Title	Formation of the ideal bureaucrat image and patronage in the late Mamlūk period : Zayn al-Dīn ibn Muzhir and 'ulamā'
Sub Title	
Author	太田 (塚田), 絵里奈(Ota-Tsukada, Erina)
Publisher	Department of Asian History, Faculty of Letters, Keio University
Publication year	2022
Jtitle	Al-Madaniyya : Keio bulletin of Middle Eastern and Asian urban history No.1 (2021.) ,p.[41]- 61
JaLC DOI	
Abstract	Zayn al-Dīn Abū Bakr ibn Muzhir was one of the most prominent bureaucrats of the late Mamlūk period. It is worth noting that during the financial crisis of the fifteenth century, Zayn al-Dīn maintained the highest authority as an administrator for a considerably long time. In this paper, we focus on the relationship between Zayn al-Dīn and his contemporary scholars, who were an important part of his horizontal networks. Most of them described Zayn al-Dīn as a virtuous, ideal bureaucrat; however, historical facts reconstructed by al-Biqāʿī's chronicle are in great discord with the image of Zayn al-Dīn narrated by many historians. Zayn al-Dīn's charitable projects for scholars not only extended his influence by gaining the scholars' support and controlling them at the same time but also functioned as an investment from a long-term perspective, to pass down his positions, wealth, and human networks to the next generation. Al-Biqāʿī's letter to Zayn al-Dīn, written after the controversy of Ibn al-Fāriḍ, reflects his wide authority over personnel affairs. His acquisition of an exceptionally long period of service could be attributed to his vertical and horizontal networks, based on the exceptional scale of his patronage as a civilian bureaucrat of his time.
Notes	Articles
Genre	Journal Article
URL	https://koara.lib.keio.ac.jp/xoonips/modules/xoonips/detail.php?koara_id=AA12949557-00000001-0041

Formation of the Ideal Bureaucrat Image and Patronage in the Late Mamlūk Period : Zayn al-Dīn Ibn Muzhir and *'Ulamā'*

Erina Ota-Tsukada[1]

Abstract

Zayn al-Dīn Abū Bakr ibn Muzhir was one of the most prominent bureaucrats of the late Mamlūk period. It is worth noting that during the financial crisis of the fifteenth century, Zayn al-Dīn maintained the highest authority as an administrator for a considerably long time. In this paper, we focus on the relationship between Zayn al-Dīn and his contemporary scholars, who were an important part of his horizontal networks. Most of them described Zayn al-Dīn as a virtuous, ideal bureaucrat; however, historical facts reconstructed by al-Biqā'ī's chronicle are in great discord with the image of Zayn al-Dīn narrated by many historians. Zayn al-Dīn's charitable projects for scholars not only extended his influence by gaining the scholars' support and controlling them at the same time but also functioned as an investment from a long-term perspective, to pass down his positions, wealth, and human networks to the next generation. Al-Biqā'ī's letter to Zayn al-Dīn, written after the controversy of Ibn al-Fāriḍ, reflects his wide authority over personnel affairs. His acquisition of an exceptionally long period of service could be attributed to his vertical and horizontal networks, based on the exceptional scale of his patronage as a civilian bureaucrat of his time.

I. Introduction

Zayn al-Dīn Abū Bakr ibn Muzhir (831-893/1428-1488) was one of the most prominent bureaucrats in the late Mamlūk period; for 26 years, he was the *kātib al-sirr* (the chief secretary), which was the head position of all scribes of the sultanate[2].

---

[1] Project Assistant Professor, Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies; Lecturer, Keio University.

[2] The Muzhir family's members and their careers are outlined in Bernadette Martel-Thoumian, *Les civils et l'administration dans l'état militaire mamlūk (ixe/xve siécle)*, Damascus: Institut français de Damas, 1992, pp. 267-281. I reconstruct them again with revisions concerning the identification of periods and

During the financial crisis of the fifteenth century Mamlūk government, repeated international warfare and plagues, sale of offices, arbitrary discharges, and confiscation of properties became common; consequently, civilian bureaucrats suffered[3]. In such a social background, it is worth noting that Zayn al-Dīn could have maintained the highest authority as an administrator for quite a long time.

During this period, appointments to high-ranking offices, retaining those positions, and reappointment after discharge were mainly based on a system of sale of offices by offering properties to the sultan and recommendation from prominent government figures. Therefore, the factors needed to maintain power as administrator can be summarized in three: 1) competence and knowledge required for offices, 2) properties that were sufficient for acquiring and keeping position, and 3) human relationships. The knowledge and skills as scribes, positions, properties, and some parts of human relationships could be inherited from one generation to the next vertically; therefore, people from notable bureaucrat families were already in an advantageous position for acquiring official positions. On the other hand, the horizontal networks, which were renewed and expanded in each generation (i.e., relationships between the military and civilian elites of scholars and bureaucrats) served not only as means of having an advantage in seeking offices, but also as defensive measures for family and individual crises in case of extinction or downfall[4].

In this paper, we focus on the relationship between Zayn al-Dīn and his contemporary scholars, which was an important part of his horizontal human network[5].

---

figures, and my interpretations of sources in Erina Ota-Tsukada, "Zayn al-Dīn ibn Muzhir (1): The Career and Lineage of an Influential Bureaucrat in the Late Mamlūk Period," *Shigaku (The Historical Science)*, 2014, 83/2-3, pp. 37-81 (in Japanese). For Zayn al-Dīn's charitable projects, see idem., "Zayn al-Dīn ibn Muzhir (2): The Official Duties and Charitable Achievements of an Influential Bureaucrat in the Late Mamlūk Period," *Shigaku (The Historical Science)*, 2015, 84/1-4, pp. 135-180 (in Japanese). Concerning survival strategy of the Muzhir family by means of marriage, see idem., "The Muzhir Family: Marriage as a Disaster Mitigation Strategy", *Orient*, 54, 2019, pp. 127-144.

[3] For the sale of offices in this period, see Aḥmad ʿAbd al-Rāziq Aḥmad, *al-Badhl wa'l-Barṭala Zaman Salāṭīn al-Mamālīk: Dirāsa ʿan al-Rishwa*, Cairo: al-Hayʾa al-Miṣriyya al-ʿĀmma li'l-Kitāb, 1979; Bernadette Martel-Thoumian, "The Sale of Office and Its Economic Consequences during the Rule of the Last Circassians (872-922/1468-1516)", *Mamlūk Studies Review*, 9/2, 2005, pp. 49-83; Toru Miura, "Administrative Networks in the Mamlūk Period: Taxation, Legal Execution, and Bribery", in Tsugitaka Sato (ed.), *Islamic Urbanism in Human History: Political Power and Social Networks*, London: Kegan Paul International, 1997, pp. 39-76.

[4] Ota-Tsukada, "The Muzhir Family", pp. 136-138.

[5] Both bureaucrats and religious officials were categorized into non-militant officials (*arbāb al-aqlām*); however, the division between them was not strictly maintained. As a pair conception of the militant (*arbāb al-suyūf*), non-militant officials were generically referred to as "men of pen". In general, they assumed the same basic Islamic knowledge and then went on to different educational specializations for

Civilian elites, comprising both bureaucrats and scholars, had been in reciprocal relationships such as with the military class through intercession, recommendations, and affording benefits by means of legal judgement[6]. However, little is known about how their mutual relationships were built and maintained[7]. Because the status of *mamlūk* was principally limited to one generation, the relationship between bureaucrat and military elite could not be passed down from father to son[8]. The Muzhir family, which had moved their base of activity from Damascus to Cairo in the early fifteenth century, seemingly needed to also redevelop relationship with the local civilian elites.

For bureaucrat families, such human relationships served as safety nets that must have been formed systematically and inherited to the next generation[9]. In this paper, we first scrutinize descriptions of Zayn al-Dīn written by his contemporary scholars; the majority of them described him as a virtuous ideal bureaucrat. On the other hand, the description of young Zayn al-Dīn by notable Qur'ān commentator Burhān al-Dīn Ibrāhīm al-Biqāʿī (809-885/1407-1480) was quite bitter. However, al-Biqāʿī eventually adopted a positive attitude toward him in line with other contemporary scholars. Through an analysis of Zayn al-Dīn's career and social background that brought him such high evaluation, we locate him in the contemporary scholastic society. Next, we focus on projects on behalf of scholars led by Zayn al-Dīn from the viewpoint of his construction of relationship with scholars in the capital. Finally, we compare the image of Zayn al-Dīn as an administrator to that of Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad (786-832/1384/5-1429, Badr al-Dīn II), who was Zayn al-Dīn's father and also a powerful bureaucrat; we propose a survival strategy of this prominent bureaucrat who lived in the turbulent period of the fifteenth century.

---

each profession; however, a not insignificant number of them engaged in both "professions of the *dīwān*s (*al-waẓā'if al-dīwāniyya*)" and "professions of the religion (*al-waẓā'if al-dīniyya*)". The Muzhir family was a local distinguished family that had produced both scholars and bureaucrats for several generations, centered in Nābulus and Damascus. However, from the generation of Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad (d. 793/1391, the grandfather of Zayn al-Dīn), the first figure of the family who assumed the office of *kātib al-sirr* of Damascus, the Muzhir family produced only administrators of the *dīwān*s and enhanced their reputation as a notable bureaucrat family.

[6] Concerning Zayn al-Dīn's support and intercessions for the sake of scholars, see Ota-Tsukada, "Zayn al-Dīn ibn Muzhir (2)", pp. 160-162.

[7] For the construction of relationship between the civilian bureaucrats and military elites, see Mathieu Eychenne, *Liens personnels, clientélisme et réseaux de pouvoir dans le sultanat mamelouk (milieu xiiie-fin xive siècle)*, Damascus: Presses de l'Ifpo, 2013, Chapitre V, esp. p. 305.

[8] Ibid., p. 307.

[9] Ota-Tsukada, "The Muzhir Family", p. 128.

II. Descriptions of Zayn al-Dīn by His Contemporary Scholars

1. Positive descriptions

Zayn al-Dīn received specialized education as administrator in his childhood, backed by the legacy of Badr al-Dīn II, who died immediately after Zayn al-Dīn's birth; he committed to the study of Ḥadīth[10]. He also studied under the chief Shāfiʿī judge ʿAlam al-Dīn Ṣāliḥ al-Bulqīnī (791-868/1389-1464), who became the fourth spouse of Zayn al-Dīn's mother Khadīja ibna Amīr Ḥājj ibn al-Baysarī (d. 878/1474)[11], and gained licenses (*ijāza*) in teaching (*tadrīs*) jurisprudence and in issuing legal opinions (*iftāʾ*) from him.

  With this academic background, historian Zayn (Shihāb) al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Iyās (ca. 852-930/1448-1524) emphasizes Zayn al-Dīn's reputation as an administrator, adding that he was an excellent scholar (*ʿālim*), well-informed about the jurisprudence[12]. According to ʿAbd al-Bāsiṭ al-Malaṭī (844-920/1440-1514), who was also Zayn al-Dīn's contemporary chronicler, Zayn al-Dīn devoted himself to studying under a group (*jamāʿa*) of scholars, excelling in jurisprudence, and despite assuming important state positions, he loved knowledge (*ʿilm*) and the people who engaged in it, pious deeds, and charities[13]. Although there is no historical source indicating Zayn al-Dīn's involvement in judiciary positions throughout his career, we can conclude that he was a bureaucrat who was well-grounded in jurisprudence and maintained close academic communication with jurists even after his advancement as an administrator.

  Jalāl al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Suyūṭī (849-911/1445-1505), a savant who claimed to be "the reformer of Islam (*mujaddid*)", describes Zayn al-Dīn's personality more concretely. According to him, Zayn al-Dīn "had fame and pure soul, and exceeded in study. He was friendly and very modest…rescued the poor and people who suffered injustice, and engaged in virtuous, pious deeds, and charities"[14].

  Furthermore, famous historian and Ḥadīth scholar Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Sakhāwī (830-902/1427-1497) highly praises Zayn al-Dīn as follows[15]:

---

[10] al-Sakhāwī, *al-Dhayl ʿalā Rafʿ al-Iṣr aw Bughyat al-ʿUlamāʾ waʾl-Ruwāh*, Cairo: al-Hayʾa al-Miṣriyya al-ʿĀmma liʾl-Kitāb, 2000 [abbr. *Dhayl Rafʿ*], p. 485.

[11] For Khadīja's career, see Ota-Tsukada, "The Muzhir Family", p. 135.

[12] Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ al-Zuhūr fī Waqāʾiʿ al-Duhūr*, 6 vols., Cairo: Dār al-Kutub waʾl-Wathāʾiq al-Qawmiyya biʾl-Qāhira, 2008 [abbr. *Badāʾiʿ*], vol. 3, p. 255.

[13] al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-Amal fī Dhayl al-Duwal*, 9 vols., Beirut and Sayda: al-Maktaba al-ʿAṣriyya, 2002 [abbr. *Nayl*], vol. 8, p. 120.

[14] al-Suyūṭī, *Naẓm al-ʿIqyān fī Aʿyān al-Aʿyān*, Cairo: Maktabat al-Thaqāfa al-Dīniyya, 2000, p. 97.

[15] *Dhayl Rafʿ*, p. 469.

He exceeded in the pair of knowledges[16] and was worthy to be head of two positions [17] …the highness of his soul equals to Farqad star [of Ursa Minor]…Knowledge continued to be gathered under him and people used their pen to record his luminous achievements…He was unparalleled in his affection [for people] and modesty. The people in need sought aid from him and returned with hope and results [of support] and said, "There is not upon the doers of good any cause [for blame]"[18].

Al-Shakhāwī's mention that "the gate [of the Muzhir family's residence] was the Futūḥ gate for people who seek aid"[19] indicates that Zayn al-Dīn's political intercession was requested daily[20]. In general, descriptions of the contemporary scholars contrast Zayn al-Dīn's authority in the administration with his modest personality, and emphasize that he had embodied justice (*'adl*) by returning his fortune to the society and providing support to the weak.

2. Al-Biqāʿī's negative descriptions

We must focus on al-Biqāʿī's descriptions of Zayn al-Dīn, which were totally different from his image of an ideal bureaucrat. Al-Biqāʿī's chronicle covers the period of 860s A. H., which was just after Zayn al-Dīn began his career as an administrator. According to al-Biqāʿī, when Zayn al-Dīn was in charge of the poll tax (*nāẓir al-jawālī*) of Egypt, he was more eager to gain the post of chief of the military bureau (*nāẓir al-jaysh*). During the reign of Sultan Īnāl (r. 857-865/1453-1461), Zayn al-Dīn's mother, Khadīja, won the favor of Īnāl's wife (*khāwand al-kubrā*), Zaynab ibna Ḥasan ibn Khāṣṣ Bak (d. 884/1479-80) and had enhanced her influence in the inner palace[21]. Khadīja slandered Sharaf al-Dīn Mūsā al-Anṣārī (d. 881/1476), who was the *nāẓir al-jaysh*, by claiming that he had misappropriated the sultan's property; he was

---

[16] Religious knowledge (*'ilm*) and general education (*adab*).

[17] Judiciary (*qaḍā'*) and administration (*wizāra*).

[18] Citation of the Qur'ān (al-Tawba: 91).

[19] *Dhayl Rafʿ*, p. 487.

[20] The expressions that "his intercession was accepted", appearing in biographies of the Mamlūk period, symbolized the figure's authority. The intercession, as an act of mercy, was understood as a kind of moral duty for the one who had "position (*jāh*)" (Shaun E. Marmon, "The Quality of Mercy: Intercession in Mamluk Society", *Studia Islamica*, 87, 1998, p. 136).

[21] The fact that Zaynab, who wielded the strongest authority among successive sultans' senior wives, favored Khadīja is also attested from her biography written by al-Sakhāwī (al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍawʾ al-Lāmiʿ li-Ahl al-Qarn al-Tāsiʿ*, 12 vols., Cairo: Maktabat al-Qudsī, 1934-1936 [abbr. *Ḍawʾ*], vol. 12, p. 25).

discharged from the office in Rajab 863/May 1459, despite being innocent[22]. In al-Biqāʿī's words, Zayn al-Dīn was a "reckless and inexperienced" young man and "his mother was more frivolous and greater liar than his son and these facts were known to all". Nevertheless, the sultan valued his wife's wish and this resulted in al-Anṣārī's discharge[23].

Young Zayn al-Dīn became the *nāẓir al-isṭabl* (controller of the stables) in Rajab 857/July 1453, which was immediately after the enthronement of Īnāl (Rabīʿ al-Awwal 857/March 1453). Following this appointment, he acquired the important administrative offices successively, including *nāẓir al-jawālī* and *nāẓir al-jaysh*, and rose remarkably in the administrative institution[24]. However, according to al-Biqāʿī, the death of Īnāl in 865/1461 meant that Zayn al-Dīn, who was in the office of *nāẓir al-jaysh*, lost his powerful backing[25].

> He does not have the nobleness required for promotion, nor a stable family lineage, religion, [firmness of mind] to adhere to one thing among all matters. He is lacking of what distinguishes humans from other animals that cannot converse, that is to say "tongue". Furthermore, that [Zayn al-Dīn's utterance] was hardly true[26].

Zayn al-Dīn experienced financial difficulty in retaining the position of *nāẓir al-jaysh* after the death of Īnāl and was forced to resign from his position in Dhū al-Qaʿda 865/August 1461[27]. Concerning Najm al-Dīn Yaḥyā ibn Ḥijjī (838-888/1435-1483), who became the *nāẓir al-jaysh* after Zayn al-Dīn, al-Biqāʿī provides contrasting description with the above-mentioned assessment of Zayn al-Dīn; he states "he (Ibn Ḥijjī) exceeded in the fields of knowledge, devoted himself to study under the shaykhs, and inherited noble lineages from his parents"[28].

The negative view toward the Muzhir family "emerging" in Cairo was

---

[22] *Badāʾiʿ*, vol. 2, p. 352; al-Biqāʿī, *Iẓhār al-ʿAṣr li-Asrār Ahl al-ʿAṣr: Taʾrīkh al-Biqāʿī*, 3 vols., Giza: Hajar liʾl-Ṭibāʿa waʾl-Nashr waʾl-Tawzīʿ waʾl-Iʿlān, 1992-1993 [abbr. *Iẓhār*], vol. 3, pp. 51-52.

[23] *Iẓhār*, vol. 3, p. 52.

[24] Concerning the detail of Zayn al-Dīn's career, see Ota-Tsukada, "Zayn al-Dīn ibn Muzhir (1)", pp. 52-60 and the table in pp. 76-79.

[25] *Iẓhār*, vol. 3, p. 343.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ota-Tsukada, "Zayn al-Dīn ibn Muzhir (1)", pp. 55-56.

[28] *Iẓhār*, vol. 3, p. 345. His father was Bahāʾ al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Ḥijjī (812-850/1409-1446), a prominent administrator who served as the *nāẓir al-jaysh* of Egypt, and his mother was Zaynab, who was the daughter of Kamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Bārizī (796-856/1394-1452), who took the office of the *kātib al-sirr* of Egypt three times. Zubayda, another of their daughters and sister of Yaḥyā, married Zayn al-Dīn (Ota-Tsukada, "The Muzhir Family", p. 134).

seemingly shared among scholars in the capital, after Badr al-Dīn settled there from Damascus (ca. 815/1412-13). In Rajab 826/June 1423, the governor of Damascus Tanbak ʿAlāʾī Mīq (d. 826/1423), who had opposed Najm al-Dīn ʿUmar ibn Ḥijjī (d. 830/1427, the grandfather of the above-mentioned Yaḥyā), reportedly tried to separate Badr al-Dīn and him by mentioning that ʿUmar disdained the Syrian-origin bureaucrats who were promoted in the reign of al-Muʾayyad Shaykh as upstarts[29].

Zayn al-Dīn's career in his youth can be summarized as follows: he relied greatly on the power of his mother and stepfather and tried to ascend in the government as administrator using even unfair means, as al-Biqāʿī's chronicle suggests. Nevertheless, he lost his power by the end of Īnāl's reign. Even a half century after their settlement, the Muzhir family was not fully recognized as a notable family in Cairo and the powerbase of Zayn al-Dīn remained unstable. However, notably, these facts are in great discord with the image of Zayn al-Dīn narrated by many historians.

III. Al-Biqāʿī and Zayn al-Dīn

1. The controversy of Ibn al-Fāriḍ

Next, we investigate the relationship between Zayn al-Dīn and al-Biqāʿī, the only figure who provided negative comments about him. Although al-Biqāʿī was an outstanding Qurʾān commentator and Ḥadīth scholar, he collided with his contemporary scholars through repeated theological controversies and spent an economically unfortunate life[30]. The major turning point in al-Biqāʿī's life was the well-known controversy among prominent scholars in Cairo concerning sufi poet Ibn al-Fāriḍ (d. 632/1235), which occurred in 874-875 A. H.[31]. Al-Biqāʿī denied Ibn al-Fāriḍ's theory of "oneness of being (*waḥda al-wujūd*)" as heretic, but pro-Ibn al-Fāriḍ

---

[29] al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk li-Maʿrifat Duwal al-Mulūk*, 12 vols., Cairo: Dār al-Kutub waʾl-Wathāʾiq al-Qawmiyya biʾl-Qāhira, 2006-2007 [abbr. *Sulūk*], vol. 4-2, p. 637.

[30] During the reign of Sultan Qāʾitbāy, al-Biqāʿī, who engaged in theological controversies, was not highly evaluated among his contemporary scholars. However, the study of al-Biqāʿī has developed greatly in the recent 30 years and his reputation as a prominent Qurʾān commentator of the fifteenth century has been gradually established (Walid Saleh, "al-Biqāʿī", in Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas and Everett Rowson (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, The Third edition, Leiden: Brill, 2007-).

[31] The outline of this controversy is summarized in Yasushi Tonaga, *Islam and Sufism: Mysticism, Saint Cult and Ethics*, Nagoya: The University of Nagoya Press, 2013, pp. 205-209 (in Japanese). For the career of al-Biqāʿī, see Li Guo, "Al-Biqāʿī's Chronicle: A Fifteenth Century Learned Man's Reflection on His Time and World", in Hugh Kennedy (ed.), *The Historiography of Islamic Egypt, c. 950-1800*, Leiden: Brill, 2001, pp. 121-124.

scholars, including al-Suyūṭī, provided immediate refutations. The polemic divided Cairene scholars into two parts, while Sultan Qā'itbāy declaring his support to Ibn al-Fāriḍ decided the argument.

In Ramaḍān 876/February-March 1470, when pro-Ibn al-Fāriḍ scholars' criticism against al-Biqāʻī intensified[32], al-Biqāʻī placed his supporters at several points in Cairo and ordered them to beat his antagonists when they passed. As soon as Zayn al-Dīn became aware of al-Biqāʻī's plan, he dispatched his *dawādār* (private secretary) Barakāt[33] and managed to release the people captured by al-Biqāʻī's supporters; consequently, many invocations (*adʻiya*) were offered to beg for God's grace on Zayn al-Dīn[34]. In Dhū al-Ḥijja 877/April-May 1473, in the rekindled polemic, al-Biqāʻī was convicted of "infidelity (*kufr*)"; he was awaiting execution under the chief Mālikī judge Burhān al-Dīn Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad al-Laqqānī (d. 896/1490). Concerning this incident, Ibn Iyās mentions, "the good thing [avoidance of the death penalty] would not have happened to al-Biqāʻī without the *kātib al-sirr*"[35]. This means that Zayn al-Dīn saved the life of the one who had severely criticized him in the past.

Al-Biqāʻī, fearing for his life, moved to Damascus in 880/1475. However, he could not acquire important positions there and died in poverty in 885/1480. Al-Sakhāwī describes al-Biqāʻī as lacking moral sense, in addition to immaturity of his learning, claiming that "al-Biqāʻī criticized people by poems and proses, even those who had done him a favor"[36] and disregarded people whom he should respect[37]. Notably, al-Sakhāwī mentions that even though al-Biqāʻī had once criticized Zayn al-Dīn, he later flattered him and emphasized his glory[38]. There is no positive description

---

[32] al-Ṣayrafī, *Inbā' al-Haṣr bi-Abnā' al-ʻAṣr*, Cairo: al-Hay'a al-Miṣriyya al-ʻĀmma li'l-Kitāb, 2002 [abbr. *Inbā' al-Haṣr*], pp. 256-257. In Shaʻbān 875/January-February 1471, Qā'itbāy dismissed and demoted people who were against Ibn al-Fāriḍ (Thomas E. Homerin, *From Arab Poet to Muslim Saint: Ibn al-Fāriḍ, His Verse, and His Shrine*, Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1994, p. 73).

[33] Concerning this figure, see *Ḍaw'*, vol. 3, p. 15. He was a *bardadār* (bailiff) of al-Anṣārī before he served Zayn al-Dīn.

[34] *Inbā' al-Haṣr*, p. 257. The following day, al-Biqāʻī attempted to appeal to Amīr Timr min Maḥmūd Shāh (d. 880/1475), who was the *ḥājib al-ḥujjāb* (grand chamberlain) against his antagonists; however, he was prevented from doing so by Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn al-Qaṭṭān (814-879/1412-1474), Tāj al-Dīn ʻAbd al-Wahhāb ibn Sharaf al-Jawjarī (b. 820/1417), and Muḥammad al-Khaṭīb al-Wazīrī (b. 847/1443-44). All of them were pro-Ibn al-Fāriḍ scholars (Homerin, *From Arab Poet to Muslim Saint*, p. 74).

[35] *Badā'iʻ*, vol. 3, p. 89; Tonaga, *Islam and Sufism*, pp. 207-208. Homerin refers the incident as in Muḥarram 878 (*From Arab Poet to Muslim Saint*, p. 123).

[36] *Ḍaw'*, vol. 1, p. 103.

[37] Ibid., vol. 1, p. 104.

[38] Ibid., vol. 1, p. 108.

of Zayn al-Dīn in al-Biqāʿī's chronicle[39]; however, al-Biqāʿī's letter to Zayn al-Dīn, written after his defeat at the controversy of Ibn al-Fāriḍ, is embedded in his biography written by al-Sakhāwī. This letter seems crucial for understanding the relationship between contemporary scholars and Zayn al-Dīn, when he was the *kātib al-sirr* (i.e., after he seized authority in the administrative institution).

2. Al-Biqāʿī's letter

Al-Biqāʿī's letter addressed to Zayn al-Dīn was intended to ask for his intercession to Damascene scholars. Although there is no mention of date, it is presumed to be written between 880 A. H., when al-Biqāʿī left Cairo, and his death in 885 A. H.; it also indicates his discordance with local scholars, and therefore it is highly possible that it was written after his criticism of al-Ghazālī in Damascus[40]. Al-Biqāʿī first asked Nūr al-Dīn ʿAlī ibn Qurayba al-Maḥallī (850-922/1446/7-1516/7) to write a letter to Zayn al-Dīn requesting his intercession. The letter presumes that Zayn al-Dīn would send what al-Biqāʿī wrote by himself to the Mālikī and Ḥanbalī judges of Damascus on Ibn Qurayba's request.

Ibn Qurayba was one of al-Biqāʿī's students and when the controversy of Ibn al-Fāriḍ settled, he accompanied his defeated master to Damascus. After the death of al-Biqāʿī (885/1480), he was appointed the professor of Ḥadīth at al-Madrasa al-Muzhiriyya in Medina (established in 893/1488) by Zayn al-Dīn; he resided in the madrasa. According to al-Sakhāwī, Ibn Qurayba went for pilgrimage with Zayn al-Dīn and read some writings concerning Sufism, such as *Ḥilyat al-Awliyāʾ wa Ṭabaqāt al-Aṣfiyāʾ* of Abū Nuʿaym al-Iṣfahānī (336-430/948-1038) and *Iḥyāʾ ʿUlūm al-Dīn* of al-Ghazālī (1058-1111). Because of their deepened friendship, he was eventually entrusted with the teaching position at al-Muzhiriyya. If we assume that this pilgrimage was undertaken in 871/1467, which was Zayn al-Dīn's last pilgrimage, their academic association had continued for more than 20 years. Ibn Qurayba must have been the closest to Zayn al-Dīn among the scholars acquainted with al-Biqāʿī.

The following is an abridged translation of al-Biqāʿī's letter reportedly addressed to Ibn Qurayba. Part [A] is the content of what al-Biqāʿī wanted Zayn al-Dīn to write in his letter of intercession to the two judges of Damascus, and Part [B] is his instruction to Ibn Qurayba.

---

[39] Al-Biqāʿī's chronicle was last published until 865 A. H. so far; nevertheless, his writing continued until 870 A. H. (Li Guo, "Al-Biqāʿī's Chronicle", p. 121, note 3; MS Medina, Maktabat al-Shaykh ʿĀrif Ḥikmat 3789; Cairo, Maʿhad al-Makhṭūṭāt al-ʿArabiyya, Taʾrīkh 893 (microfilm)). Therefore, how his evaluation of Zayn al-Dīn changed after the latter gained power needs further research.

[40] Saleh, "al-Biqāʿī", in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE.*

[A] The reason why he (al-Biqā'ī) left [Cairo] was not because we abominate him…and all notables and pious people [in Cairo] are satisfied with [him] and are lamenting his leaving. He chose you [Damascene people] among people and your land among lands. When he arrived to you, he sent [us] messages of praising you and repeatedly uttered [words of praise]. We know that he is the person who thanks even for a trifling matter. Recently, we have heard that the disease of jealousy is spreading among certain people…What we expect from you is to prevent people entirely from intervening him on the view point of "enjoining good and forbidding wrong" before he asks to do so. The people who harm a scholar are equal to [those who] destroy the Sunna…When he stayed in the great land (Egypt), we had visited him, needed him, and received benefit from him. What they (Syrian people) must do for him, at the very least, is what he had done for them. The easier thing than that is to let him act freely in order to contribute to slaves of God by teaching, practicing *dhikr* at session (*mī'ād*) and etc.

[B] The letter of al-Zaynī (Ibn Muzhir) will be quite beneficial and he (al-Biqā'ī?) said if the letter of al-Burhānī Imām al-Karakī[41] was added to it, it will increase the benefit. You (Ibn Qurayba) shall never disclose that I have requested this from you unless it is necessary…However, send me all the implications of the letter [the result of Ibn Qurayba's letter to Zayn al-Dīn][42].

Al-Sakhāwī ended the letter as follows: "Look at this. You will be astonished, for you will find many lies scattered in it". Though al-Sakhāwī does not mention how he acquired the letter, there is a possibility that Ibn Qurayba handed the letter to Zayn al-Dīn directly instead of writing to him, and Zayn al-Dīn passed it to al-Sakhāwī. Alternatively, while al-Sakhāwī stayed at al-Madrasa al-Muzhiriyya in Medina in 902/1496-97, Ibn Qurayba had served as a professor of Ḥadīth at the madrasa. Al-Sakhāwī was on close terms with Nūr al-Dīn 'Alī al-Samhūdī (844-911/1440-1506)[43], a *sharīf* and jurist who had been nominated by Ibn Qurayba to take charge of the madrasa's administration. Therefore, it can also be imagined that al-Sakhāwī had an

---

[41] This figure is presumed to be Burhān al-Dīn Ibrāhīm al-Karakī, who served as the chief Ḥanafī judge.

[42] *Ḍaw'*, vol. 1, p. 110.

[43] *Ḍaw'*, vol. 5, p. 247; al-Sakhāwī, *al-Tuḥfa al-Laṭīfa fī Ta'rīkh al-Madīna al-Sharīfa*, 2 vols., Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1993, vol. 2, pp. 284-285. The career of al-Samhūdī is outlined in Kazuo Morimoto, "The Prophet's Family as the Perennial Source of Saintly Scholars: Al-Samhudi on *'Ilm* and *Nasab*," in Catherine Mayeur-Jaouen and Alexandre Papas (eds.), *Family Portraits with Saints: Hagiography, Sanctity, and Family in the Muslim World*, Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2014, pp. 108-109.

opportunity to read the letter in Medina, although it was 10 odd years after al-Biqāʿī wrote it.

Al-Biqāʿī basically asked Zayn al-Dīn for vindication of his honor and guarantee for free academic activities in Damascus, that is, his return to the scholastic society. The Muzhir family, who were originally from Syria, still maintained their bureaus in Damascus and Nābulus even in the generation of Zayn al-Dīn[44]. They wielded enormous influence on the personnel affairs of judicial offices in Syria, and the chief judges of Damascus were usually selected from among the staff who served at their bureaus. The Furfūr family, a Damascene notable family in the late Mamlūk period, is the best example. Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn al-Furfūr (d. 911/1505), the head of bureau of the Muzhir family, acquired the position of chief Shāfiʿī judge of Damascus owing to his close ties with the Muzhir family, which had continued from his father Sharaf al-Dīn Maḥmūd (d. 871/1467), and the bribery amount of 30,000 dinars[45]. Under these circumstances, al-Biqāʿī's choice to ask Zayn al-Dīn for his intercession can be concluded as quite reasonable.

Then, how should we understand al-Biqāʿī's negative accounts of Zayn al-Dīn in his early career? Li Guo, in his analysis of the methodology of al-Biqāʿī's historical writings, concluded that al-Biqāʿī tends to put responsibility of Īnāl's misgovernment on the people around him, especially his wife, in order to avoid harsh criticism of Īnāl, although he is usually presented as a controversial figure in other sources[46]. The facts that Zaynab wielded power in administration of the state, including the right of appointment and dismissal of important offices and that Zayn al-Dīn's mother Khadīja won strong trust from Zaynab are sustained by al-Sakhāwī's descriptions; thus, we cannot deny the possibility that al-Biqāʿī purposefully portrayed Zayn al-Dīn and his mother, who was on close terms with Zaynab, in bad light[47]. However, according to

---

[44] For example, Zayn al-Dīn financed the sum required for his appointment as the *nāẓir al-jaysh* through a certain figure who served as his private secretary in Nābulus (*Iẓhār*, vol. 3, p. 343).

[45] The relationship between the Muzhir family and the Furfūr family in Damascus is based on Toru Miura, *Dynamism in the Urban Society of Damascus: The Ṣāliḥiyya Quarter from the Twelfth to the Twentieth centuries*, Leiden: Brill, 2016, pp. 137-138 and idem., "Urban Society in Damascus as the Mamluk Era was Ending", *Mamlūk Studies Review*, 10/1, 2006, p. 161. According to *Ḍawʾ*, vol. 10, p. 137, Shihāb al-Dīn and Sharaf al-Dīn made a pilgrimage with Zayn al-Dīn. The Furfūr family monopolized the positions of chief Shāfiʿī and Ḥanafī judges of Damascus from January 902/October 1496 to November 913/March 1508. In Rabīʿ al-Awwal 910/August 1504, Shihāb al-Dīn was appointment as the chief Shāfiʿī judges both in Damascus and Cairo and that was "unprecedented" (*Badāʾiʿ*, vol. 4, p. 84; Miura, *Dynamism in the Urban Society of Damascus*, p. 138).

[46] Li Guo, "Al-Biqāʿī's Chronicle", p. 146.

[47] In this incident, Sharaf al-Dīn Mūsā al-Anṣārī was suspected to have embezzled public money (according to al-Biqāʿī, it was a plot of Khadīja). His trial revealed that he had paid 26,000 dinars to the

al-Sakhāwī's biography, around 880 A. H., when the aforementioned letter was written, al-Biqāʿī presumably turned to take positive stance toward Zayn al-Dīn, at least superficially, and it is highly possible that Zayn al-Dīn's saving his life was a turning point. It can also be presumed that the reason al-Biqāʿī requested a two-step intercession via his former student instead of asking Zayn al-Dīn directly was due to the transition of their relationship.

IV. Building Relationships with Scholars

In Dhū al-Qaʿda 866/August 1462, Zayn al-Dīn finally attained the position of *kātib al-sirr*; however, this did not mean that his position stabilized immediately after his appointment. In Muḥarram 869/September-October 1464, Quṭb al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Khayḍarī (d. 894/1489), who was the *kātib al-sirr* of Damascus, appealed to Sultan Khushqadam directly to appoint him as the *kātib al-sirr* of Cairo and offered a considerable sum of gifts[48]. At Zayn al-Dīn's pilgrimage in 871/1467, he nominated Muḥibb al-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn al-Shiḥna (d. 890/1485), who had the experience of serving the office of *kātib al-sirr*, as his deputy. According to al-Sakhāwī, if it were not for Ibn al-Shiḥna, he would not have been able to protect his position from usurpers[49]. Thus, we conclude that during the reign of Khushqadam, Zayn al-Dīn was exposed to severe competition from many candidates for high-ranking offices.

However, after this pilgrimage, Zayn al-Dīn acquired stable power. One of the reasons for this is Qāʾitbāy's consolidation of long-term administration in the following year 872/1468. On the other hand, regarding Zayn al-Dīn's human network in the capital, another reason can be attributed to the fact that members of the Muzhir family reinforced ties with prominent figures by means of marriage. However, marriages in the Muzhir family were centered on people from bureaucrat families for the purpose of "reproduction of bureaucrats", and people from military class, which directly affected acquisition of offices, and there is no indication of their ties with local scholars based on marital relationships[50]. How did Zayn al-Dīn explore

---

wazīr and *ustādār*. Although this payment was ordered by Īnāl himself, Īnāl denied it. Al-Biqāʿī explains this Īnāl's attitude was because he took Zaynab's part (*Iẓhār*, vol. 3, p. 345).

[48] *Badāʾiʿ*, vol. 2, p. 424; *Nayl*, vol. 6, p. 198. Sitt al-Khulafāʾ (860-892/1456-1487), one of Zayn al-Dīn's wives and a daughter of Caliph al-Mustanjid (d. 884/1479), remarried al-Khayḍarī after her divorce from Zayn al-Dīn (*Ḍawʾ*, vol. 12, p. 55).

[49] *Dhayl Rafʿ*, p. 481.

[50] Nine marital alliances of the Muzhir family are documented: four were alliances with the civilian bureaucrat class (al-Madanī, Zubayda, Khadīja, Suʿād al-Mulūk), three were with the military class (Badr al-Dīn II's wife Khadīja, Jānbulāṭ, a daughter of Lājīn), and one was with the caliph. As for Ibn Salām,

measures to build relationships with them?

1. Promotion of learning

As for Zayn al-Dīn as administrator, many achievements have been documented by his contemporary sources[51]. His support for scholars and their academic activities are distinctive among the projects based on his own discretion. According to al-Shakhāwī, after his appointment as the *nāẓir al-jawālī* of Egypt (Dhū al-Qaʿda-Dhū al-Ḥijja 860/October-November 1456), Zayn al-Dīn began a new project for promoting the employment of young scholars and job-seekers who had already finished academic learning and supported them to find employment by offering stipends from the poll tax. "Al-Barqūqiyya" [52] , "al-Jamāliyya" [53] , "al-Muʾayyadiyya" [54] , and "al-Ashrafiyya"[55] are enumerated as the institutions of their assignment[56]. This indicates that Zayn al-Dīn had seized authority over the personnel affairs of some madrasas in Cairo during the reign of Īnāl. It is presumed that he managed the personnel affairs of these institutions indirectly through his stepfather ʿAlam al-Dīn al-Bulqīnī, who served as the chief Shāfiʿī judge at that time[57]. As for his positions of *nāẓir al-jawālī* and controller of Khānqāh Saʿīd al-Suʿadāʾ, "he did not resign until he organized the procedure of provision for eminent people (*al-fuḍalāʾ*) and people who are entitled [to receive stipend] (*al-mustaḥaqqīn*)"[58]. It is thinkable that he selected his intimate scholars and promised students in Cairo, and allocated them to these institutions.

The best-known charitable project of Zayn al-Dīn, after assuming the office of

---

who was the spouse of Badr al-Dīn II's daughter, I could not find his identifiable information (Ota-Tsukada, "The Muzhir Family", p. 132).

[51] For the achievements of Zayn al-Dīn as administrator, see Ota-Tsukada, "Zayn al-Dīn ibn Muzhir (2)", pp. 137-149.

[52] Namely, al-Madrasa al-Ẓāhiriyya located at Bayn al-Qaṣrayn.

[53] It is likely to indicate the mosque and madrasa of Jamāl al-Dīn Ustādhdār, which became the origin of the name of Jamāliyya district.

[54] Namely, the madrasa of Sultan Muʾayyad Shaykh.

[55] It possibly indicates Sultan Barsbāy's madrasa.

[56] *Dhayl Rafʿ*, pp. 479, 482.

[57] The position of al-Bulqīnī during the reign of Īnāl largely depended on Zayn al-Dīn's mother, Khadīja (Ota-Tsukada, "The Muzhir Family", p. 135). Al-Bulqīnī had reportedly allocated the positions of madrasas for which the former holders had died without successors, at his discretion (Takao Ito, "14 seiki-matsu–16 seiki-shoto Egypt no dai-kadi to sono yuryoku-kakei (The Social Background of Chief Judges of Egypt during the Late Mamluk Period [14th-16th Centuries])", *Shirin (The Journal of History)*, 79/3, 1996, p. 336; Jonathan Berkey, *The Transmission of Knowledge in Medieval Cairo : A Social History of Islamic Education*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992, p. 105). It is presumed that his act was based on the chief Shāfiʿī judge's general supervision over *waqf* endowments.

[58] *Dhayl Rafʿ*, p. 482.

kātib al-sirr, must have been his madrasa in Cairo, named after the family. Al-Madrasa al-Muzhiriyya is located in Barjawān district of Qāhira; it was completed in 885/1480-81. The madrasa was adjoining his residence and the *sabīl-kuttāb* was attached to the west[59]. The first part of its *waqf* document is missing, which presumably mentioned posts and stipends of the madrasa; however, biographical sources reveal that the madrasa included classes of jurisprudence, commentary on the Qur'ān, Ḥadīth, Sufism, logic, and grammar. It also functioned as a Friday mosque[60].

The people mentioned as professors when the madrasa was established are the following three: Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Qāsim al-Maqsī (ca. 817-893/1414/5-1488) for Sufism, Jamāl al-Dīn ʿAbd Allāh al-Kawrānī (ca. 818-894/1415/6-1489) for commentary on the Qur'ān, and Bahāʾ al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Mashhadī (812-889/1409-1484) on Ḥadīth. Ibn Qāsim became the *khaṭīb*, imam, and recited Ḥadīth during Ramaḍān, in addition to the post of shaykh of *taṣawwuf*[61]. Al-Kawrānī is also mentioned as Zayn al-Dīn's master. When Zayn al-Dīn went for pilgrimage in 871/1467, before the completion of the madrasa, he accompanied Ibn Qāsim, al-Kawrānī, and Najm al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ʿArab (b. 831/1428), who was appointed as the professor of Qur'ānic commentary after the death of al-Kawrānī[62]. In Rabīʿ al-Thānī 893/March 1488, Zayn al-Dīn appointed a new shaykh and *khaṭīb* after receiving the news of Ibn Qāsim's death[63]. One of them was Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Muḥawjib al-Dimashqī (842-912/1438-1506). He had also been on close terms with Zayn al-Dīn from 866/1461-62[64]. In summary, the staff at al-Muzhiriyya were nominated from Zayn al-Dīn's intimate circle of scholars[65].

---

[59] ʿĀsim M. Rizq, *Dirāsāt fī al-ʿImāra al-Islāmiyya: Majmūʿat Ibn Muzhir al-Miʿmāriyya bi'l-Qāhira 884 H. /1479. M.*, Cairo: Wizārat al-Thaqāfa (al-Majlis al-Uʿlā li'l-Āthār), 1995, pp. 116-118.

[60] For details, see Ota-Tsukada, "Zayn al-Dīn ibn Muzhir (2)", pp. 150-151, and the table on pp. 177-178 ([The list of staff at the Muzhiriyya]).

[61] *Badā'iʿ*, vol. 3, p. 254; *Ḍaw'*, vol. 8, p. 283; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-Kalām fī al-Dhayl ʿalā Duwal al-Islām*, 4 vols., Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risāla, 1995 [abbr. *Wajīz*], vol. 3, p. 1032.

[62] *Ḍaw'*, vol. 5, p. 49 (al-Kawrānī), vol. 8, p. 283 (Ibn Qāsim), vol. 9, p. 264 (Ibn ʿArab).

[63] According to al-Sakhāwī (*Wajīz*, vol. 3, p. 1032), Zayn al-Dīn received the news of Ibn Qāsim's death two days after his departure to Nābulus, on 10 Rabīʿ al-Thānī, to recruit Bedouins for Mamluk-Ottoman war. However, Ibn Iyās indicates (*Badā'iʿ*, vol. 3, p. 250) that his departure was in Jumādā al-Ūlā. In addition, Ibn Iyās reports the death of Ibn Qāsim in Shaʿbān, after Zayn al-Dīn's return to Cairo (*Badā'iʿ*, vol. 3, p. 254).

[64] *Ḍaw'*, vol. 1, p. 336. He is also mentioned as one of Zayn al-Dīn's friends (al-ʿUlaymī, *al-Uns al-Jalīl bi-Ta'rīkh al-Quds wa'l-Khalīl*, 2 vols., Amman: Maktabat al-Muḥtasib, 1973, vol. 2, pp. 295-296).

[65] Jamāl al-Dīn Yūsuf ibn Shāhīn al-ʿAlā'ī Quṭlūbughā (828-899/1425-1493), the successor of Ibn Qāsim, also held the position of *khaṭīb*, and therefore it can be presumed that the professor of Sufism was the central position among his madrasa's staffs. Al-Kawrānī had been a shaykh of the Khānqāh Saʿīd al-Suʿadā'. Moreover, several students who learned Sufism are mentioned as residents of "the *ṣūfiyya*" at

Zayn al-Dīn also established madrasas named after his family in Jerusalem and Medina. Al-Madrasa al-Muzhiriyya, which was the last religious institution of the Mamluk era in Jerusalem, is located at the south side of the Ḥadīd Street and was completed in 885/1480-81. It is supposed to offer courses on jurisprudence, commentary on the Qurʾān, Ḥadīth, and Sufism, same as the one in Cairo[66].

Al-Muzhiriyya in Medina was built next to the Raḥma Gate, and its greater part was completed in Shawwāl 893/September-October 1488[67]. Al-Samhūdī took charge of the administration of the madrasa, including management of its budget, and Ibn Qurayba, who was requested to act as intermediator in the aforementioned letter of al-Biqāʿī, taught Ḥadīth. This madrasa included two *ribāṭ*s, having facilities separated by gender, and functioned as lodging and anti-poverty institution for sojourners and residents in Medina. It also had a solemn mausoleum with dome. Zayn al-Dīn died in Cairo a month before the completion of this madrasa. However, reportedly, he had been eager to be buried in his mausoleum in Medina[68].

These institutions were supposed to have accepted a certain number of teaching staff, students, and sufis. Moreover, Zayn al-Dīn created various educational occasions and jobs for scholars. One such example is of "*taṣawwuf* at al-Azhar", which was presumably the donation of course comprising Sufism or *dhikr* session. He also invited many prestigious scholars and poets for sessions of reciting the Qurʾān and poetry readings held at the Citadel and his residence. In addition, he sponsored famous preachers (*wāʿiẓ*) who were especially popular among Cairene people, such as Abū al-ʿAbbās al-Qudsī (d. 870/1466)[69], who was called "Ibn al-Jawzī of the age", his student and famous jurist, Shihāb al-Dīn al-ʿUmayrī al-Maqdisī (832-890/1428-1485)[70], and Muḥibb al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Damurdāsh (ca. 832-888/1432/3-1483)[71],

---

the madrasa. Therefore, it is possible that the madrasa had a feature similar to *khānqāh,* providing lodging for many sufis. At al-Madrasa al-Bāsiṭiyya, which was established by Zayn al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Bāsiṭ (d. 854/1450), who was promoted from a local scribe to the *nāẓir al-jaysh*, the main function was to serve as *khānqāh*, although the institution was called "madrasa" （Daisuke Igarashi, "Koki Mamluk-cho no kanryo to jizen jigyo: Zayn al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Bāsiṭ no jirei wo chushin ni", in Institute of Cultural Sciences, Chuo University (eds.), *Afro-Eurasia tairiku no toshi to kokka*, Tokyo: Chuo University Press, 2014, pp. 514-515.

[66] *Ḍawʾ*, vol. 11, p. 89.

[67] *Wajīz*, vol. 3, p. 1040.

[68] Ibid. For an example of establishing madrasa with mausoleum in Medina with clear expression of its benefactor's will for burial, see Fumihiko Hasebe, "Mamluk-cho ki Medina ni okeru oken, kangan, mujāwir", in Akira Imatani (ed.), *Oken to toshi*, Kyoto: Shibunkaku, 2008, p. 232.

[69] Regarding the career of al-Qudsī and his position among the contemporary scholars, see Erina Ota-Tsukada, "A Popular Preacher in Late Mamlūk Society: A Case Study of a Prominent Wāʿiẓ, Abū al-ʿAbbās al-Qudsī", *Orient*, 48, 2013, pp. 21-35.

[70] *Ḍawʾ*, vol. 2, pp. 52-53.

[71] Ibid., vol. 7, pp. 241-242.

and held preaching sessions in Cairo.

Among his charitable projects on behalf of scholars, it was very unique that he offered graveyards for those who died away from their homeland. Zayn al-Dīn declared to provide his two tombs as burial places for scholars and "who are venerated (*al-ṣāliḥīn*)"[72]. One of these tombs was the Muzhir family's mausoleum that was built in al-Ṣaḥrāʾ district by Zayn al-Dīn's father Badr al-Dīn II. It was adjacent to the mausoleum of ascetic saint ʿAbd Allāh al-Minūfī (d. 749/1348), which had already become a place of visitation (*ziyāra*)[73]. Another one is presumed to be the aforementioned mausoleum of Zayn al-Dīn, attached to al-Muzhiriyya of Medina. Both were located in places that were considered sacred. Among the people who were actually buried, we can find names of Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Sāskūnī (d. 886/1481)[74], a sufi who is described as "one of the firmly believed people (*aḥad al-muʿtaqadīn*, i.e., saint)", Najm al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Qāḍī ʿAjlūn (831-876/1428-1472)[75], a *muftī* of the Hall of Justice (*dār al-ʿadl*) and professor of jurisprudence at madrasas in Cairo, and a jurist Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn al-Sābiq al-Ḥamawī (811-877/1409-1473)[76]. All of them had died in Cairo.

The majority of charitable endowments during the Mamluk period were provided by powerful militants represented by sultans and their families, and it was rare that a bureaucrat engaged in various kinds of philanthropic works in a wide range of regions[77]. The scale of charity provided by bureaucrats surpassed that by scholars[78]; however, almost all bureaucrats were those who served as the heads of financial administrative institutions. Zayn al-Dīn, who had built his career without having any connection to financial affairs, was rather exceptional[79]. The main purpose of Islamic charities was individual salvation by accumulating pious deeds; however, there were

---

[72] Ibid., vol. 11, p. 89; *Dhayl Rafʿ*, p. 479.

[73] Ota-Tsukada, "Zayn al-Dīn ibn Muzhir (1)", note 73 (p. 69).

[74] *Ḍawʾ*, vol. 7, p. 171.

[75] Ibid., vol. 8, p. 97.

[76] Ibid., vol. 9, p. 306.

[77] According to *waqf* documents of the Mamluk era, preserved in the National Archives of Egypt, 74% of all endowers (231 persons) were military officers and their families, and only 8.66% were civilians (religious and administrative elites) (Sylvie Denoix, "Pour une exploitation d'ensemble d'un courps: les waqfs mamelouks du Caire", in Randi Deguilhem (ed.), *Le waqf dans l'espace islamique, outil de pouvoir socio-politique*, Damascus: Institut français de Damas, 1995, pp. 34-35). During the Mamluk period, 7 bureaucrats, including Zayn al-Dīn, can be discerned as those who established more than one religious and educational institutions. As for the number of institutions and those regional distribution, Zayn al-Dīn and ʿAbd al-Bāsiṭ surpass the others (Igarashi, "Koki Mamluk-cho no kanryo to jizen jigyo", p. 519).

[78] Igarashi, "Koki Mamluk-cho no kanryo to jizen jigyo", p. 517.

[79] Ibid., p. 520.

various effects in the real world that were expected. The necessity for Zayn al-Din's implementation of "the legitimacy of rule" and "the piety" seemed to have been lower than that of Turkish mamluks and bureaucrats from non-Muslim families. Then, what was the motivation of his charitable works?

Zayn al-Dīn had also engaged in anti-poverty charities in major cities such as Cairo, Mecca, and Medina[80]. However, his projects that were designed with scholars as beneficiaries mainly focused on Cairo. Zayn al-Dīn was in his late twenties when he served as the *nāẓir al-jawālī*, and if we consider that he was repeatedly appointed to and dismissed from high-ranking offices at that time, it is striking that he expressed support for scholars when his power base and financial background were not fully established. After consolidating his position as the *kātib al-sirr* in the administration, he established large institutions, such as madrasas and *ribāṭ*s, created new posts, and supported many scholars and sufis with his abundant fortune.

During this period, a large payment was required for appointment to religious offices as well as administrative offices, yet the salary from the office itself was a quite small, compared to the required sum. Therefore, scholars were required to campaign to acquire multiple posts[81]. In such a situation, a very effective way of acquiring scholars' support was increasing their posts and offering stipends and accommodation, that is, the basis of their livelihood. It is quite natural that al-Sakhāwī attributed unstinted praise to Zayn al-Dīn about his competence as administrator, knowledge, and piety, considering that he had stayed at al-Muzhiriyya in Medina and had been a direct beneficiary of Zayn al-Dīn's charitable projects. His offering of tombs of the family could be understood as a measure of continuation and renewal of relationships with prominent scholars, mainly of Syrian origin. His patronage for popular preachers was a kind of propaganda toward Cairo as a whole, because they were functioning as the mass media at that time. These Zayn al-Dīn's projects that were based on the situation of selling offices that surrounded civilian elites of the late fifteenth century surely contributed to increasing his supporters among scholars in the capital.

2. His attitude as administrator

The reason that Zayn al-Dīn was able to implement many charitable projects is undoubtedly the ample fortune he amassed as a result of his long-time service. However, not all high-ranking officials had actively engaged in charities. Therefore,

---

[80] Ota-Tsukada, "Zayn al-Dīn ibn Muzhir (2)", pp. 153-158.

[81] The monthly income as the chief judge was 50 dinars and salaries from each madrasa were added. On the other hand, the amount of payment required for appointment as the chief judge of Cairo in the early 10th century A. H. was 3,000 dinars (Miura, *Dynamism in the Urban Society of Damascus*, pp. 117-119).

we now focus on Zayn al-Dīn's father, Badr al-Dīn II. When Badr al-Dīn served as a *muwaqqiʿ* at the chancery of Damascus, he enjoyed the favor of al-Muʾayyad Shaykh, who was the governor of Damascus at that time; later, when al-Muʾayyad ascended the throne, Badr al-Dīn II was chosen as the *nāẓir al-isṭabl*. When Kamāl al-Dīn al-Bārizī was appointed the *kātib al-sirr* in Shawwāl 823/October 1420, he served as Kamāl al-Dīn's deputy and handled practical affairs until his appointment as the *kātib al-sirr* in Jumādā al-Ākhira in 828/May 1425[82]. He held the office of *kātib al-sirr* until his sudden death in Rabīʿ al-Awwal 832/January 1429; during his tenure as *katib al-sirr* he amassed a large fortune and purchased several estates in Cairo[83].

The descriptions of Badr al-Dīn in his contemporary sources were incisive. According to Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (773-852/1372-1449), Badr al-Dīn was very eloquent and well acquainted with matters of this world. However, he did not have any knowledge about the hereafter and his biggest concern was accumulation of wealth. He amassed as much as 200,000 dinars during his service as *kātib al-sirr*[84]. Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Maqrīzī (766-845/1364-1442) also criticizes him that he was miser, piled up fortune in an obnoxious manner, and was far from rational and traditional sciences (*al-ʿulūm al-ʿaqliyya wa'l-naqliyya*)[85].

Badr al-Dīn's assumption of the *kātib al-sirr* was due to the unpaid bribe of his predecessor Najm al-Dīn ʿUmar ibn Ḥijjī to the sultan for his appointment[86]. Therefore, it is not difficult to imagine that Badr al-Dīn also hurried to collect his investment amount through aggressive means. Given that there is no description indicating his engagement in charities and that his indifference to religion and learning are emphasized, it is unthinkable that he actively devoted his wealth to philanthropic works[87]. Ibn Ḥajar suggests the possibility that he was poisoned, resulting in a painful death[88]. Badr al-dīn, who strived to make a fortune "in an obnoxious manner" and expand his social influence in Cairo, seemed to have many

---

[82] Ota-Tsukada, "Zayn al-Dīn ibn Muzhir (1)", pp. 44-47.

[83] Ibid., p. 69.

[84] Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Dhayl al-Durar al-Kāmina fī Aʿyān al-Miʾa al-Thāmina*, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1998 [abbr. *Dhayl Durar*], p. 251; idem., *Inbāʾ al-Ghumr bi-Abnāʾ al-ʿUmr*, 9 vols., Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1967-1976 [abbr. *Inbāʾ al-Ghumr*], vol. 8, pp. 190-191.

[85] al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-ʿUqūd al-Farīda fī Tarājim al-Aʿyān al-Mufīda*, 4 vols., Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 2002, vol. 3, p. 443.

[86] Ota-Tsukada, "Zayn al-Dīn ibn Muzhir (1)", p. 47. The price imposed on Ibn Ḥijjī for his appointment was 10,000 dinars.

[87] Only al-Sakhāwī left positive remarks about Badr al-Dīn that he helped people in need, rescued those who suffered injustice, and loved to associate with scholars. However, his remarks lack concreteness and we must also note that it was within the context of praise of Zayn al-Dīn's family line (*Dhayl Rafʿ*, p. 471).

[88] *Dhayl Durar*, pp. 250-251; *Inbāʾ al-Ghumr*, vol. 8, p. 191.

political opponents. The reason that the Muzhir family succeeded in the central government was not only Badr al-Dīn's executive ability but also sultans' preference for bureaucrats of Syrian origin who had no power base in Cairo[89]. Both, the rapid expansion of Badr al-Dīn's power, who was a "newcomer" there, and his acquisition of official posts as per the prevailing custom of sale of offices, resulted in his aforementioned "bad reputation".

In contrast to his father, Zayn al-Dīn, who had earned a reputation as "benefactor", declared to conduct justice as an administrator and reportedly ordered to give 50 dinars for anyone who envied and opposed him[90]. When Zayn al-Dīn was appointed the *kātib al-sirr*, he decided that he will never sign documents that order for bloodshed[91]. Al-Sakhāwī adds that Zayn al-Dīn's state of mind at the time was as follows: "even if he could gain profits from governors, he feared the result of that [punishment without justifiable reason] and the regret, and also [the result] of what is not allowed by Islamic law"[92]. When he visited the Prophet's Mosque in Medina (871/1467), he prayed for two *ṣaḥāba*s (i. e., Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq and ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb) to testify that he will never retaliate against his opponents[93].

Furthermore, al-Shakhāwī reports that Zayn al-Dīn had made the following remarks about his attitude for pious endowments:

> What I (al-Sakhāwī) understand is that he tries not to display them and this was his biggest concern. Rather, he asked me frankly not to mention much about what he had established. [However] what Got wishes…is that people follow the custom, that is, even though one tries to hide his pious achievement and aid, those will be revealed to the society[94].

Here, we must focus on Zayn al-Dīn's attitude toward his opponents; he ordered conciliation instead of elimination. As for his charities, while he himself denied that those were a kind of appeal to the society, his projects were widely announced by scholars and popular preachers who were beneficiaries of his patronage. If Zayn al-Dīn intended to build his authority without relying on despotic elimination of his political opponents as he had mentioned, his wide authority over personnel matters and his series of charities could be considered a way of his expansion of supporters

---

[89] Carl F. Petry, *The Civilian Elite of Cairo in the Later Middle Ages*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981, p. 207.

[90] *Dhayl Rafʿ*, p. 485.

[91] Ibid., p. 482.

[92] Ibid.

[93] Ibid., p. 483.

[94] Ibid., p. 478.

based on Islamic law. Thus, his general image as an ideal bureaucrat of justice and humility was formed by his contemporary scholars, the main beneficiaries of his projects.

Moreover, it is also possible that Zayn al-Dīn's charities had a more practical intention. When Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad (814-833/1411/2-1430), the eldest son of Badr al-Dīn II, succeeded the office of *kātib al-sirr*, he was asked for a sum of 100,000 dinars, which equaled to the half of his father's legacy. Therefore, Jalāl al-Dīn sold his property, such as merchandises for business (*baḍā'i' lil-matjar*), books, clothes, horses, camels, and slaves, to raise money [95]. Appointment fees required for inheritance of office between father and son were substantially a kind of confiscation of property toward the predecessor. Taking into consideration that Zayn al-Dīn had established multiple *waqf* institutions and his madrasa adopted the form of family *waqf*, as indicated by its *waqf* documents, his endowments were a countermeasure against being stripped off of their family fortune in the name of appointment fees when his son (Badr al-Dīn III, 860-910/1455/6-1504) succeeds Zayn al-Dīn as the head of the family in due time. Thus, for Zayn al-Dīn, the charities for the purpose of learning promotion had double merits: first, support for scholars, which brought fame and expansion of his supporters, greatly contributing to the formation of his powerbase in the capital. The second merit was ensuring that a part of his wealth would remain in the family by changing his property into *waqf*. It also became possible to pass the right of personnel matters down to the next generation by its supervisor's post being inherited through the family line. In other words, Zayn al-Dīn's charitable projects served as safeguards both for appointment of his descendants and continuation of the lineage.

V. Conclusion

Banū Muzhir, a notable local family of Syria, moved their main base to Cairo in the generation of Badr al-Dīn II and were thus obliged to reconstruct human networks there. It is unclear to what extent Zayn al-Dīn was conscious of his father's "bad reputation"; nevertheless, he made efforts to form an image of a bureaucrat that was contrary to that of his father, through his knowledge of jurisprudence, devotion of family property to acts of benefaction, and academic interaction with scholars. As al-Sakhāwī remarks, if al-Biqā'ī's evaluation of Zayn al-Dīn had shifted from his youth to late middle age, it should be understood to reflect the process of Zayn al-Dīn, who had no powerful backing, to consolidate his power base in the capital by expanding networks in multiple directions.

---

[95] *Sulūk*, vol. 4-2, p. 800.

Given al-Anṣārī's dismissal, it is unthinkable that there were no injustice policies or personnel affairs ordered by Zayn al-Dīn, which should have been condemned by his contemporary scholars. Nevertheless, the first reason for the scarce negative description of him is that he wielded authority over the personnel matters of scholars. To antagonize against him equaled to be remarkably disadvantageous both in acquisition of posts and continuation of study; therefore, one of the reasons for expanding his authority of personnel affairs was to gain scholars' support and control them at the same time[96]. Moreover, we cannot neglect his remarks that reinforced his image as an embodiment of justice and his contradictory speech and behavior about charities. The image of Zayn al-Dīn as an ideal bureaucrat was formed intentionally, to some extent, by scholars who were beneficiaries of his series of charitable projects, and by his own remarks.

During the period when the state faced constant financial crisis, it was highly likely that bureaucrats who were in the position of "exploiting" common people devoted themselves to charitable endowments in order to sweep away their "bad reputation"[97]; however, Zayn al-Dīn's promotion of learning not only extended his influence among his contemporary scholars but also functioned as investment from a long-term perspective, to pass down his positions, wealth, and human networks to the next generation. Therefore, we can conclude that Zayn al-Dīn's charitable projects were intended to work substantially in the long term, beyond a kind of image strategy, such as acquisition of social fame.

Considering that the fifteenth century Mamluk dynasty adopted a financial policy that presupposed a large income through bribery for frequent appointments and dismissals, it seems contradictory to the state policy to entrust an important office to one bureaucrat for a long period. Zayn al-Dīn's acquisition of an exceptional long-term period of service could be attributed to his human networks that functioned both vertically and horizontally, based on his patronage of exceptional scale as a civilian bureaucrat of those days.

---

[96] It is clear that the relationships between masters and students are crucial for the transmission of Islamic knowledge; however, hereafter, we must examine the possibility that religious orientation and human relationships of benefactors of academic institutions could decide academic trends, especially in an age that presupposed bribery for religious offices.

[97] Igarashi, "Koki Mamluk-cho no kanryo to jizen jigyo", p. 520.