



On Generosity

The
Ḥilyat al-kuramā'
of Ibn Abī al-ʿĪd

Introduced, edited, and translated by
Antonella Ghersetti

Resources in Arabic and Islamic Studies

ON GENEROSITY

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Number 13

On Generosity: The *Ḥilyat al-kuramā'* of Ibn Abī al-ʿĪd

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ANTONELLA GHERSETTI

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Series Editors' Preface

In over a hundred twenty-five articles, monographs, edited collections, editions, and translations, in Italian, French, and English, in her countless presentations at universities and conferences the world over, and through her forward-looking editorship of *Quaderni di Studi Arabi*, Professor Antonella Ghersetti has been at the forefront of the study of medieval Arabic literature. Her consideration of physiognomy (*firāsa*) when thinking about *adab* in all its significations is but one example of her pioneering scholarship. Indeed, she has broadened and deepened our understanding of *adab*, both as a concept and as a corpus. She explored the concept of *adab* with great finesse in her study, *La letteratura d'adab* (Rome, Istituto per l'Oriente C. A. Nallino, 2021), and, together with Mirella Cassarino, Letizia Osti, and Samuela Pagani, displayed the richness of the *adab* corpus, in the masterful and magnificently curated collection of translated selections, *Antologia della letteratura araba. Dalle origini al XVIII secolo* (Rome: Carocci, 2024).

We are honored, therefore—and delighted—that she has chosen to publish in our series her meticulous edition and translation of Ibn Abī l-ʿĪd's *Ḥilyat al-kuramāʾ*, an anthology devoted to the subject of generosity. Al-Saḥāwī describes his colleague Ibn Abī l-ʿĪd as an accomplished scholar and a person of integrity, modesty, generosity, and warmth; there could be no better description of our own friend and colleague, Antonella Ghersetti.

Joseph E. Lowry
Devin J. Stewart
Shawkat M. Toorawa

Acknowledgments

The project of working on this book started several years ago when I was on research leave in Liège. There, thanks to Frédéric Bauden, who was preparing the handlist of the Arabic, Persian, and Turkish manuscripts in the University Library, I first became acquainted with a work titled *Ḥilyat al-kuramā' wa-bahğat al-nudamā'*. Though very promising, it was completely unknown to me. The fact that it seemed to represent an interesting specimen of a typical monothematic *adab* anthology, and that it was still unpublished, seemed a good reason for me to embark on further research. The copy preserved in the library of the University Library in Liège, as I discovered later, was not the only extant one, and the authorship of the work presented an ambiguity deserving inquiry. While I was trying to locate all the extant copies of the work and obtain microfilms, I started investigating the issue of authorship. I presented the first results of my research—the identification of the author, whose renown was far from widespread, and a sketch of his biography—at the “16th Colloquium on the History of Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras (10th–15th Centuries),” held at the University of Ghent in 2007. My textual journey with the *Ḥilyat al-kuramā'* dates from then and lasted longer than I would have wished. The time necessary to obtain all the copies that I needed as well as the difficulty of dealing in a reasonable way with the large spectrum of textual variants that characterizes the different manuscripts both in terms of content and wording obliged me to slow down the work.

The preparation of this book has greatly benefited from the generous hospitality of two institutions. The first is the Regenstein Library of the University of Chicago where, during the summers of 2013 and 2016, I spent months digging into one of the richest collections of Arabic sources available to scholars. The friendly assistance of Marlis Saleh, responsible for the library collections in Middle Eastern Studies, was instrumental for my research: to her goes all my gratitude. The second is the Annemarie Schimmel Kolleg “History and Society during the Mamluk Era (1250-1517),” Centre for Advanced Studies, University of Bonn, that for the first six months of 2019 offered me an extremely favorable environment to finalize my work, supported by a lively exchange of ideas and discussions. I thank its scientific coordinator, Abdelkader Al Ghouz and all the staff for their friendly support.

A book is often a collective enterprise, in that scholars seldom work alone and in isolation from a wider scholarly context. This book is no exception, and during its preparation, I was able to rely on the support and counsel of colleagues and the help of friends.

I therefore wish to thank the colleagues who gave me advice, offered precious remarks, or shared with me the materials they are working on. I express my deep gratitude to Mr. Ahmed Abbaoui (Paris) who kindly helped me obtain a copy of the two manuscripts in the Adab Taymūr collection at Dār al-Kutub in Cairo. Oriana Capezio's deep knowledge of prosody has been precious when dealing with the meters of poems in some tricky cases, and I cannot thank her enough for her patience. A warm thanks also goes to Paulina Lewicka, who graciously shared with me some folios of *Taḍkirat ulī l-albāb bi-maʿrifat al-ādāb* by al-Munāwī, an author of the early Ottoman period, which contains passages quoted in the *Ḥilyat al-kuramāʾ*. I am also indebted to Daniela Meneghini who helped me in tackling the passages on Persian kings and the narratives of Persian origin. I would also like to express my thankfulness to the editors of the series Resources in Arabic and Islamic Studies, Joseph E. Lowry, Devin J. Stewart, and Shawkat M. Toorawa, for having accepted this book in their collection. I am deeply indebted to Shawkat M. Toorawa, the most accurate and reliable book editor an author could hope for. His help has been invaluable in making the English translation much more readable and elegant, and in pointing out translation errors or alternative readings in the edition of the Arabic text.

I must single out my husband, Frédéric Bauden, not only because he drew my attention to the *Ḥilyat al-kuramāʾ*, but also because he steadily supported me in my project even when it seemed to slow down, or even came to a halt. For this, and for his constant support over time, I cannot thank him enough. Needless to say, the responsibility for any mistakes remains mine alone.

SIGLA

I refer to manuscripts consulted or referred to in two ways: the letter of the Latin alphabet refers to the introduction; the letter of the Arabic alphabet refers to the Arabic edition and to the comparative charts in the introduction.

A / ز	Algiers, Bibliothèque nationale d'Algérie, MS 1880
C1 / ت ١	Cairo, Dār al-Kutub, MS Adab Taymūr 927
C2 / ت ٢	Cairo, Dār al-Kutub, MS Adab Taymūr 175
C3 / ا	Cairo, Maktabat al-Azhar, MS Abāza 7034
D	Bibliothèque Dahdah, MS 260
G / غ	Götha, Forschungs- und Landesbibliothek, MS Möll. 943
L / ل	Liège, Université de Liège, Bibliothèque ALPHA, MS 5300
Pa / ب	Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS ar. 3576
Pr1 / ج	Princeton, University Library, MS Garrett 157 H
Pr2 / ي	Princeton, University Library, MS Yahuda 847
T	Tamegroute, Dār al-Kutub al-Nāṣiriyya, MS 874

Introduction

1. The Author

The identity of the author of *Ḥilyat al-kuramā' wa-bahğat al-nudamā'*¹ (roughly “The ornament of generous people and the joy of boon companions”) has recently been confirmed as Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Mūsā ibn Abī Bakr ibn Abī al-ʿĪd, Šams al-Dīn Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Saḥāwī, later al-Qāhirī al-Mālikī,² also known as Ibn al-Qaṣabī, al-Saḥāwī, and earlier as Ibn Abī al-ʿĪd, qadi and resident of Ṭayba, “The Perfumed,” an epithet of the town of Medina.

Bio-bibliographical details on the author are scant, and sometimes contradictory. Modern reference works do not provide extended biographies, nor do they give a detailed account of the life and works of this author. He is not included in the biographical dictionary of al-Ziriklī; Kaḥḥāla, on the basis of *Nayl al-ibtihāğ* of Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbukti (d. 1036/1627),³ states that Ibn Abī al-ʿĪd al-Saḥāwī was qadi of Medina “for thirty years” and that he died in 913/1507.⁴ The biographical dictionary on Mālikī jurists of Muḥammad Maḥlūf, *Šağarat al-nūr al-zakiyya fī ṭabaqāt al-mālikiyya*, has a more detailed entry on him in the chapter of the 18th generation, in the section on the Hejaz: we are informed that Ibn Abī al-ʿĪd al-Saḥāwī remained in Medina for fifty years, and some of his masters and disciples (among whom Ġalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī) are listed. The date of his death is given as 880/1475. He is described, among others, as *mutafannin* (versatile), which suggests that he was gifted as an author in diverse fields, besides jurisprudence.⁵ This entry is seemingly based on the works of Aḥmad Bābā (quoted below), but there must have been a misunderstanding concerning the date of death. Aḥmad Bābā’s short entry on Ibn Abī al-ʿĪd al-Saḥāwī appears in his major work, the biographical dictionary of Mālikī jurists *Nayl al-ibtihāğ*, and its abridgment *Kifāyat al-muḥtāğ*, both composed during his stay in Morocco, where he states that Ibn Abī al-ʿĪd was qadi in Medina for fifty years and that he died after 880/1475. As we will see, he was judge for thirty, not fifty, from 860/1455 to 892/1486. Aḥmad Bābā also quotes al-Suyūṭī who depicts our author as prolific, even if not necessarily in the field of literary prose.⁶

1. GAL (S 2, p. 905, 2, 3; p. 909, 44) mentions this title for two different authors.

2. Ghersetti, “An Unpublished Anthology”; the following bio-bibliographical sketch is an expanded version of my article. I thank the editor of *Mamlūk Studies Review* for granting me permission to reproduce large parts of the text.

3. On him see Hunwick, “Aḥmad Bābā.”

4. Kaḥḥāla, *Muʿallifin*, vol. 3, p. 111, entry no. 12057.

5. Maḥlūf, *Šağarat al-nūr al-zakiyya fī ṭabaqāt al-mālikiyya*, vol. 1, p. 368, entry no. 953: here he is described as “*al-imām al-faḥīh al-fāḍil al-qāḍī al-ʿādil al-mutafannin al-kāmil*.”

6. “*Qāla al-Suyūṭī: lahu naẓm kaṭīr*”: Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbukti, *Nayl al-ibtihāğ*, p. 559, entry no. 687; idem,

For more light on the life and portrait of the author of *Ḥilyat al-kuramāʾ* it is necessary to look into the works of a much better-known al-Saḥāwī, the historian Šams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān (d. 902/1497). Both his *al-Ḍawʾ al-lāmiʿ li-ahl al-qarn al-tāsiʿ* and *al-Tuḥfa al-laṭifa fi tāriḥ al-Madīna al-šarīfa* include entries on our author, the second one more detailed than the first.⁷ What follows is based on the information in them.

Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Mūsā al-Saḥāwī was born in Saḥā, in the Nile Delta, in 819/1416–17. After studies in his native town, in 831/1427 he went to Cairo, where he stayed for more than seven years, attending the lectures of famous teachers. It was a period of relative stability in Cairo, after the “political, economic, and social turmoil” of the early years of the century, that made life “difficult for the whole population,” causing the death of most of the needy and the poor.⁸ After performing the pilgrimage in 840/1436, he returned to his native town, where he stayed until 859/1454. That year, he went to Cairo for the second time, after a second period of crisis due to inflation.⁹ The repeated crises and ensuing difficult social situation must have deeply affected him, as an individual and as a sufi. The repeated invitation to help the needy and to feed the poor in *Ḥilyat al-kuramāʾ*, a moral imperative spread by the sufi orders, can also be seen as a means to fill the gap created by the lack of an institutional response to the famine and social crises starving so many people.¹⁰ Back in Cairo, he dedicated himself to the study of law under the guidance of the representatives of the four legal schools, first alone and then with his son. Prior to his appointment as judge in Medina, he earned his living as a notary and deputy judge. The biographies report that he was also made a living as a panegyrist, which brought him wide renown. Thanks to some influential acquaintances, he was eventually qadi of Medina in 860/1455, hence the *nisba* al-Madanī.¹¹ We also learn that he carried out his duties with the utmost dignity and showed every virtue, much to his subjects’ satisfaction. He also acquired a great deal of power. After more than three decades he suffered a stroke which led to partial paralysis. Due to the progressive decline in his health, in 892/1486 he was succeeded by one of his two sons, Ḥayr al-Dīn Muḥammad,¹² who, the sources tell us, was even wiser and more virtuous than his father. Ibn Abī al-ʿĪd al-Saḥāwī died on 5 Muḥarram 895/29 November 1489.

Kifāyat al-muḥtāǧ, vol. 2, p. 195, entry no. 600. Unfortunately, I have not been able to locate the quotation from al-Suyūṭī.

7. Al-Saḥāwī, *al-Ḍawʾ al-lāmiʿ*, vol. 7, p. 110, entry no. 243; and idem, *al-Tuḥfa al-laṭifa*, vol. 3, p. 508, entry no. 3647.

8. Sabra, *Poverty and Charity*, p. 124.

9. On the crisis of 853–856/1449–1452 see Sabra, *Poverty and Charity*, pp. 158, 161 and passim. On social consequences of the crisis, see e.g., pp. 142–43, 168, 171.

10. Sabra, *Poverty and Charity* repeatedly stresses the private, informal character of almsgiving and the lack of systematic and institutionalized almsgiving, including the distribution of food, from the Mamluk sultans (see, e.g., pp. 171, 174, 176 and passim).

11. Mentioned by al-Saḥāwī, *al-Tuḥfa al-laṭifa*, vol. 3, p. 508 (*tumma al-Madanī*).

12. Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Mūsā ibn Abī Bakr ibn Abī al-ʿĪd: on him see al-Saḥāwī, *al-Ḍawʾ al-lāmiʿ*, vol. 7, pp. 47–48, entry no. 124.

Muḥammad al-Saḥāwī, the author of *al-Ḍawʿ al-lāmiʿ*, reports that he was on several occasions in touch with Ibn Abī al-ʿĪd. He first met him at Ibn Ḥaḡar al-ʿAsqalānī's home (to whom he refers as *ṣayḥunā*, "our master"). He then met him again in Minā and went to visit him in Medina, where Ibn Abī al-ʿĪd, already afflicted by his infirmity, showed him hospitality. Al-Saḥāwī also informs us that they shared intellectual interests and exchanged poetry: on several occasions, al-Saḥāwī transmitted his poems to Ibn Abī al-ʿĪd and received his poems in return, which he copied in a quire (*kurrāsa*). Al-Saḥāwī does not mention the literary skills of our author in the field of prose. We therefore lack any references to the writing of literary anthologies or *adab* books. Al-Saḥāwī does speak well of both the prose and poetry composed by Ibn Abī al-ʿĪd's son Muḥammad. The anthology I present here is thus unaccounted for in the biographies of Ibn Abī al-ʿĪd.

The portrait sketched by al-Saḥāwī is overwhelmingly positive: he praises Ibn Abī al-ʿĪd's character highly, in particular his modesty, cheerfulness, integrity, and generosity. In this connection, he specifies that Ibn Abī al-ʿĪd gave a warm welcome to all who came to see him. He also showed great liberality towards all the poor who addressed him, providing them with food and other means of subsistence.¹³ These character traits, as well as his manners and behavior, are consistent with the subject of *Ḥilyat al-kuramāʾ*. In fact, a substantial part of the material in the anthology deals with hospitality and its duties, and the carrying out of charitable deeds is also stressed. One passage is especially revealing of the charitable attitude of Ibn Abī al-ʿĪd and speaks of his inclination to Sufism, if not of his open adherence to a Sufi confraternity.

At the end of the first chapter, dedicated to the concept of generosity and to the characteristics of generous men, the author mentions two of his masters and recalls their acts of charity, namely offering food to the needy.¹⁴ The two masters are Muḥammad ibn ʿUmar al-Ġamrī (d. 849/1445)¹⁵ and Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan al-Šādīlī al-Taymī (d. 847/1443).¹⁶ The pious words following their names in *Ḥilyat al-kuramāʾ* reveal the close master-disciple relationship, which also receives an external confirmation: according to al-Saḥāwī, these two sufis are among the saintly men (*sādāt*) Ibn Abī al-ʿĪd met in his life.¹⁷ Muḥammad ibn

13. Al-Saḥāwī, *al-Tuḥfa al-laṭīfa*, vol. 3, p. 510: *wa-rassā kaṭīran min al-qādimīn bi-simāʾ al-ḍuʿafāʾ bi-l-ṭaʿām wa-naḥwahu*.

14. On charity see Lev, *Charity, Endowments, and Charitable Institutions*; as underlined by Sabra, almsgiving in medieval Cairo was "a private affair," and sufi sources urged Muslims "to have mercy on their poor brethren," even dictating guidelines on almsgiving (Sabra, *Poverty and Charity*, p. 68). On the significance of *iṭʿām al-ṭaʿām*, both in theory and practice, and with special reference to sufi milieus in Morocco, see Rodriguez-Mañas, "Charity and Deceit," where *iṭʿām al-ṭaʿām* is defined as "perhaps, the most conspicuous 'service' rendered by zāwiyas" (p. 60), and "rather as an integral part of their order" (p. 61).

15. GAL S 2, p. 150, entry no. 15a; al-Ziriklī, *al-Aʿlām*, vol. 6, p. 315; Ibn Ḥaḡar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Inbāʾ al-ġumr*, vol. 4, p. 243; al-Saḥāwī, *Ḍawʿ*, vol. 7, pp. 238–240, no. 641; al-Šaʿrānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, vol. 2, pp. 80–81.

16. GAL S 2, p. 150, entry no. 17; al-Ziriklī, *al-Aʿlām*, vol. 6, p. 88; al-Šaʿrānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, vol. 2, p. 81.

17. Al-Saḥāwī, *al-Tuḥfa al-laṭīfa*, vol. 3, p. 510.

‘Umar al-Ġamrī lived a life of poverty among the poor (and was even reproached for this lifestyle by Ibn Ḥaġar, among others)¹⁸ and dedicated himself to the building and restoration of mosques. Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan al-Šādīlī al-Taymī, a Hanafi, was a member of the Šādīliyya confraternity and was known for some reports concerning him and the sultan Faraġ ibn Barqūq. Ibn Abī al-‘Īd’s tone when he describes these two confirms the influence they had on him; it also shows how deeply he was marked by their teachings and by the example they set when he met them during his stay in Cairo in his youth.

2. The Book

2.1. Composition and Circulation of the Text

As far as I know, the text of *Ḥilyat al-kuramā’ wa-bahġat al-nudamā’* has been preserved in eleven manuscripts, which points to its rather wide circulation. Out of these, three manuscripts of *Ḥilyat al-kuramā’* are closely related to the Maghrib, testifying that the work also circulated in the western part of the Muslim world: (1) A (the copy in *nash* nowadays preserved in Algiers) shows that the manuscript was copied in the East and then came to North Africa, most probably Morocco;¹⁹ (2) T, the copy in *maġribī* preserved in Tamegroute (Morocco) points to the fact that the work was copied in that region; (3) L, a summarized and interpolated version of the text acquired in Tunisia, and now preserved at the University Library of Liège (Belgium), is a hint at the reception and circulation of the text in the Maghrib.²⁰

T, the manuscript in *maġribī* script kept in Tamegroute, deserves further discussion: the Nāširiyya library of this village, where the manuscript is kept, “became the intellectual center of the larger Nāširī network of scholars, but also the center of a renewed, thriving book culture in the Northern Sahara.”²¹ The library of the *zāwiya* (founded in 983/1575) was mostly developed by Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad (1057–1129/1647–1717), who succeeded his father Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad (1015–1085/1606–1674), the founder of the Nāširiyya order. Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad, who made the pilgrimage four times and established branches of the order as far as Egypt,²² spent large sums of money buying books in Cairo, and obtained a license to transmit.²³ Both Muḥammad ibn al-Nāšir and his son Aḥmad, as well as their successors, worked hard to augment the

18. See Ibn Ḥaġar, *Inbā’ al-ġumr*, vol. 4, p. 243.

19. As indicated by the ownership marks (see below), which attest that it was among the belongings of a member of the ‘Alawid family reigning in Morocco.

20. See Bauden, *Catalogue*, p. 73.

21. Gutelius, David, “Sufi networks,” p. 22; on the library see Benjelloun-Laroui, *Les Bibliothèques*, pp. 280–285.

22. See Benjelloun-Laroui, “Ibn Nāšir,” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed. Also see Gutelius, “Between God and men,” pp. 73–83; Lévi Provençal, *Les Historiens*, pp. 291–292.

23. Benjelloun-Laroui, *Les Bibliothèques*, p. 281.

library with books they also acquired in the East. The Nāṣiriyya order is based on the teachings of al-Šāḍilī,²⁴ and we know that the author of *Ḥilyat al-kuramāʾ* was very close to two Šāḍilī masters, whom he mentions in the work. This allows us to put forward the hypothesis that this work circulated in Sufi milieus and probably arrived in the Maghrib through Sufi networks. I can thus hypothesize that a copy of *Ḥilyat al-kuramāʾ* was acquired in the East, probably in Egypt, and copied in Tamegroute by some member of the *zāwiya* (which also was an important atelier of copyists), where it has remained to this day. The fact that entries on Ibn Abī al-ʿĪd are also present in the works of Aḥmad Bābā, which are particularly informative about North African scholars, seems to suggest that he had some renown in the western part of the Muslim world; this might also help explain the presence of his anthology in that region.

The circulation of *Ḥilyat al-kuramāʾ* was, however, greater in the eastern part of the Muslim world, as proven by the fact that the majority of the manuscripts were copied in *nash* script. Of these copies, five are closely connected with Egypt, specifically Cairo: (1) Pa, copied in Cairo in 1169/1755; (2) G, bought in Cairo in 1807 by Seetzen; (3) C3, preserved in Maktabat al-Azhar; (4 and 5) C1 and C2, preserved in Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya. With no evidence about the dissemination of this text further east than Egypt, I infer that the book circulated mostly in the region of origin of its author, and that the text was penned in Egypt, probably in Cairo or in Saḥā, his native village, where he lived for nearly twenty years after his first stay in Cairo. On this basis, I can suggest a probable span of time for the composition of this work, which also seems to be corroborated by internal evidence, namely the mention of Ibn Abī al-ʿĪd's masters and the eulogies that follow their names. The expressions “*nafaʿanī*” (or, according to a different reading, *mattaʿanā*) *Allāhu bi-ḥayātihi* (or, according to a different reading, *nafaḥātihi*) *wa-aʿāda ʿalaynā min barakātihi*” and “*adāma Allāhu qaṣḍahu*” are used to refer to persons who are still alive. The writing of the *Ḥilyat al-kuramāʾ* would then have taken place shortly before the deaths of Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan al-Šāḍilī al-Taymī (d. 847/1443) and Muḥammad al-Ġamrī (d. 848/1444). As to a more precise date of composition, I would propose as *terminus ante quem* 847/1443, well before Ibn Abī al-ʿĪd's departure for Medina. The *Ḥilyat al-kuramāʾ* would thus be a work composed in the author's youth, before he turned to more serious compositions, such as the *Šarḥ al-Muḥtaṣar* mentioned by Kaḥḥāla.

2.2. Theme, Arrangement, and Contents

Karam (roughly translated as “generosity”), the theme of *Ḥilyat al-kuramāʾ*, has a long tradition going back to the beginnings of Arab-Islamic literature. Considered an exemplary Arab virtue, generosity was also relevant to the Muslim community. It was considered as an element of social cohesiveness, and a primary virtue for the believer: showing generosity by distributing alms to the poor was a way for the rich to show gratitude to God and

24. On the Šāḍilī order see Geoffroy, ed., *Une voie soufie dans le monde, la Shādhiliyya*.

a way for the ruling class to acquire merit in the “moral economy.”²⁵ As an Arab virtue, and a Muslim one too, generosity underwent what Guth has called an “aestheticization.” This added an aesthetic value to it as a “cultural institution,” which explains its success in literary output since pre-Islamic times.²⁶ As happens with other concepts, such as intelligence (*ḍakāʾ*), literary treatment is based on the representation of generous persons and their deeds more than on the treatment of the abstract concept. We can therefore speak of ‘adabization,’ ‘adabification,’ or ‘adabitation’ of the stories in which generosity is represented.²⁷ Generosity (*karam* and its synonyms, e.g., *ḡūd*²⁸) as well as its antonym, stinginess (*buhl* and related terms such as *luʾm* “meanness”), were part and parcel of the range of topics treated in canonical *adab* works, which is also demonstrated by the considerable list of titles mentioning terms related to this concept. Among the most popular books of Arabic literature dedicated to generosity are *al-Mustaḡād min faʿālāt al-aḡwād*, which has long been attributed to al-Muḥassin al-Tanūḥī (d. 384/994)²⁹ and *Ithāf al-nubalāʾ bi-aḥbār wa-ašʿār al-kuramāʾ wa-l-buḥalāʾ* of Yūsuf ibn Ḥasan Ibn al-Mibrad (d. 909/1503).³⁰ Numerous other works on the same theme, such as *Tasbīḥ al-ṭālibīn al-luṭafāʾ fi nawādir al-kuramāʾ wa-l-ḥulafāʾ*, preserved in the National Library of Paris (BNF ar. 3576), remain, as far as I know, unpublished. *Adab* encyclopedias also often include a chapter or a section on generosity, such as *al-ʿIqd al-farīd* by Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih (d. 328/940), *Nihāyat al-arab* by al-Nuwayrī (d. 733/1333), *Ṣubḥ al-aṣṣā* by al-Qalqaṣandī (d. 821/1418) and *al-Mustaṭraf fi kull fann mustaṭraf* by al-Ibshīhī (d. after 850/1446). Our anthology, *Ḥilyat al-kuramāʾ wa-baḡḡat al-udabāʾ*, is thus the heir of a long tradition, from the point of view both of theme and arrangement of the contents.

Following the established conventions of the anthologies of the period, *Ḥilyat al-kuramāʾ* is composed of miscellaneous materials, both in prose and poetry (Quranic verses, hadiths, verses of poetry, aphorisms, anecdotes, and stories) arranged in the hierarchical order usual in *adab* works: Quranic verses come first, followed by hadiths, pious

25. Francesca, “Generosity versus Avarice,” pp. 158, 159.

26. On this see Guth, “Aesthetics of Generosity”; on generosity (and avarice) in Islamic thought, with special reference to economic activity, see Francesca, “Generosity Versus Avarice,” esp. pp. 158–160.

27. On this see Guth, “Aesthetics of Generosity,” pp. 309–322.

28. Lexicographers expounded the concept of generosity and its synonyms and often attempted to explain the difference between different terms related to this concept (*karam*, *ḡūd*, *saḥāʾ* etc.); nevertheless, lexicographical differences seem to be irrelevant in paremiological literature, as noticed by Zakeri (*Persian Wisdom*, vol. 1, p. 290) or in *adab* literature, where terms seem to be interchangeable. For generosity and related concepts (including antonyms and “parent ethical concepts”) in an etymological perspective see Guth, “The Etymology of Generosity-Related Terms.”

29. On this see Krenkow, “al-Muḥassin at-Tanūḥī.”

30. A catalogue of the titles for the Abbasid period, with a brief introduction to the topic and a presentation of the lexical issues, is found in Zakeri, *Persian Wisdom*, vol. 1, pp. 285–291. For an overview of the theme of generosity in literature, with particular reference to al-Muḥassin al-Tanūḥī, see Khalifa, *Hardship and Deliverance*, pp. 155–227.

anecdotes, and worldly anecdotes or aphorisms. The *Ḥilyat al-kuramāʾ*³¹ is divided into six sections, an introduction and five chapters, as summarized below.

- Introduction: Intelligence, what constitutes it, and legal rulings enacted by it
- Chapter One: Generosity, its characteristics, and people who embody its traits
- Chapter Two: Undertaking to do good and providing assistance to the aggrieved
- Chapter Three: Stories of rulers of old and high officials
- Chapter Four: The conduct of women and men in any situation
- Chapter Five: Advice that benefits the intelligent and admonishes the heedless

The introduction is mostly made up of Quranic verses and hadiths, but also of short poems and anecdotal material concerning the creation of the intellect (*ʿaql*) and its substance. The division of the faculty of the intellect into that which originates from experience (*al-ʿaql al-taḡribī*) and that which is an innate faculty is also briefly sketched, along with a list of signs typical of the intelligent man. Intellect (*ʿaql*) is a subject often treated in Arabic anthologies and *adab* encyclopedias, especially in the introductions, and constitute a kind of standard opening for this type of text. Noticeable in our anthology is the absence of the lexicographical section so common in literary anthologies and monothematic *adab* works of earlier periods. These often open with a section identifying the theme of the literary composition (*karam* in our case) and related terms, where etymology, meaning and the use of each term are explained and discussed. Here we find no such lexicographical treatment of terms. The substantial presence of hadiths, the conceptual treatment of the subject in broad philosophical terms and the normative and dogmatic tone point to the ethical concerns and exhortative purposes that must have inspired the author to consign to the background any philological and literary concerns. This can no doubt be taken as a sign of the shift of interest from the aesthetic aspect of the anthologies to their practical function and content, and to the role played by the *ʿulamāʾ* in the intellectual life of the time.³¹ *Ḥilyat al-kuramāʾ* could be a typical case: the *forma mentis* of the qadi Ibn Abī al-ʿĪd was that of a man of law and a pious Muslim, and his concern was more for legal and ethical issues than for philological ones.

Chapter one, the longest, deals with generosity and its characteristics. It opens with hadiths in which the Prophet praises hospitality, urges the believers to share their food, and prescribes the rules concerning meals (*ādāb al-akl*). Hospitality and food are two themes so often associated with generosity and so profoundly intermingled that they constitute a kind of canonical thematic network.³² The concept of generosity is hinted at by the choice of the hadiths reported at the very beginning of the first chapter: to be

31. As Bauer underscores (“Literarische Anthologien,” esp. p. 79), the authors of Mamluk anthologies were first historians or jurists, and only secondly men of letters; in this sense, the *ʿulamāʾ* replaced the *kuttāb* of the Abbasid period.

32. The antonym of generosity, stinginess (*buhl*)—and related issues—a kind of specular complementary pillar of this thematic network, is treated further in this anthology.

generous means first of all to share food. Sharing meals seems also to be the essence of hospitality, which substantially consists of offering food and drink.³³ This triplet—generosity, food, and hospitality—can be found almost everywhere in the *Ḥilyat al-kuramāʾ* and much material in the anthology pivots around them. After a standard section comprising hadiths, the first chapter continues with anecdotes that feature high-ranking figures (e.g., Hārūn al-Rašīd, the Barmakids), scholars (e.g., al-Šāfiʿī, Anas ibn Mālīk), venerated personalities (e.g., Ḥasan, Ḥusayn, ʿAlī), but also some unknown individuals: all have in common exceeding generosity and liberality.

Chapter two, in which the theme of food continues to be present, focuses on the support due to those in need. Strangely, and not entirely in tune with the title, we also find a refined man (*ẓarīf*) presenting a list of epithets describing the shortcomings of a bad table companion. Though tangential to the main subject of the chapter, it is easily explained if we keep in mind the close association linking food and table manners,³⁴ and in a sense, table manners had already been hinted at in the hadith about *ādāb al-akl* in chapter one.³⁵ The list of epithets is followed by a section on stinginess (*buhl*), criticized as the worst vice, in accordance with the Arab view of ethical values. This part also contains, in hierarchical order, Quranic verses, hadiths, and anecdotes about stingy people, all criticizing selfish behavior. The section devoted to avarice serves as a transition to the following section, consisting in exhortations to feed the poor, supported by a series of exemplary stories, enhanced by the contrast with the preceding considerations about stinginess. Here, too, historical and high-ranking figures such as Muʿāwīya, ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr and al-Mahdī feature in the anecdotes, as do common folk.

Chapter three, on rulers of old and high officials, is quite interesting. Building on the assumption that men are remembered for their good deeds, the author states that if common people must practice virtue and avoid vice, rulers must do this all the more. Intelligent people must take the stories of just and generous kings as paragons of virtue and be guided by their good example. That is why the author gives a series of anecdotes about exemplary rulers. In the first part of the chapter, he also states that people owe obedience to the ruler (*al-sultān*) because his power comes from God, and reports some hadiths about the proper conduct of the powerful. The distinction between the just ruler (*al-sultān al-ʿādil*) and the unjust ruler (*al-sultān al-ẓālim*), whose kingdom is destined to perish, is also outlined. The rest of this chapter is rich in anecdotes, sometimes separated by a gnomic section, on historical personalities: Persian and Indian kings, and the Rightly Guided caliphs, Umayyad and Abbasid caliphs, such as ʿUmar ibn al-Ḥaṭṭāb, Muʿāwīya, Hārūn al-Rašīd, al-Manšūr, and al-Mahdī. The series of narratives concludes with a story about Alexander the Great. In this chapter, anecdotes with a strong historical flavor com-

33. On this concept and on the thematic network mentioned above see Ghersetti, “En quête de nourriture.”

34. On this see Cassarino, “Il cibo come cultura,” and the bibliography contained therein.

35. See e.g., the relevant chapter (*dīkr mā qīla fī l-akl wa-l-muʾākala*) in al-Nuwayrī’s *Nihāyat al-arab*, vol. 3, pp. 338–340.

ing from works of “high literature” feature side by side with stories of clearly folkloric origin, such as the story of the fisherman of the Banū Isrāʾīl.

Chapter four, on the conduct of women and men (without further elaboration), contains a fair number of anecdotes and many aphorisms, but no discursive material. Pride of place, in terms of quantity, is given to stories about poetry and music, wherein the main characters are caliphs or noblemen, together with singers or poets. People like ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Marwān, ʿAbd Allāh ibn Ǧaʿfar, Hārūn al-Rašīd, or al-Maʾmūn, and talented female singers, who often constitute the object of royal generosity, are to be found in the narratives. In accordance with this setting, the quantity of poetic verses is far more substantial here than in the rest of the anthology. Remarkable, given the context, and marked by a misogynistic tone, is the presence of a catalog of the defects commonly attributed to women. This is counterbalanced by the subsequent passage, where a smart woman (*imraʿa ʿāqila*) does not hesitate to draw up a list of men’s defects. Furthermore, to dispel any doubt about the gifts that distinguish cultivated ladies, the author adds a series of anecdotes about witty and eloquent women “whose mention cannot be omitted.” Curiously enough, in this chapter, emphasis seems to be placed more on eloquence and musical ability than on generosity, which often remains in the background.

Chapter five, ostensibly comprising advice, is relatively short, running only to between one and five folios in the manuscripts that include it (Pr1, G, Pa, C1, C2, A, and L, and four pages in the printed edition of Beirut). The exception is Pr2, where the chapter consists of 7 folios; this is probably the result of interpolation since the contents are completely different from those in the other copies. In the five manuscripts that fully agree on the contents (Pr1, G, Pa, C1 and C2), the chapter opens with some aphorisms on the most varied subjects, including women, but then suddenly lists the characteristics of certain animals. Considering that Pr1, G, Pa, C1 and C2 (all part of the same tradition) have an identical text for the last chapter and that Pr2, A, and L (forming a different tradition) have two completely different texts, I can suggest two hypotheses: (1) that the work was left uncompleted by his author and that the fifth chapter was only planned but not written down, inducing copyists to complete the work by themselves; or, more likely, (2) that the work was completed by the author but, at a certain moment of its textual history, a mutilated manuscript circulated and copyists tried to compensate for the missing material, thus creating an “alternative” version of the last chapter which remains preserved, in two different recensions, in Pr2, A, and L.

The narrative and gnomic units of *Ḥilyat al-kuramāʾ*, as is usual in *adab* anthologies, are grouped on the ground of affinity (or contrast) of contents and structure. Noteworthy, in this case, is the frequency of authorial interventions, i.e. notes revealing the author’s voice, that serve to clarify the affinity or relevance of the textual units or, in some cases, the differences in style and narrative effect. For instance, there are headings such as “*mā huwa fī al-maʿnā qarīban* [sic] *wa-aqwā himmatan wa-uslūban*” or “*ḥikāya tantāzim fī silkiḥā wa-tandamiḡ fī sabkiḥā*,” obviously inspired by the desire to stress the significance or to emphasize the structure of the anecdotes. Another typical use of the author’s voice

can be seen in the habit of stressing the demarcation of the narrative units: each anecdote is preceded by a heading that identifies the narrative typology or the tone of the story. We thus find rhetorically elaborate expressions, often showing parallelism, such as: “*ḥikāya ḡāmi‘a wa-ḥaqīqa māni‘a*,” “*ḥikāya ḡarība ‘aḡība*,” “*ḥikāya laṭīfat al-ma‘ānī wa-‘adbat al-maḡānī*,” “*ḥikāya laṭīfa wa-innahā ḥafīfa*,” “*ḥikāya waḡīza wa-nukta ‘azīza*.” Terms describing narrative units, such as *ḥikāya*, *ḡawhara*, or *nādira* seem to be used interchangeably, whereas *fā‘ida* is preferred for aphorisms or sections devoid of a narrative character.

The sources of the stories and anecdotes are never mentioned, and isnads are almost completely absent even in their most embryonic form. The only exception is a story of the fourth chapter, reported on the authority of Abū al-Faraḡ al-Iṣfahānī, which is preceded by an isnad composed in a proper way.³⁶ In general, the author only very vaguely indicates the provenance of the information used in his anthology. In the introduction, he limits himself to hinting very broadly at the type of sources he used, alluding to the “well-considered books of the scholars” (*kutub al-‘ulamā’ al-mu‘tabara*) as well as to “their clear and well-known speeches that were preserved” (*aqwālulhum al-muḥraza al-wāḍiḥa al-mašhūra*). In any case, similar versions of some anecdotes can be easily traced back to well-known *adab* works of the Abbasid period such as *Murūḡ al-ḡahab* of al-Mas‘ūdī (d. 345/956), *al-‘Iqd al-farīd* of Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih,³⁷ or *al-Faraḡ ba‘d al-šidda* of al-Tanūḥī, or such later titles of the Mamluk or Ottoman periods as *al-Mustaṭraf fi kull fann mustazraf* of al-Ibšīhī or *I‘lām al-nās bi-mā waqa‘a li-l-Barāmika ma‘a Banī al-‘Abbās* of al-Itlīdī (12th/17th c.). A remarkable number of anecdotes connected with the themes of power and sovereignty can also be found in *al-Tibr al-masbūk fi naṣīḥat al-mulūk*, a mirror for princes part of which is attributed to al-Ġazālī (d. 505/111).³⁸ It should be noted that there is a certain amount of variance in the identity of historical personalities mentioned in the stories: e.g., Ma‘n ibn Zā‘ida features in an anecdote where in other sources the protagonist is Abū Dulaf, or Asmā’ bint Ḥārīḡa features instead of Asmā’ bint Yazīd.

The author’s qualification of his sources as “well-considered” is in tune with the purpose of the book, which seems conceived less as a literary exercise than as an act of “militant charity”³⁹ with the aim of urging the readers to generosity, charity, and provision of assistance to the poor. Charity was the virtuous behavior taught to our author by

36. A “scholarly *isnād*,” as Bray would call it; for isnads in literature see Bray, “Isnāds and Model of Heroes.”

37. Like, e.g., the story on Ibrāhīm ibn al-Mahdī and the parasite, first attested in al-Mas‘ūdī’s *Murūḡ al-ḡahab* and Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih’s *al-‘Iqd al-farīd* (on its wide circulation see Ghersetti “L’anecdote-accordéon”).

38. Al-Ġazālī’s authorship of the second part of this treatise has been discarded: see Crone, “Did al-Ghazālī Write a Mirror for Princes?” The materials occurring in *Ḥilyat al-kuramā’* come from this second, spurious part.

39. This was a common phenomenon in the Mamluk period since, as Bauer says (“Literarische Anthologien,” p. 109), the structure and contents of literary anthologies so often go arm in arm with paraenesis.

his masters, which he practiced his whole life, and which he persistently urges upon the readers of his anthology. The moralizing intent of *Ḥilyat al-kuramāʾ* is clearly perceived by readers and mirrored in the paratextual apparatus of some manuscripts (mostly L but also C1 and C3) as well as in the notes of the 2010 Lebanese edition. They all attest to the reception of this anthology as a work of a parenetical and pious tone. As a matter of fact, reading notes and pious commentaries in the margins of manuscripts and the tenor and contents of footnotes of the printed edition testify to the fact that this work was (and continues to be) read as a piece of moralizing and educational literature.

Ḥilyat al-kuramāʾ thus represents a telling example of the intense literary activity practiced by ‘*ulamāʾ*’ of the Mamluk period outside the circles of literati and philologists *stricto sensu*. Through a remarkable continuity of his work, both in arrangement and contents, with *adab* anthologies of the golden age, Ibn Abī al-ʿĪd succeeds in putting a classical genre at the service of his own purposes which was urging to virtuous behavior by showing apt examples in the form of narratives. *Ḥilyat al-kuramāʾ* can thus be considered a meaningful example of the reuse and recontextualization of traditional forms and materials with the aim of adhering to the ideals of “ethical *adab*.”

3. The Textual History

3.1. The Extant Manuscripts

I have been able to locate eleven extant manuscripts of *Ḥilyat al-kuramāʾ*. Five are dated and six are undated, but for some, dating can be hypothesized between the tenth/sixteenth and the fourteenth/nineteenth century. A seems to be the oldest copy according to the conjecture of Fagnan (10th/16th c.); if this holds true, it would have been copied one century after the death of the author. C3 is defective and seems to be the most recent. Below I list the manuscripts I have been able to identify, the dated manuscripts on the left, in chronological order, the undated manuscripts on the right in an approximate, hypothetical chronological order.

Dated manuscripts	Undated manuscripts
(1) C1 (1039/1630)	(6) A (10th/16th c.)
(2) Pr1 (1112/1700)	(7) T (described as “ <i>atiq</i> ,” date read as 1?18)
(3) Pa = (23 Ṣafar 1169/28 november 1755)	(8) Pr2 (11th/17th c.)
(4) C2 (27 Rabīʿ I 1169/31 December 1755)	(9) G (before 1807)
(5) L (1270/1854)	(10) C3 (before 1316/1898)
	(11) D

3.2. Description of the Manuscripts

I describe the manuscripts below: the dated ones in chronological order first, followed by the undated ones. For the manuscripts to which I did not have access (T and D) descriptions are based on the details available in the catalogs.⁴⁰

(1) C1 = Cairo, Dār al-Kutub, MS Adab Taymūr 927

Title (p. 1): كتابُ حلية الكرماء وبهجة الندماء على التمام والكمال

Author's name: not mentioned. Before the title page, there is a table of contents showing chapter titles and pages, added by a modern hand that also added the following reference to Ḥaḡḡī Ḥalīfa's *Kaṣf al-ẓunūn*:⁴¹

في كشف الظنون حلية الكرماء وبهجة الندماء لابن أبي العبد المالكى. ولم يزد على ذلك.

Date of copy: Tuesday 15 of Raḡab 1039 (17 July 1630); copyist: Sulaymān ibn al-Ḥāḡḡ 'Umar; paginated: 152 pages; 20 x 15 cm; 23 lines per page, *nashī*, not vocalized.

There are two ownership statements on the page before the title page (the second one is repeated twice):

لكاتبه محمد حفني المرشدي
ملك محمد حفني المرشدي الشافعي المصري الأزهري

Three other dated ownership statements, one of them identical with the one on the preceding page, are found on the title page. I list them from top to bottom:

في نوبة الفقير إلى رحمة مولاه احمد البشاري الشافعي الأزهري سنة ١١٧٦
ملك الشيخ الإمام العالم العلامة العمدة الفهامة
في ملك الفقير اليه سبحانه وتعالى محمد حفني المرشدي الشافعي المصري الأزهري في سنة ١٣١٥ كتبه
محمد حفني المرشدي المصري الأزهري

Two (unreadable) ownership seals and some verses of poetry are also found on the title page. The following are the verses of poetry: the first two are anonymous,⁴² the third seems to be a variant of a verse by the Abbasid poet Muḥammad ibn Ḥāzīm al-Bāhili (fl. end of the 2nd/8th c.–beginning of the 3rd/9th c.):

نحن قسمنا الرزق بين الوري فادب النفس ولا تعترض
وسلم الامر لاحكامنا فكل عبد رزقه قد فرض
خذ من العلم ما كفي ومن الدهر ما صفى انما الدهر ساعة كسراج وانطفئ

40. In the descriptions, the Arabic texts are reproduced exactly as they appear, including vowels and other signs, and without any orthographic standardization.

41. Ḥaḡḡī Ḥalīfa, *Kaṣf al-ẓunūn*, vol. 1, p. 690.

42. They are mentioned by the sufi and religious scholar al-Munāwī (d. 1031/1621) in his *Fayḍ al-qadīr*, vol. 5, p. 363.

The owner, Muḥammad Ḥifnī al-Muršidī, added a reading note on the title page (p. 1) and another one on the first page of the text (p. 2). We are informed that he started reading *Ḥilyat al-kuramā'* the evening of Monday 23 Šafar 1322 (May 8, 1904) and ended before the afternoon of Tuesday 24 Šafar 1322 (May 9, 1904). He read it with a friend (Muḥammad 'Alī al-Darwīš, "a man of letters"). Finding it good, they marked interesting and important passages and added commentary (linguistic commentaries, notes of appreciation, or notes on the contents), which in fact appear in the margins.

Incipit (pp. 2–3):

الحمد لله الكريم الوهاب الرحيم التواب غافر الذنب وقابل التوب شديد العقاب [الخ] وبعد فهذا كتاب جمعته
وسميته حلية الكرم وبهجة الندما يحتوي على مقدمة وخمسة ابواب واما المقدمة في العقل وما بجر اليه وما
يترتب عليه من الاحكام الشرعية واما الابواب فالباب الاول في الكرم وصفته وفي من اتسم بسمته الباب
الثاني في اصطناع المعروف واغائة الملهوف الباب الثالث في سير الملوك الاوائل واخبار الكتبة الافاضل
الباب الرابع في احوال النساء والرجال وادابهم علي كل حال الباب الخامس في وصايا ينتفع بها العاقل وينتبه
بها الغافل ويكون ذلك اخر الابواب والكتاب.

Explicit (p. 151):

... وقيل الهرج في الطوال والعجب في القصار والبركة في المربيع والثقالة في العورات والحلاوة في
الحولان والحفظ في العميان والنشاط في العرج والذكاء في الخرس.

Colophon (p. 151–152):

تم الكتاب وربنا المحمود وله المكارم والغلا والجود وكان الفراغ من هذا الكتاب المبارك في يوم الثلاثاء
المبارك خامس عشر شهر رجب الفرد الحرام من شهور سنة تسعة وثلاثين بعد الالف من الهجرة النبوية
على صاحبها افضل الصلاة وازكي والسلام من كتابه العبد الفقير الى الله تعالى سليمان بن الحاج عمر غفر
الله له ولوالديه ولكل المسلمين آمين.

On the last page, along with the colophon but in different handwriting, there is a note stating that the author must have lived in the same period as Abū Šādūf.⁴³

(2) Pr1 = Princeton, University Library, MS Garrett 157 H (Hitti et al., *Descriptive Catalog*, p. 91, no. 277)

Title (fol. 1a): هذا كتاب حلية الكرم وبهجة الندما

Author's name: not mentioned.

Date of copy: Saturday 8 Šafar 1112 (25 July 1700); copyist: Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad, known as al-Buḥārī; 60 folios, 19.7 x 14.5 cm, writing area cm 16 x 9.5; 21 lines per page, beautiful archaic *nash*, partially vocalized. Oriental paper glazed, with catchwords, ru-

43. See *Hazz al-quhūf fī šarḥ Abī Šādūf* by Yūsuf ibn Muḥammad al-Širbīnī (active 1665–1687), edited and translated by Humphrey Davies as "Brains Confounded," where Abū Šādūf would be a peasant who authored a poem. This remark can be taken as a clue to the kind of reception of our anthology, which was most probably seen as a sample of "middle literature."