

steadily adds to the number of relevant digitized materials that it makes available online. What the publications reviewed or cited here show is that one thing still missing in the reappraisal of the founding periods of Middle East studies in Europe is mutual acknowledgement of the distinctive intellectual starting points from which we investigate them today.

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Muḥammad Ibn ‘Aqīl, Anne-Marie Eddé and Abdallah Cheikh-Moussa (ed. and trans.): *Les perles ordonnées: des vertus du sultan Barqūq (784–801/1382–1399): al-Durr al-naḍīd fī manāqib al-Malik al-Zāhir Abī Sa‘īd*

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Al-Durr al-naḍīd fī manāqib al-Malik al-Zāhir Abī Sa‘īd is a unique literary offering dedicated to the Syro-Egyptian sultan al-Zāhir Barqūq (r. 784–91/1382–89 and 792–801/1390–99), written by a certain Muḥammad Ibn ‘Aqīl and preserved in a single known manuscript in the German national library (Staatsbibliothek) in Berlin. First studied by Anne-Marie Eddé in an article from 2017, she subsequently joined forces with Abdallah Cheikh-Moussa to present a full diplomatic edition of the treatise along with a French translation on facing pages and an editorial introduction.

The text’s colophon indicates that it was completed on 15 Jumādā II 783/15 August 1383, less than a year after Barqūq ascended the throne (in Ramaḍān 784/December 1382). The editors tentatively identify the chancery agent Faṭḥ al-Dīn Muḥammad b. ‘Aqīl (d. 787/1387) as the author, although they also cite another possibility, leaving the matter ultimately unresolved. This relative indecisiveness on the part of the editors is notable throughout the introduction which lays out all relevant information and up-to-date bibliographic references for a contextualization of the text but lacks a powerful overall analysis.

The edition and translation are generally commendable. The translation is particularly noteworthy for rendering Ibn ‘Aqīl’s florid Arabic phrasings into elegant and readable French without sacrificing precision. The edition itself is largely diplomatic, presenting the manuscript’s text with minimal corrections, which are mostly confined to footnotes. Unusually, the editors also decided to follow the manuscript’s poetry layout and refrained from introducing hemistich dividers. They did note the relevant poetic meters and added vocalization based on attestation of poems in *diwāns*. By contrast, in the text’s second chapter devoted to “juridical questions” (*fī al-masā’il al-fiqhiyya*), the editors did intervene at a point where a folio of the manuscript is missing and restored it with material taken



from al-Jurjānī's (d. 482/1089) *Kitāb al-mu'āyāt fī al-fiqh 'alā madhhab imām al-Shāfi'ī*, which Ibn 'Aqīl relied on extensively for this chapter (pp. 100–1, source discussed on pp. 21–2).

This second chapter on juridical questions is doubtless the most distinctive feature of *al-Durr al-naḍīd* compared to other known literary offerings of the period. It is also rather distinct from the treatise's other materials. This chapter presents a series of ambiguous legal questions which can only be answered through complex juridical reasoning. In addition to identifying the chapter's sources, the editors also connect this section to a burgeoning contemporary literature of legal riddles which has received some attention recently by Elias Saba and Matthew Keegan. The inclusion of this material is remarkable for a text ostensibly devoted to sultanic virtues (*manāqib*). The editors plausibly suggest that Ibn 'Aqīl included this long section in the text because he wanted to present his candidacy for a high legal position (p. 21). Elsewhere in the text justice is put forward as an essential sultanic virtue. It is even the first word of the treatise following its incipit (pp. 44–5). The sultan's successful administration of justice is qualified by suggesting the necessity of surrounding himself with advisers who understand such legal intricacies.

The first chapter deals with another subject entirely: the history of the "Turkish state" (*Dawlat al-Turk*) from al-Mu'izz Aybak up to Barqūq. Sultans are listed and numbered in chronological order along with their main achievements, but without much narrative qualification. Despite the schematic format, this is a fascinating snapshot of the cultivation of historical memory in Cairo's courtly circles. Generally, the list of sultans in *al-Durr al-naḍīd* shows how the idea of the sultanate's political system being distinct from that of the preceding Ayyubid dynasty had come to full fruition by the late eighth/fourteenth century. At the same time, the list's clear interest in noting how sultans designated their heirs indicates that while Ibn 'Aqīl saw the Cairo sultanate as a distinct Turkish state with its own complex dynastic history, he did not yet consider the *mamlūk* background of its rulers to be essential, as many historians of the ninth/fifteenth century would do (designated "Mamlukisation" by Jo Van Steenberg). The text also allows an assessment of Clément Onimus' observation that during Barqūq's reign the memory of al-Zāhir Baybars (r. 1260–77) was foregrounded as foundational for the sultanate. Ibn 'Aqīl's text indeed calls Baybars "the most noble of the Turkish rulers" (*anbal man wulliya min mulūk al-Turk*, pp. 56–7). At the same time, Ibn 'Aqīl also accords praise to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, whose third ascent of the throne is said to have taken place "under the most fortunate ascendant and at the most auspicious time" (*fī ayman ṭālī' wa-as'ad waqt*, pp. 62–3). Ibn 'Aqīl furthermore compares Barqūq's splendour to both al-Zāhir Baybars and al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in a panegyric section (pp. 82–3).

The text's third and final chapter returns to the sultan's virtues. It is essentially another panegyric sprinkled with allusions to historical events from Barqūq's early sultanate which exemplify his virtues. There is a notable unique reference to Barqūq proscribing the Coptic Feast of the Martyr, contrasted with Barqūq's own participation in the yearly breaking of the dyke to allow water to flow into the canal (*kasr al-khalij*). This section and the text as a whole is concluded with a long poem, of which most lines are taken from a poem by an earlier Ayyubid poet. Poetry cited in the text's introduction and in the first chapter similarly relies extensive on Ayyubid-era poets, notably Ibn 'Unayn (d. 630/1233), an interesting appropriation that invites further research.

Although it is a short, unusual, and arguably somewhat inelegant and disjointed text, *al-Durr al-naḍīd* does offer much of interest to scholars of late medieval Egypt and Syria. Its publication and translation is an important contribution to the field and makes it accessible to a larger audience both within and beyond Mamluk studies.