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The library of a fourteenth century Jerusalem scholar

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One of the most conspicuous specimens of the recently discovered collection of Arabic documents in the Islamic Museum in the Ḥaram al-Sharif in Jerusalem is a list of the belongings, both household goods and books, of a certain Shaykh Burhān al-dīn Ibrāhīm al-Nāṣiri, together with the names of those who purchased them and with the prices for which the items of his estate were sold. For three reasons this document, nr. 61, deserves particular attention and an exhaustive study which I hope to complete in the not too distant future.

1. The owner of the assets, Burhān al-dīn Ibrāhīm b. Zayn al-dīn Rizqallāh al-Nāṣiri, is the one individual about whose career as “an enterprising, hard-working scholar Ṣūfi who managed, apparently, to make a decent if undistinguished life for himself by his learning and piety”¹⁾ the Ḥaram collection gives the most copious and precise information. According to DONALD LITTLE, to whom I owe the access to this document, there is a total of at least thirty-seven documents about this one man in the collection, on whom the contemporary biographical dictionaries and chronicles remain silent. Two of them, concerning Burhān al-dīn’s wives, were recently made accessible by HODA LOTFY in her article “A Study of Six Fourteenth Century Iqrārs from al-Quds Relating to Muslim Women”²⁾. Eleven documents, dealing mostly with his application for, and his appointment to, various positions in Jerusalem pious establishments, are listed, and tentatively dated and identified, in LINDA S. NORTHRUP’s and AMAL A. ABUL-HAJJ’s brief announcement of their common discovery of the collection in 1976³⁾. Our document adds important information on his material standing. Shaykh Burhān al-dīn died in the Holy City probably only briefly before 3 Sha’bān 790/7 August 1388; it was on this day that his widow, Shirin bint ‘Abdal-lāh, acknowledged receipt of the allowance paid to her and their common surviving children (document nr. 108)⁴⁾.

2. The vast majority of the items in the inventory are books. In this quality our list, which includes, besides nr. 61, possibly also nrs. 180 and 532 and conceivably

¹⁾ Donald P. Little, “The Significance of the Ḥaram Documents for the Study of Medieval Islamic History”, *Der Islam* 57 (1980), 189–219, here 218.

²⁾ In the press for JESHO. The author kindly gave me access to the manuscript, submitted for publication.

³⁾ “A Collection of Medieval Arabic Documents in the Islamic Museum at the Ḥaram al-Šarif”, *Arabica* 25 (1978), 282–91, nrs. 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 16.

⁴⁾ Edited, translated and evaluated by H. Lotfy, see note 2.

other sheets which are not now extant, stands alone in the whole collection. We learn about the library, i. e. about the literary and intellectual interests, not of a famous scholar or of a much envied and emulated bibliophile, but of an average "college teacher" in a provincial Syrian town in the Burjī era. The number of copies of certain standard works can be used as a clue for a better knowledge of the reading lists and teaching programs in *madāris* and Šūfī convents in this period.

3. The document seems to be unique also for diplomatic reasons⁵). It records the sale of Qāḍī Burhān al-dīn's estate. The prices are designated in *siyāq*-script, both those of the individual items and the total sums to be paid by each purchaser. Furthermore the document is a *daftar*, i. e. it is folded vertically, so that it could be sewn, bound and filed in the qāḍī's office. All these qualities make it appear very similar to those 27 documents of the collection which are labelled a *makhzūma*⁶). In its broadest meaning this term seems to denote inventories of property; it is used in narrative sources e. g. in connection with the attempted confiscation of the property of the Damascene qāḍī Ibn al-Šā'igh in 682/1283⁷). Its legal sense seems to be narrower: records of *sold* objects. In the case of our document the designation *makhzūma* – or *waraqa mubāraka*⁸) – is missing at the top of the right column of the recto. Furthermore it is neither dated, nor signed, nor certified on the verso. Perhaps it is a first draft of a *makhzūma*, or an adjunct to a more concise yet legally relevant *makhzūma* which has not survived.

In the second line of the document, after the *ḥamdala*, we read: *mufradāt al-asmā' al-mubā'a min tarikat al-marḥūm Burhān al-dīn al-Nāṣirī al-mutawaffā ilā raḥmat Allāh ta'ālā qabl ta'rikhihi* "detailed list of the items that were sold from the estate of the late Burhān al-dīn al-Nāṣirī who passed into the mercy of God the Almighty before the date [of its issue]". The latter phrase becomes understandable if one considers that such lists of assets were often drawn up when the owner was not dead but only terminally ill and wanted to put his estate in order before he died. After this introduction the inventory itself begins. In the following study I shall confine myself to document nr. 61 wherever exact figures and names are concerned. For the adequate portrayal of Burhān al-dīn's library as a representative collection of his time an at least cursory glance at the books listed in documents nr. 180 and 532 seemed to me to be indispensable, even if there remains the possibility that these two sheets refer to different holdings. All entries with the additional indica-

⁵) This is certainly Professor D. Little's opinion (letter of January 15, 1981 to the author).

⁶) On this term see Little, "Significance", 206, and Lotfy, "Study", notes to Haram 205 – recto only, lines 8–9.

⁷) Shams al-dīn Muḥammad al-Jazarī, *Ḥawādith al-zamān*, ms. Gotha ar. 1561, fol. 31a, edited in U. Haarmann, *Quellenstudien zur frühen Mamlukenzeit*, Freiburg 1969, Arabic p. 14, line 10; see now also: Haarmann, "Die Leiden des Qāḍī Ibn al-Šā'ig. Ein Beitrag zur Sozialgeschichte der Stadt Damaskus im 13. Jahrhundert", in: H. R. Roemer und A. Noth, Hrsg., *Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur des Vorderen Orients. Festschrift für Bertold Spuler zum 70. Geburtstag*, Leiden: Brill, 1981, 108–122.

⁸) Little, "Significance", 207.

tion: nr. 180 and nr. 532 remain therefore liable to deletion from the following survey.

The text of the deed consists of 92 lines and is divided into fourteen paragraphs in accordance with the number of buyers. First the name of the purchaser is given, then the individual items follow together with their respective prices written directly beneath, and finally the sum of the sale is stated for each of the fourteen persons. Out of the 153 items 138 are books. The rest are household goods. The language of the document, parenthetically, displays the characteristics of 'Middle Arabic': *ma-wā'id* for *mawā'iz*; *juzw* for *juz'*; *naṣṣayn* for *naṣṣān* etc.

Shaykh Burhān al-din's close attachment to his native city Jerusalem and to the institutions founded by Saladin, the redeemer of the city, is palpable throughout the document. Most probably two works of Saladin's biographer Ibn Shaddād (d. 632/1234), the *Dalā'il al-aḥkām*, and the vita of the conqueror, *al-Nawādir al-Yūsufiyya*, and one of the numerous *Faḍā'il al-Quds* books belonged to him. Document nr. 532 lists a grammatical commentary by a Jerusalem scholar who died in the same year as our shaykh. Equally important is the relatively little known *Kitāb Mushkil al-ṣaḥīḥayn* by the *ibn al-nās* Khalīl b. Kaykaldī who taught at the Ṣalāḥiyya in Jerusalem during Shaykh Burhān al-din's apprenticeship and early career and died there in 761/1359. The *ṣūfi* brethren of the shaykh, incidentally, made sure that this book, obviously a work of sentimental value to the circle, was not sold to the outside and acquired it themselves, together with his white *kāmiliyya*.

Among those who purchased his belongings we find not only local 'ulamā' such as Shaykh Shams al-din al-Dayrī, whose *nisba* points to the immediate vicinity of Jerusalem, the Ḥanafī and Shāfi'ī chief judges of the city, or Shaykh Shams al-din al-Qalqashandī — perhaps an ancestor of Ibrāhīm al-Qalqashandī al-Maqdisī who wrote several works on tradition and died in Cairo in 922/1516 — but also several members of the ruling military aristocracy such as al-Maqarr al-Nāṣirī — i.e. the Mamluk *amīr* Nāṣir al-din —, al-Maqarr al-Sayfī Bulūṭ ("cloud"), and, if my reading is correct, the *ustādār* Shams al-din al-Ḥalabī. This *major domo* probably belonged to the household of one of the lesser Syrian governors. Document nr. 532 lists a Mamluk of the just mentioned *amīr* al-Sayfī Bulūṭ with the name of Taghri Qirmish and the local agent of the exchequer, Shihāb al-din al-Miṣrī. The available narrative sources have so far yielded no information on these fourteen men, nor on the thirty-five and thirty-nine names given in documents 180 and 532 respectively.

Let us now turn to the 153 items themselves. As we have seen, fifteen out of these 153 are household commodities. Like in the numerous death inventories of the Ḥaram collection and in other comparable lists from Mamluk and Ottoman Egypt and Syria we find boxes, book-cases (*khizāna*), bundles (*buqja*), ottomans (*tarrāḥa*), wooden shelves (*raffa*) and chairs, small furniture (*qushsha*), colorful pillows (*mikhadda*), a broken mortar (*hāwun maksūr*), an oven consisting of different parts (*tan-nūr hayākil* [?]), lanterns (*fanār*), candelabra (*sham'adān*), copper pots (*rakwa*), an iron crutch ('*ukkāz ḥadīd*'), a sword, several carpets and prayer-rugs of Syrian and Anatolian provenance, fans (*marāwih*), shirts, robes and other clothes made from linen and wool, of local manufacture and imported from Upper Egypt, and surprisingly many wooden clogs. Gradually the atmosphere in which this lowly shaykh lived and worked emerges from our document.

The different interests and needs of the purchasers appear clearly from their choice of the items. The Ḥanafī *qāḍī* e. g. must have been a practical man. He selected only books that concerned his own *madhhab*, such as a commentary on Shaybānī's *Āthār*, and spent a considerable sum on china (*ṣuḥūn qashānī*) and a wooden case. The Mamluk *amir* Bulūṭ was equally practical. He invested his money, apart from two standard works on Mālikī and Ḥanafī *fiqh*, al-Bāji's *Muntaqā* and al-Qudūri's *Mukhtaṣar*, in numerous copies, both complete and incomplete, of the Qur'ān, in one anonymous *dīwān* for pleasant reading, a tripod (*sībā*) and several boxes. The Shāfi'ī *hākim*, on the other side, who is granted the honorific epithet *sayyidunā* in the deed, must have been a man with wide intellectual and literary interests. He bought only books, both scholarly and literary, ranging from Muntakhab al-dīn Ḥusayn al-Hamadhānī's commentary on the *Shāṭibiyya* – the famous versification of al-Dānī's work on the seven readings – to the edifying sermons of the elder Ibn Nubāta, al-Māwardī's *Adab al-dunyā wa'l-dīn* and al-Ḥariri's *Maqāmāt*. Among the fourteen purchasers there was one wealthy bibliophile, a certain Bahā' al-dīn b. al-Muhandis. He acquired fifty-six items, all books, both from the religious and the Arabic sciences.

The information contained in the document is of course as concise as it was possible for the given legal and fiscal purposes. Small articles are usually mentioned summarily in one entry with an appropriate term. More than once in the title of a book is followed by *ghayruhū*, i. e. "including others". Whether this refers to a *majmū'a*, containing several works, the first of which is only named, or whether the *qāḍī* or the official who drew up the document collected several independent books under one heading because they were assessed and sold together at one single price, can hardly ever be decided.

Very often the entries consist only of the first, or the most prominent, element of the title of a book, and can therefore not always be safely identified. One example is the *Kitāb al-Īdāh* that is mentioned more than once. Our knowledge about the scholarly activities in and around al-Aqṣā mosque in the Mamluk period⁹⁾ makes it likely, yet not certain, that Abū 'Alī al-Fārisī's grammar and not al-Khaṭīb al-Qazwīnī's manual of rhetoric is meant. When the books were especially well known to the contemporaries, only the name of the author is given, e. g. Bukhārī, Muslim, al-Sharīshī or al-Ṣarṣarī. Many titles are listed twice or even more often, particularly if we include the two documents nr. 180 and 532. These books tell us more than others about the inclinations and the academic specialization of Shaykh Burhān al-dīn. The duplicates include titles as far afield as Abū Ḥafṣ 'Umar al-Suhrawardī's mystic *summa* *'Awārif al-ma'ārif*, the widely read *Faṣiḥ* of the Kufan grammarian Tha'lab, al-Rāfi'ī's handbook of Shāfi'ī law, *al-Muḥarrar*, and Ibn Nubāta al-Miṣrī's popular *dīwān*.

A few authors seem to be represented with surprisingly many of their works. One is Tha'lab with his just mentioned *Faṣiḥ* and his *Mujālasāt*. Others are 'Abd al-Ḥaqq al-Ishbili al-Kharrāṭ with his *Raqā'iq*, his *Aḥkām* and the *Jam' bayn al-ṣaḥī-*

⁹⁾ 'Abd al-Jalil Ḥasan 'Abd al-Mahdī, *al-Ḥaraka al-fikriyya fī ḡill al-Masjid al-Aqṣā fī l-'aṣrayn al-ayyūbī wa'l-mamlūkī*, Amman: Maktabat al-Aqṣā 1400/1980, 151.

ḥayn, or 'Iyād b. Mūsā al-Sabtī with the *K. al-Shifā* "on the duties of man towards the Prophet", and the *ḥadīth* work *Mashāriq al-anwār*. From the writings of Ibn Qutayba we find mentioned both his *Gharīb al-Qur'ān* and the *Mushkil al-ḥadīth* as well as, in document nr. 532, the *Uyūn al-akhbār*. Also Sa'd al-din al-Kāzarūnī may well be represented with two of his works, the *Mawlūd al-nabī* and the *Musalsalāt*. And from Ibn Ḥājib we have both his handbook of Mālikī law and one of his grammatical writings. Shaykh Burhān al-dīn's favorite writer, however, was the Ḥanbalī polymath Ibn al-Jawzī. His sermons (*khuṭab*, nrs. 61 and 532), his *Manāqib* 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, his catechisms *Uns al-nufūs* and *Tabṣīrat al-mubtadi* (61 and 180), and, his authorship provided, also his *Faḍā'il al-Quds* and his *Sharḥ Mushkil al-ṣaḥīḥayn*, are recorded in our list.

The *ṣūfī* orientation of our scholar is visible throughout the inventory of his books. It may be useful to recall that in precisely this decade, the first years of Sultan Barqūq's rule, the Mamluk government began to patronize the establishment of combined *khānqāh-madāris*, and thus promoted the integration of popular, *ṣūfī*, practices into academic teaching. We know from the endowment deed of Sultan Barqūq, composed between the years 788/1386 and 797/1395, that *ṣūfī* students were paid salaries for their participation in the daily *dhikr*, in addition to their stipends for academic or menial jobs assigned to them in the *madrasa*. *Ṣūfī* books are prevalent in Burhān al-dīn's library. We find classics, such as al-Muḥāsibī's *K. al-Ri'āya li-ḥuqūq Allāh*, al-Qushayrī's *Risāla* (nr. 532), al-Wā'iz al-Makki's *Qūt al-qulūb* (nr. 532), Ibn 'Arabī's *Futūḥāt* (nr. 532), Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh's biographies of al-Anṣārī al-Mursī, al-Shādhilī al-Kalabādhī's *Akḥbār* and, as we have seen, al-Suhrawardī's *Awārif al-ma'ārif*, but also – if I interpret correctly – an autograph by Junayd, al-Ṭā'ūsī's treatise on the mystical value of letters, and two works by al-Ṣarṣārī. Ya'qūb b. Yūnus al-Ṣarṣārī, who died in Baghdad in 656/1258, the year of the Mongol invasion into Iraq, was one of the most popular *ṣūfī* poets in Mamluk Egypt and Syria. Sultan Barqūq laid down in the *waqfiyya* of his own Cairo *madrasa*, endowed in the very years of Burhān al-dīn's teaching activities, that the salaried *mādiḥ*, "eulogizer", of the school should regularly recite al-Ṣarṣārī's poem in praise of the Prophet Muḥamad¹⁰). Each verse of Ṣarṣārī's mystic *qaṣīda* contains all the letters of the alphabet and was therefore, so one may surmise, of a high symbolic – and possibly didactic – value for the students. The close and institutionalized connection between the capital of the Mamluk domains and Jerusalem finds its expression in Barqūq's endowment deed. Barqūq who is known for his efforts to curb the spreading of *awqāf* for fiscal reasons and who certainly tried to keep the budget of his *madrasa* as low as possible, permitted the professors (*mutaṣaddirūn*) to take a paid leave of absence to make the journey to Holy Jerusalem whenever they chose to do so.

Books on Shāfi'ī law and other, not strictly legal, writings by eminent Shāfi'ī authors enjoy an even more prominent position on Burhān al-dīn's agenda than the works on *taṣawwuf*. Fakhr al-dīn al-Rāzī is represented with his two *uṣūl* works *al-Muntakhab* and *al-Maḥṣūl*, al-Ghazzālī with parts of the *Iḥyā* (nr. 532), his *'aqā'id* (nr. 532), the *Jawāhir al-Qur'ān* and his *fiqh*-books *al-Wasīṭ* and *al-Wajīz fī l-fiqh* (nr.

¹⁰) Cf. Felicitas Jaritz in: Saleh Lamei Mostafa, *Madrasa, Ḥānqāh und Mausoleum des Barqūq in Kairo*, Glückstadt 1982, 131 (line 1) and 156, including note 14.

532). We already mentioned al-Rāfiʿi's legal manual *al-Muharrar*. If our identification is correct, al-Fayyūmi's glosses on al-Rāfiʿi's commentary on al-Ghazzālī's *al-Wajīz* are also listed. Abū Ishāq al-Shirāzī's books on Shāfiʿi *furūʿ*, *al-Tanbīh* and *al-Muhadhdhab* (nrs. 61 and 532), stand side by side with works by Abū Ishāq's most important commentator, the famous al-Nawawī. Both Nawawī's *Riyāḍ al-ṣāliḥīn* his *Adhkār*, and his *Rawḍat al-ṭālibīn* could be found in Burhān al-dīn's library.

Apart from the books on mysticism and Shāfiʿi jurisprudence, the syllabus is rather mixed. There are a few standard titles on Mālikī and Ḥanafī law. The work on *ḥadīth* include the *ṣaḥīḥayn* in several copies, selections from, and a commentary on, Muslim (nr. 532), writings by the early *muḥaddith* ʿAbdallāh b. al-Mubārak, and titles by Ibn Qutayba, ʿIyād, Kharrāṭ, Kāzarūnī, and Ibn al-Munayyir. We read about one work on *al-Nāsikh wa'l-mansūkh*. The Qurʾān commentaries mentioned in the document – in the first place al-Qushayrī's *Laṭāʾif al-ishārāt* – underscore the mystic leanings of our shaykh. Among the books on the seven readings, the copy of, and a commentary on, the *Shāṭibiyya* deserve to be mentioned. Political thought is represented by two copies of al-Māwardī's *Adab al-dunyā wa'l-dīn* and al-Ṭurṭūshī's famous mirror-of-princes work *Sirāj al-mulūk* (nrs. 61 and 532).

History proper is underrepresented. Two *futūḥ*-works, one on Egypt and one on Syria, a general "History of Egypt", al-Azraqī's *Akhbār Makka* and the *Taʾrīkh Baghdād* (all in nr. 532) are recorded. Apart from Ibn Shaddād's encomium of Sultan Saladin – the liberator of Burhān al-dīn's city from infidel occupation – and Sibṭ b. al-Jawzī's *Mirāt al-zamān*, no near-contemporary work is given, despite the unprecedented wealth of historical writing in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in Egypt and Syria. One *ṭabaqāt* work is listed without any further specifications. Complete (nr. 532) and incomplete copies of the *Sira* and the relatively obscure biographies of the *ṣaḥāba* by al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Iṣbahānī stand for early Muslim historiography.

A commentary on Ibn Sinā's logical mainwork, the *Ishārāt*, does not seem to fit into the strictly religious library of our shaykh. It would therefore seem likely that the author of this commentary is critical of Ibn Sinā's freethinking approach to logic. This would speak for a tentative identification of this anonymous *sharḥ* with Fakhr al-dīn al-Rāzī's *Lubāb* or al-ʿĀmidī's *Kashf al-tamwīhāt*, and not with Naṣīr al-dīn al-Ṭūsī's strictly philosophical *Ḥall mushkilāt al-ishārāt*.

Another isolated specimen of its kind is Shihāb al-dīn Aḥmad al-Maqdisī's treatise *al-Badr al-munīr fī ʿilm al-taʾbīr* on the interpretation of dreams. Sermons and other short paraenetical works, many of which seem to have been incomplete, are ubiquitous. Ibn Nubāta the Elder's *khuṭab*, Ibn al-Jawzī's different works, Abū l-Layth al-Samarqandī's *Tanbīh al-ghāfilīn*, Diyāʾ al-dīn al-Maqdisī's *Ṣifat al-jann wa'l-nār*, numerous *mawālīd* tracts, edifying pamphlets (*mawāʿiz*) and prayer underscore the importance of popular religious writing also for a scholar in this period. If we leave aside the writings of al-Ghazzālī who holds a special position in orthodox theology, we look in vain for only one book on *kalām* proper. Also the natural sciences are neglected – with the sole exception of an anonymous title on medicine.

Finally there remain the books on the *ʿulūm al-ʿarab*. Some of them are anonymous (*majmūʿ lugha*), others identifiable such as al-Zamakhsharī's *Mufaṣṣṣal* (nr. 532).

and *Asās al-balāgha*, numerous commentaries and glosses on Ibn Mālik's *Alfiyya* (including one by the Jerusalem scholar Ibn al-Raṣṣās who died in 790/1388)¹¹), Ibn Jinnī's *Luma'* and Ibn Mu'tī al-Zawānī's *Fuṣūl khamsīn*. To the two works by Tha'lab mentioned above we have to add an anonymous commentary on his *Faṣiḥ*. The title *Masā'il al-khilāf* in nr. 532 may refer to grammatical controversies. In nr. 532 Ibn Ya'ish's commentary on the *Mufaṣṣal* is recorded.

Several anonymous *diwāns* and a few well known poetic works such as al-Mutanabbī's poetry, al-Tha'ālībī's *Yatima* (both in nr. 180) together with a *tajrid al-Yatima* (nr. 532), Ibn Nubāta al-Miṣrī's *Diwān*, al-Ḥuṣrī's *Zahr al-ādāb* and, of course, al-Ḥarirī's *Maqāmāt* (in several copies) including al-Sharishī's commentary, attest to Burhān al-dīn's literary interests.

Our document is, however, not only an unbiased source of information on the identities and likings of fourteen individuals who bought books and furniture from the estate of a little known Jerusalem scholar at the end of the eighth/fourteenth century. Nor does it only reflect the standard inventory of reading of such a humble shaykh who never made it into the biographical dictionaries of the age. It also gives the prices of these commodities and thus provides us with data on the relative value of books in comparison to household articles, and on the market for second hand goods in Jerusalem during this period. A full appreciation, however, of these figures, which are given in Damascene *dirhams*, and will first have to be deciphered from their *siyāq* "camouflage", will require careful study of comparable texts both in and beyond the Ḥaram collection.

¹¹) Ibidem, 146 and note 7, with a reference to al-'Ulaymī's *al-Uns al-jalīl*.