Developing Perspectives in Mamluk History

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# Developing Perspectives in Mamluk History

Essays in Honor of Amalia Levanoni

Edited by

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# Professor Amalia Levanoni's Contribution to the Field of Mamluk Studies

#### Michael Winter

For over thirty years, Amalia Levanoni, Professor (Emerita) of Middle Eastern History at the University of Haifa, has contributed, through her vast expertise, devotion, and tireless efforts to the preservation and expansion of studies on the political, social and cultural history of the Mamluk state (1250–1517). She is one of the outstanding scholars in this fascinating and growing academic chapter of the Middle East in the later Middle-Ages. While drawing on the solid foundations of Israeli and international Mamluk scholarship, she continually finds new and pioneering themes and approaches.

Amalia Levanoni has organized multiple international conferences in Haifa and other universities in Israel. She has also cultivated collegial ties with Mamlukists abroad and has been a very active participant in international conferences on the Mamluks. She has visited and lectured in many universities and centers where Mamluk and related subjects are researched, notably Oxford, Bonn and other German universities, as well as in Belgium, France and North America.

Amalia Levanoni has numerous publications on the Mamluk regime and the military which examine the Mamluk concepts of the sultanate, Shajar al-Durr, the only woman sultan in medieval Islam, the Battle of 'Ayn Jālūt that presents a paradigmatic historical event in Mamluk historical narratives, and many others. Her book, *A Turning Point in the Mamluk History: The Third Reign of al-Nāşir Muḥammad Ibn Qalāwūn (1310–1341)* is a thoughtful analysis of his sultanate. Al-Nāşir Muḥammad was one of the greatest Mamluk sultans, probably second only to Baybars, the actual founder of the state. Al-Nāşir Muḥammad was a strong and energetic ruler and peace prevailed during his reign. He was an avid builder and spendthrift, and as Levanoni writes "he pawned the future" by his recklessness. His economic and financial policy led directly to the social, monetary, and moral decline of the state after his death.

Amalia Levanoni has also published countless articles on cultural and social subjects and about daily life during the Mamluk period, such as the cooking and cuisine of the elite, relationships between the rulers and the *'ulamā'*, women in the Mamluk elite, religion and theology, Mamluk travels and pilgrimages, and the water supply in medieval Cairo. The list of Levanoni's articles is impressive in terms of their number, the originality of the subjects, and the journals in which they were published. These include the *International Journal of Middle East Studies, Studia Islamica, Der Islam*, and *Arabica*. She has also written several articles for the *Mamluk Studies Review*, the leading journal in the field, which is published by the University of Chicago. In addition, Levanoni has contributed many items on Mamluk history to the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition (*E12*), and to the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Third Edition (*E13*). Amalia Levanoni's many book reviews of scholarly works about Mamluks and related issues testify to her authority in the field.

Last but not least, Amalia Levanoni is an active and involved educator and colleague at the University Haifa, beyond Mamluk and Middle Eastern studies. Between 2013 and 2016 she served as President of the Middle East and Islamic Studies Association of Israel, the first woman to hold this prestigious position.

# Preface

This collective volume incorporates 17 papers in the field of Mamluk studies written by a set of leading historians of this period, both from the younger generation of scholars as well as more established ones, in honor of Prof. Amalia Levanoni, one of the most influential scholars of Mamluk society and culture, who recently retired from the Department of Middle Eastern History at the University of Haifa.

The articles in this volume are divided into five thematic categories covering social and cultural issues, women in Mamluk society, literary and poetic genres, the politics of material culture, and finally regional and local politics. Obviously in a project of this nature there is a certain element of eclecticism which has to do with the interests of the scholars participating, and some of the papers could very well fit into more than one category. I have nonetheless tried to group them in categories which best suit the main themes discussed and allow different perspectives and comparisons on given subjects. For the most part the articles deal with topics their authors have already dealt with in the last decade or two, in previous projects and publications. Their current work can thus be seen as a statement about the field of Mamluk studies today and a review of its recent developments. This field has been changing very rapidly in recent decades and today includes hundreds of active researchers worldwide who write in numerous languages and constitute a lively, strong community. Amalia Levanoni has been a prominent member of this community since the 1980s and many of the contributions in this volume in fact correspond with her research and reflect her wide range of interests and research projects as well as her vast influence on the field of Mamluk studies. Among Amalia's varied research topics one can find the importance of the Battle of 'Ayn Jālūt, the role of the 'ulamā' in the Mamluk state, Mamluk food and its meaning, women in the elite of the Mamluk state, the water system in Mamluk Cairo, the writing of historians, travelers, and pilgrims during the Mamluk period, research about specific Mamluk sultans such as al-Nāşir Muḥammad, everyday practices in Mamluk Cairo, governance, rulership, religion, and theology during the Mamluk period, and more. All of these issues are widely discussed in the 17 articles presented in this volume.

In the first section, *Social and Cultural Issues*, Carl Petry, in his article "Already Rich? Yet 'Greed Deranged Him': Elite Status and Criminal Complicity in the Mamluk Sultanate," explores elite complicity in criminal activity as reported by contemporary observers. Students of crime in several medieval cultures have noted the ties between profitable criminal activity and individuals

or groups socially situated at the apex of their societies to wield military force, police regulation, political influence and financial coercion. Why were these individuals or groups so motivated, when they already exercised hegemonic levels of control and oversaw assets in excess of what the great majority of the populace could hope to acquire? This question raises issues as complex and diverse as the social contexts in which they pursued their activities. In late medieval Egypt and Syria, writes Petry, on-site observers who commented in detail on the behavior of local elites they regarded as illicit did not offer a uniform or consistent set of explanations for their complicity in crime for profit. But the frequency with which these observers reported what they regarded as elite complicity in crime reveals the significance they attributed to it. The article considers the range of explanations these observers put forward and tries to find continuities and contrasts in their assessments of elite complicity in profitable crime. The article presents illustrative cases from criminal categories predictably associated with profitable gain such as larceny, theft, fraud, corruption, and counterfeiting. Other categories less associated with fiscal gain, such as religious deviance, but which also led to criminal incidents involving elite complicity for profit are also discussed.

Koby Yosef, in his article "Usages of Kinship Terminology during the Mamluk Sultanate and the Notion of the 'Mamlūk Family'," challenges the standard perception of the family during the Mamluk period as primarily based on *mamlūk* connections. Most students of the Mamluk Sultanate, writes Yosef, tend to underestimate the importance of relationships based on blood ties and marital ties. Instead, they emphasize the importance of mamlūk connections such as the relationship between a master and his *mamlūks*, or the connections among mamlūks of the same household serving the same master (khushdāshivya), generally referred to as "pseudo-familial ties." According to Ayalon, for example, the mamlūk's period of enslavement determined his affiliations for life and, therefore, the structure of Mamluk society was based on what he called the "mamlūk family." The patron and his freedmen developed relationships very similar to those of a biological family, and the terminology characterizing their relations was identical to terms used for the biological family. The patron was the 'father' (walid) of his mamlūks, and they his 'sons' (awlad, sing. walad), and the freedmen regarded each other as 'brothers' (ikhwa, sing. akh). The khushdāsh of a master was considered an 'uncle' by the master's mamlūks, and the master of the master was considered the 'grandfather.' According to Ahmad Abd al-Rāziq, the *mamlūks* did not understand "the true meaning of family" since their social relationships were based on mamlūk ties. Like Ayalon, he also emphasizes the fact that the terminology for these relationships was identical to that of the biological family. Yosef argues instead that the terminology of the

biological family was used to express hierarchy at least as much as it was used to express affinity. Such metaphorical usages of biological familial terms are also attested for non-*mamlūks* and for periods other than the Mamluk Sultanate. Moreover, in many cases during the Mamluk Sultanate, when biological family terminology is employed with respect to *mamlūks*, the usage does not fit the structure of the "*mamlūk* family" as envisioned by Ayalon. In addition, many times the terminology of the biological family is used to express relationships between *mamlūks* who were in-laws or even blood relatives. Yosef concludes that scholars' emphasis on usages of biological family terminology with respect to *mamlūks* thus reflects their tendency to emphasize the importance of *mamlūk* connections during the Mamluk Sultanate to a greater extent than it reflects social reality.

Limor Yungman, in her article "Medieval Middle Eastern Court Taste: The Mamluk Case," examines the formation of the "Mamluk taste" as a culinary, cultural, and political choice constituting one unique example of medieval Middle Eastern court proclivities. Class formation and social status are shaped and determined, among other things, by food preferences. This article explores the idea of the taste of medieval "haute cuisine" literally and symbolically in terms of what factors shaped it, and how it was regarded and practiced. Yungman reconstructs the tastes of the Mamluk court by investigating various sources, mainly cookbooks, chronicles, and reports on imports of food articles and ingredients that could not be found locally in Egypt such as rare and exotic spices. The "Mamluk taste" was based on two factors. The first is external and has to do with the Mamluks' background going back to the Golden Horde; i.e., the "taste" with which they came to Egypt. Remnants of Central-Asian cuisine can be found, such as the *qūmiz* (mare's milk) and horsemeat frequently gracing the sultan's table. The second was the internal influence of earlier court cuisines, such as the Abbasid-Baghdadi and the Fatimid, which in turn were influenced by pre-Islamic cuisines; for instance, the Persian-Sassanid. These two axes define the unique combination of Mamluk cuisine associating "nomad" cuisine and urban Caliphal "haute cuisine." In addition, the "Mamluk flavor" was also defined as "sweet" (Amalia Levanoni) and "seasoned and unrefined" (Paulina Lewicka), two features which are also investigated in the article. Yungman's examination and analysis of historical recipes and other sources, especially in comparison to the nutrition of the rest of the population, leads to a better understanding of Mamluk taste even beyond the "culinary," beyond the "eaten," and beyond the Mamluk context.

Bernadette Martel-Thoumian, in the only French article in this volume, "Du sang et des larmes: Le destin tragique d'Aṣalbāy al-Jarkasiyya (m. en 915/1509)," [Blood and Tears: The Tragic Fate of Aṣalbāy al-Jarkasiyya (died 1509], discusses the story of a Circassian concubine, whose tragic and fascinating life story reflects the fate of Mamluk elite women. Aşalbāy al-Jarkasiyya was a concubine of the Mamluk Sultan al-Ashraf Qāytbāy (r. 1468–96) and gave birth to his son and successor al-Nāṣir Muḥammad (1496–98). She witnessed the rise to power of his murderer al-Ṣāhir Qānṣūh min Qānṣūh (1498–1500), who was his maternal uncle. In 1500 she married *atābak al-ʿasākir* Jānbalāṭ who in the same year revolted against Qānṣūh min Qānṣūh and dethroned him, making the former concubine the sultaness for a short period of a few months. She then witnessed his emprisonment in Alexandria where he was executed and the vindication of his two successors Ṭūmānbāy and Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī. She made the pilgrimage to Mecca in 1508, which gave the sultan an opportunity to exile her, where she died and was buried about a year later.

Finally in this section, Daisuke Igarashi, in his article "The Office of the Ustādār al-Āliya in the Circassian Mamluk Era," discusses the role of chief of the al-Dīwān al-Mufrad, a special financial bureau entrusted with providing monthly wages (*jāmakiyya*), clothing allowances (*kiswa*), fodder (*ʿalīq*) for horses, and other provisions to the sultanic mamlūks (al-mamālīk al-sultāniyya). Al-Zāhir Barqūq, the first sultan of the Circassian Mamluk dynasty, founded the *dīwān* to increase and maintain his *mamlūk* corps. The bureau was meant to fortify the sultan's position in the throes of political instability and financial difficulties. Consequently, the newly established *dīwān* rapidly expanded its role, and the Mamluk state structure was reorganized. In principle, the ustādār al-ʿāliya was held by a high-ranking military man, usually an amīr of a hundred (amīr mi'ah muqaddam alf), although the duties were not military. Rather, they comprised financial management, which was usually the responsibility of the civil services. However, sources show that the actual careers and backgrounds of appointees varied as a function of the transition of the status and importance of the *dīwān* in the governmental system, which changed throughout the Circassian Mamluk period. The article lists all appointees to the office of ustādār al-ʿāliya and investigates the reasons for their appointment and dismissal. It systematically examines their careers and backgrounds as well as the political and financial situations of the Mamluk state in which each appointment was made. This detailed investigation reveals the development of the function of the office of ustādār al-ʿāliya and helps contextualize the transition of the status of al-Dīwān al-Mufrad in the fiscal administration of the Mamluk state as a whole.

In the second section of this volume, *Women in Mamluk Society*, Yaacov Lev, in his article "Women in the Urban Space of Medieval Muslim Cities," addresses the issue of women in the socio-economic life of medieval Muslim urban society and how to read sources about them. The examination of literary

sources, especially from Mamluk Egypt, has led scholars to the conclusion that there was a considerable disparity between concepts of the ideal position of women in society and the actual reality of their everyday lives. The methodology adopted by some scholars can be described as a "reverse reading" of the sources. Among other things, the article examines the wider ramifications of this methodology and its potential pitfalls.

Yehoshua Frenkel, in his article "Slave Girls and Learned Teachers: Women in Mamluk Sources," concentrates on two groups of women during the Mamluk period, slave girls (concubines) and educated women. He highlights the dualism in writing about women as reflected in male dominated sources and the multifaceted conditions existing in urban centers of the Mamluk Sultanate. Chronicles, biographies, legal texts, and inscriptions, writes Frenkel, shed light on both the ideal social position of women and their image, as well as on historical reality throughout the long Mamluk dominion. These sources describe free or slave women who were engaged in a variety of domestic and non-domestic forms of labor. The prevailing social attitudes, which are reflected in legal writings, indeed reinforce their image as a marginal component of Mamluk society. As they were prevented from holding leading legal, political or military positions they were forced into the background. This articulated, common arrangement is visible in accounts of social gatherings (majālis) in which the wives did not participate, but professional female performers took an active part. However, although women are underrepresented in Mamluk chronicles and biographical dictionaries, it should be emphasized that these sources offer rich accounts that highlight their lives and conditions. Hence, readers of Mamluk documentation should not accept any overstated popular generalization and should reject a-historical statements about "Muslim women, Islam and the woman, etc." The information on the social position of Mamluk women and their textual image reflects, in contrast to a simplified and idealistic picture of past societies, a complex reality. This stems from varying conditions, including their status and roles. The sources depict polar opposites from the pious ascetic woman to the shameless adulteress. Mamluk 'ajā'ib accounts (mirabilia), for example, transport their readers, as accepted in this literary genre, into realms of fantasy. Women in these stories often have irresistible seductive power and play the role of the destructive temptress.

Boaz Shoshan, in his article "On Marriage in Damascus, 1480–1500," the last article in this section, discusses the practices of marriage in Mamluk Syria. While the basic customs associated with the act of marriage in Islam are well known, marriage customs in the pre-modern Middle East are less well explored. Among the hundreds of notarial documents included in Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad Ibn Ṭawq's *Ta'līq*, a sort of "diary" (*yawmiyyāt*) recorded between 1480

and 1503 CE containing detailed and variegated information about the social fabric of Damascus at the end of the Mamluk era, there are reports of about 150 marriage contracts, 65 of which contain relatively rich information. This is undoubtedly the best set of data on this subject one could hope to find for a pre-Ottoman Islamic society anywhere. The article analyzes the marriage data and comments on the pattern of marriages among the Damascene population at the end of the Mamluk era.

In the third section, Literary and Poetic Genres, Li Guo's "Songs, Poetry, and Storytelling: Ibn Taghrī Birdī on the Yalbughā Affair" discusses two ballīq-songs originally composed as a *muʿārada*-duet between a court poet, Ibn al-Kharrāt, and a street entertainer, Ibn Mawlāhum. Medieval Arabic vernacular poetry developed alongside the classical crown jewel, the shi'r. The staples of the "popular" kind—muwashshah, mawāliyā, dū-bayt, zajal, and kān wa-kān—further developed into several sub-genres which display discernable timely features and regional flavors. The *balliq*-ballad, a spin-off of the *zajal*, is one example: it was Mamluk and Cairene. Medieval and modern sources tend to juxtapose the term *balālīq* (pl.) with *azjāl* (pl.) as a general reference to "songs and ballads"; often the two terms are used interchangeably—a testimony to the popularity of this particular zajal form throughout Ottoman times, and extending to modern day Egypt. However, while Mamluk poetry production, including the *zajal* in general, has attracted steady interest in recent years, little has been written about the *balliq*. The topic of the poetic debate discussed in Guo's article was the status and state of a soldier versus that of a scholar. What makes this even more interesting is that these ballads were performed for Sultan Hasan ibn Muhammad (r. 1347–51, 1354–61) in a song-and-dance format. After a close reading of the texts (the songs and the accompanying materials), this article examines the artistic features of the Egyptian Mamluk *balliq* (continuity and discontinuity versus earlier Iraqi samples provided by Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Ḥillī), and aspects of Mamluk courtly performance (the tension between the vernacular verses and "low-brow" entertainment and the high madh-panegyric courtly ritual).

Frédéric Bauden, in his article "Maqriziana XIII: An Exchange of Correspondence between al-Maqrīzī and al-Qalqashandī," examines correspondence between two prominent Mamluk authors at the beginning of the fifteenth century: al-Maqrīzī and al-Qalqashandī. Correspondence between scholars in the Mamluk Sultanate has not yet received the attention it deserves although several collections of letters are available to researchers. In the case discussed here both scholars worked together at the chancery in Cairo, before their ways parted when al-Maqrīzī opted for a different career. However, an exchange of two letters between them shows that they kept in touch. These two letters (an inceptive letter and its answer) were quoted by al-Qalqashandī's son, Ibn Abī Ghudda (d. 1471) in his own chancery manual which is still unpublished. This text indicates that a few years before al-Qalqashandī's death, al-Maqrīzī sent him a letter in which he consulted him about the use of the verb *rasama* in the meaning of *amara* (to order, to decree), a connotation which was not found in dictionaries. Beside the significance of al-Qalqashandī's answer for the field of Mamluk diplomacy, the two letters, writes Bauden, also provide crucial information about the works of these two authors. The article describes the letters, analyzes their content, and determines their significance for Mamluk diplomacy, epistolography, lexicography, and the authors' bibliographies.

In the third article in this section, Michael Winter, in his article "Sultan Selīm's Obsession with Mamluk Egypt according to Evliva Çelebi's Sevahatname," discusses the writings of this famous Ottoman 17th-century traveler who produced a ten-volume travelogue (Seyāhatnāme) describing the countries he visited. The tenth volume of his work, the topic of this article, is a depiction of Egypt and Habesh (Ethiopia). Most of this volume is devoted to Egypt as Evliyā Çelebi saw it, but there is also a section on the history of Egypt, including the events leading to the war between the Mamluk sultans and Sultan Selīm I, who led his army against the last two Mamluk sultans, Oānsūh al-Ghawrī and Tūmān Bāy. Evliyā Çelebi's writing is problematic historically, but is nevertheless fascinating because it raises numerous social and cultural issues. His narrative presents several key figures and events of the early sixteenth century in a different light than what we know from various Arab and Ottoman chroniclers. The article explores several episodes involving Sultan Selīm I's conquest of Egypt as discussed by Evliya Çelebi which are often anachronistic, and attempts to determine their origin. These include the discovery by the Ottomans of the tomb of Ibn al-'Arabī, the great but controversial mystic who died in Damascus in 1240, the circumstances surrounding the death of the Mamluk Sultan Qānsūh al-Ghawrī, the last days of Tūmānbāy, the Mamluk ruler who spoke with Selīm before he was hanged at the Zuwayla Gate in Cairo, administrative changes the Ottoman sultan introduced before his return to his capital, and others.

In the fourth section, *The Politics of Material Culture*, Warren C. Schultz, in his article, "Mamluk Coins, Mamluk Politics and the Limits of the Numismatic Evidence," examines the surviving corpus of Mamluk coins to identify and analyze the patterns that emerge. The article focuses on four case studies of Mamluk coins. While coins are primarily economic in nature in that they were minted to facilitate trade and commerce, they are also documents. Their two sides, writes Schultz, provide small billboards for the conveyance of information. Since the right of *sikka* was a royal prerogative, it is not unusual to find

names, claims, and titles on coins that supported a ruler's claim/right to rule. However, there are no surviving mint manuals or similar documents from the Mamluk era that provide insights as to what sultans or their mint supervisors intended, let alone how the coins were made. Although Mamluk-era historians frequently mention coins, they rarely shed direct light on why Mamluk coins bear certain legends. The only surviving evidence is the coins themselves. To date, there has been no systematic examination of this large corpus of numismatic evidence on political topics, and the numismatic evidence itself is limited. Coins by themselves seldom prove anything above and beyond their material characteristics. That said, their legends may support hypotheses arrived at from other evidence. They may also suggest new avenues of inquiry. But they usually serve as additional building blocks of an argument, and seldom as the foundation.

Hana Taragan, in her article "Mamluk Patronage, Crusader *Spolia: Turbat al-Kubakiyya* in the Mamilla Cemetery, Jerusalem (688/1289)" discusses the modes of use of columns, gates, stones and marble sarcophagi taken by the Mamluks from Crusader shrines (generally under violent circumstances) in 13th-century *Bilād al-Shām*, and recycled or reused in their own buildings such as mosques, *madrasas*, and *mashhads*. Spoliation, plunder or the transfer of valuable material including architectural components and treasury pieces from one culture/sphere to another to reuse them was a common practice in Late Antiquity and during the Middle Ages. They often reflected ideological, political and/or cultural messages. In the case discussed here, these plundered architectural material or *spolia* were recontextualized in the buildings of the victors, the Mamluks. They reflected a display of dominance, while concomitantly "defacing" the holy buildings (churches, shrines, etc.) of the defeated enemy.

Bethany J. Walker, in her article "The Struggle over Water: Evaluating the 'Water Culture' of Syrian Peasants under Mamluk Rule," evaluates the success and failure of the Mamluks' irrigation projects, as well as their long-term impact on villages. On the village level, conflicts over water created some of the worst tensions between local communities and Mamluk officialdom. Changes in land tenure and imperial agricultural policies, combined with political struggles within the Mamluk elite, exacerbated these troubled relations. The special conditions of administering rural lands, however, required a flexibility of governance that allowed a give-and-take in enforcing imperial projects related to agriculture. The results were unpredictable. Walker shows that village communities could modify imperial water programs in ways that had political repercussions and could transform land use and settlement. This article investigates the complex relations between state and local society as reflected in

struggles over control of local water resources—their harvesting, storage, and use. It highlights the evolving water politics in villages in two regions of southern Syria: the Jordan River Valley and the Madaba Plains of central Jordan. In both cases, the Mamluk state intervened in local agriculture through an aggressive irrigation program which interfered with local cultures of resource management. In the Jordan River Valley, this ultimately led to armed conflict, and in the Madaba Plains to the revival of traditional water harvesting and the physical restructuring of the village. The article reviews narratives from contemporary chronicles and revisits the results of archeological fieldwork in these regions, in particular an ongoing interdisciplinary water systems research project at Tall Hisbān, where state-sponsored renewal of ancient *qanāts* has created new agricultural regimes and markets.

Élise Franssen, in her article "What was there in a Mamluk *Amīr*'s Library? Evidence from a Fifteenth-Century Manuscript," the last paper in this section, examines a poorly known Arabic manuscript housed in the University of Liège, a religious work entitled *Manāfi*<sup>c</sup> *asmā*' *Allāh al-husnā wa-manāfi*' *al-ism al-a'zam wa-kalām aṣ-ṣahāba ... wa-manāfi*' *al-Qur'ān* that was copied upon the request of the Mamluk *amīr* Taghribarmish. The article addresses the question of the intellectual training of the *mamlūk*s, and more specifically their religious education. In addition, it touches on the issue of biographical dictionaries and provides the full codicological analysis of the volume, which enhances our knowledge of book production in the Mamluk period.

In the last section in this collection, *Regional and Local Politics*, Reuven Amitai, in his article "Post-Crusader Acre in Light of a Mamluk Inscription and a *Fatwā* Document from Damascus," examines the role of Acre after the Mamluk conquest in 1291. In spite of the widespread willful destruction of the coastal area by the Mamluks in the aftermath of their conquests, there is some evidence of economic activity in Acre's environs and some minimal Mamluk presence in the city. The topic also serves as a valuable opportunity to revisit David Ayalon's thesis on the Syrian coast, as well as conclusions drawn by other prominent scholars, such as Aziz Suryal Atiya and Eliyahu Ashtor.

In the second article in this section, Joseph Drory in his article "Favored by the Sultan, Disfavored by his Son: Some Glimpses into the Career of Țashtamur Ḥummuṣ Akhḍar," examines the rise of one senior *amīr* in the Mamluk Sultanate during the fifth decade of the fourteenth century, to better understand the main machineries of power in Egypt during that period. The political history of the Mamluk Sultanate during the period following al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's reign (died in 741/1341) has been more widely discussed by historians in recent years. The political vicissitudes of the next four decades of the fourteenth century (1340–80), although defined, perhaps rightly, as devoid

of outstanding sultans, do not lack interest and sometimes even tension. The dominant impression of a generation led by potentates who did little more than drain each other's resources by endless strife and violent struggles may not alter this view, but still provides a better window on Mamluk polity, especially in eras undistinguished by famous names. It is often stated that the overly autocratic Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad left his inheritors too feeble for a sultanate, or for effective governing. Not only were non-Mamluk political personalities ill-equipped regardless of their formal high credentials because of the unique structure of the Mamluk state, but first-generation Mamluks who usually proved far better capable of guiding the reins of power failed to survive the cruel struggles of leadership. A concise depiction of Ṭashtamur's activities can thus help understand the main power mechanism in Egypt at that time, and thus corroborate the conventional model where powerful *amīr*s replaced petty, weakly authoritative rulers. It also provides a glimpse into the political arguments and motives exploited by the ruling classes.

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I first met Amalia Levanoni while I was a graduate student at the University of Chicago in 2003 and she was on sabbatical. After graduating I joined the Department of Middle Eastern History at the University of Haifa in 2007, where our paths would cross once again. Amalia was of great help to me during the difficult years every new academic must confront before getting established in the field, and made my integration a much friendlier and welcoming experience. I was thus thrilled to have the opportunity to edit this volume in honor of Amalia's retirement, even though Mamluk studies are not my specialization. This volume brings together 17 of Amalia's peers and friends who were all delighted to contribute a chapter to this project illustrating Amalia's long, innovative, and successful career as a prime mover in furthering the growing field of Mamluk studies. I want to thank each and every one of the contributors for all their patience, good will and cooperation along the way. We all wish Amalia many more years of research and innovative work.

I would like to especially thank Fruma Zachs for her excellent advice and support during the early stages of the project, when its shape had yet to be fully defined. Fruma helped put the project on track and ensure its successful completion. Esther Singer did a remarkable job of language editing this long and complicated volume and unifying the text. I am grateful to Joelle Hansel for editing the French article included in the volume. The staff of Brill, above all Teddi Dols, Kathy van Vliet, Pieter te Velde and Laylan Saadaldin were very helpful and accommodating in preparing the book for printing very rapidly and professionally, and they deserve every possible thanks.

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Finally, noteworthy financial aid for the publication of this book was obtained through the concerted efforts of the Division of Humanities and the Research Authority at the University of Haifa and I am thankful to them for making the publication of this book a reality.

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# Notes on Transliteration

We have closely followed Brill's transliterations guidelines, which is also the transliteration used in the Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān. The main transliteration features in Arabic, the main transliterated language used in this book, are as follows:

Consonants: ', b, t, th, j, ḥ, kh, d, dh, r, z, s, sh, ṣ, ḍ, ṭ, ẓ, ', gh, f, q, k, l, m, n, h, w, y Short Vowels: a, u, i Long Vowels: ā, ū, ī Diphtongs: aw, ay

We have transcribed *alif maqsūra* at the end of words as long ā.

In general, we use the term Mamluk to describe the Mamluk Sultanate, the Mamluk system in general, and Mamluk official officeholders. Occasionally, however, we use the term  $maml\bar{u}k$  to refer to military slaves, the act of serving as a military slave, etc.

While adhering to the guidelines, for the most part we did not transliterate or use simplified transliterations for proper names and geographic places that are common in English, for example: Cairo, Sunni and Sunnites, 'Abbasids, Shi'i, and Mamluk. The term  $maml\bar{u}k$  occurs when referring to the phenomenon of being part of the slave system and not to the Mamluk Sultanate.

In the footnotes we have used shortcuts but full details can be found in the final bibliography at the end of the book. Articles, for example, are written in this manner:

Lutfi, Manners and customs of fourteenth-century Cairene women.

Books, on the other hand, are written following this example:

Petry, The criminal underworld.

Words appearing after the word  $Kit\bar{a}b$  in the footnotes and bibliography start with a capital letter.

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# Maqriziana XIII: An Exchange of Correspondence between al-Maqrīzī and al-Qalqashandī

Frédéric Bauden

#### Introduction

In an article published in 2008, Werner Diem emphasized that "the problem connected with Arabic letters in pre-modern times is their great number and variety on the one hand and regional and chronological disparity on the other."1 Although letters predating the modern period have been preserved in great numbers for Islamic civilization, regardless of content, there remains a sharp discrepancy between two categories of letters; i.e., what Diem categorized as original letters, and letters preserved in copied or literary transmission.<sup>2</sup> Diem noted that the original letters that have reached us are mostly either official letters dealing with taxes in the broadest sense or private correspondence of the middle class related to commercial or private issues. In terms of the latter category, we are better informed thanks to documentary witnesses that provide useful details about the shape and dispatch of this kind of correspondence.<sup>3</sup> In contrast, letters exchanged by members of the upper class (scholars for the most part) have only survived in the form of collections where these copies serve as models of elegant prose and poetry or *inshā*'. These collections were at times assembled by a contemporary, usually an admirer, or by the author himself. Khalīl ibn Aybak al-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363) in particular collected letters he exchanged with friends and colleagues in book form (Alhān al-sawāji')

<sup>1</sup> Diem, Arabic letters 843. In addition to his bibliography, see Grob, *Documentary Arabic private and business letters*.

<sup>2</sup> Diem considered scholarly letters preserved in literary transmission to be a third category termed "pseudo letters"; i.e., "scholarly texts in the form of letters which, however, in contrast to real letters, were never intended to be sent to an individual addressee." Diem, Arabic letters 852.

<sup>3</sup> A rare example of a contract between a Venetian and a courier in Alexandria at the beginning of the ninth/fifteenth century has recently been published. The dispatch by a courier of the letter to Damascus and his return with the answer within a specified amount of time throws some light on the parallel activities that were linked to the exchange of commercial correspondence in the Mamluk realm. See Bauden, D'Alexandrie à Damas et retour.

where the material is organized according to the alphabetical order of the correspondents.<sup>4</sup> Such letters were in fact first copied by al-Ṣafadī in his commonplace book (*al-Tadhkira*) together with his response. This enabled him to later recover the material for the preparation of his epistolary collection.

Although several collections of letters written by scholars who were mostly active at the chancery from the 'Abbāsid to the Mamluk period have been published and studied,<sup>5</sup> epistolography in general, and the correspondence exchanged by the upper class in the Mamluk period in particular, have received little attention. Recently, Gully tackled the issue of letter writing in pre-modern Islam, but he mainly dealt with the correspondence produced by secretaries of state and only touched upon the private formal and informal letters of scholars in broad terms.<sup>6</sup> The present study aims to tackle the question of correspondence between scholars during the Mamluk period through the lens of one typical example found by chance in a chancery manual of the same period: a letter addressed by the famous historian al-Maqrīzī to al-Qalqashandī and the latter's answer. Both letters are edited and translated here for the first time. Though only preserved as copies, they allow us to analyze their structure in diplomatic terms whereas their contents throw light on some of al-Maqrīzī's works and the nature of the relationships between the two scholars.

#### The Source

I came across the texts of the two letters exchanged by al-Maqrīzī and al-Qalqashandī in a rather overlooked text. My interest in this text was sparked by the fact that it deals with diplomatics and that it has never been the subject of a thorough study, though it was known to have been written by al-Qalqashandī's son. In a recently published article, I addressed the question of the identity of the author and assessed the value of his chancery manual in the light of those already published for the Mamluk period.<sup>7</sup> The text, entitled

<sup>4</sup> al-Ṣafadī, Alḥān al-sawāji'.

<sup>5</sup> The following references can be added to Diem's bibliography: Hachmeier, *Die Briefe Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm al-Şābi*''s; Pomerantz, *Licit magic and divine grace*. As for letters exchanged by scholars, see Nwyia, Note sur quelques fragments inédits; Haque, A letter of Ibn Taimiyya; Berjak and Iqbal, Ibn Sīnā—Al-Bīrūnī correspondence translated [English translation of *al-As'ila wa-l-ajwiba* which was edited by Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Mehdi Mohaghegh]; Akkach, *Letters of a Sufi scholar*.

<sup>6</sup> Gully, The culture of letter-writing.

<sup>7</sup> Bauden, Like father, like son. The information provided in this section is summarized from this article.

Qalā'id al-jumān fī mukātabāt ahl al-zamān (The pearl necklaces regarding the conventions of present-day epistolography), is preserved in an unicum found in the collections of the British Library (London, MS OR.3625) where it has been housed since 1888, the date of its acquisition at an auction. Composed of 165 leaves and dated 868/1464, it is remarkable in that besides the title indicated on the title page and in the author's introduction, the name of its author does not appear. However, thanks to several hints by the author in the body of the text, he can be identified as the son of al-Qalqashandī. The first clue relates to a document issued by the author (fol. 108a: min inshā' mu'allifihi), an expression followed by his name (Najm al-Dīn Abū l-Fadl Muhammad al-Qarqashandī [sic]). In another place (fol. 96b), he quotes a document composed by Shihāb al-Dīn Abū l-'Abbās Ahmad al-Qarqashandī [sic] al-Shāfi'ī, who is described as the author's father (wālid mu'allifihi). The identification is further corroborated by another passage (fol. 125a) where he quotes his father, who was dead at the time he was writing (fa-inna wālidī raḥimahu llāh), and his book entitled *Subh al-a'shā*. On this occasion, he specifies that he produced two copies of his father's work for the libraries of two important secretaries of state: one in eleven volumes for Nāșir al-Dīn Muhammad ibn Muhammad Ibn al-Bārizī (d. 823/1420) and another in seven volumes for Badr al-Dīn Muhammad ibn Muhammad Ibn Muzhir (d. 832/1429). All these elements leave no doubt that the author was al-Qalqashandī's son, identified as Najm al-Dīn Abū l-Fadl Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn 'Abdallāh al-Qalqashandī, better known as Ibn Abī Ghudda. Born in 796/1394, he was active as a deputy judge, an administrator of *waqf* properties, and as a secretary in the service of various *amīrs*. He drowned in the Nile flood of 876/1471. His contemporary biographers (al-Bigā'ī and al-Sakhāwī) scarcely mention any book titles he might have composed but three works have come down to us in manuscript form. Beside Qalā'id aljumān, there is an amplification (takhmīs) of al-Būṣīrī's al-Burda and a work on the genealogy of the Arabs, Nihāyat al-arab fī ma'rifat ansāb al-'arab, which is, as I have tentatively demonstrated in the article referred to above, a plagiarized copy of his father's Nihāyat al-arab fī ma'rifat qabā'il al-'arab.8

The *Qalā'id al-jumān* can be described as a manual aimed to be a *vade mecum* for secretaries working for *amīrs*. Though it deals with official correspondence in general, including that related to caliphs and sultans, its focus is clearly on the letters exchanged by state officials at various levels; i.e., letters described as *ikhwāniyyāt*.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 201-3.

#### The Correspondence

In the section where the question of the decrees  $(mars \bar{u}m)$  issued in answer to petitions (*qissa*) is addressed (fols. 27b–31a), the author quotes two letters. Having stated that the decrees can be issued either as a separate document or on the back of petitions,<sup>9</sup> he introduces the topic with a letter  $(ruq'a)^{10}$  "received by my father-may God the Sublime have mercy upon him-from the Shaykh Taqī l-Dīn al-Maqlīzī l-Shāfi'ī." The spelling of al-Maqrīzī's name with a *lām* is of course remarkable. A similar feature appears in the manuscript with regard to al-Qalqashandi's name, where the  $l\bar{a}m$  is replaced by a  $r\bar{a}$  (see above, al-Qarqashandī), though not systematically. It is difficult to ascertain whether these orthographic peculiarities are to be attributed to al-Qalqashandī's son or to the copyist. However, it is interesting to note that al-Maqrīzī always wrote al-Qalqashandī's name with a  $r\bar{a}$ ' in the biographies he devoted to him in his various writings.<sup>11</sup> On the other hand, the village where al-Qalqashandī was born and from which his *nisba* stems is nowadays spelled with a  $r\bar{a}$ , a form that was recorded as early as the seventh/thirteenth century by Yāqūt al-Rūmī in his Mu'jam al-buldān,<sup>12</sup> which may account for al-Maqrīzī's spelling of al-Qalqashandī's name with a  $r\bar{a}$ '. In fact, the substitution of both letters ( $r\bar{a}$ ' for *lām* and vice versa) is attested from al-Andalus to Iraq.<sup>13</sup>

The incipit of al-Maqrīzī's letter consists of an excursus that looks like an entry in a dictionary, as it provides the meaning of words derived from the root *r-s-m*. Al-Maqrīzī lists several words whose meaning is connected to the notion of trace (*rasm*: relic; *rasama*: to erase something, leaving only a trace on the ground; *tarassama*: to observe a mark; *rawsam*: stamp or mark; *rasama/arsama*: to leave/to cause to leave marks on the ground, speaking of a she-camel; *rasm*: a well filled up with earth; *irtasama*: to pronounce *Allāh akbar* and seek

<sup>9</sup> For the first, I have used a free translation. The author speaks of decrees that are *muqtadab* (i.e., extracted) or *mulakhkhaş* (i.e., summarized). He has in mind petitions whose contents are too long to allow the issue of a decree directly on their back, as is the case for the second category. For this, see al-Qalqashandī, *Şubh al-a'shā*, repr. ed. Cairo 1964, vi, 212–6.

<sup>10</sup> In his article, Werner Diem noted that this word is one term, among others, that was used by a sender either to describe his/her letter or the letter received. See Diem, Arabic letters 857.

<sup>al-Maqrīzī,</sup> *Durar al-'uqūd al-farīda*, ed. Jalīlī, i, 312–3 (no. 222); idem, *Kitāb al-Sulūk*, ed. Ziyāda and 'Ashūr 1934–73, iv, 473–4; idem, *Kitāb al-Muqaffā*, ed. Ya'lāwī 1991, i, 512–3 (no. 496) = *al-Muqaffā*, ed. Ya'lāwī 2006, i, 312 (no. 496), though in the latter source, the editor restored the name with a *lām*.

<sup>12</sup> Yāqūt al-Rūmī, *Mu'jam al-buldān* iv, 327–8.

<sup>13</sup> Maṭar, *Laḥn al-ʿāmma* 229–30.

refuge in Him). This excursus is obviously related to the word *marsūm*, which is the main topic of the section where the letters were inserted; this is a word that stems from the same root and that was used by the chancery in a technical sense (literally "ordered" and, by metonymy, "decree"). Though al-Maqrīzī does not quote the dictionary he borrowed these lines from, it is quite easy to identify it, as in fact he is summarizing the entry devoted to this root in Ibn Manẓūr's *Lisān al-ʿarab*: there, the data are presented in the same order and with the same words.<sup>14</sup>

Al-Magrīzī's letter then starts properly with the usual expression "the slave kisses the ground and reports."<sup>15</sup> The reason he was compelled to address this letter to al-Qalqashandī relates to some words derived from the root r-s-m that had come to be taken, in a technical sense in chancery terminology, to mean "order" (amr). Al-Maqrīzī gives the following examples: marsūm sharīf (noble, i.e., issued by the sultan, decree), rusima bi-l-amr al-sharif (the noble order has been issued), and *al-marsūm marsūmukum* (the decree is yours). Referring to the lexicographical excursus that preceded his letter, al-Maqrīzī presents his request: he enjoins al-Qalqashandī to defend or justify (*nādala*) the use the chancery makes of these words given that there is absolutely no indication of such a meaning in the dictionary. Al-Qalqashandī is invited to explain the meaning of these words in the terminology used by the chancery ( $m\bar{a}$ ma'nā dhālika fī stilāh al-inshā'), and provide an answer that is coherent with the lexicon (*mimmā lā tukhālifuhu al-lugha*); i.e., the etymology of the root. Al-Maqrīzī was prompted to contact him about such an issue, he says, because of the fame of his correspondent, whose book he does not name but which can easily be identified as Subh al-a'shā fī sinā'at/kitābat al-inshā' (The daybreak of the night-blind on the craft/art of chancery writing). His interest in the issue, he says, was prompted by the fact that he plans to prepare the fair copy of his book on secretaries, an ambition he is now able to fulfill as he has neared completion of his other book entitled al-Mawā'iz wa-l-i'tibār fī dhikr al-khitat wa-l-āthār.

Al-Qalqashandī's answer is structured in a manner that was fashionable for responses to an inceptive letter (*ibtidā*') such as al-Maqrīzī's letter.<sup>16</sup> First, he repeats, in his own words, the contents of his correspondent's letter and then proceeds with the answer he is able to provide to al-Maqrīzī's request; he does so after stressing, with the expected expressions of modesty, that he

<sup>14</sup> Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān al-ʿarab* v, 215–6.

<sup>15</sup> Ibn Abī Ghudda, *Qalā'id al-jumān fī mukātabāt ahl al-zamān*, fol. 27b (for a discussion of this expression, see below).

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., fols. 28a–29b.

is unfamiliar with the issue and far from being as competent as al-Magrīzī implies. He starts by stating that the meaning of "order" taken by words derived from the root *r*-*s*-*m* and used by the chancery secretaries, like *rusima bi-l-amr* al-sharif and its derivatives, is, contrary to what most people think, far from being a recent practice, because he found this very expression with that meaning in the production of secretaries of the Ayyūbid period, more precisely after the beginning of the sixth/twelfth century. These secretaries, al-Qalqashandī underlines, were capable and knowledgeable men in the art of writing who would never have used such words without ensuring that they were consistent with the Arabic language. This statement allows him to demonstrate how this technical meaning of "order" came to be ascribed to words derived from the root *r*-*s*-*m*. He thus puts forward several hypotheses. Unfortunately, the manuscript presents a lacuna of half of one leaf in that part of the letter:<sup>17</sup> there is no doubt that the copyist had to deal with a mutilated passage (as shown by the last three words he penned on the leaf before the blank which do not make any sense) which he hoped he would be able to fill in later on, something that never happened. Nonetheless, it seems that al-Qalqashandī proposed no more than four possible etymologies. In such a case, only the end of the first and the beginning of the second are lacunar.

The first proposal regards the expression *rasamtu la-hu kadhā fa-rtasamahu* where the verb *rasama* means "he ordered" and *irtasama* "he executed."<sup>18</sup> This meaning is attested in the source al-Maqrīzī relied on; i.e., Ibn Manẓūr's *Lisān al-ʿarab*, right at the end of the entry: *wa-rasamtu la-hu kadhā fa-rtasamahu idhā mtathalahu* ("I ordered him so and so and he carried it out, i.e. he executed it").<sup>19</sup>

The second etymology, though lacunar for the most part, seems to rely on the principle of metonymy.<sup>20</sup> The end of the passage that has been preserved suggests that al-Qalqashandī is comparing the use of *marsūm* as meaning "decree"; i.e., the document issued and not only the meaning of "ordered," with that of *tawqī*; i.e., the endorsement. The latter was originally used to designate the inscriptions written on the margins of petitions before its meaning was extended to the whole writ. In other words, *marsūm* as a word featured in documents issued in answer to petitions where it meant "ordered" came to be used for the whole document.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., fol. 29b.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., fol. 29a.

<sup>19</sup> Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān al-ʿarab* v, 216.

<sup>20</sup> Ibn Abī Ghudda, *Qalā'id al-jumān fī mukātabāt ahl al-zamān*, fol. 29b.

The third hypothesis, a metaphorical one, relies on the word *rawsam* that defines the seal used to stamp the mouth of a jar: in this case, the object of the *marsūm* (decree) is comparable to the seal that guarantees that the contents (the beverage in the case of the jar, the function granted in the case of the decree) are reserved for the person who disposes of it.<sup>21</sup>

The fourth proposal is connected to the same word as above, *rawsam*, though it has a different meaning: something used to polish dinars. In this case, the decree (*marsūm*) is assimilated to something that makes the contents comprehensible to the recipient because of the recommendations that it contains or because rulers elucidate the difficulties which the recipient will have to face in the frame of his new function.

Al-Qalqashandī concludes his answer with a further expression of modesty, repeating his incompetence in this matter. He is also fully aware that the question was asked by a person who was supposed to already know the answer, something he expresses very powerfully, through a verse attributed to al-Badī' al-Asṭurlābī (d. 534/1139–40) and which can be rendered by the Latin proverb: *Solem lucerna non ostenderent*—you don't show the sun with a lantern.

Despite al-Qalqashandī's protest that he is not credentialed, it appears that he had already addressed the issue of the etymology of the word *marsūm* in his *magnum opus.*<sup>22</sup> There, he pointed out two possibilities: the first tallies with the first proposal found in his answer to al-Maqrīzī (*akhdhan min qawlihim rasamtu la-hu kadhā fa-rtasamahu idhā mtathalahu*, "taken from the expression: 'I ordered him [to do] so and so and he carried it out'; i.e., he executed it") whereas the second does not appear there (*aw min qawlihim rasama 'alayya kadhā idhā kataba*, "or from the expression: 'He drew up so and so for me'; i.e., he wrote"). He further adds that the technical meaning could derive from both expressions taken together (*wa-yuḥtamal an yakūn minhumā jamī`an*).

#### Structure of the Letters in Diplomatic Terms

As an example of letters exchanged between two peers, i.e. two scholars who were active in the state chancery at some point in their lives, the two texts contain enough elements to allow for an analysis of their structure, both external and internal. In diplomatic terms, al-Maqrīzī's letter was an inceptive (*ibtidā'*) which called for an answer (*jawāb*). Furthermore, the letters follow a structure that was typical of letters produced by the chancery in the Mamluk period.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-aʿshā* xi, 107.

In fact, letters that were not produced in the sultan's name or addressed to him (*sultāniyyāt*) were called *ikhwāniyyāt* (literally "fraternal," i.e. "friendly"). Generally, it was thought that *ikhwāniyyāt* only described letters exchanged in a personal tone between friends or colleagues, but recently it has been shown that this term was also applied to official correspondence exchanged by functionaries (e.g., the secretary of the privy writing to a governor).<sup>23</sup> On the basis of the level of both the sender and the addressee, several elements, such as the address and the *intitulatio*, were adapted as a function of different patterns.<sup>24</sup> From the Ayyūbid period onwards, this kind of letter was in many respects similar to petitions (*qiṣṣa, ruqʿa*):<sup>25</sup> It started, after the *basmala*, with the expression "the slave kisses the ground and reports …" (*al-mamlūk yuqabbilu l-arḍ wa-yunhī* …), proceeded with the request (*wa-l-masʿūl* …), and ended with "he has reported this if God the Sublime will" (*anhā dhālika in shā'a llāh taʿālā*).

All these features are present in al-Maqrīzī's inceptive letter and in al-Qalqashandī's answer for the simple reason that they follow the pattern of the *ikhwāniyya* letter. Though the originals have been lost, the copy found in the manuscript displays enough elements to permit a comparison with the *ikhwāniyyāt* issued in the frame of the chancery and to reconstruct them as they were originally. As the manuscript of al-Qalqashandī's answer shows, the copyist left some space between the name of the addressee (*al-shaykhī l-taqawī*) and the incipit of the letter.

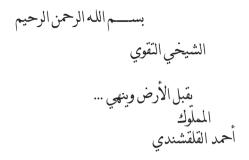
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In so doing, the copyist wanted to give an indication of the original place of these words in the letter. According to the rules, the addressee's *laqab* should be written in the space between the *basmala* and the incipit of the letter in such a way that it would start in the right margin and end below the beginning of the word *bism* in the *basmala*. The name of the sender had to be preceded by *al-mamlūk* and placed below the incipit; i.e., *yuqabbil*. All this can be represented as follows:

<sup>23</sup> Bauden, Ikhwāniyyāt letters.

<sup>24</sup> Several examples are detailed in the preceding reference.

<sup>25</sup> Stern, Petitions 241–2.



Though in the case of al-Maqrīzī's letter Ibn al-Qalqashandī did not note the addressee's *laqab*, it can be deduced quite easily, as it paralleled the one found in his father's answer: *al-shaykhī l-shihābī*, al-Qalqashandī's *laqab* being Shihāb al-Dīn. Of course, both scholars addressed each other with the title shaykh, which was reserved for their rank; i.e., '*ulamā*'. They also used the hyperbolic form with the final  $y\bar{a}$ '.<sup>26</sup>

Obviously, there was no reason for al-Qalqashandī to mention letters exchanged by scholars that follow the patterns of the *ikhwāniyya* category, as these were not issued in the frame of the chancery. Nevertheless, he devoted some space at the very end of his encyclopedia to documents, including letters that were unrelated to the chancery such as epistles (*rasā'il*), licences (*ijāzāt*), and certificates of pilgrimage (called 'umurāt).<sup>27</sup> Of these, he mentions letters that consist of questions and answers (al-as'ila wa-l-ajwiba), which he classifies into two categories, the first of which is defined as dealing with challenging or testing questions (al-as'ila l-imtihāniyya).<sup>28</sup> He further indicates that respectful belletrists (mashāyikh al-adab) and erudite secretaries often forwarded questions to each other about some topic either for the sake of inquiry (i.e., to enrich their knowledge by benefitting from the addressee's science) or simply for the pleasure of testing and disqualifying a peer. Al-Qalqashandī points out that some of these letters are answered, but others are not. The category is exemplified by a letter composed by Ibn Nubāta (d. 768/1366) and directed to the chief secretary of the chancery in Damascus who had taken his side against some contender active at the chancery. The letter thanked him and presented

<sup>26</sup> al-Qalqashandī, *Şubḥ al-aʿshā* vi, 17.

They are found in the last volume of the edition. Al-Qalqashandī, *Subḥ al-a'shā* xiv, 110–365. (These are literary productions by secretaries; they have no relationship to the secretariat of the chancery).

al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-aʿshā* xiv, 240.

some questions for the secretaries regarding the art of writing (*san'at al-inshā'*) and history (*fann al-ta'rīkh*).<sup>29</sup> Al-Maqrīzī's inceptive letter can hardly compete with Ibn Nubāta's but it is an interesting example of the category described by al-Qalqashandī.

## Al-Maqrīzī and al-Qalqashandī

Both letters are not only significant in terms of diplomatics, literature, and cultural history, but also provide detailed information about the authors themselves, the nature of their relationship, and their respective works. All the scholars who wrote about al-Qalqashandī's biography acknowledged that the entries devoted to him in the biographical dictionaries of the Mamluk and Ottoman periods were not very helpful and that, in this respect, his *Şubḥ al-a*'shā was more instructive.<sup>30</sup> Among his contemporaries who dedicated lines in their works to him (al-Maqrīzī, al-'Aynī, and Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī), al-Maqrīzī appears to be the most well-informed, and it is not surprising that most of the later authors relied on him when referring to al-Qalqashandī.

The two letters studied here reveal that they were in contact and that al-Maqrīzī valued al-Qalqashandī's opinion on a technical issue regarding chancery norms. It should be noted that al-Maqrīzī also worked for the state chancery, though for a shorter period before al-Qalqashandī started his own career as a secretary. According to al-Maqrīzī, he himself was active at the chancery, where he was responsible, until about the year 790/1388, for decisions regarding petitions (*tawqī*).<sup>31</sup> His superior, Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn

<sup>29</sup> For more details, see Bauer, Jamāl al-Dīn Ibn Nubātah 194-5.

<sup>30</sup> Bosworth, A *maqāma* 292 ("Little is known of al-Qalqashandī's life beyond that information which we can glean from his *Şubh.*"); idem, al-Ķalkashandī, *EI*<sup>2</sup> iv, 509 ("It is remarkable how little notice was taken of al-Ķalkashandī by contemporaries or nearcontemporaries. [...] Hence we do not know much about al-Ķalkashandī's legal and professional life beyond the salient points and dates of his official career, let alone about his early years, education and private life"); van Berkel, al-Qalqashandī 333 ("However, these references contain no extensive description of the author's life, education or literary production. [...] Therefore, modern historians too have to rely primarily upon the data provided by the author himself").

<sup>31</sup> Ayyām mubāsharatī l-tawqī' al-sultānī ilā naḥw al-tis'īn wa-l-sab'imi'a. See al-Maqrīzī, Kitāb al-Mawā'iz wa-l-i'tibār, ed. Cairo 1853–4, ii, 225 (where one reads al-sab'in, which is a mistake) = Kitāb al-Mawā'iz wa-l-i'tibār, ed. Sayyid, iii, 730 (correct reading).

Faḍl Allāh al-ʿUmarī (d. 796/1394), was the Chief Secretary of the Chancery at that time.  $^{32}$ 

As for al-Qalqashandī, he states that he started to work at the chancery around the year 791/1389.<sup>33</sup> It is thus unlikely that the paths of these scholars crossed at the chancery at that time but they certainly had other opportunities to strike up an acquaintance as both remained close to the central power in subsequent decades.

Beside their exchange of correspondence the data gathered by al-Maqrīzī about his peer and reproduced in the biography he penned about him in three of his works is further confirmation that they knew each other quite well. The three works are Kitāb al-Sulūk, Kitāb al-Ta'rīkh al-kabīr al-muqaffā, and Durar *al-'uqūd al-farīda*.<sup>34</sup> It is in the latter, devoted to the author's contemporaries, that more precise details emerge on the nature of their relationship; this source is all the more significant as it has been overlooked by all the scholars who have written about al-Qalqashandī though it was available as early as 1992.<sup>35</sup> In it, al-Maqrīzī reveals sides of al-Qalqashandī that are not found in the other sources on his beginnings in Alexandria. Born in Qalqashanda/ Qarqashanda, a village located in the province of Qalyūbiyya in the southern Delta, he moved to the harbor city where after his education, he served the governor Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Khalīl ibn 'Alī ibn 'Arrām. The latter occupied this position at several intervals (bef. 766/1365 to 767/1365; 768/1367 to 769/1367; 770/1369 to 772/1371; 774/1373 to 775/1373; 777/1376 to 779/1378; and in 782/1380, the year he was executed), which helps to reasonably date this employment to the penultimate or ultimate of Ibn 'Arrām's governorship and at the very beginning of al-Qalqashandī's career since he was born in 756/1355.<sup>36</sup> Shortly

<sup>32</sup> He held this function from 4 Dhū l-Ḥijja 786/17 January 1385 to 14 Ṣafar 792/1 February 1390. See Wiet, Les Secrétaires 273–4.

<sup>33</sup> al-Qalqashandī, Şubh al-a'shā i, 8 (wa-kuntu fi hudūd sanat ihdā wa-tis'in wa-sab'imi'a 'inda stiqrārī fi kitābat al-inshā' bi-l-abwāb al-sharīfa al-sultāniyya), xiv, 111 (ansha'tuhā fi hudūd sanat ihdā wa-tis'īn wa-sab'imi'a 'inda stiqrārī fi dīwān al-inshā' bi-l-abwāb al-sharīfa).

<sup>al-Maqrīzī,</sup> *Kitāb al-Sulūk* iv, 473–4; idem, *al-Muqaffā*, ed. Yaʻlāwī 1991, i, 512–3 (no. 496)
= *al-Muqaffā*, ed. Yaʻlāwī 2006, i, 312 (no. 496); idem, *Durar al-ʿuqūd*, ed. ʿIzz al-Dīn ʿAlī, ii, 361–2 (no. 181) = *Durar al-ʿuqūd*, ed. Darwīsh and Miṣrī, ii, 75–6 (no. 223) = *Durar al-ʿuqūd*, ed. Jalīlī, i, 312–3 (no. 222).

<sup>35 &#</sup>x27;Izz al-Dīn 'Alī, Abū l-'Abbās al-Qalqashandī, is the only exception: he even edited al-Qalqashandī's biography in Durar al-'uqūd al-farīda at the end of his book (p. 141).

<sup>36 &#</sup>x27;Abd al-Rāziq, Les Gouverneurs 133 (no. 18), 135 (no. 21), 136 (nos. 24 and 27), 138 (no. 33), 139 (no. 37). Al-Qalqashandī mentions him in relation to the issue of gold coins in Alexandria in the late eighth/fourteenth century, something he may have witnessed when he was in his service. See al-Qalqashandī, Şubḥ al-a'shā iii, 440.

after al-Qalqashandī settled in Cairo where, thanks to his access to Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn Faḍl Allāh, he secured a position at the chancery.

Here, al-Maqrīzī specifies that al-Qalqashandī worked in the capacity of  $k\bar{a}tib~al$ -darj pro bono (bi-ghayr ma'lūm). This statement is curious because it is contradicted by al-Qalqashandī himself in the maqāma he composed in the same year he was employed at the chancery.<sup>37</sup> In this "autobiographical postscript,"<sup>38</sup> al-Qalqashandī stresses his quandary between proceeding further in his academic research and earning his living:

I became distressed, unable to do anything properly, as I remained perplexed, not knowing which of the two courses would be more profitable to me. For if I should make the pursuit of knowledge my living, I should be acting reprehensibly in my recourse to this, and if I should spurn earning my living in favour of study, I should perish of need and die of hunger.<sup>39</sup>

And further on, "as I became assured that I am established in his *dīwān*, and listed as one of his pages, I refrained from further search for gain."<sup>40</sup> In introducing the *maqāma*, he further underlines that a man must have employment and ensure his subsistence.<sup>41</sup> It would be rather surprising that he would have accepted the job without a salary given his statement. On the other hand, why would al-Maqrīzī state that he worked *pro bono*? If there is any truth in this, it may have applied to the beginning of his career at the chancery. Al-Maqrīzī declares that afterwards he worked for many years as a deputy judge in an office of notaries (*shuhūd*).<sup>42</sup> As Bosworth emphasized, when he died, "it is not

<sup>37</sup> He inserted it in *Şubḥ al-a'shā* (xiv, 112–28) and refers to it in his introduction (i, 8–9). See Bosworth, A *maqāma*, and al-Musawi, Vindicating a profession.

<sup>38</sup> al-Musawi, Vindicating a profession 112.

<sup>39</sup> Bosworth, A maqāma 295.

<sup>40</sup> al-Musawi, Vindicating a profession 115.

<sup>41</sup> al-Qalqashandī, Şubḥ al-a'shā i, 9 (ansha'tu maqāma banaytuhā 'alā annahu lā budda lil-insān min ḥirfa yata'allaq bi-hā wa-ma'īsha yatamassak bi-sababihā) and xiv, 111 (waja'altu mabnāhā 'alā annahu lā budda lil-insān min ḥirfa yata'allaq bi-hā wa-ma'īsha yatamassak bi-sababihā).

<sup>42</sup> al-Maqrīzī, Durar al-'uqūd al-farīda, ed. Jalīlī, i, 313 (thumma nāba fi l-hukm bi-markaz min marākiz al-shuhūd 'an qādī l-qudāt Jalāl al-Dīn 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Bulqīnī muddat sinīn). This is confirmed by all the other sources, but the difference here is the chronological presentation: first, he worked at the chancery, then as a deputy judge for many years.

known whether he was still employed in the  $d\bar{i}w\bar{a}n$  at that date."<sup>43</sup> If we rely on the information given by al-Maqrīzī, it is clear that he was not.

On a more personal note, al-Maqrīzī declares, after having said that he was a learned man who had memorized works on law, grammar, and literature and that he was also a poet, that al-Qalqashandī frequently visited him and took dictation. He was even, according to al-Maqrīzī, a great talker and babbler. The biographical entry concludes with an anecdotal report in which al-Maqrīzī talks about a geometry experiment that al-Qalqashandī described to him; namely how to measure the height of an object, like a palm tree, a minaret, or a mountain. The technique deployed is a simple wood stick and the method to calculate the height is fully detailed by al-Maqrīzī.

This is undoubtedly the most personal biography that we have about al-Qalqashandī. It also contains two pieces of information that confirm that al-Maqrīzī was well acquainted with him. The first concerns the date of his death: al-Maqrīzī was the only contemporary who established that it took place on the night of Saturday 10 Jumādā 11 821 [15 July 1418].<sup>44</sup> Both al-Sakhāwī and Ibn Taghrī Birdī, who belonged to the next generation and did not know al-Qalqashandī, had to rely on al-Maqrīzī for this detail.<sup>45</sup> Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, al-'Aynī, and al-Ṣayrafī, on the contrary, simply mention that it occurred in the month of Jumādā 11 and do not indicate the day.<sup>46</sup>

The second relates to the name of al-Qalqashandī's father. Most of the sources, including the modern ones, give al-Qalqashandī's name as Aḥmad ibn 'Alī ibn Aḥmad. Al-Maqrīzī, on the other hand, mentions that his father's name was 'Abdallāh.<sup>47</sup> Al-Sakhāwī does not miss an opportunity to criticize both al-Maqrīzī and al-'Aynī for providing what he considers a mistake.<sup>48</sup> In this, he blindly follows his master, Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, who indeed indicates that the father's name was 'Alī. Notwithstanding al-Sakhāwī's confidence, it seems that al-Maqrīzī was right, a fact that strengthens the impression that he knew al-Qalqashandī quite well. Al-Qalqashandī does not quote his full name in any

<sup>43</sup> Bosworth, al-Kalkashandī, EI<sup>2</sup> iv, 509, echoed in van Berkel, al-Qalqashandī 339 ("Whether he was still employed in the Mamluk chancery is unknown to us").

<sup>44</sup> The time (night) is only indicated in *Kitāb al-Sulūk*. The date fell on a Friday, but the night of Saturday starts after sunset on Friday according to the Muslim calendar. Nevertheless, al-Maqrīzī should have said 11 instead of 10 Jumādā 11.

<sup>45</sup> Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *al-Manhal al-ṣāfī* i, 352; al-Sakhāwī, *al-Daw' al-lāmi*<sup>c</sup>, Cairo 1934–6, ii, 8.

<sup>46</sup> Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalānī, Inbā' al-ghumr, ed. Habashī, iii, 179; idem, al-Majma' al-mu'assis iii, 54; al-'Aynī, Iqd al-jumān, ed. Qarmūț 1985, 339; al-Şayrafī, Nuzhat al-nufūs ii, 432.

<sup>47</sup> He was followed in this by al-'Aynī, Ibn Taghrī Birdī, and al-Ṣayrafī.

<sup>48</sup> al-Sakhāwī, al-Daw' al-lāmi' ii, 8 (wa-sammā l-'Aynī wa-l-Maqrīzī wālidahu 'Abdallāh wahuwa wahm).

of his books. However, it is mentioned on the title pages of some manuscripts of his works. One of these is *Ma'āthir al-ināfa*. As the editor noticed, the title page of the unique copy, which moreover is a presentation copy,<sup>49</sup> bears the following name: Aḥmad ibn 'Abdallāh al-Qalqashandī.<sup>50</sup> The same holds true for the manuscript of another work (*Daw' al-subḥ al-musfir wa-jany l-dawḥ almuthmir*), which is once again a presentation copy and probably a holograph as well, that shares the same features.<sup>51</sup> On the title page the name is given, without *laqab*, as Aḥmad ibn 'Abdallāh ibn Aḥmad al-Fazārī al-Qalqashandī.<sup>52</sup> Moreover, in the biography al-Sakhāwī dedicated to al-Qalqashandī's son, the name of his grandfather is 'Abdallāh. Al-Sakhāwī thus contradicts himself. All these elements seem to invalidate al-Sakhāwī's claim that the name of al-Qalqashandī's father was 'Alī.<sup>53</sup>

All the above clearly show that al-Maqrīzī was the only contemporary author who provided personal details that only he could know from his acquaintance with al-Qalqashandī. The correspondence studied here further supports this impression.

- 50 al-Qalqashandī, *Maʾāthir al-ināfa* i, *bāʾ*. The editor underlined that this contradicted al-Sakhāwī's allegation.
- 51 Tehran: Kitābkhānah-yi Millī-yi Jumhūrī-yi Islāmī-yi Īrān, мs 'Ayn 1122. The text is a summarized version in two volumes (the manuscript corresponds to the first volume) of *Subh* al-a'shā made at the request of Kamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad Ibn al-Bārizī, who was the son of Nāşir al-Dīn Muḥammad. Nāşir al-Dīn was chief secretary of the chancery from 815/1413 to 823/1420, the date of his death. His son inherited his position upon his father's death, though only for a period of three months (823/1420-824/1421). He was reinstated on two occasions later on. See Wiet, Les Secrétaires 286-8. Several details show that this copy of *Daw' al-subh al-musfir* was produced when Kamāl al-Dīn's father was still living, hence corroborating the hypothesis that this is a holograph copy: Nāşir al-Dīn's name in the introduction is followed by the invocation *zīdat 'aẓamatuhu*, indicating that he was still living; his title is *al-Magarr al-ashraf* and he is described as being the  $s\bar{a}hib$ dawāwīn al-inshā' al-sharīf whereas his son's title is al-Maqarr al-karīm on the title page and al-Magarr al-sharīf in the introduction; the colophon reads najiza mu'allifuhu hadhā [l-ta'līf] fī l-'ashr al-awākhir min rabī' al-ākhir sanat iḥdā wa-'ishrīn wa-thamāni mi'a and someone added rahimahu llāh above mu'allifuhu. The edition of the first volume of this abridgement was published in Cairo in 1906 (and reprinted in 2009) and does not contain the details of the title page, as the editor worked from another manuscript preserved in Cairo (Dār al-Kutub al-Waṭaniyya, мs Adab 65).
- 52 The invocation is *lațafa* [*A*]*llāh bi-hi*.
- 53 All the modern sources repeat this mistake with the exception of 'Izz al-Dīn 'Alī, *Abū l-'Abbās al-Qalqashandī* 24.

<sup>49</sup> And maybe even the holograph: the title page gives the author's name without the *laqab*, a practice authors adhere to when they write their own name, and the invocation that follows shows that he was still alive (*qarana Allāh maqāşidahu bi-l-qubūl*).

## Significance of the Correspondence

Besides the personal relationship between al-Qalqashandī and al-Maqrīzī, the letters are also important for the history of the literary production of both authors. In his letter, al-Magrīzī justifies his request by the fact that al-Qalqashandī is the author of "that unattainable book of unprecedented example" (wa-qad katabtum fihi [i.e., mustalah al-inshā'] dhālika l-kitab al-badī<sup>c</sup> al-mithāl wa-l-ba'īd al-manāl).54 Though he does not quote the title of the book, here he is clearly referring to Subh al-a'shā. Al-Magrīzī knew the title, since he mentions it in the three biographies he dedicated to its author. In Kitāb al-Sulūk, he says that al-Qalqashandī composed Subh al-a'shā fī sinā'at al-inshā', in which he gathered very useful material.<sup>55</sup> Both in Durar al-'uqūd al-farīda and in al-Muqaffā, the second part of the title is given as fī qawānīn al*inshā*', an indication that he was probably quoting from memory.<sup>56</sup> In the first, he also specifies that this is a huge book, but he never states the number of volumes. This detail is provided by another contemporary, Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalānī, who indicates that it was in four volumes,<sup>57</sup> which is hardly credible: the copies preserved are in seven volumes and, as we saw, al-Qalqashandī's son made two copies of his father's book, one in seven volumes and the other in eleven. This is not the only discrepancy: Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalānī also cites the second part of the title in two different ways not attested for the book: *fī ma'rifat al-inshā*' and *fī fann al-inshā*'. All this strengthens the impression that in fact he had not seen a copy of the *Subh al-a*'shā, in contrast to al-Maqrīzī.

Al-Maqrīzī's implicit reference to this book makes it possible to roughly date the letter and its response. In general, when al-Qalqashandī completed his works, he provided his reader with chronological indications to help them to date his output fairly precisely toward the end of his life, as is shown in the following list:

<sup>54</sup> Ibn Abī Ghudda, Qalā'id al-jumān fī mukātabāt ahl al-zamān, fol. 28a.

<sup>55</sup> al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk* iv, 474 (*jamaʿa fīhi jamʿan kabīran mufīdan*).

<sup>56</sup> al-Maqrīzī, al-Muqaffā, ed. Ya'lāwī 1991, i, 512 = al-Muqaffā, ed. Ya'lāwī 2006, i, 312; idem, Durar al-'uqūd, ed. 'Izz al-Dīn 'Alī, ii, 362 = Durar al-'uqūd, ed. Darwīsh and Miṣrī, ii, 75 = Durar al-'uqūd, ed. Jalīlī, i, 313.

<sup>57</sup> Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalānī, Inbā' al-ghumr iii, 178–9 (fī ma'rifat al-inshā'); idem, al-Majma' al-mu'assis iii, 54 (fī fann al-inshā'). It is important to stress that al-Qalqashandī always calls his book Şubh al-a'shā fī kitābat al-inshā' and not fī şinā'at al-inshā'. See his introduction to Şubh al-a'shā i, 10. His references to the book in his other works, such as in Ma'āthir al-ināfa (i, 272; iii, 98, 183, 279) and Daw' al-subh al-musfir (MS 'Ayn 1122) = Daw' al-subh al-musfir (ed. Salāma), further confirm this. The version of the title with şinā'at appears only on the title page of the latter.

Nihāyat al-arab fī maʿrifat ansāb al-ʿArab: 812/1409–10<sup>58</sup> Şubḥ al-aʿshā fī kitābat al-inshāʾ: 28 Shawwāl 814/12 February 1412<sup>59</sup> Qalāʾid al-jumān fī l-taʿrīf bi-qabāʾil ʿArab al-zamān: 13 Rajab 819/6 September 1416<sup>60</sup> Maʾāthir al-ināfa fī maʿālim al-khilāfa: 819/1417?<sup>61</sup> Dawʾ al-ṣubḥ al-musfir wa-jany l-dawḥ al-muthmir: 20–29 Rabīʿ 11 821/27 May–5 June 1418<sup>62</sup>

Thus the exchange of correspondence between al-Maqrīzī and al-Qalqashandī can be dated roughly between 814/1412 (completion of *Subḥ al-a'shā*) and 821/1418 (al-Qalqashandī's death). The *terminus post quem* must however be reconsidered in view of the fact that the oldest copy of *Subḥ al-a'shā* is dated 1 Muḥarram 817/23 March 1414.<sup>63</sup> It is likely that it took time, perhaps several years, for al-Maqrīzī to learn of the existence of *Subḥ al-a'shā* and even before the book became known in Cairo. To narrow the temporal window suggested by the two termini, it is useful to turn to al-Maqrīzī's mention of two of his books related to his request; he states that both would greatly benefit from al-Qalqashandī's answer.

The first is cited without its title, but al-Maqrīzī indicates that it dealt with the history of secretaries and that he was determined to prepare the fair copy. Thus it is easy to identify it with his *Khulāṣat al-tibr fī akhbār kuttāb al-sirr*. We know that this work was started before the year 803/1400–1, because in that year al-Maqrīzī consulted a holograph copy of a volume of *al-Mughrib fī hulā l-Maghrib* by Ibn Saʿīd (d. 685/1286) and left a dated note of consultation on the title page, as per his habit. He also scribbled a note in the margin of one leaf where the author speaks of a secretary from the Fatimid period. In this note, al-Maqrīzī says that he mentions the same person in the book he was compiling

<sup>58</sup> See Bauden, Like father like son 200 and note 99.

<sup>59</sup> al-Qalqashandī, Şubh al-a'shā xiv, 404; van Berkel, al-Qalqashandī 336, is wrong when she says that this took place in 821/1418.

<sup>60</sup> al-Qalqashandī, *Qalā'id al-jumān* 206.

<sup>61</sup> al-Qalqashandī, *Ma'āthir al-ināfa* ii, 211 (*ilā ḥīn ta'līf hādhā al-kitāb fī mabādi' sanat tis' 'ashara wa-thamānimi'a*). The date of completion is not mentioned in the preserved manuscripts but the sentence quoted above helps to place it in the same year given that he had still roughly one third to compose at the beginning of 819/1416.

<sup>62</sup> al-Qalqashandī, *Daw'al-ṣubḥ al-musfir* (MS 'Ayn 1122) 659. Björkman, *Beiträge* 73, says that the date of completion is unknown; he just notes that, given that some parts are better formulated, it must have been composed after *Subḥ al-a'shā*.

<sup>63</sup> Istanbul: Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, MS A2930/7.

at that time on individuals who were in charge of the chancery.<sup>64</sup> Though no copy of this work has been discovered so far, we may assume that al-Maqrīzī indeed made a fair copy of it in the end because he quotes it in *al-Mawā'iz wa-l-i'tibār* with its full title.<sup>65</sup>

The second work referred to by al-Magrīzī is *al-Mawā'iz wa-l-i'tibār*. He declares that it was almost finished (fa-gad yassara llāh bi-mugārabat al-firāgh *min kitābī* [...]) at the time he was writing his letter.<sup>66</sup> We still lack a precise dating for al-Magrīzī's œuvre thus far and the mention of these two titles and the phase of their redaction is essential to place them on a timeline. First, it provides a confirmation that al-Magrīzī's work on the secretaries was his first major book since he started it before 803/1400-1 and completed it before what is considered his magnum opus, al-Mawā'iz wa-l-i'tibār. In spite of this precedence, al-Maqrīzī preferred to work on the latter before taking time to prepare the fair copy of the former. As for *al-Mawāʿiẓ wa-l-iʿtibār*, it has been recently established that the first version was composed between 811/1408-9 and 816/1413-4, with some updates dateable to 818/1415-6.67 This fits perfectly with the letter in which he states that it is on the verge of being completed. Considering that the letter could not have been written before 814/1412 at the earliest and after 821/1418, as we saw, it may be concluded that the first version of that work must be located within this lapse of time and that the chronological window when the letter was composed must be narrowed between 814/1412 at the earliest and 818/1415–6 at the latest. This passage also provides evidence that al-Maqrīzī valued his work, and even felt smug complacency about the outcome ("if I were not its author, I would have praised it as it deserves").68 This is a unique expression of self-satisfaction with regard to his *magnum opus*.

Given the significance of the letters for both authors and their work, it remains to be established whether al-Maqrīzī made use of the answer provided by al-Qalqashandī. The answer cannot be ascertained, since his work on the secretaries of state has not been preserved. Consequently, we do not know if he ever exploited the material. Certainly there is no indication of a semantic

<sup>64</sup> Wa-qad dhakartuhu fimā anā jāmi'uhu min al-ta'rīf li-man wulliya wazīfat al-inshā' wakitābat al-sijillāt fī Mişr in shā'a llāh yassara llāh fī itmāmihi wa-a'āna 'alā tabyīdihi. See Ibn Sa'īd, al-Nujūm al-zāhira 249 (note 2).

<sup>al-Maqrīzī, al-Mawāʿiẓ wa-l-iʿtibār, ed. Cairo 1853, ii, 63 = al-Mawāʿiẓ wa-l-iʿtibār, ed. Sayyid,
iii, 204 (wa-qad dhakartuhu bi-absaț min hādhā [...] wa-fī kitābī Khulāṣat al-tibr fī akhbār kuttāb al-sirr).</sup> 

<sup>66</sup> Ibn Abī Ghudda, *Qalā'id al-jumān fī mukātabāt ahl al-zamān*, fol. 28a.

<sup>67</sup> Bauden, Maqriziana IX 205.

<sup>68</sup> Ibn Abī Ghudda, *Qalā'id al-jumān fī mukātabāt ahl al-zamān*, fol. 28a.

shift in the meaning of the word *marsūm* and its derivatives in *al-Mawā'iẓ wa-l-i'tibār*, although he devoted some space to the chancery and its practices.<sup>69</sup>

## Conclusion

The field of epistolography in general and the correspondence exchanged by members of the upper class, including scholars in the Mamluk period, in particular, certainly deserve more attention. There have been no studies of the genre for this period and the two letters discussed here show that such examples can be tackled from a variety of research angles, including the nature of the relationship between correspondents, and the fact that they convey new information on their authors' output. This type of study should certainly include a diplomatic and rhetorical approach given that the rules prevailing at the chancery thoroughly permeated letter writing in the Mamluk period.

Edition<sup>70</sup>

الرسم بقية الأثر وقيل ما ليس له شخوص من الآثار وَقيل هو ما لصق بالأرض منها والجمع أرسُمُّ {و رُسُوم}<sup>27</sup> و رسم الغيث<sup>73</sup> الدار عفاها وأبقى فيها أثر الاصقا بالأرض وترسم الرسم نظر إليه والر وسم كالرسم والر وسم خشبة فيها كتاب<sup>74</sup> يختم به الطعام والر وسم الطابع وَالشين

- 70 Ibn Abī Ghuddah, Qalā'id al-jumān fī mukātabāt ahl al-zamān, London, British Library, MS OR. 3625.
- py the scribe. السادس MS: corrected on
- 72 MS: ورُسَم. The correction is made on the basis of Ibn Manzūr, Lisān al-'arab v, 215.
- .الغيت: MS 73
- 74 Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿarab*, ibid: + منقوش (inscribed).

<sup>69</sup> al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawāʿiẓ wa-l-iʿtibār*, ed. Cairo 1853, ii, 225–7 = *al-Mawāʿiẓ wa-l-iʿtibār*, ed. Sayyid, iii, 730–4.

لغة فيه وخص بعضهم به الطابع الذي يطبع به رَأس الخابية وقد جاء في الشعر [قرحة]<sup>75</sup> بر وسم أي بوجه الفرس وإن عليه لر وسما أي [علامة حسن أو قبح و رسمت الناقة ترسم]<sup>76</sup> رسيما أثرت<sup>77</sup> في الأرض من شدة وَطئها وأرسمتها أنا والرسم الركية<sup>88</sup>تدفنها [الأرض]<sup>79</sup> والجمع رسام والارتسام التكبير وَالتعوذ<sup>80</sup> وقال الشاعر:<sup>81</sup> [ متقارب] [٢٨أ]

وصَلَّى عَلَى دَنْهَا وَارْتَسَمُ<sup>82</sup> وقابلها الريح في دنها

المملوك أحمد المقليزي يقبل الأرض وينهي أن مما يتداوله أهل الإنشاء اليوم قولهم مرسوم شريف ورسم بالأمر الشريف والمرسوم مرسومكم ونحو ذلك يشبه أنهم يعنون بذلك أمر وَاشتقوا منه وهذا جميع ما أعلمه في مادة رسم رسم و ليس فيها من ذلك شيء وَعهدي بكم تناضلون عن مصطلح الإنشاء وقد كتبتم فيه ذلك الكتاب البديع المثال<sup>88</sup>البعيد المنال وَالمسؤول<sup>48</sup>إفادة المملوك ما معنى ذلك في اصطلاح الإنشاء مما لا تخالفه<sup>85</sup>اللغة وإلا فقد صدق قول المملوك في واضعه ولم يرد المملوك بالسوال عن ذلك إلا الفائدة فإني عازم على تبييض ماكبته من أخباركتاب السر فقد يسر الله بمقاربة الفراغ من كتابي المسمى بكتاب المواعظ والاعتبار في ذكر الخطط والآثار الذي لو وضعه غيري لقلت فيه ما يستحقه من الثناء غير أن المثل القديم يعجب بابنه<sup>36</sup>وما هو إلا بنات صدري و وسوّاس فكري وَ والله إني لكم المشتاق فالله يمن بالتلاقي بمنه وكرمه. أنهى ذلك إن شاء الله تعالى.

.الركبة: 78 Ms

- .التعود: MS التعود
- 81 In Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān al-'Arab* v, 216, the name of the poet is al-A'shā. See al-A'shā, *Dīwān* 35 (verse 11).
- 82 The whole paragraph stems from Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿarab* v, 215–6.

.وَالمسئول:Ms

- 85 MS: يخالفه.
- 86 This proverb does not appear in the classical repertoires that I have consulted. It is echoed however in the introduction Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā ibn 'Umar al-Qarāfī (d. 1009/1601) wrote for his *Tawshīḥ al-dībāj wa-ḥilyat al-ibtihāj* 14: *wa-l-mar' yu'jabu bibnihi wa-bi-shi'rihi wa-bi-şun'ihi.*

<sup>75</sup> There is a lacuna here. The necessary addition is from ibid.

<sup>76</sup> There is a lacuna here. The necessary addition is from ibid., 215–6.

<sup>.</sup>انزت:Ms 77

<sup>79</sup> There is a lacuna here. The necessary addition is from Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān al-ʿarab* v, 216.

<sup>83</sup> MS:المتال.

فأجابه وَالدي رحمه الله تعالى:

المملوك أحمد القلقشندي يقبل الأرض وينهى ورود المرسوم الشيخي التقوي [٢٨٩] الكريم العالى أعلاه الله تعالى على المملوك يأمره بالنظر في مادة قولٍ كتاب الإنشاء مرسوم شريف ورسم بالأمر الشريف وما يجري هذا المجرى ومن أين أخِذ ذلك من كلام أهل اللغة بعد إيراد مَا سمح به القلَّم مما وقع عليه اطلاع سيدي الشيخ أمتع الله الوجود ببركته ر س م على اختلاف معانيٰ ذلك ونجو ي87الخطَّاب يشير إلى أنهم يعنون بقولهم رسم أمر مع أنه ليس في المادة المذكر وة ما يطابق هذا المعنى ثم كان من فضل سيدي الشيخ نشأ الله في أجله أنه أجرى تلميذه المستمنح من فضله وَالمغترف من بحر فوائده على عادة تفضلاته من التنويه بذكر تأليفه في كتاب الإنشاء الشبيه في الحقيقة بحديث خرافة بعد التصدير بعهده بالمملوك المناضلة عن مصطلح الإنشاء والذي يطالع به المملوك العلوم الكريمة أنه ليس من فرسان هذا الميدان ولا من رجال هذه الحلبة88غير أن أمر السادة لازم للعبيد وعزيمة الموالي لا يبرح الخروج عن عهدتها إلا بالامتثال والمملوك يبدى بين يدى سيدي مَا سنح له من ذلك على ما هو عليه من جمود الفكر وكلالة القريحة وَالمُسؤول<sup>89</sup>من جزيل الإحسَان وَوافر الامتنان النظر فيما يبديه من ذلك بعين المجاملة وَالإغضاء عما في المعائب وَالمثالب [٢٩] ومما يقدمه المملوك أمام جوابه أن ما جرى عليه الاصطلاح مما يكتب فيه رسم بالأمر الشريف وما في معنى ذلك ليس مما استحدثه أهل العصر ولا من قارب زمانهم من بني فضل الله ومن داناهم كما يقع في ظن كثير من أهل العصر بل قد ألني المملوك ذلك في كتابة كتَّاب الدولة الأيوبية بعدُ الخمسُ مائة وَالكتَّاب إذ ذاك من قد علم سيَّدي الشيخ من دوي الفصل وَالمعرفة بأصول الكتابة مما لا يظن به أنه يصطلح على المهمات المجانبة للغة العرب وإذا تأمل المتأمل مادة ر س م وجد هذا المصطلح في رسم والمرسوم ومَا انحط في سلكهما مبينا على عدة أصول من اللغة مَوجُودة في كَتبها:

الأول أن يكون مأخوذا من قول القائل رسمت له كذا فارتسمه إذا امتثله ويكون المراد منه الأمركما أشار إليه سيدي الشيخ أبقاه الله تعالى في كلامه + كما إذ ينحل+ <sup>00</sup>إلى قو لك أمرته بكذا فائتمره [blank of five lines] [٢٩ب]

- 88 мs: + У crossed out.
- .وَالمسئول:Ms
- 90 This passage is corrupted: The copyist seems to have tried to reproduce his model but this is meaningless and I cannot propose any alternative solution.

<sup>.</sup>ومحوى:MS 87 87

أنهى ذلك إن شاء الله تعالى.

# Translation

[Fol. 27b] The fifth category: The noble decrees among which there are those that are extracted and those that are [written] on the back of the petitions.

A letter (*ruq'a*) whose contents follow was received by my father—may God the Sublime have mercy upon him—from the Shaykh Taqī al-Dīn al-Maqlīzī [sic] al-Shāfi'ī—may God encompass him with His grace—.

<sup>91</sup> The space left blank should have been filled in with the number of the proposal to be added in red ink as for the first one.

<sup>92</sup> The space left blank should have been filled in with the number of the proposal to be added in red ink as for the first one.

**<sup>93</sup> MS: ويتصح**.

<sup>94</sup> Attributed to al-Badī<sup>c</sup> al-Asturlābī (Hibat Allāh ibn al-Husayn ibn Ahmad al-Baghdādī, d. 534/1139–40). See 'Imād al-Dīn al-Isfahānī, *Kharīdat al-qaşr* ii, 127–46 (142 for the poem); Yāqūt al-Rūmī, *Irshād al-arīb* vi, 2769–71 (no. 1200; 2771 for the poem). In both sources, al-Badī<sup>c</sup> al-Asturlābī's verse starts with *ka-l-baḥr* instead of *wa-l-baḥr*.

A relic (*al-rasm*) is the remains of the trace (*al-athar*), or those traces that have no substance, or those of them that cleave to the ground. The plural is *arsum* and *rusūm*. The rain razed (*rasama*) the house, [i.e.,] it erased it leaving a relic thereof cleaving to the ground. He observed (*tarassama*) the mark (*al-rasm*), [i.e.,] he looked at it. The sign (*al-rawsam*) is similar to the trace (*al-rasm*). It is also a piece of wood upon which is an inscription with which food is stamped. It is also the stamp. [The form with] the *shīn* (*rawsham*) is a variant. Some use it particularly for the seal with which the mouth of the jar (*al-khābiya*) is stamped. It occurs in poetry "a blaze on the face of a horse" (*qurḥa bi-rawsam*) meaning the face of a horse. [In] "Verily upon him is a sign (*rawsam*),"<sup>95</sup> it means a mark of beauty or of ugliness. The she-camel left marks (*rasamat, tarsim, rasīman*) [means] she made marks upon the ground by the vehemence of her tread and I caused her to leave such marks (*arsamtu*). It (*al-rasm*) is also the well that the earth filled up, the plural being *risām*. *Al-Irtisām* is to say "God is great" (*Allāh akbar*) and to seek protection by God. The poet [al-A'shā] says:<sup>96</sup> [*mutaqārib*]

He exposed it [the wine] to the wind, in its jar, and he prayed over its jar, and petitioned (*irtasama*) for it.

The slave Ahmad al-Maqlīzī [sic] kisses the ground and reports that among the words of which the people of the chancery make frequent use nowadays, there are "a noble decree" (marsum sharif), "the noble order has been decreed" (rusima bi-l-amr alsharif), "the decree is yours" (al-marsūm marsūmukum), and the like. It would seem by this that they mean "it has been ordered" (*umira*) and they derive from it [various expressions]. This [the definitions that precede] is all that I know with regard to rasam [root] r-s-m and there is nothing in it of this kind. I enjoin you to defend the terminology (*mustalah*) of the chancery as you have written about it in that unattainable book of unprecedented example. What is asked [from you] is to inform the slave of the meaning of this [term] in the usages (*istilā*h) of the chancery provided that it is not incompatible with the lexicon (lugha). Otherwise, what the slave has said regarding the person who instituted this term will be true. In inquiring about this, the slave only wishes to gain knowledge as I am determined to make a fair copy of what I have written on the stories of the secretaries and God has made it possible [for me] to almost finish my book entitled al-Mawāʿiz wa-l-iʿtibār fī dhikr al-khitaṭ wa-l-āthār [Admonitions and reflections on the mention of the quarters and monuments] which, if I were not its author, I would have praised as it deserves, were it not for the old saying "He is proud of his son" because it would only be the result of my anxieties and my concerns. By God! I am longing for you. God bestows the encounter by His grace and favor. He reported this, if God the Sublime will.

<sup>95</sup> This is taken from a poem by Khālid ibn Jabala.

<sup>96</sup> Fol. 28a.

My father—may God the Sublime have mercy upon him—answered him:

The Shaykh Taqī al-Dīn

The slave Ahmad al-Qalqashandī kisses the ground and reports the reception, by the slave, of the gracious and elevated decree<sup>97</sup>—may God the Sublime exalt it—where he [al-Maqrīzī] instructs him to examine the issue of the secretaries of the chancery saying "noble decree" (marsum sharif), "the noble order has been decreed" (rusima *bi-l-amr al-sharif*), and the like, as well as from where the lexicographers consider that this was taken after having listed what the pen permitted our master the shaykh—may God make him enjoy existence through His benediction—to discover regarding [the root] *r-s-m* according to the various meanings of this [root]. The letter (*khitāb*) implicitly indicates that what they mean by rasama is "to order" (amara) though there is nothing in the mentioned root that corresponds to this meaning. Then it was part of the graciousness of our master, the shaykh—may God increase his term—, to bestow upon his disciple, who desires to be granted his grace and who scoops out from the sea of his useful teachings, his usual favors in extolling the mention of his work on the secretaries of the chancery which is, in reality, commensurate with the story of Khurāfa,98 after he expressed to the slave his admonishment to defend the terminology of the chancery.

What the slave reports to [his] eminent cognizance is that he is not competent in this field and he is unfamiliar with it.<sup>99</sup> Nevertheless, the master's order is a duty for the slave and the only way to be released from the obligation to the lord's decision is to execute it. The slave brings his master what has entered his mind about this as it comes from a lethargic mind and a weak talent. What is asked for from profuse benevolence and abundant bounteousness is to examine what he expresses about this with a friend-ly eye and with indulgence for the shortcomings and defects.<sup>100</sup>

What the slave answers is that the usage which consists in writing "the noble order has been decreed" (*rusima bi-l-amr al-sharīf*) and other expressions of similar meaning

<sup>97</sup> Fol. 28b.

<sup>98</sup> This is a reference to the story of a 'Udhrī whose tales of adventures after being abducted by demons were not believed; hence the use of the expression found here to designate entirely fictitious talk. However, the meaning can be seen as positive because "the Prophet himself vouches for the existence of the character and the authenticity of his statements" (Pellat, Hikāya, *EI*<sup>2</sup> iii, 369). Al-Qalqashandī is thus probably alluding to the Prophet's judgment in favor of the veracity of Khurāfa's story on one hand and, on the other, to the fact that al-Maqrīzī's forthcoming book will be as wonderful as this story, as suggested by the use he makes of "in reality" (*fi l-haqīqa*).

<sup>99</sup> Literally "he is not one of the horsemen of this playing field nor one of the men of this arena."

<sup>100</sup> Fol. 29a.

is not something that the people of this time nor those of the Banū Fadl Allāh who were almost their contemporaries nor those who were close to them introduced as our contemporaries believe. On the contrary, the slave found this in the production of the secretaries of the Ayyūbid dynasty after the year 500. At that time, the secretaries, as our master the shaykh knows, were men of erudition and knowledge in the principles of the art of writing so that there is no reason to think that it would have been applied to important matters by digressing from the language of the Arabs.

If someone looks attentively at the root *r-s-m*, he will find this technical meaning of *rasama* ("he decreed"), *al-marsūm* ("the decree"), and the like<sup>101</sup> clearly explained according to numerous etymologies found in the lexicons:

[1] [It could have] been taken from *rasamtu lahu kadhā fa-rtasamahu* when he executes it. What is meant here is the order as our master, the shaykh,—may God the Sublime spare him—indicated in his speech ...<sup>102</sup> when you say "I ordered him [to do] this and he executed it."<sup>103</sup>

[2] [It could have been taken] [lacuna] in the sense of an endorsement  $(tawq\bar{t})$ , which is the shallow mark stemming from "a she-camel whose flank is galled" when the rope left a slight trace on its flank. Even if the endorsement  $(al-tawq\bar{t})$  was originally a name applied to what is written on the margins of the petitions and the like, its meaning was extended until it was applied to the whole writ as for *al-marsūm* (the decree) and the like.

[3] [It could have] been taken from *al-rawsam*, meaning the seal that is stamped on the mouth of the jar and the like given that the decree (*al-marsūm*) of appointment and similar [deeds] is comparable to the seal that is stamped to this end in such a way that only the person who is in charge of it is allowed to dispose of it.

[4] [It could have] been taken from *al-rawsam* again, which is something that is used to polish the dinars, meaning either that the affairs reveal themselves to the owner of the position and the like through the recommendations that are written in the decree (*al-marsūm*), or that the affairs become clear to the owner of the position for whom the decree is written given that obscure affairs become plain and difficult ones appear clear through the rulers.

This is what has come to the view of the slave, notwithstanding his inability in this matter and his lack of knowledge. If he is mistaken, the one who is like a slave asks for forgiveness; if he is right or is close [to the truth], it is thanks to our lord's vows

<sup>101</sup> Literally "what descends their thread."

<sup>102</sup> The three words that follow are corrupted in the MS.

<sup>103</sup> Fol. 29b.

that he succeeded. In this case, the slave is comparable to the one who brings a date to Hajar:<sup>104</sup> [ $k\bar{a}mil$ ]

The cloud waters the sea No merit for this as it is made of the sea's water

He reported this

if God the Sublime will.

FIGURE 10.1 The British Library, MS OR. 3625, fol. 27b.

<sup>104</sup> Hajar was the name of the capital of Baḥrayn and the surrounding area (i.e., Eastern Arabia). It was reputed for its dates. A variant of this proverb is listed by al-Maydānī, *Majmaʿal-amthāl* ii, 152 (no. 3080): *ka-mustabḍiʿal-tamr ilā Hajar* (like the one who brings dates as merchandise to Hajar).

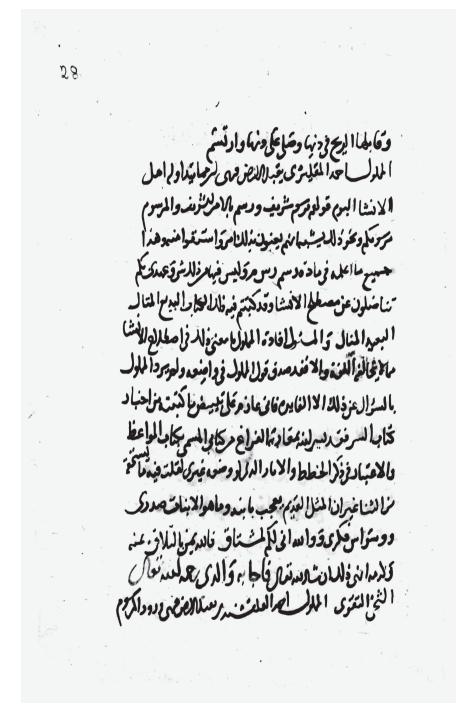


FIGURE 10.2 The British Library, MS OR. 3625, fol. 28a.

الزيرا هال علاه لديقا عل الملول يامره 15:0 الانستا مروي ربي ودسم بالاملازيف وما کار ومرابنا خذذ للمنكلام اعلالنف بوداراد ماس بمحبوا لغليما دقع عليدالحلاع مدكل لسين امسو المدالوجود بم لتنه ر اختلف معاة فللدنى كلظاد ومرائد لدبغ الما دوالمد وسمام اذا فغاله: يبدك كشيحه نستنالعه فراجلرانه دالمنترز مزيجرفوالين عاعادة فالانساال افعد القدر يعتقده الملول المناضات والملول لعلوم وبالزوجوع يواعا الا بالامتال والملول بالرداله المزار عود الفكوكلاله الترجه والمشول مرج للاحسان وواذالامنيا م مردلابيا ال الطفا والاعضاعاة وإلماس والمثالب

11

FIGURE 10.3

The British Library, мs OR. 3625, fol. 28b.

29 ا مارجوا بران اجرى للبريا استحدته فمزلد وزدانا وكالق كابا لدوللا بوب معدالخ الغفاقالموخ رطلي على لممات الجماسم ماصر للكابها الطريران اده وسمروجدهذا المصط للغة ألعرب واذاتامل ولمراللغة متوجودة في والمرس وتمااغط وسلتهما م مناعاجن اص كبتها الإوليان بكون ماخذ استقلالتا يل سمت لدكدا فادسمه اذا استد ومكون الماد منه الاس كااشاد البد سيدى نج ابعاه لد بعارية كلام حسااد سخلاالي فولل امرته بكدا فامتره

FIGURE 10.4 The British Library, MS OR. 3625, fol. 29a.

فيمعى لوقع إنه الاتراغي عذاخدا من قوط ماقه موقعه الجزاح انائر جنبها المتبت تاترا خنبفا والتوقيع دانكان فألاصل اسمالما يكتب بط حواسى القمع ويخوها فقد دوسه فد حرصاد ديللو عاجيم الكوب كافالر ) ا د بكون ماخود ا من اروس معنى لطابع الدى يطبع بدعاداس 220 الخابه ويخوها اد المورر لوليه وماجا دعاكالطابع الدي طبع منعا ولل الجحد حتى ليوغ المقرف فرما لينرمنو لم انكون ماخودا مزالدوسم ابضا وهوش يخبل موالدنا ببرداما عجن إن الامود تنجا لصاحب الولايد وعوها بالوصابا التي الهتذا لمسم أوبعنوان لامود بنجابهم الوكايد الدى يجشدا لمرسوم الأبالحكام تنج إمدامعات الامود وببضح مشكلاتها ه أاماطه فللول على متوده في هذا الماب وقاية بطاعته فانكان خلاف للدل بعذروان وافتا لعتواب اومادب فمز مروسير صلويكونا للول فم حاقل المترال هجو والعسن يطوا اسحاب وماله فعزاعلوه لانه من مايه الهذلك انشاليد ا

FIGURE 10.5 The British Library, MS OR. 3625, fol. 29b.

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