Book Reviews

TAQĪ AL-DĪN AL-MAQRĪZĪ, *Rasā'il al-Maqrīzī*, edited by Ramaḍān al-Badrī and Aḥmad Muṣṭafá Qāsim (Cairo: Dār al-Ḥadīth, 1998). Pp. 365.

REVIEWED BY LI GUO, University of Notre Dame

This collection contains eleven of al-Maqrīzī´s treatises that cover a wide range of subjects, reflecting the author´s encyclopedic scope. The texts can be roughly categorized as follows:

1. History: Two famous polemical treatises, one on the Ummayads, the Hashimites, and the early Islamic caliphate (″Al-Tanāzu‘ wa-al-Takhāṣum fīmā bayna Banī Umayyah wa-Banī Hāshim″), and another on the legitimacy of the Fatimids (″Ma‘rifat Mā Yajibu li-Āl al-Bayt al-Nabawī min al-Ḥaqq ‘alá Man ‘Adāhum″);
2. Theology: Several treatises on the principle of the unity of God (″Tajrīd al-Tawḥīd al-Mufīd″), the *dhikr* (″Ḥirṣ al-Nufūs al-Fāḍilah ‘alá Baqā' al-Dhikr″), and the *tafsīr* of the Quranic phrase *tawaffanī musliman* (″Ḥuṣūl al-In‘ām wa-al-Mayr fī Su'āl Khātimat al-Khayr″);
3. Numismatics: One treatise (″Al-Nuqūd al-Qadīmah al-Islāmīyah″);
4. Geography and ethnography: Two treatises, on the bedouin tribes in Egypt (″Al-Bayān wa-al-I‘rāb ‘an Man fī Arḍ Miṣr min Qabā'il al-A‘rāb″), and the Muslim dynasties in Abyssinia (″Al-Ilmām bi-Akhbār Man bi-Arḍ al-Ḥabashah min Mulūk al-Islām″);
(5) Mineralogy: One treatise (″Al-Maqāṣid al-Sanīyah fī Ma‘rifat al-Ajsām al-Ma‘dinīyah″);
(6) Miscellanies:These include a short treatise on the metaphorical use of references to water (″Al-Ishārah wa-al-Īmā' ilá Ḥall Lughz al-Mā'″), and a lengthy encyclopedic piece on the merits of bees from lexicographical, historical, and cultural perspectives (″Naḥl ‘Ibar al-Naḥl″).

The edition is based on a microfilm reproduction of the Paris manuscript, Bibliothèque Nationale, arabe 4657. In the introduction, the editors provide a short sketch of al-Maqrīzī´s life and work and a brief description of the manuscript as well as the contents of the eleven treatises edited here. Indexes include the Quranic verses, hadith, personal and tribal names, place names, weights and measures, and names of coins.

For the reader of this journal, particularly interesting might be the introduction,

Book Reviews: http://mamluk.uchicago.edu/MSR_IX-1_2005-BookReviews.pdf
Full volume: http://mamluk.uchicago.edu/MamlukStudiesReview_IX-1_2005.pdf
High resolution version: http://mamluk.uchicago.edu/MamlukStudiesReview_IX-1_2005_33MB.pdf

where one finds a confused, and confusing, assessment of al-Maqrīzī's work by the editors. Factual errors aside (the collection, the editors claim, contains fourteen treatises, while eleven is the correct number), one is baffled by the apparent discrepancy in that al-Maqrīzī is criticized in one place, but receives raves in another. Al-Maqrīzī, according to the information given on page 5, "knew very little" *(qalīl al-ma'rifah)* about pre-Islamic history, and was equally "incompetent" *(ghayr māhir fī)* in dealing with the early Islamic era. He might know a thing or two *(la-hu ma'rifah qalīlah)* about jurisprudence *(al-fiqh),* hadith, and grammar, but nothing truly outstanding. Far worse, his handling of sources suffered from serious flaws ranging from "distortion" *(al-taḥrīf)* to "deliberate omission" *(al-saqṭ)*. Even with all the good qualities al-Maqrīzī might have as a person, such as being "virtuous" *(ḥasan al-khulq),* "ambitious" *('ālī al-himmah),* and, most importantly, "fond of history" *(mūla' bi-al-tārīkh),* this lukewarm praise, coming from the editors, is still quite curious since the editors are the ones who carry the burden of justifying the effort put into editing these works. If al-Maqrīzī was indeed so bad, why bother? As if having sensed this line of questioning, a 180-degree turn occurs on page 7, where al-Maqrīzī is spoken of in glowing terms: the lousy, amateurish "history buff" turns, at the end of the day, to be nothing less than a "great scholar" *('ālim jalīl),* a "fine historian," and so forth. Now one is confused. Which image should one trust? The problem here, to be honest, is not whether al-Maqrīzī should be scrutinized critically (he should, just like anyone else), but rather whether this discourse should be taken seriously. The apparent illogical and odd dichotomy discussed above causes one to suspect that the editors may have simply quoted verbatim, on page 5, from one medieval author, who happened to be al-Maqrīzī's rival (perhaps al-'Aynī or Ibn Taghrībirdī?), and, on page 7, from another, who was perhaps an admirer. Not a good way to go.

ISMĀ'ĪL MUḤAMMAD ḤUSĀM AL-DĪN, *Al-Uṣūl al-Mamlūkīyah lil-'Amā'ir al-'Uthmānīyah* (Alexandria: Dār al-Wafā' li-Dunyā al-Ṭibā'ah wa-al-Nashr, [2002]). Pp. 238.

REVIEWED BY HOWAYDA AL-HARITHY, American University of Beirut

This book is a collection of essays that have been published in different venues between 1987 and 1999. The author organized the eight articles in the following manner: "Some Remarks on the Relationship between the Processions and the Location of Monumental Buildings on the Streets of Cairo," "The Naming of Places during the Mamluk Period," "The Administration of the *Awqāf* during the

Mamluk Period," "The Ottoman Use of Residential and Commercial Mamluk Buildings based on the *Waqf* Documents," "Four Mamluk Houses from Ottoman Documents," "The *Wakālah* of al-Sulṭān al-Mu'ayyad Known as the *Wakālah* of 'Awdah Pāshā," "The Buildings of Sulṭān Qāytbāy in Sūq al-Ghanam based on Ottoman Documents," and "The *Sabīl* of 'Abd al-Raḥmān Katkhūdā in the Nahhāsīn: A New Study Based on Some Mamluk Documents." The author states that the articles address two issues: the distribution of important edifices in the city of Cairo, and the origins of some Ottoman buildings traced through Mamluk documents.

While there is no single thread that runs through the articles presented, they share a methodological link. The link that ties the whole work together is the use of *waqf* documents, cross-referencing these with historical accounts, such as those of al-Maqrīzī, and illustrating urban transformation in the Fatimid city during the Mamluk and Ottoman periods. Accordingly, the articles can be divided into two groups. The first four articles address urban issues by extracting evidence from the *waqf* documents available from the Mamluk period. The second group of four articles publishes extracts from the *waqf* documents that pertain to a single building or a group of buildings.

The focus of the first group of four articles is as follows: the first article discusses the different processions that took place in the city of Cairo, identifies their routes, and concludes by demonstrating the close relationship between the processions and the location of major edifices along the processional routes during the Mamluk era.

The second article looks into the names assigned to various places in Cairo. It addresses first the terminology used by Mamluk historians, primarily al-Maqrīzī, and in the *waqf* documents, and makes the distinction between terms such as *khaṭṭ, ḥārah, 'aṭfah,* and *zuqāq*. The author then identifies and traces the names of eight *khaṭṭ*s in Mamluk Cairo.

The third article addresses two questions: the process of transferring property in Cairo into the hands of the Mamluks for the purposes of rebuilding or endowing, and the management of *waqf*s by Mamluk sultans and amirs. The study focuses its investigation on the area of Khān al-Khalīlī and demonstrates by examples extracted from *waqf* documents how the Mamluks confiscated *waqf* properties on the basis of alleged legal violations, which they then legalized as their own.

The fourth article traces through the *waqf* documents the appropriation of Mamluk buildings and the transformation of their use during the Ottoman period, with special attention to private and commercial residential buildings.

The second group of four articles relies less on analysis and more on quotation of excerpts from the *waqf* documents that pertain to a single building or a group of buildings. The first sheds light on four Mamluk residences in the area of

al-Ḍarb al-Aḥmar through excerpts from Ottoman *waqf* documents. The second focuses on a single building, the *wakālah* of al-Sulṭān al-Mu'ayyad, and traces its development through four Mamluk and Ottoman *waqf* documents. The third relies on one Ottoman *waqf* document to extract information pertaining to a group of buildings of Sultan Qāytbāy in the area of Sūq al-Ghanam. The last traces through Mamluk *waqf* documents the history of the *sabīl* of 'Abd al-Raḥmān Katkhūdā to the Qaysarīyah of Sultan Qalāwūn from the seventh/thirteenth century, which was rebuilt by Sultan Barsbāy in the ninth/fifteenth century before its rebuilding in the twelfth/eighteenth century by 'Abd al-Raḥman Katkhūdā.

Collectively the articles demonstrate the author's knowledge of the historic city of Cairo, of the primary sources, and of the *waqf* documents, both Mamluk and Ottoman. With such extensive knowledge, he is able to trace buildings' development and transformations through time from Fatimid origins to Mamluk and Ottoman times. There is no doubt that the material provided by the book is a valuable source for further work by researchers in the field.

NU'MĀN MAḤMŪD JUBRĀN AND MUḤAMMAD ḤASAN AL-'IMĀDĪ, *Dirāsāt fī Tārīkh al-Ayyūbīyīn wa-al-Mamālīk* (Irbid, Jordan: Mu'assasat Ḥamādah lil-Khadamāt wa-al-Dirāsāt al-Jāmi'īyah, 2000). Pp. 399.

REVIEWED BY LI GUO, University of Notre Dame

Despite its rather vague title, *Studies in the History of the Ayyubids and Mamluks,* the book under review weaves its narrative around one focal point: the Muslim holy war against the Crusades and the Mongols under the leadership of the Ayyubid and early Mamluk sultanates and its political, historical, and social impact on the Islamic Near East, especially Bilād al-Shām and Egypt, in the eleventh–thirteenth centuries. The authors' thesis is a simple and elegant one: it is true that the "foreign aggressions" against the Islamic realm were motivated by religious, political, military, ideological, and economic factors, but they were also aggravated by internal conflicts within the Muslim front, as a result of the decay of the weakened and decentralized Abbasid caliphate and endless civil wars among various domestic factors. Still worse is what the authors call "the dissolution of the Muslim front" *(al-tashattut al-islāmī)* (p. 7), in that some of the Muslim rulers would, for their own gain, make peace, or even forge alliances, with the "infidel" enemies at the cost of Muslim lands and lives. The unity of the Muslim world *(al-waḥdah al-islāmīyah),* or the lack thereof, thus constitutes a pivotal test in passing historical

judgment on the political leaders of the Muslim communities at the time. The book thus sets out to explore the way in which some of these leaders succeeded in their efforts to mobilize the Muslim forces and unify the Muslim front through shrewd political strategizing and military maneuvering, while others, and there were many, failed. The result is a chronicle of the political and military events of the era, with special focus on the careers and reigns of three heroic figures, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Ayyūbī (Saladin), Sultan al-Ẓāhir Baybars, and Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn.

The core of the book consists of four chapters that follow a straightforward chronological order: Chapter One, ″The Ayyubid State until the Death of Saladin″ (pp. 39–129); Chapter Two, ″The Ayyubid State after Saladin: 589–648 A.H./1193–1250 A.D.″ (pp. 131–245); Chapter Three, ″The Mamluk State until the End of the Reign of Sultan Baybars″ (pp. 247–306); and Chapter Four, ″The Reign of the Qalāwūn Family and the End of the Early Mamluk Period″ (pp. 307–63).

Overall, the book is neatly organized and adequately written. The major theme, of the success of the united Muslim front in fighting off the ″foreign aggressions,″ as well as the lessons learned from the Muslim defeats, runs recurrently throughout. The authors are perhaps reasonable in focusing on political and military events, while leaving economic, social, and intellectual aspects largely untouched, for the book′s focus is on the major heroic figures and their searching for, and achieving, Muslim unity. A noticeable feature of the book that distinguishes it from other studies on the same subject is perhaps its unmistakably political undertone. Its goal in dealing with issues of modern relevance from a historical perspective is clearly seen in a narrative that not only makes frequent references, and analogies, to modern events (e.g., on the changing status of Jerusalem from Saladin′s time up to this day, pp. 194–95), but also is studded with contemporary vocabulary such as the awareness, or lack thereof, of the ″unified Islamic front″ *(tawḥīd al-jabhah al-islāmīyah),* in fighting ″foreign occupation″ *(al-iḥtilāl al-ajnabī),* ″liberating″ *(al-taḥrīr)* the occupied territories, and so forth. But in due course, the authors manage to walk a fine line between the *sīrah*-like panegyric (of which Baybars was a legend in popular culture) and modern historical-political inquiry. In this regard, despite the authors′ polemical position in defending the ″heroes″ in question, especially Saladin and Baybars, it is evident (e.g., pp. 106–7, 138–39, 154–55, responding to modern historians′ criticism of Saladin′s perceived ″failures″; pp. 278 ff., on Baybars′ controversial legacy), that they, for the most part, allow the sources, including some documents, to take over and let the historical events speak for themselves. In this connection, one of the book′s strengths is, in my opinion, the authors′ control of the Arabic primary sources, published and unpublished, which are consulted with judiciousness and cited generously in the

narrative. Unfortunately, the same may not be said about the use of the Western sources, especially in dealing with the Crusades. Curiously lacking, too, are modern studies in non-Arabic languages. (This comes as a surprise since one of the coauthors, Dr. Nu'mān Jubrān, who wrote his Freiburg dissertation on the chronicle of al-Jazarī under the late Professor Ulrich Haarmann, is surely not unfamiliar with Western scholarship.)

The reader of this journal might also be disappointed by the fact that this book is long on the Ayyubids (nearly two-thirds of the book is devoted to Saladin, which, given the overall goal of the book, is understandable), and short on the Mamluks. And with regard to its coverage of the Mamluks, if one has read Peter Thorau´s Baybars,[1] Linda Northrup´s Qalāwūn,[2] Amalia Levanoni´s al-Nāṣir,[3] and Reuven Amitai´s Mongols[4] (none of which are mentioned in the book), then nothing new can be learned here. The book, nevertheless, does manage to present well-researched accounts, in a relatively balanced manner, of an important historic era of the Islamic Near East, and offers some fresh insights, from the authors´ viewpoint, into the events it covers. It might therefore be used as a textbook for Arab high schools. Speaking of textbooks, the book in its current form could have benefited from more careful editing: typos aside, it contains some minor grammatical errors. The overall production of the book is otherwise quite serviceable.

Money, Land and Trade: An Economic History of the Muslim Mediterranean. Edited by Nelly Hanna. The Islamic Mediterranean Series (London: I. B. Taurus, 2002). Pp. 295.

REVIEWED BY WARREN C. SCHULTZ, DePaul University

This volume contains several informative and useful contributions concerned with different aspects of the economic history of the Islamic lands bordering the Mediterranean Sea. All were originally delivered in seminars at the American

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[1] *Sultan Baibars I. von Ägypten* (Wiesbaden, 1987); English translation, *The Lion of Egypt: Sultan Baybars I and the Near East in the Thirteenth Century,* by P. M. Holt (London, 1992).

[2] *From Slave to Sultan: The Career of al-Mansūr Qalāwūn and the Consolidation of Mamluk Rule in Egypt and Syria (678–689 A.H./1279–1290 A.D.)* (Stuttgart, 1998).

[3] *A Turning Point in Mamluk History: The Third Reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad Ibn Qalāwūn (1310–1341)* (Leiden, 1995).

[4] *Mongols and Mamluks: The Mamluk-Ilkhānid War, 1260–1281* (Cambridge, 1995).

University of Cairo over the course of 1997–98. Unfortunately, this collected studies volume is mistitled. It falls far short of delivering what one would expect from a work with the sweeping subtitle ″An Economic History of the Muslim Mediterranean,″ as the following list of contents reveals.

After a brief introduction by Nelly Hanna, the book is divided into three sections: ″Land″ (contributions 1–5); ″Crafts and Trades″ (6–9); and Money″ (10–13). The contributions are: 1. ″The Individual and the Collectivity in the Agricultural Economy of Pre-Colonial Morocco″ by Nicolas Michel; 2. ″Why Study Ownership? An Approach to the Study of the Social History of Egypt″ by Ra'uf 'Abbas Hamid; 3. ″A Multiplicity of Rights: Rural-Urban Contradictions in Early Nineteenth-century Egyptian Land Ownership″ by Muhammad Hakim; 4. ″The Worst of Times: Crisis Management and *Al-Shidda Al-'Uzma*″ by Amina Elbendary; 5. ″′Passive Revolution′ as a Possible Model for Nineteenth-century Egyptian History″ by Peter Gran; 6. ″Making a Living or Making a Fortune in Ottoman Syria″ by Abdul-Karim Rafeq; 7. ″Manufacturing Myths: Al-Khurunfish, A Case Study″ by Pascale Ghazaleh; 8. ″The Private Papers of an Armenian Merchant Family in the Ottoman Empire, 1912–1914″ by Armin Kredian; 9. ″The *Rasa'il Ikhwan al-Safa'* and the Controversy about the Origin of Craft Guilds in Early Medieval Islam″ by Abbas Hamdani; 10. ″Interaction Between the Monetary Regimes of Istanbul, Cairo, and Tunis, 1799–1875″ by Şevket Pamuk; 11. ″Monetary Causes of the Financial Crisis and Bankruptcy of Egypt, 1875–8″ by Ghislaine Alleaume; 12. ″The Financial Resources of Coptic Priests in Nineteenth-century Egypt″ by Magdi Girgis; and 13. ″Perceptions of the Greek Money-lender in Egyptian Collective Memory at the Turn of the Twentieth Century″ by Sayyid 'Ashmawi.

In terms of geographical location, then, the reader is presented with eight studies concentrated exclusively on Egypt (2–5, 7, 11–13), with one about Morocco (1), one for Syria (6), one on Anatolia (8), and one without geographic focus (9). Only the study by Pamuk (10) addresses more than one location in the Mediterranean basin. In terms of chronology, eight contributions are focused on the nineteenth and/or early twentieth century (1, 3, 5, 7–8, 11–13), with one on the ninth–tenth centuries (9), one on the eleventh century (4), one that addresses the sixteenth–eighteenth centuries (6), another concerned with the seventeenth–nineteenth centuries (10), and one general theoretical survey (2) with no specific chronological focus. Given these contents, a more accurate subtitle would be ″Collected Studies Concerned with the Economic History of Primarily Egypt and Its Neighbors in the Eastern Mediterranean, and for the Most Part Addressing the Nineteenth Century with Scattered Coverage of Earlier Periods.″ This subtitle, however, would clash with the claim found on the dust jacket that

the book is ″the first major study of the economic history of the Islamic Mediterranean.″

QĀSIM ʻABDUH QĀSIM, *Fī Tārīkh al-Ayyūbīyīn wa-al-Mamālīk* (Al-Haram [Giza]: ʻAyn lil-Dirāsaāt wa-al-Buḥūth al-Insānīyah wa-al-Ijtimāʻīyah, 2001). Pp. 296.

REVIEWED BY KONRAD HIRSCHLER, School of Oriental and African Studies (London)

Qāsim ʻAbduh Qāsim, professor of medieval history at Zaqaziq University (Egypt), has published widely in his fields of specialization, namely the Crusades, the Ayyubids, and the Mamluks. Works of his have previously been reviewed in this journal (*ʻAṣr Salāṭīn al-Mamālīk* by Thomas Herzog and *Al-Sulṭān al-Muẓaffar Sayf al-Dīn Quṭuz* by Amalia Levanoni, both in volume 6). The monograph reviewed here focuses primarily on the role of the Crusades, despite the title´s wider implications. The ten chapters narrate in chronological order the grand political and military events in the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods, starting with the rise of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn and ending with the Ottoman conquest of the Arab lands. However, due to the author´s focus on the Crusades, most of the Mamluk dynasty is dealt with rather briefly: a mere 32 of the total 282 pages cover the more than two centuries after the fall of the last considerable Crusader town in the Middle East (Acre) in 690/1291.

Qāsim´s main thesis is that the Ayyubids and Mamluks were both ″military dynasties headed by a warring ruler″ who responded to the external threats to which the Islamic world was exposed, mainly the Crusades (for example, pp. 77–79). It was these dynasties´ ″historical role . . . to realize the grand Islamic project, i.e., to expel the Crusaders from the lands of the Muslims″ (p. 222). For Qāsim, the rise of the Ayyubids constituted a crucial change, as the ″military dynasties″ started to replace the more shariʻah-based Abbasid and Fatimid Caliphates who had failed to confront the newly-arisen dangers. The disappearance of these external threats after the conquest of Acre ″took away the basic historical function of the Mamluk sultans″ (p. 259), which was one of the crucial factors leading to the subsequent decline of this military dynasty. Consequently, the Mamluks handed over their ″historical role″ some two centuries later to the Ottoman Empire, the new military dynasty, which ″protected the Arab lands against Western colonialism for a long period stretching until the late nineteenth century″ (p. 282).

In keeping with modern-day perceptions of the Crusades in the Middle East, Qāsim bases his narrative on two assumptions. First, the Crusades are represented

as the most important factor, dominating the course of Middle Eastern history during the sixth/twelfth and the seventh/thirteenth centuries. Even ″the Mongol threat to the Islamic world did not equal the scale of the Crusader threat to it″ (p. 193) since the latter was still in the mid-seventh/thirteenth century the ″greatest danger for the Arabic Islamic world″ (p. 228). In this vein the Crusades were also responsible for the long-term decline of the Arab lands as the available resources were drained during the fight against them (p. 6).

This importance attributed to the Crusades is crucial for the text´s second main assumption. The period of the Crusades is continuously represented as a confrontation of two monolithic blocks, where the ″Islamic front″ or the ″Islamic-Arab front″ was juxtaposed to the ″European West.″ The Crusades appear here as a conflict between ″the Arab Islamic civilization—owner of the soil and the truth—and the Catholic European civilization″ (193). This image evidently sidelines the scholarship of the last decades, in which it has been shown that cooperation and coexistence were as much a characteristic of the Crusader period as conflict.[1]

However, a serious consideration of secondary literature is not an issue at stake in the reviewed book. The confrontational image and the importance ascribed to the Crusades aims not at scholarly discourse, but at a wider audience. The subtext underlying the book is the argument that the Crusades were a precursor of the current situation in the Middle East. This perception is already expressed by the book´s cover: the modern-day statue of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn in Damascus is placed in front of al-Aqsa Mosque with the Dome of the Rock—currently one of the most potent symbols in the Middle East—looming from behind. In combination with the book´s dedication to the martyrs of the al-Aqsa intifada the framework for the following narrative is clearly set. Here, the Crusades appear as an ″expansionist settler project,″ which set the precedence for ″European colonialism″ and ″imperialist Zionism″ (p. 5). While such explicit comments are rare, the subtext emerges repeatedly, for instance in the continuous use of the term *istīṭān* when referring to the Crusading movement or the exceptional stress on the term ″Palestine″ in contrast to the more contemporary *Bilād al-Shām.* Such an ahistorical tendency towards the sources is also visible when the medieval authors´ disinterest in the Muslim reconquest of Jerusalem in 637/1240 is encountered with incomprehension (p. 126). Qāsim does not try to understand their different perspectives on this event, but prefers his own image of the Crusades as an early expression of a millennial conflict between two blocs.

In the course of this general picture, the text also restates on a smaller scale arguments which would have merited a more subtle analysis. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn´s career

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[1]See for example Michael Köhler, *Allianzen und Verträge zwischen fränkischen und islamischen Herrschern im Vorderen Orient* (Berlin/New York, 1991).

is seen as a teleological development, where every step led to the inevitable battle at Hattin (pp. 33–34, 60); the Mamluks remained throughout their rule foreigners to Egyptian society (p. 267); and—as referred to above—their dynasty declined over a period of some two hundred years. At the same time, central rule is generally seen as the positive norm, implying stability and strength, while regionalized rule is equated with chaos and failure. Consequently, the author criticizes the Ayyubid successors of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn who did not stand united and, due to this neglect of their ″historic role,″ had to step back for the benefit of the Mamluks (pp. 137–38).

The sources employed in the course of the text are somewhat problematic. The main medieval author referred to throughout the text is, similar to the source-basis in Qāsim′s earlier works, al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1442), who is described as a ″contemporary historian″ (e.g., p. 150). Authors who were closer to the respective events described, such as Ibn Shaddād (d. 632/1234) and Ibn al-Athīr (d. 630/1232) for the early Ayyubid period, are used only as additional material. The issue of primary sources is further complicated by the difficulty in pursuing the author′s references. Often it is not clear which edition has been used. Some notes are incomplete and the bibliography omits the work in question altogether.[2] For other works different editions are given in the bibliography and in a footnote, so that it remains unclear for the following passages which edition is referred to.[3]

Secondary literature is merely discussed in order to disprove the arguments of ″historians of the West″ who have either tried to belittle the military genius of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn (p. 58) or have delighted in speculations concerning possible courses of mutual Mongol-Christian affections (p. 192–93). The secondary literature referred to, both Arabic and English, is largely limited to monographs to the exclusion of journal articles. The English literature stops in the early 1970s, the Arabic literature, with the exception of the author′s own works, was largely published in the 1980s and earlier.

In sum, it is regrettable that this work by one of the specialists in Ayyubid and Mamluk history does not offer a more original outlook on this period′s events. As it stands, it is a rather interesting source for the study of modern-day perceptions of the Crusades.

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[2]For example Ibn al-Athīr, *Al-Tārīkh al-Bāhir fī al-Dawlah al-Atābakīyah,* which is mentioned p. 55, n. 36. The note cannot refer to the work′s standard edition by ʻAbd al-Qādir Aḥmad Ṭulaymat (Cairo, 1963).

[3]For example Ibn Shaddād, *Al-Nawādir al-Sulṭānīyah wa-al-Maḥāsin al-Yūsufīyah.* The bibliography cites the edition by Jamāl al-Dīn al-Shayyāl (Cairo, 1964), while note 10, page 19 cites an anonymous edition (Cairo, 1317).

SHAMS AL-DĪN MUḤAMMAD IBN AḤMAD AL-DHAHABĪ, *Al-Mu'īn fī Ṭabaqāt al-Muḥaddithīn*. Edited by Muḥammad al-Sa'īd ibn Basyūnī Zaghlūl (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmīyah, 1998). Pp. 430.

REVIEWED BY LI GUO, University of Notre Dame

This volume contains an edition of al-Dhahabī's biographical dictionary of the hadith transmitters, from the early *ṣaḥābah,* or the Prophet's "companions," to those who were active in the twenties of the seventh/fourteenth century. During his extraordinarily prolific career, al-Dhahabī wrote, besides his major works such as *Tārīkh al-Islām,* an amazing number of short manuals and pamphlets of the *rijāl*/*ṭabaqāt* genre, in which he registered the names, and sometimes biographical sketches, of the hadith transmitters and other categories of Muslim learned men. A few of these manuals have recently been made public, and they all read like a check list that contains not much more than mere names. The volume under review is one of these. It contains 2,443 names of hadith transmitters. Each is described in footnotes by the editor with some bibliographical references as well as a short indication the person's "degree" of qualification regarding his/her authenticity, or reliability, or perhaps liability, in the hadith material transmitted on his/her authority or through him/her. The various "degrees" range from *thiqah* (trustworthy), *ṣadūq* (reliable), *lā ba's bihi* (so-so), to *ḍa'īf* (weak). And each of these is further classified with more degrees of quality. The later the person's date, the more details are given.

The editor's labor is mainly seen in the extensive indexes (pp. 233–427). The reader can, for example, search according to proper names, or *kunyah*-nicknames, or *nisbah*-surnames. Women's names are listed in separate indexes. To the disappointment of the readers of this journal, the persons who lived in the Mamluk era, that is, the *ṭabaqah*s, in al-Dhahabī's classification, "from the fifties up to the seventies of six hundred" A.H. and onwards occupy only a slim ten pages (pp. 221–32). It is also disappointing that this is hardly a critical edition by any measure. One knows nothing about the basic information regarding the manuscript(s) and the method of editing. The editor did not even bother to provide a bibliography; so all the cryptic signs and abbreviations one finds in the footnotes are nothing but puzzles and riddles. One cannot help but wonder, besides perhaps some commercial gain, what else there is to explain why the volume should have been put together in the first place. Have we not already seen enough of the scissors-and-paste method of mass producing, or abusing, medieval Arabic texts?