

INTRODUCTION

In 1937, Philip Hitti typified the opinion of his generation's Arabists about the legacy of Mamlūk authority with the following:

Mamlūk Egypt began its history under proud and triumphant rulers who had cleared Syria of the last vestiges of Frankish dominion and had successfully stood between the Mongols and world power. By the end of the period, however, with its military oligarchy, factions among the dominant caste, debased coinage, high taxation, insecurity of life and property, occasional plague and famine and frequent revolts, both Egypt and its dependency Syria were all but ruined. Especially in the valley of the Nile persistence of outworn ancient superstition and magic, coupled with the triumph of reactionary orthodoxy, hindered scientific advance. Under these conditions no intellectual activity of high order could be expected. . . . Mental fatigue induced by generations of effort and moral lassitude consequent upon the accumulation of wealth and power were evident everywhere.¹

While chroniclers who dwelled on the Mamlūk regime's abiding dilemmas gave a scholar of Hitti's stature ample ammunition for such an assessment, their comments reveal a more vibrant milieu than these lines bespeak. Anyone who pores over the historians' myriad depictions of militarist strife, abuse of the commons, and fiscal exploitation cannot but acknowledge the prevalence of "hard times" in the later Mamlūk Empire. Yet these commentators' remarks rarely indicate a lapse in "intellectual activity of high order" or the onset of "mental fatigue." Quite the contrary, the characters who charted the regime's course emerge as pragmatists coping with trying conditions of state service they accepted as normative. Although their solutions to vexing challenges may

have aimed more at short-term expedience than long-range reform, their stratagems tell us much about how ambitious individuals in later medieval Egypt pursued their fortunes and guarded their realm in the face of adversity. Their behavior, therefore, merits examination on its own terms as the reasoned response persons immersed in a sophisticated non-Western society devised to transcend its crises.

This study explores overt policies and covert ploys adopted by Egypt's military and civilian elites to shore up the Mamlūk Sultanate in its final decades. Its purpose is twofold. First, it unravels the complex events of this era (A. H. 872–922/C.E. 1468–1517), beset as it was by external threats and internal dissension, to present a coherent picture of the times. So far, this pivotal episode in Egypt's history, the country's last phase as an independent power before the modern age, remains untold in a comprehensive way.² Second, the analysis deciphers tactics adopted by the sultanate's bureaucracy to meet its autocrats' demands under straitened circumstances, while simultaneously fattening purses of its more adroit members. The dynamics of patron-client ties and their hidden rationales lurk behind every aspect of the inquiry.

Superficially, the work tells a tale of two monarchs: al-Ashraf Qāytbāy (r. 872–901/1468–1496) and Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī (r. 906–922/1501–1516). The author acknowledges flaws attendant in an analysis focused on autocrats at the summit of their society, for all their prominence in a lengthy roster of sovereigns over the millenia. Yet both men attained their offices by merit rather than inheritance. Each was a seasoned professional soldier who advanced to the top by a combination of martial talent, political acumen, and inscrutable fate. While the two contrasted markedly, each was a high achiever in the military caste he entered as a slave cadet. Their careers thus convey those values their peers regarded as essential for distinction. Both monarchs interacted closely with a host of associates: Mamlūk comrades, civilian clients and grasping subordinates who rose from diverse levels of society and virtually all its categories. The two therefore accumulated intimate knowledge about those they admitted to their retinues. Although each can justifiably be castigated as a tyrant, neither was ignorant of burdens their policies imposed on the masses who footed their bills. Most other personalities who figured in the contemporary sources were discussed in conjunction with their ties to one of these individuals. A study centered on these rulers' careers thus illuminates aspirations and machinations of all those who consorted with them, high or low.

The study does not claim to reconstruct the political economy of the Mamlūk State in these turbulent years. Copious as they are, its data can only hint at broad trends in the economy or the regime's responses to them. The analysis does probe, in-depth, attitudes, motives, and goals of those who plotted the regime's economic course and set its political tone. Recovery of a mindset is sought here, the disposition of a ruling caste that regarded its realm and

all who inhabited it as an apanage, a personal possession to be tapped at will. Their mentality had a powerful conditioning effect on all social groups that came in contact with them. That arrogance, brutality, and parasitism imbued the Mamlūk's behavior, none acquainted with their legacy can deny.

Yet despite their excesses, the Mamlūks hardly disdained matters of state security, mass prosperity, public welfare, or spiritual piety. On occasion, they showed genuine compassion for suffering endured by even the meanest of their subjects. In the prospect of their own destitution, they sustained a rich program of cultural endowment. Egypt's military caste may warrant condemnation for its legacy, but it cannot be simplistically dismissed as petty. When their facade of arrogance is pierced, these praetorians' behavior reveals a peculiarly vulnerable coterie of officers and troops who, using standards their forebears enjoyed, saw their own integrity and well-being threatened. Moreover, this elite regarded many of the ad hoc bonds linking it with civilian dependents as egregiously compromised by the latter's duplicity. One discerns a corrosive sentiment of mutual betrayal, a lack of trust on both sides infusing acts which, on the surface, seem wantonly cruel or irrational. The behavior of those who loom large in the following chapters suggests a deep-seated conviction that neither side was any longer fulfilling its part of a clandestine bargain. Those in positions of dominance would not curb their demands, while subordinates closeted the lion's share of gleanings they were forced to forfeit to retain their privileges. We thus contemplate a paradox in the conduct of Egypt's elites. An absolutist stance by the sultanate, with undisputed claims on state assets, was qualified by nagging paranoia over the trustworthiness of its own agents of exploitation. This study seeks to explain this paradox and, by so doing, expose the essence of a clandestine partnership under severe strain.

The enterprise is prefaced by brief political summaries of the two autocrats' reigns (chapter 2).³ These sketches are followed by discourses on the objectives of the sultanate's foreign policy, the performance of its military institution, the productivity of its economy, and the strategies it mounted for its survival.

The essay on foreign policy (chapter 3) addresses the sultanate's defensive posture. Motives are offered for the regime's obsession with maintenance of the international status quo. Aspirations of the sultanate's foreign competitors are compared according to the disparate challenges they posed. The Mamlūk caste (chapter 4) is considered in the context of its renown for combat effectiveness and sordid reputation as a leech on society. The Mamlūks' excesses as a self-centered interest group fully aware of their patron's beholden dilemma are considered in light of their anger over a perceived decline in lifestyle and status. The regime's economic sectors: agriculture, artisanship, and commerce (chapter 5) are examined according to the proclivity of each to concentrate its cre-

ative energies on concealment, hoarding, and preservation of existing assets rather than dabbling in more lucrative but higher-risk ventures. The evidence available depicts no precipitous decline in output but instead heightened attempts at extraction. The certainty of confiscation promoted a static attitude toward productivity, a conviction that higher profits merely attracted government harassment. Bedouin predation merits mention as a gauge of the regime's waning control over its hinterlands.

The final sections form a unit on clandestine strategies. Chapter 6 addresses the Sultanate's traditional means of coping with endemic crisis by either its circumvention, or, more likely, its manipulation for gain. It identifies the regime's schemes for coercing service from civil clients and enhancing its revenue from subjects skilled at passive resistance. Mounting frustration on both sides explains the tensions marring ties between master and minion. Chapter 7 speculates on the sultanate's attempts at overcoming crisis through innovation. It discerns tentative steps toward new procedures of recruiting soldiery outside entrenched bastions of Mamlūk power, of exploiting adroit clients, and of garnering hidden funds. Hypotheses are submitted about the sultan's attempts at creating a private fisc by laundering trust (*waqf*) properties. Inchoate as these experiments may have been, those with a vested stake in the established order rejected them vehemently as deviant and dangerous.

Many of the behavioral patterns apparent in bureaucratic or magisterial procedures of this era long outlasted their medieval progenitors. Whatever their implications for Egypt's current problems of development, they evolved indigenously long before Europeans exerted any significant influence. However they are interpreted, these tendencies emerged from myriad references by contemporary observers steeped in traditions of their culture with no sense of inferiority before the values of another. Indeed, comments about malaise occupy much of their chronicles' space, along with descriptions of factional rivalries and foreign affairs. Those who would discount the consequences of such patterns must also discredit the opinions of those who evaluated Egypt's condition in their own time. These candid observers, who did not gloss over unsettling episodes, deserve serious consideration of what they had to say.

But if the following analysis dwells on seemingly short-sighted responses to adversity, it does not ignore creative impulses of actors prominent in their design. Noted historian Eliyahu Ashtor, who contributed so much to our understanding of the economy in Mamlūk Egypt, yet so little to why it faltered, summed up his perceived limits of inquiry: "It would however be unreasonable to claim that this change in industrial structures is a satisfactory explanation of technological decline. Sometimes great innovations are made by individuals without being helped by a powerful organisation. They are indeed historical questions which the historian can raise but not answer."⁴ This book aims at answering some of them.

The Sources

The study rests on views of several chroniclers, who left detailed accounts of the regime's activities, and archival documents, which list charitable endowments of Qāyrbāy, his spouse Fāṭima, and Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī. Of the contemporary authors, four contributed the majority of the monograph's narrative data: Jamāl al-Dīn Yūsuf ibn Taghrī-Birdī (813–874/1411–1469), Nūr al-Dīn 'Alī ibn Dā'ūd al-Jawharī al-Ṣayrafī (819–ca. 900/1416–1495), Zayn al-Dīn 'Abd al-Bāsiṭ ibn Khalīl al-Malaṭī (844–920/1440–1514) and Abū'l-Barakāt Muḥammad ibn Iyās (852–930/1448–1524).

The first was the son of a Mamlūk amīr who died in the author's infancy.⁵ Raised in the households of his two sisters' husbands, Ibn Taghrī-Birdī enjoyed the status of a second-generation member of the military caste and the income from his father's estates. His brothers-in-law assured him a savant's education, in which the youth excelled. Showing an early flair for history, the young man studied with the eminent chronicler/topographer al-Maqrīzī. Capitalizing on his family connections at court, Ibn Taghrī-Birdī specialized in elucidating intricacies behind regime policies and foreign events. Although the polymath al-Sakhāwī criticized him for chronological, factual, and grammatical errors, Ibn Taghrī-Birdī's opinions reflected sober judgments of crises and shrewd assessments of character. An author of numerous compositions, he concentrated his major efforts on a biographical dictionary of court notables: *al-Manhal al-Ṣafī wa'l-Mustawfī ba'd al-Wāfi* (*The Pure Spring and Fulfillment after the Completion* [of al-Ṣafadī]); a comprehensive chronicle extending from the origins of Islam to the year 857/1453 and the death of Sultan Jaqmaq; *al-Nujūm al-Zāhira fī Mulūk Miṣr wa'l-Qāhira* (*Stars that Shine among the Kings of Egypt and Cairo*); and a continuation of Maqrīzī's history, the *Kitāb al-Sulūk*, beginning in 845/1441 and terminating in 873/1469, several months before the author's death: *Ḥawādith al-Duhūr fī Madā al-Ayyām wa'l-Shuhūr* (*Episodes of the Epochs which Pass in Days and Months*).

The third work, despite its chronological brevity, contained Ibn Taghrī-Birdī's observations about his own generation. It expresses musings of a mature thinker whose opinions were tinged with the cynicism of old age. A peer of Qāyrbāy in years and stature, Ibn Taghrī-Birdī earned the monarch's confidence as a learned adviser. Qāyrbāy shared his aspirations, doubts, and fears openly. The historian painstakingly preserved them. Because this chronicler died early in Qāyrbāy's reign, while the latter was still quelling opponents intent on deposing him, Ibn Taghrī-Birdī predicted neither Qāyrbāy's successful consolidation of power nor his longevity. He therefore dwelled on the monarch's anxieties and greed, in marked contrast with the adulation of his colleagues—who lived to see the end of a glorious reign in which largesse was copiously distributed. His interpretations of Qāyrbāy's actions offer a rare critical view of the deportment of an otherwise venerated figure.

The second chronicler exhibited a markedly different class background. Al-Şayrafi's father served as a moneychanger in the royal *dīwāns*. He supplemented an embarrassingly meager income by trading in the Jeweler's Market of Cairo.⁶ Al-Şayrafi remained acutely conscious of his father's penury and mediocre status as a minor bureaucrat. Yet his father supervised his early education personally before sending him off to the care of more eminent authorities. Al-Şayrafi attracted the notice of Cairo's learned luminary, Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī. With the esteemed shaykh's encouragement, al-Şayrafi tried his hand at historical writing, producing the first works of the so-called "Cairo narrative style," a blending of colloquial and formal usages unique to the second half of the ninth/fifteenth century.⁷ Prestige eluded al-Şayrafi all his days. Coveting appointment to a senior Ḥanafī judgeship, he never received more than a deputy's bench—and this in his fiftieth year at a colleague's behest. Al-Şayrafi took up manuscript copying to support his growing family, selling editions of his famous mentor's works with his own appendices and commentaries (dismissed by al-Sakhāwī as a blight on the great sage's treatises). But al-Şayrafi's judicial marginality served his journalistic bent well. Attending sessions of both the religious (*Shariʿa*) and appeals (*Maẓālim*) courts with few magisterial duties, he took copious notes on proceedings. These he recorded for posterity in his second chronicle.

Al-Şayrafi produced two significant historical tracts: *Nuzhat al-Nufūs wa'l-ʿAbdān fī Tawārīkh al-Zamān* (A Diversion Spiritual and Corporeal in the Annals of Time) and *Inbāʾ al-Ḥaṣr fī Abnāʾ al-ʿAṣr* (Informing the Lion about Scions of the Age). The first surveyed Egyptian politics from 786/1384 to 879/1475, following a hagiographic depiction of the Prophetic era in Madīna (of which only fragments remain). The latter was conceived as a celebration of Qāyṭbāy's reign (the "Lion" in its title). The author hoped to secure a place in the sultan's entourage by presenting his work as a gift, but no record of its completion has survived. The extant section covers only the years 873–877/1468–1473, albeit in minute detail. Portions of the years 885 and 886/1480–1481 are appended. Nonetheless, the four annals offer insights to judicial controversies available in few contemporary works. Since al-Şayrafi never deviated from his endorsement of the "court line," Qāyṭbāy emerges from his folios as a hero without blemish. Yet the sultan's judicial avocation is praised in the setting of its ambivalent reception among legal authorities compelled to abide the monarch's interference. Al-Şayrafi's remarks about their discomfiture are illuminating.

The third author claimed descent from a Mamlūk house, but one rung further down than Ibn Taghrī-Birdī.⁸ Al-Malaṭī's father occupied the vizierate in Egypt and served as a provincial governor in Syria. Although his son excelled in Ḥanafī studies, he never aspired to the legal profession. He became an eminent physician and travelled to North Africa on a Genoese galley in the 1460s. Active in Cairo's Ṣūfī orders, al-Malaṭī "enjoyed wide influence among

the Turks and amīrs," having translated numerous works into their language. In his later years, he won al-Ghawrī's favor. When he fell ill of consumption, the latter saw to his family's needs. Al-Malaṭī compiled a handbook on scriptural devotions he bestowed on his patron in gratitude: *Majmūʿ al-Bustān al-Nūrī li-Ḥadrat Maulānā Sulṭān al-Ghūrī (Anthology of the Enlightened Arbor Presented to Our Lord Sulṭān al-Ghūrī)*. Yet his historical corpus addressed the reign of al-Ghawrī's predecessor. Al-Malaṭī's large chronicle on affairs in Egypt, *al-Rawḍ al-Bāsim fī Ḥawādith al-ʿUmr wa'l-Tarājim (Gardens Smiling upon Events of Lifetimes and Lifestories)*, deals with the period between 872/1468 and 890/1485. Unedited at present and complete in a single autograph, the work charts a middle course between Ibn Taghrī-Birdī's skepticism and al-Ṣayrafi's effusion.

The last member of this primary group casts a long shadow in Islamic historiography. Ibn Iyās also belonged to the third generation of the Mamlūk elite.⁹ His grandfather held several viceroyships in Syria and left his progeny rights to his fief (*iqṭāʿ*). When Sultan al-Ghawrī attempted its expropriation, Ibn Iyās fought a grueling battle in court to reclaim his patrimony. While he succeeded, his brush with destitution scarred him. He never forgave al-Ghawrī and fulminated against him repeatedly for his spoliation of the propertied classes in Egypt. But despite his bias, Ibn Iyās stands as a towering figure among chroniclers of the later Middle Ages in Egypt. His vast tract: *Badāʾiʿ al-Zubūr fī Waqāʾiʿ al-Dubūr (Marvels Blossoming among Incidents of the Epochs)* commences with the pre-Islamic Age but addresses specific events upon Qāytbāy's enthronement. Extending to the year 928/1522, the *Badāʾiʿ* remains the sole firsthand survey of al-Ghawrī's reign.

Our dependence on one author for an informed assessment of this controversial figure is acknowledged.¹⁰ While Ibn Iyās wrote from personal observations, his hostility toward al-Ghawrī cannot be ignored. Dwelling at length on the sultan's altercations with his troops and counselors, Ibn Iyās consistently depicted al-Ghawrī as a schemer who amply merited his subordinates' rancor and suspicion. Yet Ibn Iyās never dismissed this man as a crude tyrant. The image that emerges from his castigations of al-Ghawrī's behavior is one of astute perception rather than callous brutality. Ibn Iyās readily admitted al-Ghawrī's intelligence and acknowledged his capacity to innovate as often as he decried his oppression. That the chronicler found this latter propensity disturbing is apparent in the intensity of his rebukes. But the acumen of a ruler confronting, with new stratagems, dilemmas that his precursors glossed over with timeworn ploys shows throughout Ibn Iyās's writing. The risks in depending on one man's point of view must qualify post hoc assessments of al-Ghawrī's reign. And yet this last chronicler to uphold an august tradition of factual objectivity during the independent Mamlūk period, at least by his own standards, did provide a foundation on which such assessments may be based.¹¹

Several other writers complement the perspectives of these chroniclers. While the names of some elude us, their works offer summations composed after the passage of decades and reflect judgments of later generations. An on-site commentator in this secondary category was Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Anṣārī, known as Ibn al-Ḥimṣī.¹² Resident in Damascus during Qāyṭbāy's early years, Ibn al-Ḥimṣī joined the train of the sultan's ambassador returning from negotiations with the Ottomans and relocated to Cairo. The recipient of a stipend from a trust endowed to free scholars for composition, he wrote his *Ḥawādīth al-Zamān wa-Wafayāt al-Shuyūkh wa'l-Aqrān* (*Events of the Age with Necrologies of Elders and Peers*) in 900/1495. Conceived as an extension of Ibn Ḥajar's *Inbāʾ al-Ghumr*, the chronicle is compiled in an exceedingly colloquial style bordering on the vulgar. But Ibn al-Ḥimṣī captured the ethos of Qāyṭbāy's viceregal establishment in Damascus, and commented at length on the monarch's visits. The *Ḥawādīth* is a goldmine of bureaucratic carpetbagging in this second city of the empire.

Of greater stature but comparable relevance to our topic is the polymath Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sakhāwī (d. 902/1497).¹³ Author of the huge biographical dictionary *al-Dawʾ al-Lāmīʿ*, al-Sakhāwī wrote a continuation of al-Dhahabī's history during his retirement in Mecca: *al-Dhayl al-Tāmm ʿalā Duwal al-Islām* (*The Consummate Appendix to the Nations of Islam*). While hardly duplicating the former historian's breadth, Sakhāwī's *Appendix* is valuable for its portrayal of elite doings in the holy cities of the Ḥijāz. The interminable rebellions of Bedouin chiefs are reported with details omitted by chronicles using secondary evidence in Cairo. Sakhāwī's descriptions of pilgrimage rites and arrivals of eminent personages from the capital read like a gossip column and recover the festive atmosphere of the Ḥajj season.

A member of the wealthy Cairene house of Jīʿān, Badr al-Dīn Abū'l-Baqāʾ ibn Yaḥyā (fl. 899/1494), who served as deputy to Qāyṭbāy's confidential secretary, Zayn al-Dīn ibn Muzhir, participated in the sultan's trip through Syria to the Euphrates frontier in 882/1477.¹⁴ His log of the journey describes conditions of rural life as well as receptions accorded the royal guests by provincial officials: *al-Qawl al-Mustaẓraf fī Safar Mawlānā al-Malik al-Ashraf* (*The Elegant Report Recounting the Voyage of Our Lord the Esteemed Monarch*). Among the swarms of admirers eulogizing Qāyṭbāy was Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf al-Bāʿūnī, who wrote in rajaz metre *al-Lamḥa al-Ashrafīya wa'l-Babja al-Sanīya* (*The Noble Glow, the Sublime Resplendence*).¹⁵ Amidst its flowery verses, one can discern the pious beneficence that so endeared Qāyṭbāy to the ʿulamāʾ and masked his avarice. Two anonymous authors wrote précis of Qāyṭbāy's reign: *Taʾrikh al-Malik al-Ashraf Qāyṭbāy* (*History of the Honored Sovereign Qāyṭbāy*)¹⁶ and *Jawābir al-Sulūk fī'l-Khulafāʾ wa'l-Mulūk* (*Gems of Deportment about Caliphs and Kings*).¹⁷ While neither yields any original information, each tallies up Qāyṭbāy's military expenses according to campaigns. Their focus on vast sums

bespeaks the favorable impression made by the sultan's defensive stance and his willingness to pay for it long after the Ottoman Conquest.

Al-Ghawrī received nothing comparable to the multiple coverage granted Qāyrbāy. But one tenth/sixteenth-century Syrian necrologist penned an intriguing obituary of him. Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Ḥalabī al-Ḥanbalī wrote *Durr al-Ḥabab fī Taʿrīkh Aʿyān Ḥalab* (*Loving Pearls Embellishing the History of Aleppo Notables*), which included his savage denunciation of al-Ghawrī's greed and love of luxury.¹⁸ An unnamed courtier left a history of Qāyrbāy's hapless heir, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, which elaborates on his shabby treatment as powerful amīrs maneuvered for power up to al-Ghawrī's succession: *Kitāb Ithbāt Dalālat Muḥammad ibn al-Marḥūm al-Malik al-Ashraf Qāyrbāy* (*A Tome Confirming Tokens of Muḥammad, Son of the Deceased Monarch al-Ashraf Qāyrbāy*).¹⁹ The biography of al-Ghawrī composed by the necrologist Abū'l-Makārim Muḥammad al-Ghazzī (977–1061/1570–1651) in his *al-Kawākib al-Sāʿira bi-Manāqib ʿUlamāʾ al-Miṣr al-ʿAshira* (*Lingering Luminaries among the Virtues of Tenth-Century Savants*) relies on earlier evidence and reveals nothing new.²⁰ Nor does the Damascene chronicler, Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Tūlūn (884–935/1479–1529), appreciably expand upon Ibn Iyās' comments. His *Iʿlām al-Warā bi-man wulliya Nāʿiban min al-Atrak bi-Dimashq* (*Men of Distinction among the Turks Appointed Viceroys in Damascus*) focuses primarily on imbroglions confronting governors in that city.²¹ His episodic tract *Mufākahat al-Khillān fī Ḥawādith al-Zamān* (*Boon Banter over Anecdotes of the Age*) qualifies few facets of the sultan's image as Ibn Iyās left it.²²

Archival documents analyzed as a component of the regime's private fiscal preserve consist of several hundred trust (*waqf*) deeds. Investment in charitable trusts proliferated during the later Mamlūk period because of abiding fiscal dilemmas discussed in chapters 6 and 7. These pious endowments are widely recognized as one of the most important cultural institutions of the Muslim community. Waqf donations provided much of the welfare extended to the needy and supported activities of the scholastic elite in a sophisticated academic setting. Their benefits to Islamic societies are incalculable.²³ Equally important but less publicized was the trust's function as an instrument of estate preservation.

This study utilizes data garnered from the large waqfs granted by sultans Qāyrbāy and al-Ghawrī, the former's spouse, their close associates, and shorter sale deeds taken over by al-Ghawrī. The massive endowments, each amended several times during their donors' careers, list rural and urban properties yielding revenue for charities described in the other half of the writs. Such properties embraced hundreds of individual agrarian plots, shops, inns, caravansarays, manufactories, rental apartments, and so forth. The rural tracts extended from Aswān to the Delta, while the urban holdings were concentrated in Cairo. Sections outlining the charities describe the sultan's mauso-

leum complex, comprised of his tomb (*qubba* or "dome"), college of law (*maḍrasa*), library (*khizānat al-kutub*), mystic hospice (*khānqāh*), orphanage (*ribāṭ al-aytām*) and related institutions, plus his other foundations in Cairo or the provinces. Teaching and custodial staffs, student stipends and rations, pensions for Ṣūfī residents, and related cash benefices are minutely detailed, with salary rates and operating budgets precisely tallied. These figures, when compared against sums generated by the endowments' productive properties, support speculative analysis of the charitable trust as the source of a personal fisc subject solely to its donor's manipulation.

These and related materials issued in Egypt during the Middle Ages (primarily the Ayyūbid and Mamlūk periods) are housed in two Cairo repositories: the National Archives (*Dār al-Wathā'iq al-Qawmīya*), classified within the Canonical Tribunal (*Maḥkama Shar'īya*), with jurisdiction over familial and estate affairs and abbreviated as DW; and the Ministry of Pious Endowments (*Wizārat al-Awqāf*), classified within the Medieval (pre-Ottoman) Repository (*Daftarkhānah*), abbreviated as AW. Documents in AW marked "old" (*qadīm*) indicate deeds classified before 1967, when a collection of some three hundred sale, substitution, and transfer writs was discovered. The latter were designated "new" (*jadīd*). The great majority of these were appropriated by Sultan al-Ghawrī. Muḥammad Amīn of Cairo University inventoried all surviving pre-Ottoman deeds in his *Catalogue des documents d'archives du Caire de 239/853 à 922/1516* (Cairo: IFAO, 1981), and assigned each a reference number, which accompanies all subsequent notations in chapter 7.

Notes

1. Philip Hitti, *The History of the Arabs*, 8th ed. (London, 1963), 683.

2. To date, this era has yet to be analyzed as a distinctive period. Neither Qāyrbāy nor Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī has been the subject of monographs. Brief articles in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* remain essential sources of reference. See *EI*¹ 2: M. Sobernheim, "Ḳā'itbey," 663–64 and "Ḳānṣūh," 720–21; *EI*² 4: E. Ashtor, "Ḳā'it Bāy," 462–63 and P. M. Holt, "Ḳānṣawh al-Ghawrī," 552–53. Gaston Wiet's remarks in his survey of Islamic Egypt are still the most coherent statement after five decades. See *L'Égypte arabe*, vol. 4 of G. Hanotaux' *L'histoire de la nation égyptienne* (Paris, 1937), 589–636. For a brief overview of Mamlūk institutions and politics, consult P. M. Holt, *The Age of the Crusades: The near East from the Eleventh Century to 1517* (London, 1986).

3. These summaries outline only prominent events in the regimes of the two sultans. For more in-depth biographies see *Twilight of Majesty*, as per n. 1 in the acknowledgments.

4. E. Ashtor, *A Social and Economic History of the Near East in the Middle Ages* (Berkeley, 1976), 309.

5. *GAL* 2, p. 41, no. 10; *Ḍawʿ* 10, p. 305, no. 1178; *Badāʾiʿ* 3, p. 45, 1. 23.

6. *GAL* Suppl. 2, p. 41, no. 12; *Ḍawʿ* 5, p. 217, no. 738; *Badāʾiʿ* 3, p. 309, 1. 23.

7. Ḥasan Ḥabashī, introduction to *Inbāʾ*, pp. 18–19.

8. *GAL* 2, p. 54, no. 17; Suppl. 2, p. 52, no. 17; *Badāʾiʿ* 4, p. 373, 1. 23.

9. *GAL* 2, p. 295, no. 1; Suppl. 2, p. 405, no. 1; *Badāʾiʿ* 4, p. 47, 1. 11 (obituary of author's father).

10. Ibn Iyās acknowledged Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī's sustained interest in literature. He mentioned the sultan's compositions in Turkish, which remained the language of the military elite in Cairo even when many of its members originated in Circassia. Al-Ghawrī compiled an anthology of Turkish poetry to which he contributed several pieces himself: *Dīwān-i Qānṣawh al-Ghawrī* (ms.: Berlin, Staatsbibliothek: Or. oct. 3744), edited and translated by Mehmet Yalsin, *Dīwān-i Qānṣawh al-Ghawrī: A Critical Edition of an Anthology of Turkish Poetry Commissioned by Sultan Qānṣawh al-Ghawrī (1501–1516)* (Ph. D. diss., Harvard University [Inner Asian and Altaic Studies], 1993). While a work such as the *Dīwān* attests to al-Ghawrī's poetic competence, its contents reflect on literary conventions in the Mamlūk court rather than on the regime's economic or political policies as interpreted by those compelled to endure them. Accordingly, the unique perspective of a close observer like Ibn Iyās remains indispensable.

11. Ibn Iyās' comments on the defensive posture adopted by al-Ghawrī's successor, Tūmānbāy, and policies of incorporation imposed by Selim I's governors occupy the bulk of volume five in the *Badāʾiʿ*. There is little evidence that Ibn Iyās recast his assessment of al-Ghawrī's actions to any significant degree either to vent his pent-up spleen with even more intensity or to curry favor with Egypt's new authorities. See Michael Winter, *Society and Religion in Early Ottoman Egypt: Studies in the Writings of ʿAbd al-Wahhāb at-Shaʿrānī* (New Brunswick, 1982), 5–6, 13–14, 18. Winter notes that the chronicler's dismay over the Ottoman Conquest disposed him neither to disparage deceased rulers unduly nor to exaggerate disruptions accompanying the change of government. Annemarie Schimmel focuses on Ibn Iyās' depiction of postconquest changes in judicial proceedings but not his castigation of al-Ghawrī. See "Kalif und Kadi im spätmittelalterlichen Ägypten," *Die Welt des Islams* 24 (1942): 84–93.

12. *GAL* Suppl. 2, p. 41, no. 12a.

13. *GAL* 2, p. 43, no. 1; Suppl. 2, pp. 31–32.

14. *GAL* 2, p. 38, no. 1; Suppl. 2, p. 26, no. 1; *Ḍaw'* 11, p. 8, no. 21, Not perused for this study but noted here is the account of the amīr Yashbak al-Zāhiri's embassy to Uzun Ḥasan in 880/1475, penned by Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Ajā, edited by 'Abd al-Qādir Aḥmad Tulaymāt (Cairo, 1973).

15. *GAL* 2, p. 54, no. 18; Suppl. 2, p. 67, no. 3; *Ḍaw'* 10, p. 89, no. 290.

16. *GAL* 2, p. 38; Suppl. 2, p. 26.

17. *GAL* 2, p. 42; Suppl. 2, p. 53.

18. *GAL* 2, p. 368; M. Sobernheim, "Ḳānshūh," *EI*¹ 2: 721. The work is dated 11 Dhū'l-Qa'ḍa 972/10 June 1565 on the colophon.

19. Not listed in *GAL*; Istanbul: Topkapı Saray, no. 2960.

20. *GAL* 2, p. 291, no. 8.

21. Edited by 'Abd al-'Aẓīm Ḥāmid Khaṭṭāb (Cairo, 1973).

22. Edited by Muḥammad Muṣṭafā, 2 vols. (Cairo, 1962, 1964). Another noteworthy work not utilized in this monograph bears mention. Aḥmad ibn 'Alī ibn Zunbul al-Shāfi'ī (d. 926/1520) wrote *Ta'riḫ al-Sulṭān Salīm al-'Uthmānī ma'a al-Sulṭān Qānshūh al-Ghūrī* (*History of Sultan Selim the Ottoman and Sultan Qānshūh al-Ghūrī*), a detailed log of the latter's last campaign culminating in his defeat and death at Marj Dābiq (*GAL* 2, p. 43, no. 19; Suppl. 2, p. 298, no. 1). Exploiting his post in the (Ottoman?) war office, Ibn Zunbul perused eyewitness versions of the dramatic battle. Because the analysis addresses al-Ghawrī's domestic policies, it omits this manuscript. Whether Ibn Iyās knew of it remains indeterminate since he makes no mention of it.

23. For the significance of charitable trusts in traditional Muslim societies, see Muḥammad M. Amīn, *Al-Awqāf wa'l-Ḥayāt al-Ijtimā'īya fī Miṣr* (Cairo, 1980); George Makdisi, *The Rise of Colleges: Institutions of Higher Learning in Islam and the West* (Edinburgh, 1981), 35–74; Carl F. Petry, "A Paradox of Patronage during the Later Mamlūk Period," *The Muslim World* 53 (1983): 190–95.