

The Mamluk Historian al-Amīr Baybars al-Manṣūrī al-Dawādār (d. 725/1325) and his Coptic Secretary al-Qiss al-Shams Abū al-Barakāt Ibn Kabar (d. 724/1324) (A New Assessment)

Adel Y. Sidarus

(Professor emeritus, Univ. of Evora, Portugal)

ABSTRACT : In recent decades, the multi-faceted historical work of Baybars al-Manṣūrī al-Khiṭā'ī has attracted a great deal of interest among scholars. A series of editions have been published, and a substantial entry added in the new online edition of the Encyclopaedia of Islam.

It is known that this Emir was assisted by his “kātīb naṣrānī al-Shams Ibn Kabar” for this monumental compilation, the *Zubdat al-fikra / fī Ta'rīkh al-Hijra*. Abū al-Barakāt Ibn Kabar in fact belonged to a patrician Coptic family of Old Cairo and was a priest at the al-Mu'allaqa Patriarchal church. Above all he was an encyclopedist whose work closes the golden age of medieval Coptic Arabic literature.

In a recently published paper, we have been able to reassign to him the authorship of the abridged version entitled *al-Mukhtār al-akhbār*, abusively attributed to Baybars himself in a recent edition of part of the work. In this paper, we intend to provide a detailed focus on the dossier related to both authors and their literary output in general, and present some clues as to the actual contribution of the Coptic *kātīb* to his master's huge historical compilation.

In recent decades, the multi-faceted historical work of Baybars al-Manṣūrī has encountered a series of editions and, in the beginning of this millennium, an overall appraisal of his monumental universal history *Zubdat al-fikra / fī Ta'rīkh al-Hijra* undertaken by its renowned editor, Richards, on the base of the only volume edited and studied more than once.¹ A decade later, the new online edition of the *EncIsl-3* has devoted a rather substantial entry to the Emir, in which it was evidently difficult to convey and discuss all the pending issues.²

As for me, I have very recently addressed one of the various epitomes or *selecta*, abusively attributed to him, the *Mukhtār al-akhbār* preserved in a *unicum* of the Ambrosiana Library in Milan.³ There, this “*mukhtaṣar al-Zubda*”, as presented in the heading, is clearly attributed to “al-Qiss al-Shams Ibn Kabar”, but the editor published its last part related to the Ayyubids and Mamluks under the name of Baybars himself.⁴ And the just-mentioned authoritative encyclopaedia-entry unfortunately assumed this paternity and assumed a very partial topic as title for a more general and universal chronicle!

We should note that our priest, who is descendant of a patrician Coptic family of Old Cairo, has collaborated in the compilation and composition of the *Zubda* itself, almost to the end of his life in May 1324, even before he was ordained and received in charge the *al-Mu'allaqa* Patriarchal church (1300).

I intend to provide below a circumstantiated focus of the whole dossier related to both authors and their literary output in general, and present some clues as to the actual contribution of the Coptic *kātīb* to his master's huge chronicle.

¹ Donald S. Richards (2001), A Mamluk Amīr's Mamluk History, in H. Kennedy (ed.), *The Historiography of Islamic Egypt (c. 950-1800)*, The Medieval Mediterranean, 31 (Brill, Leiden/Cologne) 37-44. His edition in question, invoked more than once in these pages, is: Baybars al-Manṣūrī al-Dawādār, *Zubdat al-fikra: History of the Early Mamluk Period*, Bibliotheca Islamica 42 (Orient Institut der DMG, Beirut, 1998).

² Li Guo (2011), Baybars al-Manṣūrī, in *EncIsl-3*.

³ A. Sidarus (2018), Abū al-Barakāt Ibn Kabar historien copte et le MS Ambrosiana C 45 Inf., in M. Lafkioui & V. Brugnatelli (eds), *Written sources about Africa and their study / Le fonti scritte sull'Africa e i loro studi* (Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan) 147-72.

⁴ Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Mukhtār al-Akhbār: Tārīkh al-dawla al-ayyūbiyya wa-dawlat al-Mamālīk al-Baḥriyya ḥattā sanat 703H*, ed. 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Ṣāliḥ Ḥamdān (al-Dār al-Miṣriyya al-Lubnāniyya, Cairo, 1413/1993).

I. BAYBARS AL-MANŞŪRĪ AND HIS WORK

As stated, the latest basic record on Baybars al-Manşūrī and his work is due to Guo in the new online edition of the *EncIsl-3*. To this, must be added Richards' overall presentation mentioned above. Beside the other (partial) edition of this very volume X by Elham quoted by Guo (but totally ignored by Richards!),⁵ one must also refer to that of Zubayda Muḥammad 'Aṭā, presented in 1972 as part of a Ph.D. dissertation at the University of Cairo, but only published at the beginning of this millennium with the erroneous indication of «volume IX»!⁶ Totally ignored by Richards too, this pioneer edition had been quoted still as a thesis by Northrup – on its turn ignored by both scholars.⁷

Although Guo did not report this last work in his *EncIsl-3* paper (2011), nevertheless he had published a review in *JNES* 61/3 (2002): 211-13. Richards, however, could not yet have known this work, which was published simultaneously to his, but he remained unaware of it, together with the thesis-edition of 'Aṭā, in his general overview of Baybars' work (2001).

In 'Aṭā, followed by Northrup, the volume of the *Zubda* is reported as corresponding to vol. IX, whereas it is actually volume X, preserved in MS London, British Library, Add. 23325, the very one that served as the basis for all the editions here quoted.⁸ Defective at the end,⁹ it covers the years 655-709/1257-1309, meanwhile another very late witness (1270/1854) discovered by Richards in MS Yale, University Library 1277 (Langberg 758), already begins in 628/1230 but breaks off in 693/1294.¹⁰ There are indications that could lead us to consider the London text manuscript to be an autograph. However, still according to Richards, it is more likely to be a copy revised by the author himself.¹¹

Nevertheless, one should note that the same manuscript of London had already been used, among other manuscripts transmitting other volumes of the work, by Little in his ground-breaking work on Mamluk historiography. It was however based upon a photographic reproduction of MS 24-28 held at the Cairo University Library, the same one that served two years later for 'Aṭā's thesis, as previously reported.¹²

The voluminous *Zubda*, of which we only possess five or six of its set of eleven volumes – and none of them edited, apart from the tenth – has been reformulated three times (!) in the form of abstracts or excerpts, including two by Baybars himself: *al-Tuḥfa al-mulūkiyya / fī al-Dawla al-mamlūkiyya* and *al-Laṭā'if / fī Akhbār al-khalā'if*. While the first was published in 1987,¹³ the *Laṭā'if* ('Pleasant Excerpts...') have been lost, though they are quoted, sometimes with relevant excerpts, in some later chronicles, beside the *Zubda* as such.

As for the third abstract, it is the *Mukhtār al-Akhbār*, written by his secretary and collaborator al-Shams Ibn Kabar, despite the contrary and abusive claim of its editor and the endorsement by Guo in the authoritative *EncIsl-3*, as explained above.

Some former reference manuals on Baybars al-Manşūrī, such as *EncIsl-2* by Eliyahu Ashtor (s.v. "Baybars al-Manşūrī", 1960) or the classic manual of Brockelmann mention an additional abstract of the *Zubda*,

⁵ Shah Morad Elham (1977), *Kiṭbuḡā und Lājīn: Studien zur Mamluken-Geschichte nach Baibars al-Manşūrī und an-Nuwayrī*, Freiburger Islamstudien 2 (Klaus Schwarz Verlag, Wiesbaden). Focusing the period between 693/1293 and 698/1298, it was originally presented as Ph.D. diss. at the Univ. of Freiburg im Breisgau, which was then spearheading the Mamluk studies. Ed./trans. of the *Zubda* text on p. 1-30 (of the Arabic part) and p. 83-140. The author compares Baybars' text with three further histories on the Mamluk period (p. 38-53). He also mentions an earlier Russian translation by W. Tiesenhausen (St. Petersburg, 1884), focusing the Golden Horde (650-708/1252-1309), always based on the same London manuscript (once more this pub. was overlooked by Richards).

⁶ BM, *Zubdat al-fikra: Al juz' al-tāsi'* ('Uyūn al-Turāth), ed. Zubayda Muḥammad 'Aṭā ('Ayn lil-Dirāsāt wal-Buḥūth al-Insāniyya wal-Ijtimā'iyya, Guiza, 1481/2001-2).

⁷ Linda S. Northrup (1998), *From Slave to Sultan: The Career of al-Manşūr Qalāwūn and the Consolidation of Mamluk Rule in Egypt and Syria (678-689 A.H. / 1279-1290 A.D.)*, (Franz Steiner, Stuttgart) 38, fn. 121. Other titles of the author's works related to the general topic of this publication will be found below.

⁸ Unlike the other four volumes presented in his introduction, Richards omits to explicitly mention this correspondence (ed. p. XVIII-XXIX), given as such in many works and papers.

⁹ According to Elham (1977), in his description of the manuscript (p. 25-26), the amount of the missing last folios is fifty.

¹⁰ Consequently, both manuscripts overlap only for 655-693/1252-1294. See Richards' ed., p. XXVIII; see also Idem 2001: 39. The manuscript preserves a slightly different version. It was obviously collated by Richards in his edition.

¹¹ Richards' ed., p. XXVIII, where the author discusses also the alternative hypothesis, which extends to other manuscript witnesses of the rest of the volumes. Elham (1977: 25-26), speaks readily of an autograph.

¹² Donald P. Little (1970), *An Introduction to Mamlūk Historiography: An Analysis of Arabic Annalistic and Biographical Sources for the Reign of al-Malik an-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalā'ūn*, Freiburger Islamstudien 18 (Franz Steiner, Wiesbaden).

¹³ BM, *K. al-Tuḥfa al-mulūkiyya / fī al-Dawla al-turqiyya*, ed. 'A-H. S. Ḥamdān (al-Dār al-Miṣriyya al-Lubnāniyya, Cairo, 1407/1987). The edition is based on the only existing copy held at Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, MS Arab. 904. See also Ḥamdān's notice about his then forthcoming edition: Un mot sur BM et son oeuvre, la *Tuḥfa*, *Annales Islamologiques* 20 (IFAO, Cairo, 1984) 55-60.

anonymously preserved in MS Oxford, Bodleian, Pocock 324, allegedly in a fragmented state.¹⁴ While Ashtor seems to rely on the information of Brockelmann, the latter drew this information from an article by Zetterstéen.¹⁵ Here, it appears incorrectly identified as volume IX of the *Zubda*, following the information of an alleged ‘superscription’. The codex however tells nothing about that. Zetterstéen, who compared the text with the witness of London, must have made some confusion.

Neither Ḥamdān nor Guo mention this specific text. As for us, since we thought this could be an additional witness to the Ambrosian text of the *Mukhtār*, we asked the Library’s Services whether the contents of the manuscript had been identified more exactly, since the description of the old Catalogue of Uri (1787). As this was not the case, they kindly sent me a copy of the first and last few folios.¹⁶

The text starts abruptly in the year 559/1164 (*Thumma fī sanat...*), immediately after the *basmala*, and ends with a brief note about the year 744/1343-44 – but after a long gap, as the preceding *bifolium* quickly evokes the events of the first three years of the sixteenth decade. Copied in a poor writing, this text consisting of 250 folios (without any foliation) stands as – according to the colophon – the *Zubda* itself, without any indication about the author’s name or the volume number! Dated from the very beginning of 882 A.H. (*yawm ‘āshūrā’* = 10 of Muḥarram / 25 April 1477), it must be a simple copy of the last volumes, shortened and sloppy, but also enlarged upon over a period of some twenty years.

Finally, apart from Keßler’s new monograph on the Mamluk history,¹⁷ the chapters 10 and 15 in the new *Cambridge History of Egypt*, respectively by L.S. Northrup and D.P. Little,¹⁸ should offer us additional elements on the global issue of the early Mamluk period here concerned.

We cannot conclude these elements of bio-bibliography without highlighting our Emir’s prominence, insofar as he stands out among the entire Mamluk soldiery. Indeed, despite his origins as an exogenous slave (from the Mongolian Qara Khitai tribe, hence the *nisba* «al-Khiṭā’ī») – he arrived in Egypt in 659/1260 when he was only 14-15 years old – he acquired a perfect command of the Arabic language¹⁹ and demonstrated intense intellectual activity. He was able to engage in historiography and religious sciences,²⁰ alongside with his eminent political and military responsibilities as well as judicial office duties (he was simultaneously *faqīh* and was once appointed *Nā’ib Dār al-‘adl*, «Supreme Justice Delegate».)²¹ He maintained all these activities throughout his long life, which ended in Ramaḍān 725 / August 1325, when he was eighty.²²

II. AL-SHAMS IBN KABAR AS A HISTORIAN AND POLYMATH

Regarding Ibn Kabar’s collaboration in the compilation of the *Zubda*, all the original sources quoted in the above references concerning Baybars’ work or soon to be mentioned in relation to Ibn Kabar himself (some 7-8 witnesses in total!) are unanimous that such collaboration took place in his capacity as secretary (*kātib*) of the Emir. The only discordant note comes from al-Sakhāwī who categorically denies this collaboration without any argument. The great biographer al-Ṣafadī adds to Ibn Kabar an anonymous second secretary. From his side al-Nuwayrī, who draws extensively on the *Zubda*, adds that Baybars employed him *fī ‘būdā’ihī* (‘at his/its beginning’) – an ambivalent syntagm in the context of the passage in question and which Richards discusses

¹⁴ Carl Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Literatur - Supplementband*, vol. II (Leiden, Brill, 1938) 43 (2nd ed. of the same volume, 1949) 55.– The manuscript identification number given, 704, corresponds to the sequential number of the old catalogue of J. Uri 1787: 158. In the introduction to his edition of the *Zubda* (p. XXVIII), Richards evokes this codex too; so does Elham 1977.

¹⁵ K.V. Zetterstéen (1909), An Arabic manuscript supposed to contain the *Zubdat el-fikra fī ta’rīḥ el-ḥiḡra*, *Le Monde Oriental* 3 (Uppsala) 264-66. On p. 265, there is a transcription of the beginning corresponding to the year 694/1294-95.

¹⁶ All this before I was able to have direct access to Zetterstéen’s paper. Actually, Brockelmann’s reference was not obvious and the journal in question is not easy to find. I am grateful to my colleague Ute Petruschka (Goettingen and Halle) for having provided me with a digital copy.

¹⁷ Ronald Keßler (2004), *Die Welt der Mamluken: Ägypten im späten Mittelalter – 1250-1517* (Klaus Schwarz Verlag, Berlin).

¹⁸ *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, vol. 1: *Islamic Egypt, 640-1517*, ed. Carl P. Petry (Cambridge, UP, 2014): respectively on “The Bahārī Mamlūk sultanate, 1250-1390” (p. 242-89) and on the “Historiography of the Ayyubid and Mamluk epochs” (p. 412-44).

¹⁹ See *passim* the different publications of Ḥamdān and Richards.

²⁰ Curiously enough, in his reference-notice Guo (2011) does not make any mention of Baybars’ religious work *Mawā’iz al-Abrār*, a Coran commentary with *sūfī* character: *MA*, Teil 1: *Shahāda wa-ṣalāwāt* (Kap. 1-2), hrsg. mit Übers., Kommentar und Einleitung von Bo Lundén, *Studia Orientalia Lundensia* 1 (E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1983). Presentation of the work in the introd., p. 22-32. The text edition follows the only existing manuscript preserved in Patna MS 1440. Richards does refer to it in his text edition (p. VI + XX), but not in his global presentation of the Emir (2001).

²¹ All the studies referred to in these pages give information about the Emir and his carrier. A tabular chronology is provided in: Elham 1977: 58-59; Richards’ ed., p. XVI-XVIII (compiled essentially from the *Zubda* text); Ḥamdān’s edition of the *Tuhfa*, p. 58-59.

²² By the way, when computing this age, some European authors put his birthday in 1245-46 (= 643 A.H.). One must however calculate eighty “lunar” years, what comes to 645/1247-48!

without reaching a definite conclusion.²³ Could one propose a misreading in the text's transmission for *fī 'btidā'ihī* (with *'ayn*) or *'inshā'ihī*, in the sense of «composition»?

In truth, this Coptic priest, whose overall literary output closed the golden age of medieval Coptic Arabic literature, is more famous as an encyclopedist and not as a historian.²⁴ His two-major works consist of a classified Coptic Arabic vocabulary known as *al-Sullam al-kabīr/muqtaraḥ* ('Scala magna/selecta'), already published in Europe in 1648, and the encyclopedia of religious sciences entitled *Miṣbāḥ al-zulma* ('Lamp for the Darkness'), variously disclosed since that same century.²⁵

Apparently, in connection with his work on prayer and liturgy in view of this *summa*, a collection of liturgical prayers sponsored by Ibn Kabar and dated to 1308 was recently found in the legacy of his daughter.²⁶ The indication *hādḥā al-majmū' al-mubārak* ('this blessed collection/compilation') which figures in the colophon is not a true title, as the discloser claims, but it is merely a description of the work done.²⁷

This collection is not to be confused with another collection of prayers, this time genuine and non-liturgical (they are named as *ṭal(a)bāt*, 'invocations'), which was once attributed to him, whereas it should be legitimately attributed to Butrus al-Sadamantī, from a half-century earlier.²⁸

Our polymath is also the author of more than fifty sermons or homilies written in an enhanced prose, mostly in flowery, rhythmic and rhymed style (*saj'*), as in the case of more than one writer of the same golden age – all indebted to the stylistic models in use in the royal chancelleries, where they had for long been engaged, and sometimes in high positions.²⁹ We should recall in this regard the information provided in the reference works according to which Ibn Kabar belonged to one of those noble families in Old Cairo, precisely where an alley or pathway (*ḍarb*) bore the name of *Ibn Kabar*.³⁰

As for historiography, the ecclesiastical encyclopedia contains a set of chapters of historical nature: *a*) the relation between the twenty or so ancient Christian sects and their beliefs (last part of ch. 2); *b*) the life of Jesus Christ in a rigorous chronological perspective and with correspondence between the different ages of the world (ch. 3);³¹ *c*) the more or less legendary lives of the 12 Apostles and 70 Disciples of Christ (ch. 4);³² *d*) a catalogue of Christian writers and writings in Arabic or translated into Arabic (ch. 7);³³ *e*) a summarized

²³ Richards'ed., p. XXI-XXII; Idem 2001: 38-39. In Tisserant *et al.* 1923: 394 (see p. 392 too), one find another interpretation based on data and arguments clarified today after almost one century of research.

²⁴ See the bibliographical Appendix.

²⁵ See *ibid.*, §§ II-III. One should note that the datations given for these works are arbitrary. Not only are they long-life compositions, but as in the case of the theological *summa* that work remained somehow incomplete until the author's death.

²⁶ Athanāsīyūs al-Maqārī, *Kitāb nuṣūṣ ṣalawāt līturgiyya qadīma...* A contribution dated to 2012 and published in the author's site <www.athanase.net>. The manuscript is Vatican, Borgia copt. 112, not integrated in the catalogue of this collection which ceases with no. 108. Monk Athanāsīyūs has not put his finding in relation to the well-known MS Berlin, Diez A, fol. 41 (ar. 10173), which is the prototype of a MS belonging also to the family's heritage; see in particular Samir 2000: 623-5 + 652 (no. 4).

²⁷ By the way, the same (descriptive) title was given abusively to the well-known comprehensive chronicle of al-Makīn b. al-'Amīd (see below), as well as to other extensive compilation works.

²⁸ Graf 1947: 355 (§ 114.9) + 442 (§ 134.1, *fine*). Information to be updated *apud* Wadi Awad (2017), Butrus al-Sadamanti al-Armani (Peter of Sadamant 'the Armenian'), in H. Takla – G. Gabra (eds), *Christianity and Monasticism in Northern Egypt* (American Univ. of Cairo, Cairo/New York) 200-11 (ch. 19), here p. 208. Further precisions in A. Sidarus (2018), *The Contribution of Monks or Hermits to the Medieval Coptic Arabic literature*, *Bull. Soc. Coptic Studies* 57 (Cairo; forthcoming).

²⁹ Partial ed. by Ḥabīb Jirjis, *Al-Jawhara al-naḥīsa / fī Khuṭab al-Kanīsa* (Cairo, 1914). Dated between 1294 and 1320, these prayers are described in 'Awad 1930: 118-24 and Graf 1931: 249-51. About MS St. Antony, Lit. 466, there referred to, see the complements in the 2018 entry "Athanasius, bishop of Abū Tīj" by A. Sidarus, in the online *Supplement of Coptic Encyclopedia* (Clairemont, FL).

³⁰ Beside the reference given by Samir 2000: 621, n. 3, see the identification of the *ḍarb* in P. Casanova, *Essai de reconstitution topographique d'Al Foustāt ou Misr*, MIFAO 35, tome 1 (IFAO, Cairo, 1919) 16.

³¹ As stated in our paper on the *Mukhtār*, this approach follows the one generally applied by Ibn al-Rāhib in his *K. al-Tawārīkh* (see also below).

³² This chapter contains more than one version or historical traditions. Graf (1947: 440-41) mentions three studies on that. One should put this chapter in relation to the *vitae* of the Biblical prophets preserved in the aforementioned Berlin MS. Otherwise, it was translated into English, together with the first four chapters of the *Lamp*, by William A. Hanna in 2000, a translation presented online as 'preliminary' (actually very poor) at <http://www.zeitun-eg.org/Ibn_Kabar.PDF> (last access in 11-01-2019).

³³ In the Cairo ed. of 1971, p. 287-326, Samīr Khalīl has annotated this valuable chapter. Besides the German ed./trans. (with some misunderstandings) by W. Riedel (1902), quoted in the reference works on Ibn Kabar, there is now an English translation based on it by Adam McCollum, Abū al-Barakāt's Catalog of Christian Literature in Arabic (dig. pub. posted in 2009 at <http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/abu_1_barakat_catalogue.htm>). Note also the preceding author inventory made by al-Mu'taman b. al-'Assāl in the first chapter of his own theological *summa K. Uṣūl al-Dīn*; Sidarus 2008: 330 (Tab. 1) with references to editions and translations.

Biblical chronology, undoubtedly similar to that of the very first part of the *Mukhtār* (ch. 4, section 19);³⁴ f) an abridged account of the lives of the patriarchs of Alexandria according to the Coptic tradition, at the end of some manuscripts.³⁵

But before reaching this point, Ibn Kabar had indeed widely collaborated, as mentioned, in the compilation and writing of the voluminous *Zubda* of Baybars al-Manṣūrī, probably in his quality of high officeholder in the prestigious Chancellery (*dār al-inshā'*), where the Emir was in charge for many years.³⁶

It is sometimes maintained that Ibn Kabar had to leave his master (*makhdūma-hu*) in 693/1293, following the Sultan's decree calling on non-Muslim officials to convert, otherwise they would have to leave the civil service. However, in *al-Mukhtār*, our *kātib* does not record this occurrence but rather that of the month of Rajab 700 (Feb./March 1301).³⁷ It seems difficult to believe that he could ignore that initial event if he was indeed one of its victims. Furthermore, it is well known that measures of this kind, as well as those imposing distinct clothing and mounts for non-Muslims, apart from other humiliations, had been used repeatedly since the seizure of power by the Mamluk soldiery. However, more than one study asserts, in the first place, that the waves of dismissals were aimed primarily at the finance staff, which would not be the case of Ibn Kabar. Secondly, that these administrative measures did not have any real impact until the following century, when they cause a radical change in the religious landscape of the public service (even if sometimes nominally...), as well as in society as a whole.³⁸

On the other hand, I had always wondered about the meaning of the chronological gap between the alleged date of 1293 and his ordination to the priesthood in 1300, if one wants to see in that a possible incompatibility. Actually, as Awad clearly points out, the same passage of al-Maqrīzī mentioned earlier, referring to Ibn Kabar's flight with another high-ranking Christian official in the wake of the persecution of spring 721/1321 (Rabī' II / April), implies that he was holding on that date both his ecclesiastical office (hence the destruction of his church on this occasion ...) and the high-ranking civil function.³⁹ In this manner we can better explain the protection provided by Emir Baybars with whom he had taken refuge.

Finally, it is obvious that the historical records compiled in the *Zubda* go well beyond 1293 and even 1300, with the lack of any internal sign indicating a cessation of the 'Kabarīan' collaboration in compilation and composition – quite the contrary. The conclusion of the historical work was indeed reached in 724/1324, precisely the date of his death, a year before the death of the principal author, Baybars al-Manṣūrī.⁴⁰

In terms of the concrete contribution of "al-Shams b. Kabar al-naṣrānī" to the work of the valiant and erudite Mamluk Emir, the part on the universal pre-Islamic history, which remained unpublished in the abridged version of *Mukhtār al-akhbār* and was displayed in mine parallel article, provides an indication about his most

³⁴ See Samir 2000: 636-40, *passim*. On p. 636, the author states that according to the Paris MS which served basically for his study it is the largest section (12 folios) of that mishmash of scattered notes on the liturgy and its texts, which constitutes the chapter in point, the last one of the work or a later supplement, was left somehow unfinished. In the MS witness of Dayr al-Suryān, badly published by the monk Samuel (1992; see the indications by Samir and Wadi), there is only the heading (p. 293). In general the manuscript tradition is fluctuant in regards to the last chapters and the end of the encyclopaedia (see next footnote).

³⁵ On this chapter (see former note), see the use of it by Nakhla (1943) and the translation by Tisserant – Wiet (1923), quoted in § III of the *Appendix*. It must be underlined the general tendency of the copyists to update from their own the listing of the Patriarchs beyond the data recorded by the different authors – a habit commented in the presentation of Ibn al-Rāhib's chronicle by Sidarus 2014: 230 ff.

³⁶ In the introduction (p. 240) of the first set of his translations mentioned in the *Appendix*, § III, Awad quotes a passage of Maqrīzī's *Sulūk* where reference is made of two *a'yān al-khiṭṭa* in a context where our personage comes into play.

³⁷ *Mukhtār*, Ḥamdān's ed., p. 165-66. The editor quotes in note Maqrīzī's *Sulūk*, where the ground (*ilzām*) for the decree is given. The event is recorded in the *Zubda* itself (Richards' ed., p. 351-52). See, on these events in Egypt and the wave of fires that ensued throughout the following year: Tisserant *at al.* 1923: 292-93; Qāsim 'Abduh Qāsim (1977; repr. 1979), *Ahl al-dhimma fī Miṣr al-'uṣūr al-wuṣṭā: Dirāsa wathā'iqīyya* (Dār al-Ma'ārif, Cairo) 184-89.

³⁸ Qāsim 1977: 184. See also the long entry with a complete list of Muslim clerics of Coptic origin by C.F. Petry (1991), "Copts in Late Medieval Egypt", in *CoptEnc*. In addition to the double more generic entries there: "Mamlūks and the Copts" (A.S. Atiya) and "Egypt, Islamization" (S.I. Cody). More bibliographical references with explanations in the specific § 7 of the *Appendix* in my forthcoming study: *Littérature copte et copto-arabe au XIV^e siècle*, in A. Boud'hors & C. Louis (eds), *Études coptes XV: XVIII^e Journée d'Études Coptes (Bruxelles, juin 2017)* (Peeters, Louvain/Paris, 2020).

³⁹ The accumulation of religious charges (*faqīh/imām*, priest/monk, rabbi) with state service was common in the Middle Ages; A. Sidarus (2013), *Coptic Dignitary Families (buyūtāt) in the Ayyubid Period and the Golden Age of Coptic Arabic Literature*, *Journ. Coptic Studies 15* (Leuven/Paris) 189-208, *passim* (now online). Most of my papers here quoted can be accessed to in the site "Academia.edu".

⁴⁰ In Awad's paper just quoted (p. 239-42), all that is discussed but without any precise conclusion. By the way, it is necessary to relate what is said there with that which we propose below concerning the nature of Ibn Kabar "collaboration" in the compilation of the *Zubda*. – It should be otherwise noticed that according to Richards (2001: 40; see also his ed., p. XXV) there are some indications pointing out to an earlier conclusion (709 or 712, date of Baybar's imprisonment...), pertaining the rest of the work to somebody else...

original contribution. In the *Zubda* itself, it had to correspond to a first volume.⁴¹ It is rare indeed to find such a treatment in Muslim historiography, and even less in the form that appears there.⁴² As we have explained elsewhere,⁴³ Muslim historians of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, such as Ibn Khaldūn, al-Maqrīzī, al-Qalqashandī or others, resorted to the universal stories developed by mid-thirteenth century Copts to enrich their treatment of this period: al-Nushū' Abū Shākir b. al-Rāhib and al-Makīn Jirjis b. al-'Amīd. And as explained in the parallel paper on the *Mukhtār*-epitome, Ibn Kabar heavily depends in this field on the *Kitāb al-Tawārīkh* of the first of these coreligionists; a work which is explicitly quoted and flattered in chapter 7 of the *Lamp for the Darkness* mentioned a few lines above.⁴⁴

As for the rest, what can be said?

If the Muslim sources themselves explicitly report that for the composition of his monumental historical compilation, Emir Baybars has been assisted by his *naṣrānī* secretary, then Ibn Kabar's contribution cannot be limited to the first volume of the *Zubda*.

We have mentioned above how the illustrious Emir was generally admired for having been able to develop the literary capacities revealed by his work, in addition to his weighty political and military as well as judicial responsibilities – and beyond his exogenous and servile origins (*mamlūk*).⁴⁵ Actually, this was because he had been able to surround himself with competent collaborators, such as our Coptic *kātib*. Thus, being a highly educated secretary, al-Shams Ibn Kabar must have undertaken the study and compilation of traditional Islamic chronicles, in addition to the historical archives available for him in the Emir's palace or elsewhere.

Without going so far as to plainly claim with G. Wiet that Baybars would have done nothing other than undersign the work done by his secretary,⁴⁶ one would think that once the material was collected by the latter (maybe with the assistance of others fellows...), it had to be submitted to the Master bearing the ultimate responsibility, in order to be properly appreciated, revised, corrected and completed at leisure, and in view of giving it the literary form that he desired. But here too, Ibn Kabar's prose was certainly not lacking in literary quality, including the use of *saj'* (one of the strong point of the Emir's works) as explained above. Thus, we may presume that a good part of the writing was due to him⁴⁷. Finally, to strengthen this argument, it is not insignificant to note that, as asserted, the *Zubda* goes until 724/1324, the year Ibn Kabar died (Thursday, 10th May), while the Emir survived him by one year!

Bibliographic Appendix concerning Ibn Kabar I.

The basic reference work is still the classical manual of Georg Graf (1947), *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*, vol. 2: *Die Schriftsteller bis zur Mitte des 15. Jahrhunderts*, Studi e Testi 133 (Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, Vatican City) 438-44 (§ 134). Together with its somewhat updated and complemented translation by Athanāsiyūs al-Maqrī (2011), *Fihrist kitābāt Ābā' Kanīsat al-Iskandariyya: Al-kitābāt al-'arabiyya*, 2 vols. Maṣādir Ṭuqūs al-Kanīsa 1.8-9 (Monastery of St. Macarius, Wadi el-Natroun) 730-59.⁴⁸ One should add nowadays: R. Coquin (1967), entry "Kabar" in *Catholicisme Hier - Aujourd'hui - Demain: Encyclopédie sous la direction de G. Jacquement*, vol. 6 (Paris, Letouzay et Ané), col. 1349-51 (because of some relevant details); Luwīs Šaykhū & Kamīl Ḥishaymeh (1987), *Wuzarā' al-Naṣrāniyya wa-kuttābuha fī al-Islām* Al-Turāth al-'Arabī al-Masīhī 11 (Pontificio Istituto Orientale, Rome) 90 (§ 88). Further, because it represents a well-documented study with some pertinent details beyond its specific topic: Samir Khalil Samir

⁴¹ Unfortunately no textual witness of this first volume, neither of the second had reached us.

⁴² Franz Rosenthal (1992), *A History of Muslim Historiography*, 2nd rev. ed. (E.J. Brill, Leiden; 1st ed. 1968); A. Noth & L.I. Conrad (1994), *The Early Arabic Historical Tradition: A Source-critical Study*, trans. by M. Bonner (The Darwin Press, Princeton). See however: Berndt Radtke (1996), *Weltgeschichte und Weltbeschreibung im mittelaltetlichen Islam* (Orient-Institut der DMG, Beirut; pb. in 1998).

⁴³ Last updating on the issue in A. Sidarus (2014), Copto-Arabic Universal Chronography between Antiquity, Judaism, Christianity and Islam: The *Kitāb al-Tawārīkh* of ... Ibn al-Rāhib (655 Heg./1257 Chr.), *Collectanea Christ. Orientalia* 11 (Córdoba) 221-50; here, p. 224 and p. 239. See also Idem (2018), Medieval Coptic Arabic historiography, *ibidem* 15: 157-83.

⁴⁴ The notice is analyzed in doc. 1 of the appended booklet in Adel Y. Sidarus (1975), *Ibn ar-Rāhib's Leben und Werk: Ein koptisch-arabischer Enzyklopädist des 7./13. Jahrhunderts*, Islamkundl. Untersuchungen 36 (Klaus Schwarz Verlag, Wiesbaden; dig. copy at <<http://menadoc.bibliothek.uni-halle.de/iud/content/pageview/847474>>).

⁴⁵ See the remarks of Richards 2001: 40. See further Adelhamid Saleh Hamdan (1988), "Un nouveau manuscrit attribué à Baybars al-Mansūrī (Mukhtār al-Akhbār)," *Studia Islamica* (Leiden), 67 (1988): 151-3, here p. 153 (journal accessible online).

⁴⁶ G. Wiet (1930), "L'historien Abul-Mahasin," *Bull. Inst. Egypt.* (Cairo), 12: 89-105, here p. 89.

⁴⁷ See in this regard what Richards suggests about the London manuscript which, by the way, has its folios numerated in Graeco-Coptic numbers. The use of these numerals in medieval codices is discussed in the parallel paper mentioned in the beginning.

⁴⁸ Volumes with continued pagination, available in the author's site at <<http://www.athanase.net>>.

(2000), L'encyclopédie liturgique d'Ibn Kabar et son apologie d'usages coptes, in H.-J. Feulner *et al.* (eds), *Crossroad of Cultures: Studies in Liturgy and Patristics in Honor of Gabriele Winkler*, OCA 260 (idem) 619-655.

In these reference works one could find former studies and publications, among which one should mention the very often invoked monography in Arabic (the only one strictly speaking, now far exceeded however and somehow uncritical!) by Jirjis Filūthā'us 'Awaḍ (1930), *Ibn Kabar, akbar faylasūf qibīl qadīm fī al-qarn 14* (Cairo). And also, for its richness and its constant use of original sources, the old (and nowadays exceeded) study by E. Tisserant & L. Villecourt & G. Wiet (1923), *Recherches sur la personnalité et la vie d'Abū'l-Barakāt Ibn Kubr (sic)*, *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien* 22 (Paris) 378-94.⁴⁹ Some complements and useful precisions in G. Graf (1931), *Mitteilungen zur Chronologie des Abū'l-Barakāt*, *Oriens Christianus* 28 (Wiesbaden) 246-51.

The following encyclopedic entries *s.v.* "Ibn Kabar" are outdated, sometimes defective if not erroneous: *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, dir. A. Vacant & E. Mangenot *et al.*, (Letouzey et Ané, Paris), tome VIII (1899-50), col. 2293-96 (free access at <http://jesusmarie.free.fr/dictionnaire_de_theologie_catholique_lettre_K.html>); *EncIsl-2*, first suppl. vol. of 1982, p. 388b-89a (by Abdel-Hamid Saleh [Hamdan]); *CoptEnc 4* (1991) 1267a-68a (entry signed by the editor; free access at <<http://ccdl.libraries.claremont.edu/col/cce/>>).

II.

The *Scala magna/selecta (al-Sullam al-kabīr/al-muqtarah)* has a shorter and a longer version, divided in 24/32 chapters (rather 'books', *bāb-s*). It is the second that was edited and passably translated by the pioneer Jesuit orientalist Atanasius Kircher (Rome, 1648). See the new presentation of this publication – and the whole manuscript prototype preserved in the Vatican Library and dated to September 1319 (Bābeh 1036 A.M.) – by A. Sidarus (2012), *La philologie copto-arabe médiévale et le Vat. ar. 71*, in P. Buzi & D.V. Proverbio (eds), *Coptic Treasures from the Vatican Library: A Selection of Coptic, Copto-Arabic and Ethiopian MSS*, *Studi e Testi* 472 (Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vatican City) 85-107. A new, more critical edition of the *scala* by the late William F. Macomber (1921-2008) is announced for the series CSCO (Leuven) as a posthumous publication.

A critical study with the general contextualization of this kind of classified or thematic vocabulary and reviewing of ancient models and analogous vocabularies by A. Sidarus (1990), *Les lexiques onomasiologiques gréco-copto-arabes du Moyen Âge et leurs origines anciennes*, in R. Schulz & M. Görg (eds), *Lingua restituta orientalis: Festschrift Julius Aßfalg*, *Ägypten und Altes Testament* 20 (Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden) 348-59 (*in-4°*). Older samples, fragmentary or not, on papyrus or parchment, displayed in Idem (2007), *Multilingualism and Lexicography in Egyptian Late Antiquity*, in J. Tubach & S.G. Vashalomidze (eds), *Stabilisierung und Profilierung der koptischen Kirche im 4. Jahrhundert (X. Internationale Hallesche Koptologentreffen 2006)* *Hallesche Beiträge zur Orientalwissenschaft* 44/07 (Universität, Halle (Saale) 173-95. Last updating account of the important trilingual *scala* known as *Liber graduum* and mentioned in these references, and which was considered by some scholars as a more improved copy or *vice-versa*, by Idem (2016), *Nouvelles données concernant la scala gréco-copto-arabe Liber graduum*, in A. Binggeli *et al.* (eds), *Manuscripta Graeca et Orientalia: Mélanges monastiques et patristiques en l'honneur de Paul Géhin*, *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta* 243 & *Bibliothèque de Byzantion* 12 (Peeters, Leuven/Paris) 563-81.

III.

As for the ecclesiastical encyclopedia *Miṣbāḥ al-zulma / fī-Īdāḥ al-Khidma* ('Lamp for the darkness or the elucidation of the liturgical Service'), the numerous manuscripts which transmit it, mostly from the seventeenth-nineteenth centuries, and the various partial editions/translations are listed in the general references given above on the personage himself. Add the most recent notice, focusing precisely this very work, by Wadī Awad (*alias* Wadī 'Awaḍ) (2012), *Al-Shams Ibn Kabar*, in D. Thomas *et al.* (eds), *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History*, vol. IV (E.J. Brill, Leiden/Cologne) 762-66. One finds there a few editions/translations sometimes omitted in other manuals, among which a set of three editions by the author himself (ch. 14, 16, 18) published in *Studia Orientalia Christiana / Collectanea* 34-37 (Cairo/ Jerusalem, 2001-4), the first one discussing in the introduction the complex issue of the author's chronology.

Add to this listing the edition by the same author of chapter 20 on the marriage, published in the Coptic journal *Al-Madrasa al-Iskandariyya* 3 (Alexandria/Cairo, 2011) 191-206 + vol. 5 (2013) 215-35. A liturgical hymn in this chapter as well in ch. 17 is addressed in the erudite study by U. Zanetti (2009), *Voici le temps de la bénédiction... : Origine copte d'une hymne liturgique éthiopienne*, *Orientalia Christ. Periodica* 75 (Rome) 25-50. Further, the translation with critical insight and commentaries of the live-notice on the Patriarchs, included sometimes in the last ('open') chapter 24: E. Tisserant & G. Wiet (1923), in Jean Maspéro, *Histoire des*

⁴⁹ Repr. in *Recueil Cardinal Eugène Tisserant: 'Ab Oriente et Occidente'*, ed. Sever Pop – Giorgio Levi della Vida *et al.*, Louvain, CIDG/Univ. Cath. Louvain, 1955, vol. 1, p. 89-107.

Patriarches d'Alexandrie (IFAO, Cairo) 359-81 (Annexe III). See also the edition-like of the contents by Kāmil Ṣāliḥ Nakhla (1943), *Kitāb tārīkh wa-jadāwil Baṭārikat al-Iskandariyya al-qibṭ* (Cairo) 60-75.

Add the kind of condensation or summary of the whole by Mīkhā'il Maksī Iskandar (2003), *Miṣbāḥ al-zulma...* (Maktabat al-Maḥabba, Cairo) and the contextualized presentation of the *summa* by A. Sidarus (2008), *Encyclopédisme et savoir religieux à l'âge d'or de la littérature copte arabe (XIII^e-XIV^e s.)*, *OCP* 74: 347-61.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ One should complement the data concerning the *Lamp*, referring the listing of its sources in the two studies by Villecourt (in the introduction of his partial edition) and by Crum, as stated in the handbooks of Graf (1947) and Athanāsiyūs (2011). Compare with the sources used in the analogous encyclopedias by his older coreligionists: al-Mu'taman b. al-'Assāl (see above fn. 33) and Abū Shākir b. al-Rāhib, in A. Sidarus (2010), *Les sources d'une somme théologique copto-arabe du XIII^e siècle (K. al-Burhān de...)*, *Miscellanea BAV* 17 (Vatican City) 127-63.