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Weighing Merchandise and Writing History in Ottoman Cairo : Notes on Ibn al-‘Ajamī (Part I)

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Abstract

In this paper, we attempt to unveil the personality of Ibn al-‘Ajamī, the hitherto unexplored author of *Mabāhij al-ikhwān wa manāhij al-khillān fī ḥawādith al-duhūr wa al-azmān* and its sequel called *Ta’rīkh āl ‘Uthmān*. The paper first reviews the descriptions in these historical writings, of which only two manuscripts are known at this point and examines their characteristics and importance as the chronicles of Ottoman Cairo. Focusing on three points: Ibn al-‘Ajamī’s family relations, Būlāq as his place of residence and work, and he as a weigher, we seek to reveal the reality of this little-known “laboring citizen historian” who was in the economic middle strata and made his living from steady work supporting the market economy of Cairo, the largest Arab trading city in the early modern era.

Keywords

Ottoman Egypt, Arabic Chronicle, Būlāq, Artisans Guild, Burullus

I. Introduction

Forschungsbibliothek Gotha holds two unique Arabic manuscripts written in Ottoman Cairo, *Mabāhij al-ikhwān wa manāhij al-khillān fī ḥawādith al-duhūr wa al-azmān* (*The Joys of Brothers and the Flat Paths of Friends in the Events of Ages and Periods*) and *Ta’rīkh āl ‘Uthmān* (*The History of Ottoman Dynasty*).¹ Although both are considered highly informative sources for studying the turbulent years of Ottoman

¹ Ibn al-‘Ajamī, *Mabāhij al-ikhwān wa manāhij al-khillān fī ḥawādith al-duhūr wa al-azmān*, Forschungsbibliothek Gotha, Ms. orient. A 1631; id., *Ta’rīkh āl ‘Uthmān*, Forschungsbibliothek Gotha, Ms. orient. A 1632. They belong to the manuscripts collected in Cairo by Ulrich Jasper Seetzen, a German explorer and Orientalist with support from Emil Leopold August, duke of Saxe-Gotha-Altenburg. On Seetzen, see Helmut, Claus (ed.), *Ulrich Jasper Seetzen, 1767–1811: Leben und Werk*, Gotha: Forschungs- und Landesbibliothek, 1995.

Egypt around the turn of the seventeenth century; it appears that they have been almost never utilized or scrutinized, except in brief bibliographic references by Carl Brockelmann and Fuat Sezgin.² This paper attempts to unveil the personality of Ibn al-‘Ajamī, the hitherto unexplored author of these remarkable historical writings. The paper first analyzes and examines the descriptions of the author, which are contained in both manuscripts, since, to the best of our knowledge, there seems to be no literary source like contemporary chronicles and biographies mentioning this conventional Cairene worker, who was striving for historical narrative, probably as a solitary personal activity.³

In the last part of *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, the author writes his name as Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-shahīr bi-Ibn al-‘Ajamī al-zā’ir al-Aḥmadī.⁴ He was a member of al-Aḥmadiyya, the popular Egyptian Sufī order that worshiped Aḥmad al-Badawī at the core of its religious practices, and was characterized by vague social cohesion. “Al-zā’ir” implies that he was a practitioner of pilgrimage (*ziyāra*), in this case, of al-Qarāfa cemetery on the southern edge of Ottoman Cairo.⁵

The basic structure of this preliminary paper, which aims to elucidate the personality of this citizen–historian, is as follows. First, we overview the contents of the two manuscripts, and subsequently focus on three themes: 1) the author’s family relationship, 2) Būlāq as his place of residence and work, and 3) merchandise weighing as a job to sustain his family. Details surrounding his religious and intellectual aspects, such as saint worship, visits to holy tombs, and personal relationship with scholars, will be discussed in the next paper.

² Carl Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur*, Supplementband, Leiden: Brill, 1938, p. 410; Fuat Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*, Band I, p. 490. Sezgin refers to his other work related to Imām al-Shāfi‘ī, *Natījat al-afkār fī mā yu’zā ilā al-Imām al-Shāfi‘ī min al-ash‘ār*, a manuscript in Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya. For an overview of Egyptian history during this period, see Michael Winter, “Ottoman Egypt, 1525–1609,” in M. W. Daly (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, vol. 2: *Modern Egypt from 1517 to the Twentieth Century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp. 17–20; Jane Hathaway, “Egypt in the Seventeenth Century,” in *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, vol. 2, pp. 34–42; id., *The Arab Lands under Ottoman Rule, 1516–1800*, Second Edition, London and New York: Routledge, 2020, pp. 57–66.

³ Ottoman registers (*sijillāt*) of Būlāq court and other courts of Cairo may be effective historical sources for this purpose, but that is a project for the future.

⁴ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 307v.

⁵ On al-Badawī and al-Aḥmadiyya, see Catherine Mayeur-Jaouen, *Al-Sayyid Aḥmad al-Badawī: Un grand saint de l’Islam Égyptien*, Cairo: IFAO, 1994. Brockelmann misreads “al-zā’ir” as “al-zā’id,” a religiously meaningful part of the full name of Ibn al-‘Ajamī, as does Wilhelm Pertsch in his catalog. See Wilhelm Pertsch, *Die arabischen Handschriften der Herzoglichen Bibliothek zu Gotha*, 5 vols., Gotha: Friedrich Andreas Perthes, 1878–1892, vol. 3, pp. 247–248.

II. *Mabāhij al-ikhwān* and its Sequel: An Overview

Since the 1960s, studies of Arabic chronicles written in Ottoman Cairo (1517–1798) have been gradually accumulated; especially, those described in eighteenth century Cairo have already been examined in detail.⁶ Among the Arabic chroniclers recording contemporary events of Egypt in the first half of the seventeenth century, Michael Winter refers to Mar‘ī ibn Yūsuf al-Karmī, al-Burullusī, and al-Ghamrī, and focuses on al-Ishāqī and Ibn Abī al-Surūr al-Bakrī, rating the latter as a particularly important writer of historical narrative.⁷ It is imperative to include Ibn al-‘Ajamī as an indispensable contemporary historian of this period.

The Gotha manuscript of *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, comprising 308 folios, appears to be an autograph of Ibn al-‘Ajamī. The reasons for regarding it as such are as follows: First, there is no description about the scribe. Second, the handwriting of the text and that of the postscript with one or more notes marked on the text to show detailed information in the margin (*hāshiya*) are similar. Third, there are many blank spaces in the text, probably because the author had intended to enter numbers such as dates and prices after obtaining the accurate information. As Ibn al-‘Ajamī notes “I recorded the prices of grains, commodities and so on in this year (1013 A.H./1604–1605), but the draft was lost;”⁸ therefore, the reserved drafts were often referred to. In that sense, we should consider this manuscript as a completed historical work based on various drafts, although, objectively speaking, the degree of its perfection is not considered so high when viewed as collectively.

Mabāhij al-ikhwān has complicated and unique structure; and it is not clearly organized into chapters. Considering some headings and descriptive contents, we would try setting up tentative chapters here for convenience:

⁶ Peter Malcolm Holt, *Studies in the History of the Near East*, London: Frank Cass, 1973; Laylā ‘Abd al-Laṭīf Aḥmad, *Dirāsāt fī ta’rīkh wa mu’arrikhī Miṣr wa al-Shām ibbāna al-‘aṣr al-‘Uthmānī*, Cairo: Maktabat al-Khāngī, 1980; Daniel Crecelius, *Eighteenth Century Egypt: The Arabic Manuscript Sources*, Claremont: Regina Books, 1990; Nelly Hanna, “The Chronicles of Ottoman Egypt: History or Entertainment?” in Hugh Kennedy (ed.), *The Historiography of Islamic Egypt (c.950–1800)*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2001, pp. 237–250.

⁷ Michael Winter, “Historiography in Arabic during the Ottoman Period,” in Roger Allen and D. S. Richards (ed.), *Arabic Literature in the Post-classical Period*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, pp. 173–174. On al-Bakrī, see Laylā ‘Abd al-Laṭīf Aḥmad, “Ibn Abī al-Surūr al-Bakrī: ‘Aṣr-hu wa mu’allaḥāt-hu,” *Dirāsāt fī ta’rīkh wa mu’arrikhī Miṣr wa al-Shām ibbāna al-‘aṣr al-‘Uthmānī*, Cairo: Maktabat al-Khāngī, 1980, pp. 129–147. Adam Sabra recently unveils new findings in his “al-Bakrī, Ibn Abī l-Surūr,” *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 3rd edition, by scrutinizing Ottoman court registers and placed al-Bakrī’s death in approximately 1667.

⁸ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 164r.

Preamble (fol. 1rv)

Chapter 1 : Sultan Selim I's Entry into Egypt and the Achievements and
Monuments of Ottoman Governors of Egypt (fols. 1v–30r)

Chapter 2 : Nile River and Other Information (fols. 30r–39v)

Chapter 3 : Obituaries of Famous Saints (*awliyā'*) in Cairo (fols. 39v–45v)

Chapter 4 : Biographies of the Great Shaykhs who Taught and Initiated Ibn al-
'Ajamī (fols. 45v–56v)

Chapter 5 : Events in Cairo (*ḥawādith bil-Qāhira*) from Rajab 12, 1006/
February 18, 1598, to Dhū al-Ḥijja 30, 1016/April 16, 1608 (fols.
56v–307v)

Closing Sentences (fols. 307v–308r)

Among these, Chapter 5 accounts for approximately 82% of the total; therefore, the basic character of this historical work can be characterized as “Cairo Chronicle.” However, other chapters also contain important historical information that cannot be obtained from other sources.

We would like to highlight some notable points here relating to the contents of each provisional chapter. Regarding the Preamble, since the sentence in the first folio of this manuscript begins in the middle of a sentence, it is considered that a folio is missing at the beginning. Fortunately, however, the surviving portion of the preamble includes the following important description, which demonstrates the author's basic stance in writing this history:

There, I imposed myself to note the advantages (*maḥāsīn*) and the defects (*'uyūb*). May he (i.e., the reader) ask Allāh forgiveness to them (i.e., the ones who made the mistakes), when the person who read it after me saw the actions of those who made the errors. If they are guilty of sin, may they return to Allāh and repent. Al-Imām al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Jalāl al-Suyūṭī, may Allāh, the Exalted have mercy upon him, argued against al-Shaykh Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī al-Sakhāwī al-Ḥanafī [sic] about what the latter wrote in his historical work that he compiled and named *al-Ḍaw' al-lāmi'*. He (al-Sakhāwī) described people's advantages (*maḥāsīn*) and disadvantages (*masāwī'*) in the work. I have not read it, but I learned about it from the rhymed prose (*maqāma*) that he (al-Suyūṭī) wrote and named *al-Kāwī 'alā al-Sakhāwī*. There, he (al-Suyūṭī) made many abominable references that I would avoid mentioning, and he even stated that he would not allow the historical work to be read, although I disagree with his claim. In addition, great scholars, *qāḍī 'askars*, and others in Cairo have devoted their attention to this historical work, and some of the manuscripts reached Bilād al-

Rūm. May Allāh grant pardons to me and them (al-Suyūṭī and al-Sakhāwī), and Muslims for all their errors and sins!⁹

Al-Sakhāwī (1427–1497) sometimes criticized his contemporary scholars without hesitation.¹⁰ According to E. M. Sartain’s essential biographical study, al-Suyūṭī (1445–1505) attempted to refute al-Sakhāwī in the above-mentioned booklet, after being criticized by al-Sakhāwī for his scholarship, aggression toward others, allegation of *mujtahid*, and plagiarism.¹¹ Al-Suyūṭī vehemently argued against the alleged plagiarism claim, pointing out that rather al-Sakhāwī relied on the manuscript left by his famous teacher, Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī. Furthermore, al-Suyūṭī went on the offensive and ridiculed that al-Sakhāwī’s writings never came out of his home, unlike his own works that were widely disseminated.¹² Interestingly, Ibn ‘Ajamī read al-Suyūṭī’s remarks on al-Sakhāwī’s biographical writing, which he had never read, and expressed his discomfort with al-Suyūṭī rather than al-Sakhāwī, who was being criticized. *Mabāhij al-ikhwān* includes several descriptions from the critical perspective of the author on political, military, and socio-economic realities of his age. The attitude of this civilian author, who highlights the various “defects” of the government officials and influential figures in society, sometimes clearly demonstrates the diverse problems of the period. In addition, it is important to focus on the title of this history written in this preamble. Only “*The Joys of Brothers*” is shown in the body of the text there, and the part following it i.e., “*and the Flat Paths of Friends in the Events of Ages and Periods*” is added later in the margin by hand.¹³ The author may not have decided the full title at the time of writing the opening part.

In Chapter 1, prior to describing the achievements of Ottoman governors of Egypt, there is a brief reference to “Mawlā-nā al-Sultān al-A‘zam al-Khāqān al-Akram Salīm ibn ‘Uthmān,” namely Selim I and “Mawlā-nā al-Sultān Sulaymān ibn al-Sultān Salīm Shāh,” that is Suleiman I. It is particularly noteworthy that Ibn al-‘Ajamī writes, “The description of Mawlā-nā al-Sultān al-A‘zam al-Khāqān al-Akram Salīm ibn ‘Uthmān’s entering into Egypt, and into al-Rawḍa and al-Miqyās (the

⁹ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 1r. Al-Sakhāwī did not belong to Ḥanafī school but Shāfi‘ī school, and his name (*ism*) was Muḥammad instead of ‘Alī. Ibn ‘Ajamī’s lack of knowledge about al-Sakhāwī is obvious.

¹⁰ On al-Sakhāwī, see Carl F. Petry, “al-Sakhāwī, Shams al-Dīn Abu’l-Khayr Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Rahmān al-Shāfi‘ī,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edition first.

¹¹ E. M. Sartain, *Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī*, 2 vols., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975, vol. 1, pp. 72–75. The title of the manuscript (Dār al-Kutub, Adab, 1510), on which Sartain relies, is *al-Kāwī ‘alā ta’rīkh al-Sakhāwī*.

¹² Sartain, *Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī*, vol. 1, pp. 75–77.

¹³ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 1rv.

Nilometer)” as if it were the title of the chapter.¹⁴ It is an expression unique to the author who was particularly interested in the Nilometer on the southern tip of Roda Island facing al-Fuṣṭāṭ and had a personal friendship with a member of the Ibn Abī al-Raddād family, the old and special family lineage that had been exclusively in charge of the management of this indispensable measurement facility for a long time from the Abbasid period.¹⁵

Interesting hearsay information from the author’s father has been recorded, regarding the change of the ruling dynasty from the Mamluks to Ottomans. It attributes the disappearance of the Mamluk regime of Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī (r. 1501–1516) to him blaming Shaykh Abū al-Su‘ūd al-Jāriḥī, who was “a man who knows the God (*‘ārif bi-llāh*),” while Selim I showed a tolerant attitude toward this living saint immediately after the conquest.¹⁶ We can see there a popular religious way of understanding by the Egyptians of the time about the collapse of the Mamluk Kingdom.

Subsequent explanations regarding the 33 Ottoman governors of Egypt, from Khāyirbak “Malik al-Umarā” (in office, 1517–1522) to Sofu Mehmed Pasha/Muḥammad Bāshā al-Sāliḥdār al-Thānī (in office, 1611–1615) and the three interim governors during the takeover periods, show a marked difference in the description for each governor. It is for six governors, namely Koca Sinan Pasha/Sinān

¹⁴ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fols. 1v–2r.

¹⁵ For this friendship, see *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 12r, and for his touring of the Nilometer of *al-Rawḍa* with a group (*jamā‘a*) of al-Qarāfa pilgrimage, see *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 262r. The official title of Ibn Abī al-Raddād is written by the author as *mutawallī qiyās al-Nīl* (*Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 250r.)

¹⁶ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 2r. On al-Jāriḥī (d. 933/1526–1527), see Jean-Claude Garcin, “Deux saints populaires du Caire au début du XVI^e siècle,” *Bulletin d’études orientales*, 29 (1977), pp. 131–143. For Rayḥān al-Habashī al-Su‘ūdī, the liberated slave saint who served as a gatekeeper of the mausoleum of al-Jāriḥī and whose charitable work the author recounts, see *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fols. 126v–127r.

Bāshā al-Wazīr al-A‘zam,¹⁷ Hadım Hasan Pasha/Hasan Bāshā al-Ṭawāshī,¹⁸ Hadım Hafız Ahmed Pasha/Ḥāfiẓ Aḥmad Bāshā,¹⁹ Seyyid Emir Mehmed Pasha/Muḥammad Bāshā al-Sharīf,²⁰ Yavuz Ali Pasha/‘Alī Bāshā al-Silāhdār,²¹ and Öküz Mehmed Pasha/Muḥammad Bāshā al-Silāhdār, better known by his nickname Kul Kıran²² that

¹⁷ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fols. 7v–11r. Koca Sinan Pasha, who later became Grand Vizier, served twice as the governor of Egypt, the first time before he went to Yemen, from Sha‘bān 24, 975/February 23, 1568, to Jumādā II 13, 976/December 3, 1568, and the second time after his return from Yemen, from Şafar 1, 979/June 25, 1571, to Dhū al-Ḥijja 29, 980/May 2, 1573. Al-Ishāqī dates his first term of office from Sha‘bān 23, 975/February 21, 1568, to Jumādā II 23, 976/December 13, 1568. See al-Ishāqī al-Munūfī, *Kitāb akhbār al-uwal fī man taşarrafa fī Mişr min arbāb al-duwal*, Cairo, 1276 A.H., pp. 325–326. Al-Bakrī, in *al-Minaḥ al-raḥmāniyya*, gives the same date as Ibn al-‘Ajāmī, while on the other hand, in *al-Nuzha al-zahiyya*, he gives the date of his departure as Jumādā II 18, 976/December 8, 1568. See Ibn Abī al-Surūr al-Bakrī, *al-Minaḥ al-raḥmāniyya fī ta’rīkh al-dawla al-‘Uthmāniyya*, Damascus: Dār al-Bashā‘ir, 1995, pp. 202–203; id., *Al-Nuzha al-zahiyya fī dhikr wulāt Mişr wa al-Qāhira al-mu‘izziyya*, Cairo: al-‘Arabī lil-Nashr wa al-Tawzī‘, 1998, pp. 152–153. Al-Ishāqī, while giving the beginning of his second term as the same date as Ibn al-‘Ajāmī, does not specify the date of his departure. See *Akhbār al-uwal*, pp. 326–327. Conversely, in the two chronicles of al-Bakrī, the beginning date is the same as Ibn al-‘Ajāmī, but probably owing to misprinting, the date of his departure is given as Dhū al-Ḥijja 30, 981/April 22, 1574. See *al-Minaḥ al-raḥmāniyya*, pp. 204–206; *al-Nuzha al-zahiyya*, pp. 154–155.

¹⁸ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fols. 11v–13v. Based on the information from one of the descendants of Ibn Abū Raddād, the author describes, “He was fat, tall, graceful, beautiful, and physically excellent, but looked unnoticed by anyone who saw him as a eunuch. This was because the eunuchs had wrinkles on their faces, but he never did.” According to Ibn al-‘Ajāmī, this governor’s tenure was from Jumādā I 16, 988/June 29, 1580, to Rabī‘ II 13, 991/May 6, 1583.

¹⁹ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fols. 15v–17r. According to his record, the tenure of this eunuch governor, who had memorized Qur’ān, began on Ramaḍān 18, 999/July 10, 1591, and ended on Ramaḍān 25, 1003/June 3, 1595.

²⁰ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fols. 17v–21v. The author describes this governor with exceptional respect for him as “our lord, *al-sayyid*, *al-sharīf*, the noble born (*al-ḥasīb*), excellent bloodline (*al-nasīb*), the pure tree branch (*far‘ al-shajara al-zakiyya*), and the embroidery decoration on the Hashemite band (*ṭirāz al-işāba al-Hāshimiyya*).” According to the author, the tenure of Seyyid Emir Mehmed Pasha in Egypt was from Shawwāl 3, 1004/May 31, 1596, to Dhū al-Ḥijja 23, 1006/July 27, 1598.

²¹ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fols. 22r–24v. According to the author, the tenure of this Serbian Ottoman governor began on Şafar 19, 1010/August 19, 1601, and ended on Rabī‘ II 6, 1012/September 13, 1603. He was promoted to Grand Vizier soon after.

²² *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fols. 26r–28r. According to the author, the tenure of Öküz Mehmed Pasha was from Şafar 7, 1016/June 3, 1607, to Jumādā II 19, 1020/August 29, 1611. For this governor, see Jane Hathaway, “The ‘Mamluk Breaker’ Who Was Really a Kul Breaker: A Fresh Look at Kul Kıran Mehmed Pasha, Governor of Egypt 1607-1611,” in *The Arab Lands in the Ottoman Era: Essays in Honor of Professor Caesar Farah*, edited by J. Hathaway, Minneapolis: Center for Early Modern History, 2009, pp. 93–109; Adam Sabra, “‘The Second Ottoman Conquest of Egypt’: Rhetoric and Politics in Seventeenth Century Egyptian Historiography,” *The Islamic Scholarly Tradition: Studies in History, Law, and Thought in Honor of Professor Michael Allan Cook*, edited by Asad Q. Ahmed, Behnam Sadeghi and Michael Bonner, Leiden: Brill, 2011, pp. 149–177.

each related description is particularly long and uses some folios. This chapter, which contains important information, must be examined comprehensively, although we would now like to outline here only a few notable descriptions owing to space constraints.

As for Iskender Pasha (in office, 1556–1559), the author describes the information that he has obtained as follows.

According to one of them (i.e., staffs of the *Waqf* facility built by Iskender Pasha) who told me about the conduct of Iskender Pasha, this governor was the first to extend his hand to receiving bribes (*rishwa*) from local inspectors (*kushshāf*), tax collectors (*‘ummāl*), and tax farmers (*multazimīn*) in Cairo and elsewhere. The matter has been attributed to Allāh, the Exalted. Ever since, it has been the hallmark of pashas of Egypt. Then it came to be known as appointment service charges (*ma‘lūm khidmat al-tawliya*) in their terminology.²³

This statement is important in that it critically highlights the pursuit of profits by provincial governors of Egypt around the turn of the seventeenth century through their official positions, and identifies the person who initiated this illegal practice.

Ibn al-‘Ajamī also provides unique information about the location and circumstances of the murder of Mahmud Pasha (in office 1566–1567).²⁴ Moreover, he describes in considerable detail the murder of two Cairene qadis. They were Nūr al-Dīn Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī al-Misīrī, known as Ibn al-Qāq who was a *khaṭīb* living in Azbakiyya and became rich by the tax farm of Egyptian villages and had many mamluks and servants (*atbā‘*) under his command, and Shams al-Dīn Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad, known as Ibn Zaḥlaq, the manager (*mubāshir*) of endowments of two holy cities (*awqāf al-Ḥaramayn al-sharīfayn*), by regular troops (*‘askar*) during the tenure of Üveys Pasha/Uways Bāshā (in office, 1586–1591). Ibn al-‘Ajamī states that they were hanged from a sycamore tree near al-Nāṣir Ḥasan’s *madrasa*-complex under the Citadel, adding that these military assaults resulted from the jealousy of *al-Arwām* toward wealthy *awlād al-‘Arab*. He also notes that the rebellion spread to the

²³ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fols. 5v–6v. According to Ibn al-‘Ajamī, the tenure of Iskender Pasha was from Rabī‘ II 21, 963/March 4, 1556, to Rajab 30, 966/May 8, 1559.

²⁴ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 7rv. According to the author, the tenure of this governor began on Shawwāl 1, 973/April 21, 1566, and he was killed on Jumādā I 24, 975/November 26, 1567. For the killing of Mahmud Pasha, which appears to have originated from the oppression of this pasha during his tenure as the governor of Yemen, see Doris Behrens-Abouseif, *Egypt’s Adjustment to Ottoman Rule: Institutions, Waqf and Architecture in Cairo (16th and 17th Centuries)*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994, pp. 42–43; Jane Hathaway, “Mahmud Pasha,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Three*.

countryside, and they even plotted to kill the governor's son, although the plan did not succeed. Besides, the citizen–historian points out that the first in a series of military insurrections took place during the tenure of this governor.²⁵ It is not specified in which courts these qadis operated, but it is worth noting that in the late sixteenth century, a well-to-do judicial scholar held mamluks.²⁶

The description of Hadım Hafız Ahmed Pasha (in office, 1591–1595), the next Ottoman governor of Egypt, focuses on his intimate relationship with Murād, known as Ibn al-Sukkarī, who was the market inspector of Cairo (*muhtasib al-Qāhira*) and also a tax farmer (*multazim bi-jihāt min al-muqāṭa'āt al-Miṣriyya*). Ibn al-Sukkarī daily presented the Ottoman governor of Egypt with sweets prepared at home, and Ibn al-‘Ajamī was informed that each serving was worth 1000 silver *niṣf*. The proximity between the two aroused the jealousy of officers (*umarā'*) and influential men (*akābir*), and Ibn al-Sukkarī, fearing that he would be murdered, fled to Istanbul. He remained in the imperial capital for a long time, but a petition (*shikāya*) was made over his appointment to the office of *muhtasib* there, which prompted him to return to Egypt. However, he soon returned to Istanbul and was believed to have died there.²⁷ As will be mentioned later, the author was particularly concerned about the adverse effects of the collusion between the governor and the *muhtasib al-Qāhira*, which is described in detail in the sequel to *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*. Therefore, the above statements should also be read in conjunction with the author's critical attitude toward market politics.

With regard to Seyyid Emir Mehmed Pasha (in office, 1596–1598), after writing that “During his tenure he exerted the effect of outstanding good deeds on Egypt, giving voluntary charity to the poor and needy,” he enumerates the governor's achievements in relation to religious urban establishments, such as his construction of mausoleums for both *ashrāf* and Muslim saints and restoration of the Ibn Ṭūlūn mosque.²⁸ According to Ibn al-‘Ajamī, when Seyyid Emir Mehmed Pasha visited Būlāq, he dedicated his book on the theme “aphorism (*ḥikam*) and etiquette (*ādāb*)” to the governor. In response, the governor awarded him silver coins (*fiḍdat al-qurūsh*

²⁵ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fols. 14r–15r. According to the author, Üveys Pasha's tenure was from Jumādā II 28, 994/June 16, 1586, to Rajab 18, 999/May 12, 1591. For *Evlād-i 'Arab* and *Rūm Oğlanı* in the regiments, see Jane Hathaway, “The *Evlād-i 'Arab* (‘Sons of the Arabs’) in Ottoman Egypt: A Rereading,” in *Frontiers of Ottoman Studies: State, Province, and the West* edited by Colin Imber and Keiko Kiyotaki, 2 vols., London: I. B. Tauris, 2005, vol. 1, pp. 203–216 and Michael Winter, *Egyptian Society under Ottoman Rule, 1517–1798*, London: Routledge, 1992, pp. 45–47.

²⁶ On the possession of mamluks by influential scholars in eighteenth-century Egypt, see Winter, *Egyptian Society under Ottoman Rule*, pp. 68–70.

²⁷ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fols. 15v–16r.

²⁸ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fols. 17v–18r.

al-ṣighār) worth 40 silver *niṣf*, which the people of the Nile River port mistook to be 20 dinars.²⁹ It is presumed that the reverence for Seyyid Emir Mehmed Pasha as a *sharīf* and such personal contact led Ibn al-‘Ajamī to write a lengthy description of the governor, including information on the great rebellion (*fitna ‘aẓīma*) that occurred during his term of office.³⁰

In Chapter 1, there is no mention of Hacı Ibrahim Pasha (in office, 1604) who was killed during his short tenure, and the account of this governor is mentioned in Chapter 5.³¹ Meanwhile, there are also detailed descriptions of government officials who assumed the position of interim governor (*niyāba*). For example, Piri Bey/Bīlī Bey, one of “*a ‘yān ṣanājiq Miṣr,*” who was fair-skinned and extremely obese, served as an *amīr ‘alā al-maḥmil al-sharīf* for several years. He never drank coffee and was known as a devout person who repeatedly practiced pilgrimage to al-Āthār al-Nabawiyya in southern Cairo.³² Ḥājī Bey, who was Egypt’s chief financial officer (*defterdār*), commuted from his home in Khuṭṭ Darb al-Bābā near al-Ṣalība al-Ṭūlūniyya to the Citadel. Ibn al-‘Ajamī states that he was hated by the Egyptian people because he was a stubborn oppressor (*jabbār ‘anīd*) and his monetary policy brought about damage.³³

At the end of descriptions of successive Ottoman governors of Egypt, the author summarizes the following points:³⁴ 1) The total number of governors at “the present time” was “thirty-seven,” of which only Hadım Süleyman Pasha and Koca Sinan Pasha had assumed the post twice. 2) There were four men who held the position of interim governor: Sinān who was a *defterdār*,³⁵ the above-mentioned Piri Bey, Osman Bey/‘Uthmān Bey who was an *amīr al-liwā*,³⁶ and Muṣṭafā Efendi who was a *qāḍī ‘askar*.³⁷ 3) Five governors were eunuchs: Hadım Süleyman Pasha, Hadım Mesih

²⁹ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 18rv. It is necessary to consider what *fiḍdat al-qurūsh al-ṣighār* refers to.

³⁰ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fols. 17v–21v. Comprehensive examination will be necessary for the content of the description regarding Emir Mehmed’s term of office. For the tenure of Yavuz Ali Paşa (1601–1603), which is equally densely described, see my “Ottoman Governors and Collective Invocations in the Early Seventeenth-Century Cairo,” *Shigaku/The Historical Science*, 88/2 (2019), pp. 2–9. (In Japanese)

³¹ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fols. 134r, 145r–146r.

³² *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 25r. According to the author, the tenure of this interim governor began on Rabī‘ II 15, 1012/September 22, 1603; he died in tenure on Sha‘bān 25, 1012/January 28, 1604.

³³ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 28rv. According to the author, the tenure of this interim governor was from Rajab 4, 1020/September 12, 1611, to Sha‘bān 9, 1020/October 17, 1611.

³⁴ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fols. 29r–30r.

³⁵ Earlier accounts refer to this person as a regular governor, and it is confusing to treat him as an interim governor.

³⁶ This officer is mentioned here for the first time.

³⁷ The “thirty-seven” is interpreted to be the total number including these four interim governors, although the above-mentioned Ḥājī Bey is strangely not mentioned here.

Pasha, Hadım Hasan Pasha, Hadım Hafız Ahmed Pasha, and Hadım Mehmed Pasha.³⁸

4) Seven governors died while in office: “Ibrahim Pasha appointed after Kasım Pasha,” Davud Pasha, Sofu Ali Pasha, Mahmud Pasha, Üveys Pasha, Hacı Ibrahim Pasha, and Osman Bey who was an interim governor. In the author’s account, there is a five-and-a-half-year gap between the term of office of Sofu Hadım Ali Pasha (in office, May 1559–September 1560)³⁹ and Mahmud Pasha (in office, April 1566–November 1567), although there are two governors between them, namely Kara Şahin Mustafa Pasha and Sofu Ali Pasha.⁴⁰

The “present” summed up by the author seems to refer to some point in the tenure of Sofu Mehmed Pasha. The last date confirmed in the section of Ottoman governors in *Mabāhij al-ikhwān* is Rajab 20, 1020/September 28, 1611, when this new pasha first entered the governor’s office.⁴¹ Therefore, this chapter appears to have been written about 17 years before the completion of *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, and it is inferred that this history book took a long time to complete.

Ibn al-‘Ajamī writes, “Now receiving Allāh’s grace in full, I have fully described the governors who ruled Egypt, I will begin to describe the year-by-year rise of the Nile” and presents the information on the rising water level of the great river in a concise and enumerative manner in Chapter 2.⁴² Table 1 summarizes the flood information recorded in this chapter from 988 A.H./1580 to 1007 A.H./1598. The margins of fols. 30v–31r have no blanks as they are filled by the author’s own additions of information of the Nile, which are arranged counterclockwise. This can be attributed to the loss of his memorandum (*musawwada*) for the years 992–1005 A.H., as specified in the text.⁴³ It is inferred that the author obtained the missing information on water rising somehow later and added it as a margin postscript.

The information on the rise of the Nile in the main text and the margin consists of the indication in the Hijra and Coptic calendars of the day when the water level in the Cairo Nilometer reached 16 *dhirā‘*, that is the day it became “full” and the embankment at the entrance of al-Miṣrī Canal was opened, and the highest water level for the year. Then, the expression “the great Nile (*Nīl ‘aẓīm*)” is found for 988 A.H.,

³⁸ Sofu Hadım Ali Pasha has been overlooked.

³⁹ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 6v. According to Ibn al-‘Ajamī, Sofu Hadım Ali Pasha’s tenure was from Sha‘bān 1, 966/May 9, 1559, to Dhū al-Ḥijja 23, 967/September 14, 1560.

⁴⁰ *al-Minaḥ al-raḥmāniyya*, pp. 169–173; *al-Nuzha al-zahiyya*, pp. 145–148. Cf. *Kitāb akhbār al-uwal*, pp. 324–325.

⁴¹ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 29r. According to al-Ishāqī, the tenure of this governor is from Sha‘bān 22, 1020/October 30, 1611, to Rabī‘ I 10, 1024 A.H./April 9, 1615. See *Akhbār al-uwal*, pp. 360–363. Cf. *al-Minaḥ al-raḥmāniyya*, p. 318; *al-Nuzha al-zahiyya*, p. 190.

⁴² *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fols. 30r–31r.

⁴³ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 31r.

when the highest water level reached 22 *dhirā* ' 8 *iṣba* ', 992 A.H. (the highest water level: 22 *dhirā* ' 15 *iṣba* '), and 997 A.H. (the highest water level: 22 *dhirā* ' 7 *iṣba* '). In contrast, the expression "the low Nile (*Nīl khasīs*)" is found for 993 A.H., when the highest water level ended up at 18 *dhirā* ' 19 *iṣba* '. However, for the year 1004, it reached 22 *dhirā* ' 10 *iṣba* ', but it is not marked as "the great Nile," although the reason is not clear. It is also noteworthy that following the presentation of Nile information for 1007 A.H., the author states, "I have lost the note (*musawwada*) of the water rise in 1008 [A.H.]"⁴⁴ Based on the estimation of the date of the writing, the information on the rising water until 1020 A.H. should have been presented here, but the reason that it was not may have been due to the loss of such a note. Otherwise, he may have believed that it would be sufficient to mention the water level information for each year in later chapter of the chronicle.

In addition to the information on Nile, Chapter 2 also includes details such as the noteworthy account of Ibn al-‘Ajāmī and his family,⁴⁵ the obituaries of prominent figures who died in 1008 A.H. and 1009 A.H.,⁴⁶ and the minute description of the relocation of tanneries (*madābigh*) in Cairo,⁴⁷ giving the impression of a mixed bag of information.

Chapter 3 begins with large black letters and the heading "Obituaries of a group of famous saints (*awliyā*) in Cairo before this year."⁴⁸ Judging from the preceding description, "this year" appears to refer to 1009 A.H. Therein is presented the biographical information of the seven Muslim saints. They are 1) al-Shaykh ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Majdhūb (d. 998 A.H./1590), who was the *mu'taqad* (venerated man) devoted by Cairene residents including Mahmud Pasha,⁴⁹ 2) Muḥammad al-Binūfarī al-Mālikī (d. 998 A.H./1590), who "combined knowledge (*ilm*), sainthood (*walāya*) and the righteousness of faith (*ṣalāh*),"⁵⁰ 3) al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Naḥrīrī al-Ḥanafī (d. 998 A.H./1590) who was visually impaired (*darīr*),⁵¹ 4) al-Shaykh Aḥmad ibn Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq al-Sunbāṭī al-Shāfi‘ī (d. 997 A.H./1589), a well-known scholar who taught at al-Azhar mosque,⁵² 5) Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Bakrī al-

⁴⁴ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 31r, 33r.

⁴⁵ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fols. 30rv, 32r–33r. See below for details.

⁴⁶ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fols. 33r–39v.

⁴⁷ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fols. 31r–32r, 35rv. We will discuss this topic of interest in the development of Ottoman Cairo into the western suburbs in another paper.

⁴⁸ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 39v.

⁴⁹ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fols. 39v–40r.

⁵⁰ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fols. 40r–41r.

⁵¹ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 41rv.

⁵² *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fols. 41v–43r. The author deviates considerably in this biographical description of

Wafā'ī (d. 994 A.H./1586), commonly known as “Ibn al-Qaṣṣāṣ (the son of storyteller),” who was a descendant of the first caliph Abū Bakr and a notary of al-Bāb al-‘Ālī court,⁵³ 6) al-Shaykh Abū Bakr al-Sumaynī (d. 999 A.H./1591), a saint (*al-waliyy al-mukāshif*) and one of the companions (*aqrān*) of ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sha‘rānī,⁵⁴ 7) Sayyidī Abū al-Faḍl al-Khalwatī (d. 1000 A.H./1591),⁵⁵ who resided in the al-Aqmar mosque and was buried in the mausoleum of Mamluk Sultan Barqūq in al-Ṣahrā’ area located in the eastern suburbs of al-Qāhira. Such biographical accounts of prominent figures who were considered Muslim saints by the author and his contemporaries, which sometimes include information on personal interactions with the author and other details, are useful in many ways for the study of Egyptian society and religion during this period, and therefore require detailed examination.

Chapter 4 consists of detailed biographies of “great, influential, and distinguished Sayyids and shaykhs with whom I have made acquaintance,”⁵⁶ or, as the author paraphrases it, “my shaykhs.”⁵⁷ The following are the eight scholars and Sufis mentioned: 1) Muḥammad al-Bahnasī (died at the end of tenth century A.H.), the scholar of Shāfi‘ī jurisprudence, Qur’anic exegesis, and hadith studies, and the Sufi of al-Naqshbandiyya, who taught Ibn al-‘Ajamī the way of *dhikr* and also appears to give him higher education, although its content is not specified,⁵⁸ 2) a shaykh of pilgrims of the Larger and Lesser Qarāfa (*shaykh al-zuwwār bil-Qarāfatayn*), whose name was curiously not mentioned (died at the end of tenth century A.H.),⁵⁹ 3) Muḥammad Ḥarrāz al-Ghamrī (died in early 1000 A.H./1591), an illiterate and poor weaver from the village of Qirimla in the Sharqiyya of Nile Delta, who became a

al-Sunbāṭī who taught him and details the urban development of the southern shore of al-Azbakiyya Pond, where this scholar settled. For Aḥmad ibn Aḥmad al-Sunbāṭī, see also al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib al-sā’ira bi-a’yān al-mi’a al-‘āshira*, 3 vols., Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1997, vol. 3, p. 102. Al-Gazzī states that his father Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq al-Sunbāṭī was a preacher of al-Azhar Mosque. See *al-Kawākib al-sā’ira*, vol. 2, p. 112.

⁵³ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fols. 43r–44v.

⁵⁴ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fols. 44v–45v. For al-Sha‘rānī, see first Michael Winter, *Society and Religion in Early Ottoman Egypt: Studies in the Writings of ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sha‘rānī*, New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Books, 1982.

⁵⁵ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 45v. Information about this person is added in the margin.

⁵⁶ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 45v.

⁵⁷ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 51r, 52r, 53r.

⁵⁸ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fols. 45v–47r. For Muḥammad al-Bahnasī as a leader of al-Naqshbandiyya in Hijaz, see Dina Le Galle, *A Culture of Sufism: Naqshbandīs in the Ottoman World, 1450–1700*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005, p. 100.

⁵⁹ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fols. 47r–50r. He, like Ibn al-‘Ajamī, belonged to the Sufi order of Aḥmad al-Badawī.

Shāfi‘ī jurist and a saint (*waliyy*),⁶⁰ 4) Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Dukhmaysī (no date of death mentioned), a scholar who lived in Būlāq, who taught Shāfi‘ī jurisprudence and Arabic grammar to the author,⁶¹ 5) Aḥmad al-Fashnī (no date of death mentioned), a Sufi of al-Aḥmadiyya and jurist, who taught Shāfi‘ī jurisprudence to the author and whose hometown, Fashn in the northern Upper Egypt, the author visited,⁶² 6) Ṣāliḥ al-Kutāmī (no date of death stated), who was the imam of ‘Alī Pasha Mosque (formerly al-Ṭabbākh Mosque) in Sūq al-Lūq and also taught Shāfi‘ī jurisprudence and Arabic grammar to the author,⁶³ 7) Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Matbūlī, who was a Shāfi‘ī jurist and saint (*waliyy*) and according to the author, was one of the descendants of Ibrāhīm al-Matbūlī (d. 1472), a well-known illiterate Sufi saint who was active in helping the poor in Cairo during the late Mamluk period,⁶⁴ 8) Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā al-Ḥanafī (d. 1006 A.H./1598), who was an imam of Iskender Pasha Mosque near Bāb al-Sa‘āda and known as Ibn Turjumān, because his father was one of *qāḍī ‘askar*’s interpreters.⁶⁵

In sum, Chapter 4 cannot be overlooked because it contains unique biographical information and validates Ibn al-‘Ajamī’s growth in religious learning and practice. It can be confirmed from this chapter that the author had a period of basic study in Shāfi‘ī jurisprudence and Arabic grammar, and that he was involved in Sufi orders of al-Naqshbandiyya and al-Aḥmadiyya. It should be noted that Jamāl al-Dīn Yūsuf al-Zifzāf, the local living saint of Būlāq, whom Ibn al-‘Ajamī visited and interacted with many times,⁶⁶ is not included in this chapter “our shaykhs.”

⁶⁰ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fols. 50r–51r. Muḥammad al-Ghamrī was one of the disciples of ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sha‘rānī.

⁶¹ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fols. 51r–52r. ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Dukhmaysī made the pilgrimage to al-Qarafa with Ibn al-‘Ajamī many times.

⁶² *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 52r. Aḥmad al-Fushaynī authored two commentaries on Shāfi‘ī jurisprudence.

⁶³ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 53r. This experience of commuting to Bāb al-Lūq may have fostered the author’s special interest in the western suburbs of al-Qāhira and resulted in his rich historical descriptions of the area.

⁶⁴ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fols. 53r–55v. It is noted that he was completely hearing-impaired. Ibn al-‘Ajamī was present when Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Matbūlī visited the residence of Ibn Turjumān, who will be mentioned next. On Ibrāhīm al-Matbūlī and his line of Sufis, see Adam Sabra, “Illiterate Sufis and Learned Artisans: The Circle of ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sha‘rānī,” in Richard McGregor and Adam Sabra (eds.), *Le développement du soufisme en Égypte à l’époque mamelouke*, Cairo: Institut français d’archéologie orientale, 2006, pp. 153–168. Meanwhile, al-Muḥibbī does not refer to Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Matbūlī as a descendant of Ibrāhīm al-Matbūlī in his collection of biographies. See al-Muḥibbī, *Khulāṣat al-athar fī a’yān al-qarn al-ḥādī ‘ashar*, 4 vols., Cairo: Dār al-Kitāb al-Islāmī, n.d., vol. 1, pp. 274–277.

⁶⁵ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fols. 55v–56v. He was a disciple of al-Shaykh Jamāl al-Dīn Yūsuf al-Kurdī. According to al-Muḥibbī, their order was called al-Khawāṭilyya. See *Khulāṣat al-athar*, vol. 4, p. 284.

⁶⁶ *Ta’riḫ al-‘Uthmān*, fols. 27r, 58r–59r, 65r.

The basic composition of Chapter 5, the chronological part dealing with various events in Egypt with Cairo as its center, is shown in Table 2. The first part of this chapter is not in chronological order, and information from 1000 A.H. to 1006 A.H. is listed randomly. The descriptions, in the sequence in which they are presented, are as follows. The massive political strife (*fitna 'uzmā*) that occurred on Rajab 12, 1006 A.H./February 18, 1598;⁶⁷ the decoration of victory celebration in Cairo and its environs around the end of Rabī'II, 1005 A.H./mid December 1596;⁶⁸ the birthday celebration (*mawlid*) of Banū al-Wafā' and the visit of the tomb by Seyyid Emir Mehmed Pasha on Sha'bān 15, 1005 A.H./April 3, 1597, and the secret nighttime participation of the governor in lectures at the Azhar Mosque;⁶⁹ and numerous good deeds (*khayrāt*) by the same governor.⁷⁰ Essentially, information related to Seyyid Emir Mehmed Pasha, who was the object of the author's special respect as already mentioned, is presented not necessarily in chronological order.

After the obituaries of two shaykhs in 1001 A.H./1592–1593 and a shaykh in 1003 A.H./1594–1595, as well as the account of the great flood (*sayl 'azīm*) of Cairo in the early first month of 1000 A.H./late October 1591,⁷¹ we come back to the account of the years 1005 A.H./1596–1597 and 1006 A.H./1597–1598 during the tenure of Seyyid Emir Mehmed Pasha.⁷² Following this miscellany, the descriptions of years 1008 A.H./1599–1600, 1009 A.H./1600–1601, and 1010 A.H./1601–1602 are presented in a somewhat haphazard manner.⁷³ However, for each subsequent year after 1011 A.H./1602–1603, the format begins with large letters such as “Description of events in 1011 A.H.,” which clearly tends to increase the orderliness of the chronicle, and for the years from 1013 A.H./1604–1605 to 1016 A.H./1607–1608, the events of each month are appropriately presented in chronological order.⁷⁴

Chapter 5 is a treasure trove of information on the socio-economic, political, military, and cultural aspects of Ottoman Egypt, centered on Cairo, giving the readers the impression of being incomplete and rather chaotic as a chronicle. Although we will refrain from providing specific examples here, the various themes related to Egyptian history, covered by this chronicle, can be listed as follows: international and regional market trends; food prices (with listings); current issues; control and administration of the provincial capital's market economy; the rise and fall of the Nile

⁶⁷ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fols. 56v–61r.

⁶⁸ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fols. 61r–62r.

⁶⁹ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 62rv.

⁷⁰ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fols. 62v–63v.

⁷¹ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fols. 63v–66r.

⁷² *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fols. 66r–68v.

⁷³ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fols. 68v–117v.

⁷⁴ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fols. 117v–307v.

River; urban disturbances over food and commodities; petitioning by the capital and local residents; wealthy merchants engaged in long-distance trade (*khawājās*, *tājirs*); various urban guilds; social crises and prayer ceremonies; plague epidemics and natural disasters; the movements of Arab tribes; Islamic charities and endowments; activities of the governors of Egypt; military uprisings; prohibition of alcohol; spread of smoking habits; clothing fashion and so on. One of the features of this chronicle is the vast information on western and southern areas of Cairo, such as Būlāq, Bab al-Lūq, Qanāṭir al-Sibāʿ, Qarāfa, and Giza on the west bank of Nile. In addition, albeit limited, there is also information on the Nile Delta, holy cities of Hijaz and Red Sea area, Syrian and Maghrib provinces.

As for the volume of this chapter, fol. 105v and fol. 106r are completely blank; therefore, the actual folios include 250 and a half, which is about 81.5% of the total number of folios of this manuscript, comprising 306 and a half folios essentially. *Mabāhij al-ikhwān* with its descriptions of various events centering on the capital of Egyptian province that accounts for more than four-fifths of the total, is placed in the category of “Cairo Chronicles.” Of these, the particularly detailed description of the year 1016 A.H. covers eighty-one and a half folios, accounting for about 32.5% of Chapter 5, or 26.6% of the total of the manuscript. The total number of folios in the chronicle of 1016 A.H. and 1015 A.H., the next most detailed year, is 128 and a half folios. This is equivalent to approximately 51.3% of Chapter 5, or 41.9% of the total. These two years are particularly well described.

In the closing sentences, there are two points to note. First, the date when the autograph manuscript was completed has been clearly stated. It is Friday, Rabīʿ I 12, 1038 A.H./November 9, 1628. Specifically, as mentioned below, Ibn al-ʿAjāmī, who appears to have already entered his later years when he completed writing this manuscript, compiled a history of various events up to 1608, some 20 years ago for the time being.⁷⁵

The second point to note is that at the end of this manuscript, the author prays to God for the completion of the description of the year 1017 A.H.⁷⁶ The author, while expressing his desire to extend the chronicle further, has tentatively ended *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*. This preview was fulfilled by a sequel to the same book, a work now called *Taʾrīkh āl ʿUthmān*. It should also be noted that the date Ibn al-ʿAjāmī completed writing this manuscript, which is given in the closing sentences, is the latest date in this entire work, including *Taʾrīkh āl ʿUthmān*. Considering the volume of the sequel,

⁷⁵ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 307v. It should be noted that writing concluded on the day of Prophet Muḥammad’s birth. As indicated earlier, the description of successive Ottoman governors of Egypt reaches September 1611.

⁷⁶ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 308r.

which will be discussed next, and the period required for its writing, we can assume that Ibn al-‘Ajamī died in 1629, or later.

Regarding the basic structure of Egyptian chronicles during the Ottoman period, Peter M. Holt proposed the basic model of “sultan–pasha chronicle,” which emphasizes the tenure of the sultans and Ottoman governors of Egypt and chronologically arranges events within the framework of each of them.⁷⁷ Meanwhile, Jane Hathaway, who scrutinized three early eighteenth-century chronicles, pointed out that they are characterized by the grouping of events in the framework of the Islamic calendar according to the term of office of each provincial governor, or the coexistence of the term of office of each provincial governor and the Islamic calendar timeline as a narrative framework.⁷⁸ Compared to the above models, *Mabāhij al-ikhwān* is unique in that it places diverse information of successive Ottoman governors of Egypt separately from the chronological history of events. In addition, the placement of the Nile information and biographical information of saints and the sheikhs with whom the author had some connections are placed before the lengthy chronological chapter, which is central and distinctive in its composition. *Mabāhij al-ikhwān* can be regarded as a highly original, though not well-ordered, history of Ottoman Egypt.

Hathaway also accurately extracts four main categories from the contents of the above three chronicles: political events, natural phenomena, obituaries, and curious incidents (*‘ajā’ib*),⁷⁹ but the history written by Ibn al-‘Ajamī is filled with a great variety of contemporaneous information that does not necessarily fit into these categories. It includes detailed descriptions of everyday events and personal experiences in the city that were not necessarily curious; it can be considered a non-elitist history book in the style of a civic miscellany.

Next, we will overview *Ta’rīkh āl ‘Uthmān*. The title and author of this manuscript, consisting of 84 folios in all, is given on folio 2r as follows.

This is the [blank] volume of *Ta’rīkh āl ‘Uthmān*, a work by al-Shaykh Sayyidī ‘Abd Allāh, known as Ibn al-‘Ajamī.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Peter M. Holt, “Al-Jabarti’s Introduction to the History of Ottoman Egypt,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 25/1 (1962), pp. 38–39.

⁷⁸ Jane Hathaway, “Sultans, Pashas, Taqwims, and Mühimmes: A Reconsideration of Chronicle-Writing in Eighteenth Century Ottoman Egypt,” in Daniel Crecelius (ed.), *Eighteenth Century Egypt: The Arabic Manuscript Sources*, Claremont: Regina Books, 1990, pp. 51–60.

⁷⁹ Hathaway, “Sultans, Pashas, Taqwims, and Mühimmes,” pp. 60–65.

⁸⁰ *Ta’rīkh āl ‘Uthmān*, fol. 2r.

However, this sentence is written in a completely different handwriting from that of the text of the chronicle beginning on the reverse side of the second folio and obviously, was added later by a different person. On the right side at the bottom of folio 2r, yet another writing indicates that Ulrich Jasper Seetzen acquired this manuscript in Cairo in 1808.

A summary of the contents of this manuscript is shown in Table 3. At the beginning of folio 2v, where the description of the contents begins, there is the phrase of *basmala*. However, it is followed abruptly by a description of the completion of repairs to the barracks of the Janissaries and the ‘Azab regiments in Cairo Citadel, without giving a date.⁸¹ It goes on to state that “on the 14th of the same month,” Mehmed Pasha ordered that both a tailor from Khuṭṭ al-Shawwā’īn near Sūq al-Ghazl, and a secretary of the governor’s office be exiled to the oasis region of Western Desert.⁸² This description and the sentence at the beginning of fol. 3r reveal a connection without being strange. However, the abrupt beginning and the abbreviation such as “on the 14th of the same month,” suggest that some description prior to those chronological descriptions on 2v has been lost. In addition, there are obvious differences in handwriting between folio 2v and folios from 3r, such as the writing style of “*dhālika*.”

Considering the aforementioned anomalies and the fact that folio 2v commenced with *basmala*, a hypothesis emerges here. The strange beginning of the manuscript may be attributed to another person transcribing and adding only the legible sentences from the deteriorated or damaged parts at the beginning of the manuscript. This assumption requires further study, but the following can be pointed out. On fol. 3rv, there are descriptions of four incidents beginning with “In the same month,”⁸³ followed by “Then good month of Ṣafar of the same year began,”⁸⁴ which is followed by a series of chronological descriptions almost in line with the flow of time, and finally by “Descriptions of various incidents in 1018 A.H.,” written in large letters.⁸⁵ Considering the flow of these descriptions, it can be inferred that “same month” mentioned above refers to the first month of 1017 A.H.

Since the handwriting of this manuscript after the third folio appears to be

⁸¹ *Ta’rīkh āl ‘Uthmān*, fol. 2v. In addition, there is a sentence about two poems related to this repair work composed by ‘Abd Allāh al-Dinūsharī, a Shāfi‘ī judge, “I wrote them in *Kitāb al-Anwār al-mudī’a fī dhikr al-dawla al-‘Uthmāniyya*.” It is noteworthy that the existence of another historical work authored by Ibn al-‘Ajamī is suggested.

⁸² *Ta’rīkh āl ‘Uthmān*, fol. 2v.

⁸³ *Ta’rīkh āl ‘Uthmān*, fol. 3rv.

⁸⁴ *Ta’rīkh āl ‘Uthmān*, fol. 3v.

⁸⁵ *Ta’rīkh āl ‘Uthmān*, fols. 3v–38v.

identical to that of *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, and the style of writing and the method of making additions in the margins are also identical, it appears that it may be called *Dhayl mabāhij al-ikhwān* (*Supplement to the Joys of Brothers*). However, Ibn al-‘Ajamī states that “I mentioned it in the first volume,” referring to the plague epidemic during Yavuz Ali Pasha’s tenure,⁸⁶ and therefore, although not explicitly stated otherwise, it is likely that the author had this manuscript in mind as the second volume of *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*.⁸⁷

Ta’rīkh āl ‘Uthmān ends abruptly on fol. 84v of this manuscript with a short account of the death of Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad al-Minyāwī, a visually impaired scholar in Rabī‘ I 1019 A.H./May–June 1610 and is not followed by concluding sentences as in *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*.⁸⁸ As mentioned earlier, the last date confirmed in *Mabāhij al-ikhwān* is Rajab 22, 1020 A.H./September 30, 1611, but the chronological narrative of this sequel was cut off suddenly without reaching that point. At the bottom of folio 84v, on another piece of paper pasted, in a different handwriting, the following was written: “May Allāh, the Exalted, save us by His Grace! The [blank] volume of Sayyid ‘Abd Allāh al-‘Ajamī’s *The History of Ottoman Dynasty* has ended. Amen!” Since nothing appears to have been under the pasted paper when the author of this article examined the manuscript closely in Forschungsbibliothek Gotha, it is assumed that Ibn al-‘Ajamī was unable to write any further due to health problems or for other reasons.

Consequently, the description of 1019 A.H. is rather insignificant, approximately 12 folios. However, the descriptions of 1017 A.H. and 1018 A.H. each exceed 30 folios, and although they do not match the volume of the descriptions of 1015 A.H. and 1016 A.H. in *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, they contain considerable historical information about the main city of Ottoman Egypt and its territory during the period in question. *Ta’rīkh āl ‘Uthmān*, which practically consists of about eighty-two and a half folios, accounts for about 25% of the entire chronicle descriptions (about 333 folios) that include the chronicle portion of *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*. This sequel should be evaluated as a valuable extension of the history. It only covers a period of a little more than two years, but like *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, it is a treasure trove of information on the social, economic, political, military, and cultural life of Ottoman Egypt centering on Cairo during that period. Although we will refrain from delving into the rich contents of this manuscript here, it should be noted that Ibn al-‘Ajamī’s severe and specific critical accounts of the market administration carried out by Muḥammad Agha, the

⁸⁶ *Ta’rīkh āl ‘Uthmān*, fol. 6r.

⁸⁷ It is worth noting that *Ta’rīkh āl ‘Uthmān* tends to have fewer margin additions than *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, and the former is characterized as more of a clear copy.

⁸⁸ *Ta’rīkh āl ‘Uthmān*, fol. 84v.

muhtasib of Cairo, backed by the strong authority of Oküz Mehmed Pasha, are scattered throughout *Ta'rikh āl 'Uthmān*.⁸⁹ These detailed descriptions of the problems of market control (*hisba*) in Cairo force us to reconsider the conventional assessment of the reestablishment of Ottoman regime in Egypt by this prominent governor of Egypt, displaying the dark side of his rule, requiring further scrutiny of the social history of Egypt in those days.

The textual sources on which *Mabāhij al-ikhwān* and *Ta'rikh āl 'Uthmān* rely have not yet been fully examined, but we would like to make a few remarks about them. In both manuscripts, there are a certain number of references to specific names of people who brought information to Ibn al-'Ajamī, but there are only a few references to literary sources with explicit authorship. Some passages rely on pamphlets (*kurrāsas*) of unknown authorship,⁹⁰ but sources that give author's name are the third volume of *Ta'rikh al-Quḍā'ī* by Muḥammad al-Quḍā'ī (d. 1062), a Fatimid official and Shāfi'ī jurist,⁹¹ *al-Khiṭaṭ* by al-Maqrīzī (d. 1442),⁹² and al-Suyūṭī's *Kawkab al-Rawḍa*.⁹³ An important feature common to *Mabāhij al-ikhwān* and its continuation is that most of the accounts appear to be based on what the author, who lived as a Cairene citizen of his time, saw and heard.

III. Ibn al-'Ajamī and his Family

The first thing to note is that the author was called Ibn al-'Ajamī. The term “*‘ajamī*” was used to refer to a non-Arab, especially often a Persian, and it is inferred that he was of paternal origin with this ethnic element, although there is no account of this by the historian himself in *Mabāhij al-ikhwān* and its sequel, and with limited mention of Persianate areas.

Aside from that, much of the personal information about Ibn al-'Ajamī's family is inserted in Chapter 2 of *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*. For example, after describing the “great Nile,” which had an unprecedented high-water level of 22 *dhirā'* 8 *iṣba'*, the highest level of the rising water in 988 A.H., he writes, “In the same year, I married my first wife, who was a virgin, in late Dhū al-Hijja (at the beginning of February, 1581).”⁹⁴

⁸⁹ *Ta'rikh āl 'Uthmān*, fols. 40rv, 43v–45r, 48v, 62v–63r, 67r–69v, 73r, 79v, 83r.

⁹⁰ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 5r.

⁹¹ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 7r. On al-Quḍā'ī and his historical work, see Paul Walker, *Exploring an Islamic Empire: Fatimid History and its Sources*, London: I. B. Tauris, 2002, p. 145.

⁹² *Ta'rikh āl 'Uthmān*, fol. 39r.

⁹³ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fols. 5v–6r; *Ta'rikh āl 'Uthmān*, fol. 43v. This unique history focusing the island of the Nile, which was a final home of this polymath, has been edited and published as al-Suyūṭī, *Kawkab al-rawḍa fī ta'rikh al-Nīl wa Jazīrat Rawḍa*, Cairo: Dār al-Āfāq al-'Arabiyya, 2002.

⁹⁴ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 30r.

Assuming he got married at the age of twenty-five, Ibn al-‘Ajamī would have been born in the mid-1550s. However, in the postscript in the margin of the section of Maḥmūd Pasha’s term of office (Shawwāl 1, 973–Jumādā I 24, 975/May 1, 1566–November 26, 1567), the author states, “I existed in his time, but I had not reached the age of discretion (*sinn al-tamyīz*).”⁹⁵ Since the “age of discretion” is considered the age of seven according to the Hijra calendar,⁹⁶ he would have been born in the early 1560s. Accordingly, his marriage to his first wife would be earlier than assumed above, around the age of twenty for Ibn al-‘Ajamī. It is also briefly mentioned that in 989 A.H./1581-1582, his first son Muḥammad was born, but died a year later.⁹⁷

About sixteen years later, Ibn al-‘Ajamī set out on a pilgrimage to the Hijaz. He landed at the port of al-Yanbu‘ al-Baḥrī, via Red Sea, after paying homage to Medina, he made the Ḥajj pilgrimage in Dhū al-Ḥijja 1007/July 1599. He was accompanied by his household dependents (*‘iyāl*) and children (*awlād*). He also mentions about his stay in Mecca as a *mujāwir* (sojourner in the sanctuary) and the Ramaḍān fasting with his household.⁹⁸ We do not know when he left Cairo, but it appears to have been a year-long journey in all. The fact that he made a family pilgrimage to two holy cities indicates that Ibn al-‘Ajamī, who was probably in his early forties, had already had some children and had sufficient financial resources at that time. However, less than three years later, in Ramaḍān–Shawwāl 1010/February–April 1602, he lost his “two great sons” to the plague in Cairo.⁹⁹

The Hijra year 1007 A.H., when he made his pilgrimage to the Hijaz, was also a year of severe hardship for Ibn al-‘Ajamī and his family, including a shocking murder. His father Aḥmad was stabbed to death in his home in Ḥārat al-Khaṭīrī of Būlāq, after the afternoon prayers. The following account of the incident is given in *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*.

The cause of his death was as follows. He raised four men and had them manufacture cheese (*jubn*). He bought them several cows (*abqār*) so that they could sell cheese for him. Later, he charged them a large sum of money for that and drew up a legal document (*wathīqa shar‘iyya*). Thereupon he demanded they refund, and one of them was imprisoned for a short period. However,

⁹⁵ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 7v. Following this, Ibn al-‘Ajamī goes on to relate Mahmud Pasha’s episode of gluttony, in which this governor once ate 100 eggs and five *raṭls* of cheese, as Ibn al-‘Ajamī’s father had heard from the governor’s cook.

⁹⁶ Avner Giladi, “Ṣaghīr,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edition.

⁹⁷ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 30v.

⁹⁸ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 32r.

⁹⁹ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fols. 86v–87r. The author provides considerable information on the plague epidemic that struck Cairo and the Nile Delta in 1601–1602, which should also be examined.

according to Allāh's decision for them, the man was released, and my father got nothing from them. Subsequently, one of them came and hid in my father's house, and attacked my father with a knife, severing a vein on his arm. It was after the afternoon prayers; the lamps were lit, and the evening market was open. Then the murderer fled, and no one pursued him. Seven days passed, and my father turned to the Mercy of Allāh, the Exalted, and died.¹⁰⁰

Ibn al-'Ajamī's father, who was an investor and possibly the proprietor of the cheese-making business, was murdered because of financial troubles at the hands of one of the cheesemakers he had raised, who had a grudge against him. The cheese workshop of Father Aḥmad may have been in a rural area, since we know that farmers brought their products to the butter and cheese market located not far from Bāb al-Kharq, albeit about the 18th century.¹⁰¹ The author goes on to state,

Before his death, my father entrusted me to bury him near Imām al-Shāfi'ī in Qarāfa. I followed his order and buried him in the tomb at the south gate opposite the mausoleum of the great scholar Imām Burhān al-Dīn ibn Abī Sharīf.¹⁰²

Ibn al-'Ajamī appears to have been present at the burial in the manner desired by his father and to have led the funeral service. The month and date of the occurrence of this tragedy are not available. However, considering the number of days required to travel between Mecca and Cairo, it seems reasonable to assume that it was before departure, not after returning from the pilgrimage. If this is the case, then the pilgrimage to the two holy cities with his family over the long period of time was also a journey to overcome grief and anxiety and to seek the rebirth of the soul for them. In addition, we might imagine that financial support for the pilgrimage was an inheritance from his father.

Furthermore, there is a description of the response of police authorities at that time. Upon receiving the news of the murder, the chief of Būlāq police (*ṣāhib al-shurṭa al-ṣuḡhrā bi-Būlāq al-Qāhira*) and two notaries (*shāhids*) of the Islamic court (*majlis al-shar'*) came to investigate the case. The results of the investigation were

¹⁰⁰ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 32rv.

¹⁰¹ André Raymond, *Artisans et commerçants au Caire au XVIIIe siècle*, 2 vols., Damascus: Institut Français de Damas, 1973–1974, p. 316.

¹⁰² *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 32v. Burhān al-Dīn Ibn Abī Sharīf al-Qudsī (d. 1491) was a chief Shāfi'ī judge in the late Mamluk period. See al-Suyūṭī, *Naẓm al-'iqyān fī a'yān al-a'yān*, New York: Syrian American Press, 1927, p. 26.

recorded in a document. Regarding the investigation fee for the case, the author states as follows,

According to administrative law (*qānūn*) and customary law (*‘āda*) in Cairo and elsewhere, if a person is killed in his residence, and investigation fee (*ma‘lūm al-kashf*) is to be collected from inhabitants of this place (*ahl dhālika al-mahall*). However, one *dīnār* was paid from my father’s estate for this investigation. Therefore, no damage or loss occurred to inhabitants of the residential area (*ahl tilka al-ḥāra*) in this incident.¹⁰³

Ibn al-‘Ajamī appears to have taken some solace, at least, in the fact that his family was not a burden to the residents of the neighborhood. Although the account of the incident concludes with a prayer for divine punishment for the murderer and his relatives,¹⁰⁴ no mention of the arrest of the perpetrator is found in *Mabāhij al-ikhwān* and its sequel. It can be imagined that Ibn al-‘Ajamī must have been burdened with heartache and anxiety as a bereaved family member of a victim of crime in his later life.

Besides, the following three members of Ibn al-‘Ajamī’s extended family are identified in *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*: 1) A visually-impaired and illiterate (*ummi*) maternal uncle whose name is not given, who died in 988 A.H./1580–1581,¹⁰⁵ 2) a paternal aunt, also unnamed, who made her first Ḥajj pilgrimage in 989 A.H./1582, stayed at ‘Arafāt seventeen times, and spent many years as a *mujāwira* in Mecca,¹⁰⁶ 3) his brother-in-law or son-in-law al-Shaykh Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Qabbānī, known as Ibn al-Naqqāsh, who, according to his name, appears to have been a weigher like Ibn al-‘Ajamī.¹⁰⁷

IV. Būlāq, Ibn al-‘Ajamī’s Hometown

The urban development of Būlāq, the river port of Cairo, began during the third reign of Mamlūk Sulṭān al-Nāṣir Muḥammad (1310–1341), and was fully realized in the 15th century with the decline of the routes via Qūṣ and ‘Aydḥāb and the rise of routes via the Sinai Peninsula in international trades linking Egypt with the Red Sea and the

¹⁰³ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fols. 32v–33r. For the court witnesses in Ottoman Cairo, see James E. Baldwin, *Islamic Law and Empire in Ottoman Cairo*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017, pp. 36–37.

¹⁰⁴ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 33r.

¹⁰⁵ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 30r.

¹⁰⁶ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 30v.

¹⁰⁷ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 47v.

Indian Ocean region, and the economic growth of the Nile Delta.¹⁰⁸ From the reign of Sulṭān Jaqmaq (1438–1453), the construction of docks and road networks in Būlāq was underway, and later, the incorporation of Cairo into the Ottoman Empire accelerated the development of this northern port of Cairo.¹⁰⁹ Starting with Hadım Süleyman Pasha (in office, 1525–1535, 1537–1538), Ottoman governors of Egypt added urban facilities such as *wikālas* and mosques one after another, which ensured the prosperity of Būlāq. By the end of the 18th century, the port had become a dense urban space with 65 *wikālas*, 25 mosques, 7 *ḥammāms*, and 12 *sabīls*.¹¹⁰ Ḥārat al-Khaṭīrī, where Ibn al-‘Ajamī’s father Aḥmad’s house was located, was a residential area with al-Khaṭīrī Mosque (Jāmi‘ al-Khaṭīrī) at its core. It was located near the southern end of this port, which formed a triangle with the Nile riverbank as its long side, near Mawridat al-Tibn.¹¹¹

The following is a summary of the description by al-Maqrīzī, which provides the most detailed information on the process of establishment of this mosque:¹¹² The site of al-Khaṭīrī Mosque was once located within the Nile’s flood zone, but as the river moved westward around 700 A.H./1300–1301, the land was used for cultivation and became a place for Cairene people to gather and stroll. Sharaf al-Dīn Ibn Zunbūr then installed a waterwheel (*sāqiya*), and next to it Muḥammad ibn ‘Izz al-Farrāsh built a house facing the Nile. Following his death, Tāj al-Dīn Ibn al-Azraq, *nāzir al-jihāt*, purchased the house and settled there. However, various prohibited acts were frequently performed there, so the house came to be known by the disgraceful appellation “Dār al-Fāsiqīn (The House of the Transgressors).” Later, al-Nashw,¹¹³

¹⁰⁸ Nelly Hanna, *Un Urban History of Būlāq in the Mamluk and Ottoman Periods*, Cairo: IFAO, 1983, pp. 2–7, 16–17; Jean-Claude Garcin, “La ‘méditerranéisation’ de l’empire mamlouk sous les sultans bahrides,” *Rivista degli studi orientali*, vol. 48 (1973–1974), pp. 109–116.

¹⁰⁹ Hanna, *Un Urban History of Būlāq*, pp. 27–29.

¹¹⁰ Hanna, *Un Urban History of Būlāq*, pp. 35–38, 65–83. For the close economic ties between Būlāq and the two Mediterranean commercial cities Alexandria and Rosetta, see Ḥusām Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Mu‘ī, “Al-Iskandariyya fī al-‘aṣr al-‘Uthmānī, 923–1213/1517–1798,” in *The Environments and Civilizations of the Nile Delta II*, edited by Fumihiko Hasebe, Tokyo: Organization for Islamic Area Studies, Waseda University, 2013, pp. 6–7, 9, 15.

¹¹¹ For more information on the distinctive structure of Būlāq, see Hanna, *Un Urban History of Būlāq*, pp. 63–83. For the location of this mosque, see *Ibid.*, p. 73, Fig. 11, No. 24.

¹¹² Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawā‘iz wa al-i‘tibār fī dhikr al-khiṭat wa al-āthār*, 5 vols., London: Mu‘assasat al-Furqān li-al-Turāth al-Islāmī, 2002–2004, vol. 4-part 1, pp. 251–254.

¹¹³ For more on this financial bureaucrat who wielded power in the 1330s, see Donald P. Little, “Notes on the Early *Naẓar al-Khāṣṣ*,” in Thomas Philipp and Ulrich Haarmann (ed.), *The Mamluks in Egyptian Politics and Society*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp. 235–253; Amalia Levanoni, “The al-Nashw Episode: A Case Study of ‘Moral Economy,’” *Mamlūk Studies Review*, 9/1 (2005), pp. 207–220.

nāzir al-khāṣṣ, had Ibn al-Azraq taken as prisoner and his property confiscated, and his house was sold to Amir ‘Izz al-Dīn Aydamur al-Khaṭīrī (d. 1337). Aydamur demolished the house and built a new mosque there, which he named “Jāmi‘ al-Tawba (The Mosque of Repentance).” Facing the Nile, the mosque was considered one of the most beautiful in Egypt and was equipped with a marble pulpit and a library with rare books, where lectures were given on the Shāfi‘ī jurisprudence. A number of *waqf* properties were also set up for the mosque and total cost of the construction was 400,000 dirhams. The first Friday prayer service was held on Jumādā II 20, 737/January 24, 1337, just before Aydamur’s death.

Although the designation “Jāmi‘ al-Tawba” is not used in *Mabāhij al-ikhwān* and its sequel, the fact that Ibn al-‘Ajāmī visited this mosque in the proximity of his father’s house is confirmed in the following narrative,

In the same month (Shawwāl 1018/December 1609–January 1610), I met a group of people from al-Bahnasāwiyya region in Būlāq. At that time, I was sitting in the late Aydamur al-Khaṭīrī’s mosque. As we were discussing the receding of waters of the Nile this year, they informed me that most of southern Upper Egypt and numerous villages in al-Bahnasāwiyya could not be irrigated and that buffaloes, cattle, sheep, and other livestock had perished. Those villages were devastated from lack of pastureland, and buffaloes and cows died soon from vomiting. Buffaloes and cows worth ten dinars were sold for three dinars, but owing to the severity of their debility, they could not find any buyers. Butter oil worth two *niṣf* per one *raṭl* was sold for five *niṣf*, but they found only small quantities of it. They had not seen such days in recent years.¹¹⁴

As is clear from the above, the neighborhood of al-Khaṭīrī Mosque was the central place of Ibn al-‘Ajāmī’s family life. Meanwhile, an important place in his professional life as a young man was the remote trading and wholesale commercial facility that formed part of the al-Sināniyya complex in Būlāq, built by Koca Sinan Pasha. Ibn al-‘Ajāmī’s relationship with this commercial facility is shown in the following chronological description for Rajab 1015 A.H./November 1606.

In the same month, imported goods from the Rūm and Syria regions arrived by sea. So did carob beans (*kharrūb*) bring from Cyprus. It was in short supply in Cairo and was sold at 50 *niṣf* per *qintār*, but the imports brought down the prices and it was sold for 34 *niṣf* per *qintār*. I weighed it when I was a weigher in the

¹¹⁴ *Ta’rikh al-‘Uthmān*, fols. 63v–64r.

wikāla of late al-Wazīr Sinān Pasha in Būlāq, and it was 14 *niṣf* per *qinṭār*. When the prices were high (*ghalā'*) during the term of Ḥasan Pasha the eunuch, it was 24 *niṣf* per *qinṭār*.¹¹⁵

It is worth noting here that the high price of carob beans, which was useful for sugar intake, was somewhat eliminated by the supply from Cyprus, but the price was nevertheless high compared to earlier. If we read along the lines of this description, we can see that Ibn al-‘Ajāmī was engaged in the weighing business in this trading facility at a time prior to the price hikes during the term of Hadīm Hasan Pasha. According to another account in *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, the handsome eunuch governor arrived on Jumādā I 16, 988 A.H./June 29, 1580, and left on Rabī‘ II 13, 991 A.H./May 6, 1583;¹¹⁶ therefore, Ibn al-‘Ajāmī’s weighing activities at the trading facility in al-Sināniyya appears to have occurred before June of 1580. This would suggest that this *wikāla* may have been his first place of employment when he was in his late teens before he married his first wife.

The description in *Mabāhij al-ikhwān* of Sinan Pasha Mosque, which became a landmark in Būlāq and contributed to the “Ottomanization” of Cairo’s urban landscape,¹¹⁷ is the preeminent portion of the entire section dealing with the achievements of successive Ottoman governors of Egypt. This may be since Ibn al-‘Ajāmī had access to an exceptional level of information about this complex and its operations, which had been his workplace for some time. *Mabāhij al-ikhwān* is exceptional among narrative sources of its time in conveying a variety of information about al-Sināniyya, which occupied an important place in the early modern space of the river port of Cairo. The following is a summary of the information on the complex in *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*.

Ibn al-‘Ajāmī emphasizes the magnitude of the construction project of Koca Sinan Pasha and describes in detail the Sinan Pasha Mosque in Būlāq. He calls it not a mosque but a “great madrasa (*madrasa ‘aẓīma*),” noting that, “its construction was

¹¹⁵ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 203r.

¹¹⁶ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fols. 11v–12r. Al-Iṣḥāqī assigns the date of the governor’s arrival as Jumādā I 26, 988 A.H./July 9, 1580, and the date of his departure as Rabī‘ II 23, 991/May 16, 1583. See *Akhbār al-uwal*, pp. 329–330. Meanwhile, al-Bakrī assigns his arrival as Jumādā I 16, 988 A.H./June 29, 1580, and his departure as Rabī‘ I 3, 991/March 27, 1583. See *al-Minaḥ al-raḥmāniyya*, pp. 235–236; *al-Nuzha al-zahiyya*, p. 159. It is unclear when the “high prices” in quotation occurred and what the actual situation was.

¹¹⁷ For Sinān Pasha Mosque and al-Sināniyya, see Behrens-Abouseif, *Egypt’s Adjustment to Ottoman Rule*, pp. 200–202. Behrens-Abouseif considers al-Sināniyya to be an urban project on a scale comparable to al-Azbakiyya in the western suburb of al-Qāhira in the late Mamlūk period.

completed in the early 970s A.H. when I was in primary school (*maktab al-ta'dīb*).”¹¹⁸ He also notes that the building differs from the “Cairo-style madrasa (*ṭarīqat al-madāris allatī bi-al-Qāhira*)” as it adopts the “Rūm regional style (*ṭarīqat al-bilād al-Rūmiyya*)” for the minarets, and the description also conveys relevant information that the construction workers and builders were trapped in the collapse of the dome after its completion, and that Egyptian builders were unable to repair it, so a Christian builder was invited from the Rūm area to rebuild it.¹¹⁹

The author then describes the staff of the mosque. It says that from the beginning, the staff included an imam, a preacher, 40 Sufis, four callers to prayer, a timekeeper (*muwaqqit*), lightkeeper (*waqqād*), carpet keeper (*farrāsh*), gatekeeper (*bawwāb*), an incense burner for Indian perfumes, among others. In addition, the staff was increased during the time that Sinan Pasha was grand vizier, adding 40 people who recited the chapter of al-An‘ām of the Qur’an every day after the dawn prayer and two groups of six people each who recited two *ḥizbs* of the Qur’an between sunset and night prayers each day.¹²⁰ As far as the various positions listed above are concerned, no function of higher education can be found.

Next, there is a description of the primary school (*maktab*), which formed part of al-Sināniyya, and a public fountain (*sabīl*) located on its lower floor, and the staff of both included a water attendant (*qayyim*), a teacher (*mu’addib*) and an assistant (*‘arīf*), as well as 20 orphaned pupils. It is followed by a description of the two *wikālas* and a *qaysāriyya*, where woolen clothes and upper garments were sold. The layout of an apartment (*rab’*), a public bath (*ḥammām*), and warehouses (*ḥawāṣil*) where various types of grain were sold, each of which formed part of the al-Sināniyya, is described in detail. Ibn al-‘Ajāmī further states that a mill (*tāḥūn*) and a oven (*furn*) for producing bread for the staff were later added by a supervisor (*nāzīr*) of *waqf*.¹²¹

¹¹⁸ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 8r. This statement is consistent with the earlier estimate that the author was born in the early 1560s. According to Behrens-Abouseif, this mosque was built in 1571. See Behrens-Abouseif, *Egypt’s Adjustment to Ottoman Rule*, p. 201.

¹¹⁹ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 8r. For the architectural features of Sinan Pasha Mosque, see Doris Behrens-Abouseif, *Islamic Architecture in Cairo: An Introduction*, Leiden: Brill, 1992, pp. 161–162.

¹²⁰ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 8rv. Compared to the *waqf* deed of al-Sināniyya, dated Rab’ I 20, 996 A.H./February 18, 1588, there are differences in the number of members in each position. See Behrens-Abouseif, *Egypt’s Adjustment to Ottoman Rule*, pp. 201–202 for comparison.

¹²¹ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fols. 8v–9r. According to Hanna, the large *wikāla* was located north of the Sinan Pasha Mosque, the small *wikāla* was located east of the same mosque, and the *qaysāriyya*, which was also called “Sūq al-Sināniyya” was adjacent to the east of the large *wikāla*. See Hanna, *An Urban History of Būlāq*, p. 49, 93. Ibn al-‘Ajāmī also mentions the successive appointments of managing directors (*mubāshirs*) who oversaw operations in Cairo under the supervisors of this complex. *Mubāshir* here appears to be synonymous with *mutawallī*. See *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 9rv; Behrens-Abouseif, *Egypt’s Adjustment to Ottoman Rule*, p. 201.

According to Ibn al-‘Ajamī, the imams of this mosque, in order of appointment, were ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Burullusī, Muḥammad al-Busāṭī, and his son Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Busāṭī, who was still holding this position when this section of *Mabāhij al-ikhwān* was written,¹²² and ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Burullusī obtained this position through the intercession of Khawājā ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn al-‘Āṣī of the famous merchant family of ‘Āṣī in Būlāq to Sinan Pasha.¹²³ Ibn al-‘Ajamī also notes that al-Burullusī changed his school of jurisprudence from Mālikī law school “for the acquisition of goods in this world.”¹²⁴ It is worth noting that he is described as “Our country man, al-Burullusī.”¹²⁵ This is an important statement that suggests that the customs port of Burullus, located in the northernmost part of the Nile Delta on the shores of the brackish Lake Burullus facing the Mediterranean Sea, was the home of Ibn al-‘Ajamī family.¹²⁶ Moreover, there is an unmissable reference to the office of *khaṭīb*, which states that ‘Abd al-Ra’ūf ibn Kamāl al-Dīn al-Buḥayrī held office at the time of writing *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, and that “most of the aforementioned madrasa’s offices were under the control of the sons of the aforementioned al-Buḥayrī.”¹²⁷

The above is a summary of a detailed description of al-Sināniyya,¹²⁸ but he also left the following description, which vividly conveys the exuberant mood of Būlāq at the time of its founding.

The following is a rare occurrence that I have seen. An artisan kneaded the bread in the shape of Wazīr Sinān Madrasa, which baked in an oven, colored it with verdigris (*zinjār*) and arsenic (*ṣīlaqūn*), and even shaped the dome, minarets,

¹²² *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fols. 9v–10r.

¹²³ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 9v. According to Ibn al-‘Ajamī’s account, al-Burullusī also served as a teacher (*mu’addib al-aṭfāl*) of the *maktab*, which was founded by ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn al-‘Āṣī. However, after ‘Abd al-Raḥmān’s death, his nephew Khawājā ‘Abd al-Qawī succeeded the position of supervisor of the *maktab*, and there was a dispute between al-Burullusī and ‘Abd al-Qawī, and eventually al-Burullusī was removed from both positions. On al-‘Āṣī family, see Hanna, *An Urban History of Būlāq*, p. 39.

¹²⁴ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fols. 9v–10r. Although it does not specify which school of jurisprudence, it is assumed that it have been Ḥanafī school, which was the main Ottoman school of jurisprudence.

¹²⁵ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 9v. It is written that Father al-Busāṭī also changed his school of jurisprudence from Shāfi‘ī school to Ḥanafī school for the sake of the imam’s position (*Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 10r.), and we can see how changing schools of jurisprudence was not uncommon in those days.

¹²⁶ For the customs in the port of Burullus, see Ṣalāḥ Aḥmad Harīdī, *Dirāsa ‘an ba’ḍ jamārik Miṣr fī al-qarn al-thāmin ‘ashar (al-Iskandariyya, Dimyāṭ, Rashīd, al-Burullus)*, Alexandria: Dār al-Ma’rifā al-Jāmi‘iyya, 1989, pp. 18–19 and Stanford J. Shaw, *The Financial and Administrative Organization and Development of Ottoman Egypt*, Princeton N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1962, p. 113.

¹²⁷ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 10rv.

¹²⁸ In addition to these, the author mentions the construction activities of mosque, *sabīl*, *wikāla*, and *khan* in Alexandria, Rosetta, and Suez, and elsewhere. See *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 10v.

and surrounding balconies (*shurufāt*). It was then paraded through the streets of Būlāq accompanied by metallic percussion instruments.¹²⁹

Although the green-colored bread is hazardous from today's point of view, we can see how elated the residents of this river port were at the appearance of the large mosque in the popular celebration procession of the inauguration. The new religious edifice had a strong visual impact, in which one of the artisans of the town demonstrated his special skills.

As mentioned earlier, there were two *wikālas* in al-Sināniyya—al-Khān al-Kabīr and al-Khān al-Ṣaghīr. Based on the descriptions in the *waqf* deed and architectural features, Hanna believes that al-Khān al-Kabīr and Wikālat al-Kharnūb which was still in existence at least in 1983 were identical, and that this commercial building began to be called Wikālat al-Kharnūb in the 18th century. It was a two-story building with a rectangular plan, characteristic of Būlāq, with a site area of about 3,840 square meters, and was one of the three major commercial buildings in this river port, along with Wikālat Ḥasan Bāshā and Wikālat al-Zayt.¹³⁰ It is not yet clear whether Ibn al-‘Ajāmī’s workplace was in al-Khān al-Kabīr or al-Khān al-Ṣaghīr, known as Wikālat al-Rab‘ al-Sināniyya, but it may have been the former, given that he was engaged in weighing the carob beans, as mentioned above.

The author’s familiarity with the people working in the commercial space of al-Sināniyya can be seen in the following obituary of one of the merchants who was active there.

On a Thursday evening, the 29th of Muḥarram 1014 (June 16, 1605), one of our great and noble companions, one of the merchants (*tujjār*) of the *wikāla* of the late Wazīr Sinan Pasha, Ḥājj Manṣūr, known as Ibn al-Ajrūd, passed away. He was one of the people of faith, good deeds, and almsgiving (*ṣadaqa*). He distributed 25 *raṭls* of flat bread every day as an offering, and the poor would gather at the gate of the *wikāla*, where one of his men would distribute a piece of bread to each person. Furthermore, when a poor man died, he dressed him in the garb of death toward Allāh, the Exalted. However, his wealth was worth only about 1,000 dinars, not on a par with the merchants of Būlāq. However, he fulfilled me with his kindness and beneficence (*iḥsān*). May Allāh, the Supreme, be pleased with him and reward him with Paradise!¹³¹

¹²⁹ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 10v.

¹³⁰ Hanna, *An Urban History of Būlāq*, pp. 90–98.

¹³¹ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 167v. Ibn al-‘Ajāmī left many accounts of wealthy Cairo merchants of his

This river port merchant, who based his commercial activities in either of the *khans* in al-Sināniyya, perhaps the larger one, was so passionate about charity that he surprisingly did not accumulate much wealth, or so he was perceived by others. Ibn al-‘Ajamī himself was a beneficiary of the charity of this faithful merchant. The charitable activities of the Būlāq merchant extended not only to the poor, but also to the weigher who worked there. This description is also noteworthy in that it demonstrates the daily practice of personal poverty relief by a merchant at the gate of *khan/wikāla*, his commercial activities’ site, which was one of the *waqf* properties that generated charitable financial resources for the operation and maintenance of al-Sināniyya.

In another obituary in *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, Ibn al-‘Ajamī’s connection to another wealthy citizen of Būlāq has also been confirmed. The master (*mu‘allim*) Aḥmad ibn al-Mu‘allim Yūsuf, known as al-Firārjī, who died on the night of Rajab 4, 1016/October 24, 1607, on his way back home from the Ḥājj pilgrimage, was a linseed and sesame oil presser (*mudawlib bil-ma‘āṣir allatī ya‘malu bi-hā al-zayt al-mustakhraj min bizr al-kittān wa al-sayārij*) and the owner of assets (*dhū al-tharwa*). During the pilgrimage, Master Aḥmad had entrusted one of his sons, who remained in Cairo, with enormous property. According to the author’s firsthand account from one of the sons of Aḥmad, there were 20,000 dinars in the master’s safe, but after inheritance, the son became impoverished and was in debt. The other sons also fell into poverty.¹³² Ibn al-‘Ajamī went back to the explanation of Master Aḥmad, adding,

Their father (i.e., Master Aḥmad) initially carried a basket on his head and walked around al-Qāhira selling chicken. He became wealthy and made a fortune. He was one of the companions (*aqrān*) of al-Khawājā ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, known as Ibn al-‘Āṣī al-Burullūsī, who owned several *wikālas* and *rab*’s in Būlāq al-Qāhira.¹³³

The author writes with grand emotion about the first generation, who rose from a humble chicken hawker to a wealthy oil producer and made friends with a powerful merchant in his hometown, while the second generation exhausted all his fortune.

Another noteworthy account is that in Rajab 1018/October 1609, a great

time. See Fumihiko Hasebe, “Khawājā Merchants in Cairo in the Early 17th Century,” *The Hiyoshi Review of the Humanities*, 35 (2020), pp. 275–300. (In Japanese)

¹³² *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 272rv.

¹³³ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 272v. The author often refers to Būlāq as Būlāq al-Qāhira, distinguishing it from Būlāq al-Takrūr in Giza.

banquet (*simāf*) of marriage and circumcision was held in the house of Jamāl al-Dīn Yūsuf, known as al-Zifzāf, who was a living saint (*ṣāliḥ mu‘taqad*) residing at Hārat al-Muqaddam Ṭu‘ma in Būlāq, attended by scholars and pious people, where the distribution of food to the poor was also practiced. In this regard, in the sequel of *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, Ibn al-‘Ajamī states, “I was living in Būlāq at the time, but was unable to attend it,”¹³⁴ providing at least some confirmation that the author’s place of residence was located then in Būlāq. The author visited the house again in Shawwāl 1018/December 1609–January 1610, when it is noted that “I went to Būlāq al-Qāhira,”¹³⁵ therefore, Ibn al-‘Ajamī appears to have resided in a place that was not Būlāq at that point.

V. Ibn al-‘Ajamī as a Weigher

Although no information other than the above can be found in *Mabāhij al-ikhwān* and its sequel regarding young Ibn al-‘Ajamī’s working in al-Sināniyya, there are more descriptions of his activities as a weigher in other settings. Now, we will focus on this unknown historian as a weigher and attempt to clarify as much as possible about his professional activities and relationships.¹³⁶

In the markets of early modern Arab cities, expert technicians played an indispensable role in weighing goods. They were classified into two groups: the *kayyāls* were measurers of the volume of grain, and the *qabbānīs* were weighers who measured various other commodities with a steelyard (*qabbān*).¹³⁷ The actual situations of *qabbānīs* in Ottoman Cairo are still largely unknown, but according to Arthur Rhoné, who stayed for some years in Egypt in the late 19th century, they used weights approved by the Egyptian regime to strictly verify weights at the request of buyers in commercial facilities and other places.¹³⁸ In her pioneering monograph on

¹³⁴ *Ta’rīkh āl ‘Uthmān*, fol. 58rv. The author’s visit to the home of this religious figure can be confirmed again in Jumādā II, 1017 A.H./September–October 1608, where he met one of the messengers from Istanbul who brought the edict to Oküz Mehmed Pasha, Ottoman governor of Egypt (*Ta’rīkh āl ‘Uthmān*, fol. 27r).

¹³⁵ *Ta’rīkh āl ‘Uthmān*, fol. 65r.

¹³⁶ As for the writings of Cairene weighers of this period, two poets, Muḥammad al-Abyārī al-Qabbānī and Yaḥyā ibn al-Khaṭīb al-Qabbānī, whose works are included in Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Khafājī (d. 1659)’s verse collection, *Rayḥānat al-alibbā*, also deserve attention. See al-Khafājī, *Rayḥānat al-alibbā wa zahrat al-ḥayāt al-dunyā*, 2 vols., Cairo: Maṭba‘at Isā Ḥalabī, 1967, vol. 2, pp. 128–132; Nelly Hanna, *Artisan Entrepreneurs in Cairo and Early-Modern Capitalism (1600–1800)*, New York: Syracuse University Press, p. 54.

¹³⁷ André Raymond, *Artisans et commerçants*, p. 275. See also E. Ashtor and J. Burton-Page, “Makāyil,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edition.

¹³⁸ Raymond, *Artisans et commerçants*, p. 275.

Ismā'īl Abū Ṭāqīyya (d. 1624), one of the leading merchants in Ottoman Cairo, Hanna states that *qabbānīs* were present at trading sessions in the *wikālas* with the *ṣarrāfs* (money changers).¹³⁹

Regarding Ibn al-‘Ajamī’s activities as a weigher, the following account in *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, which describes vividly the flood caused by heavy rainfall that hit Cairo in early Muḥarram 1000/late October 1591, with his own experiences is noteworthy.

It rained heavily that it was like a flood coming down on Mecca and the Syrian regions, as if it were pouring from the mouths of leather water containers. That day I was weighing dates with a steelyard in the field (*ghayt*) of late Amīr Jānībek, known as the governor of Jedda, adjacent to the dilapidated madrasa, known as al-Raslāniyya ... Then, I devoted myself to weighing in the *maq‘ad* of Khuṭṭ Qanāṭir al-Sibā‘. When I had finished the weighing, which was after the afternoon prayer, the great flood occurred. My clothes and turban were soaking wet. I went down from al-Khalīj al-Ḥākīmī to return to my home, but the water in the canal looked like that of the opening day of the canal in Fuṣṭāṭ. I reached home but was on the verge of ruin from the intense cold that swept over me that day. The flood damaged a lot of grains and other things on the banks of Būlāq.¹⁴⁰

Although Madrasa al-Raslāniyya has yet to be identified, the village of Zinīn in Giza, which is confirmed to have been the *waqf* land of the well-known Mamluk amīr during the reign of Sulṭān Qāyṭbāy, is considered to be the site of “the field (*ghayt*) of late Amīr Jānībek.”¹⁴¹ The fact that Ibn al-‘Ajamī, who grew up in Būlāq, was also active in Giza on the other side of the Nile is supported by a statement in *Ta‘rīkh al-‘Uthmān* that in Rajab 1017/October–November 1608, he witnessed pomegranates, which was then in abundant supply from the Nile Delta, being sold for as low as one *niṣf* per four *raṭls* in Nāḥiyat Niklā in the north of Giza.¹⁴² Although there is no other mention of his working in Giza, it is highly probable that Giza, located on the other

¹³⁹ Nelly Hanna, *Making Big Money in 1600: The Life and Times of Isma‘il Abu Taqīyya, Egyptian Merchant*, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1998, pp. 66–67.

¹⁴⁰ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 65r.

¹⁴¹ Heinz Halm, *Ägypten nach den mamlukischen Lebensregistern*, 2 vols., Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1979–1983, vol. 1, p. 240. This village was located about three kilometers west of Būlāq al-Takrūr in Giza. For Amīr Jānībek see Richard T. Mortel, “Grand Dawādār and Governor of Jedda: The Career of the Fifteenth Century Mamlūk Čanībek al-Zāhirī,” *Arabica*, 43-3 (1996), pp. 437–456.

¹⁴² *Ta‘rīkh al-‘Uthmān*, fol. 28v. The author, who was a certified weigher, makes a detailed point that four *raṭls* in that area corresponded to five *raṭls* in Cairo.

side of Cairo, was part of his scope of activities as a weigher. *Mabāhij al-ikhwān* and its sequel are unique as Cairo chronicles in that they contain not limited information on Giza, including Būlāq al-Takrūr and Imbāba.¹⁴³ This can be understood as a reflection of the author's mental map, which was extended westward from the provincial capital through these business trips. The author's business in the *maq'ad* (loggia) of Khuṭṭ Qanāṭir al-Sibā'¹⁴⁴ confirmed as of the year 1591, can be assumed to have supported his household for a certain period of time. This neighborhood, along with Ibn Ṭūlūn area, was basically a lower-class urban settlement in the southern part of Cairo during the Ottoman period,¹⁴⁵ and appears to have been rather marginal in character.

On Ṣafar 13, 1016 A.H./June 9, 1607, Ibn al-‘Ajāmī witnessed two drunken men belonging to the “army of malefactors (*‘askar muḥsidīn*)” in Qanāṭir al-Sibā’.¹⁴⁶ Furthermore, he describes his own experience with military personnel in Ṣafar 1017 A.H./May–June 1608 in the sequel of *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, as follows,

What happened because of the greed of the *amirs* of this period is as follows. I was sitting in Maq'ad al-Qibāna in the *sūq* of Qanāṭir al-Sibā’, weighing by steelyard. I was doing it to help provide for my dependents (*qūt al-‘iyāl*). At the time, I had no other job in Cairo. Then a group came to me to conclude a contract for a one-half share in a foal belonging to an orphan. I refused, fearing for my own safety. This is because *qāḍī ‘askars* forbade all members of the weighers’ guild (*tā’ifat al-qabbāniyya*) to testify on such occasions. At this time a member of the Cavuşan regiment (*tā’ifat al-Jāwīshiyya*) also came to me, and he took an ink pot, pen and paper from me and wrote two documents concerning this contrast, first for the seller and the second for the buyer. When he earned one *nişf* from it, he bought a pumpkin (*qar’*) with it and cooked it at home.¹⁴⁷

It is clear from this description that this *maq'ad* was a urban structure used specifically

¹⁴³ For example, *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 73r, 138v; *Ta’rikh āl ‘Uthmān*, fols. 68v–69r, 77v–78v.

¹⁴⁴ It is presumed that this neighborhood, centering on the Sayyida Zaynab mausoleum, functioned as a link between al-Qāhira area, the center of economic activities at that time, and Fuṣṭāṭ, an important river port in southern Cairo, but its market character remains unresolved, with only a few references to it by Raymond. See Raymond, *Artisans et commerçants*, p. 312, 314, 336, 353, 363.

¹⁴⁵ André Raymond, *Cairo*, Cambridge & London: Harvard University, 2000, p. 265, Map 10. However, such understanding of Raymond is based on the research using Ottoman court documents in the first half of the 18th century, and it cannot be determined at this stage that this was also the case around the turn of the 17th century.

¹⁴⁶ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 233v.

¹⁴⁷ *Ta’rikh āl ‘Uthmān*, fol. 6rv.

for weighing services in the market of Qanāṭir al-Sibā‘.¹⁴⁸

What is particularly impressive in the quotation is the historian’s statement that the reason he continued his work as a weigher was to earn money to feed his family, and that “I had no other job in Cairo.” Ibn al-‘Ajamī was, as mentioned earlier, an educated man with elementary academic training in Islamic studies and an extraordinary passion for writing Cairo history, but the steady work of weighing seems to have been an unavoidable choice for him to make a living.¹⁴⁹

The description regarding the contract of sale and purchase also depicts in detail an interesting reality of Egyptian society of the time. It appears that there was a social demand at the time for fair-minded weighers to serve as witnesses at the time of contract. In the face of this trend, the chief *qadīs* of Egypt, who supervised the weighers’ guild in Cairo, apparently prohibited them from engaging in such side jobs. Ibn al-‘Ajamī, who observed it, ridicules vile ways of the soldier who jumped from side to side on this legal errand, bought a pumpkin with a silver coin he so earned, and immediately cooked this highly storable vegetable. Furthermore, vividly reflected there is the tight household budgets of the non-senior military staff of the day as urban dwellers.

As shown above, for the period from 1591 to 1608, the places where Ibn al-‘Ajamī’s activities as a weigher are identified were Maq‘ad al-Qibāna in the market of Qanāṭir al-Sibā‘ in southern Cairo and the agricultural lands of Giza. Within this period, in addition to these, he stayed temporarily in another place away from Cairo. The destination was the main port of Lake Burullus in the northernmost part of the Nile Delta. In the Jumādā I 1012/October–November 1603 chronicle description, the author writes,

Then I traveled to the port (*thaghr*) of Burullus and stayed there until 15 Rajab of the same year (December 19, 1603); so, I do not have much information

¹⁴⁸ A comparative study of the *loggias*, which were used as places for trading textiles and other goods in Florence, Pisa, Ancona, other cities on the Italian peninsula from the Middle Ages to the early modern period, and the Egyptian *maq‘ads* of the same period, in terms of form and function is a topic for further study. For commercial *loggias*, see Lauren Jacobi, “An Anachronism of Trade: The Mercato Nuovo in Florence (1546–1551),” in Patrick Haughey (ed.), *A History of Architecture and Trade*, Milton: Routledge, 2018, pp. 128–141; Olivia Remie Constable, *Housing the Stranger in the Mediterranean World: Lodging, Trade, and Travel in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 154–157, 186–189.

¹⁴⁹ According to Pascale Ghazaleh’s research using estate court registers, the total estates of two weighers who died around 1800 were 21,760 *nişfs* and 288,667 *nişfs*, respectively. See Pascale Ghazaleh, *Masters of the Trade: Crafts and Craftspeople in Cairo, 1750–1850*, Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 1999, p. 138. Although the data are from a later period, it can be said that in some cases the occupation allowed for a certain amount of asset formation.

about what happened in Cairo during that time.¹⁵⁰

He traveled from Cairo to Burullus again two years later in the autumn, on Jumādā II 1, 1014/October 14, 1605, and stayed in the port “for the well-being (*maṣlaḥa*) that appeared to me” until Shawwāl 15 of the same Islamic year/February 23, 1606.¹⁵¹ He also left Cairo in Sha‘bān 1017/November–December 1608 “for work (*shughl*) that had come upon me” and went to the same port. He writes, “Then, the month of Ramaḍān (December 1608–January 1609) began. The first day of the month, as indicated by the new moon, was Tuesday, but the people of Rosetta and some people of the port of Burullus began their fast on Monday.” Since he mentions that many date palms fell and one of them fell toward him in Ramaḍān of this year in the port, it is reasonable to assume that he stayed there at least until the holy month.¹⁵² Specifically, in the autumn and winter of each of the years 1603, 1605–1606, 1608–1609, Ibn al-‘Ajamī spent several months in Burullus, his family’s hometown, and engaged in some kind of work. Since his main occupation was that of a weigher, it seems reasonable to assume that he used his special skills in this customs port city as well, and that he was a temporary migrant worker, perhaps relying on local and kinship connections. Unfortunately, we have been unable to find any specific mention of how he obtained the local job or the nature of his duties. Since the weighers in Ottoman Cairo formed a single professional guild,¹⁵³ we are also curious as to what his relationship with his guild would have been in such a case.

The weighers’ guild in Ottoman Cairo was under the supervision of *qāḍī* ‘*askar*, who was at the top of judicial organization in Egypt, and like other guilds, the head of the guild united the weighers.¹⁵⁴ According to the account in *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, in Dhū al-Ḥijja 1016/March–April 1608, Shaykh Muḥammad, known as Dubays, who served as a head of the weighers’ guild (*shaykh ṭā’ifat al-qabbāniyya*), died. He had resigned from the position due to his two sons, Shihāb al-Dīn and ‘Abd al-Laṭīf, when he became blind in his later years.¹⁵⁵ The author further notes,

¹⁵⁰ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 129r.

¹⁵¹ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 173v.

¹⁵² *Ta’rīkh āl ‘Uthmān*, fols. 28v–29r. This statement is also of note in that it specifically points out that there were regional differences in Egypt in the start date of Ramaḍān.

¹⁵³ However, there were also privately employed weighers at production facilities such as flour mills, sugar refineries, and oil refineries. See Hanna, *Artisan Entrepreneurs in Cairo*, pp. 64–65.

¹⁵⁴ *Ta’rīkh āl ‘Uthmān*, fol. 40r; Ghazaleh, *Masters of the Trade*, p. 94. As for the middle of the 19th century, the existence of the bylaws of weighers’ guild is confirmed. See Ghazaleh, *Masters of the Trade*, p. 30.

¹⁵⁵ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 288r.

During his term of office, I was engaged in weighing with a steelyard in many places. I had a colleague in the *maq'ad* of Khuṭṭ Qanāṭir al-Sibā', with whom I had numerous quarrels. I then went to Muḥammad Dubays and appealed to him, but he helped him and not me because of the bribe (*rishwa*) he got from the person in question. He also had a penchant for juveniles (*aḥdāth*).¹⁵⁶

This account of the frequent conflicts with one of his fellow guild members conveys that the *maq'ad* of Qanāṭir al-Sibā' was not always a peaceful place to work. While it was the guild chief's role to solve disputes within the guild, Ibn al-'Ajāmī claims that bribery undermined the chief's impartial judgement and is even prepared to point the finger at the chief's personal propensities.

Somewhat different from this critical look at Muḥammad Dubays, the following brief biography of Shaykh Khiḍr ibn 'Ubayd al-Burullusī, who became the next chief of the guild, is given in his obituary in Rab' I 1017 A.H./June–July 1608 in the sequel of *Mabāhij al-ikhwān* as follows,

He excelled as a skilled weigher and was proficient in Indian arithmetic (*'ilm al-ghubār*), timekeeping (*mīqāt*), and among others. He learned timekeeping from Shaykh Ḥijāzī, the timekeeper (*muwaqqit*) of Aydamur Khaṭīrī Mosque in Būlāq. He was fortunate enough to replace Shaykh Muḥammad, known as Dubays, as the chief of the same guild of al-Qabbāniyya through the mediation (*wāsiṭa*) of 'Alī ibn Ghānim al-Maqdisī, the Ḥanafī shaykh of his era and Shaykh al-Islām.¹⁵⁷

The author's respect for Khiḍr ibn 'Ubayd al-Burullusī, the next chief of the guild, with his skills as a weigher and his mathematical knowledge, can be seen in this description. According to the statements that follow, the object of mediation by the scholar of Ḥanafī school was Shaykh al-Islām Muḥammad ibn Bustān, the *qāḍī 'askar* of the time.¹⁵⁸ His formation of a connection to the holder of the *qāḍī 'askar* position, which supervised the weighers' guild, were effective in his appointment as chief of the guild.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 288rv.

¹⁵⁷ *Ta'rīkh al-'Uthmān*, fol. 10v.

¹⁵⁸ *Ta'rīkh al-'Uthmān*, fol. 10v. A similar statement is found in *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fol. 40v. According to the biography by al-Muḥibbī, Muḥammad ibn Muṣṭafā al-Rūmī (Muḥammad ibn Bustān) died in Istanbul on Sha'bān 4, 1006 A.H./March 12, 1598. See al-Muḥibbī, *Khulāṣat al-athar fī a'yān al-qarn al-ḥādī 'ashar*, 4 vols., Cairo: Dār al-Kitāb al-Islāmī, n.d., vol. 4, pp. 223–224.

¹⁵⁹ Although a local example in a later period, Chalcraft's study of craftsmen's objections in modern

Furthermore, according to the description in *Ta'rīkh āl 'Uthmān*, Khidr al-Burullusī worked in the Shaykh Hījāzī's shop (*dukkān*) and in the *sūq* of Aydamur al-Khaṭīrī prior to his appointment as chief of the guild. Therefore, this chief of guild was active in the neighborhood of Aydamur al-Khaṭīrī Mosque, and it is inferred that he was a business associate with geographical ties to Ibn al-'Ajamī. However, Khidr al-Burullusī lost his important position. The description of the reason for this in *Ta'rīkh āl 'Uthmān* is illegible in some parts as the paper was damaged,¹⁶⁰ but we can rely on a similar explanation in *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*. It states that Khidr al-Burullusī held the position of chief of the guild for a short period of time, but when Ibn Bustān was relieved of his position as *qāḍī 'askar*, Muḥammad Dubays sought reappointment to his former position and lobbied the leading figures of the weighers' guild (*akābir tā'ifat al-qabbāniyya*) to oust Khidr al-Burullusī. Ibn al-'Ajamī states the following about Khidr al-Burullusī.

He had a bad reputation over the forging of counterfeit silver coins (*ḍarb al-fidda al-zaghal*). Then it happened that a group of police (*jamā'at al-shurṭa*) arrested a girl who was in possession of counterfeit currency and used it to purchase from a retailer in al-Ṣāgha. They made her confess where the silver coins came from, suggesting that they tortured her, and she confessed they were from Khidr. The chief of police (*ṣāhib al-shurṭa*) arrested Khidr, put him in jail under them, imposed a fine from him, and later released him. Therefore, the rumor about him spread in Cairo, and he was removed from the post as chief of the weighers' guild, and Shaykh Muḥammad Dubays was reappointed to the post.¹⁶¹

Even if we shelve the truth of the matter, the arrest in the counterfeit silver coin case must have been perceived by the market community in Cairo as a grave issue, given the responsible position of the chief of the guild of certified weighers, which should be based on the principles of fairness and integrity. Shortly before his death, in Ṣafar 1017/May–June 1608, Sufi Aḥmad Darwīsh, who was the supervisor of both the *takiyya* (convent) next to Qaṣr al-'Aynī and the *takiyya* in Ṣuwwa under Cairo Citadel,

Cairo details the case of the 1879 conflict over the removal of the chief of the weighers' guild in al-Daqhliyya. See John T. Chalcraft, *The Striking Cabbies of Cairo and Other Stories: Crafts and Guilds in Egypt, 1863-1914*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004, pp. 96–97.

¹⁶⁰ *Ta'rīkh āl 'Uthmān*, fol. 10v.

¹⁶¹ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fols. 40v–41r. For the economic core area of al-Qāhira including al-Ṣāgha, which was the main site of gold and silver trading, see Sylvie Denoix, Jean-Charles Depaule, et Michel Tuchscherer, (dir.), *Le Khan al-Khalili: Un centre commercial et artisanal au Caire de XIIIe au XXe siècle*, 2 vols., Cairo: IFAO, 1999.

was also arrested by the chief of police for counterfeiting gold and silver coins.¹⁶² Although the connection to this incident is not clear, it must be considered that this was a time when counterfeiting of currency was emerging as a problem in the provincial capital.

The following is a further account of what happened to Khidr al-Burullusī thereafter.

When this misfortune befell the above-mentioned Khidr, he did not remain in Cairo because of the disgrace that had come upon him; he traveled to Istanbul, where he resided for a certain period. He then claimed to be a physician and treated some people. He fell into another situation, and they wanted to scorn him. There was an intercessor, and he returned to the port of Rosetta, where he remained for some time, devoting himself to improving the situation of weighers and their dependents, as well as the weighing in a *wikāla* there. He then returned to Cairo. In his youth, he traveled by ship with his father trading in grain. He used to go around singing under the windows and houses in Būlāq. He had a beautiful voice.¹⁶³

Ibn al-‘Ajāmī does not give up on this somewhat mysterious character of Būlāq, who skillfully switched occupations from grain merchant, weigher, and physician, and led a tumultuous life in Cairo, Istanbul, and elsewhere, but rather looks at him with a sense of curiosity.

In sum, both chiefs of the guild were ethically and legally questionable figures, but Ibn al-‘Ajāmī seems to have had a certain attachment to Khidr al-Burullusī, perhaps due in part to the fact that they resided in the same neighborhood. The free and frank descriptions of the two chiefs are valuable in that they reflect, to some extent, the views of the leaders by the members of the guild. Furthermore, the points made by the author also convey the state of affairs at the time, when bribery, connections, and hereditary succession were the norm for the position of chief of the weighers’ guild.

We also find in *Ta’rīkh āl ‘Uthmān* a mention of Muḥammad Sukaykar al-Qabbānī, a leading weigher of Khuṭṭ Bāb al-Kharq, who died in Jumādā I 1017/August–September 1608, about two months after the death of Khidr al-Burullusī. Regarding this person, who served in management and other positions of Iskender

¹⁶² *Ta’rīkh āl ‘Uthmān*, fol. 6v. The proclamation of the official currency rate in Ramaḍān 1016/December 1607–January 1608 in relation to the counterfeit issue is detailed in *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fols. 277v–278v.

¹⁶³ *Ta’rīkh āl ‘Uthmān*, fol. 11r.

Pasha Mosque in the same district, Ibn al-‘Ajamī has this to say,

He had many weighers at his disposal. He trained most of them in his shop (*dukkān*) and taught them the art of weighing with a steelyard. He was also particularly successful in improving the condition of weighers and their dependents, for which he contended with the chief of the weighers’ guild. Before his death, he made a tomb beside the mausoleum of Shaykh Karīm al-Dīn al-Khalwatī, in the form of a convent with a large dome. He was buried there. Above this tomb, residential units (*buyūt*) were built, and this dwelling was known as Shaqq al-Thu‘bān.¹⁶⁴

From this statement, it is evident that there was an influential weigher who did not hold the position of the chief of weighers’ guild but trained numerous weighers and led them. The “shop” here appears to have been an office of weighing services. The description of his tomb may also indicate that he had certain assets.

While Ibn al-‘Ajamī did not get along with one of his colleagues, *Mabāhij al-ikhwān* also tells of his amicable relationship with another person in the same profession. On Rajab 1, 1016 A.H./October 22, 1607, Ibn al-‘Ajamī visited ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Ibshīhī, the weigher of Khuṭṭ Darb al-Fawākhīr located southwest of Zuwayla Gate, and listened to the story of the death of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, ‘Abd al-Qādir’s brother. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān was a wealthy merchant who was engaged in cotton trade in the Nile Delta and adhered to religious practices, including serving as deputy preacher at Madrasat al-Qāḍī Katkūt, located opposite Qanṭarat ‘Umar Shāh near Qanāṭir al-Sibā‘.¹⁶⁵ As such, there was also a weigher with whom Ibn al-‘Ajamī had a personal friendship and whose house he would visit to chat.

Furthermore, in the chronicles of Muḥarram 1018/April 1609 and after in *Ta’rīkh āl ‘Uthmān*, we can find some criticisms of the author against the market administration and oppression (*ẓulm*) of Oküz Mehmed Pasha and *muḥtasib al-Qāhira*, Muḥammad Agha, including a detailed description of conflicts between the *muḥtasib* and the weighers.¹⁶⁶ This issue, in the larger scheme of things, will be discussed comprehensively in a separate paper, by examining the merits and demerits of the rule of this prominent Ottoman governor of Egypt, who is often referred to as having achieved the “second Ottoman conquest of Egypt.” The main task there will be to compare *Ta’rīkh āl ‘Uthmān* and two history writings by al-Bakrī and al-Burullusī, which were edited by ‘Abd al-Raḥīm ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ‘Abd al-Raḥīm in

¹⁶⁴ *Ta’rīkh āl ‘Uthmān*, fols. 18v–19r.

¹⁶⁵ *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*, fols. 269r–279r.

¹⁶⁶ *Ta’rīkh āl ‘Uthmān*, fols. 40r, 43v–44r, 67v–69r.

the late 1970s in terms of their contents.¹⁶⁷

VI. Concluding Remarks

In this paper, we have reviewed the descriptions in *Mabāhij al-ikhwān* and its sequel, of which only two manuscripts in the author's own handwriting are known at this point, and examined their characteristics and importance as the chronicles of Ottoman Cairo. Focusing on three points: Ibn al-‘Ajāmī's family relations, Būlāq as his place of residence and work, and he as a weigher, we have sought to reveal the reality of this little-known “intellectual citizen historian” who was in the economic middle strata and made his living from steady work supporting the market economy of Cairo, the largest Arab trading city in the early modern era.

In closing, we would like to summarize the most important points. First, the stabbing to death of his father, who was sometimes a source of information for historical accounts, was an incident that marked a pivotal turning point in Ibn ‘Ajāmī's life. As for Būlāq, al-Khaṭīrī Mosque area, where his father's house was located, and the large complex of al-Sināniyya were two central standpoints of his perspective in the urban space of the provincial capital. He, who is estimated to have been born in the early 1560s, was engaged in the weighing business in the *wikāla* in al-Sināniyya complex probably from the late teens, and from the 1590s to the early 17th century, mainly in Qanāṭir al-Sibā' in southern Cairo and occasionally in Giza and Burullus, the customs city in the Nile Delta. He was a member of the weighers' guild of Cairo, and his personal relationships there appear to have been important for his public and to some extent, private life.

Although it is difficult now to determine when the author began writing *Mabāhij al-ikhwān* and its sequel, it is likely that he wrote these manuscripts from around 1610 to the end of 1620s. It is reasonable to assume that long before that, while working as a weigher in Cairo and elsewhere, he must have been diligent in writing memoranda of the various historical information he witnessed or heard. Finally, we might add that Ibn al-‘Ajāmī was a “laboring citizen historian” with much more scholarly character than Ibn Budayr, the barber of Ottoman Damascus, whom Dana Sajdi succeeded in vividly portraying based mainly on her analysis of the Chester Beatty manuscript.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁷ Al-Bakrī, “Kashf al-kurba fī raf' al-ṭulba,” *al-Majalla al-Ta'rikhiyya al-Miṣriyya*, vol. 23 (1976), pp. 291–384; al-Burullusī, “Bulūgh al-‘Arab bi-raf' al-ṭulab,” *al-Majalla al-Ta'rikhiyya al-Miṣriyya*, vol. 24 (1977), pp. 267–340.

¹⁶⁸ Dana Sajdi, *The Barber of Damascus: Nouveau Literacy in the Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Levant*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013.

Table 1 : Information of the Rising of the Nile by Ibn al-‘Ajamī

<i>Hijra Calendar Year</i>	<i>Date of “Full Water” Attainment (Hijra / Coptic / Western Calendar)</i>	<i>Maximum Water Level</i>
988	no description	22 <i>dhirā</i> ‘ 8 <i>iṣba</i> ‘
989	Rajab 24 / Misrā 21, 1297 / August 24, 1581	19 <i>dhirā</i> ‘ 12 <i>iṣba</i> ‘
990	Rajab 26 / Misrā 24, 1298 / August 16, 1582	19 <i>dhirā</i> ‘ 22 <i>iṣba</i> ‘
991	Rajab 30 / Misrā 16, 1299 / August 19, 1583	21 <i>dhirā</i> ‘ 20 <i>iṣba</i> ‘
992	Sha‘bān 12 / Misrā 16, 1300 / August 19, 1584	22 <i>dhirā</i> ‘ 15 <i>iṣba</i> ‘
993	Ramaḍān 4 / Misrā 27, 1301 / August 30, 1585	18 <i>dhirā</i> ‘ 19 <i>iṣba</i> ‘
994	Ramaḍān 5 / Misrā 17, 1302 / August 20, 1586	20 <i>dhirā</i> ‘ 20 <i>iṣba</i> ‘
995	Ramaḍān 16 / Misrā 18, 1303 / August 20, 1587	no description
996	Shawwāl 1 / Misrā 21, 1304 / August 24, 1588	21 <i>dhirā</i> ‘ 2 <i>iṣba</i> ‘
997	no description	22 <i>dhirā</i> ‘ 7 <i>iṣba</i> ‘
998	Shawwāl 16 / Misrā 14, 1306 / August 18, 1590	19 <i>dhirā</i> ‘ 13 <i>iṣba</i> ‘
999	Dhū al-Qa‘da 3 / Misrā 20, 1307 / August 23, 1591	20 <i>dhirā</i> ‘ 1 <i>iṣba</i> ‘
1000	Dhū al-Qa‘da 11 / Misrā 16, 1308 / August 19, 1592	21 <i>dhirā</i> ‘ 12 <i>iṣba</i> ‘
1001	Dhū al-Qa‘da 25 / Misrā 19, 1309 / August 23, 1593	no description
1002	Dhū al-Qa‘da 30 / Misrā 14, 1310 / August 17, 1594	21 <i>dhirā</i> ‘ 3 <i>iṣba</i> ‘
1003	Dhū al-Ḥijja 19 / Misrā 22, 1311 / August 25, 1595	19 <i>dhirā</i> ‘ 20 <i>iṣba</i> ‘
1004	Dhū al-Ḥijja 9 / Abīb 30, 1312 / August 4, 1596	22 <i>dhirā</i> ‘ 10 <i>iṣba</i> ‘
1006	Muḥarram 1 / Misrā 11, 1313 / August 14, 1597	21 <i>dhirā</i> ‘ 3 <i>iṣba</i> ‘
1007	no description / Misrā 20, 1314 / August 23, 1598	20 <i>dhirā</i> ‘ 14 <i>iṣba</i> ‘

* The western calendar was indicated by the Julian calendar until October 1582 and by the Gregorian calendar thereafter.

Table 2 : Composition of Chronicle Part of *Mabāhij al-ikhwān*

<i>Hijra Calendar Year</i>	<i>Western Calendar Year</i>	<i>Corresponding Folios of Mabāhij al-ikhwān</i>	<i>Approximate Number of Folios</i>
1000–1006	1591–1598	56v–68v.	12
1008	1599–1600	86r–90v.	4 ½
1009	1600–1601	68v–71r, 84r–86r, 90v–91v.	6
1010	1601–1602	71r–84r, 91v–117v.	37 ½
1011	1602–1603	117v–123r.	6
1012	1603–1604	123v–135r.	11 ½
1013	1604–1605	135r–164r.	29 ½
1014	1605–1606	164r–179r.	15
1015	1606–1607	179r–226v.	47
1016	1607–1608	226v–307v.	81 ½

Table 3 : Composition of *Ta'rīkh āl 'Uthmān*

<i>Hijra Calendar Year</i>	<i>Western Calendar Year</i>	<i>Corresponding Folios of Ta'rīkh āl 'Uthmān</i>	<i>Approximate Number of Folios</i>
1017	1608–1609	2v–38v.	36 ½
1018	1609–1610	38v–72v.	34
1019	1610–1611	72v–84v.	12