Anna Kollatz (ed.)

Mamluk Descendants

In search for the *awlād al-nās*

Bonn University Press



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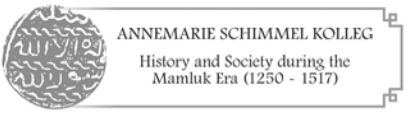

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Contents

Anna Kollatz
Introduction: On to New Horizons—Tackling the Mamluks' Descendants 7

Part I

Jo Van Steenbergen
Where are the *Awlād al-Nās?* Arabic Historiography, *Mamlūk*ization, and the Semantics and Discursive Politics of a Polysemous Concept . . . 25

Stephan Conermann
Mamluk Descendants in Military Service: The *Ḥalqa* 97

Mustafa Banister
"*Sulṭān Awlād al-Nās*" or "*Amīr ibn Mamlūk*"? Re-framing Khalīl ibn Shāhīn's *Zubdat Kashf al-Mamālik wa-Bayān al-Ṭuruq wa-l-Masālik* . . . 121

Noha Abou-Khatwa
The Muḥsinī Brothers: A Case Study in the Contribution of Mamluks' Descendants to Cairo's Material Culture in the Fourteenth Century 141

Daisuke Igarashi
'*Who should benefit from my Waqf?*' Mamluks' Views on Progeny, Lineage, and Family based on their *Waqf* Stipulations 173

Takao Ito
Awlād al-Nās during and after the Reign of al-Nāṣir Ḥasan 195

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ISBN Print: 9783847114581 – ISBN E-Book: 9783847014584

Yehoshua Frenkel
Awlād al-Nās in Mamlūk Jerusalem: An Inquiry into several Ḥaram documents 217

Part II

Koby Yosef
The Rise of *Mamlūk*s' Descendants in the Turkish Period (648–784/1250–1382): The Status and Identity of *Mamlūk*s' Descendants who were Amirs in Cairo according to the *Jarīda Iqṭāʿiyya* of the Year 778/1377 . . . 237

Koby Yosef
The Term *Awlād al-Nās* and "the Rise of a New Class" 431

Biographies 611

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Anna Kollatz

Introduction: On to New Horizons—Tackling the Mamluks' Descendants

Almost exactly a decade ago, the Annemarie Schimmel Kolleg "History and Society during the Mamluk Era" was established in Bonn. In the eight years that followed, we had the great pleasure of welcoming countless Mamlukists from all over the world: The Kolleg on Heussallee developed a life of its own, bringing about its own *khushdāshiyya*—as it has been nicknamed by many of the colleagues and friends who met here time and again over the years.

Now, German research funding requires that every project must eventually come to an end; the active phase of the Kolleg thus ended after the maximum funding period in 2020. Of course, the Kolleg lives on, for example in the Ulrich Haarmann Memorial Lectures, which are now held online, the Mamluk Studies series[1] and, of course, especially in the Bonn department of Islamic Archaeology. But it was also clear that in order to maintain the spirit of the Kolleg, new methods of exchange and fresh topics had to be established. What could be more natural than to start a new phase of Mamluk Studies in Bonn by focusing on the descendants of the Mamluks, their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren?

Since Ulrich Haarmann's study of the children and grandchildren of the Mamluks—known in existing research by the Arabic term *awlād al-nās*—was ended by his premature death, research on this interesting but elusive group within Mamluk society has progressed only sluggishly.[2] Individual researchers

1 An overview of the development of the field and research topics tackled in Bonn and elsewhere in the last decade is provided by Stephan Conermann in his introduction to vol. 25 of the series. See Stephan Conermann, "Mamluk Studies 2010–2020: An Overview plus Research Gaps", in: *Studies on the History and Culture of the Mamluk Sultanate*, ed. Stephan Conermann and Toru Miura, Bonn/Göttingen: Bonn University Press & V&R unipress, 2021 (Mamluk Studies, 25), 7–56.

2 Ulrich Haarmann, "Joseph's Law. The Careers and Activities of Mamluk Descendants before the Ottoman Conquest of Egypt", in: *The Mamluks in Egyptian Politics and Society*, ed. Thomas Philipp and Ulrich Haarmann, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, 55–84; id., "Väter und Söhne im Herrschaftssystem der Mamluken", *Berliner Wissenschaftliche Gesellschaft e.V. Jahrbuch 1995*, 211–227; id., "Arabic in Speech, Turkish in Lineage. Mamluks

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have certainly devoted themselves to the subject,[3] but a concerted effort, which would be necessary to tackle this vast unknown in Mamluk Studies, has not yet come about. Things are different for a distinct subgroup of the progeny of Mamluks, namely the sons and grandsons of sultans. They are reliably identified in the sources as *sayyid* (pl. *asyād*) and thus distinguished from the rest of the Mamluk descendants. Due to their special position, the *asyād* usually had to cope with completely different opportunities (or even obstacles) than the sons of amirs or simple Mamluks and have received far more scholarly interest, mostly regarding their positions as (future or temporary) sultans.[4]

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and their Sons in the Intellectual Life of Fourteenth-Century Egypt and Syria", *Journal of Semitic Studies* 33/1 (1988), 81–114; id., "The Sons of Mamluks as Fief-holders in Late Medieval Egypt", in: *Land Tenure and Social Transformation in the Middle East*, ed. Tarif Khalidi, Beirut: American University in Beirut, 1984, 141–168.

3 For a short overview, see the two EI articles: David Ayalon, "Awlād al-Nās", *Encyclopaedia of Islam, second edition*; and John L. Meloy, "Awlād al-Nās", *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE.* Further important studies of the topic are Amalia Levanoni, "*Awlad al-Nas* in the Mamluk Army during the Bahri Period", in: *Mamluks and Ottomans: Studies in Honor of Michael Winter*, ed. David Wasserstein and Ami Ayalon, London and New York: Routledge, 2006, 96–105; ead., "The Ḥalqah in the Mamluk Army. Why Was It Not Dissolved When It Reached Its Nadir?" *Mamluk Studies Review* 15 (2011), 37–65; Stephan Conermann and Suad Saghbini: "Awlād an-nās as Founders of Pious Endowments. The waqfiyah of Yahya ibn Tughan al-Hasani of the Year 870/1465", *Mamluk Studies Review* 6 (2002), 21–50; and following Stephan Conermann and Lucian Reinfandt, "Anmerkungen zu einer mamlūkischen waqf-Urkunde aus dem 9./15. Jahrhundert," in: *Die Mamlūken. Studien zu ihrer Geschichte und Kultur: Zum Gedenken an Ulrich Haarmann (1942–1999)*, ed. Stephan Conermann and Anja Pistor-Hatam, Schenefeld: EB Verlag, 2003 (Asien und Afrika, 7), 177–238; Donald S. Richards, "Mamluk Amirs and their Families and Households", in: *The Mamluks in Egyptian Politics and Society*, ed. Thomas Philipp and Ulrich Haarmann, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, 32–54.

4 I will refrain from giving an exhaustive list of studies focused on sultan's sons that came to power themselves. See e. g., Lucian Reinfandt, "Religious Endowments and Succession to Rule: The Career of a Sultan's Son in the Fifteenth Century", *Mamlūk Studies Review* 6 (2002), 51–62; on the Qalawunid context: Amalia Levanoni, *A Turning Point in Mamluk History. The Third Reign of an-Nāṣir Muḥammad Ibn Qalāwūn (1310–1341)*, Leiden: Brill, 1995; on the subsequent period: Frédéric Bauden, "The Sons of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and the Politics of Puppets. Where Did It All Start?" *Mamluk Studies Review* 13/1 (2009), 53–81; and on the Qalawunid household: Jo van Steenbergen, "The Mamluk Sultanate as a Military Patronage State: Household Politics and the Case of the Qalāwūnid *bayt* (1279–1382)", *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 56 (2013), 189–217. See also the study on Baybars I. and his sons: Hans-Ulrich Kühn, *Sultan Baibars und seine Söhne. Frühmamlukische Herrschaftssicherung in ayyūbidischer Tradition*, Bonn/Göttingen: Bonn University Press & V&R unipress, 2019 (Mamluk Studies, 18). Sultan's sons perceived as a social group have been studied, e. g., in Stephan Conermann and Ulrich Haarmann, "Herrscherwechsel als höfische Machtprobe. Das Beispiel der Mamluken in Ägypten und Syrien (1250–1517)", in: *Hof und Macht. Dresdner Gespräche II zur Theorie des Hofes*, ed. Reinhardt Butz and Jan Hierschbiegel, Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2007, 209–240; Henning Sievert, *Der Herrscherwechsel im Mamlukensultanat. Historische und historiographische Untersuchungen zu Abū Ḥāmid al-Qudsī und Ibn Taġrībirdī*, Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2003; id., "Der Kampf um die Macht im Mamlūkenreich", in: *Die Mamlūken. Studien zu ihrer Geschichte und Kultur: Zum Gedenken an Ulrich*

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Ulrich Haarmann's reflections, which, as his contributions to the subject suggest, he himself conceived as a beginning, as preliminary observations, have remained state of the art until today, and some of his theses, which he formulated as questions and whose investigation he called for, have become something like generally accepted facts over the past decades, without having undergone the thorough review demanded by Haarmann himself. Yet the latter had quite clearly established that there was less factual knowledge about the "Sons of the Mamluks" than there were unanswered questions. In his article "Joseph's Law", he stated, for example, "When exactly this designation '*awlād al-nās*' began to be used and how it was delineated in the course of the decades after 1250 has not yet been systematically investigated."[5]

In the midst of the first wave of the global pandemic, we decided to invite our colleagues to Bonn once again—as soon as it might be possible—and to make a new start on tackling the "*awlād al-nās* question" jointly. In the end, we had to meet online in December 2020, which had the advantage that many new friends of the Annemarie Schimmel Kolleg from all over the world could join us: even if each of us sat alone in their kitchen, office or on a park bench, we still had one of the largest conferences the Kolleg has ever seen, and fortunately, despite the circumstances, lively and productive discussions as usual.

With the Mamluks' descendants, this conference focused on a group that, while being located at a crucial point of Mamluk society, standing between the Mamluks and Arabic-speaking Egyptian society, still awaits the academic interest it deserves. Modern research, such as the EI-THREE article "Awlād al-Nās" by John L. Meloy, used to define the term as follows, claiming the existence of a more or less clear-cut social group formed by Mamluk descendants:

> *Awlād al-Nās* ("the children of the people"), was an expression used in the Mamlūk sultanate of Egypt and Syria to designate the descendants, to about the fourth generation, of the politically significant people—that is, the foreign military elite, the manumitted Mamlūks—who dominated the state.[6]

For the first time, we aimed at bringing together research touching on the Mamluks' descendants from different angles or focusing on that fascinating group itself. The reason for the group having received less interest so far might be a rather restrictive conception of Mamluk society in some of the existing research

Haarmann (1942–1999), ed. Stephan Conermann and Anja Pistor-Hatam, Schenefeld: EB Verlag, 2003 (Asien und Afrika, 7), 335–366; Agatha Rome, *Die kurze Regierungszeit der mamlukischen Sultanssöhne in der tscherkessischen Phase (784/1382–922/1517)*, M.A. thesis, University of Basel, 1995.

5 Haarmann, "Joseph's Law", 61. On Haarmann's position concerning the state of the art, see also Koby Yosef's second contribution in this volume.

6 John L. Meloy, "Awlād al-Nās".

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literature. Based on the accounts of well-known historians of the Mamluk Sultanate, such as al-Maqrīzī, al-Qalqashandī, al-Sakhāwī and others, modern interpretations in the tradition of David Ayalon's model of Mamluk society have suggested that Mamluk society was a rather static one, that allowed only limited social mobility.[7] This notion of stasis has been challenged in the last years, thus opening new directions of research on Mamluk society.[8] Societal tableaux like the one by al-Maqrīzī define Mamluk society as stratified according to profession, function and wealth. The *awlād al-nās* as a group solely characterised by their Mamluk or mixed parentage—and as such, defined by modern research—stand at odds with this social conception. According to the static normative definition of Mamluk society, they would have had only very restricted options of reaching influential positions in the administration or military. However, sons—and daughters—of Mamluks played decisive roles in Mamluk societies, be it as amirs, or even sultans, as scholars, historians, or administrators of pious foundations.

However, these individuals are difficult to locate, as they are usually not labelled with an easy-to-identify nametag concerning their status by the sources. The best ways to identify them is first, as Haarmann did, by their name, which usually contains a 'typical Mamluk', often Turkish, name as their father's or grandfather's name, or a *nisba* that indicates that their ancestor belonged to a Mamluk household. Second, prosopographic studies that trace back Mamluk family and kinship structures help in locating Mamluks' descendants e. g., in archival sources. As for the term *awlād al-nās*, historical-semantic approaches are needed to clarify its meaning throughout (and before) the Mamluk Sultanate. This volume convenes articles that follow the Mamluk descendants' footsteps by these, and more, approaches.

7 See Ayalon's collected studies on the topic in David Ayalon, *The Mamluk Military Society*, London: Variorum, 1979; and id., *Outsiders in the Lands of Islam: Mamluks, Mongols and Eunuchs*, London: Variorum, 1988. Cf. also the overview offered by Reuven Amitai in "The Rise and Fall of the Mamluk Institution: A Summary of David Ayalon's Works", in: *Studies in Islamic History and Civilisation in Honour of Professor David Ayalon*, ed. M. Sharon, Leiden: Brill, 1999, 19–32, and id., "David Ayalon, 1914–1998", *Mamluk Studies Review* 3 (1999), 1–12.

8 With regard to the definition of social groups, see Koby Yosef, "Dawlat al-atrāk or dawlat al-mamālīk? Ethnic Origin or Slave Origin as the Defining Characteristic of the Ruling Élite in the Mamlūk Sultanate", *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 39 (2012), 387–410; id., *Ethnic Groups, Social Relationships and Dynasty in the Mamluk Sultanate (1250–1517)*, Bonn, 2012 (ASK Working Paper, 6). Jo van Steenbergen and others have proposed the concept of *mamlukization* as a frame for investigating social mobility, see e. g., Jo van Steenbergen, Patrick Wing and Kristof D'hulster, "The Mamlukization of the Mamluk Sultanate? State Formation and the History of Fifteenth Century Egypt and Syria: Part I—Old Problems and New Trends", *History Compass* 14/11 (2016), 549–559; id., "The Mamlukization of the Mamluk Sultanate? State Formation and the History of Fifteenth Century Egypt and Syria: Part II—Comparative Solutions and a New Research Agenda", *History Compass* 14/11 (2016), 560–569.

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In fact, there are fundamental questions to be asked: With the conference title "Where are the '*awlād al-nās*'?", we have chosen one of them as a symbolic kick-off, which however addresses quite a number of unanswered questions: Where do we find traces of the Mamluk descendants? In which social strata, occupational groups, etc. are they to be encountered? Which ways of integration, which options of action did these people have, and: can we recognise patterns here, or was 'integration' and 'career' for the Mamluk descendants an individual matter, dependent on the respective family constellation, the situation of their Mamluk ancestors, and simply the time and circumstances they lived in? What influences affected the lives of the Mamluk descendants?

Last, but not least two questions, one asked from a semantic perspective, the other from the perspective of social history, seem to be entangled thoroughly, and answers to both of them would advance research greatly: What are Mamluk descendants called in the sources—is there a characteristic name or names for this group at all? Or, to put it from the social history point of view: Were Mamluk descendants perceived as a distinct social group?

Just as well, then, as especially the discussion panels revealed, the December 2020 conference could have been titled "Who are the '*awlād al-nās*'?", or even: "Is there such a group as 'the *awlād al-nās*'?" During the conference, it quickly became clear that the Arabic term *awlād al-nās*, which initially appears to be a source term and has been used as such previously, with its common translations "children of the elite/the nobles", or "children/sons of the Mamluks", is anything but an innocent contemporary source term. We must first note that this Arabic term appears far less frequently, indeed only very rarely, in sources from the Mamluk period than one would suspect. When it is used, it does not have a fixed meaning for much of the Mamluk period but is used differently depending on the context—or, as Jo van Steenbergen puts it, we must read this combined term as a *polysemous concept.*

Only in the 15th century, as various contributions in this volume show, did a narrower understanding of the term emerge in a certain socially and culturally definable environment; *awlād al-nās* is then increasingly understood as "sons/descendants of the Mamluks". But, even in this period, the term is far from being the only designation chosen for these people: the term stands alongside such names as "*atrāk*" or "*awlād al-turk/al-atrāk*". Moreover, even in the late Mamluk period, the narrower definition of the term *awlād al-nās* as "sons of the Mamluks" is by no means to be understood as a precise delimitation of a social group. In the 15th and 16th centuries, people are also referred to as *awlād al-nās* who are not Mamluk descendants in the narrower sense, but rather, for example, descendants of freeborn military officers, descendants of merchants, etc., who had previously found their way into the military-administrative ranks of Mamluk rule. So, the term also occurs in this period as meaning "descendants of the elite".

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If one were to argue exclusively from a semantic perspective, one would have to conclude that *awlād al-nās* (in the sense of a group concept of Mamluk descendants) simply did not exist over large periods of Mamluk history. Such a conclusion, however, would be far off the mark and is not advocated by any colleague I know. The fact is that the Mamluk descendants, as already noted above, were not associated with, or named after, a clear identifier. At least, such an unequivocal identifier seems not exist in the sources studied so far. Something close to a group identity related to a sort of signifier evolved only in the later half Mamluk period, as Koby Yosef argues, during the reign of al-Ẓāhir Jaqmaq (842–857/1438–1453), when certain Mamluk descendants established themselves among a "new class" of landowners. Furthermore, Yosef shows, using the example of al-Malaṭī, that Mamluk descendants, after being integrated into a specific social group such as the amirs, or the religious scholars, were no longer identified primarily by their descent, but by their standing as a military leader or scholar. Thus, al-Malaṭī refers to them as *umarāʾ* or *ʿulamāʾ*, while he seems to have reserved the identifier *awlād al-nās* for Mamluk descendants who earned their living from inherited *iqṭāʿ*s, from being a *jundī* in the *ḥalqa* or another regiment, or by various other occupations.

Whether identified as *awlād al-nās* or differently, Mamluk descendants certainly existed even before the emergence of a new, "civilian" landowner class and had their impact on society. Moreover, as Daisuke Igarashi's study on Mamluk inheritance policies shows, the 15th century reveals a much wider concept of kinship that includes not only children, male and female, and their families, but eventually also freed slaves and their offspring, within the group of what Julien Loiseau called the "chosen family" of a Mamluk.[9] Especially in the 15th century, when the recurring plague epidemics had decimated the population—and thereby Mamluk families—a great extent, freed slaves and their relatives became a significant factor in Mamluk inheritance or *waqf* policies. If we thus regard the question of Mamluk kinship structures from the viewpoint of economic history, it becomes clear that Mamluk descendance must not be regarded solely as a question of biological lineage, but also of socially formed kinship relations, e. g., in the concept of studying households.

Yet modern research has taken up the term "*awlād al-nās*", linked it to a relatively unambiguous definition and subsequently used it to refer to "Sons of the Mamluks"[10] or "Mamluk descendants". Eventually, over time, this etic defi-

9 Julien Loiseau, "'*Boy and Girl on Equal Terms*': Women, *Waqf*, and Wealth Transmission in Mamluk Egypt," *Orient* 54 (2019), 23–39.

10 Thereby systematically neglecting the daughters and granddaughters of Mamluks, who, although rarely appearing in narrative sources, had a significant impact on Mamluk society and kinship relations. For a recent overview of research on family and women in Mamluk society, see Daisuke Igarashi and Takao Ito, "Introduction. An Overview of Recent Studies on Women

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nition led to the etic definition of the term being misunderstood as a (supposed) source term, i. e., it became more or less implicitly established that *awlād al-nās* was an emic source term originating from the Mamluk period as a whole, which referred unequivocally to Mamluk descendants, preferably male. It seems that modern research has oriented this definition of *awlād al-nās* primarily by following a notion, maybe a common group-identity, that we find developing in the writings of several 15th-century Mamluk historians, who were in fact Mamluk descendants, grandsons and great-grandsons themselves. Among them we may count such voices as Ibn Taghrī Birdī, Ibn Iyās, and others, and Jo van Steenbergen values their struggle for establishing their (perhaps) self-chosen identity by referring to them as "*awlād al-nās* activists".[11]

The articles in this volume, which approach the topic from different methodological and theoretical angles, demonstrate distinctly that there is no uniform definition of Mamluk descendants—at least not to the extent that the 'master narrative' created by researchers on the term *awlād al-nās* suggests. Nevertheless, descendants of Mamluks undoubtedly had their fair share in influencing many different aspects of Mamluk society—and their impact can be clearly traced in various source types. Different 'career options' were open to them at different times during the approximately 250 years of Mamluk rule in Egypt and Syria. The socio-historical component, the question of influence, options for action etc. of individual Mamluk descendants can be worked out particularly in documents (*waqf*), in tax registers, but also in biographical reference works through prosopographical studies. Here, the conference also opened perspectives for connecting the question to fields like intellectual history and art history. As for semantic studies concerning the term *awlād al-nās* and its neighbouring terms, (digitised) narrative sources prove helpful—but there is much work to be done in both approaches, until we can offer decisive answers to many of the questions raised by the conference. The contributions in this volume impressively show the variety of material available and the different methods that can be used to generate information on the (still etically defined) group of Mamluk descendants; they also propose preliminary answers. The articles in the first part of this volume comprise the outcome of the December conference, representing the different methodological approaches and research questions that stand in relation to the Mamluk descendants.

The second part of the volume consists of two longer contributions by Koby Yosef, both of which were originally intended as parts of a monograph, but now are published here due to their thematic fit. Since both are based on an extensive

and Family in Mamluk Society", *Orient* 54 (2019), 1–6. See also Conermann, "Mamluk Studies", esp. 21.

11 See Jo van Steenbergen's contribution in this volume.

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amount of prosopographical data collection, which we did not want to exclude from the publication, the two contributions are now in their own section, although they were of course initially part of the conference. While the first contribution approaches the role of Mamluk descendants who were amirs during the Turkish period, the second studies term *awlād al-nās* and its use from a prosopographical perspective, discussing it with Ulrich Haarmann's theses and the reflection of the "rise of a new class".

In the first article of part one, **Jo van Steenbergen** examines the term *awlād al-nās* as a *polysemous concept* and traces its changing meaning and the thematic contexts in which it appears in Mamluk sources through a comprehensive study of *awlād al-nās* semantics, frequencies, and discursive strategies in contemporary historiography. Since the term exhibits a certain fluidity over time and in different contexts of meaning, future research on Mamluks' descendants must be based on a critical engagement with these contemporary textual meaning-making processes. Van Steenbergen interprets the formation of a group identity related to the term *awlād al-nās* in the writings of certain historiographers in the 15th century as an expression of mamlukization processes.[12]

Both van Steenbergen's and Yosef's approaches thus come to similar conclusions: First, it should be acknowledged that the term was used extremely rarely, especially in the early Mamluk period, the Turkish period. When it was used, it was not firmly linked to the meaning "Mamluk descendants", but rather as a designation for descendants of the established elites, not for the (newly emerged) Mamluk elite. Secondly, they both identify a certain group identity and consolidation of the term in the 15th century, which can be explained by the emergence of new social strata ("rise of a new class") as well as their integration into existing concepts (mamlukization).

With **Stephan Conermann**'s article, the volume takes a turn towards an institutional-historical perspective. Here, too, the first part focuses on individual biographical observations that serve to analyse the integration of the *ḥalqa* into the Mamluk-period apparatus of rule. While personal ties to the sultan predominated in the earlier period, the administration of the *ḥalqa* is characterised by increasing bureaucratisation (and thus transpersonalisation). Conermann traces financial policy decisions and development processes in the context of the *ḥalqa* in a chronological outline and is thus able to show that the position of the *ḥalqa* as a gathering place for "old, young and useless", to which the corps degenerated in the 15th century, is to be seen as the consequence of a longer-term and not entirely intentional development. This article again shows that the terminological consolidation of *awlād al-nās*, for which *ḥalqa* was increasingly used

12 On this concept, see Jo van Steenbergen, Patrick Wing and Kristof D'hulster, "The Mamlukization", parts I and II.

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as a synonym in the 15th century, can be attributed only to the later Mamluk period.

Daisuke Igarashi also chooses a socio-historical-economic approach by analysing inheritance practices in Mamluk families and in waqf stipulations—and thus the economic position of male and female Mamluk descendants. In addition, this study also provides insights into family structure, confirming, for example, that Mamluk families usually did not have many children (often no more than three), and often divided inheritance equally between male and female descendants, bypassing Islamic inheritance law. In particular, the case studies on waqf stipulations also make it possible to trace the role of female family members or the influence of matrilineally inherited property—the documents thus prove to be a source genre that can bring to light the influence of women that, with few exceptions, is somewhat invisible in narrative sources.

Yehoshua Frenkel approaches documents from the Jerusalem Haram collection with a working hypothesis that corresponds to the findings of Koby Yosef's second contribution: he reads the term *awlād al-nās* as a group designation that referred to civilian elites, while, as he argues, terms such as *turk/atrāk* were more likely to refer to military elites. The documents he examines illustrate individual examples in the context of a longer-lasting development, in the course of which Mamluk descendants, who are identified in the sources partly as *awlād al-nās* and partly as members of the *ḥalqa*, increasingly evolved away from the military context and integrated into the civilian elites.

The following three case studies take an in-depth look at the possibilities for action and the influence of individual Mamluk descendants in their respective historical and social contexts.

Takao Ito examines the biographies of Mamluk descendants promoted to amir by al-Nāsir Ḥasan, i. e. the Qalawunid descendants described by Ibn Taghrī Birdī, al-Maqrīzī and others. He is able to show that the Qalawunid era was not characterised by a one-sided preference for Mamluk descendants, but that the biographies studied are to be understood in the context of a recruitment policy that was aimed at a balanced filling of amir posts with representatives of different groups. The individual fates of the amirs and their descendants produce a diverse picture that illustrates how different the options for action and economic foundations of individual Mamluk descendants could be, even in a rather narrow temporal-social context. He also notes the change in meaning of the term *awlād al-nās* in historiographies of the 15th century already described above.

Noha Abou-Khatwa's contribution also focuses on the period of al-Nāṣir Ḥasan, or the Qalawunids. She subjects the artistic and architectural work of the Muḥsinī brothers to an in-depth art-historical analysis and is thus able to show how crucial individual Mamluk descendants were in shaping the development of book culture, architecture, and style in the Mamluk period. In addition, her

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contribution demonstrates how central a multidisciplinary approach is to the study of such a volatile group as the Mamluk descendants; only the dialogue with art history allows these individual figures to be traced beyond contemporary narrative representations, precisely on the basis of their own works.

Mustafa Banister's analysis of the *Zubdat al-kashf* of Khalīl b. Shāhīn takes us to exactly the period we have already identified as a time of conceptual change and the emergence of a possible group identity of the Mamluk descendants, i. e. the 15th century. His analysis—which includes a consideration of the author's historical-social context as well as a contentual and narratological analysis of the text, which can be seen as a kind of universal chronicle of the 15th century—leads Banister to the conclusion that Khalīl b. Shāhīn saw himself less as a descendant of a Mamluk elite. Rather, he located himself in his writing as a member of this elite, that is, within the Mamluk power elite of his time and not on its verges or in a subordinate position.

In part two of the volume, **Koby Yosef** 's first contribution is the result of many years of work on the information about Mamluk descendants in the Turkish period, based on Ibn Jiʾān's *jarīda iqṭāʿiyya* of circa 777/1376. Although this prosopographic-economic-historical approach naturally has to cope with some blank spaces or uncertainties in the data reported by Ibn Jiʾān, it yields highly interesting results that extend beyond the time span covered by the *jarīda*. For example, it is not always possible to determine the degree of relationship or status of the amirs recorded in the *jarīda*. Apart from that, this source (unfortunately) also only provides access to the Mamluk descendants who became amirs. However, the examination of this "minimal number of Mamluk descendants in Cairo" already provides fascinating insights into structures and factors that must also have affected the "minor" Mamluk descendants who are not recorded in the *jarīda*. Yosef 's analysis clearly demonstrates the influence of demographic (e. g. after the plague) or political (e. g. the influence of "uncertain" times) factors on Mamluk families: the plague decimated their lines, thus also the number of descendants to be provided for, while the Mamluks of the first "tumultuous" years of the sultanate were only able to found families late in life, if at all, and thus initially raised a smaller number of descendants to be provided for later. It was not until the Qalawunid era, during which there was also a change in marriage policy, that there were so many Mamluk descendants in adulthood that they became visibly important, e. g. in amir positions. However, even before this, the Mamluk descendants were by no means excluded from such positions—there were simply very few of the appropriate age who could have taken over posts. Furthermore, the analysis also shows that not only external factors, but especially the support of kin-groups—either one's own father or allies by marriage—fuelled a Mamluk descendant's chances of obtaining positions in the military and thus of entering the *jarīda*. In his second contribution, **Koby Yosef** approaches

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the term *awlād al-nās* and the question of whether and when it can be found as a group identifier in Mamluk sources on the basis of a large-scale prosopographical study of Mamluk descendants. Through a qualitative analysis of al-Malatī's writings, he demonstrates that the latter used the term *awlād al-nās* or *ibn* (*al-*)*nās* only for a certain subgroup of Mamluk descendants, while others were virtually absorbed into other social groups, e. g. the amirs or religious scholars, and thus were identified as such in the sources. It was only with the formation of a new class of (civilian) landowners in the 15th century that a further change in the meaning of the term *awlād al-nās* was established, as Yosef points out, whereby the term finally became a group designation for a specific group of Mamluk descendants.

All these contributions are based on the insight, as discussed during the conference and described above, that the modern master narrative as well as the term *awlād al-nās*, which oscillates strangely between being a source term and having been attributed a modern meaning, are in need of revision. At the end of the conference, we therefore decided to follow a provisional language regime that would enable researchers and readers to distinguish between the "real" emic source term and the modern, etic group concept. When *awlād al-nās* is used in the following articles, this refers to the actual—rarely occurring—source term, which, however, must not be understood simply as translating to "Mamluk descendants", but may carry a completely different meaning. If, on the other hand, we speak of Mamluk descendants, sons of the Mamluks, etc., we hereby refer to the group postulated by research. However, in practice this language rule cannot always be fully adhered to, if only because previous research uses the two terms and concepts synonymously and therefore *awlād al-nās* repeatedly appears in quotations and references as an etically constructed group designation. It is therefore left to the inclined reader to read this volume critically, but with goodwill, also from a terminological point of view. Only the next few years will show whether—and if so, in which way—this language regime will prevail with regard to the Mamluk descendants.

However, let me outline several preliminary conclusions, as well as research prospects, shared by the contributions in this volume. The conference in December 2020 and the studies presented in this volume have clearly shown two things: First, Mamluk descendants formed an integral part of Mamluk society and had considerable influence in a variety of contexts in different periods of the Mamluk sultanate. They participated in the military and ruling elite, they were active as scholars, artists, and builders, and they shaped historiographical and other scholarly discourses through their writings. They also participated as administrators and beneficiaries of *iqṭāʿ*s or land ownership in the various known forms. Some of the Mamluk descendants became part of the civilian elite in the later Mamluk period, while others were assimilated into military or scholarly

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circles and obviously did not identify themselves primarily, or at least not to any great extent that can be proven so far, by their ancestry.

Second, especially for the Turkish period, but also afterwards, we cannot assume a fixed emic concept *awlād al-nās* which could be translated unequivocally into "Mamluk descendants". Rather, this term, which is also occasionally used in the pre-Mamluk period, is subject to a constant change of meaning. The meanings range from a general term for descendants of any established elite, to quite narrow meanings depending on the context. For example, the term is used to refer to potentially defenceless young men who are vulnerable to sexual exploitation during their education, or to denote only a certain group of Mamluk descendants who are lower-rank soldiers, e. g. in the *ḥalqa.* Only in the late 15th century and until the Ottoman conquest, did some historiographers who themselves had a background of Mamluk ancestry establish a kind of group identity; Ibn Iyās, for example, gives an intensive description of the discrimination against his fellow *awlād al-nās* by the late Mamluk rulers, as well as by the Ottoman conquerors. It should also be noted that the use, context, and meanings of the source term *awlād al-nās* differ from region to region; in Syria, the term is thus used and understood less frequently and differently than in Cairo. But even in this 15th-century context the term *awlād al-nās* occurs rather seldom and is used alongside other formulations (e. g. *awlād al-turk* and the like).

Nevertheless, it makes a lot of sense to stick to researching the etically defined (constructed?) group of Mamluk descendants. Even though there may not have been an emic group identity as Haarmann postulated, the Mamluk descendants do occupy a central role in Mamluk society that we do not yet understand sufficiently. The main reason is that this role, or rather these roles, are much more diverse and thus even more elusive to scholarship, than previously assumed. Or, to summarise briefly: There is no simple answer to the question "Where are the '*awlād al-nās*'?"

Due to the various meanings ascribed to the term *awlād al-nās*, it cannot be sufficient to search for Mamluk descendants solely on the basis of this term and its closer variants in the sources. Rather, other possible group designations must be included, and themselves be studied, with regard to their multifarious layers of meaning that possibly even changed over time. The conference's chatroom brought up a very good example when discussing the terms "Turk" (*turk/atrāk*) and "Arab" in the context of Mamluk sources. Both terms can function as ethnic definitions, but even more so as cultural or social categories. Moreover, the term *turk/atrāk*, for example, must be recognised as being related to intersectional criteria like language, dress, or class. In some contexts, it may occur as a merely ethnic definition, while in others, intellectual or social aspects may prevail. Still, those criteria seldom occur in isolated form but intermingle or intersect, for example, when "Turkish" dress is associated with the military and thus dis-

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tinguishes military persons from the urban population. The term *turk*, to stick with this example, even has a political dimension related to the courtly sphere, the *dawlat al-turk*, and thus may also function as a social identifier distinguishing courtly cultural identity from the rest of society. In each of these cases and their intersections, such a term can then also have a positive or negative connotation according to its context, the author's, or the recipients' interpretation.

Equally importantly, a common effort including various methodological approaches, such as prosopography, seems to be the best way to go. In particular, it is necessary to consult archival material in addition to narrative sources; the results of the relevant studies in this volume promise good opportunities to understand the options for action and the "career" or integration paths of Mamluk descendants better than we already do today. Consideration of social institutions like the *ḥalqa*, the pious endowments, or intellectual scholarly circles, also belongs in the search for Mamluk descendants, as is interesting to examine their potential assimilation into existing social contexts.

Thus, if we want to investigate the rooms for manoeuvre of Mamluk descendants, and their integration or assimilation processes, further in the future, this must—actually not surprisingly—be done with the consideration of various factors. Demographic factors, such as the deep scars left by the plague epidemics, which of course influenced society and the economy as a whole, also created changed conditions for Mamluk descendants. Regional differences—those between Syria and Egypt in the period have already been noted in other examples—need to be observed and understood. Finally, it is an important goal to evaluate source information in such a way that groups that are difficult to trace in the narrative sources, such as simple soldiers and their families and not least women, female Mamluk descendants, can be better considered. These groups, as well as Mamluk descendants "hidden" by assimilation or integration into other social layers, will certainly remain hard to grasp, if only for lack of appropriate source material. However, we should acknowledge these blank spaces and work on and with them, rather than brushing over them by drawing general conclusions from case studies. In addition, various thematic areas or social subsystems are of course interesting for comparative studies and further engagement: for example, the involvement and room for manoeuvre of Mamluk descendants in intellectual and religious discourses, in economic processes, and many more.

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Part I

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Jo Van Steenbergen

Where are the *Awlād al-Nās?* Arabic Historiography, *Mamlūk*ization, and the Semantics and Discursive Politics of a Polysemous Concept[1]

1 Introduction

In today's scholarship a specific consensus has grown on the identity, roles and changing involvement of *awlād al-nās*, "the sons of the people", in the history of late medieval Egypt and Syria. First of all, as John Meloy summarized in 2007 in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam Three*, *awlād al-nās* is by default considered "an expression used in the Mamluk sultanate of Egypt and Syria to designate the descendants, to about the fourth generation, of the politically significant people —that is, the foreign military elite, the manumitted Mamlūks—who dominated the state."[2] Secondly, modern scholars tend to consider these *awlād al-nās* a distinct social group with a long collective history of its own. In line with the first proposition, this master narrative of *awlād al-nās* history is derived from the specific trajectories of involvement in the sultanate's history that many *mamlūk* descendants are known to have experienced. Long considered the lesser successors of their *mamlūk* fathers' privileges or, at best, unusual exceptions to this general rule, *mamlūk* descendants have in recent decades managed to exchange this traditional picture for a far more nuanced appreciation of their social and cultural participation. It is by now generally accepted that many *mamlūk* descendants partook actively, effectively, and continuously in the cultural life of the urban centers of Syria and Egypt, as scholars, *literati*, and patrons. During most

1 This chapter has been written within the framework of the project 'The Mamlukisation of the Mamluk Sultanate II: Historiography, Political Order and State Formation in Fifteenth-Century Egypt and Syria' (UGent, 2017–21); this project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program (Consolidator Grant agreement No 681510). This chapter was first presented as a paper at the online *awlād al-nās* conference organized at Bonn University, in December 2020. I am grateful to the organizers for accepting my paper proposal, and to my MMS-II colleagues at Ghent University (Mustafa Banister, Rihab Ben Othmen, Kenneth Goudie, Zacharie Mochtarie de Pierrepont, Daniel Mahoney, Maya Termonia) for providing feedback on two different drafts.

2 John F. Meloy, "Awlād al-Nās", *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE.*

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of the 8th/14th century, many *mamlūk* descendants also played important military as well as increasingly political and socio-economic roles in Egypt and Syria, as *ḥalqa* troopers, as amirs of varying ranks, and as *iqṭāʿ*-holders. Especially the reigns of the Qalāwūnid sultans al-Nāṣir Ḥasan (r. 1347–51, 1354–61) and al-Ashraf Shaʿbān (r. 1363–77) tend to be considered the heyday for these descendants' political and socio-economic participation, as demonstrated by extant prosopographical as well as socio-economic data. From the end of the 8th/14th century onwards, however, their socio-political and military participation has been demonstrated to have receded substantially, giving way in the 9th/15th century to their primary appearance in contexts of the management of varyingly composed family estates.[3]

Despite this strong scholarly consensus that *awlād al-nās* references in contemporary sources inform about a collectivity of *mamlūk* descendants and its rich social and cultural histories, some fundamental challenges to this common assumption were formulated in a survey chapter of *awlād al-nās* studies, published in 1998 by the German historian Ulrich Haarmann (1942–99). Haarmann explained that "when exactly this designation *awlād al-nās* began to be used and how it was delineated in the course of the decades after 1250 has not been

3 See especially Abraham N. Poliak, *Feudalism in Egypt, Syria, Palestine, and the Lebanon, 1250–1900* (London: The Royal Asiatic Society, 1939), 14, 29, 32–3; David Ayalon, *L'esclavage du Mamelouk* (Jerusalem: Israel Oriental Society, 1951), 43–4; idem, "Studies on the Structure of the Mamluk Army", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 15; 16 (1953; 1954), 203–28, 448–76; 57–90, here 204, 451, 456–8; idem, "Mamluk Military Aristocracy: a non-hereditary nobility", *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 10 (1987), 205–10; idem, "Awlād al-Nās", *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*; Ulrich Haarmann, "The Sons of Mamluks as Fief-holders in Late Medieval Egypt", in: *Land Tenure and Social Transformation in the Middle East*, ed. Tarif Khalidi, Beirut: American University in Beirut 1984, 141–68; idem, "Arabic in Speech, Turkish in Lineage: Mamluks and Their Sons in the Intellectual Life of Fourteenth-Century Egypt and Syria", *Journal of Semitic Studies* 33/1 (1988), 81–114; idem, "Joseph's Law. The Careers and Activities of Mamluk Descendants before the Ottoman Conquest of Egypt", in: *The Mamluks in Egyptian Politics and Society*, ed. Thomas Philipp and Ulrich Haarmann, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, 55–84; Donald S. Richards, "Mamluk amirs and their families and households", in: *The Mamluks in Egyptian Politics and Society,* ed. Thomas Philipp and Ulrich Haarmann, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, 32–54; Adam A. Sabra, *Poverty and Charity in Medieval Islam: Mamluk Egypt, 1250–1517*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2000, 90–3; Amalia Levanoni, "*Awlad al-Nas* in the Mamluk Army during the Bahri Period", in: *Mamluks and Ottomans: Studies in Honor of Michael Winter*, ed. David Wasserstein and Ami Ayalon, London and New York: Routledge 2006, 96–105; Aharon Layish, "*Waqfs* of *Awlād al-nās* in Aleppo in the Late Mamlūk Period as Reflected in a Family Archive", *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 51 (2008), 287–326; Stephan Conermann and Suad Saghbini, "*Awlād al-nās* as Grantors of Pious Foundations: The waqfīyah of Yaḥyā ibn Ṭūghān al-Ḥasanī of the Year 870/1465", *Mamlūk Studies Review* 6 (2002), 21–50; Daisuke Igarashi, *Land Tenure and Mamluk Waqfs,* Berlin: EB Verlag Dr. Brandt, 2014.

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systematically investigated".[4] In the concluding observations of this chapter, Haarmann even stated that *awlād al-nās* only refers to "an extremely volatile, mobile and not easily visible group", and that this invisibility "impeded the formation of a tangible collective identity and of the resulting group solidarity." As such, he seems to suggest that whereas *awlād al-nās* may represent a useful heuristic device for modern researchers to engage with some of the complexity and diversity of the late medieval Syro-Egyptian social world, it should not be mistaken for a historical social phenomenon or an effective social identity.[5] In the opening section of his survey chapter, Haarmann actually already illustrated this point by calling attention to the fact that "in the differentiated social models drawn up at the time"—by al-Subkī (d. 1370), al-Maqrīzī (d. 1442) and Abū Ḥāmid al-Qudsī (d. 1483)—"the sons of Mamluks are never mentioned."[6]

There exists therefore a surprising opposition between, on the one hand, the ongoing assumption in current scholarship that *awlād al-nās* represents the default contemporary term to designate *mamlūk* descendants and to identify them as a distinct social group with a very specific long history of 8th/14th-century empowerment and 9th/15th-century marginalization, and, on the other hand, the final conclusion formulated more than two decades ago by one of that scholarship's main *awlād al-nās* specialists, that there may well have been no such thing as 'the *awlād al-nās*'. Inspired by this tantalizing divergence, this chapter follows up on Haarmann's call for a "systematic investigation" of "when exactly this designation *awlād al-nās* began to be used and how it was delineated". It attempts to evaluate these two opposite positions in scholarship by pursuing a better understanding of the significance of this term's contemporary, as opposed to modern, usages. It therefore aims to take stock of the surprisingly complex semantic and discursive frameworks that defined the occurrence of *awlād al-nās*, as a meaningful combined term, in the era's most voluminous extant source material: contemporary chronicles, biographical dictionaries and related texts of history.[7] Indeed, as this chapter's first part demonstrates, when these texts use the designation *awlād al-nās*, their understandings of it were not

4 Haarmann, "Joseph's Law", 61. Also stated in his "Arabic in Speech, Turkish in Lineage", 104. A related question had already been asked many years earlier in his "The Sons of Mamluks as Fief-Holders" (147): "We do not even know, for the time being, whether the term *awlād al-nās* was customary for the sons and grandsons of Mamluks at large, or whether it was limited to those who were listed in the *ḥalqa*."

5 Haarmann, "Joseph's Law", 83–4.

6 Haarmann, "Joseph's Law", 60.

7 In all, 45 such texts from the 7th/13th to the early 10th/16th centuries have been consulted for this study, and the selection of these texts has been determined by their relevance as well as by the availability of digitized copies (on OpenITI [http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4075046] or in our own Corpus database [ihodp.ugent.be/corpus]) and/or of sufficiently detailed indexes. See the bibliography. See also fns. 33 & 43 on the organization of this corpus and its data.

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at all as uniform and specific as most modern interpretations have suggested. In fact, the social history of *mamlūk* lineages and the cultural history of the designation *awlād al-nās* in contemporary texts appear as rather more separate phenomena than generally acknowledged. Descendants, lineages, and families evidently played their differing parts in the sultanate's long history throughout the 7th/13th to the 10th/16th centuries. The term *awlād al-nās*, however, never entirely followed suit. This chapter's second part therefore reconstructs in the fullest possible detail the history of the occurrence of this combined term in the sultanate's narrative sources, aiming not only to map where the term occurred, but especially also to track the differences in its understandings by different generations of historians and their audiences. As will be demonstrated, these differences inform about a very specific trajectory of semantic continuities and transformations, which eventually included above all the representation of *awlād al-nās* as part of the later sultanate's particular *mamlūk* phenomenon, or its *mamlūk*ization. After this diachronic survey and interpretation of *awlād al-nās* occurrences in different sets of narrative sources from the 7th/13th to the 10/16th centuries, this chapter's third part endeavors to trace at least some of the ways in which, and some of the purposes to which, these changing *awlād al-nās* occurrences were interconnected across this comprehensive corpus. This part will argue that, rather than in a continuous social history of empowerment and marginalization, these interconnections must be situated in very diverse contexts of the claims, interests and challenges of particular individuals and groups, and of related textual pursuits of very different, sometimes even diametrically opposed, discursive strategies. Via this three-tiered approach, this chapter aims to not only take stock both of the semantic fluidity of the combined term *awlād al-nās* and of the surprisingly rich trajectory of its historiographical manifestations and interpretations, but it also explores a different appreciation of some of these manifestations and interpretations and of what we may learn from them.[8]

8 As should be clear from this introduction, this is above all a cultural history chapter, focused on processes of meaning making and their constructive relationships with social realities. This relates to this chapter's central perspective that modern encounters with these realities are always mediated by those contemporary interpretive processes and their embodiment in our sources, and which therefore require to be analyzed and interpreted first. For a different, but at the same time complementary, social history study of this historical divergence between the social realities of elite lineage and their identification as *awlād al-nās* realities, see the second contribution to this volume by Koby Yosef, as well as some of his related earlier work.

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2 The semantics of a polysemous concept: between *mamlūk* and non-*mamlūk* meanings

A random survey of occurrences of the combined term '*awlād [al-]nās*' (and of its variant, '*abnāʾ/ibn [al-]nās*') in contemporary texts suggests indeed that their understandings were not at all as uniform and straightforward as most modern interpretations have tended to assume. A first among several interesting examples of this semantic divergence may be found in a panegyric history/biography that was dedicated to the Qalāwūnid sultan and *mamlūk* descendant al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ Ismāʿīl (r. 1343–6). This brief text, written in a courtly context in 1343, has one *awlād al-nās* reference only, in the following passage:

> In the year 643 [1245], [sultan al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb] had made several of his *mamlūk*s amir, he had appointed governors from among them, and he had enabled them to rule the realms. The rule of the *turk* (*ḥukm al-turk*) in Egypt and Syria continued until now. Before, the rule and reign (*al-ḥukm wa-l-mulk*) there had been for the *awlād al-nās*, and the *dawla* of the *turk*, issuing forth from the *mamlūk*s [of al-Ṣāliḥ], was only established in the year 643, and it has continued until this blessed year, the year 743 [1343], the [entire] period [being] 100 years.[9]

Not only does this panegyric include the reigns of two sons and four grandsons of the *mamlūk* sultan Qalāwūn (r. 1279–90) into its centennial representation of "the *dawla* of the 'Turks'"; it also interestingly represents the concept of *awlād al-nās* in a historical contrast with these *turk*, as identifying their Ayyubid predecessors of explicitly non-*mamlūk* origins in the leadership over Egypt and Syria.

In the biographical study of contemporaries by the Syrian secretary Khalīl b. Aybak al-Ṣafadī (d. 1363), a similar contrast between a Syro-Egyptian leadership with and one without *mamlūk* origins may be found in the biography of the famous Qalāwūnid amir Qūṣūn al-Nāṣirī (d. 1341). In this case, however, the contrast is presented not from a diachronic historical perspective, but rather from a synchronic social one. This Qūṣūn, who had been a traveling merchant from the Pontic-Caspian Steppes before entering by his own volition into royal service and becoming a strongman behind the Qalāwūnid throne, was, in al-Ṣafadī's view, "a people's son and not a *mamlūk* (*wa-huwa ibn nās wa-lam yakun mamlūkan*)".[10]

Another example of this divergence from modern assumptions may be found about half a century later, when the Egyptian historian Aḥmad b. ʿAlī al-Maqrīzī (d. 1442) related in his chronicle of the sultanate's history the story of a short-

9 Ibn al-Qaysarānī, *al-Nūr al-Lāʾiḥ*, 55; Jo Van Steenbergen, "Qalāwūnid Discourse, Elite Communication and the Mamluk Cultural Matrix: interpreting a 14th-century panegyric", *Journal of Arabic Literature* 43/1 (2012), 1–28, 11.

10 al-Ṣafadī, *Aʿyān al-ʿAṣr*, 4:137.

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lived manifestation of local millenarian leadership and autonomy in southern Bilād al-Shām. This course of events in the summer of 816/1413 allegedly revolved around a *faqīh* who claimed to be an apocalyptic leader (al-Sufyānī), who declared himself sultan in the region of ʿAjlūn, and who succeeded to rally various hundreds of "*ʿarab*, *atrāk* and *ʿashīr*" to his cause. Most interestingly, according to al-Maqrīzī a public announcement in this local sultan's name did not just refer to the abolition and new arrangement of various local taxes, but it also proclaimed that "the rule of the *turk* had been abolished, so that only the rule of the *awlād al-nās* remained (*fa-ʾinna ḥukm al-turk qad abṭala wa-lam yabqa illā ḥukm awlād al-nās*)". In this phrase it is again the contrast between *turk* and *awlād al-nās* that gives meaning to both terms; in this context, however, that contrast appears not as a historical or a social one, but rather as a spatial opposition between, on the one hand, the sultan in Egypt and the regional layer of his Syrian agents and arrangements, and, on the other hand, a longstanding local layer of leaderships and their changing arrangements in the southern Bilād al-Shām.[11]

Again many decades later, the Syrian scholar, personal tutor of sultan al-Ẓāhir Jaqmaq (r. 1437–53) and trusted agent of sultan al-Ashraf Īnāl (r. 1453–61) Burhān al-Dīn al-Biqāʿī (d. 1480) presented yet another example of this semantic divergence when he also alluded to the opposition between '*turk*' and *awlād al-nās* in his autobiographical chronicle. This occurred in a report that states that in August 1454 (Shaʿbān 858) "those who were not *turk*—the *awlād al-nās*, the *faqīh*s and their like—were barred from the *dīwān al-mufrad* (*wa-quṭiʿa ʿala l-dīwān al-mufrad man ghayr al-turk wa-hum awlād al-nās wa-l-fuqahāʾ wa-ghayruhum*)" so that their regular stipends were withheld.[12] In this particular case, however, the opposition that makes the use of the combined term *awlād al-nās* meaningful is not a historical, social or spatial one, but a financial arrangement that opposes *turk* to *awlād al-nās* and other similar categories that were normally included as beneficiaries in the sultanate's resource flows.

These four specific cases' different oppositional uses of the notions of '*turk*' and *awlād al-nās* are obviously at odds with modern understandings of the latter as the descendants of the former *mamlūk turk*. Nevertheless, this dominant idea of a kind of generational continuity is certainly also present in contemporary texts. The example from al-Biqāʿī's chronicle could in fact also be read as using the combined term *awlād al-nās* to simultaneously signify some of those who for specific financial reasons were considered "not *turk* (*ghayr al-turk*)" and those less privileged descendants of these *turk* that in regular circumstances continued to be among the beneficiaries from sultanic income. This ties in directly with

11 al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 6:350.
12 al-Biqāʿī, *Iẓhār*, 2:59.

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more well-known contemporary examples of this common modern understanding of 'the *awlād al-nās*' as the readily identifiable social group of "the descendants, to about the fourth generation, of the politically significant people —that is, the foreign military elite, the manumitted Mamlūks—who dominated the state."[13] One clear example of the latter meaning may be found in a panegyric chronicle for sultan al-Ashraf Qāyitbāy (r. 1468–96), by the smalltime Ḥanafī scholar ʿAlī b. Dāwūd al-Jawharī al-Ṣayrafī (1416–95). In the detailed reports for the months Rabīʿ al-Awwal and al-Thānī of the year 873 (September–October 1468), al-Jawharī explains the enormous extent of the challenges that were faced by the recently enthroned sultan to pay salaries and stipends, including to "the *awlād al-nās* who are registered in the *dīwān* of the sultanic *mamlūk*s (*awlād al-nās al-munzilīn bi-dīwān al-mamālīk al-sulṭāniyya*)"; in al-Jawharī's reading, one of the causes for this was related to the policy of one of Qāyitbāy's predecessors, sultan al-Ẓāhir Jaqmaq (r. 1437–53), "to increase the monthly stipends of the sultanic *mamlūk*s and assign a monthly stipend to their sons (*wa-yurattib li-awlādihim jāmakiyya*); and if they did not have that—that is, sons (*yaʿnī awlādan*)—, the stipend would be raised, in accordance with this [policy], by a third of what it had been."[14]

Another example that is often referred to to illustrate this more common understanding concerns a passage—apparently first noticed by Robert Irwin and David Ayalon[15]—in the chronicle of Egyptian and Qalāwūnid history by the *mamlūk* grandson, military man, and historian Abū Bakr b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Aybak al-Dawādārī (d. after 1337). In this passage it is suggested that sultan al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn (r. 1279–90) had gathered the scattered offspring of his former *mamlūk* comrades of the Baḥriyya regiment and provided them with both regular sources of income in the military unit of the *ḥalqa* and a position as guards of one of the citadel's gates. Ibn al-Dawādārī first identified this offspring as the "*awlād al-Baḥriyya*", but it was especially his subsequent comment that this happened without the approval of a leading amir who "hated the *awlād al-nās*" (*fa-innahu yakrahu awlād al-nās*) which has been seen to confirm and even further the default modern reading of this term.[16] A similar comment by another historian and *mamlūk* descendant, Ṣārim al-Dīn Ibrāhīm Ibn Duqmāq (d. 1407), has likewise informed this modern master narrative of the *awlād al-nās* as *mamlūk* descendants who were integrated in the *ḥalqa* by the end of the 7th/13th century

13 Meloy, "Awlād al-Nās".

14 al-Jawharī, *Inbāʾ al-Ḥaṣr*, 34.

15 Robert Irwin, *The Middle East in the middle ages. The early Mamluk Sultanate 1250–1382*, Kent: Croom Helm Ltd 1986, 71; David Ayalon, "Baḥrī Mamluks, Burjī Mamlūks—Inadequate Names for the Two Reigns of the Mamlūk Sultanate", *Tārīkh* 1 (1990), 3–52, 28–31; Haarmann, "Joseph's Law", 63, f. 40.

16 al-Dawādārī, *Kanz*, 8:302.

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and who were empowered as Qalāwūnid amirs in the course of the 8th/14th century. Ibn Duqmāq's summary history of Islamic leadership ends its general assessment of the reign of the Qalāwūnid sultan al-Nāṣir Ḥasan (r. 1347–51; 1354–61) with the following famous comment:

> It was [Ḥasan's] intention to raise the *awlād al-nās.* Most of them were raised in his days, including nine *muqaddams alf* […]. He promoted a group (*jumāʿa*) of amirs of *ṭablakhānāt* and of ten, summoned from Syria to Egypt the sons of the people who had remained aloof (*awlād al-nās al-muḥtashimīn*), and made Ibn al-Qashtamurī *nāʾib Ḥalab* and Ibn Ṣabīḥ *nāʾib Ṣafad.* May God the Sublime have mercy for him and forgive him, because he used to say: 'Never have I heard anyone say that a people's son stood up against the sultan. (*ʿumrī mā samiʿtu aḥadan yaqūlu in ibn nās khāmaraʿala l-sulṭān*).'[17]

This comment, or especially its parallel renderings in some later chronicles, is invariably invoked when that master narrative of the history of the *awlād al-nās* is discussed. There are good prosopographical reasons for this, given that the names mentioned here indeed all refer to second-generation amirs. However, Ibn Duqmāq's understanding of this master narrative may have been somewhat more open-ended than generally accepted. The ranks of *awlād al-nās* whose names are explicitly listed here also included sons of smalltime non-*mamlūk* fathers such as the *muqaddam alf* Mūsā b. al-Uzkushī (d. 780/1379), vaguely identified as al-Miṣrī ('the Egyptian') in one later obituary and "the son of ʿAbd Allāh" in another;[18] and Ibn Ṣabīḥ, the *nāʾib Ṣafad*, who was better known as the Damascene amir and *ḥadīth* scholar Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. ʿAlī b. Ḥasan b. Ḥusayn b. Ṣubḥ al-Kurdī (d. 771/1369).[19]

A less exclusively *mamlūk awlād al-nās* definition also seems to have been preferred in another interesting example of this semantic fluidity, by the historian Shams al-Dīn al-Shujāʿī (d. after 1356). In the extant part of his annalistic chronicle of Qalāwūnid history (737–45 AH), the term *awlād al-nās* only occurs once.[20] This happens in a highly flattering obituary notice for the amir Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad, who died in the course of 741/1341 and who was the son of another strongman behind the Qalāwūnid throne, the amir Jankalī b. Muḥammad b. al-Bābā (d. 1346). In his praise for Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Jankalī,

17 Ibn Duqmāq, *Jawhar*, 404–5.

18 Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Tārīkh*, 3:590; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbāʾ*, 1:295. See also Takao Ito's chapter in this volume, as well as Koby Yosef's second, which suggests that Ibn Ṣabīḥ actually was "a Kurd of free origin".

19 Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar*, 1: 307; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Tārīkh*, 3: 366–7; Ibn al-ʿIrāqī, *Dhayl*, 2: 292–3. See also Yosef's second chapter.

20 The only other relevant occurrence in this text again concerns the oppositional use of the term '*ibn nās*', in an obituary notice for an amir who "was claimed to be a 'people's son' from the sons of Aleppo (*ibn nās min abnāʾ Ḥalab*)" rather than a "*mamlūk* of sultan Lājīn". (al-Shujāʿī, *Tārīkh*, 55).

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al-Shujāʿī states that he was "one of the most eloquent, intelligent, comely and articulate [persons] among the *awlād al-nās* (*min fuṣaḥāʾ awlād al-nās wa-adhkāhum wa-aḥsanihim shikālatan wa-ʿibāratan*)".[21] Just as in the above-mentioned case of the "people's son" Qūṣūn, however, Muḥammad's father Jankalī never had been a *mamlūk*, and he started his career as a successful Ilkhanid military agent in the region of Amid (Diyar Bakr) before switching sides in the early 700s/1300s; Muḥammad himself was said to have been born in Amid before that happened, and to have migrated to Egypt with his father at the age of six.[22] Al-Shujāʿī's portrayal of Muḥammad as one of "the *awlād al-nās*" therefore again invokes the idea of his social distinction. In this case, however, this distinction is neither related to any diachronic, synchronic, spatial, or fiscal contrast nor to any more direct *mamlūk* connection, but rather to his father's towering leadership status as well as to Muḥammad's own cultural achievement.

Almost two centuries later, a parallel situation and another slightly different example of this fluidity of the term *awlād al-nās* returns in a chronicle of Egyptian history by the historian Muḥammad Ibn Iyās (d. after 930/c. 1524). Among the many *awlād al-nās* references in this text, there also is the obituary notice for one "al-Badrī Ḥasan b. al-Ṭūlūnī" (d. 923/1517), which identifies this Ḥasan as "one of the *awlād al-nās* notables (*min aʿyān awlād al-nās*)". As his name suggests, Ḥasan was not of any *mamlūk* descent, but a leading member of the Ṭūlūnī family of Egyptian building contractors and stone masons. This family allegedly hailed from North-African origins, and it first acquired prominence in Egypt with the *muhandis* Aḥmad Ibn al-Ṭūlūnī (d. 1399), a low-ranking amir who is said to have "dressed like a *turk*" and whose sister and daughter were spouses of sultan al-Ẓāhir Barqūq (r. 1382–9/1390–9).[23]

These nine examples of *awlād al-nās* occurrences in a diverse set of chronicles and biographical dictionaries all display first and foremost substantial differences in whom the combined term *awlād al-nās* is meant to identify. These referents range from non-*mamlūk* to *mamlūk* descendants, from local Syrian leaderships to Egyptian stipendiaries, and from *ḥalqa* troopers to courtly elites. These examples inform therefore about how contemporary understandings of *awlād al-nās* could combine an interest in paternal lineage with far more open and fluid qualifications of that lineage than most modern readers have so far suggested. In fact, as will be further demonstrated and analyzed in this article's next part, this range of different referents and fluid qualifications can be usefully represented as a continuum of lineage-related *awlād al-nās* meanings. Just as in

21 al-Shujāʿī, *Tārīkh*, 121.

22 See al-Ṣafadī, *Aʿyān al-ʿAṣr*, 4: 380; Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkirat al-Nabīh*, 3: 23.

23 Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ*, 5:161; on the Ṭūlūnī dynasty of building contractors and chief *muʿallim*s, see Doris Behrens-Abouseif, "*Muhandis, Shād,* Muʿallim—Note on the Building Craft in the Mamluk Period", *Der Islam* 72/2 (1995), 293–309, 297–303.

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al-Jawharī's references to "the *awlād al-nās* who are registered in the *dīwān* of the sultanic *mamlūk*s", one, *mamlūk*, end of this continuum is occupied by various similar occurrences that literally '*mamlūk*ize' the term *awlād al-nās* by explicitly representing it as a group among the sultan's *mamlūk*s.[24] The other, entirely non-*mamlūk*, end of this polysemous range appears in occurrences in contemporary texts that consider *awlād al-nās* a generic urban category of freeborn young boys along a wide span of possible social statuses, from urban elite sons (*awlād al-aʿyān*) to the urban poor.[25] The anonymous late 8th/14th century *Tārīkh al-Dawla al-Turkīya*—a short dynastic chronicle that covers the years 650–805 AH and possibly represents a version of Ibn Duqmāq's *al-Nafḥa al-Miskīya fi l-Dawla al-Turkīya*—[26] includes one of the more direct statements along this generic line. In its brief account of the ceremonial for the circumcision of the son and heir apparent of sultan al-Ẓāhir Baybars (r. 1260–77), al-Saʿīd Baraka, in 662/1264, it clarifies that "the *awlād al-nās* who were circumcised together with al-Malik al-Saʿīd amounted to 1,645 [boys] from the sons of the *fuqahāʾ* and the commoners, not including the sons of the amirs, the commanders and the troopers (*awlād al-nās […] min awlād al-fuqahāʾ wa-l-ʿawāmm ghayr awlād al-umarāʾ wa-l-muqaddamīn wa-l-jund*)".[27]

24 See e. g. Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, vol. 15:366; 16:379. Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Ḥawādith*, ed. Popper, 3:681. This was already noted by Poliak, *Feudalism*, 29, n. 10; Ayalon, "Studies", 457; Haarmann, "Sons of Mamluks", 149.

25 For the parallelism between *awlād al-nās* and *awlād al-aʿyān*, see al-Ṣafadī, *Aʿyān*, 5:407; for the parallelism with the urban poor, see the only occurrence in Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-ʿUmarī (d. 749/1349), *Masālik*, 3:67 (explaining how in al-Hind "orphans and *awlād al-nās* are taught to read and write"). This seems also in line with more general generic uses of the term, as in a story recorded by the Baghdadi historian Ibn al-Fuwaṭī (d. 1323) about "one of the *awlād al-nās*" from Baghdad (Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, *Ḥawādith*, 1:283), in three stories attributed to the Fatimid historian Ibn Abī Ṭayy by al-Maqrīzī and involving different roles for "*awlād al-nās*" in much earlier, Fatimid times (al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2:291, 350, 387), and in three cases in al-Dhahabī's (d. 748) *Tārīkh al-Islām* where these *awlād al-nās* references are not even remotely related to anything *mamlūk* (al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-Islām*, 23:462; 43:141; 52:116).

26 See Sami G. Massoud, *The Chronicles and Annalistic Sources of the Early Mamluk Circassian Period,* Leiden, Boston: Brill 2007, 2, n. 12; idem, "Ibn Duqmāq", *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE*; Ibn Duqmāq, *Nafḥa*, ed. Tadmurī, 20 (editor's introduction).

27 Anonymous, *Tārīkh al-Dawla al-Turkīya*, MS Cambr. Qq 147, fol. 10a; in his dynastic chronicle *al-Jawhar al-Thamīn* Ibn Duqmāq includes a related but different version of the same report, which does not refer to *awlād al-nās* but similarly explains that "the people brought their sons (*aḥḍara l-nās awlādahum*), and the number of youngsters (*ʿiddat al-ṣighār*) amounted to 1,645 [boys] from the sons of the *faqīh*s and the commoners, irrespective of the sons of the amirs, the commanders and the troopers (*min awlād al-fuqahā wa-l-ʿawāmm wa khārijan ʿan awlād al-umarāʾ wa-l-muqaddamīn wa-l-jund*)" (Ibn Duqmāq, *Jawhar*, 276; similar in Ibn Duqmāq, *Nafḥa*, 58). Among the many versions of this circumcision story in a variety of historiographical texts, it is interesting to note that *awlād al-nās* is never used in pre-*Tārīkh al-Dawla al-Turkīya* texts: al-Dhahabī's short version of this circumcision story refers only to "a group of the sons of the amirs (*jumāʿa min awlād al-umarāʾ*)" (al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, 49:19; idem in Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 13:245); Baybars al-Man-

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3 The history of a polysemous concept: from non-*mamlūk* to *mamlūk*izing frequencies of *awlād al-nās* occurrences

As mentioned above, Ibn al-Dawādārī's reference to a leading amir who "hated the *awlād al-nās*" but could not prevent sultan Qalāwūn from supporting the "*awlād al-Baḥriyya*" represents an important moment in the modern master narrative of *awlād al-nās* integration in the *ḥalqa* and their subsequent empowerment as Qalāwūnid amirs. Interestingly, however, Ibn al-Dawādārī's reference does not just represent the only occurrence of the term *awlād al-nās* in any renderings of this story in other contemporary and later chronicles.[28] It is also the only *awlād al-nās* occurrence in the full nine-volume set of the critical edition of Ibn al-Dawādārī's chronicle. The only other related reference in the entire text concerns the notion '*abnāʾ al-nās*', which similarly occurs only once in this universal chronicle, in the obituary of an Ayyubid ruler of Ḥamā, and again

ṣūrī's equally short version prefers to speak of "a group of the sons of the senior amirs" (*jumāʿa min awlād al-umarāʾ al-akābir*) (Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubda*, 92); and the longest (and perhaps oldest) version of this story, in Ibn ʿAbd al-Ẓāhir's (d. 692/1292) panegyric biography of sultan Baybars, refers to the circumcision of "the sons of kings and the sons of amirs (*awlād al-mulūk wa-awlād al-umarāʾ*)", presents a list that identifies nine of these sons by the names of the amirs and Ayyubid rulers who were their fathers, eventually referring to another "group of the sons of the amirs" (*jumāʿa min awlād al-umarāʾ*), and adds that "a group of the orphans and of the sons of the poor" (*jumāʿa min al-aytām wa-abnāʾ al-fuqarāʾ*) had already preceded them (Ibn ʿAbd al-Ẓāhir, *Rawḍ*, 214; a slightly adapted similar version in al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 30:103). Among later texts, al-Maqrīzī's topographical history of Cairo stands out, as it repeats the rendering of this story in the *Tārīkh al-Dawla al-Turkīya*, including the *awlād al-nās* reference, when it reports that "al-Malik al-Saʿīd was circumcised together with 1,645 young boys from the *awlād al-nās*, other than the sons of the amirs and the troopers […*ṣabīyan min awlād al-nās siwā awlād al-umarāʾ wa-l-ajnād*)" (al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 4:99). In his chronicle of Egyptian history, al-Maqrīzī very briefly refers to this circumcision of al-Malik al-Saʿīd in 662/1364, but without any reference to the circumcision of other boys (al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:516). Al-Maqrīzī's contemporary al-ʿAynī refers in this same textual context to the simultaneous circumcision of "a group from the sons of the senior amirs (*jumāʿa min awlād al-umarāʾ al-kibār*)" only (al-ʿAynī, *ʿIqd al-Jumān*, ed. Amīn, 1:376). Much later, Ibn Iyās' (d. after 930/1524) chronicle recalls Ibn Duqmāq's and al-Maqrīzī's renderings by stating that "their number was 1,645 boys, irrespective of the sons of the amirs and of the notables of the people (*waladan khārijan ʿan awlād al-umarāʾ wa-aʿyān al-nās*)" and that also "the sons of the commoners (*awlād al-ʿawāmm*)" were involved; Ibn Iyās, again, does not refer to *awlād al-nās* in this context (Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ*, 1/1:323).

28 Ibn al-Dawādārī's contemporary Qaraṭāy al-ʿIzzī (d. 1333) explains in his own chronicle that it were indeed the Bahriyya and their sons (*al-Bahriyya wa-awlādahum*; *awlāduhum*; *awlād al-Baḥriyya*) whom this amir hated, because of the fearlessness of their fathers and the lack of respect from their sons; Qaraṭāy, however, did not use the phrase *awlād al-nās* in this context (Qaraṭāy, *Tārīkh*, 170; see also Yosef's second chapter). Both terms *awlād al-Baḥriyya* and *awlād al-nās* are not at all mentioned in a later rendering of this Baḥriyya story, by al-Maqrīzī, which refers instead simply to the offspring of Qalāwūn's peers from the Ṣāliḥiyya as '*dharārīhim*', 'their progeny' (al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1: 658).

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with a very open, generalizing meaning.[29] This textual situation of a predominant *awlād al-nās* silence is actually very much alike in another major source for the modern master narrative: Ibn Duqmāq's summary history of Islamic leadership, *al-Jawhar al-Thamīn.* Interestingly, in this chronicle too the terms *awlād al-nās* and '*ibn nās*' occur only in the above-quoted passage that qualifies and explains the leadership of sultan al-Nāṣir Ḥasan's reign.[30] In fact, these terms never occur in any parallel 8th/14th century text about sultan al-Nāṣir Ḥasan's reign. The historical writings of contemporaries of this reign, such as the afore-mentioned biographer al-Ṣafadī, the Damascene traditionalist scholar Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373), the Maghrebi *littérateur* Ibn Abī Ḥajala (d. 776/1375), and the Aleppine scribe Badr al-Dīn Ibn Ḥabīb (d. 779/1377), use the combined term *awlād al-nās* at most only seven times, but never in their descriptions and assessments of Ḥasan's reign and leadership.[31] From what is currently known, it can therefore only be concluded that Ibn Duqmāq was the first to make any explicit descriptive as well as interpretive connection between that mid-8th/14th century leadership and the notion of *awlād al-nās*, even when he refrained from using this notion elsewhere in his text.[32]

29 Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz*, 8:265 (al-Malik al-Manṣūr Muḥammad [d. 683/1284] is praised for his benevolence and kindness "towards all the people who called upon him, especially the 'patrons of houses, the people's sons, and those who were in need'" [*khuṣūṣan arbāb al-buyūt wa-abnāʾ al-nās wa-dawī l-ḥājāt*]).

30 See Ibn Duqmāq, *Jawhar*, 546 (index).

31 See the biographies of al-Nāṣir Ḥasan and the assessments of his reign in al-Ṣafadī, *Aʿyān*, 2:247–52; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 14:278; Ibn Abī Ḥajala, *Sukkardān*; Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkira*, 3:240. The same absence can be noted in the historical section of Muḥammad Ibn ʿAqīl's panegyric for sultan al-Ẓāhir Barqūq, written in the early 780s/1380s (*al-Durr al-Naḍīd fī Manāqib al-Malik al-Ẓāhir Abī Saʿīd*, Ms. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Wetzstein I 133, fol. 16v–17r). Ibn Duqmāq's contemporary Ibn Khaldūn (d. 1406) also does not mention any link between Ḥasan's reign and *awlād al-nās* in his chronicle of Afro-Asian history, and neither does Ibn Ḥajar (d. 1449), in his biographies of 8th/14th century elites (Ibn Khaldūn, *ʿIbar*, 5:452; Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar*, 2:38–40). Unfortunately, the relevant parts of Ibn Duqmāq's major chronicle *Nuzhat al-Anām*, of which the *Jawhar* is but a summary, seem to be lost; equally unfortunately, the relevant mid-8th/14th century parts of the chronicle by Ibn Duqmāq's other contemporary Ibn al-Furāt (d. 1405), who is known to have recycled and expanded upon Ibn Duqmāq's materials, are similarly not known to have survived (Massoud, *Chronicles*, 30, 36–8; Fozia Bora, "A Mamluk Historian's Holograph. Messages from a *Musawwada* of *Taʾrīkh*", *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts* 3 [2012], 119–53, 127).

32 This does not deny the social fact, of course, that many 'sons' rose to prominence and leadership in Ḥasan's days. It has by now, however, been firmly established that this was a much wider phenomenon marking the entire period of 8th/14th century Qalāwūnid history (see also Levanoni, "*Awlad al-nas*"; and Ito's and Yosef 's second chapter on the construct of this *awlād al-nās* link.). See part 3 for a further consideration of Ibn Duqmāq's intentions.

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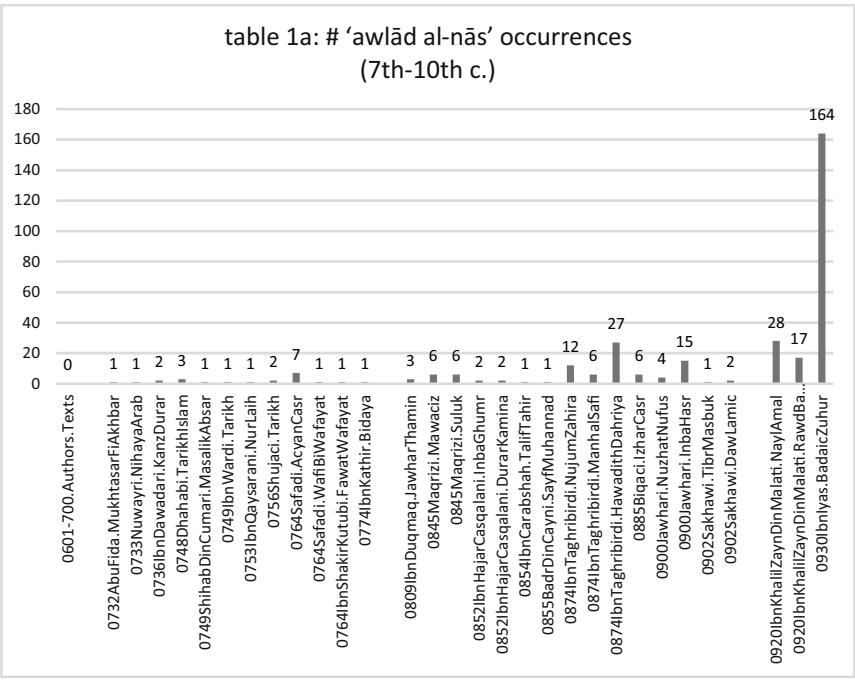

In fact, similar absences or, at best, very to extremely limited occurrences of the combined term *awlād al-nās* may be noted for all but one of the sultanate's texts of history (see table 1a).[33] Al-Ṣafadī's five-volume biographical study of his contemporaries only mentions the term *awlād al-nās* six times, in addition to his one reference to the "people's son (*ibn nās*)" Qūṣūn. These seven occurrences represent a negligible 0.001% of this text of more than 600,000 words, or an average frequency of 0.001 per hundred words. One occurrence concerns a conversation between a Syrian amir of Ayyūbid lineage and the amir Sharaf al-Dīn Ḥusayn b. Abī Bakr b. Jandar (d. 729/1329), in which the former would have said: "[O] Sharaf al-Dīn, aren't we all people's sons (*mā naḥnu kullunā awlād*

33 This and most of the other tables in this chapter are put up for their illustrative rather than their interpretive value, given that they are constructed with absolute numbers of listed occurrences in texts of highly diverse sizes (texts are identified in these tables by their Open Islamicate Text Initiative URI); these nominal *awlād al-nās* frequencies remain difficult to compare without taking into account the overall word-size of the entire corpus of 45 consulted texts, of the separate 13th-, 14th-,15th- and 16th-century sub-corpora, and of the 30 individual texts with *awlād al-nās* occurrences; given that not all texts in the corpus have been digitized yet, including importantly Ibn Iyās' *Badāʾiʿ*, and that their overall word-size remains therefore difficult to establish, it has remained impossible to calculate relative frequencies for proper comparative purposes. These tables therefore can do no more than hint at certain patterns.

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nās)?".[34] A second reference can be found in al-Ṣafadī's biography of an amir who moved to Safed with a personal entourage of "*mamlūk*s, eunuch servants and handsome *awlād nās* attendants (*mamālīk wa-khuddām ṭawāshiyya wa-awlād nās atbāʿ lahu milāḥ*)."[35] Two further occurrences relate to descriptions of praiseworthy individual qualities: the *mamlūk* amir's son Quṭlūbak b. Qarāsunqur (d. 729/1329) is credited with "the caution of the *awlād al-nās* (*ʿalayhi khafr awlād al-nās*)", and the calligrapher Mūsā b. ʿAlī (d. 716/1316) is said to "have been confidently entrusted with the care for the *awlād al-nās*, chaste, virtuous and pious (*wa-kāna maʾmūnan ʿalā awlād al-nās ʿafīfan khayyiran dayyinan*)".[36] The emotional or even sexual connotation that was implied in these "handsome attendants" and in this "confidence" and "care for the *awlād al-nās*" is actually suggested most explicitly by the final two occurrences of the combined term *awlād al-nās* in this text. Al-Ṣafadī's biography of Ibn Khaṭīb Baʿlabakk al-Sulamī describes the latter as someone "with whom some of the sons of the notables (*awlād al-aʿyān*) learned to write"; it ascribes to this teacher the particular qualities of "devoutness, chastity, continence, the strength to keep oneself from pursuing a devastating desire for the *awlād al-nās*, and integrity (*wa-kāna fīhi diyāna wa-ʿiffa wa-ṣiyāna wa-taqwā tamannuʿihi min al-taṭallu*ʿ *ilā awlād al-nās wa-amāna*)"; and it claims that he refused a calligraphic commission from the *nāʾib al-Shām* by "presenting as an excuse that he was too busy teaching the *awlād al-nās* to write (*mashghūl bi-taktīb awlād al-nās*)".[37]

Even al-Maqrīzī's above mentioned reference to an apocalyptic movement in southern Bilād al-Shām and its local *awlād al-nās* connection concerns one out of only six occurrences of this combined term in the entire chronicle. These occurrences represent an even more negligible 0.00075% of this text of more than 800,000 words. They include an adapted rendering of Ibn Duqmāq's comments on the composition of sultan Ḥasan's leadership, as well as stories involving impoverished *awlād al-nās* who had illegally sold their *iqṭāʿ*s in 721/1321, the confiscation of horses from "the amirs, the *awlād al-nās* and […] the ʿArabs of al-Buḥayra, al-Gharbiyya and al-Sharqiyya" in early 792/1390, the arrest of the amir Shaykh al-Ṣafawī (d. 1399) in 800/1398 in Jerusalem as a result of his vice (*fasād*), consisting of "his approaching the *awlād al-nās* and inciting them to fornication (*taʿarrudahu li-awlād al-nās yurīduhum ʿala l-fāḥisha*)", and, in 832/1429, a brief and ineffective embargo in Cairo's horse market on the sale of horses to specific groups, including "to any *awlād al-nās* trooper (*li-jundī min awlād al-*

34 al-Ṣafadī, *Aʿyān*, 4:555.
35 al-Ṣafadī, *Aʿyān*, 4:100–1.
36 al-Ṣafadī, *Aʿyān*, 4:124; 5:481.
37 al-Ṣafadī, *Aʿyān*, 5:407 (for the translation of *al-taṭallu*ʿ *ilā* as 'pursuing a devastating desire for', see E.W. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, 8 vols. [Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1968; repr. London: Williams and Norgate, 1863–74], 1: 1868, c).

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nās)".[38] In al-Biqāʿī's mid-9th/15th century case, the term *awlād al-nās* similarly occurs six times only in the three-volume edited version of his autobiographical chronicle. In this text of some 200,000 words these six occurrences represent a marginally higher average frequency of 0.003 per hundred words. Most of these occurrences involve stories like the afore-mentioned one from al-Biqāʿī's chronicle regarding "those who were not *turk*", about contested claims to resources and privileges, and involving *waqf*, inheritances, the sultan's *dīwān*, and in one case also the wearing of the distinctive *zamṭ* hat. In addition to these five political-economy-related cases, the term *awlād al-nās* also occurs once in a context of urban violence, in the report for Rabīʿ al-Thānī 856/April 1452, when sultan al-Ẓāhir Jaqmaq (r. 1438–53) is described as having judged and sentenced to imprisonment the murderer of "a *ghulām* of an *awlād al-nās* trooper (*ghulāman li-jundī min awlād al-nās*)".[39]

This general impression of the low frequency of *awlād al-nās* occurrences in some of our main contemporary sources, including those—by Ibn al-Dawādārī, Ibn Duqmāq and al-Maqrīzī—which have informed the modern *awlād al-nās* meta-narrative of empowerment and marginalization, is in many ways as surprising as the fluidity of this combined term's meanings is. To arrive at a better and more nuanced understanding of both unexpected phenomena, the three following sections reconstruct in the fullest possible diachronic detail the history of the occasional occurrence of this combined term in the sultanate's narrative sources. To do so, each of these sections not only maps when and where the term occurred, but it also tracks the differences in its understandings along the non-*mamlūk*/*mamlūk* continuum of *awlād al-nās* meanings. While the first section thus considers the majority of the relatively silent corpus, the second and third sections adopt this two-pronged approach in their detailed analyses of four historians' chronicles that stand out due to both higher frequencies of *awlād al-nās* occurrences and more explicit—and therefore more informative—representations of their *mamlūk*izing meanings.

38 al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3: 44; 4: 253, 274, 420, 796.

39 al-Biqāʿī, *Iẓhār*, 1: 206; 2: 59, 62, 84, 211; 3: 89. On the red *zamṭ* hat as a marker of social distinction from the mid-9th/15th century onwards, see Albrecht Fuess, "Sultans with Horns: the Political Significance of Headgear in the Mamluk Empire", *Mamlūk Studies Review* 12/2 (2008), 71–94, 82–3, 93 (figures 11–12).

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3.1 7th–9th/13th–15th century *awlād al-nās* occurrences: silence, ambiguity and *mamlūk*ization

What appears as a most striking impression from a wider survey of relevant 7th/13th to 9th/15th century historical texts is indeed not just the bewildering diversity of *awlād al-nās* meanings, but also the extremely low frequency of *awlād al-nās* occurrences (see table 1b). This remarkable *awlād al-nās* silence was absolutely deafening in texts of history that were written in the 7th/13th century,[40] and it remained the norm, with only a limited number of 22 exceptions, in consulted texts from the 8th/14th century.[41] This impression diverges entirely, and surprisingly, from the modern master narrative of 8th/14th century *awlād al-nās* empowerment. So does the fact that, among these exceptions, representing an average of merely 1.5 occurrences per 8th/14th century text, the *awlād al-nās* meanings that were prioritized lean towards the non-*mamlūk* end of its semantic continuum, and towards the generic category of young boys of varying local freeborn origins in particular. This is evident in the afore-mentioned seven cases in al-Ṣafadī's biographical study of his contemporaries, and especially the references to the "people's son" Qūṣūn, to "handsome attendants", to the quality of "taking care for the *awlād al-nās*", and to teaching "the sons of the notables (*awlād al-aʿyān*)" to write. Similar meanings appear to dominate the eight *awlād al-nās* references by the era's other Syrian historians.[42] Even the "*awlād al-Baḥriyya*" of the Egyptian historian Ibn al-Dawādārī and the identification by his colleague al-Shujāʿī of "one of the most eloquent, intelligent, comely and articulate [persons] among the *awlād al-nās*" may have to be understood first and foremost within this context of freeborn local boys and "*awlād al-aʿyān*".

40 Consulted texts from this century, which are not listed in tables 1a and b because of their lack of *awlād al-nās* occurrences, include Abū Shāma's *Rawḍatayn*, Ibn Khallikān's *Wafayāt*, Ibn Shaddād's *Aʿlāq al-Khaṭīra*, Ibn ʿAbd al-Ẓāhir's *Rawḍ* and Ibn Wāṣil's *Mufarrij al-Kurūb*.

41 Other consulted texts from this century, which are not listed in tables 1a and b because of their lack of *awlād al-nās* occurrences, include Baybars al-Manṣūrī's *Zubda*, al-Yūnīnī's *Dhayl*, and al-Ṭarsūsī's *Kitāb Tuḥfat al-Turk*.

42 Ibn Shākir al-Kutubī, *Fawāt*, 1:392; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 18:353; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, 4:307; al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-Islām*, 23:462; 43:141; 52:116; Abu l-Fidāʾ, *Mukhtaṣar*, 4:111 (repeated in Ibn al-Wardī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 296). See also the further discussion of these 8th/14th century meanings below, in part 3.

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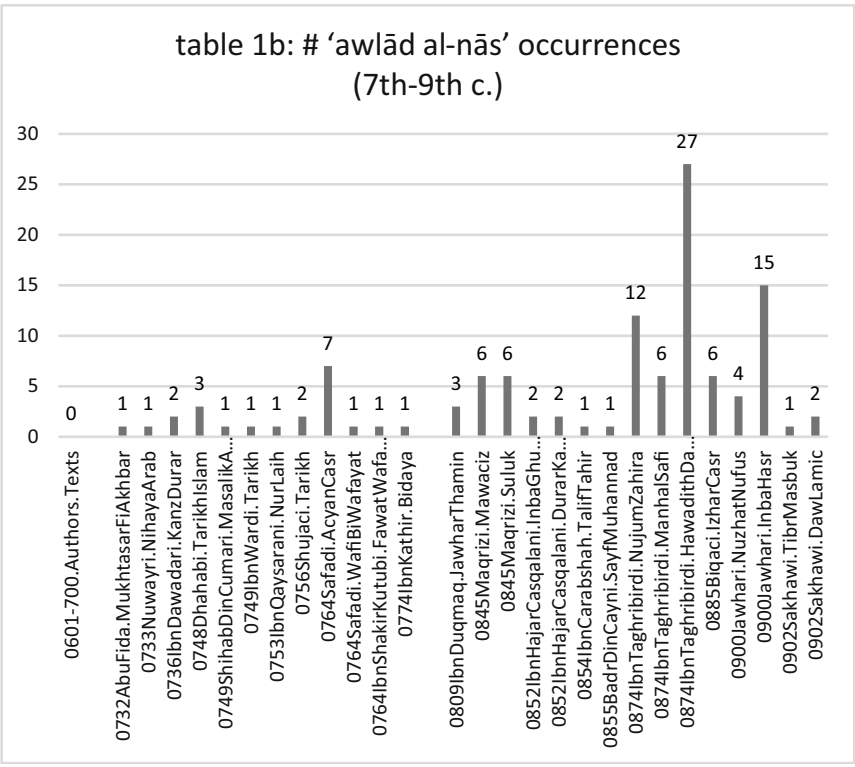

At first sight, the predominant *awlād al-nās* silence of, especially, the 7th/13th and, also, the 8th/14th centuries appears to have been broken far more often in the long 9th/15th century of Ibn Duqmāq, al-Maqrīzī, al-Biqāʿī and their peers.[43] The more general phenomenon of this exponential growth of *awlād al-nās* occurrences to more than 90 references in 9th/15th-century texts (see table 2a) is extremely interesting, and significant. This textual pattern of an expanding 9th/15th century *awlād al-nās* interest diverges again entirely from the afore-mentioned modern master-narrative and its assumption of the marginalization of *awlād al-nās* in the course of the 9th/15th century. It was furthermore only in this century that the *awlād al-nās* meanings that were prioritized by historians started

43 As suggested before, the novelty of Ibn Duqmāq's interpretation, penned down in the 790s–800s/1390s–1400s, arguably represents a turning point in *awlād al-nās* occurrences in the corpus; as will be detailed below, a similar—even though even more so from a quantitative perspective—period of transition is represented by the exponential growth of occurrences in the texts of ʿAbd al-Bāsiṭ al-Malaṭī and, especially, of Ibn Iyās, written in various installments between 890/1485 and 928/1522. The 790s/1390s and 890s/1480s are the transitional moments that have therefore been selected to organize the corpus of texts with *awlād al-nās* occurrences from the 8th/14th to the 10th/16th centuries in different centennial subsets.

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to lean towards the *mamlūk* end of its polysemous continuum.[44] This '*mamlūk*ization' of the term *awlād al-nās* is most clearly expressed in some very explicit phrases among these more than 90 occurrences. These include Ibn Taghrībirdī's strong statement that the *awlād al-nās* "are closest in their life of plenty and ease to the *mamlūk*s (*awlād al-nās li-kawnihim ila l-taraf wa-l-rāḥa aqrab min al-mamālīk*)"[45] and his distinction of those "*awlād al-nās* […] who belonged to the sultan's *mamlūk*s (*awlād al-nās* […] *alladhīna hum min jumlat al-mamālīk al-sulṭāniyya*)".[46] Ibn Taghrībirdī's obituary of one Abū Bakr al-Muṣāriʿ (d. 1452), "also known as Ibn al-Imām, one of the *awlād al-nās* promoted by al-Malik al-Ẓāhir Jaqmaq", represents a similarly explicitly *mamlūk*ized meaning, when it clarifies that "he belonged to the group of the sultanic *mamlūk*s and monthly stipend holders (*min jumlat al-mamālīk al-sulṭāniyya arbāb al-jawāmik*), until al-Malik al-Ẓāhir Jaqmaq became sultan and a little bit of good fortune was set in motion for him".[47] Almost simultaneously with Ibn Taghrībirdī, al-Jawharī wrote about "*awlād al-nās* who are registered in the *dīwān* of the sultanic *mamlūk*s (*awlād al-nās al-munzilīn bi-dīwān al-mamālīk al-sulṭāniyya*)".[48] As mentioned above, according to al-Jawharī this followed from sultan al-Ẓāhir Jaqmaq's decision "to increase the stipends of the sultanic *mamlūk*s and assign a stipend to their sons (*wa-yurattib li-awlādihim jāmakiyya*)."[49]

A chronologically first reference in 9th/15th century texts that may be interpreted as directly related to this '*mamlūk*izing' meaning of the term *awlād al-nās* occurs in the annals for the year 832/1428–9, about a decade before sultan al-Ẓāhir Jaqmaq's ascension and at a time when—according to Ibn Taghrībirdī—Abū Bakr al-Muṣāriʿ may have already "belonged to the group of the sultanic *mamlūk*s and monthly stipend holders". Al-Jawharī, following similar reports in the chronicles of al-Maqrīzī and of the Egyptian traditionist and chief judge Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (1372–1449), refers in his *Nuzhat al-Nufūs* to an ineffective royal edict of Rabīʿ al-Thānī 832 (January 1429) that prohibited "the sale of horses to any 'turban-wearer' and *awlād al-nās* trooper (*ʿalā mutaʿammim wa-lā jundī min awlād al-nās*)".[50] This orientation of *awlād al-nās* meanings towards military profiles and privileges, and especially towards the *mamlūk* end of its

44 See also Poliak, *Feudalism*, 29, n. 10; Ayalon, "Studies", 457–8; Haarmann, "Sons of Mamluks", 149–50; and Yosef's second chapter, especially his interpretation of these changes in the social history and *awlād al-nās* identity of *mamlūk* descendants.

45 Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Ḥawādith,* ed. Popper, 3:690.

46 Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 16:379; see also idem, 15: 366; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Ḥawādith*, ed. Popper, 2:175; 3: 681.

47 Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Ḥawādith*, ed. Kamāl al-Dīn ʿIzz al-Dīn, 2:390.

48 al-Jawharī, *Inbāʾ al-Ḥaṣr*, 35.

49 al-Jawharī, *Inbāʾ al-Ḥaṣr*, 34.

50 al-Jawharī, *Nuzhat al-Nufūs*, 3:150; also in al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 7:187; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbāʾ*, 3:476 (but in the annal for 835 AH). See also Yosef's second chapter.

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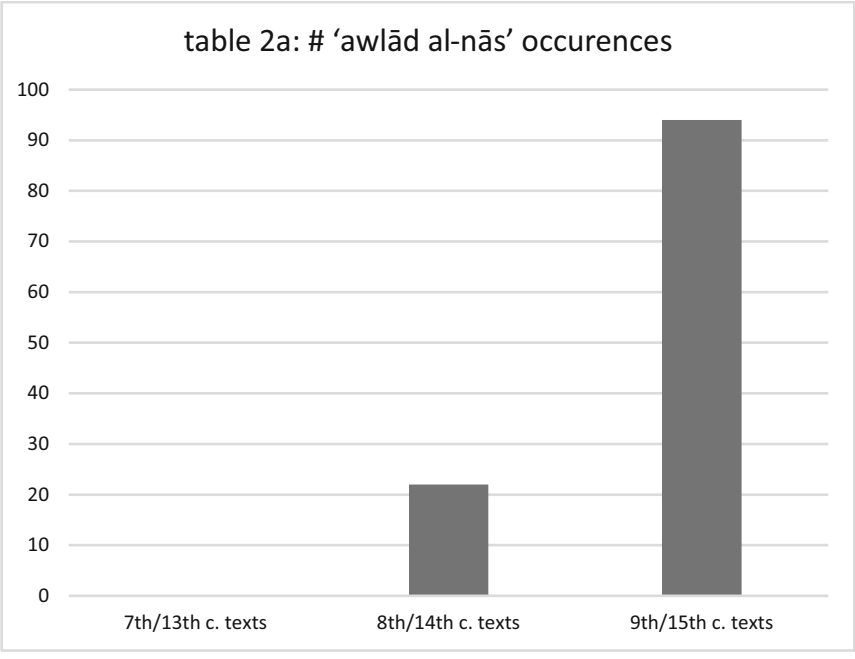
polysemous continuum, appears even more explicitly in the chronologically next occurrence in the corpus, in the annal for 837/1433–4 of, again, al-Jawharī's *Nuzhat al-Nufūs.* This concerns a story about one of the leaders of urban disturbances by the sultan's *mamlūk*s, identified by al-Jawharī as "a person belonging to the *awlād al-nās* who look like *turk*s (*shakhṣan min awlād al-nās al-mushbihīn bi-l-atrāk*)".[51] Almost all *awlād al-nās* occurrences in chronicle reports for the annals of subsequent decades ascribe to similar *mamlūk*izing meanings, and interestingly these occurrences spiked in the 850s and in, especially, the early 870s (see table 2b, and section 2.2 below).



Occurrences before the annals for the 830s, including the spike of references in the mid-8th/14th century context of sultan Ḥasan's reign, remain far more dispersed and ambiguous in their *awlād al-nās* meanings. These meanings range from the afore-mentioned "sons of the *fuqahāʾ* and the commoners" in 662/1264, to "some amirs belonging to the *awlād al-nās*" in 802/1399 and local Syrian elites in 816/1413, and to one Barsbughā l-Julbānī, who died in 832/1429 and whom Ibn Ḥajar remembers as "eloquent and knowledgeable, [so that] anyone who knew

51 al-Jawharī, *Nuzhat al-Nufūs*, 3:304.

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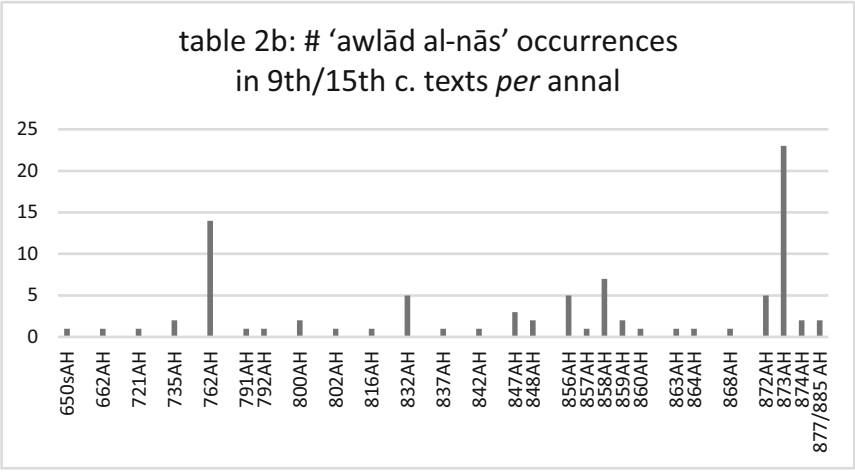
him thought that he belonged to the *awlād al-nās*".[52] Interestingly, Ibn Ḥajar's biography of Barsbughā was quoted *verbatim*, including this ambiguous *awlād al-nās* qualification, towards the end of the 9th/15th century in the biographical dictionary which one of Ibn Ḥajar's students, the scholar and traditionist Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sakhāwī (1427–97), completed in 896/1491.[53] To make things even more ambiguous, the only other relevant reference in this dictionary occurs in another quotation of a tongue-in-cheek epigram by one ʿUmar al-Bīrī from Aleppo, allegedly composed in 871/1466–7:

> I love a people's son (*ibn nās*), but I do not desire
> to see a woman appear in my house.
> Because whenever I want, I can leave him,
> while she will never ever leave me.[54]



This late 9th/15th century epigram clearly prioritized the traditional non-*mamlūk* meaning that had remained predominant in the 8th/14th century. It also suggests that this meaning may have lingered on when more ambiguous understandings entered historical texts from the first half of the century, by Ibn Duqmāq, al-Maqrīzī and Ibn Ḥajar, and even when, from the annals for the 830s onwards, an increasingly uniform *mamlūkiz*ation marked *awlād al-nās* occurrences in these as well as in later texts. In fact, the wider set of al-Sakhāwī's own historical writings display the ongoing presence of a similar semantic diversity.

52 Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbāʾ*, 3:424. For 816AH, see al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 6:350; for 802AH, see al-Jawharī, *Nuzhat al-Nufūs*, 2:35; for 662 AH, see Anonymous, *Tārīkh al-Dawla al-Turkīya*, MS Cambr. Qq 147, fol. 10a.

53 al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍawʾ al-Lāmiʿ*, 3:9.

54 al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍawʾ al-Lāmiʿ*, 6:118.

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Next to the 'people's son' poem and the Barsbughā l-Julbānī reference in his biographical dictionary, there is one other *awlād al-nās* occurrence in al-Sakhāwī's texts, but in this case, it refers entirely to a highly *mamlūk*ized meaning. The annal for 848/1444 in his chronicle of mid-century history *al-Tibr al-Masbūk* included a report about a major incident involving looting "sultanic *mamlūk*s who are stationed in the barracks" as well as "*ghilmān*, rabble, commoners and slaves"; the incident ended with sultan Jaqmaq "cutting the stipends of some of those whose side [among the sultanic *mamlūk*s] was considered weak, such as the *awlād al-nās* and their like (*mimman istaḍʿafa jānibahu ka-awlād al-nās wa-mā ashbahahum*), without however targeting any of the young [*mamlūk*] recruits (*al-julbān*), despite the fact that allegedly they had done most of the looting."[55]

In fact, this specific case in the annal for 848/1444 is the only time *awlād al-nās* occurs in the entire text of al-Sakhāwī's *Tibr*. The 'people's son' epigram and the Barsbughā l-Julbānī reference similarly are the only *awlād al-nās* moments in al-Sakhāwī's dictionary of almost 12,000 9th/15th century biographies. In a parallel fashion, Ibn Ḥajar's ambiguous Barsbugha l-Julbānī reference and his rendering of the first *mamluk*izing *awlād al-nās* story about the unsuccessful prohibition to sell horses "to an *awlād al-nās* trooper" in the early 830s, represent the only two *awlād al-nās* occurrences in his annalistic chronicle of the many events of his lifetime (773–850/1372–1447).[56] Ibn Ḥajar's own substantial biographical dictionary, furthermore, has only two *awlād al-nās* references. In this case, these references both occur in a *verbatim* copy of al-Ṣafadī's afore-mentioned 8th/14th century biography of the Damascene scholar who taught *awlād al-nās* to write.[57] As detailed above, Ibn Duqmāq's *Jawhar* only has three occurrences, while al-Maqrīzī's *Khiṭaṭ* and his *Sulūk* as well as al-Biqāʿī's *Iẓhār* only mention the combined term *awlād al-nās* six times each. Despite an exponential growth and a substantial expansion in the range of meanings, therefore, with an average of 7.5 *awlād al-nās* occurrences per text a general negligibility continues to mark the frequency lists of this century's enormous texts of history. Just as in the cases of al-Maqrīzī's *Sulūk*, with its average of only 0.00075 *awlād al-nās* occurrences in every 100 words, and of al-Biqāʿī's chronicle, with its marginally higher average frequency of 0.003 per 100 words, the majority of this period's texts continue to have none to only a handful of *awlād al-nās* occurrences (see also tables 1a and 1b).[58] In fact, a higher interest than this average is only discernible in Ibn

55 Al-Sakhāwī, *al-Tibr al-Masbūk*, 1:217; see also Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 15:366, which confirms this *mamlūk* interpretation as it refers in this same context indeed to "the cutting of the stipends of some of the sultanic *mamlūk*s belonging to the eunuchs and the *awlād al-nās*".

56 Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbāʾ*, 3:424, 476.

57 Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar*, 6:94.

58 Consulted texts from this century that are not listed in any table because of their total lack of *awlād al-nās* occurrences, at least in their extant and/or published parts, include Ibn Khal-

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Taghrībirdī's texts as well as in the extant parts of one of the two chronicles by his contemporary al-Jawharī.[59] In many ways, therefore, these are only very specific exceptions to the general rule of a textual *awlād al-nās* reticence that is maintained.

3.2 *Awlād al-nās mamlūk*ization in the chronicles of Ibn Taghrībirdī and al-Jawharī

The exceptional moments of *awlād al-nās* interest in Ibn Taghrībirdī's and al-Jawharī's contemporary chronicles concern especially the annals for the opening years of sultan al-Ashraf Qāyitbāy's reign (r. 1468–96). The annal for 873AH/1468 with its 23 *awlād al-nās* occurrences stands out in particular (see table 2b). Across the entire corpus of these 9th/15th century texts, the only other cluster that stands out concerns the afore-mentioned peculiar *awlād al-nās* interpretations of sultan

dūn's *Tārīkh*, Ibn al-Furāt's *Tārīkh*, al-Qalqashandī's *Ṣubḥ*, al-ʿAynī's *al-Rawḍ al-Zāhir*, and al-Qudsī's *Badhl*. The other major historiographical text of the 9th/15th century, al-ʿAynī's *ʿIqd al-Jumān*, was not included in this survey, because of the complicated manuscript history of this chronicle of universal history and the continuing lack of a comprehensive edition of the chronicle's full text (incompletely extant in 14 out of 19 holograph volumes, and in two slightly later sets of manuscript volumes) (see Nobutaka Nakamachi, "A Historiographical Analysis of the Four Chronicles Attributed to Badr al-Dīn al-ʿAynī", in: *Studies on the History and Culture of the Mamluk Sultanate (1250–1517)*, ed. Stephan Conermann and Toru Miura, Bonn/Göttingen: Bonn University Press & V&R unipress GmbH 2021, 113–138; we currently have editions of the annals for 565–628 AH, 648–717 AH, 784–801 AH (but this is actually a conflation of two different texts by al-ʿAynī, and therefore a problematic edition), and 815–850 AH [see bibliography]); a systematic consultation of available digitized edited versions (for 648–717 AH and 815–850 AH) has so far not resulted in the identification of any further occurrences. The annals for 746–798 AH do not seem to have survived in any manuscript version; this is unfortunate in the present context, because the corresponding manuscript volume of al-ʿAynī's other (as yet unedited) chronicle, *Tārīkh al-Badrī*, includes four *awlād al-nās* occurrences in the obituary for sultan al-Nāṣir Ḥasan, explaining in familiar 'Duqmāqian' terms how "he favored the *awlād al-nās* and it was his intention to promote them as two groups of *muqaddam*s *alf* and *ṭablakhānāh*." (Ms Dār al-Kutub 1584 *tārīkh* [juzʾ 24/1], 124–5; MS British Library, Oriental and India Office Collection, Add. 22,360, fols. 66v–67r [with a slight textual difference from DK 1584 *tārīkh*, and therefore three occurrences rather than four, with the last one '*ibnan* (sic) *nāsin*' instead of '*awlāda nāsin*']).

59 In al-Jawharī's main annalistic chronicle, *Nuzhat al-Nufūs*, for which only the final volumes covering the annals for 784 AH to 849 AH are currently accessible in an edited format, just four occurrences have been identified: one in the annal for 802 AH and referring to "some amirs of the *awlād al-nās*", and three for 832, 837 and 847 AH and referring to *awlād al-nās* troopers and military volunteers (al-Jawharī, *Nuzhat al-Nufūs*, 2:35; 3:150, 304; 4:272). The 832 and 847 occurrences parallel those in other 9th/15th century texts (al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 7:187; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbāʾ*, 3:476; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Ḥawādith*, ed. Kamāl al-Dīn ʿIzz al-Dīn, 1:91); the 802 and 837 occurrences, however, appear as unique to the *Nuzhat al-Nufūs*, including the already mentioned 837 case concerning "one from the *awlād al-nās* who look like *turk*s (*shakhṣ min awlād al-nās al-mushbihīn bi-l-atrāk*)" (al-Jawharī, *Nuzhat al-Nufūs*, 3:304).

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Ḥasan's 8th/14th century reign by Ibn Duqmāq, and by al-Maqrīzī, al-ʿAynī and Ibn Taghrībirdī after him. Apart from these two chronological *awlād al-nās* clusters, across the 9th/15th century corpus only 21 other annals are marked by one or more *awlād al-nās* occurrences, and the average of occurrences in this specific set of annals is only two per annal. Therefore, not just Ibn Taghrībirdī's and al-Jawharī's unusually high interest in *awlād al-nās* occurrences, but also the clustering of these occurrences in their annalistic reports for 873AH invite for more in-depth analysis. In fact, this and similar quantitative and chronological patterns in these relatively higher number of occurrences and also their occasionally more explicit qualifications allow to deepen understandings of both these changing annalistic frequencies and their *mamlūk*izing meanings in each of these two authors' chronicles.

Ibn Taghrībirdī's major chronicle *al-Nujūm al-Zāhira* spans the full scope of Islamic Egypt's history, from the Muslim conquest in the 1st/7th century to the enthronement of sultan al-Ashraf Qāyitbāy in 872/1468. This chronicle of more than a million words, with most frequent terms such as '*amīr/umarā'*' occurring almost 17,000 times, '*sulṭān*' more than 10,000 times, and '*nās*' almost 3,000 times, has twelve occurrences of the combined term *awlād al-nās* only. These occurrences furthermore only happen in two very specific semantic contexts: the leadership of sultan al-Nāṣir Ḥasan's mid-8th/14th century reign, in a direct parallel with Ibn Duqmāq's assessment, and contested claims to resources and privileges related to the central payment arrangements of *iqṭāʿ*, *rizaq*, *jāmakiyya* and *nafaqa*, just as in al-Biqāʿī's afore-mentioned *Iẓhār* and in most post-830s occurrences more in general.[60] Occurrences for the latter political-economy context indeed pertain mostly to the final, mid-9th/15th century parts of Ibn Taghrībirdī's multivolume text. These occurrences concern *awlād al-nās* references in reports about four distinct moments in the reigns of al-Ẓāhir Jaqmaq (r. 1438–53) and al-Ashraf Īnāl (r. 1453–61), in the annals for 848/1444, 856/1452, 858/1454, 864/1460, as well as in three more reports about Jumāda l-Ūlā 872 (December 1467), when a heavily contested *nafaqa* payment haunted the very short-lived and unsuccessful reign of sultan al-Ẓāhir Timurbughā (r. December 1467–January 1468). The chronicle's narratives of the many decades that connected sultan Ḥasan's "promotion of the *awlād al-nās*" in the 750s/1350s to the 848/1444 case of urban disruption that involved, as in al-Sakhāwī's *Tibr*, sultan Jaqmaq's "cutting down the stipends of some sultanic *mamlūk*s, belonging to the

60 Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 10:308–9, 316; 11:341; 15:364–5, 439; 16:81, 141, 379, 381. On these arrangements, see David Ayalon, "The System of Payment in Mamlūk Military Society", *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 1 (1958), 37–65, 257–96; Daisuke Igarashi, "The Establishment and Development of al-Dīwān al-Mufrad: Its Background and Implications", *Mamlūk Studies Review* 10/1 (2006), 118–140; idem, "The Financial Reforms of Sultan Qāytbāy", *Mamluk Studies Review* 13/1 (2009): 27–51; idem, *Land Tenure*.

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eunuchs and the *awlād al-nās* (*qaṭʿ arzāq baʿḍ al-mamālīk al-sulṭāniyya min al-khuddām wa-awlād al-nās*)" is again marked by a long *awlād al-nās* silence.[61] This centennial silence in Ibn Taghrībirdī's dynastic chronicle is broken only once. In line with the ambiguous meanings of most early 9th/15th century references, the report for Dhū l-Qaʿda 791 (September 1389) states that the main opponent of the deposed sultan al-Ẓāhir Barqūq (r. 1382–9; 1390–9), the amir Minṭāsh, sought support with "his peers, his *mamlūk*s and the *awlād al-nās* (*khushdāshiyyatahu wa-mamālīkahu wa-awlād al-nās*)."[62]

Related patterns of *awlād al-nās* occurrences return even more prominently in Ibn Taghrībirdī's other major chronicle of contemporary Egyptian history, the *Ḥawādith al-Duhūr*. This detailed continuation of al-Maqrīzī's *Sulūk*, beginning with the annal for 845/1441–2 and ending with the first days of the annal for the last year of Ibn Taghrībirdī's life, 874/1469–70, has most *awlād al-nās* occurrences of all consulted texts that were written between the 790s/1390s and the 890s/1480s (see table 1b). At the same time, these 27 occurrences again only represent a negligible quantitative component (0,017%) of the more than 160,000 words that make up this text. These occurrences' textual clustering in specific annals and around the specific contexts of the sultanate's courtly financial and military organization, however, is once more noteworthy, and significant. The *Ḥawādith* has four annalistic clusters of *awlād al-nās* occurrences: two for the reign of al-Ẓāhir Jaqmaq (r. 1438–53), in the annals for 847/1443–4 and 856/1452–3, and one for each of the early days of the reigns of al-Ashraf Īnāl (r. 1453–61), in the annals for 857–8/1453–4, and of al-Ashraf Qāyitbāy (r. 1468–96), in the annal for 873/1468–9, with a clear majority of fourteen occurrences marking the centrality of the latter cluster.[63] The first two clusters of, respectively, two and three occurrences concern the participation of "volunteers from among the *fuqahāʾ*, the *fuqarāʾ* and the *awlād al-nās*" in one of Jaqmaq's raids on the Mediterranean island of Rhodes in 1443; the obituary remembrance of Jaqmaq's son and heir apparent (and Ibn Taghrībirdī's pupil) al-Nāṣirī Muḥammad (d. 1444) as, "in general, the greatest (*ajall*) of the sultans' sons and the *awlād al-nās* with whom we have been acquainted", and three reports about the courtly (and financial) fortunes of two

61 Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 10:308; 15:366.

62 Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:341.

63 Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Ḥawādith,* ed. Kamāl al-Dīn ʿIzz al-Dīn, 91, 102 (847); 359, 367, 390 (856); Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Ḥawādith,* ed. Popper, 2:175 (857), 211–2 (858); 3:681–3, 690, 694–5 (873). The only two occurrences that do not fit in entirely with this pattern concern the biography of the *muḥtasib* ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, whose father Muḥammad al-Ṣaghīr "belonged to the *awlād al-nās al-ghāzāniyya* (?)" and was a boon companion of sultan al-Ẓāhir Jaqmaq, in the annal for 859/1455, and the report that in Shaʿbān 868 (April 1464), and unlike the sultanic *mamlūk*s, "a large crowd of *awlād al-nās*, 'turban-wearers' and their like (*jumāʿat kathīrīn min awlād al-nās wa-l-mutaʿammimīn wa-ghayrihim*)" saw their regular textile rations (*kiswa*) cut down (Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Ḥawādith,* ed. Popper, 2:245; 3:465).

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awlād al-nās (*aḥad min awlād al-nās*; *shakhṣ min awlād al-nās*) from Jaqmaq's entourage (*khidma*).[64] The third cluster of six *awlād al-nās* occurrences appears in reports about the new sultan Īnāl's halfhearted attempts, in March 1453 (3/857) and again in August 1454 (8/858), to cut down the monthly stipendiary payments and food rations to *awlād al-nās* and many others. The fourth, major, cluster of 14 occurrences all concern a similar situation that dominated the reports of the first months of 873/late 1468. This situation was initiated by the contested *nafaqa* payment to "the *awlād al-nās* belonging to the sultanic *mamlūk*s" that, as also detailed in the *Nujūm*, haunted the short reign of sultan al-Ẓāhir Timurbughā in Jumāda l-Ūlā 872 (December 1467) and that, in the *Ḥawādith*, returned as an unresolved issue in reports about al-Ashraf Qāyitbāy's early days. In sultan Qāyitbāy's case, this issue revolved specifically around postponed payments of *jāmakiyya*, *nafaqa* and related stipends, between Ṣafar and Jumāda l-Ūlā 873 (September–November 1468), to the amirs and to the sultan's *mamlūk*s as well as to various others, repeatedly referred to in varyingly composed lists as "*awlād al-nās*", "'turban-wearers'" (*al-mutaʿammimīn*), "*fuqahāʾ*", "secretaries" (*al-muwaqqiʿīn*), "eunuchs" (*al-khuddām*), and "others" (*ghayrihim*). These payment relationships between the sultan and different groups of regular beneficiaries became especially tense in the midst of military preparations to confront a formidable Turkmen foe in eastern Anatolia as well as of royal experiments to overcome the equally formidable challenge of an empty treasure.[65] Ibn Taghrībirdī, who claims to have counseled the sultan personally in this matter,[66] recounts how one of the more famous among these experiments concerned the sultan's organization of a public bow shooting exercise to test the military aptitude of those who were entitled to receive his pay. Those who failed the exercise, and thus proved unfit to participate in the military campaign to Anatolia, were made to transfer substantial compensation payments (*badīl*) or to accept stipend cuts (*qaṭʿ*). As Ibn Taghrībirdī summarized,

64 In one of these two *awlād al-nās* cases, manuscript variations suggest that *aḥad min awlād al-nās* could in this context also be rendered *aḥad min al-awbāsh* ("one of the urban rabble") (Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Ḥawādith,* ed. Popper, 1:124; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Ḥawādith,* ed. Kamāl al-Dīn ʿIzz al-Dīn, 359, n. 2); a similar condescending attitude transpires from Ibn Taghrībirdī's comment in the other *awlād al-nās* case that he did not know the person (*lā aʿrifuhu*), a statement that was put even more strongly in Ibn Taghrībirdī's other chronicle that this person "was known as Ibn Jānibak, even though he lacked any known lineage and merit (*lā yuʿraf lahu nasab wa-lā ḥasab*)" (Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 15:439). On the rising prominence of specific *mamlūk* and related elite lineages, which Ibn Taghrībirdī seems to suggest here, eventually also expressed in identifications such as "the notable *awlād al-nās* (*aʿyān awlād al-nās*)", see 2.3 below.

65 Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Ḥawādith,* ed. Popper, 3:678, 681–3, 689–93, 694–5.

66 Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Ḥawādith,* ed. Popper, 3:678 (*kallamtuhu anā ayḍan fī dhālika bi-kalām fīhi nafʿ lahu …*).

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