the *Khīṭaṭ*. The selections he made reveal why al-Ṣafadī's biographical dictionary was of interest to him: he wanted to rely on a source which was up-to-date and above all contemporaneous with the facts reported. This concern underlines al-Maqrīzī's probity in this particular case; he tried to exploit the most trustworthy sources, even though it was often to the disadvantage of these sources: *al-Wāfi* is never quoted in the *Khīṭaṭ* nor in any of al-Maqrīzī's other works where, nevertheless, he took advantage of the selected data. Furthermore, the analysis of a single biography permits us to understand how al-Maqrīzī reused the data in the course of time in his various works, how and when these data were reorganized and which additional (unquoted) sources he later utilized.”²⁹

This approach might be described as a compilation technique, though we should best use this term neutrally, especially since, on closer inspection, al-Maqrīzī's working mode is much closer to the approach of modern historians than is usually assumed.

27 See Bauden 2008b.

28 See Bauden 2009a.

29 Bauden 2009a, 136.

Remarkably, in the Mamluk period, there was a clear awareness of what we would today call plagiarism. Normally, discussions of inappropriate adoption of foreign ideas were almost exclusively related to poetry.³⁰ However, ironically, the example of al-Maqrīzī shows that this accusation was sometimes made against historians as well.³¹ In some biographies describing the life of al-Maqrīzī, the scholar al-Sakhāwī (d. 1497), using testimony from his teacher Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (d. 1449), vehemently asserted that the portrayed had taken the rough draft of a text by his colleague al-Awḥadī after his death in 1408, had then corrected and improved it, and subsequently published it under his own name as *Kitāb al-Mawāʿiẓ wal-ʿitibār fī dhikr al-khiṭaṭ wal-āthār*. Particularly grave, he felt, was the fact that al-Maqrīzī had not mentioned his source and its author. Coincidentally, parts of a first version of al-Maqrīzī's *Khiṭaṭ* have survived, revealing 19 sheets that do not correspond to the author's handwriting. Frédéric Bauden took a close look at these pages and determined with some certainty that they were indeed excerpts from the work of al-Awḥadī. After a very careful comparison of these texts with the final version of al-Maqrīzī's *Khiṭaṭ*, Bauden concluded that the accusation of plagiarism cannot be denied despite some minor modifications of the original.

To sum up, early modern historians followed their predecessors, using existing, exemplary works as the foundation to be transformed and modified to their own needs. Compiling from those sources available to them was an established method among Muslim historiographers. Although one of the outstanding characteristics of medieval Arabic historiography, compilation still enjoys a bad reputation today and is even considered plagiarism. But as we have seen, compiling is not just a matter of pure copying.

Against this background, all authors in this volume study Mamluk historiographical texts not primarily with regard to their facticity, their finer philological points, or their statements regarding specific events. Rather, the focus lies on what we can, using the narrative structures, learn from these sources about the mental (i. e., emotional and cognitive) operations that process the experience of time using the medium of memory into orientations for practical life.

In his contribution, Yehoshua FRENKEL focuses on narratological perspectives in Damascene chronicles. He regards the Mamlūk period as one of a rich and diverse literary productivity. Damascene chronicles regularly inform their readers about letters from pilgrims on their way to Mecca, and Frenkel shows that Mamlūk historical sources not only serve as a rich database, but also provide insights into the notion of history and the views of those living during the period

30 For this, see Heinrichs 2004.

31 For the following passages, see Bauden 2009b.

1250 to 1517. Mamlūk historical reports provide important data about both their producers and their consumers. Because memories can reveal only a limited view of the past, studying these historical records (such as chronicles, biographies, and necrologies) means studying historiography and social memory. In support of his argumentation, Frenkel presents different types of documents: the “ego-document,” which is structured like other Mamlūk historical narratives, but tells the story from a personal perspective; and “eyewitness accounts,” which report on the personal experience of others. The author argues that the historians want their readers to believe the narrator is just as reliable as the witness source himself. Therefore, they wanted their reports to be received not as legendary anecdotes but as the historical truth. Frenkel explains that Mamlūk chronologists made wide use of references to the structures of past historians, citing from earlier historical writings. Yet they did not copy only an abstract from earlier writings but long passages. A good example is al-Yūnīnī’s account of the year 702/1303, where he reports on an earthquake hitting Egypt, the details of which are based on an official letter sent from Cairo to Damascus. Because al-Yūnīnī was not satisfied with presenting a bare description, he inserted a long quotation from Zakariyā b. Muḥammad al-Qazwīnī’s (605–682/1208–1283) book *‘Ajā’ib al-Makhlūqāt*. Frenkel stresses that al-Yūnīnī believed that this extract would substantiate his report by adding a deep historical background. Authors also compared their recounted events with Biblical stories, for example, Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-‘Umārī, who compares the thrust of the Mongols with king Nebuchadnezzar and his conquest of Jerusalem, as reported in the Old Testament. These narrative techniques are not rare at all. In his conclusion, Frenkel mentions that Mamlūk authors often did not present their texts as a new formation, but as a continuation of an earlier book: They often designated their own book as a supplement (*dhayl*), completion (*tatimma*), continuation (*tallaya*), or synopsis (*mukhtaṣar*). They often saw themselves as guardians of identity and continuity, with the aim of depicting a homogeneous story that stretched out over a long period of time, one that allowed them to present themselves as preservationists of a collective identity. To legitimize a Mamluk ruler, they often added extra information.

Mohammad GHARAIBEH’s article presents the case study of *ad-Durar al-Kāmina* by Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, wherein he discusses the sociology of narrative structures in biographical dictionaries. This work is not only one of the most popular biographical dictionaries in the field of Mamluk studies, but also one of the most cited. Gharaibeh notes that, even though *ad-Durar* is such an important source, there is only very little research on its structure, organization, and arrangement. To date, not a single study has dealt analogically with the narrative nature of biographical dictionaries. This paper therefore provides an analysis of the narrative structures and strategies of the biographical dictionary.

In the case of *ad-Durar*, Gharaibeh does not focus on information provided by the author on certain persons or events, but on the way in which Ibn Ḥajar presents his information. Before analyzing the author, Gharaibeh mentions the necessity of distinguishing between *knowledge* and *information*, that is, how to distinguish between interpreted facts and mere dates. The main hypothesis of this paper is that the content of *ad-Durar* in particular, and biographical dictionaries in general, reflect knowledge and not pure information because it is not presented by the author in a neutral manner. The knowledge the author wants to present to his readership has indeed been selected, so that this method of personal arrangement is called *narrative strategy*. Gharaibeh analyzes this strategy in Ibn Ḥajar's work. The study is divided into two parts: The first part of the paper contextualizes *ad-Durar al-kāmina* within the framework of other historical writings; he second part analyzes a specific example in order to demonstrate how Ibn Ḥajar designs an entry on a certain personality. The idea of comparing the different entries derives from redaction criticism. From the perspective of this method, his comparison shows that Ibn Ḥajar designed his entries according to the orientation of the biographical dictionary. The dictionary *ad-Durar* has a very wide scope, including different kinds of individuals: elites (*āyān*), scholars, rulers, emirs, writers (*kuttāb*), viziers, literates, and poets. Gharaibeh compares *ad-Durar* to other writings of Ibn Ḥajar, as well as presenting the narrative strategies used in *ad-Durar*. Although *ad-Durar* focuses on the religious elite and on *ḥadīth*-scholars, it also includes members of the political elite and other non scholars.

In the next article, Li Guo analyzes the literary ambitions of Ibn Iyās, a Mamluk historian who was one of the most significant chroniclers of the Mamluk Sultanate. Ibn Iyās became famous through his hallmark *Badā'i' al-zuhūr fī waqā'i' al-duhūr* ("The Splendid Flowering Stories of History"). The author points out that, even though the text was consulted in studies of the period, its abundant verses have yet to receive much attention. The author studies the circumstances under which Ibn Iyās wrote his poetry and what its content expresses. The chronicler Ibn Iyās gained an elite education and was trained in poetry and rhetoric. Much of his poetry depicts current affairs, even touching on major events of the day, such as the chaotic relationship between Qāyṭbāy and Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī and the Bedouin unrest in 905/1498–1499. Ibn Iyās' poetry reached its peak during the reign of Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī (906–922/1501–1517). More than 50 poems have been passed down to us, many of which demonstrate his connection to men in power. Li Guo describes Ibn Iyās' verses as "significant sights into his world," especially into his career and personal life, about which little is known so far. Furthermore, the author explains the function of the phrase *wa-fīhi aqūl*, which is often used in medieval Arabic chronicles. In the present tense, this phrase means "regarding this, I present the following poem," which

then triggers the narrator's own comment and opinion. Although Ibn Iyās' use of verses follows the model of al-Ṭabarī and Ibn al-Atīr, who quoted poems in order to conclude or to be used as a reflection, Ibn Iyās is often responsible for both the prose *and* the verse. Therefore, the author argues that Ibn Iyās did not only quote flowering verses but took a holistic process in his writing, making Ibn Iyās' use of verses worthy of discussion. Also, many verses were composed *ad hoc*, sometimes by a contemporary or later person. Guo illustrates three cases in which Ibn Iyās used his own poetry in order to "achieve greater narrative power and fluidity."

Amalia LEVANONI's contribution also focuses on a specific kind of narratological technique: lachrymose behavior in Mamluk chronicles, specifically weeping and crying in episodes of Yūsuf Ibn Taghrī Birdī's (813–874/1410–1470) multivolume chronicle *al-Nujūm al-zāhira fī mulūk Miṣr wal-Qāhira*. Medieval Islamic chronicle literature follows the dominant theoretical perspective that narratives "transmit shared values," so that Muslim traditional history becomes part of the Islamic sciences. The author asserts that emotions have the power to cause emphatic or unsympathetic reactions to a text, a character, or an event; in other words, emotional episodes in Arabic Medieval chronicles fulfill "narratological functions." In his chronicle, Yūsuf Ibn Taghrī Birdī used emotional manifestations because he personally experienced many ups and downs in the Mamluk period during the political reorganization of his time. Levanoni also provides some background on the Sunni models of lachrymose behavior. For example, weeping stood against the "Islamic ideal of *ṣabr*": Patience was regarded as highly important. This concept was mainly influenced by Abū Ḥanīfa (d. 150/767) and Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241/855), who also stated that one part of *ṣabr* is the acceptance of death with patience, whereby the mention of this behavior is gendered: Women are characterized as generally inferior with respect to religion and emotional intelligence, while for men *ṣabr* is especially important for their religious devotion. One example for this distinction between the sexes is the fact that women were (and often still are) excluded from funeral rites because of their emotional expressions. Especially mourning was considered *ḥarām* and thus the opposite of *ṣabr*. According to early Islamic traditions, the Prophet Muḥammad strictly forbade wailing and loud crying because he considered such behavior to be a pagan ritual. In *al-Nujūm al-zāhira*, Yūsuf Ibn Taghrī Birdī chose short dramatic scenes of mourning women, even though their importance to his chronicle is rather marginal. Levanoni thinks that, from a narratological viewpoint, the women's grieving scenes may be viewed as a "repetitive effect technique suggestive of the chronicle's perspective." Levanoni concludes that the lachrymose events of women related to Mamluks fulfill an important narratological function by constructing a plot or leitmotif: It delivers the chronicle's implied message. The scenes in *al-Nujūm al-zāhira* are connected to death, exile, and dismissal of relatives or masters, so that the mourning scenes express grief

over the loss of one's guardian or protector. Writing biographies of those in power serves as a guide for future rulers.

In his article, Amir MAZOR concentrates on the *topos* of predicting the future in early Mamluk historiography. Medical Arab historiographies were not meant to be an "objective science" but were aimed at communicating "didactic, religious, moral, and political messages." The author explains that *topoi* often promote political or religious causes; here, Mazor introduces a prominent *topos* of the early Mamluk period: the prediction of the future. Many future predictions can be found in the literary sources of the Mamluk period, 50 of which concerning future prediction stemming from various Arabic historical sources are quoted. They all have in common that they refer to the first six decades of the Mamluk period (1250–1310). One indicator for the prominence of future predictions is the large number of anecdotes about it. The question is why the *topos* of predicting the future was so common in Mamluk historiography. Mazor explains that the Ayyubid and Mamluk period marked the first development of a "sufization" of the Muslim society, going back to the support of Sufism by the Zangid and Ayyubid rulers. The Mamluk period marked the climax of the Sufi trends, influencing all classes of society. One of the most prominent Sufi practice was the "cult of the saints, dead or alive," to which end the tombs of sheikhs were visited, becoming a common activity over time. Following his analysis of the 50 reports about future prediction, the author closes his article with the following thought: The *topos* of predicting the future was used not only for simple entertainment, but also to legitimize the reign of the Mamluk sultans. This led to not only the Mamluk's achievement in the battle field (i. e., while defending the Muslims in Egypt and Syria against the Crusaders and the Mongols) but also the Mamluks' religious and political strategies (i. e., the nomination of an 'Abbasid' caliph) being discussed. Historiography was thus an important tool for creating legitimacy. It was more accessible for ordinary people, and it was meant to praise the sultan's house. If we are to comprehend this *topos* even better, we must analyze the historiographical, social, religious, and political development of this period.

In the following article, Linda NORTHRUP gives us her perspective on documents as literary texts. Historians tend to think that legal documents present "raw historical data" because they would appear to be the most neutral texts available and provide historical reality. But as the author assures, such documents may provide useful facts but only little historical context. Northrup demonstrates in her study that not all documents are in fact raw material, but sometimes more like literary texts that exhibit "aspects of narrativity." She also examines how legal or administrative documents fit into a larger historical setting. One of the questions she raises is whether legal documents showing characteristics of a literary text lose their legal authority. In her analysis, the author

presents two studies related to the hospital al-Bīmāristān al-Manṣūrī, which was founded by the Mamluk sultan al-Manṣūr Sayf ad-Dīn Qalāwūn (r. 678–689/1279–1290). This hospital was built as part of the sultan’s monumental complex in Cairo and included as well his tomb, a Qur’an school for children, and a *madrasa*. Therefore, documents relating to this hospital might be helpful to answer further questions. The first document analyzed in this paper is the *taqlīd* for the *riyāsat aṭ-ṭibb* (a letter of appointment for the chief physicianship) of Egypt which is preserved by Ibn al-Furāt (d. 804/1404–1405) in his chronicle *Tārīkh ad-duwal wal-mulūk*. The second document is the *taqlīd* for the *tadrīs aṭ-ṭibb* (a letter of appointment for the professorship of medicine) at the al-Bīmāristān al-Manṣūrī in Cairo. This document was also preserved by Ibn al-Furāt in his chronicle *Tārīkh ad-duwal wal-mulūk* as well as by al-Qalqashandī (d. 821/1414) in his scribal manual *Ṣubḥ al-a’shāfi šinā’at al-inshā’*. As Northrup explains, these two documents should be studied together because both positions are attached to the Bīmāristān and “when read together, tell ‘a story.’” Because these two texts exist only in the corpus of sources mentioned above, an analysis thereof could open new perspectives on the historiography of the Mamluk period. The author concludes by emphasizing that both *taqlīds* use a number of literary devices and have a story to tell. She answers the questions that were raised at the beginning – whether legal documents which show some characteristics of a literary text lose their legal authority – in the negative, contending they would still accomplish what they intended to do: to formalize appointments at the Bīmāristān. She suggests that Ibn al-Furāt might have included these texts in his chronicle for esthetic reasons. We certainly know that he also did so because the documents add a completely new dimension to other reports describing the founding of the Bīmāristān.

Irmeli PERHO’s contribution also focuses on Yūsuf Ibn Taghrībirdī and his *al-Nujūm al-zāhira fī mulūk Miṣr wal-Qāhira*. The author looks at Ibn Taghrībirdī as a “storyteller” and as a “teacher,” raising the question of what Ibn Taghrībirdī wanted his audience and readers to learn. Ibn Taghrībirdī began to write this work for Sultan Jaqmaq’s son Muḥammad, who was his father’s heir to the throne; Ibn Taghrībirdī and Muḥammad were companions. As the author explains, main audience of *al-Nujūm* was the “Mamluk court of Ibn Taghrībirdī’s own time.” The author focuses on the stories told in *al-Nujūm* and its structure. The presentation of reigns within the chronicle all follow the same structure, starting with a summary of the career of the sultan presently sitting on the throne, where after the events of their reign follow in chronological order. Ibn Taghrībirdī concluded by evaluating the sultan and his achievements. Perho’s thesis is that this chronicle might have been read at courtly sessions. The article analyzes three 7th-/13th-century Mamluk rulers: as-Ashraf Khalīl, Kitbughā, and Lājīn. Perho compares Ibn Taghrībirdī’s presentation of both of their reigns and

explains that Ibn Taghrībirdī's account begins, as usual, with a short presentation of the sultan's accession to the throne. Perho's analysis depicts the structure of this work and explains that Ibn Taghrībirdī's descriptions of the reign of as-Ashraf Khalīl, Kitbughā, and Lājīn is evidence of his carefully collecting his material and selecting the facts he wanted to present to his readers. Ibn Taghrībirdī's main audience was the Mamluk court, so that some elements in his stories were possibly meant to be read out loud in court. But Ibn Taghrībirdī's chronicles were not meant only to entertain the audience, but to educate them, too. He also wanted to guide his companion Muḥammad and to teach him "how to be a good ruler."

In his article, Carl PETRY analyzes the gendered nuances in historiographical discourses of the Mamluk period, focusing on the discussion of qualities attributed to women and noting that there is an almost complete lack of "certifiably female voices" in surviving biographical or narrative literature from the Mamluk period. In contrast to later Ottoman sources, where female authors are visible on a regular basis, in Mamluk literature the majority was male. In the first category we find the depiction of women in volume 12 of the biographical dictionary of al-Sakhāwī (*al-Ḍaw' al-lāmi' fī ahl al-qarn al-tāsi'*), and the second category presents their involvement in criminal activities in narrative chronicles of the period. The survey of women in al-Sakhāwī's dictionary lists over 1000 biographies in volume 12 of *al-Ḍaw' al-lāmi' fī ahl al-qarn al-tāsi'*; 20 individuals were chosen for consideration. The author's criteria for choosing them is based on narrations of activities seen to provide notoriety to distinguished women: their prominence in *ḥadīth*, the writing of a lucid script, multiple marriages to men of high status, participation in political procedures, presiding over religious services, and so forth. The author describes the women's behavior, depiction, and social position and reflects on the preceding narratives, their characteristics, and style. A look at al-Sakhāwī's erudition shows there are similarities and differences in his reports about men and women: Though al-Sakhāwī's assessment of the acuity and talent of women may appear less distinctive than that of males, his estimation of ability "did not defer appreciably for either gender." While al-Sakhāwī sometimes referred to scholarly writing by women, this occurs much less often than in his references to men. For example, while reporting on a woman's authorship, he rarely mentioned the title of their scholarly writings, rather noting that the product was simply a "book" (*kitāb*) without further explanation about its subject or purpose. Nevertheless, his treatment of women remained cautious, even comparatively "neutral."

Boaz SHOSHAN's contribution concentrates on Aḥmad b. Abī Ḥasan 'Alī, also known as Ibn Zunbul, who came from al-Maḥalla al-Kubrā in the Egyptian Delta and wrote on the Ottoman Conquest of Syria and Egypt. Ibn Zunbul wrote several conventions on geomancy and astronomy, e. g., the *Kitāb qānūn al-dunyā* ("The

Book on the Order of the World”). Shoshan’s introduces Ibn Zunbul’s historical book dealing with the period between al-Ghawrī’s defeat in Syria 1516 and the years following the conquest of Egypt. Different titles have been passed down for Ibn Zunbul’s work; Shoshan uses the Cairo edition from 1998 (*waq’at* [rather *wāqi’at*] *al-Ghawrī wal-sultān Salīm wa-mā jarā baynahumā*, shorthand *Akhīrat al-Mamālīk*). But not only do different titles exist, there are also various versions. The book opens with a side note about the inner struggle in the Ottoman court between Selīm and his rival to the throne, whereupon, according to Ibn Zunbul, the departure of the Mamluk army from Cairo to Syria follows in 1515. Ibn Zunbul writes about al-Ghawrī’s defeat and execution by “his own emirs on the battlefield of Marj Dābiq,” but the largest part deals with Selīm’s invasion of Egypt in 1517. In his analysis, Shoshan presents the ideological and theological message Ibn Zunbul wished to communicate. The historiographical value of Ibn Zunbul’s book is rather meager, and some authors even consider most of it to be pure fiction. But what was the aim of Ibn Zubul’s narrative if not historiography? Some scholars regard it more as a “romance” or as “folk epic.” In the last part of his article, Shoshan focuses on early Islamic conquest narratives and their influence on Ibn Zunbul, since he wrote his book on the Ottoman Conquest of Syria and Egypt, which began much later. Ibn Zunbul’s sympathy for the Mamluk regime becomes obvious through the speeches of various protagonists. Despite his sympathy for the Mamluks, even Ibn Zunbul could not disregard what had happened. That the Mamluk dynasty had come to an end “presents Ibn Zunbul as torn politically.” Shoshan concludes by arguing that one should not see a major chasm between Ibn Zunbul and earlier works of historiography.

JO VAN STEENBERGEN’s article focuses on al-Maqrīzī’s history of the Ḥajj (*al-Dhahab al-masbūk*) and on Ibn Khaldūn’s narrative strategies. Aḥmad b. ‘Alī al-Maqrīzī (ca. 1365–1442), a leading historian of medieval Egypt, wrote several essays on the history of the *ḥajj*, calling them *al-Dhahab al-masbūk* (“The Moulded Gold”). In three parts, the author describes the insights gained from a macrostructural analysis of *al-Dhahab al-masbūk*, looking beyond its simple surface of historiographical data. The first part of Van Steenbergen’s analysis deals with the unravelling of *al-Dhahab al-masbūk* and his transition from history to text and back again. On 40 handwritten pages, al-Maqrīzī presents a summary history in Arabic. This autograph manuscript from 1438 describes the annual pilgrimage to Mecca since the days of the prophet Muḥammad. Van Steenbergen points out the very limited historiographical value of *al-Dhahab al-masbūk*. The manuscript was fully preserved in a contemporary autograph along with nine other manuscripts produced between the 16th and 19th centuries. Also, a few critical text editions have been published in the 20th and 21st centuries. The second part of the analysis introduces, besides al-Maqrīzī, Ibn Khaldūn (“Khalidunism”) and his view of the patterns of history. It is well known that al-

Maqrīzī was impressed as well as influenced by the famous scholar ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Ibn Khaldūn (d. 1406). The biography *Durar al-‘uqūd al-farīda fī tar-ājim al-a’yān al-mufīda* confirms a particular relationship between Ibn Khaldūn, the master, and al-Maqrīzī, the student, as well as an intellectual connection between both men. Some articles by al-Maqrīzī have indeed been the object of a recent “re-appraisal from the perspective of Ibn Khaldūn’s legacy.” The author argues that Ibn Khaldūn’s formulation of a comprehensive theory of history was a unique part of its wider intellectual context of late medieval Arabic historiographical thought, a “booming field” since the 12th century. In the third part of his article, the author questions the Khaldūnian narrative construction of *al-Dhahab al-masbūk*. Could structure and signification along a Khaldūnian line further the analysis and understanding of *al-Dhahab al-masbūk*? The author argues that it is highly rewarding to return texts such as *al-Dhahab al-masbūk* from the edge to the “center of historical action.”

In the last contribution, Thorsten WOLLINA analyzes the changing legacy of a Sufi Shaykh named Mubārak al-Qābūnī and narrative constructions in diaries, chronicles, and biographies from the 15th to the 17th century. Shaykh Mubārak al-Qābūnī was imprisoned by the Mamluk authorities in Damascus in Ramaḍān 899. His followers tried to secure his release, and economic life in Damascus came to a standstill for days. Because of the high death toll, this event is reported in local historiographical literature until the early 17th century. This example serves as an illustration of the authors’ agency in shaping diverging narratives. In his article, the author introduces his sources and his narratological approach, and then presents the relationship between them and the chronology of the event. He focuses on four accounts by Ibn Ṭawq (d. 1509), Ibn al-Ḥimṣī (d. 1524), and Ibn Ṭūlūn (twice). Shaykh Mubārak al-Qābūnī’s clash with the Mamluk authorities has been the subject of many accounts, but the author selected these four because the narrative of the clash was “canonized” after these works. The earliest account on Mubārak’s clash was written by Ibn Ṭawq around the time of the events themselves; the latest account was written by Najm al-Dīn al-Ghazzī (d. 1652) in his *Kawābik al-sā’ira* after 1600. As Wollina explains, Ibn Ṭawq mentions Shaykh Mubārak al-Qābūnī in entries throughout his text, whereas the other two, Ibn al-Ḥimṣī and Ibn Ṭūlūn, already “attempt a biographisation.” In a detailed analysis, Wollina presents the structure and references to Shaykh Mubārak al-Qābūnī made by these three different authors. For example, Wollina remarks that, compared to the literary chronicles of Ibn Ṭawq and Ibn al-Ḥimṣī, the focus of Ibn Ṭūlūn’s biographical account shifted “from the events to their central figure.” The author concludes by proving that, even though different chronicles and biographies adopted the same material, they did not just reproduce one another’s narrative or meaning. On the contrary, the interpretation of Shaykh Mubārak al-Qābūnī’s clash with the Mamluk authorities changed from one account to an-

other. Ibn Ṭawq portrays this event as a threat to his patrons, Ibn al-Ḥimṣī calls it a struggle of Damascenes against the Mamluk “oppressors,” and Ibn Ṭūlūn writes a case study about good and evil and then reinvents it as a “personal tragedy.”

So, what is the overall outcome of this volume of edited articles? A tentative answer would be: Debates on Hayden White’s work “Metahistory” have centered on the epistemological foundations of non-European culture studies. Within this complex debate occurring at different levels, one can isolate one theme that is essential when dealing with (Mamluk) historiographical texts: The hermeneutical principle that must be dealt with when approaching our sources remains a prerequisite for all historical-critical work. Ultimately, there are only “mute texts” that we make communicate with us. Our task is to decode the meaning of these texts, and in doing so we have to always be very aware that such a decoding process is always subjectively refracted at least twice: First, a text only says something about the author’s mind within the context of that author’s particular culture; second, our decoding process is caught up in our own subjectivity, even if we purport to work with so-called “objectivity criteria.”

Like any other composition (whether written or oral), a work of history is first and foremost a construct of language. The events recorded, the actors in those events, the circumstances and locations in which the events took place, and the cultural, societal, or political, and religious details that surrounded them are filtered not only through the writer’s sensibility, bias, or agenda, but rather, most importantly, through the medium of language. Thus, Mamluk historical works are not merely records of the past, but literary texts that may (indeed, should) be approached through literary analysis. The Mamluk historian’s implicit contract with his audience is that he is providing a true record of events. Writers of history routinely stress their truthfulness, their use of reliable sources, their rejection of unreliable, unverifiable, or fantastic material. Yet, despite these avowals of truthfulness, history was not, either for those who wrote it or for their audience, a mere record of facts, but always an act of interpretation. Facts were bearers of meaning (in particular moral meaning); and history was, largely, conceived of as exemplary. Its intent, in large part, was ethical and its means rhetorical. Even if a text wants to be true and correct, it cannot escape its immanent subjectivity and look at the object treated in some neutral way. The subjectivity that resonates in all statements reveals that a text is the product of an individual reorganizing material into a story. Thus, we can primarily recognize the position which the author(s) assume(s) about the object they processed. The individual intent is embedded in supraindividual circumstances, in mentalities that can depend on the respective situation of the author(s), as well as on the temporal, political, spatial, material, and social conditions.

This volume has organized a discussion of Mamluk historical texts, with an emphasis on literary/stylistic analysis, and basically ignores issues of “factuality” versus “fictionality.” None of the Mamluk authors set out to write “fiction”; nor would their audience have viewed their accounts as such. The events depicted were a matter of historical record; their outcome was already known to their audiences, but there was a need to gear their meaning both to contemporary and to general concerns. Their telling is part and parcel of the historian’s task; the means of telling them reflects the historian’s choice of style – and style is all important for conveying meaning. Were these accounts not considered “true,” the purpose behind their telling (and the meaning they convey) would arguably be lost. On the other hand, if they were not told in the most effective manner, their meaning might not be clearly grasped.

Immanent to the text are interpretations of the information and knowledge about the past which were available to the author at the time of writing. Any attempt to decode the textual intentionality should first ask which narrative structures and strategies were used in writing the text. Factual tales – such as biographies, autobiographies or, case in point, chronicles – while claiming reality and referentiability, depict an event that is, in principle, considered true by the reader. While factual texts are not concerned with invented figures, objects, and events, they can clearly – and this is the decisive factor – very well be literary and thus possess a poeticity of their own. They are to be understood as *narrative models of reality*, as constructive attempts at understanding, as something created in language. Here, on the one hand, reality provides too little to be processed as literature. The deficiencies of what exists are remedied by interpreting connections and creating interconnections. Of course, this may provide too much: It is impossible to depict the totality of even a single moment, which necessitates selection in order to transfer a complex and meaningless entropy into a meaningful whole.

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Mamlūk Historiography Revisited: Narratological Perspectives in Damascene Chronicles

The historical past is not an account, but a series of tales of events and situations that took place earlier. The recording of events, episodes and personalities was (and is) central to social identity and the preservation of social memory. Authors were bound to cast light only on a limited number of cases. Plot motives necessarily limit the literary style of non-fiction sources, which served as an elite communication device.¹ On the social level, collective memory – to use the term coined by Maurice Halbwachs – was (and is) a tool of social interaction. Various genres of historical writings were (and are) a medium of reconstruction, transmission and preservation of the social (or collective) memory (*soziales Gedächtnis* in German, or *ouillage mental* in French).² Based upon this assumption, my working thesis is that the study of social memory, to quote a recent definition:

[E]xplores how a social group, be it a family, a class, or a nation, constructs a past through a process of invention and appropriation, and what it means to the relationship of power within society. Differently expressed, the historian of memory considers who wants whom to remember what and why, and how memory is produced, received, and rejected.³

The Mamlūk period was an epoch of rich and diverse literary productivity. Compared with earlier Arabo-Islamic periods, and particularly with early Islamic centuries, it provides modern students of history with a considerable database of

1 Jan Assmann, “Communicative and Cultural Memory”, in Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning (eds.), *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook* (Berlin, New York 2008), 109.

2 That is to say the system of beliefs and collective representations, myths, and images with which people in the past understood and gave meaning to their world. On these terms see the recent article by Alon Confino, “History and Memory”, in Axel Schneider and Daniel Woolf (eds.), *The Oxford History of Historical Writing 5* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 36–51.

3 Alon Confino, “History and Memory”, in Axel Schneider and Daniel Woolf (eds.), *The Oxford History of Historical Writing 5* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 41.

historical writings. Side by side with accounts of events (*ḥawādith*), i.e. chronologies, Mamlūk historical texts also include biographical dictionaries (*tarājim*) and necrologies (*wafayāt*).⁴ These sources often depict scholars, bureaucrats and men of religion. Additionally, they also illuminate sultans, viceroys, governors and army commanders; that is to say, they cast light on the authors' social circles and on the ruling military aristocracy. Hence, the Mamlūk historical sources at our disposal not only enrich the database used by those who engage in digging up information on the past, but provide insight into the vision of history and notion of historiographical rhetoric of contemporaries (c. 1250–1517).⁵

To accomplish their goals the Mamlūk authors followed composition rules that encompassed evaluation, critique and the selection of information that they collected and transmitted. This observation is supported not only by textual evidence, but also by methodological notes that the historians inserted in their writings. Several Mamlūk scholars composed works dealing with the historian's craft. Ibn Khaldūn and al-Sakhāwī, for example, wrote methodological tractates to explain the technique of gathering and sifting historical information.⁶ Furthermore, this information needed to fit the expectations of the military aristocracy with whom the Mamlūk historians preserved close relations. For this reason, Mamlūk historical reports provide valuable data on both their producers and their consumers. We should assume that the information that the historical sources contain and transmit were carefully selected and woven together according to accepted narrative aesthetics. The evaluating statements provided by Mamlūk historians in their compositions certainly reinforce the public position of the elite that they served and of the social echelons to whom they were clinging. Yet, since memories serve changing needs, they offer only a restricted view of the evanescent past. The study of these historical records (id est, chronicles, biographies and necrologies) is always and foremost a study of historiography and social memory. The Mamlūk historian Baybars al-Manṣūrī, for example, opens his chronicle "*Zubdat al-fikrah*" by stating: "in this book of mine, which I toiled to compose, I extracted what I selected from accurate reports (*wa-istawfaytu mā ikhtartuh* min ṣaḥīḥ al-akhbār fī kitābī hadhā aladhi 'unū bi-jam'ih')." ⁷ His

4 Li Guo, "Mamluk Historiographic Studies: The State of the Art", *Mamluk Studies Review* 1 (1997): 15–43.

5 On this see Allan Megill & Donald N. McCloske, "The Rhetoric of History", in John S. Nelson, Allan Megill, & Donald N. McCloske (eds.), *The Rhetoric of the Human Sciences: Language and Argument in Scholarship and Public Affairs* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), 221–238; Luke Pitcher, *Writing Ancient History: An Introduction to Classical Historiography* (London: I.B. Tauris, Library of Classical Studies, 2009), 16–18.

6 Franz Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography* (Leiden, 1952\1968).

7 Rukn al-Dīn Baybars al-Dawādār al-Manṣūrī (ca. 645–725/1245–1325), *Zubdat al-fikra fī ta'riḥ al-hijrah* ed. Donald S. Richards (Beirut: al-Ma'had al-Almani lil-Abhath al-Sharqiyyah, and Berlin: al-Kitab al-'Arabi, 1998), 1 (ll. 6–7).

writing method is clearly visible in a brief account of the passing away of the well-known scholar Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī. Here the historian does not provide an assessment of the qualities of the deceased, although he names his magnum opus *Mir'at al-Zamān*. Rather, he extemporizes a stanza of lament:

the historian's days have terminated, and he has passed away / after him many days will fade away // He, Shams al-Dīn (the sun of religion) [Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī] was a guiding light / and with his death the universe was engulfed by darkness // how many have come and narrated his merits in their necrologies / the flattering words seemingly confused the mouths. // Losing him caused the veins to be overcome with grief. Egypt // sorrowed. Syria pained and bewailed. // May he rest in peace in the dust [since] I see his soul above the clouds. Farewell and peace made a compact with him.⁸

The present article examines the methods Mamlūk historians utilized to ascertain the dependability of their historical narratives. It is based upon the guiding thesis that textual production and tradition are closely related to the organization of society and its politics, and that the texts were publicly consumed.⁹ To achieve its goal the article dwells especially upon two dimensions of the narrative technique employed by the historians that I study. The first are those insertions that can be identified as ego-documents and eyewitness accounts. The second dimension of the historical narratives that this paper explores is the use made by the Mamlūk historians of various sources, both written and oral, and their incorporation in their chronicles.

1 Ego-documents

In the mid-1950s Jacob Presser introduced the study of ego-documents,¹⁰ a term that is not strange to readers of Mamlūk writings. Recent years have witnessed the publication of several studies that illuminate this aspect of Mamlūk chronicles. Ibn Ṭawq's diary, for example, was studied thoroughly by Torsten Wollina.¹¹ Li Guo took a close interest in the life of Burhān al-Dīn al-Biqā'ī.¹² I

8 Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdat*, ed. Richards, 23 (quoting Nūr al-Dīn or Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm b. 'Abd al-Laṭīf b. Muṣ'ab (622–696/1225–1297); And see also Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Khalīl b. Aybak al-Ṣafadī (696–764/1296–1363), *A'yān al-aṣr wa-a'wān al-naṣr* ed. Alī Abū Zayd (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1418/1998), 1: 152–53 (no. 65); idem, *al-Wafī bil-wafayāt* ed. al-Arnawūṭ (Beirut, 1420/2000), 6: 13–40 (no. 335).

9 Cf. Robert Redfield, *Peasant Society and Culture: An anthropological approach to civilization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), chap. 3 (The social organization of tradition).

10 Rudolf Dekker, "Jacques Presser's Heritage: Ego-documents in the study of History", *Memoria y Civilización* 5 (2002): 13–37.

11 *Zwanzig Jahre Alltag. Lebens-, Welt- und Selbstbild im Journal des Aḥmad Ibn Ṭawq* (Bonn, 2014).

12 Li Guo, "al-Biqā'ī's chronicle", in H. Kenndy (ed.), *Historiography of Islamic Egypt* (Brill:

have studied the war account of this Mamlūk historian, who provides a detailed report of his experiences in a naval operation.¹³ Ibn al-Ḥimṣī's report on the discovery of Ibn al-ʿAsākīr's tomb in Damascus (899/August 1494) provides a suitable springboard to present my argumentation in detail. During renovations of a Sufi lodge two tombs were exposed under the toilets. At this point in the account the historian switches from a third person report on the discovery to a first-person recollection:

I [Ibn al-Ḥimṣī] ordered the removal of the two lavatories and the cleaning of the filth. This bathroom has been constructed by an evil man named Jānī Beg, who served in the past as the chamberlain of Damascus. Pay attention to the calamity that had befallen this grave. There is no power and no strength save Allāh.¹⁴

A few weeks later Ibn al-Ḥimṣī visited Baalbek (in 899/September 1494). Reporting on his experiences in this Shiite stronghold in the Valley of Lebanon he says:

I have seen a remarkable event there. They have a local festival named the day of the Ḥandlīb. The governor, Muḥammad ibn Baydamir, ordered the town herald to proclaim that he permits the consumption of wine and hashish for three days.¹⁵

Another example of the employment in historical reports of a literary style that weaves personal remarks into an account can be traced in a note by Ibn al-Ḥimṣī on the fate of Taqī al-Dīn b. Burhān al-Dīn al-Maghribī (d. 887/ September 1482). Informing his readers of the fate of this Damascene practitioner, the author portrays a dramatic scene. The reader learns that one morning the physician came to inspect the city's viceroy (*naʿīb*). During the medical session the *naʿīb* suddenly noticed that his surgeon was not responding and ordered one of his men to pat him. He and his entourage figure out that doctor al-Maghribī has passed away. Summing up the episode Ibn al-Ḥimṣī proclaims:

O brother observe this world and learn the lesson, the physician walked from his house to inspect his patient but returned to his house on a stretcher. Blessed be the Eternal Lord. God will have mercy on the deceased.¹⁶

The historian's conclusion from the story of the arrest and release of sheikh al-Qābūnī (in 899/July 1494) is similar, as his concluding remark reveals:

2000) 121–148; and “Tales of a Medieval Cairene Harem: Domestic Life in al-Biqāʿī's Autobiographical Chronicle”, *Mamluk Studies Review* 9 (2005): 101–121.

13 Y. Frenkel, “Al-Biqāʿī's Naval War-Report”, in Stephan Conermann (ed.), *History and Society during the Mamlūk Period (1250–1517)*, Studies of the Annemarie Schimmel Research College (Bonn University Press, 2014), pp. 9–20.

14 Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Ibn al-Ḥimṣī (841–934/1458–1528), *Ḥawādith al-zamān wa-wafayāt al-shuyūkh wal-aqrān* ed. Ḥarfūsh (Beirut, 2000), 257–258.

15 Ibn al-Ḥimṣī, *Ḥawādith al-zamān*, ed. Ḥarfūsh, 259–260.

16 Ibn al-Ḥimṣī, *Ḥawādith al-zamān*, ed. Ḥarfūsh, 184.

Pay attention brother, this simple slave has devoted himself to Allah, Who delivered him from his enemies.¹⁷

Throughout his chronicle Ibn al-Ḥijjī provides occasional accounts in the first person singular. Such, for example, are the opening statements: “I witnessed his wedding”, or “During the night an earthquake hit Damascus. The tremor awakened me”, or “in order to see the new moon I climbed to the top of the minaret”. To support my claim, it is sufficient to present a couple of detailed accounts by this Damascene historian. The first is about his own deeds:

On the day of the ‘Īd, as is customary, the viceroy of Damascus prayed at the *muṣallā* [outside the southern walls of the city]. After the ritual he rode back to his palace in an unprecedented fabulous procession. On that day I served as the preacher in the Great Mosque.¹⁸

These ego-documents are structured in conformity with the aesthetic values of the Mamlūk historical narratives.¹⁹ The texts tell the story from a personal perspective.²⁰ They often also include what the narrator presents as his own experience: “I, witnessed”, “I saw”, “I was presented,” etc. These opening lines were intended to fortify the historian’s claims as to his own reliability, the credibility of his reports and the accurateness of his descriptions. Using this style of report enables the historian to present his account as a close examination of a development that he observed; he could lionize it as a careful description and as a true report. Readers should not regard his literary production as a fairy tale about a remote foreign country, but accept it as an accurate eyewitness account.

17 Ibn al-Ḥimṣī, *Ḥawādith al-zamān* ed. Ḥarfūsh, 256.

18 Shihāb al-Dīn Abū al-‘Abbās Aḥmad al-Sa‘dī Ibn Ḥijjī al-Ḥasbanī al-Dimashqī (751–815/1350–1414), *Ta’rīkh ibn Ḥijjī: ḥawādith wa-wafayāt 796–815/1393–1413* ed. A. al-Kundarī (Beirut: Dār Ibn al-Ḥazam 2003; 2 vol.), 343 (801/1399), 349 (801/May 1399), 370 (Dhū al-Ḥijja 801/14 August 1399), 380 (802/September 1399).

19 In this month (Dhū al-Qa‘da 817/January 1415) a great number of orange trees were planted in Egypt. (...) Our master the grand savant Ibn Khaldūn told me that “whenever the number of oranges increases this place is doomed for destruction”. Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad b. ‘Alī al-Maqrīzī (766–845/1364–1441), *al-Sulūk li-ma‘rifat duwal al-mulūk* ed. S. ‘A. ‘Āshūr (Cairo: Matba‘at Dār al-Kutub, 1427/2007), 4: 290 (817/1415).

20 See al-Birzālī’s reports on his pilgrimage to Mecca, accompanied by his son Muḥammad, on the marriage and death of this son (710–713/1311–13) and other personal accounts by him. ‘Alam al-Dīn Abū Muḥammad al-Qāsim b. Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-Birzālī (665–739/1267–1339), *al-Muqtafi‘ alā kitāb al-rawḍatayn* [the follower of the book of the two gardens (by Abū Shāma)] edited by ‘Umar A. al-Tadmurī (Beirut/Sidon: al-Maktaba al-‘Aṣriya, 1428/2006), 2/1: 489, 2/2: 5, 10, 23, 42, 97 (no. 167), 154–55 (on the birth and death of another son in 714/1314), 239, 311 (A third son named ‘Abd Allāh in 716/November 1316).

2 Eyewitness' accounts

As was demonstrated above Mamlūk historians employed a variety of reporting techniques and literary styles in order to entwine pieces of information within their narratives of events that they did not experience. They often wove into their narration and interpretation of past events accounts that could only have been derived from a participant-observer. Close to the ego-documents discussed in the previous section are these eyewitnesses accounts and reports of others' personal experience. Usually the historians open these passages with the statement: "I was informed by (*akhbaranī*)";²¹ or "I transmit it from an account written by x (*naqalt^u dhalik^a min khaṭṭiⁱ [fulān]*)";²² or "I learned it from a letter that had reached me from y".²³ In his obituary of Abū Bakr al-Mizzī (d. 796/1393), Ibn Ḥijjī tells his readers that an uncle of the deceased has told him that he was born in AH 721/1321, adding that he has read in a document written by al-Birzālī that the birth was in the beginning of that year. Al-Mizzī obtained, according to Ibn Ḥijjī, several reading certificates:

I myself obtained an *ijāzah* from him as early as 771/1369 or even earlier. This resulted from the fact that in those days I lived in the al-'Umariyyah neighbourhood, while my father travelled with al-Bulqīnī to Cairo, because of the Tāj al-Dīn [al-Subkī's] affair.²⁴ I entered the Nūr al-Dīn Ḥammām (bath) and saw him there... According to the notary Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. Kasirat, who served with us in the 'Adaliyyah, he passed away on the first day of the current month.²⁵

Reporting on a cosmic matter, the observation of three moons simultaneously, al-Biqā'ī says: "Muḥammad al-Shawbakī told me that he learned about this event from a trusted local informant, whose words cannot be rejected".²⁶ The naming of contemporary participants who it is assumed were eyewitness to the reported events is a noted literary tool for strengthening the validity of an account. Employing accounts of personal involvement and eye witnesses' records, the historians endeavored to enrich their historical pictures. This style of their reports – the incorporation of eyewitness accounts and their transmission in the first person speaking voice – adds to the impression that the story told is an authentic

21 Burhān al-Dīn Ibrāhīm b. 'Umar b. Ḥasan al-Biqā'ī (809–885/1406–1480), *Izhar al-'aṣr al-'isrār ahl al-'aṣr [ta'riḫ al-biqā'ī]* ed. Muḥammad Salīm bin Shadīd al-'Awfī (Cairo: Hajr, 1992; Riyadh: Jami' at al-Imām Muḥammad Ibn Sa'ūd al-Islāmiyyah, 1992–1993), 1: 119, 308–309, 330–331.

22 'Alam al-Dīn al-Birzālī, *al-Muqtafi 'alá kitāb al-rawḍatayn*, 2/2: 416 (720/1320), 448–449.

23 Ibn Ḥijjī, 381 (802/1399); al-Birzālī, *al-Muqtafi*, 2/2: 423 (720/1320), 441, 446, 454.

24 On this see my talk "Manuscript Yahuda Ar. 166, JNUL Jerusalem: Autographs and Mamlūk Manuscripts", Liège (October 2013; to be published).

25 Ibn Ḥijjī, *Ta'riḫ ibn ḥijjī: hawādith wa-wafayāt 796–815/1393–1413* ed. A. al-Kundarī, 39–40.

26 Burhān al-Dīn Ibrāhīm al-Biqā'ī, *Izhar al-'aṣr al-'isrār ahl al-'aṣr*, 1: 308.

one. The historian wants the reader to believe the narrator is as reliable as his source that saw, heard and tells of an event observed at close quarters or even was involved in. By so doing the historians aimed at the composition of a solid text that would be received, not as a saga, but as a sober and genuine historical report. In these cases, the chroniclers operated as transmitters rather than reporters. In their accounts of the past Mamlūk chroniclers employed a variety of sources, ranging from personal accounts to official communications. This structure of their historical narratives, the use of documents and the naming of earlier works in the transmission of historical information,²⁷ is the next topic that concerns me in this article.

3 Transmission and Continuation

Al-Birzālī appends to his report on the death of the Golden Horde’s Qaghan a passage on the geography of the land ruled by the deceased ruler (*khāqān*). This piece of information was conveyed to him by a person who had visited this remote land: “when ‘Alā’ al-Dīn al-Nu‘mān al-Khwārizmī al-Ḥanafī arrived at Damascus in 710/1310–11 he mentioned that it takes eight months to cross this vast territory”.²⁸ Reporting on the conflicts between the Mongols (*arbāb al-dawla al-ṭāṭariyya*), al-Birzālī uses data related to him (*wa-qāl*^a; not clear if by writing or orally) by ‘Izz al-Dīn Ḥasan b. Aḥmad al-‘Irbilī. Yet, the historian maintains that this informant supplied him with low quality data. He maintains that he could reconstruct what happened in the East only with the help of Muḥammad al-Qaṭṭān al-‘Irbilī, who provided him orally with rich details. The value of this information was corroborated by a travelling merchant who visited Damascus a few months later.²⁹ A similar working method is described by al-Birzālī in an account of a water canal in Aleppo. Also in this case he names his (oral) informant.³⁰ Al-Birzālī’s obituary of Ṣāfi al-Dīn al-Hindī is said to be based upon both written documents and oral transmissions that he received during study sessions with the deceased.³¹

Reporting on events in Iberia, al-Birzālī says that letters from Cairo and Alexandria circulated in Damascus and informed the citizens about the fighting in Granada (719/1319). But the overall picture was not clear since the letters

27 For the use of this tool see Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-‘Umarī (700–750/1301–1349), *Masālik al-abṣār fī mamālik al-amṣār* ed. K. Jaburi & M. al-Najm (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1426/2005), 27: 244.

28 al-Birzālī, *al-Muqtafi ‘alā kitāb al-rawḍatayn*, 2/2: 93 (AH 712/1312–13).

29 al-Birzālī, *al-Muqtafi*, 2/2: 377–383 (AH 719/1319).

30 al-Birzālī, *al-Muqtafi*, 2/2: 114 (‘Izz al-Dīn al-Ḥamawī in 713/1313).

31 al-Birzālī, *al-Muqtafi*, 2/2: 183.

contradicted each other. Then a pilgrim from Mecca, named Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allah al-Malaqī, arrived in Damascus. According to al-Birzālī’s testimony the man, who was a trusted person and a scion of a renowned family, knew the correct details of developments in Iberia: “[and] so he has composed an account (*wa-katab^a lanā bi-khaṭṭihī*) [of them] and here I copy it”.³² Al-Yūnīnī quotes al-Birzālī’s as his source for an oral account, writing: “our master ‘Alam al-Dīn [al-Birzālī] reported that he had met with Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad who informed him about events in Mecca”.³³ In a second case, al-Yūnīnī bases his account of the successful campaign against the Armenians of Cilicia (703/1304) on an oral transmission by a soldier who had participated in the fighting.³⁴ In another case, al-Nūwayrī tells of the war among the Il-khans (Chobanid). Again, his source is al-Birzālī’s history. This Damascene scholar learned of episodes in the Mongol’s remote country from accounts narrated to him by travelers who reached his home town. The historian opens his transmission by stating:

‘Izz al-Dīn al-Ḥasan b. Aḥmad al-Ṭabīb said that in Rajab a group of pilgrims arrived back from Mecca. They told that a heated debate broke out among the heads of the Il-khanid’s state. They turned against the commander of the armies and the regent (*atābeg*), the emir Jūbān (Čobān, Čūpān; ca. 660–727/1262–1327), who was the viceroy of [the minor sultan] Abū Sa‘īd, the son of Kharbanda [(Khoda-banda) Ōljeitū (Ūljāytū; Ubjītū)],³⁵ Ghazan’s brother; d. 716/1316)... No new details were added to this piece of information till the Ḥajj Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr al-‘Irbīlī stopped in Damascus and informed me clarifying the facts. ... At the end of the year 719/1320 the travelling merchant ‘Alā’ al-Dīn ‘Alī b. al-Najīb visited Damascus and told me about the events mentioned here.³⁶

Taking a detour in his relation of the Mamlūk-Mongol wars, Ibn al-Dawādārī incorporates into his survey of Ghazan’s victory and al-Malik al-Nāṣir’s retreat to Cairo the following anecdote:

I heard the soldier Sunqur Shāh al-Ḥussāmī, who was a soldier (*mamlūk*) of the emir Ḥussām al-Dīn Ṭarantay. He told to the emir Rukn al-Dīn Baybars al-Jashāngīr, who at

32 al-Birzālī, *al-Muqtafī*, 2/2: 433–441 (720/1320).

33 Quṭb al-Dīn Mūsā b. Muḥammad al-Yūnīnī (640–726/1242–1326), *Dhayl mir’at al zamān (ta’rīkh sanawat 696–711/1297–1312)* [sequel to the mirror of the time] ed. Ḥ. ‘Abbās (Abū Dhabī, 2007; 3 vol.), 2: 1176–77 (AH 707/1307–08); al-Birzālī, *al-Muqtafī*, 2/2: 322 (differs slightly).

34 al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl mir’at al zamān*, 3: 768–770.

35 On his name see Abū al-Maḥāsīn Jamāl al-Dīn Yūsuf Ibn Taghrī Birdī (813–874/1411–1470), *al-Nujūm al-zāhirah fī mulūk miṣr wal-qāhirah* (Cairo: 1426/2005), 9: 238–39 (AH 716/1316; quoting al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 32: 186).

36 Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Nūwayrī (677–733/1278–1333), *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab* (Beirut: Dār al-kutub al-‘ilmiyya, 1424/2004), 32: 22–233; al-Birzālī, *al-Muqtafī*, 2/2: 377–83 (719/1319).

that date was in ‘Abbāsa training in archery (in 704/1304–05), that “I was able to gain swiftly 700 thousand silver coins” during the crisis caused by Ghazan’s invasion.

The chronicler goes on to provide the background to this lucky achievement. The sultan compensated his army lavishly, and the above-mentioned soldier (who is the source of the story) played on the rate of exchange differentials between gold and silver. He was successful and made a fortune. Ibn al-Dawādārī concludes this report by stating: “[and now] let us return to the main course of the report”.³⁷ Reporting on the heavy taxation that was extracted from the people of Damascus after Ghazan’s conquest of the city (700/1300), Ibn al-Dawādārī says:

I transmitted all these figures from the account of Ṣadr al-Dīn Ibn al-Muraḥḥal, who provided me with these details when we meet during his stay in Cairo.³⁸

Baybars al-Manṣūrī provides a long discussion of the disintegration of the Ayyubid dynasty and the emergence of the Mamlūk sultanate. It is not merely a report on events and developments, but rather a composition concentrating on issues regarding the legitimacy of the new political order in the Nile Valley and in Bilād al-Shām. So, it is not surprising that he cites (*qāl^a al-rāwī*) the sultan himself as a source for the information of his adventures during those years. “I shall mention here”, the chronicler writes, “a story that was told to me by the late sultan al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn regarding what he and the sultan Baybars al-Bunduqdārī encountered during these years of unrest and turbulence”. Among the episodes mentioned by him is one that took place in Hebron, where the two commanders, and future sultans, met with the local saint (“friend of God”) Abū ‘Alī al-Bakā’. This saint is said to have a vision that in the near future these two hunted refugees will be rulers (*vaticinium ex eventu*).³⁹ Ibn Taghrī Birdī opens his chronology of Egypt’s history with the sentence:

the author says: the chief judge Shihāb al-Dīn Abū al-Faḍl Aḥmad b. Alī Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī al-Shāfi‘ī, the savant of our age, transmitted orally to me that he was informed by Abū Hurayra b. al-Dhahabī, who heard it from [his father] Abū ‘Abd Allah [Shams al-Dīn] al-Dhahabī etc.⁴⁰

37 Abū Bakr Ibn ‘Abd al-Allāh b. Aybak Ibn al-Dawādārī (fl. 723–736/1323–1335), *Kanz al-Durar wa-jāmi‘ al-ghurar* vol. 9: *al-Durr al-fākhīr min sirat al-malik al-nāṣir* ed. H. R. Römer (Cairo, 1960), 37–38.

38 Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-Durar wa-jāmi‘ al-ghurar*, 9: 44.

39 Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdat*, ed. Richards, 34–35.

40 Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *al-Nujūm al-zāhirah fī mulūk miṣr wal-qāhirah*, 1: 4, 5.

4 Quotations

Directly related to the design of using writings from sources who had gathered accounts from narrators close to events, and alongside the transmission of ego-documents and eyewitness accounts, Mamlūk chronologists widely employed the literary device of references to past historians' compositions.⁴¹ The basic pattern of this narratological technique was citing from earlier historical writings.⁴² Thus for example al-Yūnīnī acknowledges that his report on events in Gilan is based on: "our master 'Alam al-Dīn al-Birzālī who said that [etc.]"⁴³ A further illustration of this literary technique is al-Yūnīnī's obituary of Shraf al-Dīn 'Abd al-Mu'min al-Dim'yāfī (d. 705/1306). The eulogy brings together biographical details and mentions a book by the name of "*Nuzhat al-nāzīr bi-rasm al-sultān al-malik al-nāšīr*" that the deceased has composed.⁴⁴ This book is said to contain traditions concerning the merits of Egypt and Syria. In the quotations given from this text the reader stumbles upon earlier works, such as the *Faḍā'il al-Shām* of al-Riba'ī (c. 435/1043–44) and Ibn Asākīr's *Ta'rikh Dimashq* (the history of Damascus).⁴⁵ Inter alia the reader of Mamlūk biographies is exposed to the highly popular genre of merits of places (*faḍā'il al-bilād*).

In his report on Qalāwūn's preparation to attack Acre, al-'Aynī inserts a paragraph that opens: "Baybars [al-Manṣūrī] mentions in his book *Laṭā'if [al-akhbār]* that the Franks have killed Muslim merchants".⁴⁶ This paragraph actually serves him to explain the sultan's reaction to changing political circumstances and his decision to annul the truce with the Franks (in October 1290). An additional case illustrating the point is al-'Aynī's report on the death of the sultan al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn (in 689/ November 1290) and his story about the agony it caused "to the Muslims". He names three sources of the information he accu-

41 Burhān al-Dīn al-Biqā'ī, *Izhār al-'aṣr al-'isrār ahl al-'aṣr*, 1: 116–117, 131–132; Ibn al-Ḥimṣī, *Ḥawādith al-zamān*, 264, 281.

42 al-Birzālī, *al-Muqtafī ala kitāb al-rawḍatayn*, 1/1: 395 (676/1277) reports on the death of sultan al-Malik al-Zāhir Baybars and mentions Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir and Ibn Shaddād as two authors that have composed a biography (*sīra*) of the deceased sultan.

43 al-Birzālī, *al-Muqtafī 'alā kitāb al-rawḍatayn*, 2/2: 310–311; al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 2: 1166.

44 I was not able to trace this book. Yet it should be emphasized that its name resembles the title of al-Yūsufī's biography of al-Malik al-Nāšīr Muḥammad.

45 al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 2: 881–919.

46 Badr al-Dīn Maḥmūd b. Aḥmad al-'Aynī (726–855/1360–1451), *ʿIqd al-Jumān fī ta'rikh ahl al-zammān* ed. M. M. Amin (Cairo: Al-Haya al-miṣriyya al-'amma 1987–1992; 4 vol. *'aṣr al-salāṭīn al-mamālik* 648–707/1250–1307), 3: 10; Rukn al-Dīn Baybars al-Dawādār al-Manṣūrī (ca. 645–725/1245–1325), *al-Tuḥfah al-mulukīyyah fī al-dawlah al-turkiyyah: ta'rikh dawlat al-mamālik al-baḥriyyah fī al-fatrah min 648 wa-'ilā 711 hijriyyah* ed. 'Abd al-Ḥamid Ṣāliḥ Ḥamdān. (Cairo: Dār al-Miṣriyyah al-Lubnāniyyah, 1987), 122 (AH 689); cf. also Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdat al-fikra*, ed. Richards and his remarks on the history of the early Mamlūk period, introduction p. XX.

mulated on these episodes. Two are the writings of the well-known early Mamlūk historians – Baybars [al-Manṣūrī] and al-Nuwayrī; yet the third source he mentions is a work by an anonymous author.⁴⁷ One more example may be given of this style of literary construction: Ibn Taghrī Birdī’s report on the illness and death of the sultan Baybars. This late Mamlūk historian quotes at length from the history of Baybars al-Manṣūrī (*qālā fi ta’rikhī*) and justifies this editorial decision with the words: “no one equals him in knowledge of [Baybars’] biography” (“*wa-huwa a’raf bi-aḥwālīh min gayrih*”).⁴⁸ Moreover, some of the Mamlūk historians refer not infrequently to their own works.⁴⁹ So we stumble upon such statements as: “I said it in my other book”, “I have already mentioned it”, “I transmit it from”, “this is a continuum”, etc.⁵⁰ This fashion is salient in writings of prolific authors such as al-Maqrīzī. Thus, for example, in the introductory section to his great history of the Mamlūk sultanate this productive writer refers several times to one of his books, which has not reached us, *‘Iqd jawāhir al-asfāt min akhbār madīnat al-fuṣṭāṭ*.⁵¹ Ibn al-Ḥimṣī, to add a second instance, explains the compressed nature of his accounts by referring to a more extensive version that he wrote in another book (“*waqad basaṭ ḥawādīthah fi ta’rikhī al-kabīr farajī’ūh*”).⁵² By employing this narratological strategy Mamlūk historians could enrich their readers’ familiarity with other historical writings that they had composed.⁵³

47 al-‘Aynī, *‘Iqd al-Jumān*, ed. Amin, 3: 12–13.

48 Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *al-Nujūm al-zāhirah fi mulūk miṣr wal-qāhirah*, 7: 177 (l. 4; AH 676/1290).

49 On the exchange of writings see Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-‘Āmirī al-Ghazzī al-Dimashqī (904–984/1499–1577), *al-Maṭālī ‘al-Badriyah fi al-manāzil al-Rūmīyah, 1499–1577* ed. Maḥdī ‘A. Al-Rawwādiyyah (Abū Dabī, 2004), 60–61.

50 Ibn al-Ḥimṣī, *Ḥawādīth al-zamān*, 41, 45 presents his work as a supplement and names another work that he wrote. Cf. ‘Abd al-Basīṭ b. Khalīl b. Shāhīn al-Zāhirī Ibn al-Wazīr al-Malaṭī (844–930/1440–1514), *Nayl al-‘amal fi dhayl al-duwal* ed. ‘U. ‘A. Tadumūrī (Beirut: al-maktaba al-‘aṣriyyah, 1422/2002; 9 vol. covering the years 744–816/), 8: 18.

51 al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk li-ma’rifat duwal al-mulūk*, ed. M. M. Ziyāda (Cairo: Matba‘at Dār al-Kutub, 1934; repr. 1427/2007), 1: 9, 12, 13.

52 Ibn al-Ḥimṣī, *Ḥawādīth al-zamān wa-wafayāt al-shuyūkh wal-aqrān* ed. Ḥarfūsh, 41 (AH852/1448).

53 ‘Alī b. Dāwūd al-Khaṭīb al-Jawharī al-Ṣayrafī (819–900/1416–1495), *Inbā’ al-ḥaṣr bi-anbā’ al-‘aṣr* (informing the lions about contemporary history) ed. Ḥasan Ḥabashī (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub, 1970/2002), 63 (*wa-qad taqaddama fi al-kabīr*).

5 Extraction

Authors did not restrict themselves to a synopsis of passages from earlier works or to quotations from past authors but also copied long passages from each other's works, including books written by contemporaries.⁵⁴ A couple of obituaries of Arghūn Shāh al-Ibrāhīmī, the viceroy of Aleppo (d. 801/1398), illuminate this working method. Both Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī (773–852/1372–1449)⁵⁵ and Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba (798–874/1396–1470)⁵⁶ set out Arghūn's biography in their records. Both append their entries with passages obtained from Ibn Khaṭīb al-Nāṣiriyyah (d. 843/1440). The first author, who is keen to produce the impression that he has met with his source, opens his account with the declaration: "he had mentioned to me (*wa-mimmā dhakar^a lī al-qāḍī*)"; while the second opens his quotation: "he narrated (*wa-ḥaká qāḍī al-quḍāt*)".⁵⁷ Yet their common source simply says "I had learned (*wa-balaghanī*)".⁵⁸ Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba uses a similar narrative strategy to weave into his chronicle the biography of the sultan Barqūq. To accomplish this, he gathers information from various sources, some of them named by him, and paints a wide-ranging picture. Opening remarks such as "Ibn Ḥijjī said" and "in his continuation of his father's history, Ṭāhir ibn Ḥabīb mentions him in an elegant biography", or a paragraph that simply starts with the statement "others say", illuminate his style.⁵⁹ In his obituary of the exiled governor Sayf al-Dīn al-Shaykh al-Ṣawafī (d. 801/1398), Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba criticizes his mentor Ibn al-Ḥijjī (751–815/1350–1414) for inaccuracy and instead cites the Egyptian historian (*wa-qāl^a mu'rrikh^u al-diyār al-miṣriyyah*)⁶⁰ Taqī al-Dīn al-

54 Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. 'Alī Ibn Ṭulūn al-Ṣāliḥī (1473–1546/880–953), *Mufākahat al-khillān fī ḥawādith al-zamān* [the joyful stories of close friends concerning recent events] ed. Kh. al-Manṣūr (Beirut, 1998), 110 (895/1490 "qāl al-shaykh 'Alā' al-Dīn al-Buṣrawī fī dhayliḥⁱⁿ"), 119 (896/1490), 138 (901/1496 "qāl shaykhunā al-muḥaddith Jamāl al-Dīn Ibn al-Mibrad al-Ṣāliḥī fī ta'rrikhiḥⁱⁿ").

55 Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. 'Alī Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī (773–852/1372–1449), *Dhayl al-durar al-kāmina fī a'yān al-mi'ah al-thāmina* ed. A. Darwish (Cairo, 1412/1992), 68 (no. 9). Ibn al-Khaṭīb is mentioned by Ibn Ḥajar also in other writings. Muḥammad Kamāl al-Dīn 'Izz al-Dīn, *al-Ta'rrikh wal-manhaj al-ta'rrikhī li-Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī* (Beirut, Dat Iqra, 1404/1984), 190.

56 Taqī al-Dīn Abū Bakr b. Aḥmad Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba (779–851/1377–1448), *Ta'rrikh* ed. 'Adnān Darwish (Damascus Institut Français de Damas, 1977–97), 4: 36.

57 Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba quotes both Ibn Ḥajar and 'Alā' al-Dīn Ibn al-Khaṭīb in other pages of his *Ta'rrikh*, 4: 45, 46, 50, 52 (Ibn Ḥajar on his journey to Damascus in AH802/1399–1400), 53, 56, 60.

58 'Ala' al-Dīn 'Alī Ibn Muḥammad Ibn 'Uthmān Ibn Khaṭīb al-Nāṣiriyyah al-Ṭā'ī al-Ḥalabī (774–843/1372–1440), *al-Durr al-muntakhab fī takmilat ta'rrikh mamlakat ḥalab* ed. S. Al-Silmi (Mecca, 1432/2011), 151.

59 Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta'rrikh*, 4: 40–41; he names Ibn Ḥabīb's *Dhayl* in other lines of his history, 63.

60 Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta'rrikh*, 4: 46–47, 48.

Maqrīzī (766–845/1364–1441).⁶¹ Narrating the story of a famine that inflicted havoc on northern Iraq, the Damascene historian al-Birzālī says: “I obtained this data from the writings of ‘Izz al-Dīn al-Hasan Ibn Aḥmad Ibn Ẓufar the Sufi physician from Irbil and omitted parts of his account”.⁶² The encyclopedist al-Nuwayrī for his part writes: “I extracted the story of this event from the history of al-Birzālī”.⁶³ The obituary of Ibn al-Rifāi’ī al-Ḥarīrī is manipulated by al-Yūnīnī in order to criticize Ibn Taymiyyah’s trial and to transmit oral traditions concerning the merits of the Sufi sheikhs Abū al-Bayān and Ruslān al-Nashar al-Dimashqī.⁶⁴ This is followed by a history of the Qadiriyyah Sufi group. Al-Yūnīnī’s biography of ‘Abd al-Qādir was taken by him from (*naqalt*“), a book entitled *Anwār al-Nāẓir*.⁶⁵ Actually this section in al-Yūnīnī’s book stands by itself as a history of Sufism in Damascus from the days of Nūr al-Dīn to the author’s own day.⁶⁶ By using this narratological tactic al-Yūnīnī obliterates the generational gap and creates a unified picture of the community of scholars and disciples who are bound together by an a-historical time line.

Another example to the point is al-Yūnīnī’s account of the year 702/1303. His report on the effects an earthquake that hit Egypt is based on an official letter that reached Damascus from Cairo. Yet it seems that al-Yūnīnī was not satisfied with a mere description of the seismic event because he inserts a long quotation (*naqalt*“) from al-Qazwīnī’s book “‘Ajā’ib al-Makhlūqāt”.⁶⁷ This extract, we must assume he believed, provided his contemporary report with a deep historical background (*dhakaruh*“ *al-qudama*).⁶⁸ Moreover, in order to dramatize their accounts historian even compared recent event with biblical stories. Ibn Faḍl Allah al-‘Umarī, for example, compares the advance of the Mongols with the story of the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar and his conquest of Jerusalem.⁶⁹

61 Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad b. ‘Alī al-Maqrīzī, (766–845/1364–1441), *Durar al-uqūd al-farīda fī tarājīm al-a’yān al-mufīda* ed. Mahmud al-Jalīlī (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb, 1423/2002), 2: 123 (no. 514), 197 (529).

62 al-Birzālī, *al-Muqtafi’ alā kitāb al-rawḍatayn*, 2/2: 303–304 (718/1318).

63 Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Nuwayrī (677–733/1278–1333), *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab* (Beirut: Dār al-kutub al-‘ilmiyya, 1424/2004), 32: 224–226.

64 Cf. Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-Durar wa-jāmi’ al-ghurar*, 9: 32 (who names al-Birzālī as the source of the report on Ibn Taymiyyah and Ghazan). I failed to locate this in the *al-Muqtafi* but see there 2/1: 31–32 (and the editor’s notes).

65 al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 2: 1005.

66 al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 2: 919–1113.

67 Zakariyā b. Muḥammad al-Qazwīnī (605–682/1208–1283), ‘Ajā’ib al-makhlūqāt wa-gharā’ib al-mawjūdāt ed. Ferdinand Wüstenfeld (Göttingen, 1849), p. 149; Mamlūk and Ottoman authors were familiar with this work. See Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-‘Āmirī al-Ghazzī al-Dimashqī (904–984/1499–1577), *al-Maṭālī’ al-Badrīyah fī al-mamāzīl al-Rūmiyyah*, 1499–1577 ed. Maḥdī ‘A. Al-Rawwāḍīyyah (Abū Dabī, 2004), 44 (Ḥimṣ).

68 al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 2: 717–720 (1327; on rain in April 710/1310 followed by a comparable quotation on rain in 640/1243).

69 Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-‘Umarī, *Masālik al-abṣār fī mamālik al-amṣār*, 27: 152.

This narrative technique of using long citations from written books⁷⁰ and references to reports by others on contemporary events explains also the weaving of official memoranda into the plain fabric of chronologies. Readers of Mamlūk histories know that it is not rare to stumble upon long extractions from administrative messages or even the insertion of entire edicts and accounts in the chronicle.⁷¹ Recipients of several types of official documents used to read them in the open. Nomination deeds (*manāshir*), bureaucratic procedures (*maḥḍar*),⁷² official certificates, diplomatic correspondences,⁷³ communication from the countryside and also letters sent by pilgrims from the Hajj road were among the texts that were performed publically. Damascene chronicles regularly inform their readers about letters sent by pilgrims either while on the way to Mecca or when they were back from Arabia.⁷⁴ Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-‘Umari inserts into his chronicle of Mamlūk operation against the Hospitallers castle of Margat (Marqab; in summer 684/1285)⁷⁵ an epistle written by “our sheikh” Shihāb al-Dīn Abū al-Thanā’ Maḥmūd Ibn Fahd al-Ḥalabī (d. 725/1325). In it the sheikh congratulates the sultan for achieving a victory that past sultans “dreamed about” but failed to accomplish.⁷⁶ Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī treats in similar manner a letter from his student al-Biqā’ī, who informed him about his experiences conducting naval operations in the eastern Mediterranean.⁷⁷ In an earlier study I used these bureaucratic procedures (*maḥḍar*) to cast light on natural hazards and on the topography of farming lands.⁷⁸ Here I would like to look at them from a different angle – that of communication and transmission. Reporting on floods in Baalbek (717/1317), al-Birzālī says:

On Thursday 29th Ṣafar/12 May reports (*akhbār*) reached Damascus that a flood had deluged Baalbek destroying houses and properties and killing men. The water demolished the city’s wall and knocked down the fences of the mosques. I read (*waqafī‘* ‘*alā*) a letter that Najam al-Dīn Ibn al-Muqri’ had dispatched to the sheikh Kamāl al-Dīn

70 ‘Alī b. Dāwūd al-Khaṭīb al-Jawharī al-Ṣayrafi (819–900/1416–1495), *Inbā’ al-ḥaṣr bi-anbā’ al-‘aṣr* (informing the lions about contemporary history) ed. Ḥasan Ḥabashī (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub, 1970/2002), 24, 39, 44, 48 (*qāla Ibn Taghrī Birdī fī ta’rikhih*), 69, 72, 100, 147, 152.

71 al-Birzālī, *al-Muqtafi’ alā kitāb al-rawḍatayn*, 2/2: 260–264 (a report on floods in Baalbek in 717/1313 that is based on private and official memos that reached Damascus), 298–299 (the Nusayri revolt in Jabla).

72 Ibn Ḥijjī al-Ḥasbanī, *Ta’rikh*, 226 (799/1397).

73 Ibn Ḥijjī, *Ta’rikh*, 49–50.

74 Ibn Ḥijjī, *Ta’rikh*, 37, 380.

75 Hugh Kennedy, *Crusaders Castles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 163–179.

76 Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-‘Umari, *Masālik al-abṣār fī mamālik al-amṣār*, 27: 297.

77 Y. Frenkel, “Al-Biqā’ī’s Naval War-Report”, in Stephan Conermann (ed.), *History and Society during the Mamlūk Period (1250–1517)* (Bonn University Press: Studies of the Annemarie Schimmel Research College, 2014), pp. 9–20.

78 Y. Frenkel, “Mapping the Mamlūk Sultanate”, in Conermann (ed.), *History and Society during the Mamlūk Period*, pp. 37–60.

Ibn al-Zamlakānī. In it he narrates that on Tuesday morning 27th Šafar loud thunder was heard in the city and it was followed by a gigantic flood. The heavy water opened up a gap in the northern wall of the city and destroyed a vast part of the city, about a third of it. Water reach the mosque and penetrated it. It reached to the height of a man, and even of one and a half. The pressure of the heavy water shattered the western wall of Baalbek, destroying a considerable number of properties that financed the mosque. An unaccountable number of people drowned, men, women and infants. All the tools and furniture in the mosque were washed away....

Later on, the chief judge of Damascus, the above mentioned Najam al-Dīn, read to us the communication that the governor of Baalbek, ‘Imād al-Dīn, had sent to him as well as the dispatch that the local judge, Jamāl al-Dīn al-Raḥabī, had written to him. A military officer travelled from Damascus to inspect the damage that had been inflicted upon Baalbek. He, Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn Ma‘bad, has inspected the place and returned to Damascus carrying with him a memorandum that opens with several verses from the Qurā‘n. God is the most trusted speaker. His Almighty says: “Surely thy Lord’s chastisement is a thing to beware of”,⁷⁹ and: “Surely in that is a lesson for men possessed of eyes”.⁸⁰ Those who contemplated this massive event and paid attention to it will bless God whose intentions are always positive and who uses his deeds as a lesson for mankind. He says: “His command, when He desires a thing, is to say to it ‘Be,’ and it is. So, glory be to Him, in whose hand is the dominion of everything, and unto whom you shall be returned”.⁸¹

A while later I read in another memo that in total about six hundred houses and shops, twenty orchards and eight mills were destroyed in this event. To this number also the Great Mosque and the al-Aminiyyah school should be added. Many houses were washed away. The property carried away is unaccountable. The death toll reached the number of 144 identified men, women and infants and, in addition to them, a number of foreign people.⁸²

This practice of transmission seems to result from the common vision among the Mamlūks that administrative communications are not bureaucratic documents to be consumed by a limited number of readers. The official reports and informative dispatches were not considered an internal communication to be archived, but rather public property for immediate consumption by the urban elite. Hence historians handled them as if they were communal announcements, and incorporated them in their chronicles.

In addition to official dispatches that are quoted fully, chronicles are dotted with verses and odes. This should not surprise the student of medieval Arab literature. From the very beginning the dividing lines between *ta`rākh* and *adab*

79 Q. 17: 59.

80 Q. 3: 13.

81 Q. 36: 82–83.

82 al-Birzali, *al-Muqtafi alá kitāb al-rawḍatayn*, 2/2: 260–64.

were quite vague.⁸³ Telling the story of the closing phase of the history of the Franks in Syria, Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-ʿUmarī quotes a long poem that, after the conquest of Acre, his master Ibn Fahd al-Ḥalabī had composed in praise of the sultan al-Ashraf (in 696/1291). The poem opens with the declaration: “thanks be to God, the power of the cross was humiliated and the pure religion was strengthened / also being confused these were the hopes that were envisioned”. Al-ʿUmarī then appends a second poem that was composed by Ibn ʿAbd al-Zāhir.⁸⁴ In the following year al-Ashraf had attacked an Armenian fortification in Anatolia, Abū al-Thanaʿ, the Aleppo secretary (i.e. Ibn Fahd al-Ḥalabī), congratulated him in a long poem that opens with the eulogy: “the victory advances as you hold the yellow flag”. Al-ʿUmarī, the student of the poet, interleaves his verses with his own chronological account.⁸⁵ In his report on the aftermath of the Mongols’ defeat (in 1303), al-Yūnīnī incorporates an official letter that the sultan al-Malik al-Nāṣir sent to Ghazan.⁸⁶ To depict the Damascene public’s reaction to the news about the victory at Marj al-Ṣuffār he makes use of a long ode.⁸⁷

6 Continuum

To conclude this section it is worth mentioning that Mamlūk authors often presented the text that they had produced, not as a fresh new composition, but rather as a continuation of a well-received earlier book.⁸⁸ Hence they termed their own work a supplement (*dhayl*),⁸⁹ completion (*tatimma*), continuation (*tallaya*) or as a synopsis (*mukhtaṣar*).⁹⁰ The study of these works illuminates the Mamlūk

83 Isabel Toral-Niehoff, “History in Adab Context: ‘The Book on Caliphal Histories’ by Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih (246/860–328/940)”, *Journal of Abbasid Studies* 2 (2015) 62–63.

84 For additional quotation from his poetry see Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-ʿUmarī, *Masālik al-abṣār fi mamālik al-amṣār*, 27: 271–272, 274, 277, 281.

85 Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-ʿUmarī, *Masālik al-abṣār fi mamālik al-amṣār*, 27: 454–458, 463–476.

86 al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 2: 722–726. The dispatch is also transmitted by the anonymous historian who was published by Karl Vilhelm Zetterstéen (ed.), *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Mamlukensultane in den Jahren 690–704 der Hıgra nach Arabischen Handschriften* (Leiden, 1919), 118–121.

87 al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 2: 706.

88 Ibn al-Ḥimṣī, *Ḥawādith al-zamān*, ed. Ḥarfūsh, 37–38 (“*qad dhakartuh*”), 59, 68, 74, 102 (AH 869/1464).

89 Caesar E. Farah, *The Dhayl in Medieval Arabic Historiography* (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1967); David C. Reisman, “A Holograph MS of Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah’s ‘Dhayl’”, *Mamlūk Studies Review* 2 (1998): 21–25; Sami G. Massoud, “Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba’s ‘*al-Dhayl al-Muṭawwal*’: The Making of an All Mamluk Chronicle”, *Quaderni di Studi Arabi*, Nuova Serie 4 (2009): 61–79.

90 al-Biqāʿī, *Izhār al-ʿaṣr*, 1: 63.

period technique of teaching, transmission and reception.⁹¹ It should be added that terms such as *dhayl* are misleading. Authors often used the primary text only as point of departure to dissimilar topics and styles. To support this claim, it is sufficient to supplement here the sources already mentioned above with a very short list of selected titles:

- al-Muwaffaq Faḍl Allāh ibn Abī al-Fakhr al-Suqā‘ī (726/1325), *Tālī kitāb wa-fayāt al-a’yān* ed. Sublet, Jacqueline (Damascus, 1974).
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These titles contribute to our efforts to reconstruct the diffusion of books and the reading practices of the audiences of the Mamlūk period.

91 Ibn al-Ḥimṣī, *Ḥawādith al-zamān*, ed. Ḥarfūsh, 105 (AH870/1465–66, al-Bā‘ūnī), 111, 120–121, 129.

7 An Episode: Tanam

To illuminate the working method of some Mamlūk historians I will dwell briefly on a political affair that erupted in Damascus during the last days of Barqūq (784–801/1382–1399) and the beginning of the sultanate of his son al-Nāṣir Faraj (801–815/1399–1412). These were not shining days for the inhabitants of Cairo's citadel. The dark clouds of Ottoman conquering forces hung heavy over Cairo, Damascus and Aleppo.⁹² At this delicate moment Tanam al-Ḥasanī, a viceroy of Damascus, rebelled against the sultan (in 801/1399). Contemporary historians' records enable us to compare the reports written in Cairo and Damascus and to evaluate central and provincial points of view, as well as the opposing personal approaches – a method similar to Massoud's study of Mamlūk chronicles.⁹³ The major sources at our disposal are divided between Damascenes and Cairenes. The formers are represented by two contemporary historians: Shihāb al-Dīn Abū al-'Abbās Aḥmad Ibn Ḥijjī al-Sa'dī al-Ḥasbanī al-Dimashqī (751–815/1350–1414) and Taqī al-Dīn Abū Bakr b. Aḥmad Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba (779–851/1377–1448). Although concentrating on Bilād al-Shām, the two authors not only narrate the political history from a provincial point of view but also add reports from the center. Our contemporary Cairene historians are represented by Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. 'Alī Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī (773–852/1372–1449) and Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad b. 'Alī al-Maqrīzī (766–845/1364–1441), who both lived in the sultanate's capital. They looked and reported on developments at headquarters from close range, paying less attention to the countryside.

It should be said that, in addition to the four authors mentioned above, other contemporaries also wrote chronicles. Among them were Walī al-Dīn Abū Zur'a Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Raḥīm b. al-Ḥusayn Ibn al-'Iraqī al-Kurdī (762–826/1361–1423) and Badr al-Dīn Maḥmūd b. Aḥmad al-'Aynī (726–855/1360–1451). Yet the manuscript of al-'Iraqī ends prior to the events that occupy us here, while the section in al-'Aynī's chronology that deals with the years of al-Nāṣir, which does concern us here, is not yet published and I have not obtained the manuscript (which currently is at the heart of a PhD project in Paris). The historians named above were familiar with the historical works of their colleagues and mention in their writings various contemporary scholars. Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba names al-Maqrīzī

92 Shai Har-El, *Struggle for Domination in the Middle East: The Ottoman-Mamluk War, 1485–91* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995) 67–69; Amalia Levanoni, "The Mamlūks in Egypt and Syria: the Turkish Mamlūk sultanate (648–784/1250–1382) and the Circassian Mamlūk sultanate (784–923/1382–1517)", in Maribel Fierro (ed.), *The New Cambridge History of Islam Vol. 2: The Western Islamic World – Eleventh to Eighteenth Centuries* (Cambridge University Press, 2010), 2: 263.

93 Sami G. Massoud, *The Chronicles and Annalistic Sources of the Early Mamlūk Circassian Period* (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

and Ibn Ḥijjī among his sources and mentions that he consulted “Egyptian authors”. The difference between the texts is rendered crystal clear in their respective reports on a circumcision festival that the Tanam viceroy orchestrated in Damascus (Dhū al-Ḥijjah 801/August 1399). For example, Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba describes the tents that were erected in the city’s central square (*maydān*) and the rich food served to the guests. In order to emphasize the gorgeousness of the celebrations the chronicler switches from a plain chronological style (“on that day the viceroy made”) to a long quotation that opens with the line:

[And] Ibn Ḥijjī said: in a word (*wa-‘alā al-jumlah*) such a festive day never was seen in Damascus before. The viceroy ordered to be brought eight horses coated with horse-blankets (*kanābīsh*) made of silk and embroidered with gold and silver (*zarkash*), and on them golden saddles. The presenting senior commanders mounted the horses. Then the boy was summoned to the grand tent. The commanders rode out, and the viceroy and his son followed them. The musicians paraded behind them till they arrived at the Palace of Felicity (*dār al-sa‘āda*).⁹⁴ The circumcision took place there.⁹⁵

Using this narratological technique, switching from direct first person speaking to third person quotation, Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba moves from an abbreviated depiction of a local event to a thick account of wider scenery. By doing so he empowers the image of a rebellious military commander whose days he knows are limited. Yet he refrains from blaming him. The fault, he suggests, lies on the shoulders of others. It is not surprising that al-Maqrīzī, the Egyptian historian, does not mention the event whatsoever. From Cairo it seemed trivial; moreover, the enemies of the viceroy Tanam were in control of the Citadel – indeed, at that very moment they were busy in preparation to launch an attack against Damascus. The glorification of an enemy was too risky.

8 Summing up

The historians I have studied saw themselves as guardians of identity and continuity. The historical writings that they produced resulted from this self-image and from the aspirations of the very social group with whom they identified and who received their literary products. Furthermore, by employing this narrative strategy some among the Mamlūk historians aimed at strengthening the legiti-

94 I.e. the governors’ quarters. On this palace see William M. Brinner, “Dār al-Sa‘āda and Dar al-‘Adl in Mamluk Damascus”, in M. Rosen-Ayalon (ed.), *Studies in Memory of Gaston Wiet* (Jerusalem, 1977), pp. 235–248; Nasser O. Rabbat, “The Ideological Significance of the Dār al-‘Adl in the Medieval Islamic Orient”, *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 27 (1995): 3–28.

95 Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta’rikh*, 4: 28–29; Ibn Ḥijjī, *Ta’rikh ibn ḥijjī: ḥawādith wa-wafayāt 796–815/1393–1413*, 370.

macy of the Muslim ruler, therefore adding extra information and naming his source. The plot motives and style they employed also aimed at amplifying their self-image and social position, as well as that of their social echelon in general. They used their literary compositions, not only as a tool to frame society in a clearly defined way, but also as a device to present a continuing multi-generational dialogue. Sharing a joint communal legacy, the texts they produced were accepted favorably by their audiences. This interpretation of the Mamlūk historical writings is influenced, no doubt, by cultural studies and anthropology, which see historical writings as a tool used by a class that aspires to maintain its hegemonic position and to fortify its position as the sole legitimate interpreters of religion, norms and the past. Based upon this assumption I argued in the opening lines of this paper that the study of collective memory explores how the Mamlūk elite constructed its historical narrative. Past traditions, including historical accounts, are organized socially.⁹⁶ The historians who worked in close range of the centers of power aimed at preserving the collective memory of their surroundings and tailored their compositions to address the anticipations of their audiences. To achieve this goal these historians plotted motives and used narrative techniques that provided their compositions with images of credibility and accuracy. To help reach this end they often resorted to speaking in the first person. Transmitting what they claimed to be eyewitness accounts and inserting quotations and documents also served them well. Furthermore, by basing his report on solid contemporary “evidence”, the Mamlūk historian distanced himself from disagreeable facts and shifted the burden of proof onto the sources that he named. Although their accounts often reported on events that took place in the present,⁹⁷ they consciously used past time, creating the perception of a limitless line of moments. Using this narratological technique the historians also aimed to boost the accountability of their writings. In this fashion the historical story is dressed in a gown of truth that supposedly should be trusted. The audience should perceive that the reported events indeed took place. They should receive the accounts, not as legends or unfounded rumors, but as a report that exposes an unquestionable reality. The historical past cannot be doubted. Knowledge of what happened in the past, which is beyond reach, and certainty in evaluating the visible present, were merged into a single confirmed explanation. Hence the separation of memory and history – to return to an argument stated above – was erased. The past has not gone. It persists as an integral part of the present.

96 Cf. Burke, *Varieties of Cultural History* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1997); Jan Assmann and John Czaplicka, “Collective Memory and Cultural Identity”, *New German Critique* 65 (1995): 125–133.

97 al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk li-ma’rifat duwal al-mulūk*, 4: 267 (816/1413: “I have nothing to say about events in that month”).

The remembering of the past was seen by the Mamlūk historians as crucial to the safeguarding of their society's sense of identity.⁹⁸ It confirmed the continuity of their community – past and the present were interlaced into a single capsule of time. Their writings aimed to create the impression of a homogenous story continuing over a long period. By making use of it the historical narrative serves to depict an uninterrupted story playing out over an unbroken timeline. The last narrator in the chain of transmitters is assumed to be a node in the chain and not an inventor. This self-presentation fits well with the conformist picture that the historians hoped to paint. In doing so they gave to their works an image of prestige. Moreover, employing such narrative techniques enabled them to present themselves as preservers of the collective memory.

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98 We should bear in mind that this was an age that witnessed the growing popularity of the vision of the *salaf* as ideal prototype. This is also visible in the presence of infants in learning sessions and *ḥadīth* transmission. Y. Frenkel, “Women in Late Mamluk Damascus in the Light of Audience Certificates (*sama’āt*)”, in U. Vermeulen and J. van Steenberghe (eds.), *Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras IV* (Lueven: Peeters 2006), pp. 409–424; idem, “Islamic Utopia under the Mamluks: The Social and Legal Ideals of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah”, in Caterina Bori and Livnat Holtzman (eds.), *A Scholar in the Shadow: Essays in the Legal and Theological Thought of Ibn Qayyim al-Gawziyyah* [= Oriente Moderno 90/1 (2010)]: 63–83.

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Narrative Strategies in Biographical Dictionaries: The *ad-Durar al-Kāmina* of Ibn Ḥaǧar al-‘Asqalānī – a case study

I. Introduction

Although documentary sources, such as archaeological artifacts, architecture, endowment deeds, numismatic evidences, manuscripts and certificates of transmission (*samāʿ*) etc., have been increasingly used since the 1970s, still the main sources for the study of the Mamluk history remain the narrative sources.¹ From the beginning of the Mamluk studies till the present, scholars heavily rely on chronicles and biographical dictionaries that are overwhelmingly treated as impressive monuments of knowledge management, of which information could be taken out to rebuild the historicity and reality of the past. The surprisingly large lack of detailed studies on most of the historians and their works of the Mamluk times supports the impression of their dominant use as sources of information about specific events or persons.² Only few exceptions of modern scholarship can be named that takes the Narrative Turn of the 70s serious understanding the historical texts more as coherent narratives and thus asking in their studies for the hidden agenda of the author within his work.³ However, most of these studies take only chronicles into the focus of their research question. Until now, no study deals analogically with the narrative nature of biographical dictionaries. With only one exception, almost all studies that deal with biographical dictionaries or count biographical dictionaries among their main sources asks for their informative character of this very specific genre of Islamic

1 See Hirschler, “Studying Mamluk Historiography,” pp. 160–162.

2 See Hirschler, “Studying Mamluk Historiography,” pp. 163–164.

3 See Hirschler, “Studying Mamluk Historiography,” pp. 166–168, with reference to the studies of Shoshan, Poetics; El-Hibri, *Reinterpreting Islamic Historiography*; idem, *Parable and Politics*; Donner, *Narratives*. Those studies were devoted to the early Islamic historiography. Studies with a similar approach for the field of Mamluk studies are still very rare. The only monograph that is known to me is the PhD of Anna Angermann on an-Nuwayrī’s *Nihāyat al-arab* with the title “Analyse des ‘Mongolenbandes’ aus Shihab Al-Din Ahmad Al-Nuwayris Enzyklopädie ‘Nihayat Al-Arab’” (to be published in 2018).

historiography. That is true for the studies that were interested in the historicity of events, persons or issues as well as those that chose a quantitative approach or approaches of social history or of historical anthropology for their research.⁴ Only the study of Morray “An Ayyubid Notable and His World” is noteworthy where the author “examines the dictionary for what it can tell us about the author and his times”.⁵ By an analysis of the entries of selected contemporaries, Morray gives a unique insight into the social and intellectual world of Ibn al-‘Adīm and thus contextualizes the production of his Ayyubid-early Mamluk transition-period biographical dictionary.⁶ But even Morray’s – for the field of Mamluk studies – innovative approach still evolves from the perspective of dictionaries as a knowledge managing source primarily, though he shifted the focus to the author of the source. Hence, he did not analyze the source in terms of its use of narrative strategies. That an analysis of the narrative structures and strategies of a biographical dictionary reveals valuable results for a better understanding of the author’s intellectual project has already been indicated in the 1960s. George Makdisi argued that Tāğ ad-Dīn as-Subkī (d. 771/1370) used his biographical dictionary to depict the Šāfi‘ī school as one that is characterized by Aš‘arī theology that balanced between rationalism and traditionalism.⁷ In addition, as-Subkī blamed the Šāfi‘ī scholar and historian Šams ad-Dīn aḍ-Ḍahabī for his biases against rationalism in the latter’s biographical dictionary when he writes about Šāfi‘ī scholars.⁸ Same could be said about the biographical dictionary dedicated to the Šāfi‘ī school of Ibn Kaṭīr, what has been recently indicated through an analysis of selected biographies by Younus Mirza.⁹ Despite these well known indications that biographical dictionaries are not less influenced by the author’s agenda as for example theological treatises or more clearly theological polemics, almost no study has explicitly dealt with this topic since then. It is the main purpose of the present study to provide such an analysis of the narrative structures and strategies of a biographical dictionary.

4 For an overview of the various approaches that has been used to study biographical dictionaries or uses them for their analysis Hirschler, “Studying Mamluk Historiography,” pp. 170–180. General studies on biographical dictionaries are those of al-Qadi, “Biographical Dictionaries as the Scholars’ Alternative History”; idem, “Biographical Dictionaries: Inner Structure.”

5 Morray, *An Ayyubid Notable*, p. 2.

6 See Morray, *An Ayyubid Notable*; and the remarks on this study by Hirschler, “Studying Mamluk Historiography,” pp. 167–168.

7 Makdisi, “Ash‘arī and the Ash‘arites,” p. 59.

8 As-Subkī, Tāğ ad-Dīn, *Ṭabqāt al-fuqahā’ aš-šāfi‘iyyīn*, 2:22–23; see also Irwin, “Mamluk History,” p. 161.

9 Mirza, *Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373)*, pp. 95–103.

Methodological considerations and the structure of the paper

One of the most popular and most cited biographical dictionaries in the field of Mamluk Studies is the *ad-Durar al-kāmina fī a'yān al-mi'a at-tāmina* of Ibn Ḥaḡar al-'Asqalānī (d. 852/1449). Although the *ad-Durar* is perceived as a source – if not *the* source – for those who deal in their research with the eighth/fifteenth century, only few have drawn their attention to the structure, organization, arrangement and contained information of this work. The present study approaches this dictionary not from the perspective of what for information does the author give on certain persons or events. Instead, lights should be shed on how Ibn Ḥaḡar presents his information. Therefore, the narrative strategies lie at the center of the investigation. The biographical dictionary that has previously been perceived mainly as a source of information is now seen as the means of the author to realize his – hidden or not so hidden – agenda and as a projection screen that reflects his intellectual orientation. A useful and perhaps necessary distinction that should be made when analyzing narrative texts is that between *knowledge* and *information*. It helps to distinguish more or less pure data that describes facts and circumstances or certain attributes from already interpreted information that contains the author's intention and certain negative or positive connotations. While neutral data are defined as *information*, *knowledge* is defined as information, that is selected according to their relevance and semantic content for a certain idea or the agenda of the author.¹⁰ The main hypothesis of this paper is, therefore, that the content in biographical dictionaries in general and in the *ad-Durar al-kāmina* in particular can be identified as *knowledge* and are not pure *information* presented neutrally by the author. Since the author has already chosen certain information above others and has arranged them in a certain way, they form the *knowledge* he wanted to transmit to his readership. The personal and intentional arrangement of the information can be defined as the *narrative strategies*, that find their expression in certain *tools* such as grammatical, semantic and stylistic ones. The author chooses the strategies consciously to support his underlying intention. The aim of this paper is to analyze the strategies of Ibn Ḥaḡar in his biographical dictionary *ad-Durar* to, hopefully, be able to say something about the hidden agenda and intention of Ibn Ḥaḡar.

Moreover, the intention of the author is not only present in the concrete strategy, that can also be defined as the internal structure of a text, but finds its expression also in the external structure, i. e. the arrangement and organization of the biographical dictionary. Hence, before starting to analyze the inner structure of a biographical entry in *ad-Durar* lights need to be shed on the external structure of it, too. Therefore, this study is divided into two parts. The

¹⁰ Lahn/Meister, *Erzähltextanalyse*, p. 157.

first part describes Ibn Ḥaḡar's *ad-Durar al-kāmina* and contextualizes it within his other historical writings. It answers the question of what the characteristics of *ad-Durar* are and how it differs from the other writings. For practical reasons, this comparison focuses on Ibn Ḥaḡar's other biographical dictionaries. The underlying hypothesis is that each biographical dictionary is designed in a certain and distinctive way to meet both, the reader's expectations and the author's intention and aim. Therefore, each dictionary is assumed to either contain different information and knowledge or to present those information and knowledge in different ways. In the second part, an example is analyzed in detail to show how Ibn Ḥaḡar designs an entry of a certain personality. This entry will be compared in two ways. First, a comparison with an entry of the same person in one of Ibn Ḥaḡar's other biographical dictionaries will demonstrate how the different orientation of each dictionary influences the content and structure of the entry. Second, the entry in the *ad-Durar* will be compared with the entry in the *A'yān an-naṣr* of aṣ-Ṣafadī to see how the entries of the same personality differ in the dictionaries of two authors. Although initially planned, the paper will not go deeper into the question what might stand behind the specific design of the entry that has been chosen as an example. During the research, it appeared that there are too many factors that needed to be regarded. Instead small indications and general possibilities will be given in the concluding section that, however and of course, should be taken with a great part of caution. All results can only be of preliminary character, since it needs further studies to compare a wide range of entries to come to more substantial results that could lead to general concluding. This would, however, go beyond the possibilities of this paper.

II. Contextualization of the *Durar al-kāmina*

Content

In his short introduction to the *Durar al-kāmina*, Ibn Ḥaḡar states that he collected biographies of “elites (*a'yān*), scholars, rulers, emirs, writers (*kuttāb*), viziers, literates and poets.”¹¹ Including all these various kinds of individuals that belongs to different social groups makes *ad-Durar* a very broad dictionary with a wide scope. Although it reminds to a modern who is who, the *ad-Durar* has still a clear focus in its orientation. Being a well established religious scholar with a strong orientation towards *ḥadīth* studies himself, Ibn Ḥaḡar informs his reader that even in his broadly orientated *ad-Durar* he had a special interest in and focus on *ḥadīth* scholars and transmitters. Therefore, he mentions those who he looked

¹¹ Ibn Ḥaḡar, *ad-Durar*, 1:4.

into their conditions (*ḥālihi*) and refers to selected transmitted material. His special focus is explained by him due to the fact that many of the people he included in the dictionary were either his direct teachers or the teachers of his teachers who he either could have met but did not do, or who he met but did not hear from, or who he met and hear from.¹² With regard to the temporal period covered by the dictionary, Ibn Ḥaḡar chose to focus on the eighth century. Hence, in contrast to scholars who restrict their dictionaries to a circle of persons of a certain profession, social group or a specific *madḥab* and broaden the time period, mostly from the beginning of Islam to the author's time, Ibn Ḥaḡar focuses on one century and broaden the scope of the persons of interest.

The dictionary includes about 1343 biographies that are organized alphabetically. The main geographical focus of the work seems to be Cairo, i. e. most of the mentioned individuals lived and died there. However, there hasn't been yet any quantitative study that could confirm this impression. But due to the fact, that Cairo was the intellectual and political center of this time, it seems natural that almost all scholars from other cities and countries had spent at least some years in the capital, so that they would find their way in the dictionary as well. Therefore, and because Ibn Ḥaḡar also includes some individuals from Egypt and Syria, it can be assumed that he aimed for compiling a "who is who" of the eighth century.

In general, Ibn Ḥaḡar begins an entry with mentioning the entire name including the *kunya*, the *laqab*, the *nisba* and if given also the name the person is famous with. Then he provides the person's birth date if known followed by a list of the *samā'* a person had acquired in his youth or in later times. This is where the *ḥadīṭ*-orientation of the author becomes especially apparent. Ibn Ḥaḡar lists also the fields of Islamic knowledge in which a scholar might have specialized with a reference to the books that have been read. Teaching positions and official posts are given after that. If the individual was a mamlūk than Ibn Ḥaḡar restricts to the name and a short enumeration of the posts the individual hold. The entries differ largely from each other in length. Some are only a few lines long others stretch over several pages. The reason for that is, that Ibn Ḥaḡar includes into some biographies anecdotes about the individual's life, things he has done or that have happened to him. This is true for scholars and non scholars. If known, the entries end with the mentioning of the individual's death date and place. The information Ibn Ḥaḡar mentioned about the individuals are partly from his own contact with the person in question and partly drawn from other sources. Luckily, he listed the sources he used to cite from in general in its introduction, even though he does not refer to the specific source when citing one. Those are the *A'yān an-naṣr* of aṣ-Ṣafā' aṣ-Safadī, the *Maḡānī l-'aṣr* of Abī Ḥayyān, the

12 Ibn Ḥaḡar, *ad-Durar*, 1:4.

Ḍahabiyyat al-qaṣr of Šihāb ad-Dīn Ibn Faḍl Allāh, the *Tārīḥ miṣr* of Quṭb ad-Dīn al-Ḥalabī, the *Ḍayl Siyar an-nubalā'* of Šams ad-Dīn aḍ-Ḍahabī, the *Ḍayl Ḍayl al-Mir'āt* of 'Alam ad-Dīn al-Birzālī, the *al-Wafayāt* of Taqī d-Dīn Ibn Rāfi', the *aḍ-Ḍayl 'alā l-Wafayāt* of Šihāb ad-Dīn Ibn Ḥiġġī, the *Ḥiṭaṭ* of Taqī d-Dīn al-Maqrīzī, the *al-Wafayāt* of Šams ad-Dīn Abī l-Ḥusayn b. Aybak ad-Dimyāṭī, the *aḍ-Ḍayl 'alā al-Wafayāt* of Abī l-Faḍl b. al-Ḥusayn al-'Irāqī, the *Tārīḥ Ġranāta* of Lisān ad-Dīn Ibn al-Ḥaṭīb, the *at-Tārīḥ* of Walī d-Dīn Ibn Ḥaldūn al-Mālīkī, in addition to the *Ma'āġim* of his teachers and other sources that he did not name specifically but only refer to them as "*wa-ġayr dālik*".¹³

Comparison to other writings of Ibn Ḥaġar

Ibn Ḥaġar composed a continuation of the *ad-Durar* that he named *aḍ-Ḍayl 'alā d-Durar al-kāmīna* and also referred to as *Tārīḥ al-mi'a at-tāsi'a*. It differs in its structure slightly from the *ad-Durar*. Since Ibn Ḥaġar was well aware that he won't be able to finish a biographical dictionary that covers the entire ninth century he organized the dictionary in years, mentioning for each year the individuals who died in it in an alphabetical order.¹⁴ Like the *ad-Durar*, Ibn Ḥaġar devoted his *aḍ-Ḍayl* also to the *a'yān*, so that one finds besides the *'ulamā'* individuals belonging to the Mamluk elite and literates etc.¹⁵ The *Ḍayl* contains 639 biographies spread over 32 years (from 801–832). Although one can find longer biographies, the average length of the entries in the *aḍ-Ḍayl* is shorter than in *ad-Durar*.¹⁶ Despite its obvious *ḥadīth*-study orientation, that results of Ibn Ḥaġar's own educational background, the *ad-Durar*, in comparison to other works of the author, can be described with a more generally orientated character.

The *Raf al-iṣr 'an quḍāt miṣr*, by contrast, is dedicated, as the title already indicates, entirely to judges of Egypt. The *Raf al-iṣr* resembles the *ad-Durar* in structure – both are of alphabetical order –, but they differ from each other in the period they cover. The *Raf* covers a larger period beginning with the conquer of Egypt till the end of the 8th/15th century. However, in terms of selection criteria it is much more restricted, since it only contains judges of Egypt. That also means that there is an overlap of biographies that can be found in both the *ad-Durar* and the *Raf* for all judges of the 8th century that are included in both dictionaries.

The *Inbā' al-'umr* is another work of Ibn Ḥaġar the content of which at least partly overlaps with that of *ad-Durar* – as well as of *aḍ-Ḍayl*. As a combinational

13 Ibn Ḥaġar, *ad-Durar*, 1:5.

14 Ibn Ḥaġar, *aḍ-Ḍayl*, p. 62.

15 Ibn Ḥaġar, *aḍ-Ḍayl*, p. 62.

16 Ibn Ḥaġar, *aḍ-Ḍayl*.

work of chronicle and biographical dictionary, it covers the period of its author's life time for 773 till 849 and records the events of each year as well as the individuals that died in it at the end of each year in an alphabetical order.¹⁷ The biographies within this work tend to be shorter as those in *ad-Durar* and contain, besides the basic information such as the name and the official position, also the *samā'* of the individual if possible.

The *al-Mağma' al-mu'assis li-l-mu'ğam al-mufahris*, too, contains a significant number of biographies that overlap with those included in the *ad-Durar*. This stems from the fact that the *al-Mağma'* is a *mašyaḥa*-work in which Ibn Ḥağar lists all his teachers. As he noticed in the introduction of the work, he included all his teachers that he took from any narration (*'alā ṭarīq ar-riwāya*), be it a Prophetic *ḥadīṭ* or an entire collection of it, or those he took knowledge from, mostly in the field of *ḥadīṭ*-studies, in the form of education (*'alā ṭarīq ad-dirāya*). Ibn Ḥağar includes in addition to his teachers also those colleagues of his that he benefited from but were not essential for his education (*aḥadtu 'anhu šay'an fī l-mudākara*). Therefore, Ibn Ḥağar divided this dictionary into two sections covering in its first all his teachers and in its second all his colleagues. Both sections are arranged alphabetically. The temporal frame is given naturally by the life dates of Ibn Ḥağar and the possibility of meeting the individuals for educational reason. Although he mentions some other fields of Islamic knowledge he took from the teachers mentioned in the dictionary, the clear focus lies on the *ḥadīṭ*-studies, its narrations and collections.¹⁸ That means also that the overlap of individuals that were included in *al-Mağma'* and in *ad-Durar* were exclusively scholarly personalities and mostly *ḥadīṭ*-scholars.

Of larger interest for the present study is the author's *Līsān al-mīzān*. In terms of content it is a specialized dictionary focusing only on *ḥadīṭ*-transmitters. Ibn Ḥağar explains that he originally wanted to copy the *Mīzan al-i'tidāl* of Šams ad-Dīn ad-Ḍahabī. However, whilst doing that it appeared to him to shorten the work and to mention only those who were not included in Ğamāl ad-Dīn al-Mizzī's dictionary entitled *Tahdīb al-kamāl*. The reason for that was, that all transmitters described by al-Mizzī in his dictionary were already evaluated by the six masters of the *ḥadīṭ*-science, i. e. al-Buḥārī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, at-Tirmidī, an-Nasā'ī and Ibn Māğah.¹⁹ Besides the material he took from the *Mīzān* of ad-Ḍahabī, Ibn Ḥağar also added biographies of *ḥadīṭ*-transmitters of the eighth century. He added also material he found in the *Ḍayl* of his teacher az-Zayn al-'Irāqī that the latter compiled to the *al-Mīzān* of ad-Ḍahabī. Due to this additional material and

17 Ibn Ḥağar, *Inbā' al-ğumr*, 1:3.

18 Ibn Ḥağar, *al-Mağma' al-mu'assis*, pp. 1:75–78.

19 See for the list of the books of the six masters that has been used by al-Mizzī and that Ibn Ḥağar refers to al-Mizzī, *Tahdīb al-Kamāl*, 1:147.

because of the fact that Ibn Ḥaḡar had included much more information about transmitters than aḏ-Ḍahabī did, his *Lisān al-Mizān* became twice the size of the original of aḏ-Ḍahabī and is, thus, much more than a simple abridgment. Not only do the two works differ from each other by size, due to the exclusion of all trustworthy transmitters that were already discussed in the al-Mizzī's *Tahḏīb al-Kamāl* and the addition of transmitters whose reliability is questioned (*tukullima fih*), the *Lisān al-Mizān* of Ibn Ḥaḡar happens to focus more on unreliable transmitters while the *Mizān al-ʾitidāl* of aḏ-Ḍahabī was a more balanced one with a slight focus on reliable transmitters. Hence, it would be a false conclusion to state that the *Lisān al-Mizān* is an abridgment of the *Mizān al-ʾitidāl* of aḏ-Ḍahabī, although Ibn Ḥaḡar himself gives this impression in his introduction to the work. The first should, therefore, be treated as an individual and more or less independent work.²⁰

Definitely worth a study for its own, the most important fact about this biographical dictionary for the present study is that we find an overlap of material between the *ad-Durar* and the *Lisān*. Since Ibn Ḥaḡar finished the *Lisān* in around 805²¹ it includes an evaluation of some *ḥadīṭ*-transmitters of the eighth century. Due to the orientation of the work, the entries contain, besides the mentioning of the *samāʿ* that we found in *ad-Durar* as well, detailed information about the scholar's achievements in the *ḥadīṭ* studies as well as an evaluation of his reliability.

Besides the already mentioned dictionaries, Ibn Ḥaḡar compiled also the *al-Iṣāba fī tamyīz aṣ-ṣaḥāba* that contains biographies of the Companions of the Prophet. Because of its special orientation, it will not be considered in this article.

A preliminary result of the comparison between Ibn Ḥaḡar's biographical dictionaries is that each of them has its own orientation, specialization as well as its own internal and external structure. The *ad-Durar*, though, is together with the biographies of the *Inbāʾ al-ḡumr* the most general dictionary with regard to the individuals included. Further studies are needed to answer the question whether Ibn Ḥaḡar put the *Durar* together from the material from the other dictionaries or the other way round.

20 See for the main characteristics of the work the introduction of the author in Ibn Ḥaḡar, *Lisān al-Mizān*, 1:189–193, especially pp. 191–193.

21 See Ibn Ḥaḡar, *Lisān al-Mizān*, 9:246.

Compilation and the hidden agenda

In this subchapter, a comparison of the biography of one person from two different dictionaries shows how Ibn Ḥağar designs the entries differently according to the aim and criteria of each dictionary. The idea to compare two entries and to analyze them with regard to their structure as well as to analyze the arrangement of information that then becomes knowledge in the above mentioned sense, is taken from the Redaction Criticism. Coming from the biblical studies, this approach asks for the hidden agenda of the author whilst compiling a work and for the message he would like to share with the audience.²² As an example, the biographical entries of the Turkish Ḥanafī *ḥadīṭ*-scholar Muğultāy b. Qalīğ b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Bakğari are compared. Since Ibn Ḥağar mentioned him in the *ad-Durar* (the more general dictionary) and the *Lisān* (the more specialized dictionary), his entries represent a good case, to show how the different orientations of the works influence the concrete content and structure of them. Muğultāy is also chosen for an additional reason. He was one of the more prominent Ḥanafī *ḥadīṭ*-scholars with Turkish origins who challenged the leading Ṣāfiʿī (Arab) elite in Cairo. When he compiled his *Iṣlāḥ Ibn aṣ-Ṣalāḥ*, he kicked off a series of treatises that were written by leading Ṣāfiʿī scholars against him. The reason was, that, in his book, Muğultāy criticized the famous Ṣāfiʿī *ḥadīṭ*-scholar Ibn aṣ-Ṣalāḥ aṣ-Ṣhrazūrī and reconsidered some of the latter's positions mentioned in his Introduction into the *ḥadīṭ*-studies (*Maʿrifat anwāʾ ʿilm al-ḥadīṭ*). Scholars such as az-Zayn al-ʿIrāqī (d. 806/1403), as-Sirāğ al-Bulqīnī (d. 805/1402) and al-Badr az-Zarkaṣī (d. 794/1392)²³ were defending Ibn aṣ-Ṣalāḥ against Muğultāy's claims. A deeper look into the *ḥadīṭ*-related works of Ibn Ḥağar shows that he was clearly on the side of the other Ṣāfiʿī scholars, who all happen to be his teachers. In his *an-Nukat ʿalā kitāb Ibn aṣ-Ṣalāḥ*, also a commentary on Ibn aṣ-Ṣalāḥ's introduction, Ibn Ḥağar refers in at least two cases to the opinion of Muğultāy to oppose them. The first case deals with the "most favorable chain of transmission" (*ağall ar-riwāyāt*) and the second case asks for the first scholar to collect a *ṣaḥīḥ*-work.²⁴

Hence, it can be concluded, that Ibn Ḥağar has already a certain bias before or whilst compiling the entry of Muğultāy. That should be kept in mind during the following analysis. In the next paragraph, the entries are put side by side for the

22 See for a general introduction into Redaction Criticism (Redaktionsgeschichte) Perrin, *Redaction Criticism*; see also the study of Stephen R. Burge who applied this approach to analyse the form, style and structure of *ḥadīṭ*-collections in Burge, Stephen R., "Reading between the Lines."

23 These works are az-Zarkaṣī, *an-Nukat ʿalā Muqaddimat Ibn aṣ-Ṣalāḥ*; al-Bulqīnī, *Muqaddimat Ibn aṣ-Ṣalāḥ wa-maḥāsin al-iṣtilāḥ*; al-ʿIrāqī, *at-Taayid wa-l-īdāḥ*.

24 See Ibn Ḥağar, *an-Nukat*, pp. 261–266 and pp. 277–281.

comparison. For a better visualization of the differences between the two entries, the variations were put in colors. Phrases that indicates a certain judgment or connotation (mostly negative) were put in green. Information that is only mentioned in one entry and were neglected in the other were put in blue. Information and phrases that have been paraphrased and were included in both entries with significant differences were put in purple.

| | <i>ad-Durar</i> ²⁵ | <i>Lisān al-Mizān</i> ²⁶ |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | مغلطاي بن قليج بن عبد الله البكجري الحنفي الحكري الحافظ علاء الدين صاحب التصانيف ولد بعد التسعين وثمانية كذا ضبطه الصفي وكان مغلطاي يذكر ان مولده سنة 689 | مغلطاي بن قليج بن عبد الله البكجري الحافظ المكثّر علاء الدين صاحب التصانيف ذكر أنه ولد سنة تسع وثمانين وست مئة وأنه سمع من الشيخ تقي الدين ابن دقيق العيد ومن أبي الحسن بن الصواف راوي النسائي ومن الهميطي وست الوزراء وتعقب ذلك كله شيخنا الحافظ زين الدين العراقي كما سأذكر |
| 2 | وسمع من التاج أحمد بن علي ابن دقيق العيد أخي الشيخ تقي الدين والحسين بن عمر الكردي والوانى والختني والديبوسي وأحمد بن الشجاع الهاشمي ومحمد بن محمد بن عيسى الطباخ وأكثر جدا من القراءة بنفسه والسماع وكتب الطباخ | وسمع الشيخ علاء الدين محققاً من تاج الدين بن دقيق العيد وأبي المحاسن الختني وعبد الرحيم المنشاوي وأبي النون الديبوسي فأكثر عنه جدا ومن أهل عصره فبالغ وحصل من المسموعات ما يطول عده وأكثر طلبه بنفسه وبقرائه |
| 3 | وكان قد لازم الجلال القزويني فلما مات ابن سيد الناس تكلم له مع السلطان فولاه تدريس الحديث بالظاهرة فقام الناس بسبب ذلك وقعدوا ولم يبال بهم وبالغوا في ذمه وهجوه فلما كان في سنة خمس وأربعين وقف له العلاني - لما رحل إلى القاهرة بابنه شيخنا أبي الخير ليسمعه على شيوخ العصر - وهو بسوق الكتب على كتاب جمعه في العشق تعرض فيه لذكر الصديقة عائشة فأنكر عليه ذلك ورفع أمره إلى الموفق الحنبلي فاعتقله بعد أن عززه فانتصر له جنكلي بن البابا وخلصه | ثم اشتغل بالتصنيف فشرح البخاري في نحو عشرين مجلدة وكتب على السيرة النبوية وشرحها كتابا سماه الزهر الباسم وشرح في شرح أبي داود وفي شرح سنن ابن ماجه وذيّل على ذيول الإكمال بذيّل كبير في مجلدين وأكمل تهذيب الكمال للمزي في قدر حجم الأصل ثم اختصر منه ما يعترض به عليه في مجلدين ثم في مجلد لطيف إلى غير ذلك من التصانيف المشهورة |
| 4 | وكان يحفظ الفصح لتعلّب وكفاية المتحفّض ومن تصانيفه شرح البخاري وذيّل المؤلف والمختلف والزهر الباسم في السيرة النبوية ودرس أيضا بجامع القلعة مدة | وصنف الواضح المبين في من استشهد من المحبين فعثر منه الشيخ صلاح الدين العلاني على كلام ذكره في أوائله فاغرى به الفاضلي موفق الدين الحنبلي فعزّره ومنع الكتبيين من بيع ذلك الكتاب وتأمّل الشيخ علاء الدين مغلطاي من ذلك وشمّت به جماعت من أقرانه |

25 Ibn Ḥaḡar, *ad-Durar*, 4:352-354.

26 Ibn Ḥaḡar, *Lisān al-Mizān*, 8:124-127.

(Continued)

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| 5 | <p>وكان ساكنا جامد الحركة كثير المطالعة والكتابة والدأب وعنده كتب كثيرة جدا قاله الصفدي</p> | <p>وكان قد درس للمحدثين بجامع القلعة وقرأ عليه في الدرس شمس الدين السروجي الحافظ ورأيت له ردا عليه في الجزء الذي خرج له نفسه وفيه أو هام شنيعة مع صغر حجمه وكذلك رأيت ردا عليه في هوامشه للحافظ أبي الحسين بن أبيب وذكر شيخنا العراقي أن العلاني رد عليه أيضا فيه</p> <p>وعمل في في الحديث إصلاح ابن الصلاح فيه تعقيبات على ابن الصلاح أكثرها غير وارد أو ناشئ عن وهم أو سوء فهم وقد تلقاه عنه أكثر مشايخنا أو قلده فيه لأنه كان انتهت إليه رئاسة الحديث في زمانه فأخذ عنه عامة من لقيناه من المشايخ كالعراقي والبلقيني والدجوي وإسماعيل الحنفي وغيرهم</p> |
| 6 | <p>وقال ابن رافع جمع السيرة النبوية وولي مشيخة الظاهرية للمحدثين وقيبة الركنية ببيرس وغير ذلك</p> <p>وقال الشهاب ابن رجب عدة تصانيفه نحو المائة أو أزيد وله مأخذ على أهل اللغة وعلى كثير من المحدثين قال وأنشدني لنفسه في الواضح المبين شعرا يدل على استهتار وضعف في الدين</p> <p>وقال ولده زين الدين ابن رجب وغالب ما قاله من ترجمة مغلطاي التي أفرد بها شيخنا بعد أن سمى جماعة من المشايخ الذين ادعى السماع منهم لا يصح ذلك قال وذكر أنه سمع من الحافظ الهمياني وأنه سمع من ابن دقيق العيد درسا بالكاملية في سنة 702 وابن دقيق العيد انقطع في أواخر سنة 701 ببستان ظاهر القاهرة إلى أن مات في أوائل صفر ولم يحضر درسا في سنة 702</p> | <p>وفي آخر الأمر ادعى أن الفخر ابن البخاري أجازه له وصار يتبع ما كان خرج عنه بواسطة فيكثف الوساطة ويكتب فوق الكشط أنبأنا قال شيخنا العراقي ذكرت دعواه في مولده وفي إجازة الفخر له للشيخ تقي الدين السبكي فأنكر ذلك وقال أنه عرض عليه كفاية المتحفظ في سنة خمس عشرة وهو أمر دغير لحيه</p> <p>قال العراقي أقدم ما وجدت له من السماع سنة سبع عشرة بخرط من يوثق به وادعى هو السماع قبل ذلك بزمان فتكلم فيه لذلك قال وسألته عن أول سماعه فقال رحلت قبل السبع مئة إلى الشام فقلت هل سمعت بها شيئا قال سمعت شعرا ثم ادعى أنه سمع على أبي الحسن بن الصواف راوي النسائي فسألته عن ذلك فقال سمعت عليه أربعين حديثا من النسائي انتقاء نور الدين الهاشمي بقراءته ثم أخرج بعد مدة جزءا منتقى من النسائي بخطه ليس عليه طبقة لا بخطه ولا بخط غيره فذكر أنه قرأه بنفسه سنة اثنتي عشرة على ابن الصواف يعني سنة موته</p> <p>وقد قال في الجزء الذي خرج له نفسه وأشرت إليه قبل سمعت الشيخ تقي الدين بن دقيق العيد يقول بدرس الكاملية سنة اثنتين وسبع مئة قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم لا تجتمع أمتي على ضلالة</p> <p>قال العراقي فذكرت ذلك للسبكي فقال إن الشيخ تقي الدين ضعف في أواخر سنة إحدى وسبع مئة وتحول إلى بستان خارج باب الخرق فأقام به إلى أن مات في صفر سنة اثنتين وسبع مئة</p> <p>قال ثم ذكر له مغلطاي أنه وجد له سماعا على الشيخ تقي الدين في جزء حديثي فسألته عنه فقال من سنن الكجي فقلت له من كتب الطبقة فقال الشيخ تقي الدين نفسه فسألته أن أقف عليه فوجدته بعد بخرانه كتبه بالظاهرة فطلبته منه ففعل ثم وقفت في تركته على سنن أبي مسلم الكجي وفيه سماعه لشيء على بنت الشيخ تقي الدين بن دقيق العيد</p> |

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| 7 | <p>قال وله ذيل على تهذيب الكمال يكون في قدر الأصل واختصره مقتصرا على الاعتراضات على المزي في نحو مجلدين ثم في مجلد لطيف وغالب ذلك لا يرد على المزي</p> <p>قال وكان عارفا بالأنساب معرفة جيدة وأما غيرها من متعلقات الحديث فله خبرة متوسطة</p> <p>وله شرح البخاري وقطعة من أبي داود وقطعة من ابن ماجه</p> | <p>وقد درس الشيخ علاء الدين مغلطاي بالظاهرية بعد موت ابن سيد الناس وبقبة بيبرس والمنجبية وهي مدرسته خارج باب زويلة ودرس بالصر غتمشية أول ما فتحت ثم صرفه عنها صر غتمش نفسه ولم يلها بعده محدث بل تداولها من لا خبرة له بفن الحديث</p> |
| 8 | <p>ادعى أنه أجاز له الفخر ابن البخاري ولم يقبل أهل الحديث ذلك منه</p> <p>ورتب المبهمات على أبواب الفقه رأيت منه بخطه وكذا رتب بيان الوهم لابن القطان وأضافها إلى الأحكام وسماه منارة الإسلام وصنف زوائد ابن حبان على الصحيحين وذيل على ابن نقطة ومن بعده في المشتبه وتصانيف كثيرة جدا</p> | <p>و من تخريجاته ترتيب بيان الوهم والإيهام لابن القطان وزوائد ابن حبان على الصحيحين وترتيب صحيح ابن حبان على أبواب الفقه رأيتهما بخطه ولم يكمل والتعقب على الأطراف للمزي والميس إلى كتاب ليس في اللغة وكان كثير الاستحضار لها متمتع المعرفة فيها وكذلك في الأنساب وكتبه كثيرة الفائدة في النقل على أو هام له فيها وأما التصرف فلم يبرز منه ما يعول عليه فيه</p> |
| 9 | <p>مات في 24 شعبان سنة 762</p> | <p>وكانت وفاته في الرابع والعشرين من شعبان سنة إحدى وستين وسبع مئة رحمه الله تعالى</p> |

Analysis

The comparison of the two entries shows clearly that Ibn Ḥaḡar followed different strategies in each of the entries. The entry in the *Lisān al-Mizān* serves the *ḥadīṭ*-study orientation of the work and contains more relevant material for *ḥadīṭ*-scholars, who might be the first intended audience by Ibn Ḥaḡar. The entry is longer and more detailed than the one in *ad-Durar*. Further, Ibn Ḥaḡar begins in the introductory section (1) with a clear negative statement about Muḡulṭāy that includes an indication of what the reader will learn from this biography.²⁷ Such indications serve two main goals. First, the reader's attention is guided toward certain aspects of Muḡulṭāy's life and to increase the curiosity of his audience towards some of the problems that Ibn Ḥaḡar is going to solve. The second goal is that Ibn Ḥaḡar has already stated his opinion about Muḡulṭāy without explicitly saying it, i. e. Muḡulṭāy is highly unreliable. After mentioning what he will correct within this entry in the first section, Ibn Ḥaḡar lists up in section two and three what he held for real. That is the actual or proven (*muḥaqqaqan*) *samā'* of Muḡulṭāy as well as his main works. This list consists only of a few lines in comparison to what follows and what can be perceived as the core of the biographical entry. In section four to six, Ibn Ḥaḡar cites all the problematic

²⁷ For the use of indications and the author's aim behind them see Lahn/Meister, *Erzähltextanalyse*, p. 162.

topics he wants the reader to get from the biography. Starting with a problematic work Muğultāy had written on the topic of love for which he has been exhorting by a judge and that had been prohibited from selling (4), Ibn Ḥağar continues mentioning Muğultāy's shortcomings in his writings. In section five, it is mentioned that Muğultāy authored responses to his colleagues. However, Ibn Ḥağar comments on them that they were mostly baseless and resulted from shortcomings, misunderstandings or false knowledge. In the sixth section, the criticism reaches its peak, where Ibn Ḥağar fulfills his promise he made in the introductory section and where he gives the most important information *ḥadīṭ*-scholars are interested in. Ibn Ḥağar lists five claims of alleged *samā'āt* or *iğāzāt* of Muğultāy and demonstrates their falseness. All of these claims have been proven wrong by Ibn Ḥağar's principle teacher and first source Zayn ad-Dīn al-'Irāqī. In the first case, Muğultāy is said to have claimed an *iğāza* by the highly valued *ḥadīṭ*-transmitter al-Faḥr Ibn al-Buḥārī (d. 690/1291).²⁸ Ibn Ḥağar's key argument builds upon the exact birth date of Muğultāy. He cites his master az-Zayn al-'Irāqī who in turn based his opinion on Tāğ ad-Dīn as-Subkī (d. 771/1370) who expressed doubts about the early birth date Muğultāy was claiming. While Muğultāy was mentioning his date of birth to be in 689, Ibn Ḥağar doubts that relaying on al-'Irāqī and as-Subkī. He does that to prove that Muğultāy must have been born after 690 what indicates that he could not get an *iğāza* from al-Faḥr Ibn al-Buḥārī who died in this very year. Hence, to doubt Muğultāy's reliability concerning his birth date is not only a general issue or a question of being precise as a historian but fulfills a crucial role in Ibn Ḥağar's argumentation.

The second case addresses the claim of Muğultāy of his earliest *samā'*. An inquiry by az-Zayn al-'Irāqī, however, could prove that this claim could not resist further verification so that Muğultāy eventually admitted that the claimed *samā'* was one of poems not of *ḥadīṭ*. Same is true for the third claim. The alleged *samā'* from Abū l-Ḥasan Ibn aṣ-Ṣawwāf could be proven wrong, again, by az-Zayn al-'Irāqī. The fourth and fifth claims were related to each other. Both contain an alleged *samā'* from Taqī d-Dīn Ibn Daqīq al-'Īd (d. 702/1302), also a very famous *ḥadīṭ*-transmitter and -scholar. It could be proven that in the year Muğultāy claimed to have heard a *dars* of Ibn Daqīq al-'Īd the latter had already stopped teaching, so that Muğultāy's claim must be baseless. In the fifth case, Muğultāy held evidences back that could have supported his claim. However, after his death az-Zayn al-'Irāqī could take a look at these very evidences. It turned out that the alleged *samā'* was actually from the daughter of Ibn Daqīq al-'Īd, not from Ibn Daqīq al-'Īd himself. The sections seven to nine are more or less informative ones.

28 His full name is Faḥr ad-Dīn Abū l-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Wāḥid b. Aḥmad al-Maqdisī al-Ġamā'īlī than ad-Dimaṣqī aṣ-Ṣāliḥī al-Ḥanbalī. Al-Faḥr, who achieved one of the highest ranks of narrators in his time, was born in 595 and died in 690. Cf. aḍ-Ḍahabī, *Siyar*, 2:2733.

There Ibn Ḥaḡar lists the *ḥadīṭ*-teaching positions of Muḡulṭāy and his writings in the *tahriḡāt*-genre that is of special characteristics for the *ḥadīṭ*-studies of that time. Ibn Ḥaḡar closes the entry with the mentioning of Muḡulṭāy's death date.

In comparison to the structure and content of the entry in the *Lisān al-Mizān*, clear differences can be pointed out in *ad-Durar*. First, the introductory section is more informative and no indications are made. The section is followed by a list of the actual *samā'* of Muḡulṭāy. Here, already, hints can be seen for an intended broader audience. While Ibn Ḥaḡar mentions Tāḡ ad-Dīn Ibn Daqīq al-ʿĪd without further explanation in the *Lisān al-Mizān* with its intended *ḥadīṭ*-specialized audience, he explains the reader of the *ad-Durar* that at-Tāḡ is the brother of the much better known scholar at-Taqī Ibn Daqīq al-ʿĪd. After providing these basic information, Ibn Ḥaḡar mentions the anecdote of the work that Muḡulṭāy composed on the topic of love. Unlike he did in the *Lisān al-Mizān*, however, Ibn Ḥaḡar mentioned the anecdote much more detailed including more information about what had happened because of the work. An analysis of this anecdote will be the core of the next chapter.

The section four and five are rather informative. Ibn Ḥaḡar mentions the works of Muḡulṭāy and gives some physical and general descriptions of him, something he did not include in the entry of the *Lisān*. The section six, together with the section three, seems to be the core sections of the entry in *ad-Durar*. Here, Ibn Ḥaḡar cites different scholars and their mostly negative opinions on Muḡulṭāy. While he almost exclusively relied on – or at least cited – his principal teacher az-Zayn al-ʿIrāqī in *Lisān al-Mizān*, in *ad-Durar*, he quotes historians and scholars such as Ibn Rāfi', aš-Šihāb Ibn Raḡab and his son az-Zayn. The anecdotes were more general and point e. g. to a general lack of religiosity (*yadull 'alā stihtār wa-da'ffī d-dīn*). Ibn Ḥaḡar mentioned also the claim of Muḡulṭāy to have heard a lesson of Ibn Daqīq al-ʿĪd. Even though, Ibn Ḥaḡar has mentioned this anecdote by citing his teacher az-Zayn in *Lisān al-Mizān*, in *ad-Durar* he cites az-Zayn Ibn Raḡab and the story appears in a slightly different manner with some additional information that suits the more general orientation of the work. In the section seven, Ibn Ḥaḡar mentions some more works of Muḡulṭāy. He points out shortcomings in his attempt to respond to the great *ḥadīṭ*-scholar Ġamāl ad-Dīn al-Mizzī. Also, he mentions Muḡulṭāy's qualifications and skills in the field of genealogy (*'ilm al-ansāb*), only to say that his knowledge and skills in the *ḥadīṭ*-studies were poor. That creates an image of a scholar who might be well educated but do not have deeper knowledge in the *ḥadīṭ*-studies. This kind of information is not given in the *Lisān al-Mizān* where Ibn Ḥaḡar put Muḡulṭāy's *ḥadīṭ* skills – and only those – in a bad light. This goes together with the information Ibn Ḥaḡar gives in the eighth section. First, he mentions the alleged *iḡāza* from al-Faḡr Ibn al-Buḡārī to comment on that by saying that the *ḥadīṭ*-scholars (*ahl al-ḥadīṭ*) did not except this claim. Not bothering the audience with the further

information provided in the *Lisān*, Ibn Ḥaġar clearly implies with this statement that Muġulṭāy was not a member of the *ḥadīṭ*-scholars' community. While he was mentioning Muġulṭāy's *taḥrīġāt*-works explicitly in the *Lisān*, in the *ad-Durar* he cites some of these works but without referring to them as *taḥrīġāt*-works, so that the reader did not know what kind of works those are.

As a result of this comparison from the perspective of Redaction Criticism and of forming information into knowledge, it can be concluded that Ibn Ḥaġar designed each of these entries according to the orientation of each biographical dictionary. Although Ibn Ḥaġar gives some detailed knowledge for *ḥadīṭ*-scholars, the *ad-Durar* turns out to be much broader oriented than the *Lisān al-Mizān*. That becomes clear in the fact that the *ḥadīṭ*-special information about the claimed *samā'* were summarized in a few sentences. Only two of five *samā'* claims were mentioned in a dense, paraphrased way. Instead, in the *ad-Durar*, Ibn Ḥaġar focuses on more general anecdotes and sayings of other scholars, that were not found in the *Lisān*, such as the physical description, Muġulṭāy's knowledge in the field of genealogy (*ilm al-ansāb*), or his alleged general lack of religiosity and weakness in religion. There is also a difference in the use of sources. His principal teacher az-Zayn al-ʿIrāqī and his main source in *Lisān al-Mizān* was himself a very well known and well established *ḥadīṭ*-scholar. So it is more than accurate to rely on him when it comes to information that concerns the domain of *ḥadīṭ*-studies. By contrast, for the broader orientation of *ad-Durar* more sources might be more appropriate, especially the citation of historians such as aṣ-Ṣafadī and Ibn Rāfi', what might imply an appearance of objectivity. It even turns out, that Ibn Ḥaġar did not quote or refer directly to az-Zayn al-ʿIrāqī in the *ad-Durar*. The basic message, however, that the reader gets from both dictionaries is, that Muġulṭāy was not a good scholar, let alone a good *ḥadīṭ*-scholar. Or to put it in another way: Muġulṭāy lies, has flaws and weaknesses in his religion, makes excuses and has some serious shortcomings, that he is not even aware of.

III. Narrative Strategies in *ad-Durar*

The result of the previous chapter was that Ibn Ḥaġar designed the entry of Muġulṭāy according to the more general orientation of the *ad-Durar*. Moreover, he leaves his reader with a very negative impression about Muġulṭāy. As it can be assumed, Ibn Ḥaġar's negative image of Muġulṭāy may have resulted from his intellectual opposition to some of Muġulṭāy's opinions and writings. In this chapter, it will be analyzed more detailed how Ibn Ḥaġar creates this negative image, i. e. what narrative strategies he uses to design the entry with that negative connotation. However, instead of comparing the narrative strategies in *ad-Durar*

with those in *Lisān al-Mizān*, the biography of Muğultāy that Şafā' ad-Dīn aş-Şafadī provides will be used.²⁹ This is done for two reasons: First, Ibn Ḥağar lists the *A'yān an-naşr* of aş-Şafadī among the sources that he used. Hence, Ibn Ḥağar relied on the biographical material found in the *A'yān an-naşr*. This is confirmed at two places within the entry in the *ad-Durar* where Ibn Ḥağar refers to aş-Şafadī, first with regard to the birth date of Muğultāy (section one), and second with regard to the physical and general description of Muğultāy (section five). Hence, it is of interest for this study how Ibn Ḥağar deals with the information found in *A'yān an-naşr* and what kind of knowledge he produced out of it, i. e. what did he take over, what did he change and/or leave out. Second, the entries of *ad-Durar* and of *Lisān al-Mizān*, although different in structure and orientation, were both of negative character. Through a comparison with another author, it can be examined, whether this negative image results from the source material, or is a consequence of Ibn Ḥağar's conscious decision that might follow the negative bias that has been indicated above. Therefore, it is of interest to see how aş-Şafadī characterizes, describes and depicts Muğultāy and what connotation the biographical entry in the *A'yān an-naşr* gives.

For the present study, only few sections are compared. Those are the introductory section, the anecdote about the teaching position in the *az-Zāhiriyya* madrasa and the love-book incident. The last anecdote, in particular, is an interesting example to compare, because it has already been subject of two modern studies on Muğultāy. In her article, BALDA-TILLIER examined Muğultāy's love-book *al-Wāḍiḥ al-mubīn fī ḍikr man ustūshida min al-muḥibbīn* that allegedly had caused the conflict between Muğultāy and the Syrian scholar al-'Alā'ī that lead to the censorship of the book and the imprisonment of Muğultāy. However, in her close analysis of the work she could not find any hint that supports or justifies the claims brought up by his opponents, which are the disrespectful mentioning of 'Ā'īşa and the containing of licentious verses. Instead, BALDA-TILLIER suggests that the fact of Muğultāy being a Mamluk scholar, probably pointing to his Turkish origins and his status as a member of the social group of the *awlād an-nās*, played a huge role for the local leading religious elite of not excepting his opinions that were challenging the leading religious values.³⁰ In the same direction goes MISKINZODA who, in his PhD thesis on the *sīra* work of Muğultāy, presented an even more detailed analysis of Muğultāy's love-book with a comparison to other authors of his time. He, too, came to the conclusion that the reasons mentioned in the entries of biographical dictionaries could not

29 It needs to be mentioned, that, if the approach of an entire contextualization of a biographical entry is taken seriously, also the *A'yān an-naşr* needs be analyzed as a whole and within the larger intellectual orientation of aş-Şafadī. However, this could not be done in this article, since it goes beyond the scope of the study. Further studies are invited to take up this task.

30 Balda-Tillier, "The Forbidden Passion," p. 210.

be the real reason of the critics against Muğultāy.³¹ Hence, it is not far to argue that the real reason behind the criticism towards Muğultāy rose from what BERKEY and even HAARMANN before him have already noted as the Arab suspicion towards Turks.³²

Although both, BERKEY and HAARMANN, were most probably right with their observation of the Arab suspicion toward Turks, concluding that this is also true for a supposed motive of Ibn Ḥağar might be a too fast conclusion. And even if the reason for the criticism of Muğultāy and his imprisonment really was that the religious authorities were “especially eager to deny the Mamluks any credit for achievement in academic or literary pursuits”³³ as BERKEY stated and BALDATTILLIER and MISKINZODA suggested, then it should be still underpinned with more substantial evidence that this is also true for Ibn Ḥağar in particular. By contrast, it could even be pointed out, that, although Ibn Ḥağar opposes Muğultāy for some of his opinions, he shows him some scholarly respect and acknowledges some of Muğultāy’s objections to other topics.³⁴ Also, a general hostility toward Turkish or Ḥanafī scholar cannot be clearly proven. Ibn Ḥağar even praises some Ḥanafī scholars for their scholarly acumen and skills, that his teacher az-Zayn al-‘Irāqī ignores only for the fact that they were Ḥanafīs.³⁵ In addition, the closest student of Ibn Ḥağar, ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān as-Saḥāwī, is said to have noted that Muğultāy has obviously been treated unjustly.³⁶ Therefore, the question for the motive of Ibn Ḥağar needs further research and cannot be subject of this paper. But it is still interesting to see, how both authors, Ibn Ḥağar and aṣ-Ṣafadī, dealt with the love-book incident. For a better visualization of the differences between the two entries, variations were put in colors as explained above (i. e. a certain judgment or connotation in green; Information, mentioned only in one entry in blue; paraphrasing in purple).

31 Miskindoza, *On the margins of sīra*, pp. 62–74.

32 Berkey, *Transmission*, S. 142–143; and Haarmann, “Rather the Injustice”, pp. 61–78.

33 Berkey, *Transmission*, S. 143.

34 See Ibn Ḥağar, *an-Nukat*, pp. 261–266 and pp. 277–281.

35 See the biography of al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī b. al-Ḥağğāğ b. ‘Alī al-‘Anāfiqī in Ibn Ḥağar, *ad-Durar*, 2:58 (no 1600) where he clearly expresses al-‘Irāqī anti-Ḥanafī tendencies.

36 See Miskinzoda, p. 60, where he is referring to Rosenthal, *History*, p. 98.

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| | <i>ad-Durar</i> | <i>A'yān an-naṣr</i> ³⁷ |
| 1 | مغلطاي بن قليج بن عبد الله البكجري الحنفي الحكري الحافظ علاء الدين صاحب التصانيف ولد بعد التسعين وستمائة كذا ضبطه الصفدي وكان مغلطاي يذكر ان مولده سنة 689 | مغلطاي بن قليج ابن عبد الله الشيخ الإمام الحافظ القدوة علاء الدين البكجري بالباء ثانية الحروف وبعد الكاف جيم وراء النسبة الحنفي مدرس الحديث بالظاهرية وبين القصرين |
| 2 | mentioning his samāʿ | شيخ حديث يعرف القديم والحديث ويطول في معرفة الأسماء إلى السماء بفرح أثيث وينتقي بمعرفته الطيب من الخبيث ولي الظاهرية شيخا للحديث بها بعد شيخنا العلامة فتح الدين بن سيد الناس وعيث المصريون به لأجل ذلك ونظموا الأشعار والأزجال والبلايق الأكياس ونفضوا ما عندهم في ذلك ولم يغادروا بغايا نفقات ولا فضلات أكياس [...] وجاء الخبر إلى دمشق بوفاته في سلخ شهر رمضان المعظم سنة اثنتين وستين وسبع مئة ومولده بعد التسعين وست مئة |
| 3 | وكان قد لازم جلال القزويني فلما مات ابن سيد الناس تكلم له مع السلطان فولاه تدريس الحديث بالظاهرية فقام الناس بسبب ذلك وقعدوا ولم يبال بهم وبالغوا في ذمه وهجوه فلما كان في سنة خمس وأربعين وقف له العلاني - لما رحل إلى القاهرة بابنه شيخنا أبي الخير ليسمعه على شيوخ العصر - وهو بسوق الكتب على كتاب جمعه في العشق تعرض فيه لذكر الصديقة عائشة فانكر عليه ذلك ورفع أمره إلى الموفق الحنبلي فاعتقله بعد أن عززه فانتنصر له جنكلي بن البابا وخلصه | وكان يلزم قاضي القضاة جلال الدين القزويني وانتفع بصحبته كثيرا فلما مات الشيخ فتح الدين محمد بن سيد الناس رحمه الله في سنة أربع وثلاثين وسبع مئة تكلم القاضي له مع السلطان فولاه تدريس الحديث بالظاهرية مكانه وقام الناس وقعدوا لأجل ذلك ولم يبال بهم ولما كان في سنة خمس وأربعين وسبع مئة وقف له الشيخ صلاح الدين العلاني رحمه الله تعالى على تصنيف له وضعه في العشق وكأنه تعرض فيه لذكر عائشة الصديقة رضي الله عنها فقام في أمره وكفره واعتقل أياما فقام في حقه الأمير بدر الدين جنكلي بن البابا وخلصه |
| 4 | anecdotes of a conflict in Muğultāy's life | Muğultāy's publications |
| 5 | وكان ساكنا جامد الحركة كثير المطالعة والكتابة والدأب وعنده كتب كثيرة جدا قاله الصفدي | وكان ساكنا جامد الحركة كثير المطالعة والكتابة والدأب وعنده كتب كثيرة جدا |
| 6 | | Muğultāy's poems and personal correspondence with aṣ-Ṣafadī |

Analysis

Introductory section

The introductory section should give the reader a first take-away about the person described in the entry. Hence, it is essential what information the author put into the first sentence. As for Ibn Ḥaḡar, he starts with mentioning the name followed by some attributions that describe Muğultāy further. He is a *ḥāfiẓ* (i. e. someone who memorizes both the Quran and/or a huge amount of *aḥādīth*) and the author of many works (*ṣāhib at-taṣānif*). A reference to Muğultāy's Ḥanafi *madḥab* affiliation is given as well. Besides that, the birth date of Muğultāy is

37 aṣ-Ṣafadī, Ṣafāʿ ad-Dīn, *A'yān an-naṣr*, 5:433-438.

given with two references. First, the “real” birth date that aṣ-Ṣafadī has investigated and second, the date that Muğultāy was claiming. From the comparison with Ibn Ḥağar’s *Lisān al-Mīzān*, it is already known that it is important to Ibn Ḥağar to highlight Muğultāy’s later birth date for the sake of Ibn Ḥağar’s argumentation against Muğultāy’s *samā’*-claims. This might also be the reason why he put the birth date in the introductory section in both forms. For aṣ-Ṣafadī, the birth date in general seems to be of less importance, even though he, too, did not follow the claim of Muğultāy. Only at the end of the second section aṣ-Ṣafadī mentions the date of birth. However, he does that after the mentioning of Muğultāy’s death date, without giving any further information or variants of the date. What, apparently, was much more important to aṣ-Ṣafadī is to emphasize that Muğultāy was a well known and accepted scholar. He describes him as a *ṣayḥ*, an *imām*, *ḥāfiẓ* and a *quḍwa* (someone who leads the community in religious affairs and who deserves to be followed). After giving the reader the information that the present entry will deal with an important scholar, aṣ-Ṣafadī mentioned the essence of the teaching position of Muğultāy, so that the reader has no doubt – or at least no reason to doubt – that the individual described in the entry is a religious scholar with a special focus on *ḥadīth*-studies. That is different to the entry of Ibn Ḥağar, where he describes him only as a *ḥāfiẓ* and an author of works and did not give any reference to a *ḥadīth*-focused orientation.

The teaching position in the aṣ-Zāhiriyya madrasa

In the section two of the *A’yān an-naṣr*, aṣ-Ṣafadī speaks about Muğultāy’s qualities as a *ḥadīth*-scholar. Although his literary stile – one of the striking characteristics of his biographical dictionary – might tend to exaggerations and let the reader be cautious about all information given, it becomes clear that in aṣ-Ṣafadī’s view Muğultāy was a great *ḥadīth*-scholar. As a *ḥadīth*-scholar (*ṣayḥ ḥadīth*), he was able to analyze the *isnād* and to identify the transmitters (*ma’rifat al-asmā’*). Hence, he was an expert in evaluating the authenticity of *ḥadīth* and the reliability of transmitters (*yantaqī bi-ma’rifatihī ṭ-ṭayyib min al-ḥadīth*). Again, aṣ-Ṣafadī mentions the teaching positions. Being appropriate after pointing out Muğultāy’s skills in the *ḥadīth*-studies and elaborating further on the short indication in the introductory section, aṣ-Ṣafadī tell his reader that Muğultāy took over the teaching position of *ḥadīth* in the aṣ-Zāhiriyya madrasa after the well known scholar Faṭḥ ad-Dīn Ibn Sayyid an-Nās died. However, after the appointment, the Egyptian people went against him because of that and protested against his appointment. aṣ-Ṣafadī describes how they were doing injustice to Muğultāy and exaggerating in their reaction. The quintessence of this section is, that a talented *ḥadīth*-scholar was appointed for a teaching position for *ḥadīth* in a prestigious school and that Egypt’s people – it does not become clear whether

inhabitants or scholars are meant – protested against that without apparent reason.

In comparison with aṣ-Ṣafadī, Ibn Ḥaġar’s entry in *ad-Durar* differs significantly. Ibn Ḥaġar continues after his introductory section with the mentioning of the *samāʿ* of Muġultāy (section two). Then, only in section three, he mentions the teaching position of Muġultāy. However, he introduces this information differently than aṣ-Ṣafadī. First, he mentions that Muġultāy maintained a close relation (*lāzama*) to the chief judge Ġalāl ad-Dīn al-Qazwīnī. After the death of Ibn Sayyid an-Nās, it was al-Qazwīnī who talked to the Sultān pushing him to appoint Muġultāy as the new teacher and successor of Ibn Sayyid an-Nās. As a reaction to this appointment, the people (*an-nās*) protested, insulted and disparaged him, but Muġultāy did not care about that. Although Aṣ-Ṣafadī mentioned the same phrasing, too, in the section three, there are some important differences in the whole set up of this anecdote that influences the meaning significantly. First, aṣ-Ṣafadī added the information that Muġultāy profited a lot from his friendship to al-Qazwīnī, thus highlighting the equal relationship between the two. Their relationship appears less opportunistic, as Ibn Ḥaġar has depicted it, and al-Qazwīnī’s intervention in favor of the teaching position given to Muġultāy looks only as one of several benefits of the friendship and as a favor among friends. Second and more important, in aṣ-Ṣafadī’s account, Muġultāy is an established *ḥadīth*-scholar who, through his scholarly skills and knowledge, earned and deserved the teaching position, even though al-Qazwīnī might have helped him to get it. By contrast, the reader of *ad-Durar* still has no clear clue about Muġultāy being an outstanding *ḥadīth*-scholar. Instead, the reader takes away the impression that Muġultāy was someone who was only appointed because of a friend’s intervention and not because he earned and deserved it. Hence, in Ibn Ḥaġar’s version, the reaction of the people seems as a natural and justified reaction, even though Ibn Ḥaġar highlighted their exaggerations too.

The Love-Book incident

In section three, the intertextuality between *ad-Durar* and *Aʿān an-naṣr* becomes clear indicating that Ibn Ḥaġar might have taken this information and anecdote from aṣ-Ṣafadī or at least must have known the version of aṣ-Ṣafadī, in case he drew from another source. Both ways of telling the story are very similar, yet, the variations and differences they contain show a different image of what happened and what the moral of the story is. This is particularly true for the mentioning of the love-book incident. Both authors mention the conflict between Muġultāy and the scholar Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn Ḥalīl b. Kaykaldī al-ʿAlāʾī (d. 760 or 761/1358 or 1359) after the anecdote on the teaching position. However, while aṣ-Ṣafadī begins the

“new” anecdote with the “*wa-*” that indicates no temporal order nor any relation of causality between the two happenings – although it can express a certain connection between two events –,³⁸ Ibn Ḥağar binds the two events together using the Arabic logical connector “*fa-*”. Hence, he either implies a temporal order or even a kind of causality between the two mentioned events.³⁹ Aş-Şafadī continues to describe that al-‘Alā’ī found a book of Muğulṭāy on love in which the author allegedly has written something about ‘Ā’iṣā, the Prophet’s wife. Important to highlight is, that aş-Şafadī uses the phrase “*wa-ka-‘annahū*” (as if) when it comes to alleged reason of the conflict. Hence, aş-Şafadī leaves space for uncertainty within this story telling. Ibn Ḥağar, on the other side, sets up this part differently. He gives some additional information. According to him, al-‘Alā’ī was on a trip to pursue knowledge and seek *samā’* for his son from the great scholars of the time. With this, al-‘Alā’ī is given an image of the good guy that stumble over something bad while he is doing good. At the same time, Ibn Ḥağar calls the son of al-‘Alā’ī his master (*şayḥunā*). Thereby, he creates a dichotomy of the good and real scholars that al-‘Alā’ī, his son, Ibn Ḥağar and the great scholars of the time (*şuyūḥ al-‘aşr*) belong to, and of those who do not belong to that group, i. e. Muğulṭāy. Ibn Ḥağar does the same exclusion when he speaks about the alleged *iğāza* from al-Faḥr Ibn al-Buḥārī where he states the *ḥadīṭ*-scholars (*ahl al-ḥadīṭ*) reject the possibility of such an *iğāza* implying that Muğulṭāy is none of them (see section 8 above). Then, when al-‘Alā’ī found the book of Muğulṭāy on love in the book market, Ibn Ḥağar leaves out every uncertainty and states that Muğulṭāy, for sure, had written something inappropriate on ‘Ā’iṣā.

The reaction of al-‘Alā’ī and the subsequent arrestment, also, differ in both stories. Ibn Ḥağar continues with the dichotomy of good and bad. According to him, al-‘Alā’ī went the right way of dealing with such a situation. He rejected the content of the book, went to the judge al-Muwaffaq al-Ḥanbalī in whose responsibility the judgment on such cases lie. The judge warned him and after Muğulṭāy did not admit any error he eventually was arrested. For Ibn Ḥağar, the arrestment was an act of good and the restoration of justice. Therefore, the fact that the amir Ğankalī b. al-Bābā helped Muğulṭāy and freed him from prison appears as a baseless act and a sort of injustice. Aş-Şafadī turns around good and bad in his story. Accusing Muğulṭāy of disbelief (*takfīr*), let appear al-‘Alā’ī as someone who exaggerates. In addition, aş-Şafadī does not mention the judge and the obligatory warning before imprisonment, and by using the passive (*u’tuqila*), he implies that injustice has actually been done to Muğulṭāy. That is supported by

38 See for the various function of the connector “*wa*” see Fischer, *Grammatik des Klassischen Arabisch*, pp. 154–155.

39 For the use of “*fa*”, its meanings and the use as a logical connector with an implication of causality see Fischer, *Grammatik des Klassischen Arabisch*, p. 155.

the use of the phrase that the amir Ğankalī stood for his right (*fa-qāma fi ḥaqqihī*) instead of a simple helped him (*intaṣara lahū*). That gives the reader of the impression that injustice has been done to Muğulṭāy and that justice was restored with the release of him, what is the exact opposite of how Ibn Ḥağar tells the story.

IV. Conclusions

From the parts II and III of this article the following results can be drawn. First, *ad-Durar al-kāmina* seems to be a biographical dictionary with a broader scope and a general orientation. Although a clear focus on the religious elite and on *ḥadīṭ*-study, it includes personalities from the political elite and other non-scholarly individuals. This impression could be supported by a comparison between the *ad-Durar* and the other biographical dictionaries of Ibn Ḥağar. The entries of the individual Muğulṭāy b. Qalīğ in the two dictionaries, *ad-Durar* and *Lisān al-Mizān*, show two different orientations and directions. Since the *Lisān al-Mizān* is a dictionary for the evaluation of the reliability of *ḥadīṭ*-transmitters, Ibn Ḥağar mentions that information that are relevant for the purpose of the work. Hence, he shed lights particularly on Muğulṭāy's claims of alleged *samā'āt* and *iğāzāt*. By contrast, in his *ad-Durar* he highlights more general aspects of Muğulṭāy's life and leaves out the too special information for *ḥadīṭ*-studies such as the mentioning of Muğulṭāy's *tahrīğ*-works or some of the *ḥadīṭ*-related claims he made. Instead he mentions e. g. physical attributions or his scholarly skills in other fields like linguistics and the field of genealogy (*ilm al-ansāb*). Ibn Ḥağar even tries to take away any connotation of Muğulṭāy being a *ḥadīṭ*-scholar. That became clearer while comparing the *ad-Durar* with aṣ-Ṣafadī's *A'yān an-naṣr*. For aṣ-Ṣafadī, Muğulṭāy was a great *ḥadīṭ*-scholar who held several teaching positions and who was attacked and criticized wrongfully and unjustly by other scholars. Ibn Ḥağar used a number of narrative strategies to counter that image. By omitting *ḥadīṭ*-study relevant information, he avoided to give the reader any connotation of him being a *ḥadīṭ*-scholar. He did not even mention descriptions such as *muḥaddiṭ* or *rāwī* etc., what means that he made a conscious selection of the terminology he used. In addition, he used phrases that exclude Muğulṭāy from the group of *ḥadīṭ*-scholars such as “the *ahl al-ḥadīṭ* reject the possibility of” or “the scholars of the time.” With those phrases, Ibn Ḥağar did not only imply that Muğulṭāy didn't belong to those circles, he also disassociated himself from Muğulṭāy. The negative image of Muğulṭāy also became apparent, in the way Ibn Ḥağar told and set up the anecdotes. Through the use of logical connectors, he constructed negative connotations as shown in the example of the appointment of the teaching position as well as the conflict with the scholar al-'Alā'ī. That supports also a dichotomy between good and bad scholars, between

justice and injustice, that Ibn Ḥağar used to build the negative image of Muğultāy. Only the mentioning of Muğultāy's *samā'* at the beginning of the entry in section two might hint to Muğultāy being a *ḥadīṭ*-scholar. However, there are indications that Ibn Ḥağar's audience would not take from the mentioning of one's *samā'* that the individual was a *ḥadīṭ*-scholar. As GARRETT DAVIDSON clearly shows, in the post-canonical time, i. e. the period after the six books⁴⁰ became the standard collections *ḥadīṭ*-scholars refer to, *ḥadīṭ*-transmission witnessed changes that promoted the meaning of *isnāds* and especially short *isnāds*. Compared to the former function of the *isnād*, it achieved additional importance as it was seen as a spiritual connection to the Prophet, his legacy and authority. The function for the evaluation of the *ḥadīṭ*'s authenticity still remains, however, in addition to that, *ḥadīṭ*-scholars tried to maintain short *isnāds* for spiritual reason and to gain reputation as well as cultural capital within their community in particular and amongst the group of *ḥadīṭ*-scholars in general. Besides the various new *ḥadīṭ*-collections that developed from this perspective and that focuses almost entirely on the *isnād* and not on the content of the *ḥadīṭ* anymore,⁴¹ seeking a *samā'* and become part of the *ḥadīṭ*-transmission system developed to a cultural movement that the non-learned members of the societies joined. In order to keep the chains of transmission short, people – first scholars but eventually non-learned individuals as well – started to bring their children to *ḥadīṭ*-transmission sessions where they attained *samā'āt*. Independently, whether those children became scholars in their later life or practiced another profession, the *samā'āt* were recorded and documented. Later, scholars would use those records to identify individuals of a certain *ṭabaqa*. In order to shorten their own *isnād* they would then connect to them and narrate from them *ḥadīṭ*, regardless the fact whether those individuals were scholars or not.⁴²

For the entry in question, this means that the mentioning of the *samā'āt* alone does not indicate that Muğultāy was a *ḥadīṭ*-scholar. This is actually true for other entries in the *ad-Durar*, too, when Ibn Ḥağar mentioned the *samā'* of individuals, be it a scholar or a member of other social groups.

40 Those are *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Buḥārī*, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, *Sunan Abū Dāwūd*, *Sunan at-Tirmidī*, *Sunan Ibn Māğā*, *Sunan an-Nasā'ī*.

41 The numerous variations of the forty-*ḥadīṭ* collections as well as the 'awālī-genre are probably the most famous examples for that. See Davidson, *Carrying on the Tradition*, pp. 234–278.

42 For a comprehensive introduction into the post-canonical *ḥadīṭ*-studies and the modified meaning of the *isnād* see Davidson, *Carrying on the Tradition*, pp. 79–191. He also gives many examples of children of non-scholars who attained valuable *samā'* in their youth, but never became scholars in their life.

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Ibn Iyās, the Poet: The Literary Profile of a Mamluk Historian

Ibn Iyās is arguably one of the most significant chroniclers of the twilight years of the Mamluk Sultanate, on account of his hallmark work, the *Badā'i' al-zuhūr fī waqā'i' al-duhūr*, which might be freely rendered as “The Splendid Flowering Stories of History.”¹ The text has been exhaustively consulted in every serious study of the period, thanks to its rich content, lively language, and engaging storytelling. However, an integral component, the abundant verses (many of his own), has not received the attention it deserves. These verses are so remarkably embedded in the prose narrative that if one aims at a holistic reading of the text, he cannot afford to gloss them over as random flowery hyperboles. Under what circumstances did Ibn Iyās write poetry? What did he write about? How were these verses featured in the BZ? To what extent do they succeed to enrich the prose narrative? This essay seeks to answer these questions and to make contribution to the ongoing discussion of the literariness of history writing in the Mamluk era.

I

Ibn Iyās received an elitist education, the curriculum of which privileged poetry and rhetoric, as his writing would later testify. Of the class of *awlād al-nās*, or sons of Mamluks, with no prospects for military glory, he seems to have frequented literary gatherings, writing poetry, and later, history.² From the beginning, his sights were set high and his eyes watchful. The earliest verse quoted in the BZ is a couplet that comments on the arrival of Jumjuma b. ‘Uthmān to Cairo

1 Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i' al-zuhūr fī waqā'i' al-duhūr*, ed. Mohamed Mostafa, 5 vols. (Cairo, 1960–1963; hereafter: BZ).

2 To this day we do not have a biography of Ibn Iyās. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Ziyāda's sketchy account is still useful; see *al-Mu'arrikhūn fī Miṣr fī al-qarn al-khāmis 'ashar al-milādī* (Cairo, 1949), 46–55.

seeking political asylum in 886/1481.³ It praises Sultan Qāyṭbāy's (r. 872–901/1468–96) handling of a delicate situation. Ibn Iyās wrote about powerful men of his time, in elegy or lampoon. The first in the BZ laments the death, in 893/1488, of al-Zaynī Ibn Muzhir, Qāyṭbāy's private secretary (*kātib al-sirr*), to whom he had also dedicated a congratulatory couplet earlier, upon his appointment to the Shāfi'ī judgeship.⁴ He commented on the controversy surrounding the new shadow caliph al-Sharafī Ya'qūb in 903/1498 and voiced his support of this "pious man."⁵ He eulogized sultans al-Nāṣir Muḥammad b. Qāyṭbāy (r. 901–03/1496–98) and al-Ashraf Jānbalāṭ (r. 905–06/1500–01),⁶ various emirs,⁷ and a court musician.⁸ His desire to appease the sitting sultans appears consistent. His elegy, for example, took a *schadenfreude* turn, celebrating the death of Emir Āqbirdī, an archrival to Sultan al-Zāhir Qānṣūh (r. 903–05/1498–1500).⁹ His first lengthy panegyric cited in the BZ was dedicated to Sultan al-Ādil Tūmanbāy (r. 906/1501), on the occasion of his wife's move-in to the Cairo Citadel.¹⁰

The historian-to-be was highly opinionated. And this is in full display in his poetry, which touches upon major events of the day. His assessment of the chaotic years between Qāyṭbāy and Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī is represented partially through poems about remarkable events. In narrating the Bedouin unrest in 904/1498–99, which he describes as "horrendous incidents," he quotes his own poem, delineating the deep-rooted tension between "Arabs (Bedouins)" and "Turks (Mamluks)," a perennial nuisance to the regime.¹¹ He describes the riots that broke out within a year, in 906/1509–10, first under the watch of Sultan al-Ashraf Jānbalāṭ and next Sultan al-Ādil Tūmanbāy.¹² He expresses his displeasure at the fires and hires of the Ḥanafī chief judges at the end of the year 906/1501.¹³ But overall his tone remained guarded and cautious. He tackles, for example, the abuses the notorious *Julbān*-recruits inflicted on residents of Cairo, but in the manner of "teasing (*mudā'aba*)," nevertheless.¹⁴

Ibn Iyās' poetic output reached a high point during Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī's reign (r. 906–22/1501–17). More than fifty poems, of various lengths and genres, cover a wide range, if not always depicting a rosy picture. Formal panegyrics dedicated

3 BZ, 3: 185.

4 BZ, 3: 255.

5 BZ, 3: 378–80.

6 BZ, 3: 403, 472.

7 BZ, 3: 374, 430–31, 468.

8 BZ, 3: 434–35.

9 BZ, 3: 422.

10 BZ, 3: 473.

11 BZ, 3: 415.

12 BZ, 3: 361, 476.

13 BZ, 3: 471.

14 BZ, 3: 388–89.

to Sultan al-Ghawrī are cited in full or at length. Among them is an infamous *madḥ* of thirty-five lines, thanking him for giving the historian, who sometimes played polo games with the sultan, a special treatment in 915/1509–10, in re-installing the *iqṭāʿ*-pension that had been taken away years earlier due to financial strains of the state.¹⁵ Another was presented at the sultan's visit to the Nilometer in 918/1512, on the heels of his resolution to reinstall the controversial market inspector, al-Zaynī Barakāt (more of him see below).¹⁶ He praises the sultan's decisions to lift shipping tariffs,¹⁷ celebrates his expedition to Syria in 922/1516,¹⁸ and glorifies Egyptian troops.¹⁹ More celebratory verses dedicated to the sultan were presented on various occasions.²⁰ His panegyrics to the sultan sometimes include praises of other people as well; and this is the case where this "one stone two birds" scheme involves Burhān al-Dīn Ibn Abī Sharīf when he resigned from the chief judge's office to assume the leadership position at the Sultanīc *madrasa*.²¹

Many of his poetry dedicated to the men in power betray his well connectedness. These verses, because of their relative specificities, place the poet at the scenes of which he would describe later as a historian. For example, at a holiday celebration in 917/1511–12, Ibn Iyās approached (*dakhaltu ilayhi*) sultan's private secretary Maḥmūd b. Ajā and congratulated the emir's recovery from a long illness with a poem.²² The personal touch lends an air of intimacy to his accounts about these men and their acts. He continued to serenade his friends in high places on celebratory occasions. Among them were al-Ghawrī's private secretary²³ and a chief judge.²⁴ His elegies honored chief judges,²⁵ the royal protocol officer (*al-dawādār*),²⁶ and the senior advisor to the young sultan (*al-atābik*).²⁷

Attention was also paid to current affairs, which formed the bulk of his poetry. Unlike panegyrics and elegies that served as some sort of communiqués, these noncommittal poems comment on events and people with no strings attached. Here, the panegyrist's voice is overshadowed by that of an observer. Some of these

15 BZ, 4: 173–75.

16 BZ, 4: 278–79.

17 BZ, 5: 18.

18 BZ, 5: 61–62.

19 BZ, 5: 70.

20 BZ, 4: 326, 332–33; 5: 88–89.

21 BZ, 4: 69.

22 BZ, 4: 248.

23 BZ, 4: 441.

24 BZ, 4: 469.

25 BZ, 4: 71, 470.

26 BZ, 4: 78.

27 BZ, 4: 198.

verses pass judgment on sultans,²⁸ a caliph wanna-be,²⁹ and other high-powered men (Mamluk and civilian, good and bad);³⁰ whereas the remainder are “issue” oriented, expressing his views on economy,³¹ building projects,³² policies (good and bad),³³ crimes and punishments,³⁴ and “marvels and strange stories.”³⁵ There were some light moments as well, insofar as the phrase “friendly teasing (*mu-dā‘aba laṭīfa*)” was often remarked to set the tone. One poem of such “teasing” aimed at the sultan’s muezzin who was rumored to have married one hundred times;³⁶ the death of a notoriously “stupid” emir was the cause of a sendoff verse;³⁷ still another targeted a notoriously “cheap” chief judge, who was otherwise a decent scholar.³⁸

Ibn Iyās remained active, and vocal, throughout the ensuing transition from the last Mamluk sultan al-Ashraf Tūmanbāy, “who ruled three months and fourteen days,”³⁹ and the Ottoman takeover in 922/1517. His narrative of this period, which runs all the way to 928/1522, is the most quoted contemporary source, in no small part because of its eyewitness accounts in vivid detail. With a few exceptions, nearly all the poems in this portion of the narrative are Ibn Iyās’ own.⁴⁰ He dutifully continued writing flattery verses on behalf of the status quo.⁴¹ But more often, his poems were in response to significant developments on the ground: the Mamluk-Ottoman warfare,⁴² the execution of Tūmanbāy,⁴³ and the first Ottoman sultan Selīm’s activities, such as building a new palace and establishing the office of Egyptian viceroy (*niyāba*).⁴⁴ The historian, a staunch Mamluk loyalist, did pay his share of tributes as a panegyrist to the Ottoman conquerors, honoring Selim, in a long lament poem,⁴⁵ and his son Sulaymān, “The Magnificent,” in a panegyric.⁴⁶

28 BZ, 4: 2, 11.

29 BZ, 4: 360–61.

30 BZ, 4: 45, 48, 74, 183, 216, 220, 251, 261, 348, 352; 5: 46–47.

31 BZ, 4: 16, 45; 5: 14.

32 BZ, 4: 53, 68, 102.

33 BZ, 4: 59, 209, 312, 329.

34 BZ, 4: 136, 178, 349.

35 BZ, 4: 203–4.

36 BZ, 4: 218.

37 BZ, 4: 452.

38 BZ, 5: 26.

39 BZ, 5: 177.

40 BZ, 5: 106–494.

41 BZ, 5: 107–8.

42 BZ, 5: 106, 111, 148, 170.

43 BZ, 5: 177.

44 BZ, 5: 192–93, 209.

45 BZ, 5: 362.

46 BZ, 5: 363.

Under the Ottomans, the personal connections he had cultivated overtime continued. Some major players in the volatile mix, such as al-Zaynī Barakāt, are familiar. New relations were forged as well. He wrote extensively about Emir Khāyir Bek, a power figure; some are flattery, upon his appointment to the viceroy's office of Cairo (*nā'ib*), for example,⁴⁷ but others are less so, when the emir, for example, issued a bizarre order to kill all the dogs in Cairo.⁴⁸ When the emir died, Ibn Iyās' tributes are sarcastic in tone. One poem even mimics the dead man's own voice, that of a lost soul "in the bottom of the tomb," contemplating the punishment in the afterlife on account of "all the abuses and unjust" he had done on earth.⁴⁹

Ibn Iyās' reflections on the chaos, confusion, and shock in the aftermath of the Ottoman takeover are firsthand and personal. Half jokingly, he comments on the differences between the "bearded Circassians (Mamluk)" and "beardless Turks (Ottoman)."⁵⁰ In a more serious tone, he blasts corrupt officials and judges⁵¹ and describes many "horrible events" with grave economic, social, and political ramifications. These poems touch upon incidents such as the riots that broke up in response to unfair revenues waivers;⁵² complaints of some Mamluks about the low payments;⁵³ and the cancellation of costly rites and festivities.⁵⁴ Occasionally, his poetry reports good news, such as the falling prices thanks to the good Nile flooding, in 925/1519.⁵⁵ But overall, a sense of disappointment and dismay permeates these noncommittal verses, adding a sober tone to the prose narrative they accompany. It also bears notice that all of these verses are concerned with the happenings in Cairo.

II

By the time of his death (ca. 930/1524), Ibn Iyās had been writing poetry for decades. The nearly one hundred pieces in the BZ constitute, in all likelihood, perhaps only a fraction of his output, given his productivity and sound technique as evidenced by these samples (see below). More documentary and functional than lyric and nostalgic, they offer significant sights into his world, as well as the

47 BZ, 5: 209.

48 BZ, 5: 249.

49 BZ, 5: 482, 485.

50 BZ, 5: 220.

51 BZ, 5: 467, 470.

52 BZ, 5: 223, 293.

53 BZ, 5: 271.

54 BZ, 5: 275, 276.

55 BZ, 5: 304–5.

itineraries of his own career and life, of which little is known. (Ironically, the most quoted Mamluk historian failed to earn a place in any written history, which might suggest that he did not quite “make it,” in gaining fame as a court poet, or a major historian of the day. We are not even sure about the date of his death.)

The majority of his poetry is classical in form, including *qaṣīda*-odes and short poems and couplets, which he termed *maqāṭī*.⁵⁶ He is reported to have composed a great deal of non-canonical and vernacular verses,⁵⁷ but only a few, of *zajal* and *mawāliyā*, found their way to the BZ.⁵⁸ Of the extensive long quotes of didactic *zajal* and *rajaz* poems in the BZ,⁵⁹ none is his own. This is not a place to assess his overall achievements as a poet, insofar as the samples found in the BZ do not amount to a *dīwān*. Missing are specimens of major genres, such as love, wine, and devotional hymns. (This, of course, does not necessarily mean that he did not compose in these genres.)

Ibn Iyās was mindful of his literary legacy. He characterizes one of his panegyrics dedicated to Sultan al-Ghawrī as a “magnificent ode (*qaṣīda saniya*).”⁶⁰ He introduces his panegyric to Sultan al-‘Ādil Tūmanbāy as “eloquent verses (*abyāt laṭīfa*).”⁶¹ In summing up the eventful year of 920/1514–15, when “so many strange and spectacular things had happened, the likes of which were seldom seen in history,” he remarks, “I composed a panegyric about it. It is unique in style, never seen before (*lam yunsaj mithlu-hā ‘alā minwāl*).”⁶² He often embedded his own name into the praising songs presented to the sultan(s), a common customary practice aimed at immortalizing the patron as well as the panegyrist. In Ibn Iyās’ case, the poet’s “signature” clause would later serve as the historian’s footnote for authentication.

Ibn Iyās seemed to relish the chances when he was at the center of the Cairene cultural elites, even at the risk of sounding controversial. A telling example is his involvement in, and documentation of, a war in words (more precisely, in verses) over al-Ghawrī’s plans to beautify the square under the Cairo Citadel in 917/1511–12. Poems were circulated among “the crème of society (*min fuḍalā’ al-‘aṣr*), two hundred strong,” some criticizing the sultan’s lavish spending on flowers and trees instead of swords and knives. Ibn Iyās defended the sultan’s

56 BZ, 3: 468.

57 Ziyāda, 50.

58 BZ, 4: 68, 336; 5: 220, 223.

59 Most long *zajal*-poems are attributed to Badr al-Dīn al-Zaytūnī (d. 924/1518); see BZ, 4: 239–41; 5: 57–59, 96–101, 265–67 (his obituary), 418–20. An example for the *rajaz* is the anonymous “Roster of the sultans,” which runs over ninety-one lines; BZ, 4: 486–91.

60 BZ, 4: 322.

61 BZ, 3: 473.

62 BZ, 4: 422–23.

initiatives passionately and quoted the exchanges between him and his peers, positioning himself as a major player in this public literary debate.⁶³

Ibn Iyās did not hesitate to show off his literary skills. The frequent mention of his applications of *al-taḍmīn*, *al-iqtibās* (both intertextual exercises in paraphrasing classical poetry or Qur'an, respectively),⁶⁴ and *al-tawriya* (double-entendre)⁶⁵ highlights his grounding in canonical repertoires and techniques. The fact that these technical notes of prosody and poetics were diligently marked mostly on panegyrics to sultans says something about his possible aspirations of a chancery career or of achieving fame through the court connection.

III

Most of Ibn Iyās' verses address contemporary issues, describing events as they occurred. They parallel the historian's narrative of the last phase of the Mamluk Sultanate, the contents of volumes 3 to 5 of the BZ.⁶⁶ A poem is usually introduced by a phrase, in the past tense, which indicates existing materials at his disposal. The most frequent introductory phrases are *qad qultu fī al-ma'nā*, or "I composed a poem on this topic," and *qad qultu fī hādhihi al-wāqi'a*, or "I composed a poem about the event/situation." For elegy, he used *rathaytu-hu*, or "I eulogized him by a poem." The phrase *hannaytu-hu*, or "I congratulated him [on such-and-such occasion] by a poem," introduces celebratory verses that often allude to some personal connection. The last two types are frequently further qualified as "in two lines (*bi-hādhayn al-baytayn*)," indicating that they were composed originally as couplet, not excerpts from a longer *qaṣīda*.

Worth noting are a few verses that were likely composed at the writing of the BZ. They shed light on the historian's working process, as well as his views of writing history in general. Introduced by a phrase in the present tense, *wa-fīhi aqūl*, or "regarding this, I present the following poem," these verses, all couplets, are placed at the significant junctures of the BZ, serving as some kind of liminal markers. The phrase *wa-fīhi aqūl* is a common catchword often used in medieval Arabic chronicles as a "switch" to the narrator's own comment and opinion. With Ibn Iyās, the similar function, but in verse, is at work here. Of these poems, one

63 BZ, 4: 222–29.

64 BZ, 3: 378–79, 380, 422, 461; 4: 71.

65 BZ, 4: 326.

66 The five-volume tome as we know it is actually two in one: the earlier portions (vols. 1–2) form what one may call a "popular" history, featuring brief snapshots in easy and sometimes vernacular language. The latter section (vols. 3–5) is more finished and polished; see William Brinner, "Ibn Iyās," *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd edition.

appears in the opening, and three at the conclusion.⁶⁷ Inserted in the mid are a few: one reiterates praises of the new caliph in 903/1497; one summarizes Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī's reign that ended in 922/1517; and yet another salutes the inauguration of Ottoman Sultan Sulaymān b. Selīm I in 926/1520.⁶⁸ These verses are formulaic by nature; but they reveal Ibn Iyās' perception of the role of poetry in historical writing. In the Foreword, he writes:

In writing this chronicle, I have consulted numerous books – about thirty-seven in total. What I wanted is accurate reportage. It has come to be, thanks to God, like a string of pearls. Just like the following poem says:

If you wondered about what has occurred
since the beginning of times, read my book.

It's a mirror, through which you see (*tanzur*) the marvels
that Time has done to the humans.⁶⁹

The poem is full of clichés about Arabic chronicles: history as a “mirror of time” (*mir'āt al-zamān*) and a repertory of “marvelous stories” (*'ajā'ib*). The importance and appeal of history are once again highlighted at the conclusion of the BZ, where three couplets (each in a different meter and rhyme) wrap up the chronicle. In the first, the historian sounds humble:

Pardon the author of this chronicle with compassion.
Forgive any shortcomings caused by my zealous passion (*bi-ltihāmī*).

You have been kind to me from the beginning,
O Lord, take care of me through its ending!

The root meaning of the verb *iltahama* denotes “to gulp,” “to swallow,” thus alluding to “indulgence,” “excessiveness,” or perhaps “digression” in storytelling. Here the historian gives justifications to his own narrative style, which is characterized by some modern students as “historical romance.”⁷⁰ In the next couplet he goes on to brag about his work by some interesting comparisons:

Our chronicle is the delight of the ensembles (*al-majālis*);
Its words enchant the crowd in attendance (*al-mujālis*).

It is music to the ear.⁷¹
It pleases (*yutrib*) anyone deep in despair.

67 BZ, 1: 3; 5: 494.

68 BZ, 4: 380; 5: 1, 363.

69 BZ, 1: 3.

70 Donald Little, “Historiography of the Ayyubid and Mamluk Epochs,” in Carl Petry ed. *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, 1998), 424–25.

71 Literally, “music (*samā'*) brings joy to the humankind.”

Adding to the clichés of historical writing are that of *adab*, of poetry and music. The use of *jinās*, or paronomasia, in the first line is efflorescent. The reference to the literary salons (*al-majālis*) and the participants (*al-mujālis*) adds a descriptive layer (lacking in the prose narrative) of the locus where historical stories and anecdotes were consumed as cultural products. The historian closes his book with yet another poem:

I compiled this book, to be my best company.
People come and go, ever changing.

But the book remains loyal over the years,
withstanding scrutiny and queries (*al-naẓar*).

On this final note, the profession of historical inquiry, the “history book” in question, and the historian responsible for writing it are all immortalized, in succinct and memorable verses. The coherence is also seen in a smart echoing on a larger scale, in that the last word of the final verse (and of the entire chronicle), *al-naẓar*, or “to look, to see,” echoes the cognate *tanzur* that appears in the first verse of the BZ. The above reading of Ibn Iyās’ verses that were tailor-made for the BZ conforms to a decent level of artistry and craftsmanship. But it is to his method of using verses as a tool of narrative strategy that I now turn.

IV

Overall, Ibn Iyās’ use of verses is in line with the model established by al-Ṭabarī and Ibn al-Athīr, where poems are cited to conclude, or to be inserted in the mid of, a narrative unit as commentary, reflection, and afterthought note. Many of these verses were composed, *ad hoc*, either by a contemporary or a later person. They are mainly in the classical genres of panegyric, lampoon, and lamentation. Some are ahistorical, attributed to the timeless greats such as al-Mutanabbī, or quotes from proverbs and wisdom sayings. One way or the other, these verses perform commentary and/or descriptive tasks, if not always effectively. What makes Ibn Iyās’ use of verses worthy of discussion here is the fact that more often than not, he was solely responsible for both the prose *and* the verse. It can be argued that the historian was not simply quoting some flowering verses to spice things up. It was a holistic process in writing. In the following I dissect three cases in which Ibn Iyās utilized his own poetry to achieve greater narrative power and fluidity. The first case has to do with his obituary of Sultan al-Nāṣir, who succeeded his father Qāyṭbāy for a short, and by all accounts disastrous, reign. When he was killed in 904/1499 at the age of seventeen, he was buried next to his father, in the Qāyṭbāy Mausoleum (*qabr*). Ibn Iyās mourned the sultan who had died young by the following couplet:

O, Mausoleum (*qabr*)! Cast no more shadow (*lā tazlum*),
As long as darkness descends on him, glow.

Blessed is the Mausoleum that embraces his corpse.
Can't the sky tell, when in it a full moon resides?!

The first line contains a double-entendre (*al-tawriya*), in *lā tazlum*, which could also mean, “don’t abuse,” as in “mistreating the youthful body.” The interplay between darkness (of the tomb) and light (the deceased) is staple, yet the symmetrical mirror imageries, of “tomb” and “sky” each embracing a foreign body, “corpse” and “moon,” respectively, are refreshingly poignant. The tribute is short, cliché ridden, yet flattery and complacent. But that was then: with an aspiring poet, Ibn Iyās, trying to find his way to royal patronage. Now, years later in writing the BZ, the historian in him is at work. The ensuing obituary makes a laundry list of the boy sultan’s failures and shortcomings. Even the appearance and personality of this “good looking,” but “good for nothing (*laysa lahu min al-mahāsīn illā al-qalīl*) ruler, in the historian’s own word, became the subject of scrutiny and mockery, to be further cemented by another couplet:⁷²

Our Sultan al-Nāṣir, the beloved;
Reports about him are to be trusted.

With ignorance, he was ugly in deeds.
Of no use were his good looks.

The introduction, with the present tense verb (*wa-fīhi aqūl*), suggests that this new poem, a satire, was composed at the writing of the BZ. So, the two poems composed in different times serve different narrative purposes: the first as a record of a panegyrist’s voice, and the second as a historian’s reflection on his subject. The contrast and antithesis, in “beautiful vs. ugly,” deliver the punch line.

If the changing of tone in the case above is drastic, the next example shows the nuanced interpretative maneuvers engineered by the poet-historian. And it is seen in the narrative of Sultan al-Ghawrī, a major patron to whom a great number of panegyrics were dedicated by Ibn Iyās the poet. Interestingly, when the sultan died, Ibn Iyās’ reaction was mute and reflective. The sultan had achieved great things while on the throne, he writes in the BZ, but “people were fed up with him (*fī ghāyat al-ḍank*) near the end.” He then goes on to offer an explanation, in verse (*qultu fī al-ma’nā*):⁷³

Marvel at al-Ashraf al-Ghawrī!
Once (*mudh*) he plundered Cairo with tyranny (*zulm*),

72 BZ, 3: 403.

73 BZ, 5: 71.

He lost his grips on power.
Gone were this world and the hereafter.

The key word, *mudh*, “since,” gives context for a cautionary tale, of the causes of the sultan’s downfall. The poem functions as the conclusion of the narrative of the sultan’s obituary, and as the remarks of lessons to be learned from past rulers. In this case, verse completes the prose narrative.

In the similar vain, the citation of poetry was also used to argue for a viewpoint regarding the sultan’s complicated legacy. In concluding a lengthy report of several controversial cases that had been resolved by the sultan in 919/1513–14, Ibn Iyās mentions that, “it so happened (*wa-waqa‘a lī*)” that his panegyric to Sultan al-Ghawrī (with a lengthy quote) was “criticized by some (*lāmū-nī al-nās*)” on account of its first line, “He had shown people justice, / and done away with oppression and tyranny.”⁷⁴ He repeats the line, and goes on to put forth an argument that, despite the sultan’s well-documented “cruelty (*quwwat ‘asfi-hi*)” during “these days,” the aforesaid cases did show his judicial rulings. Here, again, poetry is cited for a more nuanced, two-sided, presentation.

Aside from panegyrics and laments, Ibn Iyās’ narrative, in prose and verse, of the ups and downs of the above-mentioned al-Zaynī Barakāt Ibn Mūsā, one of the most intriguing figures of the time, illustrates the ways in which prose and verse compensate each other.⁷⁵ When the market inspector was reinstalled in 918/1512 (all told, he was fired and reinstalled five times), Ibn Iyās congratulated him with a couplet full of hyperboles:⁷⁶

Time (*al-dahr*) has brought you redemption,
of what it had done to you – the horrible prosecution.

None could have survived such evil plot
but the market inspector, young and steadfast.

The personal closeness of the two is further illustrated by the next poetry-related incident. When the soaring sugar price hit the town in 917/1511–12, Ibn Iyās composed a long *qaṣīda*, celebrating “all the sweet things” – such as candy, cakes, pastries, singing girls’ sweet lips, and so forth – and their impact on life in Cairo and sent it along to (*rafa‘tu*) al-Zaynī Barakāt, urging him to bring “blessings (*barakāt*; a double-entendre on his name)” on solving the problem.⁷⁷ The friendship between the two seemed unshakable, in that Ibn Iyās never failed to

74 BZ, 4: 322.

75 It is Ibn Iyās’ narrative that inspired the acclaimed novel, Gamal al-Ghitani’s *Zayni Barakat* (English translation, Penguin Books, 1988). For the novelist’s indebtedness to Ibn Iyās, cf. Farouk Abdel Wahab, “Translator’s Note,” xvii–xx.

76 BZ, 4: 274–75.

77 BZ, 4: 246–47.

bestow on his friend the kind of hyperboles fit for a sultan. When al-Zaynī was re-appointed to the office, in 923/1517, this time by the Ottomans, Ibn Iyās again presented a flattery poem, celebrating the “ascending of blessings (*al-barakāt*) to the highest place in the land.”⁷⁸ Describing a pompous parade in Cairo, in 924/1518, of which al-Zaynī Barakāt spared no resources in preparation, Ibn Iyās the poet spared no words in praise of the spectacle and the market inspector’s (whose name is mentioned in the opening line) lavish spending.⁷⁹ If this otherwise staple panegyric is any indication, it is that Ibn Iyās, for reasons unclear, managed to keep his narrative of al-Zaynī Barakāt consistently positive and sunny.

When controversy arose, Ibn Iyās always came to his defense, sometimes with subtle touches. In 920/1514–15, when the market inspector confiscated all the water carrying camels in Cairo for the sultan’s own use, he was roundly condemned by the populace. Ibn Iyās joined the crowd with his own complaint, but his anger seemed to be directed towards someone else:⁸⁰

Egypt has been deserted by water-skin, now looming afar;
In its place is sultan’s banner.

Been deprived of water, in thirsty we are burning;
like young virgins, for water they are craving.

Along with his own, he also quoted verses by others protesting the mishandling of water supply in Cairo. Here, the prose narrative gives a detailed account of what went wrong, but it is the verse that answers the question, or alludes to, as who was to blame. (The market inspector simply carried out sultan’s orders.) The verses also add shades, of sentiments in the street, to the prose narrative.

His unwavering support of al-Zaynī Barakāt is once again in full display, under the new Ottoman ruling. This time, the poet commented on al-Zaynī Barakāt’s feud with a powerful figure, Shaykh Su‘ūd, who had instigated yet another dismissal of the market inspector in 922/1517:⁸¹

How strange, what has transpired in the world,
between Ibn Mūsā and Shaykh Su‘ūd!

The animosity between the two lasts,
like blazing fires.

The shaykh insisted on his firing,
making sure he was not returning.

78 BZ, 5: 209.

79 BZ, 5: 246–47.

80 BZ, 4: 365.

81 BZ, 5: 113–14.

May God help him defeat
the envious tyrant!

Would that I knew: the downfall this time
has earned Ibn Mūsā the right – to rise again!

His effortless use of the *badī'* techniques is seen in the contrast, between “downfall” and “rise” in the last line, but also a very smart way to take advantage of the rhyme *'ūd*, in a juxtaposition of all the end words to streamline a narrative – the villain’s name, Su‘ūd; the hero’s “return (*ya'ūd*)”; the cause of the feud (“envy [*al-ḥusūd*]”); and finally the hero’s “rise (*al-ṣu'ūd*). In many ways, the key verb *ya'ūd*, “he returns,” is at the heart of the entire narrative insofar as the story of al-Zaynī Barakāt is in essence one of survival: a savvy operator who managed to bounce back, “return” and “rise” high, time and again, in the jungle of Mamluk politics.

* * *

In many ways, al-Zaynī Barakāt’s “enigmatic, and deeply problematic career,” in Edward Said’s characterization,⁸² is an epitome that underlines some major themes and trends of Egyptian history in the transition period from Mamluk ruling to Ottoman takeover. The story told by Ibn Iyās is fascinating. Equally so is the way he tells it. The Mamluk historian’s distinct narrative style has drawn extensive attention by students of medieval Arabic-Islamic historiography. As Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Ziyāda puts it this way: “Unlike his peers, who followed strictly the tedious format of ‘events’ and ‘obituaries’ of each year, he (Ibn Iyās) pauses in the midst of his stories, whereupon he explains, comments, and philosophizes (*yufalsif*) with brutally frank (*al-qaswa*) judgment, audacious assessment, and a bit of exaggeration in illustration (*taṣwīr*).”⁸³ In Arabic discourse, erudition can hardly be fully archived without poetry. This is exactly what Ibn Iyās aimed at, and largely accomplished, in the making of his mesmerizing narrative.

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Lachrymose behavior in Mamluk Chronicles: A Narratological Technique

I

Since Foucault, the dominant theoretical perspective on narratives is that they have the power to transmit shared values and disciplinary models of social control and conduct to the societies that share them.¹ This applies to Medieval Islamic chronicle literature as well. Muslim tradition conceived history as part of the Islamic sciences and hence past events were seen as conveyors of didactic and ethical meanings that were applicable to general and contemporary concerns.² However, recorded events, especially when they are arranged chronologically and their focus is politics, are not self-explanatory. Beyond the choice or selection of events (deemed worthy of recording), the task of the chronicler is to reorganize these different events into a story through narrative strategies or techniques that weave the events together and reveal their underlying ethical meaning. One important principle in the construction of story content and meaning in narratives is the technique of verbal or event repetition (frequency). Similarities between events in a series create a repetitive effect loaded with meaning that draws the reader's attention to the story structure and taps memory to infer the meaning of the text.³ The strength of the repetitive effect depends on the nature of the iterated event, how unusual or emotional it is, and the impact of its meaning.

Emotions elicit readers' emotional reactions to a text by causing them to relate empathically (or unsympathetically) to characters or events, and prompting a moral evaluation.⁴ Emotions play a key role in readers' subsequent cognitive

1 Suzanne Keen, "Introduction: Narrative and the Emotions", *Poetics Today*, vol. 32:1 (2011), p. 12.

2 See, for example, Yūsuf Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *al-Nujūm al-Zāhira fī Mulūk Miṣr wa'l-Qāhira*, various editors, Cairo, 1963–1972, 16 vols., vol. 1, p. 1.

3 David S. Miall, "Emotions and the Structuring of Narrative Responses", *Poetics Today*, vol. 32:2 (2011), p. 323.

4 Mieke Bal, *Narratology Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, Toronto, Buffalo, London, 1997, pp. 114, 130–31.

processing of the story, including arousing memories and making inferences to reality.⁵ The repetition of emotional episodes in Arabic Medieval chronicles, although they might seem occasional and of minor importance, fulfils narratological functions. This article discusses episodes of lachrymose behavior in Yūsuf Ibn Taghrī Birdī's (813–874/1410–1470) multi-volume chronicle *al-Nujūm al-Zāhira fī Mulūk Miṣr wa'l-Qāhira* and accounts for their function in the making of the plot and meaning. The analysis is restricted deliberately to women in Mamluk society during the Mamluk autonomous rule (648–923/1250–1517). The main argument is that most cases of Mamluk women lachrymose behavior⁶ found in *al-Nujūm al-Zāhira* have to do with the problematic aspects of Mamluk political instability that transpired mainly during Mamluk political reshuffles. Mamluk political transitions frequently involved considerable human and material losses and breaches of professed ideals and standards of conduct. Ibn Taghrī Birdī, who as a member of the Mamluk community personally experienced ups and downs during the political reorganizations of his time chose to convey the implicit meaning of Mamluk government malfunctioning through the effective and powerful means of emotional manifestations. Together with other narrative devices, the repetitive events involving women's shedding of tears in reaction to the calamities inflicted upon them in times of crisis serve as a frame for highlighting the leitmotif of *al-Nujūm al-Zāhira*; namely, the question of justice and rulership, as the author states in the introduction to the chronicle.⁷

II

Since Medieval Muslim readers belonged to the same “emotional community”⁸ and shared collective modes of expression and understanding of emotions, a brief discussion of Sunni models of lachrymose behavior provides a good background to what follows. Muslim religious scholars articulated strong views on the religious significance of tears and appropriate ways to express lamentation. Weeping was considered incompatible with the Islamic ideal of *ṣabr*, the virtue of patience, endurance or resignation that enjoins male adherents to remain spiritually steadfast. Al-Nu'mān ibn Thābit Abū Ḥanīfa (d. 150/767) and

5 Ibid.

6 The study of lachrymose behavior in both genders is examined in another study.

7 Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *Nujūm*, vol. 1, pp. 1–2.

8 According to Barbara Rosenwein, “emotional communities” share collective modes of expression and understanding of emotions and modes of how groups or people accept, encourage, tolerate or reject them. Emotional behavior fits or does not fit into generally accepted and expected patterns of behavior which are deeply rooted in culture: Barbara H. Rosenwein, “Worrying about Emotions in History”, *American Historical Review*, vol. 107:3 (2002), p. 842.

Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241/855), the founders of two of the main schools of Islamic jurisprudence, promulgated the concept of *ṣabr* as an Islamic ideal that also includes the acceptance of death with patience and resignation. The Quran and Hadith instruct Muslims to remain steadfast in the observance of religious obligations and refrain from the prohibited in the event of uncontrollable calamities. On the other hand, weeping out of piety that expressed fear of God was considered a manifestation of great religious devotion⁹, and during the invocation of divine compassion in the face of catastrophes it was permissible to shed tears to symbolize remorse and an appeal for divine forgiveness.

Islamic perceptions of lachrymose behavior, as in many other cultures, are gendered. While the virtue of *ṣabr* is a prerequisite for males to attain a state of religious devotion, women are characterized as inferior in both religiosity and intelligence, including emotional intelligence.¹⁰ According to Islamic traditions, women's inferiority is due to their feminine nature and more specifically menstruation, submission to their spouse, and their inability to control their emotions and desires.¹¹ Women were excluded from funeral rites because of their excessive emotional and physical expressions of lamentation. According to early Islamic traditions, the Prophet Muḥammad strictly forbade wailing, and condemned loud cries as pagan rituals. The prophet was said to be particularly critical of women who tore their clothes and recited funeral dirges.¹² With the forging of orthodox law, acts of mourning such as crying out loud, throwing dust on one's head, pulling out one's hair, slapping one's cheeks, and ripping one's clothes were considered abhorrent and hence proscribed.¹³ Extraverted acts of mourning were considered *ḥarām* and opposed to patience (*ṣabr*). The moral justification for these prohibitions underlies many traditions that describe how wailing women cause torment to the deceased and contradict the idea of submission to God's will and judgment since death is brought about only under divine authority and by divine decree.¹⁴

9 Dina Greenberg, "Gendered Expressions of Grief, An Islamic Continuum", *Journal of Religion & Society*, vol. 9 (2007), pp. 3, 10.

10 *Ibid.*, p. 7.

11 J. I. Smith and Y. Y. Haddad, "Women in the Afterlife: The Islamic View as seen from Quran and Tradition", *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, vol. 43 (1975), p. 45.

12 Greenberg, "Gendered Expressions of Grief," p. 8. During menstruation and after childbirth, women are deemed ritually unclean and thus prohibited from performing religious duties which include the ritual washing of the dead or attending funerals. Menstruating women, the traditions warn, could defile a corpse indefinitely: *Ibid.*, p. 8; L. E. Halevi, "Muhammad's Grave: Death Ritual and Society in the Early Islamic World", Harvard University, Department of Middle Eastern Studies, 2002, p. 104.

13 Halevi, "Muhammad's Grave", pp. 13, 17, 19.

14 *Ibid.*; Paolo Branca, "Weeping", *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, Leiden-Boston, 2006, vol. 5, pp. 471–2; A. Rippin, "Sajda", *ET*, vol. 8, p. 740.

III

In *al-Nujūm al-Zāhira*, in accounts related to the Mamluk period, Ibn Taghrī Birdī chose to include a number of short dramatic scenes of mourning women, in spite of their seemingly extrinsic and marginal importance in the chronicle. These scenes describe women – legal wives, mothers and slave-girls of Mamluks – mourning loudly and dramatically in public the death, exile or dismissal of their close relative or master. The mourned-for were in most cases prominent figures in the Mamluk army who had been ousted or died in unfavorable circumstances during political reshuffles. The women's expressions of grief involved weeping, screaming and crying out loud, and changes in their appearance in public such as unveiling, or playing instruments. Obviously these Mamluk women blatantly transgressed the proscriptions in Islamic law concerning the excessive expression of grief in public. At face value, these women's grieving rites might be interpreted as an implied criticism of the Mamluks in general for deviating from the orthodox tradition, with implications as regards their legitimacy to rule. However, Ibn Taghrī Birdī, who was an insider in the Mamluk community, was generally devoted to the Mamluk case as he often pointed out.¹⁵ In fact there are hints in these scenes such as the onlookers' emotional identification with the mourning women, that are suggestive of the author's rather positive approach toward these women's behavior. The author's inclusion of women's nonconformist grieving scenes thus had more to do with their context and logical causal relationship to politics, and mainly the question of rulership, which like other medieval chronicles, is the focus of the chronicle *al-Nujūm al-Zāhira*.

From a narratological viewpoint the grieving scenes can be viewed as a repetitive effect technique suggestive of the chronicle's perspective. Verbal repetition and similarities in the specifics of the mourners' activities turn these isolated lachrymose cases into a series. The iterations attract readers' attention to the characteristics of the mourning women and their specific behavior during these rites and help identify their symbolic meaning as signifiers and their links to the leitmotif, since the story or ethical meaning of the chronicle is conveyed through the accumulation of the symbolic messages of events.¹⁶ The examples below illustrate this narratological process:

15 *Ibn Taghrī Birdī* was a son of the *atābak al-'asākir* (the commander-in-chief) of the Mamluk army and had close relationships with prominent amirs. Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *Nujūm*, vol. 1, pp. 9–18.

16 For the creation of a series of events and their semiotic meaning as part of the construction of the narrative perspective see: Monika Fludernik, *An Introduction to Narratology*, New York, 2009, pp. 35, 143.

1. In 676/1277, al-Sa‘īd, al-Zāhir Baybars’ son, died after a short illness in Karak about six months after his deposition by Sultan al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn (678–89/1279–90). Ibn Taghrī Birdī, a later historian relying on earlier sources, chose not only to include this event in the chronicle but also his own comments about it, unlike Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1442) who ignored it, as was the case for many other feminine lachrymose events. Ibn Taghrī Birdī relates that al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn, the ruling sultan, became estranged from al-Sa‘īd and arranged to have him poisoned based on rumors that al-Sa‘īd was enlisting mamluks to his service. Ibn Taghrī Birdī also concludes that al-Sa‘īd was most likely poisoned because Qalāwūn feared for his own power given al-Sa‘īd’s large numbers of mamluks in the army.¹⁷ The author mentions succinctly that the formal mourning rites for al-Sa‘īd extended to all provinces, but the rites performed by his wives and their slave girls received more attention and space in the text: “And the ladies and their slave girls went out [into the streets] unveiled (*ḥāsirāt*), slapping their faces in despair (*yalṭumna*), playing musical instruments (*malāhī*, sing. *malhā*) and tambourines (*dufūf*, sing. *Daff*) for many days, making loud rude remarks and insulting al-Malik al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn who did not respond, for his [al-Sa‘īd’s] poisoning was attributed to him.”¹⁸ According to Ibn Taghrī Birdī, the daughter of Qalāwūn and wife of al-Sa‘īd hated her father as did many others for killing her husband. She never remarried and remained in great lament and suffering until her death.¹⁹ This lachrymose event captures the key characteristics of the mourning women: they appeared in public unveiled, loose and unrestrained in their behavior, and displayed their musical talents and most probably also singing and dancing. Unveiling and playing musical instruments were regularly identified with these women’s indoor activities and duties. Performing these activities in public was considered a transgression of conventional boundaries and therefore was loaded with meaning. The women’s unrestrained appearance and actions in public symbolized the relaxing of the normative order typical of transition periods. These women, as was the case for many other slaves related to members of the defeated Mamluk party, remained without a guardian or master during these times, and hence were defenseless, weak and vulnerable. Therefore these women clung together and acted as a group in their mourning rites to boost their cry of despair and alert public attention to their insecurity and uncertain future. In this context, the slave girls’ rites could be interpreted as a protest against the instability that characterized the Mamluk political system and its repercussions on their lives.

17 Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *Nujūm*, vol. 7, p. 271–72.

18 *Ibid.*, p. 272.

19 *Ibid.*

2. In 742/1341 the amir Qawṣūn, the power behind the new sultan al-Manṣūr Abū Bakr, exiled all al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's sons to Qūs except the six year old Kujuk whom he enthroned. A number of rival amirs were unconventionally jailed in the Khizānat Shamā'īl, a prison for criminals. Al-Nāṣir's wives' (*ḥuram*, sing. *ḥarīm*) emotional reaction was extreme. They were "torn to pieces (*tahattakat*)" and the wailing and screaming (*al-bukā' wa'l-awīl*) in Cairo were great that day"²⁰. Ibn Taghrī Birdī notes "and this was the most atrocious day."²¹ In this case these women's extreme grief represents their despair and anxiety about the dangers that lay ahead for their sons, the source of their power after the demise of their husbands or masters.

3. After al-Nāṣir Aḥmad, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's son, was murdered in Karak on 22 Ṣafar 745/4 July 1344, when the amirs who governed from behind the throne of his brother al-Ṣāliḥ Ismā'īl decided on political purges including the exile of three hundred mamluks who had been in Aḥmad's service and were lodged in the Citadel in Cairo. One hundred mamluks were sent to Karak and two hundred to the Syrian provinces. All the mamluks were exiled on the same day, leaving their wives and children crying and screaming (*wa-nisā' uhum wa-awlāduhum fī bukā' wa-awīl*) in public as they were exiled from Cairo.²² These Mamluks were allocated horses hired from mills; i. e., old, inexpensive beasts that symbolized the disgrace and humiliation of the defeated mamluks. Here again Ibn Taghrī Birdī conveys the effects of turbulence associated with Mamluk political shifts through the depiction of helpless women and children left without their provider and guardian to protect them. The expression "*bukā' wa-awīl*" that appeared earlier in the case of the deportation of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's sons to Qūs (case no. 2) is repeated here.

4. On 4 Rabī' al-Ākhar 746/3 August 1345, al-Ṣāliḥ Ismā'īl died after an illness. The sources reveal that he died of mental and physical trauma inflicted on him after the amputated head of his brother al-Nāṣir Aḥmad was presented to him by Manjak the power behind the throne.²³ Ibn Taghrī Birdī mentions without details that the formal mourning rites for al-Ṣāliḥ Ismā'īl were held in Cairo for several days. The writer is more prolific in his description of the slave girls' rites. They wandered (*dārat*) unveiled in the streets, playing musical instruments and tambourines, crying and slapping their faces in despair.²⁴ Ibn Taghrī Birdī concludes his description with the remark that people felt great sorrow and agitation over al-Ṣāliḥ's death. Thus the narratives describing al-Ṣāliḥ's and al-Sa'īd's deaths (see case 1) have many details in common in terms of both actions and

20 Ibid., vol. 10, p. 16.

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid., p. 93.

23 Ibid., p. 98.

24 Ibid.

language. Both al-Şāliḥ and al-Saʿīd died prematurely as victims of Mamluk power struggles. The disapproval of the public and the tense atmosphere that prevailed after their deaths are mirrored in the mourning rites enacted by the women related to them. In both cases the same terminology and symbols are employed to iterate the women's characteristics: they exposed themselves unveiled in public (*ḥāsirāt*), cried and slapped their faces in despair (*yalṭumna*), played musical instruments (*malāḥī*) and tambourines (*dufūf*). These symbols and language convey the identical meaning; namely, protest against the negative impact of the Mamluk political system that affected not only Mamluks but also weak sectors related to them such as mamluks and women who were turned into helpless victims upon the elimination of their husbands or masters.

5. In 751/1350, in a factional power struggle, the defeated incumbent amirs were replaced by others from the winning party. Two of the ousted amirs were Manjak, the vizier, and Baybughā Urus, the vice regent. Their property was confiscated and their slave girls and mamluks, seventy five young mamluks who belonged to Manjak and forty five slave girls who belonged to Baybughā Urus, were summoned to the Citadel. When the slave girls passed by the vice regent's palace in the Citadel, the symbol of their previous status, they all cried out and burst into tears, which caused the onlookers to shed tears for them (*bakayna wa-abkayna*).²⁵ Thus the slave girls, not the mamluks, elicited the public's attention and prompted identification with their suffering.

6. After al-Zāhir Barqūq was deposed in a coup d'état in 791/1389, he was imprisoned in Karak, while his relatives were left behind in Cairo. When a counterrevolution broke out in Syria, Ḥusayn Ibn al-Kūrānī, an enthusiastic supporter of Timurbughā al-Ashrafī, nicknamed Mīnṭāsh, the power behind the minor Qalawunid sultan al-Manşūr Muḥammad, persecuted and humiliated two of Barqūq's sisters in Cairo. Al-Kūrānī went to their edifice in Fatimid Cairo, vilified them, slandered Barqūq and brutally took Baybārs, Barqūq's nephew, from his mother. He drove the two ladies away from their home together with their slave girls and led them through the streets of Cairo. The slave girls were unveiled (*ḥāsirāt*) exposed to the public, defamed (*masbiyāt*), and cried and screamed (*fī bukā' wa-ʿawīl*) so much that they made everybody cry with them (*ḥattā abkayna kull aḥad*).²⁶ This event came to an abrupt halt when Muqbil, the vice regent in absentia (*nā'ib al-ghayba*), ran toward the scene. Muqbil reprimanded Ibn al-Kūrānī for his conduct and ordered their return home. Ibn Taghrī Birdī comments that "what happened was food for thought,"²⁷ alluding to the vicissitudes of fate and the inevitable personal ups and downs of Mamluk pol-

25 Ibid., p. 222.

26 Ibid., vol. 11, p. 366.

27 Ibid.

itics. Ibn Taghrī Birdī concludes with the remark that this was the main cause of Ibn al-Kūrānī's death when Barqūq regained power the year after. Here again Ibn Taghrī Birdī conveys the vulnerability of women related to vanquished Mamluks by verbal and plot iteration. The women's humiliation is again symbolized by their unveiling in public (*ḥāsirāt*) and the phrase "crying and screaming (*fī bukā' wa-'awīl*)" (see cases no. 2 and 3) is repeated here to capture their emotional condition. The public's empathy for their case is once more symbolized by the onlookers' pity and tears which is expressed in the phrase "they cried and made others cry for them (*bakayna wa-abkayna*)" used in other lachrymose events (see cases no. 4, 5 and 8).

7. On 18 Muḥarram 818/30 March 1415 al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh executed four of the most prominent emirs in Egypt for supporting his opponent Nawrūz in the Alexandria prison. The executed amirs were the *atābak* Damurdāsh al-Muḥammadī, Ṭughān al-Ḥasanī the *dawādār* (ink bearer), Sudūn Talī al-Muḥammadī and Asanbughā al-Zardkāsh. Their mourning ceremonies took place in Cairo on 25 Muḥarram/6 April. Ibn Taghrī Birdī states that it was one of the most dreadful days (*mina al-ayyām al-mahūla*) ever, in which the slave girls roamed the streets of Cairo defamed and unveiled (*al-masbiyāt al-ḥāsirāt*), holding musical instruments (*al-malāahī*) and tambourines (*wa'l-dufūf*).²⁸ The verbal and content iteration, the causal effects, the characteristics of the mourning women and their implied meaning which readers have already encountered in the earlier cases appear here as well. Concluding this event with the phrase "one of the most dreadful days (*mina al-ayyām al-mahūla*) ever" reinforces its impact on the public and draws the reader's attention once again to its meaning (see also cases no. 2, 6 and 8).

8. In 843/1439, the ascending sultan al-Zāhir Jaqmaq ordered the imprisonment of the deposed sultan al-'Azīz, the fourteen year-old son of al-Ashraf Barsbāy. After al-'Azīz was taken from his cell in the Citadel to the prison in Alexandria, his mother Julbān and his father's slave girls gathered in Barsbāy's mausoleum and performed a mourning rite for al-'Azīz, thus signifying his royal descent and right to rule. Ibn Taghrī Birdī adds that the day of al-'Azīz's departure was considered a "dreadful day (*yawm mahūl*)"²⁹ because of the women's impact on the public: "They cried and made others cry for them (*wa-bakayna wa-abkayna*)."³⁰ The reader is already acquainted with the phrases *yawm mahūl* and *wa-bakayna wa-abkayna* and their meaning from earlier lachrymose events. The mourning women in their premature rite over al-'Azīz called upon the onlookers to make inferences to current events. Although al-'Azīz was still alive, he was

28 Ibid., vol. 14, p. 26.

29 Ibid.

30 Ibid., vol. 15, p. 333.

already considered potentially dead, and the women's public mourning signaled the actual disintegration of his household.

As noted, the repetition of information in a series and its accumulation help construct the semantic content of characters or heroes, their description and actions, and the space in which they acted. When an actor is presented in a series of events in terms of his/her actions and explicit qualifications, the reader deduces implicit meanings from these actions.³¹ One of the women's indirect, implicit qualifications in the lachrymose events described above is related to their gendered function. The women's extraverted, loud screams, their slapping of their cheeks and unveiling are explicit manifestations of women's inability to control their emotions and desires, while implicitly referring to their inferior feminine nature according to Islamic gender perceptions (see p. 4). However, in the Mamluk political context, these qualifications might indicate the extrinsic traits of Mamluk women and indirectly point to features of the Mamluk political culture. The women's unveiling and the slave girls' unrestrained gestures and playing of instruments in public are explicit manifestations related to their indoor functions – reproduction, sex and entertainment – in the Mamluk household harem. A large number of concubines were also trained as singers and players in the household ensemble. For example, out of the inordinate number of slave girls al-Nāṣir Muḥammad purchased during his rule, at least five hundred and five were singers and musicians.³² Twenty musical ensembles (*jūqa*, pl. *Juwaq*) of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's slave girls played at the wedding of the sultan's daughter and 'Alī the son of Arghūn the vice regent.³³ In the fourteenth century, the number of slave-girls in an ensemble was about fifteen in the sultans' and eminent amirs' households.³⁴

The description of the mourning women in these events is minimalist and nebulous. The women appear as a collective, with no specific details about individuals except al-'Azīz's mother, whose name is cited in the text (see case no. 8). There are no details about their gestures or dress except the unveiling, or the instruments they played except the tambourines which, as we can imagine, tapped out the rhythm of their sounds and movements. There are no details about the words uttered in these rites, and even the harsh words the slave girls

31 Bal, pp. 130–31.

32 Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *Nujūm*, vol. 9, pp. 175–76; Shams al-Dīn al-Shujā'ī, *T'arīkh al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad Ibn Qalāwūn al-Ṣalīhī wa-Awlādihī*, ed. Barbara Shafer, Wiesbaden, 1977, vol. 1, p. 216.

33 Aḥmad ibn 'Alī al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk li-Ma'rīfat Duwal al-Mulūk*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Ziyāda, Cairo 1971, vol. 2, p. 249.

34 Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *Nujūm*, vol. 11, p. 380.

shouted against Qalāwūn in the mourning rite for al-Sa'īd remain obscure (see case no. 1).

The semantic content of the spatial aspects of these events can be constructed in the same way as the semantic content of the characters. Here, too, we find a combination of repetition, accumulation, and the relationships between spaces that endow a dramatic effect on these events.³⁵ The lachrymose events took place in public, in the streets, a normatively inappropriate and insecure spatial frame for the Mamluks' wives and slave girls, by contrast to the Mamluk household to which they belonged and experienced as secure. The empathic reaction of the onlookers, who again have no identity or concrete shape, to the slave girls' manifestations of grief show the public's identification with their distress on the basis of a specific frame of reference. That is, the public identifies with their distress out of awareness of the slave girls' place and function in the Mamluk social order and the effects of its shortcomings on their lives. The forced displacement or marriage of slave girls and wives of amirs was commonplace in the Mamluk political system during the frequent power struggles or political purges. For example, in 733/1332 al-Nāṣir Muḥammad eliminated Baktamur al-Sāqī, the most senior amir in his service, for fear of his power and gave his wife and all his property to the amir Bashtāk who had long coveted her before her husband's demise.³⁶ In 747/1346 after al-Ashraf Sha'bān's overthrow, his mother and wives were sent away from the Citadel and his five hundred slave girls were distributed among the households of the amirs of the victorious Mamluk faction.³⁷ Thus, in most lachrymose events, the women, mainly the slave girls, are presented as an amorphous collective expressing their grief in terms of their specific frame of reference in an irrelevant and insecure location. Their mourning rites indicate their anxieties in the face of the insecure future that awaited them in the wake of unfavorable Mamluk political changes.

IV

In conclusion, although the mourning rites and other lachrymose events on the part of women related to Mamluks (mainly sultans and leading amirs) might appear incidental or of marginal importance in the political plot, they fulfill an important narratological function in the construction of the plot or leitmotif. By means of repetition of content, the description of the women's actions, locations,

35 Bal, pp. 135–36.

36 Mūsá Ibn Muḥammad al-Yūsufī, *Nuzhat al-Nāẓir fī Sirat al-Malik al-Nāṣir*, ed. Aḥmad Ḥuṭayṭ, Beirut, 1986, pp. 154, 159.

37 Ibn Taghri Birdī, *Nujūm*, vol. 11, p. 152.

and phraseology, the author fuses the lachrymose events into a series that delivers the chronicle's implied message. All the scenes of crying women included in *al-Nujūm al-Zāhira* were connected to the death, exile or dismissal of their close relatives or masters who had been leading figures in the Mamluk military and political institutions prior to their defeat in power struggles. The mourning women's vulnerability was considerable since they belonged to disintegrating households identified with the defeated Mamluk party. The mourning scenes of women publically expressing their common grief over the loss of their guardian and protector in ways indicating their indoor gendered functions have a loaded meaning, and voice a basic concern. Since the lachrymose events are always linked with Mamluk political transitions, they implicitly but consistently point to the insecurity and victimization of weak sectors such as women and slaves inherent in the Mamluk political system. These concerns were core issues in the dialogue on equitable rulership constituting the theme of the chronicle, or as Ibn Taghrī Birdī phrased it in the introduction to *al-Nujūm al-Zāhira*, the chronicler seeks to write the biographies of those in power as a guide for "every future ruler to follow their exemplary deeds and refrain from inequities and offensive actions they had done."³⁸

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The *Topos* of Predicting the Future in Early Mamluk Historiography*

Medieval Arab historiography, as is well known, was not meant to be an “objective science”. One of its main purposes was to convey didactic, religious, moral and political messages, rather than mere description of past deeds. Though this notion might be noticeable already in early Islamic historiography, it is very dominant in Mamluk historiography. Some scholars even suggest that “Mamluk chronicles are in general works of fiction as much as history”.¹

Among the fictive motifs of Islamic historiography one may mention the *topos*, or *topoi* (pl.), a recurring literary theme. As shown by Albrecht Noth, “a *topos* may have a basis in fact, for it is often the case that a *topos* was once securely anchored to real historical referents” (...). However, “such references move from the domain of life to that of literature, when they become transferable”. Thus the *topos*, as Noth puts it, “drifts from one setting to another, reappearing again and again in situations to which it had never originally belonged”.² *Topoi* could be used for mere embellishment or for literary effects, but in many cases *topoi* aimed to promote political or religious causes. In Mamluk historiography, many *topoi* should be seen in relation to the entertaining character of the historical writing of this period, as a part of the anecdotes of ‘*ajā’ib*’ (wondrous miracles), that aimed to astonish the reader or the listener.³

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1 See Stephan Conermann’s view, following Ulrich Haarmann’s study: Stephan Conermann, “Tankiz ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Ḥusāmī al-Nāṣirī (d. 740/1340) as Seen by his Contemporary al-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363)”, *Mamluk Studies Review* 12, 2 (2008), 4. For early Islamic historiography, see, for instance: Albrecht Noth in collaboration with Lawrence I. Conrad, *The Early Arabic Historical Tradition: A Surce-Critical Study*, trans. Michael Bonner, 2nd ed. (Princeton: The Darwin Press, 1994).

2 Noth and Conrad, *Early Arabic Historical Tradition*, 109.

3 Ulrich Haarmann, “Auflösung und Bewahrung der klassischen Formen Arabischer Geschichtsschreibung in der Zeit der Mamluken”, *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 121 (1971), 55, 57–58. See also n. 9 below.

One prominent *topos* of the early Mamluk period is the prediction of the future. Dozens of anecdotes about future predictions are mentioned in historiographical literary sources of the Mamluk period. The present paper, however, is based on an unsystematic collection of fifty reports about predictions of the future mentioned in various Arabic historical sources. All these anecdotes refer to the first six decades of the Mamluk period (648/1250–709/1310), and are briefly described in the appendix of this paper. The large amount of anecdotes about predictions of the future from this period alone indicates the prominence of this theme in early Mamluk historiography. Of course, this theme can be found also in early Islamic historiography. In this short article, no comprehensive comparison between the number of anecdotes about predictions of the future in tenth-century chronicles and their number in historical works of the second half of the 13th century is discussed. This kind of research, of course, is important and worthwhile. However, the general impression is that the theme of predicting the future is much more common in the early Mamluk period.⁴

Why, then, is the *topos* of predicting the future so common in early Mamluk historiography? In what follows I will claim that a combination of social-religious processes, as well as historiographical and political developments, may suggest a plausible explanation for this phenomenon.

The first development is the sufization of Muslim society in the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods. The Mamluk period marks the climax of Sufi trends influencing all classes of society. This influence was due largely to the spread of Sufi concepts, orders, institutions and people from the eastern parts of the Islamic world westward and southward. The sufization of society in Syria and Egypt increased dramatically during the second half of the 12th century, thanks to the encouragement of Sufism by the Zangid and Ayyubid rulers. These leaders invited hundreds of Sufis to their lands and established dozens of Sufi institutions for them.⁵ It should be noted that before the reign of Saladin, i.e. during the Fatimid period, Sufism was not encouraged by the rulers of Egypt.⁶ As one scholar put it, the rise of Sufism to a prominent position in the country's socio-

4 This trend was noticed also by Ulrich Haarmann, see n. 3 above.

5 See on this phenomenon, for example: Nathan Hofer, *The Popularisation of Sufism in Ayyubid and Mamluk Egypt, 1173–1325* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015); Ira M. Lapidus, *Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), xiii–xiv; Linda Northrup, “The Bahri Mamluk Sultanate 1250–1390”, in *The Cambridge History of Egypt. Vol. 1: Islamic Egypt, 640–1517*, ed. Carl F. Petry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 265–271; Jonathan Berkey, *The Formation of Islam: Religion and Society in the Near East, 600–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 196.

6 Leonor Fernandes, *The Evolution of a Sufi Institution in Mamluk Egypt: The Khanqah* (Berlin: Klaus Swarz Verlag, 1988), 21.

religious structure was the most significant religious development in late medieval Egypt.⁷

One of the most prominent practices associated with Sufism was the cult of the saints, dead or alive. Visiting (*ziyāra*) a shaykh's tombs or living saints became one of the most common features of the Mamluk period. The Sufi saint, usually referred to as a *walī* (lit. friend of God), *shaykh*, *faqīr* or *ṣāliḥ*, was considered to be especially loved by God. A testimony to his favored position in the eyes of Allāh was the miracles (*karāmāt*) he would perform, such as walking on water, flying in the air, appearing in various places at the same time and, also, predicting the future. The prominent role of mysticism, Sufi *karāmāt* and the prediction of the future in the mentality of Mamluk society, resulting in the circulation of miraculous stories about sufi saints in Mamluk Cairo, might give us the first reason for the abundance of this *topos* in Mamluk historiography.⁸

The second process is related to socio-historiographical developments in the early Mamluk period. This process was discussed in the studies of the German scholar Ulrich Haarmann, who called it the "literarization and popularization" of Mamluk historiography. Haarmann pointed out the breakdown (*Auflösung*) or trend of deviating from classic medieval Islamic historiography in the Mamluk period. This process was indicated by a new mode of historical writing that granted disproportionately high importance to entertaining elements, such as poetry, rhymed prose, dialogues, and especially to marvels and miracles (*'ajā'ib wa-gharā'ib*), alongside other popular *topoi*. According to Haarmann, this historiographical process was the result of several developments that should be seen from the perspective of the sociology of literature. On the one hand, the occupation of chronicle writing was extended from the *'ulamā'* class to other, sometimes lower, classes, such as *jundīs* (soldiers) and civilian officials. On the other hand, there was a demand from the common people for literarized historiographical works. This demand might be related to Egypt and Syria's increasing urbanization toward the end of the 13th century and to the influence of popular novels on the common people. Hence, in order to fulfill the people's demands, we find in historical works of the Mamluk period literary motifs that are taken from both higher classical *genres* of literature, such as *adab*, as well as – in fact many more – elements taken from mass entertainment, such as popular novels.⁹ Haarmann further suggests that the popular elements in Mamluk-period historical writing might also be related to the presence of authors who were

7 Boaz Shoshan, *Popular Culture in Medieval Cairo* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 11.

8 Reynold A. Nicholson, *The Mystics of Islam* (London: G. Bell and Sons Ltd., 1914), 139; Shoshan, 18–22.

9 Ulrich Haarmann, "Auflösung", 53–60. See also, for a summary of Haarmann's views: Li Guo, "Mamluk Historiographic Studies: the State of Art", *MSR* 1 (1997), 33–34.

Turkish or were influenced mainly by the Turkish intellectual and literary tradition.¹⁰

The popularization of historical writing was reflected also by the changing mechanics of the process of composing and circulating historical writings. In this development, the role of the public increased. Drafts and “works in-progress” were circulated in the public sphere and were revised and verified by the public.¹¹ In addition, history works, such as Khalīl b. Aybak al-Şafadī’s biographical dictionary, were read regularly in public areas, such as mosques.¹²

Thus, we may say that a combination of two processes that matured in the early Mamluk period may explain the frequency of the *topoi* of predicting the future in Mamluk historiography. These developments were, on the one hand, the increasing influence of Sufi trends such as the cult of saints and their *karāmāt* on society, and on the other hand, the literarization and popularization of historical writing. Historiography came to represent, more than ever, the *zeitgeist* of all strata of society. Since the prediction of the future by saints was a common practice at that time, it found its way into historiography, which became more and more popular.

Still, one might ask why is it the *topos* of predicting the future that is so prominent in Mamluk historiography, and not other Sufi miracles or *‘ajā’ib*? A brief analysis of the fifty anecdotes that were collected for this paper, might lead us to the answer to this question, too. Examination of the contents of these stories reveals their common features. They deal mainly with the same themes and predictions by the same figures. The recurring themes are: (1) Prediction of the accession of sultans such as Quṭuz, al-Zāhir Baybars, Qalāwūn, Kitbughā, Lājīn and al-Nāşir Muḥammad; (2) Prediction of the Muslims’ victory over their Mongol or Crusader enemy; (3) Prediction of a sultan’s murder (or downfall) such as al-Ashraf Khalīl, Lājīn or Baybars al-Jāshnakīr; (4) Prediction of natural death (the time, age or place); and (5) Prediction of the political career, moves or reversal of fortune of amirs, for instance, Qibjaq’s defection to the Mongols; the checkered career of Qarāsunqur; or the appointment of Aqūsh al-Afram over Syria. The predictors, in most cases, are: (1) Sufi shaykhs/*walīs*, or religious scholars and jurists (*‘ulamā’*, *fuqahā’*); (2) Sultans, such as Saladin, Quṭuz, al-Zāhir Baybars, Qalāwūn, al-Ashraf Khalīl and Lājīn; (3) Astrologers or experts in geomancy (*munajjimūn*); and (4) Senior amirs.

10 Ulrich Haarmann, “Alṭun Hān und Cingiz Hān bei den Ägyptischen Mamluke”, *Der Islam* 51 (1974), 1–36, esp. 33–36.

11 Ulrich Haarmann, *Quellenstudien zur frühen Mamlukenzeit* (Freiburg i. Br.: D. Robischon, 1969), 126ff; Guo, “Mamluk Historiographic Studies”, 34, n. 100.

12 Donald P. Little, “Al-Şafadī as Biographer of his Contemporaries”, in *Essays on Islamic Civilization Presented to Niyazi Berkes*, ed. Donald P. Little (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1976), 209.

The means by which the prediction is received and perceived also tend to recur. In many cases, the future incident is predicted by a dream (*manām*, *ru'ya*) or a waking vision (*ru'ya*). The occurrence that is about to take place is implied, symbolically or by a clear vision. An example of an allegorical vision is that of Mankūtamur, Lājīn's viceroy and mamluk, who saw that he hit the upper part of a marble column with his sword and blood sprayed all over the corridor of *dār al-niyāba* – a sign of the coming murder of Lājīn.¹³ Another instance is Qarāsunqur's prediction of his future betrayal by Lājīn, after he saw a *ru'ya* in which Lājīn, wearing his royal robes, seats Qarāsunqur on a *minbar*, only three stairs below him, but soon after kicks him down the stairs and Qarāsunqur falls from the *minbar*.¹⁴ The predicted incident, as specified in the appendix, could be implied (also as a part of dream) by a statement, a verse of poetry, a saying or a verse from the Qur'an. The phrase might be heard as a *hātif* (invisible or divine voice) and repeated several times. It also could be attributed to authoritative Islamic figures such as the prophet Muḥammad or 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib.¹⁵ Another means to convey predicted event is astrology or geomancy, i. e. divination from stars or sand. For example, a falling star as a symbol for coming death or shining stars on the birthdays of prominent rulers.¹⁶

In several cases the predictor actually sees what is happening in a remote place at the same time he is speaking, or is actually present in this place while he is sleeping.¹⁷ At that time, when there were no communication devices such as the telegraph, telephone, mobile phones or internet, this knowledge is just as miraculous as predicting the future. It reflects a similar *karāma* as predicting the future, reserved only for Sufi saints who are loved by God.

Examining the predicted themes, the identities of the predictors and the means of divination help us grasp the motives behind these anecdotes. We saw that very common themes of predicting the future are the accessions of sultans and Mamluk victories over their infidel enemies, occasionally mentioned together in the same anecdote.¹⁸ Alongside this, most of the predictors are Sufi shaykhs or '*ulamā*', as well as sultans. These features are not haphazard. The main intention behind them is to convey the message that Allāh reveals his secrets about the future only to those who He especially loves, such as Sufis and '*ulamā*'. Hence, the prediction of the ascent of a Mamluk sultan by such a religious authority reveals to the people that this sultan's reign came to be according to the Divine plan and the will of God. When a sultan predicts a true future incident, it is

13 See appendix, no. 27.

14 See no. 43.

15 See statements related to the prophet: nos. 3, 39; to 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib: no. 10 and p. 112 below.

16 See nos. 9 (and p. 111 below), 28, 2, 4.

17 See nos. 10, 12, 14, 34.

18 As in nos. 1–4, 7, 9–11.

a sign that the sultan himself, just like the Sufi *walī*, is especially loved by God, and that he was gifted with supernatural powers. The third significant group of predictors, *munajjimūn*, i.e. astrologers and experts in geomancy, were also considered to be reliable interpreters of the Divine plan. Astrology was related to the Sufi mystical systems and astrologers were believed to have access to genuine Divine knowledge, just like Sufis and other religious figures.¹⁹ Thus, in all cases the aim of this narrative motif is the same: to legitimize the rule of the Mamluk sultan.

Prediction of the victory of a Muslim army headed by a certain sultan is another way to legitimize his rule. It is a sign that God put this sultan at the head of the Muslims according to His will, otherwise the Muslims would not have succeeded. The Muslim sultan, hence, must be the right man in the right place at the right time, according to the Divine plan.

The importance of this motive in the Mamluk period is obvious. The necessity to legitimize the rule of the first Mamluk sultans was much more crucial than for any other Muslim rulers before them. As is well known, the Mamluks did not merely lack any illustrious lineage, they were slaves who were not born as Muslims but as pagans. In addition, the Mamluks came to power in an illegitimate way, after they took the crown from the true rulers, the Ayyubids. It should be noted, however, that other motives are also discernable from the discussed anecdotes, sometimes along with the main one, i.e. the urge for legitimacy. Some of these motives are purely entertaining and others are moral and didactic, such as the message of “reward and punishment”. This motive is especially noticeable in relation to anecdotes about sultan Lājīn, the murderer of sultan al-Ashraf Khalīl, who was murdered himself as sultan, and thus paid for his own misdeeds.²⁰

A short discussion of several representative anecdotes will illustrate more instructively the intention that is hidden behind them. The first one, which is transmitted, allegedly, by sultan Qalāwūn, describes an incident that happened to Qalāwūn and to his fellow-Mamluk Baybars al-Bunduqdārī (the future sultan), in 656/1258. At that time, while they were being hunted by the Ayyubid princes of Syria and Quṭuz in Egypt, they decided to go to Hebron in order to visit the Sufi shaykh ‘Alī al-Bakā’. When they were about to leave, the shaykh shook Baybars’s hand and told him: “You are going now to Egypt and the rule of this land will

19 David Cook, “Astrology”, in *Medieval Islamic Civilization: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Josef W. Meri (New York: Routledge, 2006), 1:76–77.

20 For instance, in one anecdote, Lājīn is said to say again and again, just before his death: “the one who murdered will be murdered himself” (*man qatal qutila* or *kull qātil maqtūl*). See nos. 23, 28. See also: no. 22. This motive is also discernable in the anecdotes about the murder of the cruel wazir Sanjar al-Shujā’ī (no. 34); the murder of sultan al-Ashraf Khalīl (no. 17); and the burial of amir Bahādur Ra’s Nawba (no. 49).

move into your hands”. Then he approached Qalāwūn, shook his hand and told him the same thing. Baybars and Qalāwūn were astonished by this statement since at that time they were persecuted and looking for shelter. At this point, Baybars al-Manṣūrī, who mentions this anecdote in his pro-Qalāwūnid chronicle, makes sure that the message he wants to convey is clear, by adding the following phrase: “This prediction is one of the miracles of the saints and the revelations of the pure people, and a sign of the ability of the knowers of God (*‘arīfīn*) to see the hidden things.” Then he mentions a verse of the archetypical Sufi al-Ḥallāj, according to which “the hearts of the knowers of God have eyes that can see what seeing people cannot see.”²¹

In the second example, the prediction is attributed to the sultan. According to this tale, sultan al-Zāhir Baybars once rode with Qalāwūn and Lājīn until they stopped near a cistern. Baybars then indicated that Qalāwūn should advance with his horse to the cistern and water it. Qalāwūn advanced and stayed next to the sultan Baybars. Then Baybars gave a signal to Lājīn to advance with his horse and to water it. Similarly, Lājīn advanced and stayed on his horse next to Qalāwūn, his master. Then the sultan turned his head toward Qalāwūn and Lājīn and said: “There is no God but Allāh. Three rulers stood here and watered their horses from the same cistern.” This anecdote aims, first of all, to legitimize the rule of al-Zāhir Baybars. Indeed, a clarification is added: “This is what happened exactly as al-Malik al-Zāhir said, **God revealed to him** (*aṭla’ahu Allāh ‘alayhi*) the sultanate of Sayf al-Dīn Qalāwūn and of Lājīn.” By revealing Allāh’s divine plan to the people, Baybars also legitimates Qalāwūn and Lājīn’s future rule.²²

A third example describes a vision of an incident that is occurring simultaneously to the viewer, but far distant from him. In 688/1289, when Qalāwūn besieged Tripoli, al-Ashraf Khalīl, his son and future successor, was said to have been sitting in the hippodrome in Cairo. Suddenly he said: “At this moment Tripoli is taken”. Indeed, some time after – exactly the time it takes for a message to Cairo to arrive from Syria – the news of the conquest of Tripoli arrived. The historians add, in order to clarify this story’s message: “Allāh revealed this matter to his mind and informed him about it. Indeed, the mind of the kings is pure.”²³

All the next representative instances to be discussed combine the prediction of a sultan’s accession and of a Muslim victory in the battle field. Baybars al-Manṣūrī mentions a *faqīh* who saw in his dream (*manām*) as if a *hātīf* were saying: “This Qalāwūn will break Hülegü” (*hādhā Qalāwūn huwa yaksir Halā-*

21 *Wa-kāna dhālika min karāmāt al-awliyā’ wa-mukāshafāt al-aṣfiyā’ wa-iṭtilā’ al-‘arīfīn ‘alā’ ghayb al-ashyā’ kamā qīla: qulūb al-‘arīfīn lahā ‘uyūn tarā mā lā yarāhu al-nāzirūn* (see no. 5).

22 See no. 6.

23 *Wa-dhālika al-amr kashafahu Allāh ta’ālā li-dhihnihi wa-aṭla’ahu ‘alayhi inna al-mulūk naqīyyat al-adhhān*. See no. 14.

wun). Then, as Baybars al-Manṣūrī clarifies, when God wanted to achieve this goal (of breaking the Mongols by Qalāwūn), He raised Qalāwūn to the sultanate.²⁴

Similarly, sultan Quṭuz's accession is related to his victory over the Mongols. According to this anecdote, at the beginning of the reign of al-Mu'izz Aybak, the first (male) Mamluk sultan, a famous *munajjim* who came from the Maghreb was asked by Quṭuz to foretell who was going to rule Egypt after his master Aybak. The *munajjim*, who was an expert in geomancy (*ilm al-raml*), made his calculations for a long time and then told Quṭuz that "what came out" is five letters without any points on them, and the name of the father of this future sultan is the same. "I am perplexed", said the *munajjim*, "since your name is made up of three letters, two of them with points" (i. e. Quṭuz, قطز). Then Quṭuz smiled and said: "Why don't you say the right name that you found, Maḥmūd b. Mamdūd". The surprised *munajjim* said: "By God, this is the name that I saw!" Then Quṭuz said: "I am Maḥmūd b. Mamdūd, and I am the one who is going to beat the Mongols ("Tatars"), and I will take revenge on them on behalf of my uncle the Khwārazm-shāh". The narrator, who was present there, adds: "We were astonished by this prediction, until it was really fulfilled".²⁵ The intention to legitimate Quṭuz's reign in this story is not only from the aspects of "Divine plan" and the right ruler according to the God's will, but also from the Islamic aspect. Quṭuz is said to be not a pagan Turkish slave but a Muslim, son of a Muslim from the distinguished lineage of the Khwārazm-shāh Jalāl al-Dīn. It is noteworthy that in a similar anecdote, it is the prophet Muḥammad himself who appeared in Quṭuz's dream and announces to him that he will rule Egypt and break the Mongols.²⁶

Last, I shall mention four anecdotes about the accession of sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to his long and stable third reign (709/1310–741/1341).²⁷ These stories are especially instructive, since they connected al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's accession to his conquest of Baghdad from the Īlkhāns, which, of course, never happened. Hence, these stories could not have been circulated after 1323, the year in which the peace treaty between the Mamluks and the Īlkhāns was concluded and it became clear that Baghdad would not be integrated into the Mamluk sultanate. Hence, these anecdotes were spread and integrated into the historiographical literature on the eve of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's third reign or during the first years of this reign. Their main aim was to strengthen the people's support for al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's rule, through the prediction that only he, as sultan, would be able to conquer Iraq. Interestingly enough, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's three reigns were used in order to create the belief that al-Nāṣir would also reign over three

24 Lit.: "He mounted him upon the back of the kingdoms" (*fa-lammā arāda Allāh taḥqīq dhālika amṭāhu ṣahwat al-mamālik*). See no. 13.

25 No. 2.

26 No. 3.

27 See nos. 9, 10, 11, 7.

regions: Egypt, Syria and Iraq. According to some of these anecdotes, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad would also live “three times thirty”, i. e. ninety years, or even ninety-three years, three months, three weeks and three days.²⁸

In order to provide divine validity for these predictions and to relate them to an explicit Divine plan, it is not surprising to reveal that the predictors are “the head of the astrologers (*munajjimūn*) of Mosul”,²⁹ Sufi shaykhs,³⁰ and even Saladin.³¹ In two of these stories al-Nāṣir Muḥammad is presented as a successor to an honorable line of Muslim rulers. In the first one, the head of the *munajjimūn* of Mosul states that the star that was shining during the night of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad’s birth, which included three “forelocks” (*dhawā’ib*), shone only three times before: on the nights of the births of the Fatimid caliph al-Mustaṣir in 420/1029; of ‘Abd al-Mu’min, the establisher of the Almohad caliphate in the Maghreb, in 490/1097; and of the Abbasid caliph of Baghdad al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh in 553/1158. The three “forelocks” that are appeared on the night of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad’s birth, which were the fullest ones, indicate that the successful man who would be born that night, would rule the three regions of Egypt, Syria (al-Shām) and Iraq.³² The second anecdote that relates al-Nāṣir Muḥammad’s accession to prominent Islamic rulers, combines, as we have seen before, these leaders’ victories in the battle field against the enemies of Islam, too. The predictor in this story is Saladin, who, on the eve of his coronation, hears an invisible voice which in vague rhymed prose mentions the reigns of three Islamic leaders: the first one refers to Saladin himself who would defeat the Crusaders; the second one refers to sultan al-Ẓāhir Baybars who would defeat the Mongols, and the third refers to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, who will achieve rule over “the east”, i. e. Iraq.³³ A similar anecdote provides divine validity for this prediction by attributing it to ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib. The predictor, a Sufi shaykh, sees ‘Alī in Jerusalem. The latter tells him that he is making his way from Ḥijāz, “in order to crown al-Nāṣir Muḥammad for the third time, since he will conquer Baghdad”.³⁴

From all the above, it seems more than plausible that the *topoi* of predicting the future in the early Mamluk period aimed, alongside simple entertainment, to legitimate the reign of the Mamluk sultans. When discussing the ways in which the Mamluks managed to legitimate their rule, it is usually their achievements in the battle field – i. e. in defending the Muslims in Egypt and Syria against the Crusaders and especially against the Mongol threat – that is first mentioned. It is

28 See nos. 9, 11.

29 No. 9.

30 Nos. 10, 11.

31 No. 7.

32 No. 9.

33 No. 7.

34 No. 10.

also the Mamluks' religio-political strategies that are discussed, such as the nomination of an "Abbasid" caliph, and the establishment of unprecedented numbers and types of Islamic religious institutions. The "Abbasid" caliph, allegedly a descendant of the prophet, was meant to give the Mamluks divine authority to rule the Muslim world. The establishment of numerous religious institutions aimed to purchase the support of highly esteemed social agents, the *'ulamā'* and the Sufis. In this short paper, however, we saw that historical writing was also recruited to legitimate the Mamluk rule.

Historiography was an effective tool for creating legitimation not only because historical works became much more accessible to the common people in the Mamluk period, but also because at that late period, authoritative religious literature, such as *Ḥadīth*, could no longer constitute a platform to advance political causes. On the other hand, other *genres* were emerging at that time, such as "courtly literature" (such as Baybars al-Manṣūrī's *al-Tuḥfa al-Mulūkiyya*). These historical works aimed to praise the sultans' houses and had a special interest in emphasizing the divine legitimacy of their rule.³⁵ Thus, it seems that in order to comprehend the *topoi* of predicting the future in early Mamluk historiography more fully, one must take into consideration the profound historiographical, social, religious and political developments that matured in exactly that period.

Appendix

| | Themes | Predictor | Means of divination | Reference |
|----|--|---------------------------|---------------------|---|
| 1 | Quṭuz's accession and his victory over the Mongols in the battle of 'Ayn Jālūt | Sultan Quṭuz | Statement | <i>Kanz al-Durar</i> ³⁶ 8:39–40 |
| 2. | Quṭuz's accession and his victory over the Mongols | <i>Munajjim</i> and Quṭuz | Geomancy | <i>Kanz al-Durar</i> , 8:40–41 <i>Iqd al-Jumān</i> , ³⁷ 1:258 |

35 P.M. Holt, "Literary Offerings: A Genre of Courtly Literature", in *The Mamluks in Egyptian Politics and Society*, eds. Thomas Philipp and Ulrich Haarmann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 3–16.

36 Abū Bakr b. 'Abd Allāh b. Aybak Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-Durar wa-Jāmi' al-Ghurar*, ed. Ulrich Haarmann (Cairo: al-Ma'had al-almānī li-l-Āthār), vol. 8 (1391/1971).

37 Badr al-Dīn Maḥmūd b. Aḥmad al-'Aynī, *Iqd al-Jumān fī Ta'rīkh Ahl al-Zamān. 'Aṣr Salāṭīn al-Mamālīk*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥammad Amīn (Cairo: al-Hay'a al-Miṣriyya al-Āmma li-l-Kitāb), vol. 1 (1407/1987).

(Continued)

| | Themes | Predictor | Means of divination | Reference |
|----|---|---|--|---|
| 3. | Quṭuz's accession and his victory over the Mongols | Quṭuz | Dream, statement of the prophet Muḥammad | <i>Dhayl Mir'āt al-Zamān</i> , ³⁸ 2:31–32 <i>Kanz al-Durar</i> , 8:42 <i>'Iqd al-Jumān</i> , 1:255–256 Ibn Kathīr, ³⁹ 13:261–262 |
| 4. | Quṭuz's accession and his victory over the Mongols; accession of al-Zāhir Baybars and a senior amirate of an amir | <i>Munajjim</i> | Geomancy | <i>Kanz al-Durar</i> , 8:43 <i>Dhayl Mir'āt al-Zamān</i> , 2:32–33 <i>'Iqd al-Jumān</i> 1:257–258 |
| 5. | The accession of al-Zāhir Baybars and Qalāwūn | Sufi shaykh | Statement | <i>Zubdat al-Fikra</i> , ⁴⁰ 34–35 |
| 6. | The accession of sultans Qalāwūn and Lājīn | Sultan al-Zāhir Baybars | Statement | Ibn al-Furāt, ⁴¹ 8:223–224 |
| 7. | The accession of Saladin, al-Zāhir Baybars and al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and their victories over the enemies of Islam | Saladin | Invisible voice | <i>Kanz al-Durar</i> , 8:275–276 |
| 8. | The accession of sultan Kitbughā | <i>Munajjim</i> of the Mongols (Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī) | | Zetterstéén, ⁴² 33. |
| 9. | The accession of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad | <i>Munajjim</i> | Stars | <i>Kanz al-Durar</i> , 8:272–273 <i>'Iqd al-Jumān</i> , 2:240–241 ⁴³ |

38 Quṭb al-Dīn Mūsā al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl Mir'āt al-Zamān* (Hyderabad: Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif al-'Uthmāniyya), vol. 2 (1375/1955).

39 Ismā'īl b. 'Umar Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāya wa-l-Nihāya* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī), vol.14 (1413/1993).

40 Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdat al-Fikra fī Ta'riḫ al-Hijra*, ed. D.S. Richards (Beirut and Berlin: al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1998).

41 Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Raḥīm Ibn al-Furāt, *Ta'riḫ Ibn al-Furāt [=Ta'riḫ al-Duwal wa-l-Mulūk]*, ed. Q. Zurayq (Beirut: al-Maṭba'a al-Amrikāniyya), vol. 8 (1939).

42 Karl Wilhelm Zetterstéén (ed.), *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Mamlukensultane in den Jahren 690–741 der Hīgra nach arabischen Handschriften* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1919).

43 al-'Aynī, *'Iqd al-Jumān*, vol. 2 (1408/1988).

(Continued)

| | Themes | Predictor | Means of divination | Reference |
|-----|---|----------------------------------|---|---|
| 10. | The accession of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad | Shaykh | Dream/ presence in different places at the same time | <i>Kanz al-Durar</i> , 8:273–274 |
| 11. | The accession of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad | Shaykh <i>walī</i> | Statement | <i>Kanz al-Durar</i> , 8:274–275 |
| 12. | Baybars's victory over the Mongols at the battle of Abulustayn (simultaneous) | Sufi shaykh | Dream / presence in different places at the same time | <i>Zubdat al-Fikra</i> , 265 |
| 13. | Qalāwūn's victory over Hülegü | <i>Faqīh</i> | Dream, invisible voice (<i>hātif</i>) | <i>Zubdat al-Fikra</i> , 175 |
| 14. | Qalāwūn's conquest of Tripoli from the Crusaders (simultaneous) | (future) Sultan al-Ashraf Khalīl | Statement | Ibn al-Furāt, 8:165–166 |
| 15. | Al-Ashraf's conquest of Acre from the Crusaders | Shaykh <i>faqīh ālim</i> | Dream, poem | Ibn al-Furāt, 8:113–114 <i>Sulūk</i> , ⁴⁴ 1:766–767 |
| 16. | Self-prediction of the deaths of a Sufi shaykh and of sultan Baybars | Sufi shaykh | Statement | <i>Tālī</i> , ⁴⁵ 70 |
| 17. | The murder of al-Ashraf Khalīl | Amir Ṭurunṭāy | Statement | <i>al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt</i> , ⁴⁶ 16:429–430 |
| 18. | The murder of sultan al-Ashraf Khalīl | Amir | Dream, clear vision | <i>Kanz al-Durar</i> , 8:348 |
| 19. | The murder of sultan al-Ashraf Khalīl by his viceroy Baydarā | Sultan al-Ashraf | Statement, poem | <i>al-Muqaffā</i> , ⁴⁷ 2:566–567 |
| 20. | The murder of sultan al-Ashraf Khalīl by Lājīn | Sultan al-Ashraf Khalīl | Clear vision | <i>Sulūk</i> , 1:859–860 |

44 Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad b. 'Alī al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk li-Ma'rifa Duwal al-Mulūk*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Ziyādah (Cairo: Lajnat al-Ta'lif wa-l-tarjama wa-l-Nashr), vol. 1 p. 3 (1939).

45 Faḍl Allāh b. Abī al-Fakhr al-Ṣuqā'ī. *Tālī Kitāb Wafayāt al-A'yān*, ed. and tr. Jacqueline Sublet (Damascus: al-Ma'had al-Faransī bi-Dimashq li-l-Dirāsāt al-'Arabiyya, 1974).

46 Khalīl b. Aybak al-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt* (Beirut: al-Ma'had al-Almānī li-l-abḥāth al-sharqiyya), vol. 16 (2009).

47 Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad b. 'Alī al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Muqaffā al-Kabīr*, ed. Muḥammad al-Ya'lāwī (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī), vol. 2 (1411/1991).

(Continued)

| | Themes | Predictor | Means of divination | Reference |
|-----|--|---|--|--|
| 21. | Political moves and murder of sultan al-Ashraf Khalīl | Sultan Qalāwūn | Statement | <i>A'yān al-'Aṣr</i> , ⁴⁸ 4:167 |
| 22. | The murder of sultan Lājīn | Sultan Lājīn | Dream, Qur'anic verse | <i>al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt</i> 24:387 ⁴⁹ <i>A'yān al-'Aṣr</i> , 4:170 |
| 23. | The murder of sultan Lājīn | Sultan Lājīn | Repeated didactic statement | <i>Nihāyat al-Arab</i> , ⁵⁰ 31:361 |
| 24. | The murder of sultan Lājīn (time) | Sultan Lājīn | repeated statement | <i>Sulūk</i> , 1:860–861 |
| 25. | The murder of sultan Lājīn | Lājīn's wife (a daughter of al-Ẓāhir Baybars) | Dream, symbolic vision | <i>al-Nujūm</i> , ⁵¹ 8:101 |
| 26. | The murder of sultan Lājīn by Kurjī | Sultan Lājīn | Dream, clear vision | <i>Sulūk</i> , 1:862 |
| 27. | The murder of sultan Lājīn | Mankūtamura | Dream, symbolic vision | <i>Sulūk</i> , 1:862 |
| 28. | The murder of sultan Lājīn | Sultan Lājīn | Stars, didactic and repeated statement | <i>Sulūk</i> , 1:863 |
| 29. | The fall of Mankūtamura, the viceroy of sultan Lājīn | Chief qāḍī and Sufi | Repeated statement | <i>Sulūk</i> , 1:848–849 |
| 30. | The fall of the rule of sultan Baybars al-Jāshnakir and his viceroy Salar. | <i>Munajjim</i> | | <i>al-Nujūm</i> , 8:269 <i>al-Tuḥfa al-Mulūkiyya</i> , ⁵² 196. |
| 31. | Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's and Tankiz's times of death time | Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad | Statement | <i>Sulūk</i> , ⁵³ 2:462 |
| 32. | The murder of amir Kurjī, the murderer of sultan Lājīn | Chief qāḍī | Statement | <i>Sulūk</i> , 1:857 |

48 Khalīl b. Aybak al-Ṣafādī, *A'yān al-'Aṣr wa-A'wān al-Naṣr*, ed. 'Alī Abū Zayd et al. (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr al-Mu'āṣir/Damascus: Dār al-Fikr), vol. 4 (1418/1998).

49 *Wāfi*, vol. 24 (2009).

50 Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab fī Funūn al-Adab*, ed. Al-Bāz al-'Arīnī (Cairo: al-Hay'a al-Miṣriyya al-'amma li-l-kitāb), vol. 31 (1412/1992).

51 Abū al-Maḥāsīn Yūsuf Ibn Taghri Birdī, *al-Nujūm al-Zāhira fī Mulūk Miṣr wa-l-Qāhira* (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya), vol. 8.

52 Rukn al-Dīn Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Kitāb al-Tuḥfa al-Mulūkiyya fī al-Dawla al-Turkiyya*, ed. 'Abd al-Ḥamid Ṣāliḥ Ḥamdān (Cairo: al-Dār al-Miṣriyya al-Lubnāniyya, 1407/1987).

53 al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk*, vol. 2 p. 2 (1942).

(Continued)

| | Themes | Predictor | Means of divination | Reference |
|-----|---|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| 33. | The murder of the wazir Ibn al-Sal'ūs by Sanjar Shujā'ī | Ibn al-Sal'ūs's relative | Poem | <i>Zubdat al-Fikra</i> , 300 |
| 34. | The murder of the wazir Sanjar al-Shujā'ī (simultaneous) | Chief qāḍī | Dream, Poem | <i>al-Nujūm</i> , 8:52 <i>al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt</i> 15:477 |
| 35. | Self-prediction of age of death | Ayyubid sultan of Hama Abū al-Fidā' | Statement | <i>al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt</i> , 9:178 |
| 36. | Self-prediction of place of death | Sufi shaykh | Dream | <i>A'yān al-'Aṣr</i> , 1:172 |
| 37. | Self-prediction of time of death | Sufi shaykh, walī | | <i>al-Nujūm</i> , 9:244–245 |
| 38. | Self-prediction of time of death | Sufi shaykh | | <i>Dhayl Mir'āt al-Zamān</i> (Li Guo), ⁵⁴ 2:238 |
| 39. | Self-prediction of time of death | Amir | Dream, Statement of the Prophet | Ibn Kathīr, 14:49 |
| 40. | Political career of amir Qarāsunqur | Sufi shaykh | Statement | <i>A'yān al-'Aṣr</i> , 4:99 |
| 41. | Political move: the appointment of Aqūsh al-Afram as the governor of Syria | Sultan Qalāwūn | Statement | <i>al-Durar al-Kāmina</i> , ⁵⁵ 1:424 |
| 42. | The appointment of Aqūsh al-Afram as the governor of Syria | Sufi (<i>faqīr</i>) | Statement | <i>al-Durar al-Kāmina</i> , 1:424–425 |
| 43. | Political move: the betrayal of Lājīn by Qarāsunqur | Qarāsunqur | Symbolic vision | <i>Sulūk</i> , 1:861 |
| 44. | Political move: sultan Lājīn's preference of his own mam-luks over his fellow amirs | Amir Qibjaq | | <i>Zubdat al-Fikra</i> , 313 |
| 45. | Political move: Qibjaq's defection to the Mongols | Sultan Qalāwūn | Statement | <i>Sulūk</i> , 1:871–872 |
| 46. | Political move: Qibjaq's defection to the Mongols | Sultan Qalāwūn | Examining the burnt shoulder-blades of sheep | Ibn al-Furāt, 8:94–95 |

54 Quṭb al-Dīn Mūsā b. Muḥammad al-Yūnīnī, *Early Mamluk Syrian Historiography: Al-Yūnīnī's Dhayl Mir'āt al-Zamān*, ed. and tr. Li Guo (Leiden: Brill, 1998), vol. 2.

55 Aḥmad Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *al-Durar al-Kāmina fī A'yān al-Mī'ah al-Thāmina*, ed. Muḥammad Sayyid Jād al-Ḥaqq (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Ḥadītha 1385/1966–1387/1967), vol. 1.

(Continued)

| | Themes | Predictor | Means of divination | Reference |
|-----|---|--------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 47. | A slave girl's smashing of her 'ūd (lute). | Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad | Statement | <i>A'yān al-'Aṣr</i> , 2:339 |
| 48. | Death of amir during a <i>fitna</i> in Mecca (simultaneous) | | Rumors | <i>Sulūk</i> , 2:325, 328 |
| 49. | The death of an amir and the desecration of his dead body | Chief qāḍī and Sufi | Statement | <i>al-Muqaḥḥā</i> , 2:500–501 |
| 50. | Self-prediction of reversal of fortune | Amir | Saying of al-Mutanabbī | <i>A'yān al-'Aṣr</i> , 2:558 |

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Linda Northrup

Documents as Literary Texts: Mamluk Historiography Revisited

Historians intent on discovering the truth or what really happened customarily consider legal documents (whether diplomatic, administrative, or private) to be among the most neutral, the purest of texts in the sense that they purport to record legal facts and processes with little or no interpretation. In other words, they present raw historical data. Consequently, historians are often tempted to use documents as if they represent historical reality.¹ In many instances, they may be justified in doing so. Indeed, the sale of a plot of land as recorded in a legal document, leaves little room for narrativity, i. e., storytelling, plot, or moralizing (essential elements of narrative according to Hayden White),² involving interpretation of raw data in an attempt to give meaning to otherwise atomized data. Such documents certainly provide facts that may be useful, but in a form that provides little, if any, explicit or coherent connection with the larger historical context. While this seems true of many legal and administrative documents, it is clearly not true of all.

The first goal of the present study will be to demonstrate that not all documents are the raw material one might assume them to be, but rather literary texts that exhibit aspects of narrativity or storytelling and employ literary devices that give meaning to the raw data they contain.³ If some documents are found to be

1 Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins, 1973), 3.

2 White, *Metahistory*, 5 and idem, "The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality," in *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins, 1987), 6, 21 and passim.

3 See, for example, my article, "Qalāwūn's Patronage of the Medical Sciences in Thirteenth Century Egypt," *Mamluk Studies Review*, V (2001), especially 130–140, for an early discussion of the double-entendre or play on words involving Ibn Buṭlān's name and the title of his work *Taqwīm aṣ-ṣiḥḥa* found in the *taqlid* for the *riyāsat at-ṭibb*; and now Thomas Bauer, "Mamluk Literature as a Means of Communication," in Stephan Conermann, ed. *Ubi summus? Quo vademus?: Mamluk Studies – State of the Art* (Bonn: V&R unipress/Bonn University, 2013), 23–55. In this present study, however, Hayden White's analysis of narrative will to some extent inform my analysis of the documents studied here, including this *taqlid*.

literary texts, how do such documents, framed as legal and/or administrative texts, fit into the larger historical picture, especially when they have themselves been preserved in a text such as a chronicle? If a legal document exhibits some or all characteristics of a literary text, does it lose some of its legal authority, i. e., its assumed raw documentary value as legal or historical evidence by virtue of its literary or interpretative (as opposed to its factual) qualities? Or does the legal nature of the text serve to validate the narrative ensconced within the legal text? Does the nature and the meaning of narrative found in such documents differ from that found in other types of historical representation? Why, in fact, have some authors, like Ibn al-Furāt, in the case of the documents analyzed here, incorporated legal administrative texts in their chronicles which fall somewhere on the spectrum of historical representation?

The two documents that are the focus of this study pertain to appointments made in relation to al-Bīmāristān al-Manṣūrī, the hospital founded by the Mamluk sultan al-Manṣūr Sayf ad-Dīn Qalāwūn (r. 678–689/1279–1290) in 682/1283–84 as part of his monumental complex in Cairo, a complex that also included his tomb (*turba* and/or *qubba*),⁴ madrasa, and a *maktab sabīl* or Qur'an school for orphans. An analysis of documents relevant to the hospital may help to answer some of these questions. The two documents under investigation here are the *taqlīd* (diploma or letter of appointment) for the *riyāsat aṭ-ṭibb* (chief physicianship) of Egypt, preserved by Ibn al-Furāt (d. 804/1404–05) in his chronicle, *Tārīḥ ad-duwal wa-al-mulūk*,⁵ and 2) the *taqlīd* or *tawqī'*⁶ for the *tadrīs aṭ-ṭibb* (professorship of medicine) at the Bīmāristān al-Manṣūrī in Cairo, preserved by both Ibn al-Furāt in his *Tārīḥ* and by al-Qalqaṣandī (d. 821/1414) in his scribal manual, *Ṣubḥ al-a'šā fi šinā'at al-inšā'*.⁷ Both were composed by Ibn al-Mukarram,⁸ *kātib ad-darğ*.⁹ The two texts are studied together because: 1) one

4 While the term *turba* is the usual word for tomb, the terms *turba* and *qubba* are often used interchangeably or on occasion together as *al-turba bi-al-qubba*. When *qubba* is used it means the building with the *qubba* or dome over it that houses the sultan's tomb.

5 Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīḥ Ibn al-Furāt* (originally *Tārīḥ ad-duwal wa-al-mulūk*), edited by Qustantīn Zurayq and Najla [Abu] 'Izz ad-Dīn (Beirut: American Press, 1936–1942), VIII, 22–25.

6 The terms *taqlīd* and *tawqī'* appear to be interchangeable. Ibn al-Furāt uses the term *taqlīd* whereas al-Qalqaṣandī uses the term *tawqī'* in reference to the same document.

7 Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīḥ*, VIII, 25–27; al-Qalqaṣandī, *Ṣubḥ al-a'šā fi šinā'at al-inšā'*, 14 vols. (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Ḥidiwiyya 1913–1920; reprinted Cairo: Wizārat aṭ-Ṭaqāfa wa-al-Iršād al-Qawmī, 1963), XI, 253–256.

8 Linda S. Northrup, *From Slave to Sultan: The Career of al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn and the Consolidation of Mamluk Rule in Egypt and Syria (678–689 A.H./1279–1290 A.D.)*. Freiburger Islamstudien XVIII (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1998), 36–37.

9 According to al-Qalqaṣandī (*Ṣubḥ*, IV, 30), the *kātib ad-darğ* writes letters of appointment and other correspondence. Ibn al-Mukarram was the author of a work entitled *Daḥīrat al-kātib*, a collection of his work upon which Ibn al-Furāt often drew.

and the same person, the physician Muḥaḍḍab ad-Dīn b. Abī Ḥulayqa,¹⁰ was appointed to both positions; 2) both positions are in one way or another attached to the Bīmāristān; and because 3) in my view both documents, when read together, tell “a story.” In other words, these texts go well beyond what is essential to a *taqlīd*, i. e., the simple order for appointment and job description required to formalize the appointments. Not only do they narrativize the appointments in such a way as to present the necessary information in a coherent framework, situating the appointments in an ideological context that would have been understood by the audience in the political, medical and cultural context of the time, but, it should be noted, they also do so in a way that goes far beyond what one finds in other types of historical representation, e. g., chronicles that mention the hospital. A literary analysis of these texts thus also opens new perspectives on the historiography of the Mamluk period.

The original texts of these documents are not extant, but exist, at least until now, only in the sources mentioned above. Consequently, the texts cannot be verified, although it is assumed – and it is probable – that they are reasonably accurate copies of the originals. The texts of the *taqlīd* for the *riyāsa* preserved by both Ibn al-Furāt and al-Qalqašandī exhibit only very minor discrepancies. Nevertheless, despite their apparent faithfulness to the originals, the *taqlīds* for the *riyāsat aṭ-ṭibb* and the *tadrīs aṭ-ṭibb* are deficient to the extent that in their preserved form, they omit dates, chancery registration marks, and witnessing signatures, among other things that would normally be found in the original production. Omission of these elements eliminates the possibility of charting the legal process through which they passed, but most likely does not affect the main body of the documents studied here since there is little reason to believe that the texts have been deliberately altered in any significant way.

The first issue to consider is whether the two *taqlīds* are literary texts in the sense that they display narrativity as defined by White. To be sure, our texts do not fit precisely into any of the categories of historical representation analyzed by White, i. e., annals, chronicles or “proper history.”¹¹ Yet, they do, I would argue, contain narrative. Rather than simply announcing the appointment of Muḥaḍḍab ad-Dīn b. Abī Ḥulayqa to the *riyāsat aṭ-ṭibb* and the *tadrīs aṭ-ṭibb*, Ibn al-Mukarram chose to impose meaning through skillful use of a variety of literary devices, including perhaps most significantly a narrative form. First, when read together, the two documents exhibit the most basic elements of a story. Not only

10 That the name is Ḥulayqa and not Ḥalīfa, as is found in Zurayk’s and Izzedin’s edition of Ibn al-Furāt’s *Tārīḥ*, was observed by Jacqueline Sublet in a note on Muḥaḍḍab ad-Dīn’s name in her edition of Ibn aṣ-Ṣuqā’ī’s biographical dictionary *Tālī Kitāb Wafayāt al-A’yān* (Damascus, 1974), 60–61.

11 White, “Narrativity,” in *Content*, 4.

can one establish “a well-marked beginning, middle, and end phase,”¹² but one also detects the presence of a narrator, a plot¹³ and “morality or a moralizing impulse,”¹⁴ as well as reference to a political-social order,¹⁵ all elements deemed necessary to “proper history,”¹⁶ as opposed to what one finds in alternative representations of reality devoid of the same level of narrativity, i. e., annals or chronicles, as defined by White.¹⁷

But here, as previously noted, the narrative is also embedded in a legal framework. The legal framework of a *taqlīd* comprises, as is normal in such documents, the *iftitāh* (opening or preamble), including the *basmala*, *ḥamdala*, *taṣahhud*, *taṣliyya*, and *salām*, followed by the *matn* or main text, the body of the document, the beginning of which is signalled by the phrase “*ma’a ba’d*,” which itself may include a preamble before reaching the main purpose of the text, in this case, the appointment itself.¹⁸ While these texts arise out of real rather than imaginary events, they nevertheless exhibit literary qualities as suggested above.¹⁹ So let us first summarize the factual evidence, the historical data found in the documents, before demonstrating the way in which they have been narrativized, and before addressing the implications of that process for historical representation and suggesting their significance for the historiography of the period.

The Bare Facts

Taqlid # 1 for the appointment to the *riyāsat at-ṭibb* in Egypt.²⁰

- 1) The sultan built buildings for these two sciences.
- 2) He appointed members of the ‘*ulamā*’ (religious scholars) and *ḥukamā*’ (physicians) classes whom he chose and who pleased him when he examined them.
- 3) The order was issued for the appointment of [Muhaddab ad-Dīn] and his brothers, the Qāḍī ‘Alam ad-Dīn Ibrāhīm and the Qāḍī Muwaffaq ad-Dīn Aḥmad to the *riyāsat al-aṭibbā*’.

12 White, “Narrativity,” in *Content*, 2.

13 White, “Narrativity,” in *Content*, 20–21.

14 White, “Narrativity,” in *Content*, 24.

15 White, “Narrativity,” in *Content*, 11.

16 White, “Narrativity,” in *Content*, 4–5.

17 White, “Narrativity,” in *Content*, 4, 6.

18 White, “Narrativity,” in *Content*, 20.

19 White, “Narrativity,” in *Content*, 2.

20 Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīḥ*, VIII, 22–25.

Taqlid # 2 for the appointment to the *tadrīs aṭ-ṭibb* at al-Bīmāristān al-Manṣūrī

- 1) The sultan built a *bīmāristān*.
- 2) He established a rich endowment (*waqf*) for it.
- 3) He created a place in it for the study of medicine (*‘ilm aṭ-ṭibb*).
- 4) The order was issued for the appointment of the *ra’īs* (i. e., the *ra’īs aṭ-ṭibb*, the aforementioned Muḥaḍḍab ad-Dīn [b. Abī Ḥulayqa]) to the *tadrīs aṭ-ṭibb* at al-Bīmāristān al-Manṣūrī recently established in Cairo.

The Bare Facts Narrativized or “the Story” in the Framework of an Administrative Document

Taqlid # 1 for the appointment to the *riyāsat aṭ-ṭibb* in Egypt.²¹

The opening or preamble (iftitāḥ), the beginning of “the story”

Two potent ideological themes that underlie the appointment to the *riyāsat al-ṭibb* emerge in the opening paragraphs.

- 1) The sultan is acting with moral authority, derived from a divine origin (“praise be to God...the giver of wisdom [*ḥikma*]...we praise him for giving us abundantly the share/fate [*qisma*] of rulership [*‘alā an waffara lanā min al-mulk al-qisma*]), is made clear.²² Moreover, the use of the pronoun we, the “royal we,” referring to the sultan here and throughout the document, not only provides a narrator but also establishes his authoritative role/voice and the authoritative nature of the document itself.²³
- 2) The appointment to be made is conceived as an act of *ḡihād*. “With our help, Allāh has equipped (*ahaba*) every person/soul against our enemies and His enemies.” Moreover, “Allāh has directed our (i. e., the sultan’s) resolve to the victory of his religion and the well-being of his creation, and thus that is our only intention (*‘azma*).”²⁴ Although the connection between the concept of *ḡihād* and the appointment to the *riyāsat aṭ-ṭibb* seems to the modern (and perhaps especially Western) mind as not immediately evident and somewhat surprising, the link will become abundantly clear by the end of the story.

The beginning of the story is thus marked by the sultan’s entry on the scene. Acting with divinely bestowed authority and in the way of *ḡihād*, he appoints Muḥaḍḍab ad-Dīn and his brothers to the *riyāsat aṭ-ṭibb* (in Egypt and Syria).

21 Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīḥ*, VIII, 22–25.

22 Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīḥ*, VIII, 22.

23 White, “Narrativity,” in *Content*, 6.

24 Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīḥ*, VIII, 22.

The main body of the taqlīd (signalled by ma‘a ba‘d):

Here a principal theme of the text, embodied in a *ḥadīth*, is introduced, i. e., that both spiritual and medical knowledge were recognized by the Prophet. The sultan is thus acting in accord with Islamic and prophetic ideals. “Since knowledge is, as it was related, of two kinds: the religious sciences and the bodily or medical sciences” (*li-mā kāna al-‘ilm, ka-mā-ruwiya, min anna al-‘ilm ‘ilmān: ‘ilm al-adyān wa ‘ilm al-abdān*),²⁵ we (the sultan) are obliged to improve the study/supervision of/or respect (*an-nazr*) for these two sciences and to create for them in our days that which will remain throughout all eternity an excellent legacy.”²⁶ Moreover, “we wish to protect/maintain for our subjects what they require for the preservation of a healthy spirit and body (*ṣiḥḥat ad-dīn wa-al-badan*), for we perceived that the performance of the requirements [of religion] (*farā’id*) is impossible for those who lack the outer health of the body (*min badanihi mā zahr*) and the inner health of religion or spirit (*min dīnihi mā baṭn*). So we built buildings for these two sciences.... And, we appointed for that ‘ulamā’ and *ḥukamā’* whom we had chosen and who satisfied us when we examined them.”²⁷

Here, we arrive at the purpose of the document, the order for the appointment: “Therefore the order was issued that the *riyāsat al-aṭibbā’* should be allocated to him (Muhaddāb ad-Dīn) and to his two brothers.”²⁸ But, between the order for appointment and the job description Ibn al-Mukarram digresses to explain why Muhaddāb ad-Dīn and his brothers had been selected for the post. The job description exhorts the appointee(s) to reveal the affairs of and take action against those who sit on the streets, in other words charlatans. Although the trope of charlatans, frauds and quacks is stock fare in medical texts through the centuries, here Ibn al-Mukarram may have used it strategically to contrast these disreputable, untrained wretches plying their trade on the streets with the highly educated, trained physicians that would result from the sultan’s support for medical education and the supervision of the profession envisaged here. The text instructs the appointee to the *riyāsat al-aṭibbā’* not only to test medical practitioners but also to test medications on the market in order to insure that only those of highest quality were sold.²⁹

25 This *ḥadīth* is not found in the canonical collections. It has been attributed to aš-Šāfi‘ī. See Kristina Richardson, *Difference and Disability in the Medieval Islamic World: Blighted Bodies* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 27. However, an internal reference in the document itself also attributes it to the Prophet. See the *taqlīd* for *tadrīs aṭ-ṭibb* in Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīḥ*, VIII, 25, lines 17–18, “*wa ḡafala ‘an qawlihi, ṣallā Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam, al-‘ilm ‘ilmān.*”

26 Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīḥ*, VIII, 23.

27 Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīḥ*, VIII, 23.

28 Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīḥ*, VIII, 23.

29 Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīḥ*, VIII, 24.

In this connection advice is offered regarding the curriculum to be pursued by anyone desiring to practice medicine: such a person should engage in study of the *muṣannafāt* (texts or compilations), *'ilm at-tağdiyya* (the science of nutrition or diet);³⁰ *al-masā'il* (*The Questions*),³¹ most certainly a reference to Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq's work, *Kitāb al-masā'il fī at-ṭibb li-al-muta'allimīn*; memorization of *al-Fuṣūl* (a reference to Galen's *Sixteen Books*);³² study of *al-Qānūn*, i. e. Ibn Sinā's famous medical encyclopaedia, *Kitāb al-qānūn fī at-ṭibb*; and the *Kulliyāt* (*Book of Universals*),³³ alluding to Book I of Ibn Sinā's *Qānūn* and reorganization and systematization of Galen's writings.³⁴ The text further counsels that once a student reaches the level of the certificate (*tazkiyya*), he should be received into the profession without delay so that he doesn't lose his enthusiasm for it. The brothers are then advised to recognize the seniority of Muḥaḍḍab ad-Dīn and not to take any decisions except with his consent and in consultation with him.

Mention is made toward the conclusion of this *taqlīd* that Muḥaḍḍab ad-Dīn has been appointed to the *tadrīs at-ṭibb* as well, thus explicitly linking the two *taqlīds*. He is to remain in Cairo so as to devote himself to his teaching at the hospital, thus emphasizing the importance attached to the role of the hospital as a teaching institution. Moreover, he has been appointed to both posts in the expectation that he will achieve during Qalāwūn's reign the *maqām* or status of Ibn Sinā.³⁵

Taqlid # 2 for the appointment to the *tadrīs at-ṭibb* at al-Bīmāristān al-Manṣūrī

The *taqlīd* for the *tadrīs* al-Bīmāristān al-Manṣūrī (i. e., the professorship or instructorship in medicine at the Manṣūrī Hospital), also composed by Ibn al-Mukarram, follows immediately upon the previous *taqlīd* in Ibn al-Furāt's text. The connection between these two documents is clear: the principal appointee in

30 I have found no specific work by this name as one might expect from the allusions to other works made here, but it may be that the scribe had in mind such works as Ibn al-Bayṭar's (d. 1248) *al-Ġā'mi' li-mufradāt al-adwiyya wa-al-ağdiyya* (*The Comprehensive Book on Simple Drugs and Foods*) which had wide appeal in this period or perhaps to ar-Rāzī who also wrote on this subject.

31 See Peter E. Pormann and Emilie Savage-Smith, *Medieval Islamic Medicine* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2007), 13.

32 Ibn an-Nadīm, *Kitāb al-fihrist*, ed. Ayman Fu'ād Sayyid (London: Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation, 2009), II/1, 277–78. See also Pormann and Savage-Smith, *Medieval Islamic Medicine*, 83 and 84 and sources cited therein.

33 On *al-Kulliyāt*, see Lawrence I. Conrad, "The Arab-Islamic Medical Tradition," in Lawrence I. Conrad, Michael Neve, Vivian Nutton, Roy Porter, Andrew Wear, *The Western Medical Tradition: 800 BC to AD 1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 114.

34 Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīḥ*, VIII, 24.

35 Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīḥ*, VIII, 24.

both cases, as mentioned, is one and the same person, and in each case it is the Bīmāristān that is the locus of activity.

In this letter of appointment Ibn al-Mukarram develops the story line more fully. With the exception of very general references to illness, the *ḥamdala* contains nothing of note in comparison with the ideological points referenced in the *ḥamdala* of the *taqlīd* for the *riyāsa*. Following the *ma'a ba'd*, however, he picks up the *ḡihādī* theme again, but here in an even more pointed way than in the *taqlīd* for the *riyāsat aṭ-ṭibb*. Here, the link between *ḡihād*, the hospital and the medical sciences is made explicit. Allāh had through the sultan established the banners of the faith and had made His religion victorious over others. Moreover, he, the sultan, had engaged in the duty of *ḡihād* “with hand and heart and tongue” and had constructed for its sciences (*'ulūm*) and its laws (*ṣarā'ihī*) a “perfect” institution and had appointed leading scholars in it. In fact, he had selected the most learned men in medicine, *fiqh*, *ḥadīth*, and Qur'an, for he had realized that the rulers (*mulūk*) who had preceded him, even if they had followed the best policy in dealing with their subjects (*an salaka fī siyāsat al-ra'iyya aḥsan as-sulūk*), had—once again referencing the *ḥadīth*—concerned himself exclusively with the religious sciences (*'ilm al-adyān*) while neglecting medicine or knowledge of bodies/health (*'ilm al-abdān*).³⁶ Moreover, while each of his predecessors had erected a madrasa, no one had built a hospital. They had forgotten the words of the Prophet that knowledge is of two kinds (*al-'ilm 'ilmān*). Furthermore, although it was incumbent on them, none of them had enjoined his subjects to study the science of medicine. Nor had any of them created a *waqf* (endowment) for the study of this discipline, prepared a place where the students of this profession could assemble, or appointed anyone who embodied this knowledge. But Qalāwūn, cognizant of what they were ignorant, reunited the religious and the medical sciences and built a hospital that would guard the health and well-being of every soul.³⁷ Not only does this narrative strategy bolster the sultan's authority, for he is shown to be more faithful to the words of the Prophet than his predecessors, but by this means he also justifies his attention to the medical sciences, suggesting that the medical sciences may have been viewed negatively at this time, at any rate as having less prestige than the religious sciences. The message would have resonated with an educated elite familiar with Cairo. As I have previously pointed out, the Bīmāristān is located in the midst of a gallery of madrasas, visually illustrating the point made in the *taqlīd* that while everyone before him had built madrasas, no one had until now, at least not since the

36 Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīḥ*, VIII, 25.

37 Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīḥ*, VIII, 27.

Mamluks had come to power, built a hospital.³⁸ The sultan thus set himself apart, elevating himself above his Mamluk predecessors.

The sultan created a rich endowment for the hospital.³⁹ He made treatment there available to all Muslims, though the *waqfiyya* excluded non-Muslims.⁴⁰ In addition, he created a place devoted to the science of medicine that had previously been ignored and sought physicians for the *tadrīs at-ṭibb* who were suitable for giving instruction (qualified or gifted teachers perhaps). The sultan found no one more suitable for the professorship than the *raʿīs* of this profession, i. e., Muḥaḍḍab ad-Dīn. Muḥaḍḍab ad-Dīn was the *raʿīs* and the one upon whom the top-rating had been conferred because of his excellence. Indeed, he was, Ibn al-Mukarram writes, “the physician (*ḥākim*) Hippocrates, nay, even the Socrates, the exalted Galen or rather, even the Dioscorides [of his day].”⁴¹ He was thus appointed to this post in acknowledgement that he was distinguished in this art, that he was the expert *par excellence*, that he possessed keenness and knowledge, and trusting that we (Qalāwūn) have picked the gem. With good fortune we have celebrated and have found the expert.⁴² Therefore, the order was issued that he (Muḥaḍḍab ad-Dīn) be appointed to the *tadrīs at-ṭibb* at the newly built al-Bīmāristān al-Manṣūrī in Cairo.

After remarks alluding to an historical incident that suggests the hope that Muḥaḍḍab ad-Dīn will surpass or exceed the fame or work of Ibn Buṭlān, Ibn al-Mukarram’s text sets out the expectations for his teaching. He continues, “So let all the students gather around him and let every student among them receive from him what he sought. Let him reveal his secrets and give what he has learned during his life. Let him reveal to them this hidden/carefully kept (*maknūn*) science and let him show them what is hidden from them. Let him fashion from among them a group of physicians, a party of ophthalmologists, another of surgeons, a group of bone setters working (*ʿāmilīn*) with metal instruments/knives (*ḥadīd*) and herbalists (lit., those familiar with the names of herbal medications (*al-ḥaṣāʾiṣ*)) and their efficacy.”⁴³

Thus, the story is becoming clear. The sultan acting on the basis of divinely derived authority, in the way of *ḡihād*, and actually putting into effect the *ḥadīth*, “*al-ʿilm ʿilmān: ʿilm al-adyān wa ʿilm al-badān*,” in order to justify his attention

38 Northrup, *From Slave to Sultan*, 120 and idem, “Qalawun’s Patronage,” 129.

39 Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīḥ*, VIII, 26.

40 See Northrup, “al-Bīmāristān al-Manṣūrī – Explorations: The Interface between Medicine, Politics and Culture in Early Mamluk Egypt,” in Stephan Conermann, ed. *Ubi summus? Quo vademus?: Mamluk Studies – State of the Art* (Bonn: V&R unipress/Bonn University, 2013), 121, n. 86.

41 Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīḥ*, VIII, 26.

42 Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīḥ*, VIII, 26, lines 17–18.

43 Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīḥ*, VIII, 26.

to medicine, established institutions for both the religious and medical sciences and created a rich *waqf* for the hospital, whereas his predecessors had neglected the hadith and had built madrasas while failing to provide for the training of physicians and the health needs of their subjects. At this point Ibn al-Mukarram, having demonstrated a “moral turn,” as White calls it,⁴⁴ is now able to bring the story to a conclusion. Ending on a rather triumphant note, the *taqlīd* for the *tadrīs at-ṭibb* brings the story to a close. By these initiatives in support of medical education, doctors will be trained in all the various specializations so that “tomorrow there will be several times as many (Muslim) physicians as there are today” (“*wa li-yatayassara fī hādā al-makān al-mubārak min arbāb hādīhi al-‘ulūm qawm ba’d qawm wa yazhuru minhum fī-al-ḡad in šā’ Allāh ta’ālā id’āf mīman huwa zāhir minhum al-yawm.*”⁴⁵ We must assume the graduates will be Muslim since the endowment deed (*waqfiyya*) for the hospital makes it a condition that no Christians or Jews were to be employed there! Thus, by the establishment of the hospital and these two appointments, the sultan aimed at nothing more than the Islamization of the medical profession!

In addition to a story, the texts of the two *taqlīds* exhibit other literary features that enhance the meaning we have discovered in these texts, in other words “the plot,”⁴⁶ and provide further evidence that allows us to view the *taqlīds* as literary documents or as pragmatic texts whose boundaries overlap as Bauer has shown.⁴⁷ Ibn al-Mukarram composed the letters of appointment in rhymed prose (*saj’*),

44 White, “Narrativity,” *Content*, 23.

45 Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīḥ*, VIII, 27, lines 4–5. Incidentally, it is interesting to note the *muḥtasib*, Ibn al-Uḥuwwa’s (d. 1329) comments regarding the need to train more Muslim doctors. “Medicine is an art both theoretical and practical the acquisition of which is permitted by the law for the reason that thereby health is safeguarded and weaknesses and sicknesses repelled from this noble structure [of the body].... It (the practice of medicine) is one of the duties for which the community is responsible and yet there is no Muslim to fulfil it. Many a town has no physician who is not a dhimmī belonging to a people whose evidence about physicians is not accepted [in the courts] where the laws of medicine are concerned. No Muslim occupies himself with it; everyone repairs to the study of the law and more particularly that portion of it given over to disputes and litigiousness and the town is full of legists occupied with granting fatwas and giving replies to legal queries on points which arise. Can there be any reason for the faith’s permitting a state of things in which large numbers occupy themselves with one particular duty while another is neglected, except that by medicine there is no access to judgeships and governorships whereby it is possible to claim superiority over rivals and to acquire authority over enemies? Ibn al-Uḥuwwa, *Ḍiyā’ ad-Dīn Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Qurašī aš-Šāfi’ī, Ma’ālim al-qurba fī aḥkām al-ḥisba*, ed. with abstract of contents, glossary and indices by Reuben Levy (E.J.W. Gibb Memorial) (London: Luzac 1938), 56–57 (English). For Arabic text, see pp. 165–66.

46 White, “Narrativity,” in idem, *Content*, 20.

47 Thomas Bauer, “Mamluk Literature as a Means of Communication,” in Stephan Conermann, ed. *Ubi Summus? Quo Vademus?: Mamluk Studies – State of the Art* (Bonn: V&R unipress/ Bonn University Press, 2013), 24.

used internal rhyme, made use of double-entendre (*tawriyya*),⁴⁸ employed frequent inter-textual references, as well as historicizations in his references past, present and future (to Ibn Buṭlān, his predecessors, his own initiatives, and to the expected future Muslim graduates in the discipline). The use of these literary devices is not simply an aesthetic preference. Rather, these devices add important layers of meaning to the narrativized text.

For example, Ibn al-Mukarram, showing off his skills in the art of *tawriyya* employs this device in several instances, the most prominent and suggestive of which alludes to an incident that had occurred two centuries earlier but which clearly still resonated with the educated elite in late thirteenth century Cairo,⁴⁹ namely, the encounter between Ibn Buṭlān (d. 1066), a well-known Christian physician from Baghdad and author of *Taqwīm aṣ-ṣiḥḥa* (*Almanac of Health*), with his Muslim counterpart in Egypt, the physician ‘Alī b. Riḍwān (d. 1068).⁵⁰ Unfortunately, their meeting was not an entirely positive experience. Not only did they disagree on what were considered the burning scientific issues of the day and on the best way to study medicine, but they also took a profound and personal dislike to each other, vividly reflected in the aspersions they cast on each other’s physical appearance. A record of their unhappy encounter, captured in their correspondence, has been preserved.⁵¹ In the *taqlīd*, Ibn al-Mukarram writes “*wa li-yubṭil bi-taqwīmihi aṣ-ṣiḥḥa mā allafahu Ibn Buṭlān*” (may he [Muḥaḍḍab ad-Dīn] by his *taqwīmihi* (almanac/reform) abrogate, or perhaps replace, the *Ṣiḥḥa* that Ibn Buṭlān wrote. The play on words seems to suggest the hope or expectation that Muḥaḍḍab ad-Dīn would surpass Ibn Buṭlān in excellence or renown. Of course, the fact that Muḥaḍḍab ad-Dīn was from a family of Christian origin who had only recently converted to Islam may have inspired recollection of this particular incident. Its meaning would not have been lost on

48 Thomas Bauer notes, “The *tawriyya*, a form of *double-entendre*, was considered by the Mamluk poets to be the most noble and exalted stylistic device, and mamluk *literati* were proud of the fact that their age surpassed the previous periods of Arabic literature in the art of *tawriyya*.” See his “Ibn Hajar and the Arabic Ghazal of the Mamluk Age,” in *Ghazal as World Literature: Transformations of a Literary Genre*, ed. Thomas Bauer and Angelika Neuwirth. (Beirut: Ergon Verlag Würzburg in commission with Orient-Institut), 2005, 39.

49 That Ibn Buṭlān’s work continued to have wide circulation in the thirteenth century is indicated by the fact that the first Latin translation of the *Taqwīm* seems to have been made at this time and that the earliest extant painting from the Mamluk period is a miniature from another work penned by Ibn Buṭlān, *Da’wat al-aṭibbā’* (*The Doctor’s Dinner Party*). See Michael Dols, *Medieval Islamic Medicine: Ibn Riḍwān’s Treatise “On the Prevention of Bodily Ills in Egypt,”* transl. with an introduction by Michael W. Dols, Arabic text, ed. by Adil S. Gamal (Berkeley: University of California), 1984 and Northrup, “Qalawun’s Patronage,” 136 and sources cited therein.

50 On Ibn Riḍwān, see especially Dols. *Medieval Islamic Medicine*, 54–66.

51 See Max Meyerhof and Joseph Schacht, *The Medico-Philosophical Controversy between Ibn Buṭlān of Baghdad and Ibn Riḍwān of Cairo* [Cairo, 1937].

its audience. The intent may also have been to remind the appointee, this Christian convert, of his place in the scheme of things, perhaps even to demonstrate in real life the triumph of Islam. In any case, it seems to enrich the *ġihādī* theme that permeates the documents as a whole.⁵² Within the same sentence Ibn al-Mukarram references two other works, which though important as they are, lack the punch of the first double-entendre. Ibn al-Mukarram writes, “*wa li-yurnā bi-tadbīrihi ḥīlat al-bur*’ [sic *sirr*]⁵³ (“let him show us by his conduct the strategy or artifice for recovery or convalescence (*ḥīlat*) *al-bur*”), a play on words alluding to Galen’s book by that title,⁵⁴ “for he is the Galen of his time,” and finally, “*wa li-yabdīla an-naġāh min al-amrād wa-aš-šifā min al-isqām*” (let him spare no effort in the deliverance from diseases and the cure from illnesses), “for he is the Ibn Sinā of his time,” alluding of course, to Ibn Sinā’s *Kitāb an-naġāh*.⁵⁵

References to the well-known names in philosophy and medicine of Late Antiquity (e.g., Galen, Socrates, Dioscorides) and to Ibn Sinā in the Islamic period and to their well-known works abound. These references suggest not only that the “sciences of the ancients,” despite their foreign origin, were still considered the gold standard of medical education and provided the core curriculum, a medical cannon, in the late thirteenth century, but they also suggest that these sciences had in a sense been “islamicized,” or absorbed within Islamic civilization and that they were intended in the meaning of *‘ilm al-abdān* as mentioned in the ḥadīth, *al-‘ilm ‘ilmān*. However, admiring references, though stock fare, to great Muslim physicians such as Ibn Sinā similarly suggest that these sciences are in accord with Islam.

Now that it is clear that these two *taqlīds* have a story to tell and that they make use of a number of literary devices in the telling, which add layers of meaning that would have been understood both at the time of the appointments in the late thirteenth century and in Ibn al-Furāt’s and al-Qalqaṣandī’s time, we must try to answer other questions raised by our interrogation of these documents from a literary perspective. First, does the fact that these letters of appointment, which have, as Bauer would call it, a “pragmatic” goal, rooted in a real event, overlap

52 See my much more detailed analysis of this double-entendre in my earlier “Qalāwūn’s Patronage,” 130–29. Today, however, I would not discount religion as at least a partial explanation for Ibn al-Mukarram’s allusion to this affair.

53 This edition of Ibn al-Furāt’s *Tārīḥ* renders the title as *Ḥīlat as-sirr* whereas al-Qalqaṣandī has it as *Ġabalat al-bur*. Ibn an-Nadīm provides what is probably the correct title, *Kitāb ḥīlat al-bur*’ (The Artifice or Strategy of Recovery or Convalescence), in his *Kitāb al-fihrist*, II/1 (London: Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation, 2009), 278. See also Ibn Abī Uṣaybī’a, *‘Uyūn al-anbā’ fi ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā’*, ed. Nizār Riḍā (Beirut: Dār Maktabat al-Ḥayāh, n.d.), 144 where the title is given as *Kitāb al-ḥīla li-ḥifz aṣ-ṣiḥḥa*. I am indebted to Walid Saleh for his help in unscrambling this play on words.

54 A reference to a Galen’s work by that name. See Ibn an-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 278.

55 Ibn Abī Uṣaybī’a, *‘Uyūn al-anbā’*, 457.

with literary texts in any way diminish their authority? My answer would be “no,” since they accomplished what they were intended to do; they formalized the appointments to the *riyāsat al-aṭibbāʾ* and *tadrīs at-tibb* at the Bīmāristān. Whether the aspirations that inspire them were realized, is another matter, but the appointments were made. In fact, the legal context of these documents must have enhanced the actions taken not only in regard to the appointments but also in promoting the cause of medical education and in reflecting or even possibly laying the ideological foundations for the hospital itself. If anything, by conceptualizing the study of medicine as an Islamic imperative and as a form of *ḡihād*, possible dissent to the appointment of a Christian convert to the post, to medical education, or to the hospital itself may have been diminished.

Finally, why did Ibn al-Furāt include these two *taqlīds* in his chronicle? Bauer observed that one of the criteria for designating a pragmatic communication as a literary text is that “they comply with the convention of polyvalence and are found to be aesthetically pleasing.”⁵⁶ It seems likely that al-Qalqašandī, at least, found the text for the *tadrīs at-tibb* aesthetically pleasing and so included it in his scribal manual as a model for future scribes. It also passes the test for polyvalence since it was reproduced by Ibn al-Furāt as well. The text for the *riyāsa* is found only in Ibn al-Furāt and may have been included for aesthetic reasons. However, I would argue that Ibn al-Furāt included both texts because the story they together weave around Qalāwūn’s apparent policy initiative to islamize the medical profession is unique to these documents and because the story they contain adds a completely new dimension to the reports found elsewhere on the founding of the hospital. Chroniclers of the Mamluk period present several explanations for the establishment of al-Bīmāristān al-Manṣūrī: 1) the sultan was inspired by the beauty of the *turba* that he had constructed for his wife near the *mashhad* of al-Sayyida Nafīsa;⁵⁷ 2) the sultan, having fallen ill during a military expedition, was treated with medications brought from Nūr ad-Dīn’s hospital. Once fully recovered, he visited Nūr ad-Dīn’s hospital and was so awed that he vowed that

56 Bauer, “Mamluk Literature as a Means of Communication,” 25.

57 Muḥyī ad-Dīn Ibn ‘Abd az-Zāhir, *Tashrif al-ayyām wa-al-‘uṣūr fī sīrat al-Malik al-Manṣūr*, ed. Murād Kāmil (Cairo Wizārat at-Taḡāfa wa-al-Irṣād), 55–57; Baybars al-Manṣūrī ad-Dawādār, *Zubdat al-fikra fī tāriḥ al-ḥiḡra*, ed. D.S. Richards (Beirut, 1998), 236; an-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-‘arab fī funūn al-‘adab*, ed. al-Bāz al-‘Arinī (Cairo: al-Hay’a al-Miṣriyya al-‘Āmma li-al-Kitāb, 1992), XXXI, 105; Ibn al-Furat, *Tāriḥ*, VII, 277–78; al-‘Aynī, *Iqd al-ḡumān fī tāriḥ ahl az-zamān* IV/10 (678–688 AH) (personal hand copy by a present day Cairene scribe! From Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya ms *tāriḥ* 1584), 32. Incidentally, the *turba* aṣ-Ṣāliḥiyya, the tomb of al-Malik aṣ-Ṣāliḥ Najm ad-Dīn Ayyūb, is sometimes substituted for, or referenced ambiguously, in this story (that Qalāwūn’s wife who was buried in the *turba* built for her by the sultan was the mother of his son and original heir, also named al-Ṣāliḥ, may have caused confusion). Of course, the siting of Qalāwūn’s complex opposite that of his master had ideological significance and was certainly considered in selecting the site, but the earliest reports interestingly do not mention this when discussing the efforts to find a location.

should he ever become ruler, he would build a hospital to match Nūr ad-Dīn's;⁵⁸ and 3) that his mamluks had gone on a three-day rampage during which many ordinary people/civilians (*awāmm*) were killed. In recompense, he decided to build a hospital.⁵⁹ Several chroniclers also include reports on the choice and purchase of the site, a palace known as Dār al-Quṭbiyya, in Bayn al-Qaṣrayn.⁶⁰ Most also report on its construction and completion, and some also describe the inaugural ceremonies marking the occasion of the sultan's first visit to his newly built complex. None, however, present the same rationale for this undertaking that is found in the *taqlīds* preserved by Iby al-Furāt and al-Qalqaṣandī. While al-Qalqaṣandī's inclusion of the *taqlīd* for the *tadrīs at-tibb* may have been intended only as a model notable for its aesthetic qualities, Ibn al-Furāt may have included these two *taqlīds* because they present a more coherent narrative of these events, another voice. In other words, he includes them as a way of communicating something about this sultan's enterprise that was not or could not for some reason be included by chroniclers. Whether the story the documents tell is fact or fiction is to some extent unknowable, they nevertheless present the fullest, most coherent explanation to date of the ideological motivations for the founding of the hospital in late thirteenth century Cairo. Judging by the number of documents Ibn al-Furāt included in his chronicle as a whole, it would seem that he had a keen interest in legal and administrative texts. Whether other documents have similar stories to tell and were included as alternative representations of reality remains to be seen. One would have to survey all, or at least a wider representative sample of the documents found in his *Tārīḥ*, to answer this question, but that is beyond the scope of this paper. However, our examination of these two documents does suggest that an investigation of this sort might shed new light on the use of such texts and the perspectives they yield on both the history and historiography of the Mamluk period.

58 Northrup, *From Slave to Sultan*, 119, citing al-Ġazarī, *Ḥawādīth al-zamān wa-anbā'uhu wa wafayāt al-akābir wa-al-a'yān*. The years 682–687 AH edited with German translation by Ulrich Haarmann in *Quellenstudien zur frühen Mamlukenzeit* (Freiburg: D. Robischon, 1969); al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawā'iz wa-al-i'tibār fī dīkr al-ḥiṭaṭ wa-al-aṭār fī Miṣr wa-al-Qāhira*. 2 vols. (Bulāq: reprint edition, n.d.), II, 406.

59 Ibn Iyas, *Bidā'i az-zuhūr fī waqā'i ad-duhūr*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā (Cairo: al-Hay'a al-Miṣriyya al-'Āmma li-al-Kitāb), 2nd edition (1982–1984) I/1, 354.

60 Ibn 'Abd az-Zāhir, *Taṣrīf al-ayyām*, 55–57; Šāfi'i b. 'Alī, *al-Faḍl al-ma'tūr min sirat al-Malik al-Manṣūr*, ed. 'Umar 'Abd as-Salām Tadmurī (Beirut: al-Maktaba al-'Aṣriyya, 1998), 166–167; Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubda*, 236; al-Ġazarī, *Ḥawādīth az-zamān*, ed. Haarmann, Arabic text, 24; an-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, XXXI, 106; Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīḥ*, VII, 278; al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb as-sulūk li-ma'rifat duwal al-mulūk*, ed. Muṣṭafā Ziyāda (Cairo, 1970), I/3, 716–17; al-'Aynī, *Iqd al-ġumān*, personal hand copy, p. 32; Ibn Iyās, I/1, 353.

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Ibn Taghrībirdī's Stories

Ibn Taghrībirdī began to write *al-Nujūm al-zāhira fī mulūk Miṣr wal-Qāhira* for Sultan Jaqmaq's son Muḥammad who was supposed to follow his father on the throne.¹ Ibn Taghrībirdī was Muḥammad's close companion and he may have intended to occupy a similar position in Muḥammad's court as Badr al-Dīn al-'Aynī had held in the court of al-Ashraf Barsbāy guiding the sultan by providing him with instructive reports of historical events.² Thus, the primary audience of *al-Nujūm* was the Mamluk court of Ibn Taghrībirdī's own time.

Al-Nujūm is divided into reigns and the focus of the book is underlined by the title where the first element *al-Nujūm al-zāhira*, 'the shining stars', obviously refers to the individual rulers whereas the second element *Miṣr wal-Qāhira* gives the geographic location.³ The presentation of each reign follows the same structure starting with a summary of the new sultan's career up to his accession to the throne. The establishment of the sultan's rule is described by listing the names of those he appointed to major positions. These preliminary remarks are followed by reports of events during the reign presented in chronological order. Finally, Ibn Taghrībirdī concluded his presentation of the reign with an evaluation of the sultan and his achievements. Each reign forms a self-contained unit making it suitable not only for reading in relatively short instalments but also for oral delivery. It may well be that Ibn Taghrībirdī structured his book in this manner in order to make it suitable for being read aloud in courtly sessions.

Ibn Taghrībirdī's descriptions of the reigns are stories in the sense given by Mieke Bal who defines stories as series of events presented in a certain manner.⁴ Ibn Taghrībirdī's portrayed the rulers as shining stars, as outstanding figures whose actions could serve as instructive examples that his contemporary courtly

1 *Al-Nujūm*, 15:504. Muḥammad died before his father in 847/1444.

2 *Al-Nujūm*, 15:111.

3 According to Hirschler 2006, 66–68, the first element of a rhyming book title, "the guiding phrase", is important as it not only states the author's intention but also indicates the adopted narrative structure.

4 Bal 1994, 5.

audience could benefit from. In the present article, I will look more closely into Ibn Taghrībirdī as a story teller and as a teacher: what did he want his audience to learn and how he chose to teach them? I have chosen to analyse Ibn Taghrībirdī's biographies of three 7th/13th century Mamluk rulers: al-Ashraf Khalīl, Kitbughā and Lājīn. In the 9th/15th century, Ibn Taghrībirdī's own time, the reigns of these rulers were far back in history and no-one in the Mamluk court could have any personal memories of the events. This allowed Ibn Taghrībirdī to make choices and select the material that he wanted to present. Therefore his stories of these rulers offer us a good opportunity to study both his story-telling technique and the goals he wanted to achieve. In order to highlight Ibn Taghrībirdī's individual choices, I have contrasted his presentations to those of Badr al-Dīn al-'Aynī in *'Iqd al-jumān fī ta'rīkh ahl al-zamān* and al-Maqrīzī in *al-Sulūk li-ma'rīfat al-mulūk*. Both authors were Ibn Taghrībirdī's contemporaries and must at least in principle have had the same sources available as he did but, like Ibn Taghrībirdī, made their own choices in selecting what to present.

1 Al-Ashraf Khalīl

Ibn Taghrībirdī's presentation of al-Ashraf Khalīl's reign is fairly short compared to the space allotted to it in the chronicles of Badr al-Dīn al-'Aynī and al-Maqrīzī. The shortness makes it easy to pick out the main elements that make up Ibn Taghrībirdī's story: summaries of events, eye-witness accounts and symmetrical events. The time flow of the story is lineal but there are also breaks in chronology both in form of anticipations and retroversions.⁵ In addition, Ibn Taghrībirdī also used pauses between the action elements that carry the story forward. In the following, I will discuss these elements in connection to three events of al-Ashraf's reign: accession, conquest of 'Akkā, and al-Ashraf Khalīl's murder.

Al-Ashraf Khalīl's accession

As usual, Ibn Taghrībirdī's account on the new sultan's reign begins with a short summary of the events preceding his accession to the throne.⁶ The summary identifies al-Ashraf Khalīl as the son of the previous sultan, al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn and states that al-Manṣūr appointed al-Ashraf Khalīl as his successor after the death of al-Ashraf's brother. After the summary, Ibn Taghrībirdī began his story

5 I am using Mielke Bal's terminology, where retroversion is a presentation of an earlier event and anticipation is a reference to an event that will occur in future, cf. Bal 1994, 54, 63–66.

6 *Al-Nujūm*, 8:3.

of al-Ashraf's reign starting with the events related to his accession. Ibn Taghribirdī described how al-Ashraf Khalīl found out that his father had not signed the document of appointment. Ibn Taghribirdī added his own comment that al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn had regretted his appointment and therefore refused to sign the document. However, the missing signature did not prevent al-Ashraf Khalīl from becoming sultan and he is reported to have said: "God gave me what the sultan refused to give."⁷

Ibn Taghribirdī did not give any reason why al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn's would have regretted the appointment of al-Ashraf Khalīl. According to Badr al-Dīn al-'Aynī, al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn had favoured al-Ashraf Khalīl's brother who possessed reason, calmness and good manners (*adab*), all characteristics that were lacking in al-Ashraf Khalīl. Badr al-Dīn al-'Aynī presented the information in connection with an anecdote describing a trick al-Ashraf Khalīl played on one of his amirs. He noted that al-Ashraf Khalīl was prone to mockery and disdain of powerful amirs and did not consider the consequences of his rather crude jokes.⁸ By leaving al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn's regret unexplained Ibn Taghribirdī reduced the importance of the act and the focus is transferred to al-Ashraf Khalīl's words. God becomes an actor in the story giving al-Ashraf Khalīl the power that his father sought to deny him.

The conquest of 'Akkā

The first event that Ibn Taghribirdī described in detail is al-Ashraf Khalīl's siege and subsequent conquest of 'Akkā.⁹ The events are told strictly chronologically starting with the preparations and continuing to give detailed reports of the siege and battles. Ibn Taghribirdī ended the description by pointing out symmetry of events. God had predetermined (*qaddara*) that the Muslims would conquer 'Akkā on a moment that would bear resemblance to the moment the Franks captured it in more than a century earlier. The Franks had entered 'Akkā on Friday, the 17th of Jumādā II at the third hour of the day and the Muslim conquest occurred on Friday, the 17th of Jumādā I at the third hour of the day.¹⁰ A further similarity was that the Franks had granted the Muslims a safe conduct (*ta'ammana*) but then killed them anyway and now Sultan al-Ashraf did the same: he killed some of the Franks despite a granted safe conduct.¹¹ The symmetry underlines the idea of retribution and the view that events follow God's plan. When

7 *Al-Nujūm*, 8:3–4.

8 Badr al-Dīn al-'Aynī, *Iqd al-jumān*, 444–445.

9 *Al-Nujūm*, 8:5–8.

10 *Al-Nujūm*, 8:8.

11 *Al-Nujūm*, 8:8.

al-Ashraf Khalīl's words at his accession are put together with his role as an agent of retribution, an image of the sultan as an important actor in God's overall plan begins to emerge.

The description of the conquest of 'Akkā is immediately followed by a report of the capture of Şūr and the sultan's increasing appetite for further battles against Franks. At this point the time flow of the story is interrupted by a return – retroversion – to the first half of Jumādā I when the sultan was still besieging 'Akkā. Ibn Taghrībirdī told that during the siege the sultan arrested three amirs, among them Ṭuqsū and Lājīn who was *nā'ib* of Syria. Ibn Taghrībirdī did not give any reason for the arrests and commented them only in relation to the siege. According to him, some amirs (*al-nās*) were extremely worried that the arrests would weaken the siege, but the fear proved unfounded.¹² However by placing the report of the arrests after the description of the siege of 'Akkā, Ibn Taghrībirdī separated them from the siege and tied them with the subsequent events.

The next two pages cover a period of 15 months, from Ramaḍān 690 to Dhū al-Qa'da 691. Apart from reporting on successful attacks against Franks, Ibn Taghrībirdī focused on further arrests and some releases of amirs. He listed all the names but did not provide any reason for either arrests or releases. It is only when Ibn Taghrībirdī reached to tell the events of early Dhū al-Qa'da that he gave an explanation to the frequent arrests by informing that two of the arrested amirs confessed to having plotted to murder the sultan. The main plotters were Sunqur al-Ashqar and Ṭuqsū – the latter being one of the amirs that were arrested for the first time already during the siege of 'Akkā.¹³

By providing first a retroverted report on some arrests and following it up with lists of further arrests in the subsequent months, Ibn Taghrībirdī implied that they were connected. Even though Ibn Taghrībirdī did not give any motives to the sultan's actions, he achieved to give an impression of unrest among the amirs. Ibn Taghrībirdī was describing events that had occurred two centuries earlier and therefore it is possible that he himself did not know who the involved amirs were and which factions they represented. They were probably just names both for him and for his contemporary audience. Occasionally, Ibn Taghrībirdī was able to identify the individuals and the roles that the individual had played earlier or would play in the future. Thus he mentioned that Lājīn was the one who would become sultan later and Sunqur al-Ashqar had ruled Damascus in the early days of al-Manşūr Qalāwūn's reign, whereas Baybars al-Dawādārī whom the sultan removed from office was not only an amir but also a historian.¹⁴ These identifications were important bits of information for Ibn Taghrībirdī's contemporary

12 *Al-Nujūm*, 8:9.

13 *Al-Nujūm*, 8:13.

14 *Al-Nujūm*, 8:9 (Baybars al-Dawādārī) and 14 (Ṭuqsū & Sunqur al-Ashqar).

audience pointing out some characters that they should pay attention to, whereas the others remained obscure. The frequent arrests probably functioned as a general indication to the audience that something was amiss. A member of the Mamluk court would know that this type of incidents would mean that some serious activity was taking place behind the scenes. This expectation would then be fulfilled by the report that there had indeed been a plot to kill the sultan.

The question then remains why mention the obscure names at all? For the purposes of his story, it would have been sufficient for Ibn Taghrībirdī just to mention the arrests and leave the names out. The listing of the names indicates that although Ibn Taghrībirdī streamlined his story in order to focus on the ruler and his actions, he was not completely free of the constraints of a traditional chronicle and was therefore tempted to include details that he found in his sources even though these details – in this case names – were irrelevant to his main story line. Another reason might be that the inclusion of names provided an impression of higher reliability: the names of the involved persons were known, thus the events related must be true.

Al-Ashraf Khalīl's murder

There are two clear pauses in Ibn Taghrībirdī's story of al-Ashraf Khalīl's reign and they break up sequences of action-packed scenes with descriptions of activities that do not carry the storyline forward. The first of these pauses is placed between the ending of the events related to the siege of 'Akkā and the disclosure of the plot against the life of the sultan. The pause consists of a picturesque scene of the sultan's departure from Damascus in the early morning hours on the 10th of Shawwāl 691: the merchants of Damascus lined the road holding candles to illuminate the darkness.¹⁵ Apart from functioning as a pause, the scene also underlines the admiration that the sultan enjoyed among the Syrian civilian population due to his military successes. This would then be contrasted with the failed murder plot that Ibn Taghrībirdī revealed immediately after his description of the candle scene.

The second pause occurs just before Ibn Taghrībirdī launched on his report of al-Ashraf Khalīl's murder. The pause describes the festivities on the occasion of the circumcisions of al-Ashraf Khalīl's brother and nephew giving details of games and distributed alms. The pause ends with the ominous words "this was the last celebration al-Ashraf organized" that serve as a transition to the sequence of events culminating with al-Ashraf Khalīl's death.¹⁶

15 *Al-Nujūm*, 8:13.

16 *Al-Nujūm*, 8:16.

Ibn Taghrībirdī's section on the murder starts with a summary of the events telling how the sultan went hunting only accompanied by his hunting master. Unexpectedly, he encountered Baydarā, *nā'ib al-salṭana* whom he had sent back to Cairo earlier the same day. Baydarā had returned together with a number of amirs and they soon attacked al-Ashraf Khalīl. Baydarā struck first, followed by Lājīn and then the rest of the amirs. The sultan's body was left behind as the amirs turned back towards Cairo.¹⁷ After summarising the main facts of the event, Ibn Taghrībirdī quoted an eye-witness account told by the sultan's hunting master. The account painted a scene where the sultan was obviously enjoying himself and was totally unaware of any lurking threat. Even when they suddenly saw a dust cloud approaching, the sultan still did not expect an attack but sent the hunting master to find out what was causing it. The cloud was caused by the attacking amirs and the hunting master was unable to stop their progress.¹⁸

In contrast to Ibn Taghrībirdī, neither Badr al-Dīn al-'Aynī nor al-Maqrīzī described al-Ashraf Khalīl's murder as a surprising occurrence but rather as a culmination of preceding events. They both noted that there was increasing tension between Baydarā and Ibn Sal'ūs, the sultan's favoured *wazīr*. Al-Ashraf Khalīl listened to Ibn Sal'ūs's complaints and grew steadily angrier with Baydarā. On one occasion, the sultan publicly railed at Baydarā and he was pushed out from the court. Soon Baydarā learned that the sultan planned not only to hurt his economic interests but also to arrest him. Fearing for his position and life, Baydarā decided to kill the sultan.¹⁹

Ibn Taghrībirdī chose not to mention the bad feeling between Baydarā and Ibn Sal'ūs, neither did he tell about the sultan's anger at Baydarā nor about his plans to act against Baydarā. Thus in Ibn Taghrībirdī's presentation, the motive of the murder was not Baydarā's fear, disappointment or anger but, instead, simply his low moral character. Ibn Taghrībirdī did not state the motive explicitly but presented it by quoting Sharaf al-Dīn 'Abd al-Mu'min ibn Hibat Allāh al-Iṣfahānī who in a paragraph of his moral treatise *Kitāb aṭḥāq al-dhahab*²⁰ condemned people who have no virtue but do anything for money.²¹

Ibn Taghrībirdī presented Baydarā's subsequent death as an incident of symmetry that – like the capture of 'Akkā – punished a wrong done previously. The symmetry in Baydarā's case made his death a copy of al-Ashraf Khalīl's death: Baydarā saw an approaching dust cloud created by his pursuers and when he was attacked he received exactly the same wounds as al-Ashraf Khalīl had

17 *Al-Nujūm*, 8:16–18.

18 *Al-Nujūm*, 8:18–19.

19 Badr al-Dīn al-'Aynī, *Iqd al-jumān*, 441. al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk*, 1:788.

20 According to al-Zirikli 1986, 4:170, the author died in 600/1204 and his *Aṭḥāq al-dhahab fī mawā'iz wal-khuṭab* was modelled after al-Zamakhsharī's *Aṭwāq*.

21 *Al-Nujūm*, 8:23.

suffered.²² The symmetric nature of the death gives it a character of divine retribution and by focusing on it Ibn Taghribirdī did not only condemn Baydarā's act as wrong but also, at the same time, indicated that God himself had taken revenge on al-Ashraf Khalīl's murder.

Ibn Taghribirdī ended his description of al-Ashraf Khalīl's reign by quoting the assessments of some earlier historians and biographers. The quotations remind of al-Ashraf Khalīl's virtues: he had provided maintenance (*nafaqāt*) to his army, cancelled an un-Islamic tax (*maks*) and waged *jihād* so diligently that "he should be assured of a place in Paradise."²³ To these quotations Ibn Taghribirdī added his own words that the general opinion considered al-Ashraf Khalīl to have been the bravest of the Mamluk sultans. Ibn Taghribirdī gave the final words to al-Yūnīnī who stated that the sultan had been wrongfully killed (*mazlūm*) and died as a martyr (*shahīd*).²⁴

The tone of these final remarks and quotations emphasize Ibn Taghribirdī's intention to present al-Ashraf Khalīl in a positive light. He was one of Ibn Taghribirdī's shining stars who appeared as an epitome of military bravery and excelled in waging *jihād*, one of the traditional duties of a ruler.

2 Kitbughā

Al-Ashraf Khalīl's reign was followed by the first reign of Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn that lasted for a year. He was deposed by Kitbughā who had been Nāṣir al-Dīn's *nā'ib al-salṭana*. The events leading to Kitbughā's accession were described by Ibn Taghribirdī in the end of his chapter on Nāṣir al-Dīn's first reign.²⁵ In the summary that opens the chapter of Kitbughā's reign, Ibn Taghribirdī only stated that an agreement was reached to place Kitbughā on the throne instead of Nāṣir al-Dīn.²⁶ After summarising Kitbughā's career until the accession, Ibn Taghribirdī quoted an anecdote foretelling Kitbughā's rule. According to the anecdote, the astronomer Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274) connected to Hülegü's court had predicted that a person called Kitbughā would become the king of Egypt. It was only now, about thirty-five years later that Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī's prediction proved correct. Obviously, Ibn Taghribirdī quoted the anecdote in order to emphasise that Kitbughā's rule was foretold and as such formed a part of God's overall plan.

22 *Al-Nujūm*, 8:19.

23 *Al-Nujūm*, 8:26, the last quotation is of al-Dhahabī, whereas *nafaqāt al-jaysh* were mentioned by al-Nuwayrī and *isqāt al-maks* by al-Ṣafadī.

24 *Al-Nujūm*, 8:27.

25 *Al-Nujūm*, 8:49.

26 *Al-Nujūm*, 8:55.

Even though Kitbughā was destined by God to become the sultan, it did not mean that his reign would be successful. According to Ibn Taghrībirdī, the problems began to accumulate shortly after his accession: there was shortage of food and the prices went up drastically. The misfortunes started in Egypt but soon spread to Syria as well. In the following year the situation got even worse as the food shortage developed into an actual famine and people died of hunger. On top of that, pestilence (*al-mawt*)²⁷ spread and caused further deaths.²⁸

According to both al-Maqrīzī and Badr al-Dīn al-ʿAynī, Kitbughā wanted to alleviate the situation by obliging the wealthy to provide for an allotted number of poor.²⁹ This detail is not given by Ibn Taghrībirdī who only stated that the sultan “was occupied by the increase in prices.”³⁰ In stead of focusing on the sultan’s attempts to ease the situation of the poor, Ibn Taghrībirdī included an anecdote telling about a remarkable event that took place in one of the villages close to Damascus. There an ox was heard to thank God and it continued to deliver a message that due to the Prophet’s intercession a threat of seven years’ drought was changed into plenty. Ibn Taghrībirdī commented that the report was strange but came from a reliable source and had been accepted as true by the people of Damascus who kept spreading it.³¹

The anecdote functioned partly as a pause that presented a remarkable tale for the entertainment of Ibn Taghrībirdī’s audience. But at the same time, it also formed a relevant part of Ibn Taghrībirdī’s explanation of the difficult situation. In contrast to al-Maqrīzī and Badr al-Dīn al-ʿAynī, Ibn Taghrībirdī did not refer to the low floods of Nile and the absence of rain in Syria as the causes of the famine³² but, instead, presented the high prices and famine as misfortunes that just appeared suddenly and were an indication of the ill-fated nature of Kitbughā’s rule.³³ Ibn Taghrībirdī did mention that the sultan was somehow busying himself with the problems but he did not report on any particular actions, implying that the sultan was aware of the gravity of the situation but was unable to improve it. The anecdote about the talking ox further confirmed that the current adversities faced by the society were part of a divine plan and the people had to endure them patiently until things changed for the better.

27 *Al-Nujūm*, 8:57. Both al-Maqrīzī and al-ʿAynī used the word *al-wabāʿ*, pestilence or plague in al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk* 1:807, 814 and Badr al-Dīn al-ʿAynī, *ʿIqd al-jumān*, 476.

28 *Al-Nujūm*, 8:57, 59–60.

29 Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, 1:810. Badr al-Dīn al-ʿAynī, *ʿIqd al-jumān*, 476 and 487.

30 *Al-Nujūm*, 8:60.

31 *Al-Nujūm*, 8:59.

32 Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, 1:808, 810 and Badr al-Dīn al-ʿAynī, *ʿIqd al-jumān*, 476, 477.

33 Kitbughā’s contemporaries seem to have considered his rule ill-omened (*tashāʿama*). This is mentioned in Ibn Taghrībirdī, *al-Nujūm*, 8:68, in the final section of the chapter on Kitbughā. According to al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, 1:807, people knew already on the day of his accession that Kitbughā’s rule was ill-omened.

Ibn Taghribirdī's chapter on Kitbughā's reign can be divided into two halves of approximately equal length. The first part focuses on the above mentioned events during the first six months of Kitbughā's reign, whereas the second half gives a detailed description of the the final weeks of his reign indicating the relative importance that Ibn Taghribirdī accorded to Kitbughā's abdication. The final events of Kitbughā's reign took place in Syria where the sultan was visiting with his army and amirs. Ibn Taghribirdī did not give a specific reason for the sultan's travel to Syria but only stated that he considered it necessary to go there in order to do "something".³⁴ Upon his arrival in Damascus, the sultan appointed one of his own Mamluks as the city's *nā'ib*, but otherwise spent the following three months in visiting various Syrian locations and hunting. In Ibn Taghribirdī's reports the "something" that the sultan intended to accomplish in Syria did not appear to be anything dramatic. Even though Ibn Taghribirdī did not explicitly compare Kitbughā's activities with al-Ashraf Khalīl's military campaigns, his listing of the relatively trivial matters may well have invited the audience to reflect on the differences in the two sultans' preoccupations.

Kitbughā's abdication

Ḥusām al-Dīn Lājīn who had been involved in the murder of al-Ashraf Khalīl had escaped punishment by hiding, only emerging when Kitbughā was firmly established as Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn's *nā'ib al-saltāna*. Kitbughā arranged that Lājīn regained his status as an amir and when Kitbughā became sultan, he appointed Lājīn his *nā'ib al-saltāna*. He was part of the sultan's entourage travelling in Syria and had planned together with some other amirs to attack against the sultan and kill him.

Ibn Taghribirdī's description of Lājīn's attack against the sultan is very detailed and animated. Even though Ibn Taghribirdī mentioned that Lājīn had accomplices, he did not name them and it is Lājīn whom we see realising that he could not attack the sultan directly, but had to first do away with two of Kitbughā's closest and strongest mamluks. Lājīn's accomplices were together with him riding to meet Kitbughā's two mamluks, but then the catching of the two and killing them is again told in 3rd person singular, as if Lājīn was acting alone. Immediately afterwards, Lājīn proceeded towards the sultan's camp but was prevented by the sultan's mamluks from entering the camp. Here Ibn Taghribirdī changed the scene and moved inside the sultan's camp, reporting on Kitbughā's reaction to the events. Ibn Taghribirdī presented the thoughts of Kitbughā, his awareness of Lājīn's wide support and his fear for his own life. Kitbughā decided

34 *Al-Nujūm*, 8:61: *li-amr muqaddir iqtādā-hu ra'yu-hu*.

to flee: “He rode a horse called Ḥamāma returning to Damascus because he had such a poor luck and because he had lost his throne.”³⁵ In this context, Ibn Taghrbirdi expressed his first criticism of Kitbughā’s escape by stating that if he only had stayed firmly in his camp Lājīn would not have been able to take it.³⁶

Ibn Taghrībirdī then described Kitbughā’s arrival in Damascus and reported that the *nā’ib* decided to protect him against Lājīn’s supporters. Kitbughā now regretted his support to Lājīn, but Ibn Taghrībirdī observed that the regret was both belated and useless. He then quoted a verse stating that the bold will always win over the meek,³⁷ obviously allotting Kitbughā the role of the meek, whereas Lājīn was the bold one. In the next two paragraphs Ibn Taghrībirdī alternated between reporting on Lājīn in Cairo and Kitbughā in Damascus underlining the odd situation that the realm seemed to have two rulers both considering themselves as sultans and acting as such. Then he continued by describing in detail how Lājīn’s power swiftly increased when a new town each day accepted Lājīn’s rule. Finally, Kitbughā informed Lājīn that he accepted his sovereignty and Lājīn in return appointed him *nā’ib* of Ṣarkhad.³⁸

Ibn Taghrībirdī’s assessment of Kitbughā was quite negative: Kitbughā was unambitious and was not willing to fight for the throne, even though he – in Ibn Taghrībirdī’s opinion – had a good chance to beat Lājīn. Even though Ibn Taghrībirdī often in other occasions welcomed actions preventing *fitna*, he did not here recognize that this was what Kitbughā achieved. Instead, Ibn Taghrībirdī noted that Kitbughā did what no other ruler had ever done before him: he gave up his throne voluntarily and opted for a life in relative obscurity as one of the *nā’ibs* in the realm. Ibn Taghrībirdī further noted that Kitbughā’s contemporaries were well aware of his lack of ambition and this was the reason why no-one considered re-appointing him as a sultan when the throne became vacant after the murder of Lājīn.³⁹

Ibn Taghrībirdī concluded his chapter on Kitbughā’s reign by quoting *Kitāb aṭḥāq al-dhahab* by Sharaf al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Mu’min ibn Hibat Allāh al-Iṣfahānī, i. e. the same moral treatise that he had quoted in connection with al-Ashraf Khalīl’s murder. This time the quoted text dealt with nobility (*sharaf*), stating that nobility can only be achieved by exertion and self-denial.⁴⁰ Ibn Taghrībirdī really wanted to drive home his point that Kitbughā was an epitome of a ruler who failed to achieve nobility because he favoured comfort and personal safety to effort and battle.

35 *Al-Nujūm*, 8:63.

36 *Al-Nujūm*, 8: 63.

37 *Al-Nujūm*, 8: 64.

38 *Al-Nujūm*, 8:64–67.

39 *Al-Nujūm*, 8:69.

40 *Al-Nujūm*, 8:69–70.

3 Lājīn

In the latter part of al-Ashraf Khalīl's reign Lājīn developed into a villain of Ibn Taghribirdī's story. He was suspected of plots against the sultan and finally emerged as one of the major actors in what was – in Ibn Taghribirdī's view – the wrongful murder of al-Ashraf Khalīl. Lājīn's villainy continued during Nāṣir al-Dīn's reign and Ibn Taghribirdī described his attempts to persuade Kitbughā to depose Nāṣir al-Dīn and to take the throne. Gradually, Lājīn wore down Kitbughā's resistance and Nāṣir al-Dīn was deposed.⁴¹ Lājīn became Kitbughā's *nā'ib al-salṭana* and in that capacity accompanied the sultan to Syria, where he attacked Kitbughā but failed to kill him. Ibn Taghribirdī had condemned Lājīn in connection with al-Ashraf Khalīl's murder and his plotting for Nāṣir al-Dīn's removal was also presented in a negative light but now his attitude became somewhat more positive. He expressed his dissatisfaction with Kitbughā's unwillingness to fight and thus Lājīn's action, when contrasted to Kitbughā's inaction, became bold and ambitious.⁴²

Ibn Taghribirdī's increasingly positive attitude is also apparent in his chapter devoted to Lājīn's reign. He started the chapter with the usual summary and recaptured the main events in Lājīn's career until he became sultan. Lājīn's participation in al-Ashraf Khalīl's murder is mentioned and by quoting al-Mutanabbī's verse on nobility Ibn Taghribirdī still condemned the murder but now he mitigated the act by pointing out that Lājīn's fear for his own life had led him to participate in the murder.⁴³ Further, Ibn Taghribirdī mentioned that when Lājīn established himself as the sultan, he conducted himself well and the amirs (*al-nās*) loved him.⁴⁴ When Lājīn finally reached his goal and settled into becoming a good sultan, Ibn Taghribirdī allowed his former villainy to fade into the background. By doing this Ibn Taghribirdī seemed to argue that you may both murder and betray trust to gain power but all this becomes insignificant, if you end up becoming a good ruler.

In the very beginning of his portrayal of Lājīn's rule Ibn Taghribirdī brought forth Mankutamur who, besides Lājīn, became the most important actor in the story. Ibn Taghribirdī presented him by stating that the amirs loved Lājīn but they did not love Mankutamur who, in contrast to Lājīn, behaved in a reprehensible manner.⁴⁵ Lājīn appointed Mankutamur his *nai'ib al-salṭana* and a few days later suffered a riding accident leaving Mankutamur in a position of power. According to Ibn Taghribirdī, the amirs allowed Mankutamur to remain in power, because

41 *Al-Nujūm*, 8:49.

42 *Al-Nujūm*, 8:63–64.

43 *Al-Nujūm*, 8:86.

44 *Al-Nujūm*, 8:87.

45 *Al-Nujūm*, 8:87.

they expected Lājīn to recover quickly and take back the reins of power. Lājīn did recover but Ibn Taghrībirdī's description of subsequent events shows the constant increase of Mankutamur's power whereas Lājīn became less visible.

The event that Taghrībirdī offered most space was *rawk*, the cadastral survey initiated by Lājīn. Ibn Taghrībirdī began the description by a summary where he noted that Mankutamur was supervising the re-allocations of *iqṭā'* lands to amirs and soldiers, taking care that he himself got the areas he wanted. As to the other amirs and soldiers, Ibn Taghrībirdī stated neutrally that some of them improved their previous situations whereas others suffered losses. After the summary, Ibn Taghrībirdī quoted al-Yūnīnī's report of the *rawk*, where al-Yūnīnī not only gave further details on the relative shares allocated to various groups but also anticipated the future murder of Lājīn, stating that it was the amirs' dissatisfaction with the *rawk* that made them agree to kill Lājīn and Mankutamur.⁴⁶

In addition to al-Yūnīnī's report, Ibn Taghrībirdī offered further details on the *rawk* and its effects by presenting a second report, now without indicating its source but merely labelling it as "another view" (*wajh ākhar*). The report emphasises that the way the *rawk* was accomplished gave Mankutamur an economic advantage that "had never been given to any *nā'ib* before him."⁴⁷ The report also focused on Mankutamur's position of power stating that most of the dissatisfied amirs and soldiers did not dare to voice their opposition to the *rawk* because they feared Mankutamur's reaction. Those few soldiers (*jund*) who confronted Mankutamur with their grievances were thrown into prison. Lājīn was presented as a more lenient figure wanting to alleviate the negative consequences of the *rawk* but Mankutamur forbade Lājīn to do it and he acquiesced.⁴⁸ However, Lājīn did stand up against Mankutamur when he heard about the imprisonments of the discontented soldiers, reprimanding Mankutamur and ordering their release.⁴⁹

The report placed Mankutamur in a bad light and presented him as the cause of the growing dissatisfaction within the military. The amirs were further angered when Lājīn appeared to follow Mankutamur's instructions and allowed him to effectively share his authority as ruler. Ibn Taghrībirdī presented these developments as proofs of Lājīn's indulgence of Mankutamur and considered it an error of judgment that led to Lājīn's ruin. He compared Lājīn's blindness to Mankutamur's faults to the mistake a father makes when he promotes an undeserving son: "an evil son causes the curse to fall upon the father."⁵⁰ In Ibn Taghrībirdī's presentation, Mankutamur's personality and actions together with

46 *Al-Nujūm*, 8:92.

47 *Al-Nujūm*, 8:94.

48 *Al-Nujūm*, 8:94.

49 *Al-Nujūm*, 8:95.

50 *Al-Nujūm*, 8:99.

Lājīn's indulgence and refusal to recognise the growing antagonism among the amirs are defined as the main causes for his murder.

Lājīn's murder

Ibn Taghribirdī began his description on Lājīn's murder by quoting a contemporary report by a clerk (*wakīl*) of the treasury telling of an ominous dream had by Lājīn's wife. She had dreamt that a crow had pushed Lājīn's turban off his head screeching "*Kurj, kurj.*" Later the same day, Lājīn was attacked by amir Kurjī and his accomplices, the events proving that the dream had been true and even revealed the name of the murderer.⁵¹ The next report Ibn Taghribirdī quoted was that of *qādī* Ḥusām al-Dīn al-Ḥanafī who had been together with Lājīn playing chess when the attack occurred. The *qādī*'s tale started from the attack and took the events further, first to the murder of Mankutamur and then to the deaths of the murderers themselves. The *qādī*'s description of the events is like the clerk's, minute in detail and quoting the words spoken by the various actors.⁵²

The clerk's report described how Lājīn was killed telling that Kurjī was the first one to strike hitting Lājīn's shoulder and in the ensuing tumult another amir cut off Lājīn's leg tumbling him down. When Lājīn participated in the murder of al-Ashraf Khalīl, he struck the sultan in the shoulder and now it was his turn to receive a wound in the shoulder. Even though Ibn Taghribirdī had in his reports of al-Ashraf Khalīl's reign and murder pointed to the symmetry of events, he refrained from doing so here. The reason was that if he had drawn his audience's attention to the symmetry of the wounds, Lājīn's murder would have gained the character of God's act of retribution. In Ibn Taghribirdī's view the murder was caused by Lājīn's folly and Mankutamur's behaviour and had nothing to do with Lājīn's culpability in al-Ashraf Khalīl's murder.

In contrast to Ibn Taghribirdī, al-Maqrīzī recognised the symmetry and stated how remarkable it was that the wounds found on the body of al-Ashraf Khalīl were in the same places as the wounds in Lājīn's body.⁵³ Further connection to al-Ashraf Khalīl's murder was presented by al-Maqrīzī in his reports of Lājīn being preoccupied with the murder and expecting the final retribution. This is described in two scenes that took place on the day of Lājīn's murder. The first scene is introduced by an explanation that Lājīn had since al-Ashraf Khalīl's murder been convinced that he would himself be murdered as well. The scene portrayed Lājīn throwing arrows one by one at the same time repeating the words: "The one

51 *Al-Nujūm*, 8:100–101.

52 *Al-Nujūm*, 8:101–105.

53 Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, 1:860.

who kills is killed.”⁵⁴ The second scene occurred immediately before the attack and included *qāḍī* Ḥusām al-Dīn al-Ḥanafī who – according to Ibn Taghrībirdī’s presentation – was playing chess with Lājīn when the attack took place. In al-Maqrīzī’s scene Lājīn saw a comet in the evening sky and marvelled at it but it also made him worried and he asked the *qāḍī* what it might portend. The *qāḍī* assured him that it must be a good omen. Lājīn was not convinced but said to the *qāḍī*: “It is indeed true when they say that the one who kills is killed.” The *qāḍī* tried to lift his spirits but Lājīn remained gloomy and just repeated twice the verse of the Qur’ān (2:156) that is quoted when someone has just died: “*Innā li-llāhi wa-innā ilayhi rāji’ūn.*”⁵⁵

With these two scenes al-Maqrīzī painted a portrait of Lājīn as an almost Macbeth-like figure who was haunted by his past deed. This aspect is completely absent from Ibn Taghrībirdī’s reports and in his chapter on Lājīn he focused on the events that occurred after his accession and it was within these events that Ibn Taghrībirdī found the motive for Lājīn’s murder. Even though Ibn Taghrībirdī considered al-Ashraf Khalīl’s murder a wrongful deed, it was an event that occurred in Lājīn’s past and did not influence his later activities as the sultan.

4 Conclusions

Ibn Taghrībirdī’s descriptions of the three reigns were relatively short and this indicates that he had consciously narrowed down the scope of his reports and carefully selected the material that he presented. This allowed him to present fairly coherent stories without too much detail focusing on some key events. Ibn Taghrībirdī’s primary audience was the Mamluk court and there are elements in his stories that made them suitable for oral presentation, for reading aloud. Especially the eye-witness reports and quoted anecdotes that contained lively dialogue and almost theatre like scenes where even the actors’ movements were described must have captivated the interest of his audience. These fast spaced, action packed scenes were broken up with pauses that functioned not only as calm interludes but also as reports of remarkable events that astounded the audience. The scene with candles framing the road the sultan is riding on painted a beautiful picture in the minds of the audience whereas the details of traditional games played by the soldiers were aspects of military culture and must have boosted the fellow-feeling in the courtly audience.

In addition to entertaining his audience Ibn Taghrībirdī also used his stories to educate his audience. His ambition had been to tutor Muḥammad ibn al-Jaqmaq

54 Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, 1:859.

55 Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, 1:863.

and teach him how to be a good ruler. This didactic element is strongly present in the descriptions of the three reigns discussed above. Ibn Taghribirdī's narrowing down the presented material not only made the stories short and concise to read but also allowed him to focus on certain aspects of the sultans' activities. In the case of al-Ashraf Khalīl, Ibn Taghribirdī emphasised the sultan's involvement in *jihād* against the Crusader fortresses in Syria. In Kitbughā's biography, the focus is on the modesty of his achievements, his meekness and lack of ambition, whereas Lājīn who, though bold and ambitious, wasted his initial success by his error in judgment in promoting Mankutamur.

If Ibn Taghribirdī had included al-Ashraf Khalīl's bad manners and inability to foresee the consequences of his actions, Kitbughā's desire to avoid fitna or Lājīn's feelings of guilt, the portraits of the rulers would have become more complex. His focus on selected elements allowed him to present the rulers as epitomes of single characteristics. Al-Ashraf Khalīl personified the virtue of military bravery and would serve as an object of emulation, whereas both Kitbughā with his lack of ambition and Lājīn who was unable to recognise and rectify his error become warning examples of faults that have to be avoided.

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Gendered Nuances in Historiographical Discourses of the Mamluk Period: Muted Praise? Veiled Trivialization? Enigmatic Transgressions?

The issue of ‘narrative strategies’ conditioning the semantic inferences of discourses in historiographical texts produced in Egypt and Syria during the late Middle Ages resonates significantly in the reportage of events linked to gender. Given the centrality of gender identity to relations between persons at all levels of pre-modern Islamic societies, the means by which these were expressed – in terms of arrangement of ‘facts,’ word choice, or syntactic structuring of prose (or poetry) – may exhibit patterns that distinguish such discourses from others that are not overtly connected to gender. At least this is a possible hypothesis that may be tested. In response to the theme suggested for this conference: a search for messages encoded in these categories (factual arrangement, word choice or syntactic variations), the following essay will examine gendered discourses contained in two source types contemporary to the period: biographical literature and narrative chronicles, to query whether characteristics distinctive to them are discernible, and if so, whether they substantively influenced the messages they convey.

An important methodological issue should be acknowledged at the outset: the near-complete lack of certifiably female voices in surviving biographical or narrative literature from the late medieval (Mamluk) period. While women figure prominently in this literature, the overwhelming majority of commentators about them were male (in contrast with later Ottoman sources in which female authors appear with some regularity). This fact applies to every facet of the textual interrogations that follow: men uniformly wrote the discourses under scrutiny. Women appear almost exclusively through the lenses males present (although one must inquire as to when males occasionally acknowledged, and claimed to quote, female voices – and if so, why?).

The essay will focus on the discussion of qualities attributed to several women in two source categories: 1) their depiction in volume 12 of the biographical dictionary compiled by al-Sakhāwī: *al-Ḍawʿ al-Lāmiʿ fī Ahl al-Qarn al-Tāsiʿ*,¹ and

1 Ed. Ḥusām al-Dīn al-Qudṣī, 12 vols., Cairo, 1934–36.

2) their involvement in activities labeled transgressive or criminal as presented in narrative chronicles of the period. Why transgressive? Because contemporary narrative authors often attributed a degree of impropriety – and enhanced offensiveness – to transgressions allegedly committed by females, in addition to the generalized concept of ‘social harm’ applicable to acts by either gender: crossing normative boundaries of ‘proper’ decorum specific to women (such as adoption of immodest dress, overt self-assertion in the public sphere, or undisguised contradiction of decisions by males). The presentation will consider whether narrative authors signaled their sense of violated gendered space through their terminological choices, selection of descriptive detail, or adoption of stylistic devices peculiar to these incidents. That they resorted to these indirect, covert, devices to signal aberrant behavior more often than explicitly denouncing it emerges as a significant finding to be explored.² Implication rather than condemnation appeared as a more subtle, and possibly effective, means of highlighting departure from behavioral norms.

Biographies from al-Sakhāwī’s *Ḍaw’*

With regard to depictions of women in al-Sakhāwī’s dictionary, a cursory survey of the 1000-odd biographies listed in volume 12 was conducted to detect individuals whose trajectories – personal, scholastic, or political – set them apart from their peers in terms of prominence or notoriety. The inventory of personas appearing in the 1981 article by Huda Lutfi on this topic was consulted to identify persons she detected as noteworthy or singular.³ Twenty individuals were ultimately chosen for consideration.⁴ The criteria for their selection involved dis-

2 Reliance on terminology that implicated a woman’s behavior as transgressive or aberrant occurred much more frequently than overt judgment of character as negative, or denunciation of an act as ‘wrong’ or ‘blameworthy,’ particularly in Sakhāwī’s *Ḍaw’*. This disinclination contrasted markedly with Sakhāwī’s frequent vituperative assessments of behavior by males, a trend that will be commented on subsequently.

3 Huda Lutfi, “Al-Sakhāwī’s *Kitāb al-Nisā’* as a Source for the Social and Economic History of Muslim Women during the Fifteenth Century A.D.” *The Muslim World*, 71, no. 2 (1981), pp. 104–124.

4 The 20 biographies consulted in volume 12: #20, p. 4: Āmina ibnat al-Shams Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī al-‘Idwī al-Qāhirī al-Mālīkī; #39, p. 7: Alif ibnat al-Qāḍī ‘Alam al-Dīn Ṣalāḥ ibn ‘Umar al-Bulqīnī; #45, p. 9: Ummat al-Jabbār ibnat al-Shaykh Nūr al-Dīn ‘Alī ibn al-Shaykh Miṣbāḥ al-Lāmī Umm al-Zayn ‘Abd al-Raḥīm al-Abnāsī; #87, p. 16: Tandū ibnat Ḥusayn ibn Uways; #261, p. 44: Zaynab ibnat al-‘Alā’ ‘Alī ibn al-‘Alīm al-Badr Muḥammad al-Ḥanafī (Ibnat Ibn Khāṣṣ Bak); #272, p. 47: Zaynab ibnat al-Khawājā al-Jamāl Muḥammad ibn al-Badr Ḥasan al-Ṭāhir al-Makkī; #307, p. 52: Sāra ibnat ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Kinānī al-Ḥamawī thumma al-Qāhirī al-Shāfi’ī; #377, p. 62: Sa’ādāt ibnat al-Shaykh Nūr al-Dīn ‘Alī ibn Aḥmad al-Būshī; #388, p. 64: Sa’āda Umm al-Ḥadī ibnat al-Jamāl Abī al-Sa’ūd Muḥammad ibn al-Burhān Ibrāhīm al-

inctions in depictions of activities seen to provide notoriety to eminent women: 1) prominence in Ḥadīth (traditions attributed to the Prophet Muhammad) transmission, 2) receipt of *ijāzas* certifying competence to recite/teach scholarly texts [on occasion before men as well as women], 3) independent amendments to such texts, composition of poetry, 4) writing of lucid script, 5) presiding over religious services to female congregations, 6) multiple marriages to high-status men, 7) autonomous custodianship of inherited estates, 8) participation in political procedures routinely dominated by males. The objective behind the scrutiny of these biographies was to determine whether any or all of the criteria noted above were noticeably discernible in their texts. The five biographies that follow were selected to highlight the descriptive vocabulary Sakhāwī chose to depict the qualities he attributed to high-status women in Cairo as essential to the embodiment of their character – and thus the impression about them he wished to impart.

To begin with an individual Sakhāwī regarded as an outstanding *shaykha*: ‘Ā’isha ibnat ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Kinānī al-Qāhiriyya al-Ḥanbaliyya (*Daw’* 12: 78 # 482). Born in 761 H/ 1359–60 CE, ‘Ā’isha initiated her studies with her maternal grandfather, focusing on several texts enumerated by the compiler. She received *ijāzas* from numerous Syrian and Egyptian savants, studied canons of script, and recited the Koran and Hadiths in the presence of imams. While Sakhāwī found these accomplishments laudatory, they do not distinguish ‘Ā’isha from other prominent female scholastics in the collection. Her biography does become noteworthy when Sakhāwī quoted his esteemed mentor, Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqālānī, who stated in his *Inbā’ al-Ghumr* that students (all males according to Sakhāwī) flocked to her, and that she was proficient in script writing. Sakhāwī then referred to al-Maqrīzī, who claimed that she authored quality books (no titles given). While both depicted her as ‘good’ (*khayra*), pious (*ṣāliḥa*) and exhibiting wit (*fahm malīḥ*), neither made reference to obedience or submissiveness. Sakhāwī himself echoed their high opinion, adding that she was sound of faith (*fāḍila*), and personally attesting to the refinement of her script.

Makkī, #389, p. 64: Sa’āda ibnat Abī al-Surūr Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Umm al-Khayr al-Ḥasanī al-Fāsi, #450, p. 73: ‘Ā’isha ibnat al-Ṣarīm Ibrāhīm ibn Khalīl Umm ‘Abd Allah al-Zubaydiyya min Banī Sumū’ il al-Sinjāriyya al-Aṣl al-Ba’liyya thumma al-Dimashqiyya; #482, p. 78: ‘Ā’isha ibnat ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad Umm ‘Abd Allah wa-Umm al-Faḍl, Sitt al-‘Aysh, al-Qāhiriyya al-Ḥanbaliyya; #500, p. 82: ‘Ā’isha al-‘Ajamiyya (Khātūn); #669, p. 106: Fāṭima ibnat al-Shams Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf al-Dayrūtī; #674, p. 107: Fāṭima (Sittita, Nājiyya) ibnat al-Qāḍī Kamāl al-Dīn Maḥmūd ibn Shīrīn al-Ḥanafī; #696, p. 115: Faraj ibnat al-Nāṣirī Muḥammad ibn Quṭlūbūghā; #757, p. 124: Maryam ibnat Aḥmad ibn ‘Issā al-Adhrā’ī thumma al-Miṣrī al-Ḥanafī; #805, p. 131: Hājir ibnat al-Jamāl ‘Abd al-Wāḥid al-Wiṣhī, nisba li-Wiṣh al-Ḥajr; #807, p. 131: Hājir (‘Azizā) ibnat Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Mukthira Umm al-Faḍl al-Qudṣī al-Aṣl al-Qāhiri al-Shāfi’ī; #980, p. 157: Umm Hānī’ ibnat Nūr al-Dīn Abī al-Ḥasan ‘Alī ibn al-Qāḍī Taqī al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Hawarīniyya al-Aṣl al-Miṣriyya al-Shāfi’iyya (Maryam).

He went on to confirm the depth of her knowledge with regard to the *Sīrat al-nabawīyya* (presumably of Ibn Ishāq via Ibn Hishām), with a particular expertise on the battles.

But what stands out in this biography is Sakhāwī's remark about 'Ā'isha's obsession with ablutions and self-purification. Sakhāwī claimed that her concern about washing before prayer dated from her youth, remained intense throughout her adult life and became her distinguishing characteristic. The sole reference to marriage involves his off-handed remark that she remained celibate after her husband's death. She died on 26 Dhū al-Qa'ḍa 840/1 June 1437.

So what impression did Sakhāwī convey about this person: stature as an autonomous scholastic along with predictable expertise as a Ḥadīth transmitter, a life aloof from conjugality after her husband's death, closeness to male family (no reference to her mother), an obsession with personal hygiene. Sakhāwī provided no indication of deference to males beyond deep respect for her immediate kin, but called no specific attention to this, positive or negative. 'Ā'isha's personal autonomy, scholastic acumen and obsession with ablutions established the vividness of her singularity. Her conjugal aloofness from men emerged as an impression gleaned from a lack of overt commentary.

An individual whose pedagogic distinction Sakhāwī attributed to ambition prompted by parental encouragement was Hājir ibnat Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad, al-Mukthira Umm al-Faḍl, daughter of the Muḥaddith Abī al-Faḍl al-Qudsi al-Qāhirī al-Shāfi'ī, known by her preferred name 'Azīza (*Ḍaw'* 12: 131 # 708). Born in Rabī' I 790/ March 1388, 'Azīza was favored by her father (only a deceased sister of the same name was mentioned without further elaboration; no brothers listed), who supervised her exhaustive memorization of Tradition texts. 'Azīza developed into a prodigy to whom male and female students, often senior to her in age, congregated. Sakhāwī noted that 'Azīza attained eminence as a *muḥadditha* (*ṣārat bi-akhīratin asnad ahl 'aṣriha*), although apparently after encountering financial hardship. Sakhāwī stated that 'Azīza endured a stint of poverty and mentioned that he himself had contributed modestly to alleviate her straitened circumstances (no details provided). Whether this misfortune stemmed from disputes between siblings or offspring in 'Azīza's family is unclear (it is hinted in the entry), but Sakhāwī claimed that her situation improved as her reputation spread. The remainder of the biography is taken up by an extensive list of male and female savants or transmitters before whom she recited, and testified to her competence by granting *ijāzas*.

Similar to Sakhāwī's depiction of 'Ā'isha, distinctive personal behavior lent singularity to 'Azīza's profile. He mentioned her appearance in public without the *ḥijāb* (presumably during recitation) as among several remarkable aspects of her deportment. While Sakhāwī regarded these traits as worthy of inclusion, he did not apply terms indicating their aberrance as either a transgressive deviation

from social norms or a distraction from effective recitation in the presence of men. Sakhāwī used the neutral phrase *wa-qaḍ kānat ‘alā namaṭ kathīr min al-‘ajā’ib fī ‘adam al-taḥajjub wa-nahwahu*, citing singularity without expressing further judgment, negative or positive (but possibly linking the absence of this garment to ‘Azīza’s fiscal restraints). Although the entry makes no specific reference to marriage, ‘Azīza’s *kunya* implies such a relationship at some point in her lengthy career (she died on 6 Muḥarram 874/16 July 1469). The biography concludes with a brief comment about the diverse sites where she performed her recitations and the place of her death, the Maṣṣūri Hospital in Cairo.

Implicitly undue infatuation with a husband marked the biography of an individual born into Cairo’s military elite. Faraj ibnat al-Nāṣiri Muḥammad ibn Quṭlūbughā was daughter to an agent of mamluks (*dallāl mamālīk abūha*) (*Ḍaw’* 12: 115 # 696, no birth date). Faraj’s entry was taken up by a list of marriages to civil and military notables, interspersed with pilgrimage as an accompanying spouse to Jerusalem and Mecca – in which town her current husband died. Sakhāwī’s commentary at this juncture departed from an unglossed enumeration of conjugal unions to dwell on Faraj’s amorous fixation on one of these: al-Sayyid Kamāl al-Dīn ibn Hamza al-Ḥusaynī (*wa-uftitanat bi-ḥubbihi*). Sakhāwī asserted that Faraj lavished much of her wealth (a portion of which stemmed from a legacy left to her by a previous husband) on this individual. Yet Sakhāwī laconically noted a subsequent marriage to the *dawādār* of a police officer (*wālī*), presumably in Cairo. Sakhāwī also remarked on the absence of children from any of these marriages, a presumed misfortune with fiscal consequences that did not detract from Faraj’s stature in relation to these men he praised as marked simultaneously by diffidence (*ḥishma*), leadership (*riyāsa*), and repute (*shahra*). Sakhāwī contrasted Faraj’s successful retention of her inherited assets with the denial by one Ibn al-Amāna of his own daughter’s legacy, following her death, to the claims of her surviving husband, apparently citing a father’s rights of legal guardianship over her estate. Faraj’s failure to produce offspring could potentially have imposed a similar loss of estate, a liability apparently nullified by an esteemed reputation contested by no conjugal claimant. The contrasting traits exhibited in Faraj’s deportment emerged as the distinctive theme of her biography. She was apparently still living when Sakhāwī recorded her entry.

Contested assets figured prominently in the biography of an individual whose social position did not match Faraj’s eminence, and produced less positive outcomes. A litany of conjugal disputes filled Sakhāwī’s entry for Sa‘ādāt ibnat al-Shaykh Nūr al-Dīn ‘Alī ibn Aḥmad al-Būshī (*Ḍaw’* 12: 62 #377). Virginally married after her father’s death to one al-Biqā‘ī, who himself had divorced his current spouse who shared with him “poverty and ignominy” (*al-faqr wa’l-dhill*), Sa‘ādāt found herself embroiled over estate claims mutually contested by her husband and his former wife (sister to the savant Shams al-Dīn al-Sunbātī). Al-

Biqā'ī had brought suit over assets linked to the eminent Sufi khānqāh at Sīr-yāqūs before his patron, Bardibak al-Dawādār, the outcome of which was apparently less than successful. When Sa'ādāt's own marriage to al-Biqā'ī soured, she was obliged to award him 500 dinars to gain custody over their own offspring, a settlement to which she agreed because of the intensity of mutual love between mother and son (by implication a bond the father did not share). Sa'ādāt then entered into marriage with a former pupil of her father while her former spouse verged on death. This individual himself expired soon after Sa'ādāt bore him a child, and she took on yet another husband in the person of Muḥammad ibn Muzīrī, son-in-law to Qāsim al-Shughayta. Sakhāwī stated that she was alive in 899/1493–94 without further comment on further serial marriages.

To conclude with a personal trajectory that embodied characteristics more conventionally idealizing a woman's stature, an exemplary example emerged in Sakhāwī's portrayal of Umm Hānī' ibnat al-'Alāma Nūr al-Dīn Abī al-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn al-Qāḍī Taqī al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Hawarīniyya al-'Aṣl al-Miṣriyya al-Shāfi'iyya, also named Maryam, granddaughter to al-Qāḍī Fakhr al-Dīn al-Qāyyātī (*Ḍaw'* 12: 157 # 980). Umm Hānī''s life story presented a model of pedagogic endeavor, enhanced by the reputations of her prominent male relatives. Born on 15 Sha'bān 778/27 December 1376 in Old Cairo (Miṣr), Umm Hānī' received her scholastic tutelage from her maternal grandfather in Mecca, starting in 805/1402–03. She continued her studies in Cairo where her abilities were acknowledged by *ijāzas* from some of the city's most prominent 'ulamā'. She married into a family descended from the Mamluk amir Quṭlūbughā al-Baktimurī, and bore four sons and a daughter, who collectively identified with three madhhabs (ironically, not the Shāfi'ī). Sakhāwī noted that all five engaged in formal studies, in which the Ḥanafī, Sayf al-Dīn Muḥammad, excelled. Sakhāwī stated that the Ḥanbalī, Maṣṣūr, would have attained even superior renown, but died young – allegedly terminated by the intensity of his intellect. Following her husband's death, Umm Hānī' married a Mālikī, and produced two more children. Her second husband assumed direction over the inheritance from her maternal grandfather, spending from it as he wished. But upon his death, Umm Hānī' took over his legacy, proceeds from which she invested in a famous hall on the shore of Birkat al-Fīl, known as the 'Esteemed Foundation' (*Inshā' al-Akram*). Her lavish expenditures on the structure alarmed some heirs of the individual (unnamed) who had originally endowed the hall's *waqf*. They contested the legality of Umm Hānī''s deed of ownership exchange (*istibdāl*) in court. The presiding Ḥanbalī judge upheld the veracity of Umm Hānī''s purchase and confirmed her continued ownership.

Sakhāwī went on to temper the inventory of texts alleged to have been mastered by the youthful Umm Hānī' under her eminent grandfather's guidance, claiming that she did not fully memorize all six canonical Ḥadīth collections.

Sakhāwī mentioned a recension of al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ* by al-Nishāwarī (a contemporary of Ibn Ḥajar) as one of the works she had not committed to memory. Despite this minor qualification, Sakhāwī extolled Umm Hānī' with traits not equivalently associated with the preceding depictions. Pious (*ṣāliḥa*), admirable (*khayr*), faithful (*fāḍila*), lachrymose (*bakkā'*) when recalling God and His Messenger, beloved of the Hadiths and their people, diligent (*muwāḏaba*) in keeping the Fast and the Night Vigil (*tahajjub*), firm in religiosity (*matīna fī al-diyāna*), committed to saintliness (*kathīrat al-taḥarrī fī al-ṭahāra*), skilled in diction (*faṣīḥat al-ibāra*), proficient in writing (*mujīda li'l-kitāba*), excellent in poetics (*ijāda li-iqāmat al-shīr*). Sakhāwī topped off his litany of praise by commending her memorization of the Koran in childhood, and attesting personally to her eloquent recitation and accurate retention (*sama'nā min lafẓiha wa-ḥifẓiha sūrat al-ṣaff bi-faṣāḥa wa-ḥusn al-talāwa*). Umm Hānī' went on pilgrimage 13 times, her sojourns devoted to spirituality rather than to lingering in holy space for the purpose of acquiring Baraka simply by association. Her Ḥanafī son attested to the depths of her devoutness. Umm Hānī' died on 30 Ṣafar 871/10 October 1466 and was interred in her grandfather's tomb near the sanctuary of al-Shāfi'ī. Sakhāwī was in Mecca at the time

Umm Hānī''s entry contrasted with the preceding cases in terms of personal qualities and pivotal events emphasized in each. The first four biographies focused on peculiarities that, without detracting from the individuals' accomplishments – learned or cultural, lent the distinctiveness that defined the impressions Sakhāwī chose to leave about them. Obsession with ablutions, cleanliness and ritual purity; performance of public recitation without head covering; minimal concern with marriage to a person of peer status; spousal infatuation (possibly excessive or untoward) on the part of an individual born into society's apex; or serial marriages and acerbic disputes over conjugal property – these departures from stereotypic feminine norms set the final biography apart due to its conformity with them. Umm Hānī' emerged from Sakhāwī's description as a model of idealized female deportment. No peculiar or aberrant event disrupted the trajectory of esteemed accomplishments she projected. The rhymed characteristics Sakhāwī listed at length for her occupy the reader's attention and convey the impression of impeccability surrounding Umm Hānī''s conduct with persuasive rhetoric.

Depictions of Transgressive Behavior

In light of impressions about feminine qualities conveyed in biographical literature, what may one discern in depictions of feminine character presented by narratives that describe transgressive behavior on the part of women from more

diverse positions in Cairene society? The following incidents were chosen from an inventory of such cases in narrative chronicle literature of the period to suggest the descriptive vocabulary narrative authors employed when they described actions that set women they regarded as criminals apart from their law-abiding contemporaries. Contrasting sharply from the preceding biographical literature, narrative depictions of transgressive behavior vividly emphasized its negative qualities in the cases that follow. The first of these involved prostitution and its exploitation by a male who committed a more potent offense but escaped punishment:

“On Tuesday the 27th (Jumādā II 876/10 December 1471) an extraordinary incident occurred in the quarter of Bahā’ al-Dīn Qarāqūsh. Near the home of ... Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Ḥajar (al-‘Asqalānī) was located a den of long-standing iniquity (*qāʿatun mazlīmatun ṭawīlatun*), in which resided a peculiar celibate (*aʿzab gharīb*) from Ḥalab.... The Ḥalabī enriched (*istamāla*) a woman among the daughters of sin (*khaṭāʿ*) and her mother. He paid the two a moiety (*shiqqa*) of silk and gold given him by an elderly procuress (*ʿajūz al-qawwāda*). The two wore garments (*aqmisha*) with embroidery (*muzarkasha*) and silk, gold bracelets (*asāwir*), earrings (*ḥalaq*) with balas rubies (*balakhsh*) and turquoise (*fayrūz*), a perfumed necklace with gold beads (*mursala dhahab bi-misk*) and similar items. He plied them (*awsaʿahum*) with wine, and performed on them what is not permissible (*mā lam yaḥull*). He (then) strangled them, stole what they had, and fled, leaving them dead in the hall. They remained there (undiscovered) for eight days, when their stench dispersed (*dhāʿa natnuhum*). People (then) hastened to them, finding them strangled nude among the half-empty wine vessels. The police chief (*wālī*) and his deputy rode out and buried them. They interrogated those who knew the two murder victims. They likewise arrested the building owner, extracting from him something from the (remaining) items (*ḥuṭām*). Some days later it was rumored among the populace that they had arrested a group selling the personal effects of the murder victims, but this was not verified.”⁵

Ibn al-Ṣayrafī’s rendition of this incident starkly juxtaposed the ornate against the grotesque. Luxurious apparel was depicted in a fashion signaling the prostitutes’ voluptuousness (without actual comment on their physical traits), their implicit cost hinting at the fiduciary rewards for engaging in sinful practices. By stark contrast, Ibn al-Ṣayrafī left no description about the Ḥalabī’s appearance. The aberrance of his deportment as both unmarried and ‘peculiar’ is therefore emphasized by the lack of a physical description. The Ḥalabī’s intimacy with the women, following their inebriation from wine he supplied, was depicted as impermissible (under Law), leaving the nature of the (presumably untoward) acts he performed on them to the reader’s imagination.

5 Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Inbāʿ al-ḥaṣr bi-abnāʿ al-ʿaṣr*, ed. Ḥasan Ḥabashī, 4 vols., Cairo, 1970, p. 369, line 16.

Ibn al-Şayrafi made no mention of the Wālī's pursuit of either the Ḥalabī or the procuress, despite the former committing a capital crime. His brief asides to a miniscule fine imposed on the hall's owner (the sole inference, by deduction, that the owner knew something about the activities sullyng his property) and rumored arrest of persons attempting to sell the victims' stolen apparel implied the police chief's indifference to the heinousness of the women's fate. Why pursue the murderer who granted the victims the punishment merited by their livelihood? The luridness of Ibn al-Şayrafi's depiction raises a question as to his sources. While none are provided, the specificity of its detail, along with the exact date, suggest that he had access to a police report, or comments made by the neighbors who discovered the putrescent corpses. As an adjunct qādī known more for his proclivity to gossip than for his settlement of litigation, Ibn al-Şayrafi offered a depiction sufficiently grounded in plausible details to warrant some measure of accuracy. Yet the aim to discredit the women by describing their grisly demise was abundantly clear. Ibn al-Şayrafi discussed an incident of murder several months later (Sha 'bān 876/January 1472) on the part of female slaves seeking to escape from their master's household:

“A strange event: A mamlūk belonging to the corps of al-Zāhir Jaqmaq resided in Cairo near the postern gate of the Amir Timur al-Ḥājjib's residence. He was of the brethren of Jānibak al-Wālī, armorer at the start of al-Ashraf Īnāl's reign. He owned two slave girls, one white one black (*jāriyya baydā' wa-jāriyya sūdā'*), an aged groom (*ghulām shaykh*) and a black chattel slave (*abd aswad*). He held assets in the amount of 2500 dinars. They (his slaves) plotted to murder him and steal his money. They intimidated the black slave and goaded him to flight (*harrabūhu*). They (the authorities) apprehended the groom and interrogated him about his master's condition. He replied, 'He departed two days ago, carrying a dagger, intending to pursue freebooting (*alayhi qarşana*) and none know his whereabouts. He evaded pursuers.' They (then) questioned him about the slave but he feigned ignorance (*ankara*). The Amir Timur al-Ḥājjib summoned him (the groom) and reassured him with a pledge to release (him from) his chains, saying 'This soldier (*jundī*) bears guilt for multiple murders of slave girls, chattel slaves and freedmen (*aḥrār*). If he were killed, he would murder no one else.' Upon this, he (the groom) spoke, and consequently revealed the young black slave. He (the slave) confessed that his (the mamlūk's) female slaves had strangled him and buried his body in his stable below its horse shoes (*nī alīhi*, i. e., the floor). The Amir then stood up and proceeded to the stable himself. They excavated it in his presence and found his (the slave's) statement to be true. He (the mamlūk) had been strangled. They seized those who had abetted his murder and awaited him in the stable. Officials from the privy bureau (*dīwān al-khāṣṣ*) appropriated his (the mamlūk's) assets. It was alleged that his female slaves had divided the money. The Amir al-Hājjib requested his legacy from the sultan as a personal favor since he was his neighbor and comrade (*khujdāshuhu*). He was

not informed as to what he was due. As for the ghuḷām and slave girls, they remained in custody to be executed as they had murdered.”⁶

Ibn al-Ṣayrafī (seconded by Ibn Iyās) reported the convicts’ execution two months later.⁷ Sultan Qāyitbāy ordered them scourged, paraded and hanged from their former master’s gate. He only specified the white slave girl and the groom (also white, likely Circassian), commenting that the girl’s public exhibition was exceptional (*wa-lam na’hud imra’atan musamarratan ‘alā jamalin ka-hay’ati hadhihi al-jāriyya al-bayḍā*). Ibn al-Ṣayrafī had been informed that the slave girl was beautiful (*jamīla ‘alā ghāya*) but that the camel driver was intrepid due to the severity of her crime (*wa-lakin ba’asa al-jammāl lamma irtakabathu min qubḥi al-fī’āl*). Ibn al-Sayrafī’s omission of the two blacks remains a mystery since both were implicated. The chattel slave’s confession and disclosure of the body (necessary to prove a homicide rather than a missing person) may have granted his exoneration. But Ibn al-Sayrafī did not so state explicitly.

The message conveyed by Ibn al-Ṣayrafī’s description of this incident was homicide inflicted on a senior militarist by women who were his personal property; a grave threat to preservation of hierarchy and hegemony in the social order. That he discussed only the humiliating display and execution of the two whites who were convicted may imply the greater gravity of their offense, since they murdered their owner who shared their ethnicity. Yet the black slave girl was equally culpable. From details Ibn al-Ṣayrafī supplied, one cannot determine whether he found her involvement less ominous than that of her white peer. But the violation of ethnic solidarity implicit in the severity of the fate inflicted on the two whites lent this incident its distinction.

Another incident of homicide against a militarist owner occurred in the third decade of the tenth/sixteenth century and involved slave women and their free lovers. The historian Ibn Iyās pointedly tied their ethnicity and status to their actions:

“On Saturday the ninth (of Jumādā II 921/21 July 1515), the sultan (Qānṣawh al-Ghawrī) ordered hanged four persons (*anfār*): a white female slave of Anatolian extraction (*jāriyya rūmiyyat al-jins*), an Ethiopian female slave (*jāriyyat Ḥabashiyya*), a youthful son of a mamlūk (*walad nās*), turbaned (*laffāf*), and a bowmaker (*shakhṣ qawwās*). The reason: this mamlūk’s son and the bowmaker fornicated with the two slaves and urged them to assassinate their owner, who was himself a *walad nās* and *iqṭā’* holder. They (presumably the slaves only) killed him, and thrust his corpse into the

6 Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Inbā’* p. 401, line 10.

7 Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Inbā’* p. 425, line 4; Ibn Iyās, *Baḍā’i’ al-Zuhūr fī Waqā’i’ al-Duhūr*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā, 2nd ed. 5 parts in 6 volumes, Beirut/Wiesbaden, 1982–84: Isā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, vol. 3, p. 70, line 10.

latrine (possibly midden: *mustarāḥ*). They stole everything in his house and then traveled toward Aṭfih (in Upper Egypt). Five months elapsed before their crime was discovered. They were denounced by a small slave girl. A (presumably Bedouin) shaykh in Aṭfih apprehended them and returned them to the sultan. Upon interrogation, they confessed to the murder and disposal of the body. The sultan ordered the wālī prefect to investigate the case. He searched the latrine and found the cadaver there in a putrid state. It was removed from the latrine and shown to the sultan, who ordered its burial. The victim's iqtā' was reassigned to another mamlūk. He (the sultan) ordered hanged those who were responsible. On their execution day, Cairo turned out to witness it. They were conducted to the murder scene, near the Bāb al-Sa'āda, and terminated."⁸

The notoriety and implicit threat behind this case influenced Ibn Iyās's choice for its inclusion. The luridness of his description, with emphasis on the perpetrators' deception, greed and lust, conveyed a more ominous message of latent menace beneath the facade of smoldering resentment of an owner's control and exploitation. That free members of society, both white, were ready to abet these sentiments – and share in the risk of certain capital punishment if captured – heightened this threat to public order and the attendant hierarchies of class and property that buttressed it. Ibn Iyās's depiction of the free men who incited the slave women to murder their owner hinted at their primary responsibility as instigators of homicide that violated status boundaries and compromised the hegemony of the military elite.

The Damascene historian al-Jazari commented on a case where the guilty party met execution by strangulation for her heinous duplicity. The incident's notoriety was sufficient to sustain its detailed depiction in a chronicle compiled decades after the fact.

“On Tuesday the third of Dhū al-Qa'da (737/3 June 1337), they (presumably police authorities) strangled, on the outskirts of Damascus, a procuress (*qawwāda*). She (habitually) frequented wedding festivals (*al-afrāḥ*), to take note (*tubaṣṣira*) of the attending women. (In this instance) one was wearing gold and silver jewelry (*maṣāgh zarkash*), trinkets (*ḥalī*), and attractive apparel (*thiyāb jamīla*). She (the procuress) spoke to her, awakening her desire (*turaghghibuha*). She (the procuress) said to her that she had with her a handsome young man (*shābun ḥasanun*) who, if he (customarily) were to offer (*yabdhalu*) a comely woman (*malayḥa*) fifty dirhams, he might (then) raise the amount (*yudarrijuha*) to one hundred. When she (the woman) replied to him (in the affirmative: *ajābathu*), she (the procuress) would take (the additional sum). She (the procuress) (then) walked with her to the outskirts of town, and induced her to stay at a certain place. She said to her: 'You cannot meet up with someone in town because of neighbors or officials, but only in the orchard (*bustān*).' She then left (the woman) with her husband. He (the husband) then put off the pledge to her. But she (the procuress) had plotted with (*amalāt 'alā*) a female hairdresser (*māshiṭa*), who absconded with

8 Ibn Iyās, *Baḍā'i* 4, p. 461, line 8.

many trinkets as was her custom. Three days later, one of the hairdresser's female slaves (*jāriya*) went to the police prefect (*wālī*), and informed on the woman (procuress). When they (police) summoned her, she denied the affair. They tortured her repeatedly, but she refused to confess. The *wālī* then stated that the female slave was lying. (Subsequently) investigators (*al-mu'arrafūn*) took three coins (*fulūs*) and sent them with a woman whose husband had given them to her to spend. He had enjoined her (*yuṣiḥa*): 'Do not confess (to the act); I will give (these) so that you will not have need (to do so).' When the woman had met up with her (the procuress), she (the woman) asked, 'Is he well-disposed (*ṭayyib*)?' She (the procuress) replied, 'yes, and his danger is upon you (*khāṭiruhu 'alayki*); Until now, I have acknowledged nothing.' They (investigators) informed the *wālī*. He summoned her (the procuress) and bound one hand and foot. They inserted the other hand into poison aloe (*maqirat al-'ilāj*). She verged on death, and confessed that she had (so) acted with several other women. Her husband fled, and no further news was learned of him. Her interrogation proceeded throughout the entire month. The Viceroy (*nā'ib al-salṭana*) ordered her strangulation, which was carried out on the aforementioned date. May God show her neither mercy nor favor, nor for her husband. May God curse her and diminish them both."⁹

Since al-Jazarī likely redacted the details of this incident second-hand from earlier sources, we cannot know whether he abridged or enhanced them. Yet the specificity and vividness of his version attest to the abiding memory of a transgression regarded as sordid because of its perpetrator's odious duplicity. No mention was made of any crime worse than theft and fornication (the participants were lured from post-marital festivities); no victims were reported murdered to conceal the offenders' identities. It would seem that the duplicity of the procuress, who infringed upon the sanctity of marital rites to carry out her seductive activities for profit, endured to taint her memory as a woman damned by God and society. Note however, that al-Jazarī focused his most vehement condemnation on the procuress, not on her husband. Nor did he report any effort on the authorities' part to pursue him, despite his complicity in the crime. He was to be diminished, but God's curse fell on her. The gendered distinction is significant.

A case of serial marriages tainted by implicit violation of the prescribed period of waiting (*'idda*) that resulted in the birth of a freakishly deformed infant was reported by three historians, two amending the first's rendition.¹⁰ In all three versions, the woman remained unnamed.

9 Al-Jazarī, *Ta'riḫ Ḥawādith al-Zamān wa-Anbā'ih wa-Wafayāt al-Akābir wa-al-A'yān min Abnā'ih*, ed. 'Umar 'Abd-as-Salām Tadmurī, 3 vols., Beirut, 1997, vol. 3, p. 393, line 3.

10 Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk li-Ma'rifat Duwal al-Sulūk*, ed. M.M. Ziyāda and A. 'A. 'Ashūr, 4 vols., 2nd ed., Cairo, 1956–72, vol. 2, p. 921, line 14; Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Inbā' al-Ghumr bi-Anbā' al-'Umr*, ed. Ḥasan Ḥabashī, 3 vols. Cairo, 1971–72, vol. 3, p. 512, line 3; Ibn Taghrī-Birdī, *al-Nujūm al-Zāhira fī Mulūk Miṣr wa-al-Qāhira*, ed. W. Popper, 16 vols. Cairo, 1936–70, vol. 15, p. 47, line 7.

Maqrīzī: “During it (Sha‘bān 837/March-April 1434), a man from (the presumed tribe) of the Banī Mahdī in the region of al-Bilqā’¹¹ divorced his wife while she was pregnant (*hāmīl*). Another man married (with consummation) her (*nakaḥaha*), then abandoned her. A third man (then) married her. To him she bore a frog (*ḍufda’an*) with the guise (*qadr*) of the child (*al-tifl*). They took it and buried it, fearing disgrace (*al-‘ār*).

Ibn Ḥajar: “I noted in the book of one who reported events that a woman was divorced, while pregnant (*hāmīl*). She concealed (*katamat*) her pregnancy and remarried. Then he (2nd husband) divorced her, and she married a third. Then after that divorce bound her, she bore a male child whose appearance (*ṣūra*) was that of the frog (*al-ḍufda’*) with the guise (*qadr*) of a child. God shielded her (*sataraha*) by its killing (*imātihi*). I read that in the writing of the Shaykh Taqī al-Dīn al-Maqrīzī.

Ibn Taghrī-Birdī: “Al-Maqrīzī stated: ‘In this year, that is the year 837, a man of the Banī Mahdī from the region (*ard*) of al-Bilqā’ divorced a woman who was pregnant (*hāmīl*). A man other than he married (with consummation: *nakaḥaha*) her. Then he separated from her (*fāraqaha*) and a third man married her. To him she bore a frog (*ḍufdā’an*) with the guise (*qadr*) of a child. They took it and buried it, fearing disgrace (*al-‘ār*).

Note that Maqrīzī’s initial version was the most terse: simply reporting the woman’s three marriages and birthing of a deformed infant, presumably still-born although this was not overtly stated, and its burial to avoid shame. The latter objective: evading public disgrace carried with it the possibility that the infant was alive when buried, although the Koranic condemnation of infanticide would significantly deter the likelihood of committing of such an act. The woman’s implicit violation of the *‘idda* could only be deduced from his version. By contrast, Ibn Ḥajar asserted that the woman consciously perpetrated a crime by knowingly concealing her pregnancy when she married a second time. Whether her second husband abandoned her upon discovery of her violation to avoid paternal responsibility is indeterminate. The birth of a deformed infant following the woman’s third marriage Ibn Ḥajar depicted as divine sanction (for a repeated violation of *‘idda*), but also protection from possible worse punishment under Law due to killing the product itself (thus an act of infanticide). By implication, unnamed persons carried out God’s shielding of the woman for violation of the waiting period by termination of its misshapen product. Whether deformity regarded as monstrous would mitigate infanticide is left open in Ibn Ḥajar’s version. Ibn Taghrī-Birdī amended neither of his predecessors, reiterating Maqrīzī’s rendition. His familiarity with his de-facto mentor’s historical corpus is well known. Although Ibn Taghrī-Birdī reduplicated Maqrīzī’s laconic description of the incident verbatim, this was not his routine reaction to Maqrīzī’s depictions generally. Ibn Taghrī-Birdī did not routinely concur with Maqrīzī’s

11 Reinhart Pieter Anne Dozy, *Supplément aux dictionnaires arabes*, 2 vols., Leiden, 1818, vol. 1, p. 168.

interpretations of events that had provoked contention, and about which both had access to detailed sources. In this case, he apparently had no access to sources unconsulted by Maqrīzī, or did not regard the incident itself as worthy of further inquiry or speculation. Whatever the background to Ibn Taghrī-Birdī's concurrence, all three historians conveyed the impression of links between the woman's serial marriages, violation of the prescribed interval to ascertain the unborn's paternity, birth of a shockingly deformed infant as an implicit sign of divine disfavor, and its burial to evade public disgrace. Although the woman was by implication guilty of deliberate concealment when entering into subsequent marriage, she escaped punishment through the intervention of persons unnamed, but presumably related to her. Ibn Ḥajar stated that God 'shielded' her, but from discovery in the temporal world. Whether she would avoid permanent sanction in the Hereafter is left unresolved.¹²

The final transgressive event related to female deportment under consideration was, for several reasons, among the most unsettling to its redactors that the present writer discerned among an inventory of such events compiled during a broader investigation of crime.¹³ While not extensive in terms of specific acts or circumstances surrounding them, the incident confronts the reader with questions about culpability and responsibility that evade unambiguous resolution. A superficial reading of the case leaves an impression of tragedy that supportive counseling could have prevented. Subsequent reflection taking into account contextual perspectives qualifies such an impression. Two historians reported the incident: al-Maqrīzī and Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, the latter amending the former's rendition with his own assignation of blame.¹⁴ The historians offered differing

12 An incident of freakish childbirth that attracted notoriety at the highest levels in English society during the 18th century is discussed by Lisa Forman Cody: the peasant woman Mary Toth's delivery of multiple rabbits (*Birth of the Nation: Sex, Science, and the Conception of Eighteenth-Century Britons* [Oxford, 2005], p. 120). Unlike the presumed (and unnamed) fornicatress of the preceding incident, Toth's alleged production of monstrous offspring caught the attention of the monarchy itself, and granted her temporary celebrity. Under interrogation, Toth was not charged with fornication or bestiality, but was accused of fabrication and her husband of supplying the rabbit fetuses (pp. 128–132). The contrast between furtive concealment and deliberate exposure highlights the differing crimes and social contexts of the two incidents.

13 26 references to female deportment were discerned, dating from 750H/1349–50CE to 928/1521–22. Several of these were generic edicts proscribing apparel that violated acceptable clothing norms according to legal/religious authorities, or imposing limits on women's mobility in the public sphere. These were often issued in the aftermath of political crises, foreign threats or natural disasters. Others commented on specific incidents, similar to the incident under discussion. Notoriety determined the chroniclers' selection in these cases.

14 Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk* 3, p. 354, line 14; Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-Nufūs wa-al-Abdān fī Tawārīkh al-Zamān*, ed. Ḥasan Ḥabashī, Cairo, 1970, vol. 1, p. 160, line 5. The commentary allegedly contributed by al-'Aynī would be located in currently unpublished ms. sections of his *Iqd al-*

dates for its occurrence: Jumādā II or Shaʿbān 787/July-August or September/October 1385.

Al-Maqrīzī: “During this month (Jumādā II 787/July-August 1385) occurred an event to be marveled: a woman (unnamed) beheld in her sleep the Messenger of God, praise be upon Him. He forbade her from wearing the shawl (*shāsh*), which was a black headcloth (*aṣba*) that women affected (*aḥdathaha*) from about the year 780. It imitated (*ṣārat tashabbaha*) the camel’s humps (*asnima al-bukht*) and its fat (*samīnaha*). The shawl’s front lay over the woman’s forehead, its rear extended over the back (of the head). Its length extended (*ṭūluhu mumtaddan*) to ca. one cubit (*al-dhirāʾ*) in height (*fi irtifāʾ*), less a quarter cubit.¹⁵ She did not cease wearing it, and (thus) beheld him (the Prophet pbuh) a second time while asleep. He said to her: ‘I forbade you from wearing the *shāsh* but you did not heed me and wore it (again). You (thus) will not die except as a Christian (*naṣrāniyya*).’ Her mother (then) conveyed her to the Shaykh al-Islām Sirāj al-Dīn ʿUmar al-Bulqīnī so that she would relate her vision to him. He ordered her to proceed to the Christian church (unspecified) and pray there several prostrations (*rakaʿāt*) and ask God the All-High to have mercy on her. She might (then) approach Him so that He summoned her. Her mother (then) conducted her from the session with al-Bulqīnī to the church. She (the daughter) prayed and fell dead immediately (*kharrat mayyitatan li-waqtīha*). Her mother (then) left her (there) and departed from the church. The Christians buried her among them (i. e., in their space). We seek refuge in God from the evil consequence of the judgment (*sūʾ ʿāqibat al-qaḍāʾ*).”

Ibn al-Ṣayrafī: “During this month strange events occurred, among which: a woman while asleep beheld the Prophet pbuh who admonished her against wearing the *shāsh*. It was a head cloth (*aṣba*) that women took (to wearing) from ca. the year 780 (from here Ibn al-Ṣayrafī duplicated Maqrīzī’s version until the woman’s death following her prayer in the church and mother’s abandonment of her corpse). The Christians (then) buried her in their cemeteries (*muqābirihim*). We seek God’s (protection) from that. Thus did several historians relate this incident. I wish I knew (*layta shīrī*) how this (manner of) death was made possible (*ʿuhilla*), enabling (*makunū min*) the Christians to bury this Muslim woman in their cemeteries. The command of Shaykh al-Islām al-Bulqīnī to her to pray in the church resulted (*yatarratabu ʿalayha*) in her (forced) departure from the Community (*milla*) of Islam. By God, how astounding, then (again) astounding is that! (*wa-yallahu al-ʿajab thumma al-ʿajab min dhalika*). Each (ghayr waḥid) of the historians such the Shaykh Taqī al-Dīn al-Maqrīzī and our Shaykh Qāḍī al-Quḍāh Badr al-Dīn al-ʿAynī related (*awrada*) this incident (*qiṣṣa*).”

Jumān fi Taʾrikh Ahl al-Zamān. Note also that, despite the claim by the editor of Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, no reference to the incident was found for that date in Ibn Ḥajar’s *Inbāʾ al-Ghumr*.
 15 The appearance of this garment is elusive. Yedida Stillman discusses the terms *shāsh* and *aṣb* in their masculine usage as turbans (*Arab Dress from the Dawn of Islam to Modern Times* [Leiden, 2000], pp. 70, 135; 25, 39, 103). She notes periodic edicts forbidding women from wearing turbans styled for men throughout the Mamluk period and a ‘sac-like veil’ fastened with a cloth *ʿisāba* (p. 82). Dozy makes reference to the *shāsh* headgear (*Supplément aux dictionnaires arabes* I, p. 802). The physical image of the depicted camel humps remains indeterminate.

The incident evidently affected its redactors as remarkable for its negative consequences. But an interrogation of their depictions raises questions as to precisely what they found negative about it. Both authors attributed the woman's death to a judgment on the part of a prominent and learned jurist. Maqrīzī applied the term 'evil' (*sū*) to the admonition al-Bulqīnī imposed on her to perform undisguised Muslim prayer in a Christian church. Since both called upon the ultimate i. e., divine, authority to protect believers from such an act – and its terminal consequence, neither attributed any responsibility for that judgment to divine agency. By deduction then, they held the jurist accountable. But when al-Bulqīnī's admonition is parsed, it offers the possibility of divine forgiveness and a summons to the woman if she prayed as a Muslim in Christian sacred space. Could not her death immediately upon her performance of Muslim prayer be interpreted as God's calling her to Himself in forgiveness: a sign of His ultimate mercy and offer of salvation?

Neither author seems to have thought so. Both emphasized the woman's death as a departure (albeit unwillingly) from redemption as a Muslim, and a claim upon her soul by Christians, attested to by her interment on Christian soil. Her act itself was either deliberately provocative to Christians in a hostile sense, or subject to their own interpretation of it as a gesture of submission to their own faith. The jurist al-Bulqīnī remained the object of both authors' opprobrium. Note that the Prophet's second warning to the woman following her rejection of his order to cease wearing the (apparently outlandish) head cloth conveyed the certainty of her dying outside her own religion – a fate implicitly worse than the simple fact of death itself. The gist of both authors' versions pointed to effective excommunication from the offender's religious community as the irremediable penalty for her act – performance of which was imposed on her by a respected religious authority.

With regard to the pivotal aspect of her offense, it would seem to have been defiance of the Prophet's warning to cease wearing the outlandish *shāsh*. Both authors intimated that the woman (possibly an impressionable adolescent from their descriptions) had done nothing more aberrant than to imitate the preference for a peculiarly shaped garment manifested by many affluent women in Cairo. This *shāsh* was currently in style. The authors offered no comment as to why wearing a head cloth shaped like a camel's hump by this particular individual defied divine injunction against feminine immodesty, as seen by the Prophet, or why her refusal to desist prompted a warning of such dire consequences. Neither made mention of this garment's popularity as a fashion among Christians, or other religious minority, and thus offensive to Muslims. Nor did they overtly attribute aberrant sexual imagery to its imitation of a camel's hump.¹⁶

16 Prohibition of head coverings shaped as camel humps is addressed in a Prophetic tradition.

The mother's behavior with regard to her daughter merits scrutiny. An impression of abrupt abandonment following the collapse and death of one's offspring in the surreal setting of Muslim prayer openly performed in a Christian church may not convey the range of possible reactions on the authors' part. Their depiction offers no descriptive details about the mother beyond her accompanying the daughter to a counseling session with the *qāḍī*, acquiescing to his admonition by conducting her to the church, and then immediate departure while leaving the girl's body on the floor to be claimed by its congregants. The authors provided no comments endorsing or condemning these acts. The mother emerges as emotionless in their depiction. While collectively the mother's behavior implies a sense of salvation irretrievably lost that outweighed any personal feelings of grief over a child's sudden death, her behavior may have accorded with idealized concepts of faith expressed by a believer whose devotion was genuine and convictions sound. If the mother heeded the Prophet's warning that her daughter would die a Christian because of her rebellious actions, then in the mother's eyes her fate was effectively sealed before she entered the church. The mother was abandoning the corpse of a person who had herself relinquished her chance for redemption. Whether the two authors regarded the mother's behavior in this way remains indeterminate from details they provided in the entry. It is possible that they regarded it as unpraiseworthy but not condemnatory. From their perspective, faith convictions may have trumped a mother's sorrow in this instance.

The authors' views with regard to the *qāḍī*'s admonition were less equivocal. Both denounced his judgment, and Ibn al-Ṣayrafī castigated it as responsible for a Muslim's death outside her religious community, the fate of her soul claimed by sectarian rivals in their own sacred space. Whether either author believed that a respected jurist was duty bound to offer an impressionable, possibly unstable, adolescent supportive counsel if not comfort following the emotional turmoil brought on by her visions also remains indeterminate from the details provided. The extant text may not warrant reading this possibility into the event. But the *qāḍī*'s responsibility for casting a believer out of her religion and closing off her chance for redemption as a Muslim does emerge as the message they conveyed.

The Ḥadīth appears in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Muslim (thus sound): The Messenger of God pbuh said: "There are two types of people who will be punished in Hell and whom I have not seen: men having whips like cows' tails who beat people with them; and women who are dressed but appear to be naked, inviting evil. They themselves will be inclined to it. Their heads will appear like camel humps (*asnima al-bukht*) inclined to one side. They will not enter Paradise nor will they smell its fragrance...." (18/123 in the Book of Prohibited Actions [*Kitāb al-umūr al-manhī' anḥā*], transmitted by Abū Hurayra). The historians may have assumed awareness of this Ḥadīth by their presumed readership, and therefore did not refer to it explicitly.

Closing Thoughts

Reflecting over the preceding narratives as a group, what characteristics do they reveal about their personnel, and projected by what semantic or stylistic devices? With regard to terminology, reference to diffidence (*hishma*) in the presence of males occurred only once – in the biography about Faraj ibnat al-Nāṣirī Muḥammad. The reference was coupled to her leadership or authoritativeness (*riyāsa*), with the inference that the former enhanced the latter. This limited occurrence must be interpreted within the confines of a small sample of five biographies chosen from 20 surveyed, themselves selected from among hundreds of others that addressed women who attained renown or notoriety for their erudition or prominence in the public sphere. Yet Sakhāwī's lack of emphasis on terminology implying deference or submissiveness to males was discernible throughout the full roster of women's biographies in volume 12. He was far more inclined to apply terms indicating the distinctive, singular or unusual about them than to choose words or phrases that left impressions of their subordination to males. And when Sakhāwī focused on the singular, or even peculiar, in their biographies, he rarely embellished his distinctions with phraseology that was overtly judgmental – pro or con. This disinclination to praise or denigrate contrasts markedly with Sakhāwī's proclivity for judgmental, frequently biased, assessments of his male subjects. His treatment of women remained noticeably restrained, even neutral, by comparison.

On the matter of erudition itself, similarities and contrasts distinguish Sakhāwī's reportage for men and women. Biographies for both fulsomely list subjects studied, either broad disciplines or specific works. Lists were likely compiled from *ijāza* certificates, to which Sakhāwī seems to have had substantial access. Trajectories for men and women diverge noticeably when he inventoried authorship of scholarly or pedagogical writings. References to specific works, usually identified by key words in the title of a treatise or commentary, abound for men. More than half of a biography of a male jurist or scholastic of even middling reputation is frequently taken up by either the roster of texts he studied, or wrote himself. While Sakhāwī sporadically referred to scholarly writing by women, it occurred much less often, and rarely mentioned a specific title. When Sakhāwī reported authorship by a woman, the product was noted simply as a 'book' (*kitāb*) without further identification of subject or purpose. Sakhāwī frequently appended an adjective to this reference indicating quality, such as 'fine' (*ḥasan*). His vagueness was rarely linked to some expression of inferiority or inaccuracy, a procedure to which he did not adhere when reporting scholarship by men. Quite the opposite; Sakhāwī's penchant for derogation of male scholarship figures substantively throughout the *Ḍaw'*. For individuals whom he

regarded as incompetent, misguided, or both, his criticisms often verged beyond castigation to dismissively venomous.

Sakhāwī largely spared women this degree of vituperation. In fact, the vagueness characterizing his depiction of their pedagogical authorship was accompanied by a studied neutrality about its substance. Beyond rather superficial attributions of quality, he had little to say. Whether such brevity implies a predisposition to assume insignificance, and thus disinclination to consult the actual text, remains indeterminate. One cannot know whether, in a pre-print environment of limited production and scarce copies, works composed by women were transcribed by male copyists and were readily accessible to male readers. Sakhāwī's pointed references to prominent female Hadith transmitters reciting before male audiences would seem to mitigate against this possibility, but the actual circumstances behind transmission of works authored by women remain largely untraceable.

Sakhāwī's assessment of acuity and talent by the women he described may appear as less distinctive than his evaluation of scholastic accomplishments by males because of the dearth of specific works, presented as inventories of titles, for the former. Yet his estimations of ability overall, as derived from evaluative terminology, did not differ appreciably for either gender. Sakhāwī applied similar terms or phrases to the learned achievements, public posture, and social stature of both. As noted above, women were routinely praised for the depth of their religious convictions, sincerity of their piety, and skills at recitation or calligraphy (or criticized for perceived deficits in these accomplishments or qualities). Sakhāwī did not dwell on their adherence to restrictions on interaction according to gender boundaries. Few litanies attesting to deference or submissiveness appeared in his depictions. The terms Sakhāwī used paralleled those he applied to his evaluations of men for scholastic accomplishment. The lack of titled works reported for women does seem to have resulted in more generalized – and consequently less precise – depictions of scholastic achievement for women than for men. The tenor of Sakhāwī's assessments nonetheless remained broadly the same for each gender. And again, as noted above, Sakhāwī was much more apt to depict the career trajectories of men in a negative light than he was for women. To the latter, his assessments appear more restrained and less inclined toward hyperbole, effusion or vitriol. Whether Sakhāwī's restraint was due to inherent caution when traversing gender boundaries, or latent dismissiveness with regard to literary output on the part of women remains an open question.

Restraint did not characterize depictions of criminal or transgressive behavior by women as reported in narrative chronicle literature of the period. Interrogation of terminology applied to such behavior as a device of negative indictment without explicit condemnation is an objective motivating this inquiry. While a parallel interrogation with regard to depictions of crime by men awaits a

substantive comparison, the incidents considered above disclosed a tendency on the part of narrative writers to focus on the singular or exceptional when they described transgressive behavior/activity by women. This tendency resembled the attribution of singularity evident in Sakhāwī's renditions of female biographies in the *Daw'*. And to the extent that men participated in transgressions attributed to women, the former's actions were described in less vivid detail than the latter's – in contrast with depictions appearing in the women's biographies. In criminal activity attributed to both genders, it was the men who emerged less distinctly, were subjected to sanctions of less intensity, and were more likely to evade apprehension or arouse the authorities' pursuit. What sort of message did this tendency convey? Terms and phrases utilized to describe women's criminality appear to have been chosen for their inference of underlying proclivities.

The Ḥalabī who engaged prostitutes in 'impermissible' acts (prostitution itself with unmarried women is not illegal), and who subsequently murdered them, received no description beyond his 'peculiar' celibacy. And it was he who escaped with no effort by the authorities at apprehension. By contrast, his victims were luridly described: costly apparel and fragrances were juxtaposed against the stench of their putrefaction as they lay undiscovered among wine cups (ingestion of forbidden substance). No one was named in this incident. The white and black slaves who murdered their Mamluk masters emerged as violators of the social order that consigned them to status as chattel. While this transgression against hierarchical authority was serious, it did not provoke the chroniclers' most vivid language. Rather, it was shared ethnicity of the perpetrator with her master in one incident and an illicit liaison with free men (both white) by the two female offenders in the other that attracted the chroniclers' most intense opprobrium. The vividness of their terminology lends credence to the veracity of their descriptions.

The procuress who enticed female attendees at wedding parties to sexual encounters with her husband was exposed to the authorities by an accomplice's female slave. The narrator made no further reference to this individual who, as an unfree person, took the risk, apparently on her own initiative, of reporting the procuress's crime to the police. Her steadfastness when accused of lying seems to have impressed the authorities sufficiently to set up the three coins ruse that unraveled/discredited the procuress's alibi. The narrator's omission of praise for this unnamed slave projects an ambiguous impression of acknowledgment for the slave's exposure of a crime al-Jazari found heinous enough to call God's curse upon its perpetrator. Yet the narrator failed to appreciate the slave's contribution in any explicit way. Does this omission convey a message of indifference about an initiative that, although essential to solving a crime, was taken by a person whose status did not warrant formal recognition? The narrator's omission would seem to so imply. Omission becomes integral to the passage's semantic structure.

The brief reports of deformed birth following a woman's serial marriages in (presumed) violation of the prescribed waiting period conveyed a less ambiguous message. A misshapen infant implicitly embodied divine retribution for transgressing against divine Law. Ambiguity did surround burial of this deformed product of sin by the woman's (also presumed) kin to protect the transgressor from detection and sanction. The passages made no comment about whether the infant was still-born but left open the possibility of infanticide, an offense in magnitude equal to violation of the 'idda. The passage conveyed no option for unequivocal salvation.

The death of a girl who defied the Prophet's admonition to cease wearing a peculiarly shaped head covering raised multiple issues of culpability readily apparent in the narrators' terminological choices. The garment itself was depicted as at once outlandish (by implication sufficiently aberrant to arouse the Prophet's ire) and yet stylish as a sought-after fashion by the girl's female peers. Did the girl's fate convey a collective warning to affluent women who chased after rakish fashion? The narrators' attribution of responsibility to a respected shaykh for ordering the girl to perform Muslim prayer in a Christian church, presumably in the presence of congregants, resulted in a death that severed her irrevocably from the Muslim community. Her mother's behavior was depicted as more than abandonment. Her abrupt departure leaving the girl's corpse for Christians to claim signaled disownment of a daughter lost to her by excommunication from Islam and denied salvation as a true believer. The narrators' condemnation of both for inflicting a fate of such severity on a person guilty of little more than adolescent rebellion, expressed in language that castigated misconduct by the counselor to whom she turned for comfort, emerges as an effective summation of the issues considered in this presentation.

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Ibn Zunbul on the Ottoman Conquest of Syria and Egypt

Aḥmad b. Abī Ḥasan ‘Alī, better known as Ibn Zunbul (we may dismiss the much less common variant Ibn Zambal¹), stemmed, as his *nisba* al-Maḥallī indicates, from al-Maḥalla al-Kubrā in the Egyptian Delta.² We know that he adhered to the Shāfi‘ite school of law, but not much else; even when he died is variously speculated about by scholars and the dates range between 1553 and 1575 and even, although less likely, the first half of the seventeenth century.³ He probably witnessed Sultan Selīm’s entry to Cairo in 1517 as a youngster or alternatively, as middle-aged, depends on which date one assumes for his death. Later, he was known as a *munajjim* (astrologer) and *rammāl* (geomancer: telling the fortunes according to the shapes of the sand⁴); Robert Irwin and Benjamin Lellouch differ on the identity of the Ottoman governors he served in this capacity.⁵ We are also told that he visited Istanbul a few times and his name reached the Ottoman court. At the same time, he had close ties with Muḥammad, the son of the Mamluk sultan Qansawh al-Ghawrī. Although our author, as we shall see, did not have much respect for the father, his relationship with the son was entirely different: he refers to him fondly and respectfully *sīdī* and claims he was one of his informants.⁶

Ibn Zunbul wrote several treatises on geomancy, cosmography and astronomy, among which one can name the *Kitāb qānūn al-dunyā* (“The Book on the

1 Lellouch (2006b).

2 For reference to his possible residence in that town and his dwelling on its excellences in one of his works, see Irwin (2006), 4.

3 Holt (1968), 5 n.1; Lellouch (1994), 144; Moustafa-Hamouzova, 190; Lellouch (2006a), 275; Irwin (2006), 4; Fuess, 109. See also editor’s introduction (p. 72) to the edition of his historical book that is discussed below.

4 See article “rammāl,” Encyclopaedia of Islam, second edition.

5 Irwin (2004), 138; Irwin (2006), 4, where he rejects the possibility that Ibn Zunbul was Qansawh al-Ghawrī’s court geomancer. For a different opinion, see Lellouch (2006a), 241, 274. According to the editor of a Beirut 2004 edition of his historical book, he died after 980/1572.

6 Lellouch (2006a), 241, 274–275; Lellouch (2006b).

Order of the World”), and on other topics.⁷ Obviously, our concern here is with his historical book of less than 200 pages in printed editions, which treats the short time span between al-Ghawrī’s defeat in Syria in 1516 and the five odd years following the conquest of Egypt a year later. The author features in it in his name explicitly at least thrice,⁸ and otherwise refers to himself as “the historian” (*mu’arrikh*), “the author” (*mu’allif*) and other terms. He also reveals, or at least claims to do so, his informants, including, as noted, al-Ghawrī’s son.⁹ In devoting a sort of a monograph to a few select episodes that allegedly took place within the larger scene of the Ottoman conquest, but certainly not only in this respect, Ibn Zunbul differs from the more reputed Egyptian Ibn Iyās or the Syrian Ibn Ṭūlūn, both more or less his contemporaries, for whom the conquest of both Syria and Egypt, an important event as it was, could only be placed in the broad annalistic format in which they excelled.¹⁰

The title of Ibn Zunbul’s book under review is variously given. For example, a lithographed edition dated to 1861¹¹ has the title (a corrupt one, according to P M Holt) *Kitāb ta’riḫ al-sultān Salīm Khān b. al-sultān Bāyāzid Khān ma’a Qanṣawh al-Ghawrī sultān Miṣr wa-a’māliḥā*. Holt prefers the title as it appears in a Bodleian manuscript, *Ta’riḫ ghazwat al-sultān Salīm Khān ma’a al-sultān al-Ghawrī*.¹² According to the editor of the Cairo 1998 edition, which I use for this contribution (which is, in fact, apart from the editor’s introduction, a re-issue of a 1962 edition, and is also identical with the 1861 lithograph¹³), the original title was *Waq’at* [however, rather *Wāqī’at* on the front page!] *al-Ghawrī wa’l-sultān Salīm wa-mā jarā baynahumā*, but its shorthand was *Akhīrat al-Mamālīk*.¹⁴ Ibn Zunbul himself refers to the book as *Infiṣāl dawlat al-āwān wa-itṭiṣāl dawlat Banī ‘Uthmān*, a title adopted by Irwin, and which he translates as “The Departure of the Temporal Dynasty and the Coming of the Ottomans.”¹⁵ According to Irwin, we have not only different titles for the same text but a cluster of closely related

7 For its full title and a discussion of an illustrated Istanbul manuscript, see Milstein and Moor.

See also Irwin (2006), 5, who has the title *al-Qānūn wa’l-dunyā*, and suggests considering the author as similar to modern novelists-occultists.

8 Ibn Zunbul, 83, 99, 170 in the Cairo 1998 edition that is used throughout in the present article.

9 Ibid, 254, 256, 258.

10 The assessment by Holt (1968), 5, reproduced in (1973), 153, that Ibn Zunbul’s work is a supplement to Ibn Iyās on the conquest seems to me off the mark. Even to Holt, Ibn Zunbul’s “history” belongs to an entirely different genre of writing about the past. This will be further argued below.

11 The editor of the 1998 edition (p. 72) dates it erroneously to 1287/1870–1.

12 Holt (1973), 153, 158–159.

13 Moustafa-Hamouzova, 190.

14 Editor’s introduction, 7. For Fuess’ apparent error, see 113.

15 Irwin (2006), 5; see his slight error in (2004), 139; Lellouch, (2006ba). I shall use the shorthand *Infiṣāl* in what follows.

versions.¹⁶ At least this much seems beyond doubt: judging by over forty manuscripts that survived from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries,¹⁷ and the existence of a few Turkish adaptations, as well as the fact that the book was one of the earliest to be printed by the Ottomans, the *Infīṣāl* was and perhaps to some extent still is quite popular.¹⁸

What are in brief the book's contents? As already summarized by scholars, it opens with an aside about an inner struggle in the Ottoman court between Selīm and his contenders to the throne, then follows the departure of the Mamluk army from Cairo to Syria – in May 1515 according to Ibn Zunbul, but exactly a year later, according to the preferred dating, supplied by the authoritative Ibn Iyās.¹⁹ Then we learn about the tension within the Mamluk camp and al-Ghawrī's defeat and execution by his own emirs on the battlefield at Marj Dābiq. The largest part is the account on Selīm's invasion to Egypt in 1517, not before the Circassians show resistance and are able to cause the Ottoman army temporary defeat. Ṭūmānbāy, the last Mamluk sultan, and his faithful followers stand in contrast to the traitors to their race, chiefly Khā'irbāy, and to a treacherous Arab chief. At least initially Sultan Selīm appears as a somewhat colorless figure controlled by his emirs who press him to invade Egypt against his own wish to conclude some sort of peace (*ṣulḥ*). In his dialogue with the defeated Ṭūmānbāy, the Ottoman ruler is almost made to apologize for invading Egypt, claiming it was not on his mind and he would have been satisfied with the traditional token of obedience, *khuṭba* and *sikka*. Even later he reiterates it and puts the blame for what in fact happened on the inner division (*fitna*) in the Mamluk camp.²⁰ The Circassians are defeated and then follows a description of the dispositions made in Egypt by the Turkish ruler, his return to Istanbul and his death. A final section deals with the revolt of Janbīrdī al-Ghazālī, a Mamluk emir who had been appointed as governor in Damascus, against Sultan Suleymān. What appears as the original version brings the story to a close with the death of Khā'irbāy in 1522 and the acts of the contingent which he had sent from Egypt to support the conquest of Rhodes.²¹ In later versions additional material was inserted.²²

16 Irwin (2006), 5. See also Moustafa-Hamouzova, 189; Lellouch (2006a), 244 n. 15.

17 For details, see Lellouch (2006b).

18 Moustafa-Hamouzova, 205–206; Lellouch (2006b); Irwin (2006), 4, 11. For details on further adaptations, see Hathaway (1990), 54–55. The most recent edition I was able to see is a popular Giza 2012 edition (no editor's name) under the title *Ta'rikh al-sultān Selīm al-awwal, ḥur-ūbuhu ma'a Qaṣṣawh al-Ghawrī wa-Qāitbāy* [sic] *wa-dukhūluhu Miṣr*, ascribed to Aḥmad al-Rammāl (no mention of Ibn Zunbul) and based on an unidentified manuscript that was copied in 1248/1833.

19 Moustafa-Hamouzova, 190 and n. 17.

20 Ibn Zunbul, 245, 267; Moustafa-Hamouzova, 194.

21 For this opinion, see Holt (1968), 5.

22 Holt (1973), 153; Lellouch (2006b); Irwin (2006), 5–6.

From what has been related so far it may be noticed that since Holt's notes in the late 1960s there has been some scholarly interest in our author, although I find it strange that on the face of it there appears occasional unawareness by some scholars of work done by their colleagues. Thus in an article published in 2001 Moustafa-Hamouzova is unaware of Lellouch's contribution in 1994 and Irwin appears unaware of both Holt and Moustafa-Hamouzova. My contribution takes note of the major scholarly observations made so far and expands on some of the historiographical features of the book. Based on specific examples I shall argue that Ibn Zunbul's *Infiṣāl* is by and large affiliated with the late *sīra* genre and, at the same time, has features that are common to what is considered as mainstream historical narratives.

We may begin with the overt ideological/theological messages that Ibn Zunbul, like most writers of history, of whatever brand and of any time, wished to convey.²³ As already pointed out by Lellouch, in the *Infiṣāl* it is mainly done through speeches made by the protagonists.²⁴ Assuming that one and the same writer is responsible for the text, one may in the first place detect a different political attitude toward Qānṣawh al-Ghawrī from that to Tūmānbāy, his successor. The first was clearly detested by Ibn Zunbul, who notes the sultan's policy in discriminating the veterans (*qarāniṣa*), actually causing their elimination in the Syrian campaign, and his attempt to promote his own 12,000 mamluks (*mushtarawāt*) who, however, failed him at a very crucial moment at Marj Dābiq and stood there passive. He was tricking almost everybody, including Selīm, and was suspicious, inquiring his geomancer about who would succeed him and mistaking the enigmatic answer "sīn," obviously standing for the name of the Ottoman sultan, for an emir who was loyal to his predecessor Qāitbāy. No wonder that the leading emirs (*a'yān*) were all disloyal to him, each of them wishing him death so he could succeed him. In the end, at the final stage of Marj Dābiq, he finds himself alone, with no one to support him. It is in this light that one has to interpret the detailed scene of the wounded al-Ghawrī laying unconsciously on the ground, his expensive clothing (priced at 3000 dinars) forming a contrast to his miserable situation, and two of the veteran emirs exchanging words as to what to do with him. They are sure that the Ottomans would cut off his head and display it all around their kingdom. To avoid it, at least this is what the claim, they do it themselves and throw the head into a pit, because "no one would recognize a corpse that has no head."²⁵

With Tūmānbāy things are different. Our author, if not an Egyptian patriot, at least appears to be a staunch supporter of the new sultan and the Mamluks. As he

23 I discuss it as regards al-Ṭabari's *History* in Shoshan (2004), 85–107.

24 Lellouch (1994), 147–148, 151.

25 Ibn Zunbul, 82–3, 88–9, 99, 100, 103.

would tell in his obituary of Ṭūmūnbāy, “he was beloved by all who saw him... there was none who did not wish him the best.” Even Selīm, before reluctantly deciding to execute him, thought of sparing his life and appointing him as a general, if not for the Mamluk traitors who warned him against it. Ṭūmanbāy remains Ibn Zūnbul’s favorite till his sad end, and even Selīm knows to tell just from his look his braveness and chivalry. The day of his execution was for the inhabitants of the kingdom “the worst day,” in which the world “turned upside down” with much groaning and tears coming from widows and orphans. Even the victorious Ottoman ruler was benevolent enough to send out three sacks full of silver coins as alms distributed in honor of the deceased ruler.²⁶

Ibn Zūnbul’s sympathy with the Mamluk regime is repeatedly stated through the protagonists’ speeches. At the top is Ṭūmanybāy, who in captivity challenges the Ottomans: “If you claim that this sultan of yours is a just king (*malik ‘ādil*), who stays away from wrongdoing, how dares he attack us and shoot at us... while we are Muslim believers and protect the Creed?”²⁷ The reference to the Ottoman use of artillery and muskets (*ramy al-nār*) has been pointed out as resentfully repeated and as the cause given in the book to the destruction of Circassian *chivalry*.²⁸ To be sure, the political tragedy from the vantage point of an Egyptian patriot had nothing to do with the real art of fighting, in which the Mamluks unquestionably excelled and surpassed their enemy. Thus, ‘Alān, an emir who survived Marj Dābiq and one of the aforementioned two who killed there the wounded al-Ghawrī, describes to Ṭūmānbāy the Ottomans as lacking *furūsiyya* skills; what they have is (the inferior) infantry armed with muskets (*rumāt bi’l-bunduq*). However, as we well know, the emir’s confidence that the Mamluks would prevail and make the Ottoman sultan “a parable (*mathal*) till the Day of Judgment”²⁹ ran against the actual course of history. Sharbāk, another prominent emir, tells his sultan that he observed the Ottomans’ conduct at the battlefield and they seemed to him as a “herd of beasts with no guide.”³⁰

Especially blunt is the captured emir Kirtbāy who, facing Selīm and knowing he would shortly be executed, does not hesitate “to look into his eyes” and describes the Mamluks as “the knights of [ill] fate (*fursān al-manāyā*) and of the red blood [of death].” He challenges Selīm to test the Mamluks’ ability, since even a single one of them would suffice for overpowering his opponents had they dropped their muskets. Mocking the sultan about his army of 200,000 (!) of all races (*jamī’ al-ajnās*), he challenges him further to let only three Mamluk heroes

26 Ibid, 242, 252, 253, 254; Moustafa-Hamouzova, 193, 202. For the sultan’s modesty, see also Lellouch (1994), 151.

27 Ibn Zūnbul, 217.

28 Holt (1973), 153, my italics.

29 Ibn Zūnbul, 120–121.

30 Ibid, 202.

fight his entire army, then he would see if he deserved to be named king. Invoking the names of ‘Umar and ‘Alī, the two brave early caliphs, Kirtbāy contrasts them with Selīm who, although facing “Muslim armies,” gathered his troops from the far ends of the earth, “Christians and rūm,” adopting the European stratagem (*hīla allatī tahayyalat bihā al-ifranjī*), namely, gunpowder. Now, its use goes against the Prophet’s *sunna* of relying on the sword only. “O to you, how dare you throwing fire [i.e., shooting] at those who proclaim the *shahāda* and believe in Muḥammad’s message?” In fact, the emir tells that when a man from the West (*maghribī*) came before al-Ghawrī and tried to convince him to adopt firearms, the sultan rejected it on the grounds that he did not intend to forsake the Prophet’s *sunna* and follow the *sunna* of the Christians. When further challenging Selīm about his status as a ruler, the emir demonstrates his courage yet, alas, leaves to the Ottoman ruler – who entertained the idea of appointing him a general in his army- no alternative but execute him.³¹ Sadly, everything said by Kirtbāy was only rhetoric and, in the event, the Mamluks were defeated. As it is stated more than once, “size overwhelmed gallantry.”³² And yet, it is stressed, no *mamlūk* ran away from or was killed by the sword, but only as a result of the use of firearms (*al-bunduq wa’l-ḍarbazanāt*).³³ The emir Shārbek stood amidst his troops like a lion and demonstrated gallantry comparable to the mythological ‘Antara ibn Shaddād.³⁴ As he himself states, were there no firearms used it is clear to whom the victory would go.³⁵

What explains then Mamluk defeat as opposed to this nice rhetoric was the technical advantage of firearms and (though obviously to a much lesser degree) the activity of those Circassian emirs who turned to be traitors.³⁶ But this, of course, is only on a mundane level, too simplistic in the eyes of a believer. As Holt has noted, it all was decided by the Heavenly decreed “decline and fall” of the Circassians,³⁷ and Irwin, similarly and more recently writes that Ibn Zunbul was of the opinion that “[t]he Mamluk Sultanate was doomed...by divine decree.”³⁸ Indeed, it is put in the mouth of Kirtbāy when challenged by Selīm as to how the Mamluks, despite their claim to hold onto Scripture and their braveness, were defeated. The emir’s answer, which leaves Selīm speechless (*afḥama*) – after all, what could he say? – is that it is God’s decision, as to each entity, including

31 Ibid, 139–145. Note his similar plan to appoint Ṭūmānbāy, as mentioned above, which would suggest a topos.

32 Ibid, e.g., 220.

33 Ibid, e.g., 222.

34 Ibid, 191. For ‘Antara see, for example, “‘Antara,” Encyclopaedia of Islam, Third Edition.

35 Ibn Zunbul, 198

36 Ibid, 213.

37 Holt (1973), 153.

38 Irwin (2006), 8.

dynasties (*dawla*), there is beginning and end.³⁹ That everything is according to God's decision is repeatedly stated on different occasions.⁴⁰ Similarly, Shārbek concedes that "God knows that our dynasty came to an end." He uses the word *āwān* in the sense of the "passing of time," precisely the term that features in one of the various titles of the book (see above) and the word *zawāl* (extinction).⁴¹ Finally, no other than Ṭūmānbāy concedes to Selīm that "our dynasty turned its back and your dynasty stepped forward and this is something that God decreed long ago."⁴²

This repeatedly stated fact that the Mamluk dynasty has come to its end presents Ibn Zūnbul as torn politically. His sympathy to the Mamluks notwithstanding, he cannot disregard what has been decreed. If you wish, he is at a cognitive dissonance.⁴³ This is perhaps why he gives voice to Selīm's ideology of a universal sultanate and his Islam-supported legitimacy in an important speech he delivers following one of the Ottoman temporary defeats and in which he presents himself as a *jihad* warrior, even allegedly (physically, that is) holding 'Umar's sword in his hand.⁴⁴ He is battling the "infidels" and the "despots" (*al-kuffār wa'l-rawāfiḍ wa-ahl al-ṭughyān wal-'udwān*), as well as the "Owners of the Elephants," referring of course, to Abrahā's defeat in his attempt to capture Mecca on the eve of the rise of Islam.⁴⁵ This he also makes clear in his dialogue with the defeated Egyptian ruler.⁴⁶ This is why at one point Selīm is praised as a most determined ruler who "did not involve compassion in politics." In a play on his name by some of Ṭūmānbāy's soldiers, he who follows him would be safe (*salīma*), but he who rebels against him would soon regret it. No wonder, then, that there were Egyptian troops who deserted and submitted themselves to him.⁴⁷ In the same vein, this is why the Turkish troops challenge emir Shārbek as "a Christian son of a Christian" and "a swine," while they regard themselves as Islam's warriors (*ghuzāt al-islām*) who wage *jihad* against the infidels.⁴⁸ This is also why Selīm can challenge Ṭūmānbāy that "sultanate befits only he whose forefathers had been sultans, while what are the names of your father, and

39 Ibn Zūnbul, 141–145.

40 Ibid, e.g., 82, 96, 99, 100.

41 Ibid, 198–199.

42 Ibid, 243, where the play is on *adbara* and *aqbala*.

43 Moustafa-Hamouzova, 203 and elsewhere sees the work as an apology for the Mamluks. As argued in this article, I see it as more complex.

44 Ibn Zūnbul, 101. Lellouch (1994), especially 152, detects in Ibn Zūnbul a critique of Selīm's universal ambition.

45 Ibn Zūnbul, 154–155, where further derogatory attributes such as "the Pharaoh of Vanity" (*fir'awn al-bāṭil*) are used. See also Lellouch (1994), 146–153; Irwin (2006), 8.

46 Ibn Zūnbul, 244.

47 Ibid, 147, 213.

48 Ibid, 197–198.

Qāitbāy's? And al-Ghawrī's? Whence is your sultanate? You are all Christians, non-emancipated slaves who, mindlessly, appointed a sultan over them".⁴⁹ Seen in this light, the question how such a pro-Mamluk work was written when Egypt was already under Ottoman rule is somewhat *mal posée*.⁵⁰ Although the author gave expression to locale patriotic sentiments, he knew his limits and was fully aware of the difference between political sentiments and political reality. In his work Ottoman superiority replaces Mamluk dexterity and with victory comes legitimacy.

Let us turn next to the crucial issue of the value of Ibn Zunbul's book as a piece of historiography. There appears a consensus, presumably reached independently, although variously grounded upon and formulated, that it is of meager factual value. Holt suggests using it with great caution and adds that it is devoid of the urge to elucidate historical causation,⁵¹ incidentally, something on which Irwin has an entirely different opinion.⁵² Doris Behrens-Abouseif considers most of the text as fiction, and notes the long dialogues that reflect more a dramatic than a historic character (one scholar noted that direct speech forms up to 60 per cent of the book⁵³). Moustafa-Hamouzova is not in disagreement with that when maintaining that while some historical facts are there, a considerable portion of fiction features as well.⁵⁴

The question of facts came up more recently in Irwin's critique of Ayalon's well-known position, based on Ibn Zunbul's "passing statement" – however, as we have seen, a statement repeated time and again – that the Mamluk defeat was the result of their rejection of firearms. Noting that Ibn Zunbul's background, chronology and literary aims are poorly explored, furthermore, that the Egyptian author is actually of little use as far as historical facts go, Irwin argues that one cannot use the *Infiṣāl*, as Ayalon did, to prove that the refusal sealed the fate of the Egyptian dynasty. Ayalon, so the argument goes, simply erred in taking fiction for fact.⁵⁵ Obviously, here is not the place to elaborate on this important question, except that it hinges on a major methodical aspect. In this respect Irwin's position seems hardly convincing and suffering from the same fault he attributes to Ayalon. Even granting that Ibn Zunbul used a great deal of fiction, the question of Mamluk weaponry, furthermore, Mamluk psychological attitude,

49 Ibid, 244.

50 Moustafa-Hamouzova, 206, as the argument is about an apology for the Mamluks; Irwin (2006), 6, 9.

51 Holt (1973), 153.

52 Irwin (2006), 9, who contrasts it with Ibn Iyās.

53 For a reference, see Moustafa-Hamouzova, 191 and n. 21.

54 Behrens-Abouseif, 9; Moustafa-Hamouzova, 206.

55 Irwin (2004), 138–139. For the anecdote which, according to Irwin is apocryphal, about the Mamluk sultan rejecting gunfire, see Irwin (2006), 5.

if one can thus define the issue, toward firearms cannot be resolved one way or another on the basis of a single source. Furthermore, Irwin holds onto a somewhat naïve position in maintaining that if a great deal of fiction can be demonstrated to have filled a purportedly historical writing, or fabricated dialogues have been used, everything has to be rejected tout court. Yet, as we saw above, when, emir Kirtbāy, one of Ibn Zunbul's heroes, accuses Selīm of using weapons invented by Christians (he obviously means firearms, the question of who invented it apart) and which are beneath the dignity of real men; and when in another dialogue Ṭūmānbāy is made to state that firearms go against Divine Law and contrary to norms established by the Prophet,⁵⁶ one need not accept the dialogue as factual in order to assume that by inventing it the Egyptian writer did give authentic voice to Mamluk mentality and codes of military conduct. In other words, even non-facts, as we know well from reading literature – and after all, literature is fiction – are embedded in a specific zeitgeist and carry an ideological message that has its anchoring in a certain historical context.

If not history (or better, historiography), what then is Ibn Zunbul's narrative on the Ottoman conquest? Most scholars regard it as a romance or a folk epic, or at least partly so. In fact, a mid nineteenth-century copy has the term *sīra* inserted into the title.⁵⁷ According to Holt, what we have is “a collection of heroic prose sagas rather than a sober narrative,” a “romance of chivalry,” (also Irwin writes on “the passing of chivalry,” and “doomed dynasties”⁵⁸) in which Ṭūmānbāy is depicted “as a kind of Circassian Roland, a doomed hero encountering overwhelming odds.”⁵⁹ Incidentally, this resort to European analogies (as we shall see, it is even more pronounced in Irwin's comments) is in my mind rather superficial and not of much help. Also according to Moustafa-Hamouzova, while we cannot define the work as absolutely folk or semi-folk literature, some characteristics of the folk epic (*sīra*) may be recognized, which would render Ibn Zunbul's *Infiṣāl* as “mixed literature.” The psychological descriptions and the motivations of the heroes as expressed in the dialogues are the main difference between a popular epic (which the *Infiṣāl* is) and “an ordinary narration.”⁶⁰ Also Behrens-Abouseif, as already mentioned, sees the similarity to folk epic in the use of long dialogues with more of a dramatic than a historic character.⁶¹ Lellouch gives a more nuanced opinion: the work combines two genres, whereby the beginning and the end, totaling only about one third, are “history of events,” while the rest is

56 See references in Moustafa-Hamouzova, 203; Irwin (2006), 8.

57 Lellouch (2006a), 276.

58 Irwin (2006), 6.

59 Holt (1968), 5.

60 Moustafa-Hamouzova, 206.

61 Behrens-Abouseif, 9.

actually Geste, namely, a medieval heroic plot of fictive nature.⁶² I shall come back to this in the final section.

As already suggested, Irwin has taken the opinion on the fictive character of the *Infiṣāl* to its extreme and this influences its categorization. As he puts it, what makes the book unique is the author's readiness to sacrifice factual accuracy to narrative drive.⁶³ Despite a nod to Ulrich Haarmann's thesis about the so-called literarization process that Mamluk chronicles underwent, which would very much apply to Ibn Zunbul's "history,"⁶⁴ Irwin argues that a case can be made for considering the *Infiṣāl* no less than the Arab world's first true historical novel, thus making its author an early forerunner not only of Jurji Zaydan, but, globally speaking, of Walter Scott, arguably Europe's first historical novelist. In that, Irwin rejects Rosenthal's view as expressed in his monumental compendium about Muslim historiography and, by implication, the view expressed by other aforementioned scholars, that the book under consideration is of the genre of popular epics. Dubiously applying definitions by Georg Lukacs and E M Forster of the historical novel,⁶⁵ Irwin regards Ibn Zunbul as both a novelist and occultist in one, similar to some Europeans.⁶⁶ This and numerous other instances where Irwin evokes such names and titles as Homer, Richard Wagner, J R Tolkien and the King Arthur Legend (there is a great deal of name dropping in his article) seem rather pointless and lead us nowhere in an attempt to understand Ibn Zunbul's and similar Arabic historical or pseudo-historical writings in their own terms. One fails to see how, as Irwin has it, the idea of a doomed world that pervades the *Infiṣāl* can be fruitfully compared to Gogol's *Taras Bulba*.⁶⁷

My position is that one should not see the *Infiṣāl* as an Arabic *sui generis* drawn into such an orbit where it is made to fly at the side of Homer or Tolkien, but place it in its more immediate cultural environment in order to appreciate it. The emerging result would reveal affinity to a variety of genres simultaneously: popular sagas of the *sīra* genre, earlier products of Mamluk narratology, and, yes, also mainstream Islamic historiography, which would also include in the case under consideration the long-time tradition of conquest literature. An attempt at **strictly** categorizing Ibn Zunbul's book seems to suffer from an ill-conceived application of modern clear-cut distinctions ("historiography" vs. "historical novel" or simply "novel") to materials that do not easily permit it and to writers to whom such distinctions were unfamiliar. For although a great deal that was intended to supply "history," and was and is still treated as such, involved in no

62 Lellouch (1994), 145–146.

63 Irwin (2006), 7–8.

64 Ibid, 6–7. The literarization process is discussed in Haarmann.

65 Irwin (2006), 3–4, 5.

66 Ibid, 5.

67 Ibid, 6, 8, 10.

small measure fiction which, and this should be stressed, plays a role in Islamic historiography in general. Now, although Irwin insists on the book's total fictive nature, which would exclude it from the list of history books, it would be erroneous to insist on Ibn Zunbul as unique in this respect. Robert Hoyland's observation, made in a contribution that, ironically, follows Irwin's in an edited volume on literature and representation in medieval Islam, is much to the point. Accordingly, studies in Western literature (and one can perhaps add to it studies in Middle Eastern literature) have demonstrated that fiction and history are less easily distinguishable than had generally been thought. The two forms, as Hoyland rightly insists, have continually had recourse to each other's techniques, and have more in common than is usually assumed.⁶⁸ In this respect, Ibn Zunbul, like al-Ṭabarī, supposedly a model of straightforward history,⁶⁹ demonstrates how boundaries between fact and fiction were illusive, perhaps on many occasions or even by and large did not even exist. A medieval Muslim history writer was – whether cognizant of it or not – also a writer of fiction.

To bolster the argument from a different direction, I wish to draw attention to one more contribution in the aforementioned collection, in which James Montgomery insightfully elaborates an argument he bases on al-Jāhiz's *al-Bayān wal-tabyīn*. Accordingly, a distinction between literature and theological discourse is impossible as well as anachronistic.⁷⁰ Now, the two cases of al-Jāhiz and Ibn Zunbul are, of course, very remote from one another not only in time. But they demonstrate the need for a methodical caveat when dealing with cultures of the past. That is, we ought to be cautious in applying the modern situation of the splitting of knowledge and creativity into categories that did not exist as such in the past and in insisting on specialization as if it already had existed.

Putting the *Infiṣāl* in the context of historical (and pseudo-historical, for that matter) writing in pre-modern Islam in general, and in Mamluk society in particular, would demonstrate its affinity with the large body of historical works that may be distinguished by their narrativist rather than annalistic and “factual” character, the latter being more often the case of what we consider as proper historiography in the Mamluk era, where, as in Ibn Iyās or Ibn Taghrībirdī, it is less of a continuous narrative than structured on numerous reports that tend to be brief and focus on one event, a certain item or an obituary.⁷¹ I would argue briefly that, although clearly different from the historiography written by its

68 See the fine methodological discussion in Hoyland, 17–18, 39–40. But see his distinction (pp. 33–34) between “historicized fiction,” for which al-Azdi's *Futūḥ al-Shām* is an example, and “fictionalized history.”

69 See, however, Shoshan (2004), where this image is deconstructed.

70 Montgomery.

71 For a preliminary comparison with Ibn Iyās as regards the conquest, which takes into account also the different views of the Ottomans, see Moustafa-Hamouzova, 202–205.

author's almost contemporaries, the *Infiṣāl* does not stand alone and resembles to some extent earlier Mamluk works of historical nature. I have in mind Shāfi' b. 'Alī's biography of Sultan Qalāwūn, the *al-Fadd al-ma'thūr*. Surely, unlike Ibn Zunbul, who covered a limited range of events, Shāfi' selected a larger number of episodes, historical or fictive. But a cursory glance would reveal significant similarities as far as the mode and style are concerned.⁷²

Turning to the narratological devices used in the *Infiṣāl*, some of these resemble the ones used in al-Ṭabarī's opus, to take an earlier Muslim cultural giant and, by extension, in mainstream medieval Islamic historiography. I would place the difference between the two at the level of style, rather than anything else.⁷³ Let us first consider the historian's intent to project a true story. Here, the Egyptian writer resorted to what the ancients had called mimesis (what Moustafa-Hamouzova refers to as similes and detailed descriptions).⁷⁴ It is best conveyed in an episode where Selīm asks emir Khā'irbāy to describe to him Egypt "as if I am looking at it," and the latter "describes it from beginning to end."⁷⁵ Now, elsewhere I have shown how al-Ṭabarī (and his sources) claims his own version of mimesis by making one of the historical protagonists ask to be told about a certain event as if he saw it himself. Even more analogous to Ibn Zunbul's take is what we are told about Heraclius, the Byzantine emperor, when asking a prisoner just released by the advancing Muslims to inform him about his capturers. The man's response, "I shall tell you, and it will be as if you yourself were looking at them," leaves no doubt as to the mimetic quality claimed for the description that follows immediately thereafter.⁷⁶ In this respect Ibn Zunbul is a scion to an old tradition; that he repeatedly states the prevalence of an eyewitness account over information achieved through hearsay (*laysa al-khabar ka'l-'iyān*) is another way of expressing it.⁷⁷ For many classical and medieval writers, it was a rhetorical topos.⁷⁸ This self-conscious statement about the "truth" of the historical narration, as well as detailed descriptions and similes, all have the task of insisting on veracity, on the quality of the story as absolutely true, thus removing any suspicion to the contrary.

Also Ibn Zunbul's other literary devices that have been pointed out by scholars are hardly novel and bear resemblance to those used by his old predecessors. Such is the author's omniscience, namely, his alleged access to the subjectivity of the historical characters, to their feeling and thinking, his ability to penetrate

72 Lewicka, especially 94–105.

73 For an analysis of the stylistic features, see Moustafa-Hamouzova, 196–200.

74 Ibid, 201.

75 Ibn Zunbul, 134.

76 Shoshan (2004), 6–7.

77 Ibn Zunbul, e.g., 96, 116, 130, 223, 235; Irwin (2006), 7.

78 Shoshan (2004), 25–41.

their minds. For example, describing the desire of emir Jānbirdī al-Ghazālī to succeed al-Ghawrī, Ibn Zunbul is allegedly able to tell us what was on the emir's mind and how he thought to achieve it. Similarly, he “knows” what is on the mind of Jānim, the governor of the Fayyūm, when planning to desert the Egyptian army and ask protection from Selīm. Or, what Ṭūmānbāy thinks when learning on the approach of the enemy.⁷⁹ Irwin attributes this literary device to Ibn Zunbul's expertise in *firāsa*.⁸⁰ However, such is unnecessary, as there has hardly been a historian worthy of his name, whether ancient or modern, who would have thought giving up this privileged “knowledge.”⁸¹ Take another device, also used in al-Ṭabarī's History, where strict chronology is violated and, unlike in real life, the movement forward and backward in time is permitted in order to gain the author's privileged position. In the *Infiṣāl* such practices, variously termed by scholars as foreshadowing, foreknowledge, analepsis and prolepsis, or what Moustafa-Hamouzova terms “retardation,” that is, inserting various events and descriptions before arriving at the main point, as well as “retrospection,” (what Irwin terms “capitulation”) make the readers or listeners know more than the heroes of the narrative and enhances the sense of surprise and historical drama.⁸²

Further on literary tactics, numerous speeches made by the dramatis personae, long dialogues, some of which have been already referred to above, all are meant to create an impression that the narrator possesses inside knowledge. Actually, one could argue that there is hardly an element in history-writing as mimetic as “verbatim” quotation of words said by the historical protagonists.⁸³ As already argued, in addition to clarifying the motivation of the protagonists, or setting out complex political issues, they may indicate an initially oral delivery and performance of the text.⁸⁴ Ibn Zunbul also refers marginally to “documents” of various sorts.⁸⁵ Finally on this aspect, there is occasional interruption of the narrative by the author in order to stress points, clarify things or for other reasons. For example, when speaking of al-Ghawrī's plan to set out from Aleppo to Istanbul (!) our author explains that it was a reaction to an infuriating letter received from Selīm. Or, emir al-Ghazālī's objection to al-Ghawrī's young suc-

79 Ibn Zunbul, 110, 146, 162. For other examples see 174, 178, 207, 233, 242. Moustafa-Hamouzova, 193, refers to it as “interior monologue technique.”

80 Irwin (2006), 7.

81 See discussion and examples in Shoshan (2004), especially 52–60.

82 Irwin (2006), 8–9, however, without specific references. For the discussion as regards al-Ṭabarī, see Shoshan (2004), 61–82.

83 For its role in al-Ṭabarī, see Shoshan (2004), 44–50. As for the large part that speeches and dialogues occupy in narratives on the early conquests (which will be discussed below), Tarif Khalidī (p. 87) notes that the heroes in al-Azdī's *Futūḥ al-Shām* speak at least as much as they act, and sermons, letters, speeches and debates are as common as the clash of weapons.

84 Irwin (2006), 6.

85 This marginality may explain why Irwin (2006), 9, notes rather the lack of documents.

cessor is explained as motivated by his desire to become sultan himself.⁸⁶ Stating his view on the confrontation at Marj Dābiq, the author describes it as incomparable to any other in the distant or more immediate past.⁸⁷

Turning to the last part of this article, I wish to focus briefly on early Islamic conquest narratives and their possible influence on Ibn Zunbul in writing his book on the much later conquest of Syria and Egypt by the Ottomans. To begin with, I find it noteworthy that independently of each other, Hugh Kennedy in his book on the early conquests, and Benjamin Lellouch in his book on the Ottomans in Egypt, both use the term “social memory” when characterizing the two narratives.⁸⁸ There is no need to belabor the term now yet it has been understood as conveying the notion of constructing rather than reconstructing the past in a manner that would be of value to those – especially of later generations – who “remember” it. Furthermore, one can see that certain episodes in the *Infiṣāl* are cast as a re-enactment of what allegedly took place in the early conquests, a replay of the Arab-Byzantine war (in reverse, so to speak), albeit with some modifications that the present situation required. Hence, the Ottomans are referred to throughout with almost no exception as “Byzantines” (*rūm*, *arwām*, ‘*ulūj al-rūm*) and I take the choice of this term as connoting more than just geographical allusion, but an attempt to draw analogy with the past.⁸⁹ Other relevant terms are “infidels (*kuffār*)” and the “law of the Christians (*sunnat al-naṣārā*).⁹⁰ What complicated the situation for Ibn Zunbul, however, was the fact that it was an inner Islamic struggle and there are sufficient clues to indicate, as argued earlier, that he was ambivalent in his political stand, perhaps torn between Egyptian pride and sympathy to the Circassians on the one hand and admiration or even interest-motivated attitude toward the Turks.⁹¹ This may explain why we find derogatory terms such as “infidels” and “tyrants” to denigrate the enemy, at one point also used by the Ottomans for the Circassians,⁹² not unlike those used in the early narratives.⁹³ Take, for example, the delegation of ten Mamluks sent to Selīm by al-Ghawrī. They do not behave in the expected manner and the Ottoman ruler is infuriated.⁹⁴ The episode reminds of the delegation to Heraclius which is reported by the early sources. However, compared to the Byzantine emperor, who, in the interest of early Islamic tradition, is made to play a positive role,⁹⁵

86 Ibn Zunbul, 105, 109.

87 Ibid, 99. See generally Moustafa-Hamouzova, 192.

88 Kennedy, in the introduction, especially 13–14; Lellouch (2006a), 278.

89 Ibn Zunbul, e.g., 104, 131, 134, 176, 188, 195, 197.

90 For “infidels,” see e.g., 197. For the sunna see 140; Lellouch (2006a), 247.

91 See, for example, Lellouch (2006a), 245–246, 247–248.

92 For Selīm’s use of these, see Ibn Zunbul, e.g., 155.

93 See, for example, its use in descriptions of the Yarmūk battle, Shoshan (2016), 100.

94 Ibn Zunbul, 93.

95 I discuss this episode in Shoshan (2016), especially 146–149.

Selīm is evil because he executes the delegates, disregarding the advice no to, and thus performing a breach of norms.⁹⁶ And yet, on occasion he looms large as some heir to a glorified tradition: how else would one interpret the “fact” that he holds ‘Umar’s sword, ‘Umar being in the early historical tradition the Muslim conqueror par excellence?⁹⁷ In other words, just as for early writers Heraclius had many sides in him, so for our late writer was Selīm.

One literary trope in which one can detect affinity between Ibn Zunbul’s and early conquest narratives is a reflection of the concept of history as determined by God. We have seen it above playing a crucial role in the defeat of the Mamluks, and it is invoked in other instances when, for example, reflecting on the ambitious contenders among the Circassians to access the sultanate, the author states categorically that “kingship is not [achieved] by force but rather a divine command (*amr ilāhī*) that God gives to whomever he wishes of his servants.”⁹⁸ When Selīm is perplexed as to why his opponent, whose chivalry he can easily tell, did not resist or alternatively, did not escape, but threw his weapon and surrendered, he can only conclude that it was a Heavenly decision (*amr samāwī*).⁹⁹ Elsewhere I show how God is made to play a major role in narratives of the early conquests and how Muslim warriors are actors in the show He staged.¹⁰⁰

Then we have the inflated, nay imaginative numbers of the Ottoman fighters and the recurrent theme of the few (Circassians) fighting the many. Examples abound, such as 2000 vs. no less than 150,000 at Marj Dābiq, 100 fighting 180,000 (!) and are able to withstand; 1000 dead Circassians, who are killed by guns (*madāfi*) and muskets (*bunduqiyāt*) are contrasted with 4000 dead Ottomans; the Mamluks kill 10,000 in one night and altogether 15,000 in a matter of three days.¹⁰¹ Now, the inflated numbers of the enemy’s troops and the significantly lower number of Muslim fighters is a recurrent theme in the early conquest literature. There, the number of 100,000 enemy troops is favored by the sources and is reported for both the Ajnadayn and Fihl battles in Palestine. In the course of the latter, 7000 Christians, including more than a 1000 dignitaries are reported killed, and 60,000 retreat, astonished at the Muslim resistance. The Muslims numbered only 20,000 which, from a modern perspective, must be regarded as an exaggerated number as well; only seventeen (!) of them died. No less than 100,000 was the number of the fallen Byzantines in the battle of Caesarea.¹⁰² And so on

96 Ibn Zunbul, 161.

97 Ibid, 101. However, this does not appear in all versions. See Lellouch (2006a), 277 n. 86.

98 Ibn Zunbul, 173.

99 Ibid, 242.

100 Shoshan (2016), especially 2–3, 172–174.

101 Ibn Zunbul, 101, 102, 106, 135. See similarly 153, and there are further examples; Moustafa-Hamouzouva, 200.

102 For further figures and references, see Shoshan (2016), 53–54.

and so forth. Metaphorically, Ibn Zunbul compares the Ottomans to the “flowing sea and inclining ocean,” to “ants in the *wādī*” and to “locust.”¹⁰³ However, unlike in the Muslim-Byzantine case, here a crucial factor, namely, firearms, does determine the final result. As conceded by one of the protagonists, although each Mamluk equestrian equals one thousand, “the many overpowered the brave as no one can withstand firearms.”¹⁰⁴

Like in the case of the fallen early Muslims, the term *shahīd* is invoked on the fallen Mamluks.¹⁰⁵ Shārbek, one of the heroic emirs, is praised in terms reminiscent of the early Muslim heroes as a lion (*layth ghadanfr*) who, single-handedly, causes the enemy to retreat; the opponent leader realizes that only firearm would enable overpowering him.¹⁰⁶ Like the enemies of the early Muslims, the Ottoman attributes his prowess to the influence of the devil (*jinn*) as no one with his right mind would involve himself in such destruction.¹⁰⁷ And like Abū ‘Ubayda in the early conquests, who modestly claims he is no better than an ordinary Muslim, Tūmānbāy declares his reluctance to rule, that he is equal to all the rest, and had they not elected him and forced him into office he would not have demanded obedience.¹⁰⁸ This though does not exhaust the list of similarities and one could mention briefly the role of dreams, only that in the *Infiṣāl* the Egyptian sultan is made to dream what in the early narratives is the dream of the Byzantines, namely, a clear signal of the upcoming defeat. Perhaps most ominous is the dream in which a messenger tells him in the name of the Prophet that his dynasty has come to its end and that in about four days he would join the Prophet in Paradise. Hence, there is no use to continue fighting. Grasping the situation, the Egyptian sultan instructs his emirs to take each his own way, since this is their last meeting in this world before rejoining in the Hereafter.¹⁰⁹ There are also duels standing for military confrontation, a *topos* found not only in the conquest narratives but also in other historical traditions.¹¹⁰

Now, although one may presume in the light of all these similarities Ibn Zunbul’s familiarity with the early conquest narratives of the late eighth century CE and later time, one may point out a text circulating in his time as a possible intermediary text and a source for his use of themes and terminology. I have in

103 Ibn Zunbul, e. g., 98, 101, 134, 198, 209, 222.

104 Ibid, 140.

105 Ibid, e. g., 192. For the use of this term in the early conquest narratives, see Shoshan (2016), 54–57.

106 Ibn Zunbul, 193–194.

107 Ibid, 196.

108 Ibid, 172. For this theme, see Shoshan (2016), 61–63.

109 Ibn Zunbul, 234. See another example in 226; Irwin (2006), 8. I discuss the role of dreams in the context of the narrative on Yarmūk in Shoshan (2016), 88.

110 Ibn Zunbul, e. g., 150–151, 212–214; Moustafa-Hamouzouva, 200–201; Irwin (2006), 9. I discuss it in Shoshan (2016), 2.

mind the anonymous *Futūḥ al-Shām*, which had been (falsely) attributed to the early ninth-century al-Wāqidī and is still published here and there as his authentic work. However, scholarship justifiably refers to it as a psd-Wāqidī and dates its composition to hundreds years later than al-Wāqidī's time, in fact certain clues permit placing it in the context of the fifteenth century. Interestingly enough, and as would befit a non-canonical and unfixed text, perhaps the parts on the conquest of Cairo and Bahnasā' were added to it in Ibn Zunbul's time. One should stress, however, that the anonymous author (or authors) was much influenced by the earlier works on the conquests and on occasion copied from these. As I argue elsewhere, in the psd-Wāqidī we have the combination of *sīra* and more straightforward, so to speak, historiographical conquest account.¹¹¹ It is not possible here to discuss in detail the similarities between the two works. Suffice it to note that a few of the aforementioned scholars have already referred to the *sīra* features of the *Infiṣāl*: vivid language and simple syntax that resembles colloquial language.¹¹² To these I would add the use of specific stylistic features that are comparable to those found in the psd-Wāqidī, such as rhymed prose, a typical beginning of new passages, and more.¹¹³

To conclude, it is my position that one should not see a substantial divide between Ibn Zunbul's and earlier works of historiographical claim. At the same time, it is clearly the literary genre of the *sīra*, quite popular during the Mamluk, as well as later periods, that may be seen as most influential as regards the *Infiṣāl* in both its monographic structure and its style. To recall, at one point Ibn Zunbul compares the superhuman prowess of emir Shārbak to that of 'Antara.¹¹⁴ *Sīrat 'Antar*, which purports to relate his gallantry,¹¹⁵ as well as popular works such as the *Futuḥ al-Shām* and the *Sīrat Dhātal-Himma* were desirable companions to his book and were most likely his terms of reference.

111 For a detailed discussion of this work, see Shoshan (2016), especially, 13–15.

112 Moustafa-Hamouzova, 196.

113 Compare, for example, *hādhā mā kāna... wa-ammā, or ammā fa*, Ibn Zunbul, 106, 116, 121, 122, 125, 128, 132, 133, 145, 149; psd-Wāqidī, 22, where the similar *fa... idh* is repeated, e. g., 46. For rhymed prose see Ibn Zunbul, e. g., 82, 94, 98, 154, 178, 202, 210, 211; psd-Wāqidī, e. g., 55. Compare *qāla al-rāwī* and *qāla al-nāqil*, occasionally also identified as Aḥmad Ibn Zunbul, e. g., 83, 105, 108, 118, 168, 178, 251; Moustafa-Hamouzova, 191; *qāla al-mu'allif*, psd-Wāqidī, e. g., 7.

114 Hathaway (2003), 57. She adds that the emir in a poem he allegedly composes invokes the two *sīras* of 'Antar and Zīr Salīm. However, I have been unable to trace it.

115 For the 'Antara epic see, for example, "'Antar, Sīra," Encyclopaedia of Islam, Third Edition.

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Jo Van Steenbergen

Al-Maqrīzī's History of the *Ḥajj* (*al-Dhahab al-Masbūk*) and Khaldūnian Narrative Construction: towards a macro-structural textual analysis of form and meaning

The word has spread that the high-born intention was set on undertaking the *ḥajj* and to be endowed with the noise and blood of rituals. It has become common practice for servants to present a gift to their masters, for which reason I considered the situation of clients that owe presents on the occasion of an event like this, and I decided to follow their example.

Using the introductory format of a belletristic personal confession, one of late medieval Egypt's foremost historians, Aḥmad b. 'Alī al-Maqrīzī (ca. 1365–1442), explains in these and similarly embellished phrases the particular socio-cultural context that brought him to write a little treatise in Arabic on the history of the *ḥajj*, the pilgrimage to Mecca, entitled *al-Dhahab al-Masbūk* ('The Moulded Gold'). Until recently this text did not attract much attention in modern scholarship, unless perhaps for its historiographical value for a handful of scholars interested in the history of the *ḥajj*. In a recent publication, entitled *Caliphate and Kingship in a fifteenth century literary history of Muslim leadership and pilgrimage*, I prepared an English translation and a new critical edition from the Leiden autograph (Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek Or. 560, fols. 115v–135r).¹ In addition, I present in this publication a detailed textual analysis that aims to look beyond *al-Dhahab al-Masbūk*'s simple surface of historiographical data. In *Caliphate and Kingship*'s analytical part a contextualisation is presented of the text's subject matter, author and production in early 15th century Egypt, followed by a narratological, intertextual and semiotic analysis of the text as a literary construction stemming from al-Maqrīzī's creative authorship, and completed with a reconstruction of the material and immaterial dimensions of *al-Dhahab al-Masbūk*'s equally rich social life beyond the 15th century. By this three-tiered

1 J. Van Steenbergen, *Caliphate and Kingship in a fifteenth century literary history of Muslim leadership and pilgrimage. A Critical Edition, Annotated Translation, and Study of al-Maqrīzī's al-Dahab al-Masbūk fi Ḍikr man Ḥaġġa min al-Ḥulafā' wa-l-Mulūk (Bibliotheca Maqriziana Series – Opera Minora)* (Leiden: Brill, 2016); for the opening fragment, see the translation in part 2 of this publication.

analytical approach the first part of *Caliphate and Kingship* aims to present a cultural biography of this particular product of al-Maqrīzī's scholarship, deepening its current understandings as well as contributing to today's growing insights into that scholarship and the wider socio-cultural contexts in which it was performed.

This chapter will proceed further from the main results that were presented in *Caliphate and Kingship*'s first part. It explores what insights may be gained from the addition of another level of macro-structural analysis. As will be explained below, this level of analysis will be captured under the notion of Khaldūnian narrative construction. Before pursuing such an analysis in the third and final part of this chapter, however, first the text itself and the main insights from *Caliphate and Kingship* will be briefly presented, followed by a more detailed explanation of the relevance and definition of that Khaldūnian perspective.

Part 1: Unravelling *al-Dhahab al-Masbūk*: from history to text, and back again

Al-Maqrīzī's *al-Dhahab al-Masbūk*, the Moulded Gold, is a summary history in Arabic of the annual pilgrimage to Mecca since the days of the Prophet. This is a relatively short text of 40 handwritten pages in the autograph manuscript from 1438. It has been fully preserved in this contemporary autograph as well as in nine more manuscripts, all produced between the 16th and 19th centuries, and it has been published in a handful of 20th and 21st century critical text editions. In most manuscripts and editions, the text is better known under the longer title that was later also added in the header of the autograph's first page: "The Book of Gold Moulded In the Format of the Report of the Caliphs and Kings who Performed the *hajj*" (*Kitāb al-Dhahab al-Masbūk fi Dhikr man Ḥajja min al-Khulafā' wa-l-Mulūk*).

Discussing issues of caliphate, kingship and Mecca pilgrimage *al-Dhahab al-Masbūk* is in many ways a curious and highly intriguing little text. Up to the publication of the text's book-length study in *Caliphate and Kingship*², and in accordance with the longstanding status and reputation of the Egyptian scholar, administrator and judge Aḥmad b. 'Alī al-Maqrīzī (ca. 1365–1442) as one of the most important historians of his age, scholarship has mainly considered *al-Dhahab al-Masbūk* for its historiographical value, for the convenience of its collection and chronological organisation of diverse materials concerning

2 This entire part summarises the main findings that are explained in full detail in part 1 of this book; for further references to the text of *al-Dhahab al-Masbūk*, its editions, and relevant sources and literature, see this part in Van Steenbergen, *Caliphate and Kingship*.

pilgrimages of illustrious caliphs and of many other Muslim rulers during eight centuries of Muslim history. In line with expectations raised by *al-Dhahab al-Masbūk*'s longer title the text indeed presents a highly convenient "report of the caliphs and kings who performed the *hajj*". Starting with the Prophet's Farewell Pilgrimage of 632 and ending with the story of the Mecca journey in 1377 of the Qalāwūnid sultan of Cairo al-Ashraf Sha 'bān (r. 1363–1377), the text consists of a comprehensive chronological list of twenty-seven narratives about Muslim rulers and their leadership experiences, especially those that were somehow related to the Mecca sanctuary. *Al-Dhahab al-Masbūk* thus moves from the time of the Prophet, over that of the Caliphs, to that of non-caliphal Muslim rulers' pilgrimage engagements from the eleventh century onwards, wandering from one story to another and from the narrative whole of one Muslim ruler's stories to that of another.

Due to the work's limited size and the select and summary nature of many of the stories that it contains, however, the added historiographical value of *al-Dhahab al-Masbūk*'s information about pilgriming Prophet, caliphs, and kings is only very limited. As has been argued in *Caliphate and Kingship*, that disappointing historiographical nature of *al-Dhahab al-Masbūk* appears as a mere residual dimension when it is realised that it concerns a literary text that was constructed in a unique manner for far more complex purposes. The booklet is indeed rather more remarkable for other reasons, not in the least, from a wider literary point of view, as the very first – at least, by the present state of acquaintance with the field of Arabic literary production up to al-Maqrīzī's time – to claim to offer a more or less focused stand-alone narrative of Muslim leadership of the pilgrimage. *Caliphate and Kingship* actually demonstrates how this is a text that was first and foremost constructed around a conscious authorial *persona* and his very intricate and particular narrative and, at the same time, socio-political methodologies. These deserve to be summarised here before considering one of the larger structural aspects of this textual complexity, to be identified and explained below as Khaldūnian narrative construction.

The adoption in most parts of the text of a language and style that seem to aim at straightforwardness, accessibility and clarity rather than at any sort of complexity is entirely in line with al-Maqrīzī's writing practice in his other known works of history. It is a practice that prioritises chronography over literary aesthetics as a guiding principle, and that is therefore deeply embedded in the historiographical genre's process of formation and crystallisation out of the many individual reports of varying size, length, value and authenticity, the *khabars*, that informed and defined the early Muslim community's social memory. As with many texts of this type, however, this booklet opens – as mentioned in this chapter's opening lines – with a general introduction that stands as an exception to this general rule of literary sobriety. Unbound by

historiographical restrictions of genre and tradition, al-Maqrīzī used this introduction to explain his motives for writing this particular kind of history in a far more belletrist and personalised prose, also embellished by four lines of poetry. Dedicating the work in the best of Arabic literature's panegyric tradition to an unnamed patron, the author describes in flowery language how his personal quest for finding a gift that befitted the occasion of this patron's *hajj* eventually resulted in his "collecting for the benefit of the esteemed library of our lord [...] a volume that comprises the report of those caliphs and kings who performed the *hajj*", a history of pilgriming Muslim rulers which he then decided to entitle "The Moulded Gold" (*al-Dhahab al-Masbūk*).

As explained in *Caliphate and Kingship*, it is clear that conscious choices were made by al-Maqrīzī about the general lay-out of the text, which displays a structural unity that transcends its mere chronological organisation. *Al-Dhahab al-Masbūk* actually is made up of three parts that were each demarcated by explanatory titles that define these parts as three separate chapters, one on the prophet, one on caliphs, and one on kings. By sheer size, the second and third chapter clearly function as the text's main structural blocks, and this is not in the least also suggested by the fact that these two chapters are symmetrically aligned in two units of exactly thirteen Muslim leaders. Thirteen pilgriming caliphs (Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān, Mu'āwiya, 'Abd Allāh b. al-Zubayr, 'Abd al-Malik, al-Walīd, Sulaymān, Hishām, al-Manṣūr, al-Mahdī, Hārūn al-Rashīd, and al-Ḥākim) are thus succeeded by thirteen pilgriming 'kings' ('Alī al-Ṣulayḥī, al-'Ādil Nūr al-Dīn Maḥmūd, al-Mu'azzam Tūrān Shāh, al-Mu'azzam 'Īsā, al-Mas'ūd Yūsuf, al-Manṣūr 'Umar b. 'Alī b. Rasūl, al-Nāṣir Dāwūd, al-Muzaffar Yūsuf, al-Zāhir Baybars, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, Mansā Mūsā, al-Mujāhid 'Alī, and al-Ashraf Sha'bān). The first, much shorter, chapter on the Prophet's Farewell Pilgrimage then clearly was constructed by al-Maqrīzī as a sort of textual axis and as a touchstone for each of the other two chapters of thirteen rulers, reminding of the way in which Muḥammad's example was referential for Muslim rulers in general.

As detailed in *Caliphate and Kingship*, the different narrative wholes of stories about each of those twenty-six Muslim rulers, which make up the second and the third chapters, display a generally shared internal hierarchy of introductory rulership frame, pilgrimage chronography, and stories that were mostly occasioned by the latter chronography, but that often also continued to refer to the former rulership frame. In some cases, however, the disturbance of this hierarchy by the oscillating of different stories between rulership and pilgrimage leave disparate and confusing overall impressions on a reader. For the author, this kind of flexible structuring clearly enabled the inclusion of a great variety of material, and hence the creation of a complex, multilayered text, that included accounts of or references to more than 120 different stories. These were moreover all spread

in a rather amorphous way over the different ruler narratives, some reproducing one story only, and others really consisting of strings of stories, connected through the frames of rulership or pilgrimage. These stories furthermore were told in narrative modes of speed that continuously varied between the different narratives, and also on many occasions within them, leaving the overall and occasionally confusing added impression of stories that were oscillating between very fast and very slowly developing plots. Nevertheless, amidst this amorphous complexity chronology continues to figure as an organising principle to hold on to for the author and his audiences. Years, dates and chronography continued to be important tools on the micro-structural level of *al-Dhahab al-Masbūk* too, and al-Maqrīzī pursued a chronological arrangement of his stories wherever the available material allowed for such a set-up.

Caliphate and Kingship actually argues, however, that many of these and many more micro-structural arrangements of the stories that make up the text of *al-Dhahab al-Masbūk* were only to a certain extent the product of al-Maqrīzī's authorial agency. It seems rather that through its particular reproduction of so many stories (or *khābars*) the booklet's entire second chapter was directly plugged into the historiographical tradition that had been formed and codified – in structuring and normative ways – around the particular remembrance of the first centuries of Islam and its often contested leaderships. In many ways, the same appears to be true for the stories of the third chapter and their participation in a more recent historiographical tradition in full formation. *Caliphate and Kingship* concludes in this respect that these and other very deeply rooted multiple intertextualities surely endowed *al-Dhahab al-Masbūk* with particular types of textual authority and socio-cultural meaning. But first and foremost they clearly had a very strong impact on the contents of the three chapters of *al-Dhahab al-Masbūk*, nuancing the intentionality of their structural organisation. Micro-structural elements such as the plotting of stories along a modal continuum of differing speeds and their continued chronological organisation were then imposed rather by the particularities of different extant historiographical traditions than merely by the author's intentions. Authorial decisions mainly played on the macro-structural level of selecting particular stories and related *khābars*, of devising particular rulership-pilgrimage frames for each and every narrative, and of wrapping those narratives in an equally particular three-tiered structure of communicating chapters. Micro-structurally reproduction is the key word to understand *al-Dhahab al-Masbūk*, situating the text within rich and discursively even inevitable intertextual contexts of diverse historiographical traditions. Macro-structurally, however, production rather is the key word, al-Maqrīzī creating something entirely new within the textual webs that connect those traditions. For *Caliphate and Kingship*, it was this authorial creative process

of the production of particular, innovative kinds of narrative frames and chapters that endowed the text with its most obvious meanings.

As far as these meanings are concerned, *Caliphate and Kingship* actually develops in much detail the argument that *al-Dhahab al-Masbūk* was indeed never really intended to merely conform to, participate in, reproduce and transmit different sets of canonised or canonising historiographical traditions. These traditions and stories as well as the literary conventions and social memories to which they had been or were being set appear above all in this text as the means to different ends. They appear as the nodes in networks of historical knowledge and meaning that were structured by the author in particular, innovative ways in order to make shared understandings of the past meaningful in equally innovative ways for his and his intended audience's present.

Through this creative agency at the macro-structural level, al-Maqrīzī first and foremost produced *al-Dhahab al-Masbūk* as a programmatic text of moral-didactic purpose, which used the historiographical formats of pilgriming ruler narratives and leadership stories to communicate ideas and moral categories of good Muslim rule, Egyptian supremacy, and divine sovereignty. The text's first intended audience appears therefore to have been the ruler and his court. *Caliphate and Kingship* actually claims that the most likely candidate for this kind of active and purposeful dedication seems to have been the Egyptian sultan al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh (r. 1412–21), whose rule coincided with a particular time of radical social, economic, political and cultural transformation, yes even crisis, for al-Maqrīzī personally as well as for Egypt, Syria and the wider world of Muslim West-Asia. However, when the plans for al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh's 1418 pilgrimage had to be cancelled, the casting of this didactic message of good rule and sovereignty in the format of an innovative pilgrimage text rooted in tradition proved futile and *al-Dhahab al-Masbūk* was therefore probably never published to nor received by its originally intended audience.

As a consequence, when the text of *al-Dhahab al-Masbūk* entered the collection of al-Maqrīzī's shorter texts in the Leiden autograph some twenty years later, at about 1438, it may have done so in a slightly altered, more generic and less specific form, taking into account the new elite audiences whose interests it still might serve. At that time, however, political circumstances had substantially changed and the imminent relevance of the text's original meaning of political restoration after the deep crisis that had ended the first decade of the fifteenth century was for ever lost. By lack of any reading notes or external references it remains unclear how the text was actually read by its new readership in the 1430s, if not for its obvious political message. The inclusion of *al-Dhahab al-Masbūk* in al-Maqrīzī's collection of more than a dozen of smaller texts from his rich scholarly portfolio, covering a wide range of subjects, is nevertheless quite suggestive. A particular expectation is at least created about one of the meanings that

may have been intended by the author and perhaps even understood by most of his fifteenth-century audiences. This collection certainly speaks of al-Maqrīzī's authoritative achievements in a wide range of related fields of scholarship. It is actually demonstrated in *Caliphate and Kingship* how the text of *al-Dhahab al-Masbūk* certainly was also meant to mediate such more personal socio-cultural meanings of the author's claims to distinction, identity and entitlement. It could be argued then that despite the loss of the acuteness of its political meanings the text continued to be relevant (and continued to be redrafted) for the more personal socio-cultural meanings that it communicated. What remained was its textual performance of al-Maqrīzī's mastery of historical knowledge, announced in the introduction as "the most precious and most valuable of treasures, the most glorious and the longest remembered of deeds" and presented throughout the text by inter- and metatextual means as though monopolised by its author. In the particular combination with the other texts in the collection that was uniquely preserved in the Leiden autograph from 1438, *al-Dhahab al-Masbūk* thus continues to attest above all to the accomplished scholarship of its author, al-Maqrīzī.

However, as time went by, this level of personalised socio-cultural meanings evidently lost its meaning too, and in the ongoing consumption and reproduction of this collection and of different other products of al-Maqrīzī's pen, texts such as *al-Dhahab al-Masbūk* increasingly derived their meanings from the canonisation of al-Maqrīzī's own authorship as an authority in matters of historical tradition and truth, rather than that they were merely meant to perform claims to such levels of knowledge. The consumption of these texts thus transformed from accepting them (or not) as presenting particular social claims about historical knowledge to understanding them as privileged carriers and transmitters of that knowledge. As far as *al-Dhahab al-Masbūk* is concerned, this process made that eventually its historical character was prioritised over the different other meanings that it communicated, and that an understanding of the particular ways in which it had been constructed to pursue the latter communication was sidelined for retrieving names, data and conventional stories of pilgriming Muslim rulers.

Part 2: Introducing 'Khaldunism': Ibn Khaldūn, al-Maqrīzī and the patterns of history

It has been fairly well established by now that the author of *al-Dhahab al-Masbūk*, al-Maqrīzī, was not only well acquainted with, but also deeply impressed and influenced by the North-African scholar and historian of towering reputation

‘Abd al-Rahmān Ibn Khaldūn (d. 1406).³ From the time of Ibn Khaldūn’s arrival in Egypt in 1382 until his death in Cairo more than two decades later, the lives of both scholars appear regularly as deeply intertwined, in the scholarly circles of students and teachers as well as in the social networks that revolved around sultan al-Zāhir Barqūq (d. 1399) and his court. As various scholars have demonstrated, al-Maqrīzī’s biography of his teacher Ibn Khaldūn in his biographical dictionary of contemporaries, *Durar al-‘Uqūd al-Farīda fī Tarājim al-A’yān al-Mufīda*, is constructed as a unique testimony to this particular relationship between Ibn Khaldūn the master and al-Maqrīzī the pupil. This biography culminates in more than conventional praise for (and subtle understanding of) the value and quality of one of the most important products of Ibn Khaldūn’s scholarship, the introduction (*al-Muqaddima*) to his chronicle of the history of the Maghreb and the Mashreq. Amongst many other things, this biography even confirms that also intellectually there was a strong connection between both men. As al-Maqrīzī explains (in Nasser Rabbat’s careful translation of this passage):

“Nothing like it has been written before and it would be difficult for anyone to try to achieve something like it in the future ... It is the cream of knowledge and sciences and the creation of sound minds and intellects. It informs about the essence (*kanh*) of things and tells about the reality (*ḥaqīqa*) of events and happenings, as if it is expressing the condition (*ḥāl*) of being and revealing the origin (*aṣl*) of everything in existence in a style which is brighter than a strand of pearl and purer than water fanned by a zephyr.”⁴

This “cream of knowledge and sciences” that “informs about the essence of things and tells about the reality of events and happenings” refers of course first and foremost to the structural theory of human history that Ibn Khaldūn reconstructed in the *Muqaddima*, as a new ontology of ‘human culture’, or more precisely of ‘human constructivism and man’s sociability’ (*al-umrān al-basharī wa-l-ijtimā’ al-insānī*). This is not the place to expand on the full scope of Ibn Khaldūn’s particular thinking about the nature, purpose and method of historiography.⁵ But it is important to remind here that, as Tarif Khalidi argued,

3 For Ibn Khaldūn and his intellectual achievement, see most recently (including further references) A.J. Fromherz, *Ibn Khaldun, Life and Times* (Edinburgh: EUP, 2010); G. Martinez-Gros, *Ibn Khaldūn et les sept vies de l’Islam* (Paris: Sindbad-Actes Sud, 2006).

4 N. Rabbat, “Was al-Maqrīzī’s *Khiṭa* a Khaldūnian History?” *Der Islam* 89/2 (2012): 118–140, p. 128; pp. 120–7 for the strong connections between both men. For a slightly diverging interpretation of the same passage, see S. Jarrar, “Al-Maqrīzī’s Reinvention of Egyptian Historiography through Architectural History”, in D. Behrens-Abouseif (ed.), *The Cairo Heritage. Essays in Honor of Laila Ali Ibrahim* (Cairo: AUC Press, 2000), pp. 31–53, p. 52, fn. 5. For the link between al-Maqrīzī and Ibn Khaldūn, see also A. Broadbridge, “Royal Authority, Justice, and Order in Society: the influence of Ibn Khaldūn on the Writings of al-Maqrīzī and Ibn Taghribirdī”, *Mamlūk Studies Review* 7/2 (2003): 231–245, p. 234.

5 See on this the detailed and perceptive analysis in Martinez-Gross, *Ibn Khaldūn*, esp. pp. 47–104 (III La Théorie: analyse de la *Muqaddima*).

Ibn Khaldūn's formulation of a comprehensive and coherent theory of history, informed by a particular structuralist rationalism and by a firm belief in social power as a structuring agent of historical change, was in a unique sense part and parcel of its wider intellectual context of late medieval Arabic historiographical thought. In many ways, it may even be considered a culmination point of the highly politicised forms, functions and meanings that marked the booming field of Arabic historiographic production since, at least, the twelfth century.⁶ Furthermore, it should also be remembered that the formulation of a structural theory of human history in the *Muqaddima* was truly meant to serve as a conceptual introduction and analytical framework for the main parts of Ibn Khaldūn's *magnum opus*, his chronicles of the history of Maghreb and Mashreq. As Khalidi equally explains about these chronicles, "his History [...] was in fact intended to be a precise and carefully constructed demonstration of the principles of historical change outlined in the *Muqaddima*."⁷ Ibn Khaldūn's theories were not just empirically informed and grounded in the *Muqaddima*. They were also meant to have above all a practical functionality for the historian and his moral tasks, including for Ibn Khaldūn himself. This is famously made explicit in one of the first paragraphs of the opening section of the *Muqaddima*. In this passage Ibn Khaldūn explains that "history is a science (*fann*) of fine principles, manifold uses, and noble purpose [which] informs us about the people of the past – the characters of nations, the lives of prophets, the kingdoms and policies of kings – thus usefully providing example for the emulation of those who desire it in religious and worldly affairs". But he simultaneously warns about not taking the historian's task lightly, not in empirical nor in analytical terms. Both need to be carefully combined to achieve sound and meaningful results.

"The writer of history requires many sources and varied knowledge (*ma'ākhidh muta'addida wa-ma'ārif mutanawwi'a*); he also requires keen judgement and careful scrutiny (*ḥusn naẓar wa-tathabbut*) to lead him to the truth (*al-ḥaqq*) and away from lapses and errors. If reliance is placed on simple narrative as transmitted (*al-akhbār ... 'alā mujarrad al-naql*), without studying the roots of custom (*uṣūl al-'āda*), the foundations of politics (*qawā'id al-siyāsa*), the nature of civilization (*ṭabī'at al-'umrān*), and the circumstances of human society (*al-aḥwāl fī l-ijtimā' al-insānī*), and without comparing far with near and past with present (*al-ghā'ib ... bi-l-shāhid wa-l-ḥādir bi-l-*

6 "That Ibn Khaldun sought to pass beyond the particular and the individual and to survey history as it unfolded over generations and as it was made by large forces or groups was due at least in part to his time and place in the tradition of *siyasa*" (T. Khalidi, *Arabic historical thought in the classical period* (Cambridge: CUP, 1994), p. 231. On the booming field of historiographic production in late medieval Syria and Egypt, see K. Hirschler, "Studying Mamluk Historiography. From Source-Criticism to the Cultural Turn", in St. Conermann (ed.), *Ubi sumus? Quo vademus? Mamluk Studies – State of the Art* (Bonn: BUP, 2013), pp. 159–186.

7 Khalidi, *Arabic historical thought*, p. 222. This same argument has been fully explained and detailed in Martínez-Gros, *Ibn Khaldūn*, esp. pp. 105–58 ("IV Les clés d'une histoire").

dhāhib) – then there will often be danger of slipping and stumbling and straying from the right road (*jāddat al-ṣīdq*).⁸

What Ibn Khaldūn's historical mind in general and his theoretical expositions in the *Muqaddima* in particular therefore had to offer to his scholarly environment was a practical analytical toolbox for thinking beyond the particularity of everyday events, for making the past meaningful beyond the individuality of historical facts and figures, and for connecting the seemingly unconnected in ways that were also morally useful, so that people might draw meaningful examples from it. Ibn Khaldūn and his writings thus participated very actively in a programmatic vision of historiographical action: historians and their writings were meant to do something meaningful to their audiences, and Ibn Khaldūn provided intellectual tools to achieve this. These tools enabled, at least for Ibn Khaldūn, the required transformation of historical data from "simple narrative as transmitted" to socio-cultural performance of the "truth" (*al-ḥaqq*), a concept unwrapped by al-Maqrīzī, as mentioned above, as "the essence (*kanh*) of things", "the reality (*ḥaqīqa*) of events and happenings", "the condition (*ḥāl*) of being" and "the origin (*aṣl*) of everything in existence".

Among the various analytical tools that were expounded in this comprehensive, embedded and moralising manner, one of the most influential – as far as Muslim historiographical production of subsequent generations and in later centuries is concerned – seems to have been the link that Ibn Khaldūn made between the structuring agency of social power and the changing course of history, in its diverse social and political manifestations, as well as in its economic and cultural appearances. The basic thrust of Ibn Khaldūn's argument revolves around the analytical problem of "how power is acquired, how it is maintained,

8 From Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima*, translated in *Islam from the Prophet Muhammad to the Capture of Constantinople. Volume I: Politics and War*, ed. & transl. B. Lewis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. v. Franz Rosenthal presented a slightly more literal translation of this opening passage of the *Muqaddima*'s introduction: "history is a discipline that has a great number of (different) approaches. Its useful aspects are very many. Its goal is distinguished. (History) makes us acquainted with the conditions of past nations as they are reflected in their (national) character. It makes us acquainted with the biographies of the prophets and with the dynasties and policies of rulers. Whoever so desires may thus achieve the useful result of being able to imitate historical examples in religious and worldly matters. The (writing of history) requires numerous sources and greatly varied knowledge. It also requires a good speculative mind and thoroughness. (Possession of these two qualities) leads the historian to the truth and keeps him from slips and errors. If he trusts historical information in its plain transmitted form and has no clear knowledge of the principles resulting from custom, the fundamental facts of politics, the nature of civilization, or the conditions governing human social organization, and if, furthermore, he does not evaluate remote or ancient material through comparison with near or contemporary material, he often cannot avoid stumbling and slipping and deviating from the highroad of truth." (Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah: an introduction to history*, translated from the Arabic by Franz Rosenthal, 3 vols. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1958).

and how it is lost"⁹; the basic insight that he brings to this debate is that he explains how this history of power permeates social processes beyond the body politic of state or dynasty, how it transcends the individual agency of dynasts and elites, and how it structures social organisations in parallel patterns of the rise, efflorescence, decline and fall of royal dynastic authority. As Anne Broadbridge put it,

Ibn Khaldūn presented a clear analysis of several crucial ideas: the cyclical theory of history with its assumptions about the rise and fall of dynasties; the related comparison of the state to the body with a life cycle of birth, growth, maturity, old age, and death; and the connections among strong royal authority, justice, and an ordered society, with the consequent assumption that weak royal authority led to the spread of injustice and societal disorder.¹⁰

The impact, or at least remarkably parallel re-appearance, of these and similar ideas in early-modern Ottoman historiographical texts, and their authors' subsequent appreciation and appropriation of Ibn Khaldūn, has been well known since many years. This is not in the least due to the fact that a number of those texts made explicit and unique references to Ibn Khaldūn's scholarship (and that the *Muqaddima* was famously translated into Ottoman Turkish already in the eighteenth century). His scholarship indeed turned out to provide useful tools to explain, support, and accommodate the concerns and views of particular groups of Ottoman scholars, and to underscore the transformation of their gloomy analyses of contemporary transformations into calls for action to restore royal authority, rejuvenate the state, and avert the alleged decline of the Ottoman dynasty.¹¹

For a long time, it was thought that this Ottoman advice literature (*nasihatname*) was not just unique in its programmatic approach, but also in its

9 Khalidi, *Arabic historical thought*, p. 224.

10 Broadbridge, "Royal Authority, Justice, and Order in Society", p. 232. Gabriel Martínez-Gros is more critical of the popular notion of any kind of cyclical structuralism permeating Ibn Khaldūn's theories; he suggests that for Ibn Khaldūn this concerns no more than structural appearances of similarity, not repetitions of historical phenomena, especially since for Ibn Khaldūn in Martínez-Gros' reading there is a clear beginning (Muḥammad's mission) and therefore also a predetermined end to it all, which would preclude any cyclism in its literal, repetitive and endless sense; Ibn Khaldūn's notion of the structural appearance of similarities in history due to the agency of social power are therefore better rendered according to Martínez-Gros as the lives ("vies") of people and dynasties, connected as in a genealogical chain (rather than captured in any historical circularity) and as remembered (manipulated?) by historians such as Ibn Khaldūn (see Martínez-Gros, *Ibn Khaldūn*, pp. 63–5, 128–9, 158).

11 See especially Cornell H. Fleischer, "Royal authority, dynastic cyclism, and 'Ibn Khaldūnism' in sixteenth-century Ottoman letters", *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 18 (1983): 198–220. See also more in general on the nature and purpose of early modern Ottoman advice literature, R.'A. Abou-El-Haj, *Formation of the Modern State. The Ottoman Empire, Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries. Second Edition* (New York: Syracuse UP, 2005), esp. pp. 18–58.

incorporation and accommodation of Ibn Khaldūn's ideas. In more recent years, however, it has been made clear that this may have more to do with modern scholarship's lack of appreciation for Ibn Khaldūn's reception in other literary traditions, than with any negligence or marginalisation of his legacy. A case in point concerns the vast and impactful historiographical production of Ibn Khaldūn's student al-Maqrīzī.

Among the substantial list of al-Maqrīzī's extant historiographical writings, a few have indeed been the object of a more recent re-appraisal from the perspective of Ibn Khaldūn's legacy. In the *Mamlūk Studies Review* volume that was entirely dedicated to al-Maqrīzī, published in 2003, Anne Broadbridge thus analysed two of al-Maqrīzī's shorter economic treatises – *Ighāthah al-Umma*, published around 1405 and one of al-Maqrīzī's earliest writings, and *Shudhūr al-Uqūd*, written at an unspecified date between 1416 and 1421. She explains highly convincingly how both were textual repositories of royal advice that were organised around a particular world view, and how that view demonstrates obvious parallels with Ibn Khaldūn's re-appropriation of the ancient notion of the interdependence between royal authority, justice and social order.¹²

More recently, Nasser Rabbat similarly developed a strong case for understanding both the structure and the argument of one of al-Maqrīzī's larger historiographical enterprises from the perspective of his intellectual relationship with Ibn Khaldūn. As Rabbat explains,

the overarching cycle of the rise and fall of dynasties, which forms the basis of Ibn Khaldūn's cyclical historical process, seems to have furnished the intrinsic structure of the *Khiṭāṭ* as well. [...] he seems to have subsumed the Khaldūnian cyclical structure as a way of classifying, understanding, and rationalizing the vast amount of historical, topographic, and architectural data he collected over the years and of explaining the changing fortune of Cairo over its seven centuries of existence.¹³

In Rabbat's reading it was Ibn Khaldūn's idea of the structuring of social organisations by the dynamics of social power in successive cycles of the rise, efflorescence, decline and fall of central (urbanised/"sedentarised") authority that returns in similarly structuring ways in the organisation as well as the

12 "Indeed, al-Maqrīzī does demonstrate a marked interest in at least one notion dear to Ibn Khaldūn: that of the connections among royal authority, justice, and the maintenance of order in society. In al-Maqrīzī's hands, however, the concept is most frequently shown in reverse as the weakening of royal authority, the proliferation of injustice and the resultant spread of societal disorder." (Broadbridge, "Royal Authority, Justice, and Order in Society", p. 235) The programmatic, moral-didactic nature of both texts was also underlined and further explained in the same issue of *Mamlūk Studies Review* by John Meloy (J.L. Meloy, "The Merits of Economic History: Re-Reading al-Maqrīzī's *Ighāthah* and *Shudhūr*", *Mamlūk Studies Review* 7/2 (2003): 183–203).

13 Rabbat, "Was al-Maqrīzī's *Khiṭāṭ* a Khaldūnian History?", p. 134.

moralising argumentation of the *Khiṭaṭ*, al-Maqrīzī's multi-volume topographical history of the city of Cairo and its environs.¹⁴ At least, on both levels of the textual organisation and signification of Cairo-related topographical knowledge in the *Khiṭaṭ* Rabbat explains how there are many and most insightful parallels to be found with what Cornell Fleischer identified, in an Ottoman context, as "Ibn Khaldūnism": the conscious and moral-didactic use of the notion of "an historical cyclism governing the life of dynastic states".¹⁵ Identifying a similar structuring appearance of this notion in al-Maqrīzī's *Khiṭaṭ*, Rabbat re-imagines it as "Khaldūnian History", defined – in the fragment just quoted – as a "Khaldunian cyclical structure", full of explanatory meaning, of "the rise and fall of dynasties".

Al-Maqrīzī's uses of this "Ibn Khaldūnism" or "Khaldūnian History", which appears to have been picked up so widely from Ibn Khaldūn's analytical toolbox, will be further pursued in this chapter. However, since our intention is to move the textual analysis beyond a prioritisation of historical/historiographical analyses, this particular tool will be reframed here with the more literary-conscious notion of Khaldūnian narrative construction.

Part 3: Khaldūnian narrative construction in *al-Dhahab al-Masbūk*?

What concerns us here in the third and final part of this paper is to explore the notion of Khaldūnian narrative construction, as a literary perspective, wondering whether the idea of structuration and signification along Khaldūnian lines may also help to further the analysis and understanding of al-Maqrīzī's *al-Dhahab al-Masbūk*. For this perspective any more historical question of al-Maqrīzī's direct inspiration by Ibn Khaldūn, or not, appears as rather less relevant, even when a reconstruction of context and circumstances are very suggestive in this respect. One of the arguments of this chapter is, after all, that it is highly rewarding to return, in scholarly analyses, texts such as *al-Dhahab al-Masbūk* from the margins to the centre of historical action, not as merely passive or biased and selective observers, but as participants and actors in their own right, structuring such action as well as simultaneously structured by it. From this perspective of textual agency, interaction and history making, it seems far more pertinent (and rewarding) to simply explore whether and how a particular historical imagination, which may be conveniently identified as Khaldūnian and which sees power and

14 See also Nasser Rabbat's much briefer development of this argument in an earlier publication: N. Rabbat, "Al-Maqrīzī's *Khiṭaṭ*, an Egyptian *Lieu de Mémoire*", in D. Behrens-Abouseif (ed.), *The Cairo Heritage. Essays in Honor of Laila Ali Ibrahim* (Cairo: AUC Press, 2000), pp. 17–30, esp. pp. 24–6.

15 Fleischer, "Royal authority, dynastic cyclism, and 'Ibn Khaldūnism'", p. 200.

its pervasive moral consequences as appearing in parallel historical patterns of rise, efflorescence, decline and fall, may have been accommodated and accommodating to al-Maqrīzī's textual communication. It becomes then above all clear that it was thus accommodated and accommodating, and quite effectively so, also in other works than his *Khīṭaṭ*, including in *al-Dhahab al-Masbūk*.

As summarised above, al-Maqrīzī produced *al-Dhahab al-Masbūk* as a programmatic text of moral-didactic purpose, which accommodated the historiographical formats of stories about pilgriming rulers and about leadership to its communication of ideas and moral categories of good Muslim rule, Egyptian supremacy, and divine sovereignty. This creative and performative agency of the author and the text played above all at the macro-structural level, because the text's micro-structural building blocks of *khābars* appear as firmly set within various webs of the historiographical canon and its strict conventions. It is therefore the authorial process of the production of particular, innovative kinds of chapters and narratives for the structuration of selected sets of canonised historical material that generated the communication of one of the most important and most explicit layers of the text's meanings. Considering *al-Dhahab al-Masbūk*'s core business of pilgriming Prophet, caliphs and non-caliphal rulers, it is in this context certainly pertinent to note how al-Maqrīzī's construction of its three corresponding chapters displays a particular structural and structuring coherence that may actually be understood as a Khaldūnian narrative construction.

It was already made clear above that by sheer size the second and third chapter of *al-Dhahab al-Masbūk* clearly function as the text's main structural blocks, and that these two chapters are symmetrically aligned in two units of exactly thirteen Muslim leaders. Thirteen pilgriming caliphs are thus succeeded in the text by an equal number of thirteen pilgriming 'kings'. The first, much shorter, chapter on the Farewell Pilgrimage, as noted above, clearly was constructed by al-Maqrīzī as a sort of macro-structural axis and as a touchstone for each of the other two chapters of thirteen rulers, reminding of the way in which the example of the Prophet was referential for Muslim rulers in general.¹⁶ The exigencies of a clearcut structure of three chapters and two sets of thirteen Muslim rulers emanating from the Prophet surely goes a long way toward explaining al-Maqrīzī's sometimes surprising choices for or against the inclusion of particular rulers. But

16 In many ways, this prophetic chapter may also be explained from the Khaldūnian perspective, especially if that perspective is further qualified by Martínez-Gros' suggestion not to overestimate the cyclical assumption in Ibn Khaldūn's historical theories, to think in terms of parallel structural effects of the dynamics of social power rather than of any structural determinism of repetitive political realities, and to acknowledge how for Ibn Khaldūn the prophetic charismatic mission represented a defining starting point in the history of Muslim leadership (Martínez-Gros, *Ibn Khaldūn*, pp. 129, 133–5).

related macro-structural dynamics may also have played a role in these authorial choices, and particular moments in the textual structure are very suggestive in this respect.

One of these conspicuous moments occurs when the text of *al-Dhahab al-Masbūk* suddenly leaps forward by almost 500 years, from the glorious days of the 'Abbāsīd Hārūn al-Rashīd (r. 786–809) to the thirteenth and last caliph in the list, al-Ḥākīm (r. 1262–1302). The latter was the second 'Abbāsīd caliph of Cairo, where the caliphate had been restored shortly after the destruction of Baghdad and the execution of its last 'Abbāsīd in 1258. Al-Maqrīzī's plotting of the story of this al-Ḥākīm's 1298 pilgrimage against a background of powerlessness and defunct authority reads as a surprising, anticlimactic moment in the text, after the great deeds and exemplary exploits of al-Ḥākīm's twelve caliphal predecessors. Al-Maqrīzī's concluding sentence of this caliphal part of the text is actually auspiciously programmatic, in the organisation of the text as much as in its framing of wider social realities. Connecting the sequence of caliphs to his own early fifteenth-century time he subtly announces and explains the text's imminent transition from caliphs to non-caliphal rulers, by zooming in on the long-standing tradition of delivering the Friday sermon in the Mecca sanctuary in the ruler's name.

Until today, the situation has remained like that, the Friday sermon in Mecca never being delivered in the name of any of the 'Abbāsīd caliphs of Egypt, except for [the name of] the caliph al-Musta'īn bi-llāh Abū l-Faḍl al-'Abbās b. Muḥammad, [which was mentioned] for a few days in the year 815 [1412].¹⁷

The 'Abbāsīd Caliph of Cairo al-Musta'īn (r. 1406–1414) was indeed briefly awarded this highly symbolic supreme Muslim rulership privilege. This, however, derived from al-Musta'īn's accession to Muslim kingship rather than from his caliphal authority, when during a short span of time in 1412 al-Musta'īn was made sultan, uniquely combining the by then empty shell of the 'Abbāsīd caliphate with the sovereignty of the Sultanate of Cairo. Non-caliphal Muslim kingship, including the Sultanate of Cairo, is therefore what al-Maqrīzī focused on in the next, third chapter of the booklet.

Interestingly, at the end of this third chapter and its chronological list of thirteen 'kings', another one of such conspicuous moments in the text occurs when the story of the Qalāwūnid sultan of Cairo al-Ashraf Sha'bān (r. 1363–77) appears in the format of as anticlimactic a plot as that of the caliph al-Ḥākīm had ended the second chapter. This last ruler of the entire list in *al-Dhahab al-Masbūk* left his seat of government in Cairo for the pilgrimage, but he never made

17 Quotations in this part are all taken from Part 2 (Critical Edition and Annotated Translation) of Van Steenberg, *Caliphate & Kingship*.

it to Mecca due to a series of rebellions in his own royal entourage. This then appears as a final moment of political failure and chaos that contrasts in dark ways with the redemptive theme of pilgrimage, providing the booklet with a rather fatalistic end. In this rather negative line of thought, al-Maqrīzī aptly concluded both Sha‘bān’s case and *al-Dhahab al-Masbūk*’s text with the claim that “the last that is known about [sultan Sha‘bān] is that he was killed by strangulation – God knows best”.

These two remarkable moments in the text clearly join the powerless caliph al-Ḥākim and the doomed al-Ashraf Sha‘bān in entirely distinct but at the same time parallel stories of failure. If they are mapped onto the larger conscious arrangement of two times thirteen Muslim rulers in each of chapters two and three, it transpires that these moments coincide with particular structural junctures in the text of *al-Dhahab al-Masbūk*. These representations of Muslim rule at its nadir really come across as echoing each other in their parallel anti-climactic tones at the end of each chapter, and as thus confirming and explaining the structural boundaries of the booklet’s two main narrative blocks.¹⁸ On both occasions, they furthermore follow reconstructions of particularly glorious moments of Muslim rule. In the second chapter al-Ḥākim’s narrative was thus immediately preceded by those of the ‘Abbāsīd caliphs al-Manṣūr (r. 754–75), al-Mahdī (r. 775–85) and al-Rashīd (786–809). Sha‘bān’s ominous pilgrimage adventures in chapter three ended a range of narratives that evoked the regional sovereignty of the Sultanate of Cairo, as the achievement and legacy of the sultans al-Zāhir Baybars (r. 1260–77) and al-Nāṣir Muḥammad b. Qalāwūn (r. 1293–4; 1299–1309; 1310–41). In this particular sequential construction, then, al-Ḥākim’s and Sha‘bān’s stories of loss of power, failure, rebellion and murder indeed bespeak the idea of a Khaldūnian pattern of the efflorescence, decline and fall of central authority structuring the macro-level of al-Maqrīzī’s textual enterprise as well as of his historiographical representation of a caliphal and then a non-caliphal line of Muslim rulers, both of which were rooted in the Prophet’s example.

This kind of Khaldūnian narrative construction of the two main chapters of *al-Dhahab al-Masbūk* is finally also particularly suggestive in terms of the meanings that at least some readers may have picked up from their engagements with *al-Dhahab al-Masbūk*. A Khaldūnian perspective suggests certainly that the end of chapter three, with its rebellion against and murder of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad b. Qalāwūn’s grandson Sha‘bān in 1377, is as much pitched as the end of an era as the transition from caliphal to non-caliphal Muslim rule was at the end of chapter

18 Explorations of the possible meanings of the number thirteen in such a double structural pattern have so far not yielded any relevant insights, but certainly invite for further consideration.

two. This generates the impression that the post-1377 time of writing and reading *al-Dhahab al-Masbūk* – as explained above, primarily in 1418 – should similarly be considered to belong to another, new era of Muslim power, at which a new pattern of strong central authority was unfolding and for which the examples of the two preceding eras could be highly useful. Of course, nowhere in the actual text is this idea really explicitly formulated, and it may even have been an unintentional consequence of the author's infusion of the text's many complex narratives with canonized historical material. But this textual construction's coinciding with a turn of the century that was a time of substantial political and socio-economic transformations – as also reminded by the reference to caliph al-Musta'in's unorthodox and ephemeral tenure of the sultanate in 1412 – at least suggests that the intended readership of *al-Dhahab al-Masbūk*, including the usurper of al-Musta'in's sultanate, al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh (r. 1412–21), may have been highly susceptible to reading into it Khaldūnian meanings. These meanings certainly would have included a particular, moralising historical imagination and explanation of the rebellion and murder in 1377 that had marked the beginning of the end for al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's dynasty, the Qalāwūnids, as well as for all who had risen to power and status in Egypt either in their wake or – in the 1370s and 80s – against that longstanding wake. These meanings may furthermore also have included ideas about the restoration of good Muslim rule in the new era that was unfolding thereafter. Seen from this perspective, Khaldūnian narrative construction actually enabled *al-Dhahab al-Masbūk* to underscore the idea of al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh's legitimate tenure of the sultanate, which appears as historically and morally timely in the resolution of the post-1377 crises and in the novelty of the violent empowerment of al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh and of entirely new groups of powerholders with him. In this way, *al-Dhahab al-Masbūk* even suggests a bright future at the start of the new era for this sultan and his entourage, if only they would draw lessons from the past, as reproduced in *al-Dhahab al-Masbūk*.

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The Changing Legacy of a Sufi Shaykh: Narrative Constructions in Diaries, Chronicles, and Biographies (15th–17th Centuries)

Introduction

In Damascus in Ramaḍān 899, the sufi shaykh Mubārak al-Qābūnī was imprisoned and beaten by the Mamluk authorities. After being rescued by some eminent jurists, his followers went to the prison on the next day to achieve the release of their companions who were still held there. The Mamluks attacked the crowd and pillaged the village of Qābūn.¹ Economic life in Damascus came to a standstill for days, and the Mamluks apprehended everyone who looked like one of Mubārak’s sufis. This episode resulted in probably the highest death toll suffered by the city on any single day during sultan Qā’itbāy’s later reign. In the aftermath, the local authorities feared a full-scale uprising of Bedouins, peasants and brigands led by Mubārak. The importance ascribed to these events is reflected in their being mentioned in local historiographical literature until the early 17th century.²

However, it is not so much the events themselves what will be examined in the following. Rather, they shall serve to illustrate the authors’ agency in shaping their respective past into diverging narratives. Historical works were literary and public texts, and authors used narrative techniques to meet (or surprise) the expectations of their respective audience(s). Material was added, rejected, re-

1 Qābūn lies northeast of Old Damascus and was Mubārak’s base of operations where he had his house and convent.

2 Estimates move between 60 and 150. The lowest number is given by Ibn Ṭawq and refers only to the death toll at the Umayyad Mosque. Ibn Ṭūlūn’s estimate of 150 dead should be taken with caution, for it probably takes all people killed on that day and over the following days into account. Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn ‘Alī Ibn Ṭūlūn (1964), *Mufākāhat al-khillān fī ḥa-wādith al-zamān: tāriḫ Miṣr wa-l-Shām*, ed. by Muḥammad Muṣṭafā, Cairo, vol. 1, 158; Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad Ibn Ṭawq (2004), *al-Ta’liq. Yawmiyyāt Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad Ibn Ṭawq. Mudhakkirāt kutibat bi-Dimashq fī awākhir al-‘ahd al-mamlūkī*, ed. by Shaykh Ja’fār al-Muhājir, Damascus, vol. III, 1288. Even during the siege of Damascus by the rebellious *da-wādār* Aqbirdī in 903, fighting rarely led to such casualties. See Toru, Miura (2006), “Urban Society in Damascus As the Mamluk Era Was Ending”, *Mamluk Studies Review* 10/1, 157–193.

shuffled, or merely rephrased from one account to the next; events were emphasised, summarised or omitted; leading in some cases to dramatically changed *meaning* of a story itself. The above-mentioned episode was subjected to almost ten *retellings* over the following century and thus offers itself for a comparative study of narratives as well as of the intertextual relations between them.

In my opinion, two of the most inspiring recent narratological studies in our field are Boaz Shoshan's *Poetics of Islamic Historiography* and Konrad Hirschler's *Authors as Actors*.³ This article takes up Hirschler's contention that through the application of a narratological approach "even texts of 'minor' authors appear as more multi-faceted than previously assumed", because only if we diverge from the focus on their respective factual value do we see how these authors "developed, in their outwardly quite similar texts, distinctive versions of their immediate past".⁴ In contrast to both Hirschler and Shoshan, I will focus on a joint analysis of chronographical⁵ and biographical works on the micro-narrative level. Inspired by the French literary scholar Gérard Genette's systematic approach, the analysis will focus on the temporal arrangement of narratives, for this allows us another perspective on their claim to 'truth'. It will further be shown that the largest narrative shift occurred in Muḥammad Ibn Ṭūlūn's (d. 953/1546) works. Through a radical condensation of the preceding accounts, it opened up ways for a reinterpretation of this episode, and thus was adapted by all succeeding biographers.

The article proceeds in a rather conservative 'narrative': First, I will introduce my sources, the relations between them, and the accounts they give of the incident. Then, I will introduce my narratological approach and conceptual vocabulary, before we turn to the chronology of the historical episode and its diverging narrative treatments. The overall number of accounts has proven too great to include all of them. I have thus restricted the scope to four accounts by Ibn Ṭawq (d. 1509), Ibn al-Ḥimṣī (d. 1524), and, twice, Ibn Ṭūlūn. The reason for this selection is that the narrative of the clash had been mostly 'canonised' after

3 Boaz Shoshan (2004), *Poetics of Islamic Historiography. Deconstructing Ṭabarī's History*, Leiden; Boston; Konrad Hirschler (2006), *Medieval Arabic Historiography. Authors as Actors*, London; New York. For a thorough survey of the current state of narratological studies in our field, the reader is pointed to the introduction of this volume.

4 Hirschler, *Authors as Actors*, 16, 12. See also Hirschler (2013), "Studying Mamluk Historiography. From Source-Criticism to the Cultural Turn", in: *Ubi Sumus? Quo Vademus? Mamluk Studies – State of the Art*, ed. by Stephan Conermann, Göttingen: V&R Unipress, Bonn Univ. Press, 159–186, here: 166–168.

5 In terminology I follow Chase Robinson, who distinguishes between biographical (*sīra*), prosopographical (*ṭabaqāt*), and chronographical literature (*tārīkh*). The term chronographical is more appropriate than 'annalistic' or 'chronological', for not all chronicles are arranged by year nor do they follow chronology on all levels, as will be shown below. See Chase Robinson (2007), *Islamic Historiography*, Cambridge, xxiv–xxv.

these works. Finally, the conclusion will give an outlook on the later biographical transmission until the early 17th century.

The Transmission on Mubārak

Shaykh Mubārak's clash with the Mamluks has been the subject of several accounts, the earliest of which was penned by Ibn Ṭawq around the time of the events themselves and the latest of which was written by Najm al-Dīn al-Ghazzī (d. 1652) in his *Kawākib al-Sā'ira* well after 1600. I could identify six biographical entries and three chronographical accounts of the episode, not all of which have survived (in full).⁶ Figure 1 shows these texts clustered into three groups, dividing the latter group further into literary chronicles and diaries. As I argue elsewhere, the latter is still caught up in the events it reports, whereas the former can, due to editing at later stages, take a deliberate stance towards said events.

Whereas Ibn Ṭawq mentions Mubārak in entries throughout his text, the chronicles of both Ibn al-Ḥimṣī and Ibn Ṭūlūn already attempt a 'biographisation'.⁷ Thus, the shaykh appears only once, in the context of the central episode. Although Ibn Ṭūlūn's *Mufākaha* might give the impression (at first glance) that it is 'only' a diary,⁸ comparing only the length of the description of the clash between Mubārak and the Mamluks (48 lines in Ibn Ṭawq to only 13

6 For the great clash, see Najm al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Ghazzī (1945), *al-Kawākib al-sā'ira bi-āyān al-mi'a al-āshira*, Beirut, vol. 2, 245–246; 'Abd al-Ḥayy Ibn Aḥmad Ibn al-Imād [1932], *Shadharāt al-dhahab fī akhbār man dhahab*, Beirut, vol. 8, 259–260; Sharaf al-Dīn Mūsā Ibn Ayyūb, "Kitāb al-Rawḍ al-āṭir fīmā tayassiru min akhbār ahl al-qarn al-sābi' ilā khitām al-qarn al-āshir", Staatsbibliothek Berlin: Wetzstein II 289, ff. 285b–286b; Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākaha* 1, 158; Aḥmad Ibn al-Ḥimṣī (2000), *Ḥawāḍith al-zamān wa-wafayyāt al-shuyūkh wa-l-aqrān*, ed. by 'Abd al-Azīz Fayyā Ḥarfūsh, Beirut, 252–254; Ibn Ṭawq (2004), *al-Ta'līq* III, 1287–1292. Parts of Ibn Ṭūlūn's *Tamattu'* are still available through Aḥmad Ibn-Muḥammad al-Ḥaskafī (1999), *Mu't al-adhhān min al-tamattu' bi-l-iqrān bayna tarājim al-shuyūkh wa-l-aqrān*, ed. by Ṣāliḥ al-Dīn Khalīl al-Shaybānī al-Mawṣilī, Beirut; his *Mufākahat al-Ikhwān*, which has not survived, was identified by Chaim Nissim: *The Historiography of Syria in the Late Mamluk Period and the Beginning of Ottoman Period: The Historical Writings of Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn Ṭūlūn (1475–1546)*, Jerusalem 2012, 155. Ibn al-Mibrad's biographical dictionary *Al-riyāḍ al-yāni'a* is lost and only known from excerpts in other, mostly Ibn Ṭūlūn's, works; Guy Burak (2015), *The second formation of Islamic law: the Hanafī school in the early modern Ottoman empire*, Cambridge, 106.

7 For the concept of the 'biographisation' of historical writing, see Otfried Weintritt (2008), *Arabische Geschichtsschreibung in den arabischen Provinzen des Osmanischen Reiches (16.–18. Jahrhundert)*, Hamburg-Schenefeld, 11, 16.

8 For that common notion, see e.g. Stephan Conermann (2004), "Ibn Ṭūlūn (d. 955/1548): Life and Works", *Mamluk Studies Review* 8/1, 115–139; Richard Hartmann (1926), "Das Tübinger Fragment der Chronik des Ibn Ṭūlūn", *Schriften der Königsberger Gelehrten Gesellschaft Geisteswissenschaftliche Klasse (3/2)*, 87–104.

lines in Ibn Ṭūlūn) quickly destroys this notion.⁹ The *Mufākaha* must have been edited later on or it would have given the event much more space, as will become apparent below. It should thus be regarded as a “literary creation in its own right” rather than a pragmatic collection of dated events.¹⁰

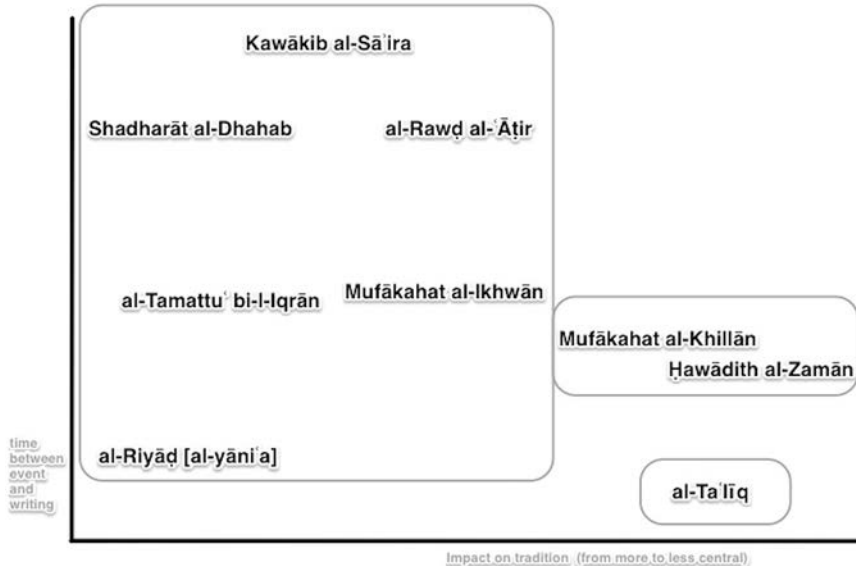


Fig. 1: The y-axis indicates the chronology, in which these texts were written. The x-axis indicates their impact on ‘canonisation’ of transmitted material. The close to the zero degree, the more influential a work was in this respect.

Two things become apparent in figure 1. First, the biographical writing on Muḥarrak (the large cluster to the left) is richer and more long-living than the chronological one (the smaller cluster to its right). Second, on the surface the chronological and the biographical clusters seem to exist independent from each other. This separation is even more striking once we introduce references between texts (figure 2).¹¹ Explicit citations and ‘implicit’ references (copy of anecdote without acknowledgement of the source) only occur between bio-

9 If Ibn Ṭūlūn had written contemporaneous to these events, he would have ascribed much more importance to it, just as much as the two authors discussed so far.

10 Shoshan, *Poetics*, xviii. For the argument to distinguish diaries from literary chronicles, see Torsten Wollina (2014), *Zwanzig Jahre Alltag: Lebens-, Welt- und Selbstbild im Journal des Ahmad Ibn Tawq*, Göttingen, 23–43; George Makdisi (1986), “The Diary in Islamic Historiography: Some Notes”, *History and Theory* 25/2, 173–185.

11 Arrows indicate explicit citations of either a work or an author (if oral transmission is not explicitly mentioned); simple lines indicate that material was used from these works without acknowledging the source.

graphical works, where Ibn Ṭūlūn's two accounts constitute the central texts. As I will demonstrate in the following, the two clusters also intersect in one of these works and there the transfer of narrative patterns took place.

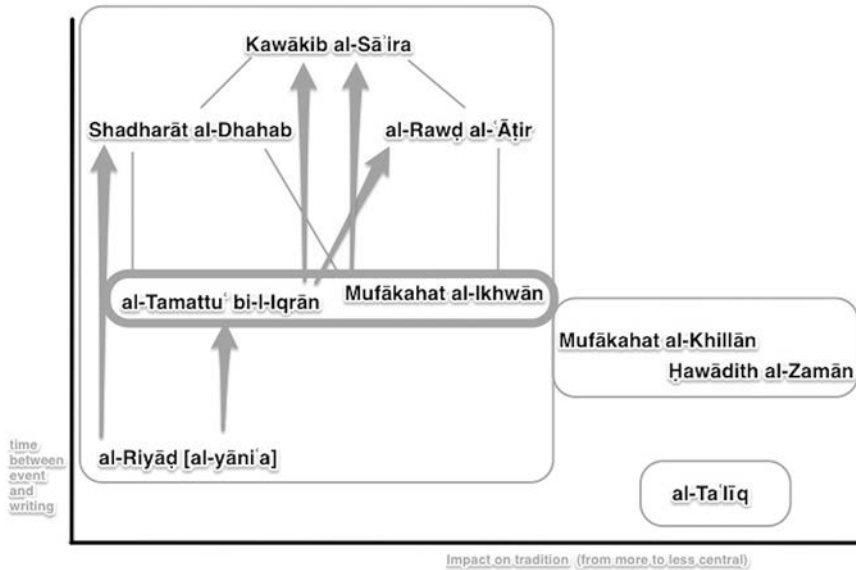


Fig. 2

The following analysis is concerned only with the first 'phase', which consists primarily of chronographic accounts but moves into the biographical sphere towards its end. It focuses on the descriptions of the two central days of conflict. The most detailed description of the events can be found in Ibn Ṭawq's *Ta'liq*; it also was written closest to the events portrayed. Ibn Ṭawq's account of Mubārak's exploits is mostly a scattered narrative, disappearing and resurfacing throughout his text between the years 894 and 903.¹² The central confrontation in Ramaḍān 899, however, takes the centre stage in the *Ta'liq* within the coverage of that period (48 lines).¹³ For reference, I have here already included the signifiers for the events making up the historical episode. They will become important in the analysis and will be elaborated on in the following section.

12 Ibn Ṭawq, *Ta'liq* II, 850; *Ta'liq* III, 1115, 1129, 1141, 1146, 1157, 1160, 1167, 1168, 1173–1174, 1179, 1190, 1197, 198, 1235, 1255, 1265–1267, 1273, 1280, 1282, 1287–1292, 1294, 1299, 1300, 1513; *Ta'liq* IV, 1531.

13 See Ibn Ṭawq, *Ta'liq* III, 1287–1296. From among those ten pages, Mubārak is a topic on seven; in some cases he is the only topic.

[Friday, 2 Ramaḍān 899] (B1) During the *īd*, Shaykh Mubārak and three others passed the *al-Nuḥḥās madrasa*, just as [the *dawādār*] Arakmās was sitting in his tomb (*turba*). Whether someone informed him or he saw [Mubārak], he sent for him and sat down in the window and started an unnecessary dispute with him. (B) Then he sent about five Mamluks – maybe more, maybe fewer – after him, and they captured him and two [men] who were with him. They brought them to the governor. (C1) One could escape; he went and told the *shaykh* [*al-islām*] about it; it was Ibn Zunhār. (B*) Meanwhile, the order was given to flog [Mubārak] heavily for his insubordination, as is told. (C2) Another [man] escaped from the meeting and is now at shaykh Faraj’s house.¹⁴ (B2) With [Mubārak] stayed still another man from Ṣāliḥiyya, who was beaten severely. Both were taken to the prison at the *Bāb al-Barīd* [prison] in shackles, guarded by a group of Mamluks, and it was decreed over them: “This is the punishment or less than the punishment [than he deserves] who harms the people!” (C3) God inspired our master the *shaykh* [*al-islām*] to go to the Shāfi‘ī chief judge’s residence, after three messengers had been dispatched there. The last of them had been shaykh Shihāb al-Dīn al-Ṣamīdī but he did not inform him of anything. When the shaykh arrived, he let him know so that (C) he rode off immediately to the governor and stayed with him until, after much dispute, he freed [Mubārak]. (C4) Apparently a decree was written or he was advised that he and his faction were not allowed to carry weapons, and they intimidated him. (C*) The judge had arrived after sunset. [Mubārak’s] following came for him from Qābūn after sunset. He was in much pain from the beating – (K) we ask God for His forgiveness and for our wellbeing.

[Saturday, 3 Ramaḍān 899] (D) God Almighty has ordained for his creatures in Damascus that shaykh Mubārak and his faction came down from Qābūn in the morning, (D1) and many of the riffraff and bystanders without any work flocked to them. (E) When he and some of his followers entered the large house of the *shaykh al-islām* in the neighbourhood of the *Bādirā’iyya madrasa*, (F) a large crowd went to the prison to free the beaten prisoner. The prison was opened for them and [so] they freed him. (F1) It is said, he is a paper merchant from Ṣāliḥiyya. (F2) It is also said that with him a group of inmates of the outer prison escaped. None of the [real] criminals from the big prison escaped. (F3) The prison guards informed the household of the governor, (G) and his deputy sent out a unit of Mamluks who went and cut with their swords amongst the people. Most of them were just bystanders and fled their path. About sixty people were killed and many more wounded. (G1) I was told that they captured two men and beheaded them. This was done in front of the governor’s seat. (G2) Corpses lay from the *Sūq al-Raṣīf* all the way to the bench of the *muḥtasib* and to the wall. (G3) One group had locked themselves up in a caravanserai there but one unit killed a number and injured seven of them [...]. (H) [The governor] ordered the Mamluks to pillage Qābūn. (H1) With them went the *dawādār* Qaṭaj. They went first to lower Qābūn and (H2) started at Mubārak’s house and convent (*zāwiya*). From there they went killing and injuring people all the way to the market. (H3) The *fitna* lasted until noon. (I1) They went to the gate of our master the *shaykh* [*al-islām*]’s house, broke open the ledge (*ḥawḥa*) and forced their way to the door of the corridor. They tried to break it open but God

14 Another militant Sufi of the time; I am grateful to Boaz Shoshan to make me aware of him.

dispersed them! (I2) At the Shāfi'ī chief judge's house they forced open the gate's ledge, entered and shot about ten arrows. (I3) The governor's deputy (*kāfil*) sent a grand emir, the *ḥājib al-ḥujjāb*, the sultan's *dawādār* and the second *ḥājib* to the judge to demand Mubārak. He replied: "Have I seen Mubārak? Since even if he was with me, I could never deliver him to you, I cannot tell you." (I) The markets were closed, and the city (*balad*) was in turmoil. This state continued until the end of the day, (I3*) when the aforementioned¹⁵ came to the judge and they rode together to the deputy. (H4) All the people have left Upper Qābūn. (K*) It was a disastrous day! Oh God, don't punish us for our misdeeds nor for our ill activities! (I4) The killed were carried to the *Amīniyya madrasa*. The people came and took their dead. There were about 15 people. Our *mawlā* the *shaykh [al-islām]* decided to wash them on the next day. (H*) Regarding those who went to Qābūn, all the soldiers were in full armour, riders and foot soldiers, and [with] their grooms (*ghulmān*) and those who joined them they were about two thousand men.¹⁶

Ibn al-Ḥimṣī dedicates two long entries in his chronicle *Ḥawādith al-Zamān* to the clash itself (pp. 252–254) and to its aftermath (pp. 255–256) respectively. I will focus on the first, which retains almost the length of Ibn Ṭawq's account (43 lines):

(B) On the evening of said Friday [2.9.899] Arakmās, the sultan's *dawādār*, ambushed shaykh Mubārak al-Qābūnī, took him prisoner and brought him to the governor of Damascus Qānṣūh al-Yaḥyāwī. (A) This shaykh Mubārak had demolished the taverns on the *īd* and hindered the alcohol traders' deliveries. He had had earlier confrontations with the Mamluks. Thus, the governor and the Turks hated him. (B*) When shaykh Mubārak was at the governor's, he ordered him to be beaten severely. One of his sufis, who was with him, was [also] beaten with a stick. Both were shackled and thrown into the prison at the *Bāb al-Barīd*. (C1) The people were in unrest, and (C) the *shaykh al-islām* Taqī al-Dīn Ibn Qāḍī 'Ajlūn hurried with a group of '*ulamā*' to the Shāfi'ī chief judge Shihāb al-Dīn Ibn al-Farfūr. [...]

(D) Then, on Saturday the 3rd, the populace came together to greet shaykh Mubārak and wish him well. He then went from lower Qābūn (E) to the Shāfi'ī judge's house, accompanied by about 200 of his Sufis who praised [the judge]. Then [Mubārak] went to the *shaykh al-islām* Taqī al-Dīn and praised him. Some of his Sufis were with him; (F) the others were at the gate. (F1) Some of them said: "They have done this to our shaykh Mubārak. He was unjustly beaten, and our comrade is in prison. Let us go and free him from the prison." (F*) So they went and freed the sufi of shaykh Mubārak (F2) but could not free the other prisoners. So they shouted. (F3) At this point, a crowd gathered and broke down the prison gate and freed the prisoners who fled and dispersed. (G) When the governor of Damascus heard about this, his mamluks¹⁷ and other soldiers came in

15 I am not completely certain if this refers to one of the emirs or to Mubārak, but the latter is, in this context, rather unlikely.

16 Ibn Ṭawq, *Ta'liq* III, 1287–1289.

17 He means here the type of mounted soldiers, armed with lance, sword and bow, not the Mamluks as rulers or dynasty.

full armour. (G1) They came to the prison gate, and the sufis and commoners fled into the Umayyad Mosque. They locked all the gates but one through which the mamluks entered the mosque and attacked them. They injured uncountable souls. (G2) Then the crowd fled towards the amber market, opposite the gate of the mosque, but its gate was locked. There the mamluks came upon them. They used their swords against High and Low, against the sufis and all others. More than 70 people were killed by the amber market, while some lost a hand, a whole arm, or an eye. (G3) Then, the Mamluks reached the swords market and pillaged parts of it. (I) The markets of Damascus were closed. The fear and anxiety was indescribable. (J) The Mamluks – may God defeat them – cut the throat of everyone wearing a *mīzar*.¹⁸ (H1) Then they returned to the governor and told him what had happened. He ordered the mamluks and the emirs: “Go to Qābūn and pillage it!” (H) They went to Lower Qābūn and pillaged it, taking people’s utensils, clothes and cattle – they left them nothing! They killed whoever they found and tore down shaykh Mubārak’s *zāwiya*. (J*) They killed everyone wearing a *mīzar*. (I*) Upon their return from Qābūn the populace was in such a fear that it cannot be described. If the *ḥājib* and the other emirs had not reached them, they also would have pillaged Upper Qābūn. (I1) I have seen the corpses with my own eyes: they lay like cattle in the *Amīniyya madrasa* in front of the gate of the Umayyad Mosque. I counted more than 100.

(K) So gaze, oh brother, on this disaster so great that it has not its equal!¹⁹ There is not power nor strength but in God! And the emirs informed the sultan of it [...].

Ibn Ṭūlūn’s chronographical account in the *Mufākahat al-Khillān* (henceforth *Mufākaha*) is much shorter and, despite being stretched over three entries (1, 2 and 4 Ramaḍān 899), consists of mere 13 lines of text:

“(B1) On Thursday, the [1.9.899] a large crowd met in the Umayyad Mosque, and they allowed the prayer call of the noon and the afternoon prayer only in the gallery by the gate to the minaret. And they shouted ‘Allāh Akbar!’ against the sultan’s *dawādār*, because he had captured two of shaykh Mubārak’s faction, (A) for they had been keeping the wine merchants from entering Damascus. [...]

(B) Then, at the end of this day [2.9.899], the *amīr al-ḥājj* Arakmās apprehended shaykh Mubārak and another man. He brought both to the governor’s seat. The governor tortured/beat both and had them imprisoned. (B2) He spoke to shaykh Mubārak: ‘If you have (any) secret, disclose it!’, (A*) because he was enraged by his fetching the wine deliveries. (C) As the judge heard of his imprisonment, he sent for him and freed him from prison. [...]

(D) Then, on Saturday [4.9.899], (D) a crowd came from Qābūn to the prison at *Bāb al-Barīd*, (F) broke in, and freed shaykh Mubārak’s follower, and he fled. (G) The governor’s mamluks rushed armed from the governor’s seat towards them and killed scores,

18 A type of headgear that was the ‘uniform’ of Mubārak’s followers.

19 A similar statement is to be found at the end of the second entry dedicated to Mubārak: “So gaze, oh brother! This black slave, when he stood fast and faithful to God, God rescued him from them [the Mamluks] and submitted them to him. Praised be He who changes hearts.” Ibn al-Ḥimṣī, *Ḥawādith al-zamān*, 256.

more than 150, of them and of the people of Šālihiyya, the poor (*al-nudra*), and others, at the *Bāb al-Barīd*, (G2) the gate of the amber market, and (G1) the grave of Zakariyyā in the Umayyad Mosque. (I) Damascus was in turmoil, and (J) the judges abstained from being present at the *Dār al-ʿAdl* on [the following] Monday. (K) There is no power but in God!²⁰

In his *Mufākahat al-Ikhwān*, which has survived only in copies from later biographical dictionaries, Ibn Ṭūlūn offers a more encompassing picture of Mubārak's life, adding information both before and after the clash, although the clash remains the centrepiece of the 'biography'. The following version was quoted directly on Ibn Ṭūlūn's authority by both Ibn al-ʿImād and al-Ghazzī:

(A1) Shaykh Mubārak had recited the *Ghāyat al-ikhtišār* before the *shaykh al-islām* Taqī al-Dīn Ibn Qāḍī ʿAjlūn, who built a *zāwiya* for him in the vicinity of Lower Qābūn. There, he lived with his followers (*jamāʿa*), (A) and they searched the road for alcohol traders, and [when they apprehended them] cut open the vessels and spilled the alcohol. (B1) When this became known to the governor, he captured some of the shaykh's faction and threw them in the prison at *Bāb al-Barīd*. (B) Shaykh Mubārak came to intercede on their behalf but the governor had him imprisoned (as well). (C) As these news were brought to shaykh Taqī al-Dīn Ibn Qāḍī ʿAjlūn, he interceded and freed him. (F) Then the rest of shaykh Mubārak's faction attacked the prison, broke its gates, and freed their comrades. (G) News reached the governor, and he sent a detachment of his Mamluks who killed about 70 people around the *Bāb al-Barīd*, (G2) the amber market, and (G1) the Umayyad Mosque. (J) Then, shaykh Mubārak gave up and only stayed in the *zāwiyas* [...].

The account of Ibn al-Mibrad, which the later biographical dictionaries cite as well in unison, is not regarded in the following analysis, for it only alludes to the central conflict: "(A) Shaykh Mubārak appeared in the year 897 or earlier or later, and to him came followers and the *amr bi-l-maʿrūf*. He worked against the vices (*al-munkar*) by destroying alcohol, among other things. (B-H) After he had done this, he turned against the Turks, and they against him."²¹ It suffices to acknowledge that here the main event of the other accounts has itself become mere epilogue to the campaign against the vices, which usually appeared only as a pretext or prologue to said event.

20 Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākaha* 1, 158.

21 This lack of information on the clash should be attributed to Ibn al-Mibrad's comparatively early death in 1495. His work was probably 'published' even before that incident. See identical in Ghazzī, *Kawākib* 2, 245; Ibn Ayyūb, "al-Rawḍ", f. 286a; Ibn al-ʿImād, *Shadharāt al-dhahab* 8, 259.

Historical Time and Narrative Time

While “motives, figures and narrative strands” (“Motive, Figuren und Erzählstränge”), as Thomas Herzog explained (part of) his interest in the *sīrat al-Zāhir Baybars*,²² are certainly part of the narrative repertoire, I move the analysis to a different, micro-narrative level. An analysis of this level provides us with another approach to how such motives were embedded in narratives – and how the description of certain events could be accommodated to existing tropes or ‘modes of emplotment’.²³ It is thus an analytical approach, which is narrower than and, at the same time, goes beyond the study of tropes or topoi. It is my contention that this approach also allows us to scrutinise the distinction between genres, such as ‘biography’ or ‘chronicle’ and opens an additional path to understand the “narrativization of the past”.²⁴

My approach is primarily concerned with the micro-narrative level, or micro-arrangement, which “deals with the internal arrangement of these reports, that is how did the authors arrange their material about a specific event to form a report.”²⁵ I adapt several key concepts from Gérard Genette’s *Narrative Discourse*. Although this book is foremost concerned with a modern fictitious novel (Proust’s *A la recherche du temps perdu*), many aspects of his method can be applied, in my opinion, to the study of premodern Arabic historiography. Genette, first of all, introduces the distinction between the ‘story’, which is a series of ‘events’, and the ‘narrative’, which is an account of this ‘story’.²⁶ Since this choice of terminology has proven confusing, I instead to speak of a ‘historical sequence’ or ‘episode’, of which we have several ‘accounts’ with their respective narratives. Each account consists of a number of ‘events’, which are presented in different detail. And what constitutes an event in one account might correspond to any number of events (or of historical incidents) in another.²⁷

22 Thomas Herzog (2006), *Geschichte und Imaginaire: Entstehung, Überlieferung und Bedeutung der Sirat Baibars in ihrem sozio-politischen Kontext*, Wiesbaden, 1.

23 Hirschler, *Authors as Actors*, 4.

24 Thomas Herzog (2012), “What they Saw with their Own Eyes...’: Fictionalization and ‘Narrativization’ of History in Arab Popular Epics and Learned Historiography”, in: *Fictionalizing the Past: Historical Characters in Arabic Popular Epic*, ed. by Sabine Dorpmüller, Leuven, Paris, Walpole (MA), 31.

25 Hirschler, *Authors as Actors*, 6.

26 Gérard Genette (1980), *Narrative discourse: an essay in method*, Ithaca, N.Y., 27.

27 With regard to Tabari’s History, Boaz Shoshan distinguishes the elements which make up its narrative at large as *akhbār*, medium-sized reports, and whole sequences/episodes (occasionally followed by a summary by the historian). Only on the level of sequence, Shoshan finds a narrative reconfiguration of the temporal order, a break in the chronology or continuity of the story. However, as will be shown below, this happens even on the level of *khbar*, for what constitutes a *khbar* in the *Ta’līq*, does not necessarily constitute a *khbar* in Ibn Tūlūn’s *Mufākaha*, or such-and-such a number of *akhbār* in the former are subsumed under

Genette divides the narrative treatment of time into three categories: temporal order, duration, and frequency. The first one is concerned with the divergences of the order, in which events are related, from the order, in which they occurred; the second one with the space devoted within the narrative to the description of specific events at the expense of others (“the narrative devotes considerable space to a momentary experience and then leaps over or swiftly summarizes a number of years”); the third one (which is of minor importance here) could be described as the analysis of repetition: either the repeated narrating of the same event or the single narrating of an event that happened recurrently.²⁸

The temporal order can be interrupted or dissolved by advance notices and retrospections, which Genette calls prolepses and analepses, “designating as prolepsis any narrative maneuver that consists of narrating or evoking in advance an event that will take place later, designating as analepsis any evocation after the fact of an event that took place earlier than the point in the [historical sequence] where we are at any given moment”.²⁹ I myself have used them amply in this article, pointing to arguments which already have been made or will be made later. An analepsis has also been used both by Ibn al-Ḥimṣī and Ibn Ṭūlūn to explain why the central clash between Mubārak and the Mamluks came about. They both opt for a beginning *in medias res*, which is “seemingly part of the earliest and most lasting narrative tradition” and which allows them to place the complete episode at one place in their works.³⁰ Although the prolepsis is much rarer in the works considered here, it is not completely absent from their authors’ repertoire, either.

The reshuffling of the temporal order serves to highlight a specific event within a historical sequence and thus is closely linked to the category of duration. Large parts of an account relate events leading up to said event or resulting from it only in summary and thus reduce them to mere prologue and epilogue of a central event, which is described in more detail. Genette proposes for this distinction the binary between ‘scene’ and ‘summary’, which corresponds to quite different proportions between time narrated and text dedicated to its narration. This distinction carries with it a hierarchisation of events by their importance. The ‘scene’ zooms in and “most often in dialogue [...] realizes conventionally the equality of time between narrative and story”.³¹ In the accounts studied here, this

one *khabar* in the latter, or what amounts to a medium sized report or even sequence in one account, maybe condensed in another to the form of *khabar*. See Shoshan, *Poetics*, xxix–xxx.

28 Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 11, 33–160.

29 Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 40.

30 Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 46.

31 Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 94. Genette proposes a fourfold model of “basic forms of narrative movement”, in which the extreme poles are the ellipsis (events are omitted) and the descriptive pause (narration happens outside of time, so to speak). The summary and the

is achieved by use of monologue or dialogue, often in direct speech, or by adopting a ‘worm’s-eye view’, relating events without mention of their outcome. Through these means, other elements of a sequence appear only in condensed or summarised form and thus are pushed to the background.

The difference between scene and summary should become clearer in the following example, which comes from Ibn Ṭawq’s *Ta’līq* and deals with an earlier confrontation between Mubārak and the mamluks. It takes place on 29 Rabī’ II 898, right after Mubārak had reported attacks on two taverns to the *shaykh al-islām* and the Shāfi’ī chief judge (until here it is only summary). The entry starts with a summary of Mubārak’s last raid on taverns. The scene begins, when “all but a few of his people had left him”:

[During the night] Shaykh Mubārak attacked two taverns, one of which was on the slopes of *Malik Āṣṣ*. They spilled much alcohol after the morning prayer. Some Christians defended [it]. The rumor goes that they raised their voices in the Christian prayer (*dhikr al-ṣalīb wa-naṣarahū llāh*). [Mubārak] was accompanied by a large force. In the morning hours he returned to greet and inform our *mawlā* the shaykh [Ṭaqī al-Dīn Ibn Qādī ‘Ajlūn] and the Shafiite Qādī. Then he left towards his current residence. All but a few of his people had left him. When they passed the old *Dār al-Ṭa’im*, they came upon mamluks close to al-‘Anāba, many of whom were mounted and armed with lances and more. They had a skirmish with them. Then they ran and saw the last ones approximately in al-‘Anāba; they had a brawl with them (*ibtalashū bi-him*). Then they ran. [Mubārak] entered the Anbār quarter and others, [being chased] through the main street all the way to the *Zuqāq al-Rummān* and the *Naqūlish* (unidentified). When the mamluks had surprised them and they had faced each other, there were only around 10 men with [Mubārak], and the mamluks counted many. They injured several of [Mubārak’s men] and took about six prisoners, whom they brought to the *dawādār kabīr* of the governor. He beat them, released two and put the rest into the prison at the *Bāb al-Barīd*. Shaykh Mubārak was unharmed and came to us to Qābūn shortly before noon.³²

The length of this scene (which might have even been written while or after the story was told in Qābūn on the same day) is stretched by the giving of details (number of men, weapons of the Mamluks) but even more because the whole sequence is laid out, although it repeats itself (skirmish – flight – skirmish – flight); then Ibn Ṭawq’s account follows first Mubārak’s flight before it returns to the (first?) skirmish and comments upon the fate of the other men. A summary of the same event could have been much shorter (Shaykh Mubārak comes across Mamluks; he can flee but they caught half of his men), as is demonstrated by the

scene are only intermediate forms. For our purpose here, however, they are the common modes, in which events are narrated. An example of ellipsis would be Ibn al-Mibrad’s treatment of the central conflict between Mubārak and the Mamluk authorities, which he simply omits.

32 Ibn Ṭawq, *Ta’līq* III, 1173–1174.

beginning of the entry, where Ibn Ṭawq's focus clearly is on the results. Although it does not feature any dialogue, Ibn Ṭawq's tracing of the shaykh's paths clearly makes it the scene of the narrative framed by summaries. This distinction is, as we will see, more pronounced in the literary chronicles and biographies than in Ibn Ṭawq's diary, which is obviously connected to greater awareness of an audience other than the author himself.

The Historical sequence

Although a short summary of the main historical events that involved shaykh Mubārak has been given at the beginning of this article, it is necessary, now that the appropriate narratological terminology has been introduced, to establish the individual historical events, which constitute this historical sequence, and their chronological order.

Since in all accounts but Ibn Ṭawq's Mubārak's campaign against the vices merely appears as 'prologue' to the central clash,³³ and the same is true for its 'epilogue', which is often omitted altogether, I have listed them only as such. In contrast, the central sequence covers only a few days; events thus cover very short time periods in this case. The narrative can be broken down into eleven events from (A) through (J), as has been indicated above:

- A. Prologue;
- B. Mubārak is captured, brought before the governor, beaten, and imprisoned;
- C. He is released through intercession by important Shāfi'īs;
- D. Mubārak returns with his retinue to Damascus the next day;
- E. He goes to thank his saviours;
- F. His followers attack/are freed from *Bāb al-Barīd*;
- G. Mamluks attack the crowds;
- H. They pillage Qābūn;
- I. The crisis encompasses all of Damascus;
- J. Epilogue and consequences.

Events (B) and (C) occurred on the first day; events (D) through (I) on the second, with (A) and (J) framing those two days. Although it is not part of the historical sequence itself, the historian's commentary, as Shoshan points out, may be part of an account. For it is important for ascribing meaning to the events, it shall be

33 In some of the biographies, on the other hand, the campaign becomes the main message, although the clash is usually mentioned (as cited from Ibn Ṭūlūn) at least once.

included as a separate item (K).³⁴ This structure is still very basic, and is tested by the additions we find in the four accounts examined here. These have thus been marked with additional numbers (e. g. B1) to indicate variations in content. If one event is narrated repeatedly in one account, this is indicated with an asterisk (e. g. F* for the first repetition; F** for the second, etc.).

The Ta'liq

Since Ibn Ṭawq knew (and had written) about the reasons for the Mamluks' animosity against shaykh Mubārak (A), his account of the clash starts directly with the shaykh's capture (B) and in general follows a chronological arrangement. This leads him to shift his gaze during the first day constantly between the sites of (B) and (C): B-C1-B*-C2-B2-C including C3-4 and C*, ending his account with his own interpretation (K). On the second day, he mostly continues likewise from (D) through (I), but with less alternation between sites. However, directly before and after his own commentary (K*), he diverges from the chronology to revisit the care for the dead (I5), the flight of the people from Qābūn (H4) as well as the size of the expedition (H*). The impact on the city (I) and epilogue (J) continue to be subject of his text during the following days, weeks, and years, falling back into a purely chronological order.³⁵

There is a strong difference in focus between the two entries. On the first day, the focus is completely on Mubārak; both (B) and (C) focus exclusively on his ordeal and his rescue from it respectively. If we can speak of a scene at all, it would be this, for the shaykh's capture and torture create the narrative frame and duration; Ibn Ṭawq revisits it time and again between his tracing of the rescue efforts. Also there is indirect dialogue (B1). The effect evoked by the constant alternation between places is unsettling and translates well the feeling of the author that time was running out. As soon as the chief judge is informed, the narrative reverts to summary (C, C*). The second day oscillates between summary and scene, always depending on which information the author could gather and what he deemed important. The scenic character is strongest, where the wider impact on Damascus is described, for there he also loosens his grasp on the chronological arrangement. In particular, I mean the 'scene' of the emirs' visit to the judge's house (I3 through I3*), which apparently occurred at "the end of the day". Not only does it feature monologue; it also frames the short-term analepsis

34 Technically, the comment is the latest event within any episode, for it is situated in the author's time of writing about those events.

35 The impact of the central event is even taken up in entries which have nothing to do with Mubārak. Thus he applauds shaykh Zayn al-Dīn Barakāt for his recitation at the end of Ramaḍān for it being admirable "considering the circumstances". Ibn Ṭawq, *Ta'liq* III, 1295.

on the general turmoil in the city (I), which only lasts until this meeting (I3*). (H4) could still be seen as part of it (as another analepsis), for it emphasises again the extent of the crisis.

Admittedly, the emphasis on the scene is not very strong in Ibn Ṭawq's account. It is too close to the events in general. Nonetheless, it indicates that his main concern was reserved for his personal acquaintances and 'patrons' in particular (Ibn Qāḍī 'Ajlun, the chief judge Ibn al-Farfūr, and Mubārak himself), and, in effect, for his own position.³⁶ We will see in the following that the literary accounts make more refined and conscious choices between scene and summary to endow these events with a particular meaning. Certainly, temporal distance and the resulting safety of their authorial position enabled bolder narrative choices.

Variations of Narrative: *Ḥawādith* and *Mufākaha*

Ibn al-Ḥimṣī deals with Mubārak in two, Ibn Ṭūlūn in three entries, which are in both cases centred on the clash. All events before are summarised to make up merely the prologue or pretext of this one event. Therefore, both accounts begin "*in medias res*, followed by an expository return to an earlier period of time", following "one of the formal topoi of epic".³⁷

However, whereas Ibn al-Ḥimṣī concentrates his narrative to lead up to one central scene, Ibn Ṭūlūn's consists of nothing but summary. Indeed, the divergence can already be glimpsed from the works' titles (especially the 'guiding phrases').³⁸ Ibn al-Ḥimṣī is concerned with the singular events of his age (one could say, for their own sake), while Ibn Ṭūlūn promises to offer conversation topics *on* these events. The events are here merely the subject, from which more general lessons could be learned.³⁹ Therefore, we find a strong emphasis on the central clash in the *Ḥawādith al-Zamān*, whereas it is downplayed and decon-

36 Ibn Ṭawq was closely aligned with all three figures. Mubārak and Ibn Qāḍī 'Ajlun at least saw eye-to-eye on the issue of alcohol and drugs. Most telling is a comment by the latter on a minor skirmish between the former and some mamluks in Rajab 899: "The governor would save us the trouble if he [just] proclaimed an end to the places of vice (*mahramāt*) and the taverns. Then neither Mubārak nor anyone else would do a thing." Ibn Ṭawq, *Ta'liq* III, 1273.

37 Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 36.

38 Rhymed titles of Arabic Historiographical works consist of a 'guiding phrase' and a 'thematic phrase'. The latter describes the subject of the work, whereas the guiding phrase "were intended to prepare the reader for the following narrative structure." See Hirschler, *Authors as Actors*, 66–72; quote: 67.

39 The irony of it all is that Ibn al-Ḥimṣī's lavish descriptions and temporal juxtapositions are – to the modern reader at least – much more entertaining and would therefore make a much better conversation piece.

textualised in the *Mufākahat al-Khillān*. This is not to mean that the latter is less of a literary work; rather Ibn Ṭūlūn mastered the technique of condensation, retaining the important ‘facts’, while arranging them in a new narrative that would be adapted in all biographical accounts.

Hawādith al-Zamān

Ibn al-Ḥimṣī applies refined techniques to lead the reader through his narrative. His account starts *in medias res* with the ambush on and imprisonment of Mubarak (B), followed by a condensed analepsis to explain the causes behind this event (A). It then returns to the former point, describing the beating at the governor’s seat (B*). After that, he mostly follows the chronological order in his account, but arranges it around one central scene. This scene is the clash between sufis and Mamluks around the Umayyad Mosque (F to F3; G to G3; H1), which takes up about half the text. After he summarises Mubārak’s actions (E), he turns his full attention towards to his centre stage: “Some of his Sufis were with him; (F) the others were at the gate.” Their motives and intentions are uttered by these sufis themselves (F1): “They have done this to our shaykh Mubārak. He was unjustly beaten, and our comrade is in prison. Let us go and free him from the prison!”

Only in the scene, his narrative inspects the events closely, evoking a sense of escalation, urgency and uncertainty: First, the sufis move against the prison and can free only one prisoner; then, not satisfied, they shout so that a larger crowd gathers and helps them break down the gates, enabling the other prisoners to flee (F, F2, F3). As soon as the Mamluks react, repetition of the same basic sequence (Mamluks attack; people flee; Mamluks attack) is used to increase this effect: (G) the soldiers attack; (G1) inside the Umayyad Mosque, the people are unable to lock all gates; the crowd flees to the amber market (G2) but find their way blocked; the Mamluks attack once more. Then they loot the swords market (G3). Another instance of direct speech makes the governor responsible for the whole affair (H1), before the raid on Qābūn is summarised (H). Ibn al-Ḥimṣī emphasises the centrality of his central scene also by immediately laying out its consequences: the closing of the markets (I) and the hunt for “everyone wearing a *mīzar*” (J).⁴⁰

Ibn al-Ḥimṣī consciously built his narrative around this central scene, which is therefore charged with “fully paradigmatic importance”.⁴¹ The account thus ends with the author himself taking the stage at the same place, certifying the credi-

40 According to Ibn Ṭawq, this began only on 4 Ramaḍān; Ibn Ṭawq, *Ta’liq* III, 1289–1290.

41 Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 111.

bility of his account (I1) as well as the validity of his conclusions from it (K).⁴² Even in his more general epilogue (J), which receives its own extensive treatment in the second entry (dated 21 Shawwāl 899) and uses an even more complex approach to chronology, using two analepses, where the second is even inserted in the first, he redirects his audience's attention to this scene.⁴³ Thus, his narrative depicts these events as being of a unique impact for Damascus.

Mufākahat al-Khillān

In contrast, Ibn Ṭūlūn's account goes towards an overall condensation. Like the *Ḥawādith*, Ibn Ṭūlūn's narrative begins *in medias res*. The entry for 2 Ramaḍān follows almost the same arrangement (B-A-C), but the governor is the only one speaking (B2), and (C) is summarised in only one sentence, omitting the involvement of the *shaykh al-islām*. The day of the clash is even more condensed. The sufis go directly from Qābūn (D) to the prison (F). What constituted a scene in Ibn al-Ḥimṣī's work, is here only summary: "(G) The Mamluks ... rushed ... towards them and killed scores, more than 150 ..., at the *Bāb al-Barīd*, (G2) the *Bāb al-Anbariyyīn*, and (G1) the grave of Zakariyyā in the Umayyad Mosque."⁴⁴ The attack on Qābūn (H) is discounted altogether, and his acknowledgement of the impact (I) is as brief as possible – as is the conclusion he draws from it (K): "There is no power but in God!" However, he adds in a *prolepsis* one consequence of those events (J).

Ibn Ṭūlūn's terseness is not due to a larger temporal distance between the events and his writing, but to a different intention of the text, one that is common

42 Also, here he does not mention that the *shaykh al-islām* was present at this *madrasa*, as well; see Ibn Ṭawq's account above (H2).

43 The entry begins with the arrival of sultanic decrees to Damascus, before revisiting Mubārak's 'adventures' in Cairo after his leaving Damascus. From there the narrative looks back again and continues the episode where the first entry had stopped: "When he [Mubārak] suffered his ordeal (*miḥna*), about which I have talked before, from his prison break and the oppressors' mounted attack (*rukūb*) against him and his following, the killing of more than 100 of them and other people in front of the gate of the Umayyad Mosque, and their looting of Qābūn, and the oppressors' search for shaykh Mubārak, dispatching [search parties] on the roads to catch him." Ibn al-Ḥimṣī follows chronology from then on, tracing the shaykh's escape to Cairo, leading back to that time, before returning to the present of the greater narrative, i. e. the events actually dated. Again, he closes the entry with a comment: "Now gaze, o brother, upon this black slave: when he had true intentions (*akhlaṣa al-niyya li-llāh*), God saved him from them [the 'oppressors'] and subjected them to him. Praised be to the changer of hearts." Ibn al-Ḥimṣī, *Ḥawādith al-zamān*, 255–256. The account of the journey agrees with Ibn Ṭawq's notes but no discussion of the sultanic decrees took place until after the end of Shawwāl 899; *Ta'liq* III, 1290–1292, 1294, 1299, 1300.

44 The numbers here refer to the same points used in Ibn al-Ḥimṣī's account.

in many of his *ta'liq* works. He actually succeeds in retaining all (or most) of the essential 'facts' of the episode, while stripping the original context from it (which is easier if the protagonist appears only in this one place in his entire chronicle). In my opinion, Ibn Ṭūlūn purposefully retained the appearance of a diary for it gave it a different kind of credibility, but also because it allowed him to shift or change the narrative without sacrificing the factuality of the events it describes. Thereby, he could frame the whole affair in binaries of good and evil, pious and unjust, and so on. The consequences of the clash become more important than the events themselves. The summarisation emphasises the focus on the consequences and subjects the singular events to the lessons to be learned from them. There might be repetition at work on the macro-narrative level, which would indicate that Ibn Ṭūlūn wrote a story in which the Mamluks (or at least this governor) took the part of the villain.

This becomes clearest in the first entry (1.9.899), where the imprisonment of two of Mubārak's followers is answered with the occupation of the Umayyad Mosque (B1) and its minarets. Their shouting the *takbīr* indicates their moral superiority as much as the reason for the imprisonment (A).⁴⁵ Since this incident is not to be found in the other sources discussed above, which, in general, were much more attentive to the whole affair, I suggest that this incident might actually have never happened in that way (or at that time) and serves rather as an advance notice (prolepsis) of the events to follow.⁴⁶ The whole clash is already foreshadowed here. Ibn Ṭūlūn introduces the main characters (Mubārak and the *dawādār*) and alludes to the nature of the conflict. Furthermore, this frame takes the focus (or blame) off Mubārak: first his followers get arrested, then he himself is a victim of the ruthless *dawādār* (the "large crowd" indicates that Mubārak has a majority of the – Muslim – people on his side). Mubārak disappears from the narrative after the second entry; any connection between him and the riot is thus rejected.

Changing the subject: *Mufākahat al-Ikhwān*

Comparing Ibn Ṭūlūn's biographical account to those from the two literary chronicles, we find that the focus has shifted from the events to their central figure. All information pertaining to other consequences has been stripped from

45 See Konrad Hirschler, "Riten der Gewalt: Protest und Aufruhr in Kairo und Damaskus (7./13. bis 10./16. Jahrhundert)", in: *Islamwissenschaft als Kulturwissenschaft I: Historische Kultur-anthropologie. Ansätze und Möglichkeiten*, ed. by Stephan Conermann/Syrinx von Hees, Hamburg, 216.

46 In fact, Ibn Ṭawq mentions an incident quite similar to Ibn Ṭūlūn's description for Sunday 1 Jumādā I 898. Ibn Ṭawq, *Ta'liq* III, 1174.

the account (H, I, J), while new material about Mubārak's life has been added (A1, J). It also re-establishes the chronology, albeit on a rather larger scale (A comes before B). One could say that, on that level, the clash with the Mamluks (as a whole) has become the central 'scene' (B1 through G1) in this life story, if only because everything else has been condensed or omitted. This effect is boosted by the lack of dating. Thus it seems that the whole episode could have happened over the course of only one day.

Within this scene we find similarities with the chronicles. The narrative order of events clearly follows the *Mufākaha*, both on the level of entries (1st entry: B1; 2nd entry: B, C; 3rd entry: F, G) and within those entries (G2 before G1, omission of E). However, the focus of this scene (the slaughter around the Umayyad Mosque) is closer to Ibn al-Ḥimṣī's version. Indeed, the death toll, which is restricted to central Damascus, seems to be directly copied from the *Ḥawādith* (F2). Furthermore, Ibn Qāḍī 'Ajlūn is being made the central figure in Mubārak's rescue (C). Yet, this does not mean that Ibn Ṭūlūn merely compiled the material in a new way. He constructed a strikingly different narrative, in which most of Mubārak's agency is discounted. On one hand, he is turned into a client of the *shaykh al-islām*, who first built him his *zāwiya* (A1) and then comes to his rescue (C). The omission of the judge ways heavy in this respect.⁴⁷ On the other hand, Ibn Ṭūlūn's first entry (B1) has been promoted here from mere 'advance notice' to the primary cause of the clash. Mubārak merely tried to intercede (B) peacefully but could not stop the escalation. He could not even control his followers (F). The epilogue insists that the magnitude of the massacre led him to resign his effort for a 'better' world.⁴⁸ Thus framed, the central scene becomes the biographee's life-changing moment; the citywide crisis is reformulated into a personal one.

Conclusions

As was demonstrated, the different chronicles and biographies did not, while they might reuse the same material, reproduce one another's narrative or meaning. The interpretation of the Mubārak's clash with the Mamluks changed tremendously from one account to another. Ibn Ṭawq portrays it as a threat to his patrons and thus, in the end, to his own position in the world. Ibn al-Ḥimṣī rephrases it as a struggle of Damascenes against Mamluk "oppressors". Ibn Ṭūlūn, first, turns it into a (minor) 'case study' on the contest between good and

47 This is just tentative speculation, but the judge's exclusion might have, stipulated by the new Ottoman judicial setup, actually proven Mubārak's piety and distance from the rulers.

48 Ibn Ṭawq records a last raid in 902; *Ta'liq* III, 1513.

evil, and, then, reinvents it as a personal tragedy, the latter of which would become ‘canonical’ in the later biographical works.

The later biographies generally embed the episode within a more general description of the shaykh, which might seem hagiographic, were it not for the peculiarity of the qualities highlighted. Among those are his strength, dark skin, impressive figure and determination, but also a speech impediment and his skills in singing, hunting, and swimming.⁴⁹ They thus change the topic, and the clash between Mubārak and the Mamluks becomes part of a strikingly different ‘macro-narrative’ than in the literary chronicles or diaries analyses here.

Al-Ghazzī, Ibn al-‘Imād (d. 1622), and Ibn Ayyūb (d. 1592) all devote at least half of their accounts to a description of the central clash.⁵⁰ In this, they rely exclusively on two entries, copied from Ibn al-Mibrad and Ibn Ṭūlūn’s *Mufākahat al-Ikhwān* respectively. Ibn Ayyūb also quotes the first (from the *Tamattu*),⁵¹ but declares the latter as his own writing; the account still follows the same arrangement, although the terminology and certain emphases are altered. Furthermore, he presents the two accounts in an order opposite to both chronology and the arrangement chosen by the other biographers.⁵² The later biographical transmission on Mubārak mostly accepted Ibn Ṭūlūn as the authority on the sufi shaykh. He is cited at least once on other aspects of Mubārak’s biography in all the three following accounts. Even his transcripts of Ibn al-Mibrad’s text would outlive citations of the original. His *Mufākahat al-Ikhwān*, although it does not seem to have survived, became authoritative in the bio-

49 Whereas Ibn al-‘Imād only mentions the shaykh’s talents and skills, both Ibn Ayyūb and al-Ghazzī elaborate in two anecdotes how Mubārak once shot two birds although with a broken crossbow and how he used to dive into the river and would resurface with fish in both his hands – and feet! The assessment of his speech impediment is quoted by all from Ibn Ṭūlūn (no work given). Ghazzī, *Kawākib* 2, 246; Ibn Ayyūb, “al-Rawḍ”, f. 286a; Ibn al-‘Imād, *Shadharāt al-dhahab* 8, 259–260. I have uploaded my translations of these three biographies on my blog Damascus Anecdotes (thecamel.hypotheses.org). A search for Mubārak turns up all entries.

50 In counting, I have substracted the last half page from Ibn Ayyūb’s entry, which deals exclusively with the biography Mubārak’s son shaykh Muḥammad; Ibn Ayyūb, “al-Rawḍ”, ff. 286a–286b.

51 The episode survives identical in the later abridgment “Mut ‘at al-adhḥān min al-tamattu’ bi-l-iqrān bayna tarājīm al-shuyūkh wa-l-aqrān” by Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Ḥaskafī, MS Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, or. Sprenger 257, fol. 202b.

52 Ibn Ayyūb’s approach to the episode and to Mubārak’s biography more generally, is certainly the most intriguing among the three. He emphasizes the influence of Ibn Qāḍī ‘Ajlūn over Mubārak and discredits his activities by calling his followers ‘unruly youth’ (*utūra / uturat al-shabāb*). He wrongly gives the governor’s name as ‘Īsā Bāshā (rather an Ottoman than Mamluk title) and ascribes the alcohol trade exclusively to the Christian village of Sayyidnāyā. He omits any consequences of the massacre but ends his account with the words: “[The mamluks] killed about 70 of [Mubārak’s followers] at the Bāb al-Barīd [...]. The rest fled”. The conflict thus appears as not much more than a gang fight, not a city wide crisis. See Ibn Ayyūb, “al-Rawḍ”, f. 285b.

graphical works, both because it provided the most convincing narrative and because it hides the narrative's origins.⁵³ The clusters are penetrated in this one case (see figure 3), which emphasises the centrality of Ibn Ṭūlūn's works for the transmission even more. His works became the mainstay of biographical writing on Mubārak and his biographical account as 'canonical' as Ibn al-Mibrad's.⁵⁴

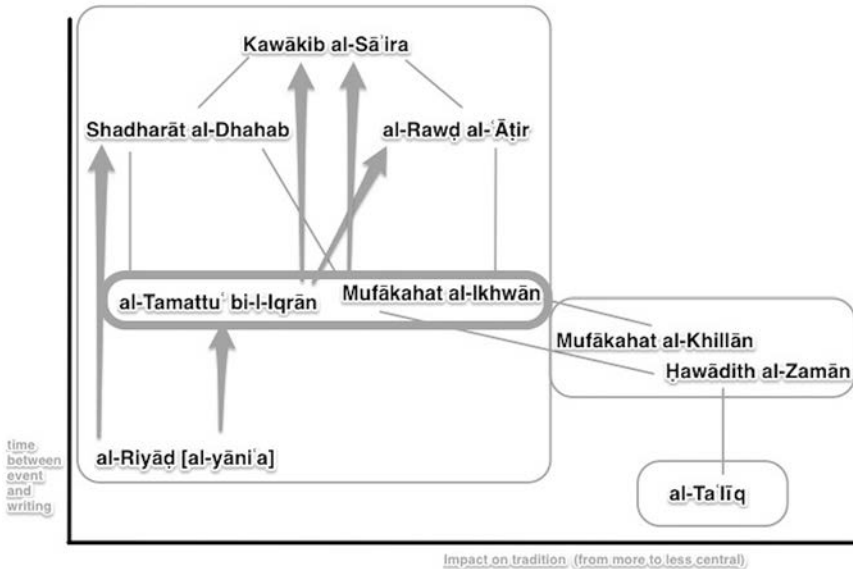


Fig. 3

Still, Mubārak's legacy remained contested through 'narrativisation' until the early 17th century. Later biographers concentrated on other elements of Mubārak's biography, in which they treated each other's works in much the same way, as Ibn Ayyūb treated the *Mufākahat al-Khillān* or Ibn Ṭūlūn the chronicles at his disposal: they copy-catted them. This is interesting to observe with regard to the emergence of a transmission as well as to literary practice. Copying without explicit reference was of course a very common practice. Only once a certain version had achieved a 'canonical' status, would its source be acknowledged. But what was the reason that Ibn Ṭūlūn reached this status? Did it depend on the later biographers' temporal distance from the events described? Only al-Ghazzī cites

53 In other, smaller biographical works, he explicitly refers the reader to his chronicle: "I have mentioned an abridged version [of such-and-such an incident] in my book *Mufākahat al-Khillān fi Ḥawādith al-Zamān*"; Ibn Ṭūlūn, "Ghāyat al-bayān fi tarjamat al-shaykh Arslān", MS Süleymaniyye U Kütüphanesi, Esat Effendi 1590, f. 10b.

54 This account is explicitly cited from the *Tamattu'* by al-Ghazzī and Ibn Ayyūb, the *Mufākahat al-Ikhwān* explicitly by al-Ghazzī and implicitly by Ibn al-ʿImād.

both works explicitly, whereas Ibn al-‘Imād refers to their author as his source of information (“Ibn Ṭūlūn spoke”) and Ibn Ayyūb cites him only in part. Was it his contemporaneity to the events? Ibn al-Ḥimṣī was a contemporary, too. Was it that he authored both chronicles and biographies? Yet, his chronicle is not cited in any account, although it was accessible even to the latest biographer al-Ghazzī.⁵⁵ Was it Ibn Ṭūlūn’s reputation as a scholar and historian? Despite the many citations, most of his works remain only as autographs. Or did a taste for a certain style of narration play a role in this process of canonisation?

It is probable that his narrative really was perceived as the most convincing, concise and adaptable, and that this granted it its ‘canonical’ status. Not even Ibn Ayyūb’s rewrite could change that, and Ibn al-‘Imād and al-Ghazzī discounted this version. Muhsin al-Musawi’s finding that one main concern of historical narrative was “[t]o be true to life, but not real” looms large in this respect.⁵⁶ In any case, the different Mubāraks and clashes are a result of those procedures, in which the past was constantly reinterpreted to illuminate an ever-changing present.

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55 From other biographies, we know that al-Ghazzī had access to the Mufākaha. Also Ibn Ayyūb used Ibn Ṭūlūn’s chronicle (“*ta rīkh*”) and other works abundantly. See the biographies of Abū Bakr Ibn Qāḍī ‘Ajlūn, Ghazzī, *Kawākib* I, 114–118; Günes, *Das Kitāb ar-rauḍ*, 28–30; Conermann, “Life and Works”, 139.

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