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Who Was al-Maqrīzī? A Biographical Sketch

Today, it is all too common to view any text in light of its author′s psychological, emotional, and intellectual proclivities. Background, character, upbringing, education, successes and failures, and all other experiences are seen as fundamental factors in shaping the scope and orientation of one′s literary and artistic output. So established has this mode of inquiry become that it has spread from its original application in creative writing to permeate the study of all literary forms, even those that have traditionally claimed to be governed by rules of objectivity, methodology, and scholarly detachment. This development is a direct outcome of modern culture′s mania for memory and the memorial, which translates into society′s effort to preserve every shred of memory of those deemed worthy of remembrance, if not of everybody.[1]

Medieval culture had different and less pronounced attitudes toward individuality, authorship, and remembrance, all concerns that underwent a phenomenal shift in significance in modern times.[2] This observation pertains both

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[1]The outburst of biographies in our times is proof enough of our culture′s belief in the individual and the individual psyche as historical agents. A recent development, obituaries collections from newspapers, shows how far this fascination has gone; see Marvin Siegel, ed., *The Last Word: The New York Times Book of Obituaries and Farewells: A Celebration of Unusual Lives* (New York, 1997, reprt. 1999), or the ongoing series of *The Daily Telegraph* obituaries books, collected and edited by Hugh Massingberd: *A Celebration of Eccentric Lives* (London, 1995); *Heroes and Adventurers* (London, 1996); *Entertainers* (London, 1997). In the same vein, genealogical research is fast becoming a major pursuit in the US with specialized magazines, companies, websites, and web search engines all serving the large number of Americans engaged in family history research (see the genealogytoday site, http://www.genealogytoday.com/topics/obits.htm). An editorial in *Ancestry* magazine (July–August 2001) cites a recent poll that put their number at 60 percent of the population. This mostly web-based occupation gained the scholarly cachet of approval in 2001 through the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)′s production of ″My History Is America′s History″ guidebook and its sponsorship of many related scholarly conferences and meetings. For references to NEH activities in this domain, see NEH′s family history website (http://www.myhistory.org).

[2]On the slow process of change from a muffled to a clear voice of the individual in Western literature, cf. Danielle Régnier-Bohler, ″Imagining the Self: Exploring Literature,″ and Philippe Braunstein, ″Toward Intimacy: The Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries,″ in *A History of Private Life: Revelations of the Medieval World*, ed. Philippe Ariés and Georges Duby, tr. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge, Mass, 1988), 373–82, 536–56, respectively.

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to the Western and the Islamic worlds. Medieval Muslim scholars, like their Western peers, maintained a relatively inconspicuous presence in their writings. They followed established scholarly and literary conventions that tended to conceal personal touches behind ready-made narrative structures and elaborate prose techniques. Their authorial persona, however, came with distinct sensibilities since they functioned in an environment different from their Western counterparts and had their own textual strategies and restrictive religious and sociocultural values.[3]

This is not to say that medieval Muslim scholars did not see any relationship between an author´s intellectual and emotional disposition and his oeuvre. Quite the opposite: but they saw that relationship less in terms of the author´s character, feelings, and choices, and more in terms of his family background, religious and scholarly affiliations, teachers, and professional positions and patrons. In other words, the work of an author was believed to be influenced more by his social and intellectual circle than by his personality, preferences, or eccentricities. His good reputation, and therefore subsequent commemoration in *kutub al-tarājim* (biographical dictionaries)—the most extensive source we have on distinguished individuals in pre-modern Islamic societies—depended fundamentally on how closely he adhered to, and rose within, the established norms of his social class or professional group.

A typical biographical entry presents a more or less consistent set of facts depending on the category of the biographee—his (or, very rarely, her) full name, titles, and lineage, dates of death and birth (if known), family connections, education and teachers/masters *(shuyūkh)* from whom he acquired *ijāzah*s (licenses to transmit their texts), books read and memorized, employment history, quotations from poetry if he had composed any, reputation among peers, and, in conclusion, a doxology. With few exceptions, medieval biographers tended to leave out personal or anecdotal details about the biographee, not because they were uninteresting, but because they did not help define the individual within his scholarly, military, or social milieu, which is what the biographical genre was intended to do in the first place.[4] The few biographers who routinely included anecdotes, both real and

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[3]See the analysis of a number of these literary devices and cultural tendencies in the Arabic autobiographical tradition in Dwight Reynolds et al., *Interpreting the Self: Autobiography in the Arabic Literary Tradition* (Berkeley, 2001), 72–99.

[4]Michael Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus, 1190–1350* (New York, 1994), argues that prosopographies should be seen more as registers of the practices by which the influential social classes manipulated power. Fedwa Malti-Douglas, *"Mentalités* and Marginality: Blindness and Mamluk Civilization," in C. E. Bosworth et al., *Essays in Honor of Bernard Lewis: The Islamic World from Classical to Modern Times* (Princeton, 1989), 211–37, makes an interesting and innovative use of a subset of the medieval biographical dictionaries, but stresses nonetheless their usefulness to understanding the mentality of an entire category rather

invented, seem to have used them as encoded messages about the moral standards of their subject—another defining aspect of the individual scholar in medieval Islamic etiquette.[5] Anecdotes, it appears, provided a free space within the codified structure of the genre for praise and criticism, which allow us to know more not only about the subject but also about the biographer himself.

THE BACKGROUND OF A SINGULAR HISTORIAN

Taqī al-Dīn al-Maqrīzī lived at a time when history writing flourished in an unprecedented way in Egypt.[6] More annals, biographical compendia, manuals for the chancery, geographical treatises *(masālik),* and topographical tracts *(khiṭaṭ)* were written in Cairo in the first half of the fifteenth century than in any other half-century period until the onset of modernity in the late nineteenth century. But, unlike an earlier Mamluk generation of universal historians—such as al-'Umarī and al-Nuwayrī in Cairo and Ibn Kathīr and al-Dhahabī in Damascus—who covered the entire Islamic world, al-Maqrīzī and his contemporaries tended to focus on local events in the present or recent past. Most of them composed cosmocentric and regional histories and prosopographies. They busied themselves with minutely chronicling the events of Mamluk Egypt during the fifteenth century, and to a lesser extent Syria, sometimes beginning with a cursory run-down of Islamic history from the Prophet to their own time, and sometimes adding the biographies of their contemporaries or immediate predecessors. This resulted in the formation of an endogenous and insular school of historiography, in which every member was linked in more than one way to the others, and every member's work was inevitably and immediately measured against the works of others, who essentially covered the same terrain.[7] This situation encouraged intense scholarly and social

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than individuals.

[5]See Nimrud Hurvitz, "Biographies and Mild Asceticism: A Study of Islamic Moral Imagination," *Studia Islamica* 85 (Feb 1997): 41–65, for a discussion of these issues in the context of an analysis of the biography of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal.

[6]On Mamluk historiography, see Franz Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography* (Leiden, 2nd ed., 1968), passim; Shākir Muṣṭafá, *Al-Tārīkh al-'Arabī wa-al-Mu'arrikhūn: Dirāsah fī Taṭawwur 'Ilm al-Tārīkh wa-Rijāluhu fī al-Islām* (Beirut, 1978–93), 2:139–304, all of vol. 3, 4:7–227; Ulrich Haarmann, *Quellenstudien zur frühen Mamlukenzeit* (Freiburg, 1969); Tarif Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period* (New York, 1994), 182–231; Li Guo, "Mamluk Historiographic Studies: The State of the Art," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 1 (1997): 15–43.

[7]Donald Little, *An Introduction to Mamlūk Historiography: an Analysis of Arabic Annalistic and Biographical Sources for the Reign of al-Malik an-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalā'ūn* (Wiesbaden, 1970), is a pioneering comparative examination of the annals of six of these historians which shows their complicated patterns of interdependence. See also the two detailed studies of the sources of two lesser-known Mamluk historians, al-Yūnīnī and Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah: Li Guo, *Early Mamluk Syrian Historiography: Al-Yūnīnī's Dhayl Mir'āt al-Zamān* (Leiden, 1998); David Reisman,

competition, especially among the most prominent such as al-ʻAynī and al-Maqrīzī or al-Sakhāwī and al-Suyūṭī. These rivalries at times escalated into bitter factionalism among supporters and disciples which found its way into the biographies they penned of each other and each others′ masters.[8]

Thus, many of al-Maqrīzī′s biographers not only knew him personally, but held an opinion about him that depended on which side they belonged to in the historians′ ″club.″[9] Some, like Ibn Ḥajar al-ʻAsqalānī, regarded themselves as his friends and colleagues. Others, like Ibn Taghrībirdī, al-Sakhāwī, al-Jawharī al-Ṣayrafī, and Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, were his students or disciples of his students, but

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″A Holograph MS of Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah′s Dhayl,″ *Mamlūk Studies Review* 2 (1998): 19–49. As for al-Maqrīzī himself, see the article by Frederic Baudin in this issue of *MSR*.

[8]Anne F. Broadbridge, ″Academic Rivalry and the Patronage System in Fifteenth-Century Egypt: al-ʻAynī, al-Maqrīzī, and Ibn Ḥajar al-ʻAsqalānī,″ *Mamlūk Studies Review* 3 (1999): 85–107, analyzes the triangular relationship between these three paragons of history writing.

[9]A partial list of his Mamluk biographers includes Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah fī Mulūk Miṣr wa-al-Qāhirah* (Cairo, 1930–56), 15:490–91; idem, *Al-Manhal al-Ṣāfī wa-al-Mustawfá baʻda al-Wāfī,* ed. Muḥammad Muḥammad Amīn et al. (Cairo, 1956), 1:394–99; idem, *Ḥawādith al-Duhūr fī Madá al-Ayyām wa-al-Shuhūr,* ed. Muḥammad Kamāl ʻIzz al-Dīn (Beirut, 1990), 1:63–68; Ibn Ḥajar al-ʻAsqalānī, *Al-Majmaʻ al-Muʼassis lil-Muʻjam al-Mufahris,* ed. Yūsuf ʻAbd al-Raḥmān al-Marʻashlī (Beirut, 1994), 3:58–60; idem, *Inbāʼ al-Ghumr bi-Abnāʼ al-ʻUmr* (Hyderabad, 1967), 9:170–72, which al-Maqrīzī seems to have read before his death; Badr al-Dīn al-ʻAynī, *ʻIqd al-Jumān fī Tārīkh Ahl al-Zamān: Ḥawādith wa-Tarājim,* selections by ʻAbd al-Rāziq al-Ṭanṭāwī Qarmūṭ (Cairo, 1989), 574; al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Ḍawʼ al-Lāmiʻ li-Ahl al-Qarn al-Tāsiʻ* (Cairo, 1935), 2:21–25; idem, *Kitāb al-Tibr al-Masbūk fī Dhayl al-Sulūk* (Būlāq, Cairo, 1896), 21–24, same as *Ḍawʼ;* Najm al-Dīn ʻUmar ibn Muḥammad Ibn Fahd, *Muʻjam al-Shuyūkh,* ed. Muḥammad al-Zāhī and Ḥamad al-Jāsir (Riyadh, 1982), 63; al-Jawharī al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-Nufūs wa-al-Abdān fī-Tawārīkh al-Zamān,* ed. Ḥasan Ḥabashī (Cairo, 1970–89), 4:242–44; Ibn Iyās, *Badāʼiʻ al-Zuhūr fī Waqāʼiʻ al-Duhūr,* ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafá (Wiesbaden, 1960–75), 2: 231–32; Muḥammad ibn ʻAlī al-Shawkānī, *Al-Badr al-Ṭāliʻ bi-Maḥāsin Man baʻda al-Qarn al-Sābiʻ* (Cairo, 1930), 1:79–81, adapts most of his information from al-Sakhāwī and Ibn Ḥajar, but questions the motivation of the former to attack al-Maqrīzī. See also article ″al-Maḳrīzī,″ by Franz Rosenthal, *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* 2nd ed., 3:177–78; Fuat Sezgin et al., *Studies on Taqiyaddin al-Maqrīzī (d. 1442): Collected and Reprinted* (Frankfurt am Main, 1992). Modern Arabic biographical studies include: Muṣṭafá Ziyādah, ″Tārīkh Ḥayāt al-Maqrīzī,″ in Muḥammad Ziyādah, ed., *Dirāsāt ʻan al-Maqrīzī* (Cairo, 1971), 13–22; Saʻīd ʻAbd al-Fattāḥ ʻĀshūr, ″Aḍwāʼ Jadīdah ʻalá al-Muʼarrikh Aḥmad ibn ʻAlī al-Maqrīzī wa-Kitābātihi,″ *ʻAlam al-Fikr* 14 (1983): 453–98; Shākir Muṣṭafá, *Tārīkh,* 2:140–51; Zuhayr Ḥumaydān, ″Introduction,″ *Min Kitāb al-Mawāʻiẓ wa-al-Iʻtibār bi-Dhikr al-Khiṭaṭ wa-al-Āthār lil-Maqrīzī* (Damascus, 1987), 1:5–47; Ḥusayn ʻĀṣī, *Al-Maqrīzī, Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn ʻAlī ibn ʻAbd al-Qādir al-ʻUbaydī, 766–845 H/1366–1441 M: Muʼarrikh al-Duwal al-Islāmīyah fī Miṣr* (Beirut, 1992); Muḥammad Kamāl al-Dīn ʻIzz al-Dīn, *Al-Maqrīzī: Muʼarrikhan* (Beirut, 1990); idem, *Al-Maqrīzī wa-Kitābuhu ″Durar al-ʻUqūd al-Farīdah fī Tarājim al-Aʻyan al-Mufīdah″* (Beirut, 1992); Ayman Fuʼād Sayyid, ″Introduction,″ in *Musawwadat Kitāb al-Mawāʻiẓ wa-al-Iʻtibār fī Dhikr al-Khiṭaṭ wa-al-Āthār* (London, 1995), 6–22.

they were also the students of his competitors and opponents. Still others were his rivals and even enemies, because al-Maqrīzī—besides being a solitary, proud, and competitive man—was arguably the most famous historian of them all.[10] These qualities induced deference, envy, disdain, and perhaps misunderstanding.

Al-Maqrīzī′s admirers particularly emphasized his scholarly qualities. They differed, however, when it came to judging his prominence as a historian, with Ibn Taghrībirdī repeatedly asserting that he was ″hands down the dean of all historians.″[11] They also stressed his religious virtues and *zuhd* (mild asceticism),[12] which formed the solid moral and intellectual framework that defined the conception and orientation of his whole historical oeuvre.

Hostile biographers, notably the formidable al-Sakhāwī and al-‘Aynī, questioned his accuracy and rigor as a historian, with al-‘Aynī derogatorily claiming that he was a man given to divination and numerology.[13] Al-Sakhāwī, furthermore, raised a number of skeptical questions about al-Maqrīzī′s lineage, education, clientage, and authorial integrity.[14] The gravest of his allegations is that al-Maqrīzī stole a draft of a book on *khiṭaṭ* after the death of its author, Shihāb al-Dīn al-Awḥadī, who was his neighbor and friend, and incorporated it into his own *Khiṭaṭ* without mentioning Awḥadī. Less fanatical biographers kept their criticism at the level of insinuation.[15] These accusations and innuendoes, inconclusive in themselves for lack of evidence, still allow us to add nuance to the otherwise drab portrait of the

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[10]This is demonstrated, for example, by the envoy of the Timurid Shāh Rūkh who asked for a copy of al-Maqrīzī′s *Sulūk* in 833/1430. Al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk li-Ma‘rifat Duwal al-Mulūk,* ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafá Ziyādah et al. (Cairo, 1934–72)*,* 4:2:818, shows commendable restraint in reporting that request in three words with no comment. See also Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm,* 14:336; al-Jawharī al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat,* 3:178.

[11]Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm,* 14:150, 15:189; idem, *Ḥawādith al-Duhūr,* 1:25–26, where the author tells us that he intended to continue al-Maqrīzī′s *Sulūk* in his book because it was the best chronicle of its time.

[12]For a discussion of the meaning and implications of mild asceticism, see Hurvitz, ″Biographies and Mild Asceticism,″ *passim.* For an intimation of al-Maqrīzī′s spirited views on *zuhd,* cf. al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk,* 4:2:757–58, for the obituary for *zāhid al-waqt* Aḥmad ibn Ibrāhīm, known as Ibn ‘Arab, which contains all the elements of *zuhd* enumerated by Hurvitz.

[13]Examples abound in his reports on his relations with many of his biographees. He reveals his deep belief in divination in *Al-Mawā‘iẓ wa-al-I‘tibār bi-Dhikr al-Khiṭaṭ wa-al-Āthār* (Būlāq, Cairo, 1853)*,* 1:49, where he offers an environmental explanation for its prevalence in Egypt, and in a riddle he wrote in 823/1420, entitled ″Al-Ishārah wa-al-Imā’ ilá Ḥall Lughz al-Mā’,″ which is still in manuscript; see ‘Izz al-Dīn, *Al-Maqrīzī: Mu’arrikhan,* 52–54.

[14]Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw’,* 2:22–24.

[15]This is especially true of Ibn Taghrībirdī, who was al-Maqrīzī′s pupil and who displays mixed feelings towards his teacher. Besides the remarks in his biographies see *Nujūm,* 13:151–53; 14:109–10, 200–1, 236–37, 310–11; 15:189.

common biography with the information they divulge about some of the more ambiguous aspects of al-Maqrīzī´s character, scholarship, and career.

Al-Maqrīzī himself—whether inadvertently or deliberately—provides some tantalizing hints about himself every now and then in his historical narrative by giving his reaction to the event he is reporting or his whereabouts when it occurred. He adopts a more revelatory tone in the concise biographical dictionary *Durar al-'Uqūd al-Farīdah fī Tarājim al-A'yān al-Mufīdah,* in which he collected the biographies of people who died after his own birth, most of whom were family members, teachers, colleagues, competitors, or simply friends and acquaintances. In these entries, he reports on his interactions with them, including casual conversations he had with them, didactic anecdotes and poetry they recited to him, and meditations about the misfortunes that befell some of them.[16] Through these recollections, al-Maqrīzī displays the quintessential autobiographical qualities of first-person narrative—intimacy, immediacy, and the inevitable hint of vanity—without having to incur the reputation for vainglory that sometimes attached to serious scholars who wrote autobiographies.[17] For us, he actually provides glimpses of his experiences, feelings, and reflections which are invaluable for assessing who he was and how his life affected his scholarly output.

In this article, I will confine my discussion to four aspects of al-Maqrīzī´s biography: his lineage, education, *madhhab,* and *zuhd,* for I believe them to be crucial in understanding al-Maqrīzī´s choice of topics, the development of his method of inquiry, and the unusually strong critical voice that transpires in all of his historical writing, especially the *Khiṭaṭ, Itti'āẓ,* and the *Sulūk*. A fuller biography will appear in my forthcoming book on al-Maqrīzī and his *Khiṭaṭ*.

LINEAGE: Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn 'Alī ibn 'Abd al-Qādir al-Maqrīzī was born around 766/1364 in his family home in the Ḥārat al-Barjawān at the heart of Fatimid Cairo. His lineage is a bit obscure, ostensibly at his own hand. In the preface of most of his books, he in fact stops short at the tenth forefather when he introduces himself as was the custom at the time,[18] although he could have extended

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[16]A single, incomplete manuscript of the book (Gotha MS 270 Arab) was inexplicably published twice within five years. It contains around 330 entries of the reported 556. See 'Izz al-Dīn, *Al-Maqrīzī wa-Kitābuhu "Durar al-'Uqūd al-Farīdah";* al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-'Uqūd al-Farīdah fī Tarājim al-A'yān al-Mufīdah,* ed. Aḥmad Darwīsh and Muḥammad al-Maṣrī (Damascus, 1995).

[17]For a discussion of medieval autobiographers´ uneasiness in speaking of themselves, cf. my "My Life with Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn: The Memoirs of 'Imād al-Dīn al-Kātib al-Iṣfahānī," *Edebiyât* 7 (Fall 1996): 61–81.

[18]For al-Maqrīzī´s own presentation of his genealogy in the preface of his books see *Khiṭaṭ,* 1:4, where he stops at his great grandfather; *Sulūk,* 1:1:22; and *Durar,* 1:47, with the ten names stopping at the name of Tamīm, the father of 'Abd al-Ṣamad, who is in fact the grandson of the Caliph al-Mu'izz according to al-Sakhāwī´s longer chain. The same line appears in al-Maqrīzī´s

it to a very glorious ancestor, al-Mu'izz li-Dīn Allāh (r. 953–75), the first Fatimid caliph in Egypt and the founder of al-Qāhirah, or to an even more illustrious forebear, 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib.[19]

Yet al-Maqrīzī seems to have admitted his Fatimid ancestry to at least some of his close friends.[20] He was apparently very proud of his caliphal Fatimid pedigree. He even approvingly volunteers a number of panegyric stanzas written by his neighbor, colleague, and posthumously-turned competitor, Shihāb al-Dīn al-Awḥadī, in which Awḥadī candidly and unapologetically calls al-Maqrīzī *"ibn al-khalā'if"* [scion of the caliphs] and a descendant of al-Mu'izz and al-Ḥākim.[21] In one stanza, Awḥadī bluntly proclaims, ″Be proud, Taqī al-Dīn, among the people of your noble Fatimid lineage. And if you cited a report on their generosity and you encountered a contestant, then trace your ancestry back to the Ḥākimī [al-Ḥākim].″ These laudatory lines appear nowhere else in either Awḥadī′s or al-Maqrīzī′s various biographies.[22] In fact, al-Maqrīzī is the only one who speaks of a *dīwān* of poetry by Awḥadī that he claims to have read and critiqued, and he lists many examples from it in his *Durar,* including those laudatory verses. Their citing can only be explained as an implicit admission of al-Maqrīzī′s purported Fatimid pedigree, even though it is couched in someone else′s words.

A public assertion of his Fatimid, i. e., Isma'ili ancestry, could have ruined his carefully constructed career as a Shafi'i *'ālim,* and even as a private citizen. Even without any solid confirmation of al-Maqrīzī′s Fatimid pedigree, al-Sakhāwī, in his maliciously and underhandedly disparaging biography, uses the derogatory patronymic al-'Ubaydī, i.e., descendant of 'Ubayd Allāh, the first in the Fatimid line to claim descent from the Prophet′s daughter Fāṭimah in 906.[23] Al-'Ubaydīyūn was indeed the spiteful title adopted by all Sunni commentators in Mamluk Egypt

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obituary of his grandfather 'Abd al-Qādir in *Sulūk,* 2:2:365, and of his father 'Alī in ibid., 3:1:326.

[19]Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm,* 15:490 and Ibn Ḥajar, *Al-Majma' al-Mu'assis,* 3:59, enumerate the forefathers of al-Maqrīzī back to the eighth ancestor, 'Abd al-Ṣamad, and say that they have copied it from al-Maqrīzī himself. Ibn Taghrībirdī then adds that al-Maqrīzī′s nephew, Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad, dictated his uncle′s genealogy after his death and brought it up to 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib through the Fatimid caliphs. The same report appears in al-Jawharī al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat,* 4:244.

[20]Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā',* 9:172, idem, *Al-Durar al-Kāminah fī-A'yān al-Mi'ah al-Thāminah* (Hyderabad, 1929–32), 3:5; copied with an indignant remark in al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw',* 2:23.

[21]Al-Maqrīzī, *Durar,* 1:249–50; 'Izz al-Dīn, *Al-Maqrīzī wa-Kitābuhu "Durar al-'Uqūd al-Farīdah,"* 1:234.

[22]See Awḥadī′s biographies in Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā',* 6:112–13; idem, *Al-Majma' al-Mu'assis,* 3:38–39; al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw',* 1:358–59; Ibn al-'Imād al-Ḥanbalī, *Shadharāt al-Dhahab fī Akhbār Man Dhahab,* (Cairo, 1931–33), 7:89–90

[23]Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw',* 2:21, idem, *Dhayl al-Sulūk,* 21, where he lists all the ancestors up to Caliph al-Mu'izz li-Dīn Allāh.

who rejected the Fatimids′ claim of Prophetic lineage, and ascribed them instead to Maymūn al-Qaddāḥ ibn Daysān, the Manichean.″[24]

It is thus very plausible that al-Maqrīzī′s flattering portrayal of the Fatimids and their achievements in his *Khiṭaṭ* and his *Itti'āẓ al-Ḥunafā'* was partly animated by his belief of being their scion.[25] He even mounts a fervent defense of the authenticity of their lineage back to Fāṭimah in the introduction of his *Itti'āẓ al-Ḥunafā'*.[26] He approvingly records Ibn Khaldūn′s long discussion defending the authenticity of the Fatimids′ genealogy, an opinion that has earned Ibn Khaldūn many curses from his contemporary biographers.[27] Finally, al-Maqrīzī asks his readers to ″examine the facts fairly and not be deceived by the fabrications of the Fatimids′ detractors,″ at a time when the learned consensus in Sunni Egypt was that the Fatimids were impostors with a suspect lineage.

Al-Maqrīzī′s plea to his reader to accept the Fatimids′ genealogy did not go unnoticed. On the margin of the page in which he reports Imami traditions on the rise of the Fatimids, a remark states that ″al-Maqrīzī—God′s forgiveness be upon him—is not to blame for mounting this defense of the Fatimids because his lineage goes back to them.″[28] This comment must have been added by either the copyist or the owner of the manuscript, both of whom were fifteenth-century scholars who might have known al-Maqrīzī personally.[29] Ibn Ḥajar too almost confirms al-Maqrīzī′s Fatimid ancestry, by calling him al-Tamīmī (the descendant

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[24]Al-Maqrīzī, *Itti'āẓ al-Ḥunafā' bi-Akhbār al-A'immah al-Fāṭimīyīn al-Khulafā',* ed. Jamāl al-Dīn Shayyāl (Cairo, 1967), 1:52–54. The Maymunid genealogy is discussed in the same section.

[25]Shākir Muṣṭafá, *Tārīkh,* 2:148, raises this possibility as well, but Sayyid, *Musawwadat,* ″Introduction,″ 45, does not seem to think that it was the case.

[26]Al-Maqrīzī, *Itti'āẓ,* 1:15–54, where he logically argues the truth of their lineage and lists prominent scholars, such as Ibn Khaldūn, who accepted it. Idem, *Khiṭaṭ*, 1:348–49, is a summary of the *Itti'āẓ*′s discussion. Another Mamluk historian who accepts their claim is Ibn 'Abd al-Ẓāhir, *Al-Rawḍah al-Bahīyah fī Khiṭaṭ al-Qāhirah al-Mu'izzīyah,* ed. Ayman Fu'ād Sayyid (Cairo, 1996), 6–7. Other Mamluk historians who deny their lineage: Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm,* 4:69–112; Abū Ḥāmid al-Qudsī, *Kitāb Duwal al-Islām al-Sharīfah al-Bahīyah: wa-Dhikr Mā Ẓaḥara lī min Ḥikam Allāh al-Khafīyah fī Jalb Ṭā'ifat al-Atrāk ilá al-Diyār al-Miṣrīyah,* ed. Ulrich Haarmann and Ṣubḥī Labīb (Beirut, 1997), 12–15.

[27]Al-Maqrīzī, *Itti'āẓ,* 1:44–52. On the cursing of Ibn Khaldūn, see Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā',* 5:331, though not in his entry in *Al-Majma' al-Mu'assis,* 3:157–60; similar reports in al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw',* 4:147–48.

[28]Al-Maqrīzī, *Itti'āẓ,* 1:54, no. 2.

[29]Ibid., 1:31. The copyist, who copied his text from an autograph version in 884/1479, is an Azharite, as his *nisbah* indicates: Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Gīzī al-Shāfi'ī al-Azharī. The owner seems to have been Yūsuf ibn 'Abd al-Hādī, a famous Damascene scholar of the fifteenth century (840/1437–909/1504); on his bio, see al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw',* 10:308; Najm al-Dīn al-Ghazzī, *Al-Kawākib al-Sā'irah fī A'yān al-Mi'ah al-'Āshirah,* ed. Khalīl Manṣūr (Beirut, 1997), 1:317; Ibn 'Abd al-Hādī, *Rasā'il Dimashqīyah,* ed. Ṣalāḥ Muḥammad al-Khiyamī (Damascus, 1988), 13–17.

of Tamīm, either the son of al-Mu'izz, i.e., al-'Azīz, or his great grandson), perhaps another way to ascribe him to the Fatimids without having to state it openly.[30] Najm al-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn Fahd, the Meccan scholar who accompanied al-Maqrīzī during his *mujāwarāt* in Mecca, traces his teacher's ancestry to 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib via al-Ḥusayn, through the Fatimid line.[31]

Moreover, al-Maqrīzī's choice of wording for the title of his *Itti'āẓ al-Ḥunafā' bi-Akhbār al-A'immah al-Fāṭimīyīn al-Khulafā'* itself amounts to another bold public declaration of his belief in their genuineness. He invites his readers, whom he calls *ḥunafā'* (sing. *ḥanīf)*, to draw lessons *(mawā'iẓ,* same as the title of the *Khiṭaṭ)* from the history of the Fatimids. His use of the term *ḥunafā'* is due to more than the necessity of rhyme. A *ḥanīf* in the sense accepted in the medieval period is the true Muslim, the believer in the original and true religion, i.e., someone who transcends the sectarian division that prompted the Sunnis to vehemently denigrate both the Isma'ili doctrine and the genealogical claim of the Fatimids.[32] In the second clause, al-Maqrīzī strongly emphasizes the Fatimids' privilege as both *khulafā'* (caliphs) and *a'immah* (imams) of the Islamic community, that is, the supreme leaders of the community in both the theological/judicial and institutional senses.[33]

This is not the same as saying that al-Maqrīzī believed in the Isma'ili doctrine of the Fatimids, for he most certainly did not. He was by all accounts a solid Sunni Shafi'i. The remark that he tacks onto his exposé of the Fatimids' dogma in his *Musawaddah* of the *Khiṭaṭ* is critical in understanding the difference between believing in the Fatimids' glorious pedigree and accepting their dogma. In it, al-Maqrīzī distances himself *(yatabarra',* takes *barā'ah)* from the Isma'ili doctrine he is about to explain, as he did in reporting the accounts denigrating the Fatimids' genealogy in the *Itti'āẓ.*[34] It is curious that the same remark does not appear in the published copy of the *Khiṭaṭ,* although the *da'wah* section is copied in its entirety from the text of the *Musawaddah.*[35] This is probably due to the transformation that al-Maqrīzī underwent in the period between the draft and the final redaction of the *Khiṭaṭ*. By the latter date, which was toward the end of his life, al-Maqrīzī did

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[30]Ibn Ḥajar, *Raf' al-Iṣr 'an Quḍāt Miṣr,* ed. Ḥāmid 'Abd al-Majīd and Muḥammad Abū Sunnah (Cairo, 1957), 1:2, in a complimentary remark on his friend al-Maqrīzī in his introduction.

[31]Ibn Fahd, *Mu'jam al-Shuyūkh,* 63.

[32]On the meaning and development of the term, see article "Ḥanīf," by W. Montgomery Watt, *EI²,* 3:165–66.

[33]On the meaning and development of the imamate, see article "Imāma," by W. Madelung, *EI²,* 3:1163–69; on the caliphate, see article "Khilāfa, the History of the Institution" and "Khilāfa, In Political Theory," by D. Sourdel and A. K. S. Lambton respectively, *EI²,* 4:937–50.

[34]Sayyid, *Musawwadat,* "Introduction," 45, and p. 94 of the text.

[35]Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ,* 1:348–49, 393–95, in which the same exposé is presented.

not feel the need to assert the solidity of his Shafi'i Sunni creed since he no longer was interested in competing for public positions or patronage. The defense of the Fatimid genealogy, however, appears in both *Musawaddah* and *Khiṭaṭ* as well as in the *Itti'āẓ,* underscoring al-Maqrīzī's strong conviction in its truthfulness throughout his life.

EDUCATION: Al-Maqrīzī grew up in the house of his maternal grandfather Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān, Ibn al-Ṣā'igh al-Ḥanafī (ca. 710/1310–11 Sha'bān 776/15 January 1375), who was one of the most famous Hanafi *faqīh*s in Cairo, having held a series of prestigious judicial posts and composed a number of philological, grammatical, and exegetical books.[36] Almost everybody in his family was involved in some form of *'ilm,* despite the difference in *madhhab* between his paternal and maternal sides. His father 'Alī was a Hanbali *kātib* who worked and lived in Damascus before moving to Cairo, where he occupied a few minor positions in the judiciary and the viceregency. He died on 25 Ramaḍān 779/25 January 1378 when he was fifty-years old and al-Maqrīzī was less than fourteen years old.[37] His paternal grandfather 'Abd al-Qādir, who died before his birth (732/1331), was born in Ba'labek, in today's Lebanon. He settled down in Damascus, where he became a rather well-known Hanbali scholar and *muḥaddith,* heading a premier Damascene institution, Dār al-Ḥadīth al-Bahā'īyah (of al-Bahā' Ibn 'Asākir).[38]

But the most influential figure in al-Maqrīzī's early education, and his first tutor, was his maternal grandfather. Under his tutelage, al-Maqrīzī received the traditional education available to boys of his background with its focus on Quranic studies, hadith, Arabic grammar, literature, and *fiqh*.

Al-Maqrīzī claimed to have studied with or received *ijāzah*s (licenses) from more than six hundred shaykhs (tutors) in Cairo, Damascus, and Mecca, a number that evidently includes all those he had heard lecturing, even if only once, or those from whom he received an *ijāzah* without ever meeting them.[39] The extant roll of

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[36]Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā',* 1:95–96; idem, *Al-Durar al-Kāminah,* 3:499–500; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk,* 3:1:92, 198, 245, and 4:1107, chronicles the last stages of the career of his grandfather; 'Izz al-Dīn, *Al-Maqrīzī: Mu'arrikhan,* 27–32.

[37]On the father, see al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk,* 3:1:326; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā',* 1:166; 'Izz al-Dīn, *Al-Maqrīzī wa-Kitābuhu "Durar al-'Uqūd al-Farīdah,"* 1:18. Al-Maqrīzī's brothers are Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad (772/1371–822/1419) (see al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk,* 4:1:514) and Ḥasan. Broadbridge, "Academic Rivalry and the Patronage System in Fifteenth-Century Egypt," 86, mistakenly puts the father's death in 1384 and makes him a Shafi'i.

[38]On the grandfather, see Khalīl ibn Aybak al-Ṣafadī, *Kitāb al-Wāfī bi-al-Wafayāt,* ed. Riḍwān al-Sayyid (Leipzig, 1993), 19:42–43; Ibn Ḥajar, *Al-Durar al-Kāminah,* 2:391; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk,* 2:1:365; 'Izz al-Dīn, *Al-Maqrīzī: Mu'arrikhan,* 25–27; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal,* 7:324.

[39]Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw',* 2:23, questions some of al-Maqrīzī's teachers.

his shaykhs is an impressive collection of thirty-nine names of scholars, some of whom, like the ascetic and *muḥaddith* al-'Imād al-Ḥanbalī, or al-Sirāj ibn al-Mulaqqin, or the chief judges al-Sirāj al-Balqīnī and al-Burhān ibn Jamā'ah, or the towering Ibn Khaldūn, were the leading figures of their profession.[40] Al-Maqrīzī became a regular at the circle of Ibn Khaldūn, who taught in Cairo after 1382. The passages directly copied from the master's dictation and the discussions he had with him or with others in his circle, dispersed throughout his oeuvre and bearing dates spanning more than ten years, show that he accompanied him for a long time and benefited from his knowledge on many topics.[41] His high esteem for his teacher and admiration for his ideas, especially those expounded in the *Muqaddimah,* come across very clearly in the extensive biography he wrote of Ibn Khaldūn in the still-unpublished section of his biographical dictionary *Durar*.[42]

The influence of Ibn Khaldūn's interpretive framework is evident in a number of short thematic books by al-Maqrīzī, such as his treatise on the calamity of the early fifteenth century, *Ighāthat al-Ummah bi-Kashf al-Ghummah,* and his analysis of the rivalry between the Umayyads and the Abbasids, *Al-Nizā' wa-al-Takhāṣum fimā bayna Banī Umayyah wa-Banī Hāshim.* But it is most clearly apparent in the structure and aim of the *Khiṭaṭ*. The overarching cycle of the rise and fall of dynasties that formed the basis of Ibn Khaldūn's hermeneutical framework in explaining historical process seems to have informed al-Maqrīzī's thinking and structuring of his *Khiṭaṭ,* albeit in a roundabout way.[43] He seems to have subsumed the Khaldunian structure as a way of classifying and understanding the vast amount of historical, topographic, and architectural material he collected over the years.[44]

A QUESTION OF MADHHAB? Several years after his father's death, al-Maqrīzī decided in 786/1384 to switch to the Shafi'i *madhhab* and to abandon the Hanbali *madhhab* of his forefathers or the Hanafi one of his maternal grandfather in which

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[40]For the full roster see 'Izz al-Dīn, *Al-Maqrīzī wa-Kitābuhu "Durar al-'Uqūd al-Farīdah,"* 1:20–28; idem, *Al-Maqrīzī: Mu'arrikhan,* 34–42.

[41]Al-Maqrīzī, *Durar,* 1:143, 152, 2:63, 193; idem, *Khiṭaṭ,* 1:50, 2:76.

[42]The biography, which is not included in the recently published portion of the book, was published by Maḥmūd al-Jalīlī, "Tarjamat Ibn Khaldūn lil-Maqrīzī," *Majallat al-Majma' al-'Ilmī al-'Irāqī* 13 (1965): 215–42.

[43]See Ziyādah, "Tārīkh Ḥayāt al-Maqrīzī," 13–22. See also Adel Allouche, *Mamluk Economics: A Study and Translation of al-Maqrīzī's Ighāthat al-Ummah bi-Kashf al-Ghummah* (Salt Lake City, 1994), 4–7.

[44]I have found only one explicit reference to Ibn Khaldūn's historical theory in al-Maqrīzī's *Khiṭaṭ* (2:190), which actually suggests that he was thoroughly familiar with the *Muqaddimah.* Another mention in al-Maqrīzī's biography of Ibn Khaldūn straightforwardly states that the *Muqaddimah* "unveils the cause of events and informs on the essence of things," al-Jalīlī, "Tarjamat Ibn Khaldūn," 235.

he had been instructed. This decision, though not unusual in itself, could not have been casual either. It may be interpreted in two ways, which are not necessarily mutually exclusive. It may be a sign of a self-righteous and individualistic personality in the making, perhaps even a bit rebellious against authority figures (father and/or grandfather), albeit meekly and after their passing. Changing his *madhhab* may have represented to al-Maqrīzī a rejection of his forebears′ teaching and authority, and therefore a liberating act on the way to self-fulfillment as an independently minded scholar. This is indeed the meaning that one can read from Ibn Ḥajar′s comment on al-Maqrīzī′s change of *madhhab*, that ″when he became aware and competent *(tayaqqaẓa wa-nabuha),* he switched to Shafi'ism.″[45] But the change could also be seen as a calculated move of a young and pragmatic scholar in his early twenties trying to establish a career in the Shafi'i-dominated scholarly milieu of Cairo.[46]

An intriguing detail mentioned by many of his biographers, however, favors the former interpretation: al-Maqrīzī was known later in life for his bias against, even antipathy toward, the Hanafis, ostensibly because of his unconfirmed leaning toward the by-then uncommon Zahiri *madhhab*.[47] The Zahiri *madhhab,* named after its founder′s insistence on admitting only the apparent *(ẓāhir)* meaning of the Quran and hadith, upheld a strict, literalist approach to interpretation and to legal speculation and opposed all other *madhāhib,* but especially the Malikis and Hanafis, on basic interpretive issues.[48] The *madhhab,* codified by the Andalusian polymath Ibn Ḥazm (994–1064), never attained the same kind of theological synthesis achieved by other Sunni *madhāhib*. Furthermore, it never took root in Egypt and Syria, although the enmity displayed by Mamluk ulama toward its adherents shows that the fundamentalist challenges it posed were still felt by the established theological and jurisprudential *madhāhib*.

Al-Maqrīzī himself does not mention his knowledge of or adherence to the Zahiri *madhhab,* although he seems to have been close to many Zahiris, or at least individuals who are identified in the Mamluk sources as Zahiris because of their bias toward the writing of Ibn Ḥazm.[49] Moreover, he is full of praise for them as

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[45]Ibn Ḥajar, *Al-Majma' al-Mu'assis,* 59.

[46]Sayyid, *Musawwadat,* ″Introduction,″ 39, favors this interpretation.

[47]Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal,* 1:396, where he says that there is nothing wrong in admiring the writing of Ibn Ḥazm; also ibid., 2:88, where he accuses his revered teacher al-Maqrīzī of favoring al-Burhān simply because he was a Zahiri.

[48]On Zahirism see ″al-Ẓāhiriyya,″ by R. Strothmann in *EI*[1], 8:1192–93; ″Dāwūd b. 'Alī b. Khālaf,″ by P. Voorhoeve in *EI*[2], 2:182–83; and ″Ibn Ḥazm,″ by R. Arnaldez in *EI*[2], 3:790–99.

[49]Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal,* 2:113, reports that al-Maqrīzī said of a Shihāb al-Dīn al-Ashmūnī al-Naḥawī (749/1348–809/1407), ″that he was a Zahiri then turned against them,″ and then al-Maqrīzī said ″I accompanied him for some years,″ implying that that was when al-Ashmūnī was still a

righteous individuals. He admires their fervent struggle for justice and truth, equanimity, self-restraint, and chastity, as is apparent from their biographical entries in his *Durar* and *Sulūk*.[50] These same qualities will be attached to al-Maqrīzī later in life after his withdrawal from the competition for public posts.

But what seems to have truly attracted him to Zahirism was not only the moral rectitude of its founders and followers, nor was it its theological puritanism, an intellectual stance that had lost most of its potency by the end of the fourteenth century.[51] It was probably what can nowadays be termed the ″militant″ spirit that some of its last organized groups deployed in the face of the religiously corrupt Mamluk regime. This spirit rose to the surface in the so-called ″Zahiri Revolt″ of 788/1386, an event that greatly impressed al-Maqrīzī, at least if we judge from the glowing image he paints in his *Durar* of its leader, the rather obscure Zahiri shaykh al-Burhān Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl (754/1353–808/1406).[52] Al-Burhān foolishly and tenaciously organized this doomed uprising against Sultan Barqūq and the Mamluks because they did not satisfy the strict Islamic prerequisites to rule: they were not descendants of Quraysh, the tribe of the Prophet, and they instituted some un-Islamic practices, chief among them the levying of tariffs *(mukūs)*. Al-Burhān seems to have had supporters among the Mamluk ruling class and the Arab Bedouins of Syria as well. But the uprising failed nonetheless; many of its organizers were caught, tortured, imprisoned, and their lives ruined as a consequence. Al-Burhān, impoverished and emotionally broken in al-Maqrīzī′s words, maintained his integrity throughout his imprisonment and questioning by the sultan and after his release to a life of obscurity until his death.

Zahiri; see al-Maqrīzī, *Durar*, 2:174; 'Izz al-Dīn, *Al-Maqrīzī wa-Kitābuhu "Durar al-'Uqūd al-Farīdah,"* 2:431.

[50]Cf. al-Maqrīzī, *Durar*, 1:191, 203; 'Izz al-Dīn, *Al-Maqrīzī wa-Kitābuhu "Durar al-'Uqūd al-Farīdah,"* 1:204–205 for the biographies of his teacher al-'Imād al-Ḥanbalī, and the *sharīf* and *muḥaddith* Abū Bakr al-Hāshimī; idem, *Sulūk,* 4:2:761, in the biographical notice on Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Bashtākī (d. 830/1427), who was a follower of Ibn Ḥazm′s *madhhab,* al-Maqrīzī says, ″I have been chagrined by his loss, he has left no one like him.″ Al-Maqrīzī admired moral rectitude wherever he encountered it; see for instance his report in *Khiṭaṭ,* 2:279–80, where he praises the steadfastness of the Shafi'i judge al-Mināwwī, who betrays Zahiri leanings in his discourse, in upholding what he considers right.

[51]See the discussion on the confusion about Zahirism in Mamluk sources in Lutz Wiederhold, ″Legal-Religious Elite, Temporal Authority, and the Caliphate in Mamluk Society: Conclusions Drawn from the Examination of a Zahiri Revolt in Damascus,″ *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 31 (May 1999): 203–35, esp. 204–6.

[52]Al-Maqrīzī, *Durar,* 2:44–55; 'Izz al-Dīn, *Al-Maqrīzī wa-Kitābuhu "Durar al-'Uqūd al-Farīdah,"* 2:342–47. Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk,* 3:2:554, offers a compact report on the revolt and in *Sulūk,* 4:1:23, produces a brief obituary of al-Burhān which carries the same positive assessment.

Al-Maqrīzī´s impassioned and detailed description of the ″Zahiri″ revolt substantially differs from other Mamluk historians´ reports.[53] His is the only one that goes deep into the theological roots of the revolt to justify it rather than just passing them over to speak of the intrigues that led to its failure as does Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, the other main source for the revolt. Al-Maqrīzī seems to have heard the full story from al-Burhān himself, for he speaks of a very intimate relationship with the man and his family and of many sessions spent studying with him. In a cryptic sentence at the end of his entry, al-Maqrīzī calls al-Burhān one of three men by whom God has benefited him, and states that he hoped to gain *barakah (*grace) from that benefit. This sentence may be pointing toward a disciple/master relationship in a sufi sense, that is, al-Burhān leading al-Maqrīzī on the way of true knowledge. But it is probably more an admission that al-Burhān, along with two unnamed individuals, offered al-Maqrīzī a model which he consciously was trying to follow in his own life. His reported leaning towards the Zahiris, and al-Burhān in particular, may thus have been motivated by his respect for their fortitude as committed individuals and his approval of their firm opposition to the Mamluks on religious ground rather than his adherence to their religious interpretations.

Another possible explanation for al-Maqrīzī´s passionate support of the ″Zahiri″ revolt may be found in his complex set of religious beliefs, which, though not uncommon at the time, may appear a bit paradoxical to our modern eyes accustomed to a visible Sunni-Shi'i sectarian division. As illustrated by his acceptance of the imamate of the Fatimids because they were the progeny of the Prophet, al-Maqrīzī, the pious and strict Sunni alim, seems nonetheless to have harbored 'Alid sympathies throughout his life. What his defense of the Fatimids hints at comes across more clearly in other tractates focusing on the *Āl al-Bayt* (the family of the Prophet), especially his *Al-Nizā' wa-al-Takhāṣum fimā bayna Banī Umayyah wa-Banī Hāshim* (Book of contention and strife concerning the relations between the Umayyads and the Hashimites).[54] In this undated short work, which seems to belong to his

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[53]For other historians´ reports see Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal, 2*:87–89, who says that al-Maqrīzī exaggerated in his praise of al-Burhān because he was a Zahiri; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā', 2*:232–34; idem, *Al-Majma' al-Mu'assis,* 3:73–75; al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw', 2*:96–98; a reconstruction of the revolt based mostly on Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah,* ed. 'Adnān Darwīsh (Damascus, 1977), 1:89–91, 186–89, 269, is Wiederhold, ″Zahiri Revolt,″ 209–16. It is revealing that al-Maqrīzī, unlike Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, never uses the word *fitnah* (sedition) in his description.

[54]First edited and translated in 1888 as al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Nizā' wa-al-Takhāṣum fīmā bayna Banī Umayyah wa-Banī Hāshim: Kampfe und Streitigkeiten zwischen den Banu Umajja und den Banu Hasim; eine Abhandlung von Takijj ad-Din al-Makrizijj,* ed. Geerhardus Vos (Vienna and Strasbourg, 1888). Several Arabic re-editions followed but they did not add much. For an English translation and commentary, see *Al-Maqrīzī´s ´Book of Contention and Strife Concerning the*

early career, al-Maqrīzī was trying to make metahistorical sense of the apparent failure of the ʻAlids, the Banī Ḥāshim of his title, to keep what was their divinely-ordained birthright, namely the caliphate. After analyzing the circumstances of the conflict between the Umayyads and the Hashimites (both Abbasids and ʻAlids), he comes down squarely on the side of the ʻAlids. He assumes the same stance in other similar treatises where the ʻAlids are unambiguously identified as the God-appointed rulers and guides of the Islamic community.[55]

But it is quite revealing that neither his explicit ʻAlid leanings nor his excited verbal empathy with the Zahiri revolt prevented al-Maqrīzī from pursuing his career in the religious and administrative branches of the Mamluk regime. This has never been picked up on by his biographers, simply because his collaboration with and seeking patronage within the Mamluk system, though only up to his middle age, were very ordinary at the time. Almost every other scholar eagerly pursued Mamluk patronage, despite the collectively-held intellectual and religious resentment of the mamluks themselves.[56] What distinguishes al-Maqrīzī from the average Sunni alim of his ilk is his anxious and manifest sympathy for militant movements, such as the ʻAlid cause and the Zahiri revolt, aimed at redressing the wrong they perceived at the top of the ruling system in the Islamic world. Never mind that both causes were ultimately doomed to failure. What matters is that al-Maqrīzī, in his reporting and his analysis, displayed an honest sense of justice and objection to deviation from the proper Islamic way as he saw it.

WITHDRAWAL: Al-Maqrīzī did not withdraw from the treacherous milieu of sultans and courtiers until midway in the reign of al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh (1412–21), although he manifested the first signs of weariness during the reign of Faraj ibn

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Relations between the Banū Umayya and the Banū Hāshim,′ ed. and trans. Clifford Edmund Bosworth (Manchester, 1983).

[55]On al-Maqrīzī′s pro-ʻAlid sympathy, see C. E. Bosworth, ″Al-Maqrīzī′s Epistle ′Concerning What Has Come Down to Us About the Banu Umayya and the Banu l-ʻAbbas,′″ in *Studia Arabica and Islamica: Festschrift for Ihsan ʻAbbas*, ed. Wadad Kadi (Beirut, 1981), 39–45; idem, ″Al-Maqrīzī′s Exposition of the Formative Period in Islamic History and its Cosmic Significance: The *Kitāb al-Nizāʻ wa-al-Takhāṣum,*″ in *Islam: Past Influence and Present Challenge: In Honour of William Montgomery Watt,* ed. A. T. Welsh and P. Cachia (Edinburgh, 1979), 93–104. Reprinted in idem, *Medieval Arabic Culture and Administration* (London, 1982) as no. IX and XI respectively.

[56]On the subject of the ulama′s relationship with the mamluks see the two pioneering articles by Ulrich Haarmann, ″Arabic in Speech, Turkish in Lineage: Mamluks and their Sons in the Intellectual Life of Fourteenth-Century Egypt and Syria,″ *Journal of Semitic Studies* 33 (1988): 81–114; idem, ″Rather the Injustice of the Turks than the Righteousness of the Arabs—Changing ʻUlama' Attitudes Towards Mamluk Rule in the Late Fifteenth Century,″ *Studia Islamica* 68 (1989): 61–79. Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus*, 37–54, 57–113, discusses the development of these practices among the ulama as a class in thirteenth to fourteenth-century Damascus.

Barqūq when he turned down the coveted *manṣib* of the Shafi'i chief judge of Damascus which was offered to him more than once around the year 1410.[57] His refusal must be ascribed to the traditional pious alim's fear of inadvertently committing injustice while holding the position of judge, a fear that al-Maqrīzī explicitly exhibits when he singles out accepting the judgeship of the Hanbalis as the only sin of his friend and patron al-Muḥibb ibn Naṣr Allāh.[58] But this was not the only sign of the shift in his thinking. A passage in his *Durar* reveals his leaning toward *zuhd,* the "mild asceticism" professed by a number of ulama in the medieval period.[59] Al-Maqrīzī says that he tried to convince a judge and colleague in Damascus to "quit seeking favors of the amirs if he is really sincere about his renunciation of worldly gains."[60] The passage carries a tone of self-reflection that may indicate that al-Maqrīzī himself was going through that transformation at the time.

Al-Maqrīzī was gradually withdrawing from public life when he was suddenly jolted by the dismissal and then brutal killing of his last confirmed patron, Fatḥ Allāh the *kātib al-sirr,* which took place after a painful six-month imprisonment (Shawwāl 815–Rabī' al-Awwal 816/January–June 1413), in the first year of al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh's reign. This cold-blooded crime was not so unusual for the time, but it must have been especially painful for al-Maqrīzī because Fatḥ Allāh was both a dependable and resourceful patron and a faithful friend for more than twenty years.[61] It also deepened his disgust and despair.

This feeling of despondency is amply displayed in the introduction to the history of the Ayyubids and Mamluks, *Al-Sulūk li-Ma'rifat Duwal al-Mulūk,* which suggests that al-Maqrīzī started this book around that desperate moment in his life when he was still wavering between self-imposed isolation and another attempt at court life. On the first page of the autograph manuscript of the *Sulūk*, al-Maqrīzī unambiguously in two inscriptions poured out his heart to his reader. The first passage, which is written below the title, seems to be directed to himself as an incantation. It says:

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[57]Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal,* 1:396; al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw',* 2:22.

[58]Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk,* 4:3:1232.

[59]Hurvitz, "Biographies and Mild Asceticism," 48–52; L. Kinberg, "What is Meant by Zuhd?" *Studia Islamica* 61 (1985): 27.

[60]Al-Maqrīzī, *Durar,* 2:60. This may be contrasted with what Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm,* 15:189, says about his master's forced withdrawal from court. The truth is probably a combination of both impulses.

[61]Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk,* 4:1:242, 248, 252, 256, 259, records in detail the ordeal of his patron, and 4:2:1012, recalls his great achievements thirty years after his killing. Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā',* 7:104, 137–39.

> May God save you from requesting the reimbursement for a good deed you have rendered and a payment for a favor you have offered, and may He not abase your hand below that for whom it was above, and may He protect you from a passing glory and an exigent living. May God keep you alive as long as life is beautiful by your presence and may He take you if death was better for you, after a long life and high eminence. May he close your deeds with kindness and allow you to reach in this life your hopes and guide your unsteady way, and may He rectify your predicament in the hereafter. He is the All-hearing, the Magnanimous, and the Granter [of wishes].[62]

This invocation is key to deciphering al-Maqrīzī´s psychological state at that late, and probably low, point in his life. It conveys contradictory feelings: hope and despair, pride and dejection, love of life and an admission of the inevitability of death. These feelings reflect the situation in which al-Maqrīzī found himself during and immediately after the reign of al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh: banished from court, lonely after the death of Sūl, his beloved concubine, in 1421 and Fāṭimah, the last of his children, in 1423, yet still full of self-esteem and the will to contribute to public life.

At the bottom of the same cover page, there is another passage in al-Maqrīzī´s hand written longitudinally in the middle of the page between two other unrelated informational passages. This short passage must have been added at a later date, not only because of its odd position on the page, but also because of the strong feeling of resignation it bespeaks. In it, al-Maqrīzī declares

> I have been afflicted with such bad fortune, that whenever it goes up, it immediately comes down, and whenever it stands up, it inevitably falls down, and whenever it goes straight, it surely bows down again, and whenever it runs smoothly, it at once encounters obstacles, and whenever it becomes alert, it soon sleeps again. . . .
> [Then follows two verses]
> By your life, I do not lack a banner of glory
> Nor did the horse tire of competing
> Instead, I am afflicted with bad fortune
> Just like a beautiful woman is inflicted with divorce

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[62] Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk,* 1:1:3 and facing page for a photographic reproduction of the autograph manuscript´s cover page (Istanbul, Yeni Cami, # 887).

Here we find the extreme expression of melancholy that must have overtaken al-Maqrīzī after he realized the futility of his repeated attempts to gain the sultan´s favor. He thus reverts to his belief in the supernatural to explain his failure. The insertion of the *dūbayt* at the end, however, attests that the man did not lose his self-esteem: he still thinks of himself as able and worthy. He only resigns himself to his fate to concentrate fully on his scholarly and ascetic pursuits. To that point in time should be dated his final retreat to his family home in Ḥārat al-Barjawān. He was to spend the rest of his life studying, writing, and teaching in almost total seclusion, except for rare visits with his fellow ulama and students and for an unknown number of pilgrimages and *mujāwarāt* in Mecca between 1430 and 1435.[63] He wrote his *Khiṭaṭ* book and completed most of his long historical treatises during these thirty-plus years, but we have no fixed dates for any of them. The *Khiṭaṭ,* however, was the first book he tackled. As such, it was closely connected with this defining period in his life with its intense and painful soul-searching and reckoning. It marked his transformation from a client to one or the other among the Mamluk grandees, to an independent, even aloof, scholar and historian and a pessimistic observer recognizing the corrupt structure of power and chiding its perpetrators. These strong yet ultimately desperate feelings of disillusionment inevitably seeped into the structure and tone of the *Khiṭaṭ* and the *Sulūk*.

DEATH: Al-Maqrīzī died in Ramaḍān 845/January–February 1442 after a protracted but unnamed illness. His biographers dispute the exact date of his death, and none of them managed to record the correct day of the week on which he died.[64] This is further evidence of his relative isolation from his scholarly milieu at the end of his life. His biographers might not have learned of his death until some time after it occurred, or they might not have bothered to check the correct date, as Ibn Taghrībirdī pungently suggests al-'Aynī did not. Al-Maqrīzī was buried without any elaborate funeral in the Sufi Baybarsīyah cemetery outside the Bāb al-Naṣr north of Cairo, which was the final resting place of many ulama

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[63]Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal,* 1:397, al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw',* 2:24, mention only a *mujāwarah;* al-Jawharī al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat,* 3:219, 367, quotes al-Maqrīzī in the years 834/1431 and 840/1437 respectively as having been in the hajj; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm,* 14:355, quotes him in 835/1432, which may mean that he stayed in Mecca for a whole year.

[64]Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā',* 9:172, places it on Thursday 26 of Ramaḍān (correct day is Wednesday); Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm,* 15:490, and *Manhal,* 1:399; al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw',* 2:25, put it on Thursday 16 Ramaḍān (correct day is Sunday), whereas al-'Aynī, *'Iqd,* 547, carelessly—as noted by Ibn Taghrībirdī—put it on Thursday 29 Sha'bān, although he was at least correct in the day of the week. Al-Jawharī al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat,* 4:343–44, reports Ibn Ḥajar´s and al-Aynī´s dates, but favors Ibn Ḥajar´s in accordance with his master, Ibn Taghrībirdī, whom he later on will denigrate, although Ibn Taghrībirdī´s date is different from Ibn Ḥajar´s.

of the period, including Ibn Khaldūn.[65] The anonymity of al-Maqrīzī′s burial place is an indication of his *zuhd* (asceticism), since he does not seem to have provided a specific place for his interment as was the habit of distinguished ulama in medieval Egypt. The simplicity of his entombment becomes even more poignant when it is contrasted with the pomp of that of his old competitor al-'Aynī, who had built himself a sumptuous funerary *qubbah* in his madrasah adjacent to al-Azhar. The *qubbah* was embellished by a gilded dome ordered specially by Sultan al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh as a sign of favoritism, when the same sultan seems to have shunned al-Maqrīzī throughout his reign.[66]

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[65]Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm,* 10:336, no. 1; al-Jalīlī, ″Tarjamat Ibn Khaldūn,″ 230; al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw',* 10:146.

[66]Laila Ibrahim and Bernard O′Kane, ″The Madrasa of Badr al-Dīn al-'Aynī and its Tiled Mihrab,″ *Annales Islamologiques* 24 (1988): 253–68, esp. 267; 'Alī Bāshā Mubārak, *Al-Khiṭaṭ al-Tawfīqīyah al-Jadīdah* (Būlāq, 1888–89), 6:10. Al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh seems to have provided some endowment in his *waqf* for the madrasah of al-'Aynī; see al-'Aynī, *'Iqd,* 110 (*Awqāf* 938q: *Waqf* of Sultan al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh, dated 12 Rajab 823/1420, lines 331–41).