"All the Way to the British Isles"

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"All the Way to the British Isles": Ayyūbid-English Diplomatic Networks in an Early Thirteenth-Century Exchange

By Ilan Shoval

Introduction

A receipt found in the Pipe Rolls of the county of Kent for the year 1207 informs us that King John of England received a diplomatic envoy from the sultan of Egypt by the name of William. We are told nothing of the nature of William's mission, and this episode has no corroboration in any other English source. In the years around 1210, a merchant diplomat known by the peculiar sobriquet of "William the Genoese" is described by various Islamic chroniclers as a companion in the court of the Ayyūbid sultan, al-Malik al-ʿĀdil.

The notion that William, envoy of the Egyptian sultan and a figure in the English archives, is the William the Genoese who appears in contemporary Muslim sources is a rather tantalizing one. Pending further corroboration, however, this idea remains entirely conjectural. Yet there is much to gain from detective work on this diplomatic interaction.

From a historiographical perspective, the case at hand calls for a revisionist view of Islamic-Western European interactions in the Middle Ages. This study argues in favor of a broader understanding of contacts between the Islamic—particularly Ayyūbid—and northern European world and thus for an expansion of the idea of the Mediterranean and contact zones therein.

In what follows, I seek to reconstruct the circumstances and unearth the facts related to the mission led by the person named William from Egypt to King John of England, placing this event into the broader context of Ayyūbid-Frankish diplomacy and Western-Muslim relations at about the year 1200. This project may shed light on the professionalization of diplomatic practice and on the development of Islamic and Western European bureaucratic governance. I intend to lay bare the symmetry as well as the reciprocity that appears to have characterized the relations between the Islamic and Christian realms at the time.

Additionally, I employ a specific methodology. Adopting a sort of clue-finding approach to the sources may prove useful: it opens up a narrative advantage, supplies the inquiry with illustrative tools, and, by virtue of its nonstandard review of information caches, increases the likelihood that we will avoid a biased worldview. Such

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methodology poses investigative questions that consider the route to solutions far more important than the solutions themselves. Achieving these historiographical-revisionist objectives is entirely independent of the solution to the queries.

Two major exploratory queries will be posed in the coming pages. The first of these concerns the existence of the sole individual who, in sharp contrast to the Genoese Williams, or to other Genoese who held official posts in the Ayyūbid sultanate on behalf of their city-state, did not bear a surname. This person seems to have been active in Egypt during the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. He was a companion to the Ayyūbid sultan al-Malik al-ʿĀdil, and he might have served the latter as a diplomat, at least in the mission to King John of England. The second exploratory query will delve into establishing a somewhat narrow dating of William's visit to King John's court as well as the circumstances of that visit.

William the Genoese in Ayyūbid Egypt

There are several appearances in the Islamic sources of the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries of a certain Genoese by the name of William, noteworthy in that he bears no surname. William, whose activities included commerce and personal companionship with the sultan, has a somewhat vague persona. From what we can glean from the documents, he seems to have enjoyed a peculiar status in Egyptian Ayyūbid elite circles outside the official bureaucracy. Notwithstanding the oddity of his personal identification, his integration into Ayyūbid society in various posts, including perhaps diplomacy and espionage, tells us a great deal about Islamic-Latin relations.

A Companion to the Sultan: A Merchant/Diplomat/Spy in the Ayyūbid Court

A Syrian chronicle entitled "The Mansurite History" (*at-Tāʾrīkh al-Manṣūrī*), penned by Ibn Naẓīf al-Ḥamawī in the mid-thirteenth century, was dedicated to al-Malik al-Manṣūr, the emir of Ḥimṣ.[1] Ibn Naẓīf was a high-ranking official in the administration of the Ayyūbid ruler al-Malik al-Ḥāfiẓ b. al-ʿĀdil (1198/1200–1218). Alex Mallett aptly noted that "his [Ibn Naẓīf's] work is valuable in terms of Christian-Muslim relations because it highlights the diplomatic relations between the Ayyūbids and the Franks of the crusader states, which at this time were particularly close due to their mutual needs."[2]

In folio 130v–131r of the manuscript, referring to the year 607/1210–11, Ibn Naẓīf records the whereabouts of one "William (*Kulyām*), the Genoese merchant,"

[1] Angelika Hartmann, "A Unique Manuscript in the Asian Museum, St. Petersburg: The Syrian Chronicle *at-Taʾrīḫ al-Manṣūrī* by Ibn Naẓīf al-Ḥamawī from the 7th/13th Century," in *Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyūbid and Mamlūk Eras*, ed. U. Vermeulen and J. van Steenbergen, vol. 3 (Leuven, 2001), 89–100.

[2] Alex Mallett, "Ibn Naẓīf al-Ḥamawī," in *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History*, ed. David Thomas and Alex Mallett, vol. 4, *1200–1350* (Leiden, 2012), 245–47. On Ibn Naẓīf as a reliable source on Muslim-Genoese relations, see Alex Metcalfe, *The Muslims of Medieval Italy* (Edinburgh, 2009), 281–83.

in the court of Sultan al-Malik al-ʿĀdil. "In that year," the text runs, "the Genoese merchant William, God's curse upon him, came before the sultan, and he met with him, and treated him cordially, and amongst the good things he did for him was that he enjoined him to be attached to his suite. And the cursed shrouded things from time to time in mystery and warned the Franks of affairs (in Cairo). This was reported to the sultan but he paid no heed."[3] The next year, 608/1211–12, William served as a companion to Sultan al-ʿĀdil (*suḥba*) to Alexandria.[4]

Apparently relying on Ibn Naẓīf al-Ḥamawī as a source, the fifteenth-century chronicler Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad b. ʿAli al-Maqrīzī (1364/5–1442) repeated, with some modifications and additions, the reference to William the Genoese merchant.[5] Born into a scholarly family, al-Maqrīzī advanced quickly in the Egyptian Mamlūk administration. His chronicle, "The Paths to Knowledge about Dynasties and Kings" (*Al sulūk li-ma ʿrifat duwal al-mulūk*), was devoted to the Ayyūbid dynasty. Christian-Muslim relations in this work mostly concern the period of the Crusades, but there is also information about diplomatic relations with the Latin states.[6] Frédéric Bauden noted the reference made by this Muslim chronicler to a Genoese merchant named William as evidence for "Al-Maqrīzī's taste for good stories and anecdotes."[7] Al-Maqrīzī adds, to al-Ḥamawī's information on William, that coming before al-Malik al-ʿĀdil in the year 1210–11, William gave him precious gifts.[8] Al-Maqrīzī supplemented the work of Ibn Naẓīf with information derived from an unknown source. He dubbed William "the Genoese, the Frank." Al-Maqrīzī referred once again to William in the events of the following year, 608, that is, from 15 June 1211 to 2 June 1212: "This year al-ʿĀdil left Cairo and came to Damascus; thence he moved to the Jazīrah and set its affairs in order,

[3] A photomechanical edition of the whole unique manuscript of Saint Petersburg, including a detailed introduction in Russian, was published in 1960: P. A. Gryaznevich, ed., *Muḥammad al-Ḥamawī: at-Tāʾrikh al-Manṣūrī* (Moscow, 1960), 248–49: "wa-fīha waṣala kulyām al-tājir al-janawī la ʿanahu Allāh wa-qadama li-l-sulṭān wa-ṣādaqahu fa-aḥsana l- sulṭān ilayhi wa-kāna fī jumlat iḥsānihi ilayhi anahu ya ʾkhuḏahu ma ʿahu ila ibn al-nakhba wa-kāna al-mal ʿūn yaktanifa l-aḥwāl awalan fa-awalan wa-bada ʾa nabata bihā al-faranj wa-qīla li-l-sulṭān fa-mā iltafata"

[وفيها وصل كليام ألتاجر ألجنوي لعنه آلله وقدم للسلطان وصادقه فأحسن ألسلطان إليه وكان في جملة إحسانه اليه أنه يأخذه معه الي إبن ألنخبة وكان ألملعون يكتنف ألأحوال أولا فأولا وبدأ نبت بها ألفرنج وقيل للسلطان فما التفت].

See also

ألتأريخ ألمنصوري, تلخيص ألكشف وألبيان في حوادث ألزمان, تأليف أبي ألفضائل محمد بن علي بن نظيف .ألحموي, تحقيق, أبو ألعيد دودو (مطبعة ألحجاز بدمشق, 1981) ص. 65–66.

[4] ألتأريخ ألمنصوري, ص. 67: 'وفيها توجه ألملك ألعادل إلى الإسكندرية لكشف أحوالها وكليام صحبته

[5] There is now scholarly agreement that al-Maqrīzī was familiar with and made use of the works of Ibn Naẓīf al-Ḥamawī. This story about William further supports the contention. See Hartmann, "A Unique Manuscript in the Asian Museum," 97–98.

[6] Frédéric Bauden, "Al-Maqrīzī," in Thomas and Mallett, *Christian-Muslim Relations*, vol. 5, *1350–1500* (Leiden, 2013), 380–95, at 381–85.

[7] Frédéric Bauden, "Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad b. ʿAli al-Maqrīzī," in *Medieval Muslim Historians and the Franks in the Levant*, ed. Alex Mallett (Leiden, 2015), 161–200, at 189.

[8] Al-Maqrīzī, *A History of the Ayyubid Sultans of Egypt*, trans. R. J. C. Broadhurst (Boston, 1980), 154; Al-Maqrīzī, *Al-sulūk li-maʿrifat duwal al-mulūk*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Kādir, 8 vols. (Beirut, n. d.), 1:291: "wa-fīhā qadama ila-l-qāhira kulyām al-faranjī al-janawī tājiran fa-itaṣala bi-l-malik al-ʿĀdil wa-ahda ilayhi nafāʾis fa-aʿjaba al-ʿĀdil bihi wa-amarahu bi-mulāzamātihi wa-kāna kulyām fī bāṭin al-amir ʿaynan li-l-faranj yuṭāli ʿahum bi-l-aḥwāl fa-qīla haḏa li-l-ʿĀdil fa-lam yaltafit ila mā qīla ʿanhu"

[وفيها قدم إلى ألقاهرة كليام ألفرنجي ألجنوي تاجرا فإتصل بألملك ألعادل وأهدي إليه نفائس فأعجب ألعادل به وأمره بملازمته وكان كليام في باطن ألأمر عينا للفرنج يطالعهم بالأحوال فقيل هذا للعادل فلم يلتفت إلي ما قيل عنه].

returning then to Damascus. With him was William the Frank."[9] Both Ibn Naẓīf and al-Maqrīzī record the Genoese's whereabouts until the year 1214. Here Ibn Naẓīf in folio 133v tells us, "[And] in that year al-Malik al-ʿĀdil returned to al-Diyār al-Miṣrīya and William did not leave him."[10] Al-Maqrīzī wrote that "al-ʿĀdil left Syria for Egypt, and that he gave orders that William the Frank, the Genoese, should reside with him in the Vizirial Lodge."[11]

Neither al-Ḥamawī nor al-Maqrīzī explicitly states that William acted as a diplomat sent on a mission by the sultan. It should also be noted that William's absence from the writings of other important contemporary historians of the Ayyūbid dynasty in general, and al-ʿĀdil's in particular, is rather conspicuous.[12]

[9] Al-Maqrīzī, *A History of the Ayyubid Sultans of Egypt*, trans. Broadhurst, 155; Al-Maqrīzī, *Al-sulūk*, 293: "wa-fīhā kharaja al-ʿĀdil min al-qāhira fa-sāra ila dimashq wa-baraza minhā yurīdu-l-jazīra fa-waṣala ilayhā wa-rataba aḥwālahā wa-ʿāda ila dimashq wa-ma ʿhu kulyām al-faranjī"
[وفيها خرج ألعادل من ألقاهرة فسار إلي دمشق وبرز منها يريد ألجزيرة فوصل إليها ورتب أحوالها وعاد إلي دمشق ومعه كليام ألفرنجي].

[10] Gryaznevich, *at-Taʾrikh al-Manṣūrī*, 273: "wa-fīhā ʿāda al-malik al-ʿĀdil ila al-diyār al-miṣrīya wa-kulyām lā yufāriquhu" [وفيها عاد ألملك ألعادل إلي ألديار ألمصرية وكليام لا يفارقه]. For al-Diyār al-Miṣrīya, see Bahā al-Dīn b. Shaddād, *Sīrat Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, al-Nawādir al-Sulṭanīya wa-`l-Ḥasā'īn al-Yūsufīya*, ed. Gamāl al-Dīn al-Shayyāl (Cairo, 2004), 47–48. See Gamal el-Dīn al-Shayyāl, "Ibn Shaddād," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. P. J. Bearman et al. (Leiden, 2012), http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_3368.

[11] Al-Maqrīzī, *A History of the Ayyubid Sultans of Egypt*, trans. Broadhurst, 159; Al-Maqrīzī, *Al-sulūk*, 299: "wa-fīhā kharaja al-ʿĀdil min al-shaʾm yurīdu miṣr fa-nazala fī-l-qāhira bi-dār al-wizāra wa-istamarra ibnuhu al-Kāmil bi-qala ʿat al-jabal wa-amara al-ʿĀdil an yuqīma ma ʿahu kulyām al-faranjī al-janawī bi-dār al-wizāra"
[وفيها خرج ألعادل من ألشأم يريد مصر فنزل في ألقاهرة بدار ألوزارة وأستمر آبنه ألكامل بقلعة ألجبل وأمر ألعادل أن يقيم معه كليام ألفرنجي ألجنوي بدار ألوزارة].

[12] Al-Maqrīzī relied heavily on the historian Kamāl al-Dīn Abū-l-Qāsim ʿUmar b. Aḥmad b. al-ʿAdīm (1192–1262): Bernard Lewis, "Ibn al-ʿAdīm," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. Bearman et al., http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_3063. This *qāḍī* of Aleppo was a leading diplomat in the service of the Ayyūbid rulers in Aleppo as well as in Damascus during the early decades of the thirteenth century. Puzzlingly, in his own treatise "The Cream of the Milk from the History of Aleppo" (*Zubdat al-ḥalab min tāʾrikh Ḥalab*), wherein he compiled material from his incessant travels, Ibn al-ʿAdīm made no mention of William the Genoese, who escorted Sultan al-Malik al-ʿĀdil in Damascus. See Kamāl al-Dīn b. al-ʿAdīm, *Histoire d'Alep* (*Zubdat al-halab min taʾrikh Ḥalab*), ed. Sami Dahan (Damascus, 1968), vol. 3, *1173–1243*, 63–85. Al-Makīn b. Jirjis b. al-ʿAmīd (1205–73), a Christian Copt official of *dīwān al-jaysh* in Cairo and later in Syria, who was the single contemporary Egyptian historian writing on the Ayyūbids of the mid-thirteenth century and whose familiarity with Ayyūbid administration allowed him to name specific officials who escorted al-ʿĀdil during his voyages, also said nothing of William the Genoese: Al-Makīn Ibn al-ʿAmīd, *Chronique des Ayyoubides (602–658: 1205/6–1259/60)*, trans. Anne-Marie Eddé and Françoise Micheau, in *Documents relatifs à l'histoire des croisades* (Paris, 1994), 18–30. See also Claude Cahen and R. G. Coquin, "al-Makīn b. al-ʿAmīd," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. Bearman et al., http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0637; Samuel Moawad, "Al-Makīn," in Thomas and Mallett, *Christian-Muslim Relations*, 4:566. Even Ibn al-Athīr, who served as a diplomat in the Ayyūbid administration during the first two decades of the thirteenth century, made no reference to this person. Ibn Wāṣil and Abū Shāma, in whose histories, as analyzed by Konrad Hirschler, the topic of ideal rule was most salient, were also silent with regard to the William under discussion: Konrad Hirschler, *Medieval Arabic Historiography: Authors as Actors* (London, 2006), 122–23. See also Hirschler, "Social Context of Medieval Arabic Historical Writing: Court Scholars Versus Ideal/Withdrawn Scholars—Ibn Wāsil and Abū Shāma," in *Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras*, ed. U. Vermeulen and J. Van Steenbergen, vol. 4 (Leuven, 2005), 311–31; Daniel G. König, "Muslim Perceptions of 'Latin Christianity': Methodological Reflections and a Reevaluation," in *Comparativ: Zeitschrift für Globalgeschichte und vergleichende Gesellschaftsforschung* 20 (2010): 18–42.

Yet, relying on analogy and research on the Ayyūbid administrative structure, we might speculate that the Genoese, presumably a traveler merchant, held the informal position of an envoy.

David Jacoby has discussed Genoese merchants' special role in the late twelfth century as personal envoys of the Egyptian rulers to Byzantium and as carriers of Egyptian embassies and messages to the Byzantine emperors. In his study of the striking case of a Genoese merchant by the name of Gionata da Campo, Jacoby portrayed the intricacy of interactions between the actors within the Mediterranean involving diplomacy, trade, shipping, and espionage.[13] I would suggest that our "William the Genoese" who has left his traces in the Muslim sources might have followed a similarly sundry path. William likely traded in goods and diplomacy and perhaps also in espionage, as the Muslim sources suggest.

The study of the administrative structure of the Ayyūbid court may reinforce our hypothesis regarding William's capacity as a diplomat. In the royal court, personal servants or officials from the household were often employed as diplomats. Working by word of mouth, these individuals mostly carried out covert operations. And yet, bilingual as well as Latin and Arabic versions of treaties between Muslim and Christian powers in the Mediterranean have reached us.[14] From these, we know that envoys were put to various uses. Some were sent to survey the terrain and pass crucial topographical information to their lords. Others were tasked with sounding out the enemy's intentions and secretly negotiating with the opposing forces. Yet others sought to gain a general impression of the enemy's society.[15] The Ayyūbid sultanate did not enjoy an organized "foreign affairs" division with a documental depository. As Reuven Amitai has noted, there is no extant archive of diplomatic documents in the Islamic world prior to the Ottoman era, but in some periods and regions texts were preserved in chancery manuals and in various historical literary sources.[16] Since trade was an important motive for diplomacy, the figure of the

[13] David Jacoby, "Diplomacy, Trade, Shipping and Espionage between Byzantium and Egypt in the Twelfth Century," in *Latins, Greeks and Muslims: Encounters in the Eastern Mediterranean, 10th–15th Centuries* (Aldershot, 2010), 83–102, at 86–94; Claude Cahen, *Orient et occident au temps des croisades* (Paris, 1983), 146–47.

[14] M. L. De Mas Latrie, *Traités de paix et de commerce et documents divers concernant les relations des Chrétiens avec les Arabes de l'Afrique septentrionale au Moyen Âge*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1866; repr., New York, 1963); Michele Amari, *I diplomi arabi del R. Archivio Fiorentino* (Florence, 1863); Peter M. Holt, *Early Mamlūk Diplomacy (1260–1290): Treaties of Baybars and Qalāwūn with Christian Rulers* (Leiden, 1995); Michael Köhler, *Alliances and Treaties between Frankish and Muslim Rulers in the Middle East: Cross-Cultural Diplomacy in the Period of the Crusades*, trans. Peter M. Holt, revised, edited, and introduced by Konrad Hirschler (Leiden, 2013).

[15] Anne-Marie Eddé, *Saladin*, trans. Jane Marie Todd (Cambridge, MA, 2011), 276 n. 27, 560 (reference to Ibn Shaddād). See Bahā al-Dīn b. Shaddād, *Sīrat Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn*, 157–58; Daniel G. König, *Arabic-Islamic Views of the Latin West: Tracing the Emergence of Medieval Europe* (Oxford, 2015), 56.

[16] Reuven Amitai, "Diplomacy and the Slave Trade in the Eastern Mediterranean: A Re-examination of the Mamlūk-Byzantine-Genoese Triangle in the Late Thirteenth Century in Light of the Existing Early Correspondence," *Oriente Moderno* 88/2 (2008): 349–68, at 349–51. For chancery manuals see Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-ʿUmarī, a fourteenth-century author and administrator of the Mamlūk period, who served in the chancery of Cairo and Damascus and left important works on the organization and administration of the Mamlūk state: K. S. Salibi, "Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-ʿUmarī," in *Encyclopaedia of*

merchant who carried out diplomatic missions on behalf of one ruler to another materialized. The array of terms used for "ambassador" and "envoy" as well as for records of interview procedures suggests professionalism, with a rather sophisticated hierarchy of representatives.[17] Moreover, the gulf that separated meetings of envoys from summits between kings was mutually acknowledged. For instance, King Richard's appeal for an interview with Sultan Saladin was refused, the response detailing the necessary preliminaries that first should be arranged.[18]

We shall now expand out purview to consider more precisely how William might have served al-ʿĀdil during the early 1210s. The complexity of the Ayyūbid administrative structure has been studied quite thoroughly by modern scholars. These topics include land and tenure politics, *dīwāns* and the politics of revenue assignment, political culture and the elite household, and diplomacy.[19] We do not find in Muslim writers' references to William the Genoese any indication of an official assignment rewarded through *dīwān*, *iqṭāʿ*, or any other payment known to have been given to members of a particular religious community who staffed the administrative system. This being the case, it seems that William joined the sultan's household (*bayt*) as an intimate. Our sources convey the impression that his presence exemplified the political and social ties that stood as bonds of friendship and companionship and were prevalent in the Ayyūbid court. In a political culture in which "there was a premium on extravagant hospitality and lavish gift-giving," William might have entered directly into the sultan's household, perhaps even residing in the palace; his residence in the royal court would attest unusually intimate relations between al-ʿĀdil and William.[20] Al-Maqrīzī was quite explicit with regard to William's status. He stated pointedly that William was "at the heart of the matter" (*fī bāṭin al-amr*) and that al-ʿĀdil ordered William to reside in the Vizirial Lodge ("wa-amara al-ʿĀdil an yuqīma maʿahu kulyām al-faranjī al-janawī bi-dār al-wizāra" [وأمر العادل أن يقيم معه كليام الفرنجي الجنوي بدار الوزارة]).[21] As one of al-ʿĀdil's subordinates, he

Islam, Second Edition, ed. Bearman et al., http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_3153. See also Shihāb al-Dīn Abu-l-ʿAbbās al-Qalqashandī (1355–1418), a legal scholar and secretary in the Mamlūk chancery, who composed important treaties on Mamlūk administration: C. E. Bosworth, "al-Qalqashandī," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. Bearman et al., http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_3832.

[17] Al-Maqrīzī, *A History of the Ayyubid Sultans of Egypt*, trans. Broadhurst, 45, 47–48. On Ayyūbid chancery, see S. M. Stern, "Petitions from the Ayyūbid Period," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 27/1 (1964), 1–32, at 14–25.

[18] John Gillingham, *Richard I* (New Haven, 1999), 20. The thirteenth-century English chronicler Matthew Paris has left a detailed account of how al-ʿĀdil received envoys in his palace. See Matthew Paris, *Chronica majora*, ed. Henry R. Luard, 2 vols. (London, 1874), 2:401.

[19] Michael Chamberlain, "The Crusader Era and the Ayyūbid Dynasty," in *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, vol. 1, *Islamic Egypt, 640–1517*, ed. Carl F. Petry (Cambridge, UK, 1998), 211–41.

[20] On Ayyūbid administrative structure, see Peter Holt, *The Age of the Crusades: The Near East from the Eleventh Century to 1517* (London, 1986), 73–77.

[21] Al-Maqrīzī, *Al-sulūk*, 291, 299. Often Italian merchants were required to reside during their stay in the *funduq* they obtained from the sultan. Apparently, some of the foreigners became permanent residents and some functioned as a kind of administrative staff. This staff of sorts in turn became a nuclear colony. See David Jacoby, "Les italiens en Égypte aux XIIe et XIIIe siècles: Du comptoire à la colonie?," in *Coloniser au Moyen Âge*, ed. Michel Balard and Alain Ducellier (Paris, 1995), 76–89, at 81–82.

easily could have served on a diplomatic mission as a personal service (*khidma*) to the sultan.[22]

A further perspective might support our presumption regarding William the Genoese as part of a diplomatic network and might help to account for the absence of William the Genoese from the writings of such historians as Ibn al-ʿAdīm, Ibn al-ʿAmīd, Ibn al-Athīr, Ibn Wāṣil, and Abū Shāma. William was a favorite of neither Ibn Naẓīf al-Ḥamawī nor al-Maqrīzī. Recently, Luke Yarbrough has suggested that their writing about his presence in the sultan's court seems to have been fueled by these Muslim writers' aversion to the state employment of non-Muslims.[23] Yarbrough has addressed at length Ibn Naẓīf's writing as part of a distinct genre. In his survey of "Drawing the Sword of Ambition to Extract What is Owed by the Dhimmīs" (*Tajrīd sayf al-ḥimma li-istikhrāj mā fī dhimmat al-dhimma*) by the Egyptian Shāfiʿī qāḍī al-Nābulusī (1192–1262), Yarbrough identified the earliest-known extant independent literary work that undertook to convince a Muslim sovereign to dismiss non-Muslim officials.[24] Al-Nābulusī wrote on Ayyūbid Egyptian bureaucracy at the time of al-Kāmil (1218–38), al-ʿĀdil's successor, aiming to disqualify his non-Muslim competitors from lucrative bureaucratic employment. Offering comprehensive information on non-Muslims in the civil service, al-Nābulusī was the first Muslim to develop what might be called the literary genre of Muslim advice literature in the early thirteenth-century Ayyūbid court.[25] Yarbrough's analysis of this literature of the twelfth to fourteenth centuries, which included al-Maqrīzī's *al-Sūlūk*, reveals Muslim religious elites' concern with their own social and political posi-

[22] Chamberlain, "The Crusader Era," 238–39; Claude Cahen, "Ayyūbids," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. Bearman et al., http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_0934; Anne-Marie Eddé, "Ayyūbids," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Third Edition*, ed. Kate Fleet et al. (Leiden, 2007), http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_0164. For the term *khidma* with the sense of "report," see Geoffrey Khan, *Arabic Legal and Administrative Documents in the Cambridge Genizah Collections* (Cambridge, UK, 1993), 424–25. This is the only place where a Genoese is mentioned. See also Sonja Brentjes, "Ayyūbid Princes and Their Scholarly Clients from the Ancient Sciences," in *Court Cultures in the Muslim World: Seventh to Nineteenth Centuries*, ed. Albrecht Fuess and Jan-Peter Hartung (London, 2011), 326–56, at 336.

[23] Bauden, "Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad b. ʿAlī al-Maqrīzī," 189; Eliyahu Ashtor-Strauss, "Saladin and the Jews," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 27 (1956): 305–26; Shlomo D. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society: The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Genizah*, 5 vols. (Berkeley, 1967, 88), 1:59, 61, 270.

[24] Luke Yarbrough, "Al-Nābulusī," in Thomas and Mallett, *Christian-Muslim Relations*, 4:310–16; Yarbrough, "Upholding God's Rule: Early Muslim Juristic Opposition to the State Employment of Non-Muslims," *Islamic Law and Society* 19/1 (2012): 11–85; Uthman b. Ibrāhīm al-Nābulusī, *The Sword of Ambition: Bureaucratic Rivalry in Medieval Egypt*, ed. and trans. Yarbrough (New York, 2016).

[25] Yarbrough, "Al-Nābulusī," 313; Yarbrough, "Islamizing the Islamic State: The Formulation and Assertion of Religious Criteria for State Employment in the First Millenium A.H." (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2012), 203–24, available online at http://dataspace.princeton.edu/jspui/handle/88435/dsp01s4655g624 (accessed 31 March 2018). Yarbrough argued that the origins of this literary genre are related to Saladin's extensive use of non-Muslims in his administration as a part of a wider change in the attitude towards *dhimmīs* during the transition from Fatimid Shiʿi rule to the Sunni Ayyūbids. See also Emmanuel Sivan, "Notes sur la situation des chrétiens à l'époque ayyubide," *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 172/2 (1967): 117–30, at 121–23.

tion.[26] In his historical writing al-Maqrīzī was engaged with the precariousness of power and of divine will, which both places and topples rulers. In this religiously driven work, the notice taken of the employment of non-Muslims in al-ʿĀdil's court was intended as rebuke to the Ayyūbid sultan.

Al-Maqrīzī's addition of the sobriquet "the Frank" to "William the Genoese merchant" appears to have been intended to accentuate where his true allegiance lay. Not a neutral Genoese, whose main interests were trading and perhaps performing diplomatic tasks, our figure was portrayed rather as one wholly aligned with the enemy.[27] It appears, then, that the criticism directed at William the Genoese concerned the suspicion that, once in the personal entourage of the sultan, he would spy for the Franks.

Unlike the many Arabicized Copts who served the Ayyūbids, William spoke a European language. Furthermore, whereas the Eastern Christians were part of the Muslim Levant, the Genoese merchant had the advantage of possessing a wider knowledge of Latin European politics. Very significantly, as well, he was acquainted with the manners and habits of Latin Christendom. On collegial terms with al-ʿĀdil, as described by the Muslim chroniclers, William seems that he would have been well suited to serve as a sort of a personal envoy of the sultan. Although Muslim envoys and merchants regularly sailed on Latin ships, William the Genoese might have had the linguistic advantage of being less restricted in his itinerary and thus of being able to cross vast areas of Western Europe.

Considerably predating the William who figures in the events described by Ibn Naẓīf and al-Maqrīzī, a person with the peculiar name "William the Genoese" or the designation "the Genoese merchant" appears in various Egyptian sources. One wonders if we are meeting the same person as the later "William the Genoese." As we follow the traces of this William, we learn that the absence of a surname seems to have been intentional on the part of those who referred to him, and that this peculiarity in fact served as a precise means of identification.[28]

[26] Yarbrough, "Islamizing the Islamic State," 111, 221–24, 325, 370. Yarbrough referred to al-Maqrīzī's *Al-sulūk*, but not with regard to the episode with William the Genoese in al-ʿĀdil's court. See also Donald P. Little, "Historiography of the Ayyūbid and Mamlūk Epochs," in *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, ed. Petry, 1:412–44.

[27] Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, 1:43.

[28] Notably, the Arabic transcriptions differ across sources. In al-Makhzūmī, we find *Kulmilmū al-Janawī* (كلملموا ألجنوي), whereas in Ibn Naẓīf and in al-Maqrīzī we find *Kulyām* (كليام). Both, however, seem to preserve the original Italian "Guglielmo." There are other instances where the name William appears in this transcription. Ibn al-Furāt Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Raḥīm (1334–1405), in his *History of the Countries and the Kingdoms* (*Tāʾrikh al-duwal wa-l-mulūk*), trans. Ursula Lyons and Malcolm C. Lyons, 2 vols. (Cambridge, UK, 1971), 2:161–62, referred to an affair occurring in 1275 in which Sultan Baybars attacked a castle controlled by William the Monk; *Tāʾrīkh Ibn al-Furāt*, li-Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad b. ʿAbd a-Raḥīm b. l-Furāt, ed. Konstantin Zarīq (Beirut, 1942), 33: "ila Kilyām al-nāʾib bi-l-qaṣīr." On the other hand, al-Maqrīzī uses *Ghulyām* (غليام) when referring to William son of Roger of Sicily. See al-Maqrīzī, *Al-sulūk*, 164. Dahlmanns erroneously used "Guliam" for Ibn Naẓīf al-Ḥamawī: see Franz-Josef Dahlmanns, "Al-Malik al-ʿĀdil: Ägypten und der vordere Orient in den Jahren 589/1193 bis 615/1218, ein Beitrag zur ayyūbidischen Geschichte" (PhD diss., University of Giessen, 1975), 181. Both "Guilielmus" and "Wilielmus" were used in the Genovese cartulary sources: see *Le carte di Santa Maria delle Vigne di Genova (1103–1392)*, ed. Gabriella Airaldi (Genoa, 1969), 273–74, 297–98.

Al-Makhzūmī

As early as 1170, reference is made to a certain "*Kulmilmū* (Guglielmo/William) the Genoese" in an administrative treatise of a twelfth-century *qāḍi*. Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. ʿUṯmān al-Qurāshī al-Makhzūmī, a civil servant in the Egyptian Fātimid administration, was entrusted with the duty of supervising the employees of the tax office. His fiscal treatise "The Customary in Egyptian Taxation" (*Kitāb al-Minhāj fī ʿilm Kharāj Miṣr*) was concerned with the activities performed by these employees and offers a meticulous account of the customs and commercial administration of the Mediterranean ports frequented by Italian merchants.[29] Relations between Egypt and Genoa were already flourishing in the Fātimid era, but by the time of Saladin, in the early 1170s, the Ayyūbids and the Genoese were on excellent terms.[30] Al-Makhzūmī cites the name of one "William the Genoese" as well as of one "Giovanni" and another "Badr the Venetian" in his tax registries, recording the arrival of ships from Crete in Alexandria: "The paper of the first among a number of ships coming from Crete with the date of its weighing, Guglielmo the Genoese, signature, its date, 50 dinar; signature, its date, 70 dinar," that is, the dates and amounts Guglielmo the Genoese was charged upon his arrival in the first of a number of ships coming from Crete.[31]

To this source—which, except for its reference to a merchant active in Egypt with the peculiar sobriquet William the Genoese, teaches us nothing about him—we may add some possible information from a contemporary Genoese archive.

Genoese Archive

At around the same time, that is, the last quarter of the twelfth century, among dozens of men named William (*Wilielmus*) who bore this name along with a sur-

[29] Claude Cahen, "al-Makhzūmī," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. Bearman et al., http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_4830; see also Hassanein Rabie, *The Financial System of Egypt A.H. 564–741/A.D. 1169–1341* (London, 1972), 9; Jacoby, "Diplomacy, Trade, Shipping and Espionage."

[30] Merav Mack, "A Genoese Perspective of the Third Crusade," *Crusades* 10 (2011): 45–62, at 47.

[31] Claude Cahen, *Douanes et commerce dans les ports méditerranéens de l'Égypte médiéval d'après le "Minhadj" d'al-Makhzūmī* (Leiden, 1964), 305, 308. Cahen pointed out that al-Makhzūmī used authentic Italian names, such as Giovanni and Guglielmo, 223–24 n. 2. It may be pointed out that Cahen's study stands out already in the 1960s as a "revisionist" approach. It also suggest a less "symmetrical" view of the mutual flow between Muslims and Latins. The Italians were drawn by the East but the initiative, at least in this case, was theirs. David Jacoby referred to a person named by al-Makhzūmī as "Badr le Vénitien," "qu'on pourra identifier sans doute avec un membre de la famille Badoer": Jacoby, "Les italiens en Égypte," 78; Claude Cahen, "Kitāb al-Minhādj fi ʿilm Ḥarādj Miṣr," *Supplément aux Annales islamologiques* 8 (Cairo, 1986): 68–72, at 55: "waraqat- l-markab- l-awwal min l-ʿadad- l-wārid min Aqrīṭs bi-tā ʾrīkh waznihi, Kulmilmū l-janawī, tawqī ʿtā ʾrīkhihi khamsīn dīnāran, tawqī ʿtā ʾrīkhihi sab ʿīn dīnāran"

[ورقة ألمركب ألأول من ألعدد ألوارد من أقريطس بتأريخ وزنه كلملموا ألجنوي توقيع تأريخه سبعين دينارا].

See also Claude Cahen, *Makhzumiyyat: Études sur l'histoire économique et financière de l'Égypte médiéval* (Leiden, 1977); David Jacoby, "Byzantine Trade with Egypt from the Mid-Tenth Century to the Fourth Crusade," in *Commercial Exchange across the Mediterranean: Byzantium, the Crusader Levant, Egypt and Italy*, ed. Jacoby (Aldershot, 2005), 25–77, at 58; and Jacoby, "Byzantine Crete in the Navigation and Trade Networks of Venice and Genoa," in *Byzantium, Latin Romania and the Mediterranean*, ed. Jacoby (Aldershot, 2001), 517–40, at 533–36.

name or a title and who appear in various Genoese archives of the period, there is only one person who carries the name "Wilielmus" alone. This figure, in a document of the cartulary of the church of Santa Maria delle Vigne in Genoa dated 9 September 1170, is recorded as a young man, not yet aged twenty-five, who sold Otto, provost of the church, nine feet of land.[32]

William/Guglielmo was a common name in contemporary Italian merchant city-states, and of the numerous men named William, many were merchants, diplomats, or both. This fact can be gleaned by compiling a simple list of Genoese Guglielmi in the *Annals* of Genoa. Indeed, the dozens of Guglielmi who appear in Caffaro's *Annals* of Genoa between 1099 and 1163, in extracts from these *Annals* made after Caffaro's time, from the *Short History of the Kingdom of Jerusalem*, and from a wide stock of documents that cover the history of the city in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, all bear a family name. Some are referred to by their role as consuls of the city of Genoa, others as scribes or notaries, and yet others as ambassadors.[33] Guglielmi and other members of the famous Embriaci family who became lords of Gibelet and who traded with Egypt are recorded from the mid-twelfth century onward; some of them were mentioned by the Jewish traveler Benjamin of Tudela.[34] Genoese state, diplomatic, notarial, and cartulary documentation of the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries register precise names and surnames, among which I have found only one person who is referred to as "Wilielmus" alone.[35] Correspondence between Pisan envoys and al-ʿĀdil during the 1170s refers to specific persons.[36] Guglielmo Cassinense's contract with Saladin, signed in 1192, marked the resumption of Genoese-Ayyūbid commercial activity. Around 1200, a certain Zorio de Castello, a member of one of the Genoese

[32] Airaldi, *Le carte di Santa Maria delle Vigne*, 30–31, no. 28 (Genoa, 9 September 1170): "Et ego Wilielmus iuro ad sacra Dei Evangelia hanc vendicionem omni tempore firmam et incorruptam habere, et cum habuero etatem annorum xxv et a te vel tuo misso mihi requisitum fuerit, faciam inde talem cartam qualem tuus iudex mihi laudaverit" (I, William, swear that I hold this sale firm and unviolated by God's Holy Gospels, and when I come of the age of twenty-five years and I am asked either by you or your representative [to do so], I will after that time make a document of such a sort as your judge recommends to me).

[33] *Caffaro, Genoa and the Twelfth-Century Crusades*, trans. Martin Hall and Jonathan Phillips (Farnham, UK, 2013), 1–48; 248–49. In 1191, a certain Guglielmo Zerbino "was sent on behalf of the commune of Genoa as ambassador, with Oberto di Negro, to the king of Morocco, Elmiremumulinum, with whom they entered into an agreement," 150. Only two Guglielmi are recorded in W. Heyd, *Histoire du commerce du Levant au Moyen Âge*, 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1885–86), 1:282: "Guglielmo de Négrepont," in 1209; and a Venetian, "Guglielmo de Larsa," in the early thirteenth century. See Gabriella Airaldi and Alex Mallett, "Caffaro of Genoa," in Thomas and Mallett, *Christian-Muslim Relations*, vol. 3, *1050–1200* (Leiden, 2011), 635–42.

[34] Charles du Fresne Du Cange, *Les familles d'Outremer*, ed. Emmanuel-Guillaume Rey (Paris, 1869), 316–28; see also Gabriella Airaldi, *Blu come il mare: Guglielmo e la saga degli embriaci* (Genoa, 2006), 164–69; Heyd, *Histoire du commerce*, 390–91.

[35] Airaldi, *Le carte di Santa Maria delle Vigne*, 30–31; Sandra Origone, "Genova, Costantinopoli e il regno di Gerusalemme (prima metà sec. XIII)," in *I comuni italiani nel regno crociato di Gerusalemme*, ed. Gabriella Airaldi and Benjamin Z. Kedar (Genoa, 1986), 283–316. On the specificity with which Genoese ship owners who traveled to the East, all with surnames, were recorded, see Eliyahu Ashtor, "Il volume del commercio levantino di Genova nel secondo Trecento," in *East-West Trade in the Medieval Mediterranean*, ed. Benjamin Z. Kedar (London, 1986), 391–432.

[36] Heyd, *Histoire du commerce*, 397–98.

families involved in trade with Egypt, signed a contract concerning a *funduq* in Alexandria, and two consuls mentioned by their names visited the city in 1204.[37] Some early thirteenth-century notary acts found in the Archivio di Stato in Genoa, in which valuable information regarding private transactions of Genoese merchants was recorded, precisely list the "Williams" (Wilielmi) along with their surnames either as notaries or as witnesses to the shipping contracts.[38] Only two years prior to our William's appearance in Ibn Naẓīf and in al-Maqrīzī's texts in 1210, an influential Genoese politician by the name of Guglielmo Guercio arrived in 1208 in an embassy to Sultan al-ʿĀdil. He sought to enter into trade agreements that would safeguard the interests of the Genoese merchants in areas that were of increasing strategic importance to the Genoese trade following the imposition of the Venetian monopoly in the former Byzantine Empire after the Fourth Crusade.[39] Notations of private names and surnames are found also for later Genoese Guglielmi of the late thirteenth until the fifteenth century in Genoese and Muslim archival documentation. None of them stands alone as "Guglielmo the merchant" or "Guglielmo the Genoese."[40]

Of course, it might be argued that while Genoese sources always make reference to Guglielmo with a surname, for the Muslims it sufficed to call him *Kulyām*, "the Genoese merchant," or alternatively, "the Frank." However, we have some indication from Arabic legal and administrative sources that Muslim writers, like their Western European counterparts, were quite precise with regard not only to the names of Frankish kings, generals, diplomats, and pirates, but also to the names of individual merchants.[41] In an official report to the chancery of the caliph al-Āmir in the early twelfth century, the Christian merchants who arrive with a cargo of timber are named: "They are Sergius the son of Constantine . . . Grasso the son of Leo the Amalfitan . . . and Bon Senyon the Genoese, and their companions who are with them."[42] Muslim literary sources too were exacting with regard to names. When a formal Genoese envoy, Rosso della Volta, concluded a peace agreement

[37] Jacoby, "Les italiens en Égypte," 80–81, 86.

[38] Eugene H. Byrne, *Genoese Shipping in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries* (Cambridge, MA, 1930), 68–77, on documents from 1200 to 1236.

[39] Enrico Basso, "Guglielmo Guercio," in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* 60 (2003), http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/guglielmo-guercio_res-5f324b90-87ee-11dc-8e9d-0016357eee51_(Dizionario-Biografico)/ (accessed 31 March 2018). In 1208, the Venetians established another *funduq* in Alexandria. See Jacoby, "Les italiens en Égypte," at 82–83.

[40] Eliyahu Ashtor, *Levant Trade in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1983), 581; Benjamin Z. Kedar, *Merchants in Crisis: Genoese and Venetian Men of Affairs and the Fourteenth-Century Depression* (New Haven, 1976); David Abulafia, *The Two Italies: Economic Relations between the Norman Kingdom of Sicily and the Northern Communes* (Cambridge, UK, 1977), 300–301.

[41] Ashtor, *Levant Trade*, 11. In 1275, for instance, when a Genoese embassy went to Cairo to strengthen the republic's position in trade by a new treaty, al-Maqrīzī specified the names of the envoys. On William Jibā the pirate, see *Arab Historians of the Crusades*, trans. Francesco Gabrieli and E. J. Costello (London, 1969), 81. The Arabic text of a treaty made in 1188 between Genoa and the Muslim ruler of the Balearic Islands preserved the name of Rodano de Mauro, the ambassador. See Michele Amari, *Nuovi ricordi arabici su la storia di Genova* (Genoa, 1873), 593–600.

[42] Khan, *Arabic Legal and Administrative Documents*, 424–25, no. 109: "bin qusṭanṭīn wa-sar [. . .] niqūla bin haḥlam wa-ghras bin līn l-malfiṭānī." See also Rabie, *The Financial System of Egypt*, 92; Amari, *I diplomi arabi*, 153 (serie prima, no. 36), 67 (serie seconda, no. 21) for specific Italian names written in Arabic documents, including Guglielmo. I suggested earlier that al-Makhzūmī's reference to

with Saladin in 1177, Abu Shāma recorded him by name.[43] Thus the designation of a Genoese merchant simply by the name "William the Genoese," when there were so many men named William in Genoa, may point to a very singular situation, namely that so few Genoese merchants traveled in Ayyūbid Egypt that this person was conspicuous.[44]

A Genizah *Document*

Another reference in the early 1170s to a person active in Egypt described peculiarly as the "Genoese" and additionally as "the Frank" (*al-Janawī al-Faranjī*)—a sobriquet that closely corresponds with al-Maqrīzī's addition to al-Ḥamawī—appears in an unedited and unpublished *Genizah* document. A single leaf of torn and stained paper, written in Hebrew and Judaeo-Arabic, was cited by Shlomo D. Goitein in his monumental *A Mediterranean Society*. In the first volume of this work, Goitein alluded to the expression *al-Ifranjī al-Janawī* (the Frank, the Genoese), with regard to an ambassador engaged in international contacts found in that document.[45] In the fourth volume, dedicated to daily life, Goitein referred to this same document, which he placed in the twelfth century, as providing an example of the meaning of "citadel" as a general administration building.[46] In light of my inspection of the document, I would suggest the possibility of a precise date, given in the form of *gematria* (numerical value) by the writer of the document, that is, the year 1173.[47] Reference to certain persons whose identity may be corrobo-

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"Guglielmo the Genoese" was intended as a quite specific designation for a historical person. See Cahen, *Douanes et commerce*, 224, 305.

[43] Hall and Phillips, *Caffaro, Genoa and the Twelfth Century Crusades*, 18.

[44] Eliyahu Ashtor, "Il regno dei crociati e il commercio di levante," in Airaldi and Kedar, *I comuni italiani nel regno crociato di Gerusalemme*, 17–56, at 37–38; Michael Ballard, "The Genoese in the Aegean (1204–1566)," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 4/1 (1989): 158–74, at 158–60; Geo Pistarino, "Genova e il vicino oriente nell'epoca del Regno Latino di Gerusalemme," in Airaldi and Kedar, *I comuni italiani nel regno crociato di Gerusalemme*, 90; Dahlmanns, *Al-Malik al-ʿĀdil*, 182. Trade however continued in this period as well: see Hall and Phillips, *Caffaro, Genoa and the Twelfth-Century Crusades*, 29. In 1215 there were, according to al-Maqrīzī, no fewer than three thousand Frankish merchants in Alexandria. See Heyd, *Histoire du commerce*, 404. Sometime between 1192 and 1200 the Genoese merchants probably had gained a *funduq* in Alexandria as well as liberty of movement in the interior of the country. See Jacoby, "Les italiens en Égypte," 81; Byrne, *Genoese Shipping*, 49–50; Abulafia, *The Two Italies*, 75.

[45] Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, 1:43. Goitein's reference to the document at 401 n. 14 contains an error. The correct shelf mark is T-S Misc. 20.153. Also, the text has "al-Faranjī," not "al-Ifranjī."

[46] Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, 4:76, 356 n. 162: "A Genoese Frank emissary entering the Citadel." I thank Dr. Melonie Schmierer-Lee of the Genizah Research Unit, Cambridge University Library, for a photocopy of the document as well as for the current catalogue information.

[47] On the right side of the document the following script appears (see cover of issue): כתב אל נהאר אלרביע, שבת, [לסדר=לפרשת השבוע] "את מספר ימיך אמלא" [שמות כג, כו. פרשת "ואלה המשפטים"]. (On Wednesday of the weekly [Bible] chapter of Exodus 23). I suggest that the writer used the *gematria* for the precise date, in which case the total number of words is 933. The Hebrew year 4933 (תתקל"ג) corresponds to the Christian year 1173. Although the citation might be interpreted as a mere literary ornament, I find it puzzling that the writer would specifically indicate the day on which he wrote the document without referring to the year. Perhaps he wished to write the Hebrew month of *Shvat* (שבט) and mistakenly wrote *Shabat* (שבת). *Gematria* was used by European Jews on gravestone inscriptions. I am not aware of other twelfth-century Genizah documents of this early period that use this method for dating the year.

rated further supports Goitein's dating of the document to the twelfth century. Additionally, the peculiar sobriquet "the Genoese" may bolster the idea that the document refers to the very person who appears on al-Makhzūmī's lists. This short but extremely interesting *Genizah* document deserves a thorough investigation of its own. In the context of our inquiry, however, a general description of its content and a suggestion for the context of the Genoese's appearance in it must suffice. The document appears to be a letter addressed by a Jew of Alexandria to a coreligionist, one Rabbi Isḥaq, who, I suggest, might be identified as Isaac b. Sāsōn, son of Sāsōn b. Meshullām. Isaac b. Sāsōn, known as "chief of the judges" (*Rōsh ha-Dayyānīm*), served from 1167 to 1198 as judge in New Cairo.[48] The writer informs Rabbi Isaac of the arrival of his letter. He tells the rabbi of his meeting with one Ḥajj Ḥasan al-Bābā[49] in the presence of the acting prince (*amīr*), the commander of the citadel to whom "the Genoese, the Frank," has submitted his credentials.[50] The letter, whose author was intensively preoccupied with rates, currency values, prices, and payments to be collected strictly in accordance with Islamic law, leaves the impression that the Alexandrian Jew was somehow involved in the trade terms of the Genoese's admission in the citadel and his contacts with the bureaucracy therein. He deemed it necessary—perhaps he was even asked to do so in the letter he received from Cairo—to keep the Jewish judge abreast of the detailed connections with the bureaucracy of the citadel following the sultan's "noble decrees" (*al-marāsim al-sharīfa*, as the document reads) addressed to the Genoese.[51]

[48] Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, 2:514 (appendix D: Judges). In the document he is addressed as "the minister, man of wisdom."

[49] The title "al-Bābā" refers to the Coptic patriarchs of Alexandria. See Georg Graf, *Verzeichnis arabischer kirklicher Termini* (Leuven, 1954), 239. It also meant "the father," that is, head of a monastery. See al-Maqrīzī, *A History of the Ayyubid Sultans of Egypt*, trans. Broadhurst, 265. The Coptic title, however, begins surprisingly with both the Muslim title "Ḥajj" and the name Ḥasan. A possible explanation might be that this clerk was a Coptic monk who converted to Islam. See Sivan, "Notes sur la situation des chrétiens à l'époque ayyubide," 120–22. See also the reference in a Christian source to mass conversion of Christians at that time, *Anonymi auctoris chronicon ad A.C. 1234 pertinens*, trans. Albert Abouna, Corpus Scriptorium Christianorum Orientalium 354, Scriptores Syri 154 (Leuven, 1974), 125–26; Terry G. Wilfong, "The Non-Muslim Communities: Christian Communities," in Petry, *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, 182–84, 264. Copts, or Copt converts to Islam, who served in the Egyptian Mamlūk administration in later periods, were often marked by their office, such as *nāẓir al-khāṣṣ* (overseer of crown property) or *nāẓir al-jaysh* (financial supervisor of the army), information that is not recorded in the Genizah document. See Robert Irwin, *The Middle East in the Middle Ages: The Early Mamlūk Sultanate, 1250–1382* (London, 1986), 110, 112–13. The most complete available list of Coptic or Copt-convert officials in the late medieval Egyptian administration is presented by Carl F. Petry, "Copts in Late Medieval Egypt," in *The Coptic Encyclopedia*, ed. Aziz S. Atiya, 8 vols. (New York, 1991), 2:618–35. Ḥajj Ḥasan al-Bābā does not appear among them.

[50] The text runs as follows: "tamma al-Janawī wa-aḍhara masṭūra kuddām nā'ib al-kala'a." Goitein, probably as a result of translating *masṭūra* as "credentials," suggested that the Janawī held some kind of diplomatic post; Joshua Blau, *A Dictionary of Medieval Judaeo-Arabic Texts*, ed. Yechiel Kara (Jerusalem, 2006), 296, translated the word as "writ," "note of indebtedness." In any case, the Genoese did not necessarily hold an official diplomatic post either on behalf of the Genoese government or of the Ayyūbids. I thank Dr. Uri Melammed of the Academy of the Hebrew Language for his valuable assistance in translating and deciphering the text. I must also note that I consulted Genizah expert Dr. Amir Ashur, who argues that this document is from a later period.

[51] The Genoese's petition, as described by the Alexandrite Jew, referred for instance to payment of one hundred Ashrafī gold coins, at a fixed rate of exchange rather than at market rate, equivalent to *al-*

The quality of Jewish life under Ayyūbid rule remains a somewhat open question. Goitein has written, "At no time do we find such close and constructive relations between an Islamic government and its Jewish subjects as during the first half of Ayyūbid rule."[52] At the same time, Jewish and Christian economic activity in the region was notably strained at the beginning of that period. Saladin attempted to reenact discriminatory practices against non-Muslims and to oblige them to pay a double rate of customs duties, but soon he was forced to abandon the idea.[53] This may stand as further support for the contention that the document in question deals with events of the 1170s. It presents, on the one hand, the deep involvement of Jews and Christians, Copts and Latins alike in political and economic activity. On the other hand, our document appears to reflect how Christians and Jews, as *dhimmī*, came under strict Islamic legal regulations and discriminatory rate values in their economic activities. Saladin's description, in a letter to the caliph of Baghdad in 1175 complaining that Genoese traveler-merchants "imposed their law on Islam with their imported goods and escaped strict regulation," reflects the delicate situation at the time the Genoese merchant presumably reached Alexandria.[54] The *Genizah* document into which the Genoese merchant ambassador's name was entered constitutes a window into these turbulent years of interregnum between the death of the Fātimid caliph al-ʿĀḍid in 1171 and that of Nūr al-Dīn in May 1174. During this period, Saladin faced mutiny and even assassination attempts, in which Copts, Jews, Franks, and Muslim supporters of the Fātimids took part.[55]

At this point, and with reservations, I pose the possibility of identifying the Williams of al-Makhzūmī, the Genoese archive, and the *Genizah* document with the William we find situated in the sultan's court some thirty years later.

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shawānī (the high rate demanded by pirates), and the sale at the lowest rate, all in accordance with Sharīʿa law. The formula *al-marāsim al-sharīfa* ("the noble decrees") had already been used in Ayyūbid chancery documents. See S. M. Stern, "Two Ayyūbid Decrees from Sinai," in *Documents from Islamic Chanceries*, ed. Stern (Oxford, 1965), 9–38, at 33. On the Genizah as a valuable source for Genoese commercial activity, see Gabriella Airaldi, *Guerrieri e mercanti: Storie del medioevo genovese* (Turin, 2004), 224.

[52] Shlomo D. Goitein, "Genizah Sources for the Crusader Period: A Survey," in *Outremer: Studies in the History of the Crusading Kingdom of Jerusalem Presented to Joshua Prawer*, ed. Benjamin Z. Kedar, H. E. Mayer, and R. C. Smail (Jerusalem, 1982), 306–22, at 318–19; on al-Malik al-ʿĀdil and his servant the Nagid Abraham Maimonides, see Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, 3:347, 406–7.

[53] Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, 1:344. Jews and Christians living in Muslim countries had to pay a poll tax when traveling from one country to another and were obliged to produce a certificate showing that they had fulfilled that obligation. Foreigners from non-Muslim countries had to pay a toll when crossing the frontier. However, Saladin actually abolished dues and taxes levied by the Fātimids: Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, 1:61, 270. See also Shlomo D. Goitein, "From the Mediterranean to India: Documents on the Trade to India, South Arabia and East Africa from the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries," *Speculum* 29/2 (1954): 181–97, at 196; and Ashtor-Strauss, "Saladin and the Jews," 313.

[54] Saladin's letter was preserved by Abū Shāma, see *Kitāb al-Rawḍatayn*, in *Recueil des historiens des croisades: Historiens orientaux*, 5 vols. (Paris, 1872–1906), 4:170–17; English translation by Todd in Eddé, *Saladin*, 449.

[55] *Recueil des historiens des croisades*, 1:599–600; English translation in *The Chronicle of Ibn al-Athīr for the Crusading Period from "al-Kāmil fī l-Taʾrikh"*, part 2, *The Age of Nūr al-Din and Saladin*, trans. D. S. Richards (Aldershot, 2007), 218–20. See also al-Maqrīzī, *Al-sulūk*, 162; Metcalfe, *The Muslims of Medieval Italy*, 219.

William, Envoy of the Sultan of Egypt: An English Source

We will now pursue the second exploratory query, regarding the date and objectives of the Egyptian sultan's mission, through a certain William, to the English king. At the core of this inquiry stands a geopolitical argument that the political and military circumstances around 1207 might have channeled the joint interests of the Ayyūbid Sultan al-ʿĀdil and Angevin King John into an Egyptian-initiated diplomatic mission.

In the records of the audits performed by the Exchequer of the accounts and payments presented to the Treasury by the sheriff of Kent in the ninth year of the reign of King John (27 May 1207 to 27 May 1208) we find a payment of 66 solidi made to a person by the name of William, envoy of the sultan of Egypt (*Willelmo nuntio Soldani Babelonie*).[56] Importantly, the amount recorded in the Exchequer receipt was said to be equivalent to the value of one fine scarlet cloak, by order of the king.[57] English-manufactured scarlet had acquired a reputation in contemporary Islamic elite circles.

Ibn Saʿīd al-Maghribī (1213–86), a Western Muslim historian and geographer who lived and wrote in late Ayyūbid and early Mamlūk Egypt, left in his "Book of Geography" (*Kitāb al-jughrāfīya*) information of particular relevance to our inquiry. In his description of the British Isles, Ibn Saʿīd listed its main cities by name; he referred to its ruler's relations with Saladin and indicated the trade lines that connected England, Ireland, and even the extremely cold northern regions, via Narbonne, with Alexandria. He referred specifically to the fact that the English manufactured "precious scarlet" (*wa-ʿindahum yuṣna ʿal-iskarlāṭ al-ʿālī*) [وعندهم يصنع ألاسكرلاط آلعالي].[58] Considered in the context of our inquiry, it seems not accidental that King John ordered a scarlet cloak to be given to William, knowing just how it would be appreciated in Egypt. This is a vital piece of information, crucial to our understanding of the interactions between Ayyūbid Egypt and Angevin En-

[56] "Sultan of Babylon" was the epithet in medieval Christian sources for the Muslim sultans of Egypt. A comprehensive explanation for this identification is found in *The Voyages and Travels* by John Mandeville (1332–72), in *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques, and Discoveries of the English Nation*, ed. Richard Hakluyt, vol. 8, *Asia: Part 2*, 17 vols. (1598; repr., Glasgow, 1885–90), 8:83, chap. 6: "Dicitur autem haec Babylonia minor ad differentiam magnae Babyloniae, siue Babel, . . . Haec autem Babylonia Aegypti est Ciuitas grandis et fortis, tamen valde prope eam est alia maior dicta Cayr, in qua vt saepius residet Soldanus, quanquam Babylonia nomen per seculum diffusius est cognitum."

[57] *The Great Roll of the Pipe for the Ninth Year of the Reign of King John, Michaelmas 1207*, ed. Mary A. Kirkus (London, 1946), 30–31, no. 53: "Et Willelmo nuntio Soldani Babelonie lxvj s. ad unam bonam robam de scarletto. Per breve eiusdem." (And to William, envoy of the Babylonian sultan, sixty-six solidi for one good scarlet robe, by the king's writ). For the repeated formula "per breve eiusdem" see R. E. Latham and D. R. Howlett, *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources*, 16 vols. (Oxford, 1975–2012), 1:216, no. 10.

[58] Ibn Saʿīd al-Maghribī, *Kitāb al-jughrāfīya*, 181, 200; see König, *Arabic-Islamic Views of the Latin West*, 62–64, 278–79. Interestingly, al-Maqrīzī refers to a scarlet cloak in the context of al-Malik al-Muʿaṭṭam Tūrānshāh's victory over Louis IX in the year 648 (1250–51): see al-Maqrīzī, *A History of the Ayyubid Sultans of Egypt*, trans. Broadhurst, 310: "With the letter al-Muʿaṭṭam sent the cloak of the King of the French, and the Emir Jamāl-al-Dīn ibn-Yaghmūr donned it. It was scarlet and lined with miniver. The Shaykh Najm-al-Dīn-Isrā ʾīl said of it: 'The cloak of the Frenchman came as a gift to the lord of princes. It was white as a paper, but our swords dyed it with blood.'"

gland. Scholars, diplomats, and merchants had functioned from ancient times as the conduit for long-distance information transfer. William's diplomatic mission might now be embedded in a broader background of diverse interactions between Egypt and England.

The English Crown generated detailed documentation, and its judicial and financial records constitute an unparalleled source for the study of medieval society and governance.[59] The procedure of recording payments in one register of the Exchequer archive, which sometimes included gifts endowed to individuals by the Crown, began in the first half of the twelfth century. Recently, Sara Lipton has called attention to the representation of others in the institutional culture and scribal practice of thirteenth-century Exchequer receipt rolls. Reading the reference to the Egyptian sultan's envoy in this context might expand our understanding of how he and the king who welcomed him so generously were conceived by the English bureaucratic staff.[60]

By the time of King John, the Pipe Rolls were growing unwieldy, as fines and fees were being recorded apace. It was becoming harder and harder to access information in the rolls. By 1206, a system was settled on whereby the details of the receipts were recorded in a set of receipt rolls and only aggregates were entered in the Pipe Rolls.[61] Rolls were dated according to the fiscal rather than calendrical year, beginning on Michaelmas (29 September). The period between 27 May and 29 September 1207 would have overlapped with the fiscal year 1206–7 and the ninth regnal year. But the precise date of the diplomat's visit to England is difficult to establish. The payment may have been made at an earlier date, since the time span the Pipe Roll covered may have run from Easter of one year or even earlier to the summer of the next.[62]

Moving from temporal to geographical contextualization, we recall that the order of payment for the purchase of the scarlet cloak appeared in the records of Kent. The meeting between the king and the Egyptian envoy, if it in fact took place, may have been held in that county, with the presiding sheriff keeping the account. Tracking John's itinerary, we see that the king indeed visited the county in early January 1207. He arrived at Bexley on Monday 1 January, stayed in Canterbury on Tuesday and Thursday, 2 and 4 January, and reached Rochester on Friday, 5 January.[63] The king did not return to Kent in that fiscal year, that is, before 29 September. Nonetheless, the meeting may have taken place elsewhere, with the king choosing to have the sheriff of Kent make the payment. What we

[59] Nicholas Vincent, "Why 1199? Bureaucracy and Enrolment under John and His Contemporaries," in *English Government in the Thirteenth Century*, ed. Adrian Jobson (Woodbridge, UK, 2004), 17–48.

[60] Sara Lipton, "Isaac and Antichrist in the Archives," *Past and Present* 232 (2016): 3–44, at 6, 24, 30. A symmetry might be drawn between Islamic bureaucrats' criticism of the rulers, as manifested in al-Nabūlusī and in al-Maqrīzī's writings, and the criticism of bureaucrats on Angevin rulers, as presented by Lipton.

[61] S. B. Chrimes, *An Introduction to the Administrative History of Medieval England*, Studies in Medieval History 7 (Oxford, 1959), 72–74.

[62] Nick Barratt, "The Revenue of King John," *English Historical Review* 111/443 (1996): 835–55, at 836–37, on the accuracy of information concerning any given financial year.

[63] See J. J. Crump's website, The Itinerary of King John & the *Rotuli Litterarum Patentium*, http://neolography.com/timelines/JohnItinerary.html (accessed 31 March 2018).

know about this sheriff seems to support the latter view. Reginald of Cornhill (c. 1140–1209/10) was born to a family whose members had served in the Angevin administration since the days of Henry II. In 1192 he succeeded his brother, Ralph, as sheriff of Kent, a position Reginald held until his death. This figure was prominent "as purchaser of goods—luxury items rather than basic commodities—for the king's household."[64] Perhaps it was his expertise in acquiring fine goods that inclined the king to have him see to the endowment of William, the Egyptian sultan's envoy.

The nature of the document at hand is itself pertinent to our investigation. Despite the aforementioned lack of corroborative evidence in any other English source, the archival—as against literary—character of the text might weigh in favor of its historical neutrality. That is, unlike literary sources such as chronicles and annals, in which writers wrote deliberately on behalf of or against the king, chancery records are more likely to preserve the "facts" of a matter, especially, as in this case, where a receipt is concerned.[65] Receipts were collected throughout the fiscal year, with no regard to the chronology of occurrence. Hence, a reference to the arrival of another diplomat on behalf of the king of León, for instance, or to a certain Knights Templar endowment—events whose exact dates may be ascertained—add nothing to the dating of William's visit. With the help of circumstantial evidence, though, I will suggest below a relatively short time span for that visit, that is, in the spring and summer months of 1207.

Taking into proper account the covert nature of diplomatic business, we will continue now to probe the purpose of the mission undertaken by William on behalf of the sultan. Toward this end, I wish to suggest a possible geopolitical context in which to embed our current information. This context may help us make better sense of William the envoy's activities in general and specifically of the mission he carried in 1207 on behalf of Sultan al-ʿĀdil to King John.

The Historical Geopolitical Context: The Crusades, al-Malik al-ʿĀdil, and Contemporary Angevin Rulers

The military confrontations of the Third and Fourth Crusades were, as is well known, at the background of the Ayyūbids' relations with Western Europeans. With regard to the Third Crusade, the personal relations between the English King Richard I and Saladin and his brother al-ʿĀdil assumed particular importance. As is becoming evident, our snapshot of William and his mission on behalf of the sultan to England in 1207 leads us to consider complex aspects of these relations. A more fully realized assessment of Ayyūbid foreign policy considered in a

[64] Paul D. A. Harvey, "Reginald of Cornhill," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004), https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/59536 (accessed 31 March 2018); W. R. Powell, *English Administrative Families in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries with Special Reference to the Cornhill Family* (Oxford, 1952); and Stephen D. Church, *The Household Knights of King John* (Cambridge, UK, 1999), 44, 55.

[65] With regard to King John's historiography in particular, see Warren C. Hollister, "King John and the Historians," *Journal of British Studies* 1/1 (1961): 1–19; Marc Morris, *King John: Treachery, Tyranny and the Road to Magna Carta* (London, 2015), 167–70; Stephen D. Church, *King John: England, Magna Carta and the Making of a Tyrant* (London, 2015), xix–xxxi.

wider, Eurasian context comes to the fore and involves both al-ʿĀdil's presumed personal relationship with the Angevins and his anxiety concerning a possible European invasion of Egypt.[66]

Already in the 1190s, some fifteen years before succeeding to the throne, Saladin's brother and close adviser, al-Malik al-ʿĀdil, held a special position as contact man with the crusaders. Perhaps most important, al-ʿĀdil was on friendly terms with Richard I "Lionheart," king of England and John's brother. After Philip Augustus left Acre on 31 July 1191, Richard initiated negotiations in an attempt to reach an agreement with Saladin in regard to the recently lost Kingdom of Jerusalem. Sending envoy after envoy to Saladin's camp, the English king hoped to conclude the crusade either by military combat or truce. Notably, in the wake of the siege of Acre, Richard discussed the possibility of an attack on Egypt with the Genoese consul Morino di Piazzalonga, whose support he obtained in 1192.[67] A great many words have been written about the negotiations held between Richard and Saladin via al-ʿĀdil.[68] Particular attention has been awarded to the technical aspects of the treaties and of the legal institutions that made agreement possible from the Muslim legal and institutional point of view.[69]

Political calculation was unquestionably the main force behind Richard and the Ayyūbids' cultivation of mutual contacts. A point made by Malcolm C. Lyons and D. E. P. Jackson in their study of Saladin deserves our attention. They note that "Richard throughout his stay on the Coast was conspicuous for the contacts that he made with individual Muslims."[70] The Muslim sources, for their part, indicate

[66] On earlier attempts to invade Egypt, see Yaacov Lev, "The Fātimid Caliphate (358–567/969–1171) and the Ayyūbids in Egypt (567–648/1171–1250), in *The New Cambridge History of Islam*, vol. 2, *The Western Islamic World: Eleventh to Eighteenth Centuries*, ed. Maribel Fierro (Cambridge, UK, 2010), 217–22.

[67] Heyd, *Histoire du commerce*, 400.

[68] The sources and the secondary literature on the subject are vast. See Bahā al-Dīn b. Shaddād, *al-Nawādīr al-Sulṭānīya wa-l- Maḥāsin al-Yūsufīya*, ed. Carlo de Landberg, 2 vols. (Leiden, 1888), 1:397–98, English translation in *The Rare and Excellent History of Saladin* (*al-Nawādīr al-Sulṭānīya wa-l- Maḥāsin al-Yūsufīya*), trans. D. S. Richards (Aldershot, 2001), 185. Arabic text published by Carlo de Landberg, (Leiden, 1888), vol. i, 397–8 and *The Chronicle of Ibn al-Athīr for the Crusading Period from al-Kāmil fī-l-taʾrikh (The Complete History)*, part 3, *The Years 589–629/1193–1231: The Ayyūbids after Saladin and the Mongol Menace*, trans. D. S. Richards (Aldershot, 2008), 196–97. See also ʿImād al-Dīn al-Kātib al-Isfahāni (1125–1201), *Conquête de la Syrie et de la Palestine par Saladin (al-Fatḥ al-qussī fī l-fatḥ al-qudsī / The Conquest of Jerusalem)*, trans. Henri Massé (Paris, 1972), 353–54; Henri Massé, Henri, "ʿImād al-Dīn," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition.*, *2nd ed.*, ed. Bearman et al., http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_3546; Hans E. Mayer, "The Latin East, 1098–1205," in *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, 4/2, *c. 1024–c. 1198*, eds. David Luscombe and Jonathan Riley-Smith (Cambridge, UK, 2004), 657–74; Stephen Humphreys, "Zengids, Ayyūbids and Seljuqs," in *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, ed. Luscombe and Riley-Smith, 4/2: 742–46; Gillingham, *Richard I*, 19–22; Eddé, *Saladin*, 263–64, esp. n. 84, with regard to the Christian sources.

[69] Köhler, *Alliances and Treaties*, 26–72, 263–64; Konrad Hirschler, "Ibn Wāṣil: An Ayyūbid Perspective on Frankish Lordships and Crusades," in Mallett, *Medieval Muslim Historians*, 136–60, at 142–43; and Rabie, *The Financial System of Egypt*, 26–72.

[70] Malcolm C. Lyons and D. E. P. Jackson, *Saladin: The Politics of Holy War* (Cambridge, UK, 1982), 351–52.

that in the context of these associations, Richard opened himself up to cultural aspects of his foe's world. Richard and al-ʿĀdil established what appears to have been an extraordinary personal relationship. Doubtless, shared dining, musical interludes, and exchanges of gifts and ideas, as well as a shared culture of chivalry, would have built up a mutual sense of familiarity and confidence.[71] Muslim writers referring to interactions between the two leaders make mention of "friendship" and "sincerity of feelings."[72] These relations, echoed in English sources as well, are not to be slighted,[73] despite the hostile Muslim-Christian relationships attested perhaps more prevalently in chronicles, poetry, polemical literature, and other literary sources.[74]

The personal relations between the English king and the Ayyūbid sultan's brother and eventual heir, already familiar to scholars, may have had significant repercussions. The diplomatic mission initiated by al-ʿĀdil, considered in light of the suggested background, allows for the speculative possibility that the intimacy that developed between al-ʿĀdil and Richard lasted well after Richard left the East and that the relationship between the Ayyūbids and England may have continued into John's reign.

After a long period of hostility between the brothers, John spent the years 1194–99 serving his brother on the field of battle and in the council chamber, "quietly building up credit with the men who mattered at court."[75] After Richard died, John inherited the loyalty of most members of the lay and ecclesiastical administration. These connections extended beyond the administration and included many persons known to Richard in other capacities. It may be surmised, then, that Richard's brother benefited from Richard's good personal relations with the Ayyūbid sultan. al-ʿĀdil, on his part, also may have remembered his English friend. The case of William the envoy leads us to speculate that through his connections with the Angevins al-ʿĀdil was able to keep abreast of internal affairs in Western Europe. When

[71] Bahā al-Dīn, Abū `l-Maḥāsin Yūsuf b. Rāfiʿ b. Tamīm, and Ibn al-Athīr report in detail, respectively, of Richard taking pleasure in dishes provided by al-ʿĀdil and the king asking al-ʿĀdil to arrange for him to hear some Arabic singing. See Gillingham, *Richard I*, 21 n. 26, 23 n. 40. On Ibn al-Athīr, ʿIzz al-Dīn Abū-l-Ḥasan ʿAlī (1160–1233), see F. Rosenthal, "Ibn al-Athīr," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. Bearman et al., http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_3094. Interpreters were pivotal players in these interactions: see Eddé, *Saladin*, 274 nn. 12, 15; Bahā al-Dīn b. Shaddād, *The Rare and Excellent History of Saladin*, trans. Richards, 173. On Saladin in the medieval European imagination, see John V. Tolan, *Sons of Ishmael: Muslims through European Eyes in the Middle Ages* (Tallahassee, 2008), 79–100.

[72] Gillingham, *Richard I*, 23; Imād al-Dīn al-Iṣfahānī, *Conquête de la Syrie*, trans. Massé, 310, 378; and Hadia Dajani-Shakeel, "A Reassessment of Some Medieval and Modern Perceptions of the Counter-Crusade," in *The Jihād and Its Times*, ed. Ronald A. Messier (Ann Arbor, 2011), 66–67.

[73] *The Annals of Roger de Hoveden Comprising the History of England*, ed. Henry T. Riley, 2 vols. (London, 1853), 1:215.

[74] Carole Hillenbrand, *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives* (Edinburgh, 1999), 271–97; Malcolm C. Lyons, "The Land of War: Europe in the Arab Hero Cycles," in *The Crusades from the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim World*, ed. Angeliki E. Laiou (Washington, 2001), 41–46; Niall Christie, "Ibn al-Qalānisī," in Mallett, *Medieval Muslim Historians*, 16–18; and Nizar F. Hermes, *The (European) Other in Medieval Arabic Literature and Culture, Ninth–Twelfth Century AD* (New York, 2012), 154–69.

[75] Lewis W. Warren, *King John* (New Haven, 1997), 46–48; Gillingham, *Richard I*, 347.

the time came for help from this direction, he may have recalled the English rulers' political and diplomatic competence and commitment to realpolitik. In point of fact, Richard and al-ʿĀdil had established what we might term "English-Ayyūbid relations." Understanding this development can help us unpack the sometimes misleading umbrella label of "Christian-Muslim relations" into smaller, more comprehensible units.[76] Moreover, it may shed light on the relationship maintained by al-ʿĀdil and John after Richard's death. Nearly fifteen years later, under quite different geopolitical circumstances, al-ʿĀdil deemed it expedient to engage his friend's brother, the English King John, in a diplomatic mission.

A Continuous Threat to Egypt

The Fourth Crusade must have had a fateful impact on the 1207 Ayyūbid diplomatic mission to England. It began as a major assault on Egypt, and even after the diversion to Constantinople the establishment of the Latin Empire was perceived as a serious menace to the Muslims in the East, as is explicitly expressed in contemporary Muslim chronicles. In 1207, the events of 1204 were still fresh in the minds of the authors of these accounts. In Hamilton Gibb's words, "the only danger to be apprehended (and it remained vividly present to al-ʿĀdil, with his memories of the Third Crusade) was the possibility of fresh crusades from overseas. Like Saladin before him, al-ʿĀdil's chief concern was Egypt (no doubt reinforced by the naval raids on Rosetta in 1204 and Damietta in 1211), and his Egyptian troops were for the most part retained on garrison duty in Egypt."[77] After seven years of internecine rivalry following Saladin's death on 4 March 1193, al-ʿĀdil assumed sovereignty over Egypt and Syria.[78] The date of his ascension, namely 4 August 1200, marked one year since the Christian army had begun to converge, at papal request, to go against Egypt. Al-Malik al-ʿĀdil, therefore, had a nuanced understanding of the geopolitical position of Egypt. Al-Maqrīzī recorded that the Sicilians intended to invade Egypt in 1202 and that al-ʿĀdil "sent a column of his troops to protect Damietta from the Franks."[79] Al-Maqrīzī himself pointed out that in 1218, when a considerable muster of Frankish reinforcements came from Rome resolved to capture Jerusalem, "the people were greatly frightened and called upon God, and the mosques were filled with their clamor."[80] This chronicler recorded, "This year (1218) the Franks unanimously decided to march

[76] English historian Frank Barlow went perhaps too far when he argued that England played a central role in connecting the Mediterranean with northwestern Europe from the second half of the twelfth century onward. See Frank Barlow, *The Feudal Kingdom of England, 1042–1216* (London, 1972), 326.

[77] Hamilton A. R. Gibb, "The Aiyūbids," in *A History of the Crusades*, ed. Kenneth M. Setton, 2nd ed., 6 vols. (Madison, WI, 1969), 2:697.

[78] On al-Malik al-ʿĀdil's rise see Humphreys, *From Saladin to the Mongols*, 87–123; al-Maqrīzī, *A History of the Ayyubid Sultans of Egypt*, trans. Broadhurst, 136. See also Dahlmanns, *Al-Malik al-ʿĀdil*, 16-85.

[79] Al-Maqrīzī, *Al-sulūk*, 283; al-Maqrīzī, *A History of the Ayyubid Sultans of Egypt*, trans. Broadhurst, 143–44.

[80] Al-Maqrīzī, *Al-sulūk*, 306; al-Maqrīzī, *A History of the Ayyubid Sultans of Egypt*, trans. Broadhurst, 164.

from Acre on Egypt in an endeavor to conquer it."[81] Indeed, until he died in August 1218, al-ʿĀdil was preoccupied with the European threat to invade Egypt, and this threat seems to have influenced his entire foreign policy. News of the Christian success in the siege of Damietta reached him shortly before his death. Al-ʿĀdil did not live to witness the last great Ayyūbid victory over the crusaders three years later, in August 1221.

Narrowing our historical-chronological spectrum, we now turn to the significance of the year 1207.

Al-ʿĀdil's and John's Political and Military Circumstances in 1207: al-ʿĀdil

In 1207, the sultanate of al-ʿĀdil was confirmed by the caliph in Baghdad. This move was one of mere formality, as al-ʿĀdil was already the supreme Ayyūbid authority over a politically fragmented, autonomous set of principalities, each answering to its own Ayyūbid ruler. This very same year, in which the sultan sent his envoy to England, was an exceptionally difficult one with regard to relations with the Frankish crusader kingdoms in the East. Consequently, Egypt was rendered yet more vulnerable. This is manifest in the fact that in 1207 al-ʿĀdil strengthened the fortifications of the Cairo citadel by adding three great square towers. The fifteenth-century historiographer Abū-l-Maḥāsin Jamāl al-Dīn Yūsuf b. Taghrībirdī, in his "History of Egypt" (*al-Nujūm al-Zāhira fi Mulūk Miṣr wa-l-Qāhira*), noted the Frankish assault on Ḥimṣ.[82] Al-Makīn Jirjis b. al-ʿAmīd reported in his chronicle "The Blessed Collection" (*al-Majmū ʿal-Mubārak*) that in the year 603 (August 1206–July 1207), al-Malik al-ʿĀdil devastated the Frankish territories in Syria, pillaging them and taking prisoners.[83] Al-Maqrīzī added in his chronicle for that year that "[t]his year the attacks of the Franks upon the land were intensified, and that al-ʿĀdil intensified his efforts in destroying the Frankish castles and fortresses. . . . [T]hence he removed to Ḥimṣ, where soldiers came to him from all sides, tens of thousands joining him."[84] It was thus the largest Ayyūbid army to have been assembled since the death of Saladin, and possibly stands as the largest to be gathered in the sultanate's entire history. By the spring of 1207, the Frankish raids staged from Tripoli seem to have become so destructive that al-ʿĀdil could no longer avoid a major punitive expedition. He was drawn into active intervention in a conflict between the Hospitallers and Bohemond IV of Antioch and Tripoli, capturing al-Qulay ʿiya, besieging Krak des Chevaliers, and advancing up to the walls of Tripoli. Ibn al-Athīr adds that in the same year, al-ʿĀdil made a demonstration of power before Acre, whose ruler he deemed responsible for

[81] Al-Maqrīzī, *Al-sulūk*, 312; Al-Maqrīzī, *A History of the Ayyubid Sultans of Egypt*, trans. Broadhurst, 171; Dahlmanns, *Al-Malik al-ʿĀdil*, 114–16.

[82] Abū al-Maḥāsin Jamāl al-Dīn Yūsuf b. Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm al-Zāhira fi Mulūk Miṣr wa-l-Qāhira*, 16 vols. (Cairo, 1963–70), 6:191–93. On this important historian of al-Malik al-ʿĀdil, see W. Popper, "Abū al-Maḥāsin Jamāl al-Dīn Yūsuf b. Taghrībirdī." *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. Bearman et al., http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_0227.

[83] Al-Makīn Ibn al-ʿAmīd, *Chronique des Ayyoubides*, trans. Eddé and Micheau, 17–18.

[84] Al-Maqrīzī, *Al-sulūk*, 281; al-Maqrīzī, *A History of the Ayyubid Sultans of Egypt*, trans. Broadhurst, 148; Humphreys, *From Saladin to the Mongols*, 135.

the Cypriot assault against Egyptian vessels that broke the truce.[85] Moreover, the disruption of commercial ties with Venice and Pisa in 1207 revealed the interdependence of East-West relations: commercial interests made the Latins dependent on peaceful conditions, a tool often used by the Ayyūbids in exerting anticrusade pressure.[86] Ibn Wāṣil wrote that al-ʿĀdil was planning to declare *jihād* against the unbelievers.[87] Such a plan, as will be shown shortly, did not conflict with the sultan's simultaneous effort to engage England in resistance to a Western European military offensive by crusaders.

In the following year, military successes together with economic pressure seem to have changed all this. By August 1207, peace was made. Hence the year 604, which began on 28 July 1207 and lasted until 15 July 1208, opened in al-Maqrīzī's report with al-Malik al-ʿĀdil returning to Damascus "after peace had been concluded between him and the Frankish king at Tripoli."[88] Correspondingly, this year saw hectic diplomatic activity, in which Venice and Pisa reassumed their trade privileges from al-ʿĀdil in Egypt.[89]

The geopolitical scene shifted incessantly at this time. Between the spring and the early summer months of 1207, then, was the precise moment of time at which al-ʿĀdil would either have thirsted for information on the strategic plans and tactical movements of the Europeans or else endeavored to exclude potential allies from joining a crusade. The unwieldiness of the newly recruited, ten-thousand-man-strong cavalry gathered against the Franks in Syria may have compromised the sultan's ability to protect Egypt. Moreover, the sultan would have been interested in enlisting possible European participants in his venture. Dispatching an envoy to a Western European friend whose current political circumstances positioned him as a sort of ally may have seemed quite judicious. With this objective in mind, Sultan al-ʿĀdil may have thought it eminently reasonable to send his trusted courtier far abroad on a diplomatic mission to the westernmost corner of Latin Europe. As envoy to King John of England, this courtier would have been specially, perhaps secretly, appointed by the sultan. A trade route that apparently had existed between England and Egypt via Narbonne may have served William in his travel.[90] As I will argue later on, this argument would indicate that al-ʿĀdil had at his disposal detailed and accurate information on certain domestic factors that influenced the foreign policy of European-Christian powers.

[85] Stern suggested this date, 1207, for the petition mentioned above made by Italian merchants who were forbidden to leave Alexandria because their ship arrived from Cyprus while it was in a state of war with Egypt. The petition, written in Arabic, was found in the archives of Pisa: see Stern, "Petitions from the Ayyūbid Period," 6.

[86] Gibb, "The Aiyūbids," 697. With regard to the possibility of an embassy sent by the sultan to Venice in 1208, see Heyd, *Histoire du commerce*, 401–4.

[87] Dahlmanns, *Al-Malik al-ʿĀdil*, 124–25. On *jihād* as an ideological countercrusade campaign that reinforced the defensive and offensive military activity at the time of Saladin and al-ʿĀdil, see Dajani-Shakeel, "A Reassessment," 41–43.

[88] Al-Maqrīzī, *Al-sulūk*, 281; al-Maqrīzī, *A History of the Ayyubid Sultans of Egypt*, trans. Broadhurst, 148.

[89] Jacoby, "Les italiens en Égypte," 83–84.

[90] Ibn Saʿīd al-Maghribī, *Kitāb al-jughrāfīya*, ed. Ismāʿīl al-ʿArabī (Beirut, 1970), 181.

King John

What, then, were the geopolitical circumstances in which John found himself in the spring and summer of 1207 that might have aligned his calculations with those of the Ayyūbid sultan of Egypt, or at least might have inclined the English king to have granted an audience to this envoy of his brother's old friend?

The years 1206–7 were of crucial importance for King John with regard to his hold on the territories on the mainland and his relations with the church and the papacy. After a war that stretched from 1202 to 1206, Philip Augustus succeeded in conquering Normandy, Anjou, Maine, Poitou, and Brittany.[91] The old ancestral fiefs of the English Crown had been lost irretrievably, and only the latest acquisition, Aquitaine, and its most southerly province, Gascony, remained in John's hands. Angevin control of the remaining Continental territories was slipping, and retaining them demanded the bulk of John's energies. With Poitou assuming rule in the lands on the Continent previously held by John, the king now focused his resources on reconquest. His abiding ambition was to reinforce a European confederacy with the aim of tightening pressure on France. In order to achieve that goal, he turned to the northern alliances he had inherited from his brother Richard, namely the German, Flemish, and Dutch confederacy. In May 1207, Raymond VI, count of Toulouse, was excommunicated. On the heels of the Egyptian envoy's visit to England, presumably in the summer of 1207, John made an alliance with the excommunicated Holy Roman emperor Otto, and both assisted Raymond against a papal-directed crusade, that of the Albigensians.[92]

The year 1207 also saw King John's relations with the pope run aground. After Hubert Walter's death on 13 July 1205, the king wished to nominate his trusted servant, John Grey, bishop of Norwich, as primate of England in Canterbury. Innocent III, however, quashed Grey's election on May 1206, and in December of the same year he announced that the right to elect belonged exclusively to the cathedral chapter. He then invalidated the nominee of the monks of Christ Church, the subprior Reginald. The pope suggested a third candidate, Stephen Langton, cardinal priest of Saint Chrysogonus, who resided in the papal court, and, disregarding the objection of the royal proctors at Rome, on 17 June 1207 consecrated Stephen archbishop at Viterbo. In early August, the bishops of London, Ely, and Worcester were instructed to make a final attempt to persuade the king to "bow to the divine ordinance." An interdict on England and Wales was to be the result if he failed to do so.[93] Thus, a step taken by the pope in the hope of swiftly bringing

[91] David A. Carpenter, *The Struggle for Mastery, Britain 1066–1284* (Oxford, 2003), 265–71; Tony K. Moore, "The Loss of Normandy and the Invention of *Terre Normannorum*, 1204," *English Historical Review* 125/516 (2010): 1071–109; Frederick M. Powicke, *The Loss of Normandy (1198–1204): Studies in the History of the Angevin Empire* (Manchester, UK, 1913).

[92] Church, *King John*, 143–54.

[93] *Selected Letters of Pope Innocent III Concerning England (1198–1216)*, ed. Christopher R. Cheney and W. H. Semple (London, 1953), 86–90; Cheney, *Innocent III and England* (Stuttgart, 1976), 298–302; Cheney, "King John and the Papal Interdict," in C. R. Cheney, *The Papacy and England, 12th–14th Centuries: Historical and Legal Studies*, Variorum Reprints 154 (London, 1982), 295–318. See also Morris, *King John*, 126–43.

King John to submission evolved into a prolonged church-state conflict.[94] At that time, the possibility of John taking the cross and participating in a Western venture against the East was out of the question. Yet for Innocent III, it was still vital to prevent a consolidation of an antipapal and noncrusader coalition in Western Europe.[95]

Apparent Mutual Interests

As we unfold the geopolitical circumstances of the Ayyūbids and that of the kingdom of England in 1207, the extreme delicacy of King John's position in England, yet resilient stand in Western Europe as a whole, and of al-Malik al-ʿĀdil's position in his sultanate becomes clear.[96] These facts may serve to clarify the mutual concerns of both sides. If al-ʿĀdil's envoy to England in 1207 dealt with any serious matters at all, in all likelihood this would have been due to the interest King John held that same year in impinging upon any coalition led by the pope to launch an offensive against the Ayyūbids.

Papal interests lay in Western Christian crusader solidarity before the Ayyūbids. The church wanted peace in the West and war in the East. In a striking display of symmetry, however, we observe that internecine strife among Christians, as among Muslims, worked at times to promote relationships between Christians and Muslims. Political interactions and alliances were common in the East, between the Ayyūbids and the crusader states, as well as in the West, between the Almoravides and the Almohads and the Iberian and northern European kingdoms.[97] As many scholars have affirmed, "respect for the pope or the Christian religion had nothing to do with foreign policy. . . . [N]o religious scruples precluded links with Muslim powers if expediency prompted their making, however much a pope might denounce those who traded with the enemies of the faith and condemn Spanish princes for allying with Sarracens."[98]

Pursuing our exploratory leads has led us straight to the remarkable symmetry that characterized Sultan al-ʿĀdil's (and the Ayyūbids') and King John's (and Angevin England's) political dispositions at around 1200. These arguments change the narrative and permit us to disengage from a dichotomous hegemonic worldview, regardless of whether they sufficiently substantiate the identity of the envoy sent by the Egyptian sultan.

[94] G. O. Sayles, *The Medieval Foundations of England* (Edinburgh, 1963), 394; Bolton, "Philip Augustus and John: Two Sons in Innocent III's Vineyard," in *The Church and Sovereignty c. 590–1918*, ed. Diana Wood (Oxford, 1991), 113–34.

[95] On John and the Crusades, see Warren, *King John*, 32–33, 265; Barlow, *The Feudal Kingdom of England*, 351–52.

[96] Ilan Shoval, *King John's Delegation to the Almohad Court (1212): Medieval Interreligious Interactions and Modern Historiography*, Cursor Mundi 23 (Turnhout, 2016), 94–96, 155, 172–73.

[97] On interesting differences between alliances east and west of the Mediterranean, see Köhler, *Alliances and Treaties*, 283–85. On the employment of personal servants as diplomats by the English kings, see George P. Cuttino, *English Medieval Diplomacy* (Bloomington, 1985), 6.

[98] Cheney, *Innocent III and England*, 14; see also Eddé, *Saladin*, 244.

Beyond the Mediterranean: A More Expansive Understanding of Contacts between the Islamic and Northern European Worlds

The pluralistic political landscape, or "short period of experimental diplomacy," to borrow an apt phrase from Daniel König, that existed in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries was not, it seems, limited to the Levant. Rather, as our case shows, the activity included vast political-geographic areas. Only seemingly paradoxically, the period in which crusade and *jihād* propaganda peaked was also the period in which treaty and alliance policy governed the politics between neighboring as well as between remote Islamic and Western European polities. The Muslim "other," al-Malik al-ʿĀdil, appears to have been driven by the very same motives that drove the rulers of Western Europe.[99]

The apparent symmetry continues. From the Western European contemporary and modern point of view, the term "Outremer" has generally been reserved for the crusader states overseas.[100] But this term was also used to refer to any land beyond the sea. We find a parallel designation in the Muslim sources, which, taken at face value, carries precisely the same sense from the Islamic perspective. The phrase "Franks beyond the sea" does not necessarily imply that Frankish Europe was regarded as remote. Instead, it seems to correspond to Muslim expressions used for Franks in the crusader states, such as the "Franks in the coastland." Saladin is cited as having said, with respect to Western Europe, "for this is all that is beyond the sea" (*wa-innama huwa kull min warāʾ al-baḥr*) [وإنما هو كل من وراء ٱلبحر]. Ibn Wāṣil, in whose chronicle Saladin's words are preserved, also has Sultan al-Malik al-Kāmil at a later period using the phrase "the Franks beyond the sea."[101]

To a great extent, Muslim knowledge of events beyond the Mediterranean has been discounted or misinterpreted by modern historians.[102] The Muslim historians of the Ayyūbid period and shortly thereafter appear to have been quite well ac-

[99] The presentation of Saladin as a *jihād* warrior who unremittingly fought the Franks is, as Peter Holt noted, "an over-simplification; his relations with the Franks were the ordinary earthly relations of competitive neighbours with the usual incidents of medieval diplomacy and warfare": Holt, *The Age of the Crusades*, 61–62; Hannes Möhring, *Saladin: The Sultan and His Times, 1138–1193*, trans. David S. Bachrach (Baltimore, MD, 2005), 13–23; Eddé, *Saladin*, 243–45; König, *Arabic-Islamic Views of the Latin West*, 247. See also *Muslim Networks from Hajj to Hip Hop*, ed. Miriam Cooke and Bruce B. Lawrence (Chapel Hill, 2005), xi.

[100] Studies on the Christian stances, that of the papacy in particular, on Christian-Muslim contacts, the trade in weaponry, and political alliances are numerous and comprehensive. See the recent Stefan K. Stantchev, *Spiritual Rationality: Papal Embargo as Cultural Practice* (Oxford, 2014), 36–39, 44–52; James M. Powell, "The Papacy and the Medieval Frontier," in *Muslins under Latin Rule: 1100–1350*, ed. Powell (Princeton, 1990), 175–203.

[101] Gabrieli, *Arab Historians of the Crusades*, on Ibn Wāṣil, 264; Ibn Wāṣil, Jamāl al-Dīn Muhammad, b. Salīm (1208–98), author of *Mufarrij al-Kurūb fi Akhbār bani Ayyūb* [*The Dissipator of Anxieties Concerning the History of the Ayyūbids*], ed. Gamāl al-Dīn al-Shayyāl, 5 vols. (Alexandria, 1953), 4:241–44. See also Ibn Wāṣil on Saladin's call for *jihād*, referring to the enemy "beyond the sea," at 2:207: "And this enemy is not alone, his conspiracy has succeeded, may he be ruined, for this is all that is, and everyone from the house of heresy, without a single exception—a city, a country, an island small or large—has prepared weapons." Gamāl al-Dīn Shayyāl, "Ibn Wāṣil," *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. Bearman et al., http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_3408.

[102] Robert Irwin, "The Arabists and Crusader Studies in the Twentieth Century," in *Cultural Encounters during the Crusades*, ed. Kurt Villads Jensen et al. (Odense, 2013), 283–98.

quainted with Latin European politics and insightful about its internal sociocultural structures. As was recently shown by Daniel König and Niall Christie, starting from an early date the Muslims gradually obtained detailed information about Europe. When they considered it to be relevant, they distinguished the Germans, French, Italians, and English from the "Franks," whom they "tended to define as representatives of Latin-Christian expansionism."[103] William the Genoese (*al-Janawī*) is, of course, an available example. Sawirus b. al-Mukaffaʿ, the Copt monk and author of the "History of the Patriarchs of the Egyptian Church," refers to these "nationalities."[104] But contemporary Muslim writers also used the terms "Afransis" for the French and "Ankalthīr" for the English. This was the case with Ibn al-Athīr and Bahā al-Dīn b. Shaddād, who introduced the English king in a chapter that deals with the arrival of Richard in Cyprus.[105] The period saw a growing geographic mobility, not only of Westerners who traveled abroad, or of Westerners such as William sent from the East on Muslim rulers' behalf, but in a quite symmetrical manner as well, of Muslims headed to the north across the Mediterranean. Ibn Wāṣil, who attained a high position in Hamā's administration and who conducted a number of diplomatic missions for the Mamlūks in the 1260s, was himself an ambassador to Manfred, son of Frederick II Hohenstaufen in southern Italy.[106] Ibn Wāṣil acquired highly detailed information on the personal hostilities of the papal-imperial relationship, and he also remarked on the prominent status of the English king among the Western Europeans ("waṣala malik al-Inkitār, wa-huwa malik ʿaẓīm min al-Faranj").[107]

The military encounters between crusaders and Muslims increased Islamic acquaintance with Western Europe, but previous knowledge had already been quite vast and intensively accumulated. While the Holy War was suffused with religious extremism, it had opened multiple channels of diplomacy, commerce, and the diffusion of more accurate information.[108] Evidently, this circulation was far from a single-sided affair.

[103] König, "Muslim Perceptions of 'Latin Christianity,'" 24–27. This contention might (and should) be slightly revised. It hints at an asymmetrical situation in which Islamic diagnosis or perception had made a distinction, or could tell the difference, between "Western imperialism" and the various "nations" from which it originated. It also hints or argues that the Muslims anticipated the Europeans themselves with regard to this distinction.

[104] Antoine Khater and O. H. E. Burmester, *History of the Patriarchs of the Egyptian Church, by Sawirus b al-Mukaffaʿ*, vol. 3/2, *Mark III–John VI (A.D. 1167–1216)* (Cairo, 1970), 149, 153, and 155.

[105] *The Chronicle of Ibn al-Athīr*, part 3, *The Years 589–629/1193–1231*, trans. Richards, 29; *Ibn Shaddād's Biography of Saladin (Sīrat al-Sulṭān al-Nāṣir)*, ed. Ahmed N. Ibish (Damascus, 2005), 353.

[106] For references, see Hirschler, "Ibn Wāṣil," 142; Konrad Hirschler, "The Formation of the Civilian Elite in the Syrian Province: The Case of Ayyūbid and Early Mamlūk Hamah," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 12/2 (2008): 95–132; Gabrieli, *Arab Historians of the Crusades*, 267, 276–80. On Muslim envoys and travelers, see Brian A. Catlos, *Muslims of Medieval Latin Christendom, c. 1050–1614* (Cambridge, UK, 2014), 164–228.

[107] Ibn Wāṣil, Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad, b. Salīm, *Mufarrij al-Kurūb fi Akhbār bani Ayyūb*, ed. al-Shayyāl (Cairo, 1957), 2:328–39 (*al-Faranj/malik al-Rūm bi-Qusṭanṭīnīya/malik al-Almān*); König, *Arabic-Islamic Views of the Latin West*, 250–51.

[108] König, "Arabic-Islamic Perceptions of Western Europe," 25; König, *Arabic-Islamic Views of the Latin West*, 27–71, 271–72, points out that Arabic geographical knowledge of Europe was already quite extensive before the Crusades, as various tenth-century geographical treatises with detailed chapters on the Roman Empire, the Byzantines, and the Slavs clearly demonstrate. The inclusion of the

The Muslim chroniclers observed the special status of the pope in Rome and referred to his exceptional influence over processes of political and diplomatic decision making in Western Europe. These references can be traced to the early tenth century.[109] In the period under inspection, the papacy was involved in direct exchange with Muslim rulers. The English chronicler Ralph de Diceto recorded two letters, translated into Latin, that were written to the popes Alexander III (1159–81) and Lucius III (1181–85) by the Ayyūbid sultans Saladin and al-Malik al-ʿĀdil.[110]

Muslim writers obtained accurate, firsthand information about the pope's capacity to inflict penalties such as excommunication on European kings. Ibn Wāṣil wrote, "and that is because the pope excommunicated (*ḥarrama)* Manfred for his inclination towards the Muslims, and he rejected him from their law (*nāmūs shar ʿihim*) [ناموس شرعهم]."[111] When, in 1212, a coalition of Christian forces was organized to confront the Western Islamic empire of the Almohads on the Iberian frontier, Muslim sources reveal a sharp sense of the papal suppression of dissent. In fact, Muslim chroniclers attributed Sancho VII's break with his ally, the Almohad caliph—and hence his defeat at the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa—to papal threats of excommunication of this king of Navarre. Ibn ʿIdārī al-Marrākushī's "The Surpassing Explanation, on the [Summary of the] History of the Kings of al-Andalus and the Maghrib" (*al-Bayān al-Mughrib fī ikhtiṣār akhbār mulūk al-Andalus wa-l-Maghrib*) records an official letter in which the Almohad caliph tried to minimize the disaster. "The Lord of Navarre," he wrote, "was linked to the Almohads by agreement and guided to them by the most gentle of reins. He was however threatened by the Lord of Rome should he not mobilize his people and reinforce the coalition of his coreligionists."[112]

Islamic writers' knowledge of Western Europe did not end here. Chroniclers of the Ayyūbid period reveal minute comprehension of the idea of crusade, the religious zeal associated with it, and its power as an ideological framework to unite

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Western kingdoms in the horizon of Arab geographers merely extends preexisting traditions of knowledge.

[109] König, "Arabic-Islamic Perceptions of Western Europe," 23; König, *Arabic-Islamic Views of the Latin West*, 239–67; Khater and Burmester, *History of the Patriarchs of the Egyptian Church*, 3/2:215. Contemporary Christian writers, like their Muslim counterparts, saw in the caliph an equivalent to the pope. See Matthew Paris, *Chronica majora*, ed. Luard, 2:400: "Baldach, ubi habitat papa Sarracenorum qui Caliphus appellatur; et timetur in lege eorum et adoratur sicut Pontifex Romanus apud nos." On the general political, demographic, social, and cultural circumstances in Europe and in the Mediterranean during this period, seen from a modern historical perspective that concurs with that of Ayyūbid Muslim sources, see Christopher Tyerman, *God's War: A New History of the Crusades* (Cambridge, MA, 2006), 1–24.

[110] König, *Arabic-Islamic Views of the Latin West*, 246 n. 97.

[111] Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij al-Kurūb fi Akhbār banī ʾAyyūb*, ed. al-Shayyāl, 4:249–51. See Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, 319–20. On Saladin's comment on the pope, see his letter to the caliph in Baghdad, in König, *Arabic-Islamic Views of the Latin West*, 248–49, 260–65.

[112] *Al-Bayān Al Mughrib, qism al-muwwaḥidūn*, tḥqīq, Muḥammad al-Katānī (Beirut, 1948), 261, 264: "wa kāna ṣāḥib nabara muta ʿaliqan min al-muwwaḥidūn bi-ḏamām, wa munqādan ilayhim Abadan fī asmaḥ zamām, fa-sakhaṭa ʿalayhi ṣāḥib rūma in lam yakun li-qawmihi mu ʿaskaran wa-li-sawād ahl milatihi mukaṯaran fa-laḥiqa bi-tilka l-jumūʿ mirhajan"
[وكان صاحب نبرة متعلقا من الموحدين بذمام, ومنقادا إليهم أبدا في أسمح زمام, فسخط عليه صاحب رومة إن لم يكن لقومه معسكرا ولسواد أهل ملته مكثرا, فلحق بتلك الجموع مرهجا].

Europeans and fuel waves of destructive assault against the Islamic states.[113] Shihāb al-Dīn Abū Shāma (1203–68), a Syrian philologist, described the dynasty of Saladin in his "Book of the Two Gardens" (*Kitāb al-Rawḍatayn fi Akhbār al-Dawlatayn al-Nūrīya wal-Ṣalāhīya*).[114] He recorded an extended summons addressed by Saladin to one of the provinces on the Christians' incentives for crusade and on the religious resilience that characterized the crusaders. The text is worth citing here in full:

> Observe how far the Franks have gone; what unity they have achieved, what aims they pursue. . . . [T]here is not a king left in their lands or islands, not a lord or a rich man who has not competed with his neighbours to produce more support, and rivaled his peers in strenuous military effort. In defence of their religion they consider it a small thing to spend life and soul, and they have kept their infidel brothers supplied with arms and champions of war. And all they have done, and all their generosity, has been done purely out of zeal for Him they worship, in jealous defence of their Faith.

Abu Shāma also discloses Saladin's keen grasp of the Europeans' stance and his analysis of their anticipation of a Muslim attack on Europe: "Every Frank feels that once we have reconquered the (Syrian) coast, and the veil of their honor is torn off and destroyed, this country will slip from their grasp, and our hand will reach out toward their own countries."[115]

Both Saladin and the chronicler appear to have been acutely aware of the Europeans' social, cultural, and religious concerns, which not surprisingly were quite parallel to their own. Matters of honor, which was held in high regard by European knights, stand out front and center, as does the European fear of a counter-assault by or on behalf of the Muslims against their own lands. Indeed, during the period in which the Christians suffered serious defeats—between the battle of Hattin in the East in 1187 and the battle of Alarcos in the West in 1195, and until their victory over the Almohads at Las Navas in 1212 and then at Damietta in 1219—fear that there would be an "uncontainable advance of Islam" spread throughout Catholic Europe.[116] Sicard of Cremona, a contemporary chronicler, stated that the Mauritanian king, who had entered Spain with an endless number of warlike Saracens, had threatened to conquer not only Spain but also Rome and

[113] Sohail H. Hashmi, ed., *Just Wars, Holy Wars and Jihāds: Christian, Jewish, and Muslim Encounters and Exchanges* (Oxford, 2012); Andrew J. Kirk, *Civilizations in Conflict? Islam, the West and Christian Faith*, Regnum Studies in Global Christianity (Eugene, 2011), 35; Vincent Lagardère, "Le gihad almohade: Théorie et pratique," in *Los Almohades: Problemas y perspectivas*, ed. Patrice Cressie et al., 2 vols, Estudios Árabes e Islámicos: Monografías 11 (Madrid, 2005), 2:617–31.

[114] Hilmy Ahmad, "Abū Shāma," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. Bearman et al., http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_0250.

[115] Gabrieli, *Arab Historians of the Crusades*, 214–15; Shihāb al-Dīn Abu al-Qāsim ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Ismā ʿīl al-Maḳdisī Abū Shāma (1203–68), *Kitāb al-Rawḍatayn fi Akhbār al-Dawlatayn al-Nūrīya wal-Ṣalāhīya* [*The Book of the Two Gardens*], 3 vols. (Cairo, 1998), 1:216–24. Saladin's words must be considered as a rhetorical attempt to encourage *jihād*. Like his counterparts in Europe, he knew the comparison was not true.

[116] Francisco García Fitz, *Las Navas de Tolosa* (Barcelona, 2012), 128; Alvira Cabrer Martín, "De Alarcos a Las Navas de Tolosa: Idea y realidad de los orígenes de la batalla de 1212," in *Actas de "Alarcos 1195". Congreso Internacional Conmemorativo del VIII Centenario de la Batalla de Alarcos*, ed. Ricardo Izquierdo Benito and Francisco Ruiz Gomez (Cuenca, 1996), 249–64.

Europe in its entirety.[117] The contemporary chronicler Ibn ʿIdārī al-Marrākushī, along with a later chronicler, fourteenth-century Ibn abi-Zarʿ al-Fāsī, referred to fear spreading among the Christian princes.[118]

The evidence seems weak for such intentions either on the part of the Almohads or the Ayyūbids with regard to France in the context of the 1212 confrontation. From a Muslim perspective, the advantages of crossing over at that time into European territories were far from clear, although according to Ibn Shaddād, Saladin hoped to extend the boundaries of Islam to "their islands, until he would not leave a single heretic on the face of the earth."[119] Whether or not the Muslims intended to make a pervasive penetration into Western Europe, it seems that such rumors on the Christian side operated in their best interests against the backdrop of local conflicts. These intense mutual misgivings were part of the context of an ongoing Ayyūbid-Western European-Angevin interchange. Considered here from the Muslim point of view, they reflect the Muslim understanding of certain factors that influenced Latin-Christian "foreign-policy" decisions with regard to the Islamic sphere.[120]

The Ayyūbids thus appear to have been acquainted with Latin European politics and were interested as well, at least to some extent, in its internal social, cultural, and religious affairs. Such information was collected in governmental circles, such as the Ayyūbid and, later, Mamlūk administrations or the historiographers in con-

[117] Sicard of Cremona, *Chronicon*, PL 213:538: "Eodem anno scilicet 1212, Almeramomeley rex Mauritanus veniens in Hispanias cum infinita multitudine Sarracenorum minabatur non solum Hispaniam, sed et Romam, imo [*sic*] Europam capere universam." Such information appears later in an account of events leading up to the battle of Las Navas written by Bernat Desclot in his chronicle of the reign of King Pedro III of Aragon. See *Crusade and Christendom, Annotated Documents in Translation*, ed. Jessalyn Bird, Edward Peters, and James M. Powell (Philadelphia, 2013), 85–94, no. 9 ("The Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa, 1212").

[118] *Al-Bayān Al Mugḥrib*, 263: "wa-l-rahbān min burtuqāl ila alqusṭanṭīna-l-ʿuṭma, yunādūn fī-l-bilād min al-baḥr al-rūmī ila al-baḥr al-akhḍar ghawṯan ghawṯan wa-raḥma raḥma." See also ʿAlī b. Abī Zarʿ, *Rawḍ al-Qirṭās*, ed. ʿAbd al-Wahāb Binmanṣūr (Al-Rabaṭ, 1999), 309: "fa-aqāma biha wa-ihtazzat jamī ʿbilād al-rūm bi-jawāzihi wa-waqa ʿa khawfuhu fī qulūb mulūkihim wa-akhaḏu fī taḥsīn bilādahum wa-ikhlāʾ ma qaruba min al-muslimīn min qurāhum wa-ḥuṣūnihim"

[فأقام بها واهتزت جميع بلاد الروم بجوازه ووقع خوفه في قلوب ملوكهم وأخذوا في تحصين بلادهم وإخلاء ما قرب من المسلمين من قراهم وحصونهم].

Also Ibn Abī Zarʿ, *Rawḍ al-Qirṭās*, trans. A. Huici Miranda, 2 vols., Textos Medievales 13 (Valencia, 1964), 1:457: "toda la tierra de los cristianos se conmovió con la nueva de su llegada. Y el miedo se apoderó de los corazones de sus reyes. Se fortificaron en su país abandonando el territorio próximo a los musulmanes con sus aldeas y castillos."

[119] Ibn Shaddād, *Al-nawādir al-sulṭānīya*, ed. al-Shayyāl, 22: "wa ʾma aḥki laka shay ʾan? Qultu yali, qāla: fī nafsi, ʾanahu mata mā yassaru Allāh ta ʿāla fatḥ baqīyat –l-sāḥil qassamtu –l-bilād, wa-ʾawṣaytu wa-wada ʿtu, wa-rakabtu haḏa-l-baḥr ila jazā ʾirihim, antabi ʿuhum fīha ḥata lā abqī ʿala wajhi-l-arḍ man yakfar bi-Allāh aw amūt"

[وأما أحكى لك شيئا ؟ قلت: يلي, قال: في نفسي, أنه متى ما يسر الله تعالى فتح بقية الساحل قسمت البلاد, وأوصيت وودعت, وركبت هذا البحر إلي جزاءرهم, أنتبعهم فيها حتى لا أبقى على وجه الأرض من يكفر بالله أو أموت].

Cyprus especially played an enormously important role for the crusaders after Richard the Lionheart took control of it.

[120] Tyerman, *God's War*, 1–57; Kurt Villads Jensen, "Cultural Encounters and Clash of Civilisations: Huntington and Modern Crusading Studies," in Villads Jensen et al., *Cultural Encounters during the Crusades*, 15–26; Emmanuel Sivan, *L'Islam et la croisade: Idéologie et propagande dans les réactions musulmanes aux croisades* (Paris, 1968); Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The Crusades, Christianity, and Islam* (New York, 2008).

tact with them. And yet the prevailing scholarly perception of the Islamic engagement with Western Europe remains regretfully paradigmatic. Medieval Muslim historians are often said to have "evinced no interest in the government of the Frankish states in the Near East, nor about Europe."[121] However, at least as far as the Muslim historians of the Ayyūbid period are concerned, the picture painted by the chronicles is remarkably subtle. These historians and the Muslim personalities about which they penned accounts were far from indifferent about Western European affairs. On the contrary, as I have demonstrated, they made a serious effort to create their own narrative of the crusader conflict in the East. Moreover, they endeavored to trace the invaders back to their countries of origin and to inquire into the forces that had launched them.[122] Diplomacy presupposes cognizance of a wider world.[123] Not only were the Ayyūbids interested in the politics of the most Western of European countries, they recognized how these could be harnessed to their advantage. By and large, scholars have examined over two centuries of interchange among Muslims (including the Ayyūbids) and crusaders from a resolutely Middle Eastern or Mediterranean Christian angle. A handful of researchers, however, have observed in a wider context the Islamic historiographical approach, which included accounts of events of the crusading period and prior to it. Already this attitude has generated a fuller, more contextualized reading of medieval Islamic historians.[124] In turn, such reading allows us to extend our reach beyond the limited fields of crusader and Mediterranean studies and plumb the broader political and diplomatic networks that seem to have existed between Islamic entities and European ones.

[121] Bernard Lewis's view (see n. 122) was somewhat corrected by Carole Hillenbrand's work. See Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, 257–58. It has been criticized by others: see König, *Arabic-Islamic Views of the Latin West*, 17–22; Hermes, *The (European) Other*, 1–6. On methodology, see in particular Benjamin Z. Kedar, "Croisade et *jihād* vus par l'ennemi: Une étude des perceptions mutuelles des motivations," in *Autour de la Première Croisade: Actes du Colloque de la Society for the Study of the Crusades and the Latin East (Clermont-Ferrand, 22–25 juin 1995)*, ed. Michel Balard (Paris, 1996), 345–55, at 346; Helen J. Nicholson, "Muslim Reactions to the Crusades," in *Palgrave Advances in the Crusades*, ed. Nicholson (Houndmills, 2005), 269–88.

[122] Bernard Lewis, *Islam in History: Ideas, People, and Events in the Middle East* (Chicago, 1993), 116–17. Lewis followed Francesco Gabrieli's views on the subject. See his "The Arabic Historiography of the Crusades," in *Historians of the Middle East*, ed. Lewis and Peter M. Holt (London, 1962), 1–19, 98–107; Lewis, *Faith and Power: Religion and Politics in the Middle East* (Oxford, 2010), 10–20. On the issue of translation into modern Western languages of paragraphs relevant to crusader history from the Arabic sources, both in the *Historiens orientaux* volumes of the great *Recueil des historiens des croisades*, see Gabrieli, *Arab Historians of the Crusades*, xx; and Alex Mallett, "Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī," in *Medieval Muslim Historians*, 96. See also Claude Cahen, "Pour un programme de traductions des chroniques arabes du Proche-Orient au temps des croisades," *Journal des savants* 1–2 (1987): 13–26; König, *Arabic-Islamic Views of the Latin West*, 9–10.

[123] Cuttino, *English Medieval Diplomacy*, 25.

[124] König, "Arabic-Islamic Perceptions of Western Europe," 17–34; Christie, *Muslims and Crusaders*, 1–5, 43–98; Alex Mallett, "Introduction," in *Medieval Muslim Historians*, 1–6; Daniel G. König, "Arabic-Islamic Historiographers on the Emergence of Latin-Christian Europe," in *Visions of Community: The West, Byzantium and the Islamic World, 300–1100*, ed. Walter Pohl, Clemens Gantner, and Richard Payne (Farnham, UK, 2012), 427–46; Brian A. Catlos, *Infidel Kings and Unholy Warriors: Faith, Power and Violence in the Age of Crusade and Jihād* (New York, 2014), 3–12; David Thomas, ed., *Understanding Interreligious Relations* (Oxford, 2013); John V. Tolan, *L'Europe latine et le monde arabe au Moyen Âge: Cultures en conflit et en convergence* (Rennes, 2009).

A modern critic of King John has written that "John's quarrel with the Church was not something reluctantly taken up as a result of miscalculations and ineptitude but a crusade he, at least initially, entered on with enthusiasm"; this critic has also argued that "[a]s a moral leper, John was, in the eyes of Christendom, in no better case than Saladin faced by Richard."[125] After surveying the sources and disentangling the diplomatic networks apparently constructed through Ayyūbid initiative, I wish to hone in on this writer's particular choice of words and cautiously suggest that the Ayyūbid sultan al-ʿĀdil may have sensed these very same sentiments. Prominent historian of the Ayyūbids Stephen Humphreys has remarked pointedly that "Ayyūbid history must always be situated within the powerful geopolitical, societal, and cultural forces that transformed the Muslim world—indeed, all of Eurasia—during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries."[126] Christopher Tyerman, for his part, has chosen to take a broad view of Europe and the Mediterranean in his study of the Crusades.[127] The Ayyūbids appear to have been initiators of contacts with northwestern Europe, and our awareness of al-ʿĀdil's mission significantly amplifies our understanding of the Islamic perspective on the Crusades in their Western European context. It also substantiates further the notion that both the Muslims and the Christians were anything but indifferent to their neighbors. Our inquiry into this episode joins another analysis of a similar kind—the English negotiations with the Almohads in 1212—synoptic treatments from which the "bigger" story of Islamic-European political, diplomatic, and personal exchange in the Middle Ages may be constructed.[128]

[125] Frank McLynn, *Lionheart and Lackland: King Richard, King John and the Wars of Conquest* (London, 2006), 374, 379.

[126] Stephen R. Humphreys, "Ayyubids," Oxford Bibliographies Online, http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/obo/9780195390155-0049; Isabel Callejas Martín, "Los ayubíes (564 h./1168–658 h./1260): Un recorrido historiográfico" (PhD diss., University of Madrid, 2015), http://revistas.ucm.es/index.php/ELEM/article/view/49036 (accessed 31 March 2018).

[127] Tyerman, *God's War*, 1–24.

[128] Shoval, *King John's Delegation to the Almohad Court (1212)*, xv–xviii, 175–76. On a much later period, see Jerry Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen: The Untold Story of Elizabeth and Islam* (New York, 2016). Such wide geopolitical systems seem to have existed long before the Crusades: see Sari J. Nasir, *The Arabs and the English* (London, 1976), 6: "Harūn el-Rashīd wanted the Franks to help him against the Umayyads of Spain, while Charlemagne looked to Harūn as a possible ally against his Byzantine foes."

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