

**LITERARY HISTORICAL SOURCES FOR THE
HISTORY OF OTTOMAN EGYPT 1099-1150 A.H
(A.D1687-1737)**

ABSTRACT

Ottoman Egypt witnessed the emergence of several history schools and the era of Ottoman rule possesses a great depth of documentation, for which there exist not only extensive archival sources, but also chronicles, numerous manuscripts, and travel accounts describing all aspects of the region in Arabic, Turkish, and many European languages.

Despite the importance and value of archival sources, there have been many criticisms concerning apparent limitations to the use of archives as an independent source for the history of Ottoman Egypt. This study argues that the Egyptian archives alone cannot function as an independent reliable source for research into the period of Ottoman rule, and study of Ottoman Egypt cannot be carried out without reference to manuscript sources alongside the national archives.

There are still many unpublished chronicles, biographical dictionaries, and other manuscript sources in the national libraries of Cairo, Istanbul, and European capitals. These manuscripts have not yet been considered, studied, or even recognized by recent researchers. The following paper looks into some of the very important but unexploited sources for the history of the period 1099/1687-1150/1737.

The aim of this study is to shed some light on the sources of one of the darkest and most obscure periods of Ottoman Egypt. It is hoped that it will be a step towards uncovering the hidden parts of Egypt's history under the Ottomans, providing more material and encouragement to future research.

LITERARY HISTORICAL SOURCES FOR THE HISTORY OF OTTOMAN EGYPT 1099-1150 A.H (A.D1687-1737)

It has been a prime concern of many historians and historical institutions during the past few decades to study the history of Ottoman Egypt, in an attempt to illuminate the darkness that has for long surrounded this period. The period of nearly three centuries, from the conquest of Selim I in 1517 to the French invasion in 1798, has been one of the most neglected episodes in the history of Egypt as a whole. Compared to the preceding two and a half centuries of Mamluk rule, Ottoman Egypt possesses a far greater depth of documentation, for which there exist not only extensive archival sources, but also chronicles, numerous manuscripts, and travel accounts describing all aspects of the region in Arabic, Turkish, and many European languages. Nevertheless the Mamluk sultanate has been the subject of more study and research than the period of Ottoman rule in Egypt. Moreover, the majority of recent works on the modern history of Egypt concentrate on the French invasion and the rule of Muhammed 'Ali Pasha as a starting point for the modern part of Egypt's history. This approach has also contributed to the neglect of the history of Egypt under Ottoman rule.

There are many reasons for the relative lack of study of and research into the history of Egypt under Ottoman rule. Egypt declined from being a centre of empire under the Mamluks, to the level of an Ottoman province. This waning position, combined with the remarkable weakness of the central government in Istanbul, caused a general political, economic, and cultural decline. These factors may well have been a major obstacle to the continuation of the school of history writing that prevailed in the Mamluk period.(1) They may have affected the quality, language, and style of the historical works written in this period, but they certainly did not have any effect on the quantity of sources on Ottoman Egypt, which is greater than what is extant for the Mamluk era. The problem, therefore, has not been the absence of primary sources, but a lack of exploitation of the

available material. Continuing difficulties in using the national archives in Cairo and Istanbul, and the virtual absence in Egypt of Ottomanists capable of reading and exploiting the old Turkish and Arabic material, have contributed to the slow development of research on this period.

M. Anis, in his 1962 Cairo University lectures on the Egyptian school of history in the Ottoman period, supported al-Jabarti's explanations for the lack of development in the historiography of Egypt. Al-Jabarti asserted that much of the material existing at that time was taken out of Egypt, mainly by the French and other Westerners.(2) In the long term, however, this proved to be an advantage. The national museums and libraries of Paris, London, Berlin, and other European capitals have conserved a large amount of material, that has been catalogued and thus made generally available to scholarship much earlier than has been the case with comparable material existing in Turkey and Egypt. This may partly explain why the first serious works of scholarship on the history of Ottoman Egypt appeared in Europe rather than Egypt itself. On the other hand, the material that remained in Egypt is much more extensive and varied than al-Jabarti and M. Anis have suggested. Manuscript collections in various libraries in Egypt, especially *Dār al-Kutub*, contain very rich historical materials and numerous chronicles including, for example, the highly important *Awdah al-isharāt*, which al-Jabarti in his day claimed had been lost.(3)

Under the aegis of the Royal Geographic Society in Egypt, a generation of historians in the 1920s and 30s, funded by the Egyptian court, were directed to concentrate their research on the history of Muhammed 'Ali Pasha and his descendants, in order to publicize their westernization policies and reforms in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Examples of these historians' works are the *Histoire du Règne du Khédive Ismail*, by Douin, and the *Précis de l'Histoire d'Égypte*, of which A. Sammarco wrote the fourth volume, covering the period 1848-1879. There were also the writings of Dodwell, Crabitès, and Hanotau.(4) This political initiative was a major cause in diverting the attention of historical research and developing a

vaguely negative view of the period 1517-1798 in the history of Egypt. It was not until the sixties of this century that a new generation of Egyptian Ottomanists began to explore the neglected material in the national archives in Cairo, and to direct their attention to the history of Ottoman Egypt.

This neglect of the history of Ottoman Egypt, in addition to the continuing reliance on a very limited number of sources for that period, helped to foster many unfounded ideas about the period. Perhaps the most serious of these was the prevailing view that history writing in Egypt ceased to develop after Ibn Iyas, until it was redeemed by al-Jabarti two and a half centuries later. This idea, which had been put forward by al-Jabarti himself in the introduction to his *'Ajā'ib al-Āthār*, and was supported by many modern historians, impeded further research into works which al-Jabarti attempted to discredit, and discouraged researchers from inquiring into what appeared to be an unrewarding and profitless field.

Thanks to Ibn Iyās's *Badā'i' al-Zuhūr*, we know with a good degree of accuracy the details of Selim I's invasion of Egypt in 1517 and the establishment of an Ottoman administration led by Khair Bey. In al-Jabarti's *'Ajā'ib al-Āthār*, the end of the Ottoman rule over Egypt and the French invasion in 1798 are discussed, with a degree of fidelity similar to that shown by Ibn Iyās, in reporting the events that took place at that time. But the two and a half centuries in between the two works present a problem for historical enquiry. The period of Ottoman rule over Egypt is not equally chronicled. For the second half of the sixteenth century we have very little material, and the same is generally true for the end of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. In fact, very little of the available material has been fully exploited. With regard to the eleventh century A.H (A.D 1591-1688), upon which all historians focused in their chronicles, it may be noticed that there was a generation of historians who covered most of this century, beginning with al-Ishaqi and ending with Ibn Abī al-Sūrūr, who died in 1087/1676. Professor Holt, in his article on the Arabic manuscript sources, has indicated the main outline of eleventh/seventeenth-century works. The following are the

significant eleventh-century works, that are prior to the period of study:(5)

- Muhammed al-Ishāqi, *Akhbār al-'uwāl*, up to 1032/1623.
- Mār'ī Ibn Yūsuf, *Nuzhat al-nāzirīn*, up to 1035/1626.
- Al-Ghamri, *Dhākirat al-i'lām*, up to 1040/1630.
- Muhammed Ibn Abī al-Sūrūr, *al-Kawākib al-sā'irah*, up to 1062/1651-2.
- Anonymous, *Qahr al-wujūh*, up to 1066/1656.
- Al-Sālihi, *Wāqi'at al-sanājiq*, up to 1071/1660.
- Anonymous, a continuation of al-Ishāqi, ending in 1084/1673.

Al-Ishāqi and Ibn Abī al-Sūrūr left rich material of a high quality and degree of accuracy. Also relevant are many other works by Ibn Abī al-Surur, including *al-Minah al-rahmānīyah*, *al-Rāwdah al-zāhiyah*, *Allatā'if al-rabbānīyah*, and *Kashf al-kurbah fī raf' al-tulbah*.

The first fifty years of the twelfth century AH have not been well studied in comparison with the previous century, or with the following period when al-Jabarti, al-Sharqāwi, al-Khashshāb, and French scholars embarked on writing the history of Egypt. The early twelfth century (late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries AD) did not witness the emergence of great scholars concerned to write the history of Egypt at that time, but there still survives an amount of material which covers this period, and which proves on examination to be very fruitful and rewarding for the purpose of study and research.

Recent research has concentrated more on the archival material than on literary manuscript sources. These extensive records kept in national archive repositories are preserved in the form of collections of *defters* and include much material relating to social and economic matters. Financial records, court registers, *waqf* documents, family papers, and other material are among the priceless collections in the archives of Cairo and Istanbul. They have been taken as the basis of the majority of recent works on Ottoman Egypt. Archival materials are regarded as very important in view of the fact that they provide more details, statistics, and solid material than do manuscript sources. *Iltizam defters*, *qadi* court *sijills*, and other collections include accounts

of everyday life in Ottoman Egypt covering all classes of Egyptian society. Much archival material on Ottoman Egypt has been carefully studied and published in books and articles. Ways of reading, understanding, and exploiting these documents have also been thoroughly explained. Usage of the Ottoman archives in Cairo and Istanbul is becoming easier as more work is done on them, and research students gain increased ability in reading the texts.

Despite their importance and value, there have been many criticisms concerning apparent limitations to the use of archival documents as an independent source for the history of Ottoman Egypt. Research students and Ottomanists have faced serious problems in relying upon these archival collections for their studies of Ottoman Egypt, among them the following:

- *Sijills* and *defters* were written by and restricted to a limited number of officials. They were not compiled for usage by the general public. Indeed, to ensure a degree of secrecy in these records, they were written in the *Qirma* script (also called, *Siyakat*), which is very difficult to read or understand. This type of script was extensively used in *Ruzname defters* and continued to be used until it was cancelled in 1280/1834 and replaced by simple Arabic script. Reading these *defters* is not impossible, but a long time is required for the decoding of much of their terminology, which makes it very difficult to go through many *defters* or *sijills* in the limited time available to a research student. Exploitation of this material requires specialists with various linguistic and paleographic skills to decipher these writings.

- Despite some few limited attempts, a complete indexing of the various collections is far from being achieved. Research students have to rely on some very few published indexes, covering a very small part of the available collections. Many of these indexes are handwritten and, in some instances, are inaccurate. A large amount of documents remains unexploited and unavailable for research because they have not yet been properly indexed. Slow development and lack of funds add to the problems and cause further deterioration. While the aim of *Dār al-Wathā'iq* was established in 1954, to collect all the material relating to Egypt's

history from the various places where collections exist, this goal has not yet been achieved. In addition to *Dār al-Wathā'iq*, further archival material is also available in *Dār al-Mahfūzāt* near the citadel, the Shari'a Court *sijills* in the *al-Shahr al-'Aqāri* building, the Ministry of Awqaf, which has a major archive and many other places too. The process of transferring these collections to *Dār al-Wathā'iq* is rather slow, and the transferred material is not made available to the public for a long time afterwards.

- Corruption, which spread widely in the centre of the Ottoman Empire and its provinces, puts much of the statistics and information in the documents under serious question. These documents were issued by a centralist bureaucracy and written by officials not likely to be in touch with the public if compared to chronicles composed by Egyptians writing in Arabic or Turkish.

- The earliest attempt to reorganize the various archive collections in Cairo was first made in 1925 by order of King Fu'ad. The main object then was to index and study material from the time of Muhammed 'Ali Pasha down to 1914. Documents were collected in the 'Abidīn Palace in 1933 under the supervision of Jean Deny who wrote a description of this collection: *Sommaire des Archives turques du Caire*. This may explain why there is more material in *Dār al-Wathā'iq* on the later period of Egypt's modern history than on the early Ottoman period. While this may be regarded as a major set-back for the value of Egypt's national archives in providing documents on the Ottoman period, on the other hand it may explain why recent research based on the Egyptian archives has concentrated mainly on the second half of the eighteenth century and the following century. For the earlier period many collections of *defters* and *sijills* are missing and incomplete. Examples of these groups from the period of study (1099-1150/1687-1737) are as follows:

a- *Mizān Ruznāmeji* (income of *Khazna*): there exist only six annual *sijills* for a period of fifty years; these are for the years 1107, 1114, 1120, 1139, 1140, and 1143. The remainder are missing.

b- *Ruzname, Īradāt wa Masrūfāt* (income and expenditure): only three *sijills* exist for the period of study. These are the sijills of the years 1111, 1117, and 1136.

c- *Ruzname, Murattabāt Ojaqāt* (*ojaqs* salaries): only ten out of fifty *sijills* are available, while the rest are missing. The *sijills* available are those for the years 1120, 1127, 1128, 1129, 1131, 1132, 1140, 1141, 1142, and 1143.

d- *Ruzname, Hisabāt Wazir Misr* (Wazirs' annual accounts): in this very important collection only one budget is available relating to the period of study, the one for the year 1110.

e- *Sijills* of the *al-Dīwān al-‘Āli*, which is a vital source for information on the political history of the period. All the *sijills* for the period of study are missing and nobody knows their whereabouts.

Thus, the Egyptian archives cannot provide the relevant statistics and information for the whole period of Ottoman Egypt. Many documents (up to 60% at some estimates) are missing for unknown reasons. The credibility of available documents is also put in question, and the archival material lacks the continuity which manuscript sources provide for the history of Ottoman Egypt. This leads us to the conclusion that the Egyptian archives alone cannot function as an independent reliable source for research into this period, and study of Ottoman Egypt cannot be carried out without reference to manuscript sources alongside the national archives.

Arabic and Turkish manuscripts are therefore the primary sources for studies of the earliest period in the history of Ottoman Egypt. They continue to be vital for any study on this period. In 1968, in his article '*Ottoman Egypt 1517-1798: an Account of Arabic Historical Sources*', P.M. Holt was the first to survey manuscript histories of Ottoman Egypt, and to conclude that these histories "have not yet been adequately evaluated and their full exploitation is still far in the future. Very little has been published nor has much work been done on the manuscript sources".(6) It was not until the 1980s that Holt's remarks began to receive the attention of some scholars, and works on manuscripts began to appear, mainly by A. ‘Abd al-Rahīm, D. Crecelius, L. ‘Abd al-

Latīf, A. Raymond, and few other historians who made some important contributions in this field. In 1990 a conference, organized by D. Crecelius, was held at California State University and attended by nine scholars who presented papers on the manuscript histories of Egypt in the eighteenth century. One of the major objectives of the conference was “to bring to the attention of the scholarly world the rich range of still unexploited manuscript sources for the eighteenth century”.(7) About fourteen published and unpublished manuscripts were studied in nine articles, but there are still further unexploited manuscripts for this period. The conference proved that Ottoman domination did not put an end to the writing of history in Egypt, as some scholars had earlier asserted. It also helped to raise the issue of manuscript histories for further attention and research

It is rather surprising to discover that in the period 1099-1150/1687-1737 contemporary historians and travelers wrote so many manuscript histories. Most of these works are still unexploited. The following manuscripts could well form the basis for a different approach to the history of Ottoman Egypt in this rather neglected period.

1- ‘Abd al-Rahmān al- Jabarti, *‘Ajā’ib al-āthār fī al-tarājim wal ‘akhbār*,(8)

This is the most famous account of the history of Egypt in the eighteenth century, and has been the basis of many studies on the history of Egypt for three periods: Ottoman rule, the French occupation, and the rule of Muhammed ‘Ali Pasha, ending in 1236/1821. Al-Jabarti made reference to all classes of society including the Ulema, Mamluks, and notable merchants. The book gives attention to the *tarājim* (biographies), but also provides a historical account of events at the time. For the early part of the eighteenth century al-Jabarti had to rely on earlier sources such as *Awdah al-ishārāt* by Ahmad Shalabi and *Tuhfat al-ahbāb* by Yūsuf al-Malwāni. The first study on *‘Ajā’ib al-āthār* appeared in a three-volume book in 1957 by *‘Ajā’ib al-āthār*. Sharqāwi, who was followed in 1960 by D. Ayalon, who regarded al-Jabarti as “the greatest of modern Arab historians”.(9) This was followed by a study on the sources of al-Jabarti’s introduction to

the history of Egypt by P.M. Holt,(10) and an article by Crecelius on the sources of '*Ajā'ib al-āthār*' for the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.(11) Over thirty-five articles on al-Jabarti and his book, written in Arabic, English, or French, were collected in one volume and published by the Egyptian Ministry of Culture in 1976. In 1990 the works of al-Jabarti were re-evaluated in a conference held in California State University, organized by D. Crecelius, who argued that "the uniqueness of al-Jabarti's '*Ajā'ib al-āthār*' is reduced by the revelation of the massive borrowings he made from earlier chronicles without attribution."(12) However A remains a unique and useful source mainly for the biographical details relating to notables, which earlier chronicles did not pay much attention to.

2-Al-Damurdāshi, *Al-Durrah al-musānah fī akhbār al-Kinānah 1100-1169/1688-1755*(13)

This consists of a group of manuscripts available in the following libraries: (1) Vienna, National Bibliothek, MS Hist. Osm. 38; (2) Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Bruce 43; (3) London, British Museum, MS Or 1073-4; (4) Cairo, Dār al-Kutub, MS Tarīkh 4048; and (5) Munich, Staatsbibliothek, cod. Arab 399.

A. Bakr studied the interrelationships among this group of manuscripts in a conference paper in which he concluded that there was a common ancestry or relationship among them.(14) 'Abd al-Rahīm compared copies of these manuscripts, prepared and an annotated edition of the work, which was published in 1988 by the *Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale du Caire*. The text was translated into English and annotated by Crecelius and Bakr in 1991. The authors of these works belonged to the military class of the '*Azebān*' Regiment and thus this history is attributed to the school of *ajnād*. M. Anis referred to *Al-Durrah al-musānah*, in lectures given in 1962, as an important source for the history of Egypt in the eighteenth century, and emphasized its importance in providing political, economic, and social information. Despite the valuable information *Al-Durrah al-musānah* provides, the chronicle -or group of chronicles- has been criticized for its poor quality, extensive use of colloquial Arabic, and the lack of historical skills displayed by the writers. In his

articles *'The Career of Küçük Muhammed'*, and *'Account of Arabic Historical Sources'*, Holt referred to these manuscripts which he called "The Damurdashi Group". He compared the copies in Vienna, Oxford, and London and concluded, "These chronicles contain many reported speeches, conveying the impression of inside knowledge, but again this is probably a literary device. There is probably a saga element in these chronicles and the data they appear to provide should be used with caution."(15)

Without mentioning the name of the author or making reference to the title al-Jabarti relied heavily on the accounts of al-Damurdashi, and used him as a major source for the early part of his *'Ajā'ib al-Āthār*. Crecelius carefully traced this dependence in his article 'Ahmad Shalabi ibn 'Abd al-Ghani and Ahmad Ketkhuda 'Azaban al-Damurdashi: Two Sources for al-Jabarti's *'Aja'ib al-Athar fi al-Tarajim wa al-Akhbar'*, in *Eighteenth Century Egypt* (89-102).

3- Ahmad Shalabi 'Abd al-Ghani's *Awdah al-ishārāt*(16)

Ahmad Shalabi was a Sufi, regarded as one of the Ulema, and his father was a prominent Sheikh in al-Azhar. The manuscript starts with the term of Khair Bey in 923/1517 and goes down to 1150/1737. Holt referred to it briefly in his *'Ottoman Egypt: an Account of Arabic Historical Sources'*, but at the time that article appeared it was still unpublished. A. 'Abd al-Rahīm studied and annotated the manuscript copy of the text in the library of Yale University and published the text in Cairo in 1978. It is of great value for the history of Egypt during the period under study, as it was composed by a contemporary. Shalabi wrote *Awdah al-ishārāt* upon request from friends. It was compiled in chronological order, as is shown by its accuracy and frequent references to other sources. *Awdah al-ishārāt* itself was a major source for *'Ajā'ib al-Āthār*. Al-Jabarti mentions it as a reference which he later lost when it was borrowed by a friend of his. It is a basic reference for any study of this period and is of vital importance for the political events in the period under study.

4- Al-Murādi, *Silk al-durar fi a'yān al-qarn al-thāni 'ashar* (17)

This is a major source, used by compilers of biographical dictionaries, for persons of the twelfth century AH. Al-Murādi died in 1206/1791 at the age of 32 and had a close connection with al-Jabarti. He was a Syrian and his father was a Hanafi scholar. His book included biographies of many Egyptian notables. Three volumes of *Silk al-durar* were published in 1291/1873 in Istanbul, while the fourth volume was published in Cairo in 1301/1883. Al-Jabarti knew of al-Murādi's biographical dictionary but did not know what happened to it after al-Murādi's death. M. Anis referred to *Silk al-durar* in his 1962 lectures as an example of manuscript sources containing biographies of persons who lived during this period.

5- 'Abd al-Ghani al-Nābulsi's *al-Haqqah wal Majāz*(18)

This text, a manuscript copy of which in 246 folios is kept in Cairo (Dār al-Kutub, MS 344 Geography), is Sheikh al-Nabulsi's (1050/1641-1143/1730) account of his travels through Syria, Egypt, and the Hijaz. When the Ottoman Empire incorporated Arab provinces under its rule, vast areas of land were made into one single country. In Mamluk times, Crusaders, Mongols, and various Shi'ī sects had been actively engaged in violence in Egypt and Syria, making those places unsafe for travelers, but the situation improved under the Ottomans, so that the idea of travel flourished all around the Empire, resulting in many people compiling travel accounts and descriptions of various cities and provinces. This journey of al-Nabulsi is also referred to as *al-Rihla al-Kubra* (the great journey); it began in Muharram 1105/ September 1693 and ended in Safar 1106/ September 1694. He completed writing the account in 1110/1698. Al-Nabulsi was a prominent Sufi Sheikh with a wide reputation in the Ottoman Empire. He lived in Damascus and had many students from Syria, Egypt, and Anatolia. His writings exceeded 300 titles. Al-Jabarti wrote about him in his biographies in *'Ajā'ib al-Āthār* (1/232). The titles of his works are listed in *Hadiyat al-Ārifīn*,(19) which includes mention of all his travel accounts. Al-Nabulsi spent 83 days in Egypt, which occupy the middle section of his book. The Egyptian part is very informative and detailed. It reflects everyday life with reference to social, economic, and political

aspects. The main purpose of al-Nabulsi's journey to Egypt was to visit the various mosques and graves of pious people. The Egyptian section of *al-Haḥiqah wal Majāz* starts with Khan Yunis, after Gaza, as the first town in Egypt. Al-Nabulsi's account is very detailed.

Many of al-Nabulsi's works have been published, but *al-Haḥiqah wal Majāz* has not yet received the attention it is due by historians of Ottoman Egypt. In an article written by 'Abd al-Karīm Rāfiq of the University of Damascus, entitled 'Syrian Manuscript Sources for the History of Eighteenth-Century Egypt' (20) some details are given concerning the travel account of al-Nabulsi and its importance. Rāfiq mentions that parts of *al-Haḥiqah wal Majāz* were published in Damascus in 1881-2, and in Cairo in 1906-7, but he adds that "it has not been used to any great extent in studies on Egypt." (21) In 1986 the Ministry of Culture in Egypt published the manuscript in facsimile with an introduction and an index to the whole travel account by A. Haridi. For the period of study, *al-Haḥiqah wal Majāz* is an important resource and should be considered for future research in the history of Ottoman Egypt.

6- Sheikh Ahmad al-Rashīdī's *Husn al-safā wal ibtihāj bi thikri man wlia imārat al-hājj* (22)

Al-Rashīdī died in 1178/1764, but the work was continued down to 1197/1782, he was regarded as one of the Ulema. Al-Rashīdī wrote about the office of *Amīr al-Hājj*, which was one of the important offices in the Egyptian political system. He went on the pilgrimage several times and witnessed many of the events which he recorded in his book, while he referred to earlier sources for the period that he did not witness, including the works of al-Suyūtī, al-Maqrīzī, Ibn Iyās, Ibn Zunbul, and al-Ishāqī. This book was studied and annotated by Layla 'Abd al-Latīf, for its publication in Cairo in 1980, but has not yet been fully exploited. It has rarely been used in recent studies on the history of Ottoman Egypt. The book starts with the very early days of the pilgrimage, but concentrates more on the pilgrimage route (from Egypt to Mecca) and its organization under the Ottomans. It is a good source for events in Jeddah, Mecca and Medina, as well as for the

history of Egypt. Attacks by the Bedouin, and their suppression by the *Amīr al-Hāj* is an important aspect of Egypt during the period of study.

7- Isma‘īl al-Khashshāb, *Akhhbār ahl al-qarn al-thānī ‘ashar*(23) Manuscript copies of this text are to be found in Cairo (Dār al-Kutub, 2148 Tarīkh Tal‘at, and 2107 Tarīkh Taymūr) and in Paris (1858 Arabe). The text was briefly mentioned in Holt’s article on Arabic sources. Contained in twenty-six folios, the manuscript contains a very brief history of Egypt from 1120/1708 down to the French invasion in 1213/1798. Al-Khashshab had an early religious education and was a friend of al-Jabarti, who wrote his biography when al-Kashshāb died in 1230/1815. The history was only published in 1990 in Cairo by A. Jamaluddin and I. Abu Ghāzi. It is very brief and misses out important events, but it does give some idea of the political conditions in Egypt. It also pays particular attention to the role of the Ulema and could be useful if used with other, more reliable sources.

8- Hussein Efendi Ruznameji’s *Tartīb al-diyār al-Misriyah fī al-‘ahd al-‘Uthmāni*(24)

A manuscript copy is kept in Cairo (*Dār al-Kutub*, 1152 Tarīkh Taymūr). It has been published twice: in 1936 by Shafīq Ghorbāl in *the Bulletin of the Faculty of Arts* of Cairo University, and in a book by Stanford Shaw in 1964. The book is a set of answers to questions posed by French officials to Hussein Efendi, in seventy-five pages. Topics include the political system of Ottoman Egypt, its governors, the military and judicial systems, Egyptian provinces, and the *iltizam* system. This work provides a general view of the Ottoman political and administrative systems in Egypt, and could be a useful source for those aspects in the period under study.

9- Sheikh ‘Ali al-Shādhili’s *Dhikr ma waqa‘a bayna ‘asākir Misr al-mahrūsah*(25)

An edition of the manuscript (Cairo, *Dār al-Kutub*, 367 Tarīkh Taymūr) was published in *al-Majallah al-Tarīkhiyyah al-Misriyyah* by A.Tulaymat.(26) This source deals only with the 1123/1711 crisis, which continued for seventy days, causing much destruction and suffering in Cairo. Al-Shadhili wrote his

account as an eyewitness and reported the roles played by the military regiments, the Pasha, the Ulema, the Mamluk beys and the Bedouin who came from the provinces of Egypt to join in alliances and battles. This source is an important and detailed account for an event that took place in the period of this study. An article was written on this manuscript by A. Raymond, entitled '*The Opuscule of Sheikh 'Ali al-Shādhili: A source for the History of the 1711 crisis in Cairo*'.(27)

10- Ali b. Ridwan's *Zubdat al-ikhtisār*(28)

This is a chronicle of Ottoman Egypt, which begins with the regime of Khair Bey in 923/1517 and goes down to 1111/1699, with an additional entry for 1113/1701-2. It is not clear whether the name, 'Ali ibn Ridwān, at the front of the chronicle is that of the author or the copyist. Another name, Hajj Mustafa al-Halabi also appears on the first page. The introduction is different both in handwriting and style, from the rest of the chronicle. It is also noticeable that the chronicle has been revised and additional information added in the margins. It consists of forty-one folios in a tiny script. It seems that the only historian to have taken notice of this chronicle is Holt, who wrote about it in his survey of Arabic manuscript sources for the history of Ottoman Egypt, where he concluded "It is a most valuable source for the last decades of the seventeenth-century."(29) Holt also used *Zubdat al-ikhtisār* as one of the major sources for his writings on the career of Küçük Muhammed and the beylicate in Ottoman Egypt during the seventeenth century. In comparison with other contemporary sources, Holt argued that *Zubdat al-ikhtisār* is an independent source, although it has some similarities with other chronicles, such as *Awdah al-ishārāt*, but clearly *Zubdat al-ikhtisār* is an earlier source than Ahmad Shalabi's, and is more detailed in the later part of the period it covers. Holt also noticed that much of its later data are clearly the jottings of a contemporary. It may also be clearly observed that the author was an eyewitness of many of the later events. He also mentions being told by someone else about those later incidents that he did not personally witness.

Zubdat al-ikhtisār pays most attention to political events in Egypt and also to major crises such as droughts, the Nile's inundation, weather changes, and other natural phenomena. There are no biographies of notables as in other works such as those of al-Jabarti and al-Murādi, and the author pays more attention to events rather than to people. If it is to be classified, *Zubdat al-ikhtisār* is more in the style of compositions by *ajnād* (military officials) who wrote on the history of Egypt. The author gives quite abundant information about events inside the Citadel and the Pasha's court, and the various activities of the seven regiments. Very little is given about life in Cairo itself, which suggests that the author spent more time in the Citadel than in Cairo. For details of the political system of Ottoman Egypt, *Zubdat al-ikhtisār* is an important resource.

11- Jād Allah al-Ghunaymī's *al-Durr al-nadīr fī adab al-wazīr*(30)

This manuscript consists of forty-two folios. It was completed in 1101/1689 by Al-Ghunaymī, who was a prominent scholar of his time. His writings vary between literature and philosophy. The dates of both his birth and death are unknown, but it is clearly indicated that he wrote *al-Durr al-nadīr* in 1101/1689. He also wrote another book on theology in 1155/1742.(31) *al-Durr al-nadīr* was presented to Ahmad Pasha, the Wazir of Egypt from Muharram 1101 to Jumada II 1102/ October 1689 to March 1691. The motive behind writing this book was indicated by the author; he refers to a prophetic tradition that at the beginning of each century a reformer would come to reform what has been corrupted. Al-Ghunaymī presented this book to the Pasha hoping that he would be the reformer of the twelfth century, which started with his reign. Ahmad Pasha was known for his piety and is most remembered for rebuilding the famous al-Mu'ayyad mosque in Cairo.(32) He was also involved in fighting the Bedouin, who caused many problems in the provinces. He died in office in 1691, which was not common for Pashas in Egypt, who generally were either dismissed or overthrown. Al-Ghunaymī divided his book into an introduction, two chapters, and an ending. He discusses attributes of the Wazirs, relations between kings and their Wazirs,

types of Wizarats and differences between one and another. *al-Durr al-nadīr* also discusses the way in which a Wazir should deal with his subjects, with a large chapter on justice. The text is full of traditions and stories from the days of the Persians, the Umayyads, and the Abbasids. There is not much reference in the work to current political issues of the time, but it is very important for the following reasons:

- The manuscript of al-Ghunaymī contains much material on political theory and legislation. It dates from a time for which very little documentary material is available on these issues. This manuscript could be regarded as the first work of an ‘ālim providing information on the political and legislative bases of Egypt as a province governed by a Wazir.
- This book also gives many clues on the relations between the Pasha and the Ulema, and the ideal view as suggested by al-Ghunaymī. It also reflects views of the Ulema on the ruling class and how an ideal Islamic government should conduct itself.
- Very little writing on these issues existed in Egypt at that time owing to changes in officials’ status and in administration. Thus, for the political system of Ottoman Egypt, *al-Durr al-nadīr* is a vital source.

This manuscript has not yet been studied, nor has there been any known attempt to use this source for research into this period with which we are concerned.

12- Mustafa al-Bakri’s *al-Nihla al-nasrīyah fī al-rihlah al-Misrīyah*(33)

This manuscript consists of eighty-five folios, containing a report on a journey made to Egypt in 1132/1719, by Mustafa al-Bakri (1099-1162/1687-1749), a well-known Sufi Sheikh, who was born in Damascus, and made during his life-time several journeys to Aleppo, Jerusalem, Baghdad, Constantinople, the Hijaz, and Egypt. Several years after the journey recounted in the text, he came back to live in Egypt and died in Cairo in 1162/1749. In his dictionary of authors, *Hadīyat al-‘arifīn*, al-Baghdādi mentions over 100 titles of books which al-Bakri composed during his lifetime, most of which are on Sufi themes, and religious matters.(34) Al-Ziriklī refers to large volume containing the

collection of al-Bakri's travel accounts but makes no mention of where this volume is to be found.(35) Mustafa al-Bakri started his journey in Shawwāl 1132/1719, accompanying Wazir Rajab Pasha, the governor of Aleppo, who was going to Egypt to become the Wazir appointed by the Porte. Al-Bakri describes the journey with the Wazir as it began in Jerusalem and proceeded via Gaza. Soldiers from Egypt went to accompany the Wazir during his journey for his protection. He also describes the large house of a Mamluk, Muhammed Bey Abu al-Shawārib. He then describes Cairo as it was when he arrived there. This travel account includes the names of places and mosques visited by the author, and there were many references to *qādīs* and Sheikhs whom he saw during his visit, with very accurate descriptions of the events he witnessed. The work also contains samples of poetry and reports of visits and discussions with scholars at various places in Cairo. Al-Bakri also had a trip on the Nile, which he describes as a horrifying journey. He also visited the northern provinces of Egypt, including, al-Mansūrah, Dimyāt and other cities. The journey was interesting and informative, although al-Bakri was more concerned about the religious places he visited. His travel account casts light on the life of Sufi Sheikhs and the Ulema, who were remarkably rich and influential. This travel account could be useful in various ways for the history of Ottoman Egypt at the time. It was written at a time when the idea of journeys within the Ottoman lands, such as the journey of Evliya Çelebi, and that of al-Nabulsi, was very much in vogue. There were also journeys to other European capitals during the reign of Ahmad III, who sent embassies to Vienna (1719-30), Paris (1721-2), Moscow (1722-3), and Poland (1730). Among the results of these embassies were the various travel accounts composed by those who joined in travels and embassies.

The travel account of al-Bakri has not yet been studied or used in any form of research on the history of Ottoman Egypt, although it is of vital importance for the period.

13-Yūsuf al-Malwānī's *Tuhfat al-'ahbāb*(36)

No information is available on Yūsuf al-Malwānī as a scholar or a historian. His work is nevertheless one of the important sources

for the period in which he lived. Al-Malwāni continued to record the events he witnessed until his death in 1131/1719 and his work was continued by Murtada al-Kurdi until the year 1136/1724. Unlike previous manuscript histories al-Malwāni divides his work into four major chapters dealing respectively with pre-Islamic Egypt, Islamic Egypt to the end of the Fatimid era, the Mamluk Sultanate from its establishment to the death of Tuman Bey and the invasion of Selim I in 1517, and the Ottoman period until 1136/1724.

The first three sections are rather concise and very general, while the last chapter occupies more than two thirds of the whole book. Al-Malwāni refers to all the major events that took place in Egypt in the political, economic, and social spheres. He also records the times of drought, famine, flood or other natural disaster that were frequent in Egypt in his days. He refers to previous sources and, for events which he did not personally witness, al-Malwāni mentions the names of people who were his informants about various incidents. Although *Tuhfat al-'ahbāb* has not yet been published, it has been used as a major source for many recent writings on the history of Ottoman Egypt. A. 'Abd al-Rahīm, in his article '*Yūsuf al-Malwāni's Tuhfat al-Ahbāb, and Ahmad Shalabi Abd al-Ghani's Awdah al-Isharāt*', (37) compares the two chronicles and proves in various cases that al-Jabarti had copied parts of al-Malwāni's reconstruction of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries from it.

14- Ibrahīm al-Sawālihī al-'Awfī's *Tarājim al-sawā'iq fī waqi'at al-sanājiq* (38)

The work of al-Sawālihi focuses on the 1071/1660 crisis. An edition of the text, studied and annotated by A. 'Abd al-Rahīm, was published in 1986 by the *Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale du Caire*. The text of the *Dār al-Kutub* manuscript, however, continues down to 1113/1701, a supplement being written by a different author, Muhammed Ibn Mahmūd. This unpublished addition is, in fact, an important source for our period of study as it contains a very rich and detailed account of everyday events in Egypt, superior in quality and quantity to *Zubdat al-ikhtisār* and *Awdah al-ishārāt*, although surprisingly it

has not received the attention of scholars and researchers of Ottoman Egypt. The manuscript reflects the political situation, various military conflicts, and the impact of these events on the capital and the rural areas of Egypt.

15- Anonymous, *Tarīkh Mūlūk Āl ‘Uthmān wa nuwwabihim bi Misr*(39)

A concise history of the Ottoman Sultans and their Wazirs in Egypt, this text begins with the year 923/1517 and ends in 1129/1716, referring to each Pasha and the major political events that took place during their terms in office. No work has been done on this manuscript, nor does there exist any study of it.

There are also other important sources that could be used alongside the above-mentioned manuscripts. *Ruzname sijills*, containing details of incomes, annual budgets, and salaries of the military, are available for a limited number of years, and some important firmans, which are limited in number but great in value, still survive.(40) Two major *waqf* documents are also available for this period; these are the *waqf* of Amīr Mustafa Ibn Yūsuf of 1112/1700, and that of Amīr Shahīn Agha of 1129/1716.

A vital source for the political system of Egypt under the Ottomans is the famous *Qanunname*.(41) The original Turkish manuscript is available, a translation into Arabic of the *Qanunname* for 931/1525 was published in Cairo in 1986. Other sources are French travelers' and Consuls' reports, which provide useful material for the period of study. The most important of those are the writings of Savary, Granger, Volney, and Olivier. There are also important reports by Consuls Millet and Mure, and several accounts of English travelers, of which the most significant is Joseph Pitts' account.(42)

Manuscript sources, which cover, partly or fully, the period from 1099/1687 to 1150/1737 are greater in quantity than those of earlier periods. Much of the material has not yet been fully exploited, while many manuscripts have still not received any attention whatsoever from researchers. The aim of this study was to shed some light on one of the darkest and most obscure periods of Ottoman Egypt. It is hoped that it will be a step towards uncovering the hidden parts of Egypt's history under the

Ottomans, providing more material and encouragement to future research.

Footnotes

- (1) The most notable historians of this period are al-Suyūti, al-Shawkāni, Ibn Taghri Birdi, and Ibn Iyās.
- (2) al-Jabarti, ‘Abd al-Rahmān. *‘Ajā’ib al-āthar fī al-tarājim wa-l-akhbār* (Cairo, 1297/1880).1/6.
- (3) *ibid.*,
- (4) A. al-Jumayī, *Ittijāhāt al-kitābah al-tarīkhiyah fī tarīkh Misr* (Cairo, 1990).
- (5) P.M. Holt, *Political and Social Change in Modern Egypt* (London, 1968) 3-12.
- (6) In P.M. Holt, *Studies in the History of the Near East* (London, 1973) 3.
- (7) D. Crecelius (ed.) *Eighteenth Century Egypt*, (Los Angeles, 1990) 3.
- (8) al-Jabarti, ‘Abd al-Rahmān. *‘Ajā’ib al-āthar fī al-tarājim wa-l-akhbār* (Cairo, 1297/1880).
- (9) D. Ayalon, ‘*Studies in al-Jabarti*’, *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 3/2 (1960) 218.
- (10) P.M. Holt ‘*Al-Jabarti’s introduction to the History of Ottoman Egypt*’, in Holt, *Studies in the History of the Near East* (London, 1973) 161-177.
- (11) In D. Crecelius (ed.) *Eighteenth Century Egypt* (Los Angeles, 1990) 89-102.
- (12) *ibid.*, p. 5.
- (13) An edition of the manuscript has been annotated and published by A. A. ‘Abd al-Rahīm, (Cairo, 1988), it was also translated into English, annotated, and published by A. Bakr and D. Crecelius, (New York, 1991).
- (14) A. Bakr, ‘*Interrelationships among the Damurdashi Group of Manuscripts*’. In D. Crecelius (ed.) *Eighteenth Century Egypt*. 79-88.
- (15) P.M. Holt (ed.), *Political and Social Change in Modern Egypt* (London, 1968) 3-12.
- (16) ‘Abd al-Ghani, Ahmad Shalabi. *Awdah al-isharāt fī man tawalla misr min al-wuzarā’i wa al-bashāt* (Yale University, Carlo de Landberg collection, Ms. No. 3, History of Egypt from 922/1516-7 to 1150/1737-8). An edition of this manuscript has

been published by ‘Abd al-Rahīm ‘Abd al-Rahmān ‘Abd al-Rahīm (Cairo, 1987).

(17) al-Murādi, Muhammed Khalīl. *Silk al-durar fī a’yān al-qarn al-thānī ‘ashar*. 4 vol. (Cairo 1291/1874).

(18) al-Nābulsi, ‘Abd al-Ghani. *al-Haqiqah wa al-majāz fī al-rihlah ilā bilād al-Shām wa Misr wa-l-Hijāz* (Cairo, Dār al-Kutub, Ms. 344 geography, 246 folios). It has been published by A. Harīdi. (Cairo, 1986).

(19) Al-Baghdāi, *Hadiyat al-‘Arifīn*, 1/590-594.

(20) In D. Crecelius (ed.), *Eighteenth Century Egypt* (Los Angeles, 1990) 103-114.

(21) *ibid.*, p. 104.

(22) al-Rashīdī, Ahmad. *Husn al-safā wa-l-ibtihāj bi dhikr man walia imarat al-Hajj* (Cairo, Dār al-Kutub, Ms. 5559 Tarīkh). It has been published by L. ‘Abd al-Latīf (Cairo, 1980).

(23) al-Kashshāb, Isma‘īl. *Akhhbār al-qarn al-thānī ‘ashar* (Cairo, Dār al-Kutub, Ms. 2148 Tarīkh Tal‘at; 2107 Tarīkh Taymūr). It has been published by A. Jamāluddīn and I. Abu Ghazī, (Cairo, 1990).

(24) al-Ruznameji, Hussein Efendi. *Tartīb al-diyār al-Misriyyah fī al-‘ahd al-‘Uthmāni* (Cairo, Dār al-Kutub, Ms. 1152 Tarīkh Taymūr). It has published in 1936 by S. Ghurbāl in the Bulletin of the faculty of Arts of Cairo University, and as a monograph by Stanford Shaw in 1964.

(25) al-Shadhili, ‘Ali. *Dhikr ma waqa‘a bayna ‘asāker al-mahroushah Misr* (Cairo, Dār al-Kutub, Ms. 367 Tarīkh Taymūr). It has been published by A. Tulaimāt *al-Majallah al-Tārīkhiyyah al-Misriyyah*, 14 (1968) 312- 403.

(26) 14 (1968) 321-403.

(27) In D. Crecelius (ed.) *Eighteenth Century Egypt* (Los Angeles, 1990) 25-38.

(28) Ali b. Ridwan. *Zubdat al-ikhtisār* (London, British Library, Add. 9972). A Chronicle of Ottoman Egypt which begins in 923/1517 and goes down to 1111/1699. An edition of this manuscript has been published by Bashir Zain al-Abdin (Cairo 2006).

- (29) P.M Holt, *Political and Social Change in Modern Egypt* (London, 1968) 155.
- (30) al-Ghunaiymī, Jād Allah. *al-Dur al-nadīr fī adab al-wazīr* (Cairo, *Dār al-Kutub*, Ms. 1655 and 3549 Ādab).
- (31) Al-Baghdadi, *Hadiyat al-‘arifīn*, 1/249.
- (32) A. Shalabi, *Awdah al-Isharāt* (Cairo, 1987) 184.
- (33) al-Bakri, Mustafa. *al-Nihlah al-nasriyyah fī al-rihlah al-Misriyyah* (Cairo, *Dār al-Kutub*, Ms. Geography 651 Majāmi‘).
- (34) Al-Baghdadi, *Hadiyat al-‘arifīn* 2/446-50.
- (35) Al-Zirikli, *al-A‘lam*, 8/141. See also al-Murādi, *Silk al-durar*, 4/190-200, and al-Jabarti, 1/165.
- (36) al-Malwāni, Yūsuf. *Tuhfat al-ahbāb biman malka Misr min al-mulūk wa-l-nūwāb*. (Cairo, *Dār al-Kutub*, Ms. 5623 Tārīkh).
- (37) In D. Crecelius (ed.) *Eighteenth Century Egypt*, 39-50.
- (38) al-‘Awfī, Ibrahīm al-Sawālihi. *Tarājim al-sawā ‘iq fī waqi‘at al-sanājiq* (Cairo, *Dār al-Kutub*, Ms. 226 Tarīkh; Paris 843 Arabe; Sofia A1277; Munich Cod. Arab. 415). This manuscript focuses on the 1071/1660 crisis. An edition of this text was annotated by A. A. ‘Abd al-Rahīm and published in 1986. The text of the *Dār al-Kutub* manuscript however continues down to 1113/1701, the supplement being written by a different author, Muhammed b. Mahmūd.
- (39) Anonymous, *Tarīkh Mūlūk Āl ‘Uthmān wa nuwwabihim bi Misr*, (Cairo, *Dār al-Kutub*, 2408 Tarīkh Taymūr).
- (40) Administration des Beins Privés Et Des Palais Royaux, *Recueil De Firmans Impériaux Ottomans Adressés Aux Walis Aux Khédives D’Egypte, 1006 H-1322 H/1597 J.C-1904 J.C.* Imprimé l’Administration de l’Arpentage, (Cairo, 1933).
- (41) *Qanunname-i Mısır*. Collection of laws decreed in Egypt in the year 931/1524-5. There are a number of variant manuscript copies of this collection, of which the one possessed by the *Suleymaniyye* Library (Istanbul), *Esad Efendi* collection, Ms. 1827/1 (40 folios, 21 lines) has been quoted in this study. This Manuscript was published by Barkan, Ö.L. *XV ve XVI nci asirlarda Osmanli İmparatorluğunda ziraī, ekonominin hukukī ve malī esaslari*, vol. 1 (Istanbul, 1943) 355-87. Other copies of

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(42) Foster, William (ed.) *The Red Sea and Adjacent Countries at the close of the Seventeenth Century*, Halikut Society (London 1949).

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