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Crime in Mamluk Historiography: A Fraud Case Depicted by Ibn Taghrībirdī

Fraud and crimes related to corrupt fiscal practices figured prominently among references to criminal activity as chroniclers of the Mamluk period reported such episodes. A crime, as distinct from other categories of violence, may be defined as an act deemed by its recorder(s) as worthy of investigation, apprehension, prosecution, and retribution.

Of roughly 1,100 cases discerned in a group of prominent Mamluk-era histories, fraud-related crimes constituted some fifteen percent (167 incidents).¹ Included in this broad category were cases involving manipulation of *waqf* properties, fiscal extortion, generalized corruption (the largest group with 60 incidents), embezzlement, false witness, forgery, and fraud itself (defined as a crime linked specifically to mendacity). The range of actions the chroniclers described, and the diversity of their contexts, were truly multifarious. While the majority of incidents touched upon the laundering or other misappropriation of fiscal assets (but not larceny or theft, which constituted a separate category), fraud-related crimes included sale of defective goods, faking weights and measures, forcing purchases of otherwise unsalable goods, hoarding and price fixing, racketeering through connivance with gangs, falsification of accounts, spreading of rumors deliberately to stimulate civic unrest, and a host of elaborate con schemes.

I am still in the process of collating these crimes among their various types, since few incidents fit neatly into one category and most can be considered in several. I have also discovered that generalizations about classification of criminal acts offer few insights unless they are closely tied to discrete incidents as illustrations. I therefore have selected one well-documented case of fraud for discussion, as an example of the kind of activity that attracted the notice of historians active during the Mamluk period. It emerged as perhaps the most interesting scheme by a con artist that I have encountered.

The incident was recorded by only one chronicler, albeit among the best

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¹The collection of criminal cases was conducted to support a study, ongoing at the present time, of crime and its social context in Mamluk Cairo and Damascus. The incident discussed here is indicative of the nuanced detail frequently included in the narratives presented by contemporary chroniclers such as Ibn Taghrībirdī.

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known: Ibn Taghrībirdī, in his *Hawādith al-Duhūr*.² The incident, or at least its prosecution, occurred during the month of Shawwāl 858/September–October 1455. The case involved an individual of the *awlād al-nās* (descendants of first-generation Mamluk soldiers) named Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī ibn Īnāl (no relation to the sultan of that name). Ibn Taghrībirdī initiated his discussion by stating that this Muḥammad went into hiding when a princess (*khawand*), daughter of the former sultan al-Mu’ayyad Shaykh (815–24/1412–21), brought suit against him after he had instigated the demolition of a belvedere, or *manẓarah*, known as al-Tāj, the Crown, with Five Sides (i.e., a pentagon, although some described it with seven sides or a septagon) and his expropriation of its materials for resale.

Ibn Taghrībirdī described this person as “one repugnant” to the sultan, al-Zāhir Jaqmaq (842–57/1438–53). The latter had raised Muḥammad from childhood since the ruler had shared a bond of camaraderie with his father. Indeed, Jaqmaq had begun his career in the father’s service, prior to his own promotion by Sultan Barqūq (two reigns: 784–801/1382–99). Jaqmaq as an amir had placed Muḥammad in his own company of mamluks. But this Muḥammad had other ideas about his future, apparently, since he abandoned soldiering for the path of an itinerant Sufi. Ibn Taghrībirdī described him, contemptuously, as adopting the guise of a mendicant or *faqīr* who solicited (more bluntly, begged, *sa’ala*) alms from the populace. Ibn Taghrībirdī claimed that this individual was lazy, lethargic, and quite content with his chosen agenda, until Jaqmaq was enthroned as sultan. He then summoned Muḥammad and ordered him to resume his military garb. But Muḥammad refused his patron’s demand, unlike his brother Aḥmad, who conformed to behavior more appropriate to his class.

When Jaqmaq promoted the brother Aḥmad to the rank of amir of ten, Muḥammad was “consumed with envy” but still refused to conform. Instead, he became even more audacious with his solicitation, and took to riding a donkey up to the citadel where he collected alms from the elite stationed there. Muḥammad displayed unique skills in his calling, it would seem, since he gained status among the influential, abandoned his donkey for a horse, and ultimately won the post of court audiencer (*amīr shakkār*). He attained his brother’s rank as amir of ten that he had coveted. Ibn Taghrībirdī noted that he was awarded several allotments (*iqṭā’āt*) set aside for the *ḥalqah* reserve corps.

But none of this satisfied Muḥammad’s ambition, and it is at this stage of the narrative that Ibn Taghrībirdī noted his cross-over into crime. Muḥammad alleged to Sultan Jaqmaq that frequenters of the Tāj belvedere were committing “fornication and other shocking acts” on the premises. “Its demolition would thus be meritorious.”

²(Beirut, 1994), 2:500, line 16; ed. William Popper, University of California Publications in Semitic Philology, vol. 8, pts. 1–4 (Berkeley, 1930–42), pt. 2:216, line 1.

Ibn Taghrībirdī emphatically dismissed this claim. He described the belvedere as “one of the loveliest buildings in Miṣr—and one of the most respectable.” He mentioned that its resident shaykh, by the name of Ḥaydar, was “among the worthiest of persons, religious, pious, and righteous.” Indeed, the populace came to him with their supplications, presumably for his intercession with the Divine on their behalf. Shaykh Ḥaydar had established a *zāwiyah* at the site and had attracted a devout community of mystics.

Ibn Taghrībirdī went on to note that the belvedere, located in the vicinity of Kawm al-Rīsh outside al-Qāhirah, had deteriorated prior to the sultanate of al-Muʿayyad Shaykh. The latter had intervened to invest 20,000 dinars in its restoration. The sultan developed a special affinity for the site, and visited it on numerous occasions after its restoration. Subsequently, Sultan Barsbāy (825–41/1422–38) established the shaykh Ḥaydar, now described more precisely as a Rifāʿī, in the belvedere. The shaykh had founded the *zāwiyah* in the *ṭarīqah* of this order. Sultan Barsbāy granted the shaykh a stipend for this purpose, and Ḥaydar had presided over his *zāwiyah* for three decades, with all due propriety—before this Muḥammad impugned his reputation. Ibn Taghrībirdī was himself a close friend of the shaykh Ḥaydar, noting that he was “decent and upright with regard to what the riffraff of Persians cast at him.”

Yet despite his unsavory past, Muḥammad managed to persuade Sultan Jaqmaq about the veracity of his allegation. The sultan ordered the belvedere razed—under Muḥammad’s supervision. He appropriated all of its material (whether known to Jaqmaq is unclear), which he sold. Ibn Taghrībirdī mentioned “an exorbitant quantity of building stones, wood, iron window fixtures, and other items beyond calculation.” The belvedere became “a ruin inhabited by mendicants.” The audacious Muḥammad actually used some of the razed materials to build a structure at the Hill of the New Quarter (*kawm al-qanṭarah al-jadīdah*). Ibn Taghrībirdī stated that the locals mockingly dubbed it “the wanton” (*al-makhlūʿah*). “Hashish users and others steeped in depravity repaired to it.” The populace were profoundly grieved over the demolition of the lovely belvedere.

Ibn Taghrībirdī now digressed into a detailed description of the sordid Muḥammad. He was tall, long of beard, bushy of mustache, reckless in speech. As for his dress, he wore the cloth headgear of (common) marketeers, and a mantle with wide sleeves—in the guise of the Bedouin from al-Buḥayrah. He rode on a Bedouin-style saddle, in the fashion of the *ʿArab* also. On occasion, he held a hunting falcon on his arm. This individual was indeed so adept in altering his appearance that he often went unrecognized in the streets. Ibn Taghrībirdī did not admire his skill at image transformation, however, since he found his demeanor “repulsive and ridiculous,” even comical—his bearing “indicative of triviality of mind, (proof that) insanity appears in diverse forms.” Nonetheless, Muḥammad

continued on his trajectory of schemes and depravity with success until al-Ashraf Īnāl (857–65/1453–61) succeeded Jaqmaq. He immediately stripped Muḥammad of his amir's rank and dismissed him as court audiencer. His status declined until al-Mu'ayyad's daughter formally denounced him. In suit, she demanded the value of materials expropriated from the demolished belvedere her father had built—presumably as an inheritance due her (possibly under *waqf* trust). Ibn Taghrībirdī stated that the accused remained in custody for several days, yielded up a fraction of the value of the expropriated materials—less than 1,000 dinars—and then went into hiding until the *khawand* expired (no date given, but other data suggest a lengthy seclusion). He eventually reappeared and took to his house. The entry terminated without further disclosure.

So, what to make of this intriguing affair? First of all, Ibn Taghrībirdī lavished far more detail on Muḥammad's deviance from the stance of a respectable member of the *awlād al-nās* and their *ḥalqah* corps, entitled to a comfortable if not profligate living from his allotments, than he did on particulars of the fraud case itself. Perhaps he knew nothing more about its facts, but no chronicler was better informed of court intrigues than Ibn Taghrībirdī. Ibn Taghrībirdī was particularly incensed by Muḥammad's smirching of Shaykh Ḥaydar's reputation. Quite possibly, his vitriolic denunciation masked a rivalry between two sharply contrasting representatives of Sufi activism in Cairo. Ibn Taghrībirdī loathed the heterodox life-style of the mendicant Sufis, who disdained the shari'ah-oriented strictures of the more conventional *ṭarīqahs*, and indulged in drug use and other practices castigated by the formal religious establishment but appealing to many elements of the commons.

But for whatever reason, Ibn Taghrībirdī disclosed little about the actual nature of the suit and its litigation, presumably in the appeals (*mazālim*) court presided over by Sultan Īnāl. The substantive facts warranting the suit were only two: 1) that Muḥammad had allegedly lied to Sultan Jaqmaq about sordid, possibly illegal, acts occurring on the premises of the belvedere, and 2) that the daughter of the belvedere's founder, al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh, could put a lien on the materials removed from the belvedere upon its demolition that Muḥammad had sold.

With regard to the first, Ibn Taghrībirdī made clear his own revulsion over behavior exhibited by visitors (he would describe as revelers, by inference, fornicators) to the belvedere. But despite his choler, it is possible to envisage some debate at a court hearing over the illegality of such behavior. And in any case, Ibn Taghrībirdī provided no details about whether such acts were formally attested by sworn witnesses. As noted above, Ibn Taghrībirdī's denunciation of these acts, and his defense of Shaykh Ḥaydar, likely conceal a long-standing tension between the shaykh and Muḥammad—and more broadly, over opposing orientations within Sufi life-styles. But whatever rancor existed between the two

over their contrasting Sufi paths, Ibn Taghrībirdī's assertions remain allegations unsupported by description of the litigious proceedings themselves. We have his word only about Muḥammad's character. Indeed, Muḥammad's personal decisions about his abandonment of a soldier's career as a *walad nās* in the *ḥalqah* corps for the life of a mendicant, his solicitation of influential persons for alms, or his adoption of peculiar modes of dress that effectively disguised him may have sullied Ibn Taghrībirdī's own standard of conduct (recall that he too was a *walad nās*). But there was nothing intrinsically illegal about these decisions—unless they could be tied to specific malfeasance.

In fact, this Muḥammad, considered objectively, comes across as an imaginative figure who elected to cross boundaries that defined behavioral norms considered appropriate to class conduct and fixed by time-honored tradition. And more relevant to this case, he got away with crossing them and prospered accordingly. An incident that relies solely on one observer's version does not allow for the offender's voice to be heard. So, we do not have any indication of Muḥammad's perspective on these events.

With regard to the second fact, supporting details are sparse. The daughter of al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh is not named, but simply referred to as the princess or *al-khawand*. Although her death date cannot be ascertained from Ibn Taghrībirdī's account, she may not have died in 858/1455 or soon after the events of this case. Al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh produced several children who lived beyond infancy, including two sons and at least three daughters whose deaths can be dated. One of the sons, Aḥmad, would briefly succeed Shaykh upon his demise in 824/1421, as Sayf al-Dīn Abū al-Sa'ādāt. Deposed within months, at less than two years of age, Aḥmad would be imprisoned in Alexandria along with his surviving brother, Ibrāhīm. Both would die by the plague nine years later. I raise this issue because of its possible relevance to the daughter's claim. No male heirs survived to 858/1455 and thus could not demand right of precedence in any legal proceeding. With regard to the daughter, this individual seems somewhat elusive. A check of relevant biographical sources (Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī and al-Sakhāwī), and obituaries at the end of year logs in relevant chronicles turned up three females fathered by al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh. Two of these individuals died in 816/1413 and 842/1438–39 respectively.³ I also found obituaries of two women: one described as Khawand Āsīyah, wife of the prominent *dawādār* Yashbak al-Faqīh, and Shaykh's last surviving child. She died in Shawwāl of 891/September–October 1486.⁴ The other was listed as Shaykh's granddaughter, and thus was the probable child of this

³Al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Ḍaw' al-Lāmi' fī A'yān al-Qarn al-Tāsi'* (Cairo, 1353/1934), 12:163, nos. 1022, 1023.

⁴Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i' al-Zuhūr fī Waqā'i' al-Duhūr* (Cairo and Wiesbaden, 1960–63), 3:234.

Khawand Āsīyah. She died in 918/1512.⁵ While her mother was not named in the obituary, her father was the same Grand *Dawādār*, Yashbak al-Faqīh. Al-Sakhāwī mentioned a husband for only one of the two daughters he listed (the first died at the age of nine and was unmarried), and this was one Qurqmās. So Āsīyah, deceased in 891 according to Ibn Iyās, was likely the *khawand* noted here by Ibn Taghrībirdī. (If Āsīyah was indeed the relevant individual, then she would not appear in obituaries listed in the *Ḥawādith al-Duhūr*, which terminates in 873/1469.)

Returning to the lien claimed by the *khawand*, Ibn Taghrībirdī makes no mention of the property's legal status. The term *waqf* appears nowhere in the entry, nor do any details about the belvedere's heritability. The possibility of the belvedere's inclusion among Shaykh's *waqf* properties is strong, but cannot be ascertained pending an examination of his *waqf* deed. The possibility is bolstered by the properties listed at the end of Shaykh's biography in the *Ḍaw'*.⁶ The belvedere is noted prominently, and may have represented the second most costly site among Shaykh's endowments, following the sultan's tomb mosque at the Bāb Zuwaylah. If the belvedere did belong to the properties protected by Shaykh's trust, then, on the assumption that *waqf* provisos granted its heirs perpetual access to at least some of its proceeds following any sale, this *khawand* had a legal case.

Other possible circumstances must be considered. For example, an anomaly is apparent in this incident. Ibn Taghrībirdī claims that Sultan Jaqmaq had been discomfited for years about his ward's rejection of a soldier's duties and his subsequent behavior. Yet when Muḥammad raised his allegations about heinous acts occurring at the belvedere, the sultan accepted them at face value. How probable would this be, unless other circumstances influenced his decision? The possibility of collusion between the sultan and mendicant for mutual profit cannot be discounted here. Plundering materials from existing structures is well known as a practice widespread during the Circassian period, when the economy was stagnating and cash flows available to the elites for new construction were depleted. But such expedients, especially if they involved properties shielded under *waqf*, were usually restricted to the sultan himself. Note that it was Jaqmaq who endorsed the demolition. But did he endorse Muḥammad's subsequent sale of the razed materials? While this is unclear, collusion for mutual profit is a plausible scenario.

Also note that when Īnāl was enthroned, he reviewed acts of nepotism by his predecessor, and stripped Muḥammad of his sinecures. Only then did the *khawand* file her claim. Ibn Taghrībirdī stated that she received less than 1,000 dinars, a fraction of the original expenditure by her father decades earlier—even discounting for inflation. Ibn Taghrībirdī claimed that Muḥammad went on to build a structure

⁵Ibid., 4:258.

⁶Al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Ḍaw' al-Lāmi'*, 3:308, no. 1190; see p. 310 bottom.

that was popularly derided as a den of iniquity. But he makes no mention of Īnāl demolishing it to provide restitution. Presumably, Shaykh Ḥaydar's Rifā'ī *zāwiyah* did not survive the belvedere's demolition. But the entry concludes with Muḥammad re-emerging and seeking seclusion in his house. If Khawand Āsīyah was actually the instigator of the suit, then Muḥammad remained a recluse for more than thirty years. Could he have resumed his old tricks after so long an interval? Did he do so clandestinely while in hiding? Did his disguises aid him in this endeavor? Who knows? Ibn Taghrībirdī asserted that Muḥammad's personal depravity would indeed be assessed and retribution imposed—but only by the All-High on Judgment Day (*yawm al-qiyāmah*).

APPENDIX I: TRANSLATION OF THE ORIGINAL ENTRY

Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Ḥawādith al-Duhūr fī Madá al-Ayyām wa-al-Shuhūr* (1994 edition), 2:500, line 16; (1932 Popper edition), 8:216, line 1

In these days (Shawwāl 858), Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī ibn Īnāl fled (*haraba*), and no one knew where he had gone. The reason for his retreat (*tasahḥubihī*): the *khawand*, daughter of al-Malik al-Mu’ayyad, complained about him due to his demolition of the observatory/belvedere (*manẓarah*) of five sides (*al-khams wujūh*) known as al-Tāj, and seven sides. Also, his expropriation of its debris/material (*anqāḍihī*).

line 20: This Muḥammad was one of those offensive/repugnant (*musī’*) to al-Malik al-Zāhir Jaqmaq. He had raised him while young (*rabbāhu ṣaghīran*), because al-Zāhir, prior to his arrival [in the service of] al-Malik al-Zāhir Barqūq, was a mamluk of the amir ‘Alī, father of the aforementioned Muḥammad. In consequence of that, he [al-Zāhir] took custody of him and raised him. Then, he placed him (*ja’alahu*) in his company (*jumlah*) of mamluks when he grew up (*kabara*). He continued this way for several years. Then, it seemed appropriate for him to cease soldiering (*yatraku zayy al-jund*) and dress as a mendicant (Sufi) person (*faqīrī*). He became a mendicant (*tafaqqara*) and begged (*sa’ala*) from the populace. He became lethargic (*tukhūmila*), and continued like that for a time (*dāma ‘alá dhalika dahran*), until al-Malik al-Zāhir became sultan. He [then] summoned him and ordered him to dress as he had done initially. He refused to do so, and persisted as he was. His brother Aḥmad was also in the service of al-Malik al-Zāhir Jaqmaq.

p. 501, line 1: Aḥmad was the elder. They were carefree (*ghayr ashqā’*). Al-Malik al-Zāhir promoted his brother Aḥmad to the rank of amir of ten. When Muḥammad noted what had befallen his brother Aḥmad, envy consumed him. He remained unwilling to return to soldiering. He opened another door of soliciting (*fataḥa bāban ākhir min al-sawā’il*), begging (*ṭalab*), and extortion (*balṣ*). Yet he was not satisfied/content (*ṣāra la yaqna’u*) with what was in the treasury (*bayt al-māl*) from al-Malik al-Zāhir Jaqmaq. He persisted in riding a donkey, ascended to the Citadel, and frequented (*yataraddadu ilá*) prominent persons (*al-akābir*) and solicited them (*yas’aluhum*) properly and illegally (*ṭayyibatan wa-ghaṣban*). He behaved (*aḥara*) in repulsive ways (*min qabīḥ al-khiṣāl*), and with gross greed (*‘iẓam al-ṭama’*), as will be related about him on the Day of Judgment (*yawm al-qiyāmah*). Then, after a while he rode a horse and assumed [the rank of] amir audiencer (*shakkāran*). Subsequently, he was promoted amir of ten. That was after he assumed (*akhadha*) several allotments (*iqṭā’āt*) of the *ḥalqah* reserve corps.

None of this satisfied him so that he alleged/disclosed (*anhá*) to al-Malik al-Zāhir that in al-Tāj fornication (*fawāḥish*) and horrendous acts (*umūr ‘aẓīmah*) were occurring on the part of the observers/spectators (*mutafarrijīn*). Its demolition [therefore] would be highly meritorious (*min akbar al-maṣāliḥ*). There was no truth to his speech. For indeed, this site was one of the loveliest buildings in Miṣr and the most respectable (*anzahuhā*). As for the shaykh Ḥaydar who was dwelling there, he was one of the worthiest of people, religious, pious, and righteous (*‘iffah*). He was among those of whom supplications were solicited. A mihrab had been built there [or he did so] and was called none other than the *zāwiyah*.

line 14: Altogether (*bi-al-jumlah*), the Tāj was one of the handsomest [of structures] in the world. It was one of the old buildings near Kawm al-Rīsh outside Cairo. Its structure had deteriorated [literally, disrupted, *tasha‘‘aba*] and it was demolished. Al-Malik al-Mu‘ayyad Shaykh, may God praise him, restored it, and spent on it [literally, indemnified it, *gharama ‘alayhi*] approximately 20,000 dinars. He descended to it from the Citadel several times. He resided there and held a review (*khidmah*) there. He wished to build up (*‘amara*) its surroundings, and his desire was fulfilled [literally, Fortune overtook him, *adrakathu al-manīyah*]. Then, when al-Malik al-Ashraf Barsbāy was enthroned, he established this Shaykh Muḥammad Ḥaydar al-Rifā‘ī and his brotherhood [there]. He [Barsbāy] granted him a stipend (*rizqah*) near to it. The aforementioned Ḥaydar dwelled there some thirty years. There was a firm friendship (*ṣuḥbah akīdah*) between me and him. He was among the singular (*al-afrād*) in his qualities (*ma‘anāhu*)—religious, decent, upright (*‘afīfan*) in what the riffraff of Persians [Sufis?] (*awbāsh al-‘ajam*) cast at him. May God the All-High have mercy on him.

line 22: When al-Malik al-Zāhir heard this Muḥammad’s speech, he believed it and ordered its [the belvedere’s] demolition. This Muḥammad supervised its razing and appropriated (*istawlá*) all its debris/material, which he sold—an exorbitant quantity (*bi-jumal mustaktharah*) of stones, wood, windows (*shabābīk*) of iron, and [many] other items, impossible to calculate (*la tudkhalu taḥt ḥaṣr*). The aforementioned al-Tāj became a ruin of the mendicants (*kharāb al-fuqarā’*). He [Muḥammad] was not satisfied with the demolition of al-Tāj until he built with some of its debris (*anqāḍihi*) a locality (*mawḍi‘an*) on the Hill of the New Quarter (*kawm al-qanṭarah al-jadīdah*), which the commons named the wanton (*al-makhlū‘ah*). Hashish users and depraved ones repaired to it. All the people were sorrowed by the demolition of the aforementioned al-Tāj—to the extreme.

p. 502, line 1: The appearance (*hay’ah*) of this Muḥammad: he was a tall man, long of beard (*liḥyah*) and mustaches (*shawārib*), reckless (*ahwaj*) in his speech.

As for his dress, he wore on his head a piece of cloth (*shāsh*) like the common marketeers. He wore a mantle (*thiyāb*) with wide sleeves (*akmām kubār*), in the guise of the Bedouin (*‘arab*) of al-Buḥayrah. He rode on a saddle of Bedouin type, in the style of the Arabs also. Then, on some occasions he held in his hand a bird of prey (*ṭayr al-jawāriḥ*) [falcon]. He walked in the streets in this guise. When one looked at him, one did not recognize him due to the changeability of his bearing (*amrihi*) and varied costume. His demeanor was repulsive and ridiculous/comical (*muhawwilah muḍḥikah*). All that [indicating] one of the trivial of mind (*khiffat al-‘aql*), [proof that] insanity appears in diverse forms (*wa-al-junūn funūn*). He continued in this way until al-Malik al-Ashraf Īnāl became sultan. He stripped him of his officer’s rank and forbade him the [office of] amir audiencer (*shakkārīyah*). His status (*amruhu*) began to diminish until the daughter of al-Mu’ayyad denounced/brought suit against him. She demanded of him the price/value of what he had sold of the material from al-Tāj. He remained in custody for several days and yielded up some money—less than 1,000 dinars. Then he fled, where no one knew, until the time when she expired. Some days later he reappeared and took to his house.

APPENDIX II: AUTHOR OF THE SOURCE

Ibn Taghrībirdī (813–74/1411–69) was an admiring, but on occasion critical, disciple of the eminent historian al-Maqrīzī. Jamāl al-Dīn Abū al-Mahāsīn Yūsuf stood in awe of his mentor’s formidable intellect and moral integrity. Yet he was aware of al-Maqrīzī’s inner turmoil over ideological controversies, and endemic bitterness over his stalled career. Ibn Taghrībirdī appreciated the effect such emotions could have on his predecessor’s depiction of events. More relevant to issues at hand, he applied this realization to his own scholarship.

Ibn Taghrībirdī envisioned his second historiographical work, in which the preceding incident was discerned, as an extension of the detailed coverage and rigors of analysis maintained by al-Maqrīzī. *Ḥawādith al-Duhūr fī Madā al-Ayyām wa-al-Shuhūr* (Episodes of the epoch that pass in days and months) begins where al-Maqrīzī’s *Kitāb al-Sulūk* left off, with the year 845/1441. It continues to 873/1469. More compact chronologically than its predecessor, the *Nujūm al-Zāhirah*, the *Ḥawādith* deals with events contemporaneous to its author. It focuses almost exclusively on incidents in Cairo. Although intrigues in the sultanic court loom with predictable prominence, the *Ḥawādith* offers myriad glimpses of life in the city’s teeming streets. Crimes committed at all levels of society, from members of the sultan’s household to unruly gangs of urban riffraff or *zu‘ar*, are reported frequently, their depiction marked by the sobriety and thoroughness characteristic of al-Maqrīzī’s methodology. Ibn Taghrībirdī rarely let an incident pass without comment on motives, often followed by condemnation of moral laxity or falsification of evidence. Ibn Taghrībirdī did not confine his castigations to the lower orders. He reserved his intense vituperations for those at the apex of the ruling class. As a *walad nās* and son of a former amir, Ibn Taghrībirdī exploited his connections at court to fulminate against the excesses of its most exalted residents. His descriptions of their crimes were among the most gripping narratives noted in these texts. Overall, the *Ḥawādith* ranked among the most productive sources consulted for the larger study. The appearance of the preceding case is therefore consistent with the author’s objectives.