



The Ottoman Ibadis of Cairo

Ibadi Muslims, a minority religious community, historically inhabited pockets throughout North Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, and the East African coast. Yet less is known about the community of Ibadi Muslims that relocated to Egypt. Focusing on the history of an Ibadi-run trade depot, school and library that operated in Cairo for over three hundred years, this book shows how the Ibadi Muslims operated in and adapted to the legal, religious, commercial, and political realms of the Ottoman Empire from the seventeenth to early twentieth centuries. Using a unique range of sources, including manuscript notes, family histories and archival correspondence, Paul M. Love, Jr. presents an original history of this Muslim community told from the bottom up. Whilst illuminating the events that shaped the history of Egypt during these centuries, he also brings to life the lived reality of a Muslim minority community in the Ottoman world.

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The Ottoman Ibadis of Cairo

A History

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For Sarra, Sophia, and Julia

نحبکم بارش!

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As I write this, I am listening to my daughter Julia (four) explain to her sister Sophia (six) the bad dream that has woken her up at 6:20 a.m. The soothing calm of their whispering voices, the quiet of this morning in Ifrane, and the warmth of our home despite the cold outside, together remind me how fortunate I have been to have had this space to work on this book over the past several years. What a pleasure it is to sit down and thank all the people who have helped me do it. But first, a quick note on how I arrived at this point.

The present book emerged out of a realization I had when writing my first book on the history of late medieval Ibadi Muslim communities in the Maghrib. Despite my best efforts to go back further in time, most of the manuscripts I used dated from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries. To my surprise, a significant number of those had been copied not in the Maghrib but in Cairo, at a place referred to in the colophons as the “*Wikālat al-Jāmūs*.” This place, so central to the production of knowledge for Ibadis over more than three centuries, rarely featured in histories of the community. This realization led me to write this book. The researching and writing of it, however, were only possible because of the support and collaboration I have received from a wide variety of people and institutions.

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Thank you so much, everyone.

Introduction

On June 2, 1949 the grand vizier of the French Protectorate of Tunisia, Muṣṭafā al-Ka‘āk, issued this circular to provincial officials all over the country:

I would like to know if there are any private endowments (*aḥbās*) established by Tunisians in the lands of the Egyptian Kingdom. It is desired that a broad search be conducted, and thorough investigations undertaken in order to obtain this information and to record it as soon as possible. If some of those under your administration possess endowments of this kind, you should let us know their type, their importance, and the names of their founders.¹

When the official from the island of Jerba responded two months later, he attached to his letter a remarkably detailed table of private endowments in Egypt owned by Tunisians from this island in the south.² The list was far longer than those from other parts of the country. It included endowed homes (*diyār*), shops (*ḥawānit*), and trade depots (*wakā'il*) in Cairo and Alexandria dating to as early as the seventeenth century, managed by prominent Jerban merchant families in Egypt. First on the list were the extensive endowments of the al-Baḥḥār family, an Ibadi Muslim family from the southern Jerban town of Ajīm (Figure 0.1).

Over three centuries earlier, on November 18, 1617, several members of the same Jerban families listed in that document had stood in the Civilian Inheritance Court (al-Qisma al-‘Arabiyya) in Ottoman Cairo. Those present, “all from among the distinguished merchants of the market of the [Ibn] Tulun Mosque,” had gathered to serve as witnesses in a case regarding the estate of a merchant from the al-Baḥḥār family named ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Aḥmad.³

¹ ANT A 281 0006 (1949–1950), doc. 13 (French), doc. 14 (Arabic).

² ANT A 281 0006 (dated 25 Shaw 1368/Aug 20, 1949), doc. 4.

³ Maḥkamat al-Qisma al-‘Arabiyya, 23, case 440 (dated 19 D. al-Qa‘da 1026/Nov 18, 1617). Reproduced in ‘Abd al-Raḥīm ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ‘Abd al-Raḥīm, ed.,

[illegible]

Figure 0.1 The first of several pages in a table, prepared in Jerba in 1949, recording private endowments (*ahbās*) in Egypt belonging to Jerbans. The entire first folio lists endowments connected to the al-Baḥḥār family. ANT A 281 0006, doc. 5. (Photo by author, 2018)

These documents, one from the colonial-era archives of the French Protectorate in Tunisia and the other from the court registers of Ottoman-era Egypt, together capture the main themes of this book. First, they demonstrate a centuries-long presence for Jerbans and other

Wathā'iq al-maghārība min sijillāt al-mahākam al-shara'riyya al-mišriyya abān al-ʿaṣr al-uthmānī 1604/1650 (*al-juzʿ al-thālith*), vol. 3 (Zaghwān: Muʿassasat al-Tamīmī, 1998), 55.

Maghribi Ibadis in Ottoman-era Egypt that lasted from the seventeenth century well into the twentieth. Second, the family at the center of these two documents, al-Baḥḥār, endowed the building that is the geographic anchor of my story here. In the early seventeenth century a member of the al-Baḥḥār family established a trade agency, school, and library beside the Ibn Tulun Mosque that would become known as the “Buffalo Agency” (*Wikālat al-Jāmūs*).

That institution would be operated and supported by the Ibadi Muslim communities of the Maghrib from the island of Jerba, the Mزاب Valley (today in Algeria), and the Jebel Nafusa (today in Libya). As in these two documents, however, the Ibadi affiliation of the Buffalo Agency and its residents over the course of its three-and-a-half centuries of operation remained hidden in plain sight. In this book I argue that this is because the Maghribi Ibadis of Cairo participated in the legal, commercial, religious, and political spheres of Ottoman Egypt to such an extent that they are only with great difficulty distinguished from their non-Ibadi contemporaries. Their unusual status as members of both the Muslim majority and a coherent minority religious community facilitated this participation and enabled them to be at once Ottoman and Ibadi. In short, this is the story of the Ottoman Ibadis of Cairo.

The two documents referred to above likewise bookend the timeframe of the story I tell here. In the following chapters I anchor the history of Ibadis in Cairo to that of the Buffalo Agency and the individuals whose commercial, scholarly, and personal lives intersected there from the seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries. Finally, the documents convey something of the range of materials I use to tell this story, including Ottoman shariah court records, personal documents and letters, official correspondence, colonial-era archives, and notes and marginalia from private manuscript libraries.

Ibadis as a Community

The Ibadi community constitutes a religious minority, whose history predates the Ottoman period by several centuries. Ibadi Muslims trace their own origins to the first century of Islam in the city of Basra, in what is today Iraq. By the eighth century CE they had begun to emerge as a distinct community, which would develop separately from what would become known as Sunni and Shi‘i Islam. The two spheres of

premodern Ibadi communities – one in the east, centered in the southern Arabian Peninsula, and another in the west, in the Maghrib – developed their own legal, theological, and prosopographical textual corpora that distinguished them intellectually from both one another and their Sunni or Shi'i counterparts.⁴

The two spheres also followed separate political trajectories throughout the early Islamic centuries. In the Arabian Peninsula, especially in Oman, their communities would hold political power, and in the early modern era even commanding a vast maritime empire that led to the incorporation of the island of Zanzibar into the realm of Ibadism.⁵ In the west, by contrast, there was only a brief period of Ibadi political control in the form of the Rustamid dynasty of Tāhart (778–909 CE). From the fourth/tenth century onward, Ibadis in the region lived under the control of other empires or regional polities.⁶ Over the subsequent centuries Ibadi scholars would fashion a historical narrative that drew the boundaries of an Ibadi community and distinguished it from other Muslim groups.⁷

Since the extension of Ottoman influence into the Maghrib beginning in the sixteenth century, Ibadi communities there have concentrated in three main regions: the Mzab Valley in what is today central Algeria, the island of Jerba in southern Tunisia, and the Jebel Nafusa in northwestern Libya. The Ottoman centuries would witness the continuation of a trend toward a growing familiarity among Ibadi scholars with Sunni texts, a trend that accelerated with the attraction of Sunni

⁴ Pierre Cuperly, *Introduction à l'étude de l'ibādisme et de sa théologie* (Algiers: Office des publications universitaires, 1984); Valerie J. Hoffman, *The Essentials of Ibādī Islam* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2012); John Wilkinson, *Ibādism: Origins and Early Development in Oman* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Adam Gaiser, *Muslims, Scholars, Soldiers: The Origins and Elaboration of the Ibādī Imamate Traditions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Ersilia Francesca, "Ibādī Law and Jurisprudence," *The Muslim World* 105, no. 2 (2015): 209–23.

⁵ Wilkinson, *Ibādism*; Amal N. Ghazal, *Islamic Reform and Arab Nationalism: Expanding the Crescent from the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean (1880s–1930s)* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010).

⁶ Virginie Prevost, *L'aventure ibādite dans le Sud tunisien, VIIIe–XIIIe siècle. Effervescence d'une région méconnue* (Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 2008); Cyrille Aillet, *L'archipel ibadite. Une histoire des marges du Maghreb médiéval* (Lyon-Avignon: CIHAM-Éditions, 2021).

⁷ Paul M. Love, Jr., *Ibadi Muslims of North Africa: Manuscripts, Mobilization, and the Making of a Written Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

institutions of learning such as the Zaytuna Mosque in Tunis and, as this book explores, the al-Azhar Mosque in Cairo. By the end of the Ottoman centuries, Ibadis knew the Sunni postclassical canon well, and were participating in the pan-Islamic and Salafi discourses of their non-Ibadi contemporaries.⁸ One of the purposes of this book is to shed light on this long-term participation of Ibadis in the legal, intellectual, political, and religious life of the Ottoman Empire.

Ibadi Studies

Until very recently, the scholarship on Ibadi Islam in European languages has focused on one of two periods. The first and largest has been research on the earliest history of the community, including its development in late antique and early medieval contexts. Interest in this period of Ibadi history dates back to the first half of the twentieth century in particular.⁹ Drawing on that earlier generation of scholars, more recent historians focused on these periods, including many from the contemporary Ibadi community, have made remarkable contributions to our understanding of the place of Ibadis in early Islamic intellectual and legal history.¹⁰ Historiography in Arabic has long

⁸ Augustin Jomier, *Islam, réforme et colonisation. Une histoire de l'ibadisme en Algérie (1882–1962)* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2020).

⁹ On North African Ibadis, the work of Tadeusz Lewicki, Zygmunt Smogorzewski, and Pierre Cuperly merit special mention for the influence they have had on modern scholarship: Tadeusz Lewicki, “Les sources ibādites de l’histoire médiévale de l’Afrique du Nord,” *Africana Bulletin* 35 (1988): 31–42; Tadeusz Lewicki, *Les ibadites en Tunisie au moyen âge* (Rome: Angelo Signorelli, 1958); Tadeusz Lewicki, *Études maghrebines et soudanaises* (Warsaw: Éditions scientifiques de Pologne, 1983); Marius Canard, “Les travaux de T. Lewicki concernant le Maghrib et en particulier les Ibadites,” *RA* 103 (1959): 356–71; Marius Canard, “Quelques articles récents de l’arabisant polonais T. Lewicki,” *RA* 105 (1961): 186–92; Krzysztof Kościelniak, “The Contribution of Prof. Tadeusz Lewicki (1906–1992) to Islamic and West African Studies,” *Analecta Cracoviensia: Studia Philosophico-Theologica Editata a Professoribus Cracoviae* 44 (2012): 241–55; Zygmunt Smogorzewski, “Essai de bio-bibliographie ibadite-wahbite, avant-propos,” *Rocznik Orientalistyczny* 5 (1927): 45–57; Cuperly, *Introduction à l’étude de l’ibādisme*.

¹⁰ For example: Prevost, *L’aventure ibādite*; Gaiser, *Muslims, Scholars, Soldiers*; Cyrille Aillet, ed., “L’ibādisme, une minorité au cœur de l’islam,” *REMM* 132 (2012); Adam Gaiser, *Shurat Legends, Ibadi Identities: Martyrdom, Asceticism, and the Making of an Early Islamic Community* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2016); Cyrille Aillet, ed., *L’Ibadisme dans les sociétés de l’Islam médiéval. Modèles et interactions*, *Studies in the History and Culture of the*

recognized and emphasized the place of Egypt as a site of transit connecting the eastern and western spheres of Ibadism. Like European-language scholarship, however, the emphasis has usually remained on the earliest centuries of Ibadi history with little attention to the Ottoman period.¹¹

Scholars have also begun to turn their attention to Ibadi history in the modern era, situating the history of Ibadis in North Africa, East Africa, and Oman in the contexts of the global events that shaped the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Demonstrating how Ibadis in different places participated in or opposed modern Islamic reform movements, for example, has done tremendous work in making Ibadis visible as distinct intellectual and political communities in the contexts of European colonialism and the early years of independence in North Africa, East Africa, and the Arabian Peninsula.¹² That scholarship has also emphasized the ways in which Ibadis, like their contemporaries, utilized the technologies of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries such as the printing press, steam power, and the telegraph to participate in both intra-communal and global conversations on and

Middle East 33 (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2018); ‘Abd Allāh ibn Yazīd al-Fazārī, *Early Ibādī Theology: Six Kalām Texts by ‘Abd Allāh ibn Yazīd al-Fazārī*, ed. Abdulrahman al-Sālīmī and Wilferd Madelung, Islamic History and Civilization 106 (Leiden: Brill, 2014); Abdulrahman al-Sālīmī and Wilferd Madelung, eds., *Ibādī Texts from the 2nd/8th Century* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2018). A series of international conferences funded by the Omani government since 2011 has resulted in several publications in the series entitled Studies on Ibadism and Oman, published by the Olms Verlag.

¹¹ The two most directly relevant monographs highlighting Egypt as a point of connection are Rajab Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Ḥalīm, *al-Ibādīyya fī Miṣr wa-al-Maghrib wa-‘alāqātuhum bi-Ibādīyyat ‘Umān wa-al-Baṣra* (al-Sīb: Maktabat al-Ḍamīrī, 1990); and Farhat Djaabiri, *‘Alāqāt ‘Umān bi-shimāl Ifrīqiya* (Muscat: al-Maṭābī‘ al-‘Ālamiyya, 1991). More recently, a synthetic study in Arabic by ‘Alī al-Shillī offers a good overview of the secondary source material on Ibadis in Egypt: ‘Alī b. Sālīm al-Shillī, *al-Wujūd al-Ibādī fī Miṣr* (Oman: Baseera Editions, 2018).

¹² Valerie J. Hoffman, “The Articulation of Ibādī Identity in Modern Oman and Zanzibar,” *The Muslim World* 94, no. 2 (2004): 201–16; Ghazal, *Islamic Reform and Arab Nationalism*; Valerie J. Hoffman, “Ibadi Reformism in Twentieth-Century Algeria: The Tafsir of Shaykh Ibrāhīm Bayyud,” *REMMM* 132 (2012): 155–73; Hoffman, *The Essentials of Ibādī Islam*; Augustin Jomier, “Iṣlāḥ ibādīte et intégration nationale. Vers une communauté mozabite? (1925–1964),” *REMMM* 132 (2012): 175–95; Jomier, *Islam, réforme et colonisation*.

engagements with modernity.¹³ A continued engagement with globalization has also been the subject of recent scholarship on Ibadi communities in Oman and East Africa.¹⁴

Although Egypt appears frequently in this scholarship as a hub connecting different Ibadi communities in the late nineteenth and especially the first half of the twentieth century, its role as a site of Ibadi activity in the centuries of Ottoman rule that preceded those periods has gone largely unremarked. I use the history of Ibadis in Cairo throughout much of the Ottoman period to emphasize the long-term importance of Egypt as a site of Ibadi interaction stretching back to the beginning of the seventeenth century. The lack of attention to Egypt in much of the historiography of Ibadi communities is remarkable, since as I demonstrate throughout this book Ibadis were ubiquitous in all aspects of everyday life in Ottoman Egypt. I argue here for recognizing the central place of Ottoman Egypt – and Cairo, in particular – in the history of generations of Maghribi Ibadi students, scholars, pilgrims, merchants, journalists, and activists from the seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

Ibadis as Ottomans

A history of the Ottoman Ibadis of Cairo and the Buffalo Agency offers three contributions to the historiographies of northern Africa and the broader Ottoman world. First is the transnational nature of the story told here. The Buffalo Agency's history is primarily one of Maghribis

¹³ For example, see Philip Sadgrove, "From Wādī Mīzāb to Unguja: Zanzibar's Scholarly Links," in *The Transmission of Learning in Islamic Africa*, ed. Scott Reese (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 184–211; Amal N. Ghazal, "An Ottoman Pāshā and the End of Empire: Sulaymān al-Bārūnī and the Networks of Islamic Reform," in *Global Muslims in the Age of Steam and Print*, ed. James L. Gelvin and Nile Green (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 40–58; Augustin Jomier, "Les réseaux étendus d'un archipel saharien. Les circulations de lettrés ibadites (XVIIe siècle-années 1950)," *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* 63, no. 2 (2016): 14–39. On the broader context of global Muslim engagement with modernity into which Ibadis fit see Nile Green, *Terrains of Exchange: Religious Economies of Global Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

¹⁴ Mandana E. Limbert, *In the Time of Oil: Piety, Memory, and Social Life in an Omani Town* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010); Kimberly T. Wortmann, "Omani Religious Networks in Contemporary Tanzania and Beyond" (Ph.D. thesis, Harvard University, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, 2018).

living, studying, and working in Egypt but operating in networks linking them to the rest of the Ottoman Mediterranean and beyond. The legal, commercial, and communal ties linking Ibadis in Cairo with their coreligionists in Tunis, Jerba, Alexandria, Mecca, or Istanbul demonstrate the remarkable interconnectedness of the Maghrib to the rest of the Ottoman Empire. Ibadis share this transregional history with other Maghribis in Egypt, whose lives have captured the attention of prominent historians. The collective works of André Raymond and ‘Abd al-Raḥīm A. ‘Abd al-Raḥīm, as well as the more recent work of Ḥussām ‘Abd al-Mu‘ṭī, have demonstrated the ubiquity of Maghribis in Ottoman Egyptian society of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.¹⁵ In this book I draw heavily on the work of these three scholars, but I also extend their arguments in two ways. First, I move beyond the general community of Maghribis in Egypt to follow the history of a particular community: Maghribi Ibadis. Second, I follow the history of Maghribis in Egypt beyond the eighteenth century and demonstrate the continuity of the Ibadi Maghribi experience into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This means that the book traces the history of Ibadis in Cairo over almost the entirety of Ottoman rule in Egypt, which I approach here as having lasted in one form or another from 1517 CE until the collapse of the Ottoman Empire following World War I.

My emphasis on the Ottoman character of this period and the Maghribi Ibadis who lived through it connects to the second contribution of the book: making Ibadis visible as a religious minority in the historiography of the Ottoman Empire, and Ottoman-era Egypt in particular. Rich and innovative scholarship on the Ottoman Mediterranean from the past several years has highlighted the histories of religious minorities such as Sephardic Jews, Armenian Christians, and Coptic Christians in Ottoman and European colonial contexts.¹⁶

¹⁵ André Raymond, *Artisans et commerçants au Caire au XVIIIe siècle*, vol. 1 (Damascus: Institut français de Damas, 1973); André Raymond, *Artisans et commerçants au Caire au XVIIIe siècle*, vol. 2 (Damascus: Institut français de Damas, 1974); ‘Abd al-Raḥīm ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ‘Abd al-Raḥīm, *al-Maghārība fī Miṣr fī al-‘aṣr al-‘uthmānī* (Tunis: al-Majalla al-Tārikhiyya al-Maghribiyya, 1982); Ḥussām ‘Abd al-Mu‘ṭī, *al-‘Ā’ila wa-al-thawra: al-buyūt al-tijāriyya al-maghribiyya fī Miṣr al-‘uthmāniyya* (Cairo: al-Hay’a al-Miṣriyya al-‘Āmma lil-Kitāb, 2008).

¹⁶ Recent examples include Magdi Guirguis, “The Organization of the Coptic Community in the Ottoman Period,” in *Society and Economy in Egypt and the*

Those studies likewise draw attention to how the roles of those minorities within the Ottoman Empire varied according to time and place. Treatments of some of these minorities, as Magdi Guirguis has written, often “do not fully describe these groups of people nor . . . take into consideration the changes that take place in the internal dynamics of such groups in the course of the historical process.”¹⁷ In this book I follow Guirguis’s example by tracing the history of Ibadis in Cairo to highlight elements of continuity and change both in the internal dynamics of the community and its place vis-à-vis Ottoman state and society in Egypt and beyond.

While they shared much with non-Muslim religious minorities in the Ottoman Empire, Ibadis nevertheless belonged to the Muslim majority. This unusual combination afforded them opportunities in that it gave them space to participate fully in Ottoman society in Egypt while also allowing them to draw on a vast support network of coreligionists throughout northern Africa and beyond. This dual status of minority within a majority raises two interrelated questions for my purposes here: (1) How visible as a distinct community were the Ibadis to the Ottoman authorities in northern Africa? and (2) What, if anything, distinguished the Ibadi experience in Cairo from elsewhere in Ottoman lands?

In the lands west of Egypt, Ottomans encountered Ibadis beginning with the establishment of their control there in the sixteenth century. The Mzabi community of the Sahara signed a special agreement with the Ottomans that distinguished them from other parts of the *eyālet al-Jazā’ir*, granting them autonomy in exchange for tribute and at least indirectly recognizing their identity as Ibadis.¹⁸ Internally, the Mzabis

Eastern Mediterranean 1600–1900: Essays in Honor of André Raymond, ed. Nelly Hanna and Raouf Abbas (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2005), 201–16; Febe Armanios, *Coptic Christianity in Ottoman Egypt* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015); Sarah Abrevaya Stein, *Extraterritorial Dreams: European Citizenship, Sephardi Jews, and the Ottoman Twentieth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017); Richard E. Antaramian, *Brokers of Faith, Brokers of Empire: Armenians and the Politics of Reform in the Ottoman Empire* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2020); Dina Danon, *The Jews of Ottoman Izmir: A Modern History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2020).

¹⁷ Guirguis, “The Organization of the Coptic Community,” 201.

¹⁸ Yūsuf Ibn Bakīr al-Ḥājj Sa’īd, *Tārīkh Banī Mzāb: dirāsa ijtīmā’iyya wa-iqtisādiyya wa-siyāsiyya*, 3rd. ed. (Ghardāia: n.p., 2014), 68–70. Al-Ḥājj Sa’īd is referencing an agreement with the Wargala, rather than the Mzab, which is cited

were allowed to maintain their form of governance centered on local councils of scholars (*‘azzāba*). Within the territory under more direct Ottoman control in the northern tell region, especially in the city of Algiers, Mzabis held a special status and remained organized under and responsible to the leader of their community (*amīn*).¹⁹ As I demonstrate in this book, the physical separation of Ibadis in the Mzab or their “social separation” in the north contrasted with Ibadi participation in Ottoman society in Egypt.²⁰

The identity of the Mzabis as a trading community throughout the *eyālet al-Jazā’ir* resembled that of their coreligionists from the island of Jerba, whose merchant communities could be found throughout the empire. Ottoman control of Jerba began first through the island’s incorporation under the Ottoman government in Tripoli in the sixteenth century. Largely autonomous families ruled the island on behalf of the Ottomans until Jerba came under control of the Husaynid Ottoman government in Tunis in the eighteenth century.²¹ Over the period of Ottoman rule, Ibadis in Jerba watched the traditional council of religious scholars, the *‘azzāba*, progressively lose its influence as the Ottomans exercised control of the island through the appointment of officials and the establishment of courts.²² A growing rate of conversion of the island’s population to Maliki Sunnism, especially in the last two centuries of Ottoman rule, distinguished the Ibadi experience in Jerba from that of the Mzab. In Jerba people would have been very aware of the Ibadi community as a distinct one, but there is little to suggest that the Ottomans were particularly interested in the Ibadis’

in Diego de Haëdo, *Histoire des rois d’Alger*, trans. H. D. de Grammont (Algiers: Adolphe Jourdan, 1881), 86–87. Robert Brunschvig suggested that the Ibadis from both Jerba and the Mzab enjoyed “la liberté . . . pour pratiquer leur rite” beginning with the Ottoman occupation at the end of the sixteenth century. Unfortunately, he did not cite the source of that information: see Robert Brunschvig, *La Berbérie orientale sous les Hāfšides des origines à la fin du XVIème siècle*, 2 vols. (Paris: Maisonneuve, 1940), 1:333.

¹⁹ Donald C. Holsinger, “Migration, Commerce and Community: The Mīzābis in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Algeria,” *Journal of African History* 21, no. 1 (1980): 61–69.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 70.

²¹ Muḥammad al-Marīmī, *Ibādīyyat Jarba khilāl al-‘aṣr al-ḥadīth* (Tunis: Kullīyat al-Adāb wa-al-Funūn wa-l-Insāniyāt bi-Manūba, 2005).

²² Farhat Djaabiri, *Nizām al-‘azzāba ‘ind al-ibādīyya bi-Jarba (L’organisation des azzaba chez les ibādīhites de Jerba)* (Tunis: Institut national d’archéologie et d’art, 1975), esp. 309–10.

religious beliefs. Ottoman policies in Jerba instead reflect practical approaches to ensuring political control over a strategically valuable geography.

Jerban Ibadi communities outside of the island, in what Mohamed Merimi has called *shatāt* (diasporas), followed a structure similar to that of the Mzabis outside the Mzab. Under the leadership of a prominent individual, a group of Jerbans oversaw the wellbeing of the community. Within the *eyālet* of Tunis, Jerbans concentrated in a specific location in each city, known as the *dār al-jamā'a*.²³ Similar models were followed throughout the empire, although they took slightly different forms in Tunis, Tripoli, Alexandria, Cairo, or Istanbul. In some places, such as in Tunis or Istanbul, Jerbans appear to have been a distinct and identifiable merchant community comparable to the Mzabis in Algiers.

In Cairo, by contrast, the Ibadi community was not made up only of Jerbans, but also included Mzabis and Nafusis. In later centuries these communities were in regular contact with their coreligionists in the Arabian Peninsula and on the East African coast. While they shared features of social organization with the Jerbans in Tunis or the Mzabis in Algiers, part of what I suggest distinguished Ibadis in Cairo from their coreligionists in many other Ottoman cities was the greater degree to which they participated in all aspects of Ottoman daily life. The community in Cairo was more diverse than Ibadi communities in the lands to the west. As I show in Chapter 1, the city was home to Maghribi Ibadis from different regions who came to Cairo for a variety of reasons beyond trade, including education or pilgrimage. Many Ibadis spent years or even decades in Egypt. Their diversity of backgrounds and motivations for being there also meant that the visibility of Ibadis to the Ottoman government as a distinct religious minority community differed from the Maghrib.

Whether the Ottoman authorities in Egypt regarded Ibadis as a heterodox religious community was largely irrelevant in the everyday life of Ibadis for much of the period covered here, since it did not prevent their full participation as Muslims in the political, legal, commercial, or religious life of Ottoman Egypt. Still, it merits consideration how and why the Ottoman authorities dealt with Ibadis in the ways that they did, and how the situation in Egypt resembled or differed

²³ Ibid., 258.

from their circumstances elsewhere in the empire. This is especially true because Ibadis had that unusual status of being at once part of the religious majority and a religious minority community.

In this, Ibadis resembled Shi'i communities in the empire. In his work on Shi'ism in Ottoman-era Lebanon, Stefan Winter noted that "if the Empire, having formally espoused Sunni Islam, could not explicitly tolerate religious dissidence, the pragmatism sometimes shown in accommodating and indeed integrating deviant groups and individuals is no less a defining feature of its history."²⁴

For much of that history, Winter goes on to say,

the Sunni clerical establishment, much less the Ottoman state authorities, rarely made it their business to inquire into the hearts and minds of Muslims simply in order to discover and uproot heretical belief. . . . Many Ottoman government officials . . . who were well apprised of the confessional identity of their charges . . . chose not to make an issue of it in day-to-day administration.²⁵

The same was likely true for the Ibadis of Cairo, whose religious affiliation to a non-Sunni Muslim community was known to many of their contemporaries in the markets, courts, and madrasas of Egypt. As I explore in subsequent chapters, many of their Maliki Muslim contemporaries who also came to Egypt from the Maghrib would have known well the religious affiliation of Ibadis in Cairo. As for the Ottoman authorities, Winter points out that even with a community as well-known as the Shi'is, "the Ottoman state, contrary to conventional assumptions, was ideologically too heterogenous and politically too pragmatic to follow an actual policy against Shiism."²⁶ The same applies to Ibadis, who were far less numerous than Shi'is in the empire and had the benefit of not being indirectly affiliated with any political rivals to the Ottomans (as was the case with Shi'is and the Safavids, for example).

Examples from the Ottoman provinces to the west of Egypt, where Ibadis would have been more visible as a distinct community because of their long-term concentration in particular geographic centers, demonstrate these points well. For example, in a letter from the mid-tenth/sixteenth century, a Mzabi Ibadi scholar wrote to the acting Ottoman

²⁴ Stefan Winter, *The Shiites of Lebanon under Ottoman Rule, 1516–1788* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 8.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 17–19. ²⁶ *Ibid.*, 5.

ruler in the north, a man named Yūsuf Āghā, to protest comments made by the latter about Ibadis during a military expedition to the region in 971/1563.²⁷ The campaign, aimed at the extraction of resources from the region, does not appear to have targeted the Mزاب for any religious reasons. This suggests that the region's Ibadi affiliation was known from the beginning, but it does not evidence any discriminatory treatment of them by authorities.

This kind of letter, in which Ibadi scholars addressed their complaints to the Ottoman authorities, became a kind of literary genre over the next few centuries in the lands west of Egypt.²⁸ Two other letters from an Ibadi scholar in Jerba during the eighteenth century, one addressed to the 'Alī Pāshā Bey of Tunis (r. 1725–56) and the other to the ruler of Tripoli, Aḥmad al-Qaramanlī (r. 1711–45), provide lengthy complaints over allegedly discriminatory practices against the Ibadi communities in the two Ottoman cities. In the first case, the issue was a man who had slandered the Ibadi community in a public hammam in Tunis.²⁹ In the case of the letter to Tripoli, the issue specifically addressed Ibadi participation in an Ottoman court there. Evidently, a Maliki judge had refused to accept Ibadis as witnesses at the insistence of some local jurists.³⁰ The long definitions and descriptions of the Ibadi community and its history that accompany these letters suggest that the Ottoman authorities in these provinces had only a vague notion of who the Ibadis were and had no systematic policies discriminating against them. This helps to contextualize the Ibadi experience in Egypt, where Ibadis were even less visible, operating under the radar of the Ottoman authorities altogether. As I demonstrate in the following chapters, in Cairo Ibadis belonged to the broader Maghribi community. This status as a minority within the majority proved important to the history of Ibadis in Cairo.

²⁷ Nāṣir Bilḥāj, “‘Alāqāt Ibādiyyat Wādī Mizāb bi-al-‘Uthmāniyyīn fī iyālat al-Jazā’ir min khilāl risālat al-shaykh Abī Mahdī ‘Īsā ilā Yahyā Aghā,” *al-Majalla al-tārīkhīyya al-‘arabiyya li-al-dirāsāt al-‘uthmāniyya* 47 (2013): 113–138, at 125. Bilḥāj has used this example to emphasize the importance of the distinction between the Ibadis in the north and those of Mzabis in the Mزاب itself.

²⁸ Ibrāhīm b. Bakīr Baḥḥāz, “Thalāth rasā’il makhṭūṭa ḥawl al-ibādiyya al-mizābiyyīn bi-al-jazā’ir fī-al-‘ahd al-‘uthmānī,” *Revue d’histoire maghrébine* 89–90 (1998): 239–52.

²⁹ Sālim Bin Ya‘qūb, *Tārīkh jazīrat Jarba*, 1st ed. [independently published], 138.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 144.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as notions of belonging changed in the competing imperial and later nascent nationalist landscapes of northern Africa and western and central Asia, the Ottoman position toward Shi'ism shifted to one of political suspicion.³¹ Ibadi communities, by contrast, appear not to have represented much of a political or religious threat to either the Ottoman authorities or religious scholars. This was especially true because by the late nineteenth century French colonial forces had taken control of and formed administrations in most places where Maghribi Ibadis lived. In Algeria, Mzabis negotiated a place for themselves as a distinct minority community, both in the Mزاب and throughout Algeria, from 1853 onward.³² In the French Protectorate of Tunisia from 1881 forward, they continued much as they had under the Ottomans in that Jerbans maintained their roles as a merchant community and Ibadis in Jerba continued to operate their local religious educational system – although they increasingly lost pupils to French schools in the twentieth century.³³ By the end of the nineteenth century, Ibadis in the Jebel Nafusa had also joined an Ottoman administrative framework as part of the Tanzimat reforms. Ibadis served in Ottoman offices there into the twentieth century.³⁴ As I show in the later chapters of this book, Ibadis in Egypt were active at the highest levels of Ottoman regional politics in these places. But it was also in late nineteenth-century Egypt, as elsewhere in the empire, that Ibadis became enmeshed in global conversations on and networks of Pan-Islamism and, in the twentieth century, anticolonial resistance.

Alongside religious and communal affiliations, the geography of Ibadi communities in the Ottoman context also merits consideration. Despite the concentration of their communities in Maghribi

³¹ Gökhan Çetinsaya, “The Caliph and Mujtahids: Ottoman Policy towards the Shiite Community of Iraq in the Late Nineteenth Century,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 41, no. 4 (2005): 561–74.

³² Amal N. Ghazal, “Tensions of Nationalism: The Mزاب Student Missions in Tunis and the Politics of Anticolonialism,” *IJMES* 47, no. 1 (2015): 47–63; Jomier, *Islam, réforme et colonisation*; Amal Ghazal, “Self-Minoritization: Performing Difference in Colonial Algeria,” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 41, no. 3 (2021): 355–61.

³³ Ḥamādī al-Wātī, *Madāris jazīrat Jarba tuḥaddith akhbārāhā* (Jerba: n.p., 2011).

³⁴ Ghazal, “An Ottoman Pāshā and the End of Empire”; Paul M. Love, Jr., “Provenance in the Aggregate: The Social Life of an Arabic Manuscript Collection in Naples,” *Manuscript Studies: A Journal of the Schoenberg Institute for Manuscript Studies* 3, no. 2 (2018): 334–56.

geographies (oases, mountains, islands) that lay distant from the major centers of Ottoman imperial power or commerce, Ibadis traveled and conducted business throughout the Ottoman world in much the same way that their Jewish, Christian, or non-Ibadi Muslim contemporaries did. The history of the Buffalo Agency shows that Ibadis, far from being a minority on the margins of the Ottoman world, had a sustained presence in the empire's richest province for centuries. Moreover, the nature of their presence in Egypt was multifaceted, with Ibadis working, living, and studying in Cairo for many different reasons.

Geography often appears as a defining feature in discussions of Ibadi history in the Maghrib, whether as an explanation for their relative isolation from other Ibadi communities in the Arabian Peninsula before the nineteenth century or even their geographic distribution in the Maghrib as an "Ibadi archipelago."³⁵ While this is a productive way of understanding Ibadi communities as connected through a dense network, it is important to remember that this network extended well beyond the Maghrib to the east.³⁶ Moreover, as the individuals in this book show, the Ibadi community in Cairo was not always a transient one. Egypt was home to a sizeable community of Ibadis for three centuries, including many who made their careers, families, and lives there.

This all leads to the central argument and contribution of the book. I argue that the Ibadis of Cairo should be understood as Ottomans. These were not outsiders who existed on the margins of empire. Instead, they operated within the legal structure of the Ottoman shariah courts, the culture of Islamic education centered on al-Azhar, and the commercial landscape of Egypt and the broader Mediterranean in precisely the same ways as their non-Ibadi contemporaries did. At the same time, the Ottoman Ibadis of Cairo also relied upon their community's networks in Egypt and throughout the Mediterranean to facilitate the exchange of capital, books, goods, and ideas. In this way, the history of Ibadis in Egypt both intersects with and diverges from that of other Ibadis in the Maghrib, that of other religious minorities, and that of other Maghribis in the overlapping contexts of the Ottoman Empire and early European colonialism in northern Africa and western Asia. That unusual status of belonging to the

³⁵ Aillet, *L'archipel ibadite*.

³⁶ Jomier, "Les réseaux étendus."

Muslim majority while also constituting a distinct religious minority played a crucial role in enabling the Ibadis of Egypt to be Ottomans.

The Wikālat al-Jāmūs

To situate Maghribi Ibadis in this Ottoman context and to demonstrate the importance of Cairo to their history, I follow the story of an Ibadi institution known as the Wikālat al-Jāmūs – what I have called “the Buffalo Agency.” The original reason for its name (literally, “the water buffalo agency”) may have been its specialization in the trade of the skins of the water buffalo native to the Nile River Valley, but by the seventeenth century no evidence for that connection survives beyond the name itself.³⁷ Located in the Tulun district of Cairo, the Buffalo Agency served the Ibadi community of Egypt in different ways at different times. Over the course of its history from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries, it would function as a trade depot, a school, a library, and, in the latest stage of its history, as a memorial to the legacy of the Ottoman Ibadis of Cairo. Despite its centrality in the intellectual, religious, commercial, and political lives of generations of Ibadis over these centuries, the Buffalo Agency has received surprisingly little attention from historians of Ibadi Islam.

Although several Ibadi historians and a handful of authors writing in European languages have recognized the importance of the Buffalo Agency, only one published Arabic-language study of its history exists. The author of that study, the Tunisian historian Aḥmad Muṣliḥ, originally wrote it as a master’s thesis and subsequently revised it as a book, published under the title *al-Waqf al-jarbī fī Miṣr* (The Jerban waqf in Egypt: the example of the Wikālat al-Jāmūs.)³⁸ Notably absent from the title is any reference to Ibadis. The emphasis on the geographic origins of the community in Jerba, rather than their religious affiliation, in part reflects the challenge of identifying Ibadis in the

³⁷ This claim is usually traced (orally or in writing) back to Sālim Bin Ya‘qūb. For example, see Martin H. Custers, *Ibādī Publishing Activities in the East and in the West, c. 1880–1960s: An Attempt to an Inventory, with References to Related Recent Publications* (Maastricht: n.p., 2006), 39.

³⁸ Aḥmad Muṣliḥ, *al-Waqf al-jarbī fī Miṣr wa-dawruhu fī ‘l-tanmiya al-iqtisādiyya wa-al-ijtimā’iyya wa-al-thaqāfiyya min al-qarn al-‘āshir ilā ‘l-qarn al-rābi‘ ‘ashar al-hijrīyayn (Wikālat al-Jāmūs namūdhajan)* (Kuwait: al-Amāna al-‘Amma lil-Awqāf, 2012).

historical sources produced outside the community that I discuss below. Muşliḥ's book is a remarkable journey through the history of a central feature of the Buffalo Agency: the waqf endowments that supported the upkeep of both the institution and its residents over much of its history.

Muşliḥ's study draws on a rich body of materials, ranging from court documents and manuscript notes to the author's own written exchanges with some of the last residents of the Buffalo Agency from the 1950s. He argues for the importance of the waqf in ensuring the longevity of the institution over several centuries, which he demonstrates by analyzing the key surviving endowment document of the institution from the mid-eighteenth century as well as other smaller private endowments. These latter include the endowment of books, documented in the manuscript notes of texts that survive from the Buffalo Agency's library. Most of the book relies on two main bodies of sources. The first are the surviving manuscripts from the library of the Agency that are today held in private collections in Oman and Tunisia, to which he had at least partial access. The second are the unpublished notes and the published work of the historian Shaykh Sālim Bin Ya'qūb (d. 1991), under whom Muşliḥ studied as a young man in Jerba, Tunisia.³⁹ I also draw on these sources, although as I explain in Chapter 6, the circumstances of my accessing them were quite different.

Despite these shared bodies of materials, the present study of the Buffalo Agency differs from Muşliḥ's in important ways. First of all, the history of waqf is not my priority. I fully agree with Muşliḥ's arguments for the centrality of the mechanism of waqf in the Agency's history, but I am interested in using those endowments to demonstrate only one of several aspects of Ibadi participation in Ottoman culture in Egypt. Muşliḥ's study showed the ubiquity of Ibadis in Ottoman Cairo, but I seek here to document their engagement with Ottoman law, politics, commerce, and religious life. The present book also distinguishes itself from that and previous studies in its attention to the citation of and specific referencing to individual manuscript notes and court records. Muşliḥ's rich study often contains oblique references to manuscripts or court cases, the origins of which

³⁹ Sālim Bin Ya'qūb, *Tārīkh jazīrat Jarba wa-madārisihā al-'ilmiyya*, ed. Farhat Djaabiri, 2nd ed. (Tunis: Cérès Editions, 2006).

are not clear. Nevertheless, his study served as a foundational starting point for my own, and it is difficult to imagine having completed this book without the leads offered to me there.

Muşliḥ's is not the only study to address the history of the Buffalo Agency. A few other important studies have also taken up the topic and have influenced my arguments here. The first is the work of the Tunisian historian Mohamed Merimi, who has focused on the Ibadi communities of the island of Jerba, in particular. Merimi emphasized the need to understand the history of Ottoman-era Ibadi communities in Jerba as an interplay between religious and economic power, since it was both religious scholars and prominent merchants who shaped the organization of communities there and their relationship to Ottoman rule.⁴⁰

He emphasized that this same dynamic was present in Jerban communities outside the island, in what he calls their diaspora communities (*shatāt*) throughout the Mediterranean.⁴¹ In this he drew on the earlier scholarship of Farhat Djaabiri, who noted the importance of networks of Ibadis outside Jerba. His book on the history of the *'azzāba* in Jerba mentioned the central place of the Buffalo Agency for Jerbans in Egypt but limited the discussion of it to a couple of pages. In those pages, Djaabiri hinted at the rich engagement of Ibadis in Cairo with the Sunni religious circles that I explore here when he wrote: "We should not understand [the presence of the Agency] as the desire of the Ibadis to close in on themselves. In addition to the classes they attended there, [Ibadi] students also attended lessons at the al-Azhar Mosque."⁴² In this book I demonstrate that the Buffalo Agency confirms Djaabiri's point on its importance as a site of religious learning and conforms in some ways to Merimi's model of a Jerban diaspora community, especially in the importance of understanding the complementary roles of merchants and religious figures. At the same time, the community at the Buffalo Agency was not limited to Jerban Ibadis but included their Mzabi and Nafusi confreres.

In his more recent work Merimi also used the extant waqf statement of the Buffalo Agency from the eighteenth century (discussed in Chapter 3) to bolster his overarching argument that Ibadis from Jerba adapted to the legal norms of Maliki Sunni law in their

⁴⁰ Al-Marīmī, *Ibāḍiyyat Jarba*. ⁴¹ Ibid., 42–44.

⁴² Djaabiri, *Nizām al-'azzāba*, 258–59.

Mediterranean diasporas.⁴³ Convinced by this argument, I found it applicable in the context of Ibadis living in Ottoman Egypt during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In some ways, this book is an attempt to demonstrate an analogous, long-term adaptability of Ibadis in Egypt to an Ottoman context in all aspects of everyday life. It diverges from Merimi's argument only in my way of understanding the Ibadis of Egypt not as a diaspora but instead as a diverse group of people bound not by regional origins but by communal belonging.

There is also a short but valuable treatment of the Buffalo Agency's history by Martin Custers. Although best known for his work in compiling an exhaustive bibliography of primary and secondary sources for the study of Ibadism, Custers also authored a slim volume entitled *Ibadi Publishing Activities in the East and in the West, c.1880–1960s*.⁴⁴ This volume contains what is to my knowledge the only other treatment of the Agency's history in English.⁴⁵ Although less than five pages long, his short account of the Buffalo Agency carries tremendous value in that it draws on his extensive bibliographic work and his fieldwork in North Africa in the 1970s. Many of the materials he collected then and for his bibliography have been key to my own reconstruction of events over the course of the Agency's history, as so many of the footnotes below attest.

Sources and Method for this Book

When I set out to write this book I had a clear idea of the source material on which I intended to draw. These included first and foremost as many of the extant books from the Buffalo Agency's library as I could find. I knew from my previous work on the Ibadi prosopographical corpus that many of these texts were to be found in two places: (1) the private library of Shaykh Aḥmad al-Khalīlī in Muscat, Oman and (2) the private library of Shaykh Sālim Bin Ya'qūb in Jerba,

⁴³ Muḥammad al-Marīmī, *Ahl jazīrat Jarba min khilāl awqāf al-ibādiyya wa-hakdāsh bay'at al-gharība al-yahūdiyya* (Tunis: Markaz al-Nashr al-Jāmi'ī, 2018). See also Mohamed Merimi, *Juifs de Djerba et stratégies identitaires* (Tunis: Diraset études maghrébines, 2011).

⁴⁴ Martin H. Custers, *al-Ibādiyya: A Bibliography*, 2nd ed., vols. 1–3 (Hildesheim: George Olms Verlag, 2016).

⁴⁵ The section on Egypt, which is clearly of relevance, is quite a bit longer. On the Wikāla, specifically, see Custers, *Ibādī Publishing Activities*, 38–42.

Tunisia.⁴⁶ My aim was to visit both collections and to examine as many texts as possible by physical autopsy.

In my previous work I have been insistent upon this need to examine, whenever feasible, the physical objects themselves. This stems first from my conviction that the manuscripts are themselves actors alongside the people who create, transport, and use them, and second from the evidence (such as watermarks and bindings) that illuminate the history of these manuscripts but can be difficult to examine in digital facsimiles.⁴⁷ Despite all these intentions and convictions, in the end I examined in person only a handful of individual manuscripts that originated in the Buffalo Agency. Instead, I was able to draw extensively on digital facsimiles. This affected my method and approach to using these sources in unexpected ways that deserve some attention here.

The first and largest body of extant manuscripts from the Buffalo Agency's library is today found in the private library of Shaykh Aḥmad al-Khalīlī, who is also currently the Grand Mufti for the sultanate of Oman. Unable to obtain leave or funding for an extended stay in Oman, I had to make recourse to other means of examining these texts. The Omani Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs has offered digital facsimiles of many of the texts in the al-Khalīlī Library on its "Electronic Library" website, but the online reader that must be used to view them is difficult to work with and the images are often distorted.⁴⁸ Fortunately, the Ibadica centre des études et de recherche sur l'ibadisme in Paris has in its collection an additional set of digital facsimiles of much of the library. It is from those images that I have analyzed the manuscripts from the al-Khalīlī Library, and it is to the shelf marks in the Ibadica collection that I refer throughout the book. While the use of digital surrogates meant I was unable to study some physical features such as watermarks and bindings, spending several months with those images allowed me far more time to study their contents and even some aspects of their physical features than even an

⁴⁶ Love, Jr., *Ibadi Muslims of North Africa*, esp. 140–42 on the Wikāla.

⁴⁷ On these issues see Eryn Kropf, "Will That Surrogate Do? Reflections on Material Manuscript Literacy in the Digital Environment from Islamic Manuscripts at the University of Michigan Library," *Manuscript Studies: A Journal of the Schoenberg Institute for Manuscript Studies* 1, no. 1 (2016): 52–70.

⁴⁸ Online at elibrary.mara.gov.om/en/.

extended visit to the library would have allowed. The ability to manipulate the color, contrast, and size of images often proved invaluable in identifying difficult-to-read passages or other features of texts that would have otherwise gone unnoticed.

A comparison of the images and numbering systems in different facsimiles from the manuscripts in the al-Khalilī Library and references to them in other studies quickly demonstrated to me that I did not have the whole picture. Shelf marks differed depending on which source or collection of images I referred to, and even the contents of particular volumes differed. I have reconstructed much of the library and its history through the use of these digital facsimiles. Despite a few volumes that may be missing, the overall picture of the collection emerges quite clearly, and it is in large part due to the flexibility of being able to move among facsimiles from different collections that I was able to reconstruct it.

That said, the veritable key to reconstructing the skeleton of the Buffalo Agency's library was an additional set of photographs taken by Martin Custers in a visit to the library of Sālim Bin Ya'qūb in Jerba. In that case, it was not facsimiles of the books in the Agency's library that proved so valuable but instead images of a hand list of those books recorded by Bin Ya'qūb during his residency at the Agency in the 1930s. Discussed in detail in Chapter 6, Bin Ya'qūb's time in Cairo and efforts to document the Buffalo Agency's history have proved invaluable to writing this book. In part for that reason, his own private library constituted the second-largest collection of manuscripts on which I have drawn here.

Sālim Bin Ya'qūb is a prominent figure in the modern history of Ibadi Islam in the Maghrib, and his influence is felt in the work and careers of his students and friends. As noted above, these include Aḥmad Muşliḥ, whose study of the Buffalo Agency's waqf draws heavily on his teacher's library and scholarship. Muşliḥ also had access to a version of the list of endowed books recorded by Shaykh Sālim, although it differs somewhat from the version I have used. This list represents only one instance of the many sources from the Bin Ya'qūb family library on which I have drawn for this book. Here again, the Ibadica Center facilitated my access by providing me with its own collection of digital facsimiles of much of the Bin Ya'qūb Library, and it is to that numbering system that I refer throughout. In my own reconstruction of the Buffalo Agency's library and its history,

I have triangulated these different digital facsimiles of manuscripts, documents, and books from these two collections.

Despite their centrality, the books originally held in the Buffalo Agency's library constitute only one piece of the body of source material I used in this book. Also important was the large extant corpus of manuscripts produced by Ibadis while resident at the Agency. Manuscripts transcribed in the Agency or at nearby locations (such as al-Azhar) by its residents are housed in private and public libraries across the Maghrib and elsewhere. A large number, for example, are housed together in the El Barounia (al-Bārūniyya) Library in Jerba, Tunisia. The curator of that collection, Sa'īd al-Bārūnī, provided me with digital facsimiles of those texts and, in a handful of cases, direct access to the physical objects themselves during my fieldwork in Jerba. Alongside that collection, many manuscripts connected to the Agency are also today housed in the private libraries of the Mزاب Valley in Algeria. As I discuss in the following chapters, Ibadis originally from the Mزاب were among the most frequent visitors and residents at the Buffalo Agency, especially from the late eighteenth century onward. The number of copies of manuscripts transcribed at the Agency by Mزابis over a period of three centuries is considerable, and so a visit to the many libraries of that region seemed in order.

Here came another snag in my original plan. I had intended to visit the Mزاب for a research visit in 2019 but political events in Algeria prevented me from traveling there. With generous help from colleagues there, I obtained the electronic catalog entries for the manuscripts I had hoped to examine. While for the Bin Ya'qūb and al-Khalīlī Libraries I had been able to rely on digital facsimiles, for dozens of other manuscripts from the Mزاب I have relied on the remarkably detailed catalog entries produced by Ibadi research organizations there. References to many of these manuscripts appear in the notes of this book as they do in those catalogs, since I accessed them through data provided to me from the al-Barrādi Database, a central database of manuscripts in the Mزاب Valley operated by the Association Abou Ishak Tafeyeche in Ghardaïa. The analytical value of these catalog entries, which number in the hundreds, was tremendous. They provided me first with a sense of how significant the Agency's role was as a site of Ibadi manuscript production. Second, these catalog entries allowed me to identify individuals in time and space who appeared obliquely in other sources, whether court cases, private letters, or manuscript notes.

Still more digital facsimiles, produced in a very different context, proved invaluable. When I was unable to travel to Algeria in 2019, I extended my stay in Tunisia to conduct additional research at the Tunisian National Archives (ANT). The visit was aimed at examining the correspondence of the commercial and diplomatic agent for the Husaynid bey of Tunis, Saʿīd al-Shammākhī (d. 1883), the subject of Chapter 5. The correspondence belongs to the archives' "Historical" (i.e. precolonial) series, meaning that it is accessible only through digital facsimiles. The ANT archivists and staff, always generous with their time, were especially patient during this visit as they allowed me to print copies of the entire 300-page correspondence on their office's desktop printer. This allowed me to work with the letters after leaving Tunisia and to reconstruct al-Shammākhī's career with great detail, which would have been impossible for me to do in a few weeks on site at the archives.

With a handful of exceptions, then, digital surrogates and catalog entries make up most of my primary source material here. The large amount of data that I was able to obtain via digital facsimile speaks to a remarkable sea change in how research can be conducted. As a result, this book is, I think, a good example of the tremendous value and exciting potential for the fruits of the many ongoing projects aimed at digitizing Arabic manuscript and early print collections, whether Ibadi or otherwise. Moreover, the catalog data I use here serves as an important reminder that good metadata are worth their weight in gold for research!

Finally, the first two chapters of the book draw heavily from a particularly Ottoman kind of source for the study of Egypt: the registers of Ottoman shariah court cases, known as *ṣijillāt*, dating from the late sixteenth to the late eighteenth centuries. Here I owe a great debt to the work of Egyptian historian ʿAbd al-Raḥīm A. ʿAbd al-Raḥīm (1936–2005), who spent decades identifying cases involving Maghribi litigants and publishing them serially in journal articles and five large volumes (the final one posthumously).⁴⁹ These published

⁴⁹ ʿAbd al-Raḥīm ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ʿAbd al-Raḥīm, "Wathāʾiq tuwaḍḍiḥ dawr al-jāliya al-maghribiyya fī tārikh Miṣr fī-al-ʿaṣr al-uthmānī," *Revue d'histoire maghrébine* 7–8 (1977): 99–105; ʿAbd al-Raḥīm ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ʿAbd al-Raḥīm, "Wathāʾiq ʿan dawr al-maghāriba fī tārikh Miṣr fī-al-ʿaṣr al-uthmānī," *Revue d'histoire maghrébine* 10–11 (1978): 99–105; ʿAbd al-Raḥīm ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ʿAbd al-Raḥīm, "Wathāʾiq ʿan dawr al-maghāriba fī mujtamiʿ"

collections of sources, which remain underutilized by historians due to their rarity, allowed me to look for Ibadis in over two thousand cases from Ottoman courts in Cairo and elsewhere in Egypt. Without their publication, I would not have had the time or the ability to study the original registers in Egypt.

Chapter Outlines

This book covers some 300 years of history, which (as is evident from its length) it does unevenly. This resulted in part from the nature of my source materials. I was, for example, able to say far more about Ibadi engagement with the world of law in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries than I could for later periods because of the published court registers. Rather than attempt a comprehensive historical survey, I follow a chronological arrangement, highlighting specific themes or historical figures in each of the chapters.

Chapter 1 offers a *mise en scène* by introducing the larger context of Maghribis in Ottoman-era Egypt in which Ibadis lived. In particular, it focuses on the neighborhood around the Ibn Tulun Mosque, where the Ibadi community of Cairo was centered and where the Buffalo Agency was located. Known as the Tulun district (*ḥayy Ṭūlūn*), this area of town was home to a community of Maghribis for the entirety of the

al-Iskandariyya fi-al-‘aṣr al-‘uthmānī ‘alā ḍaw’ wathā’iq al-sijill al-awwal min sijillāt maḥkamat al-Iskandariyya al-shara’iyya,” *Revue d’histoire maghrébine* 15–16 (1979): 119–28; ‘Abd al-Raḥīm ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ‘Abd al-Raḥīm, “Wathā’iq maḥkamat al-Iskandariyya al-shara’iyya al-muta’alliqa bi-al-jāliya al-maghribiyya fi madīnat al-Iskandariyya fi-al-‘aṣr al-‘uthmānī al-sijill al-thālith,” *Revue d’histoire maghrébine* 19–20 (1980): 301–07; ‘Abd al-Raḥīm ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ‘Abd al-Raḥīm, ed., *Wathā’iq al-maghāriba min sijillāt al-maḥākam al-shara’iyya al-miṣriyya abān al-‘aṣr al-‘uthmānī (al-juz’ al-awwal)*, vol. 1 (Zaghwān: Centre d’études et de recherches ottomanes, morisques de documentation et d’information, 1992); ‘Abd al-Raḥīm ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ‘Abd al-Raḥīm, *Wathā’iq al-maghāriba min sijillāt al-maḥākam al-shara’iyya al-miṣriyya abān al-‘aṣr al-‘uthmānī (al-juz’ al-thānī)*, vol. 2 (Zaghwān: Centre d’études et de recherches ottomanes, morisques de documentation et d’information, 1994); ‘Abd al-Raḥīm ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ‘Abd al-Raḥīm, ed., *Wathā’iq al-maghāriba min sijillāt al-maḥākam al-shara’iyya al-miṣriyya abān al-‘aṣr al-‘uthmānī 1604/1650 (al-juz’ al-rābi’)*, vol. 4 (Tunis: Mu’assasat al-Tamīmī, 2004); ‘Abd al-Raḥīm ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ‘Abd al-Raḥīm, ed., *Wathā’iq al-maghāriba min sijillāt al-maḥākam al-shara’iyya al-miṣriyya abān al-‘aṣr al-‘uthmānī 1676/1689 (al-juz’ al-khāmis)*, vol. 5 (Tunis: Mu’assasat al-Tamīmī, 2016).

Ottoman period. The chapter also lays out the geographic distribution of Maghribis in Cairo, their principal professions, and their ties to other regions, as well as where their stories fit in the historiography of Ottoman-era Egypt.

Turning more specifically to the Ibadi community, Chapter 2 examines the early history of the Buffalo Agency in the seventeenth century. It focuses its attention on shariah court records from that century to highlight Ibadi participation in Ottoman legal culture. The first of the two main characters is the founder of the Agency's first endowment: 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Baḥḥār. The example of al-Baḥḥār emphasizes the key role of Ibadi merchants in supporting the Agency from the very beginning, as well as demonstrating the reliance of those merchants on Ottoman courts to adjudicate commercial and personal matters and to formalize endowments. The second character of the chapter, a young Ibadi scholar named Muḥammad al-Sidwīkshī, plays a complementary role. His prominence as an Azhari scholar, his appearances in a series of probate and inheritance court cases, and his scholarly output together show how Ibadi scholars also participated in Ottoman religious and legal culture in Cairo. The chapter also uses shariah court records to identify the first appearance of the Buffalo Agency by name in the historical record.

Chapter 3 continues with the theme of the symbiotic relationship between Ibadi merchants and scholars by focusing its attention on the Buffalo Agency's manuscript library in the eighteenth century. The survival of much of that collection allowed me to tell the story of some of the most prominent students, scholars, and merchants connected to the Agency in that period, as well as to demonstrate more precisely the importance of the support of merchants for the accumulation of a library there. The contents of the library likewise convey the multiple roles played by the Buffalo Agency as a school for Ibadi studies and a residence for Ibadi students studying at the Sunni madrasa of the al-Azhar Mosque.

In Chapter 4 I transition into a discussion of the early nineteenth century, which demands the inclusion of a new set of actors. The first was the French army and its brief occupation of Egypt under Napoleon Bonaparte (d. 1821). The second was the arrival to power of the new Ottoman governor of Egypt, Muḥammad 'Alī (d. 1849). Europeans had long been present in Ottoman lands, but the French invasion marked the beginnings of European imperial (and later colonial)

activity in Egypt and the Maghrib that would characterize the rest of the nineteenth century. Ottoman governors had likewise come and gone, but Muḥammad ‘Alī would prove different. I follow the lives of two Ibadis who lived and studied in Egypt during this period as a lens through which to view how Ibadis experienced the dramatic events of the first half of the nineteenth century. A new type of source material for this chapter, personal letters authored by student residents of the Agency, complements other evidence from the margins of manuscripts copied or used by students and teachers there. Finally, the chapter highlights the key role of Egypt as a site of increasing contact among the Ibadi communities of the Maghrib and those in both the Arabian Peninsula and East Africa.

Chapter 5 focuses on the lives of two individuals in the second half of the nineteenth century to show how Ibadis interacted with two key components of Ottoman culture in Egypt during that period: ruling household politics and print culture. The first character, Sa‘īd al-Shammākhī (d. 1883), had earlier served as the director of the Buffalo Agency during the period covered in Chapter 4. His appointment to the role as the commercial and diplomatic agent (*wakīl*) of the Husaynid bey of Tunis from 1871 to 1881 demonstrates the links between the Ibadi community and the Ottoman ruling households of Egypt and Tunisia. The second key figure of the chapter, Muḥammad al-Bārūnī, founded the first Ibadi print house in northern Africa. Known as al-Maṭba‘a al-Bārūniyya (al-Bārūnī Press), it pioneered the printing of both classical Ibadi texts and new works by Ibadi authors living in the Maghrib, Oman, and Egypt. Ibadis shared an enthusiasm for print culture with their non-Ibadi contemporaries, and the chapter shows how Ibadis used the business and culture of printing in ways comparable to other Ottomans.

With the dawn of the twentieth century, the attention and activities of Ibadi Muslims in Cairo turned to the transregional worlds of pan-Islamist discourse, nascent nationalist movements, and Islamic reform. The events of the interwar years, in particular, represent a key turning point in the history of Ibadi communities throughout northern Africa and beyond, but that was a story in which the Buffalo Agency would play no major part. This is not to say that there was a fundamental break with the past. Work by Amal Ghazal and Augustin Jomier on the interwar period has already demonstrated its remarkable continuities

with the Ibadi past.⁵⁰ But a detailed study the events of that period are beyond the scope of this book.

The final chapter instead looks at the twilight decades of the Buffalo Agency's operation as an institution of Ibadi learning and commerce in Egypt by following the journey of a young Jerban student named Sālim Bin Ya'qūb to Cairo in the 1930s. Bin Ya'qūb arrived in Cairo to find that the Buffalo Agency had been deserted for years. His efforts to collect the fragments of the Agency's history represents a reenactment and a memorialization of the Ibadi experience in Cairo, which he would later seek to record in the form of a book about the history of the community there. This book follows his efforts to do so, reconstructing much of the work he did and drawing on many of the same documents to tell that very story. As a result, the chapter also reflects on Bin Ya'qūb's career and how it overlaps and at times intersects with my own experience researching and writing a book about the Buffalo Agency.

⁵⁰ Ghazal, *Islamic Reform and Arab Nationalism*; Amal N. Ghazal, "The Other Frontiers of Arab Nationalism: Ibadis, Berbers, and the Arabist-Salafī Press in the Interwar Period," *IJMES* 42, no. 1 (2010): 105–22; Jomier, "Iṣlāḥ ibāḍīte et intégration nationale"; Ghazal, "Tensions of Nationalism"; Jomier, *Islam, réforme et colonisation*.

1 *Tulun District*

By the Ottoman era the neighborhood around the Ibn Tulun Mosque in Cairo (see Figure 1.1) had seen better days. The mosque itself, constructed in the ninth century by its patron and then ruler of Egypt, Aḥmad b. Ṭulūn (d. 884), had begun to crumble. The Tulun district (*ḥayy Ṭulūn*), home to many of the city's Maghribi residents, seemed to be literally falling apart in May 1694, when a portion of the mosque's minaret came crashing down during a windstorm and destroyed several houses. The violence of the storm and the destruction led many people to believe that the end of days had arrived.¹ Over the course of the next century Tulun served as the scene of frequent fighting among different military factions that vied for control of the city.² In 1798, shortly after the French army had occupied Cairo under the command of Napoleon Bonaparte (d. 1821), the neighborhood's Maghribi merchants woke up one Thursday morning to find that "a gang [had] charged the gate of the Tulun market, smashed it, and went through it into the market. They smashed the lights, broke into three shops, and stole all of the goods of the Maghribi merchants. They killed the guard there and left without any resistance or challenge."³ A few years later, in 1803, things had scarcely improved when strong gusts of wind caused houses in the neighborhood to collapse.⁴

¹ 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Jabartī, *'Ajā'ib al-athār fī-al-tarjā'im wa-al-akhbār*, ed. 'Abd al-Raḥīm 'Abd al-Raḥmān 'Abd al-Raḥīm, vol. 1 (Cairo: Maṭba'at Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya bi-al-Qāhira, 1997), 48; 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Jabartī, *'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Jabartī's History of Egypt*, ed. Thomas Philipp and Moshe Perlmann, vol. 1 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1994), 41.

² For examples, see Jabartī, *'Ajā'ib*, 1:77 (in 1711); Jabartī, *al-Jabartī's History*, 1:65; Jabartī, *'Ajā'ib*, 1:84 (in 1123/1711); Jabartī, *al-Jabartī's History*, 1:72. On the late eighteenth-century context more broadly see Daniel Crecelius, *The Roots of Modern Egypt: A Study of Ali Bey al-Kabir and Muḥammad Bey Abū al-Dhahab, 1760–1775* (Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1981).

³ Translation from: Jabartī, *al-Jabartī's History*, 3:47–48; al-Jabartī, *'Ajā'ib*, 3:49.

⁴ Jabartī, *'Ajā'ib*, 3:372; Jabartī, *al-Jabartī's History*, 3:357.



Figure 1.1 The Mosque of Ibn Tulun. (Source: Getty Images UK)

Admittedly, these episodes are those that the early nineteenth-century Egyptian chronicler ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Jabartī (d. 1825) deemed worthy of mention. Houses (probably) did not collapse every day in the Tulun district in the Ottoman era. Together, however, these anecdotes convey something of the socioeconomic status of the neighborhood’s Maghribi residents. Unlike some of the other Maghribi communities in Cairo, those of the Tulun district were of relatively modest means. The neighborhood offered more than a cheap cost of living, though. The density of Maghribis residing in Tulun also provided a sense of home and a degree of security. Newly arrived students or merchants from the Maghrib could locate their compatriots or even their extended family in the neighborhood. For these reasons, Ibadis from Jerba chose Tulun as the site to establish the Buffalo Agency at the beginning of the seventeenth century.

In the following chapters we encounter the stories of Maghribi Ibadis who arrived in Cairo and sought out their coreligionists and extended family members living in Tulun or other parts of the city. This story of Ibadis in Ottoman-era Cairo belongs to a broader history of Maghribis in Egypt. This chapter introduces the Maghribi

communities of Ottoman Cairo to draw a picture of the world inhabited by the Ibadis who lived there from the seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries. It begins by providing a brief overview of Ottoman-era Egypt before turning its attention to Maghribis more specifically. This will set the stage for the remainder of the book, in which I tell the story of the Buffalo Agency in Tulun to show how Maghribi Ibadis participated in the religious, political, commercial, and legal world of Ottoman Egypt through their status as a minority within the Muslim majority.

Ottoman-Era Egypt

In Ottoman-era Cairo the lives, careers, and paths of Ibadis and other Maghribi merchants, scholars, students, and pilgrims converged. In the nineteenth century they would be joined by political activists, printers, and journalists. Part of the explanation for this convergence lay in the Ottoman context in which they operated. The Ottoman conquest of Egypt in 1517 had ushered in a new era.⁵ Suddenly, Egypt had been

⁵ This section draws on a number of works of excellent scholarship, all of which address different aspects of the history of Ottoman-era Egypt in far more detail than my brief description here: ‘Abd al-Mu‘ī, *al-‘Ā’ila wa-al-thawra*; ‘Abd al-Raḥīm, *al-Maghārība fī Miṣr fī-al-‘aṣr al-‘uthmānī*; James E. Baldwin, *Islamic Law and Empire in Ottoman Cairo* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018); Crecelius, *The Roots of Modern Egypt*; Daniel Crecelius, ed., *Eighteenth Century Egypt: The Arabic Manuscript Sources* (Claremont, CA: Regina Books, 1990); Khaled Fahmy, *All the Pāshā’s Men: Mehmed Ali, His Army and the Making of Modern Egypt* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2008); Nelly Hanna, *Making Big Money in 1600: A Biography of Ismā‘il Abū Taqīyya, Egyptian Merchant* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1997); Nelly Hanna, *In Praise of Books: A Cultural History of Cairo’s Middle Class, Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2004); Jane Hathaway, “Egypt in the Seventeenth Century,” in *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, vol. 2, ed. M. W. Daly (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 34–58; Jane Hathaway, *The Arab Lands under Ottoman Rule: 1516–1800*, (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2008); Reem A. Meshal, *Sharia and the Making of the Modern Egyptian: Islamic Law and Custom in the Courts of Ottoman Cairo* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2014); Alan Mikhail, *Nature and Empire in Ottoman Egypt: An Environmental History* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Raymond, *Artisans et commerçants*, vol. 1; Raymond, *Artisans et commerçants*, vol. 2; Afaf Lutfi Sayyid-Marsot, *Egypt in the Reign of Muḥammad Ali* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984); Michael Winter, *Egyptian Society under Ottoman Rule, 1517–1798* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992).

transformed from the seat of empire, a status it had enjoyed under the preceding Mamluk dynasty (1250–1517), into a marginal province. Despite remaining the wealthiest province of the empire, Egypt would not again command significant political influence in the region until the arrival of Ottoman governor Muḥammad (Mehmet) ‘Alī to power in the first half of the nineteenth century.

In the first two centuries of their rule the Ottomans introduced a number of important reforms to Egypt, which would affect Ibadis and other Maghribis living there. These included significant reforms to the tax system, especially the practice of “tax farming” (*iltizām*), which allowed wealthy individuals to bid on lands for which they would bear the responsibility of collecting taxes for the government. Throughout the seventeenth century those responsible skimmed a bit (and sometimes more than a bit) off the top for themselves.⁶ The rise of tax farming also benefited merchants, who used the system to establish waqfs out of their tax farms to enhance their reputations and for the benefit of posterity. In the more chaotic eighteenth century, waqfs would help this same class of merchants to preserve their property. Rural lands as well as urban structures could be transformed into endowments by their merchant owners, while the scholarly class, the *ulama*, took control of managing those endowments. They, too, would benefit financially from managing them, as would the students and scholars at schools throughout Cairo and Alexandria to whom the proceeds of waqf would go. Alongside the move to tax farming at the end of the sixteenth century, the mid-seventeenth century witnessed the rise of a military elite. First the military regiments of the *ojaqs* and then later factions of the Janissary corps and individual Mamluk “beys” asserted remarkable economic and political influence in Ottoman Egypt for the next century and a half.⁷ Most prominently, the rival military factions of the *Fiqārīs* and the *Qāsimīs* “virtually divided Egyptian society between them from roughly 1640–1730.”⁸

The management of land tax and endowments, in turn, required a way of establishing and keeping records of all that capital moving around. Here, too, the Ottomans played an important role as

⁶ Hathaway, *The Arab Lands under Ottoman Rule*, 50.

⁷ Winter, *Egyptian Society under Ottoman Rule*, 47–75; Jane Hathaway, *The Politics of Households in Ottoman Egypt: The Rise of the Qazdağlis* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

⁸ Hathaway, “Egypt in the Seventeenth Century,” 42.

reformers to the legal system in Egypt. These included additional reforms to the tax system, which did not prove popular among the city's ulama. An instructive example also highlights the reputation of Maghribi scholars in Ottoman-era Egypt:

Nothing the Ottomans did provoked as much anger as their legal innovations. . . . The most offensive legal change was a tax on marriage contracts called *yasaq*: virgins were required to pay twice as much as women who had been previously married. The Cairo ulama denounced the tax as a violation of the Prophet's custom (*sunna*), and for a while the number of marriages decreased. A Maghribi 'Alīm [scholar] – the Maghribis were always the most uncompromising and fearless when religion was at stake – was reported to have cried into the [Ottoman] governor's face: "This is the infidels' law (*yasaq*)!"⁹

The most basic legal transformation, which had to be accepted whether the Maghribis liked it or not, was the formalization of the court system in Cairo, beginning with the establishment of specific sites for the operations of the court.¹⁰ The central imperial court (the Bab al-'Alī) was supported by several smaller courts throughout the city. These included local courts in the urban centers where Maghribis concentrated heavily, such as the district around the Ibn Tulun Mosque. Not surprisingly, then, the mosque itself served as the local courthouse for Ibadis and other Maghribis in the neighborhood from the sixteenth century onward.

In these courtrooms of Cairo, merchants and scholars from across the empire and across the religious spectrum would adjudicate the issues of their everyday lives. Maghribi merchants from Fes, Marrakesh, Algiers, Tunis, Sfax, Jerba, Tripoli, and elsewhere would appear before judges of all four Sunni schools of law to establish (and to terminate) their marriages, to execute the estates of their deceased loved ones or business partners, to ensure the inheritance of their progeny, to create business partnerships, and to endow their goods, property, or libraries as waqfs. That Maghribis frequented Ottoman courtrooms is evident from the names of litigants in thousands of court records, referring to their city or region of origin ("al-Fāsī," "al-Marrākushī," "al-Jarbī"). Just as often,

⁹ Winter, *Egyptian Society under Ottoman Rule*, 11.

¹⁰ Nelly Hanna, "The Administration of Courts in Ottoman Cairo," in *The State and its Servants: Administration in Egypt from Ottoman Times to the Present*, ed. Nelly Hanna (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1995), 45–59; Baldwin, *Islamic Law and Empire*, 33–54.

however, the documents simply identified them as “al-Maghribī,” a point to which I will return below.¹¹

Like other Ottoman-era residents of Egypt, Maghribis relied on less formal mechanisms for establishing relationships or resolving disputes. The use of out-of-court reconciliation (*ṣulḥ*) and other informal practices are much more difficult to document but no doubt played a crucial role in the structuring of everyday life for Maghribis.¹² With the gradual rise in influence and wealth of the merchant and scholarly classes in the Ottoman period, Maghribis grew more and more reliant on their regional bonds to support one another. From the seventeenth century, Maghribis in regions such as the Tulun district were represented by a specific individual who took the title “Shaykh of the Maghribis of Tulun” (*shaykh al-maghārība bi-Ṭulūn*) or, almost synonymous, “Shaykh of the Merchants of Tulun” (*shaykh al-tujjār bi-Ṭulūn*).¹³ Communalism and solidarity among Maghribis, especially as it appears in the court records, mask differences of regional origin or religious affiliation.¹⁴ As I discuss in Chapters 2 and 3, this was also likely a protection mechanism, since by identifying as “al-Maghribī” Ibadis helped to ensure their inclusion in a larger community. In many cases, however, court records make clear that the Shaykh of the Merchants of Tulun was often a Jerban.¹⁵ Here, too, Ibadis reflect the practices of their non-Ibadi and non-Maghribi contemporaries in Egypt and well beyond. The prominence of artisan and merchant guilds, who often shared geographic origins, is characteristic of the

¹¹ The work of ‘Abd al-Raḥīm A. ‘Abd al-Raḥīm demonstrates the ubiquity of Maghribis in the courtrooms of Ottoman Cairo. In addition to the five volumes of cases and many articles cited throughout this book, see his *al-Maghārība fī Miṣr fī-al-‘aṣr al-‘uthmānī*.

¹² Baldwin, *Islamic Law and Empire*, esp. 49–54.

¹³ ‘Abd al-Raḥīm, *al-Maghārība fī Miṣr fī-al-‘aṣr al-‘uthmānī*, 51; ‘Abd al-Mu‘ī, *al-‘Āila wa-al-thawra*, 264–65; Raymond, *Artisans et commerçants*, 1:68–69.

¹⁴ André Raymond, “The Role of Communities (Tawa’if) in the Administration of Cairo in the Ottoman Period,” in *The State and Its Servants. Administration in Egypt from Ottoman Times to the Present*, ed. Nelly Hanna (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1995), 32–43.

¹⁵ Two examples from the late sixteenth century include the Jerban *shaykh al-sāda al-tujjān bi-Ṭulūn*, Qāsim b. Sa‘īd al-Maghribī al-Jarbī: ‘Abd al-Raḥīm, *Wathā’iq al-maghārība*, 2:270–71. For a list the *shuyūkh al-tujjār al-maghārība* in the eighteenth century based on court documents that includes several Jerbans see ‘Abd al-Mu‘ī, *al-‘Āila wa-al-thawra*, 266.

seventeenth and eighteenth centuries throughout the empire.¹⁶ A comparative case of Tunisian fez sellers in Istanbul, who would have included many Jerbans, is instructive.

The merchants dealing in fezzes (*shāshiyya*) from Tunis living in Istanbul in the eighteenth century shared a number of characteristics with the Ibadi and other Maghribi merchants in Cairo. More broadly, Ibadi ties to the fez industry link them to imperial networks of trade and fashion.¹⁷ Despite the fact that they sold an item produced outside Istanbul (and as a result should properly have been classified and organized as merchants), like the local artisans of Istanbul the Tunisian fez sellers of the city

formed a guild and behaved just as guildsmen of the time used to behave: among other things, they chose one of their fellows as their headman, *kethuda* in Ottoman parlance, who in this instance had to be a Maghribi. . . . The Maghribis' relations with their *kethudas* were very much in line with what we know from the Bursa and Istanbul scene in general . . . show[ing] quite clearly that this group . . . functioned as a guild.¹⁸

In this they resembled their local artisan guildsmen contemporaries and distinguished them from other foreigners (such as Europeans) in Istanbul. Similarly, Ibadi and other Maghribi merchants in Cairo would appoint a Maghribi merchant to represent their community in Tulun. Likewise, as in Cairo the Tunisian fez sellers concentrated themselves in a particular neighborhood of Istanbul and, like the Ibadis and the Buffalo Agency, “by the mid-1700s, the Maghribis possessed a proper building in which to meet and discuss grievances.”¹⁹ Jerban merchants

¹⁶ Raymond, *Artisans et commerçants*, vol. 1; Suraiya Faroqhi, *Towns and Townsmen of Ottoman Anatolia: Trade, Crafts and Food Production in an Urban Setting, 1520–1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); Suraiya Faroqhi, “Ottoman Guilds in the Late Eighteenth Century: The Bursa Case,” in *Making a Living in the Ottoman Lands, 1480–1820* (Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2010), 99–118; Nelly Hanna, *Artisan Entrepreneurs in Cairo and Early-Modern Capitalism (1600–1800)* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2011).

¹⁷ Youssef Ben Ismail, “A History of the Ottoman Fez before Maḥmūd II (ca. 1600–1800),” *Muqarnas* 38, no. 1 (2021): 155–83.

¹⁸ Suraiya Faroqhi, “Immigrant Tradesmen as Guild Members, or, the Adventures of Tunisian Fez-Sellers in Eighteenth-Century Istanbul,” in *The Arab Lands in the Ottoman Era*, ed. Jane Hathaway (Minneapolis: Center for Early Modern History, 2010), 187–207, at 195.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 198.

followed a similar pattern in the Tunisian capital, where they had by the same period concentrated in an area of the city known as Sūq al-liffa.²⁰

The changing circumstances to which Ibadis and their fellow Maghribis were adapting over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries have represented an important point of debate among historians of the Ottoman Empire for decades. An earlier generation of historians in the twentieth century understood the empire to have entered a period of political and economic decline in these centuries.²¹ On the ground in Egypt, they identified decline in the increasingly distant role of the Ottoman sultan and his government in the everyday affairs such as the marginalization of the Ottoman governor and greater autonomy in the collection of taxes. Different military houses and their allies in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, coupled with the gradual assertion at the end of the eighteenth century of a class of Mamluk beys in Egyptian society (and especially in Cairo) seemed to signal the inability or unwillingness of the Ottoman government to establish more direct control. From this perspective, the invasion of the French in 1798 seemed like a logical conclusion to a period of steady decline.

A more recent generation of historians offered a different take on the same period. In their view, Ottoman society from the late sixteenth century onward did indeed change. Rather than understand this as decline, however, they have instead framed it as a period of transition, adaptation, and decentralization.²² The Ottoman state gradually moved from an expanding military power to a huge, bureaucratic empire with a remarkably diverse population to govern. Different degrees of autonomy for its provinces reflected a strategy of decentralized governance. Taxes were collected for the sultan, wood moved into Egypt, while grain and

²⁰ Īnās al-Ṭabjī, “al-Ikhtiṣāṣāt al-iqtisādiyya allatī mārasahā al-shatāt al-jarbī fī madīnat Tūnis khilāl al-fatra al-ḥadītha (min al-qarn XVI ilā al-qarn XIX) bayna al-iḥtikārāt al-ithniyya wa-al-dīnāmikiyya al-ḥirafiyya,” in *Jarba wa-muḥīṭuhā al-baḥrī wa-al-qārri: buḥūth fī al-tārīkh wa-al-jughrāfiyā wa-al-ḥaḍāra* (Tunis: Markaz al-Nashr al-Jāmi‘ī, 2016), 49–67.

²¹ See discussions in Suraiya Faroqhi, “Making a Living: Economic Crisis and Partial Recovery,” in *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*, ed. Halil İnalcik and Donald Quataert (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 433–73, at 467–70; Hathaway, *The Arab Lands under Ottoman Rule*, 8–9.

²² On the basic contours of the debate see Hathaway, *The Arab Lands under Ottoman Rule*, esp. 8–12; Alan Mikhail and Christine M. Philiou, “The Ottoman Empire and the Imperial Turn,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 54, no. 4 (2012): 721–45.

other goods continued to move out for the benefit of the empire.²³ The symbolic power of the Ottoman state in Egypt was also felt in everyday life through the court system, as well as the elaborate organization of the annual hajj pilgrimage as it departed from Cairo.²⁴ In other words, historians now see these centuries not as one of decline in Ottoman power but as a transformation of what it meant to be Ottoman in Egypt. In this context, the lives of Ibadis and other Maghribis constitute a piece in the mosaic landscape of a diverse and ever-transforming Ottoman Empire.

The Distribution of Maghribi Communities²⁵

In terms of sheer numbers, for much of the Ottoman period Maghribis constituted the largest non-Egyptian population in Egypt. Although they are visible in court records from throughout the period by the use of the adjective “al-Maghribī” they were so ubiquitous in the major urban centers of Cairo and Alexandria that they hardly represented a foreign population at all.²⁶ The Ibadis of Ottoman Cairo blended into this larger community of Maghribi merchants, scholars, students, and pilgrims who passed through and in some cases settled in Egypt.

Like other Maghribis, Ibadis living in Ottoman Egypt did not settle in one area.²⁷ Court records, archival documents, and family histories show that Ibadi families from the Maghrib settled in many different parts of Cairo and across Egypt. The Ibadi community in Alexandria, for example, may have been as numerous as that in Cairo. In the latter city the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries seem to have set the pattern for Maghribi settlement. The largest Maghribi communities in Cairo were concentrated in areas near the al-Azhar Mosque, especially Bunduqīyyīn, Jūriyya, and al-Fahhāmīn (Figures 1.2 and 1.3).²⁸

²³ Alan Mikhail, *Under Osman's Tree: The Ottoman Empire, Egypt, and Environmental History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019).

²⁴ F. E. Peters, *The Hajj: The Muslim Pilgrimage to Mecca and the Holy Places* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 162–72.

²⁵ This and the following section owe a great debt to the remarkable work of ‘Abd al-Raḥīm A. ‘Abd al-Raḥīm, André Raymond, and Ḥussām ‘Abd al-Mu‘ī.

²⁶ André Raymond, “Les quartiers de résidence des commerçants et artisans maghrébins au Caire aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles,” *Revue d'histoire maghrébine* 31–32 (1983): 355–63.

²⁷ ‘Abd al-Raḥīm, *al-Maghāriba fī Miṣr fī-al-‘aṣr al-‘uthmānī*, 50–52.

²⁸ Raymond, “Les quartiers,” 356–59; Raymond, *Artisans et commerçants*, 1:67–68.

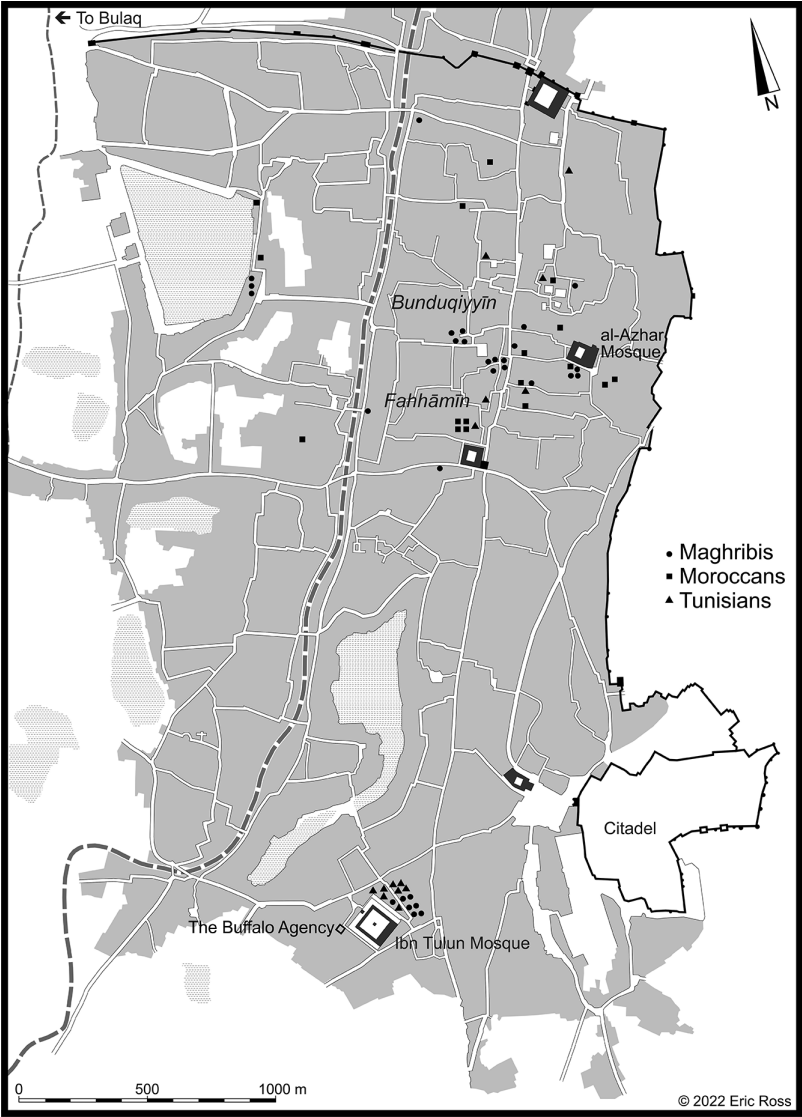


Figure 1.2 Map of residences of Maghribi communities in Ottoman Cairo (eighteenth century), including the location of the Buffalo Agency. Based on maps in Raymond, “Tunisiens et Maghrébins au Caire.” Raymond drew his data from shariah court records. (Map by Eric Ross, 2022)

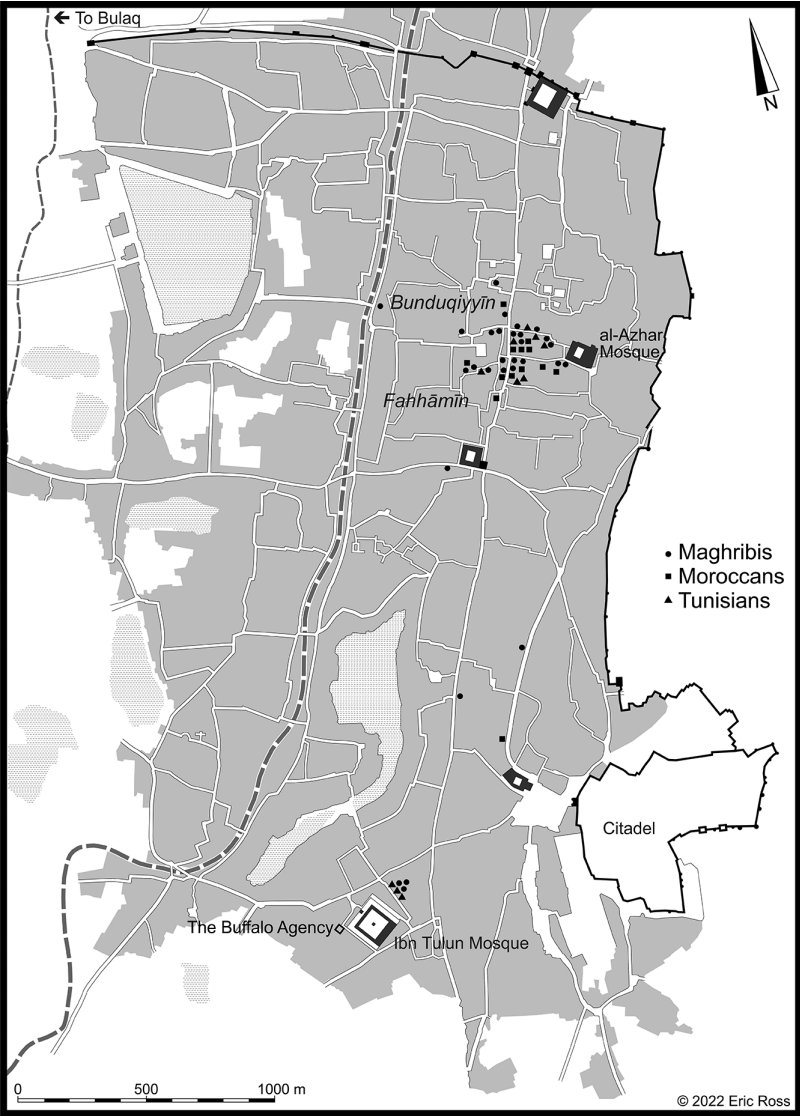


Figure 1.3 Map of places of work of Maghribi communities in Ottoman Cairo (eighteenth century), including the location of the Buffalo Agency. Based on maps in Raymond, “Tunisiens et Maghrébins au Caire.” Raymond drew his data from shariah court records. (Map by Eric Ross, 2022)

There were also Maghribis in the main port of the Nile River that served Cairo, the suburb of Bulaq.²⁹ A third Maghribi center in Cairo, located about 3 kilometers southwest of al-Azhar, was the Tulun district.

The toponyms in Tulun and other parts of the city collectively construct a path taken by Maghribis through the city from their arrival at the city gates after disembarking from boats on the Nile. Peppering this path were numerous monuments – fountains, wikalas, mosques, and alleyways – whose names testify to the presence of Maghribis in the area connecting Bab Futuh to the Ibn Tulun Mosque.³⁰ That path was in part drawn by the regular coming and going of Maghribi traders and students, including many Ibadis making their way to the Buffalo Agency in Tulun.

While the Maghribi merchants of Cairo were in general quite successful throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, merchants from the areas of the far west (cities such as Fes and Marrakesh) were usually wealthier than those from the eastern Maghrib coming from places like Tunis, Sfax, Sousse, Jerba, or Tripoli. Ibadis belonged to this latter group, representing a slightly lower socioeconomic class on average than their Fessi or Marrakeshi counterparts. The Maghribi community in Tulun came mostly from the central and eastern Maghrib – especially Jerba and Tripolitania.³¹ Since most of those from the Ibadi community who would patronize the Buffalo Agency originated from the island of Jerba, Tulun was the natural place to settle. Although not far from the Citadel (the center of political and military power in the city), Tulun was geographically separated from the other hubs of economic activity in Cairo, which helped make it a relatively inexpensive area to live in. Fessi or Marrakeshi counterparts of the Maghribis of Tulun lived farther north around the al-Azhar Mosque.³² That said, the quintessentially Jerban quarter near the mosque, the Sūq al-Fahhāmīn, was on average wealthier than the area around Tulun.

²⁹ ‘Abd al-Rahīm, *Wathā’iq al-maghāriba*, 2:155 (al-Qallāl), 306 (Amghār).

³⁰ André Raymond, “Tunisiens et Maghrébins au Caire au dix-huitième siècle,” *Les cahiers de Tunisie* 7, no. 26–27 (1959): 335–71, at 357–358; Raymond, “Les quartiers.”

³¹ ‘Abd al-Mu‘ī, *al-‘Ā’ila wa-al-thawra*, 31.

³² Raymond, “Les quartiers,” 369.

Tulun's Maghribi character is reflected in court records from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries, where "al-Maghribī" and "al-Jarbī" (the Jerban) appear constantly as monikers appended to the names of hundreds of litigants in the neighborhood's local court – the Ibn Tulun Mosque.³³ Consider this example. On February 1, 1627 a Jerban merchant named Abū Salāma came to the Ibn Tulun Mosque to purchase a property just beside it. He bought the property from a Jerban woman who was herself the wife of a neighborhood Jerban cloth merchant named Sāsī al-Jarbī. The witnesses to the sale were also all from Jerba.³⁴ In many cases litigants are also identified by their families, villages, or regions of origin: al-Baḥḥār, al-Laynī, al-Jumlī, al-Maṣ'abī, al-Bārūnī.³⁵ These and other names identify them specifically as Ibadi. In the following chapters we encounter many Jerban Ibadis with these names connected to the Buffalo Agency in the courtrooms of Cairo.

These names also demonstrate that Jerbans may have numerically represented the largest group of Tunisian families in Cairo, but they were not the only community of Maghribi Ibadis living in the city.³⁶ The prominence of the names al-Maṣ'abī and al-Bārūnī in the Egyptian court records of the Ottoman era demonstrate that Ibadis from the Mزاب Valley (Algeria) and the Jebel Nafusa in Tripolitania (Libya) also studied and conducted business there. Family names in court records suggest that the Tripolitanian community in Tulun was considerable. Nafusi and Mزابi Ibadis came in growing numbers, especially from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. At the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries, Ibadis from all three main regions were living at the Buffalo Agency. Throughout the entirety of the Agency's history, however, the Jerbans remained the largest community associated with it.

Ibadi and other Maghribi merchants, students, and scholars made their homes in the streets and alleys surrounding the Ibn Tulun Mosque. Since Maghribis both lived and worked in the Tulun district,

³³ 'Abd al-Raḥīm cites hundreds of examples in his five volumes of court cases involving Maghribis (1992–2016). Examples of Ibadis in those records are cited in Chapters 2 and 3.

³⁴ Al-Shahr al-'aḳārī bi-'l-Qāhir, Maḥkamat Ṭulūn 196, no. 112 (dated 15 Jum I 1036/Feb 1, 1627). Reproduced in 'Abd al-Raḥīm, *al-Maghāriba fī Miṣr fī-al-aṣr al-'uthmānī*, 152–53.

³⁵ 'Abd al-Mu'ī, *al-'Āla wa-al-thawra*, 60–63. ³⁶ Ibid., 64.

they had a vested interest in maintaining the neighborhood. Merchant communities invested money in shops in the neighborhood's market, some of which they endowed for the benefit of students.³⁷ Maghribis often purchased the buildings they used, including their homes, depots, and *wikalas* (caravanserais).³⁸ *Wikalas* figure prominently in these cases, as property trading hands or as storage sites for goods whose ownership was disputed in court. Maghribis established a number of *wikalas* in the Tulun district and elsewhere to house both goods and people. The reasons for doing so included the prestige associated with setting up a *wikala* for a community, which might also benefit from it because it was an equally prestigious endowment – such as the one that is at the center of this book's narrative.³⁹

Maghribi Trajectories: Merchants, Students, and Pilgrims

What were all these Maghribis doing in Egypt? There had long been a presence of Maghribi traders, students, and scholars in Egypt, but in the Ottoman period the number grew precipitously. The waves of migrants followed similar trajectories, but the reasons for their arrival differed. Various external factors contributed to the growth of an Ibadi and, more generally, a Jerban community in Cairo beginning in the seventeenth century. In 1598 'Uthman Dey, the Ottoman ruler of Tunis, temporarily expelled Jerban merchants from that city, which led to many of them taking up residence in Cairo and Alexandria in the subsequent decades.⁴⁰ There were also broader changes to the Ottoman Empire and Egypt in this period that merit consideration. For example, Jane Hathaway notes that the seventeenth century marks the beginning of a transition for the Ottomans from an expansionist military state to a bureaucratic, commercial one. This included a special place for Egypt, as it went from being a source of soldiers to an important source of grain, taxes, and coffee coming from Yemen.⁴¹ Cairo witnessed a significant transformation as Maghribis joined students from across the empire in pursuing their studies at the al-Azhar Mosque.⁴² In addition, the Hijaz connection was also important

³⁷ For examples see 'Abd al-Raḥīm, *Wathā'iq al-maghāriba*, 2:161, 225, 323.

³⁸ 'Abd al-Raḥīm, *al-Maghāriba fī Miṣr fī al-'aṣr al-'uthmānī*, 77. ³⁹ Ibid., 78.

⁴⁰ 'Abd al-Mu'ī, *al-'Ā'ila wa-al-thawra*, 22.

⁴¹ Hathaway, "Egypt in the Seventeenth Century," 50. ⁴² Ibid., 57.

because Egypt took responsibility for arranging the hajj journey for virtually all pilgrims coming from western and northern Africa.

Although many factors led to the formation of a large community of Maghribis in Cairo, “it was first and foremost economic factors that were behind this process of Maghribi expansion” into Egypt.⁴³ Maghribis in Ottoman Egypt as a general rule were associated with specific commercial sectors, especially trade in olive oil, fabrics, and coffee.⁴⁴ The Maghrib represented an important regional trading partner for Egypt, with “around a quarter [of that trade taking place] by land routes and the rest by maritime routes.”⁴⁵ Trade with the Maghrib was, moreover, “monopolized by Maghribi merchants who formed an important community in Cairo.”⁴⁶

Commerce helped to shape the geographic distribution of Maghribis in Cairo as well. The trade in olive oil proved lucrative, and Maghribis involved in this sector were concentrated heavily in the Bulaq port along the Nile River outside Cairo. Jerbans, in particular, played an especially important role as middlemen in the olive-oil trade. Court records demonstrating these connections stretch back into the sixteenth century and continue for centuries, such as when a member of the Bin Malāʾib family from Jerba appeared in court in April 1565 to sue for money owed for olive oil and soap.⁴⁷ The Jerban Amghār family was among the most prominent merchant families dealing with olive oil in Bulaq during the eighteenth century.⁴⁸

Many Maghribis traded in coffee, such as the prominent al-Sharāʾibī family from al-Maghrib al-Aqṣā.⁴⁹ In the eighteenth century it would be a Jerban coffee merchant who reestablished the waqf to support Ibadi students at the Buffalo Agency (Chapter 3). There was a market for Maghribi fabrics centered on the Tulun, whose merchants included many Jerban Ibadis.⁵⁰ Still other Maghribis, including many Ibadis from Jerba, did business in the area around the al-Azhar Mosque.

⁴³ ʿAbd al-Raḥīm ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ʿAbd al-Raḥīm, “Aḥamiyyat al-arshif al-miṣrī fī dirāsāt al-tārikh al-ijtimāʿī wa-al-iqtisādī wa-al-thaqāfī li-bilād al-maghrib,” *Revue d’histoire maghrébine* 13–14 (1979): 83–91, at 84.

⁴⁴ “Métiers exercés par les Maghrébins,” in Raymond, *Artisans et commerçants*, 1:66–67.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 191. ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 201.

⁴⁷ Maḥkamat Bāb al-Sharʿiyya, 592, case 165 (14 Ram 995/Aug 16, 1587). Reproduced in ʿAbd al-Raḥīm, *Wathāʾiq al-maghāriba*, 2:220–21.

⁴⁸ ʿAbd al-Raḥīm, *al-Maghāriba fī Miṣr fī-al-ʿaṣr al-uthmānī*, 71–72.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 68–70. ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 73.

A well-known trade depot, Wikālat Sulaymān Pāshā, near al-Azhar was operated by Jerbans.⁵¹ Jerbans were not limited to these goods or these areas, however, and they appear in court records from all over the city.

Students, scholars, and pilgrims from the Maghrib followed precisely the same trajectories as their merchant counterparts. Often, these different categories were represented in the same individuals. Pilgrims moving through Cairo had long constituted a massive annual movement of people and goods through Egypt. This included both Maghribis and West Africans, including famous examples of hajj caravans like those of Malian ruler Mansa Musa in the medieval centuries. Pilgrims were good for local business, and Maghribis were no exception. The housing for pilgrims in Alexandria or Cairo resembled the residences of less-transient Maghribis in those places. Both stayed in similar housing structures, including the hotel-like *rabī*'s of Cairo and the city's ubiquitous wikalas.⁵²

This latter form of housing brought together the different roles and activities of Maghribis and other Egyptians of the Ottoman period. Wikalas served a variety of functions, since they could house trade goods and animals as well as shops while also constituting small hostels for pilgrims and students. Alongside these roles, and in part because of them, wikalas could also function as madrasas and come to house their own libraries. The wikala at the center of this book, the Buffalo Agency, served all these functions at once. Wikalas in Cairo numbered into the hundreds by the nineteenth century.⁵³ But they represented only one link in a chain of such institutions that connected Cairo to the Maghrib. Like other Maghribi communities, Ibadis had wikalas in other parts of northern Africa that provided places to rest on journeys to and from Egypt. These would have included wikalas in Alexandria, Benghazi, Tripoli, and Tunis.⁵⁴ They may well have

⁵¹ Maḥkamat Būlāq, 19, case 911 (7 Ram 1004/May 5, 1596). Reproduced in 'Abd al-Rahīm, *Wathā'iq al-maghāriba*, 2:180–81.

⁵² André Raymond, "The Rab': A Type of Collective Housing in Cairo during the Ottoman Period," in *Architecture as Symbol and Self-Identity*, ed. Jonathan G. Katz (Philadelphia: Aga Khan Award, 1980), 55–62, available at archnet.org/publications/2632; Raymond, *Artisans et commerçants*, 1:68.

⁵³ See the list of *wakā'il* in the *fihris* of volume 1 of 'Alī Bāsha Mubārak, *al-Khiṭaṭ al-jadīda li-Miṣr al-Qāhira* (n.p.: al-Maṭba'ah al-Kubrā al-Amīriyya, 1305), 25–26.

⁵⁴ See Chapter 4 for the discussion of an Ibadi wikala in Benghazi.

extended to Jeddah and Mecca, which represented the eastern terminus for the flow of goods and people from Egypt. The Ibadis who established and used the Buffalo Agency throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries fit remarkably well into these patterns of Maghribi communities in Egypt throughout the Ottoman period.

As noted above, both those who established the waqfs that maintained the Buffalo Agency and most students and scholars who passed through it in this period hailed from the island of Jerba. By this period, Jerbans in Egypt also comprised two different Muslim communities: Malikis and Ibadis. In most cases they are indistinguishable from one another in court records, with both being identified as “al-Jarbī.” Another religious community from Jerba, its Jewish inhabitants, may have been represented in Cairo but they are less visible in court records or chronicles. The histories of individual Jerban families such as the El Bessi, Bel Hadj Ali, and El Kateb families reinforce this overall picture of widely connected Jerban communities of both Ibadis and Malikis operating throughout the Mediterranean.⁵⁵

Alongside Cairo, Alexandria and Istanbul represent key nodes in the Jerban network, and they remained influential trading communities throughout the Ottoman period into the twentieth century.⁵⁶ Istanbul’s Jerban community in the nineteenth century was considerable, concentrated in one section of the city.⁵⁷ Throughout the entirety of the Ottoman era, Alexandria was an important center of Jerban and, more broadly, Maghribi activity.⁵⁸ There was an especially large presence in Egypt of Jerbans from the southern towns of Maḥbūbīn, Ajīm, Qallāla, and Sidwikish, the last three of which were predominantly Ibadi. The constant movement of people and legal interconnections among these different parts of the Ottoman world supported

⁵⁵ Margaret Price Wilder, “The Djerban Diaspora: A Tunisian Study of Migration and Ethnicity” (Ph.D. thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1980); Ali Boujdidi and Paul M. Love, Jr., “Preserving Endangered Archives in Jerba, Tunisia: The al-Basi Family Manuscript Library,” *Manuscript Studies* 3, no. 1 (2018): 215–19.

⁵⁶ ‘Abd al-Mu’ī, *al-‘Āila wa-al-thawra*, 57.

⁵⁷ Pierre Bardin, *Algériens et tunisiens dans l’Empire ottoman de 1848 à 1914* (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 1980), 18.

⁵⁸ ‘Abd al-Raḥīm, “Wathā’iq ‘an dawr al-maghārība fi mujtami’ al-Iskandariyya,” 1979; ‘Abd al-Raḥīm ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ‘Abd al-Raḥīm, “Wathā’iq ‘an dawr al-maghārība fi mujtami’ al-Iskandariyya fi-al-‘aṣr al-‘uthmānī kamā tuṣawwiruhu wathā’iq maḥkamat al-Iskandariyya al-shara’iyya,” *Revue d’histoire ,aghrébīne* 17–18 (1980): 131–36; ‘Abd al-Raḥīm, “Wathā’iq maḥkamat al-Iskandariyya al-shara’iyya.”

remarkably far-reaching familial networks operated by Jerbans in the Mediterranean.⁵⁹

A few demonstrative examples show how the Ibadi Jerban communities of Alexandria used courts to manage their affairs back home. In March 1611 a woman identified as Ibnat al-Muʿīn appointed her husband, Abū Bakr, as her *wakīl* so that he could gather rents on properties she owned in Ḥārat al-Mistāwa in Jerba.⁶⁰ Personal and commercial matters adjudicated by Jerbans in Egyptian courts could also involve people from multiple parts of the empire. For example, consider the case of Salāma b. Saʿīd al-Jarbī, who died in Cairo in 1688. His estate was inherited by his two wives – one in Jerba and the second, along with her two sons, in Alexandria.⁶¹ Elsewhere, a Jerban man died in the late seventeenth century in Istanbul, while inheritance of his estate was adjudicated in Cairo among his Jerban relatives connected to the Mustahfazan Janissary corps.⁶² A final remarkable example showing the far-reaching networks of Maghribis is the case of al-Ḥājī Ṣāliḥ, a Jerban merchant who died in the city of Mansura in the Egyptian Delta in April 1685. The day before his death he had chosen to manumit his slave, Conan. Testifying to this decision were his colleagues from Marrakesh (Morocco), Sfax (Tunisia), and Tripoli (Libya).⁶³

Pilgrims

Alongside commerce and study, another seasonal flow of Maghribis into and through Cairo came in the months leading up to the hajj pilgrimage. Adding to the already grandiose fanfare of the official Ottoman procession for the hajj (the *maḥmal*) that commenced in

⁵⁹ Bardin, *Algériens et tunisiens*, 18 (Asia Minor, including Istanbul), 19 (Alexandria), 20 (Tripolitania).

⁶⁰ The name “Ḥārat al-Mistāwa” likely refers to part of the modern Jerban town of Guellala.

⁶¹ Maḥkamat al-Qisma al-ʿArabiyya, 65, case 399 (8 Raj 1099/May 9, 1688). Reproduced in ʿAbd al-Raḥīm, *Wathāʾiq al-maghāriba*, 5:545–46.

⁶² Maḥkamat al-Qisma al-ʿArabiyya, 58, case 1377 (13 D. al-Qaʿda 1089/Dec 27, 1678). Reproduced in *ibid.*, 5:87–88.

⁶³ Maḥkamat Maṣṣūra, 9, case 2 (dated 1 Rab II 1096/Mar 7, 1685). Reproduced in ʿAbd al-Raḥīm ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ʿAbd al-Raḥīm, “Wathāʾiq maḥkamat al-Maṣṣūra al-sharaʿiyya al-mutaʿalliqa bi-al-maghāriba fī al-ʿaṣr al-ʿuthmānī,” *Revue d’histoire maghrébine* 61–62 (1991): 205–24, at 214–15.

Cairo, there were large waves of pilgrims arriving in the city sometimes months in advance of the procession's departure.⁶⁴ In the eighteenth century the Egyptian historian al-Jabartī regularly noted the arrival of "large numbers" of pilgrims from other parts of northern Africa.⁶⁵ The most ostentatious were those accompanying the sultan of al-Maghrib al-Aqṣā or his family, who would arrive and be honored by the governor of Egypt.⁶⁶ Regular streams of pilgrims also came from the central and eastern Maghrib; they usually entered the city and headed straight for the Tulun district and surrounding areas.⁶⁷

The pilgrimage itself of course also had an economic character, since it was a caravan transporting both goods and people that moved from the far west to Egypt. While perhaps not as significant as the trade and pilgrimage caravans that connected Istanbul to Mecca, the hajj caravans linking the Maghrib to Egypt and the Hijaz must be understood as part of a much broader system of Ottoman trade in which Ibadis took part.⁶⁸ Ibadis from Jerba, the Mzab, and Nafusa joined these waves of migrants during the hajj seasons, and in the following chapters we encounter stories of how the pilgrimage brought many into contact with the Buffalo Agency between the seventeenth and twentieth centuries.

Al-Jabartī also wrote that the Maghribis in the city had the prestigious duty of carrying the cloth cover for the Kaaba, the *kiswa*, from one end of the city to the other in advance of the pilgrimage procession. In one case, he wrote that in April 1699 Maghribis in this ceremony inadvertently caused a small riot by attacking someone for smoking on the street while the *kiswa* was passing.⁶⁹ Religious fervor often proved a catalyst for tussles or even larger instances of violence in Ottoman Cairo. A comparable incident occurred in 1748 when Coptic Christians in Cairo prepared for their own pilgrimage to Jerusalem:

⁶⁴ 'Abd al-Mu'tī, *al-Ā'ila wa-al-thawra*, 24–25.

⁶⁵ Jabartī, *ʿAjā'ib*, 4:446; Jabartī, *al-Jabartī's History*, 4:405.

⁶⁶ For example, see Jabartī, *ʿAjā'ib*, 4:229; Jabartī, *al-Jabartī's History*, 4:198.

⁶⁷ Raymond, "Tunisiens et Maghrébins," 340.

⁶⁸ Suraiya Faruqi, "Trade: Regional Inter-Regional and International," in *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*, ed. Halil Inalcik and Donald Quataert (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 474–530, at 484–87.

⁶⁹ Jabartī, *ʿAjā'ib*, 1:55 (14 Shaw 1110/Apr 15, 1699); Jabartī, *al-Jabartī's History*, 1:47.

As the pilgrims came closer to one of Islam's most revered institutions [i.e. the al-Azhar Mosque], all festivities halted. Suddenly the voice of Muslim religious leaders ... were heard from amid the crowds, "How dare they emulate the Muslims?" said one. Others inflamed the crowds by shouting. ... The pilgrims panicked and scrambled to guard their lives and properties.⁷⁰

The site of this particular instance, al-Azhar, also witnessed regular clashes involving Maghribis in particular. The Maghribi and Syrian contingents of the student residences (*riwāqs*), for example, were well known to erupt into fights over issues of both leadership and doctrine.⁷¹ This contributed to Ibadis choosing not to live in the *riwāq* of the Maghribis before the twentieth century.⁷²

The Perils of Maghribi Communal Solidarity

By the end of the eighteenth century the rise of local Mamluk beys and their allies had made Cairo a dangerous place to live without powerful friends. An especially instructive story of a Jerban named Aḥmad b. 'Iyyād demonstrates just how precarious life could be. Before coming to Cairo Bin 'Iyyād had lived in Tunis, where he served the Ottoman Bey of Tunisia, Ḥammūda Pāshā Bey (r. 1782–1814). After he "fell out with Ismā'īl, the Katkhūda of Ḥammūda [Bey] ... [he ended up] in exile" in Egypt. He had fled with his family and belongings, including numerous slaves and concubines, before finally settling in the port of Bulaq. Bin 'Iyyād kept a low profile. Al-Jabartī, who relates the story and whose family lived just down the street from him, wrote that Bin 'Iyyād moved to Cairo in 1778–79 and "lived secluded in his house ... [and] associated only with a few of his compatriots."⁷³

⁷⁰ Armanios, *Coptic Christianity*, 3–4. The story comes originally from the historical chronicle of Egyptian chronicler Aḥmad al-Damurdāshī. See Aḥmad al-Damurdāshī, *Kitāb al-durra al-muṣāna fī akhbār al-kināna*, ed. 'Abd al-Raḥīm 'Abd al-Raḥmān 'Abd al-Raḥīm (Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1989), 247.

⁷¹ James Heyworth-Dunne, *An Introduction to the History of Education in Modern Egypt* (London: Frank Cass, 1968), 32. On the social environment at al-Azhar see Irfana Hashmi, "Patronage, Legal Practice, and Space in al-Azhar, 1500–1650" (Ph.D. thesis, New York University, 2014).

⁷² Muṣliḥ, *al-Waqf al-jarbi*, 168–69.

⁷³ Translation from Jabartī, *al-Jabartī's History*, 2:214; For Arabic see Jabartī, *'Ajā'ib*, 2:193.

A few years later, however, his old adversary Ismā'īl also came to Cairo as an exile. Having made some powerful friends, he sought out Bin 'Iyyād. When the latter refused to respond to an official summons, Ismā'īl went to his home in Bulaq accompanied by soldiers. The scene escalated to Bin 'Iyyād opening fire on the soldiers and killing two of them. He was then seized, killed, and decapitated on the spot, with his body thrown out into the street. Although his family was allowed to flee, his home was seized and boarded up. Ismā'īl did not stop there, and it is what happened next that demonstrates both the dangers and the strengths of communal ties among Jerbans in Cairo.

Still covered in blood, Ismā'īl went to the Khān al-Sharāyibi, a *wikala* owned by Maghribis near al-Azhar Mosque. There he sought out a Jerban merchant, Ḥajj Sulaymān al-Sāsī, only to slap him in the face and address both him and the group of merchants around, shouting:

It has become known, you people from [Jerba], that you commit all these acts and are in a state of war with the men of the government. . . . Have things come to such a pitch with you merchants from [Jerba] that you kill the sultan's soldiers? Ibn 'Iyyād has killed two of my men and you are responsible for paying the blood money for them – 500 purses. You bring the money tomorrow, or I will kill you to the last man.⁷⁴

When Hajj Sulaymān failed to pay he was imprisoned until the money could be gathered by his fellow Jerban merchants. To make things worse, on the same day storehouses of grain in the Tulun district were surrounded by soldiers, “some of them were seized; the rest were sealed.” This was likely in response to Ottoman governor Ḥasan Pāshā's demand for “a loan from the merchants – Muslims, Europeans, and Copts – to facilitate the purchase of supplies needed for the pilgrimage. . . . The merchants apportioned the loan among themselves in proportion to each man's circumstances and collected the amount.”⁷⁵ A few years later Maghribi merchants in Tulun would be required to pay an extraordinary poll tax, along with the merchants of al-Ghūriyya and the Khān al-Khalīlī.⁷⁶ To defend against extortion,

⁷⁴ Translation from Jabartī, *al-Jabartī's History*, 2:197 and 215 (combined quotations separated by ellipsis); for Arabic see Jabartī, *'Ajā'ib*, 2:175 and 193.

⁷⁵ Translation from Jabartī, *al-Jabartī's History*, 2:195; for Arabic see Jabartī, *'Ajā'ib*, 2:173.

⁷⁶ Jabartī, *al-Jabartī's History*, 2:374; Jabartī, *'Ajā'ib*, 2:345–46.

violence, and other abuses of power, the Ibadi and other Maghribi merchants of Cairo had to band together to protect their lives and livelihoods.

Transformations in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries

While the following chapters aim to demonstrate the remarkable continuity of the three centuries of the Buffalo Agency's history, some periods also witness fundamental and dramatic changes to the structures of everyday life for Ibadis and other Maghribis in Egypt. The nineteenth century, in particular, would bring great change to Egypt and to the Ottoman Empire. The decade after the departure of the French army in 1801 witnessed the arrival of an Ottoman officer named Muḥammad 'Alī as governor. After his own remarkably long reign (1805–48) his descendants would rule Ottoman Egypt until 1882, with the establishment of a British protectorate. The family remained in nominal control even into the twentieth century, until 1952.⁷⁷ As we will see in Chapters 4 and 5, Ibadis would, like their contemporaries, weather these political changes and adapt to them. For now, it suffices to point to some of the economic, technological, and broader social transformations in the Ottoman Empire that would affect Ibadis.

The flow of Maghribi pilgrims, students, scholars, and merchants to and from Cairo did not cease in the nineteenth century. In that way, the period represents a continuity with the previous two centuries. Significant transformations to the political and economic landscapes of northern Africa and the Ottoman Empire would nevertheless leave a lasting impact. The end of the Ottoman monopoly on trade in the Red Sea, for example, devastated the lucrative coffee trade and negatively affected the Maghribi merchants who had depended on it for their livelihood.⁷⁸ Yet those same changes led to increased communication among Ibadi communities across the Red Sea, bringing Ibadis from the

⁷⁷ Sayyid-Marsot, *Egypt in the Reign of Muḥammad Ali*; Fahmy, *All the Pāshā's Men*.

⁷⁸ André Raymond, "A Divided Sea: The Cairo Coffee Trade in the Red Sea Area during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," in *Modernity and Culture: From the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean*, ed. Leila Tarazi Fawaz and C. A. Bayly (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 46–57.

Maghrib living in Cairo into much more frequent contact with their coreligionists from the Arabian Peninsula and the island of Zanzibar off the East African coast. As we will see in Chapter 4, the flow of books and pilgrims in the first half of the nineteenth century demonstrates this well.

These interregional connections also accompanied the advent of important technological developments in the nineteenth century: the telegraph, the steamship, and the spread of lithograph printing. Ibadis, like others in the Ottoman Empire and Muslims globally, employed each of these technologies in ways that fundamentally changed their lives.⁷⁹ Moreover, these technologies played a part in the transformative reforms to the empire as a whole known as the Tanzimat. These reforms to education, political organization, the military, and commerce in Egypt and throughout the empire are reflected in the changes to the Ibadi community in the second half of the nineteenth century discussed in Chapter 5.⁸⁰ Even changes to elements of Ottoman fashion would affect Maghribis directly. The widespread popularity of the Tunisian fez cap (*shāshiyya*) in the nineteenth century represented an important economic boom for that community.⁸¹

The transformations to Egyptian society in the first three quarters of the nineteenth century affected the Maghribis there along with the other communities. The increasing attempts by the state to exercise control of taxes, the land, and the military fundamentally altered the role played by the Maghribi merchant class over the previous two centuries. The traditional role of the *shaykh al-tujjār bi-Ṭulūn* and similar intermediary roles between merchants and the state disappeared. Long-distance merchants, who through their connections with the Janissary corps had earlier exercised considerable influence, saw

⁷⁹ James Gelvin and Nile Green, eds., *Global Muslims in the Age of Steam and Print* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013); Green, *Terrains of Exchange*.

⁸⁰ Sayyid-Marsot, *Egypt in the Reign of Muḥammad Ali*; Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1991); Fahmy, *All the Pāshā's Men*; Indira Falk Gesink, *Islamic Reform and Conservatism: Al-Azhar and the Evolution of Modern Sunni Islam* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2014).

⁸¹ Bardin, *Algériens et tunisiens*, 18; Raymond, *Artisans et commerçants*, 2:472. For the longer-term history of the fez before the nineteenth century see Ismail, "A History of the Ottoman Fez."

that influence dry up.⁸² In the last quarter of the century the Egyptian state sank deep into international debt that would lead to widespread poverty. A similar financial crisis would plague the Tunisian homeland of many of the Ibadis living in Cairo in the same period.⁸³ Debt, in turn, paved the way for the next major transformation of the nineteenth century.

European imperialism would bring dramatic changes to all aspects of life in northern Africa and the Ottoman Empire. Each of the places where Maghribi Ibadis lived experienced European imperialism and eventually colonialism in distinct ways over the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The extension of French colonial control of the Mزاب Valley in Algeria and the establishment of the French Protectorate in Tunisia beginning in the 1880s directly affected the political and commercial lives of Ibadis just like their non-Ibadi contemporaries. The experiences of Mزابis and Jerbans contrasted with their coreligionists in the Jebel Nafusa, which continued to belong to the Ottoman Empire's province of Trāblus al-Gharb until the advent of Italian colonialism in the 1910s.⁸⁴ For example, when a Mزابi confectioneer named Hadj Ahmed El Mزابi died in Istanbul in 1878, the details of his estate were first dealt with by the French consulate there because Hadj Ahmed was "Algerien, a French subject." However, his family lived in Tripoli, which was at the time under Ottoman jurisdiction. The French consulate in Tripoli sent its consular secretary to the shariah court in Tripoli to settle the affairs of the estate.⁸⁵

While the period between the seventeenth and the early twentieth centuries constitutes one of remarkable continuity in the everyday lives and patterns of commercial and educational activity for Maghribi

⁸² André Raymond, "Les transformations des corporations de métiers au Caire du XVII au XIXe siècle," in *Les institutions traditionnelles dans le monde arabe*, ed. Hervé Bleuchot (Aix-en-Provence: Institut de recherches et d'études sur les mondes arabes et musulmans, 1996), 29–40; Pascale Ghazaleh, "Trading in Power: Merchants and the State in 19th-Century Egypt," *IJMES* 45, no. 1 (2013): 71–91.

⁸³ On this period of Tunisia's history see Kenneth J. Perkins, *A History of Modern Tunisia*, 2nd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 10–38; Lisa Anderson, *The State and Social Transformation in Tunisia and Libya, 1830–1980* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 57–114.

⁸⁴ On the Mزاب and colonialism see Jomier, *Islam, réforme et colonisation*, esp. 56–74. On Ibadism in the Jebel Nafusa and early Italian colonialism see Love, "Provenance in the Aggregate."

⁸⁵ The correspondence and other documents associated with this story are found in a folder labeled "Constantinople" in CADN 706PO/1/176.

Ibadis, a sea change occurred following the Italian invasion of Ottoman Tripolitania and the subsequent outbreak of World War I. As in previous centuries, Ibadis from each of these regions lived and worked in Egypt, where they often encountered one another for the first time. Alongside increased contact, however, came different reasons for interacting. Cairo, like Tunis, would bring together Moroccan, Tunisian, Algerian, and Libyan supporters of pan-Ottomanism and anticolonial politics.⁸⁶

By the 1920s the Tulun district no longer occupied the same role it had played in centuries past. Although Maghribis still lived in the neighborhood, the Buffalo Agency had lost its role as an institutional and communal anchor for Ibadis. When the trickle of students staying at the Agency dried up in the 1920s, the building lay derelict and its library gathered dust. As I discuss in Chapter 6, the arrival of Jerban student Sālim Bin Ya'qūb and the last generation of Maghribi students to stay for extended periods at the Agency in the 1930s did not so much mark a moment of continuity as of memorialization. The post-Ottoman world required a renegotiation of Maghribi identities. Ibadis, like their Maghribi compatriots throughout the region, had by World War II turned their attention to the struggle for independence. Although the Buffalo Agency would serve as an occasional refuge for students in the 1940s and 1950s, its doors were more often than not chained up and its library had moved to the suburban home of its last director.

Conclusion

The Ottoman Ibadis of Cairo belonged to this larger community of Maghribis in Egypt. They occupied the same places, used the same courts, and operated in the same trading networks as other Maghribis in Egypt and the Mediterranean. Like others, a variety of factors drew them to Cairo; some came as merchants, others as students or scholars, and yet others as pilgrims. In highlighting the similarities between Ibadis and other Maghribis, this chapter has demonstrated that Ibadis relied on precisely the same tools for making a living, receiving an education, and protecting their lives and livelihoods as did others in Ottoman Cairo.

⁸⁶ Ghazal, "The Other Frontiers of Arab Nationalism"; Ghazal, "Tensions of Nationalism"; David Stenner, *Globalizing Morocco: Transnational Activism and the Postcolonial State* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2019).

2 | *The Alley of the Ram*

Cairo, 1626. The case concerned a debt of the impressive sum of 1,200 gold dinars. The litigants worked in the region's increasingly lucrative coffee trade, which throughout the Ottoman period prospered thanks to the movement of coffee from Yemen up through the Red Sea and across Egypt. The plaintiff, al-Ḥājj Muḥammad, claimed that he was owed this amount by the estate of the recently deceased merchant 'Alī b. Ṣālīḥ, to whom he had loaned a large quantity of coffee stored in a depot near the al-Azhar Mosque with the agreement that the latter would sell it until he had repaid the loan.¹

Cases like this one appear regularly in the registers of the Ottoman courts of Cairo, recording the lived reality of thousands of the city's residents from the sixteenth to the early nineteenth centuries. The Ottomans initiated several reforms to the legal system of Egypt following their conquest of it in the sixteenth century, including the creation of courts dedicated to adjudicating matters of inheritance. The Civilian Inheritance Court (Maḥkamat al-Qisma al-'Arabiyya), where the case above took place, dealt with inheritance matters among the city's civilian rather than military population.² Despite the large sum of money involved, the case represented a run-of-the-mill dispute: someone had died, and settling their affairs became the problem of their family. In this case, the deceased left behind his wife and son to deal with this particular debt. The widow, 'Alama, enlisted the help of a third party to serve as her legal representative (*wakīl*).

This case stands out, however, due to one important detail: neither the defendant's representative nor the plaintiff was originally from Egypt. Instead, the two litigants came from the island of Jerba. When the defendant denied the charges and the plaintiff produced witnesses to support his claims, all those present were Maghribis. Moreover,

¹ Maḥkamat al-Qisma al-'Arabiyya, 27, case 492 (17 Jum I 1035/Feb 14, 1626), 397–98 and case 493 (21 Jum I 1035/Feb 18, 1626), 397–98. Reproduced in

'Abd al-Raḥīm, *Wathā'iq al-maghārība*, 3:96–98.

² Hanna, "The Administration of Courts," 46.

those who witnessed the original loan were all Jerbans. While the religious affiliation of most actors in the court that day eludes certainty, in one case we can be sure of it. Among the witnesses stood an Ibadi merchant named ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Baḥḥār. The appearance of al-Baḥḥār in this case represents a main theme of this chapter. Over the course of the seventeenth century Ibadis appeared in Ottoman courts alongside Ibadis and non-Ibadis from the Maghrib as well as their Egyptian counterparts to adjudicate matters of their everyday lives. Al-Baḥḥār and his contemporaries reveal the overlapping legal worlds of Ibadis and others in Ottoman Cairo. The case also demonstrates a salient theme of this book: that Ibadi participants in Ottoman society such as al-Baḥḥār often remain hidden in historical sources precisely because of how much they resembled their non-Ibadi contemporaries.

By the time the case above took place, ‘Abd al-‘Azīz had already lived in Cairo for decades. Originally from the village of Ajīm in southern Jerba, his family rose to prominence in the commercial scene of Cairo in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Around the same time as the case above, ‘Abd al-‘Azīz established a religious endowment (waqf) that changed the lives of Ibadis in Egypt for centuries. Sometime in these first few decades of the seventeenth century he established a waqf in support of a trade agency and residence in the Tulun district. Subsequently known as the Wikālat al-Baḥḥār and later as the Wikālat al-Jāmūs – or the “Buffalo Agency” – this trade agency and residence for Ibadis in Cairo would form its own library and school over the course of the next three centuries. Jerban Ibadis made up the majority of students and scholars who stayed at the Buffalo Agency as well as of those who donated or commissioned books for its library.³

This earliest stage in the history of the Buffalo Agency remains obscure, since no original legal documents survive to demonstrate precisely when and under which circumstances al-Baḥḥār established the waqf that supported it. Nevertheless, the actors connected to this early period do appear in the Ottoman court registers of Cairo from

³ Aḥmad Muşliḥ identifies ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Baḥḥār as the first to create an endowment for the Buffalo Agency. His only citation, however, is a document from the Ibn Tulun court dated 1036/1626 that mentions a member of the al-Baḥḥār family having pawned a boat to invest in fruit. See Muşliḥ, *al-Waqf al-jarbī fī Miṣr*, 51–52. This is in reference to *Arshīf al-shahr al-‘iqari bi-al-Qāhira*, Maḥkamat Tulūn, 196, case 23 (dated 9 Rabī’ II 1126/Jan 6, 1724), 11, reproduced in ‘Abd al-Raḥīm, *al-Maghāriba fī Miṣr fī-al-‘aṣr al-uthmānī*, 151–52. In addition to his own fieldwork, Aḥmad Muşliḥ no doubt drew also from the notebooks of Shaykh Sālim Bin Ya‘qūb. See discussion in Chapter 6.

the seventeenth century. For this reason, courts and their records offer a window into the lives of Ibadi Muslims in Cairo during this early period of the Buffalo Agency's history.

In this chapter I examine the ways in which Ibadi merchants and scholars participated in the legal world of Ottoman Cairo in the seventeenth century. I use both documentary and manuscript sources to follow three different threads connecting the court system and the history of the Buffalo Agency. I begin by examining cases involving the Agency's first patron, 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Baḥḥār, whose time involved in court cases like the one above reflects the importance of Maghribi networks and neighborhood relationships for the success of Ibadi merchant activity in Cairo. Second, I turn my focus to a series of cases involving one of the most prominent Ibadi scholars of the seventeenth century, Muḥammad b. 'Umar b. Abī Sitta al-Sidwikshī. Better known as al-Muḥashshī (the glossator) due to the large number of glosses (*ḥawāshī*) he authored, Muḥammad Abī Sitta reflects the close connection between the scholarly and legal spheres of Ottoman Cairo. Finally, I consider the first Cairene court document in which the Buffalo Agency appears by name. This document from the end of the seventeenth century offers a brief glimpse at the physical structure and legal ownership of the Agency in its first century of existence.

* * *

The first time that 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Baḥḥār appeared in a courtroom he ended up having to defend his right to be there. In December 1599 'Abd al-'Azīz brought a case against another Jerban named Ibn Abī Nūḥ al-Najjār, whom he claimed owed his father Maṣṣūr al-Baḥḥār some forty half-silver pieces (*niṣf fiḍḍa*). Although the defendant recognized that he owed the amount to Maṣṣūr, he demanded that the plaintiff produce some evidence that he had the right to act as his father's legal representative. The response to this demand communicates much about both the Jerban Ibadi community in Egypt and the courtrooms of Ottoman Cairo. 'Abd al-'Azīz brought two witnesses, who testified to knowing both the plaintiff and his father Maṣṣūr. They also testified that Maṣṣūr himself had asked them five years ago, while in Jerba, to witness the appointment of his son as his representative.⁴

⁴ Arshif al-shahr al-'iqari bi-ql-Qāhira, Maḥkamat Ṭulūn, 188 (dated 3 Jum II 999/ Mar 28, 1591), 26. Reproduced in 'Abd al-Raḥīm, *Wathā'iq al-maghāriba*, 1:288–89.

Jerban – whether Ibadi or otherwise – appeared constantly throughout the seventeenth century in Cairene courts, surrounded by a host of Jerban witnesses prepared to offer testimony on their behalf. Other prominent Jerban members of the community, including the representatives of merchants in Tulun like the head of the merchants' guild (*shaykh al-tujjār bi-Ṭulūn*) or the head of the Maghribi community (*shaykh al-maghāriba*) also often appeared in these cases on behalf of their communities or as trusted witnesses.⁵ 'Abd al-'Azīz himself appeared in other cases over the next two decades in precisely this capacity – as a witness in cases involving other Maghribi litigants.

These include a case from April 1600 in which the same defendant as in the case above, Ibn Abī Nūḥ al-Najjār, himself served as *wakīl* in a deal involving a prominent member of Cairene society.⁶ This time 'Abd al-'Azīz appeared in court as a witness in support of him. These overlapping appearances of individuals in court do not represent anomalies, since many merchants or scholars participated regularly in cases connected to their neighborhoods.⁷ For the Ibadi and other Maghribi merchants of Tulun, the closest courthouse was not a far walk since it convened inside the Ibn Tulun Mosque in the center of the neighborhood.

The first case above involving 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Baḥḥār is instructive for another reason beyond communal solidarity: the witnesses not only shared Jerban origins, they also testified to events that took place in Jerba. Jerbans regularly traveled back and forth to Cairo and Alexandria, meaning that they had a regular stream of potential witnesses and messengers connecting them with the island. This was not an exception made for Jerbans – the Ottoman courts of Cairo were

⁵ This is a salient theme of 'Abd al-Raḥīm, *al-Maghāriba fī Miṣr fī-al-'aṣr al-'uthmānī*. See discussions in 'Abd al-Mu'ī, *al-'A'ila wa-al-thawra*, 260–64; Raymond, "The Role of Communities."

⁶ Arshif al-shahr al-'iqari bi-'l-Qāhira, Maḥkamat Ṭulūn, 188, case 599 (dated 6 Shaw 1008/Apr 20, 1600), 203. Reproduced in 'Abd al-Raḥīm, *Wathā'iq al-maghāriba*, 1:295–98.

⁷ In addition to the overlapping participants in two cases cited above (Maḥkamat Ṭulūn, 188 and Maḥkamat al-Qisma al-'Arabiyya, 27, case 492), other members of the al-Baḥḥār family appear in court with shared litigants. For example, see cases involving 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Baḥḥār and Muḥammad al-Baḥḥār in Maḥkamat al-Qisma al-'Arabiyya, 19, case 38 (dated 13 Raj 1019/Oct 1, 1610), 285. Reproduced in 'Abd al-Raḥīm, *Wathā'iq al-maghāriba*, 3:55–57; Maḥkamat al-Qisma al-'Arabiyya, 24, case 263 (dated 3 D. al-Qa'da 1028/Oct 12, 1619), 223. Reproduced in 'Abd al-Raḥīm, *Wathā'iq al-maghāriba*, 3:65–66.

prepared to accept testimony from anyone, and decisions from one Ottoman court were valid elsewhere in the empire. What merits note is that a steady, transregional flow of witnesses proved a tremendous advantage to Jerbans and other Ibadis in Cairo, since it enabled them to protect their assets and adjudicate personal matters across great distances.

The use of extraterritorial evidence by Jerbans in Ottoman courts extended to written documents from outside Egypt as well. Jerban litigants regularly produced written forms of evidence (*hujaj*: sing. *hujja*) in support of their claims to debts, inheritance, manumission of slaves, and other issues. Moreover, they drew documentation and oral testimony from well beyond their island homeland. The reason for this was that from the seventeenth century forward, Jerbans could be found across the Mediterranean and the Red Sea in key trade centers such as Alexandria, Cairo, Jeddah, Mecca, and Istanbul. Members of the al-Baḥḥār family, for instance, maintained a prominent place in both Cairo and Alexandria for centuries, where several large *awqāf* were under control of the family as late as 1950.⁸ Other Jerbans, such as the Bin 'Iyyād family, occupied important political or commercial positions in the Ottoman capital just as they did in their Tunisian homeland (Chapter 1).⁹ In other cases, connections between the island and Istanbul were mirrored in official communications from the Ottoman court, which often dealt directly with prominent merchants and leaders in Jerba rather than through Tunis.¹⁰

An additional feature of the first case above that applies to other cases involving Ibadis deserves notice: in no instance do the court records of Ottoman Cairo identify Ibadi litigants as Ibadis. Historians have written much about the diversity of Ottoman courts, and this case offers no exception.¹¹ In this instance, a Hanbali judge presided over an Ottoman (i.e. “officially” Hanafi) courtroom involving Ibadi and Maliki litigants from Jerba, who were using oral

⁸ ANT A 0281 006 (1949–50).

⁹ On the Bin 'Iyyād family see Andreas Tunger-Zanetti, *La communication entre Tunis et Istanbul, 1860–1913. Province et métropole* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1996), 114–16; on Jerbans more generally see 36–38.

¹⁰ al-Marīmi, *Ibāḍiyyat Jarba*, esp. 75–76.

¹¹ Ido Shahar, “Legal Pluralism and the Study of Shari'a Courts,” *Islamic Law and Society* 15 (2008): 112–41; Meshal, *Sharia and the Making of the Modern Egyptian*; Baldwin, *Islamic Law and Empire*.

testimony from the island to support their case in Cairo. That said, the Ottoman state did still regard Hanafi law as the official legal school. The highest official position in the Ottoman legal system in Egypt, *qāḍī al-quḍāt* (the chief judge) was “usually a Turk ... [and] always a Hanafi, the official school of the Ottomans.”¹² The only situation in which that was required, however, was in the principal court of Cairo, known as al-Bāb al-‘Ālī.¹³ Even there, the Hanafi chief judge served alongside other non-Hanafi judges. In other cases, such as the first case including al-Baḥḥār above held in the local court of the Tulun district, courtrooms could be presided over by deputy judges from any of the four Sunni schools.¹⁴ This may have been part of an Ottoman strategy, as suggested by Reem Meshal in her work on shariah courts in Ottoman Cairo during the sixteenth century, to soften the lines among its Muslim communities in Egypt.¹⁵

Alternatively, it could be due to attempts by the Ibadi community to blend into the larger Maghribi community of Tulun and other areas of Cairo. Identifying as Maghribi carried significant advantages in terms of communal support.¹⁶ In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as the power of the central Ottoman government waxed and waned and military households associated principally with the Janissary corps asserted their prominence in everyday financial and political administration, communal forms of support became increasingly important for protecting merchants’ livelihoods and assets in the face of corruption or other abuses of power. Court documents often identify Jerbans, like Marrakushis or Fessis, specifically by their place of origin, appearing in documents with the title “al-Jarbī al-Maghribī.”¹⁷ Ibadis from Jerba

¹² Hanna, “The Administration of Courts,” 45. ¹³ Ibid., 46.

¹⁴ I thank the anonymous reader whose comments on the place of the Hanafi chief judge allowed me to clarify this section.

¹⁵ Meshal, *Sharia and the Making of the Modern Egyptian*.

¹⁶ ‘Abd al-Raḥīm, “Wathā’iq tuwaḍḍih,” 100; ‘Abd al-Raḥīm, *al-Maghāriba fī Miṣr fī al-‘aṣr al-‘uthmānī*.

¹⁷ Ḥuṣṣām ‘Abd al-Mu‘ī has done some fascinating work drawing out *nisbas* connected to merchants from Marrakesh and Fes, in particular Ḥuṣṣām ‘Abd al-Mu‘ī, “The Fez Merchants in Eighteenth-Century Cairo,” in *Society and Economy in Egypt and the Eastern Mediterranean, 1600–1900: Essays in Honor of André Raymond*, ed. Nelly Hanna and Raouf Abbas (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2005), 115–40; Ḥuṣṣām ‘Abd al-Mu‘ī, *al-Maghāriba fī Miṣr khilāl al-qarn al-thāmin ‘ashar* (Alexandria: Bibliotheca Alexandrina, 2015).

no doubt found it useful to identify in court as Jerbans, since many cases involved both Ibadi and non-Ibadi Jerban litigants.

It may well be that Ibadis outside Jerba consciously elected to follow the legal norms of Malikism as part of a strategy in adapting to their cultural, political, and legal environment.¹⁸ In any case, their Maliki Jerban confreres – who would have been aware of their Ibadi affiliation – appear to have had no objection to supporting them in court. On the other hand, in some cases Ibadis like ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Baḥḥār no doubt found it expedient to avoid mentioning their religious affiliation while in Cairo.

Did Ibadis see themselves as different in this context? It is hard to say with certainty, given the nature of the sources. What cases like al-Baḥḥār suggest, however, is that regardless of how they felt internally about using non-Ibadi courts, Ibadi merchants approached the legal realm of Ottoman life with much the same pragmatism as did the Ottoman state with regard to its non-Sunni minorities.¹⁹ Moreover, this pragmatism was shared by Ibadi scholars and students in Cairo, as the next character in this chapter shows.

* * *

In 1630, just a few years after ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Baḥḥār appeared in court for the last time, a young Jerban student named Muḥammad b. ‘Umar b. Abī Sitta al-Sidwīkshī (d. 1670) arrived in Cairo. Then only eighteen years old, Muḥammad had come with the ambition of studying at the renowned al-Azhar Mosque. Like so many other Jerbans he would also have arrived knowing that a large Maghribi community had already settled in the Tulun district. Members of his own family already living in the area made moving there to pursue his studies a bit easier.²⁰

¹⁸ This argument belongs to Muḥammad al-Marīmī who, in his previous work on Jerba (*Ibādīyyat Jarba*), raised this point. More recently he used the example of the Wikālat al-Jāmūs to demonstrate its applicability to what he calls Jerban “diasporas” (*shatāt*) in his book on Ibadi and Jewish religious endowments. See al-Marīmī, *Ahl jazirat Jarba*, 49–56.

¹⁹ Winter, *The Shiites of Lebanon*.

²⁰ For brief accounts of his life, career, and works see Sa‘īd Bin Ta‘ārīt, “Risāla fī tārikh Jarba” (photocopy of MS copied by Sālim Bin Ya‘qūb) (Jerba, [n.d.]), 75–78; Bin Ya‘qūb, *Tārikh jazirat Jarba*, 2006, 365–73; Djaabiri, *Niẓām al-‘azzāba*, 225–27; Sulaymān b. Aḥmad al-Ḥilātī, *‘Ulamā Jarba (Chronique de l’île de Jerba)*, ed. Mohamed Gouja (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1998), 80–82; Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ Nāṣir Bābā‘ammī et al., eds., *Mu‘jam a‘lām al-ibādīyya (Dictionnaire des hommes illustres de l’Ibadisme, les hommes du*

The al-Azhar Mosque quickly rose to prominence in the Ottoman period, attracting students like Muḥammad Abī Sitta from all across the empire but especially from the Maghrib. The existence of a special residence hall there for Maghribi students (the *riwāq al-maghārība*) marked their ubiquity at the mosque.²¹ Ibadis did not, however, elect to reside there. Instead, they took up residence with family members or in local hostels and schools such as the Buffalo Agency associated with the Ibadi communities of the Maghrib.

Muḥammad was a young man when ‘Abd al-Azīz established the endowment for the Buffalo Agency. As his reputation grew, however, so too did his ties with the Agency and the Tulun neighborhood. Sometime following the completion of his studies at al-Azhar, Muḥammad came to occupy two very different functions. He gained prominence at al-Azhar, being given the nickname “al-Badr” (“the full moon”) by his colleagues after he began teaching there.²² Alongside his role as an Azhari teacher, he also might have overseen the maintenance of the Buffalo Agency’s budding manuscript library.²³ In any case, Muḥammad’s other function aside from his time at al-Azhar was as a teacher to Ibadi students in Cairo.

Muḥammad serves as an important indicator of the multidimensional lives of Ibadis at the Buffalo Agency in seventeenth-century Cairo. He

Maghreb), vol. 2 (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 2000), 389–90; Khālīd b. Yūsuf Bin Yaḥyātīn, “Muḥammad b. ‘Umar b. Abī Sitta al-mashhūr bi-al-Muḥashshī: ḥayātuhu wa-āthāruhu” (MA thesis, Ma’had al-‘Ulūm al-Sharā’iyya, 2013), 15–35; Martin H. Custers, *al-Ibādīyya: A Bibliography*, vol. 2: *Ibādīs of the Maghrib*, 2nd ed. (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2016), 386. Most of these works refer back to the *Risāla* of Sa’īd b. Ta’ārīt (d. 1872).

²¹ ‘Abd al-Raḥīm, *al-Maghārība fī Miṣr fī-al-‘aṣr al-‘uthmānī*, 99–103; Raymond, “Tunisiens et Maghrébins,” 357; Raymond, “Les quartiers,” 355; Hathaway, “Egypt in the Seventeenth Century,” 55–57. On the broader social life of al-Azhar in the preceding century see Hashmi, “Patronage, Legal Practice, and Space.”

²² Bin Ta’ārīt, “*Risāla fī tarīkh Jarba*,” 75.

²³ The Libyan historian ‘Alī Yaḥyā Mu‘ammar (d. 1980) wrote that the Ibadis in Cairo had a *dār ‘ilmiyya* that held “a very valuable library and he [Muḥammad b. Abī Sitta] oversaw it and guided students in seeking benefit from its treasures.” See ‘Alī Yaḥyā Mu‘ammar, *al-Ibādīyya fī maukib al-tārīkh*, ed. Sulaymān b. al-Ḥājī Ibrāhīm Bābz[a?]bz[a?]b (al-Sīb: Maktabat al-Dāmīrī li-al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī’, 2008), 207. To my knowledge, this piece of information is unique to this source, and I have yet to find any earlier indication that Abī Sitta oversaw the Agency’s library. On whether the library even existed at this point, see below.

does so first through his appearance in the Ottoman court records beginning in 1653 under the name of his family in Jerba: “Muḥammad b. ‘Umar al-Maghribi, known as Abī Sitta.” Then only in his early forties, he appears in these records with the honorific titles of “the learned shaykh” (*al-shaykh al-‘allāma*) and “sun of religion” (*shams al-dīn*).²⁴ As a mirror to his time at al-Azhar, his appearances in court show the degree to which Ibadi scholars and merchants operated simultaneously in the Ibadi community of their coreligionists and the commercial and legal worlds of their non-Ibadi contemporaries. Second, Muḥammad’s scholarly output demonstrates the access he had to Ibadi and non-Ibadi texts during his time in Cairo at the Buffalo Agency. This also points to some features of Ibadi scholarship produced in Ottoman Egypt.

In the remainder of the chapter I follow Muḥammad Abī Sitta in and out of the courtroom. Just as ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Baḥḥār demonstrates the constant participation of Ibadi merchants in the Ottoman legal system, Muḥammad Abī Sitta shows how Ibadi scholars also regularly used the courts. I then juxtapose this with his better-known role as a religious scholar and teacher during the same period to shed light on how Maghribi Ibadi scholars participated fully in the legal, commercial, and intellectual words of Ottoman Cairo in the seventeenth century.

* * *

September 1653 proved to be a busy month for Muḥammad Abī Sitta. He spent late August through mid-September that year in and out of the Civilian Inheritance Court in central Cairo as the representative for the family of the late ‘Umar al-Jabbālī, known as al-Nafūsī.²⁵ This Ibadi merchant, whose name suggests origins in the Jebel Nafusa in

²⁴ He appears under this title in the second of several cases in Maḥkamat al-Qisma al-‘Arabiyya, 42, case 818 (dated 11 Shaw 1063/Sep 4, 1653), 530. Reproduced in ‘Abd al-Raḥīm, *Wathā’iq al-maghāriba*, 4:44–45.

²⁵ The cases involving the Nafūsī estate in which Muḥammad Abī Sitta appears are Maḥkamat al-Qisma al-‘Arabiyya, 42, case 840 (dated 11 Shaw 1063/Sep 4, 1653), 543–45; case 846 (dated 28 Ram 1063/Aug 22, 1653), 549–50; case 857 (dated 19 Shaw 1063/Sep 12, 1653), 554. These are reproduced in ‘Abd al-Raḥīm, *Wathā’iq al-maghāriba*, 4:48–53. Muṣliḥ also reproduces the text of an endowment dated Rabī‘ I 1059/Mar–Apr 1649 in which one “Yūsuf b. ‘Umar al-Nafūsī,” resident of the Ibn Tulun quarter, endowed 20 half-silver pieces for the benefit of repairing a ruined structure in the “al-Jamāla alley” (*ḥārat al-Jamāla*). This is likely either the son or father of the same al-Nafūsī man represented by Muḥammad Abī Sitta in the cases here. See Muṣliḥ, *al-Waqf al-jarbi fī Miṣr*, 218.

Tripolitania but who also could have come from Jerba, had left behind considerable wealth in property, liquid capital, endowments, books, and debts owed to him. Muḥammad represented the two wives of the deceased, 'Aisha and Halima, along with his two sons 'Abd al-Raḥmān and al-Ṣāliḥ, in multiple cases in September 1653 as various claimants to the estate came forward. Some of these claims involved substantial sums. One Yaḥyā b. Sa'īd, for example, claimed that he was owed 467 *mithqal* of gold dust, which he had exchanged for eighteen sacks of seashells (*wad'*). Another regular business partner of the deceased Nafusi merchant was a Christian named 'Abd Rabb al-Masīḥ, son of Gabriel (Jabrīl). With the help of this Christian merchant and a Muslim colleague of the deceased named 'Alī al-Tūnisī, Muḥammad succeeded in settling many claims of debts owed to and by the estate.²⁶

The use of the Ottoman court system by Ibadis such as Muḥammad Abī Sitta should not come as any great surprise. Muslims of all Sunni schools also regularly used Ottoman courts presided over by judges affiliated with schools other than their own. As James Baldwin has noted, there is no reason to think that merchants or other individuals using the Egyptian courts were all that concerned with the affiliation of the judge or the other litigants. Baldwin distinguishes, in particular, between “ordinary Cairene Muslims” and scholars on this issue:

An ordinary native-born Cairene might have recognized the way his or her religious practices differed from those of a Maghribī immigrant without ascribing this to a difference of madhhab. . . . What is clear from Cairo's shari'a court records is that even if ordinary Cairene Muslims identified with a certain madhhab with regard to their worship, they did not feel obliged to organize their worldly legal affairs according to the doctrines of any one madhhab. In court records, the choice of madhhab correlates clearly with certain types of cases. Court users chose a particular madhhab according to the remedies it could offer, not according to their own affiliation.²⁷

In other words, if litigants did intentionally choose courts from a different legal school than their own, this choice could very well have stemmed from the understanding that they could derive the maximum benefit from using them. This phenomenon, known as “forum

²⁶ Maḥkamat al-Qisma al-'Arabiyya, 42, case 846 (dated 28 Ram 1063/Aug 22, 1653), 549–50. Reproduced in 'Abd al-Raḥīm, *Wathā'iq al-maghāribā*, 4:51–52.

²⁷ Baldwin, *Islamic Law and Empire*, 79.

shopping,” was characteristic of Egyptian courts both before and during the Ottoman era. Baldwin contrasted these “ordinary Cairenes” with scholars and jurists, for whom “identification with a madhhab was the norm . . . [and whose] affiliation meant having been trained in, and continuing to work within, the particular body of scholarship that grew out of the works of the madhhab’s eponymous founder and his disciples.”²⁸ This is not to say that scholars did not also forum shop, but instead to emphasize that madhhab mattered to them in their scholarship. On the one hand, these ideas certainly apply to Ibadis living in Ottoman Cairo. Ordinary Ibadis, like their Sunni counterparts, chose to use Cairene courts presided over by other madhhabs for practical reasons, while Ibadi ulama identified in their scholarship according to their own madhhab. Documented cases like these occurred in later centuries, such as the mixed religious context of nineteenth-century Zanzibar, where residents had access to either Ibadi or Shafi‘i courts.²⁹ On the other hand, however, it merits emphasizing that Ibadis had no other formal legal options. Unlike nineteenth-century Zanzibar, there were no Ibadi deputy judges in the shariah courts of Ottoman Cairo. Ibadis could (and did) often resolve disputes among themselves through unofficial channels, as did so many other Cairo residents in the seventeenth century and later. Unlike even their Christian or Jewish contemporaries, however, the Ibadi community had no officially recognized legal representatives in Egypt.³⁰ This could, as Mohamed Merimi has suggested, help explain the Ibadi preference for following Maliki legal conventions.³¹ In addition, since Maghribi Ibadis would already be familiar with Maliki fiqh and came from regions with majority-Maliki populations, many of their non-Ibadi contemporaries may well have assumed them to be Maliki.

In an anecdote related by one of his students, he and Muḥammad were walking one day on a main thoroughfare of Cairo when they heard a man beckon another into the courthouse saying, “‘God has legislated (that you enter)!’ And so [Muḥammad] placed his sleeve over his mouth in angry surprise and said, ‘O disbeliever! O enemy of God! Whom do you beckon into the courthouse saying God has legislated

²⁸ Ibid. ²⁹ Shahar, “Legal Pluralism,” 136–37.

³⁰ On Christians and Jews in Ottoman courts in Cairo see Baldwin, *Islamic Law and Empire*, 48–49; on the importance of mediation (*ṣulḥ*) outside courts see 49–53.

³¹ Al-Marīmī, *Ahl jazīrat Jarba*.

it?’ [Muḥammad said this] due to the great quantity of rulings reached through opposition and bribery [in the court].”³² When the time came, Muḥammad must have been irritated that even though both he and the family of the deceased Nafusi man were Ibadis there remained no other option but to enter those very same courts. To settle the estate, they had to follow the formal procedures of an Ottoman court presided over by a Hanafi court official. Moreover, Muḥammad Abī Sitta was no “ordinary Cairene” who just happened to be an Ibadi – he was a prominent Azhari scholar.

In this regard, Ibadis certainly shared something with both Sunni Muslims and other religious minorities in Ottoman Cairo: a recognition that despite issues of corruption, working through the official channels of the Ottoman courts could prove effective. Decisions made in the Civilian Inheritance Court, like other Ottoman courts in the city, carried the authority of the state.³³ In cases involving both Ibadi and non-Ibadi (or non-Muslim) litigants, it clearly benefited Ibadi residents in Cairo to work through official channels to protect their assets.

When those failed, Ibadis could also resort to less formal solutions outside of the courts. For example, at the end of the seventeenth century a contemporary of Muḥammad Abī Sitta, an Ibadi merchant and scholar named Aḥmad al-Wirānī, left Cairo to return to Jerba.³⁴ Before leaving, he established several small endowments for the support of Ibadi students in Cairo. This practice, which came to represent the primary source of support for the Buffalo Agency and its students in the eighteenth century, also required interaction with the court system in Egypt. Unfortunately, maintaining endowments from as far away as Jerba was not without its logistical difficulties.

Aḥmad left Cairo around 1680, after designating a shop in the Tulun district as an endowment for the benefit of Ibadi students.

³² Bin Ya‘qūb, *Tārīkh jazīrat Jarba*, 2006, 367. The printed texts drew from Makt. Bin Ya‘qūb “Daftar 2,” Sālim Bin Ya‘qūb’s notebook in a section entitled “Tarjumat al-imām al-shaykh Muḥammad b. ‘Umar b. Abī Sitta al-shahīr bi-‘l-Muḥashshī” (photograph of the original manuscript by Werner Schwartz), 61. This was, in turn, copied from a biographical note on his time in Cairo by Sa‘īd b. Ta‘arīt (d. 1868) in Shaykh Sālim’s library: Makt. Sālim Bin Ya‘qūb MS 057.

³³ That Ottoman Cairenes came to believe in the power of documents ratified by the state is a main argument of Reem Meshal in her *Sharia and the Making of the Modern Egyptian*.

³⁴ The story, presumably based on an archival document that is not cited, appears in Bin Ya‘qūb, *Tārīkh jazīrat Jarba*, 2006, 323.

Sometime over the next decade an Egyptian resident in the neighborhood attempted to seize control of the endowment. Aḥmad, now in Jerba, sent his son ʿĪsā to Cairo in 1698–99 to protect the endowment in court, but he failed to do so because the Egyptian litigant produced a counterfeit testimony. Tenacious, ʿĪsā returned in 1704–05 and took the Egyptian back to court. This time ʿĪsā brought with him written testimonies of his family's control of the waqf from his siblings, which also authorized him to appear in court on the family's behalf. Like other Jerban Ibadis, ʿĪsā also made sure that several members of the Jerban community in Cairo accompanied him to court to support his claims to the property. These included Jerban merchants Yaḥyā b. Muḥammad al-Jumlī and ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Sulaymān. In the face of both oral and written testimonies contesting his ownership of the endowment, the Egyptian settled out of court directly with ʿĪsā. This could also work in the opposite direction. One of the two Jerban witnesses who came to his help, Yaḥyā al-Jumlī, also appeared in a Cairene court as a character witness in a dispute over inheritance involving Jerban litigants in 1687. The properties in question in that case were actually located in Jerba.³⁵ The ability of Jerban and other Ibadi merchants and scholars like al-Wīrānī to support one another proved invaluable. This regular movement and communication of people, capital, documents, and books would ensure the survival of the Buffalo Agency for centuries.

At the same time, Ibadis elected to keep their religious affiliation out of the discussion. Like ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Baḥḥār, no evidence appears in the cases involving Muḥammad Abī Sitta, the deceased Nafusi man, or al-Wīrānī that would suggest they were Ibadis. For some Ibadi residents in Cairo, their own religious affiliation when deciding on a Maliki or Shafiʿi judge may have been as irrelevant to them as it was for their Sunni contemporaries going to court. That is, religious affiliation need not have determined their everyday lives. The Nafusi man himself serves as an illustration of this.

In one of the most remarkable of the cases involving Muḥammad as the legal representative (*wāṣī*) for the Nafusi family, the details of the

³⁵ Maḥkamat al-Qisma al-ʿArabiyya, 65, case 30 (dated 29 D. al-Qaʿda 1098/Oct 6, 1687), 28–30. Reproduced in ʿAbd al-Raḥīm, *Wathāʾiq al-maghāriba*, 5:506–08.

estate appear in an itemized list.³⁶ These include outstanding debts, liquid capital, properties in the Tulun district, and a private library. An official, carrying the title *al-ṣaḥḥāf*, sorted through these books and assigned a value for each volume in the local Ottoman currency, *paras*. Based on the list, the library consisted of 45 titles in 54 volumes, amounting to a value of 3,420 *paras*. The library's contents, owned by a man whose name and origins suggest he was an Ibadi, contain no identifiably Ibadi titles. While the Ibadi titles could have been donated to students or a library, it is equally plausible that the library simply did not contain any Ibadi books.

For some Ibadi merchants and scholars in seventeenth-century Cairo, then, religious affiliation may not have dictated much about their everyday lives. Ibadis did business with, studied alongside, and read the books of their Sunni contemporaries. In some cases, they appear to have given little thought to the differences between them and other Muslims in Cairo. Yet as Baldwin noted, for some scholars these distinctions no doubt mattered. As we will see, for a prominent Ibadi scholar like Muḥammad Abī Sitta, community did have meaningful, if somewhat porous, spatial and intellectual boundaries.

* * *

Muḥammad oversaw the itemization of the Nafusi merchant's estate and helped settle most of its debts, before the official presiding over the inheritance court (*al-qassām*) transferred responsibility for the estate and legal supervision of the merchant's family to another Maghribi man identified as 'Alī al-Tūnisī. Over the preceding two weeks this former colleague of the deceased had helped Muḥammad settle the debts owed to the estate. Neither Muḥammad nor his family would disappear from the court records, however, as both the Nafusi's estate and other Jerban estates would again draw them into the legal world of Ottoman Cairo. These court appearances, as well as the work that he produced as a scholar, revolve around a neighborhood at the northwest corner of the Ibn Tulun Mosque.

In June 1655 Abī Sitta again appeared in court to serve as a witness alongside another Jerban named Sālīm al-Daḥmānī in an inheritance case. Held again in the Civilian Inheritance Court in Cairo, this case

³⁶ Maḥkamat al-Qisma al-'Arabiyya, 42, case 840 (dated 11 Shaw 1063/Sep 4, 1653), 543–45. Reproduced in 'Abd al-Raḥīm, *Wathā'iq al-maghāribā*, 4:48–51.

centered on an official document (*ḥujja*) produced in the local court of the Ibn Tulun Mosque, just around the corner from the Buffalo Agency. Moreover, the property in question was located at the north-west corner of the Ibn Tulun Mosque, in the “Alley of the Ram” (Ḥārat al-Kabsh) – the same alleyway off which the Buffalo Agency itself was located.³⁷ Muḥammad was a logical witness to call because he lived in this neighborhood. The evidence for this comes from a case involving a Jerban merchant and his daughters, in which Muḥammad Abī Sitta makes an unexpected appearance.

Less than one year after he served as witness in the case above, and just a few months prior to his return to Jerba, Muḥammad appeared in one final, remarkable, case. In late January 1657 a woman named Mihiniyya inherited the endowed property of her late father, a Jerban merchant named Aḥmad b. Abī Nūḥ. The home was located in Tulun, just beside another building endowed for the benefit of the two holy cities of Mecca and Medina (a detail to which I will return below). Mihiniyya appeared in court in order to add her husband, Muḥammad b. ‘Umar, known as “Abī Sitta,” and his progeny (*dhurriyatahu*) into the line of inheritance for the property.³⁸ This means that, following the death of his wife Mihiniyya, the property would move into possession of Muḥammad’s family. Of course, her choice to do this begs the question: why?

Although it might initially appear odd that Mihiniyya would insert her husband into her family’s waqf right before they left Cairo, court records provide an elucidating detail: an additional member of Muḥammad’s family, ‘Alī b. Badr, likely remained in Cairo. This ‘Alī was almost certainly Muḥammad’s son, since “Badr” was the nickname given to Muḥammad by his colleagues at al-Azhar. Further evidence comes from ‘Alī’s appearance several times throughout 1656–57 in court representing the widow of the same Nafusi man whose estate his father had

³⁷ Maḥkamat al-Qisma al-‘Arabiyya, 44, case 336 (dated 31 Raj 1065/Jun 6, 1655), 227–28. The document in question was from the court in Tulun, however, and is dated 2 Ram 1059/Sep 8, 1649. Reproduced in ‘Abd al-Raḥīm, *Wathā’iq al-maghārība*, 4:61–63. Based on later maps and evidence, the Agency was right at the corner of this alleyway (the Lallat or Ḥārat al-Kabsh) and another known as the ‘Aṭfat al-Najjār. The Lallat al-Kabsh and the quarter surrounding it continue to be known by that name up to the present, although the layout of the neighborhood has changed substantially.

³⁸ Maḥkamat al-Qisma al-‘Arabiyya, 46, case 293 (dated 7 Rab II 1067/Jan 23, 1657), 213. Reproduced in ‘Abd al-Raḥīm, *Wathā’iq al-maghārība*, 4:130–32.

represented a few years earlier.³⁹ By inserting Muḥammad into her family's waqf, Mihiniyya insured that his – most likely, their – son 'Alī would continue to benefit from this property in the future. The Abī Sitta family would stay in the neighborhood for at least the next century.

These appearances by Muḥammad Abī Sitta in mid-seventeenth-century Ottoman courts highlight several things about the life of Maghribi Ibadis in Cairo. First and foremost, Muḥammad and Maghribi Ibadis like him played several different roles during their time in Cairo. Like many Ibadis after him, Muḥammad was a student and later a teacher at the premier Sunni institution of learning in Egypt, the al-Azhar Mosque, where he enjoyed a good reputation among his colleagues. Likewise, he served as a legal representative for his fellow Maghribi Ibadis in the Hanafi Ottoman legal system of Cairo, where he was executor for the estate of a Nafusi man. It should come as no surprise that Ibadis, like other religious minority communities including Jews and Christians, opted to use the Ottoman courts. Alongside his support of his fellow Ibadis in the legally plural world of Ottoman Cairo, Muḥammad Abī Sitta's appearances in court also emphasize the porous divisions between Ibadi and non-Ibadi communities. Moreover, his appearance in Cairene courts bore direct ties to his personal and intellectual life in the Tulun district. The properties owned by the Nafusi man were located in Tulun just a short walk from the Buffalo Agency, where Muḥammad taught. He and his family, through the legal actions of his wife Mihiniyya, also ended up in control of property in the neighborhood.

* * *

Abī Sitta's work as a scholar also mirrors the porous boundaries separating religious communities. On the one hand, by the 1650s he had risen to prominence as a scholar at al-Azhar, after nearly three decades studying and teaching in Cairo. At the same time, however, he also frequented the library of the Buffalo Agency in these early decades of its history. Over the course of his career he would author some two dozen marginal glosses (*ḥawāshī*) on major Ibadi works from the middle period (eleventh–sixteenth centuries), many of which came to

³⁹ The cases in which 'Alī b. Badr is mentioned include Maḥkamat al-Qisma al-'Arabiyya, 45, case 322 (dated 15 Rab II 1066 /Feb 12, 1656); case 334 (dated 14 Jum I 1066 /Mar 10, 1656); case 335 (dated 26 Rab II 1066 /Feb 22, 1656). Reproduced in 'Abd al-Raḥīm, *Wathā'iq al-maghāriba*, 4:83–86.

occupy an honored place in the Ibadi core curriculum for centuries.⁴⁰ His glosses on Ibadi texts would live on in the margins of printed editions of these titles with the advent of Ibadi print houses in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Chapter 5). Two features of these glosses deserve special attention. First, the material history of these commentaries reveals much about the history of the Agency's library in the late seventeenth century. Second, the contents of the commentaries and especially their sources shed additional light on the intellectual milieu in which Ibadi scholars in Ottoman Cairo operated.

As for extant copies of his glosses, libraries in major centers of Ibadi learning in the Maghrib all the way up to the present house copies of them. He clearly wrote several of these texts down himself, although few autographs survive because many titles attributed to him were compiled by one of his students in the years following his death. Before considering the later compilation of his works, however, a more basic question relates to which manuscripts Muḥammad Abī Sitta would have relied upon when preparing his glosses.

Most of his glosses would have come out of his time in Cairo, while living at or at least frequenting the Buffalo Agency and teaching at al-Azhar. These two spaces were the main centers of Ibadi manuscript production in Cairo between the sixteenth and early twentieth centuries. Little evidence survives for what the Agency's library would have looked like during Muḥammad Abī Sitta's time there. If the contents of the library in the eighteenth century are any indication, however, there were as many non-Ibadi as Ibadi works (Chapter 3). At the very least, the library would have contained the core works of Ibadi theology and law, which were compiled over the later medieval centuries and on which Muḥammad wrote his commentaries. Ibadi Muslims like Muḥammad studying and living in Cairo in the seventeenth century copied Ibadi and non-Ibadi titles at both the Buffalo Agency and al-Azhar. The family names of the copyists in the colophons of the manuscripts copied at either al-Azhar or the Buffalo Agency in the seventeenth century demonstrate the regular flow through Cairo of Ibadis from Jerba and the Jebel Nafusa: al-Sidwīkshī (Jerba), al-Tandimīrtī (Jerba/Nafusa), al-Nafūsī (Nafusa), al-Shammākhī

⁴⁰ Some glosses were written in Cairo, while others were written following his return to Jerba. For a full list see Custers, *al-Ibāḍiyya*, 2:368.

(Jerba/Nafusa), al-Yafrani (Jerba/Nafusa), al-Maṣ'abī (Mzab/Jerba), al-Laynī (Jerba).⁴¹

None of the endowed manuscripts from the Buffalo Agency library that survive carry endowment statements dating to before the eighteenth century. Perhaps Muḥammad worked in part from his personal library rather than that of the Buffalo Agency. As demonstrated in the execution of the estate of the Nafusi family, Maghribi merchants and scholars often owned dozens of books in seventeenth-century Cairo, and Muḥammad would have had a large number of manuscripts himself. In all likelihood, however, those would have traveled back to Jerba with him in 1657–58. A few manuscripts in his hand from his time in Cairo have survived till the present, and they give some indication of what he was reading and studying there. When he copied a couple of manuscript that carry the dates 1635 and 1636, he would still have been a young man in his twenties and studying at al-Azhar.⁴² In other cases, manuscripts copied from exemplars in Abī Sitta's hand also survive. For example, a manuscript dated October 8, 1896 in the Buffalo Agency was copied from that in the hand of Abī Sitta, showing that some books in his hand remained in use there for the next two-and-a-half centuries.⁴³

Some additional indirect evidence suggests that the Buffalo Agency had begun to acquire a library by this time. Catalog entries on extant copies of his commentaries found in Ibadi libraries throughout northern Africa offer some indication of which texts he composed while there and which of those remained behind in Cairo after his return to Jerba. Many libraries in Jerba and the Mzab Valley today house copies of Muḥammad Abī Sitta's commentaries, many of which date to within fifty years of his death in 1670.⁴⁴ In some cases their colophons

⁴¹ See Paul M. Love, "Ibadis on (and in) the Margins: Manuscript Notes from the Buffalo Agency in Early-Modern Cairo," *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts* 9, no. 2–3 (2018): 221–41.

⁴² Bin Ya'qūb MS 46[f] (dated Ram 1045/Feb–Mar 1636). Another fragment in the same composite manuscript (*majmū'*) without a titled but dated Sha'b 1044/Jan–Feb 1635 is also in his hand. In both cases the colophons note that the texts were copied in Cairo. Contemporary with this and also in Cairo is Khizānat al-Shaykh 'Umar b. Sulaymān Nūḥ al-Yasjanī MS 'ayn nūn wāw 23 (1047/1637–38). The copyist, Sa'id b. Ibrāhīm al-Shammākhī, would likely have known and studied with Muḥammad.

⁴³ Makt. Bin Ya'qūb MS 9 (dated 1 Jum I 1314/Oct 8, 1896).

⁴⁴ Makt. Abū Bakr Mas'ūd, Bābakr MS 29 (dated 1124/1712); Makt. al-Istiḳāma MS 121(dated 1085/1674); Makt. Abū Bakr Mas'ūd, Bābakr MS 44 (dated

note that they were copied at the Buffalo Agency. This suggests that the Agency's library held these works at the time they were copied. For example, by 1679–80 there was a copy of his commentary on the fourteenth-century work entitled the *Qawā'id al-islām* in the Buffalo Agency's library.⁴⁵ By June 1702 there were two additional glosses of his on late medieval works of jurisprudence along with a copy of his gloss on the commentary of the *'Aqīdat al-tawhīd* by Aḥmad al-Shammākhī by 1704.⁴⁶ This suggests that the Buffalo Agency's library already housed several of Muḥammad Abī Sitta's works by the end of the seventeenth century, shortly after his departure.⁴⁷ A priori, this also means that he had access there to manuscripts of the texts on which he wrote glosses.

In some cases Abī Sitta's works survived thanks to their careful compilation and collation by his student 'Alī b. Bayyān (d. 1708). Ibn Bayyān studied with his teacher in Cairo before returning with him to Jerba in 1657–58.⁴⁸ Later Ibadi historians noted his important role in preserving the work of his shaykh, a claim evidenced by the survival of manuscript copies of Abī Sitta's glosses in Ibn Bayyān's hand. Most of these circulated on the island of Jerba in the years following his death, while a few others appear to have been copied

1090/1679–80); Makt. al-Istiḳāma MS 110 (dated 1079/1669) and 81a (dated 1108/1696); Makt. al-Istiḳāma 97a (dated 1115/1703); Makt. Āl Yiddir 47 (late eleventh/seventeenth century); Makt. Āl Yiddir 163 (dated 1106/1695); Makt. al-Khalīlī AK 119 (dated 1114/1702); Makt. al-Istiḳāma MS 86 (dated 1127/1715); Makt. al-Ḥājj Šāliḥ La'ālī 97 (dated 1111/1700) and 93 (dated 1126/1714); Makt. al-Istiḳāma MS 77 (dated 1137/1724–25); Makt. al-Istiḳāma MS 88a (dated 1114/1702); al-Khizāna al-'Āmma MS 60 (dated 1065/1654). This last manuscript may be the date of composition, rather than the date of transcription. All manuscripts cited with copyists and additional bibliographic data in Custers, *al-Ibādīyya*, 2:369–76.

⁴⁵ Makt. Abū Bakr Mas'ūd, MS Bābakr MS 44. Listed in Custers, *al-Ibādīyya*, 2:370. A copy of his gloss on the commentary of this work was copied in the Buffalo Agency in 1106/1695; Makt. Āl Yiddir MS 163, cited in Custers, *al-Ibādīyya*, 2:372.

⁴⁶ Makt. al-Istiḳāma MS 88a; Makt. al-Khalīlī AK 119; Makt. al-Istiḳāma MS 97a (dated 3 Sha'b 1115/Dec 12, 1703). Cited in Custers, *al-Ibādīyya*, 2:371, 374, 376, respectively.

⁴⁷ A copy of the *Sharḥ al-su'ālāt* in his hand also survives today at the Dār al-Kutub in Cairo: MS *bā'* 217890.

⁴⁸ Ibn Bayyān copied manuscripts unrelated to Abī Sitta while in Cairo. E.g., Khizānat al-Shaykh 'Umar b. Sulaymān al-Yasjanī MS *'ayn dāl nūn* 74 (10 Rab II 1058/May 3, 1648).

by Ibn Bayyān while still in Cairo.⁴⁹ For example, a copy of his gloss on the *Qawā'id al-islām* today housed in a library in the Mزاب Valley carries the date 1696 and notes that it was copied from a manuscript in Ibn Bayyān's hand at the Buffalo Agency.⁵⁰ The colophons of two later copies of glosses made in the eighteenth century also note that their exemplars were in the hand of 'Alī b. Bayyān.⁵¹ All this suggests that Muḥammad Abī Sitta's glosses had already begun circulating both in Jerba and at the Buffalo Agency by the end of the seventeenth century. In addition, it assumes that the Agency's library already held copies of the works on which he was writing glosses.

Yet Abī Sitta's works stand out due to an additional feature beyond their early and wide circulation, one which reflects more clearly the porous divisions between the intellectual world of Ibadi scholars living in Cairo and that of their non-Ibadi contemporaries in the seventeenth century. Abī Sitta wrote his many glosses relying on both Ibadi and non-Ibadi works. In drawing on classical and post-classical works of Sunni hadith, tafsir, and fiqh, Muḥammad Abī Sitta accomplished two different things. First and foremost, he put Ibadi intellectual works into conversation with their Sunni counterparts and demonstrated the similarities and differences among them. This reflects his status as a scholar at al-Azhar, where he would have been expected to be familiar with the canon of Sunni religious thought studied and taught by his colleagues.

In addition, however, his work familiarized an Ibadi readership with the works of their non-Ibadi coreligionists. For Ibadi students in Jerba or Cairo, this would help prepare them to follow in his footsteps as students at al-Azhar. Many Ibadis over the following century would come to Cairo to study at al-Azhar while staying at the Buffalo Agency (Chapter 3). Abī Sitta's glosses offered them a foundation upon which to build their own familiarity with both the Ibadi and non-Ibadi post-classical canons. When he and his glosses arrived in Jerba they would have exposed Ibadis on the island to some Sunni works for the first

⁴⁹ See Bābā'ammī et al., eds., *Mu'jam a'lām al-ibāḍiyya*, 2:292–93.

⁵⁰ Makt. al-Istiḳāma MS 81a. Cited in Bābā'ammī et al., eds., *Mu'jam a'lām al-ibāḍiyya*, 2:371.

⁵¹ Makt. Dār al-Talāmidha MS 131 (dated 17 Shaw 1187/Jan 1, 1774). Cited in Bābā'ammī et al., eds., *Mu'jam a'lām al-ibāḍiyya*, 2:370. This likely refers to the same manuscript exemplar in the previous footnote; Makt. al-Bārūniyya MS 188 (dated 15 Šaf 1214/Jul 19, 1799). Cited in Bābā'ammī et al., eds., *Mu'jam a'lām al-ibāḍiyya*, 2:368.

time. A contemporary of Abī Sitta, writing shortly after his death, noted that “Shaykh Muḥammad b. ‘Umar, who exceeded all in understanding, abundance of knowledge and composition . . . explained the books of our [Ibadi] companions and extracted issues from the books of the prominent [non-Ibadis] such as al-*Qāmūs*, al-*Jawhar*, al-‘*Aḍud*, Ibn Abī Sharīf, al-‘Alqamī, the *Kitāb al-mawāhib*, and al-Zamakhsharī.”⁵² Muḥammad Abī Sitta’s work thus put post-classical Ibadi thought in dialogue with the non-Ibadi canon.⁵³ This resulted from his more than two decades navigating the intellectual and legal worlds of Ottoman Cairo.

* * *

Just a few months after Muḥammad’s wife Mihiniyya added him to her family’s waqf and they returned to Jerba, an official court record document (*ḥujja*) describing the Buffalo Agency by name was drawn up in a courtroom in Tulun. The original description appears in a document from almost thirty years later, in 1685, in which several shares of different properties were acquired by another Jerban named Muḥammad b. Sālim, known as al-Qallāl. A man who appears to be this merchant’s brother had appeared earlier in 1654 alongside Muḥammad Abī Sitta as a witness in a case involving the dispute of another Jerban-owned property in the Alley of the Ram, just around the corner from the Agency. The two would likely have known one another.⁵⁴

This is significant because Muḥammad al-Qallāl acquired two-and-a-half portions (*sahm*) of ownership in a structure named “the Buffalo Agency” (Wikālat al-Jāmūsī).⁵⁵ In the description of the property the

⁵² Hīlātī, ‘*Ulamā’ Jarba*, 82.

⁵³ For a detailed example of this based on his commentary on al-Jayṭālī’s *Qawā’id al-islām* see Bin Yaḥyātin, “Muḥammad b. ‘Umar b. Abī Sitta.”

⁵⁴ The name appears in this case as “al-Ghallāl” (“the fruit seller”), but typographical errors like these occur frequent in the printed version (the difference here being the small morphological difference between the Arabic letters *ghayn* and *qāf*). Abī Sitta, for example, appears as “al-shahīr bi-Abī Sinihi” in the same document: Maḥkamat al-Qisma al-‘Arabiyya, 44, case 338 (dated late Raj 1065/early Jun 1655), 227–28. Reproduced in ‘Abd al-Raḥīm, *Wathā’iq al-maghāribā*, 4:61–63. Moreover, Mas’ūd b. Sālim’s name also appears as “al-Qallāl” in another case from years later: Maḥkamat al-Qisma al-‘Arabiyya, 60, case 424 (dated 27 Jum I 1093/Jun 3, 1682), 289–90. Reproduced in ‘Abd al-Raḥīm, *Wathā’iq al-maghāribā*, 5:215–17.

⁵⁵ The structure is named as the “Wikālat al-Jāmūsī” (*sic*). Based on the description of its location, it without doubt refers to the Buffalo Agency: Maḥkamat al-Qisma al-‘Arabiyya, 62, case 446 (dated 8 Jumādā II 1096/May 12, 1685),

document notes that it was located in the farthest alleyway there, presumably a reference to the same “Alley of the Ram” where Muḥammad’s family continued to benefit from his wife’s waqf property. Indeed, based on the physical description of the location of that property, both buildings were situated just beside a structure designated as a waqf for the two holy cities of Mecca and Medina (*al-ḥaramayn*). In the court document description, to the west of Mihinniya’s property sat a house endowed for the benefit of the *ḥaramayn*, while in the al-Qallāl case the same property appears just to the south.

The case involving al-Qallāl reveals additional details, since the purchase of physical property required a listing of both a description of the location and the physical layout of the space. As a result, the document draws a picture of the Buffalo Agency in the mid-seventeenth century. The description is being quoted from the earlier document, and so it points to the layout of the Agency during Muḥammad Abī Sitta’s time there. The structure, which was a caravanserai-like building known as a *wikāla*, comprised multiple levels with a central, open-air courtyard (Figure 2.1). It housed twelve small depots (*ḥawāṣil*) on the bottom floor and eleven on an additional upper level.⁵⁶ Both the bottom floor and this upper level had exterior doors and the structure had several other rooms and windows. To the south was the property of the al-Masīrī family and the waqf of the two holy cities. Its northern wall faced the pathway (*darb*) where the main door was, while its eastern side connected to the same al-Masīrī property. Finally, the western side of the Agency faced an alleyway where there was an additional door.

336–37. Reproduced in ‘Abd al-Raḥīm, *Wathā’iq al-maghāribā*, 5:317–21. Both Muḥammad al-Qallāl and his brother Aḥmad appear in other court records: Maḥkamat al-Qisma al-‘Arabiyya, 62, case 122 (dated 26 Ram 1095/Sep 6, 1684), 82–83. Reproduced in ‘Abd al-Raḥīm, *Wathā’iq al-maghāribā*, 5:274–76. Several students at the Buffalo Agency in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries carried the *nisba* al-Gallālī, on which see Bin Ya‘qūb, *Tārīkh jazīrat Jarba*, 2006, 153–54.

⁵⁶ This is generally consistent with a twentieth-century description of the structure by the Jerban historian Sālim Bin Ya‘qūb (d. 1991), who said that the Agency had a total of twenty-six rooms: interview with Sālim Bin Ya‘qūb (1986) [00:23:08–00:23:20].



Figure 2.1 The plan of the seventeenth-century Ottoman Wikālat al-Bazarah in Cairo gives a good sense of the original layout of the Buffalo Agency. © Museum With No Frontiers, MWNF (Discover Islamic Art)

The next direct reference to the Buffalo Agency in the court documents would not appear for another half century, when a new endowment for students at the Agency was established.⁵⁷ The importance of this particular reference is that it marks the first appearance of the Buffalo Agency by name in a legal document, nearly a century after its original founding in the early seventeenth century.

During its first century of existence the Buffalo Agency began to attract Ibadi students and scholars from Jerba in larger and larger numbers. Although the details of day-to-day operations remain unclear for this earliest period, already in the seventeenth century it sat at the intersections of the lives of Ibadi scholars, merchants, and students in Ottoman Cairo. This chapter has shown, in particular, how Ibadis connected to

⁵⁷ Maḥkamat Ṭūlūn, 224, case 868 (dated 28 D. al-Ḥijja 1152/Mar 27, 1740) 401–02. Reproduced in ‘Abd al-Raḥīm, “Wathā’iq tuwaḍḍiḥ,” 102–05. This document is discussed in detail below in Chapter 3.

the Buffalo Agency including both merchants like ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Baḥḥār and scholars such as Muḥammad Abī Sitta moved in and out of the courtrooms of seventeenth-century Ottoman Cairo.

As was the case for their non-Ibadi Muslim and non-Muslim contemporaries, the court proved an important focal point of Ibadi lives in Ottoman Egypt. Their participation in the Ottoman court system enabled them to protect and to defend their property by drawing on the oral testimonies of their confreres from Jerba as well as written documentation from their island homeland. The Ottoman courts of Cairo equipped al-Baḥḥār, Abī Sitta, and their contemporaries to establish, to maintain, and to protect endowments both large and small in support of their families, business partners, and students in Egypt. This, as we will see in the next chapter, proved an enduring feature of the Ibadi communities in Cairo in the eighteenth century as well. Finally, the example of Muḥammad Abī Sitta also shows how this intersection occurred both in the realm of law and in the world of religious scholarship. Spanning more than two decades at al-Azhar and subsequent time back in Jerba, Abī Sitta’s career demonstrates how the Ibadi experience in seventeenth-century Cairo helped to bring the community’s intellectual tradition into dialogue with the post-classical canon of Sunni works. This, too, would remain constant over the course of the next century as Ibadi students and scholars flowed into and out of Ottoman Cairo seeking training at al-Azhar.

A final story from Muḥammad Abī Sitta’s time in Cairo also reminds us of the details of everyday life that the court records and religious commentaries do not provide. In the years following his death ‘Alī b. Bayyān, Muḥammad’s dedicated student and compiler of his works, committed to writing memories of his time with his teacher in Cairo. In one especially intimate story, he wrote that in his leisure time Muḥammad would take ‘Alī down to the Nile River for a different type of lesson: he taught the young man how to swim.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Sālim Bin Ya‘qūb, “Tarjumat al-imām al-shaykh Muḥammad b. ‘Umar b. Abī Sitta al-shahīr bi-‘l-Muḥashshī” (in a manuscript notebook photographed by Werner Schwartz), 61. Copied from a fragment in the hand of Sa‘īd b. Ta‘ārīt (d. 1868), today in Makt. Sālim Bin Ya‘qūb MS 57.

3 | *An Ibadi Library in Cairo*

On March 27, 1740 five men stood before a Maliki judge in the court of the Ibn Tulun Mosque in Cairo to witness the establishment of a religious endowment (waqf) by a prominent Jerban coffee merchant named Aḥmad b. Saʿīd al-Maghribi, known as al-Jumli.¹ The event marked the creation of a new endowment for residents of a building popularly known as the Wikālat al-Jāmūs (or the Buffalo Agency).² The court document identified the beneficiaries of the endowment as Maghribi students who had memorized the Quran and resided at the Agency. The remaining features of the waqf were all standard for this type of document, including stipulations as to how much of the Quran should be read there during each night of the month of Ramadan and that the waqf should be overseen and administered by a director (*nāẓir*), whose salary and upkeep the endowment also should cover. Finally – and almost comically, given the Ibadi litigants involved – after the standard formula of asking for blessings upon the Prophet Muḥammad, the document added a similar call for blessings on his caliphal successors and the attributed founders of the four Sunni schools of law.

This document lays out in detail the location, circumstances, and actors involved in the establishment of the endowment that maintained the Buffalo Agency over the course of much of the eighteenth century. Each element of the waqf deed represents a feature of the Ibadi community of Cairo in this period. Both the endower and the witnesses

¹ Maḥkamat Ṭulūn, 224, case 868 (dated 28 D. al-Ḥijja 1152/Mar 27, 1740), 401–02. Reproduced in ʿAbd al-Raḥīm, “Wathāʾiq tuwaḍḍiḥ,” 102–05; Muṣliḥ, *al-Waqf al-jarbī fī Miṣr*, 69–73. Muṣliḥ notes in his introduction (p. 22) that he himself found the document in ʿAbd al-Raḥīm.

² By the mid-eighteenth century the legal name of the structure was the Wikālat al-Sāda al-Ghuwābiyya, which is the name under which it appears in this document. Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, however, colophons of manuscripts copied there continue to refer to it as Wikālat al-Jāmūs.

reflect the prominent place that Ibadi merchants occupied in the commercial life of Ottoman Cairo. The endowment itself and the parties involved mirror the complementary relationship between Ibadi merchants and the scholars and students who benefited from endowments like this one. Finally, the endowment's intention to support Maghribi students speaks to the aspiration of many Ibadi students in Cairo to attend courses and to study texts at what had become the premier institution of Sunni learning in the Ottoman period: al-Azhar. The biographies of the students and their teachers as well as the contents of the Buffalo Agency's library further reinforce the link between Ibadis and al-Azhar.

This chapter follows the actors involved in the maintenance and use of the Buffalo Agency and its library in the eighteenth century. It begins by focusing on the waqf statement, pausing on each of the individuals involved and then briefly on the contents of the document itself. It then redirects its attention to the library of books held in the Agency to ask: Who commissioned them? Who used them and how? By examining the endowment statements, copyists, contents, and readers of the books in the library, I demonstrate how Ibadi merchants, scholars, and students operated in the world of Ottoman Cairo in a way that conformed to the practices of their non-Ibadi contemporaries in the eighteenth century. At the same time, certain features of the library's formation and contents demonstrate how it was created and used by Ibadis, specifically.

* * *

That the founder of the Buffalo Agency's major waqf of the eighteenth century, Aḥmad al-Jumlī, traded in coffee comes as no surprise. Jerbans and other Maghribi merchants were "making big money" from coffee by that time.³ Alongside fez hats and fabrics, coffee was one of the principal commodities traded by Maghribi merchants in Egypt and across the region.⁴ By the early seventeenth century the first endower of the Buffalo Agency, 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Baḥḥār, had appeared in a court case involving the coffee trade. Coffee passing through Cairo was big business, and the trade in it reached "its zenith in the last decades of the seventeenth century and the first decades of the

³ Hanna, *Making Big Money in 1600*.

⁴ "Métiers exercés par les Maghrébins," in Raymond, *Artisans et commerçants*, 2:472–73; Sayyid-Marsot, *Egypt in the Reign of Muḥammad Ali*, 2.

eighteenth.”⁵ This carried not only an economic but also a cultural importance well beyond Egypt. When it came to coffee culture and coffee houses, “Cairo seems to have set some of the trends for Istanbul.”⁶ The importance of the coffee trade in al-Jumli’s lifetime was remarkable:

Sixty-two caravanserais (out of the 360 then existing in Cairo) carried out the coffee trade in Cairo; coffee represented a third of Egypt’s foreign commerce, thus making it the single most important economic activity in the country. Some of the 100,000 hundredweight of coffee imported annually from Yemen to Cairo was reexported to countries in the Ottoman Empire and Europe. The 500 *tuggâr* involved in the business consisted largely of North Africans, Turks, and Syrians ... which demonstrates the international nature of the business.⁷

This boom in the coffee trade and more generally in the Egyptian economy allowed for the establishment of the endowments that would carry the Buffalo Agency through the eighteenth century. Most endowments that supported the Agency were more modest, however. Alongside the large endowment by al-Jumli, several smaller endowments from him and other merchants provided for the upkeep of the students there. In some cases these came from individual shops or agricultural properties, the proceeds of which were used to support the Agency’s residents. Following his death, Aḥmad al-Jumli himself left behind money to endow a shop in the Tulun district for the benefit of students. Significantly, the witnesses included both the prominent ulama and merchants associated with the Buffalo Agency.⁸ The al-Jumli family continued to support the Agency through smaller endowments into the next century, though at least some of Aḥmad’s

⁵ Raymond, “A Divided Sea,” 46. For a more general picture of the coffee trade in Egypt during this period see André Raymond, “Les problèmes du café en Égypte au xviie siècle,” in *Le café en Méditerranée. Histoire, anthropologie, économie: XVIIIe-XXe siècle* (Aix-en-Provence: Institut de recherches et d’études sur les mondes arabes et musulmans, 1980), 31–71.

⁶ Cemal Kafadar, “How Dark Is the History of the Night, How Black the Story of Coffee, How Bitter the Tale of Love: The Changing Measure of Leisure and Pleasure in Early Modern Istanbul,” in *Medieval and Early Modern Performance in the Eastern Mediterranean*, ed. Arzu Öztürkmen and Evelyn Birg Vitz (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014), 243–69, at 259.

⁷ Raymond, “A Divided Sea,” 46. ⁸ Muşliḥ, *al-Waqf al-jarbī fī Miṣr*, 221.

immediate relatives had returned to Jerba by the end of the eighteenth century.⁹

Successful merchants like al-Jumlī in the first half of the eighteenth century did not achieve that success alone. In addition to a booming trade in coffee, Maghribi and other “long-distance merchants” (known as the *tujjār*) in Ottoman Egypt benefited from a “mamluk-merchant . . . alliance, whose main source of income, other than land, was derived from long-distance trade within the confines of Ottoman territories.”¹⁰ Court records reflect both that alliance and the political connections of merchants throughout this period.¹¹ Here again, al-Jumlī’s case is instructive.

On July 1, 1741, a little over a year after the establishment of the Buffalo Agency’s endowment, al-Jumlī again appeared in court for a case concerning the sale of tax-farm (*iltizām*) properties in the province of Giza.¹² This case took place not in Tulun but in the principal Ottoman court of the capital, al-Bāb al-‘Ālī, which addressed among other things matters pertaining to land. The other litigants, neither Ibadiis nor Maghribis, instead belonged to the ‘Azabān regiment of the Janissaries. Al-Jumlī appeared there as representative for a Janissary who was purchasing the tax farm from Ibrāhīm, former deputy (*katkhūda*) of the ‘Azabān. Al-Jumlī’s participation in this case shows that successful Ibadi merchants, like their non-Ibadi Muslim and non-Muslim contemporaries, cultivated relationships with the Janissary and Mamluk elements of Ottoman Cairo in the first half of the eighteenth century.¹³

These close ties between Mamluks and merchants reinforced the political clout of certain members of the *tujjār* merchant communities like those in the Tulun district. These included the other men standing

⁹ Muṣliḥ reproduces the text of a court case dated 2 Shaw 1189 (Nov 26, 1775) in which Sulaymān b. Aḥmad al-Jumlī and Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā al-Jumlī (on behalf of several members of the family in Jerba) sell shares in a *wikala* owned by Aḥmad in the Tulun district (*ibid.*, 224).

¹⁰ Sayyid-Marsot, *Egypt in the Reign of Muhammad Ali*, 1.

¹¹ “Les gens des métiers et la caste militaires,” in Raymond, *Artisans et commerçants*, 2:629–726.

¹² Arshif al-Shahr al-‘Iqārī bi-al-Qāhir, 1, *al-Dūwān al-‘Ālī* case 30 (dated 16 Rab II 1154/Jul 1, 1741), 17. Reproduced in ‘Abd al-Raḥīm, *al-Maghāriba fī Miṣr fī-al-‘aṣr al-‘uthmānī*, 179–80.

¹³ Magdi Guirguis argues a similar place for Coptic notables in the eighteenth century, which he also notes reflects broader changes throughout the empire: Guirguis, “The Organization of the Coptic Community,” 208–09.

beside al-Jumli in 1740 at the establishment of the Buffalo Agency endowment. One of them was a Jerban merchant and scholar, Maṣ'ūd Ibn Ḥadīd, who purchased a palm in Giza in the same year as an endowment for the students.¹⁴ In the following year he made two additional endowments as he took on his new role as the “Shaykh of the Merchants of Tulun.” He made these endowments in his capacity as the director (*nāẓir*) of the Agency’s waqf.¹⁵ His endowment was supplemented in 1740 by a generous addition from his wife Asiya, the daughter of Jerban merchant Muḥammad al-Sharūnī. She endowed two residences in the al-Najjār alleyway on the west side of the Buffalo Agency for the use of its students.¹⁶ The al-Sharūnī family also established other waqfs for the benefit of students.¹⁷ Endowments like these sustained the Buffalo Agency over the course of the eighteenth century, when Jerbans represented nearly 40 percent of the prominent Tunisian merchant families of Cairo.¹⁸ Of the recorded waqfs in support of students at the Agency, the large majority date to the early to mid-eighteenth century – no doubt due to the booming success of Ibadi merchants and their contemporaries in Egypt in the first half of that century.¹⁹

¹⁴ On Maṣ'ūd b. Sulaymān Ibn Ḥadīd see Bin Ya'qūb, *Tārikh jazirat Jarba*, 2006, 290. He also authored a handful of texts, including a revision of the didactic poem “al-Manzūma al-jāduwiyya.” See Bābā'ammī et al., eds., *Mu'jam a'lām al-ibādīyya*, 2:417; see also Makt. al-Bārūniyya MS 307 (dated Shaw 1175/Apr–May 1762). A few years prior to the al-Jumli endowment, Ibn Ḥadīd was likely resident at the Agency where he himself had composed a eulogy for Jerban scholar Sa'īd al-Jādwi: Makt. al-Ḥājj Ṣāliḥ La'alī MS *dāl ghayn* 007 (dated 1149/1736–37).

¹⁵ Muṣliḥ, *al-Waqf al-jarbī fī Miṣr*, 215.

¹⁶ See *ibid.*, 221. The description of the endowed property’s location in the *waqfiyya* notes that its western edge runs along an alley that does not open to the street and continues until one reaches the property that is the inheritance of “al-Ḥājj Sulaymān al-Ḥājj Abū Bakr Sharūnī al-Maghribī” and “Sālīma bint al-Marhum al-Ḥājj Aḥmad al-Sharūnī” (*ibid.*, 224: Maḥkamat Ṭūlūn, case 868, 401–02, reproduced in ‘Abd al-Raḥīm, “Wathā’iq tuwaḍḍiḥ,” 104; Muṣliḥ, *al-Waqf al-jarbī fī Miṣr*, 71).

¹⁷ For example, Muṣliḥ reproduces abbreviated versions of court records of endowments by the al-Sharūnī family from 1744 and 1767 but provides no specific references. See Muṣliḥ, *al-Waqf al-jarbī fī Miṣr*, 223 and 227, respectively.

¹⁸ ‘Abd al-Mu’ṭī, *al-‘Ā’ila wa-al-thawra*, 64.

¹⁹ Raymond, *Artisans et commerçants*, 1:243; Daniel Crecelius, “Egypt in the Eighteenth Century,” in *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, vol. 2, ed. M. W. Daly (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 59–86, at 60.

The family names of the other Ibadi merchants who witnessed the establishment of the waqf, 'Umar b. Yūsuf al-Shammākhī, al-Ḥājī Ramaḍān b. Ṣāliḥ al-Baḥḥār, and Ramaḍān b. Sa'īd al-Qallāl, each represent prominent Ibadi Maghribi families in Ottoman Cairo. In court records of the eighteenth century, al-Baḥḥār and al-Jumlī feature among the leading Tunisian merchant families in the period alongside the Ibadi al-Maṣ'abī family.²⁰ The al-Shammākhī family appears prominently among the names of Tripolitanian merchant families, since the name represents two interrelated branches of the family in the Jebel Nafusa and Jerba.²¹ In this case, 'Umar al-Shammākhī represented not the commercial activities of the al-Shammākhī family but instead its scholarly side. By the time this waqf was established 'Umar had been in Cairo for decades. He copied manuscripts during his time there, likely first as a student and then as a teacher.²² Al-Qallāl, a name connected to the prominent Jerban merchant family, does not feature in the same list but appeared regularly in the court records of the previous century, and the family continued to play an important role in the Agency's history throughout the eighteenth century.

Being aware of this link between names and their Ibadi affiliations is methodologically crucial to identifying Ibadis in the shariah court records. When the scribes of the Ottoman courts of Cairo or Alexandria recorded a name, they did not add any adjective that would clearly identify a litigant as an Ibadi, such as "al-Ibadi" (the Ibadi guy). This distinguishes them from other minorities, like their Christian and Jewish contemporaries, for example, who often appeared in court records with the adjectives "al-Naṣrānī" or "al-Yahūdī") attached to their names. The reason Ibadis did not appear in the court records as

²⁰ 'Abd al-Mu'tī, *al-Ā'ila wa-al-thawra*, 60 (al-Baḥḥār), 61 (al-Jumlī), 62 (al-Maṣ'abī). Muṣliḥ lists endowments for the students at the Buffalo Agency by Sulaymān al-Maṣ'abī: Muṣliḥ, *al-Waqf al-jarbi fī Miṣr*, 222.

²¹ 'Abd al-Mu'tī, *al-Ā'ila wa-al-thawra*, 49.

²² His name appears as the copyist in the colophons of three manuscripts transcribed at the Buffalo Agency: Makt. Āl Yiddir 43 (dated 1118/1706–07); Khizānat Dār al-Ta'lim MS *mīm 'ayn* 22 (dated 1120/1708–09); Makt. al-Khalīlī AK 182 (dated 19 Rab II 1142/Nov 11, 1729). 'Alī b. Yūsuf, likely his brother, was also copying manuscripts at the Agency in the same period: Makt. Muḥammad b. Sulaymān Ibn Drīsū MS *alif* 40 (dated 29 Raj 1140/Mar 10, 1728).

Ibadis was because legally they were not a minority. Instead, they shared the legal status of Muslims with their Sunni contemporaries.

Instead, Maghribi Ibadis appear associated with their land or city of origin: al-Maṣ'abī (the Mzabi), al-Jarbī (the Jerban), or al-Nafūsī (the Nafusi). In these latter cases, context and the prominence of Ibadis in those places can help to narrow down their religious affiliation. When it comes to Jerba, however, this is far less straightforward because by the Ottoman centuries, Maliki Sunni Jerbans are as numerous in the records as Ibadis. For this reason, being able to link family names to Ibadi affiliation proves invaluable. Some of the work of identifying these names has been done by other historians, while in other cases I have asked contemporary Jerbans about family names.²³

Whether Ibadis or non-Ibadis, Jerbans or non-Jerbans, the majority of the time North Africans from west of Egypt appear with the same title in court records: "al-Maghribi." Part of the explanation for this lies in the highly formulaic nature of court documents and the conventions of scribal practice. At the end of the day, their specific religious affiliation bore little relevance to the case. In other cases, however, the litigants themselves likely elected to identify as "al-Maghribi."

The close relationships among Maghribi Ibadi merchants, scholars, and students in the eighteenth century formed out of both their shared religious affiliation and a communal solidarity based on regional origin. The "Shaykh of the Maghribi Merchants" or the "Shaykh of the Merchants of Tulun" already represented a quasi-official position as a representative of the interests of these merchants to the Ottoman state in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.²⁴ This position would have been like "the shaykhs of . . . guilds, usually chosen from among their members, [but who] had to be confirmed by the qadi."²⁵

Reliance on a representative reflected a growing sense of communalism among Maghribis, the importance of which sharpened in the eighteenth century as the Mamluk beys asserted their authority vis-à-vis the Ottoman government. Some Maghribi merchants, like al-Jumli above, cultivated relationships with influential Mamluk households in Cairo as a form of insurance.²⁶ Ibadis and other Maghribi merchants

²³ This is especially true of the work of Sālim Bin Ya'qūb (d. 1991). In other cases, family and friends have provided me with additional points of reference.

²⁴ 'Abd al-Mu'ī, *al-Ā'ila wa-al-thawra*, ch. 5, esp. 260–66.

²⁵ Hanna, "The Administration of Courts," 51.

²⁶ Hathaway, *The Politics of Households*.

in this period counted on their most prominent members to protect their interests, which also explains why the Shaykh of the Merchants often appears as a witness in court proceedings involving Ibadis and other Maghribis in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This includes the fifth and final witness to the establishment of the waqf by al-Jumli, the Shaykh of the Maghribis of Tulun Market, Sa'īd b. Muḥammad al-'Adlūnī.²⁷ Ibadis here specifically adopted the title "al-Maghribi" to ingratiate themselves with the broader community in districts like Tulun.²⁸ In this way, Ibadis supporting one another in the legal and commercial spheres conformed to the practices of their Sunni contemporaries.

The structure of the Buffalo Agency itself was just as connected to the community as were the actors who lived there. In addition to conveying the multifunctionality of the site, the passage in the waqf document that describes the location of Agency reveals some interesting changes to the surrounding landscape by the mid-eighteenth century. First and foremost, the document notes that the Agency was at that time known as the Wikālat al-Sāda al-Ghuwābiyya and was previously known as the Wikālat al-Jāmūs (the Buffalo Agency).²⁹ Its location on the farthest alleyway in Tulun Street (*khaṭṭ Ṭulūn*) in a lane (*darb*) known then as the Darb al-Aṭfiḥī but previously as "al-Magharbil." Despite the changes in names, the description indicates that it is the same building described several decades earlier, when a member of al-Qallāl family had purchased shares in the property at the end of the seventeenth century (Chapter 2). This later description, however, contains far more detail.

Rounded stones covered the northern facade of the building, with two wooden shutters flanking the main entryway. Above the doorway,

²⁷ The title in Arabic appears as "Shaykh ṭā'ifat al-maghāriba bi-sūq Ṭulūn." See Muṣliḥ, *al-Waqf al-jarbī fī Miṣr*, 71 and 78; 'Abd al-Raḥīm, "Wathā'iq tuwaḍḍiḥ," 102.

²⁸ 'Abd al-Raḥīm, "Wathā'iq 'an dawr al-maghāriba," 97–98.

²⁹ Both 'Abd al-Raḥīm and Muṣliḥ read this as "al-Sāda al-Ghuwābiyya" but it seems to just as if not more likely that it could be read "al-Gharābiyya," meaning connected to the family name "al-Gharb" or "al-Gharbī." In either case, I was unable to identify this name in any contemporary documents. This might also be a mistake on the part of the court scribe, and it may instead have been meant to be some form of "Maghāribiyya." Not only does this make more sense in the context but the endowment document itself refers to the residents of the Agency as *al-sāda al-maghāriba*.

a window likely covered in wooden latticework looked out onto the street. Entering the door, visitors found themselves in the covered foyer (*dahlīz*). To the right there were two storage rooms (*ḥawāṣil*) and on both the right and the left there were seats. From the foyer one entered into the open courtyard (*ḥūsh*) of the ground floor, where there were ten additional storage rooms and a waterspout for ablutions with a jar beside it. Upper and lower levels housed additional storage rooms on both the right and left. The southern edge of the property neighbored the house of a Christian named Nurūz al-Naṣrānī al-Ya‘qūbī while the east ended in a property belonging to the Tripolitanian al-Masīrī family. Finally, a closed alley ran along the western edge until one reached the properties of the al-Sharūnī family, including Mas‘ūd Ibn Ḥadīd’s sons.³⁰

Al-Jumlī recorded the establishment of this waqf several times in different places, likely as a form of insurance that record of it would be maintained, including in both Cairo and Mecca. The conditions of the waqf provided for the upkeep of Maghribi students resident at the Agency. The terms stipulated the recitation of the Quran at particular times of the year, including Ramadan. As elsewhere in court records, the endowment document makes no explicit mention of the Ibadi affiliation of these Maghribi students.³¹ As in other cases, the Buffalo Agency appears here as one structure among many others like it in the Tulun district. This could be a result of the nature of court documents, which as historians have observed often reshape the proceedings from courtrooms into highly formulaic language.³² It is doubtful, for

³⁰ The full description of the structure and a photo of the original document appear in ‘Abd al-Raḥīm, “Wathā’iq tuwaḍḍih,” 102–04. Muṣliḥ’s edition also produces the text in full, with a combined photograph of the two pages on which the document appears: Muṣliḥ, *al-Waqf al-jarbī fī Miṣr*, 70–71; on the al-Sharūnī family see 80–81.

³¹ ‘Abd al-Raḥīm, being unaware of its Ibadi affiliation, uses the example of the Wikālat al-Jāmūs as an example in discussing the relationship between Maliki merchants from the Maghrib and students at al-Azhar: ‘Abd al-Raḥīm ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ‘Abd al-Raḥīm, “al-Itiṣāl al-thaqāfi bayna al-Zaytūna wa-al-Azhar wa-athrahu ‘alā al-ḥayāt al-thaqāfiyya fī Miṣr wa-Tūnis,” *Revue d’histoire Maghrébine* 23–24 (1981): 205–13, at 208. There was good reason to think this, since as Muḥammad al-Marīmī has noted, the document itself conforms to Maliki standards: see al-Marīmī, *Ahl jazīrat Jarba*, 50.

³² Shahar, “Legal Pluralism”; Dror Ze’evi, “The Use of Ottoman Sharī’a Court Records as a Source for Middle Eastern Social History: A Reappraisal,” *Islamic Law and Society* 5, no. 1 (1998): 35–56; Hanna, *In Praise of Books*, 20–25.

instance, that al-Jumlī wanted the recitation of the Quran (by Ibadi students) to be read in honor of the “four [Sunni] Imams and those who follow their path.”³³ Indeed, precisely this same language appears in other Ottoman court documents, meaning that it represents the formulaic phrasing of this type of endowment, rather than a condition specific to this particular waqf.³⁴ The additional conditions of the waqf also made clear that a director (*nāẓir*) was to administer the funds of the endowment and see to it that the resident students had their basic needs met. The waqf also covered the living expenses of the director himself. Whether previous iterations of the waqf required this or not, this may have been the same position occupied by Muḥammad Abī Sitta in the mid-seventeenth century.

The complementary relationship of Ibadi merchants supporting students and scholars residing at the Buffalo Agency also mirror the activities of their Sunni coreligionists in the same period. As the work of André Raymond shows, scholars and merchants represented overlapping categories. Prominent members of both communities often established family connections, especially among the long-distance *tujjār* families.³⁵ Scholars, artisans, and merchants were linked in other ways as well. In addition to offering private lessons, less prominent scholars often practiced some sort of trade as a way to make ends meet. The merchants who created religious endowments from their wealth empowered the ulama since it would be the latter who managed them.

Alongside real estate, books represent one of the clearest ways in which merchant wealth supported the intellectual endeavors of students and scholars in Ottoman Cairo. In the eighteenth century “merchants endeavored to purchase large collections of books and to endow them for students of al-Azhar and other mosques and schools.”³⁶ Nelly

Meshal, *Sharia and the Making of the Modern Egyptian*; Baldwin, *Islamic Law and Empire*.

³³ “. . . ziyāda fī sharafihī ṣallā Allāhū ‘alayhi wa-sallama wa-al-āli wa-al-ṣaḥābati wa-al-qurābati wa-al-tābī‘īni wa-al-arba’ati al-a’immati al-mujdahidīni wa-muqallidihim . . .” (‘Abd al-Raḥīm, “Wathā’iq tuwaḍḍih,” 104).

³⁴ Muṣliḥ, *al-Waqf al-jarbī fī Miṣr*, 82. For the Mālikī influences on the structure of the document see al-Marīmi, *Ahl jazīrat Jarba*, 49–55.

³⁵ “Les gens des métiers et les ‘ulamā’,” in Raymond, *Artisans et commerçants*, 1:418–33.

³⁶ ‘Abd al-Mu’ṭī, *al-Ā’ila wa-al-thawra*, 296. He also draws forty-nine examples from probate documents of Egyptian merchants who left money for students. While ‘Abd al-Mu’ṭī made this point regarding the eighteenth century, ‘Abd al-Raḥīm regularly pointed this out in his work on the seventeenth and eighteenth

Hanna's description of a "middle class" of Sunni merchants-cum-scholars in Cairo during the same century fits remarkably well with the Ibadi community there.³⁷ Hanna emphasizes the importance of the economic prosperity of this class in allowing them to attain literacy, which encouraged them to fund the production of books for both themselves and others. She highlights the overlapping categories of merchant and scholar, as well as a class of individuals who often studied at smaller madrasas, or even al-Azhar, but did not become professional scholars. Sometimes, those merchants would endow their libraries to schools or madrasas upon their death.³⁸ Overall, she paints a picture of a remarkably vibrant book culture in eighteenth-century Cairo. This constitutes the historical setting in which the Buffalo Agency and its residents operated.

Two prominent examples of merchants who endowed books to the Buffalo Agency's library demonstrate how well Ibadis reflected these broader cultural practices related to books and manuscripts in Cairo. The first, Muḥammad b. Ramaḍān al-Baḥḥār, belonged to the same successful Ibadi merchant family from the Jerban village of Ajīm discussed above. He was likely also the son of the same Ramaḍān al-Baḥḥār who served as a witness for the al-Jumli waqf in 1740. In the first half of the eighteenth century he donated at least ten different volumes to the Buffalo Agency's library (Figure 3.1). None of the endowment statements themselves on manuscripts he gifted carry dates, but their dates of transcription range from 1665 to 1730, demonstrating that he endowed books that he bought or owned as well as those commissioned during his own lifetime. The al-Baḥḥār family remained prominent throughout the eighteenth century, and both Muḥammad and his family continued to play a part in maintaining the upkeep of students at the Agency throughout that century. For example, Yahyā al-Baḥḥār donated a book to the Agency in 1782–83.³⁹ Muḥammad's own son Sa'īd al-Baḥḥār appeared in court late in 1763 alongside Sa'īd Abī Sitta as witnesses to the purchase of a

centuries. For example, see 'Abd al-Raḥīm 'Abd al-Raḥmān 'Abd al-Raḥīm, "Wathā'iq 'an dawr al-jāliya al-maghribiyya fī tārikh Miṣr fī al-'aṣr al-'uthmānī (al-qism al-thānī)," *Revue d'histoire maghrébine* 9 (1977): 182–96, esp. 183.

³⁷ Hanna, *In Praise of Books*, 50–78.

³⁸ See "Books and the Middle Class," in *ibid.*, 79–103.

³⁹ Makt. al-Khalilī AK 090 (dated 11 Sha'b 1198/Jun 30, 1784); also cited in Ibadica Center, Fonds Custers, "Qā'ima," 3.

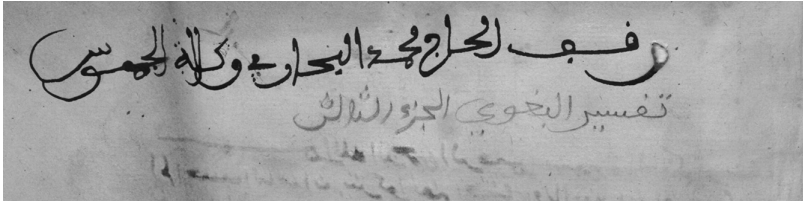


Figure 3.1 An example of an endowment statement from manuscripts in the Buffalo Agency's library, donated by Muḥammad al-Baḥḥār in the eighteenth century. Many of these books, like the one pictured here, were Sunni titles that Ibadi students staying at the Agency would have used while studying at al-Azhar. Source: Makt. al-Khalīlī AK 010 *Tafsīr al-Baghawī [al-juz' al-thālith]* (1143/1730). (Photograph courtesy of Ibadica Centre d'études et recherches sur l'ibadisme. Used with permission)

property in Tulun by Yaḥyā Mālīyū, from a family in Jerba that would send a number of members to study at the Buffalo Agency in the nineteenth century.⁴⁰ Likely the purchaser's brother, Aḥmad Mālīyū, also sold a property in Tulun in 1784, which was purchased by the Buffalo Agency's director, Muḥammad al-Maṣ'abī.⁴¹ These families remained in Cairo for centuries. For example, as late as the 1940s the al-Baḥḥār family still controlled large waqf properties in Egypt.⁴²

In a second example, Sulaymān al-Khanūsī endowed a sizable collection of at least thirty-two manuscript books in 1758–59. In the waqf statements at the beginning of the manuscripts the term “the deceased” (*al-marḥūm*) precedes his name. This suggests that the books he endowed to the Agency's library belonged to his private collection, which he donated upon his death. Bookish merchants like al-Khanūsī were common in eighteenth-century Cairo, as evidenced in the number of probate records of the estates of merchants and other non-elites that include libraries.⁴³ As seen in the previous chapter, already in the seventeenth century Muḥammad Abī Sitta had overseen the probate

⁴⁰ Maḥkamat al-Qisma al-ʿAskariyya, 175, case 435 (dated Rab I 1177/Sep–Oct 1763), 312. Reproduced in ʿAbd al-Raḥīm, “Wathāʾiq tuwaḍḍiḥ,” 106.

⁴¹ Muṣliḥ, *al-Waqf al-jarbī fī Miṣr*, 224–25.

⁴² “Murāsālāt ḥawl aḥbās khāṣṣa assasuhā Tūnisiyyūn bi-ʿl-arādī al-miṣriyya,” ANT A 281 0006.

⁴³ Hanna, *In Praise of Books*, 99.

of the estate of ‘Umar al-Jabbālī al-Nafūsī, an Ibadi merchant with a private library of over two dozen volumes.

The donations of the Muḥammad al-Baḥḥār and Sulaymān al-Khanūsī to the Agency’s library represent a broader trend in the mid-eighteenth century. In the extant list of endowed books from the Buffalo Agency, for example, dozens of titles were endowed to its library over this period. Catalogs of manuscripts in Ibadi libraries in Jerba and the Mzab Valley list some 104 additional titles transcribed by students and scholars while in Cairo during the eighteenth century (compared with 12 from the previous century).⁴⁴ The production of books at the Agency and their donation to its library were linked to the remarkable rise in the sheer number of manuscript books copied and traded in this period, following the growing affordability of higher-quality paper from Europe.⁴⁵ Alongside al-Azhar, the book markets of Cairo were one of the main draws for Jerbans and other Maghribis to travel to Cairo in the eighteenth century.⁴⁶

* * *

In a later tradition, historians looked back on the number of books in the Buffalo Agency’s library and imagined it packed with hundreds of volumes. While that may have been true at some point, surviving evidence for endowed books in the Agency provides data for only around two hundred volumes, with far fewer titles, by the end of the nineteenth century.⁴⁷ Moreover, this number owed much to donations from Ibadi merchants and scholars in the nineteenth century alone (Chapters 4 and 5). The collection did grow significantly in the

⁴⁴ See Love, “Ibadis on (and in) the Margins.”

⁴⁵ Based on trading records and watermarks, Terence Walz demonstrated that the period witnessed a significant rise in Italian and French papers (Terence Walz, “The Paper Trade of Egypt and the Sudan in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries and Its Re-Export to the Bilād as-Sūdān,” in *The Trans-Saharan Book Trade: Manuscript Culture, Arabic Literacy and Intellectual History in Muslim Africa*, ed. Graziano Krätli and Ghislaine Lydon [Leiden: Brill, 2011], 73–107). Šādiq Ibrāhīm’s study of watermarks in Egyptian archival documents from the Ottoman era reinforced the predominance of Italian and other European papers: Amīr Muḥammad Šādiq Ibrāhīm, *al-Khuṭūṭ wa’l-‘alāmāt al-mā’iyya fī al-makhṭūṭāt al-‘arabiyya: dirāsa ‘alā makhṭūṭāt maktabat al-awqāf al-miṣriyya* (Riyadh: Maktabat ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-‘Āmma, 2010).

⁴⁶ Raymond, “Tunisiens et Maghrébins,” 368.

⁴⁷ For a summary of titles in the collection see Martin H. Custers, “Catalog of Waqf-Books in Wikālat al-Baḥḥār (Jāmūs)” (2016 [document given to author via email]).

eighteenth century thanks to the generous endowment of books by Ibadi merchants, but evidence suggests it did not number more than one hundred volumes – certainly not a large library for a madrasa in the period. The size of the Buffalo Agency's library resembled other small Ottoman-era libraries in Arabic-speaking lands. Describing this overall picture, Ahmed El-Shamsy notes that “while the formerly extensive holdings of existing libraries in the Arab lands shrunk . . . the few new libraries founded there in the Ottoman period – whether public or private – were modest to begin with.”⁴⁸ Among the examples offered as evidence, he mentions an endowed library contemporary with the Buffalo Agency. In the mid-eighteenth century “the new library of Muḥammad Bey Abū al-Dhahab (d. 1775) in Cairo contained fewer than five hundred books.”⁴⁹ Although this number refers to titles rather than volumes (the number of volumes was substantially larger: 1,004), it still gives a relative sense of the modest size of the Buffalo Agency's library in the eighteenth century.⁵⁰ Even if not large by the standards of eighteenth-century Ottoman Cairo, the contents of the library in that period nevertheless reveal much about the nature of Ibadi life in Ottoman Egypt.

As one would expect, many of the titles in the Buffalo Agency's library belong to the core curriculum of postclassical Ibadi education. These include standard titles of late medieval Ibadi jurisprudence, theology, and prosopography along with a few works of exegesis and hadith. Like other Ottoman-era Muslim communities, these are accompanied by postclassical commentaries and glosses on these works.⁵¹ The commentaries of Muḥammad Abī Sitta, the resident at and perhaps director of the Agency in the previous century encountered in Chapter 2, figure prominently in the history of the library. While it is difficult to know the holdings of the library in the eighteenth

⁴⁸ Ahmed El Shamsy, *Rediscovering the Islamic Classics: How Editors and Print Culture Transformed an Intellectual Tradition* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2020), 23.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ He is citing the inventory of books from the *waqfiyya* of Muḥammad Bey in Daniel Crecelius, “The Waqfiyah of Muḥammad Bey Abū Al-Dhahab in Historical Perspective,” *IJMES* 23, no. 1 (1991): 57–81, at 70.

⁵¹ Francis Robinson, “Ottomans-Safavids-Mughals: Shared Knowledge and Connective Systems,” *Journal of Islamic Studies* 8, no. 2 (1997): 151–84. See also the discussion in El Shamsy, *Rediscovering the Islamic Classics*, 31–41.

century in their entirety, manuscripts dating to that period recorded in a hand list of its library at the beginning of the twentieth century give a good indication of it.

Especially prominent in the library were copies of a work entitled *Kitāb al-īdāḥ* by Abū Sākin ‘Āmir al-Shammākhī (d. 1279). This late medieval primer in Ibadi law served as a standard textbook at the Agency, which by end of the next century held over two dozen copies of different volumes or commentaries on it.⁵² Both Muḥammad al-Baḥḥār and Sulaymān al-Khanūsī donated copies of the work. In the eighteenth century the library also held copies of works of the medieval Ibadi scholar Abū Ṭāhir Ismā‘īl al-Jayṭālī (d. ca. 1349–50), the *Qanāṭir al-khayrāt* and the *Kitāb al-nikāḥ*.⁵³ Also endowed in the same period was a copy of the best-known work of Ibadi prosopography, the *Kitāb al-siyar* by Abū al-‘Abbās Aḥmad al-Shammākhī (d. 1521).⁵⁴ The Ibadi titles endowed by al-Khanūsī, al-Baḥḥār, and other Ibadi merchants were largely copied locally, and often in the Buffalo Agency itself. In this sense, they were likely commissioned either for personal use or with the intention of donating them as waqf to the library at a future date.⁵⁵ The production of these Ibadi titles relied heavily on local Ibadi students or scholars, in that these books would not have been readily available in Egypt.⁵⁶

The core curriculum of Ibadi works in the Agency’s library was complemented by their equivalents in the Sunni tradition. The library held titles popular in eighteenth-century Ottoman Cairo, such as the

⁵² On manuscript copies and lithograph editions of the book see Custers, *al-Ibādīyya*, 2:406–11.

⁵³ On al-Jayṭālī and these titles see *ibid.*, 2:260–72.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 2:397–400; Love, Jr., *Ibadi Muslims of North Africa*, 120–34.

⁵⁵ Muṣliḥ, *al-Waqf al-jarbī fī Miṣr*, 121–26.

⁵⁶ For example, the first volume of the *Kitāb al-īdāḥ* (dated 27 Ram 1133/Jul 21, 1721) and a copy of the *Kitāb al-nikāḥ* (14 Ram 1131/Jul 30, 1719) donated by Muḥammad al-Baḥḥār were copied by fellow Jerban Qāsim b. Ṣāliḥ al-Taghzwīnī (Custers, “Catalog,” 3 and 6, respectively). The copyist’s brother, Sa‘īd b. Ṣāliḥ al-Taghzwīnī, also donated a book to the Agency’s library, copied in 1152/1739–40 by another Jerban student, Qāsim b. Yaḥyā al-Ājmī (Ibadica Center, Fonds Custers, “Qā’ima,” 6). Sulaymān al-Khanūsī’s first volume of the *Kitāb al-īdāḥ* was also copied locally by a Jerban student, Qāsim b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Tandanmīrtī (dated 20 Ram 1151/Jan 1, 1739). Al-Khanūsī also endowed a copy of *Qawā’id al-islām* transcribed by Aḥmad b. Dāwūd al-Wārjalānī in the al-Azhar Mosque (dated 4 Jum II 1175/Dec 30, 1761).

popular work of ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sha‘rānī (d. 1565),⁵⁷ but also components of the Sunni canon like the famous hadith collection of the *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* or the *40 Hadith of al-Nawawī* or well-known Quranic exegeses like the *Tafsīr al-Baghawī* or the *Tafsīr al-Bayḍāwī*.⁵⁸ Alongside the strictly Sunni (and often Shafī‘i) canon, Ibadi merchants like al-Baḥḥār and al-Khanūsī donated over a dozen titles related to grammar, syntax, logic, and other sciences. These and other non-Ibadi titles constituted the majority of works donated to the library in the form of endowment in the eighteenth century. This naturally begs the question why Ibadi would merchants donate non-Ibadi books for an Ibadi library in Cairo.

Part of the answer to this lies in the availability of those titles compared to Ibadi ones. The book markets of Cairo would have been rich in works of the Sunni canon, whereas one could hardly expect to find Ibadi titles there. Ibadi merchants, doing business and socializing with their non-Ibadi contemporaries, no doubt had regular access to Sunni titles and purchased them either for their own libraries or to endow them to the Agency for the use of students. Although it might initially seem odd to endow a Sunni hadith collection (or a Sunni tafsīr that draws heavily on those hadith) to an Ibadi library, by the beginning of the Ottoman era the Ibadi and Sunni traditions of hadith had overlapped for centuries.⁵⁹ That Ibadi merchants knew that the students and other residents at the Agency would be interested in reading these Sunni works, which were readily available in Cairo, also speaks to a willingness and desire to engage with the ideas of their Sunni contemporaries.

But Ibadi students at the Agency also had need of Sunni titles for a more precise reason beyond intellectual curiosity. For most Ibadis, the

⁵⁷ Makt. al-Khalīlī AK 056 (dated 9 Rabī II 1134/Jan 27, 1722). The text bears the endowment statement of “Muḥammad al-Baḥḥār,” meaning it was likely endowed in the mid-eighteenth century.

⁵⁸ Makt. al-Khalīlī AK 049 (n.d., *terminus ante quem* mid-eighteenth century); Makt. al-Khalīlī AK 003 (n.d., *terminus ante quem* mid-eighteenth century); Makt. al-Khalīlī AK 216 (dated 1 Muḥ 1058/Jan 27, 1648); Makt. al-Quṭb *bā’* 19; Makt. al-Khalīlī AK 001 (n.d., but *terminus ante quem* mid-eighteenth century based on the waqf by Muḥammad al-Baḥḥār).

⁵⁹ This is part of what John Wilkinson has dubbed “madhhabization,” a gradual process of convergence between Ibadi and Sunni approaches to scholarship: Wilkinson, *Ibāḍism*, 413–37. With regard to Ibadi hadith, in particular, see John Wilkinson, “Ibadi Hadith: An Essay on Normalization,” *Der Islam* 62 (1985): 231–59.

draw to study in Cairo came not from the Buffalo Agency but from al-Azhar. The works in the Agency's library helped support Ibadis in their studies at al-Azhar, partially explaining the dominance of Shafi'i titles in the collection.⁶⁰ Already in the seventeenth century, Muḥammad Abī Sitta had devoted over two decades to studying and teaching at al-Azhar, and the generations that followed him found it equally appealing. His devoted student 'Alī b. Bayyān had also studied at al-Azhar before returning to Jerba with his teacher in 1657, as did many of his contemporaries. The eighteenth century witnessed the arrival of an even greater number of Maghribi Ibadis to study at al-Azhar, including some coming from the Mzab. For example, 'Umar b. Ṣāliḥ b. Abī al-Qāsim, a student from Ghardaïa, copied books both at the Agency and al-Azhar throughout the 1750s and 1760s.⁶¹ Another Algerian student, Aḥmad b. Dāwūd al-Warjalānī, noted in his colophon that he finished copying Abī Sitta's commentary on the *Qawā'id al-islām* while sitting in the al-Azhar Mosque in 1761.⁶² Like many Jerban Ibadis, Mzabis such as 'Umar and Aḥmad spent a decade or so in Cairo living at the Agency and studying at al-Azhar.⁶³ These two Algerians overlapped at the Agency and knew each other, with Aḥmad even having his colleague copy a manuscript for him.⁶⁴ One of the strongest connections between the Agency and al-Azhar was the Jerban

⁶⁰ From the eighteenth to the end of the nineteenth centuries, the rector of al-Azhar was almost always a Shafi'i. All four Sunni schools had representation, however: Heyworth-Dunne, *Introduction*, 399; on the compiled curricula at al-Azhar see 41–65.

⁶¹ Makt al-Istiḳāma MS 111 (dated 6 Rab I 1164/Feb 2, 1751); Makt. al-Ḥājī Sa'īd Muḥammad MS 34 (dated 20 Sha'b 1165/Jul 3, 1752 in al-Azhar); Makt. Ḥamū Bābā wa Mūsā MS *ḥā' dāl ghayn* 101 (dated 1165/1751–52 in Egypt); al-Khizāna al-Āmma MS *dāl ghayn* 26 (dated late Sha'b 1166/Jun 1753 in Egypt); Makt. al-Khalīlī AK 168 (dated 5 Ram 1166/Jul 6, 1753, in Wikālat al-Jāmūs); Makt. Abū Bakr Ma'sūd, Bābakr MS 62 (dated 19 Ṣafr 1167/Dec 16, 1753 in al-Azhar Mosque); al-Khizāna al-Āmma MS *dāl ghayn* 28 (dated 1166/1752–53); Khizānat Dār al-Ta'lim MS *dāl ghayn* 48 (dated 1176/762–63 in Wikālat al-Jāmūs); al-Khazā' in al-Thalāth MS *shīn ṣād* 07 (dated 25 Shaw 1177/Apr 27, 1764 in Wikālat al-Jāmūs); Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya MS *bā'* 22297 (dated 17 Jum II 1164/May 13, 1751).

⁶² Ibadica Center, Fonds Custers, "Qā'ima," 6.

⁶³ Nearly a decade earlier, Aḥmad had made a copy of the *Kitāb al-īdāḥ* (*Kitāb al-buyū'*). See Khizānat al-Shaykh Muḥammad b. Yūsuf Babānū MS *bā'* 126 (dated 20 Ṣafr 1166/Dec 27, 1752 in Wikālat al-Jāmūs).

⁶⁴ Makt. al-Istiḳāma (al-Khizāna al-ūlā) MS 111.

Ibadi scholar Abū Ḥaḥṣ ‘Umar al-Tulātī (d. 1773–74), who spent decades in Cairo and to whom I will return below.

As for works of grammar, syntax, or logic, Ibadis had no need to produce these texts themselves or seek out Ibadi-authored equivalents. There would have been no opposition to using non-Ibadi references for these fields. The latter example of logic demonstrates clearly the link between al-Azhar and the Agency in the eighteenth century. In the surviving hand list of books from the Agency’s library, the six titles on logic that appear are precisely those that one would expect to study at al-Azhar, including commentaries and glosses on the work of al-Sanūsī, al-Akhḍarī, al-Damanhūrī, and al-Abhārī. Ibadis shared an interest in logic with their Maghribi contemporaries, who strongly influenced the field in Ottoman Egypt.⁶⁵ The same could be said of other non-Ibadi works in the collection, which comprised titles in other fields such as grammar and syntax (*al-naḥū wa-l-ṣarf*), Sunni fiqh, tafsir, and rhetoric (*al-ma‘ānī wa-al-bayyān*) that students would either encounter at al-Azhar or be expected to know before arriving. Considering the number of Ibadis drawn to Cairo to study at al-Azhar, the endowments of non-Ibadi books in these fields make perfect sense.

Alongside those works endowed specifically for the library, those copied there in the eighteenth century demonstrate its importance as a site of manuscript production in this period. The two categories of endower and copyist overlap. Sulaymān al-Khanūsī, noted above as donor of the largest number of books to the Agency’s library in the eighteenth century, himself copied some of the books he donated. In another cases he copied marginal commentaries (*ḥāshiya*) into the books he purchased from others before endowing them for the library.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ See “Maghrebi ‘Theologian-Logicians’ in Egypt and the Hejaz,” in Khaled El-Rouayheb, *Islamic Intellectual History in the Seventeenth Century: Scholarly Currents in the Ottoman Empire and the Maghreb* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 131–47.

⁶⁶ Two copies of Yahyā al-Jannāwunī’s *Kitāb al-nikāḥ* in the list of endowed books from the Agency demonstrate this. The first was transcribed by Sulaymān b. Abī ‘Azīz b. ‘Umar al-Barbūshī on 21 Ṣafr 1155 (Apr 26, 1742) but its *ḥāshiya* was transcribed by Sulaymān al-Khanūsī several years later in 1162/1749 while at the Buffalo Agency before he endowed the manuscript to its library. The second copy was both copied and endowed to the library by al-Khanūsī in 1161/1748–49 (Ibadica Center, Fonds Custers, “Qā’ima,” 6).

A final note on the physical books themselves is merited. In most cases I have worked with digital facsimiles of manuscripts from the Buffalo Agency's library. While this has prevented me from conducting any full physical analysis of the objects themselves, in those cases where I had access to photographs of binding covers, the texts from this period largely reflect the eighteenth-century Ottoman style of decoration popular in Egypt and the eastern Maghrib: leather covers (usually brown) with central embossed pendant designs and borders.⁶⁷ In the few cases where I have been able to examine copies of manuscripts produced in the Agency during this period, they appear to be copied on Italian papers – which is likely true of many of the books copied there during these centuries.⁶⁸ At the same time, however, in this and other periods some of the books came to Egypt from elsewhere in the Ottoman Empire such as Istanbul or Tunis.⁶⁹

Having now explored who donated these books and what domains they covered, the next question is: who used them? The names and careers of the students and scholars who passed through the Buffalo Agency in the eighteenth century far outnumber those of the previous century. This results both from better documentation and an increase in the overall number of Ibadis passing through the Agency. Many of the same merchants and scholars responsible for copying or endowing books to the library spent several years at the Agency in the eighteenth century. Jerban names such as al-Ghūl, al-Barbūshī, al-Bārūnī, al-Qallālī, Ibn Ḥadīd, and al-Laynī appear prominently in the list of students at the Agency over the course of the eighteenth century.

Although they probably represent the majority, not all eighteenth-century merchants and scholars connected to the Agency came originally

⁶⁷ Bindings on manuscripts from the library that conform to this style include Makt. al-Khalilī AK 002 (dated 934/1528); AK 003 (n.d., *terminus ante quem* mid-eighteenth century); AK 009 (dated 1075/1665); AK 010 (dated 1143/1730); AK 011 (n.d., *terminus ante quem* mid-eighteenth century); AK 012 (dated 1042/1632); AK 049 (n.d., *terminus ante quem* mid-eighteenth century); AK 056 (dated 1134/1722); AK 087 (n.d., *terminus ante quem* mid-eighteenth century); AK 142 (dated 1168/1754); AK 231 (dated 1092/1681).

⁶⁸ For example, a copy of the *Kitāb al-īdāh* held today in the Jāmī al-Truk (El Trouk) in Jerba was transcribed in 1124/1712 at the Buffalo Agency on Italian watermarked paper bearing the well-known “Tre Lune” watermark (EAP1216 T_1_0051).

⁶⁹ Examples from the next century include Makt. al-Khalilī AK 138 (dated 1267/1851, copied in Tunis); AK 186 (n.d., but collated in Tunis in 1256/1840).

from Jerba. A line of Jerban transplants from the Mzab Valley, distinguished by the name al-Maṣ'abī, also had connections to the Buffalo Agency and left a remarkable stamp on the history of early modern Ibadi Islam. Among the most prominent was Yūsuf b. Muḥammad al-Maṣ'abī (d. 1773), whose father had earlier moved from the town of Melika in the Mzab to Jerba. Yūsuf would study in Tunis before traveling to Cairo in 1717–18, and lived at the Buffalo Agency.⁷⁰ Like other Ibadis, he split his time between the Agency and al-Azhar. He also collected a number of manuscripts while at the Agency, many of which are held today at the al-Bārūniyya Library in Jerba.⁷¹ For example, several of the titles in that library with his marginal notes were copied between 1711 and 1713 by Yaḥyā b. 'Abd al-Raḥīm al-Yafranī, from whom al-Maṣ'abī appears to have purchased a number of texts at the Agency.⁷² Yūsuf remained in Cairo for some time, since in 1745 he was still in the Agency copying manuscripts.⁷³

Eventually, however, he would return to Jerba where he occupied an important place among the 'azzāba there. He also spent time in Tripoli and the Jebel Nafusa.⁷⁴ He gained a reputation, too, as a writer of marginal glosses and commentaries, which earned him the name “the second al-Muḥashshī” (the “second glossator”). Like his namesake, al-Maṣ'abī distinguished himself both in Cairo and later in Jerba for his interaction with non-Ibadi scholars and students. A prominent scholar later in life, he wrote letters to the Ottoman rulers of Tunis and Tripoli in defense of Ibadi communities in these provinces. In the latter, he

⁷⁰ Bābā'ammī et al., eds., *Mu'jam a'lām al-ibāḍiyya*, 2:491–93.

⁷¹ The editors of the al-Bārūniyya Library's catalog suggest that the large number of manuscripts owned by the al-Maṣ'abī family came to al-Bārūniyya when the latter family absorbed the library of the former. See *Fihriṣ makḥṭūṭāt al-maktaba al-Bārūniyya bi-Jarba* (Ghardaïa: Jam'iyyat Abī Ishāq Ifṭayish, 2018), 32–34.

⁷² Makt. al-Bārūniyya MS 18 (dated 1124 AH) carries a note by Yūsuf al-Maṣ'abī that he purchased the volume (a *majmū'*) from “Shaykh Yaḥyā” with the intention of endowing it for the Banī Maṣ'ab. (See *ibid.*, 105–06.) Other manuscripts by the same copyists, all in the Makt. al-Bārūniyya today, include MS 108, MS 183, MS 120, and MS 315.

⁷³ Makt. al-Bārūniyya MS 61 (dated 20 Jum I 1158/Jun 20, 1745).

⁷⁴ Makt. al-Bārūniyya MS 49 (dated 1165/1751–52) places him in Tripoli in that year, although it is not clear if this was after he had returned to Jerba or on his way there. Biographies of him suggest that he left Jerba for about seven years to spend time in the Jebel Nafusa, so it may have been this period that he copied these texts. See Bābā'ammī et al., eds., *Mu'jam a'lām al-ibāḍiyya*, 2:491–93.

wrote to the Qaramanli ruler of Tripoli to protest an instance in which the testimony of Ibadi witnesses was refused by a Maliki judge – something that appears not to have happened often.⁷⁵ Al-Maṣʿabī also wrote a commentary on the famous Sunni work by Jalāl al-Dīn al-Maḥallī (d. 1460) and Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (d. 1505), the *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*.⁷⁶ After returning to Jerba he enjoyed popularity among both Ibadi and Maliki students. He likewise played a prominent role on the island as a representative of Ibadi communities in Jerba and Nafusa to the Ottoman state.⁷⁷ One of his sons, ʿAlī b Yūsuf, also studied at the Agency and al-Azhar before eventually going to the Mzab Valley, where his students would include ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. Ibrāhīm al-Thamīnī (d. 1808), the author of the famous *Kitāb al-Nīl* (Book of the Nile), discussed in Chapter 5.⁷⁸

One of ʿAlī al-Maṣʿabī's teachers, Abū Ḥafṣ ʿUmar b. Ramaḍān al-Tulātī (d. 1773–74), was likely the most prominent figure of the century at the Buffalo Agency. Al-Tulātī came to Egypt from Jerba to study at al-Azhar, and spent several decades teaching at the Buffalo Agency and al-Azhar. His teacher back in Jerba, Sulaymān al-Ḥilātī, had himself been the pupil of former students of the Buffalo Agency in the seventeenth century.⁷⁹ Known primarily for his writings, al-Tulātī also taught three generations of Ibadi students who came to Cairo in the eighteenth century to study at al-Azhar.⁸⁰ Through his wide network of students and prolific writing, he helped establish the Agency as a complementary institution to al-Azhar for Ibadis in Cairo. When al-Tulātī was still a student, he studied under Jerban scholar Aḥmad b. Sālim al-Ghūl, who taught at both the Buffalo Agency and the

⁷⁵ Copies of these letters are today held in Makt. al-Bārūniyya: MSS 290 and 275. See also Bin Yaʿqūb, *Tārīkh jazīrat Jarba*, 2006, 137–42.

⁷⁶ The autograph copy of this *ḥāshiya* is Makt. al-Bārūniyya MS 1 (dated late Ram 1181/Feb 1768). The manuscript also bears a note by his son ʿAlī b. Yūsuf on his death date in Ṣafr 1187/Apr–May 1773 at around ninety-three years old, which would mean that he was born around 1094/1683–84.

⁷⁷ On Abū Yaʿqūb Yūsuf al-Maṣʿabī see Bin Yaʿqūb, *Tārīkh jazīrat Jarba*, 2006, 136–45.

⁷⁸ On ʿAlī al-Maṣʿabī see Bin Taʿārit, “Risāla fī tarīkh Jarba,” 101–07. His time there also included copying manuscripts, such as Makt. al-Bārūniyya MS 138 (dated 10 D. al-Qaʿda 1182/Mar 18, 1769).

⁷⁹ Sulaymān al-Ḥilātī authored some important texts on the history of Jerba, compiled in Ḥilātī, *ʿUlamāʾ Jarba*.

⁸⁰ On al-Tulātī's works see Custers, *al-Ibāḍiyya*, 2:461–70.

nearby Ibn Tulun Mosque.⁸¹ Aḥmad's son Ramaḍān al-Ghūl in turn studied under al-Tulātī and at al-Azhar. Later in life the students of al-Ghūl and al-Tulātī relayed messages through students in Jerba and Egypt after they had had a falling out. Several members of the al-Ghūl family would travel to Cairo for study and trade, helping establish them as prominent members of the 'azzāba and the 'ayān in Jerba.⁸²

Al-Tulātī himself studied and taught well beyond the boundaries of the Buffalo Agency. As a young man, he studied under prominent Shaf'iī Sunni shaykhs at al-Azhar and appears to have had a close relationship with them. In surviving manuscripts in his hand from his time as a student, he added notes about his teachers to the colophons. For example, at the end of a *ḥāshiya* he notes that he finished copying it in al-Azhar while seated beside his teacher (*ustādhnā*) 'Abdallāh al-Shibrāwī (d. 1758).⁸³ In another manuscript he notes that he originally transcribed it while seated in the spot where Shaykh Aḥmad al-Mallawī (d. 1767–68), who was “arguably the most important logician of Ottoman Egypt,” usually taught.⁸⁴ His writings and his manuscripts convey his knowledge of Sunni schools and his engagement with their scholarship.⁸⁵ According to the nineteenth-century historian Bin Ta'ārīt, the jealousy of his colleagues at al-Azhar pushed him to leave. Although he would later return, for a time he relocated his classes to the al-Mu'ayyad Mosque, where another Maghribi was at the time serving as the curator of that institution's library.⁸⁶

Al-Tulātī also mixed socially with his non-Ibadi colleagues outside the context of teaching and studying. His biography notes that “he enjoyed taking walks, strolling through the gardens of Cairo, and singing on the Nile. He would sit in coffee houses where both formal

⁸¹ Bin Ya'qūb, *Tārīkh jazīrat Jarba*, 2006, 173.

⁸² Ibid., 174; Bin Ta'ārīt, “Risāla fī tarīkh Jarba,” 114.

⁸³ Makt. al-Bārūniyya MS 119 (dated 18 Rab II 1136/Jan 15, 1724).

⁸⁴ El-Rouayheb, *Islamic Intellectual History*, 133–34. Al-Tulātī's note appears in Makt. al-Bārūniyya MS 311 (dated 29 Šafr 1172/Nov 1, 1758); See no. 322 in the catalog: *Fibris al-Bārūniyya*, 245.

⁸⁵ For example, in an undated manuscript that is likely from his time as a student, he compiled various postclassical Sunni texts into a *majmū'* (see Makt. al-Bārūniyya MS 307). For a list of works attributed to him see Bābā'ammī et al., eds., *Mu'jam a'lām al-ibāḍiyya*, 2:318–19; Custers, *al-Ibāḍiyya*, 2:461–70.

⁸⁶ Bin Ta'ārīt, “Risāla fī tarīkh Jarba,” 112. Al-Jabartī's necrology for 1177/1763 included “Shaykh Khalīl b. Muḥammad al-Maghribī al-Miṣrī, who directed the al-Mu'ayyid's library.” See Jabartī, *al-Jabartī's History*, 1: 433.

and colloquial poetry as well as hadith were [recited].”⁸⁷ In addition to blending in well in Cairo, al-Tulātī’s influence on the Ibadi scholarly community both in Cairo and beyond was significant. His many students in Cairo ensured a continuous Ibadi presence at al-Azhar, copied manuscripts for the Buffalo Agency’s library, and a few went on to scholarly careers of their own. For example, his student Abū Zakariyā’ Yaḥyā al-Yasjanī would return home to the Mzab, where he too would teach ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Thamīnī, the author of the *Kitāb al-Nīl*.⁸⁸ Several of al-Tulātī’s students would return home to Jerba and become teachers themselves, including members of the prominent al-Ghūl, Ibn Ḥarīz, al-Maṣ‘abī, al-Ballāz, and al-Wīrānī families.⁸⁹

Not all of al-Tulātī’s students or others who came through the Agency and studied at al-Azhar early in life went on to become scholars. In this Ibadis also resembled their Sunni contemporaries, who often sent their sons to al-Azhar “for a couple of years and then left in order to learn some trade and eventually join some corporation.”⁹⁰ For example, this was the case for several members of prominent Jerban merchant families including Ibn Ḥadīd and al-Mathnī, whose connections stretched throughout Egypt and beyond to Istanbul.⁹¹ One of al-Tulātī’s students, Marzūq Ibn Ḥadīd, studied with al-Tulātī around 1718, and in the 1730s he was working in Asyut as a merchant.⁹² Marzūq’s brother, Maṣ‘ūd, was the same distinguished merchant standing beside Aḥmad al-Jumlī as a witness to the establishment of the Buffalo Agency’s waqf in 1740 and who later served as the Agency’s director.⁹³ Their brother ‘Alī was also a student of al-Tulātī and copied manuscripts.⁹⁴ Another of al-Tulātī’s students, Sulaymān al-Furātī, used his later success in commerce to leave behind a number of small endowments for Ibadi students before

⁸⁷ Bin Ta’arīt, “Risāla fī tarīkh Jarba,” 112.

⁸⁸ Bin Ya’qūb, *Tārīkh jazīrat Jarba*, 2006, 171.

⁸⁹ For example, see Bin Ya’qūb, *Tārīkh jazīrat Jarba*, 2006, 151 (al-Ballāz), 174–75 (al-Ghūl), 291 (Ibn Ḥarīz), 323 (Wīrān).

⁹⁰ Heyworth-Dunne, *Introduction*, 28.

⁹¹ The strongest evidence for these connections comes from a bit later in the nineteenth century. See Tunger-Zanetti, *La communication entre Tunis et Istanbul*, 94–99.

⁹² Bin Ya’qūb, *Tārīkh jazīrat Jarba*, 2006, 290.

⁹³ Muṣliḥ, *al-Waqf al-jarbī fī Miṣr*, 215; on the *awqāf* listed in his name, 221.

⁹⁴ Bin Ya’qūb, *Tārīkh jazīrat Jarba*, 2006, 91. He completed a copy of the *Sharḥ al-jahhālāt* in 11 Rab I 1195/Mar 7, 1781 (Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya MS *bā’* 22293).

returning to Jerba.⁹⁵ The need to make a living led many students to enter careers as merchants and traders in Egypt and elsewhere over the course of the eighteenth century. Indeed, a literate class of merchants, soldiers, and bureaucrats is one of the defining features of the eighteenth-century Cairene book culture to which Ibadis belonged.⁹⁶

Al-Tulātī, his colleagues, and his students also played an important role in the accumulation of manuscripts in the Agency's library. As noted above, the eighteenth century proved one of the most productive in terms of both the copying and endowing of manuscripts for the Buffalo Agency. While merchants like Muḥammad al-Baḥḥār and Sulaymān al-Khanūsī donated important works of the Sunni canon to the Agency's library, students deserve credit for the accumulation of Ibadi texts there since they copied most of them.⁹⁷ Al-Tulātī's students and contemporaries are representative in this regard. Ramaḍān b. Aḥmad al-Ghūl (d. 1818–1819) copied two classic Ibadi works: the *Sharḥ al-qaṣīda al-nūniyya* (ca. 1769–70) and *al-ʿAdl wa-l-inṣāf* (ca. 1773–74).⁹⁸ This second title included al-Tulātī's own commentary on the work.⁹⁹ ʿAlī, the brother of Marzūq Ibn Ḥadīd, who was the trader in Asyut mentioned above, copied the Ibadi hadith collection known as *al-Jāmiʿ al-Ṣaḥīḥ* and other works.¹⁰⁰ Several Ibadis at the Agency from well-known Jerban families including Ibn Ḥarīz, al-Ballāz, al-Wīrānī, and al-Taghzwīnī connected to al-Tulātī copied the Ibadi titles that filled the shelves of the Buffalo Agency's library.¹⁰¹ Al-Tulātī himself contributed by endowing works to the students of

⁹⁵ Bin Yaʿqūb, *Tārīkh jazīrat Jarba*, 2006, 264–65.

⁹⁶ Hanna, *In Praise of Books*. ⁹⁷ Muṣliḥ, *al-Waqf al-jarbī fī Miṣr*, 121–26.

⁹⁸ The copy of *al-ʿAdl wa-l-inṣāf* also included the commentary by al-Tulātī: Ibadica Center, Fonds Custers, “Qāʾima,” 2; “*Sharḥ al-nūniyya*,” *ibid.*, 1.

⁹⁹ Makt. Bin Yaʿqūb MS 29b (dated [18 Rab II?] 1187/[Jul 8?] 1773).

¹⁰⁰ Bin Yaʿqūb, *Tārīkh jazīrat Jarba*, 2006, 291. Other titles copied by him include the *Kitāb sharḥ mukhtaṣar al-ʿadl wa-l-inṣāf* (Makt. al-Khalīlī AK 094 [dated 1187/1774]), part of a *majmūʿ* dated 10 Shaw 1185/Jan 15, 1772 (Makt. Bin Yaʿqūb MS 46).

¹⁰¹ For example: Makt. al-Khalīlī AK 089 (dated 1145/1732) copied by Ṣāliḥ b. ʿUthmān Ibn Ḥarīz, a student of al-Tulātī. Ṣāliḥ Ibn Ḥarīz copied several texts while in Egypt. For example: Makt. al-Ḥājj Ṣāliḥ Laʿālī MS 220 (dated Muḥ 1045/Jun–Jul 1635 in Wikālat al-Jāmūs); Makt. Abū Bakr Maʿūd, Babakr MS 33 (dated 1145/1732–33 in Wikālat al-Jāmūs). Yūsuf b. Ṣāliḥ al-Ballāz, whose son Ṣāliḥ was a student of al-Tulātī's, copied Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya MS *bāʿ* 22067 (dated 1117/1706); ʿIsā b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Wīrān, whose father studied with al-Tulātī, transcribed a copy of the *Kitāb qawāʿid al-islām* in 1125/1713–14 (Ibadica Center, Fonds Custers, “Qāʾima,” 6).

both the Agency and elsewhere, including in the Mزاب Valley.¹⁰² Some of his own manuscripts, which would have been available to students at the Agency during his long tenure and many of which were copied there, would also travel back to Jerba.¹⁰³

A final comment on the manuscripts copied at the Agency during the eighteenth century: At this point, the library there appears to have held copies of a number of short Omani-authored Ibadi texts. Yaḥyā al-Yafrānī, mentioned above as having copied a number of texts at the Agency in 1711–13, took advantage of these titles being available and made copies of them. We know they were unusual in the Maghrib because he added to the colophons of two Omani texts that he “transcribed [the text] from a very corrupted copy and did not find it except in Egypt.”¹⁰⁴ This is significant because one of the biggest changes to occur in the following century was the increase in the exchange of books among the Maghribi and Omani spheres of Ibadism (Chapter 4).

The tenure of al-Tulātī and his students in Cairo may have represented a period of intellectual flourishing for the Agency, but the second half of the eighteenth century was a difficult one for Egypt. The fruitful alliance of Janissaries and merchants that had characterized the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries slowly deteriorated from the 1760s onward. The Janissary factions were replaced by the growing power of individual Mamluk beys, who vied with one another for power. Although the long-distance *tujjār* attempted to adapt to this

¹⁰² Aḥmad Muṣliḥ, “Waqf al-Tulātī wa-ʿAwwāla li-al-makḥṭūṭāt ʿalā Jāmiʿ ʿAmmī Saʿīd bi-Ghardāya,” unpublished paper presented at the Workshop on Ibadi Manuscripts and Manuscript Cultures, Al Akhawayn University (Apr 5–6, 2019).

¹⁰³ For example, al-Tulātī requested the copying of several manuscripts at the Agency from ʿIyyād b. Abī Bakr b. Muḥammad al-Fāhimī al-Qallāl: Makt. al-Bārūniyya MS 149 (dated 15 Šafr 1156/Apr 10, 1743); Makt. al-Bārūniyya MS 116, no. 152 in the catalog (dated 1 Raj 1137/Mar 15, 1725); Makt. al-Bārūniyya MS 217 (n.d., *terminus ante quem* late eighteenth century) but contains marginal notes by al-Tulātī). The two of them also copied texts together: Makt. al-Bārūniyya MS 116 (dated 23 Raj 1137/Apr 6, 1725 in the Wikālat al-Jāmūs).

¹⁰⁴ Makt. al-Bārūniyya MS 183 (no. 244 in the catalog) (dated 29 D. al-Ḥijja 1123/Feb 6, 1712); Makt. al-Bārūniyya MS 108 (dated 15 D. al-Ḥijja 1124/Jan 12, 1713). See transcriptions of his observations in *Fihri al-Bārūniyya*, 201–02, 210.

system, ultimately the “mamluks not only displaced the janissaries . . . they also displaced the Muslim *tujjār* by encouraging the Syrian Christian merchants at the expense of Muslim merchants.”¹⁰⁵ The beys and their supporters regularly abused the population through excessive taxation, extortion, and arbitrary violence. When not directed against the civilian population, violence still occurred in the countryside as the last two decades of the century witnessed “a state of quasi-permanent civil war . . . leading to severe financial crisis from 1780.” In Cairo, where they remained strong, Mamluks “could extort funds with impunity,” and they frequently resorted to illegal seizure of property.¹⁰⁶ Al-Jabartī reports that in 1785 several storehouses of grain in Tulun were surrounded; “some of them were seized and the others were sealed.”¹⁰⁷

A new wave of plague in 1791, popular resistance to excessive taxation, and arbitrary abuses of power all combined with a growing international trade deficit at the end of the century.¹⁰⁸ The trade in two of the key commodities that distinguished Egypt in the Mediterranean suffered significant losses: coffee and textiles. Coffee had brought merchants like al-Jumlī into positions of great wealth, which they achieved in part through connections with Mamluk factions. As the alliance between merchants and Mamluks came to end in the second half of the century, so did the Egyptian monopoly on the coffee industry. Cheaper coffee of a lesser quality from the Antilles began to enter the Mediterranean market, including the Ottoman Empire.¹⁰⁹ Mamluk leaders such as ‘Alī Bey al-Kabīr (d. 1773) in the second half of the eighteenth century also brought the monopoly on Red Sea trade to an end by gradually allowing European traders to do business there.¹¹⁰ Textiles, a strong commodity in Egypt throughout the seventeenth century and one of the main items in which Maghribis traded, increasingly competed with French equivalents by the end of the eighteenth century. Despite these dramatic changes, the Buffalo Agency did

¹⁰⁵ Sayyid-Marsot, *Egypt in the Reign of Muhammad Ali*, 11, 14.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹⁰⁷ Translation from Jabartī, *al-Jabartī's History*, 2:196; for Arabic: Jabartī, *‘Ajā’ib*, 2:174.

¹⁰⁸ Alan Mikhail, “Plague and Environment in Late Ottoman Egypt,” in Alan Mikhail, ed., *Water on Sand: Environmental Histories of the Middle East and North Africa* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 111–32.

¹⁰⁹ Sayyid-Marsot, *Egypt in the Reign of Muhammad Ali*, 2.

¹¹⁰ Raymond, “A Divided Sea”; Crecelius, *The Roots of Modern Egypt*.

continue operating in the last decades of the eighteenth century much as it had before. The director, Ibrāhīm b. Saʿīd al-Tālibī, managed to maintain the endowments through the end of the century and into the next. In doing so, he and others at the Agency would weather some remarkable changes as foreign invasion would lead Ottoman Egypt into a new era.

* * *

The upkeep of the Buffalo Agency in the eighteenth century was an Ibadi enterprise that very much belonged to the Ottoman world in which it operated. In establishing and maintaining the Agency, the Maghribi Ibadi community of Cairo drew on precisely the same tools as their contemporaries: the use of the mechanism of the waqf to endow both the Buffalo Agency's building and the books that lined the shelves of its library. In form and content, those books reflect the interrelationship between the Ibadi merchants who paid for their commission or purchase and the Ibadi students and scholars who made use of them.

The Ibadi books in the library, commissioned by merchants and in large part copied by students, reflect the need for a specialized library of Ibadi titles at the Agency's school. At the same time, the Sunni titles in the library demonstrate the intersections of Ibadi merchants, Ottoman-era book culture, and the draw of al-Azhar – the premier institution of Sunni learning – for Ibadi students and scholars in Cairo. Finally, the success of the merchants and scholars attached to the Buffalo Agency likewise ebbed and flowed with the political and economic changes in Egypt over the course of the eighteenth century. The alliance of Mamluks and merchants in long-distance commerce, such as the coffee trade that had made Aḥmad al-Jumlī wealthy enough to create the Agency's endowment in 1740, collapsed by the end of the century. The Buffalo Agency, its residents, and its library thus fit squarely into the Ottoman context of eighteenth-century Egypt. In some ways, it is precisely because of this ordinariness that its history as an Ibadi institution merits attention. Whether in the religious, cultural, or legal landscapes of eighteenth-century Cairo, Ibadis are only with great difficulty distinguished from their non-Ibadi contemporaries.

4 | *A New Century*

Saʿīd al-Bārūnī's timing for his move to Egypt could not have been worse. In 1798 this young Ibadi student from the Jebel Nafusa in Tripolitania had traveled to Cairo to study at the al-Azhar Mosque, arriving just months before a French military force under Napoleon Bonaparte occupied the city. The preceding decades had not been kind to Cairo: warring Mamluk beys, a declining economy, and an especially vicious wave of plague had ravaged the city. Saʿīd would spend the next decade in an Egypt upended by the French occupation, the chaotic end of the rule of the Mamluk beys, the meddling of the British in Ottoman affairs, and the violent series of events that culminated in the rise of Ottoman officer Muḥammad ʿAlī to the governorship of Egypt.

Despite these events swirling around him, Saʿīd's journey to Cairo represents a remarkable continuity over the 200 years that separate him from the establishment of the Buffalo Agency in the early seventeenth century. For generations, Maghribi Ibadis had been traveling east to Egypt to study and to do business. At the dawn of the nineteenth century little seemed to have changed. Unlike in the era of Saʿīd's predecessors, however, by this point the Buffalo Agency had established its reputation as both a residence and a school for Ibadi students. As discussed in the previous chapter, teachers such as ʿUmar al-Tulātī in the eighteenth century had helped to solidify the Agency as an important complementary site of study for Ibadis alongside al-Azhar. However, the challenges faced by non-Ibadis in Egypt during this period also took a toll on the Buffalo Agency and its residents.

This chapter explores the world of Ibadi Cairo in the first half of the nineteenth century, as Egypt underwent rapid change. It does so by following the lives of Saʿīd al-Bārūnī and his Ibadi contemporaries who passed through the Agency in these decades. Each figure signals both continuity with the generations before them and the transformations sweeping the Ottoman world in the early nineteenth century. Saʿīd

himself arrived in Cairo at the end of the eighteenth century, coinciding with the French invasion and the rise to power of Muḥammad ‘Alī. Like those before him, though, Sa‘īd copied and collected many manuscripts while staying at the Buffalo Agency and studying at al-Azhar. After his return to Jerba several years later, his link to Cairo was maintained by a former student, Muḥammad al-Bārūnī, who wrote him a letter from the Buffalo Agency in April 1856. That letter offers a glimpse into everyday life for a student at the Agency, demonstrating how its school complemented education at a much-diminished al-Azhar. In addition, the letter points to an important change to the life and culture of both the Agency and Ibadi Cairo more broadly: the growing communication between Ibadis in Cairo and their confreres in Oman and Zanzibar.

The theme of transregional communication continues as the chapter turns to the life of another of Muḥammad’s teachers, Sa‘īd al-Shammākhī (d. 1883). Sa‘īd also lived at the Agency in the mid-nineteenth century, serving as its director. His career further emphasizes a growing affiliation with Oman and especially the role of Cairo as a transit point for books and people linking Maghribi Ibadis and their southeastern coreligionists. Through his personal library, we learn about the books he and others used to teach at the Agency and the movement of manuscripts from Zanzibar and Mecca in the mid-nineteenth century. As with al-Bārūnī, letters to al-Shammākhī shed light on transregional relationships among Ibadi scholars in the Ottoman era.

* * *

Sa‘īd al-Bārūnī did not let the invasion of Egypt pass by unremarked. In the colophon of a manuscript he finished not long after his arrival in Cairo, he wrote:

[This manuscript] was completed on the evening of *al-arbi‘ā’* in God’s great month of Sha‘bān [in] the year 1213 [January 1799]. That was in Egypt at the Buffalo Agency. . . . This year is the year of the entry of the French (*al-ifranṣīṣ*) into Egypt and their taking possession of it – may God end them and cast them out of it!¹

¹ “... waqa‘a al-farāgh minhā ‘ashiyyat yawm al-arbi‘ā’ min shahr Allāh al-mu‘azzam Sha‘b sanat 1213 wa-dhālika bi-al-diyār al-miṣriyya bi-wikālat al-jāmūs ‘ammarhā bi-al-muslimīn . . . wa-hādhihi al-sana hiya sanat dukhūl al-ifranṣīs Miṣr wa-mulkihim lahā azālahum Allāh minhā.” Original from the final folio of Makt. al-Bārūniyya MS 118 (Sha‘b 1213/Jan 1799, quoted from

Despite the tumultuous changes to the cityscape of Cairo occurring around him, the ongoing opposition to the French occupation, and the regional struggles among French, British, and Ottoman armies to determine who would control Egypt, Saʿīd would carry on largely as had those before him. Like Ibadis in the eighteenth century, Saʿīd straddled two interconnected worlds by living in the Agency and studying at al-Azhar. His own grandfather, Yaʿqūb al-Bārūnī, had come from the Jebel Nafusa to study at the Agency in the mid-eighteenth century.² Before traveling to Cairo, Saʿīd followed a long-standing tradition of Nafusi students who traveled to Jerba to study at the island's Great Mosque. That would have meant that he studied there with two important Ibadi scholars, Muḥammad al-Maṣʿabī (d. 1792) and Sulaymān al-Shammākhī (d. 1819), who were the successive imams and head teachers at the mosque.³ During his time at the Agency in Cairo Saʿīd would have studied under its director, Ibrāhīm al-Tālibī (d. ca. 1817), an Ibadi scholar from Jerba who taught at al-Azhar at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries.⁴

Saʿīd also followed in the footsteps of those before him as a copyist of manuscripts. Over the years he spent in Egypt, he proved an avid collector of manuscripts, copying and buying them in his time between his studies. Like those before him, Saʿīd maintained an interest in both Ibadi and non-Ibadi texts, and he would collect many of the latter for his own library while in Egypt. At the Buffalo Agency he focused his efforts on copying Ibadi titles. Like many of his non-Ibadi contemporaries in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries he prioritized commentaries and glosses. In his first two years at the Agency (1798–1800) he focused his attention on marginal glosses (*ḥawāshī*) and commentaries (*shurūḥ*) by Muḥammad Abī Sitta and Yūsuf al-Maṣʿabī.⁵ His last few

pp. 154–55). The French forces arrived in Alexandria in July 1798, which was near the beginning of the hijri year 1213. This accounts for the apparent discrepancy in the two dates.

² Makt. al-Bārūniyya MS 54 (dated 1179/1766).

³ This and the frame of much of what follows of the details from Saʿīd al-Bārūnī's life in Cairo is drawn from his biography in *Fihris al-Bārūniyya*, 8–14.

⁴ Bābā ammī et al, *Muʿjam aʿlām al-ibāḍiyya*, 2:15.

⁵ Manuscripts from these years copied by Saʿīd al-Bārūnī in the Makt. al-Bārūniyya include: MS 42 (dated 1213/1799); MS 39 (dated 1214/1800); MS 47 (dated 1213/1798); MS 57 (no. 22) (dated 1213/1798); MS 57 (no. 27) (dated 1213/1799); MS 110 (dated 1213/1798); MS 118 (dated 1213/1799); MS 126 (dated

years at the Agency, by contrast, were devoted primarily to copying original texts (*mutūn*) rather than commentaries or glosses. This reflects his development as a scholar.

His accomplishments as a manuscript copyist and collector are all the more impressive given what turned out to be the very bad timing of his journey to Egypt. As Saʿīd sat quietly in the Agency copying manuscripts in these first few years of the nineteenth century, the city outside raged. The French occupation lasted only a short time, but between the arrival of Napoleon's army in 1798 and its departure in 1801, life in Cairo was transformed. The houses of the Mamluk beys were looted as the French attempted to establish order. Their efforts included a failed attempt to register all ownership of property, including *wikalas* like the Buffalo Agency.⁶ Saʿīd and his contemporaries experienced quite a shock when the French let loose their cannons on al-Azhar during a revolt against the city's occupation at its outset. Riots throughout the period of occupation led to the looting of shops and depots throughout the city, including those surrounding the Tulun district.⁷

An Ottoman-British campaign in 1801 brought the French occupation to an end. The British navy arrived in Alexandria in March, and by June Cairo had fallen. The Ottomans had also sent a new military force to reestablish the sultan's sovereignty in Egypt, but the coming years brought anything but order. The French occupation may have "broke[n] the last links between the mamluk beys and the indigenous population"⁸ but Egyptians were hardly ready to embrace their replacements. In 1802 and 1803 the Ottoman soldiers, especially the forces from Syria, looted the city and plundered the countryside. Alongside the arbitrary violence of the soldiers, people of Cairo also faced impending famine. Some of the remaining Mamluks and their supporters had fled to the north, where they cut off the grain supply to the capital. To establish order, the new government attempted to raise money through taxes to pay the soldiers and keep them from looting.

1213/1798); MS 154 (dated 1213/1798); MS 170 (dated 1213/1799); MS 188 (dated 1214/1799).

⁶ Darrell Dykstra, "The French Occupation of Egypt," in *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, vol. 2, ed. M. W. Daly (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 113–38, esp. 113–26.

⁷ Jabartī, *al-Jabartī's History*, 3:47–48; Jabartī, *ʿAjāʾib*, 3:49.

⁸ Sayyid-Marsot, *Egypt in the Reign of Muhammad Ali*, 20.

This had precisely the opposite effect: the people rose up in opposition to taxes that they no longer had the money to pay anyway, and the soldiers revolted at not being paid in 1804. In response to the destructive rampage of the soldiers, “the ulama ordered the gates of al-Azhar mosque closed [as] a signal of distress.”⁹ The prominent ulama and merchants of the city decided to support the leader of the Albanian contingent, Muḥammad (Mehmet) ‘Alī, as governor in May of that year.¹⁰

The problem was that there was already a governor, a man named Khurshid Pāshā. Locked away in the Citadel, he did not last long. Only one month later, the remarkable move taken by the ulama, the merchants, and the people of Cairo in electing Muḥammad ‘Alī led to the Porte sending a decree from Istanbul removing Khurshid Pāshā and appointing Muḥammad ‘Alī as governor of Egypt.¹¹ Soon thereafter the ulama decided to step out of the spotlight and to reopen the gates of al-Azhar, which allowed students like Sa‘īd al-Bārūnī to return to their studies. Muḥammad ‘Alī would spend the next several years stamping out any remaining opposition from the Mamluks, and by 1811 he had secured his position as governor of Egypt.

It is remarkable to imagine Sa‘īd moving back and forth in these years between the Buffalo Agency and al-Azhar. He would have walked north to the mosque through the city’s volatile streets during the short windows of time when classes were being given. In normal times this meant only around six months of every year, so one can imagine how infrequent the courses were in these years. Perhaps in part due to the constant disruption of his studies at al-Azhar, Sa‘īd spent a lot of time at the Buffalo Agency copying manuscripts. From August 1798 to January 1800 (i.e. the height of the disorder brought about by the French occupation) Sa‘īd had an active period of copying. The sixteen titles he copied in this timeframe are followed by a notable silence of four years. The popular revolts, the departure of the French, and the destructive beginnings of the Ottoman occupation in the years

⁹ Ibid., 45.

¹⁰ Ibid., 36–43. See also Khaled Fahmy, “The Era of Muḥammad ‘Alī Pāshā, 1805–1848,” in *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, vol. 2, ed. M. W. Daly (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 139–79, at 140–44.

¹¹ Sayyid-Marsot, *Egypt in the Reign of Muhammad Ali*, 46–50.

that followed help to explain this silence. Only in July 1804 did Saʿīd return to copying manuscripts.¹²

While there might have been a great deal of optimism following the appointment of Muḥammad ʿAlī in 1805, like others on the ground in Cairo Saʿīd would also have been aware that the trouble was far from over. Despite the danger, he decided to spend a bit more time at al-Azhar. He copied a few more manuscripts from 1804 to 1808, during which time Muḥammad ʿAlī attempted to quell the Mamluk opposition. Meanwhile, the British allies of the Mamluks arrived at the port of Alexandria, no doubt causing a new wave of panic throughout the country. Preoccupied with events elsewhere in the Mediterranean, and having made a deal to obtain Egyptian grain, however, their ships disappeared six months later without incident. Other events in the empire, including successive *coups d'état* in Istanbul and the Wahhabi movement taking control of the two holy cities of Mecca and Medina in the Hijaz, meant that for the time being Muḥammad ʿAlī could focus on consolidating his power without direct interference from the central Ottoman government.¹³

Near the end of Saʿīd's first decade in Cairo, things would not have looked much better. In 1809 Muḥammad ʿAlī

ordered that *waqf* lands, which in the past had been exempted from taxation now be taxed. . . . The ulama, many of whom controlled waqf lands, were understandably disturbed by that order and . . . they met together to take action. . . . [They] vowed to stay at home and hold no lessons at the [al-Azhar] university until they had received satisfaction from the Pasha.¹⁴

The strategy ultimately ended in failure and the taxes remained. This had a double effect on institutions like the Buffalo Agency. First, students such as Saʿīd were frustrated to find that once again al-Azhar had closed its gates to classes over civil unrest and politics. Second, the taxing of waqf lands hit smaller schools such as the Agency that relied on endowments for their upkeep just the same as it did the grand institution of al-Azhar. The coming decades would witness a marginalization of the education offered by al-Azhar and the

¹² Makt. al-Bārūniyya MS 124 (dated 5 Rab II 1219/Jul 14, 1804).

¹³ Sayyid-Marsot, *Egypt in the Reign of Muhammad Ali*, 61–66; Fahmy, “The Era of Muḥammad ʿAlī Pāshā,” 148–53.

¹⁴ Sayyid-Marsot, *Egypt in the Reign of Muhammad Ali*, 67–68.

erosion of the political and cultural capital carried by merchants and scholars in Cairo in the era of the Mamluks.¹⁵

A letter written in 1815 by Saʿīd to his close friend Yaḥyā al-Bārūnī confirmed the dismal state of things in Cairo. Nearing the end of his time in Egypt, Saʿīd wrote: “If you were to ask about the state of things in Cairo (*Miṣr*), I would say that it is in a deranged and disorderly state – but God knows best! Ruin has spread from its edges to its core. Everything you see either distresses you or makes you want to cry. Anyone who tells you otherwise is lying.”¹⁶ Saʿīd’s description of al-Azhar confirms why he devoted so much attention to copying manuscripts at the Agency: “As for al-Azhar, its ruin has increased. Its men [of learning] have vanished and its people have dispersed. The character of those who have remained has wasted away. So, hold tight with all your strength to your homeland!”¹⁷ In what follows, he suggested that staying put in Jerba and seeking out an education there would be far more beneficial for those in search of knowledge.

The same letter also conveys some of the continuity with earlier periods in terms of Ibadi commercial networks within Egypt and throughout the Mediterranean. For example, Saʿīd mentioned that he had received a book Yaḥyā had sent, and that he had in turn sent it to one ʿUmar al-Bārūnī, who was at the time selling cotton in Upper Egypt. Saʿīd added that ʿUmar had not yet sent him the money for the book, and was on his way to the Hijaz to carry out the hajj. Saʿīd also asked his correspondent to send his greetings to one Aḥmad al-Baʿṭūrī in Jerba and to let him know that the money he was owed would be on the next ship bound for the island. He then added that he sent two French *riyals* with a relative bound for Istanbul to buy an embroidered vest (*farmala*) for someone back in Jerba. The next passage in the letter offers an intimate window into the correspondents’ lives, but also speaks to the level of trust that bound Ibadi communities in Cairo and Jerba. Saʿīd wrote that members of Yaḥyā’s family had married in Cairo and that he had covered some of the costs. He then

¹⁵ Fahmy, “The Era of Muḥammad ʿAlī Pāshā,” 150, 162.

¹⁶ Saʿīd al-Bārūnī, “Risalat al-Shaykh Saʿīd b. ʿIsā al-Bārūnī ilā ṣaḍīqihi al-Shaykh Yaḥyā al-Bārūnī bi-Jarbī min Miṣr ḥīn kāna yuzāwīl al-taʿallum fī-al-Azhar fī 12 Shaʿb 1230 hijrī,” in Saʿīd Bin Taʿārīt, *Risāla fī tarājīm ʿulamāʾ Jarba* (*Épître des savants de Djerba*), ed. Sassi Ben Yahyaten (Paris: Ibadica Editions, 2021), 139–43, at 140.

¹⁷ Ibid.

added that upon the death of Yaḥyā's son he had provided the family with money to support the costs associated with the burial in the city's al-Qarāfa cemetery.¹⁸

A final greeting from "Shaykh Yūnus" is especially revealing. The person in question was Yūnus b. Abī Ishāq, who beginning in that year would manage the endowments of the Buffalo Agency until his death in the 1850s. The letter notes that he had recently divorced and remarried, to a Jerban woman, and Yūnus requested that Yaḥyā ask around on the island whether she still held any property there.¹⁹ These anecdotes together demonstrate how Ibadi merchants and scholars at the beginning of the nineteenth century still operated a vast network to manage goods, money, and property rights throughout the Mediterranean just as they had for the previous two centuries.

* * *

After nearly two decades in Cairo, and having earned the title "al-Azhari" in the ownership statements and colophons of the manuscripts he purchased and copied, Sa'īd began his journey home to Tripolitania. In doing so, he would have followed an itinerary that Maghribi Ibadi merchants, students, scholars, and pilgrims had traversed for centuries. Leaving Cairo, he would have gone north to the great Ottoman port city of Alexandria, where he could catch a boat heading west. A letter from a Jerban merchant living in Egypt, written just a few years before Sa'īd returned home, traces the routes connecting Maghribi Ibadis like him to Egypt in the early years of the nineteenth century.

In a letter to his business partner in Sfax in 1804, a Jerban merchant named 'Alī Ta'zā'it describes how he sent wheat, turbans, bowls, and other miscellaneous goods from Egypt to Tunisia in exchange for items in demand in Egypt, including fabrics, olive oil, and leather.²⁰ These three items, along with the fez, made up the staple import items of Jerban and other Maghribi merchants in Egypt. Travelers such as Sa'īd

¹⁸ Ibid., 141. ¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ An edited version of the letter was published in Arabic and French: Ali Zouari, "Deux documents d'archives relatifs au commerce de Djerba et de Sfax avec l'Égypte au début du XIXe siècle," *Revue de l'Occident musulman et de la Méditerranée* 39 (1985): 189–99, published (also by Zouari) in Arabic as "Wathīqatān 'an tijārat Jarba wa-Ṣfāqs ma' al-sharq," in *Actes du Colloque sur l'histoire de Jerba, avril 1982* (Tunis: Association pour la sauvegarde de l'île de Jerba, 1986), 73–85.

traversed the same paths as these goods aboard small charter ships that moved back and forth along the Mediterranean coast of North Africa. In Ta'zā'it's letter, some familiar Ibadi names appear as owners of these ships moving from Jerba to Alexandria via Tripolitania. For example, the letter mentions 'Alī al-Bāsī, member of a prominent Ibadi merchant family in Jerba who had close ties to Istanbul and had endowed a large manuscript library at their family mosque back home on the island in the late eighteenth century.²¹ The other family to appear as the owners of a charter ship were the al-Bārūnīs, whose vessel moved goods between Alexandria and Jerba.²²

A final detail of the letter notes that sometimes these ships did not arrive at their destination without incident. Ta'zā'it refers to an earlier shipment from Egypt, which had not arrived when its owners simply decided not to deliver it. The intercession of a prominent Jerban, Aḥmad Bin 'Iyyād, led to the release of the goods from their Christian (probably Italian) transporters and their delivery to Tunisia.²³ Boarding a charter ship like this one in Alexandria – perhaps even one owned by a member of his extended family – Sa'īd al-Bārūnī would have begun his journey west toward Tripolitania. Leaving Alexandria, he would likely have stopped in Benghazi before continuing on to the great port of Tripoli.

The city of Tripoli and much of the region of Tripolitania were at that time under the control of the Qaramanli dynasty. Founded by Ottoman Janissaries at the beginning of the eighteenth century, the Qaramanlis ruled on behalf of the Ottomans until 1835 when the Sublime Porte reasserted more direct control.²⁴ Disembarking in Tripoli, Sa'īd would not have had trouble finding his Ibadi confreres in the city. Ibadi communities from both Tripolitania and nearby Jerba lived in Tripoli, where they constituted merchant communities active in both Saharan

²¹ On the al-Bāsī library see Boujdidi and Love, Jr., "Preserving Endangered Archives."

²² "Jawz al-ṣanādiq ṣaḥabat markab 'Alī al-Bāsī" and "yḍan ṣaḥabat markab al-Bārūnī 'alā Jarba biḍa'a . . ." (Zouari, "Wathīqātān," 80), translated as "Caisse (de marchandises) avec le bateau de 'Alī al-Bāsī" and "Une caisse de marchandises par le bateau d'al-Bārūnī dirige sur Djerba," in Zouari, "Deux documents," 196.

²³ Zouari, "Wathīqātān," 80; Zouari, "Deux documents," 193.

²⁴ Dirk J. Vandewalle, *A History of Modern Libya* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 16–20; Mostafa Minawi, *The Ottoman Scramble for Africa: Empire and Diplomacy in the Sahara and the Hijaz* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016).

and Mediterranean trade networks.²⁵ Saʿīd would have traveled with his Ibadi coreligionists back up into the Nafusa mountains. By May 1819 he was back in Nafusi town of Jādū copying manuscripts.²⁶

Sometime that year Saʿīd decided to move to Jerba and to settle there with other members of the al-Bārūnī family. His extended time in Cairo and at al-Azhar had catapulted him to a level of prestige in Jerba and won him the coveted position of the imam of the Great Mosque, a post previously held by his teacher Sulaymān al-Shammākhī. Sulaymān had departed on the hajj accompanied by Aḥmad al-Ghūl, both of whom died in Mecca in 1819, just one year after Muḥammad ʿAlī recaptured the Hijaz from the Wahhabīs on behalf of the Ottomans. Although Aḥmad al-Ghūl himself spent his life in Jerba, his father Ramaḍān had also studied at both al-Azhar and the Buffalo Agency, where he copied books in the second half of the eighteenth century (Chapter 3). Like the Shammākhīs, the al-Ghūl family maintained a centuries-long presence in Egypt in the Ottoman period.

Saʿīd would spend much if not all of the remainder of his life in Jerba, where the manuscripts he had collected in Egypt would form the core of what became the island's largest Ibadi library.²⁷ Alongside the material legacy of his library, he would also train many of the prominent figures of Ibadi history in Jerba. These included Saʿīd Bin Taʿārīt, whose *Epistle on the History of Jerba* became one of the most important historical sources for Ibadis in North Africa from the late nineteenth century forward. His *Epistle* (itself written in Egypt) proved especially valuable for chronicling the history of Jerban Ibadis in Egypt. Much of Bin Taʿārīt's knowledge of the Ibadi community in Cairo came directly from his studies under Saʿīd al-Bārūnī, whom he often quoted, from conversations with his teacher to manuscripts.²⁸

* * *

In the summer of 1856, nearly four decades after he assumed the leadership of the Great Mosque in Jerba, Saʿīd received a letter from

²⁵ Bardin, *Algériens et tunisiens*, 20.

²⁶ Makt. al-Bārūniyya MS 33 (dated 17 Rajab 1234/May 12, 1819). The colophon notes that Saʿīd al-Bārūnī was in Jādū when this was written. The editors of the catalog of the Makt. al-Bārūniyya interpreted the colophon differently to mean that he began it in Egypt and finished in Jādū. This appears, however, to be the location of the transcription of the exemplar: *Fihris al-Bārūniyya*, 11.

²⁷ *Fihris al-Bārūniyya*, 25–40.

²⁸ Bin Taʿārīt often began passages by attributing them to his teacher: “min shaykhinā Abī ʿUthmān Saʿīd b. ʿIsā al-Bārūnī . . .” or “wajadtu bi-khaṭṭ shaykhnā Saʿīd al-Bārūnī . . .” For example, see Bin Taʿārīt, “Risāla fī tārikh Jarba,” 75.

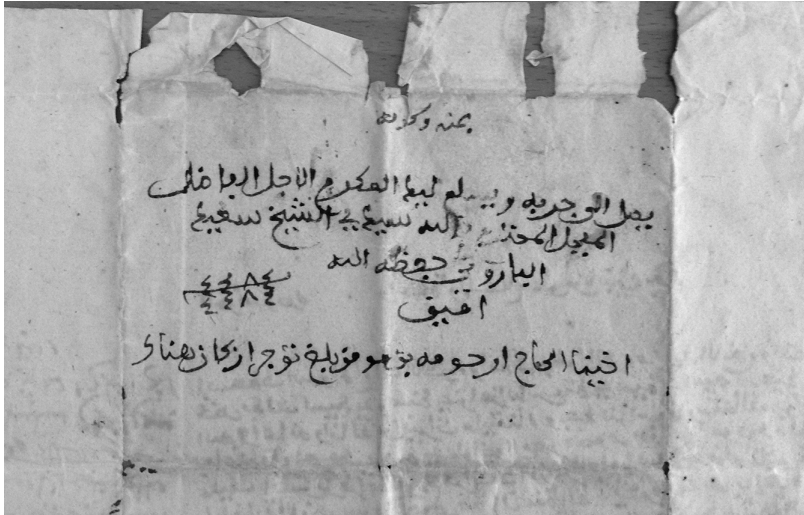


Figure 4.1 The reverse side of the letter from Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Bārūnī, a student at the Buffalo Agency, addressed to Sa’id al-Bārūnī in Jerba (dated 1856). The folio would have been folded into a small rectangle before being sealed and sent with someone traveling to the island. Makt. al-Bārūniyya MS *rā’ bā’* 14. (Photo by author, 2018)

Cairo (Figure 4.1). The sender, a younger relative and student of his named Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Bārūnī, had written to his former teacher to update him on events in Egypt, and at the Buffalo Agency in particular. This letter, preserved today in the al-Bārūnī family library in Jerba, is a remarkable document for the details it relates. It begins:

We wrote a letter to you previously in which we informed you of our news. We write [now], *sīdī*, about the conditions in Egypt specifically. Studies continue but studying one book with you is better than studying it four times at al-Azhar. Truly, *sīdī*, you teach with advice, exactitude, and deep inquiry. But study at al-Azhar is by recitation (*sardan*), especially at the end of the year. [Usually] they study on most days and on Friday but at the end of the year they study only one day during the month of Rajab.²⁹

²⁹ Makt. al-Bārūniyya MS *rā’ bā’* 14 (dated 17 Sha’b 1272/Apr 22, 1856). The letter is written mostly in a mixed register, with formal Arabic interwoven with either a Jerban or Libyan dialect.

In addition to the flattery of saying that studying at al-Azhar pales in comparison to his former teacher's classes, Muḥammad's description of the institution reflects both recent and longer-term trends in its history during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Even before the arrival of the French, al-Azhar had proved one of the casualties of the unrest of the eighteenth century, a period during which the institution was plagued by violent clashes among students, who rioted over bread and poor living conditions. Factional fights between Syrians and Maghribi students were also a regular feature of that earlier period, although Ibadi students rarely if ever resided in the *riwāq* residence for Maghribi students.³⁰ One of the root causes of problems was the demographic pressure of waves of students from across the empire, who came to Cairo to study at al-Azhar. The attacks on the mosque by the French at the end of the eighteenth century during Sa'īd's time there did not do much to ameliorate the situation. Thinking back to his own time in Cairo, it is easy to imagine Sa'īd chuckling to himself over Muḥammad's complaint about the infrequency of classes.

Additional reasons for Muḥammad's bleak image of al-Azhar can be found in the broader history of Egypt in the early nineteenth century. In the decades since Sa'īd had left Cairo, Muḥammad 'Alī Pāshā and his successors radically altered the political, institutional, military, and environmental landscape of Egypt. Under Muḥammad 'Alī, many of the religious endowments outside Cairo, the likes of which had subsidized the food and lodging of the students at al-Azhar and smaller schools like the Buffalo Agency, were taxed by the government. In addition, Muḥammad 'Alī's reforms included the establishment of schools for training bureaucrats, engineers, linguists, and other specializations, which led to a decline in the importance of an Azhari education. Azhari scholars themselves were drawn away from their home institution to teach in many of these new schools.³¹ Although the success and dominance of those schools proved short-lived, their creation under Muḥammad 'Alī and his successors dealt a blow to the prestige of al-Azhar for decades in the nineteenth century. The biggest pushes toward Egyptian industrialization under Muḥammad 'Alī had largely been thwarted by British interference.³² Nevertheless, his

³⁰ Muşliḥ, *al-Waqf al-jarbī fī Miṣr*, 162–69.

³¹ Sayyid-Marsot, *Egypt in the Reign of Muhammad Ali*, 168; Fahmy, *All the Pāshā's Men*; Heyworth-Dunne, *Introduction*, 395–97.

³² Sayyid-Marsot, *Egypt in the Reign of Muhammad Ali*, 191, 196–231.

successors, especially his nephew ‘Abbās (r. 1848–54) and his son Muḥammad Sa‘īd (r. 1854–63), continued to develop Egypt’s infrastructure, which included the addition of several railway lines and the sale of land for the construction of a canal in the Suez.³³ The canal was only one of the many dramatic changes to the Egyptian environmental landscape.³⁴ These events made up the backdrop of Muḥammad al-Bārūnī’s letter in 1856.

Muḥammad also conveyed important information about life at the Buffalo Agency:

There are no students in Cairo who gather with one another to read. The son of Shaykh Qāsim has married and now sleeps at his home and the same goes for Hajj Sulaymān. Only Ḥājj ‘Abdallāh al-Kabāwī, his cousin *al-faqīh* Sulaymān b. Ḥājj Ayyūb, and Ḥājj Aḥmad b. ‘Iyyād remain at the Agency (*al-wikāla*). I am always saying to Ḥājj ‘Abdallāh, nobody teaches like *sīdī* Shaykh Sa‘īd. I tell him that I want to leave.³⁵

Muḥammad’s mentioning by name of several of the people living at the Agency in the 1850s merits attention. He begins by noting that “the son of Shaykh Qāsim” had recently married and “now sleeps at his home.”³⁶ This was normal practice for Ibadis who stayed for a long time in Cairo.³⁷ They stayed at the Agency during the early years of their residence, but when they married they would have moved elsewhere in the city and returned only to teach.

Two other individuals mentioned here, ‘Abdallāh al-Kabāwī and Sulaymān al-Kabāwī, are both far better known by Muḥammad’s own family name, al-Bārūnī. The first, ‘Abdallāh b. Yaḥyā al-Bārūnī (d. 1914), would go on to become a very prominent scholar back home

³³ For an overview of the period see F. R. Hunter, “Egypt under the Successors of Muḥammad ‘Alī,” in *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, vol. 2, ed. M. W. Daly (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 180–97.

³⁴ Mikhail, *Nature and Empire*; Mikhail, *Under Osman’s Tree*.

³⁵ Makt. al-Bārūniyya MS *rā’ bā’* 14.

³⁶ This would either refer to the rector of the Agency at the time, Sa‘īd b. Qāsim al-Shammākhī (d. 1883) or the son of Qāsim b. Ṣāliḥ al-Kabāwī (d. late nineteenth century). On both individuals see below.

³⁷ Aḥmad Muṣliḥ notes that this remained the case all the way into the twentieth century, when quoting from an interview with a former resident of the Agency who lived there in the in the 1950s: “The Agency (*al-wikāla*) was for the Maghribis . . . equivalent to a hotel . . . sought out at first by the new arrival (*al-wāfid*), after which time he would settle down” (Muṣliḥ, *al-Waqf al-jarbī fī Miṣr*, 169).

in the Jebel Nafusa. He was best known for the establishment of an Ibadi madrasa in the village of Yefren. His reputation also owed much to the promotion efforts of his famous son, Sulaymān Pāshā al-Bārūnī (d. 1940), whom we will encounter in Chapter 5. In 1855 ‘Abdallāh’s cousin Sulaymān b. Ayyūb al-Bārūnī copied a book for the Agency’s rector, Sa’īd al-Shammākhī (also later mentioned by name in the letter), which would end up in the Buffalo Agency’s library.³⁸

Another “al-Kabāwī” whose time at the Agency also overlapped with Muḥammad’s was Qāsim al-Kabāwī, who copied a number of manuscripts at the Agency while staying there in the 1850s. He gifted additional manuscripts copied by others, continuing the tradition begun in the eighteenth century of augmenting the Buffalo Agency’s library through endowments.³⁹ Several manuscripts copied by him would eventually end up in the Agency’s library at the end of the nineteenth century.⁴⁰ Both Qāsim al-Kabāwī and the other person Muḥammad’s letter mentions as having left the Agency, Sulaymān b. Abī Bakr al-Bārūnī, would at different times manage the endowments that maintained the Agency (Chapter 5).

Finally, sons of ‘Iyyād, Aḥmad and Sulaymān, mentioned in the letter, point to the importance of Cairo as a waystation for Ibadi travelers moving throughout the Ottoman Empire. These two did not hail from the famous Jerban Bin ‘Iyyād family (encountered in Chapter 1) but instead were also members of the extended al-Bārūnī family. Aḥmad b. ‘Iyyād had recently returned to Egypt from Oman, where he had collected books. A year after the letter was written Aḥmad was still at the Agency, transcribing a manuscript in which he gave his full name: “Aḥmad b. ‘Iyyād b. Sa’īd b. ‘Īsā al-Bārūnī

³⁸ Makt. al-Khalīlī AK 062 (dated 22 Raj 1271/Apr 10, 1855), copied by Sulaymān b. Ayyūb b. Yūsuf al-Bārūnī al-Nafūsī.

³⁹ Makt. al-Khalīlī AK 089 (dated 1145/1732, endowed by Qāsim b. Šāliḥ al-Kabāwī around 1276/1862); AK 153 (dated 1264/1848), copied by Qāsim b. Šāliḥ al-Kabāwī; Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya MS *bā’* 21113 (dated 18 Raj 1281/Dec 17, 1864).

⁴⁰ Makt. al-Khalīlī AK 138 (dated 1267/1851–52) and AK 153 (dated 1264/1848), both copied by Qāsim b. Šāliḥ al-Kabāwī; Makt. al-Khalīlī AK 157 (dated 1267/1850–51) and AK 179 (n.d., *terminus ante quem* nineteenth century) both bear ownership statements for Qāsim b. Šāliḥ al-Kabāwī; Makt. al-Khalīlī AK 187 (dated 1051/1641); Makt. al-Quṭb MS *bā’* 16 no. 4 (dated 1271/1854–55) and MS *wāw* 48/1 no. 6. (dated 1271/1854–55), both copied by Qāsim b. Šāliḥ al-Kabāwī.

al-Yafranī al-Nafūsī.”⁴¹ His brother, Sulaymān b. ‘Iyyād, is mentioned in the closing lines of the letter as having just left the Agency for Istanbul. The Ottoman capital was home to a large community of Ibadi merchants in the nineteenth century. This was especially the case for Jerban merchants, who dominated the trade in fez hats and lived in a particular quarter of Istanbul.⁴² Sulaymān would also return a few years later to assume responsibility for managing the Ibadi endowments supporting the Buffalo Agency.

Muḥammad, the author of the letter above, knew the people at the Buffalo Agency well because he had already been living there, studying at al-Azhar, and – like so many of his predecessors – copying manuscripts. He copied several texts from the Agency’s library as well as compiling texts written during his time there.⁴³ These included making copies of the correspondence of the Agency’s director, Sa’id al-Shammākhī.⁴⁴ Extant manuscripts in his hand suggest he also brought books with him to the Agency. This was one of the key roles of the institution in expanding the network of circulation of books throughout its history: students and scholars brought books with them to Cairo, which could in turn be copied by the students and scholars at the Agency. In Muḥammad’s case, these likely included books from Jerba but certainly included a volume containing a number of different titles (called a *majmū‘*), which he had copied some twenty years earlier in the summer of 1253/1837 at another agency, known as the Bin Zablaḥ Agency (Wikālat Bin Zablaḥ) in Benghazi. This small detail suggests that there was an Ibadi community in Benghazi in the

⁴¹ Makt. al-Hājj Ṣāliḥ La’alī MS *mīm* 222 (dated 5 Raj 1273/Mar 1, 1857). This name is curious, since it suggests that he is the grandson of the same Sa’id al-Bārūnī to whom the letter is addressed. However, given how large the al-Bārūnī family was, this could just be another member of the family in Nafusa (rather than Jerba) with the same name.

⁴² Bardin, *Algériens et tunisiens*, 18; Tunger-Zanetti, *La communication entre Tunis et Istanbul*, 36–38.

⁴³ Examples specifically mentioning the Wikālat al-Jāmūs as the place of copying: Makt. al-Bārūniyya MS 112, no. 177 in the catalog (dated 5 Jum I 1273/Jan 1, 1857); Makt. al-Bārūniyya MS 48 (dated 27 Ram 1276/Apr 18, 1860); Makt. al-Shaykh Muḥammad b. Sulaymān Ibn Drīsū MS *mīm* 14 (dated 28 Sha’b 1276/Mar 21, 1860); [same volume] (dated late Sha’b 1276)/Mar 1860); Makt. al-Bārūniyya MS 112, no. 205 in the catalog (dated 12 Sha’b 1277/Feb 23, 1861).

⁴⁴ Makt. al-Bārūniyya MS 330 (dated late Rab II 1275/Dec 1858). For details on the contents of this manuscripts see 19 *jīm* in the catalog; *Fihris al-Bārūniyya*, 356.

nineteenth century, since he must have had access to these Ibadi texts while there. Moreover, it reminds us that Ibadis moving from the Maghrib to Egypt would have stopped at several points along the way, including wikalas such as the Buffalo Agency in cities like Tripoli, Benghazi, and Alexandria.

Returning to the letter, Muḥammad also wrote to Saʿīd al-Bārūnī regarding two recent controversies among those studying at the Agency's school. These debates among students and teachers shed light on the methods of instruction at the school as well as the increasingly strong paper-based ties between Omani and Maghribi Ibadis via Cairo. Fittingly, each centered on a passage from a book from one of the two spheres of the Ibadi world: the first issue was a question of syntax from a Mzabi-authored text, the second a question of law from an Omani-authored text.

The director of the Buffalo Agency, Saʿīd al-Shammākhī, had been teaching an Ibadi text from the late eighteenth century entitled the *Kitāb al-Nīl* (Book of the Nile). Its author was a Mzabi scholar, ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Thamīnī (d. 1808), who had studied under several former students of the Buffalo Agency in the eighteenth century (Chapter 3). The book and especially a subsequent commentary (*sharḥ*) on it by a Mzabi scholar, Amḥammad Aṭṭayyish (d. 1914), gained wide circulation in the nineteenth century. This included its use as a kind of legal handbook for Ibadi judges in colonial-era Zanzibari courts at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries.⁴⁵ In the surviving manuscript copy of the *Kitāb al-Nīl* used by al-Shammākhī to teach at the Agency, notes in his hand fill the margins.⁴⁶ In another book from the Agency's library, Saʿīd al-Shammākhī wrote in the margin that he had finished reading it while he was teaching the *Kitāb al-Nīl* at the Buffalo Agency in late December 1855.⁴⁷ The

⁴⁵ Anne K. Bang and Knut S. Vikør, "A Tale of Three Shambas: Shāfī-Ibādī Legal Cooperation in the Zanzibar Protectorate Part I," *Sudanic Africa* 10 (1999): 1–26, at 6; Elke E. Stockreiter, "The Ignorant do not Belong to Any Particular Sect: Legal Practice and Social Identities in Colonial Zanzibar," *Islamic Law and Society* 23, no. 4 (2016): 410–31, at 419. Many thanks to Kimberly Wortmann for these references and for drawing my attention to the book's importance in colonial Zanzibar.

⁴⁶ Makt. al-Khalīlī AK 147 (n.d., endowed late nineteenth century).

⁴⁷ I was unable to locate this manuscript, which is one of the many copies of the *Kitāb al-īdāḥ* that were held in the Agency's library. Sālim Bin Yaʿqūb quoted the dated marginal note by Saʿīd al-Shammākhī in his list of endowed books at the Agency's library: Ibadica Center, Fonds Custers, "Qāʿima," 3.

Kitāb al-Nīl manuscript itself belonged to al-Shammākhī and he had likely brought this copy with him from Jerba. His father, Qāsim al-Shammākhī (d. 1854), had been the first to copy this text and introduce it to Jerba. Qāsim himself had a few years earlier passed through Egypt and spent time at the Agency on his way back from the hajj around 1848.⁴⁸ Qāsim's father (Sa'īd's grandfather), Sulaymān al-Shammākhī, had also served as the imam of the Great Mosque there and it was his position that Sa'īd al-Bārūnī had taken up around 1819 when he moved to Jerba.⁴⁹

In his letter, Muḥammad recounted that as Shaykh Sa'īd al-Shammākhī began reading the *Kitāb al-Nīl*, the group arrived at the end of the book's opening passage, in which the author explains the title. A heated discussion then ensued over an object pronoun and its referent!⁵⁰ Shaykh Sa'īd suggested one explanation and the students and others in attendance disagreed. This passage demonstrates that classes at the Agency followed the model of those at al-Azhar and elsewhere in the Ottoman world. Students seated around their teacher listened to the latter as he (or another student) read from a text, and discussed its meaning. In this case, al-Shammākhī himself weighed in on the issue but did not convince the students. In the letter, Muḥammad beseeched Sa'īd al-Bārūnī to clarify the issue for them in writing.

The second and more complicated issue of the letter regards the arrival of Aḥmad b. 'Iyyād at the Agency with a copy of a "small book from Shaykh Ja'īd." The author of the book in question, Abū Nabḥān Jā'īd b. Khamīs al-Kharūṣī (d. 1822), was an important Ibadi scholar

⁴⁸ On Qāsim al-Shammākhī's life and work see Chapter 5 and Sulṭān b. Mubārak b. Ḥamad al-Shaybānī, *Qāsim b. Sa'īd al-Shammākhī* (Muscat: Baseera Editions, 2015), 11–16.

⁴⁹ Sulaymān himself may also have come through Cairo, since a copy of *al-Da'ā'im* in his hand survives in the Dār al-Kutub (MS *bā'* 22074, n.d., *terminus ante quem* 1234/1819).

⁵⁰ The passage in question is "wa-sammaytuhu bi-al-nīl rijā'an min Allāhi sabḥānuhu wa-ta'ālā an yanfa'a bihi kulla man qara'ahu aw ḥaṣṣalahū aw sa'ā fi shay'in minhu kullu waqtin min ba'da 'aṣrihi." In the printed edition of the definitive commentary on the *Kitāb al-Nīl*, the *Sharḥ kitāb al-nīl*, written by the nineteenth-century Mzabi scholar Amḥammad Aṭfayyish (d. 1332/1914), this sentence requires a full three pages to explain (32–34). In the end, however, Aṭfayyish decided that the *hā'* in 'aṣrihi refers to the time in which the author is living ("asr al-kitāb, ay zamān al-mu'allif"): Muḥammad b. Yūsuf Aṭfayyish, *Sharḥ kitāb al-nīl wa-shifā' al-alīl*, 2nd ed. (Beirut: Dār al-Faṭḥ, 1973), 1:34.

of Oman in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, often credited along with his son Nāṣir b. Jā'id (d. 1847) with helping usher in a period of Ibadi renaissance (*nahḍa*).⁵¹ Oman also witnessed dramatic changes in the same period. After nearly a century and a half under Omani control, the island of Zanzibar had become the seat of the sultanate's power in 1830. In the letter, Muḥammad wrote:

In the book [Jā'id b. Khamīs] talks about how, according to the scholars of the Maghrib, when silk touches the body of someone while praying their prayer is invalidated. Shaykh Jā'id said that this is false and there is no evidence to support it. ... Even the students at the Agency said that Shaykh Jā'id's claim was correct. We told them [that] the scholars of the people of the Maghrib support[ed] with evidence all of what they said in their books.⁵²

⁵¹ Valerie J. Hoffman, "Ibāḍīs in Zanzibar and the Nahḍa," in *Oman, Ibadism, and Modernity*, ed. Abdulrahman Al Salimi and Richard Eisner (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2018), 129–41, at 129; Ghazal, *Islamic Reform and Arab Nationalism*, 21–23. In both cases, these draw on Nūr al-Dīn al-Sālīmī's (d. 1332/1914) *Tuḥfat al-a'yān*, in which Abū Nabḥān is described as "the leader among the people of his time respect to knowledge, grace, and honor. People regarded as an exemplar in the path to their religion's salvation and the reform of their world": Nūr al-Dīn 'Abdallāh al-Sālīmī, *Tuḥfat al-a'yān bi-sīrat ahl 'Umān* (Cairo: al-Maṭba'a al-Salafiyya, 1347), 1:174.

⁵² Makt. al-Bārūniyya MS *rā' bā'* 14. I was unable to identify this book. However, in a recently published edition of the responsa of Jā'id's son, Nāṣir, to a colleague in the Mzab, there is a discussion of the permissibility of wearing silk. In that discussion, Nāṣir distinguishes between the degrees of prohibition: "Ibn al-'Abbās said, 'The Prophet didn't prohibit (*yanḥā*) the wearing of silk for men in the meaning of absolute prohibition (*naby al-taḥrīm*); it is only a *naby* of dislike (*karāhiyya*).' After that, it was impossible to have consensus on the prohibition (*taḥrīm*) of wearing silk as it was on the prohibition of wearing gold. If Ibn al-'Abbās hadn't said that until the Companions died, its prohibition would have been established by consensus, as it was for gold. Our companions, meaning the scholars of our school, follow what most of the Companions say about silk: they permit pure silk in clothing that is less than the width of two fingers; they didn't make any stipulations regarding its length. If the silk is woven with another material, a strip the width of which is less than four fingers is allowed" (Nāṣir b. Jā'id al-Kharūṣī, *al-Ajuwibah al-Maghribiyyah: jawāb al-Shaykh Nāṣir ibn Jā'id ibn Khamīs al-Kharūṣī al-'Umānī 'alā su'ālāt Sa'id ibn Yūsuf al-Wabbī al-Yasjīnī al-Maghribī*, ed. Aḥmad b. Sālim b. Mūsā al-Kharūṣī [Muscat: Dhākirat 'Umān, 2017], 98–99). The distinction here between a full and partial prohibition likely explains the disagreement taking place at the Agency. The identification of this passage, its translation, and its connection to the context here belong to Valerie Hoffman. I am deeply thankful to her for helping me work through this issue and for generously identifying and translating the text.

Muḥammad went on to explain his position and that he recalled hearing about this issue from Saʿīd himself when they were both in Benghazi, likely a reference to the same Bin Zablaḥ Agency (Wikālat Bin Zablaḥ) mentioned above. He added that Saʿīd had written countless letters on issues relating to the opinions of Omani scholars. Here again, Muḥammad requested that Saʿīd write to clarify the issue for the students. This section of the letter reveals a growing interconnectivity among Ibadi communities, and the important role played by the Ibadi community in Cairo in facilitating that contact.

Maghribi Ibadis and their Omani counterparts had of course been in sporadic contact long before the nineteenth century. The pilgrims on the hajj as well as a few individual, intrepid travelers had in earlier periods made their way from the Maghrib to Oman or vice versa.⁵³ Mecca itself would have served as a key site of interaction, bringing together Ibadis just like other Muslims from across the Islamic world. Yet, from the nineteenth century onward, ties among different Ibadi communities became much stronger. Technological changes in that century, such as the advent of print and steam power, would transform communication networks among Ibadis in the Maghrib, Oman, and Zanzibar.⁵⁴ Decades before the advent of those technologies, however, Cairo – and, more precisely, the Buffalo Agency – was already serving as a link between Maghribi Ibadis and their eastern counterparts.⁵⁵

Omanis had on occasion also passed through Cairo prior to the nineteenth century, but a major obstacle stood between them and regular contact with Egypt and the Maghrib: the Red Sea. The same trade in coffee that had made so many Maghribi merchants during the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries fabulously wealthy had also prevented Ibadis in Cairo from regular contact with their Omani confreres. The Ottomans carefully controlled access to the Red Sea trade in coffee, but in the last decades of the eighteenth century their monopoly on the trade began to break. This resulted in part from the policy of the Mamluk

⁵³ Jomier, “Les réseaux étendus.” On the earlier periods see ‘Abd al-Ḥalīm, *al-Ibādiyya fī Miṣr*; Djaabiri, *‘Alāqāt ‘Umān bi-shimāl Ifrīqiyyā*.

⁵⁴ A dramatic example from later in the century is Sulaymān Pāshā al-Bārūnī (d. 1940), on whose tale of mobility see Ghazal, “An Ottoman Pāshā and the End of Empire.”

⁵⁵ Paul M. Love, Jr., “Omani Books and Their Maghribi Readers: Ibadi Textual Exchanges in Ottoman Cairo,” *Nouvelles Chroniques du Manuscrit au Yémen*, Special Issue 3 (2021): 60–80.

beys, who gradually gave European merchants access to the market. In the same era, a lower-quality but cheaper coffee entered the European and Ottoman markets from the Antilles. The Maghribi merchants and their Janissary partners, who had previously dominated the trade in the eighteenth century, had the rug pulled out from under them.⁵⁶

The Ottoman policing of the Red Sea had meant that few merchants, Ibadi or otherwise, from Asia outside Syria and Turkey frequented the streets of Cairo or the ports of Alexandria and Damietta.⁵⁷ The same was true for Egyptian merchants, who until the nineteenth century rarely made it farther east than Jeddah.⁵⁸ When the Red Sea trade opened at the end of the eighteenth century, and especially in the first decades of the nineteenth, communication lines among Ibadis opened wide up. Already in 1808, Saʿīd al-Bārūnī had been copying Omani titles at the Buffalo Agency, but by the time Muḥammad al-Bārūnī was writing to him in 1856, the exchange of books and letters between Maghribi and Omani Ibadis (including those in Zanzibar) was in full swing. Pilgrims continued to play an important role in this process. Chances are that Aḥmad b. ʿIyyād, who brought the book by Jāʿid b. Khamīs to the Agency in the 1850s, made his trip to Oman as an extension of a trip to Mecca. In other cases, however, the link would be more explicit. This was the case one year after Muḥammad wrote his letter, when in 1857 pilgrims arrived at the Buffalo Agency carrying two boxes of manuscripts.

* * *

These two boxes of books carried by Maghribi pilgrims on their return from Mecca contained specific volumes destined for each of the Ibadi communities in the Cairo, Jebel Nafusa, Jerba, and the Mzab. While the authors of these works were mostly Omani Ibadis, the manuscripts had been transcribed not in Oman but in Zanzibar. The East African island had been under Omani control since the eighteenth century, and was home to a small but active Ibadi scholarly community. In 1832, a couple of decades prior to the arrival of these books in Cairo, the sultanate had relocated its court from Oman's mainland to Zanzibar.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ See discussion in Chapter 3.

⁵⁷ Raymond, *Artisans et commerçants*, 1:72; Raymond, "A Divided Sea."

⁵⁸ Suraiya Faroqhi, "Crisis and Change, 1590–1699," in *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*, vol. 2, ed. Halil İnalcık and Donald Quataert (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 411–636, at 516.

⁵⁹ Ghazal, *Islamic Reform and Arab Nationalism*, 23.

These manuscripts sent to Cairo from Zanzibar had been commissioned as endowments by Muḥammad b. Nāṣir al-ʿAlawī (d. late nineteenth century),⁶⁰ who wrote in the letter to the Mzabi scholar Bāba b. Yūnus al-Ghardāwī (d. 1863) the intended destination of each title:

I send to you, our shaykhs, ten Qurans (*maṣāḥif*) and three books. The first book is *al-Kashf wa-al-bayān*,⁶¹ which is two parts in one volume; [the second is] the *Kitāb Jāmiʿ Abī Muḥammad*;⁶² and the third is *Kitāb mukhtaṣar al-khiṣāl*.⁶³ ... Know, too, our shaykhs, that I have endowed these ten Qurans and three books for you, the people of Mzab (*ahl Maṣʿab*) for scholars and students until the Day of Resurrection. ... I likewise sent to Nafusa the same as I sent to you: ten Qurans and three books ... [and] to the island of Jerba I likewise sent ten Qurans and three books like yours.

I [also] sent to Shaykh Saʿīd ... al-Shammākhī the Jerban, who resides in Egypt, two books ... the *Kitāb Daqqāq aʿnāq ahl al-nifāq*⁶⁴ by Shaykh Jāʿid b. Khamīs al-Kharūṣī ... and the *Jāmiʿ Abī Ḥasan*. ... I sent them in two boxes – the Qurans in one box and the nine books in the hands of our two friends Muḥammad b. Sulaymān ... al-Mundhirī and Saʿīd ... al-Saqrī, so that they could give them to pilgrims from among ... your friends from the people of Nafusa, Jerba, and Mzab. ... Please let me know of the arrival of the Qurans and the books ... 7 Shaʿbān 1273 [April 1, 1857].⁶⁵

A postscript to the letter also brought news of a big change to the Ibadi community of the Indian Ocean: “I write this with haste: Sayyid Saʿīd

⁶⁰ Muḥammad b. Nāṣir al-ʿAlawī. I have not identified this person with certainty, but his name resembles that of his contemporary Muḥammad b. Nāṣir al-Mī walī, on whom see Bābā ammī et al., eds., *Muʿjam al-aʿlām al-ibāḍiyya, qism al-mashriq*, 430.

⁶¹ Custers, *al-Ibāḍiyya*, 1:423–24. ⁶² Ibid., 127–29. ⁶³ Ibid., 169–70.

⁶⁴ This manuscript is today held in the Makt. al-Khalīlī, AK 028 (n.d., but carries the date 19 Shaʿb 1273/Apr 13, 1857, when the book was handed over to Maghribi pilgrims in Mecca bound for Cairo). On the work itself see Custers, *al-Ibāḍiyya*, 1:285–86.

⁶⁵ Reproduced in Muṣliḥ, *al-Waqf al-jarbī fī Miṣr*, 211–12. The letter is labeled “A letter of Muḥammad b. Nāṣir al-ʿAlawī (Zanjibār) ilā al-maghāribā (Saʿīd b. Qāsim al-Shammākhī) maʿ al-ḥujjāj yaʿlimuhum bi-waqfihī maṣāḥif wa-kutub ʿalā ṭalabat al-ʿilm bi-Mizāb wa-Nafūsa wa-Jarba.” Saʿīd al-Shammākhī was not the intended addressee, however, since al-ʿAlawī names his addressee as “Bāba b. Yūnus Bilḥāj Aḥmad al-Ḥujjājī al-Ghardāwī al-Maṣʿabī al-Nafūṣī” (210). Muṣliḥ notes that “the original” contains errors in a footnote, but never gives any indication where the letter comes from. Like many of the documents of this kind in his study, it likely came from a manuscript copy in the library of Sālim Bin Yaʿqūb.

b. Sulṭān [al-Būsaʿīdī, the ruler of Muscat and Oman] died at sea. He was buried on the island of Zanzibar.”⁶⁶ The death of Saʿīd b. Sulṭān (r. 1806–56), which had occurred in October 1856, would split the sultanate in two shortly after Muḥammad al-ʿAlawī dispatched his books. Two of his sons claimed the right to rule in Zanzibar and Oman.⁶⁷ Muḥammad would then have dispatched the letter and the books with the two messengers heading to Mecca sometime around August 1857, just prior to the hajj pilgrimage season.⁶⁸

The letter indicates that there had been previous missives between the scholars of the Mzab and al-ʿAlawī but that it had been years since the last letter arrived.⁶⁹ Communication between Omani/Zanzibari Ibadis and their Maghribi counterparts gradually increased from the early nineteenth century onward. At least one of the books sent to Jerba ended up in the library of Saʿīd al-Bārūnī, where it remains today.⁷⁰ This letter, along with a few of the books intended for the Mzab, did not make it to the Mzab.⁷¹ Instead, they remained in Cairo with Saʿīd al-Shammākhī, whom we encountered above teaching the

⁶⁶ Ibid., 212. ⁶⁷ Ghazal, *Islamic Reform and Arab Nationalism*, 13–14.

⁶⁸ He names these individuals in the letter as Muḥammad b. Sulaymān b. Saʿīd al-Mundhirī and Saʿīd b. ʿAlī al-Saqrī. In the notes on the manuscripts themselves that have survived (Makt. al-Khalilī AK 113 [dated 21 Muḥ 1273/Sep 21, 1856]; AK 028; AK 026 [dated 14 Rab II 1273/Dec 12, 1856]; AK 027 [19 Shaʿb 1273/Apr 13, 1857]) there are notes by another person, Sālim b. Muḥammad b. Khamīs al-Mundhirī, that he is passing the books on to pilgrims. One of these notes (AK 026–27) is dated 19 Shaʿb 1273/Apr 13, 1857, just two weeks after Muḥammad b. Nāṣir al-ʿAlawī signed his letter to Bāba b. Yūnus al-Ghardāwī (on 7 Shaʿb 1273/Apr 1, 1857).

⁶⁹ Some of his correspondence with the Mzab is held in the Omani National Archives: OM.NRAA.B.14.1.3 (1263/1847), which is a letter from Muḥammad al-Mʿalawī (*sic*) to Sulaymān b. ʿUmar in the Mzab; OM.NRAA.B.14.1.1 (1273/1857), which is a copy of the letter quoted above from Muḥammad b. Nāṣir to Bāba b. Yūnus regarding the endowment of books; OM.NRAA.B.14.1.2 (1266/1850), which is the previous letter sent by al-Maʿlawī to Bāba b. Yūnus regarding the transfer of money for use in the Mzab; OM.NRAA.C3.1.18 (1273–1385/1857–1966), which is a larger collection containing letters and other personal documents from East Africa and appears to contain at least some documents connected to Muḥammad b. Nāṣir al-ʿAlawī. The originals of the first three documents are held today in libraries cataloged by the Muʿassasat ʿAmmī Saʿīd in Ghardāia, Algeria. The correspondence is also referred to in Bābā ʿammī et al., eds. *Muʿjam aʿlām al-ibāḍiyya*, 2:72; Custers, *al-Ibāḍiyya*, 2:156.

⁷⁰ Makt. al-Bārūniyya MS 87 (dated Raj 1272/Mar–Apr 1856). See full description under no. 126 in *Fihris al-Bārūniyya*, 139.

⁷¹ Makt. al-Khalilī AK 113; AK 028; AK 026; AK 027.

Kitāb al-Nīl at the Buffalo Agency, and who was at the time director of Ibadi endowments in Cairo.

* * *

Saʿīd al-Shammākhī came from a line of respected scholars in the Jebel Nafusa and Jerba. His father Qāsim composed an important commentary and his grandfather, Sulaymān, had served as the imam of the Great Mosque of Jerba until his death in 1819. Saʿīd came to Cairo in 1842, accompanied by his close friend ʿAbdallāh al-Bārūnī.⁷² The two studied together at al-Azhar for several years before teaching at the Buffalo Agency, which is where they both were in 1856 when Muḥammad al-Bārūnī wrote his letter to Jerba discussed above. ʿAbdallāh would return to the Jebel Nafusa to establish a school in the town of Yefren, although the two exchanged letters and poetry for years after that.⁷³ Saʿīd al-Shammākhī traveled to Tunis for a short time before coming to Cairo, where he remained until his death in 1883.⁷⁴ It was likely in the same year as Muḥammad's letter (1856) that Saʿīd assumed the directorship of the Buffalo Agency, meaning that he managed the endowments that supported both the building and its residents.⁷⁵

Manuscripts belonging to or used by Saʿīd al-Shammākhī, along with fragmentary correspondence connected to him, tell us about these early years of his life as a scholar and trader. Saʿīd's private library held manuscripts acquired both in Jerba and in Cairo. As for the former, these consisted of a handful of Ibadi titles he had either inherited or purchased, including from his father Qāsim or his grandfather Sulaymān.⁷⁶ As noted

⁷² His son, Qāsim, wrote that his father arrived in Cairo in Rabī I 1247 (Aug–Sep 1842). “Tārīkh al-muʿallif,” in Qāsim b. Saʿīd al-Shammākhī, *Kitāb sard al-ḥujja ʿalā ahl al-ghufla* (Alexandria: al-Maṭbaʿa al-Ibrāhīmiyya, 1892), 2.

⁷³ Later published as part of al-Bārūnī's *Hādhā al-kitāb mushtamal ʿalā diwān ... al-allāma al-Shaykh ʿAbdallāh al-Bārūnī* (lithograph, n.p., n.d.), e.g. see pp. 33–40. The two were very close, and al-Bārūnī would also compose a eulogy for al-Shammākhī following the latter's death (ibid., 67–70).

⁷⁴ I am not certain of the precise amount of time he spent in Tunis but a manuscript with his ownership statement, collated in 1256/1840 at a mosque in Tunis, suggests he was there at that time. See Makt. al-Khalīlī, AK 186.

⁷⁵ Muṣliḥ, *al-Waqf al-jarbī fī Miṣr*, 216.

⁷⁶ Makt. al-Khalīlī AK 201 (n.d., *terminus ante quem* early nineteenth century) (Sulaymān); Makt. al-Quṭb MS *hāʾ* 1/1 no. 9 (dated 1252/1836–37); Makt. al-Quṭb MS *uāw* 31/1 no. 10 (883/1478–79) (Qāsim); Makt. al-Khalīlī AK 119 (brought from Jerba); possibly Makt. al-Quṭb MS *dād* 16 no. 26 (1180/1766) and Makt. Bin Yaʿqūb MS 29b. Additional manuscripts that previously

above, the copy of the *Kitāb al-Nīl* he brought with him to Cairo and with which he taught at the Buffalo Agency likely belonged to his grandfather, who is credited with having been the first to copy the work in Jerba. It was in Cairo, however, that he acquired many books that would ultimately end up in the Agency's library.

His first major acquisition of manuscripts was in 1855, when he purchased the library of the late 'Umar al-Bārūnī.⁷⁷ Two manuscripts from the Buffalo Agency's library that previously belonged to al-Shammākhī bear notes that he purchased the library of 'Umar al-Bārūnī from his family.⁷⁸ This appears to have been after the library had been inherited by his son, Yaḥyā b. 'Umar al-Bārūnī, who had brought a book to Cairo from Oman in the 1820s as a gift for Jerbans in Egypt.⁷⁹ It may have been through this same library that Sa'īd acquired a book that had been sold twice in Zanzibar, once in 1784 and again in 1821–22, before making its way to Cairo.⁸⁰ In the

belonged to other members of the al-Shammākhī family likely also came to Cairo with Sa'īd. For example, Makt. Bin Ya'qūb MS 46 (late Rab I 1250/Jul–Aug 1834) is a *majmū'* that includes part of "Ḥāshiyat al-Jamal 'alā 'Isām" with the ownership statement of Sa'īd's brother: "milk min amlāk Aḥmad b. al-Shaykh Qāsim b. Sulaymān al-Shammākhī"; Makt. Bin Ya'qūb MS 73 (nineteenth century) is another *majmū'* containing texts by Qāsim b. Sulaymān al-Shammākhī and Aḥmad a-Shammākhī, both of which have marginal notes in Sa'īd's hand.

⁷⁷ This is probably 'Umar b. Yaḥyā al-Bārūnī, whose father corresponded with Sa'īd al-Bārūnī. Sālim Bin Ya'qūb owned MS fragments from his father Yaḥyā, including a *taqrīr* on the *Kitāb al-Nīl* and a letter to Sa'īd al-Bārūnī (Makt. Bin Ya'qūb MS 11 [various dates, *terminus ante quem* 1172/1758–59]). The marginal notes for these were written in Sa'īd al-Shammākhī's hand. This *majmū'* appears to have belonged to al-Shammākhī, since it also includes random texts in his hand. It could, however, also refer to 'Umar b. Šālih al-Bārūnī, who also knew Sa'īd al-Shammākhī. The latter 'Umar wrote an ownership statement in one of Sa'īd al-Shammākhī's manuscripts today: Makt. al-Bārūniyya MS 133 (n.d.).

⁷⁸ Makt. al-Khalilī AK 134 (dated 5 Jum II 1134/Mar 23, 1722); Makt. al-Khalilī AK 159 (dated 1197/1783–84).

⁷⁹ Sālim Bin Ya'qūb's catalog of endowed books from the Buffalo Agency, written in the 1930s, includes a copy of a *Hāshiyat kitāb al-dalā'il fī al-lawāzīm wa-al-wasā'il* by Darwish b. Jum'a al-'Umānī (d. 1080/1670). Bin Ya'qūb added a note that this manuscript was "an endowment of Shaykh Aḥmad b. Sayf al-Būsa'īdī al-'Umānī, which he endowed for the people of the island [of Jerba] and sent to Egypt in the hands of Shaykh Yaḥyā b. 'Umar al-Bārūnī in Rabī I 1240 [Oct–Nov 1824]" (Ibadica Center, Fonds Custers, "Qā'ima," 7). I have not been able to locate this manuscript.

⁸⁰ Makt. al-Khalilī AK 065 (3 Šafr 1199/Dec 16, 1784). This manuscript carries a few ownership statements. The first folio (fol. 1.a) bears one dated 1237, which

same year as he purchased the al-Bārūnī library, Saʿīd requested that another resident at the Agency copy a book for him entitled the *Kitāb al-Maʿālim fī al-tawḥīd*.⁸¹ Its author, ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Thamīnī, was the same Mzabi scholar who wrote the *Kitāb al-Nīl*. Since this title does not seem to have been in the Buffalo Agency’s library at the time, chances are that its exemplar was a book owned by someone visiting the Agency from the Mzab.

During al-Shammākhī’s tenure, additional books passed through the Buffalo Agency that may not have originally been donations but never left. For example, two books by the nephew of the ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Thamīnī, Ibrāhīm al-Thamīnī (d. 1808), were brought to the Agency by Amḥammad b. Abī Nuh (al-Maṣʿabī?) sometime after their transcription in Istanbul in 1859.⁸² Both manuscripts bear statements of loan to Saʿīd al-Shammākhī, as do other books in the library, since he often borrowed books from the Buffalo Agency and added marginal commentary to them.⁸³

Why would someone like al-Shammākhī, who was already residing at the Buffalo Agency, bother to write a statement of loan in the books there? A marginal note from his library offers an answer. In one of the books inherited by Saʿīd from his father Qāsim, there appears the following note: “Praise be to God. . . . This book has become the property of Shaykh Saʿīd, the son of the late Shaykh Qāsim

notes that it was purchased in the souk of Zanzibar and belonged to Saʿīd b. ʿĀmir b. Maṣʿūd al-Rāʾī. A few folios later (fol. 5.a) there appears Saʿīd al-Shammākhī’s ownership statement, along with another one noting that it had previously belonged to Ḥasan b. Saʿīd al-Rustāqī in 3 Šafr 1199 (Dec 16, 1784).

⁸¹ Makt. al-Khalīlī AK 062 (dated 22 Raj 1271/Apr 10, 1855), copied by Sulaymān b. Ayyūb b. Yūsuf al-Barūnī al-Nafūsī. The colophon notes it was copied for Saʿīd al-Shammākhī.

⁸² Makt. al-Khalīlī AK 095 (dated 3 Shaʿb 1275/Mar 8, 1859). The inside cover bears an endowment statement: “milk li-Amuḥammad b. Banūḥ muḥabbas ʿalā ṭalabat ʿilm min dhuriyyatihi aw dhuriyyat akhwānihi . . .”; Makt. al-Khalīlī AK 097 (dated 10 Shaʿb 1275/Mar 15, 1859). This manuscript bears no waqf statement but fol. 1.a bears an ownership statement for “Muḥammad b. Abī Nūḥ al-Maṣʿabī” and the colophon notes that it was copied in Istanbul (rendered as “Qusṭaṭna” [sic]). It also carries a statement of loan for Saʿīd al-Shammākhī. Based on these paratexts, it seems that these were not originally meant as donations to the Agency. Instead, they likely joined the collection when they were transferred from the private library of al-Shammākhī to the Agency at the end of the nineteenth century (discussed in Chapter 5).

⁸³ Examples include Makt. al-Khalīlī AK 183 (dated 10 Muḥ 1065/Nov 20, 1654); Makt. al-Khalīlī AK 205[b] (n.d., but the endowment statement is dated 1172/1758–59).

a-Shammakhi. [Saʿīd] now resides in Cairo as of today, 14 Safr 1269 [Nov 27, 1852] in Bulaq.”⁸⁴ The Bulaq quarter on the banks of the Nile River was home to a large Maghribi community. This included many Jerbans, especially those involved in the lucrative trade in olive oil (Chapter 1). Saʿīd’s choice to live outside the Agency likely stemmed from a few factors. Two of them are quite clear. The first was that by this point Saʿīd was married and it was likely that Muḥammad al-Bārūnī had been referring to him when he wrote in his letter that “the son of Shaykh Qāsim has married and now sleeps at his home.” In 1857, the same year in which the boxes of books arrived from Zanzibar, Saʿīd’s own son, Qāsim, was born. An additional reason was financial: like so many other Ibadi Maghribi scholars, he was also a merchant.

His prominence as a merchant is evidenced by the appearance of his signature on a letter to the Husaynid bey of Tunisia dated a year later, in 1858–59, in which “the merchants residing in Egypt from the *Eyalet Tunis* [the Ottoman province of Tunisia], the respectable people of the island of Jerba” request the appointment of a *wakīl* to represent their commercial interests on behalf of the bey in Egypt.⁸⁵ Their candidate, ‘Umar al-Zuwārī, like most *wakīls* in the nineteenth century, was a Jerban. The signatures appearing alongside that of Saʿīd al-Shammākhī demonstrate the commercial ties between the Jerba and Egypt in the mid-nineteenth century. Above each signature also appears each man’s seal – a must-have for any man of standing in nineteenth-century Egypt.⁸⁶

Specific names on the letter also speak to the ties between commerce and the Ibadi community in Egypt, in particular. Below al-Shammākhī’s name appears that of his friend ‘Abdallāh al-Bārūnī, who at the time was still living at the Buffalo Agency. Also legible is the signature of ‘Umar Bin Taʿārīt, a Jerban Ibadi merchant based in Alexandria. His grandson, Saʿīd Bin Taʿārīt (d. 1875), studied under Saʿīd al-Bārūnī at the Great Mosque in Jerba. He composed an

⁸⁴ Makt. al-Quṭb *hāʾ* 1/1 no. 9; cited in Šālih Syūsyū, “Mašādir maktabat al-quṭb Aṭfayyish min khārij al-jazāʾir,” *El-Minhāj: dawriyya ʿilmiyya mutakhaṣṣisa fī makhtūṭāt al-ibāḍiyya wa wādī mizāb fī withāʾ iqihā al-arshifiyya* 2 (2013): 132–61, at 149.

⁸⁵ ANT H 231 441, “Savants et commerçants tunisiens en Égypte,” doc. 5.

⁸⁶ On seal rings in nineteenth-century Egypt see Edward William Lane, *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London: Gardner, 1895), 48–49.

important work on the history of the Ibadi community in Jerba in 1856 while living in Alexandria.⁸⁷ The Bin Ta'ārīt family was one of many Maghribi Ibadi families in the city of Alexandria, which as a major Mediterranean trade hub attracted many from nearby Jerba. Tunisians in Egypt were often represented by two *wakīls*, one representing Alexandria and the other in Cairo. In some cases, such as this one, the *wakīl* represented merchants from both cities. The signature of Sa'īd al-Shammākhī on this petition to the bey in 1858–59 is fitting, since, as we will see in Chapter 5, he would be appointed to this very position a decade later.

In the intervening years Sa'īd would delegate control of the Buffalo Agency's endowments to others residing there. These included three people mentioned in Muḥammad al-Bārūnī's letter to Jerba: Sulaymān b. Abī Bakr al-Bārūnī (ca. 1862–63 until 1864); Sulaymān b. 'Iyyād al-Bārūnī (1864–72; 1874–94); and Qāsim al-Kabāwī (1872–74).⁸⁸ These last two delegates would manage most of the everyday affairs of the agency after 1871, when Sa'īd began his new position as the *wakīl* for the bey of Tunis.

* * *

The first half of the nineteenth century marked an important period of both continuity and change for the Buffalo Agency and the Ibadi community of Cairo. Students such as Sa'īd al-Bārūnī, arriving at the end of the eighteenth century, or his student Muḥammad al-Bārūnī, arriving in the mid-nineteenth century, continued a centuries-old tradition of Maghribi Ibadis traveling to Cairo to study at al-Azhar. Like those who came before them, they took up residence at the Agency, copied manuscripts in its library, and debated texts with the students and scholars who lived there. At the same time, they were living in an Egypt transformed by political upheaval, changes to its relationship to the Ottoman capital, a different role for the Egyptian economy in the region of the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, and the rise of Muḥammad 'Alī and a new vision for the role of education in Egyptian society.

⁸⁷ Bin Ta'ārīt, "Risāla fī tārikh Jarba."

⁸⁸ See "Asmā' al-nāzirīn 'alā waqf al-ṭalaba bi-Ṭulūn wa-a'māluhum wa-tārikhuhum," in Muṣliḥ, *al-Waqf al-jarbi fī Miṣr*, 215–17.

In some cases, Ibadis would have felt the consequences of the economic marginalization of Maghribi merchants in Egypt. The prosperous economy of the previous century had been in part responsible for the establishment of endowments that had allowed the Agency to function and to grow its library. Perhaps for this reason, the first half of the nineteenth century saw a larger number of works copied there rather than added to its library. While most Ibadi merchants in this period may not have been as wealthy as many of those in the previous century, business continued.

The opening of the Red Sea economy to non-Egyptian actors coincided with an increasingly open flow of letters, books, and people between Ibadis in the Maghrib and their Omani (and Zanzibari) confreres. The early career of Saʿīd al-Shammākhī exemplifies the key role that Cairo, and the Buffalo Agency in particular, played in linking these two spheres of Ibadism. Like his contemporaries, Saʿīd came to Cairo to study at al-Azhar. Unlike many others, however, he remained in Cairo for much of his life and took on a leadership role at the Agency. His correspondence with the Mzab and Oman reflects the centrality of Cairo as a site of east–west Ibadi interaction. When Muḥammad al-ʿAlawī sent Omani books from Zanzibar to the Maghrib, he also included manuscripts for the benefit of Saʿīd and his students in Cairo, confident that the titles would be relayed to their Maghribi destinations. Debates between Saʿīd and the students and scholars of the Buffalo Agency over the two books mentioned in Muḥammad al-Bārūnī’s letter, one from the Mzab and the other from Oman, highlight this same role of Cairo as a site of linkage.

Finally, Saʿīd’s prominence in the Maghribi community in Cairo extended beyond the Agency’s walls. His signature and those of other Jerban Ibadis on a letter to the bey of Tunisia, requesting the appointment of a *wakīl*, portended the new role Saʿīd himself would play a decade later. The second half of the nineteenth century would witness new types of Ibadi engagements with Egyptian and Ottoman society.

5 | *The Diplomat and the Printer*

In spring 1871, after two decades of serving as director and teacher at the Buffalo Agency, Sa'īd al-Shammākhī took on a new role as a commercial and diplomatic agent (*wakīl*) for the Husaynid bey of Tunisia, Muḥammad al-Ṣādiq (r. 1859–82). For the next ten years al-Shammākhī would write hundreds of letters to the grand viziers of Tunisia and other officials in the government, reporting on the commercial, agricultural, and political affairs of Egypt. Today preserved at the Tunisian National Archives (ANT), al-Shammākhī's correspondence records the political events of the 1870s in vivid detail.¹ In addition, it offers a window into the life of an Ibadi diplomat, who maintained connections to the ruling households of both late Ottoman Tunisia and Egypt as well as to the commercial and religious communities of Maghribis in Cairo and Alexandria. Although his career would end in 1881 with the abolition of his office following the invasion of Tunisia by the French and the establishment of the Protectorate, his decade in office is a remarkable testament to the links between the Ibadi community of Egypt and the Ottoman world.

One year before the French invaded Tunisia, a contemporary of al-Shammākhī living at the Buffalo Agency made his own career change. In 1880 Muḥammad al-Bārūnī, a young man originally from the Jebel Nafusa, transitioned from the life of an Azhari scholar to that of an entrepreneur when he went into business with his merchant colleagues to establish the first Ibadi print house: al-Bārūnī Press (al-Maṭba'a al-Bārūniyya). Al-Bārūnī's press proved to be the first of many Ibadi printing enterprises over the next several decades that would produce editions of new and classical Ibadi texts as well as periodicals.

¹ Sa'īd al-Shammākhī's correspondence is today held in a file under his name: ANT H 231 438, "Taḳārīr wa-murāsālāt Sa'īd al-Shammākhī wakīl al-dawla al-tūnisiyya bi-al-Qāhira." Additional documents authored by or related to him are found in ANT H 222 378, "Affaires des Tunisiens résidents en Turquie" and ANT H 231 441, "Savants et commerçants Tunisiens en Egypte."

This chapter tells the connected stories of Saʿīd al-Shammākhī and Muḥammad al-Bārūnī to show how Ibadis in Cairo participated in the political, religious, technological, and cultural transformations sweeping Egypt, Tunisia, and the larger Ottoman world in the closing decades of the nineteenth century. On the one hand, their stories offer evidence of remarkable continuity with the experiences of earlier Ibadi communities in Egypt. On the other, the two careers represent significant departures from the world of their coreligionists in previous centuries.

Similar to their predecessors, these two men symbolize the involvement of Ibadi merchants and scholars in the Ottoman political, economic, and cultural realms. Like generations of Ibadis in Cairo before him, Saʿīd al-Shammākhī was a scholar and merchant who represented his coreligionists and compatriots from Tunisia to the Ottoman government there. In the eighteenth century the *shaykh al-tujjār* or *shaykh al-maghāriba* in Tulun had also played the vital role of intermediary between the state and the Ibadi Maghribi merchant community. The class of long-distance merchants (*tujjār*) to which they belonged “were more than just businessmen: they often enjoyed close relations with political and military rulers, serving as diplomats, administrators, and suppliers of essential resources.”² Yet the nature of governance, the legal system, and the role of merchants in Ottoman Cairo had not remained static, and “by the mid-19th century, decisive changes had undermined the merchants’ multiple roles ... [and] these processes resulted in stripping the merchants of many of their capacities and areas of jurisdiction, transforming them into mere merchants by the middle of the century.”³ Also unlike the *shaykh al-tujjār* or the *shaykh al-maghāriba* of Tulun in centuries past, al-Shammākhī had a distinct role as the political and commercial representative of the bey. This role demanded that he cultivate a familiar relationship with the khedive, who ruled on behalf of the Ottoman sultan, and the key figures in the bey’s government in Tunisia. His relationship to the Ottoman ruling families of both provinces placed al-Shammākhī in a new position of influence as a representative of Ibadis in Cairo and beyond.

Muḥammad al-Bārūnī and Ibadi print culture in late nineteenth-century Egypt likewise represent elements of both continuity and change. As the first lithograph Ibadi print house, al-Bārūnī Press

² Ghazaleh, “Trading in Power,” 72. ³ Ibid.

clearly marked an important point of departure. At the same time, the press relied upon existing Ibadi networks of communication linking Egypt with the Maghrib, Oman, and East Africa to acquire, finance, and distribute texts. In this chapter I situate al-Bārūnī Press in a broader landscape of private printing and Ibadi political and religious networks connecting these different regions. In terms of both the circumstances of their production and how they were used, printed books mirror the manuscript book culture that preceded them and persisted unabated alongside their appearance. Finally, the choices of which titles to print, whether classical or contemporary, reveal the ways in which Ibadi print activities were similar to and different from their Sunni contemporaries in this period.

Both al-Shammākhī and al-Bārūnī spent time as young men studying and living at the Buffalo Agency, maintaining connections to it and the students, scholars, and merchants who passed through it even long after they moved on to new careers. In addition to being contemporaries, the two men likewise shared an overlapping network of interlocutors in Egypt and throughout the Maghrib, Zanzibar, and Oman. Taken together, the lives of al-Shammākhī and al-Bārūnī encapsulate many of the transformations to northern Africa and the broader Ottoman world in the second half of the nineteenth century. More specific to the Ibadis, they demonstrate the ways in which the Agency remained an anchor of the Ibadi community of Cairo in this era of rapid change.

* * *

By the mid-nineteenth century Saʿīd al-Shammākhī had risen to prominence in the Maghribi merchant community of Egypt and international Ibadi networks of communication. As a scholar, his private correspondence included some of the towering figures of Ibadi Islam of the period, such as the scholar Amḥammad Aṭfayyish (1820–1914) in Algeria and the soon-to-be leader of a revolution to reestablish an Ibadi imamate in Oman, Saʿīd b. Khalfān al-Khalīlī (d. 1874).⁴

His reputation and standing beyond Ibadi circles became clear when, in spring 1871, Saʿīd assumed the role of *wakīl* (agent) for the Husaynid ruler of Tunis, Muḥammad al-Ṣādiq Bey (r. 1859–82).

⁴ For his correspondence with al-Khalīlī see al-Shaybānī, *Qāsim b. Saʿīd al-Shammākhī*, 18. Letters between Amḥammad Aṭfayyish and al-Shammākhī include correspondence on questions of fiqh. See, e.g., Makt. al-Quṭb *alif wāw* 21 (dated Rab I 1273/Oct–Nov 1856).

Much as in Egypt, the Husaynid beys of Tunis ruled their territory on behalf of the Ottoman sultan with a degree of autonomy relative to other parts of the empire.⁵ After acquiring the ability to appoint their own successors and to grant titles in the late eighteenth century, the beys of Tunis had also begun designating individuals as *wakīls* to represent the commercial interests of the bey and his merchant subjects abroad.⁶ Before considering the roles and responsibilities of the *wakīl* and Saʿīd's time in that office, the circumstances of his appointment merit consideration. How did the director of the Buffalo Agency become the representative of the bey of Tunis in Cairo?

After a brief stay in Tunis as a student, Said relocated to Cairo. In the three decades between his arrival in Cairo as a student in 1842 and his appointment as *wakīl* in 1871, al-Shammākhī had studied at al-Azhar and taught at the Buffalo Agency (Chapter 4). By 1852 he was living in the suburb and bustling Nile port of Bulaq, where he also worked as a merchant like so many of his Jerban contemporaries in Cairo.⁷ He continued to frequent the Buffalo Agency and to manage its endowments until 1862, when he delegated that responsibility to another Ibadi colleague, Sulaymān b. Abī Bakr al-Bārūnī. Saʿīd would formally remain the director of the endowments until his death in 1883, but

⁵ On the origins of the Husaynid dynasty vis-à-vis the Ottomans see Leon Carl Brown, "The Ottoman Connection and the Emergence of the Husaynid Dynasty," in *The Tunisia of Aḥmad Bey 1837–1855* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), 27–40; Perkins, *A History of Modern Tunisia*, 15–43; François Arnoulet, "Les rapports tuniso-ottomans de 1848 à 1881 d'après les documents diplomatiques," *Revue de l'Occident musulman et de la Méditerranée* 47 (1988): 143–52. For earlier periods and a historiographical discussion of Tunisian autonomy see Asma Moalla, *The Regency of Tunis and the Ottoman Porte, 1777–1814: Army and Government of a North-African Eyālet at the End of the Eighteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 2004), esp. xiii–xxiii.

⁶ Bardin, *Algériens et tunisiens*, 21–26; Tunger-Zanetti, *La communication entre Tunis et Istanbul*, 69–77; Mehdi Jerad, "Les agents des beys de Tunis au XIXe siècle. Entre intérêts de pouvoir et enjeux marchands," *Cahiers de la Méditerranée [En ligne]* 98 (2019), available at <http://journals.openedition.org/cdlm/11398>.

⁷ The autograph copy of al-Shammākhī's father's *Lu'lu' fi 'ilm al-tawḥīd* (dated 1252/1836–37) carries a marginal note that reads: "This [book] became the possession of al-shaykh Saʿīd b. al-marḥūm al-shaykh Qāsim al-Shammākhī. He (Saʿīd) now resides in Cairo, Egypt, 14 Šafr 1269 [Nov 26, 1852], Būlāq": Makt. al-Quṭb MS *hā'* 1/1 no. 9. See full description in Syūsūy, "Mašādir maktabat al-quṭb Aṭfayyish min khārij al-jazā'ir," 149.

from the 1860s onward he became increasingly involved with the Tunisian merchant community in Cairo.⁸

While it is not clear which trade he worked in, al-Shammākhī was clearly successful. His relocation to the posh suburb of Bulaq and the purchase of land and livestock in the province of al-Sharqiyya clearly marked his financial success.⁹ Based on manuscript notes from his personal library, he also had money to spend on books, including the purchase of the library of Jerban merchant ‘Umar al-Bārūnī and many other manuscripts over the course of the 1850s and 1860s.¹⁰ A combination of commercial success, prominence as an Azhari and Ibadi scholar, and political connections in both Egypt and Tunisia no doubt led to his appointment as *wakīl*. A striking example of his political ties comes from an anecdote about his troubled relationship with his son, Qāsim.

Qāsim was born in Egypt in 1857, during the reign of Sa‘īd Pāshā (r. 1854–63). In the preceding decades under the rule of Muḥammad ‘Alī and his immediate successors, Egypt had grown more and more autonomous as an Ottoman province. Aggressive reforms to education, infrastructure, and industry meant that the paths to success in the 1860s and 1870s looked different for Qāsim than they had for his father.¹¹ He spoke and wrote Arabic like his Egyptian contemporaries, including in the *ruqa’a* script. Like many young men of his generation he sought to avoid a strictly religious education, and instead hoped to

⁸ Muşliḥ, *al-Waqf al-jarbī fī Mişr*, 216.

⁹ He mentions his landholdings at various points in the correspondence. For example: letter to Mustafā Khaznadār, dated 29 Jum I 1289, ANT H 231 438, doc. 45. Al-Shammākhī specifies in a marginal note dated 13 Rab II 1297 (Mar 24, 1880) that he wrote the note in “our estate (*‘izbatinā*) in al-Sharqiyya” (Makt. al-Khalīlī AK 048). Şultān al-Shaybānī, who published two marginal notes by al-Shammākhī that appear in this manuscript, identified references to al-Shammākhī’s estate as toponyms and suggests that he transcribed the notes in “al-Ab‘ādiyya,” a village in Damhanhūr. My reading of the first is *‘izba* and the second is *ab‘ādiyya*, both of which would refer to country estates or farms.

¹⁰ A marginal note in a copy of Abū Ghānim al-Khurasānī’s *al-Mudawwana* carries the following note in Sa‘īd al-Shammākhī’s hand: “Hādhihi mudawwanat al-‘umānī ishtaraytuhā min warathat al-marḥūm al-shaykh ‘Umar al-Bārūnī.” Another further clarifies: “thumma dakhlat fī mulk kātibihi Sa‘īd al-Shammākhī bi-al-shirā’ ma’a baqī al-kutub sanat 1272” (Makt. al-Khalīlī AK 134, dated 5 Jum II 1134/Mar 23, 1722).

¹¹ Qāsim al-Shammākhī composed his autobiography as an appendix to one of his books: “Tārīkh al-mu’allif,” in al-Shammākhī, *Kitāb sard al-ḥujja*, 1–15. On his career see al-Shaybānī, *Qāsim b. Sa‘īd al-Shammākhī*; Custers, *Ibādī Publishing Activities*, 27–38.

pursue his studies in one of the Egyptian government's state schools. He also wanted to learn English, the language of an increasingly aggressive British Empire that was taking control of Egyptian finances as the country sank deeper into international debt. Qāsim's desires clashed with his father's hopes for his son to pursue a religious career, eventually leading to their falling out. Qāsim responded by leaving Cairo to live for a time with the Bedouin in the Egyptian desert.¹²

In a remarkable demonstration of al-Shammākhī's political ties, the longstanding Tunisian grand vizier Muṣṭafā Khaznadār intervened in 1869–70 to help resolve the issue between father and son. Thanks to Khaznadār's intervention, al-Shammākhī reluctantly consented to his son's choice to pursue a state education "on the condition of never seeing him wear Western clothes."¹³ While it is not clear when Sa'īd developed this close relationship with Muṣṭafā Khaznadār such ties demonstrate his political connections in the bey's government.¹⁴ This type of connection, along with his reputation in Egypt among Tunisian merchants in Cairo, culminated in his appointment to the office of *wakīl* of Tunisia in spring 1871.

* * *

Wakīls for the Tunisian bey could be found throughout the Mediterranean, both in Ottoman and European lands. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries their principal role was to report to

¹² Al-Shaybānī, *Qāsim b. Sa'īd al-Shammākhī*, 24; Custers, *Ibādī Publishing Activities*, 29. Both sources are referencing Qāsim's own description of his journey to learn "chivalry" (*al-furūsiyya*) from the Bedouin, in his "Tārīkh al-mu'allif," in al-Shammākhī, *Kitāb sard al-ḥujja*, 3.

¹³ Custers, *Ibādī Publishing Activities*, 29. Qāsim al-Shammākhī himself describes the reconciliatory role of Khaznadār and his father's demand that he not see his son in "Frankish clothes" (*bi-zayy ifranjī*): "Tārīkh al-mu'allif," in al-Shammākhī, *Kitāb sard al-ḥujja*, 3. In an undated letter, Amḥammad Aṭfayyish responded to a question "from Egypt" regarding the permissibility of "wearing the clothes of Christians (*libās al-naṣārā*)." The letter would have come from the Agency, and may well have been sent by al-Shammākhī himself, who corresponded with Aṭfayyish throughout his time there. See Makt. Jam'iyyat Abī Ishāq Ibrāhīm Aṭfayyish MS 57/40, "Risā'il wa-ajwibat al-Quṭb," 69. I thank Amal Ghazal for sharing images of this manuscript with me.

¹⁴ The ties between the Khaznadār and al-Shammākhī families continued into the next generation as well. Qāsim wrote in the introduction to his autobiography that it was Khaznadār's son, 'Abd al-Salām, who on a visit to Cairo in 1891 encouraged Qāsim to write his autobiographical note at the end of his book. See "Tārīkh al-mu'allif," in al-Shammākhī, *Kitāb sard al-ḥujja*, 1.

the court on the commercial landscape of their post as well as to negotiate for favorable economic conditions for Tunisian merchants there. The prominence of Jerbans in the Tunisian merchant communities of Ottoman lands meant that many of the *wakīls* were Ibadis from Jerba, like Saʿīd al-Shammākhī. This was true of some of the most important positions, including Istanbul.¹⁵ In the nineteenth century Egypt typically had two *wakīls*, representing Tunisian interests in the two commercial centers of the country: Alexandria and Cairo.¹⁶ Alexandria linked Egypt to the Mediterranean and the rest of the Maghrib, whereas Cairo was the country's link to nearby Syria, East Africa, the Hijaz, and the world of the Indian Ocean. In most ways, al-Shammākhī's was the typical profile of a Tunisian *wakīl* in the Ottoman era. He was a prominent Jerban merchant, had decades of experience living in Egypt, and was also well connected to the religious scholars of al-Azhar.

Al-Shammākhī's time as *wakīl* overlapped with changes in the Ottoman governments of both Tunisia and Egypt. His position and standing meant that he had ties to both governments, and especially to the khedival household in Egypt, which allowed him to follow political and economic developments closely. During his tenure Tunisia went through four different grand viziers. His friend and colleague Muṣṭafā Khaznadār, who had intervened on behalf of al-Shammākhī's son when the two had fallen out, remained in office until 1873. Khaznadār was, like many of the influential figures in the Tunisian Ottoman government in the nineteenth century, of Mamluk origin.¹⁷ The circumstances of his removal from office were part of a series of embezzlement scandals in the Tunisian bey's government in the second half of the nineteenth century. Al-Shammākhī's fellow Jerban Maḥmūd Bin ʿIyyād was perhaps the most notorious. After embezzling something to the tune of "50 or 60 million francs," Bin ʿIyyād fled Tunisia in 1852 and entered into the protection of the French.¹⁸

¹⁵ For example, al-Shammākhī's contemporary and fellow Ibadi Muḥammad al-Mathnī from Ajīm in Jerba served as *wakīl* to Istanbul for some 40 years: see Tunger-Zanetti, *La communication entre Tunis et Istanbul*, 72–74.

¹⁶ Bardin, *Algériens et tunisiens*, 19.

¹⁷ M'hamed Oualdi, "Mamluks in Ottoman Tunisia: A Category Connecting State and Social Forces," *IJMES* 48, no. 3 (2016): 473–90.

¹⁸ Tunger-Zanetti, *La communication entre Tunis et Istanbul*, 114–16; M'hamed Oualdi, *A Slave between Empires: A Trans-Imperial History of North Africa* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2020), 67–85.

Prudently, al-Shammākhī did not refer to Khaznadār's removal from office in his correspondence.

Khaznadār's replacement, Khayr al-Dīn Pāshā, was, like his predecessor (and father-in-law), a Mamluk. Al-Shammākhī appears to have known Khayr al-Dīn well. The correspondence with the new grand vizier includes all the expected formalities, but some letters from his time in office suggest a closer relationship than a minister and his *wakīl*. For example, Khayr al-Dīn often requested specific items from al-Shammākhī that seem destined for personal use by the vizier, such as a turtle shell (likely for use as a baby's crib on the occasion of a wedding) or a mother-of-pearl box.¹⁹ It was also during Khayr al-Dīn's tenure as vizier that al-Shammākhī received a regular salary, something that apparently stopped when he was replaced.²⁰

Khayr al-Dīn sought to reform the bey's government and combat the various forms of corruption associated with the likes of Bin 'Iyyād and Muṣṭafā Khaznadār. Al-Shammākhī's political acumen comes through clearly when, during one of the many times that he met with Khedive Ismā'il and his son and heir apparent, Muḥammad Tawfīq, at their

¹⁹ Letter to Khayr al-Dīn Pāshā (dated 6 Jum II 1288/Aug 23, 1871), ANT H 231 438, doc. 15. Al-Shammākhī's peer in Istanbul, Muḥammad al-Muthannī (also a Jerban Ibadi) carried on a similar correspondence with Khayr al-Dīn. See Tunger-Zanetti, *La communication entre Tunis et Istanbul*, 72–74.

²⁰ Muḥammad Naṣīb's study of Tunisian *wakīls* in Egypt offers the number of "3,000 francs" as their salaries. Presumably, he found evidence for that number in correspondence other than al-Shammākhī's, but it is not cited (Muḥammad Bin Naṣīb, "Wukalā' al-iyāla al-tūnisiyya fi-l-Qāhira wa-l-Askandariyya" [MA thesis, University of Tunis, 1997], 75). Mehdi Jerad instead suggests that the *wakīls* were likely paid by commission until the beginning of the nineteenth century, though he offers no salaried amount for the later period (Jerad, "Les agents des beys"). In al-Shammākhī's own correspondence he sometimes received promissory notes from the grand viziers, although these were in response to specific requests during times of financial straits. See, e.g., ANT 231 438, doc. 180 (from Muṣṭafā Khaznadār). He was also paid what seems to be a proper salary of 3,074 francs: letter to Muṣṭafā b. Ismā'il (10 Jum II 1296/Jun 1, 1879), ANT H 231 438, doc. 234. Following al-Shammākhī's death, however, his son Qāsim wrote to the French officials in Tunis to request backpay for his father's service. He claimed his father had been paid 3,000 francs yearly but had not received payment since Khayr al-Dīn left office: letter from Qāsim b. Sa'īd al-Shammākhī to the French ambassador in Tunis, ANT H 231 438, doc. 313. See also the discussion regarding "indemnities" of similar amounts paid to al-Shammākhī's counterpart in Istanbul, Muḥammad al-Muthannī, in Tunger-Zanetti, *La communication entre Tunis et Istanbul*, 73.

palace in Cairo he was asked about the transition from the vizierate of Khaznadār to that of Khayr al-Dīn.

We drank coffee and he [the khedive] asked about His Highness [the Bey] and the happenings of his lofty state. I said that it was in good health and fortune and that his state had not ceased progressing or increasing in prosperity ever since he had given the reins of his kingdom and the direction of his affairs to my lord Khayr al-Dīn, the grand vizier.

“How is [Khayr al-Dīn]?” [the khedive] asked.

“He is well,” I said, and I told him about the great things you [Khayr al-Dīn] had accomplished since your control of the financial commission to date. . . .

“What is Muṣṭafā Khaznadār doing now?” [the khedive] then asked.

“Sitting in his home. He does not leave it.”

“Is he very rich?”

“He is well known for that, but God knows best what [truth] there is in that.”

“Is he of Jewish origin?”

“No, he was originally a *rūmī mamlūk* who converted in his youth and served the state.”²¹

Al-Shammākhī’s decision to add this anecdote demonstrates his desire to communicate appreciation for Khayr al-Dīn’s reforms as well as his allegiance to Khaznadār’s replacement. Like al-Shammākhī, Khayr al-Dīn was a staunch supporter of Tunisia’s connections with the Ottoman Empire, and he deeply resented the growing influence of Europe upon Ottoman provinces in northern Africa. Famously, Khayr al-Dīn had written that he believed Ottoman ties to Tunisia provided a great deal of protection from the increasingly jealous eyes Europe had cast on Tunisia.²²

Yet when the grand vizier’s efforts at reform clashed with the bey’s own policies in 1877, Khayr al-Dīn himself fell from grace and left Tunis for Europe. After this al-Shammākhī distanced himself from his former friend by informing his successor, Muḥammad Khaznadār, of Khayr al-Dīn’s

²¹ Letter to Khayr al-Dīn Pāshā (dated mid-Jum II 1292/Jul 1875), ANT H 231 438, doc. 117.

²² Perkins, *A History of Modern Tunisia*, 34; Tunger-Zanetti, *La communication entre Tunis et Istanbul*, 47–52; Julia Ann Clancy-Smith, *Mediterraneans: North Africa, Europe, and the Ottoman Empire in an Age of Migration, c. 1800–1900* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 2012), 315–41.

various rumored intrigues against the Tunisian and Egyptian states. In a conversation with the khedive mirroring the earlier one about Muṣṭafā Khaznadār, al-Shammākhī was asked about why Khayr al-Dīn had left the service of the bey in Tunis. In a remarkable about-face, he told the khedive that Khayr al-Dīn had left Tunis because “in him there is an appetite for the love of tyranny.”²³ This must have been an embarrassment a few months later, when al-Shammākhī had to inform the grand vizier in Tunis that Khayr al-Dīn had been welcomed by the sultan in Istanbul, where he was appointed grand vizier of the Ottoman Empire.²⁴

His knowledge of Khayr al-Dīn’s role in the relationship between the Porte and Egypt also demonstrate al-Shammākhī’s familiarity with the khedive’s household. The former grand vizier of Tunisia advocated strongly in Istanbul for the revocation of the khedive’s special privileges as an Ottoman governor – especially his autonomy in establishing political and financial relationships with Europeans.²⁵ This was brought on by the series of international loans taken over the course of the 1860s and 1870s by Khedive Ismā’īl to finance various infrastructure projects. Al-Shammākhī reported in minute detail the finances of the Egyptian state and the negotiations of British and French “advisors” with the khedive’s government. By 1875 the government was bankrupt, and the following years saw the takeover of Egypt’s finances and legal system by the British and the French. Al-Shammākhī lamented this state of affairs in correspondence over the next few years. Given his close relationship with the khedive and his

²³ Al-Shammākhī quotes this conversation in a letter to Muṣṭafā b. Ismā’īl (dated 31 Ram 1296/Sep 28, 1878), ANT H 231 438, 208, doc. 234. Khayr al-Dīn was the topic of an earlier conversation with the khedival family a few weeks before, when al-Shammākhī visited them at the palace. When asked about him, al-Shammākhī merely noted that he had heard that Khayr al-Dīn was in France but he knew little else: letter to Muṣṭafā b. Ismā’īl (dated 8 Ram 1295/Sep 5, 1878), ANT H 231 438, doc. 205.

²⁴ Letter to Muṣṭafā b. Ismā’īl (dated 17 D. al-Ḥijja 1295/Dec 12, 1878), ANT H 231 438, doc. 212. Khayr al-Dīn held the position for only a short time (Dec 1878–Jul 1879), but the esteem in which he was held by the Ottoman sultan was clear from the appointment and the palace he and his family were gifted in the capital.

²⁵ Letter to Muṣṭafā b. Ismā’īl (dated 14 Sha’b 1296/Aug 2, 1879), ANT H 231 438, doc. 243. As a result of British and French interference the khedive ultimately retained those privileges. See Robert Hunter, “The Dismantling of Khedivial Absolutism,” in *Egypt under the Khedives, 1805–1879: From Household Government to Modern Bureaucracy* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1999), 179–226.

son, it pained him to watch the ruling family's disgrace and the confiscation of their property. In a letter from September 1878 he wrote how, after visiting the palace to offer Ramadan greetings, he had observed that the khedive and his two sons had been deeply affected by what had happened to the family.²⁶

Like other *wakīls*, consuls, and prominent members of the merchant and religious community, al-Shammākhī also regularly attended official ceremonies at the palace. He received invitations to parties and dances held by the khedive in a European style, complete with music, dancing, and wine, which he described in detail in his correspondence.²⁷ He also had individual audiences with the khedive and his son on religious holidays or following their return to Cairo from Alexandria in the summer or other journeys abroad. He described these conversations, in which the khedive often asked about the grand vizier, the bey, and the finances or political environment in Tunis. These visits almost always included coffee and tobacco – the latter, al-Shammākhī was careful to note, being an obligatory tradition and formality in Egypt.²⁸

This last image of al-Shammākhī smoking tobacco with the khedive is a striking one. If one thing comes across about al-Shammākhī in his correspondence and biography it is that, for all his urbaneness and familiarity with Ottoman and European politics, he was still a pious and conservative Ibadi Muslim. His conservatism took a variety of forms, ranging from his distaste for European dancing and ways of dress, to his disapproving descriptions of the ubiquity of alcohol at the khedive's court, to his opposition to his son learning English. At the same time, there is nothing inherently "Ibadi" about al-Shammākhī's conservatism. Certainly, his resentment of the growing cultural,

²⁶ Letter to Muṣṭafā b. Ismā'īl (dated 8 Ram 1295/Sep 5, 1878), ANT H 231 438, doc. 205.

²⁷ For example, al-Shammākhī attended the wedding of his friend Tawfiq Pāshā (son the khedive) in January 1873 and provided a detailed description of it in a letter to Khayr al-Dīn Pāshā (ANT H 231 438, doc. 79). He also provided a detailed description of his attendance at a ball held at the khedival palace in July 1879: letter to Muṣṭafā b. Ismā'īl (dated 23 Raj 1296/Jul 13, 1879), ANT H 231 438, doc. 239.

²⁸ For example, see the letter to Khayr al-Dīn Pāshā (dated 11 D. al-Hijja 1292/Jan 8, 1876), ANT H 231 438, doc. 132; letter from Khayr al-Dīn Pāshā (dated 5 Ram 1293/Sep 24, 1876), ANT H 231 438, doc. 149.

political, and economic influence of Europe on Egyptian society was shared by many of his non-Ibadi Muslim and non-Muslim contemporaries. But this raises the issue, until now taken for granted, of what was so Ibadi about al-Shammākhī as *wakīl*?

His post called for a balance between his roles as Ibadi scholar and Ottoman diplomat. As *wakīl*, al-Shammākhī represented first and foremost the bey's government, comprised at the highest echelons of Mamluks from a variety of Mediterranean backgrounds.²⁹ While the majority of those in the Tunisian government were Muslims, they were certainly not Ibadis. On the other hand, he also represented the Tunisian merchant community of Cairo, who included both Maliki and Ibadi Muslims. Al-Shammākhī regularly became involved in the adjudication of matters relating to the Tunisian merchant community. On various occasions he was tasked with sorting out the estates of Jerbans who had died in Egypt and left property or possessions behind.³⁰ These could include Ibadis or non-Ibadis, but their religious affiliation remained – as did al-Shammākhī's – almost entirely absent in the correspondence. Indeed, it is striking that in much of what has been written about al-Shammākhī and his Jerban contemporaries in the nineteenth-century Ottoman world, there is little mention of their Ibadi affiliation.³¹

Only if one is looking for it does al-Shammākhī's religious affiliation to Ibadism show up in his correspondence. A striking convergence of his role as a diplomat with his affiliation as an Ibadi appears in the visit of Sultan Barghash (r. 1870–88), the Ibadi ruler of Zanzibar, to the

²⁹ M'hamed Oualdi, *Esclaves et maîtres. Les Mamelouks des Beys de Tunis du xviie siècle aux années 1880* (Paris: Éditions de la Sorbonne, 2015); Tunger-Zanetti, *La communication entre Tunis et Istanbul*, 51–52.

³⁰ For example, there is an extended discussion over the estate of Jerban merchant 'Umar al-Zuwārī: letter to Muḥammad Khaznadār (dated Jum II 1295/Jun 1878), ANT H 231 438, doc. 196. Al-Shammākhī also reported on a Jerban merchant named Sa'īd b. 'Alī, who owned land in Jerba that was endowed by his grandfather. His legal representative back in Jerba, a cousin named 'Iyyād b. Šālih, used these lands to take out a loan with Europeans even though he was not legally entitled to do so. This led al-Shammākhī to recommend instituting shariah court records in Tunisia similar to those in Egypt. Other examples include the estate in ANT H 231 438, doc. 281 (dated 17 Shaw 1297/Sep 22, 1880) regarding a Jerban merchant named Muḥammad b. Jum'a, who claimed that his mother had inherited property in Egypt.

³¹ Zanetti makes the point that such affiliation, although not mentioned, could be deduced through family names: Tunger-Zanetti, *La communication entre Tunis et Istanbul*, 37.

court of Khedive Ismā'īl. In his report on the visit to Khayr al-Dīn Pāshā in August 1875, al-Shammākhī focuses his attention on a conversation from a dinner party held on the occasion of the sultan's visit to Egypt. Al-Shammākhī appears to have been at the table with the khedive and his guests, which happened often over the course of his tenure as *wakīl*. In describing the conversation among Khedive Ismā'īl, his son Tawfiq, Barghash, and the others at the table, al-Shammākhī expresses his admiration for the sultan. He begins by describing the sultan's character and appearance, remarking that "his condition evinces [his commitment to religious] reform, as well as his adherence to the shariah and all prayers at their appropriate times. [He does not] partake of any forbidden things, neither in his food nor in his clothing, such as silk. Rather, his clothes are made of what the earth gives forth naturally."³² Although these comments contain no mention of Ibadism, they touch on key themes of Ibadi jurisprudence as well as critiques by al-Shammākhī of his non-Ibadi contemporaries. For example, his choice to comment on the sultan's dietary habits were clearly meant to contrast with those of the khedive and his European guests. His praise of Barghash for avoiding wearing silk – an important issue in Ibadi fiqh that appeared previously in Chapter 4 – was at once an implicit praise of his commitment to Ibadism and a critique of those who wore it. The contrast between the Ibadi sultan and the khedive's court grew stronger as al-Shammākhī moved on to the conversation itself.

The atmosphere at the table was a bit tense. In an effort to strike up conversation, the khedive's son and al-Shammākhī's friend, Tawfiq Pāshā, asked Barghash if they had wine in Zanzibar. He responded that, yes, date-palm wine existed in his country. He made sure to add that only the dissolute drank it – and when they drank too much, they were flogged. Al-Shammākhī wrote that Tawfiq looked around the room, which was crowded with Europeans drinking wine, before gesturing with his hand to the guests and saying, "And if he were to drink [in public] like this, what would you do to him?" The sultan's reply was brief: "Flog him."³³

³² Letter to Khayr al-Dīn Pāshā (dated 21 Raj 1292/Aug 23, 1875), ANT H 231 438, doc. 118.

³³ Ibid.

The conversation then turned to tobacco, which the sultan made clear he regarded as legally forbidden. When asked to produce evidence from the Quran and the Sunna for his position, Barghash offered a response that went on for some time. Al-Shammākhī's choice to quote from and describe in detail the conversation between the sultan and the khedival entourage would not likely have been lost on Khayr al-Dīn in Tunis as he read the letter. Al-Shammākhī's praise for Barghash stemmed from his admiration of the sultan's commitment to Ibadi Islam.

* * *

Al-Shammākhī's correspondence with Khayr al-Dīn from a few months earlier also touched upon his connections with the Ibadi community in his homeland of Jerba. As was the case with Sultan Barghash, however, his discussion of the issue only addressed Ibadism indirectly. However, in framing this section of al-Shammākhī's correspondence, we can understand more clearly the ways in which he served as both an Ottoman official and an intermediary between Ibadis and the Ottoman government of Tunisia.

In letters beginning in June 1875, al-Shammākhī wrote to the grand vizier regarding a troubling development back home in Jerba. The issue regarded the newly established Association of Religious Endowments (*Jam'iyyat al-Awqāf*), one of Khayr al-Dīn's reforms to the bey's government that attempted to systematize the administration of religious endowments.³⁴ Al-Shammākhī had learned from the cousin of the imam of the Great Mosque in Jerba, who was in Cairo, that the local administrator for the Association had threatened to revoke the endowments supporting several historic *zawiyas* on the island.³⁵ In the context of modern Jerba, *zawiyas* referred to religious schools, and since the beginning of the Ottoman period had usually been applied to Maliki madrasas and mosques. Over time, with the conversion of many of the island's inhabitants from Ibadism to Sunnism, several former Ibadi mosques and even some mosques that remained Ibadi became known as *zawiyas*.³⁶

³⁴ Perkins, *A History of Modern Tunisia*, 34.

³⁵ Al-Shammākhī's counterpart in Istanbul, Muḥammad al-Mathnī, also wrote to Khayr al-Dīn to protest this attempt to confiscate the endowments of Ibadi mosques, including the one for which "he held – *in absentia* – the post of imam and wakil" (Tunger-Zanetti, *La communication entre Tunis et Istanbul*, 73).

³⁶ On the Malikization of Ibadi mosques and communities in Jerba see al-Marīmī, *Ibādīyyat jarba khilāl al-aṣr al-ḥadīth*, 317–76.

Al-Shammākhī's letter offered a defense of the historical importance of six *zawiyas* in Jerba, three of whose endowments were under threat:

In both these times and the past, our rulers sacralizing the prominent *zawiyas* ... [has] bec[o]me one of their crucial and important duties. Among the greatest of the mosques and *zawiyas* on the island [Jerba] ... deserving and worthy of respect is the blessed congregational mosque known as the Great Mosque, attributed to the *zawiya* of the famous saint Shaykh Abū Miswar. This *zawiya* on the island of Jerba, along with its aforementioned mosque, preserves its distinguished respect like the other distinguished *zawiyas* in other cities and lands. Shaykh Abū Miswar's – may God rest his soul – founding of this mosque along with its endowments (*awqāfihi*) is a thing demonstrable, well known, and famous.³⁷

He continued by noting that the different “rulers of Ifrīqiyyā” (i.e. the rulers of central North Africa) across time acknowledged its prominence and recognized its endowments. Al-Shammākhī specifically pointed out that both the Ottoman state through *firman*s and then later the Husaynid government through its own decrees had recognized the mosque's endowments in the past. With regard to the latter, he clarified how the Husaynid decree regarded its endowments:

There was an exceptional status [of protection for endowments] given to all prominent *zawiyas* in all regions, including the six well-known mosque-*zawiyas* in Jerba: the mosque-*zawiya* of the saint Shaykh Ibrāhīm al-Jumnī, the mosque-*zawiya* of Awlād 'Inān, the al-Mayhūb *Zawiya*, the mosque *zawiya* of Shaykh Abī Miswar under discussion [known as the “Great Mosque”], the mosque-*zawiya* of Bin Ya'lā, and the mosque-*zawiya* of Shaykh Abī Sitta al-Sidwikshī – may God give us benefit from all of them.³⁸

Although he did not explicitly mention it, the three under threat were not Maliki *zawiyas* but Ibadi madrasas. This was no doubt a conscious strategy in grouping three Ibadi institutions with three Sunni ones – and referring to them all as *zawiyas*. Without noting the affiliation of any of them, however, al-Shammākhī then made the problem clear.

With regard to the first three, their exceptional status has been maintained. As for the last three, however, the *nā'ib* [official] of the Jam'īyyat al-Awqāf in Jerba, Si Ḥamīda al-Sharfi, has undertaken to desecrate them ... in a way

³⁷ Letter to Khayr al-Dīn Pāshā (dated 21 Jum I 1292/Jun 25, 1875), ANT H 231 438, doc. 116.

³⁸ Ibid.

unlike others. [In this, he] disregarded them and sought to divest them of their endowments from the hands of their owners. The strangest and most amazing thing is his seizure of the endowments Great Mosque and stripping them from the hands of the progeny of Shaykh Abī Miswar, despite their ancestor having founded this mosque before the sixth [hijri] century and its having remained in his descendants' hand until today. This zawiya along with its aforementioned mosque is the oldest of the zawiyas in Jerba. Since it was founded, no ruler has dared to shatter its honor or divest it of its sanctity nor has anyone objected to its mosque's endowments.

Shaykh Yūsuf Abī Miswar, a descendant of the founder of the zawiya, is now here with us in Egypt. He received letters from his paternal cousin in Jerba, Shaykh Zakariyā [the shaykh of that zawiya] telling him of what was explained above, so it was requested of me to write to Your Eminence to notify you of the reality of the matter. For this reason, I ventured to write Your Excellency to beseech the sympathies of your justice to present this issue to His Highness the bey.³⁹

Al-Shammākhī clearly saw this attack on Ibadi endowments as a hostile move against the island's Ibadi community, which itself represented a continuation of a larger theme in modern Jerban history. The Ottoman period witnessed the dissolution of the power and influence of the Ibadi community in Jerba. Most important was the end of the Ibadi council-rule system known as the *'azzāba* and its replacement by Ottoman governance.⁴⁰ Khayr al-Dīn's reply, which attempted to distinguish between stripping the endowments and stripping ownership, led al-Shammākhī to insist that this discrimination had no basis. Knowing what we know about al-Shammākhī and the prominence of these institutions among Ibadis on the island, it is clear that he read this as an anti-Ibadi initiative by the Jam'iyyat al-Awqāf in Jerba.⁴¹

Moreover, the most prominent of the three institutions to have its endowments threatened was one with which al-Shammākhī and the Agency had close ties. What al-Shammākhī referred to in the letter as the "Zāwīyat Abī Miswar" or the Great Mosque received its name from Abū Miswar Yasjā al-Nafūsī, a key figure in the early history of

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Djaabiri, *Niẓām al-'azzāba*, 309–11; on the evolution of the *'azzāba* and the changes in the structures of power in Jerba during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries see al-Marīmī, *Ibādīyyat jarba khilāl al-'aṣr al-ḥadīth*, 21–37.

⁴¹ Letter to Khayr al-Dīn Pāshā (dated 4 Sha'b 1292/Sep 5, 1875), ANT H 231 438, doc. 121.

Ibadi Islam on the island.⁴² Al-Shammākhī's grandfather Sulaymān had served as the imam of the mosque before that position was taken over by Sa'īd al-Shammākhī's own teacher, Sa'īd al-Bārūnī, after his return to the Maghrib from several years of study at the Buffalo Agency and al-Azhar (Chapter 4). Al-Shammākhī and his father Qāsim had also studied at the mosque, which represented the most prestigious institution of Ibadi learning on the island. Despite his physical distance from Jerba, al-Shammākhī felt obliged to intercede on behalf of his fellow Jerban Ibadis to defend their institutions. Tellingly, however, at no point did he refer to the Ibadi affiliation of the mosques. Instead, he made the case for their importance to the history of Jerba and of the region.

On only one occasion was the Ibadi affiliation of Jerbans made explicit in al-Shammākhī's correspondence. In May 1878 he wrote a letter to Khayr al-Dīn's successor as grand vizier, Muḥammad Khaznadār (1877–78) about a recent incident in Alexandria.⁴³ A prominent Jerban encountered an intoxicated man originally from Tripoli, Muḥammad al-Zalītnī, in the street. Al-Zalītnī hurled abuse at the man, including all manner of blasphemy. The Jerban took the issue to the police, and he was supported (naturally) by a host of Jerban witnesses to the event. The Tunisian *wakīl* in Alexandria, who would normally be involved in such a dispute, was al-Shammākhī's colleague and friend 'Alī al-Qayzānī. Unfortunately, al-Qayzānī had been bed-ridden with sickness for months. In what seems to have been an unofficial capacity, his son Muḥammad had taken over his father's responsibilities. Al-Shammākhī devoted many letters to complaints about the younger al-Qayzānī, whose corruption and inappropriate behavior he argued were an embarrassment to the bey's government. The incident in Alexandria was a case in point:

The police asked the witnesses to record their statements, so they wrote what they knew. When signing, each witness wrote "So-and-so, the Tunisian (*fulān al-Tūnisī*).” Some Sfaxians supported al-Zalītnī and al-Qayzānī [the son of the *wakīl*] helped them. He went himself to the police station and looked at the statements. When he saw the witness had written "So-and-so, the Tunisian,” al-Qayzānī raised his voice with the policemen, saying:

⁴² On Abū Miswar see Djaabiri, *Nizām al-'azzāba*, 157–65.

⁴³ Letter to Muḥammad Khaznadār (dated 13 Jum I 1295/May 16, 1878), ANT H 231 438, doc. 199.

“How could he write ‘the Tunisian’ when he is Jerban?”

“Isn’t Jerba part of Tunisia?” the policemen asked.

“Yes,” he said, “but its people are Kharijites (*khawārij*) and their testimonies are not accepted [by law].”

Some of the rational people there denied his claim, noting that it was unjustified and that the law forbade talking about this matter. After the investigation was complete, the matter went to the tribunal and al-Zalītnī was sentenced.⁴⁴

For al-Shammākhī, the incident merited such detailed description for three reasons. First, he believed that the younger al-Qayzānī was embarrassing the bey’s government by acting this way at an Egyptian police station. Second, he was certain the incident would not be reported (as it should be) in the correspondence from the official *wakīl* in Alexandria, since the latter was bedridden. Beyond his capacity as *wakīl* for Tunis, however, al-Shammākhī had a third, very particular, reason for reporting the incident: al-Qayzānī’s comments accused Ibadi Jerbans – including al-Shammākhī – of being both religiously deviant and politically disloyal to the Ottoman state.

In labeling the Ibadis of Jerba *khawārij*, al-Qayzānī drew on a historical association between early religious and political separatism of Kharijism and the Ibadism that emerged out of it.⁴⁵ This carried with it, however, an explicit claim that Ibadis – as Kharijites – were outside the accepted boundaries of the Muslim community. The long tradition of political opposition, separatism, and revolution associated with Kharijite movements also suggested that Ibadis were disloyal to the bey of Tunis and, by extension, the Ottoman state. As a result, an Ibadi could not in good faith sign his name as “al-Tūnisī” (“the Tunisian”) on a document. This amounted to no less than a simultaneous attack on Ibadi Jerbans’ religious legitimacy and their political loyalty to the Ottoman government. As both a Jerban Ibadi scholar and a commercial and diplomatic agent of the bey in Egypt, al-Shammākhī took this as a personal offense. While he avoided any direct

⁴⁴ Letter to Khayr al-Dīn Pāshā (dated [13 Jum?] I 1295/[May 16,] 1878), ANT H 231 438, doc. 199 [sic].

⁴⁵ On the issue of Kharijism and Ibadism in both historical and contemporary contexts see Valerie J. Hoffman, “Ibādism: History, Doctrines, and Recent Scholarship,” *Religion Compass* 9, no. 9 (2015): 297–307; Adam Gaiser, “The Kharijites and Contemporary Scholarship,” *History Compass* 7, no. 5 (2009): 1376–90.

indication of his own affiliation to Ibadism, he made it clear that al-Qayzānī's treatment of the incident in Alexandria was only the most egregious of many. After this incident, he explicitly insisted upon al-Qayzānī being prevented from representing the government any longer.

* * *

Two processes clearly impacted al-Shammākhī during his time as *wakīl* more than any others. The first was gradual. Over the course of the 1870s al-Shammākhī wrote and reported on the mounting debt of the government of Khedive Ismā'īl, the destitution of the Egyptian people, and the interference of the British, French, and other European powers in the Egyptian government and legal system. He lamented the poor state of financial affairs and the effects on the people of the countryside. A constant refrain in his letters to the grand viziers of Tunisia was his hope that nothing of the sort would befall Tunisia. This gradual encroachment of European powers in Egyptian affairs only made the second event, the rapid fall of Tunisia to the French army in the summer of 1881, even more shocking. The French attack on the coastal Tunisian town of Tabarka, followed by their swift invasion of the rest of the country, left al-Shammākhī stunned.⁴⁶

The final letters of his correspondence, which came to an end along with his office in the year following the Treaty of Bardo in May 1881, suggest that al-Shammākhī remained optimistic that the French would not remain in his homeland. Knowing how long-lasting the French presence in Tunisia would prove, it is difficult not to read as naïve al-Shammākhī's hopes that the prime minister and the bey's government would somehow manage to preserve the country's independence. In what was likely his last letter to the grand vizier, Muḥammad Khaznadār, in October 1881, al-Shammākhī wrote that the Ottomans were continuing their protests at the violation of their sovereignty and that the khedival government had rejected the French consul in Egypt as representative of the Tunisians.⁴⁷ Their opposition in this regard, al-Shammākhī wrote, was clear, since "it

⁴⁶ Letter to Muṣṭafā b. Ismā'īl (dated 31 Jum I 1298/May 1, 1881) (on the invasion of Tabarka) and letter to Muṣṭafā b. Ismā'īl (dated 4 Jum II 1298/May 4, 1881) (on the subsequent invasion of al-Kaf), ANT 231 438, nos. 300–01.

⁴⁷ Among the first steps taken by the Protectorate administration regarding the external political relationships following the establishment of the Protectorate was, naturally, to abolish the office of the *wakīls* and claim that France assumed

was not the desire of the subjects of Tunisia to enter the protection of France except the base and the rabble.” He further expressed his hope that Khaznadār and his government would succeed in “returning things to their origin.”⁴⁸

Over the preceding decade al-Shammākhī had lamented the turncoat politics of the khedive’s entourage, who cooperated with increasingly aggressive and powerful European governments.⁴⁹ His close ties to Khedives Ismā’il and Tawfiq, made clear in his correspondence with Tunis, had made the disintegration of their power difficult to watch. The economic downturn of the 1870s had affected far more than al-Shammākhī’s feelings, however. He himself experienced financial hardship after losing his livestock and crops to disease, suffering alongside Egyptian landowners and farmers alike as the country sank deeper into depression.⁵⁰ His financial hardship was shared by his Tunisian merchant colleagues, who sought to avoid additional taxation at a time when the market in Egypt had dried up.⁵¹ The summer of 1881 must have been especially hard for al-Shammākhī. In the spring he had been shocked by the French invasion of his homeland of Tunisia and the subsequent Treaty of Bardo in May that year. This blatant lack of respect for the Ottoman province’s sovereignty seemed as unconscionable as the virtual absence of an international response. He barely had time to digest what was happening in Tunisia when revolt erupted in his adopted homeland of Egypt. He was scandalized to watch as the Egyptian military under Aḥmad ‘Urabī (1841–1911)

responsibility for Tunisian subjects of the bey abroad: Bardin, *Algériens et tunisiens*, 118–25 (on Egypt specifically, 123–24).

⁴⁸ Letter to Muḥammad Khaznadār (dated 23 D. al-Qa’da 1298/Oct 17, 1881), ANT H 222 378, doc. 50.

⁴⁹ On Ismā’il’s entourage before and after the 1870s see Hunter, *Egypt under the Khedives*.

⁵⁰ Letter to Khayr al-Dīn Pāshā (dated 12 Ram 1290/Nov 3, 1873), ANT H 231 438.

⁵¹ For example, one of the most important commercial items for Tunisians in Egypt and elsewhere in the Ottoman Empire was the *shāshiyya* (fez). A letter from Shammākhī to Khayr al-Dīn in Šafr 1293 (Mar 1876) specifically speaks to the negative effects of the rise of the *shāshiyya ifranjiyya* (i.e. the European-made and cheaper equivalent to the Tunisian-made *shāshiyya*) on Tunisian commerce in Egypt (ANT H 222 378, doc. 22). That and several other letters constitute appeals for Khayr al-Dīn’s intervention on behalf of the merchants to relieve them of certain taxes.

surrounded the khedival palace with twenty-six cannons.⁵² Despite his reluctant admiration for ‘Urabī in his defiance of the British and the French, he opposed the attack on the khedive and the further diminishing of his power. The subsequent British invasion of Alexandria the following year, the defeat of ‘Urabī’s army, and the “restoration” of the power of the khedive were bitter pills to swallow.

In November of the following year al-Shammākhī’s final letter from Cairo arrived in Tunis. Co-signed with the former Tunisian *wakīl* of Alexandria, Ṣāliḥ Bin Daḥmān, the letter was addressed directly to the new bey, ‘Alī (r. 1882–1902). It offered condolences for the death of his brother Muḥammad al-Ṣādiq, whose government al-Shammākhī had served for a decade and whose health and happiness he had wished for in the closing lines of over 200 letters.⁵³ The two men’s signatures that appear at the end of the letter include only their names, no longer accompanied by the proud titles of “agent of Tunisia in Egypt.” The bey had died, Tunis had fallen, and within a few months of penning the letter al-Shammākhī himself died.

* * *

In February 1881, a few months before the French invasion of Tunisia, a final petition was sent to the Tunisian bey requesting the appointment of a new *wakīl* in Alexandria.⁵⁴ Signed by dozens of Tunisian merchants in Alexandria and Cairo, the letter called for a Jerban merchant in Alexandria, Ṣāliḥ Bin Daḥmān (later al-Shammākhī’s cosignatory in the letter to ‘Alī Bey), to replace the recently deceased ‘Alī al-Qayzānī, who like al-Shammākhī had served the bey in that office for a decade. Al-Shammākhī’s name did not appear on the petition because it was al-Shammākhī himself who nominated Bin Daḥmān for the office, sparking conflict among different Tunisian merchant factions from Sfax and Jerba.⁵⁵ Among the signatures that do appear on that list,

⁵² Letter to Muḥammad Khaznadār (dated 29 Shaw 1298/Sep 24, 1881), ANT H 231 438, doc. 304. On the broader context of the “‘Urabī Rebellion” see Donald Reid, “The ‘Urabī Revolution and the British Conquest, 1879–1882,” in *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, vol. 2, ed. M. W. Daly (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 217–38; Juan R. Cole, *Colonialism and Revolution in the Middle East: Social and Cultural Origins of Egypt’s ‘Urabī Movement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

⁵³ Letter to ‘Alī b. Ḥusayn (dated 31 D. al-Ḥijja 1299/Nov 13, 1882), ANT H 231 438, doc. 305.

⁵⁴ ANT H 231 444, doc. 12 (dated Rab I 1298/Feb 1881).

⁵⁵ In this letter to Muṣṭafā b. Ismā‘īl, al-Shammākhī notes that he happened to be in Alexandria when al-Qayzānī died and was able to attend his funeral. In the same

however, a few had close ties to the history of the Buffalo Agency in the decade following al-Shammākhī's own death two years later.

Two of these signatories merit special attention because of their links to the next big addition to the Buffalo Agency's library. Yūnus and Sulaymān Bin Sha'bān were prominent Ibadi merchants in Cairo. At some point following al-Shammākhī's death in 1883 they, along with another merchant named Aḥmad Bin Daḥmān, would endow dozens of texts from al-Shammākhī's personal library to the Buffalo Agency. These included texts that al-Shammākhī had purchased, borrowed, or inherited over the preceding decades and that presumably would have been in his home in Bulaq before their relocation to the Agency. Al-Shammākhī's son, Qāsim, appears to have supported their donation to the Agency.⁵⁶ In any case, many of the texts had originally been destined for endowment, such as the manuscripts sent to Cairo from Zanzibar in the 1850s. When Jerban scholar Ramaḍān al-Laynī (d. 1947) arrived in Cairo in 1891, the two Bin Sha'bān brothers and Bin Daḥmān were together supporting Ibadi students at the Agency (apparently with their own money rather than waqfs).⁵⁷ Like them, Ramaḍān al-Laynī would spend the nine years he lived in Egypt financially supporting the students there and financing the publication of Ibadi books. He also spent that time teaching at the Agency, before returning to Jerba in 1900.⁵⁸

The third signature on the petition that merits attention belongs to an Ibadi scholar from the Jebel Nafusa, whose career would take the Ibadi community of Cairo and the Ibadi written tradition into a new

letter he offers Ṣāliḥ b. Daḥmān's name as a potential replacement along with those of a few other men, including 'Umar b. Ta'ārit, a Jerban Ibadi merchant. See ANT H 231 438, doc. 279 (dated 31 Ram 1297/Sep 6, 1880).

⁵⁶ Martin Custers cites a document from the library of Ṣālim Bin Ya'qūb describing a dispute between Qāsim and his brother-in-law, 'Umar b. Ṣāliḥ al-Kabāwī, over the former's inheritance of his father's estate. Given that it was Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-Bārūnī (the soon-to-be director of the Agency's endowments) whom Qāsim "empowered . . . to defend his rights to the inheritance," he must have agreed to the endowment of his father's books. See Custers, *Ibādī Publishing Activities*, 29 n. 29.

⁵⁷ Bin Ya'qūb, *Tārīkh jazirat Jarba*, 2006, 298.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 299. Part of Ramaḍān al-Laynī's private library, including several printed books from his time at al-Bārūnī Press, survive today in Jerba as part of the family's private collection. This collection was digitized in 2021 in the framework of the "EAP1216, The Jerba Libraries Project," supported by the Arcadia Foundation and administered by the British Library.

era. Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-Bārūnī's is the only name on the petition that appears not as "the merchant" but instead as "al-Azhari." Less than a year before he added his stamp seal to the letter to the bey of Tunis (which is curious, since he was from the Jebel Nafusa), al-Bārūnī had taken the important step of establishing the first Ibadi printing press, *al-Maṭba'a al-Bārūniyya*.⁵⁹ The young man had "[arrived in] Cairo around 1875, at 25 years old," apparently following a problem with taxes and the Ottoman authorities back home in the Jebel Nafusa.⁶⁰

Al-Bārūnī's printing activities in Cairo followed the trajectory of the private printing industry in late nineteenth-century Egypt more broadly. The enterprise was a collective Ibadi endeavor, with the Nafusi al-Bārūnī partnering with the same Ramaḍān al-Laynī who was teaching at the Agency, a Constantine-based merchant named Sulaymān al-Majdūlī, and his own paternal cousin from the Jebel Nafusa, Qāsim al-Bārūnī.⁶¹ The processes of setting up the press and keeping it financially solvent required such collective efforts.

In terms of operations, financing, and machinery, al-Bārūnī Press was typical of other private presses in late nineteenth-century Cairo, which

reproduced texts lithographically almost exclusively until around 1860 by hand copying them onto transfer paper, pressing this onto a lithographic stone, and then taking an impression from the stone. In this they differed from the city's governmental presses, which used the metal typefaces of typography. They usually did not list press names, and these were not stable between printings in cases when they did. And they operated through what appear to be shifting groups of people, or consortiums, that may have taken turns on lithographic stones, as opposed to fixed businesses with brick and mortar printing facilities.⁶²

⁵⁹ Custers, *Ibādī Publishing Activities*, 5.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 6. Custers cites this information based on "communication by 'Umar Aḥm [ad] b. Sul[aymān] al-Bārūnī, Tripoli, June 1972" (n. 30). He may have been older than this, however, since Ennami described a manuscript in his hand dated Rabī I 1276/Sep–Oct 1859. The Gregorian date he provides there (1850) appears to be mistaken. See Amr Khalifah Ennami, "A Description of New Ibadi Manuscripts from North Africa," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 15, no. 1 (1970): 63–87, at 77.

⁶¹ Custers, *Ibādī Publishing Activities*, 5.

⁶² Kathryn A. Schwartz, "The Political Economy of Private Printing in Cairo as Told from a Commissioning Deal Turned Sour, 1871," *IJMES* 49, no. 1 (2017): 25–45, at 27.

Similarly, al-Bārūniyya Press appears to have at times relied on its own equipment and staff, while at others outsourcing different stages of the printing process to other presses. The colophons and title pages of its books reflect this, sometimes giving different print houses. For the first several years of operation, however, the address of the press was al-Judāriyya Street in the Tulun district.⁶³

In terms of acquisition and financing, al-Bārūniyya Press relied on preexisting networks of textual exchange between the Maghrib and Egypt via the Buffalo Agency.⁶⁴ Muḥammad al-Bārūnī himself sought out texts for publication, or texts were commissioned by others. For example, he corresponded with the prominent Algerian scholar Amḥammad Aṭfayyish (d. 1914).⁶⁵ Aṭfayyish sent al-Bārūnī a number of his own manuscript texts to be printed in Egypt, including various parts of his well-known commentary on the *Kitāb al-Nīl*, which he dispatched to Cairo in the hands of Muḥammad al-Bārūnī's own nephew Ṣāliḥ.⁶⁶ Other texts he sent included both original works and commentaries. The precedent of sending texts from Mzab to Egypt applied even to Aṭfayyish himself, who had decades earlier sent a text to the Agency for "the distinguished men of the [Ibadi] *madhhab* in Egypt, so that they might copy it." Sa'īd al-Shammākhī saw to it that the manuscript was returned to Aṭfayyish, adding a short letter of thanks and praise on its title page.⁶⁷

Aṭfayyish's correspondence with the sultan of Zanzibar, Ḥamūd b. Muḥammad (r. 1896–1902), conveys the former's frustration with his Cairo-based publisher, to whom he sent various manuscript volumes to be printed, only to have their printing delayed.⁶⁸ These letters point to important features of how texts were acquired and their printing funded. First, a correspondence like this one linking Algeria,

⁶³ Custers, *Ibādī Publishing Activities*, 5.

⁶⁴ On the textual exchanges between the Maghrib and Egypt more generally see Jomier, "Les réseaux étendus." On the Buffalo Agency as a conduit for those exchanges in the nineteenth century see Love, Jr., "Omani Books."

⁶⁵ Philip Sadgrove has written about Aṭfayyish's correspondence with the sultans of Zanzibar, in which he complains at some length about al-Bārūnī's delays. See Sadgrove, "From Wādī Mīzāb to Unguja." A few documents and letters between Aṭfayyish and al-Bārūnī are today held in the Maktabat al-Quṭb. See, e.g., Makt. al-Quṭb MS *rā' qāf* 2 (n.d.); Makt. al-Quṭb MS *wāw qāf* 5 (dated 29 Muḥ 1318/May 28, 1900).

⁶⁶ Sadgrove, "From Wādī Mīzāb to Unguja," 203.

⁶⁷ Makt. al-Quṭb MS *alif hā'* 7 (dated Ṣafar 1272/Oct–Nov 1855).

⁶⁸ Sadgrove, "From Wādī Mīzāb to Unguja," 207–08.

Zanzibar, Egypt, and Oman points to the remarkably dense network of Ibadi communications that allowed for the exchange and printing of texts across these different regions.⁶⁹ Al-Bārūniyya Press quickly became known among different Ibadi communities as the place to send texts to be printed, whether from Oman, Mzab, Tunis, Jerba, or Nafusa. This remained true also for Zanzibar, even though in the same year Sultan Barghash of Zanzibar established the Sultanic Press (al-Maṭba'a al-Ṣulṭāniyya). This press was a state-run operation rather than a privately owned enterprise like al-Bārūnī's, so Zanzibaris financed the printing of books in Cairo.⁷⁰

Far-flung networks and journeys in search of manuscript texts are something Ibadis shared with other privately owned efforts in Egypt to publish manuscript texts in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Producing printed editions of premodern texts, for example, often required travel to libraries throughout the Ottoman Empire and beyond where collectors and commissioners could either purchase manuscripts or commission copies of them. Unlike many of the medieval Sunni classics that were "rediscovered" in this period, however, most of the premodern Ibadi texts printed in this period existed in numerous manuscript copies throughout northern Africa and beyond.⁷¹ The Buffalo Agency itself, for example, held multiple copies of many of the classical Ibadi texts later printed by al-Bārūniyya Press. Several of those likely served as the exemplars for the printed editions. For example the lithograph edition of Abū al-'Abbās Aḥmad al-Shammākhī's (d. 1521) late medieval Ibadi prosopography, *Kitāb al-siyar*, reproduces the manuscript tradition of that work down to the colophons of its different components, including the names of the copyists of their exemplars.⁷²

In addition, Aṭfayyish's correspondence discusses funding the printing of a text. Financing the printing of books often proved a

⁶⁹ Ghazal, *Islamic Reform and Arab Nationalism*; Jomier, "Les réseaux étendus."

⁷⁰ Sadgrove, "From Wādī Mīzāb to Unguja," 205–06; Custers, *Ibādī Publishing Activities*, 56–64.

⁷¹ Ahmed El-Shamsy's work has argued that what scholars today regard as classics of Islamic religious thought were largely known only through reference to or commentaries on them until the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: El Shamsy, *Rediscovering the Islamic Classics*.

⁷² Abū al-'Abbās Aḥmad b. Sa'īd al-Shammākhī, *Kitāb al-siyar* (Cairo: al-Maṭba'a al-Bārūniyya, 1301), 577, 600.

thorny and complicated – not to mention risky – endeavor.⁷³ Moreover, the problem was neither new nor specific to Ibadis. Saʿīd al-Shammākhī's correspondence included instances of attempts by Tunisian scholars to have books printed in Egypt in the 1870s and early 1880s, only to have those orders delayed for months over lack of funds or delayed payments to the printer.⁷⁴ One way to shore up the funds needed to print a work was to collect orders in advance. Like his contemporaries, al-Bārūnī used this method to print some of his works. Aṭfayyish specifically noted in a letter to Sultan Ḥamūd that copies of his *Sharḥ al-Nīl* had been ordered in advance, something that made the extended delay of its printing a source of frustration:

Shaykh al-Hajj Muḥammad al-Bārūnī took from me two large parts of the *Sharḥ al-Nīl* more than a year ago and did not return them to me. He was not good enough to reply to me and has ignored me, because of the distance of the countries. . . . [He] took money from the Maghribis on the undertaking that he would send them copies but he did not send them, and did not reply to them.⁷⁵

This particular work's print history is also telling, since Aṭfayyish complained that part of the delay stemmed from al-Bārūnī having relied on a different person to publish the work.⁷⁶

The initial technology used by al-Bārūniyya Press, lithography, was itself a continuation of the Ibadī manuscript tradition that was so central to the Buffalo Agency's history. The process required the transcription by hand and transfer of the entire text onto a stone slab. The form of the lithograph books published by al-Bārūnī (like many other lithograph books of the late nineteenth century) also perpetuated the conventions of the manuscript tradition by including similar frontispieces and especially colophon-like conclusions to the text. The colophons sometimes reproduced the names and dates of the manuscript

⁷³ Schwartz, "The Political Economy of Private Printing."

⁷⁴ For example, two books by Ṭāhir b. ʿĀshūr had been sent to Cairo to be printed but their printing was delayed after a misunderstanding over payment: letter to Muṣṭafa b. Ismāʿīl (dated 18 Ramaḍān 1296/Sep 5, 1879), ANT H 231 438, doc. 249. For a later example see the letter to Muṣṭafa b. Ismāʿīl (dated 25 Ṣafar 1298/Jan 27, 1881), ANT H 231 438, doc. 288.

⁷⁵ Quoted in Sadgrove, "From Wādī Mīzāb to Unguja," 207–08.

⁷⁶ Sulṭān b. Mubārak b. Ḥamad al-Shaybānī, *Tārīkh al-ṭibāʿa wa-al-maṭbūʿāt al-ʿumāniyya ʿabr qarn min al-zaman 1295–1397/1878–1977* (Muscat: Dhākīrat ʿUmān, 2015), 108.

exemplars from which they were copied, but also included al-Bārūnī's name and other information about the printing process. These and other longstanding features of the manuscript tradition would remain in use until the following century.⁷⁷

Alongside the adoption of lithography, the commissioning of texts by al-Bārūnī was also a form of continuity in that it represented a longstanding tradition at the Agency in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Here again, al-Bārūniyya Press was typical of "the political economy of private printing" in Egypt, which

developed as a speculative endeavor that applied to the printed domain the manuscript custom of commissioning a single text. Cairenes who desired handwritten texts either copied the texts themselves or commissioned someone else to copy them. . . . Commissioners of manuscripts customarily supplied copyists with the texts they wanted copied. Then the copyist and commissioner brokered the terms of the project, which required the commissioner to set their expectations for the end product, and the copyist to bargain a wage accordingly. . . . Those who developed Cairo's private printing industry applied this model to the print domain.⁷⁸

Like manuscripts before them, books published at al-Bārūnī Press would make their way into the stacks of the Buffalo Agency. This was no coincidence, and the ties between the print house and the Agency went well beyond sharing a neighborhood. Muḥammad al-Bārūnī no doubt lived at the Agency for his first few years in Cairo, and he may well have still lived there at the time of the founding of the print house. He, along with his co-founder Sulaymān al-Majdūlī, endowed books to the Agency's library. Other printed book donations to the institution's library demonstrate additional links between al-Bārūniyya Press and the Agency.⁷⁹ The tradition of donating printed books to the

⁷⁷ Jomier, *Islam, réforme, et colonisation*, 120–21.

⁷⁸ Schwartz, "The Political Economy of Private Printing," 28.

⁷⁹ Unfortunately, since most lithograph books from the Agency were separated from manuscripts, it is difficult to trace their current locations. In the list from the 1930s compiled by Sālim Bin Ya'qūb, for example, there is an endowed copy of the *Kitāb al-iḍāḥ* endowed by Muḥammad al-Bārūnī and Sulaymān b. Maṣ'ūd, who are explicitly identified as the owners of al-Bārūniyya Press: Ibadica Center, Fonds Custers, "Qā'ima," fol. 3.) Muḥammad al-Bārūnī also endowed a copy of the *Kitāb al-farā'id* by Ismā'il al-Jayṭālī on 8 D. al-Qa'da 1327/Nov 21, 1909 (*ibid.*, fol. 15). Several additional printed volumes in the library were donated in first two decades of the twentieth century.

Agency's library predated al-Bārūnī Press, including the very first donation by al-Shammākhī in December 1875.⁸⁰

One donation to the Agency's library was a printed edition of the *Dīwān* of the prominent Nafusi scholar 'Abdallāh b. Yaḥyā al-Bārūnī (d. 1914), who had been a close friend and fellow student of Sa'īd al-Shammākhī while the two of them studied at al-Azhar and lived at the Buffalo Agency. Al-Bārūnī's *Dīwān* arrived in Cairo many years later in the hands of his son, Sulaymān al-Bārūnī (d. 1940), who like his father had come to Egypt to study at al-Azhar, between 1892 and 1895. Sulaymān partnered with Muḥammad al-Bārūnī to print his father's work with al-Bārūniyya Press around 1894.⁸¹ Sulaymān stayed nearby at the Buffalo Agency, where he and other Nafusis were supported by the Bin Sha'bān and Bin Daḥmān brothers.⁸² This explains his choice to endow a copy of his father's *Dīwān* to the library.⁸³ The trajectories of Maghribi Ibadis such as Sulaymān al-Bārūnī, who elected to donate print books to the Buffalo Agency's library during stays there as students or pilgrims, demonstrate the continuation into the late nineteenth century of tradition that had been established in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Print books in no way halted the copying of manuscripts in the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries. Mzabi, Jerban, and Nafusi students passing through the Agency continued to copy texts while in residence there during this period. Sulaymān al-Bārūnī, for example, transcribed a copy of a well-known work by Sa'īd al-Shammākhī's father Qāsim from the autograph, which had ended up in the Agency's library along with al-Shammākhī's other books.⁸⁴ Other manuscripts that ended up in the library were copied in the 1880s

⁸⁰ "Ḥāshiyat al-Shaykh Makhlūf 'alā al-risāla al-bayyāniyya li-al-Ṣabān" (endowed 3 D. al-Qa'da 1292/Dec 1, 1875). See Ibadica Center, Fonds Custers, "Qā'ima," fol. 12.

⁸¹ On this edition see Custers, *Ibādī Publishing Activities*, 9 n. 42.

⁸² Bin Ya'qūb, *Tārīkh jazīrat Jarba*, 2006, 298.

⁸³ Bin Ya'qūb's list of endowed books also notes that Sulaymān al-Bārūnī donated a copy of 'Umar b. 'Isa al-Tandimīrti's *Dīwān al-qalā'id al-durriyya*. Both books in Ibadica Center, Fonds Custers, "Qā'ima," fol. 10.

⁸⁴ Makt. Bin Ya'qūb MS 17 (dated Muḥ 1313/Jun–Jul 1895). This manuscript specifies that it was copied from the *taswīd* of the author Qāsim al-Shammākhī at the Wikālat al-Jāmūs. Although undated, around the same time al-Bārūnī also had a copy of Abū Zakariyā' al-Warjalānī's *Kitāb al-sira wa-akhbār al-a'imma* copied by Ḥammū b. Mūsā b. Yāmī: Makt. al-Quṭb MS 2 *thā'* no. 12 (see Syūsyū, "Maṣādir maktabat al-quṭb Aṭfayyish min khārij al-jazā'ir," 151).

and 1890s, with the tradition continuing into the first two decades of the twentieth century.⁸⁵

As in previous centuries, students and scholars were not alone in maintaining the Buffalo Agency. Ibadi merchants working in Cairo and elsewhere in Egypt also continued to play a prominent role in its upkeep. Following Sa'īd al-Shammākhī's death in 1883, his responsibility for the management of the Buffalo Agency's endowments had passed to his old colleague Sulaymān b. 'Iyyād al-Bārūnī. This Nafusi merchant, who appeared earlier in Chapter 4 departing Cairo for Istanbul, had returned to Egypt in 1874–75 and managed the Agency's endowments on behalf of al-Shammākhī (as his deputy, or *wakīl*). He remained responsible for their management until his decision to undertake the hajj pilgrimage in 1893. While absent from Egypt, Sulaymān delegated his responsibilities in managing the endowments to Muḥammad al-Bārūnī.⁸⁶

When Sulaymān returned from Mecca in summer 1894, however, Muḥammad al-Bārūnī refused to relinquish control of the endowments. It was with the intervention of the other signatories to the petition discussed above, Yūnus and Sulaymān Bin Sha'bān, that Muḥammad assumed formal control of the endowments' management.⁸⁷ These same two merchants, as noted above, also played an important role in augmenting the Agency's library through their donation of Sa'īd al-Shammākhī's library. While managing his print house in Tulun, Muḥammad al-Bārūnī also maintained the Buffalo Agency's endowments for the next twenty years. Whether he continued to live at the Agency or not, his role as director of the endowments provided him with a small income and kept him in regular touch with the Agency

⁸⁵ For example, Aḥmad b. Šāliḥ b. Muḥammad al-Tandimīrtī copied manuscripts today held in the Bin Ya'qūb Library but acquired by Sālim Bin Ya'qūb at the Agency during his stay there in the 1930s: Makt. Bin Ya'qūb MS 4 (multiple titles, one dated mid-Raj 1311/Jan 1894). Other examples include texts copied by 'Abdallāh b. Sāsī al-Bārūnī al-Qala'āwī and 'Isa b. Sa'īd al-Bārūnī: Makt. al-Istiḳāma MS *alif*25 (dated 20 Raj 1308/Feb 28, 1891); Makt. Irwān MS *mīm khā'* 14 (dated Rab I 1304/Nov–Dec 1886); Makt. Ḥamū Bābā wa-Mūsa MS *hā'* *mīm* 32 (dated Sha'b 1304/Apr 24, 1887); Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya MS *bā'* 26573 (dated 1305/1887–88), also copied by 'Abdallāh b. Sāsī al-Bārūnī.

⁸⁶ These details are from an appendix Aḥmad Muṣliḥ's study of the Agency. Most of the appendices appear to be based on documents from the Sālim Bin Ya'qūb Library, although they are not cited. See Muṣliḥ, *al-Waqf al-jarbi fī Miṣr*, 216–17.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 217.

and those living there. This came in handy as he attempted to keep his printing business afloat.

The already precarious business of private printing was made more difficult by other factors. A disagreement between Sulaymān b. Maṣ'ūd and al-Bārūnī in 1897 was followed by a fire at al-Bārūniyya Press in 1898–99.⁸⁸ The fire occurred in the middle of printing Aṭṭayyish's *Sharḥ al-Nīl*.⁸⁹ The press did not produce any books for the next two years, but luck would come in the form of an Omani visitor to Cairo. Reflective of the increasingly close ties among Ibadis in Oman, East Africa, and North Africa, Shaykh Sulaymān b. Nāṣir al-Lamkī (d. 1915) purchased a movable-type press to replace some of the equipment that had been damaged in the fire. Al-Lamkī was a “wealthy landlord and governor of Dar es Salaam, who [had] met [Amḥammad] Aṭṭayyish while traveling in Algeria in 1900.”⁹⁰ In private correspondence with Aṭṭayyish, al-Lamkī specifically noted in a letter from February 1901 that delays in printing the *Sharḥ al-Nīl*, which had been sent to Muḥammad al-Bārūnī to print, led him to purchase a printing press and letter keys from Beirut, which he then gifted to al-Bārūnī.⁹¹ The next several years witnessed the printing of several works by al-Bārūniyya Press. While it continued to produce lithographs into the twentieth century, it also used al-Lamkī's press to produce movable-type books.⁹²

* * *

As the twentieth century began, the Buffalo Agency appeared to function much as it had over the past several centuries. Students and

⁸⁸ The disagreement is mentioned in a letter from Maṣ'ūd b. Sa'īd al-Bārūnī al-Nafūsī to Aṭṭayyish, who was asked to intervene between the two business partners. See Makt. al-Quṭb MS *rā' nūn* 9 (dated 14 Sha'b 1315/Jan 7, 1898). Ibn Maṣ'ūd would die one year later before another “discord arose between Muḥammad and [his cousin and other partner] Qāsim”: Custers, *Ibādī Publishing Activities*, 6.

⁸⁹ Zygmunt Smogorzewski, “Étude sur le waqf abadhite (Review),” *Rocznik Orientalistyczny* 6 (1929): 243–58, at 255; Custers, *Ibādī Publishing Activities*, 6.

⁹⁰ Ghazal, *Islamic Reform and Arab Nationalism*, 47.

⁹¹ Al-Shaybānī, *Tārīkh al-ṭibā'a wa-al-maṭbū'āt al-'umāniyya*, 107–08. The original letter is Makt. al-Quṭb MS *rā' šād* (dated 8 Dhū al-Qa'da 1318/Feb 27, 1901), 1.

⁹² For the full print list of al-Bārūniyya Press see Custers, *Ibādī Publishing Activities*, 7–22. On Omani Ibadi works printed by the press, specifically, see al-Shaybānī, *Tārīkh al-ṭibā'a wa-al-maṭbū'āt al-'umāniyya*, 106–18.

scholars continued to arrive in Egypt to pursue studies at al-Azhar, to conduct business in Cairo and Alexandria, and to pass through on their way to or from the hajj pilgrimage. But in the first two decades of that century, events of global importance would radically shift the focus of Ibadi communities away from the Agency. The Italian invasion of Ottoman Tripolitania put a definite end to the last remaining Maghribi Ibadi community independent of colonial rule, that of the Jebel Nafusa. Even before the invasion, but certainly after it, the land route connecting Ottoman Tripolitania and Egypt represented a point of competing imperial projects and this, too, would have disrupted traffic connecting Ibadis to Egypt.⁹³ Quickly on the heels of Italy's invasion of Tripolitania came World War I, which helped bring about collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Interlinked with this was colonial-era disruption to one of the primary processes that had for centuries brought Ibadis to and through Cairo, the hajj.⁹⁴ For Ibadis, elements of continuity with the Ottoman era would persist into the twentieth century, especially as they played an active role in the pan-Arab and pan-Islamist press of the interwar years and joined the anticolonial movements of the post-Ottoman decades. Cairo, too, would remain an important node in networks of Ibadi journalists, political activists, and reformers, linking North Africa, East Africa, and the Arabian Peninsula. In this last section of the chapter I follow the gradual receding of the Buffalo Agency's centrality in the lives of the Ibadis of Cairo in this period.

Under Muḥammad al-Bārūnī's directorship in the first decade and half of the 1900s the Buffalo Agency continued to house students. The large group of students from Jerba and the Jebel Nafusa living there when Ramaḍān al-Laynī and his colleagues arrived in 1891 seems to have been followed by others at the turn of the century.⁹⁵ In a letter from August 1907, a Nafusi student at the Agency named 'Umar b. 'Īsā al-Tandimīrtī wrote a letter to Amḥammad Aṭfayyish in the Mzab. The short missive described a dispute among Ibadis from the previous Ramadan over when to begin the fast. Al-Tandimīrtī wrote that there were six Nafusis there at the time, all of whom decided to fast with the

⁹³ This includes, among other things the activities of the Sanusiyya and disputes over the borders separating these areas. See Minawi, *The Ottoman Scramble for Africa*; Matthew H. Ellis, *Desert Borderland: The Making of Modern Egypt and Libya* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018).

⁹⁴ Peters, *The Hajj*, 266–315. ⁹⁵ Bin Ya'qūb, *Tārīkh jazīrat Jarba*, 2006, 298.

Mzabis three days later than the Jerbans. He made sure to emphasize that the Jerbans sided with the non-Ibadis (*al-mukhālifun*) on the issue. He also added (with no small degree of satisfaction) that the Jerbans later proved to be incorrect.⁹⁶ His letter suggests that in the first decade of the twentieth century under al-Bārūnī's directorship the Agency and the debates of its students remained as active as they had been in the preceding century.

While Muḥammad al-Bārūnī's press appears to have ceased activity in the first decade of the twentieth century, a new member of the extended al-Bārūnī family arrived to take its place. In 1906, Sulaymān al-Bārūnī returned to Cairo. Since leaving Egypt in 1895, when he had collaborated with Muḥammad al-Bārūnī to publish his father's *Dīwan*, Sulaymān had traveled to the Mzab to study for three years.⁹⁷ He then spent a few years back in the Jebel Nafusa, where he had briefly been imprisoned "by the Ottoman authorities on the charge of subversive intentions aiming at the establishment of an Ibadi imamate" there.⁹⁸ He arrived in Cairo accompanied by his brothers, with whom he set up a new printing press: al-Azhār al-Bārūniyya. In addition to books, the press also published a pan-Islamic newspaper called *al-Asad al-Islāmī*.⁹⁹ Sulaymān's stay in Cairo was brief, and he returned to the Jebel Nafusa in 1908, but he remained an important figure in the Ibadi press of Cairo for the next three decades as he gained an international reputation during and after World War I. The Young Turk Revolution in 1908 led to the reestablishment of an Ottoman parliament, of which al-Bārūnī was a member. Al-Bārūnī's political activism overlapped with his scholarly trajectory, through which he linked Nafusa, the Mzab, Tunis, Cairo, Istanbul, and Oman.¹⁰⁰

In 1911 the Italo-Turkish war began, leading to the invasion of Ottoman-controlled Tripolitania, including the Jebel Nafusa. Al-Bārūnī

⁹⁶ Makt. Jam'iyyat Abī Ishāq Ibrāhīm Aṭfayyish MS 41 (dated 22 Raj 1325/Aug 31, 1907).

⁹⁷ Ghazal, "An Ottoman Pāshā and the End of Empire," 46.

⁹⁸ Custers, *Ibādī Publishing Activities*, 23. A collection of letters in Sulaymān al-Bārūnī's hand, today held in the Bin Ya'qūb Library in Jerba, makes reference to his arrest and troubles with the Ottoman authorities. (Makt. Bin Ya'qūb MS 99 [dated 1317–19/1899–1901/2]).

⁹⁹ Custers, *Ibādī Publishing Activities*, 24 n. 118; on Sulaymān al-Bārūnī's press see 23–27.

¹⁰⁰ On his eventful life after leaving Tripolitania see Ghazal, "An Ottoman Pāshā and the End of Empire."

would play a leading role in the resistance to Italian occupation, earning him an international reputation as an opponent of colonialism and a political agitator, as well as other less flattering monikers such as “charlatan.”¹⁰¹ The World War that followed the Italian invasion of Ottoman lands in Africa both galvanized anticolonial sentiment in the Maghrib and offered new possibilities for the future trajectories of Ibadi communities.¹⁰² These possibilities included the prospect of independence for the Mzab and a brief-lived republic in Tripolitania.¹⁰³ Ibadi activities in the Maghrib mirrored those of their Egyptian contemporaries, who likewise imagined that the end of World War I would bring independence.¹⁰⁴ Al-Bārūnī himself would travel to the Paris Peace Conference in 1918 to argue (unsuccessfully) for Tripoli’s independence. He would later attend the conference in Lausanne in 1923, which raised the concerns of the French colonial authorities after the Mzabis tasked him with delivering a letter in which “the signatories demanded French recognition of Mzabi independence.”¹⁰⁵ In the same period, Mzabi and Nafusi students and scholars also arrived in Tunis in large numbers, where the former played a leading role in the drive toward independence through their support of the Constitutional Party (Hizb al-Dustūr).¹⁰⁶ Alongside, and interwoven with, new political aspirations, the interwar years brought up a generation of advocates for Ibadi reform, who participated in transregional discussions with their contemporaries across northern Africa and well beyond.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰¹ See references in Paul M. Love, Jr., “The Copyist, the Printer, and the Charlatan: At the Intersections of Manuscripts, Colonialism, and Ibādī Muslim Communities in Late-Ottoman Cairo,” in *Africa in the World, the World in Africa/L’Africa nel mondo, il mondo in Africa*, ed. Alessandro Gori and Fabio Viti (Milan: Biblioteca Ambrosiana, 2022), 173–86.

¹⁰² See Jomier, *Islam, réforme et colonisation*, 98 (n. 99 for references); Amal Ghazal, “Counter-Currents: Mzabi Independence, Pan-Ottomanism and WWI in the Maghrib,” *First World War Studies* 7, no. 1 (2016): 81–96.

¹⁰³ This was not an exclusively Ibadi effort, although Sulaymān al-Bārūnī played a leading role. See Lisa Anderson, “The Tripoli Republic, 1918–1922,” in *Social and Economic Development of Libya*, ed. George Joffe and Keith MacLachlan (Wisbeck: Menas Press, 1982), 43–65.

¹⁰⁴ Martin W. Daly, “The British Occupation, 1882–1922,” in *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, vol. 2, ed. M. W. Daly, 59–86 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 239–51, at 247.

¹⁰⁵ Ghazal, “Counter-Currents,” 91. ¹⁰⁶ Ghazal, “Tensions of Nationalism.”

¹⁰⁷ On the advent of “Ibadi reformism” see Jomier, *Islam, réforme et colonisation*, 75–116.

Egypt itself would undergo rapid political change in this period. After large-scale opposition to British colonial rule in 1918, the country won formal independence in 1922 and continued to oppose its de facto protectorate status over the next three decades.¹⁰⁸ Alongside Tunis, Cairo still served as an important site of interaction among different Ibadis and their non-Ibadi contemporaries including journalists, political activists, and advocates of religious reform.¹⁰⁹ At the outset of the second decade of the century the Buffalo Agency still served as a site of interaction among different Ibadi communities from the Maghrib. As late as fall 1910 there was still a delegation of Nafusi students living at the Agency, headed by ‘Umar b. ‘Īsā al-Tandimīrtī. Among the students arriving in that year was ‘Alī al-Qaḍqāḍ (d. 1955). This student of former Agency teacher ‘Abdallāh al-Bārūnī in Yefran studied at al-Azhar for three years before sickness forced him to return home. He would continue his studies a few years later, however, spending time in Tunis, the Mzab, and Jerba.¹¹⁰ Abū al-Yaqẓān Ibrāhīm (d. 1973), a Mzabi journalist and influential reformer who visited the Agency as a young man in 1910 on the way to Mecca to perform the hajj, described his encounter with al-Tandimīrtī. The two became friends and corresponded for several years.¹¹¹ Already at that time, however, Abū al-Yaqẓān noted that residents there lacked the financial support they needed.¹¹²

The Italian invasion of Tripolitania in 1911–12 and the outbreak of World War I appear to have led to a rapid decline in the steady flow of Ibadi students from the Maghrib to Cairo to stay at the Agency from 1914 onward. Nafusis such as ‘Alī al-Qaḍqāḍ or Mzabis like Abū al-Yaqẓān, for example, would increasingly be drawn instead to the political and intellectual environment of Tunis in the 1910s and 1920s.¹¹³

As for Muḥammad al-Bārūnī, following the end of his press’s activities he continued to serve as the director of the endowments for the

¹⁰⁸ Afaf Lutfi Sayyid-Marsot, *A History of Egypt: From the Arab Conquest to the Present*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 98–126.

¹⁰⁹ Jomier, *Islam, réforme et colonisation*, 95–104.

¹¹⁰ Makt. al-Quṭb Abū al-Yaqẓān Ibrāhīm b. ‘Īsā, “Mulḥaq al-siyar, al-juz’ al-thālith,” 321.

¹¹¹ He mentions this briefly in *ibid.*, 396–97.

¹¹² Musliḥ, *al-Waqf al-jarbī*, 167–68.

¹¹³ Ghazal, “Tensions of Nationalism,” 57; Jomier, *Islam, réforme et colonisation*, 79–80.

Buffalo Agency. In 1914 he met the orientalist and former vice-consul to Algiers for the Russian tsar, Zygmunt Smogorzewski (1884–1931).¹¹⁴ Smogorzewski had recently spent time in the Mzab and had been put into contact with Muḥammad al-Bārūnī by Amḥammad Aṭfayyish. While it is unlikely that Smogorzewski visited the Agency, he would later reflect on the importance of al-Bārūnī and his lithographic books in the process of knowledge about Ibadism making its way to European libraries. He also highlighted the role al-Bārūnī played in allowing him to obtain Ibadi works by Omani and Zanzibari authors, to which he had previously not had access.¹¹⁵ Smogorzewski would only return to his work on Ibadis a decade later, after an eventful period first as a prisoner of war and later as a diplomat. His work on Ibadis, cut short by illness and premature death in 1931, would be continued by his student Tadeusz Lewicki (1906–92).¹¹⁶ Smogorzewski and Lewicki, whose studies in French continue to serve as foundational works on the study of Ibadi history, built upon the collection of manuscripts and lithographs collected by Smogorzewski during his time in the Mzab and Cairo. al-Bārūniyya Press had earlier garnered the attention of the Italian authorities through their informant in Cairo, Enrico Insabato (d. 1963). In 1911 Insabato noted having met a Nafusi man whose son was receiving a subsidy to study at al-Azhar and was likely also living at the Agency.¹¹⁷ He had also known about several members of the Ibadi community in Cairo of the previous generation, including al-Shammākhī and ‘Abdallāh al-Bārūnī, and he wrote about the role of al-Bārūniyya Press in allowing orientalists to obtain copies of Ibadi works.¹¹⁸

Muḥammad al-Bārūnī ceased to direct the endowments of the Buffalo Agency in the same year he met Smogorzewski, handing

¹¹⁴ Kościelniak, “The Contribution,” 249 n. 28.

¹¹⁵ Smogorzewski, “Essai de bio-bibliographie ibadite-wahbite,” 50.

¹¹⁶ Kościelniak, “The Contribution.”

¹¹⁷ This encounter is described in an archived letter from Insabato to the director general of colonial affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (dated Dec 30, 1911). See the description and citation in Federico Cresti, “Due volte minoranza: i berberi ibaditi del jabal Nafūsa nella visione colonial,” in *Minoranze, Pluralismo, Stato nei Paesi dell’Africa Mediterranea e nel Sahel*, ed. Federico Cresti (Rome: Aracne, 2015), 21–61, at 29.

¹¹⁸ See the references in the discussion of Insabato’s 1918 book, *Gli Abaditi del Gebel Nafusa*, in Custers, *Ibādī Publishing Activities*, 7.

control of them to ‘Umar al-Tandimīrtī.¹¹⁹ The final donation of six books to the library from another Nafusi, Sulaymān al-Bakhbakhī, took place in 1916.¹²⁰ Al-Bārūnī likely died around the same time, though his connection to the Agency did not cease with his death. His son Qāsim Muḥammad al-Bārūnī, would remain in Cairo for the next three decades, where he would work as a schoolteacher. His other son, Yaḥyā, was a friend of Sulaymān al-Bārūnī and followed him to the Jebel Nafusa and later to Iraq.¹²¹ Following the death of Sulaymān al-Bārūnī in 1940, the two brothers corresponded with one another. A letter from Yūsuf sent to Qāsim gives his address as “Toulooon Road, Atfit Annajar, No.4 Cairo, Egypt,” just beside the Buffalo Agency.¹²²

Although directors would in theory continue to oversee the Agency into the middle of the twentieth century, in practice the regular endowments that supported the students living there ended by 1920.¹²³ Despite the mechanism of waqf ceasing to function as it had before, and the global changes swirling around them, Ibadis continued to come to Cairo. Yet the forces drawing them there had changed. Consequently, after 1920 the function of the Buffalo Agency as a staple institution of the Ibadī community in Cairo came to a gradual end.

Indicative of this change was the contrast between the former director of the Agency and its endowments, Sa‘īd al-Shammākhī, and his son Qāsim. Sa‘īd’s career had in many ways continued in the line of his predecessors, including study at al-Azhar, a blending of Ottoman political connections and Maghribi-based commercial activity, and a tradition of teaching, manuscript copying, and scholarship at the Agency. His son Qāsim, by contrast, was born in Cairo and spoke

¹¹⁹ Muṣliḥ, *al-Waqf al-jarbī fī Miṣr*, 217.

¹²⁰ See Ibadica Center, Fonds Custers, “Qā’ima,” 4, 8, 15.

¹²¹ Custers, *Ibādī Publishing Activities*, 6.

¹²² Frustratingly, on the description of the letter, which belonged to an intelligence file on the death of Sulaymān al-Bārūnī, is all that survives: “Copy in translation of an extract from a letter dated 21st May 1940, from Yusuf al Baruni, Muscat, to Qāsim Mohammad al Baruni, Toulooon Road, Atfit Annajar, No.4. Cairo, Egypt.” See File no. 15/3 Suleiman al Baruni and his relatives, British Library: India Office Records and Private Papers, IOR/R/15/6/450, in *Qatar Digital Library*, available at www.qdl.qa/archive/81055/vdc_100000000881.0x0000e1.

¹²³ Custers cites Sālīm Bin Ya‘qūb (in a discussion from 1972) on this point. He specifically writes that “total maintenance of the students came to an end.” See Custers, *Ibādī Publishing Activities*, 41.

and wrote the Arabic of his Egyptian contemporaries. While fiercely defensive of Ibadism, he saw Ibadi Islam within a wider framework of Islamic reform. In place of al-Azhar, he would pursue an education in the secular state schools of Egypt.¹²⁴ His work as a teacher, as a translator for the British in Egypt, and his devotion to the world of Arabic print journalism, with its preoccupations with discussions of Islamic reform and responses to colonialism, drew him and his contemporaries further from the world of the Buffalo Agency.¹²⁵ The periodical *Nibrās al-mashāriqa wa-al-maghāribā*, which he helped publish in the first decade of the 1900s with his Egyptian colleague (and convert to Ibadism) Muṣṭafā b. Ismāʿīl, exemplified the pan-Islamic character of ideas in both name and content.¹²⁶

That said, the lives of Qāsim and his contemporaries bear many elements of continuity with the past. Like his father, Qāsim would maintain connections with the family of the khedive in Egypt, and even with the family of the former grand vizier of Tunis, Muṣṭafā Khaznadār.¹²⁷ In Amal Ghazal's description of Qāsim, who is for her "representative of a growing reform trend among Ibadis both in the diaspora and at home,"¹²⁸ the place of Cairo for this and the next generation of Ibadis in Egypt bears a striking resemblance to the role played by the city in the preceding four centuries. She writes that "Cairo was the place where they established themselves, built these

¹²⁴ For his biography and details of his publication activities see al-Shaybānī, *Qāsim b. Saʿīd al-Shammākhī*.

¹²⁵ Custers, *Ibādī Publishing Activities*, 27–33. ¹²⁶ Ibid., 30.

¹²⁷ The connection with Khaznadār is discussed in the autobiographical note in his *Kitāb sard al-ḥujja*. Other connections, including with the khedival household, are discussed in his private correspondence with different members of the Ibadi community in Cairo, copies of which are held at the Ibadica Research Center in Paris. For example, in an undated letter to Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-Bārūnī, Qāsim had discussed how a member of the Bin 'Iyyād family, who was also related to the khedival household, requested from him a copy of a book that Qāsim had previously seen in his father's library. Presumably, Qāsim had written to Muḥammad because Saʿīd al-Shammākhī's library was now housed in the Buffalo Agency, for which al-Bārūnī still served as director ("Risāla min 'Abdallāh b. Ḥamīd al-Sālimī wa-'Isā b. Ṣāliḥ al-Ḥārithī ilā al-shaykh Qāsim b. Saʿīd al-Shammākhī" [dated Jum II 1329/Jun–Jul 1911], in a collection of letters from the Ibadi community of Egypt, ed. Sāsī Bin Yaḥyātin [Paris: Ibadica Editions, forthcoming], letter 13).

¹²⁸ Amal N. Ghazal, "Seeking Common Ground: Salafism and Islamic Reform in Modern Ibādī Thought," *Bulletin of the Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies* 7, no. 1 (2005): 119–41, at 124.

connections with Sunni Salafis, played active roles in the city's flourishing intellectual life, and published their own writings and those of like-minded contemporaries."¹²⁹ Nothing in this description marks a fundamental break with the place of Ibadis in Ottoman-era Egypt. What had changed, however, was the place occupied by the Buffalo Agency. Qāsim and his contemporaries, and especially the generation that would follow them, would leave the Agency behind in pursuit of transregional debates of Islamic reform and anticolonialism that played out in the world of print journalism. The Ibadis of Cairo in these years operated in a diverse political environment, and the variety of their activities mirrors that of their contemporaries.

In other words, the Ottoman Ibadis of Cairo in the first two decades of the twentieth century continued in the tradition of their predecessors in engaging fully with the political and religious currents of Egypt and the wider Ottoman world. They did so in large part because they continued, as they would after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, to benefit from their unusual status as a minority community with a sense of collective identity while at the same time belonging to the Muslim majority. That distinct Ibadi identity remained of utmost importance for Qāsim al-Shammākhī's generation and the one that followed. The interwar years would welcome a new generation of Ibadis to Cairo, one that would, like Qāsim, embrace journalism and other "professions that would emancipate them from the mosque and its waqfs."¹³⁰ What this meant for the Buffalo Agency, however, was that the centrality it and its library had enjoyed for three centuries as a site of study and contact, as well as the endowments that had supported its students, receded into the background.

* * *

Together, the careers and social circles of Sa'īd al-Shammākhī and Muḥammad al-Bārūnī demonstrate remarkable continuities between the history of Ibadi communities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and those of the past. At the same time, their careers mark important changes to the Ibadi community of Cairo that distinguish it from anything that came before.

Al-Shammākhī's close ties to the khedival household and his connections in the bey's government in Tunis represent an unprecedented

¹²⁹ Ibid. ¹³⁰ Jomier, *Islam, réforme et colonisation*, 124.

level of Ibadi participation in Ottoman politics in Egypt. At the same time, his career as a Jerban merchant and Azhari scholar that led to his attaining that position mirrored a similar role played by Ibadi merchants and scholars in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In those earlier periods the heads of Maghribi merchant guilds or prominent scholars in Tulun had also represented Jerbans in court, petitioned the bey for their *wakīl*, and served as mediators between the Ottoman government and the merchants. Al-Shammākhī still formally maintained control of the endowments supporting the Buffalo Agency, and the flow of students and merchants in and out of the Agency continued unabated throughout this period.

Muḥammad al-Bārūnī also followed the longstanding tradition of Maghribi Ibadi students who traveled to Cairo for study at al-Azhar. His choice to enter the private printing industry may have been innovative for his community, but in terms of operations and financing it resembled in virtually every way other private presses in Ottoman Egypt in the second half of the nineteenth century. Al-Bārūnī relied on the same networks of textual exchange that had been used to acquire manuscripts in the past. The technology of lithography and the method of commissioning texts likewise resembled the manuscript culture that preceded them. Like other private presses, however, there was a great deal of risk involved in producing hundreds of copies, and this required significant funds. Al-Bārūnī resembled his contemporaries in seeking advances to fund his printings, but he was distinguished from his Sunni contemporaries in two important ways. First (and perhaps most obviously), his choice of texts, which were overwhelmingly Ibadi authored, distinguished the press from other private enterprises. Second, however, was his good fortune in having the financial backing of Ibadi communities elsewhere: texts commissioned and financed by the sultans of Zanzibar; texts commissioned from the Mzab by Amḥammad Aṭfayyish and financed by Ibadis from the Mzab and Jerba; and the purchase of a new press by Sulaymān al-Lamkī following the fire that destroyed the press in 1898–99. This in turn allowed al-Bārūnī Press to offset some of the risk associated with printing in late nineteenth-century Egypt.

The gradual decline in the importance of the Buffalo Agency in the first two decades of the twentieth century, followed by the end of its role as the anchor of Maghribi Ibadis in Egypt by 1920, likewise mirrors both continuity and change in the history of the Ottoman Ibadis of Cairo. The city maintained its central role as a site of

inter-Ibadi contact, linking Maghribi Ibadis from different regions and their confreres to the east. Cairo likewise continued to connect Ibadis to the broader Ottoman world through political activism, print journalism, and the transregional lives of the Ibadis who passed through or had been born in Egypt. This role for Cairo, as a site of Ibadi interaction with the intellectual, political, and religious world of the Ottoman Empire, was as prominent as it had been over the past three centuries. The dual status of Ibadis as a minority community and members of the Muslim majority continued to allow them the opportunity to engage fully with Ottoman society both up to and beyond the collapse of the empire itself. What changed was the role of the Agency. In the flurry of transregional Ibadi activity that characterized the interwar years, the Buffalo Agency would sit vacant.

6 | *Sālim Bin Ya‘qūb*

Much of what I have written in this book has drawn directly or indirectly from the work of the Jerban historian and Ibadi scholar Sālim b. Muḥammad Bin Ya‘qūb (1904–91). Shaykh Sālim’s two published works represent only a small fraction of the knowledge and experience he gained over the course of his long life devoted to the study of Ibadi history.¹ It was by gathering traces of Shaykh Sālim’s biography, his research, the work of his students, and manuscript evidence scattered across North Africa, Europe, and Oman that I reconstructed much of the Buffalo Agency’s story. In this final chapter I turn to the life of Shaykh Sālim, his time at the Agency in the 1930s, and his work in compiling the history of Ibadis in Ottoman Egypt.

The manuscript and documentary evidence for this chapter share much with earlier chapters in that I draw on manuscripts copied or once housed in the Buffalo Agency’s library to narrate its story. Yet the contents of this chapter, perhaps more so than any of those that preceded it, could only have been assembled with the help of friends, colleagues, and coresearchers in Tunisia, Algeria, France, Germany, Italy, and Oman. Their invaluable assistance merits more than acknowledgment, in that it shaped the methodological approach I used in reconstructing the story of both Sālim’s life and the Buffalo Agency. Alongside those sources, the informal anecdotes or published testimonies of Shaykh Sālim’s friends and students, who assembled many of the materials I draw from here, also preserve the memory of Shaykh Sālim and his time in Cairo.

Other visitors to Shaykh Sālim’s library over the course of the twentieth century played serendipitous roles in my ability to tell the story of this book – and this chapter, in particular. Werner Schwartz,

¹ Bin Ya‘qūb, *Tārīkh jazīrat Jarba*, 2006; Ibn Sallām al-Ibādī, *Kitāb fīhi bad’ al-islām wa-sharā’i al-dīn*, ed. Werner Schwartz and Sālim Bin Ya‘qūb (Beirut: Dār al-Ṣādir, 1986).

who in 1979 and 1983 as a student traveled across Tunisia and Libya photographing manuscripts for use in his doctoral research, has for several years offered me research materials and advice relating to Ibadi history, and Shaykh Sālim in particular.² My seat being next to his at dinner several years ago turned out to be a wonderful coincidence. The photographs he took of several of the notebooks and manuscript *majmū*'s in Shaykh Sālim's library proved invaluable for my research. His photographs of the Bin Ya'qūb family during a visit in the 1980s also offered me a brief glimpse into Sālim's life as a scholar, father, and grandfather (Figure 6.1). Martin Custers, who had embarked on a similar journey in 1972 to gather materials on the life of Sulaymān Pāshā al-Bārūnī (d. 1940), photographed what turned out to be among the most important documents for this book: a handwritten list of the endowed books in the Agency's library that were still there during Sālim's stay in the 1930s. Professor Custers, with whom I have only ever corresponded in emails, has been terribly generous with sharing his work.

Shaykh Sālim's students and Jerban friends of the Bin Ya'qūb family have allowed me to reconstruct certain aspects of the story told here and in the previous chapters. Perhaps the most prominent of his students, Farhat Djaabiri, has been generous in discussing Shaykh Sālim's work and career with me. Dr. Djaabiri is the closest thing to a successor for Shaykh Sālim in contemporary Jerba, and so his support has often opened doors that might otherwise have remained closed. Similarly, the support of Sa'īd al-Bārūnī, the curator of the al-Bārūnī family library in Jerba, has provided me with access to physical manuscripts connected to Shaykh Sālim and the Buffalo Agency. The al-Bārūnī Library was a collection Shaykh Sālim knew well, evidenced by the many marginal notes he left in its manuscripts.

More recently, my colleague Ali Boujdidi in Jerba provided me with copies of the documents he used to write a detailed biographical article on Sālim Bin Ya'qūb.³ His access to those materials was made possible

² Werner Schwartz, *Die Anfänge der Ibaditen in Nordafrika: der Beitrag einer islamischen Minderheit zur Ausbreitung des Islams* (Wiesbaden: In Kommission bei Verlag O. Harrassowitz, 1983).

³ 'Alī al-Būjdīdī, "al-Shaykh Sālim Bin Ya'qūb: ḥayāt rajul wa-tajribat jīl," *Majallat al-ḥayāt* 16 (2012): 170–82. Second part published as "al-Shaykh Sālim b. Ya'qūb: ḥayāt rajul wa-tajribat jīl (al-ḥalqa al-thāniyya)," *Majallat al-ḥayāt* 17 (2013): 249–73.

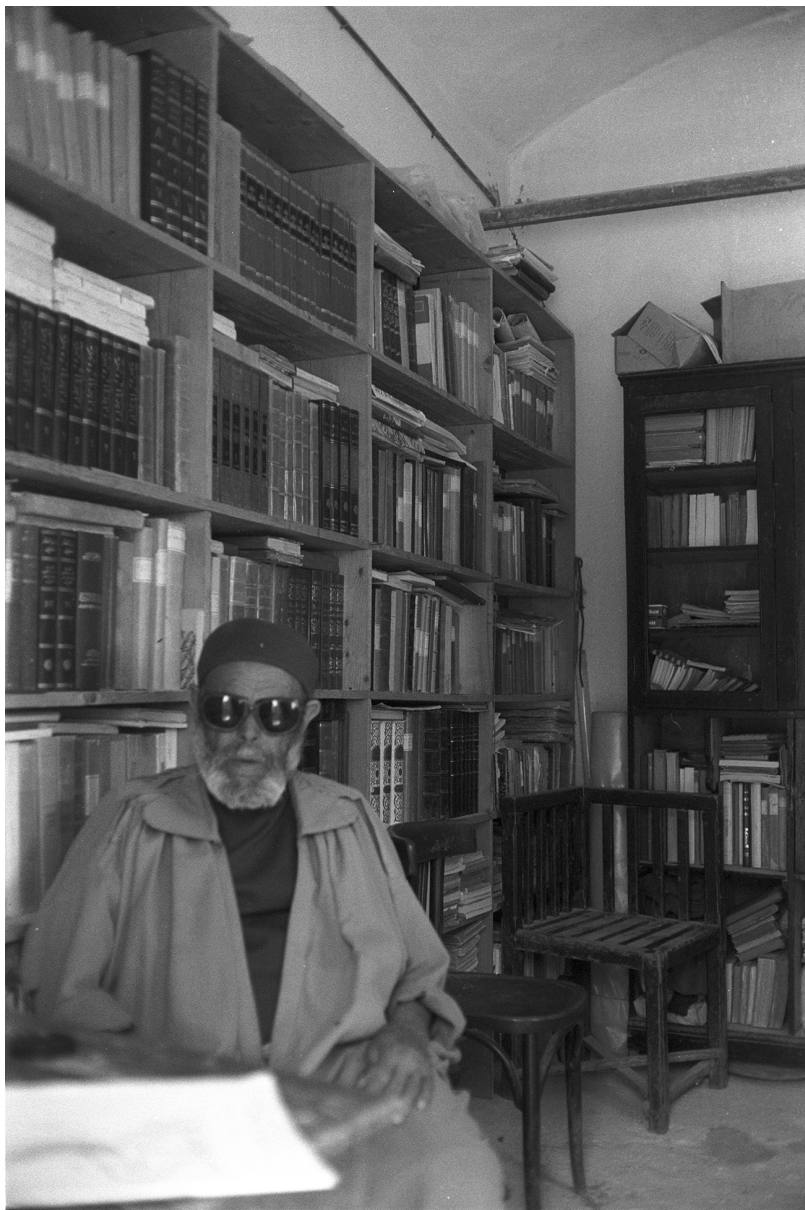


Figure 6.1 Shaykh Sālim Bin Ya'qūb, seated in his library. (Photograph by W. Schwartz, 1979)

by his friendship with the family. Similarly, the work of another of Shaykh Sālim's students, Aḥmad Muṣliḥ, has proved invaluable. His published study of the Agency's waqf, which I have relied on in this book, also offered me documents related to the Agency from Shaykh Sālim's library.⁴ Finally, another of Shaykh Sālim's students, Sāsī Bin Yaḥyātin, has been helpful in providing me with manuscript materials from Shaykh Sālim's library, whether in facsimile or in his own research publications. Alongside digital surrogates provided to me by other researchers in Jerba, Ghardaïa, Muscat, Paris, and beyond, these acts of generosity have been the building blocks of this book. Moreover, they further reinforce the centrality of Shaykh Sālim to my own narrative and emphasize the need to follow his story.

Among the most valuable sources cited here is a videotaped interview with Sālim, recorded in 1986 on a handheld camcorder in the library on the Bin Ya'qūb farm estate in Gizen, Jerba.⁵ The conversation includes Shaykh Sālim, Said El Barouni, Gasseem Gouja, and my wife's maternal uncle, Farid El Cadi. Farid, who has on more than one occasion been kind enough to entertain my many questions on the history of Jerba, deserves special credit for having led for many years the Association pour la sauvegarde de l'île de Djerba, the organization responsible for having recorded the video and having preserved so many other books and documents connected to the island's history. My wife's family in Jerba have continued to bring me back there in the summer months of each year, and it is in part through them that I have developed a familiarity with the island. Those connections merit more than footnotes – they are often the very reason I have been able to access materials for this book in the first place.

Also present for that interview was Shaykh Sālim's son, Maḥmūd Bin Ya'qūb, whom I regret not having had the opportunity to meet before his untimely death in 2005. Although I have mostly engaged with Sālim's life and work indirectly, one final experience has also contributed to my ability to tell this story. In 2014–15 I collaborated with Shaykh Sālim's grandson, Dr. Neji Ben Yagoub (Nāji Bin Ya'qūb), to produce a preliminary inventory of the hundreds of

⁴ Muṣliḥ, *al-Waqf al-jarbī fī Miṣr*.

⁵ Interview with Sālim Bin Ya'qūb (1986). Original video held at the Association pour la Sauvegarde de l'île de Djerba. Digitized version now available online at www.youtube.com/watch?v=NIGHIqVYC9A.

manuscript fragments collected by Sālim in Egypt and Jerba.⁶ While it was only a first step, and not as fruitful as I had hoped for, I am nevertheless thankful for the opportunity to work with the physical objects themselves, cognizant that I have sifted through stacks of unorganized folios from the Buffalo Agency just as Sālim did when he arrived in Cairo in 1934. As in other cases when I have encountered manuscripts produced at the Agency, I regard these physical interactions with these objects as important. I say this not to fetishize the manuscripts but rather as a way of emphasizing that these objects are the main actors in the story of this book. Moreover, they constitute the last material vestiges of the Buffalo Agency's existence.

This corpus of material and digitized sources has permitted me to rebuild a history of the Buffalo Agency in the preceding chapters. Equally significant, however, are the things that I have not been able to say. Beyond the limitations of any body of historical documents, the very particular circumstances of Shaykh Sālim's own library have presented me with significant obstacles. Since my initial cooperation with the Bin Ya'qūb family in 2015, I have not had direct access to any of the physical manuscripts or to Shaykh Sālim's personal documents and notes in the library. My understanding of what the library holds has been filtered through what I have had access to through scans and photographs provided to me by colleagues. My attempts in this chapter to reconstruct Sālim's early life and his time in Egypt stem from my desire to understand the constitution of his library, a portion of which I have drawn from to tell the Buffalo Agency's story.

In this chapter I follow Sālim on his journey to Cairo to collect manuscript fragments, to copy new texts, and to gather information on the history of Ibadis in Egypt. On his own journey in search of knowledge and materials about Ibadi history, Sālim also knowingly followed in the tradition of his Maghribi Ibadi predecessors from the previous three centuries. Through the process of writing this book I have simultaneously retraced both his steps and theirs to build a history of the Buffalo Agency. As a result, this book pursues many of the same trails first blazed by Sālim. I have attempted to be reflexive

⁶ Paul M. Love, Jr., "The Sālim Bin Ya'qūb Ibādī Manuscript Library in Jerba, Tunisia: A Preliminary Survey and Inventory," *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts* 8 (2017): 257–80. That research was the product of a Collection Care and Emergency Response grant from the Islamic Manuscripts Association (TIMA) in 2014–15.

and have not shied away from inserting my own research process into the narrative. In what follows, I offer the historical narrative of Sālim's career mixed with the chance encounters, conversations, and documents that allowed me to reconstruct the story.

* * *

In his adolescence, Sālim was an unlikely candidate for a scholar. By his own description he was a terrible student, and regularly fled his studies. The recorded interview from 1986 offers a remarkably intimate retrospective of his early life. He speaks of running as a child into the prickly-pear mounds that separate the farm estates in the olive-tree *ghāba* (literally, forest) of the interior of the island of Jerba, where he recalls he would wait “until the children would head home [from school] and then I would go home with them.”⁷ Given that two of his teachers were his maternal uncles, this could not have been much of a secret.⁸

By all accounts, Sālim should have become a merchant rather than a scholar. Representative of their family's Jerban identity, Sālim's father Muḥammad b. Sa'īd b. Dāwūd Bin Ya'qūb (d. 1927) worked as a merchant, doing business in Tunisia, Algeria, and Libya. He spent seven years alone working in Benghazi.⁹ He even traveled to France to sell goods, accompanied by a Mzabi business partner in 1308 AH (1890–91). Sālim's paternal uncle had also done business in Alexandria.¹⁰ In this way, the merchant side of Sālim's family followed the same trajectories as those of the historical personalities who would come to dominate his work as a historian, scholar, and book collector. His father's account books (sing. *khunnāsha*), which remain in the family library today, include detailed records of the money and goods he moved to and from different places, including Jerba, Tunis, Tripoli, and Benghazi. Many of the transactions are for transporting small items like books – including a book sent to him by Sulaymān

⁷ Interview with Sālim Bin Ya'qūb [00:04:08–00:04:15].

⁸ He noted in the recorded interview that his maternal uncles, Qāsim b. Mhinnī Bin Ya'qūb and his brother Ma'sūd, were his teachers at the Lakīn Mosque: *ibid.* [00:04:45–00:05:08].

⁹ At the beginning of his interview Bin Ya'qūb mentioned his father's “Mzābī” partner, who traveled with him [00:03:10–00:03:20]; this could be Baḥmad b. Ibrāhīm al-Mzābī, whose name appears in the transaction registers of his father (Makt. Bin Ya'qūb MS 129).

¹⁰ Interview with Sālim Bin Ya'qūb [01:05:00–01:05:15].

b. 'Abdallāh al-Bārūnī (d. 1940) to sell in Jerba. Sālim's father also did business with the island's Jewish community. These included a man named Shū'a Yūyūwa, for whom Muḥammad moved small goods in and out of Jerba.¹¹

To avoid his studies, Sālim worked the family's land. Astonishingly, not until the age of twenty did he learn to write, and he only began his studies in earnest a few years later.¹² Fortunately for Sālim, the island's al-Bāsi Mosque had just resumed its functions as a madrasa for a small group of students in 1924, and he joined them.¹³ There they followed the curriculum established by the Zaytuna Mosque, but its students were also among the last generation to study Ibadi classics in a formal institutional setting, including the Ibadi primer in jurisprudence, the *Kitāb al-Waḍ'*, and the didactic poem of creed (*'aqīda*) known as *al-Jāduwiyya*.¹⁴ Sālim then left the al-Bāsi Mosque and moved to Bizerte for a brief time to work with his brother Ḥamīda in the family business.

After his father's death following his return from hajj in July 1927, Sālim inherited a share of his father's shop worth some 6,000 francs.¹⁵ Determined to pursue his studies, Sālim left work in Bizerte and traveled to Tunis to attend courses at the Zaytuna Mosque in 1929. He attended lessons there without adhering strictly to the curriculum, while also copying manuscripts.¹⁶ Having arrived just as the Mzabi missions to Tunis were drawing to a close, he nevertheless overlapped with many of them. For example, during his time in Tunis he studied under the prominent Mzabi reformer Muḥammad al-Thamīnī

¹¹ Makt. Bin Ya'qūb MS 129 and MS 130 (notebooks of Muḥammad Bin Ya'qūb).

¹² Interview with Sālim Bin Ya'qūb [00:04:16–00:04:27].

¹³ This mosque-library had a long and prestigious history linking Jerba to the Ottoman Empire. See Boujdidi and Love, Jr., "Preserving Endangered Archives."

¹⁴ Interview with Sālim Bin Ya'qūb [00:11:24–00:11:36]. He describes his time at the al-Bāsi Mosque in some detail in his *Tārikh jazīrat Jarba*, 2006, 204–10.

¹⁵ He describes telling his father of his desire to study at the Zaytuna Mosque prior to the latter's death in 1325/1927. Although his father initially doubted his son's ability to succeed (Bin Ya'qūb, *Tārikh jazīrat Jarba*, 2006, 209), he eventually seems to have gained his support, although his brother Ḥamīda did not support his decision and refused to send him the new clothes he would need for his journey: Interview with Sālim Bin Ya'qūb [00:14:33–00:14:50].

¹⁶ For example, in the margin of Makt. Bin Ya'qūb MS 5 (dated 12 Sha'b 1349/Jan 2, 1931) there is a note that he copied it between leaving the al-Bāsi Mosque and beginning his studies at Zaytuna.

(1897–1970).¹⁷ Al-Thamīnī also owned a bookstore in the medina of Tunis called Maktabat al-Istiḳāma, which served as an important point of distribution for printed Ibadi (and non-Ibadi) works.¹⁸ A few years later, in 1934, shortly after his wife died of illness, Sālim decided to leave Tunisia for Egypt.

* * *

When he boarded a steamship bound for Alexandria in 1934, Sālim knew well that he was following the same path that Jerbans had been taking for hundreds of years. He traveled in the footsteps of Ibadis who for the past three centuries had journeyed to Cairo to study at al-Azhar and to stay at the Buffalo Agency. The ship, Sālim recalled over sixty years later, carried some four hundred passengers, and he sat all the way in the rear. They stopped first in Benghazi, at the time under the rule of the Italian colonial government, to let off the Jerbans who worked as merchants there. The ship continued its journey to Alexandria, where Sālim sought out members of the Bin Ta'ārīt family, Ibadi merchants who had long lived between Egypt and Jerba. The Bin Ta'ārīt family were friends and likely former merchant colleagues of Sālim's family, both of which had strong connections to Alexandria.¹⁹ In addition, the family claims the great historian of Jerba in the nineteenth century, Sa'īd b. 'Alī Bin Ta'ārīt (d. 1872), whose *Epistle on the History of Jerba* represented one of the most important manuscript sources for Sālim's own history of Jerba and the island's connection with Egypt.²⁰ Sālim's own manuscript of that text today circulates in photocopy on the island of Jerba, and I have relied on that copy in

¹⁷ Bin Ya'qūb, *Tārīkh jazīrat Jarba*, 2006, 209. On al-Thamīnī and the Mzabi delegations to Tunis in this period see Ghazal, "Tensions of Nationalism."

¹⁸ An extant catalog of the Maktabat al-Istiḳāma from 1934, Sālim's last year in Tunis, gives the address of the book as 34 Nahaj Bin 'Arūs. The copy I examined was in the private collection of Mohamed El Bennani in Tunis.

¹⁹ In addition to Sālim having stayed with the family upon arriving in Alexandria in 1934, several years later two members of the Bin Ta'ārīt family, Muḥammad and Qāsim Bin Ta'ārīt, served as the witnesses at his wedding to his second wife, Salmūna: Marriage contract between Sālim b. Muḥammad Ya'qūb and Salmūna bt. Yūnus b. Yaḥyā al-Manūshī (dated Hūmat Sūq, dated 26 D. al-Ḥijja 1357/ Feb [16,] 1939). A scan of this document from the Bin Ya'qūb Library was shared with me by Dr. 'Alī al-Būjdīdī. The two men's biographies appear in his history of Jerba: Bin Ya'qūb, *Tārīkh jazīrat Jarba*, 2006, 391–93.

²⁰ Bin Ta'ārīt, "Risāla fī tārīkh Jarba." This photocopy was also given to me by Dr. al-Būjdīdī.

this book.²¹ Sālim had access to the exemplar, which was likely the autograph, thanks to his close relationship to the Bin Ta'ārīt family. Its author, Sa'īd Bin Ta'ārīt, had died in Alexandria in 1872 and members of his family had worked in both Cairo and Alexandria during Sa'īd al-Shammākhī's time as *wakīl* at the end of the century (Chapter 5).²²

After four days in Alexandria, Sālim continued his journey to Cairo, where he again sought out members of the Jerban community. With his "head swimming like a steamship from fifteen days" of travel, he found rest at the home of the Jerban Bin Qā'id family in the Sūq al-Fahhāmīn.²³ From that historic center of Jerban commercial activity, Sālim continued the well-trodden itinerary of his predecessors. The following day he walked the 3 kilometers south toward the Ibn Tulun Mosque, where he located the Buffalo Agency, in the al-Najjār alleyway at the mosque's northwestern corner.

But Sālim found the Buffalo Agency empty, covered in dust, and without running water or electricity. This contrasted with the past, he later recalled, "when there had been servants (*abīd*) who would cook and . . . there had been perhaps fifty people living in it."²⁴ Some fifteen or so years before he arrived the last regular payments in support of students had ceased. Near penniless, Sālim took up residence at the Agency and eventually succeeded in securing a modest monthly stipend drawn from the centuries-old endowments that had been made by Ibadi merchants since the seventeenth century for the benefit of students like him. Sālim made no mention of how precisely he obtained this stipend or from whom, although he said that a Jerban acquaintance studying at al-Azhar had also earlier received a stipend. This suggests that the endowments may have in some form been maintained for Jerban students regardless of whether they were connected to the

²¹ In 2022 the Ibadi Research Center published an edited version of the text, based on this copy and the manuscript from which it was copied: Sa'īd b. 'Alī b. 'Umar b. Sa'īd b. Yaḥyā Bin Ta'ārīt, *Risāla fī tarājīm 'ulamā' Jarba (Épître des savants de Djerba)*, ed. Sassi Ben Yahyaten (Paris: Ibadica Editions, 2022).

²² In mid-May 1875 Sa'īd al-Shammākhī tasked one 'Alī Bin Ta'ārīt (who was probably the father of the Jerban historian Sa'īd b. 'Alī Bin Ta'ārīt) with transporting a cow and a bull from Egypt to Tunis for then grand vizier Khayr al-Dīn Pāshā. See ANT H 231 438, doc. 85, letter from Sa'īd al-Shammākhī to Khayr al-Dīn Pāshā (dated 28 Rab I 1291/May 15, 1874).

²³ The quotation: Interview with Sālim Bin Ya'qūb [00:18:50–00:19:15]; he also discusses his time with the Bin Qā'id family [00:22:13–00:22:45].

²⁴ Ibid. [00:24:33–00:24:42].

Agency or not.²⁵ Nominally, the man in control of the endowments in 1934 was the same as in 1914: the Nafusi merchant and scholar discussed at the end of Chapter 5, 'Umar b. 'Isā al-Tandimīrtī (d. 1948). It is not clear, however, if he was still in control of much of anything by that point.²⁶

For the first year, Sālim remained alone. But he was soon joined by a young man from the Jebel Nafusa and two from Zuwāra, a town to the north of the Jebel along the Mediterranean coast.²⁷ While residence at the Agency cost nothing, living conditions were far from ideal. Water had to be brought from next door, and without any electricity, reading and study could only happen in the daylight hours.²⁸ Sālim had come to Cairo to study at al-Azhar, and he soon joined courses there. Unlike previous centuries, however, he found he was the only Jerban studying at the mosque in 1934. In his spare time he used what little money he had to purchase books in the markets around al-Azhar. He often chose to buy books instead of food.²⁹

During his five-and-a-half years in Egypt Sālim divided his time between al-Azhar and private study under the person who would nominally control the Buffalo Agency's endowments after 1948, Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm Aṭṭayyish (d. 1965). This nephew of Amḥammad Aṭṭayyish (d. 1914) had been in Cairo since 1923, when he had been forced to choose a place of exile outside French-controlled Tunisia and Algeria. He had earlier been one of group of Mzabis who had traveled with young students to Tunis, where they sought access to new forms of both religious and secular education. The Mzabi presence in Tunis, which long predated the twentieth century, was particularly formative in that period of the 1920s.³⁰ Mzabis in Tunisia participated in the recently founded Constitutional Party (Ḥizb al-Dustūr) and, through both their experience there and the Tunisian and Egyptian press, were exposed to pan-Islamic and pan-Arab ideas circulating throughout the region in the wake of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire.³¹ This political involvement had earned Ibrāhīm Aṭṭayyish an exile in Egypt.

²⁵ Ibid. [00:25:10–00:25:40].

²⁶ Muṣliḥ, *al-Waqf al-jarbī fī Miṣr*, 217; Makt. al-Quṭb, Abū al-Yaqzān, "Mulḥaq al-siyar," 396 (notes that he died in Cairo but not when).

²⁷ Interview with Sālim Bin Ya'qūb [00:24:15–00:24:19].

²⁸ Ibid. [00:24:25–00:24:30]. ²⁹ Ibid. [00:33:27–00:34:14].

³⁰ Jomier, *Islam, réforme et colonisation*, 79–80.

³¹ Ghazal, "The Other Frontiers of Arab Nationalism," 109–11; Ghazal, "Tensions of Nationalism"; Jomier, *Islam, réforme et colonisation*.

Aṭfayyish belonged to a generation of Ibadi reformers whose careers matured in the decades after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. His long and varied career has earned him the attention of several historians, especially with regard to his well-known journal *al-Minhāj*.³² Like Qāsim al-Shammākhī before him, Aṭfayyish's work as a journalist helped connect Ibadis with the worlds of pan-Arab and pan-Islamic reformism – and opposition to it – in the interconnected discursive worlds of post-Ottoman northern Africa, western Asia, and East Africa.³³ As Augustin Jomier has demonstrated, Aṭfayyish and other Ibadi reformers-cum-journalists of the interwar years achieved a fundamental transformation of the role of the scholar (*ʿālim*) through their publishing activities.³⁴

Sālim was influenced by Aṭfayyish as well as the general environment of Egypt in the 1930s. His contact with the world of print journalism in Cairo even inspired him to attempt the establishment of his own bimonthly Ibadi newspaper, *al-Istiḳāma*. Although apparently never published, a draft of the first issue of the newspaper dated December 27, 1935 (Figure 6.2) survives today in the Bin Ya'qūb Library and lists Sālim as its chief editor. Listing the Agency's address as its headquarters (8 'Aṭfat al-Najjār, Tulun Street), it introduces itself as “published by: a select group of young Ibadi students in Cairo. Its aim: to produce writing, discourse, and the means by which [to realize] the reform of Ibadi society with regard to the sacred and the mundane (*dīnan wa-dunyāwan*).”³⁵

His choice of the term reform (*iṣlāḥ*) is significant, reflecting the degree to which the arguments of Ibadi reformers had by the 1930s come to dominate the discursive arena of Ibadi communities in Cairo, Tunis, and the Mzab.³⁶ Yet Sālim's rhetoric and his interest as a

³² Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm Iṭfayyish, ed., *al-Minhāj: Majalla 'ilmiyya siyāsiyya ijtīmā'iyya niṣf shariyya* (Cairo: al-Maṭba'a al-Salāfiyya, 1925). On Aṭfayyish's life and career see Muḥammad Nāṣir, *al-Shaykh Ibrāhīm Aṭfayyish fī jihādihī al-islāmī* (al-Qarāra: Jam'iyyat al-Turāth, 1991). The new journal by the same name, *El Minhaj*, also dedicated a special issue to his career. See “al-Ayyām al-dirāsiyya al-'ilmiyya: al-Shaykh Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm Aṭfayyish al-Jazā'irī, al-'ālim al-'āmil,” *El Minhaj (al-Minhāj)* Special Issue (2014).

³³ Al-Shaybānī, *Qāsim b. Sa'īd al-Shammākhī*; Ghazal, “Seeking Common Ground,” 124–31.

³⁴ See “Des polygraphes aux publicistes. Les oulémas dans l'entre-deux-guerres,” in Jomier, *Islam, réforme et colonisation*, 117–53.

³⁵ Makt. Bin Ya'qūb MS 135, “al-Istiḳāma” (dated Dec 27, 1935).

³⁶ Jomier, *Islam, réforme et colonisation*, 104–09.

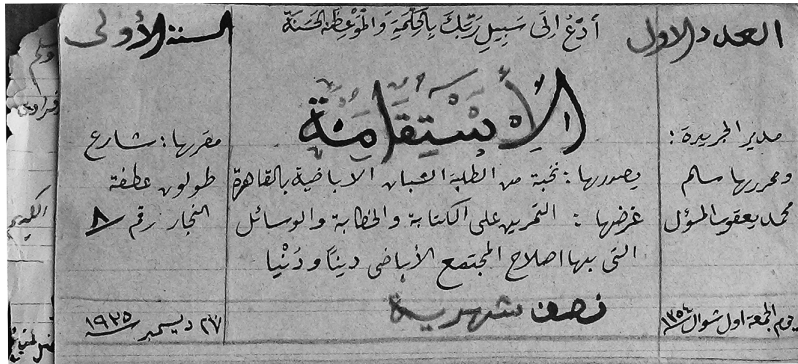


Figure 6.2 The header of Sālim Bin Ya'qūb's draft for a bimonthly Ibadi newspaper entitled *al-Istiqlām* (dated Dec 27, 1935). Maktabat Bin Ya'qūb MS 135. (Photograph courtesy of Ibadica centre des études et de recherche sur l'ibadisme. Used with permission)

historian and scholar later on did not necessarily reflect an ecumenicalism or an attempt at finding common ground with his Sunni coreligionists. Sālim's interests lay squarely in the realm of Ibadi history and thought. He did not leave behind much in the way of writing to suggest whether he would have fallen into the "reformist" or "conservative" schools of Ibadi thought in the twentieth century.³⁷ Despite the influence of Aṭfayyish, Sālim likely would have adhered to some conservative principles. For example, he categorically rejected the idea of carrying out the communal Friday prayer, instead adhering to the classical Ibadi principle that the prayer should only be held under the leadership of a just Ibadi imam.³⁸

In the introductory article to his bimonthly, Sālim addressed readers as he provided a broad review of Ibadi history and the foundation of different Ibadi states in both the Maghrib and the Arabian Peninsula, blending them with the story of the expansion of Islam. He likewise pointed to the remarkable perseverance of Ibadism for over a millennium without the support of a state (as, he claimed, the Ash'aris

³⁷ On the tension between the two see Jomier, *Islam, réforme et colonisation*.

³⁸ Shaykh Sālim was well known for his position on this particular matter, on which see Farhat Djaabiri, "Ibadi Identity in the Modern Era," in *Local and Global Ibadi Identities*, ed. Yohei Kondo and Angeliki Ziaka, Studies in Ibadism and Oman 13 (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2019), 213–23, at 216–17.

enjoyed), which he contrasted with other communities that have now disappeared, such as the Mu'tazila and the Kharijites. He concluded by exhorting his fellow Ibadis to know this past and to be proud of it. Both this text and the one that follows it, written by one Shaykh 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-'Azzābī, appear to have been read aloud to the group that intended to publish the newspaper.³⁹ Although the paper never appeared in print, Sālim's plans to publish it fit squarely into the journalistic activities among Ibadi reformers in Egypt, Tunis, the Mزاب, and Zanzibar in the first three decades of the twentieth century.⁴⁰

Ibrāhīm Aṭṭfayyish's work in journalism represented only one of the many ways in which he influenced Sālim. While Aṭṭfayyish appears to have taught the trickle of students who passed through the Agency in the 1920s, by the 1930s teaching there had stopped entirely.⁴¹ Instead, the young Sālim spent four days a week with Aṭṭfayyish, traveling from the Agency in Tulun to his teacher's home the northern suburb of al-Maṭariyya, where Aṭṭfayyish offered lessons to him and other students.⁴² These studies culminated in Sālim receiving from Aṭṭfayyish a license (*ijāza*), today preserved in the Bin Ya'qūb Library. The document, transcribed shortly before Sālim's return to Jerba, authorized him to teach jurisprudence, *uṣūl*, and other topics.⁴³ The two were so

³⁹ Makt. Bin Ya'qūb MS 135. The precise identity of this 'Abd al-Raḥmān is not clear, but the text may be attributed to 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Umar al-Bakkālī (d. 1986), a Mزابi reformist, active writer, and new member of the 'azzāba of the town of al-'Aṭf by the mid-1930s. See Bābā'ammī et al., eds., *Mu'jam a'lām al-ibādīyya*, 249–53.

⁴⁰ Custers, *Ibādī Publishing Activities*; Ghazal, "The Other Frontiers of Arab Nationalism"; al-Shaybānī, *Qāsim b. Sa'īd al-Shammākhī*.

⁴¹ Custers refers to his conversations with Shaykh Sālim, saying that "Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm Aṭṭfayyish (d. 1966) [*sic*] supervised the house and taught there" (*Ibādī Publishing Activities*, 40).

⁴² Jomier notes that Abū Ishāq taught at the wikala (*Islam, réforme et colonisation*, 98) and Muṣliḥ also noted him as among the most prominent teachers at the wikala. However, Muṣliḥ also makes it clear that Aṭṭfayyish taught from his home in al-Maṭariyya, just as he would in the 1930s (*al-Waqf al-jarbi*, 151). I suspect, then, that Aṭṭfayyish normally did not teach at the wikala after the 1920s, if at all.

⁴³ Makt. Bin Ya'qūb, "Shahādat ijāza," signed by Abū Ishāq [Ibrāhīm] Aṭṭfayyish (dated 6 D. al-Qa'da 1357/Dec 28, 1938, manuscript in the Bin Ya'qūb Library). A scan of this document was provided to me by Dr. 'Alī al-Būjdīdī.

close that when Aṭfayyish on occasion was unable to write, he dictated his private letters to Sālim.⁴⁴

While Sālim spent his days between al-Azhar and Aṭfayyish, he divided his evenings among the many meetings of different literary and social organizations active in Cairo. He spent time late into the evenings, for example, attending lectures and study circles organized by the Muslim Brotherhood (al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn) and the al-'Urwā al-Wuthqā Association.⁴⁵ Sālim's interest in these organizations likely also developed out of his friendship with Aṭfayyish, who was a strong advocate of reform, a prolific writer, and an outspoken opponent of colonialism with close ties to some of the most influential social and political actors of the era in Egypt, including Ḥasan al-Bannā, Sayyid Quṭb, and many others.⁴⁶

It may well also have been through Aṭfayyish, who would later work as an editor at the manuscript division of the Dār al-Kutub National Library in Cairo, that Sālim ended up spending time searching that library's collections for manuscripts and printed books relating to Ibadi history.⁴⁷ He later reflected on the experience, saying:

I spent three months reading [in the Dār al-Kutub]. I would choose, they would give me a *daftar* [one of] the catalogs (*al-fahāris*), and I would choose and read whatever I liked about history. . . . At that time I was focused on history. . . . I gathered most of what I compiled on the history of Jerba in Egypt from the Agency and the Dār al-Kutub.⁴⁸

Further testimony of his time in Cairo survives today in small notebooks and loose folios, where he recorded the titles of the books that he looked through in his time there. These notes, along with most of Sālim's handwritten notes, drafts, and even his poetry, remain in manuscript form in his family library in Jerba.⁴⁹ His reference in the passage above to "what

⁴⁴ Muḥammad Nāṣir, "Qirā'a bi-im'ān fi rasā'il Abī Ishāq ilā Abī al-Yaqẓān," *El Minhāj* Special Issue (2014), 301.

⁴⁵ Interview with Sālim Bin Ya'qub [00:29:19–00:29:54].

⁴⁶ On his varied career see the collected articles in the special issue of *El Minhāj* (2014) devoted to his life.

⁴⁷ Nāṣir, *al-Shaykh Ibrāhīm*, 24. On his work as editor see 'Umar Bū'aṣṣbāna, "al-Shaykh Abū Ishāq muḥaqqiqān," *El Minhāj* Special Issue (2014), 100. On Abū Ishāq's printed and edited works see Custers, *Ibādī Publishing Activities*, 42–56; Jomier, *Islam, réforme, et colonisation*, 122.

⁴⁸ Interview with Sālim Bin Ya'qub [00:35:11–00:35:50].

⁴⁹ These notebooks and loose folios are today scattered throughout Sālim's library. Those to which I had access to include a small notepad with various notes on

I compiled on the history of Jerba” refers to what proved to be his focus in Cairo: gathering all the material he could find on the history of Ibadis and Jerbans in Egypt. Although some of these materials were looseleaf folios and small notebooks, many of the materials he copied survive in two large bound notebooks in his library, which different researchers have labeled “Daftar 1” and “Daftar 2.” Werner Schwartz shared with me scans of those two notebooks, the first folio of which contains a marginal note at the top that reads: “This notebook (*daftar*) gathers important and rare historical and literary documents, which I have collected during the period of my residing in Egypt 1933–1938 and afterwards in Jerba. All of these [documents] are Ibadi traditions [*athār al-Ibāḍiyya*].”⁵⁰ The results of those efforts appeared some five decades later, when he published the first edition of his *History of the Island of Jerba* (1986).⁵¹ This work had taken him many years to complete. By the 1960s Sālim had already gained a reputation as a collector of documents and manuscripts. In his *Mulḥaq al-siyar* Abū al-Yaqzān Ibrāhīm included an entry on him, in which he wrote:

Among them is the illustrious Shaykh Sālim b. al-Ḥājǧ Muḥammad Bin Ya'qūb ... from the scholars of the island of Jerba. ... [After finishing his studies] he returned to his home in Jerba where he gave classes in some of its mosques. Then he embarked upon writing, for which he gathered a large collection of historical documents, which are nourishment of the pen for the historian. No one knows the value of this nourishment except those who are hungry for this art! It has reached us that he is currently writing a book by the title *Jerba over 2000 Years* [*Jarba fī alfay 'ām*] and the book is likely to be in two parts. It is set to appear soon, God willing.⁵²

Abū al-Yaqzān went on to acknowledge the debt he owed to Sālim in his work, noting: “All that relates in this *Mulḥaq* to the distinguished

documents and book titles (Makt. Bin Ya'qūb MS 133); another is more specifically a notebook from the Dār al-Kutub visit, including mostly non-Ibadi books he looked at while there (Makt. Bin Ya'qūb MS 71).

⁵⁰ Makt. Bin Ya'qūb “Daftar 1.” Below this note is a stamp from Sālim’s seal, dated 1354 (1935–36). The marginal note was written much later than the stamp and the bulk of the notebook, evidenced by the handwriting.

⁵¹ Sālim Bin Ya'qūb, *Tārīkh jazirat Jarba*, 1st ed. ([independently published], 1986).

⁵² Abū al-Yaqzān, “Mulḥaq al-siyar,” 509. Especially considering his close relationship with Abū al-Yaqzān’s friend Abū Ishāq Aṭfayyish, it is curious the biography does not mention Sālim’s time in Egypt. Instead, he moves straight from his studies in Tunis back to Jerba.

shaykhs and scholars of Jerba either comes from his accounts of the accounts of his trusted and just colleagues. He has filled for us – may God keep him! – that wide and excessive gap.”⁵³ What eventually appeared as the *History of the Island of Jerba* in 1986 was far from complete, however. As was already known to Abū al-Yaqzān, much of what he compiled was destined for a second volume. When asked in the recorded interview to discuss the history of commerce connecting Jerba and Egypt, Sālīm referred to his forthcoming work, saying that “when I finish [the book], it will shed much light on [the topic].”⁵⁴ Some of this was eventually compiled by Sālīm’s student Farhat Djaabiri, and published in a second edition in 2006.⁵⁵ Even in its expanded version, however, the book devotes little attention to the Egyptian Jerban community and the Buffalo Agency. This is surprising, given Sālīm’s tremendous interest in that element of Jerban history. The explanation, as he himself wrote, was that he had planned to write an additional volume called *The Ibadis in Egypt*, which he refers to by name in his first book.⁵⁶ Instead, the materials he compiled remain today in his family library, scattered in stacks of papers on shelves and in cabinets, inside notebooks and between pages of printed volumes.⁵⁷

Sālīm’s efforts to collect materials related to the history of Ibadis in Egypt, along with the subsequent work of his students and colleagues, provided the structure for much of what I have written in the previous chapters. His efforts at copying and collecting manuscript books and documents, in particular, preserved what otherwise might have been lost. This is especially true for the library of the Buffalo Agency itself. While the Agency had still been in regular use into the first decade of the twentieth century, the library had continued to accumulate books and to serve as a site of transcription and study. By the time Sālīm arrived in 1934, however, he found the collection in tattered heaps. In the interview he described the Agency’s library when he found it.

⁵³ Ibid. ⁵⁴ Interview with Sālīm Bin Ya'qūb [01:04:04].

⁵⁵ See Djaabiri’s introduction to the edition in Bin Ya'qūb, *Tāriḫ jazīrat Jarba*, 2006, 13–22. In his 2006 study of Ibadi publishing activities in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Martin Custers wrote that he had “been told that . . . volume 2 of [Sālīm’s] *Tāriḫ Jazīrat Jarba* . . . [has] for some years [been] “in the press”]: Custers, *Ibādī Publishing Activities*, 38.

⁵⁶ Bin Ya'qūb, *Tāriḫ jazīrat Jarba*, 2006, 366.

⁵⁷ For a description of the fragments and bound manuscript volumes as of 2015 see Love, Jr., “The Sālīm Bin Ya'qūb Ibādī Manuscript Library.”

GOUJA: In the library of Ibn Tulun [i.e. the Buffalo Agency], do you remember some of the books that you copied and read?

SĀLIM: Many, many! No one had lived in the Agency for years, so I found letters and papers covered in dust and dirt. There were manuscripts, broken apart [in] a heap and there were [others] on the shelves.⁵⁸

In the video of the interview he gestures with his hand to the cabinet in his own library (Figure 6.3) where he had deposited many of those manuscripts when he returned to Jerba years later. These were the same volumes that I inventoried during my time working with Sālim's grandson in 2014–15. Alongside the hundreds of printed books and magazines that fill the shelves behind him in the video, he carried with him documents and book fragments that would allow him to write the history of Ibadis in Egypt. In Alexandria in early 1939 he registered three large crates of books as he boarded the ship back home to Jerba.⁵⁹ His library would join the collection of his predecessor at the Buffalo Agency, Sa'īd al-Bārūnī (Chapter 4), as one of the most prominent manuscript collections on the island.

Over the course of the two decades that followed Sālim's departure, a handful of students would temporarily reside at the Agency, but none would remain for extended periods, as he had, and the structure itself would never again function as an institution.⁶⁰ The last years of the Buffalo Agency saw divisions among the Jerban Ibadi community in the 1940s and 1950s, who controlled both the building and its endowments. The endowment even moved back and forth between private and public hands, for a time falling under the control of the Egyptian government. Abū Ishāq Aṭfayyish, who remained in Cairo after Sālim's departure for more than two decades, noted with some bitterness in a letter from 1953:

I oversee (*u'āyin*) the endowments of the Ibadis [in Egypt]. They are ruins for whose reform and revival I have prayed, but those prayers have not been answered. So, I submitted them to the [Egyptian] Ministry of Endowments. As for the Buffalo Agency, the center of the Ibadis in Egypt for centuries, it is

⁵⁸ Interview with Sālim Bin Ya'qūb [00:37:39–00:38:10].

⁵⁹ Ibid. [00:38:30–00:38:58].

⁶⁰ On the last days of the Agency and the infrequent residents of the 1940s and 1950s see Muṣliḥ, *al-Waqf al-jarbi fī Miṣr*, 168–69.



Figure 6.3 A photograph of part of Shaykh Sālim's library. (Photograph by W. Schwartz, 1979)

in the hands of fate as two parties from the people of Jerba fight for it. They are among the inheritors of the endowers, whereas I am a third party opposed to that which wants to sell it and divide its price among themselves as if though it were a civil waqf rather than a benevolent endowment.⁶¹

A few brave souls would live in the ruined agency in the 1950s and collect the pittance that remained of the endowment, but most would move on to other locations as soon as they had other options.⁶² It was likely around the time the letter above was written that the books in the Agency's library were removed. The majority of books that the young Sālim had found covered in dust or heaped up in a corner at the Agency in 1934 had remained there after he left, but sometime soon after that Aṭfayyish relocated the manuscripts to his residence in al-Maṭariyya.⁶³ He kept many of these texts in his private library at home, while others would ultimately be sent to the Mzab Valley, where they today are housed in the library of his uncle, Amḥammad Aṭfayyish, which is known as Maktabat al-Quṭb.⁶⁴ Still others made their way through him into the stacks of the Egyptian National Library, where they remain today.⁶⁵ The bulk of the bound manuscript volumes, however, would end up in the private collection of the grand mufti of Oman, Shaykh Aḥmad b. Ḥamad al-Khalīlī, after being purchased from

⁶¹ Letter dated December 31, 1953 and quoted in Aḥmad Muṣliḥ, "Riḥlāt al-Shaykh Abī Ishāq," *El Minhāj* Special Issue (2014), 438–39. Muṣliḥ notes here and in his *al-Waqf al-jarbī fī Miṣr* that the endowments changed hands a few times from this point onward. Custers, on the authority of Aṭfayyish's son Muḥammad, writes that the endowment was finally confiscated by the Egyptian government in August 1967. Presumably this refers to the waqf of the building itself (see Custers, *Ibādī Publishing Activities*, 41).

⁶² Muṣliḥ describes the experience of Muḥammad 'Alī Ḥanbūla, one of the very last to live at the Agency in his *al-Waqf al-jarbī fī Miṣr*, 168–69.

⁶³ Aḥmad Muṣliḥ conducted an interview in June 2002 with Aṭfayyish's son Muḥammad, who described the process of moving the books out to al-Maṭariyya. See *ibid.*, 198 n. 1. He does not mention when precisely, but it would presumably have been in the early 1950s, after Sālim's return to Jerba.

⁶⁴ Syūsū, "Maṣādir maktabat al-quṭb Aṭfayyish min khārij al-jazā'ir." A footnote (145 n. 2) specifies that the books were accompanied by a list (dated 1968) of their titles and that the manuscripts also included lithographs.

⁶⁵ For example: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya MS *bā'* 22067); Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya MS *bā'* 22297). These precise manuscripts were still at the Agency in 1934, when Sālim compiled a list of the endowed works from the library. See Ibadica Center, Fonds Custers, "Qā'ima," 6, 15. For other examples see the bibliography.

Aṭṭayyish's son Muḥammad.⁶⁶ Some of those manuscripts still bear the marginal notes or even the ownership statements of Salīm Bin Ya'qūb, who intended to return to Jerba with a larger number of manuscripts than he did. For example, the first folio of a bound volume from the Agency's library, today held in the al-Khalīlī Library in Oman, bears the following statement after the title: "[This book's] owner is Salīm b. al-Ḥājj Muḥammad Bin Ya'qūb al-Jarbī." On the following page, however, the inventory number from the library of Abū Ishāq Aṭṭayyish's son Muḥammad makes it clear that the book was eventually transferred to al-Maṭariyya and subsequently traveled to Oman.⁶⁷

As for the scattered fragments, letters, and other manuscripts Salīm found at the Agency in piles or on the shelves, those would make their way back to Jerba with him in 1939. If those crates of books arrived in Jerba in stacks and heaps, they did not stay that way for long. The contents of some of the manuscripts, including a few in his own hand, he had sewn into quarter-bound leather volumes while still in Cairo.⁶⁸ As Salīm collected and copied additional texts while back in Jerba, he also set about systematically organizing the fragments he brought from Egypt. In Jerba he took collections of the manuscript fragments he had arranged into the nearby town of Houmt Souk, where he would pay a local Jewish bookbinder to sew them together into hardback volumes.

⁶⁶ This is mentioned frequently by Muṣliḥ, who provides a list of endowed books similar to that compiled by Salīm as an appendix to his study of the Agency. At the foot of the table of titles and copyists he added: "The list of the two tables is extracted from the catalog of the manuscripts of the Wikālat al-Jāmūs currently found in the library of His Grace the Grand Mufti of Oman, al-Shaykh Aḥmad b. Ḥamad al-Khalīlī, may God preserve him": Muṣliḥ, *al-Waqf al-jarbī fī Miṣr*, 228–29. The texts from the library were consulted by Brahim ben Moussa Fekhar, who cites some of them in his thesis and mentions meeting Aṭṭayyish's son. See Brahim ben Moussa Fekhar, "Les communautés ibadites en Afrique du Nord (Libye, Tunisie, et Algérie) depuis les Fatimides" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Paris, 1971), 10.

⁶⁷ Makt. al-Khalīlī AK 079 (dated late Jum I 1058/Jun 1648). Other examples in the al-Khalīlī collection include AK 067 (dated 2 D. al-Ḥijja 1261/Dec 2, 1845); AK 201 (n.d., *terminus ante quem* early nineteenth century).

⁶⁸ Examples include a collection of texts copied by Aḥmad b. Šāliḥ al-Tandimīrtī (Makt. Bin Ya'qūb MS 4); a copy of the *Kitāb al-su'ālāt* by the same copyist (Makt. Bin Ya'qūb MS 9); and a copy of the *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt* in Salīm's own hand (Makt. Bin Ya'qūb MS 30). This last book contains a marginal note after the colophon clarifying that it was copied in Egypt, where he had lived for five-and-a-half years before returning to Jerba in 1939. I assume that these were bound in Cairo rather than in Jerba because those bound in Jerba all share a similar style and were never bound in leather.

I had heard this story several times, including in the recorded interview and from Shaykh Sālim's grandson.⁶⁹ No one had ever been able to tell me much more about this bookbinder other than how he used to have a shop in Houmt Souk. In summer 2022, as I was finishing revisions of this book, I was talking about this bookbinder with my friend Mahfoudh Dahman while sitting in his own bookbinding workshop in Houmt Souk. He told me that the bookbinder was also a printer, who operated a Hebrew press in Jerba. He looked up at me and smiled, asking: "And do you know where it was?" Without giving me time to answer, he walked over to his workshop's window and pointed down to the next door on the street (Figure 6.4). Mahfoudh then told me that the original bookbinder's name was Yashū'a Ḥaddād, whose son Ḥāyy Ḥaddād (Haï Haddad) took over the business after him.⁷⁰ The family had left Jerba in the 1960s shortly after Mahfoudh's own family had moved into a formerly Jewish-owned home across the alleyway.

To the volumes bound by Ḥaddād, Sālim added a numbered table of contents in blue fountain-pen ink. In arranging his library, Sālim drew upon the help of his students and family members, especially as his eyesight grew worse. He and his students added titles to hundreds of fragments from Egypt and other places in Jerba.⁷¹ These labeled fragments, along with the now mostly disassembled bound volumes so carefully organized by Sālim in his lifetime, still await rearrangement. I say "disassembled" because during my collaboration with the Bin Ya'qūb family to inventory and to preserve the manuscript fragments in the library, Sālim's grandson Nājī Bin Ya'qūb told me that he had removed the original bindings of many of the texts due to pest damage.

⁶⁹ Interview with Sālim Bin Ya'qūb [01:07:50–01:08:32]. Gasim Gouja notes in the interview that this Jewish man was the only person in Jerba at the time who bound books. This same story was told to me by Sālim's grandson, Dr. Nājī Bin Ya'qūb, during conversations about the library's history in fall 2014.

⁷⁰ Jacqueline Fraenkel, "L'Imprimerie Hébraïque de Djerba (étude bibliographique)" (Ph.D. thesis, Université de Paris III, 1982), 41.

⁷¹ Farhat Djaabiri wrote: "He [copied] the manuscripts of all the Ibadi texts from the National Library in Cairo and the Wikālat al-Jāmūs al-Ibādiyya, ranging from chronicles and the books of doctrine and all that related to Jerba and Oman. I learned all this and I helped organize his library" (Djaabiri, "Ibadi Identity in the Modern Era," 215). Dr. Nājī Bin Ya'qūb told me in 2014–15 that he and his brothers also added titles to fragments at the instruction of their grandfather, and the same has been communicated to me by other students of Shaykh Sālim.



Figure 6.4 Nahj Rammāda in Houmt Souk in 2022. The building, now boarded-up, housed the workshop and printing press of Yashū' Ḥaddād. The surrounding buildings were owned by Jerban Jewish merchants until the 1960s. (Photo by author)

I have not seen the library since 2015, but I suspect that it still awaits proper organization and cataloging.

What I have examined of Sālim's library and reconstructed of his efforts to tell the story of the Agency's history has required looking through images of these fragments, his notebooks, and other documents of which I was able to obtain copies. Collectively, the contents of his library demonstrate the tremendous effort Sālim exerted in collecting materials on the Agency's history and the history of Ibadis in Egypt. Among the most valuable items he took the time to record was a list of endowed books at the Agency's library. The list of books, photographed by Martin Custers during a visit to the library in 1972, comprised 173 volumes, of which nearly half were non-Ibadi titles.⁷² The list reflected the condition and contents of the collection at the Agency when he found it in 1934, several years before parts of it would be relocated to the Aṭfayyish residence in al-Maṭariyya. The prominence of non-Ibadi titles helped demonstrate the importance of the Ibadi merchant community in the donation of books to the Agency's library as well as the draw of al-Azhar for many of the students there.⁷³ In the same notebook as the list of endowed books, Sālim included one of his characteristic sheets of data: a list of names of individuals appearing in the list and dates associated with them. While in Cairo, and in the following decades back in Jerba, he would fill notebooks with selections from texts he found relevant to the history of Jerba or Ibadi Islam. Alongside copies or fragments or full texts, Sālim also compiled lists of Ibadi texts in different places he visited in Cairo.⁷⁴ Each of these items contributed a piece of the story of the Agency as he began constructing it.

⁷² Martin Custers prepared an abbreviated translation of the catalog of endowed books, along with some basic statistical information on its contents: Martin H. Custers, "Catalog of Waqf-Books in Wikālat al-Baḥḥār (Jāmūs)," available at www.academia.edu/20960969/CATALOGUE_OF_WAQF_BOOKS_IN_WIK%C4%80LAT_AL_BA%E1%B8%A4%E1%B8%A4%C4%80R_J%C4%80M%C5%AAS_%E1%B9%AC%C5%ABl%C5%ABn_Cairo. The original black-and-white photographs of the manuscript are today held at the library of the Ibadica Research Center in Paris. Presumably the original manuscript remains in the Maktabat Bin Ya'qūb in Jerba.

⁷³ Love, "Ibadis on (and in) the Margins."

⁷⁴ For example, the lists of books in Makt. Bin Ya'qūb MS 133, which might be a draft of the waqf list. This also contains the map to a building endowed by the al-Jāduwī family in Alexandria.

As he made the connections between these manuscripts, individual scholars, locations, and titles, he would make notes in the margins to remind himself of these links. Among the fragments he would carry back with him to Cairo were manuscripts in the hand of his predecessor, Muḥammad Abī Sitta (al-Muḥashshī), whom we encountered in Chapter 2. These were rare and important items which today remain in the family library. Others were fragments of manuscripts copied at the Agency but may have been collected back in Jerba. Given that the Bin Ya'qub Library remains today largely in fragments, reconstructing the different quires and reassembling volumes that were originally bound together will have to wait for the work of a team. In the preceding chapters I have drawn from these fragments to document the presence of particular Ibadis in Cairo in much the same way as Shaykh Sālim himself did in his *History*.

One of the most significant collections of books and texts Sālim found at the Agency in the 1930s was the library of Sa'īd al-Shammākhī. As noted in Chapter 5, al-Shammākhī's library was endowed to the Agency sometime at the end of the nineteenth century by a group of his Ibadī merchant colleagues in Egypt. Sa'īd's son Qāsim, who had pursued a career in journalism as an ardent and outspoken defender of Ibadism until his death in 1916, also left behind traces in the Agency's library. The notable absence of detailed discussions of either Sa'īd or Qāsim al-Shammākhī from Sālim's *History of the Island of Jerba* was likely because he planned for them to take center stage in his *The Ibadis in Egypt*.⁷⁵ He collected a lot of material on these two, including (as he noted in the interview) copies of letters. For example, his library today houses letters both by Sa'īd al-Shammākhī and 'Umar al-Bārūnī, whose library al-Shammākhī purchased in the mid-nineteenth century.⁷⁶ Another remarkable document, a copy of which was made by Sālim himself while at the Agency, is a letter of advice offered by Qāsim al-Shammākhī in 1909 to the then ten-year-old heir to the khedive, Muḥammad 'Abd al-Mun'im (d. 1979).⁷⁷ The other works connected to the al-Shammākhī family in the Bin Ya'qub collection include notes on

⁷⁵ Sa'īd al-Shammākhī is briefly mentioned in relation to his father Qāsim: see Bin Ya'qub, *Tārīkh jazīrat Jarba*, 2006, 270.

⁷⁶ See Chapters 4 and 5 on al-Shammākhī's library.

⁷⁷ This is filed with the images of drafts of the periodical *al-Istiḳāma* under Makt. Bin Ya'qub MS 135.

genealogy, letters to and from its members, and texts by prominent members of the family in the late medieval Maghrib.⁷⁸ Sālim was also able to copy some of the private letters of Qāsim b. Sa'īd al-Shammākhī. This was likely also through Aṭṭfayyish, who had married one of al-Shammākhī's daughters, al-Sabī'a, after arriving in Cairo in the 1920s.⁷⁹

The relationship between Sālim's work with these fragments and other manuscripts connected to the Buffalo Agency that he encountered in Egypt and, later, back home in Jerba required recourse to his notebooks. Triangulating these different elements of his library often led me to venture into the realm of speculation. What, precisely, were the connections among the manuscript fragments, the notebooks, and the hints in his interview or published work? Reassembling these relationships could prove revealing. For example, in a fragment of text attributed to Muḥammad Abī Sitta (the focus of Chapter 2) held in the Bin Ya'qūb Library, the first few folios offer an unusually detailed biography of the author's time in Cairo. These folios, added to the fragment from the nineteenth century, were written in the hand of the Jerban historian Sa'īd Bin Ta'ārīt (d. 1872). Those anecdotes, which provided much of the context for Abī Sitta's time in Cairo in Chapter 2, were also instrumental for Sālim's own biography of him in *History of the Island of Jerba*.⁸⁰ That this particular fragment served as the source of Sālim's biography of Abī Sitta is certain, since he recopied the biography word for word from the fragment into his notebook for use in his *History* at a later stage. In this case, we have an unusually detailed image of Sālim as historian, following him as he

⁷⁸ For example, the letters in a *majmū'* in the Bin Ya'qūb Library (Makt. Bin Ya'qūb MS 11) belonged to Sa'īd al-Shammākhī and 'Umar al-Bārūnī, whose library al-Shammākhī purchased. Another collection of texts by Sa'īd's father Qāsim b. Sulaymān include marginal notes by Sa'īd, suggesting that it originated in his family library (Makt. Bin Ya'qūb MS 73).

⁷⁹ On al-Sabī'a see al-Shaybānī, *Qāsim b. Sa'īd al-Shammākhī*, 41. Sālim appears also to have collected a dozen or so letters connected to Qāsim al-Shammākhī, including letters from him to his daughters and his son, Sa'īd. These letters are at the time of writing (2022) being edited by the Ibadica Research Center for future publication.

⁸⁰ Djaabiri, the editor of the second edition of Sālim's *Tārīkh jazīrat Jarba*, may well have compiled these stories directly from the notebook. These accounts of Abī Sitta's life appear in Bin Ya'qūb, *Tārīkh jazīrat Jarba*, 2006, 367. For the references to the notebook and the original manuscript in Bin Ta'ārīt's hand see the discussion in Chapter 2.

discovers a fragment previously annotated by Bin Ta'ārit, transfers it to his own notebook, and finally moves it into his own written draft for his book.

For nearly half a century after his return to Jerba, Sālim continued to devote his life to the work of teaching and writing. A generation of students studied with him at different mosques on the island.⁸¹ Stories circulate widely today about his efforts to collect and to copy texts from different parts of the island for decades after his return from Cairo. Teaching and collecting texts would also lead him to travel again. In 1967, for example, he visited the libraries of the Mzab. Joining him were some students, including Dr. Farhat Djaabiri, who recounted the details of this trip to me in 2018.⁸² Sālim also traveled several times to the towns of the Jebel Nafusa in the 1970s to teach. The 1980s would see the both the appearance of his *History of Jerba* and the culmination of his collaboration with German historian Werner Schwartz to edit one of the earliest extant histories of the Maghrib, Ibn Sallām's eighth-century *Bad' al-islām wa-sharā'i' al-dīn*.⁸³ His library was visited throughout the second half of the twentieth century by many researchers from the Maghrib and well beyond.⁸⁴ When he died in 1991, Sālim left behind a generation of students and scholars who benefited from his knowledge, experience, and remarkable library of items collected during his journey to Egypt and over decades of collecting and transcribing the history of Ibadis.⁸⁵

* * *

On the one hand, Sālim's journey reflects the long-term continuity of the flow of Jerbans and other Ibadis traveling to and from Egypt over the previous three centuries who have been the subject of this book. He was also very much a product of his own era, such as when he planned the publication of an Ibadi reformist newspaper in 1935. At the same

⁸¹ On his teaching activities in Jerba see al-Būjdīdī, "al-Shaykh Sālim b. Ya'qūb."

⁸² Interview with Dr. Farhāt al-Ja'abīrī (Aug 18, 2018).

⁸³ Ibn Sallām al-Ibādī, *Kitāb fihī bad' al-islām wa-sharā'i' al-dīn*.

⁸⁴ 'Alī al-Būjdīdī offers many quotations from the library's visitor book testifying to the number of visitors and researchers welcomed by Sālim: al-Būjdīdī, "al-Shaykh Sālim Bin Ya'qūb."

⁸⁵ Shaykh Sālim died on January 26, 1991. A short biographical notice by Sa'īd al-Bārūnī describing his life and impact on the Jerban community appeared in the local Jerban newspaper, *al-Jazīra: jarīdat al-junūb*, no. 60 (Apr–Mar 1991), see pp. 5 and 10.

time, in traveling to Egypt he did more than follow in the tradition of his predecessors. Instead, he consciously performed their journeys, right down to staying at the Buffalo Agency and pursuing his studies at al-Azhar. Sālim was reenacting the work of his predecessors, and this experience enhanced his ability to narrate the stories of those who came to the Buffalo Agency before him. But the contrast of that history with his own experience – arriving to a dusty and derelict building without water or electricity – emphasizes that his own journey to the Agency followed a period of great change. Likewise, much like his predecessors, Sālim would complement his time at al-Azhar with private study under the director of the Buffalo Agency's endowments, Ibrāhīm Aṭfayyish. It is telling, however, that he did so not at the Agency but in the latter's home in al-Maṭariyya. By Sālim's time the Agency no longer represented the focal point of the Ibadi community in Cairo. Although he would not be the very last student to stay at the Agency, Sālim does represent the last breath of its life as an Ibadi institution. Beyond the timing of his visit, Sālim's residence at the Agency and his efforts to gather the scattered fragments of its library and to search for details of its history speak to the fact that its time as a living institution had already passed by the 1930s.

This book has also represented its own kind of historical performance and reenactment. I have followed Ibadis from Jerba, the Mzab, and the Jebel Nafusa as they made their journeys by land or by sea to Egypt as students, teachers, merchants, and pilgrims. I attempted to stand beside them in the courtroom in Tulun, sit beside them in study circles at the Buffalo Agency or al-Azhar, and look over their shoulders as they transcribed their texts. Through this book I have offered a window into their world, and in doing so I have sought to show how Ibadi communities connected to the Buffalo Agency participated in the legal, commercial, and religious life of Ottoman Egypt. Much of what I have been able to say of that story has been facilitated by the work of Sālim Bin Ya'qūb, whom I have come to know better than any other Ibadi resident in Egypt. His journey marks the culmination of Agency's history as an institution, and so it seems fitting that his story should bring my own to a close.

Conclusion

The Buffalo Agency came to an anticlimactic end at the close of the 1960s when the building itself was demolished to make way for new construction in the Tulun district.¹ Although the Ibn Tulun Mosque itself remains standing, much of the neighborhood surrounding it has been rebuilt. The area where the Agency once stood is today a collection of homes, mobile-phone shops, and grocery stores that make up every other part of the modern city of Cairo. A visitor to the area today would never know that a vibrant community of Maghribi Ibadis had operated a trade agency, school, and library in that neighborhood for over three centuries.

Then again, what I have argued here in this book is that, even during this long period of the Agency's operation, the Ottoman Ibadis of Cairo were hidden in plain sight. This is because Ibadis participated in the world of the Ottoman Empire in ways remarkably similar to their non-Ibadi contemporaries. In the first part of this concluding chapter I offer reflections on the tools and mechanisms employed by Ibadis to participate in Ottoman society in Egypt. I argue, as I have throughout this book, that Maghribi Ibadis actively engaged with the legal, political, commercial, and religious realms of Ottoman society in Egypt and the broader empire in ways analogous to their non-Ibadi contemporaries. This does not, however, mean that there was nothing special about the Maghribi Ibadi community in Cairo. In the second half of the chapter I turn to some of the things that distinguish the dynamics of the Ibadi community there over the course of the Buffalo Agency's history. I conclude that section by emphasizing that the Agency's story highlights the unusual dual status of Ibadis in

¹ Martin Custers notes: "According to Muḥ Ibr. Iṭfayyish the Wikāla was finally shut down in 15 Au[g]. 1967" and "In 1972, the building did not exist anymore" (*Ibādī Publishing Activities*, 39 nn. 196 and 41).

Ottoman Cairo as both members of the religious majority and a religious minority community.

* * *

This book has shown the variety of social strategies and mechanisms Maghribi Ibadis employed from the seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries to participate fully in everyday life in Ottoman Egypt while at the same time maintaining a distinct communal cohesion and identity. The very structure itself – the *wikala* – represents one of the most ubiquitous buildings of the Ottoman-era Mediterranean. One of hundreds of *wikalas* like it in the city, the Buffalo Agency would have appeared a very ordinary structure in Ottoman Cairo.

The same was true of the way it functioned. The origins of the Agency lay in the simultaneous participation of Maghribi Ibadis in the commercial activity of Cairo and the use of the Ottoman court system there. In a symbiosis of the commercial, legal, and scholarly spheres, Ibadi merchants and religious scholars used the Ottoman courts of Cairo to protect their commercial interests and adjudicate matters from inheritance to real estate. In this way they used the same courts, presented their cases before the same Sunni judges, and did business just as their non-Ibadi contemporaries did. But the use of the courts by Maghribi Ibadis in this book also showed how their personal lives overlapped with those of their non-Ibadi contemporaries, including non-Muslims, as they stood beside them in court and developed friendships and business partnerships with them in the markets of Cairo, Alexandria, and other Ottoman cities.

One aspect of the legal world of the Ottoman Empire proved especially important for the Buffalo Agency and the Ibadis of Cairo: the mechanism of *waqf*. Ibadi use of *waqf* in Egypt to endow everything from books to palm trees and real estate served as an essential tool for the community from at least the seventeenth century. In both the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, large endowments made by wealthy Ibadi merchants guaranteed the maintenance of the Buffalo Agency. That set the stage for the next few centuries, during which time Ibadis would use the legal mechanism of *waqf* to endow books, land, shops, and structures for the benefit of their community living in Egypt. The upkeep of both the Agency as an institution and its student residents in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries benefited directly

from endowments made by merchants in support of them. Even though the structural form of the endowments had ended by the twentieth century, as late as the 1930s *Salim Bin Ya'qūb* was still able to gather support from the community there to cover his living expenses.

The library of the Buffalo Agency represented an additional long-term benefit of the mechanism of *waqf*. Endowments of books in the library, especially in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, allowed for the formation of a sizable collection of manuscript (and, later, print) books for use by the Ibadi community. Around half of that collection comprised books by non-Ibadi authors. This marked, first, the growing familiarity among Ibadi scholars with the arguments and ideas in Sunni schools of thought current in Egypt. That process had already begun by the start of the Buffalo Agency's history in the seventeenth century under *Muḥammad Abī Sitta*, and it grew in momentum over the course of the next three centuries. By the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries Ibadis were participating fully in the transnational discourse of Islamic reform (and opposition to it) in the Ottoman Empire and beyond.

The Sunni books in the Agency's library also represent a growing interaction among Ibadis and Sunnis in physical space. Like their merchant contemporaries, Maghribi Ibadi students and scholars in Ottoman-era Cairo were in constant contact and dialogue with non-Ibadis. Although sometimes this interaction took place in the courtroom, for scholars and students it was more often in the space of madrasas and mosques. This was especially true of the premier institution of Sunni learning in Ottoman Egypt, al-Azhar. Maghribi Ibadis were drawn to Egypt to pursue their studies at al-Azhar alongside their Sunni contemporaries from throughout the empire. To do so, they drew on the collection of canonical Sunni texts, including commentaries and glosses, held in the Buffalo Agency's library. The Agency thus served as a residence and a library for Ibadi students studying at al-Azhar.

With the advent of the private printing industry in the nineteenth century the Ibadi community of Cairo followed suit in establishing its own private press. The financing, operation, and distribution of Ibadi printed texts mirrored those of their non-Ibadi contemporaries. Technologically, the products of that printing (lithographs and, later, typeset books), followed the form of non-Ibadi printing activities as

well. Finally, the accumulation of printed texts in the Buffalo Agency's library conformed to the same patterns as did the manuscript tradition that preceded and continued alongside it. Early Ibadi entrepreneurs of printing such as Muḥammad al-Bārūnī and Sulaymān al-Bārūnī each had links to the Agency and donated their books to its library.

Living and studying together were only two of the ways in which Ibadis organized like their non-Ibadi Ottoman contemporaries. Like the broader Maghribi community, local and long-distance Ibadi merchants in Egypt relied on their communal solidarity as a form of security. They did so in a way akin to guilds in other parts of the Ottoman Empire and other artisan and merchant communities in Egypt, under the representative leadership of a "shaykh" in the Tulun district. Whether that individual happened to be Ibadi or not was less important than his being a Maghribi in that he represented the Maghribi merchants as a collective, to which Ibadis belonged. Since the inhabitants of the neighborhood where the Buffalo Agency was located were mostly of Tunisian and Tripolitanian origin, that ensured relative homogeneity in this guild-like organization. The merchant's representative, the *shaykh al-tujjār bi-Ṭulūn* or the *shaykh al-maghārība bi-Ṭulūn*, served as an intermediary between the merchants and the state, including appearing in court cases involving the estates or other affairs of merchants (such as the eighteenth-century waqf for the Buffalo Agency's structure). At times, Ibadis benefited directly from one of their own serving as the *shaykh al-tujjār*, such as when the director of the Buffalo Agency's waqf, Mas'ūd Ibn Ḥadīd, served in that office in the mid-eighteenth century. At other times, Ibadis benefited indirectly from that individual by virtue of his being Maghribi like them.

The longevity and durability of this Maghribi and Ibadi communal solidarity is remarkable. For the largest community of Ibadi merchants connected to the Agency, the Jerbans, this representation in the form of a prominent merchant lasted at least until the end of the eighteenth century. That representation continued in new form following the changes to Egyptian society under the Mamluk beys, the brief French occupation, and the transformation that followed the establishment of the dynasty of Muḥammad 'Alī. As the old solidarity between merchants and Janissaries in Egypt collapsed at the end of the eighteenth century, the *shaykh al-tujjār* found his replacement in the office of *wakīl* to the bey of Tunis. Reforms to the bey's government in Tunis at the end of the eighteenth century had led to the creation of the office

of *wakīls*, who represented the bey's subjects throughout the empire. Although technically only a representative of the bey's subjects in Egypt, the *wakīl* functioned in much the same way as the *shaykh al-tujjār* had in previous centuries: he served as an advocate for Ibadi and other Maghribi merchants living in Egypt and as an intermediary between them and the Ottoman governments of Cairo and Tunis. Like the shaykhs of the merchants of Tulun in centuries past, the end of the nineteenth century saw a prominent Ibadi merchant, scholar, and former director of the Buffalo Agency, Sa'īd al-Shammākhī, appointed to that office. In al-Shammākhī, Ibadis found a direct line of communication to the bey's government in Tunis and a representative in the khedival palaces of Egypt. Just as the *shaykh al-tujjār* mirrored the larger system of Ottoman guilds in the empire, al-Shammākhī and other *wakīls* represented the intra-Ottoman complement to the growing presence of consuls and other foreign representatives in Ottoman territories at the end of the nineteenth century.

Although Ibadis resembled their contemporaries, they distinguished themselves from them in three important ways. The first was how Maghribi Ibadis drew on a centuries-old network of Ibadi merchants, scholars, students, and pilgrims connecting them to their Maghribi homeland and elsewhere. Networks of people and books had helped Ibadis distinguish themselves in the pre-Ottoman centuries as an identifiable religious tradition in North Africa. The Buffalo Agency in this way served as a node among many others in a longstanding communal network. The scope of the Ottoman era was even broader than before, however, in that Ibadis operated transregional networks of commerce and pilgrimage that linked them to the Ottoman cities of the Maghribi littoral, Alexandria, Cairo, Jeddah, Mecca, and Istanbul. That broader network also ensured financial support for Ibadis in Cairo through the long-distance maintenance of waqfs (for example, between Jerba and Cairo) as well as the movement of capital and goods along the trade routes traversed by Ibadi merchants crisscrossing the Ottoman Empire. That Ibadis and their goods passing through Egypt usually ended up for a time at the Buffalo Agency – whether for just a few nights or for several years – shows the centrality of the institution to the commercial, religious, and communal life of Ibadis in Cairo and from elsewhere throughout the Ottoman world. That this was

as true in the seventeenth century as it was in the early twentieth clearly demonstrates the longevity of that centrality.

With people moved their books. The library that formed in the Buffalo Agency relied on precisely the same communal support and mechanisms as did the structure and its residents. Waqf played as important a role in the endowment of Ibadi books as it did for the Sunni books in the Agency's collection. The endowed Ibadi texts there, however, were far more unusual in a place like Cairo. In most cases these manuscripts were either copied by Ibadi students and scholars in Egypt or represented chunks of the private libraries belonging to Ibadi scholars or merchants who lived there. Most Ibadi texts at the Agency were either copied by Maghribis resident in Cairo or the manuscripts themselves originated from outside Egypt. These included texts from the Ibadi heartlands of the Mزاب, Jerba, and the Jebel Nafusa but, beginning in the early nineteenth century, they came to include Omani-authored texts that arrived in Cairo via Zanzibar and Mecca. The library, like the Agency itself, in that way served as an important link in the increasingly dense transregional Ibadi networks from the two traditional spheres of Ibadism in the Arabian Peninsula and North Africa. The Agency's library offered precious copies of Ibadi texts to students living there, allowing for the formation of study circles and the operation of a kind of Ibadi complement to the education most of them were pursuing at al-Azhar. With the advent of Ibadi print houses, beginning with al-Maṭba'a al-Bārūniyya at the end of the nineteenth century, the Agency's library also grew through the donation of Ibadi print titles to its collection.

The dynamic underlying this simultaneous integration into Ottoman Egyptian society and operation of distinct communal networks of exchange and support was the unusual religious status held by the Ibadi communities in Ottoman lands. As Muslims, Ibadis both belonged to the majority and constituted a religious minority within the empire. Alongside the fact that many of them were also Berber speaking, this unusual status as both religious minority and part of the majority afforded Ibadis in the Ottoman Empire a number of opportunities. Their ability to integrate into and operate within the political, commercial, legal, and religious domains of Cairo and elsewhere in the empire allowed Ibadis to benefit from the Muslim-dominated structures of everyday life. They encountered no particular obstacles when they used Ottoman courts, conducted business, pursued religious (or,

later, secular) education, or had individuals represent them before the Ottoman governments of Tunis and Cairo. This distinguished them from other religious minorities such as Christians or Jews. Since the Ottoman state did not recognize Ibadis as a minority community, as a Muslim community they continued to benefit from their status as members of the Muslim political majority. On the level of everyday life, Ibadis were recognized as Maghribis but otherwise moved among the towns and cities of the empire largely unnoticed. This afforded them opportunities to maintain tightly knit commercial, religious, and social networks in much the same way as other religious communities but without any of the disadvantages faced by non-Muslim minorities. In many ways, that special status allowed this Maghribi community in Cairo to be at once Ibadi and Ottoman.

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- MS 119 (no. 154 in the catalog), "Ḥāshiyat al-waḍ'" (18 Rab II 1136/Jan 15, 1724)
- MS 120 (no. 133 in catalog), "Ḥāshiyat al-Büyū'" (Jum II 1121/Aug–Sep 1709)
- MS 124 (no. 115 in catalog), "Kitāb al-iḍāḥ" (5 Rab II 1219/Jul 14, 1804)
- MS 126 (no. 132 in catalog), "Juz' min kitāb al-iḍāḥ" (1213/1798)
- MS 133 (no. 219 in catalog), ["Qawā'id al-islām"] (n.d.)
- MS 138 (no. 238 in the catalog), "Kitāb al-luḡat" (10 D. al-Qa'da 1182/Mar 18, 1769)
- MS 154 (no. 142 in the catalog), "Ḥāshiyat Abī Sitta 'alā al-farā'id" (1213/1798)
- MS 170 (no. 176 in the catalog), "Kitāb al-ṭahārāt" (1213/1799)
- MS 183 (nos. 20, 118, 139, 172, 183, 244, *nūn* 12, *nūn* 26, *nūn* 35, *jīm* 06 in catalog), *majmū'* (multiple dates)
- MS 188 (no. 130 in the catalog), "Ḥāshiya 'alā kitāb al-aḥkām" (15 Ṣaf 1214/Jul 19, 1799)
- MS 217 (no. 206 in the catalog), ["Kitāb al-ṣawm"] (n.d., *terminus ante quem* late eighteenth century)

- MS 275 (no. 106 in the catalog, *Qism al-ajwiba*), “Risāla ilā ḥākim Tūnis” (n.d.)
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 MS 307 (no. *nūn* 34 in the catalog), “Shajūt min amr fādih” (Shaw 1175/Apr–May 1762)
 MS 311 (no. 322 in the catalog), “al-Futūḥāt al-ilāhiyya ‘alā al-manẓūma al-Khazariyya” (29 Ṣafr 1172/Nov 1, 1758)
 MS 315 (no. *nūn* 58 in catalog), [“Majmū‘ qaṣā’id”] (n.d., *terminus ante quem* early eighteenth century)
 MS 330 (no. *jīm* 19 in the catalog), “Ajwibat al-isti’dhān wa-ghayruhu” (late Rab II 1275/Dec 1858)
 MS *rā’ bā’* 14, Letter from Muḥammad al-Bārūnī to Sa’id al-Bārūnī (17 Sha‘b 1272/Apr 22, 1856)

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Archives Nationales de la Tunisie

- ANT A 281 0006 “Habous privé constitués par des Tunisiens”
 ANT H 222 378 “Affaires des Tunisiens résidents en Turquie”
 ANT H 231 438 “Taḡārīr wa-murāsālāt Sa’id al-Shammākhī wakīl al-dawla al-tūnisiyya bi-al-Qāhira”
 ANT H 231 441 “Savants et commerçants tunisiens en Égypte”

Muscat

Maktabat al-Shaykh Aḥmad al-Khalīlī

- AK 001, “Tafsīr al-Baghawī” [part 2] (n.d., *terminus ante quem* mid-eighteenth century based on the waqf by Muḥammad al-Baḥḥār)
 AK 002 “al-Juz’ al-awwal min sharḥ al-da‘ā’im” (943/1536)
 AK 003 “Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī” [part 2] (n.d., *terminus ante quem* mid-eighteenth century)
 AK 009 “al-Juz’ al-thānī min al-mawāhib al-ladaniyya” (Muḥ 1075/Jul–Aug 1665)
 AK 010 “Tafsīr al-Baghawī [al-juz’ al-thālith]” (1143/1730)
 AK 011 “al-Juz’ al-awwal min al-mawāhib al-ladaniyya” (n.d., *terminus ante quem* mid-eighteenth century)
 AK 012 [“al-Sīra al-Ḥalabiyya”?] (6 Ṣafr 1042/Aug 23, 1632)
 AK 026 “al-Juz’ al-awwal min kitāb al-kashf wa-al-bayān” (14 Rab II 1273/Dec 12, 1856)
 AK 027 “al-Juz’ al-awwal min kitāb al-kashf wa-al-bayān” (19 Sha‘b 1273/Apr 13, 1857)

- AK 028 “Kitāb al-daqqāq” (n.d., *terminus ante quem* Sha‘b 1273/Apr 1857)
- AK 048 “Kitāb al-siyar wa-al-akhbār” (29 Šafar 1131/Jan 21, 1719)
- AK 049 “Šaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī” [part 1] (n.d., *terminus ante quem* mid-eighteenth century)
- AK 056 “Kitāb al-mizān” (9 Rabī II 1134/Jan 27, 1722)
- AK 062 “Kitāb al-ma‘ālim fī al-tawḥīd” (22 Raj 1271/Apr 10, 1855)
- AK 065 “Kitāb al-raḥma fī al-ṭibb wa-al-ḥukm” (3 Šafar 1199/Dec 16, 1784)
- AK 067 “Ḥāshiyat Abī Ya‘qūb Yūsuf b. Muḥammad al-Malikī al-Maṣ‘abī ‘alā al-Muṣraḥ li-al-shaykh al-Wirānī” (2 D. al-Ḥijja 1261/Dec 2, 1845)
- AK 079 “Kitāb uṣūl al-arāḍiyyin” [*sic*] (late Jum I 1058/Jun 1648)
- AK 087 “Ḥāshiyat al-muḥashshī ‘alā al-qawā‘id” (n.d., *terminus ante quem* mid-eighteenth century)
- AK 062 “Kitāb al-ma‘ālim fī al-tawḥīd” (22 Raj 1271/Apr 10, 1855)
- AK 089 “Kitāb al-īdāḥ” (Jum I 1145/Oct–Nov 1732)
- AK 090 “Kitāb al-īdāḥ” (11 Sha‘b 1198/Jun 30, 1784)
- AK 094 “Kitāb sharḥ mukhtaṣar al-‘adl wa-al-inṣāf” (mid-D. al-Ḥijja 1187/Feb 26, 1774)
- AK 095 “al-Jawāhir al-thamīna ‘alā al-manẓūma al-mumiyya” (3 Sha‘b 1275/Mar 8, 1859)
- AK 097 “Kitāb mukhtaṣar manāsik al-Shaykh Ismā‘īl” (10 Sha‘b 1275/Mar 15, 1859)
- AK 113 “Kitāb mukhtaṣar al-khiṣāl” (21 Muḥ 1273/Sep 21, 1856)
- AK 119 “Ḥāshiya ‘alā kitāb al-waḍ‘” (15 Muḥ 1114/Jun 11, 1702)
- AK 134 “al-Mudawwana” (5 Jum II 1134/Mar 23, 1722)
- AK 138 “Kitāb al-waḍ‘” (1267/1851)
- AK 142 “Ḥawāshī al-Shinwānī ‘alā al-Azhariyya” (9 Muḥ 1168/Oct 26, 1754)
- AK 147 “Kitāb al-Nīl” (n.d., endowed late nineteenth century)
- AK 153 “Kitāb ‘aqīdat al-tawḥīd” (Rab I 1264/Feb–Mar 1848)
- AK 157 “Ḥawāshī Abī Sitta ‘alā kitāb al-waḍ‘” (1267/1850–51)
- AK 159 “Kitāb al-da‘ā‘im” (1197/1783–84)
- AK 168 *majmū‘* (multiple dates, including 5 Ram 1166/Jul 6, 1753)
- AK 179 “Kitāb al-tawḥīd” (n.d., *terminus ante quem* nineteenth century)
- AK 182 “Kitāb al-waḍ‘” (dated 19 Rab II 1142/Nov 11, 1729)
- AK 183 “al-Juz’ al-thālith min kitāb al-īdāḥ” (10 Muḥ 1065/Nov 20, 1654)
- AK 186 “Kitāb al-ḥall wa-al-waṣāyā” (n.d., but collated Muḥ 1256/Mar–Apr 1840)
- AK 187 *majmū‘* (multiple dates, including 1051/1641)
- AK 201 “Sharḥ al-nūniyya” (n.d., *terminus ante quem* early nineteenth century)
- AK 205[b] “Ḥāshiyat al-Khayālī ‘alā al-‘aqā‘id” (n.d., endowed 1172/1758–59)
- AK 216 “Sharḥ al-arba‘in al-Nawawiyya” (1 Muḥ 1058/Jan 27, 1648)
- AK 231 “Sharḥ al-mukhtaṣar ... ‘alā talkhīṣ al-miftāḥ” (late Šafar 1092/Mar 1681)

Omani National Archives

OM.NRAA.B.14.1.1 Letter from Muḥammad b. Nāṣir to Bāba b. Yūnus (1273/1857)

OM.NRAA.B.14.1.2 Letter from al-ʿAlawī to Bāba b. Yūnus (1266/1850)

OM.NRAA.B.14.1.3 Letter from Muḥammad al-ʿAlawī to Sulaymān b. ʿUmar in the Mzab (1263/1847)

OM.NRAA.C3.1.18 (1273–1385/1857–1966)

*Cairo***Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya**

MS *bāʾ* 21113, “Jāmiʿ Ibn Baraka” (18 Raj 1281/Dec 17, 1864)

MS *bāʾ* 21789, “Sharḥ al-suʿālāt” (n.d., *terminus ante quem* late seventeenth century)

MS *bāʾ* 22067, “Sharḥ qawāʿid al-islām” (Shaw 1117/Jan–Feb 1706)

MS *bāʾ* 22074, “al-Daʿāʾim” (n.d., *terminus ante quem* 1234/1819)

MS *bāʾ* 22293, “Sharḥ al-jahhālāt” (11 Rab I 1195/Mar 7, 1781)

MS *bāʾ* 22297, “Kitāb al-farāʿid” (17 Jum II 1164/May 13, 1751)

MS *bāʾ* 26573, [“Kitāb Abī Masʿala”] (1305/1887–88)

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