

## The Historiographical Trajectory and Legal Status of a Rebellion: Anti-Sultan Jakam (d. 809/1407) and his Literary Representation

### Introduction

*Context: Amir Jakam and early fifteenth-century internal warfare*

The ninth/fifteenth century in Egypt and Syria began with a period of internal warfare (*fitnah*) that substantially disturbed the sultanate of Cairo. The death of Sultan al-Zāhir Barqūq in 801/1399 brought to the throne an eleven-year-old child, his son al-Nāṣir Faraj (r. 801–15/1399–1412), who proved incapable of ensuring the domination of the sultanic household. His enthronement provoked a long series of political struggles in Egypt and then Syria between the main warlords of the realm, among whom were the amirs Jakam min ‘Iwaḍ, Sūdūn Ṭāz, Yashbak al-Sha‘bānī, Shaykh al-Maḥmūdī, and Nawrūz al-Ḥāfiẓī. These conflicts (which even Tamerlane’s invasion in 803/1401 did not suspend) ended a few years after Faraj’s tragic death, during the reign of Sultan al-Mu‘ayyad Shaykh (r. 815–24/1412–21).<sup>1</sup>

The main texts that narrate these events were written between the 810s/1410s and the 840s/1440s. All of them condemned the military elite’s proclivity to conflict and its responsibility in these long, fratricidal wars. The biographical dictionaries, especially, show their disapproval of these wars, or *fitnah*, and define the instigators in terms that suggest to what extent internal warfare was in opposition to the values considered important by these historians (and by the ulama in general). The biographers, who point out how an amir “liked quarrels” or used to spark them off,<sup>2</sup> systematically relate these instances using negative expressions such as “he was a man of evil and discord.”<sup>3</sup> The hostility of the opinions against

<sup>1</sup>On these events, see Clément Onimus, *Les Maîtres du jeu: Pouvoir et violence politique à l’aube du sultanat mamlouk circassien (784–815/1382–1412)* (Paris, 2019).

<sup>2</sup>We can find the following expressions: “*kāna yuḥibbu al-fitan wa-al-ḥurūb*” or “*kāna min muthīri al-fitan*” or “*kāna min ru’ūs al-fitan*.” See for example the biography of Sūdūn al-Jalab (Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Inbā’ al-ghumr bi-abnā’ al-‘umr*, ed. Aḥmad Allāh Khān [Hyderabad, 1969–76], 7:99–100), the biography of Shāhīn Qiṣqā (Ibn Taghribirdī, *Al-Nujūm al-zāhirah fī mulūk Miṣr wa-al-Qāhirah*, ed. William Popper [Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1933–54], 6:286), or the biographies of Yashbak al-Mūsawī (Ibn Taghribirdī, *Al-Manhal al-ṣāfi wa-al-mustawfā ba’d al-wāfi*, ed. Muḥammad Amīn [Cairo, 1984–2005], 12:130; al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-sulūk li-ma’rifat duwal al-mulūk*, ed. Sa’id ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ ‘Ashūr [Cairo, 1936–1973], 4:201).

<sup>3</sup>We find the expression *kāna min ahli al-sharr wa-al-fitan* in the biography of Amir Alṭunbughā Shaqal, from al-Maqrīzī’s pen, which was copied by al-Sakhāwī. In the *Sulūk*, al-Maqrīzī, calls



the conspiracies that led to *fitnah* is sometime explicit, as when Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah explains how much Amir Ṭuruntāy al-Kāmilī was hated for having provoked Yalbughā al-Nāṣirī's war with his intrigues.<sup>4</sup>

Nevertheless, one of those warmongers, Amir Jakam min 'Iwad, enjoyed special treatment in the sources. Although he was one of the most active faction chiefs in the discords that determined the evolution of the beginning of the ninth/fifteenth century, the judgements on him were surprisingly qualified. Jakam appears in the sources in Rabī' II 801/December 1398, when Sultan Barqūq appointed him as an amir.<sup>5</sup> After the sovereign's death, he took part in the internal war of 802/1400, where he joined Barqūq's younger amirs against the leading amirs. After their victory, Jakam and his allies, led by Amir Yashbak al-Sha'bānī, distributed amirates and offices among themselves. Thus, Jakam's was a fast ascent that allowed him to reach the highest amiral rank, amir of 100, in one and a half years. Thanks to his newly-gained power, he managed to become autonomous: it seems, indeed, that he did not benefit from the patronage of any other amir.<sup>6</sup> He then engaged in the incessant conflicts between the amirs until he became the chief of a powerful faction that allowed him to take power in Cairo in 803–4/1401. After another *fitnah* where he lost all his supporters, among whom was Amir Nawrūz al-Ḥāfizī, he was arrested by one of his rivals, Amir Sūdūn Ṭāz, and imprisoned in Syria (804–6/1402–4). The governor of Aleppo, Amir Damurdāsh al-Muḥammadī, hoping to benefit from such a precious ally, freed him from jail, but Jakam fled and took part to the interminable Syrian wars that involved numerous factions for years.<sup>7</sup> As a talented warlord, he succeeded in gathering several rebels around

---

him “corrupted scum” and “demon of the sultan” just before he adds that he was one of the warlords of these internal wars: “*kāna min ru'ūs al-fitan.*” Al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-ʿuqūd al-farīdah fī tarājim al-ʿyān al-mufīdah*, ed. Maḥmūd al-Jalīlī (Beirut, 2002), 1:430; idem, *Sulūk*, 4:206–7; al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Daw' al-lāmi' li-ahl al-qarn al-tāsi'*, ed. Ḥusām al-Dīn al-Qudṣī (Cairo, 1934–37), 2:320. Evil (*sharr*) is also related to *fitnah* in the biographies of 'Allān Julaq (Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 8:21–22), Uzbek Khāṣṣ Kharjī (Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 2:341–42; al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Daw' al-lāmi'*, 2:273), Bardbughā al-Dawādār (Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 3:283–84), and Jānim min Ḥasan Shāh (Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 4:216–17), among others.

<sup>4</sup>Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah*, ed. 'Adnān Darwish (Damascus, 1977–97), 1:356–57.

<sup>5</sup>Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:924; idem, *Durar al-ʿuqūd*, 1:574–80; al-'Aynī, *Al-Sulṭān Barqūq mu'assis dawlat al-mamālīk al-jarākisah min khilāl makhtūṭ 'Iqd al-jumān fī tārikh ahl al-zamān li-Badr al-'Aynī*, ed. Īmān 'Umar Shukrī (Cairo, 2002), 487; al-'Aynī, *'Iqd al-jumān fī tārikh ahl al-zamān*, ed. Islām Yushā' Bīnū (Amman, 2011), 82; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 4:11; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā'*, 6:24–27; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 5:591; idem, *Manhal*, 4:313–24.

<sup>6</sup>Although Jakam was a mamluk of Barqūq at the very beginning of his career, it seems that he was never the client of another amir afterwards. He never appears in the sources except as a leading chief of a faction, and never as the follower of another amir.

<sup>7</sup>Damurdāsh al-Muḥammadī (d. 818/1415) was a friend of Taghrībirdī, father of the famous historian. He took part in the conflicts of Sultan Faraj's reign and was one of the causes of the second



him, thanks to betrayals and changing alliances. He managed to obtain the temporary support of some of his former enemies, such as Yashbak al-Shaʿbānī and his ally Shaykh al-Maḥmūdī, with whom he led the war against Sultan Faraj in 807/1404–5. His skill in manipulating various political networks, as well as his perseverance, allowed him to surmount the military interventions of the young sultan who, in 809/1406, led an expedition in Syria intended to annihilate the faction of Jakam and Nawrūz. After the sultan's return to Cairo, Jakam seized most of Syria and proclaimed himself sultan in Aleppo in 809/1406–7. He was the first of Sultan Barqūq's former mamluks who dared to break with his late master's testament and the dynastic succession he had prepared. Jakam's reign did not last more than two months, however, as he was killed in battle in Dhū al-Qa'dah 809/April–May 1407, while besieging the city of Āmid<sup>8</sup>—which used to belong to the chief of the White Sheep Turcoman Horde, Amir Qarā Yulūk (d. 839/1435).<sup>9</sup>

### *Paradox: The Issue of Jakam's Salvatio Memoriae*

Jakam was thus one of the vanquished in history. His career and his final failure might have—perhaps *should* have—made him a damned person in historiography. Yet his memory was neither passed over in silence nor tarnished. Why this paradox? What process of history writing had led the ninth/fifteenth-century historians to this *salvatio memoriae*?

Sources that come directly from Jakam himself are rare. We possess only an inscription from the citadel of Aleppo, which he had restored after its destruction by Tamerlane. This inscription confirms the construction projects that are mentioned in the narrative sources, which show not only his concern for fortifying the city (especially the construction of the south bastion on which the inscription can be found) but also that his monumental projects should have been worthy of a ruler (especially the ceremonial hall that connected the two towers flanking the gate).<sup>10</sup> The extreme rarity of such direct pieces of evidence would make them

internal war of the reign. See Onimus, *Les Maîtres du jeu*, 115, 120, 199, 250, 245, and 366.

<sup>8</sup>Now Diyarbakir, Turkey.

<sup>9</sup>The sources give different dates of death: 11, 17, 25, or 27 Dhū al-Qa'dah 809/19 or 25 April or 3 or 5 May 1407. For the details of Jakam's biography, refer to the table at the end of this article and to his biography in Clément Onimus, "Écrire la vie de Jakam," in Mathilde Boudier, Audrey Caire, Eva Collet, and Noémie Lucas, eds., *Autour de la Syrie médiévale: Études offertes à Anne-Marie Eddé* (Paris, 2020), forthcoming.

<sup>10</sup>This inscription has been published twice with a few corrections, first by Sauvaget, then by Herzfeld. Jean Sauvaget, "Enceinte primitive d'Alep," *Mélanges de l'Institut Français de Damas* 1 (1929):142, n. 2; Ernst Herzfeld, *Matériaux pour un Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum*; part 2: *Syrie du Nord; Inscriptions et Monuments d'Alep*, t. I, vol. 1; *Mémoires publiés par les membres de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale du Caire* 76 (1955): 93, n. 43. See *Thesaurus d'Epigraphie Islamique* (TEI), XIIIe livraison, 2015, nos. 8810 and 32331.



incomprehensible to the modern historian without the narrative work of contemporary historians. Faced with such a problematic character who instigated *fitnah* and sought to break the dynastic order, they tried to give meaning to Jakam's failed rebellions in the biographies they wrote about him. What significance did they give to his life? What memory did they elaborate for this amir? My approach will combine both a narratological and a micro-historical perspective<sup>11</sup> and ask in particular what discursive treatment of the individual the authors chose.

In this article, I intend to develop the argument that, on the one hand, history writing is not independent from jurisprudence, and, on the other hand, that the evolution of the political regime had an impact on historiography. Most of the historians of the Cairo sultanate were indeed jurists. The converging image of Amir Jakam they elaborate, despite their different positions in the academic field, is linked to the way they handle justifying his rebellion against Sultan Faraj. This justification was being written during a period when a monarchic regime was being built, under Sultan Barsbāy (824–41/1421–38). In a second historiographical stratum, the nature of narration changed: from justification, it became memory. The juridical stake disappeared and its historiographical expression became sedimented, like a fossil inside the rock of memory writing. In each one of these historiographical strata, one historian played a particular role in the elaboration of the literary representation of Amir Jakam: al-ʿAynī at the beginning of the ninth/fifteenth century and Ibn Taghrībirdī during the second half of the century. This article will give a special emphasis to both of these historians, whose works will be compared to those of their contemporaries.

I shall first describe the narrative existence of Jakam. In other words: to what extent is his life narrated by the historians? Then I shall describe the position of each one of those historians *vis-à-vis* Jakam. At last, we shall see that, despite the various contexts, a thematic convergence develops in these texts around the issue of the justice of the rebel.

### Amir Jakam's narrative existence

Jakam's narrative existence—the one that is meaningful to the authors—does not start with his birth (about which we know nothing—neither the place nor the year—just as we do not know anything about his ethnic, religious, or geographic origins). It begins with his first appointment as an amir, a social ritual of institution that is the condition *sine qua non* for the discursive ritual of institution

<sup>11</sup>For a seminal study that links microhistory to narratology, see Jo Van Steenberghe and Stijn Van Nieuwenhuysse, "Truth and Politics in Late Medieval Arabic Historiography: the Formation of Sultan Barsbāy's State (1422–1438) and the Narratives of the Amir Qurqumās al-Sha'bānī (d. 1438)," *Der Islam* 95, no. 1 (2018): 147–87.



consisting of integrating him into the biographical dictionaries. Before this event, he does not exist. That means that the narrative existence defines the social existence, and this is mutual: to become an amir is the only way for a military man to be considered a member of the *a'yān*, that is, a notable. The consistency of this social milieu is given by the biographers: they define it through the mention of the proper names in their narration and through the biographies. These dictionaries, thus, create the elite as a group of individuals.<sup>12</sup>

These individualities are only defined inside a particular field, which depends on the profile of the person who is the subject of the biography.<sup>13</sup> To be more precise, the political field is almost the sole relevant facet of Jakam's life, just as it is in the biographies of other amirs. This explains the lacunae related to his family,<sup>14</sup> his economic activity, and a lot of other acts and facts that might have been presented if the biography were a narrative of his life. As in most of the amiral biographies, Jakam's life is restricted to listing his offices, his fiscal concessions (*iqiā'*), his rebellions, and other political acts. In short, Jakam's biographies map a course, a succession of positions in the political arena of the sultanate,<sup>15</sup> in an institutional and symbolic frame into which rebellion is integrated as one of the forms of political action. It is thus unnecessary to explain its immediate causes:<sup>16</sup> often, the struggles are mentioned only in order to describe a change in the government, not to analyze the ins and outs of the event.

There are eight biographies of Jakam. Almost all of the contemporary authors wrote one or two of them, as did some authors of the second half of the ninth/fifteenth century.<sup>17</sup> Four of them are in biographical dictionaries<sup>18</sup> and four are

<sup>12</sup>See Onimus, *Les Maîtres du jeu*, 33–34.

<sup>13</sup>It is possible to distinguish different types of biographies, such as the biographies of scholars, the biographies of amirs, or the biographies of secretaries.

<sup>14</sup>No source mentions either a wife or a child.

<sup>15</sup>On the *cursus honorum* in Cairo sultanate, see Clément Onimus, "La question du *cursus honorum* dans le sultanat mamelouk au tournant des xive–xve siècles," *Bulletin d'Études Orientales* 64 (2015): 365–90.

<sup>16</sup>The tensions that broke out between Jakam and Sūdūn al-Ḥamzāwī in Šafar 804/September 1401 are mentioned by different chroniclers without any kind of explanation. Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:1078; Ibn Taghribirdī, *Nujūm*, 6:93.

<sup>17</sup>I have not found any other biography of this character. The authors who wrote before Jakam's rise do not speak about him: neither Ibn Khaldūn nor Ibn al-Furāt nor Ibn Duqmāq. There is no obituary in Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah's chronicle either, because the edited book does not go further than 808/1405. The mentions of Jakam within his chronicle look like what can be found in al-Maqrīzī.

<sup>18</sup>Ibn Taghribirdī, *Manhal*, 4:313–24; al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-'uqūd*, 1:574–80; Ibn Khaṭīb al-Nāṣiriyaḥ, "Al-Durr al-muntakhab fī tāriḫ Ḥalab," Bibliothèque nationale MS Arabe 5853, fols. 133–35; al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Daw' al-lāmi'*, 3:76.



obituaries included in annals.<sup>19</sup> It is noteworthy that some authors did not include Jakam in their dictionaries: he does not appear in Ibn in their *Al-Durar al-kāminah* or in the *Dhayl al-durar al-kāminah* by the same author; he is absent from al-Maqrīzī's *Muqaffā* and from al-Suyūṭī's *Nal-Suyo'iqyān*. Some choices have been made, but they may be neither an apotheosis nor a *damnatio memoriae*, as some authors do not cover Jakam in one of their dictionaries, but do in another, as in al-Maqrīzī's *Durar al-ʿuqūd*, or in the obituaries of a chronicle, as in Ibn the *obiInbā'nbIbn the* Symmetrically, no necrology of Jakam is found in some chronicles whose authors wrote a biography of him in their dictionaries, such as al-Maqrīzī's *Sulūk* or Ibn Taghribirdī's *Nujūm*. This depends on the historiographical program of each author. Ibn n apotheosis nor a nd outs of the event. hrough the mention of the proper names in their narration and through s the lives of scholars) and his chronicle (which is the discursive place of politics). Al-Suyūṭī's work is the acme of this literary distinction, where the military are only tolerated in a biographical dictionary if they held a license (*ijāzah*).<sup>20</sup> On the contrary, in the eyes of al-Maqrīzī and Ibn Taghribirdī, biographical dictionaries elaborate the sociopolitical identity of the regime and are thus oriented toward the amirs,<sup>21</sup> although the obituaries in the chronicles are shorter and rarer. Al-Maqrīzī wrote two dictionaries with two distinct plans: one is meant as a register of contemporary notables since 760/1358, and it allowed some space for the military,<sup>22</sup> whereas the other is dedicated to prominent characters in the history of Islam and gives only limited coverage of the military in comparison with the attention to scholars.<sup>23</sup>

In short, the narrative existence of the sultanate's amirs used to depend, on the one hand, on the social representations of the ulama of that century, who defined notability according to institutional and political criteria; and on the other hand on the historiographical program of each one of the authors in each one of their books. In this frame, Jakam's narrative existence appears short—it is restricted

<sup>19</sup>Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 6:24–27; al-ʿAynī, “Iqd al-jumān,” Topkapı MS Ahmet III A2911/1, fol. 88v; idem, “Tārīkh al-Badr,” Bibliothèque Nationale MS Arabe 1544, fol. 80v; Ibn al-Sayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs wa-al-abdān fī tawārīkh al-zamān*, ed. Ḥasan Ḥabashī (Cairo, 1970–71), 2:232.

<sup>20</sup>For example, Sultan Jaqmaq is mentioned but his biography is restricted to the evocation of his teaching license. Al-Suyūṭī, *As-Suyūṭī's Who's Who in the Fifteenth Century: Nazm ul-Iqyān fī Ayān il-Ayān: Being a Biographical Dictionary of Notable Men and Women in Egypt, Syria and the Muslim World, Based on Two Manuscripts, One in Cairo and the Other in Leiden*, ed. Philip K. Hitti (New York, 1927), 103.

<sup>21</sup>Julien Loiseau, *Reconstruire la maison du sultan: Ruine et recomposition de l'ordre urbain au Caire (1350–1450)* (Cairo, 2010), 211–12.

<sup>22</sup>See the author's introduction: al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-ʿuqūd*, 1:62.

<sup>23</sup>Only three amirs of the reigns of Barqūq and Faraj are mentioned in al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-muqaffā al-kabīr*, ed. Muḥammad al-Ya'lāwī (Beirut, 1991).



to the first nine years of the ninth/fifteenth century—even though it is evoked in several works: seven authors of that century chose to write of his life in eight texts.

## Historiographical Trajectories: The Historians and Their Relationships with Jakam

Four of these authors were contemporaries and witnesses of the events. They composed their biographies of Jakam over the course of several decades in the first half of the ninth/fifteenth century. It is possible to propose a chronological order of these biographies: the first was written by al-ʿAynī in his *Tārīkh al-Badr*, whose composition had begun in the last months of the preceding century. Though I do not know the exact date, the second must be that of Ibn Khaṭīb al-Nāṣirīyah, as it preceded Ibn Ḥajar’s biography.<sup>24</sup> The third is in Ibn Ḥajar’s *Inbāʾ al-ghumr*, written about 840/1438, and the fourth is the one in al-Maqrīzī’s *Durar al-ʿuqūd*, which he wrote before 845/1442. The fifth is in the *ʿIqd al-jumān*, which al-ʿAynī started to write in order to replace his preceding chronicle from 824/1421 or 832/1428, with the fragment in question probably being written in 851/1449.<sup>25</sup> Except for the *Tārīkh al-Badr*, all of these biographies date from at least twenty years after Jakam’s death, and they were probably all redacted in about the same decade (840s/1438–47).

### *Al-ʿAynī and Jakam: Successive Strata in Historiographical Discourse*

Al-ʿAynī (762–855/1361–1451) was a client of Jakam, and one of his friends.<sup>26</sup> All his fellow historians note that he owed his ascension to Jakam’s patronage, as, during the very first years of the century (801–4/1399–1402), when Jakam was one of the most powerful amirs in Egypt, he granted al-ʿAynī the positions of *muḥtasib* of Cairo and then *nāzir al-aḥbās*.<sup>27</sup> After Jakam’s imprisonment in Syria in 804/1402, al-ʿAynī’s career suddenly took a downward turn. Having lost his patron, he was appointed only to low offices until he again found favor under Sultan al-Muʿayyad

<sup>24</sup> Al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Ḍawʾ al-lāmiʿ*, 3:76.

<sup>25</sup> Nobutaka Nakamachi, “Al-ʿAynī’s Chronicles as a Source for the Baḥrī Mamluk Period,” *Orient* 40 (2005): 157.

<sup>26</sup> For example, Jakam appointed him *muḥtasib* in Cairo in 803/1401. Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 4:161. See Clément Onimus, “Al-ʿAynī and His Fellow Historians: Questioning the Discursive Position of a Historian in the Mamluk Academic Field,” in Jo Van Steenberghe and Maya Termonia, eds., *New Readings in Arabic Historiography from Late Medieval Egypt and Syria* (submitted for publication); Onimus, “Écrire la vie de Jakam.”

<sup>27</sup> Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 11:193–97; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:1038, 1080; idem, *Durar al-ʿuqūd*, 3:467–68; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbāʾ*, 4:33–34.



Shaykh. It was al-ʿAynī’s intimacy with Jakam that first incited me to study his creation of this historical character, which later led to the decision to compare it with the character that appears in the works of other historians. This interesting narrative situation deserves some development.

Despite their friendship, al-ʿAynī’s obituaries of Jakam (in two different chronicles) are the shortest. The first is the *Tārīkh al-Badr*,<sup>28</sup> composed from 799 to 805/1396 to 1403 and then continued before it was copied by the author’s brother until 827/1424.<sup>29</sup> According to Nobutaka Nakamachi, this is the oldest text at our disposal.<sup>30</sup> I suggest that the fragment in question was written between 813/1411 and 815/1412. Indeed, following Nakamachi’s statement, it seems that this book was the continuation of an earlier manuscript that was ended in 813/1411.<sup>31</sup> The copy that was made by Aḥmad (al-ʿAynī’s brother) was not continued after 815/1412, when the author personally resumed the composition until 819/1416.<sup>32</sup> It is thus very likely that Aḥmad stopped writing in 815/1412. The text is short, consisting of only a few lines.<sup>33</sup> He notes his death, the shortness of his sultanate, and his various qualities. He continues with the restoration of the citadel of Aleppo, which would have been, according to the author, proof that Jakam dealt with important matters.<sup>34</sup> He concedes a mistake: that Jakam had executed his enemies at the end of his life—an accusation that can be backed up through al-Maqrīzī’s chronicle.<sup>35</sup> There is a surprising correction in the text. Among Jakam’s qualities, a negative one has been written and then crossed out: miserliness. Because of the correction, the reading is complicated; but it seems that it was meant to delete the word *misāk*. Does this mean that the copyist did not benefit from the same favors as his brother Maḥmūd? Indeed, it is written in another manuscript that

<sup>28</sup>Nobutaka Nakamachi, “Al-ʿAynī and His Chronicle: Historical Narrative Practice of Mamluk ‘Ulamā’,” *Annals of Japan Association for Middle East Studies* 23, no. 1 (2007): 266–67.

<sup>29</sup>Bibliothèque Nationale MS Arabe 1544. I am currently preparing an edition of this text.

<sup>30</sup>Nakamachi, “Al-ʿAynī and His Chronicle,” 266; idem, “Life in the Margins: Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-ʿAynī, a Non-Elite Intellectual in the Mamlūk Period,” *Orient* 48 (2013): 98.

<sup>31</sup>The manuscript in question is the manuscript of Süleymaniye Library no. 830. Cf. Nakamachi, “Life in the Margins,” 99.

<sup>32</sup>Nakamachi, “Life in the Margins,” 98.

<sup>33</sup>Al-ʿAynī, “Iqd al-jumān,” fol. 88v, and idem, “Tārīkh al-Badr,” Bibliothèque Nationale MS Arabe 1544, fol. 83v.

<sup>34</sup>The same expression can be found in the obituary of the *Iqd al-jumān*, that I will discuss later, as well as in the one written by Ibn al-Ṣayrafī (who copies al-ʿAynī). Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 2:232.

<sup>35</sup>He executes Duqmāq al-Muḥammadi in Jumādā II 808/December 1405, Ibn Ṣāhib Albāz and his sons in Shawwāl 808/April 1406, Nuʿayr the same month, ʿAllān al-Yaḥyāwī Julaq and Ṭūlū min ʿAlī Bāshā in Dhū al-Ḥijjah 808/June 1406, and Kizil in Dhū al-Qaʿdah 809/April 1407. Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:12, 17, 18, 20, 46.





Aḥmad al-ʿAynī mourned Amir Jakam when he died because Jakam had promised to give him an important position but had not done so.<sup>36</sup> This first obituary belongs to a specific political and personal context. It was written a few years after the events (813–15/1410–12), while one of Jakam’s rivals—either Sultan Faraj or Sultan Shaykh—occupied the throne. At that time al-ʿAynī was in disgrace because of his past friendship with the defeated amir. Thus, the text is short, prudent, and includes a negative concession against Jakam, and does not show how much al-ʿAynī was tied to his patron.

The second historiographical text in which al-ʿAynī mentions Jakam’s story is the panegyric dedicated to Sultan al-Muʿayyad Shaykh. Amir Shaykh al-Maḥmūdī had been a prominent member of Yashbak al-Shaʿbānī’s faction before he “inherited” this faction after the latter’s death on 13 Rabiʿ II 810/17 September 1407. At first he followed the political course of Yashbak (of whom Jakam was a supporter in 802/1400 and an enemy in 803/1401) and he only briefly allied with Jakam in 807/1405 before becoming his enemy in 808/1406. In general (except the 807/1405 episode), Yashbak’s and Shaykh’s faction remained hostile to Jakam’s faction (which Nawrūz al-Ḥāfizī inherited after his death in 809/1407).<sup>37</sup> In 815/1412, when Shaykh triumphed over Sultan al-Nāṣir Faraj and proclaimed himself sultan, al-ʿAynī fell into disgrace because he was his rival’s follower. In order to be forgiven, he wrote a panegyric titled *Al-Sayf al-muḥannad fī sirat al-Malik al-Muʿayyad*. In all likelihood, this is the second (partially) historiographical text in which Jakam appears. He is not mentioned, however, before his alliance with Shaykh and Yashbak in 807/1405. The causes of the reversal that followed (where Shaykh was forgiven by Sultan Faraj and then opposed to Jakam) are concealed in all the sources, maybe because they were related just to the opportunism and material interest of the actors and were not worth noting. The battle that ensued and opposed Shaykh to Jakam in al-Rastān is briefly narrated (the responsibility for Shaykh’s defeat is attributed to his friend Damurdāsh al-Muḥammadī). Regarding the later events, Jakam is negatively evoked: he is said to have gathered corrupt people to create an army that incited him to be proclaimed sultan. The author insists that the only Syrian city that did not submit to Jakam’s authority was Ṣafad, where Shaykh was governor, as its conquest was forbidden by God’s will (*qadr*), which warned Jakam that the “Sultan in the sight of God” was the “king” (*malik*) of Ṣafad. In other words, al-ʿAynī interprets the fact that Jakam did not attack Shaykh in Ṣafad as a divine order, when in fact it was due to a call for help from the amir of Mardin. The way al-ʿAynī takes responsibility away from Jakam reminds the reader of Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah (779–851/1377–1448), another contemporary of the events, according to whom the sultan’s hostility was due only

<sup>36</sup>Nakamachi, “Life in the Margins,” 105.

<sup>37</sup>On these two factions, see Onimus, *Les Maîtres du jeu*, 236–38.



to Jakam's outspokenness and rudeness (as if he was not responsible for having rebelled).<sup>38</sup> The amir's mistakes are thus presented as signs of obedience to God and of the sovereign's intransigence.<sup>39</sup>

From Sultan Barsbāy's enthronement (824/1421) forward, al-ʿAynī wrote a second chronicle, entitled *ʿIqd al-jumān*—of which an autograph copy has been preserved—that was completed in 851/1447. The second obituary of Jakam that can be found in it is more or less a copy of the first. The corrected criticism is absent and it displays a few other differences. It adds two qualities, courage and heroism (*kāna shujāʿan baṭalan*), to the ones mentioned in the first obituary: fortitude, bravery, and devotion. He then supplements these martial qualities with two others: justice and equity (*al-ʿadl wa-al-inṣāf*). Moreover, al-ʿAynī devotes a sentence to defending the amir's sexual probity (a remark that is absent in the *Tārīkh al-Badr* and is so unexpected that it must have been answering an accusation against Jakam decades after his death).<sup>40</sup> While evoking the restoration of the citadel of Aleppo in this obituary, al-ʿAynī adds that God Himself entrusted Jakam with this work after Tamerlane had destroyed it. In short, after thirty years, al-ʿAynī has modified a sober and prudent text to make an apology for Jakam.

While concentrating on the narration of the events in the *ʿIqd al-jumān* and not just in the obituary, the positive evocations of Jakam do not leave any doubt about the author's bias. The frame of the events of 803–4/1401–2 is the same as in al-Maqrīzī's chronicle, but al-ʿAynī presents his protector (with whom he used to dwell, he says)<sup>41</sup> as the protagonist of the realm's history by naming him in every rubrical title.<sup>42</sup> He is presented as a popular man<sup>43</sup> and his faction is glorified for its courage and compared both to a hawk that swoops down on its prey and to a prisoner who takes off his chains.<sup>44</sup> During the *fitnah* of Shawwāl 804/May 1402 (after which Jakam was arrested), al-ʿAynī insists (by quoting “an amir whom [he] trust[s]”) that Jakam and Nawrūz would have won the battle if Sūdūn Ṭāz had not used a disloyal ruse.<sup>45</sup> Ibn Ḥajar gives another example: the Shafīʿi qadi criticizes al-ʿAynī for having exhibited his support of Jakam. In order to substantiate the ac-

<sup>38</sup>His edited chronicle ends before Jakam's death, hence the absence of an obituary. Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 4:410.

<sup>39</sup>Al-ʿAynī, *Al-Sayf al-muhannad fī sirat al-malik al-Muʿayyad*, ed. Fahīm Muḥammad, ʿUlwī Shaltūt, and Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Ziyādah (Cairo, 1998), 247–49.

<sup>40</sup>I have not found any trace of this accusation in the other historiographical writings.

<sup>41</sup>Al-ʿAynī, *ʿIqd*, ed. Bīnū, 203.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 270–76.

<sup>43</sup>He is supported by the people during the *fitnahs*. Ibid., 274.

<sup>44</sup>Al-ʿAynī, *ʿIqd*, ed. Bīnū, 275.

<sup>45</sup>He manipulated the child-sultan who organized negotiations that involved the caliph and the four qadis. Ibid., 308.



cusations, he quotes *in extenso* al-ʿAynī’s paragraph related to the al-Rastān battle that was won by Jakam against Shaykh in Dhū al-Ḥijjah 808/June 1406,<sup>46</sup> and ends with “during this battle, Jakam had less than 2000 [soldiers] but God gives the victory to whom he wants.”<sup>47</sup> In its detail, this passage is particularly hostile to Amir Shaykh al-Maḥmūdī (who appears as fearing Jakam’s good fortune).

Comparison of the texts shows that the position the author takes on the subject is determined by his position in the political realities at the time he is writing. The first obituary was written when Jakam’s enemies dominated the realm and the author was in disgrace. The second text was written less than ten years after the events (818/1415), when some of the protagonists were still alive and one of them (to whom it is dedicated) was the sultan. More than in the former text, the author tries successfully to obtain forgiveness. As for his major chronicle, *ʿIqd al-jumān*, most of the text dates from the second quarter of the ninth/fifteenth century, and particularly from the reign of Sultan Barsbāy, during whose rule it was published.<sup>48</sup> Amir Barsbāy al-Duqmāqī had not been neutral in the conflicts that defined the rhythm of the beginning of the ninth/fifteenth century. He was close to Jakam’s partisans during his youth,<sup>49</sup> so al-ʿAynī could be more explicit about his bias. A consistent feature of these various texts is that Jakam is always obedient to God’s will until his final failure. Al-ʿAynī cultivates then uncertainty when he writes about Jakam, and thus creates a plurality of possible receptions of his text. He makes it acceptable to the victor without betraying himself, by preserving the diachronic unity of his own individuality as a writing subject and a political actor.

<sup>46</sup>Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:20–21; idem, *Durar al-ʿuqūd*, 1:574–80; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbāʿ*, 4:24–27; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 6:177.

<sup>47</sup>“Azhara al-taʿaṣṣub fihā li-Jakam” he says. Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbāʿ*, 5:302.

<sup>48</sup>A part of it may have been written during the 810s, while al-ʿAynī had fallen into disgrace. Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 11:193–97.

<sup>49</sup>Since the beginning of his career, Barsbāy had been an intimate friend to Ṭaṭar and remained so until Ṭaṭar’s death. Ṭaṭar was directly tied to the faction of Shaykh Lājīn and Jakam. Barsbāy joined the rebel coalition between Jakam, Yashbak, and Shaykh before he obtained the amnesty of the sultan in Dhū al-Qaʿdah 808/May1406, but it is not said which one of them he was supporting. Among the four other amirs who got amnesty, there were three members of the Jakam-Nawrūz faction (Jumaq, Arghiz, and Sūdūn al-Yūsufī) and a partisan of Yashbak-Shaykh (Asanbāy al-Turkumānī). When Ṭaṭar joined Shaykh al-Maḥmūdī’s faction after Jakam’s death, Barsbāy followed him and was granted the office of great chamberlain of Damascus by this amir in Ramaḍān 811/February 1409. It is noteworthy that we should not follow Aḥmad Darrāj’s opinion related to Barsbāy as an unconditional partisan of Shaykh al-Maḥmūdī: this would obliterate a great part of his factional course. Al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-ʿuqūd*, 1:456–82; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 6:397–405 (biography of Sultan al-Zāhir Ṭaṭar); Aḥmad Darrāj, *L’Égypte sous le règne de Barsbāy, 824–841/1422–1438* (Damascus, 1961), 13.



*Other Biographers, Other Narrative Contexts*

Other contemporary authors, who also knew Jakam, present his personality from various angles according to the context in which each of them was writing. Nevertheless, a generally positive perspective emerges from their pens. It will be useful to explain their various political and academic positions.

Al-Maqrīzī (766–845/1364–1442) was al-ʿAynī’s rival.<sup>50</sup> By appointing al-ʿAynī *muhtasib* of Cairo, Jakam caused al-Maqrīzī’s destitution. During the time when Jakam was politically active (801–9/1399–1407), it seems that al-Maqrīzī belonged to the rival faction led by Yashbak al-Shaʿbānī.<sup>51</sup> He left the political scene as early as the 810s/1410s and began writing his chronicle the *Kitāb al-sulūk*. However, as Jo Van Steenbergen shows in his edition of al-Maqrīzī’s *Al-Dhahab al-masbūk*, this author remained involved in clientage relationships with the successive sovereigns. Indeed, he would have dedicated this book concerning the rulers of old who performed the pilgrimage to Sultan al-Muʿayyad Shaykh in 821/1418, then he offered it to Yūsuf, son of Sultan al-Ashraf Barsbāy, in 834/1431.<sup>52</sup> In all likelihood, al-Maqrīzī’s retirement should be questioned.<sup>53</sup> To be specific, while writing the *Kitāb al-sulūk*, he was presumably seeking the patronage of both sultans. He was writing at the same time as al-ʿAynī was composing his *Tārīkh al-Badr*; both texts are, consequently, independent of each other.

The biography al-Maqrīzī wrote decades later in the *Durar al-ʿuqūd*, during Barsbāy’s reign, is relatively long in comparison to the rest of the biographies in that work,<sup>54</sup> a form of implicit emphasis of this individual’s importance. He is, thus, the most accurate of the witnesses. The comparison of this text with the narrative of the events in the *Kitāb al-sulūk* shows that the entire text is composed as a compilation of the excerpts from the chronicle that mention Jakam. In his various books, al-Maqrīzī is consistent: unlike al-ʿAynī, his public position *vis-à-vis* Jakam did not change between the composition of the *Kitāb al-sulūk* (the second decade of the ninth/fifteenth century) and the composition of the *Durar al-ʿuqūd*

<sup>50</sup>On al-Maqrīzī, I refer to Frédéric Bauden, “Taḳī al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī al-Maqrīzī,” in Alex Mallett, ed., *Medieval Muslim Historians and the Franks in the Levant* (Leiden and New York, 2014), 161–200. On the rivalries between al-Maqrīzī, al-ʿAynī, and Ibn Ḥajar, see Anne F. Broadbridge, “Academic Rivalry and the Patronage System in Fifteenth-Century Egypt: al-ʿAynī, al-Maqrīzī, and Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 3 (1999): 85–107, and Clément Onimus, “Al-ʿAynī and his Fellow Historians: Questioning the Discursive Position of a Historian in the Mamluk Academic Field,” in Van Steenbergen and Termonia, eds., *New Readings in Arabic Historiography*.

<sup>51</sup>Jo Van Steenbergen, *Caliphate and Kingship in a Fifteenth-Century Literary History of Muslim Leadership and Pilgrimage* (Leiden, 2016), 38.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., 47, 50. This is a critical edition and translation of al-Maqrīzī’s *Al-Dhahab al-masbūk fī dhikr man ḥajja min al-khulafāʾ wa-al-mulūk*.

<sup>53</sup>On this debate, see *ibid.*, 34–35.

<sup>54</sup>Six pages in the published version. Al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-ʿuqūd*, 1:574–80.



(the fifth decade of the century). While Sami G. Massoud has demonstrated that al-Maqrīzī's position toward a historical character could evolve significantly,<sup>55</sup> the diachronic treatment of the figure of Jakam shows a remarkable historiographical stability.

The biography that Ibn Khaṭīb al-Nāṣirīyah (774–843/1372–1439)<sup>56</sup> wrote is as long as al-Maqrīzī's.<sup>57</sup> He is chronologically the third author who wrote on Jakam, and he had a particular point of view: he came from an Aleppine family of scholars and lawyers and became a historian of Aleppo, the city that Jakam made his capital. He probably lived there during Jakam's reign. According to al-Sakhāwī, he left Cairo in Rabī' I 809/August 1406, when Sultan Faraj undertook his expedition against Jakam in Syria, and he probably stayed in Syria during the following months (i.e., during Jakam's reign).<sup>58</sup> He wrote years—or perhaps decades—later, while he was chief qadi of Aleppo (an office he held several times from 816/1412–13 onwards) or chief qadi of Tripoli, or while he occupied other positions in Aleppo.<sup>59</sup> Indeed, in his biography of Jakam he elaborated on Syrian events, which indicates his access to Levantine sources and witnesses.<sup>60</sup> It is noteworthy that there are no indications that he had relationships with al-ʿAynī or al-Maqrīzī, but he was close to Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, of whom he may have been a student in Cairo (unless they were of the same age) and whom he invited to stay in his house in Aleppo during Sultan Barsbāy's expedition to Āmid. Ibn Ḥajar also corrected the manuscript of Ibn Khaṭīb al-Nāṣirīyah's chronicle.<sup>61</sup>

Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (773–852/1372–1449) is the last contemporary author who wrote on Jakam. He had long been a rival of al-ʿAynī before the latter became close to Jakam. This rivalry can be easily read in the first mentions of Jakam in the *Inbāʾ*, which insist that al-ʿAynī owed his ascension to the amir.<sup>62</sup> While

<sup>55</sup>Sami G. Massoud, "Al-Maqrīzī as a Historian of the Reign of Barqūq," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 7, no. 2 (2003): 119–36.

<sup>56</sup>Born in Jibrīn, near Aleppo, he became qadi of Aleppo and Tripoli. Carl Brockelmann, *Geschichte des arabischen Literatur* (Leiden, 1949), S2:42.

<sup>57</sup>Six pages. Ibn Khaṭīb al-Nāṣirīyah, "Al-Durr al-muntakhab fī tārikh Ḥalab," Bibliothèque nationale MS Arabe 5853, fols. 133–35.

<sup>58</sup>See al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Dawʾ al-lāmiʿ*, 5:303–7.

<sup>59</sup>Among others, he was the preacher and imam of the great mosque of Aleppo, as well as a teacher.

<sup>60</sup>Besides the narrative of the *fitnahs*, he is also the most accurate about the restoration of the citadel of Aleppo and the war that opposed him to the governor of al-Bīrah and then to Qarā Yulūk.

<sup>61</sup>After al-Sakhāwī who was, later, another pupil of Ibn Ḥajar. The biography al-Sakhāwī wrote cannot allow us to establish an accurate chronology of the life of Ibn Khaṭīb al-Nāṣirīyah. He mainly gives the list of his teachers. See al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Dawʾ al-lāmiʿ*, 5:303–7.

<sup>62</sup>Jakam appears in the *Inbāʾ al-ghumr* in the obituary of al-ʿAynī's father, in which the author denounces the intercession that he granted to the son, Badr al-Dīn Maḥmūd. Jakam's patronage



writing the *Inbā'*, Ibn Ḥajar became the chief Shafī'i qadi in Egypt during Sultan Barsbāy's reign and was dominating the academic scene, concurrently with al-ʿAynī. The context in which Ibn Ḥajar wrote was, therefore, ambiguous. On the one hand, he was writing about an individual whose client was his rival. Moreover, this individual had been the enemy of his benefactor, Sultan Faraj.<sup>63</sup> On the other hand, he was writing during the reign of another sultan, Barsbāy, from whom he received exceptional favors and who had been a member of, or close to, Jakam's faction. Thus, Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī could have been equally biased in favor of or hostile toward Jakam.

The different biographies of Jakam that were written by contemporary witnesses are independent of each other. No clue indicates any dependence of one text on another, except the two obituaries that al-ʿAynī wrote. Al-Maqrīzī, Ibn Khaṭīb al-Nāṣiriyyah, and Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī wrote texts that were far longer than al-ʿAynī's biographies, as well as more accurate and factual. These authors' positions create a historiographical polyphony as a result of their various political and academic contexts. The notion of "historiographical trajectory" allows us to apprehend not only the different positions of each actor but also the evolution of their writing contexts, depending on evolving political realities. A remarkable stability can be found under al-Maqrīzī's pen. Ibn Khaṭīb al-Nāṣiriyyah's point of view is clearly correlated to his Aleppine origins. Political evolutions caused in al-ʿAynī's and Ibn Ḥajar's works a sort of distortion of a past that they evoke in equivocal ways, because their positions at the time of the events and their positions at the times of the composition of their works were different. We shall see, finally, that all of these works converge toward a positive historiographical representation of this amir.

### *Ibn Taghrībirdī and the Later Biographers*

Among the later authors, three historians of the second half of the century wrote biographies of Jakam: Ibn Taghrībirdī (813–74/1411–70),<sup>64</sup> al-Sakhāwī (830–902/1427–97),<sup>65</sup> and Ibn al-Ṣayrafī (819–900/1416–95).<sup>66</sup>

Unlike the later texts of al-Sakhāwī and Ibn al-Ṣayrafī (which consist of summarized compilations of former biographies, and specifically the ones that were

---

toward his clients is mentioned several times, particularly about al-ʿAynī.

<sup>63</sup>There is no doubt that Ibn Ḥajar was then closer to Sultan Faraj, who appointed him *muftī* of the Dār al-ʿAdl in 811/1408–9, than to the partisans of Jakam. Franz Rosenthal, "Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., 3:800.

<sup>64</sup>Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 4:313–24.

<sup>65</sup>Al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Ḍawʿ al-lāmiʿ*, 3:76.

<sup>66</sup>Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 2:232.



the most in favor of Jakam),<sup>67</sup> Ibn Taghrībirdī's text looks like a long panegyric of the amir.<sup>68</sup> As Julien Loiseau explains that the objective of the compilation of the *Manhal* was the elaboration of the memory of the mamluks of Sultan al-Zāhir Barqūq, we may infer that Jakam's importance in this book shows that Ibn Taghrībirdī believed that Jakam had played an important role in the formation of the Zāhirīs' power.<sup>69</sup> Because of the exceptional length of this biography, as well as the memorial intent that rules the book, this is a key text in the elaboration of the historiographical figure of Jakam, and it is worthy of particular exposition.

In general, this is a compilation of excerpts from al-Maqrīzī's chronicle regarding Jakam's rebellions, but Ibn Taghrībirdī adds some original accounts thanks to his integration inside the amiral milieu (he was the son of a colleague of Jakam). For example, he is the only one who gives a physical description of Jakam, although he never met him:<sup>70</sup> "he was tall, had bright red skin, a black beard and black brow, and he was hairy." This description may reflect the true appearance of the amir during the years 801–9/1399–1407, but its mention in the biography is not innocuous, as it shows a mature man, that is, a man that can reign, unlike Sultan Faraj, whom the same author describes as a blond-haired child of medium height.<sup>71</sup> Ibn Taghrībirdī's biography is obviously in favor of Jakam and echoes some passages of the chronicle of al-ʿAynī, whose disciple he had been.<sup>72</sup> In a passage that he copied from al-Maqrīzī, we find the same reservation that al-ʿAynī expresses in regard to the other amirs Jakam killed.<sup>73</sup> The recurrence of this reservation shows that it was common decades later among the survivors of these wars. Despite the seriousness of the criticism, Ibn Taghrībirdī sings Jakam's praises. Unexpectedly, the hostility between Amir Taghrībirdī (father of the historian) and Amir Jakam during at least two *fitnahs* is never mentioned and does

<sup>67</sup>They reproduce or compile data available in the witnesses' works: al-Sakhāwī summarizes Ibn Khaṭīb al-Nāṣirīyah's text, although he quotes Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī and al-Maqrīzī among his sources. Ibn al-Ṣayrafī writes just a few lines that are based on al-ʿAynī's text, and lingers on Jakam's qualities and kind deeds before he ends with a eulogy (which is exceptional in this chronicle's obituaries).

<sup>68</sup>It is the longest biography: twelve pages in the edited version.

<sup>69</sup>Julien Loiseau, "L'émir en sa maison: Parcours politiques et patrimoine urbain au Caire, d'après les biographies du *Manhal al-Ṣāfi*," *Annales Islamologiques* 36 (2002): 120–23; *ibid.*, *Reconstruire la maison du sultan: Ruine et recomposition de l'ordre urbain au Caire (1350–1450)* (Cairo, 2010), 209–14.

<sup>70</sup>Ibn Taghrībirdī was born in 813/1411 and Jakam died in 809/1407.

<sup>71</sup>Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 6:271. The contradiction might be with Sultan Īnāl as well, as he was more than 60 years old when he was enthroned, while the author was writing his chronicle.

<sup>72</sup>In the biography of Badr al-Dīn al-ʿAynī, Ibn Taghrībirdī says that he held from him a teaching license for his whole work. This biography is almost a panegyric. Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 11:193–97.

<sup>73</sup>Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 6:177.



not lessen the praise.<sup>74</sup> Here again, the representation of the amir he had to elaborate was more important than any reservation that could be expressed.

The variety of writing contexts is thus clear: differences in geographical context between the Cairenes and the Aleppine, differences in political context between Jakam's client and his rival's clients, differences in academic context between friends and rivals, and so on. And yet, from the comparison, a permanent feature appears: the crucial role that was played by Sultan Barsbāy's reign. Jakam's figure not only evolved under al-ʿAynī's pen and was then rehabilitated in the *ʿIqd al-jumān*, but he also acquired a central position for all the historiographers. The enthronement of one of his former partisans was the occasion that led to a new period of historiographical writing, which the historians of the second half of the ninth/fifteenth century inherited. The unanimously laudatory presentation of Jakam's life by Ibn Taghrībirdī, and then by al-Sakhāwī and Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, shows how much this character had become a major figure in the history of the regime.

### **Convergence: The Impossible Elaboration of a Sultanic Figure**

Despite the different contexts, the historiographical polyphony converged toward a unanimous treatment in favor of the figure of Jakam.

#### *Titles and the Question of the Sultanate*

An onomastic study confirms such a polyphony, which is particularly significant to the extent that the name is the cornerstone of the individual identity. As we can see in the following table, Jakam's name changes according to the author and must be compared with the official title he gave to himself and that appears in the foundation inscription of the south bastion of the citadel of Aleppo.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>74</sup>Jakam was a supporter of the younger *khāṣṣakīyah* amirs during the internal war of 802/1401, while Taghrībirdī supported their rivals Aytamish and Tanam. Compare the biographies of both amirs and their mentions in the chronicles: al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-ʿuqūd*, 1:574–80; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbāʾ al-ghumr*, 6:24–27, 7:83–84; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 4:31–43; idem, *Nujūm*, 6:16; al-ʿAynī, *ʿIqd*, ed. Bīnū, 171; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:986 ff. In 807/1405, during an offensive led by Amirs Jakam, Yashbak al-Shaʿbānī, and Shaykh al-Maḥmūdī against Egypt (which was ruled by Īnāl Bāy), Taghrībirdī followed the sultan's party against Jakam and his allies. Compare al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-ʿuqūd*, 1:574–80; idem, *Sulūk*, 3:1144; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbāʾ al-ghumr*, 6:24–27; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 4:313–42; idem, *Nujūm*, 6:124.

<sup>75</sup>See n. 10 above.





<b>Jakam's Titulatures</b>	
<b>Source</b>	<b>Titulature</b>
Inscription on the south bastion of the citadel of Aleppo	Al-Malik al-ʿĀdil Abī ʿAbd Allāh Jakam Niẓām al-Mulk
Al-Maqrīzī (766–845/1364–1442), <i>Durar al-ʿuqūd</i> , 4:574.	Jakam al-Malik al-ʿĀdil Abū al-Futūḥ ibn ʿAbd Allāh
Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (773–852/1372–1449), <i>Inbāʾ al-ghumr</i> , 6:24	Jakam ibn ʿAbd Allāh Abū al-Faraj al-Zāhirī
Al-ʿAynī, “Tārīkh al-Badr,” Bibliothèque Nationale MS Arabe 1544, fol. 80v	Al-Malik Sayf al-Dīn Jakam
Al-ʿAynī (762–855/1361–1451), “Iqd al-jumān,” MS Ahmet III A2911/19, fol. 88v	Al-Malik Sayf al-Dīn Jakam
Ibn Khaṭīb al-Nāṣiriyyah (d. 843/1451), “Al-Durr al-muntakhab,” Bibliothèque Nationale MS Arabe 5853, fol. 133.	Jakam ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Zāhirī al-Amīr Sayf al-Dīn
Ibn Taghrībirdī (813–74/1411–70), <i>Al-Manhal al-ṣāfi</i> , 4:313.	Jakam ibn ʿAbd Allāh min ʿIwaḍ al-Zāhirī al-Amīr Sayf al-Dīn al-mutaghallab ʿalā Ḥalab al-mulaqqab bi-al-Malik al-ʿĀdil
Ibn al-Ṣayrafī (819–900/1416–95), <i>Nuzhat al-nufūs</i> , 2:232.	Al-Malik Sayf al-Dīn Jakam
Al-Sakhāwī (830–902/1427–97), <i>Al-Ḍawʾ al-lāmiʿ</i> , 3:76.	Jakam Abū al-Faraj al-Zāhirī Barqūq

The singularity of Jakam's biography consists in the fact that it had to take a position *vis-à-vis* the sultanic figure since the biographized subject had claimed the sovereign title. But the main aspect of Jakam's naming is its heterogeneity. The onomastic instability illustrates the difficulty of elaborating a unified biographized subject due to divergences between the biographizing subjects. This difficulty correlates with the position of each author in the political field. First, we notice that no author plainly states the sultanic title. The term “sultan,” although it can be found elsewhere in the text, cannot be found in any title attached to Jakam. Its omission on the Aleppo inscription is related to Jakam's progressive claim of the sultanate: Ibn Khaṭīb al-Nāṣiriyyah explains that he initially ordered the Friday sermon to be said in his name using the royal title (*laqab*) al-Malik



al-ʿĀdil, but without the term “sultan” until 10 Shawwāl 809/20 March 1407.<sup>76</sup> We learn from the epigraphy that he bore at that time the title of Nizām al-Mulk, which could be translated as “regent of the realm.” Only al-Maqrīzī uses the royal title (the *ism* is in the first position because of the alphabetical classification), whereas al-ʿAynī uses the royal title of *malik* but without the royal name al-ʿĀdil. On the contrary, he chooses a typically amiral *laqab* (Sayf al-Dīn), hence an onomastic inconsistency. Thanks to various evidence, we know of his intimacy with Jakam, so his hesitation to use a higher title cannot be anything other than a sign of prudence while facing those of his enemies who became sovereigns after Jakam’s death. Ibn Khaṭīb al-Nāṣiriyyah and Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī choose an entirely amiral title, except for the *kunyah* (in Ibn Ḥajar’s text), which is rare among amiral titles but systematic in the sultanic ones. This *kunyah* is very interesting because it diverges from al-Maqrīzī, who names him Abū al-Futūḥ (the father of victories), and from Ibn Ḥajar, who calls him Abū al-Faraj (the father of relief). The epigraphy shows that Jakam had in fact chosen another *kunyah* for himself, Abū ʿAbd Allāh, which may have been a paternal name (the father of ʿAbd Allāh). Thus, the *kunyahs* that we find in al-Maqrīzī’s and Ibn Ḥajar’s texts may be either deliberate or unconscious choices made by these authors that associate the amir with positive values. Moreover, the second one symbolically retakes the notion of relief from the name of Sultan al-Nāṣir Faraj, Jakam’s rival; such a correspondence cannot be pure coincidence. The title is one of the most revealing clues to an author’s position: al-Maqrīzī recognizes kingship, Ibn Ḥajar and Ibn Khaṭīb al-Nāṣiriyyah do not, and al-ʿAynī grants it with some caution, probably because he was known to be the amir’s loyal partisan.

The later authors use the titles their teachers used: Ibn Ḥajar and Ibn Khaṭīb al-Nāṣiriyyah are al-Sakhāwī’s sources, and al-ʿAynī is Ibn al-Ṣayrafī’s source. Only Ibn Taghrībirdī proposes a medium solution. Whereas al-Sakhāwī’s and Ibn al-Ṣayrafī’s choices come from a classical phenomenon of compilation that transforms the narrated fact from testimony to memory, Ibn Taghrībirdī prefers a new solution that shows a sort of neutrality as he gives an amiral title (the only one that uses Jakam’s *nisbah*: “min ʿIwaḍ” or “al-ʿIwaḍī”) but adds the claimed royal title. These onomastic divergences indicate the substantial complexity of the position of these epigones who depended on their sources and masters but were also responsible for the elaboration of the political memory of the regime.

### *From Polyphony to Convergence*

The titles and the onomastic express the polyphony of the historiographical writing. However, it is noteworthy that, despite this polyphony, every biography of

<sup>76</sup>Ibn Khaṭīb al-Nāṣiriyyah, “Al-Durr al-muntakhab,” fol. 135r.



Jakam converges on a positive treatment. Unlike both biographies written by al-ʿAynī, the three other contemporary authors—al-Maqrīzī, Ibn Khaṭīb al-Nāṣirīyah, and Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī—insist on a factual description of Amir Jakam’s career: offices, rebellions, battles, and so on. Yet, no one limits his discourse to the facts: all of them make positive remarks which do not leave any doubt about their bias in favor of the amir. In Ibn Khaṭīb al-Nāṣirīyah’s text, the Aleppine point of view is obviously in favor of Jakam. For al-Maqrīzī and Ibn Ḥajar, the writing of their works during the reign of Barsbāy (1422–38) influenced their perspectives: denigration of the amir would have displeased their audience, i.e., the court. An ambiguity can be noticed in the obituary in Ibn Ḥajar’s *Inbāʾ*.<sup>77</sup> Although the biography is, on the whole, positive, Ibn Ḥajar expresses (explicitly or implicitly) some criticisms of the amir: he doubts the date of his appointment as an amir<sup>78</sup> and accuses him of megalomania (*taʿāzum*).<sup>79</sup>

In contrast, in al-Maqrīzī’s text the position *vis-à-vis* Jakam is stable and nuanced. The very same representation of Jakam appears in the body of the *Kitāb al-sulūk* and in the biography in the *Durar al-ʿuqūd*, despite Jakam’s hostility to al-Maqrīzī’s patron, Amir Yashbak,<sup>80</sup> and despite the fact that part of the *Sulūk* was written during the reign of an enemy of Jakam, Shaykh. In a first writing stratum, higher stakes prevailed in the factional games, which led him to show Jakam in a favorable light. In a second stratum, this positive representation integrated the process of the pursuit of sultanic patronage: while writing the *Durar al-ʿuqūd*, during Barsbāy’s reign, to evoke Jakam positively became a clientage action.

In sum, every contemporary author shows himself to be in favor of Jakam. Their various historiographical trajectories allow us to understand why each one adopted this perspective, but this does not explain everything. As it appears in the onomastic and in the *Kitāb al-sulūk*, for example, other issues also seem to have influenced the historiographical representation of Amir Jakam.

<sup>77</sup> Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbāʾ al-ghumr*, 6:24–27.

<sup>78</sup> He postdates Jakam’s appointment as an amir after Barqūq’s death and not during his reign. This statement looks like an anecdote but it suggests that his appointment was not due to the sultan who recognized his skills but to his ambition and the conflicts in the beginning of Faraj’s reign.

<sup>79</sup> Jakam’s claim to the sultanate would be hubris, which may be an implicit way to explain his death two months after his enthronement as a divine punishment.

<sup>80</sup> There is only one clear difference between the biography and the chronicle: the reaction of Jakam’s allies when in 807/1404–5, while he was rebelling against al-Nāṣir Faraj, he adopted the sultanic rituals. In the *Kitāb al-sulūk*, he would have caused the wrath and anxiety of his allies, Shaykh and Yashbak, while in the *Durar al-ʿuqūd*, this decision would have provoked their mockery. Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:1150; Onimus, “Écrire la vie de Jakam.”



*A Thematic Convergence: The Justice of the Rebel*

The onomastic instability shows how complicated an author's position related to the sultanic claim was. This complexity is due to the fact that the notion of rebellion was anything but trivial. It asks the question of the rebel's legitimacy, a major issue that is not explicitly evoked by any author, but which no one could have simply omitted, even if it is only present in the titles.

The core of the question is the theme of justice. After the narrative, the amiral biographies all end with a list of qualities and faults. This list is standardized: the terms that are meant to describe an individual personality belong to a repertory that is common to all the authors and is an expression of the set of values considered important in the milieu of the ulama.<sup>81</sup> This enumeration of terms does not inform about the events, but it should not be considered as an annex either. On the contrary: it is the core, the essence of the biography. Indeed, the authors wrote the lists of obituaries and collections of biographies with the intention of expressing a hierarchy of values that was meant to define an ideal of notability. The compilation of biographies, associated to a proper name, elaborates the social group of the *a'yān* and each biography locates a member of this group as an *exemplum* in relation to the moral ideal of the ulama. Thus, the dictionaries are written from the perspective of *Historia magistra vitae*, aimed at the ethical edification of the readers and listeners who are incited to conform themselves to this ideal. From the point of view of the biographized individuals, the enumeration of qualities contrasts with the linearity of the biography or of the annalistic narrative: the individual is not depicted as an actor in political events but as a personality which is evaluated according to a moral position *vis-à-vis* the other members of the elite and specifically *vis-à-vis* the ulama.

The analysis of the qualities that are attributed to Jakam is enlightening. Al-Maqrīzī and al-ʿAynī associate this list with the sultanate. We read in the *Durar al-ʿuqūd*: “as a sultan, he was clement, fair and feared.”<sup>82</sup> “His sultanate did not last more than two months. He was nothing but courageous, heroic, firm, brave, and devoted,” al-ʿAynī says in the *Iqd al-jumān*, adding that “he loved justice and equity” (*al-ʿadl wa-al-inṣāf*). Unexpectedly, the longer enumeration of qualities comes from Ibn Ḥajar: “he was courageous, valiant, feared (*muhāb*), prone to seek justice (*yataḥarrá al-ʿadl*) and to like equity. He was well-disposed towards the composition of poems and loved to listen to them.”<sup>83</sup> More interesting is the text of Ibn Khaṭīb al-Nāṣirīyah, who places the list of qualities not at the end of the biography but just before the evocation of his claim for the sultanate. There is no doubt that he was preparing the reader, who thus understands that this claim was not

<sup>81</sup> Onimus, *Les Maîtres du jeu*, 40–48.

<sup>82</sup> Al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-ʿuqūd*, 1:574–80.

<sup>83</sup> Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbāʾ al-ghumr*, 6:24–27.



unjustified. Jakam was, he says, “a grand amir, respected, courageous, valiant, and a skilled administrator. He was a man of great honor and was feared with such a reverence that it forced the magnates to be humble.” In order to insist on Jakam’s legitimacy, Ibn Khaṭīb adds that no one opposed the proclamation of the deposition of Sultan Faraj. In other words, the divergences between the authors become less marked when writing of the personal qualities of Jakam; hence the exemplification of his figure. He is thus unanimously recognized as fitting the moral ideal that amirs are meant to conform to.

Jakam was not the only amir whose lists of qualities emphasize justice, but this is not common. Among hundreds of amirs who took part in the wars during the reign of Sultan Faraj, only three enjoyed such a treatment:<sup>84</sup> Tanam (d. 802/1400),<sup>85</sup> Taghrībirdī (d. 815/1412),<sup>86</sup> and Duqmāq al-Muḥammādī (d. 808/1406).<sup>87</sup> Justice is also mentioned, but ambiguously, in two other biographies: Sūdūn al-Jalab (d. 815/1412)<sup>88</sup> and Yashbak al-Aʿraj (d. 831/1428).<sup>89</sup> Among Jakam’s peers, i.e., the protagonists of these wars, Amir Taghrībirdī is without any doubt the one who was granted the most positive remarks, but most of them come from his own son, who made his chronicle a sort of panegyric for his father. Among the leaders of factions, Amir Shaykh al-Maḥmūdī is depicted with laudatory commentaries but justice is not mentioned in any biography of him<sup>90</sup> except al-ʿAynī’s panegyric.<sup>91</sup> Shaykh had by then become sultan, and he favored most of our historians. It is noteworthy, however, that for unknown reasons, al-Maqrīzī ended Shaykh’s biography before his appointment as sultan and does not mention any qualities.

<sup>84</sup>Based on an exhaustive prosopography of the 1102 amirs under the reigns of Barqūq and Faraj.

<sup>85</sup>Only Ibn Ḥajar mentions his justice explicitly (*Inbāʾ al-ghumr*, 4:143–89), but all the other biographers insist on similar qualities. Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 4:168–74; Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 2:66.

<sup>86</sup>Only Ibn al-Ṣayrafī mentions his justice and equity explicitly (*Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 2:320–21), but all the other authors agree on his numerous qualities and his good behavior, particularly his son. Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 4:31–43; al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-ʿuqūd*, 1:491–92; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbāʾ al-ghumr*, 7:83–84.

<sup>87</sup>Ibn Taghrībirdī is the only one who notes his justice (*Manhal*, 5:310–14), but Ibn Ḥajar insists on other qualities (*Inbāʾ al-ghumr*, 5:319–21).

<sup>88</sup>Ibn Ḥajar says he was fair toward the inhabitants of al-Karak, of which he had been governor, but he does not forget to mention that he instigated *fitnahs*. (*Inbāʾ*, 7:99–100; idem, *Dhayl al-durar al-kāminah fī aʿyān al-mīʾah al-tāsīʿah*, ed. Aḥmad Farīd al-Muzaydī [Beirut, 1998], 163). Al-Maqrīzī says that he oppressed the population of al-Bilqāʿ (*Sulūk*, 4:62).

<sup>89</sup>Ibn Ḥajar speaks well of him (*Dhayl al-durar al-kāminah*, 243), whereas Ibn Taghrībirdī is less indulgent (*Manhal*, 12:122–26).

<sup>90</sup>Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 6:263–312; al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-ʿuqūd*, 2:125–88; Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Dhayl al-durar*, 214–15.

<sup>91</sup>Al-ʿAynī, *Al-Sayf al-muḥannad*, 2, 3, 40, 261–64.



It seems, therefore, more relevant to compare Jakam's qualities to the qualities that the authors grant to other defeated amirs, the other losers in history, namely Nawrūz al-Ḥāfīzī and Yashbak al-Shaʿbānī. The different authors contradict each other in the ways they depict Amir Nawrūz: Ibn Taghrībirdī considers him to be a great king, whereas al-Maqrīzī condemns his tyranny.<sup>92</sup> Just one historian, Ibn Taghrībirdī, wrote a biography of Yashbak al-Shaʿbānī, and he lists no quality except his splendor.<sup>93</sup> Such a lacuna in the written works of every contemporary historians toward one of the most powerful amirs of the reign of Faraj<sup>94</sup> cannot be a coincidence. Obviously, they all considered him unworthy to be ranked among *aʿyān*, and therefore converged on this sort of *damnatio memoriæ*.

The biographical treatment of Jakam is, therefore, unique, and without any doubt it reveals the ideas that all the authors had about his rule and the legitimacy of his rebellion. Obviously, they associate Jakam more than any other amir, more than any other warlord, and more than any other who was vanquished, with the notion of justice (*ʿadl*) and with the qualities of sovereignty.

The amir's qualities appear even clearer while analyzing the rhetorical figures through which the authors elaborate a sort of *literalization* of the historical character. They do not hesitate to create discursive devices that are meant to show his justice. Sometimes, the narrative becomes fiction, or at least we can doubt the veracity of parts of the anecdotes and see them as *topoi* or stylistic devices. For example, the direct speeches could not be exact, as they would have been spoken in Circassian or Turkish, while they are written in Arabic. Yet, several authors reproduce the very same dialogues, like a sentence of Jakam that is quoted by al-ʿAynī, al-Maqrīzī, and Ibn Taghrībirdī:<sup>95</sup> during a *fitnah* in Shawwāl 803/May–June 1401, he is supposed to have promised to the sultan that he was loyal and that his enmity fell on his rival, Amir Yashbak al-Shaʿbānī. This anecdote may be real, but why did it become a recurrent element in the chronicles and biographies? What significance did it add to the event itself? In general, direct speech (which is necessarily a literalized reconstruction of history) informs more about the narrative representation of the character than about his real acts. Here, Jakam appears as an honest and loyal man, faithful to his oath to the sovereign, a man whose goal is not to depose the sultan but to defend his life and honor against his enemy. Another recurring event relates to Jakam's fair behavior toward the

<sup>92</sup>Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 12:34–38; al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-ʿuqūd*, 3:513–18.

<sup>93</sup>Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 12:119–22.

<sup>94</sup>He ruled the realm several times: from 10 Rabīʿ I 802/10 November 1399 to 19 Shawwāl 803/2 June 1401, then from 7 Muḥarram 805/7 August 1402 to 4 Rajab 807/6 January 1405, and finally from Jumādā II 808/December 1405 to 25 Šafar 810/1 August 1407. See Onimus, *Les Maîtres du jeu*, 244.

<sup>95</sup>Compare al-ʿAynī, *ʿIqd*, ed. Binū, 274; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:1063; and Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 6:88.



people of Damascus and his strictness toward his soldiers when he entered the city. This anecdote is mentioned twice in his biographies, at two different times: in 802/1400<sup>96</sup> and in 808/1406,<sup>97</sup> so it is possible to question the reality of the fact, but above all an interrogation of the spreading of that narrative and the causes of its repetition is important. The event may or may not be real, but its reality does not contradict its literalized aspect, as this act was selected by the authors in order to become significant. Here, the meaning the authors give to Jakam's career invariably orbits around the notion of justice.

Ibn Taghribirdī, particularly, emphasizes this theme. In his work, Jakam is shown as a man who is fair toward his subjects, not only when he ran the realm in Cairo but also when he ruled Aleppo “unlike the rulers who conquered their realm,”<sup>98</sup> the author adds, a remark that obviously incites the reader to compare Jakam to Sultan Faraj's injustice.<sup>99</sup> Another passage of Ibn Taghribirdī's work again shows the subjects' positive opinion of the amir, as well as the author's narrative choice, by quoting this popular slogan: *Jakam ḥakama wa-mā zalama*, which we may translate as “Jakam ruled with justice and without injustice.” Such a slogan contributes to expressing Jakam's popularity. “Most of his comrades and mamluks have told me that in this manner,” Ibn Taghribirdī specifies in order to support his statement. He adds that, according to these same mamluks, “his expedition to Āmid saved Sultan al-Malik al-Nāṣir Faraj: had he come to Cairo, no one would have opposed him because people liked him.”<sup>100</sup> Ibn Taghribirdī presents a flattering portrait with a long list of qualities, where justice and equity join splendor, courage, valiance, reverence, honor, cunning, smartness, force, power, aggressiveness, abstinence, decency, and popularity.<sup>101</sup>

The insistence on ritual acts plays the same role. That is what Philippe Buc suggests when he comes to the conclusion that the relevance of the very notion of ritual should be questioned by medievalist scholars. Ritual is always a reconstruction, because its interpretation is never immediate and its symbolic

<sup>96</sup>Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:1011; al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-ʿuqūd*, 1:574–75; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbāʾ*, 6:25. For the year 802/1400, Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah seems to be more neutral: he evokes Jakam's arrival in Damascus with a deed of *amān* from the sultan, which provoked the joy of the people, but he does not give a personal statement related to Jakam. However, he notes his popularity among the people of Damascus when he returned there in 807/1405 because of his past and present fair rule. Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 4:91, 410.

<sup>97</sup>Ibn Taghribirdī, *Nujūm*, 6:178.

<sup>98</sup>“*Bi-khilāfi al-mutaghallibīn ʿalā al-bilādi min al-mulūk.*”

<sup>99</sup>Jakam's fair rule is also mentioned in the chronicle of Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, who insists on the difference between Jakam's and his predecessor's (Damurdāsh) behavior. Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 4:408.

<sup>100</sup>Ibn Taghribirdī, *Manhal*, 4:323–24.

<sup>101</sup>Ibn Taghribirdī, *Manhal*, 4:313–24.



significance is accentuated by contemporary authors (who can invent ceremonial fictions): it is thus the text that mentions the ritual that is effective and not the performance of the ritual itself.<sup>102</sup> A lot of ritual acts are mentioned by the authors and represented as meaningful in the political arena in interactional situations between the competitors. In the case of Jakam, all of them are related to the adoption of royal etiquette: for example, to sit in the center of the hall or to salute according to the sultanic rite.<sup>103</sup> These acts are mentioned by al-Maqrīzī in order to prepare the audience for an evolution in the narrative (without impact on the events' sequence) and to express a relation between the appearance and reality of power. The uncertainty of the facts should not prevent us from drawing any conclusions, but it informs less about Jakam's acts than about the political culture and the ninth/fifteenth century historians' symbolic representations. Here, al-Maqrīzī unquestionably mentions the rituals in order to progressively give to Jakam a sultanic appearance in the course of the narrative.

Symmetrically, the authors' silences are as eloquent as their inventions. In the first years of Jakam's career, he was close to the faction of a soldier named Shaykh Lājīn. This soldier rebelled against Sultan Faraj and claimed the sultanate while Tamerlane was besieging Damascus. The revolt provoked the return of the young sultan to Cairo at night, and consequently the rout of the army as soon as dawn broke. No author speaks about any link between Shaykh Lājīn and Jakam, but their closeness is obvious after prosopographic analysis.<sup>104</sup> This may be because this revolt was not ordinary. It caused the capitulation of the sultan in the face of a Mongol conqueror, and the leader—who was not an amir—claimed sovereignty and called for the destruction of the books of *fiqh* and the abolition of *iqṭāʿ*s and *waqfs*.<sup>105</sup> In sum, such a program would have endangered the very essence of the regime. When he ruled Cairo and Aleppo, Jakam never implemented any part of this program and there is no evidence that he adopted it, although Shaykh Lājīn was still alive when Jakam ruled the realm at the end of 803/mid-1401.<sup>106</sup> His closeness to Shaykh Lājīn was probably nothing more than part of his strategy to seize power himself. It seems that he hoped to take advantage of the exceptional respect that this soldier enjoyed among the Circassians, but he never adhered to his program. So, the authors might have discreetly concealed the truth in order

<sup>102</sup>Philippe Buc, *Dangereux rituel: De l'histoire médiévale aux sciences sociales* (Paris, 2003).

<sup>103</sup>Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:1150–51, 1159; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 6:119.

<sup>104</sup>Onimus, *Les Maîtres du jeu*, 237.

<sup>105</sup>Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 4:285–86; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:1090; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 6:155; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbāʾ*, 5:51–53.

<sup>106</sup>On the other hand, Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī notes that this program remained in the mind of some of his partisans. Shaykh Lājīn died in Rabīʿ I 804/October 1401. Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbāʾ*, 5:51–53.





to dissimulate a less acceptable aspect of Jakam's career, although they firmly condemned Shaykh Lājīn and his partisans.<sup>107</sup>

Despite the heterogeneity of their political positions, the authors converge, then, on a thematic unity in the treatment of the historical figure of Jakam: he is represented as just and as fitting a sort of sultanic ideal.

### *History Writing: A Resort for Law?*

Justice is at the core of this idealized representation of sovereignty. Following the transition from the caliphal to the sultanic regimes during the fifth–sixth/eleventh–twelfth centuries, sovereign legitimacy abandoned theocratic functions and concentrated around some basic aspects of Islamic kingship, such as leading the holy war (*jihād*) and justice (*‘adl*). The definition of the sovereign's justice is based on several elements: application of the sacred law (*sharī‘ah*) as defined in the scriptures and in jurisprudence (*fiqh*); practice of royal justice through the reception of subjects' petitions and the *mazālim* courts that Sultan Barqūq, the father of Sultan Faraj, had recently restored and that Jakam himself organized in his own palace when he ruled Egypt;<sup>108</sup> and above all a ruling practice that respects the welfare of the subjects, according to the criteria of the ancestral political culture of the “circle of justice,” according to which sovereign power should complement the common good by means of fiscal justice.<sup>109</sup>

For the previously mentioned historians of the ninth/fifteenth century, who were all jurists or judges, it was obvious that injustice and not the struggle for power delegitimized a ruler's authority.<sup>110</sup> The evaluation of a prince's legitimacy did not focus on how he reached the throne but how he ruled, hence his justice or injustice. The moral evaluation of a ruler concentrated on that aspect of his reign, while the usurpation question could be ignored.

The mention of this topic with respect to Jakam raises the question of the justice of the rebel, which used to be a major question in Islamic jurisprudence. One of the main debates among the premodern jurists was related to the juridical

<sup>107</sup> Shaykh Lājīn's name is never mentioned by al-‘Aynī, although he evokes his *fitnah*: this is a suspicious oversight from one of Jakam's clients. Al-‘Aynī, *‘Iqd al-jumān*, ed. Binū, 246.

<sup>108</sup> Ibn Ḥajar says that he had proclaimed throughout Cairo: “Whoever has been subjected to an injustice must come to Jakam's gate.” Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā‘*, 6:24–27. It is noteworthy that this justice of the military elite was in competition with the qadī's justice.

<sup>109</sup> The notion of the Circle of Justice comes from early Middle Eastern antiquity, according to Linda Darling. It creates an indissoluble link between the monarch's power, his army, taxes, and justice toward the subjects. See Linda Darling, *A History of Social and Political Power in the Middle East: The Circle of Justice from Mesopotamia to Globalization* (London and New York, 2013).

<sup>110</sup> This was an important idea in the eyes of Ibn Khaldūn, whom all our authors knew (al-Maqrīzī was one of his students). See Linda Darling, *Circle of Justice*, 123.



status of *fitnah* and the rules of rebellion (*ahkām al-bughāt*). How jurists dealt with rebels and *fitnahs* is thus an important question and there is no doubt that while writing their chronicles and biographies these ninth/fifteenth century authors had in their minds related juridical categories. Classical Islamic law condemns revolt because it breaks the unity of the *ummah*, the community of believers; the only legal war is holy war against infidels, or *jihād*. The violence of the very first *fitnah* that opposed ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib to ‘Ā’ishah, Ṭalḥah, and Zubayr, and then to Mu‘āwiyah, was seen as an extreme situation that was meant to remain an exception. From this point of view, which was justified by a Quranic verse,<sup>111</sup> an unfair ruler was better than internal warfare.<sup>112</sup> During the time of the Cairo Sultanate, Ibn Jamā‘ah (d. 733/1333) forcefully represented this “legalist” trend: in his eyes, *fitnah* was cursed. But Khaled Abou El Fadl has shown that the idea that a quietist consensus gradually emerged is wrong. The existence of violent conflicts among the closest companions of the Prophet during the first/seventh century forced Muslim jurists to consider that rebellion might not deserve an extreme punishment, and even that the rebel could be within his rights.<sup>113</sup> In the juridical writings of our historians, al-‘Aynī, a Hanafi, considers the rebel not to be a criminal and Ibn Ḥajar, a Shafi‘i, considers only those who rebel without a cause or grievance to be condemnable.<sup>114</sup> This juridical situation, due to constant reference to the beginnings of Islam, led jurists to elaborate theology according to juridical categories, the law being an instrument of negotiation between history, theology, and politics.<sup>115</sup>

History writing in the beginning of the ninth/fifteenth century does not come within the province of first/seventh-century sacralized history: it does not specify a doctrine. The narrative about the beginnings had authority to present claims about the Prophet’s and the first caliphs’ behavior and guidance. Thus, historiography had a normative value. There is not such a value in the narrative of Sultan Faraj’s reign. History as it is narrated by our jurists is not considered sacred, so it is not written in order to defend a juridical doctrine. Nevertheless, another dialogue is created between law and history by the ninth/fifteenth-century authors: all of them mention the *fitnahs* in their historiographic texts and wonder about the legality of rebellion in their juridical texts. When some conflicts between Muslim belligerents are firmly condemned, it is due to a reaction to the conver-

<sup>111</sup>Quran 4:59: “Obey God, Obey the Prophet and those in authority among you.”

<sup>112</sup>Symmetrically, other Quranic verses firmly condemn *fitnah*, which here means “temptation to apostasy”; for example, in Quran 2:191: “*fitnah* is more serious than murder.”

<sup>113</sup>Khaled Abou El Fadl, *Rebellion and Violence in Islamic Law* (Cambridge, 2001), 13–20.

<sup>114</sup>Ibid., 243; al-‘Aynī, *Umdat al-qārī sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (Beirut, n.d.), 24:90; Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Fath al-bārī bi-sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (Beirut, 1993), 14:312, 350.

<sup>115</sup>Abou El Fadl, *Rebellion*, 33.



sion to Islam of the Mongols: they are then considered either as infidels or as bandits and therefore criminals (which allows them to be subject to criminal law and not the rules of rebellion). Against Tamerlane, the *takfīr*<sup>116</sup> and *jihād* option was chosen.<sup>117</sup> By contrast, *jihād* was never proclaimed in an internal war between amirs, and almost none of them was condemned according to criminal law.

On the contrary, the jurists of that epoch were inclined to adhere to the school that Abou El Fadl calls “revisionist,” that is the law school that considers that a government may not be the resort of Muslims against the enemies of Islam. The revisionists thus make a distinction between rebels who reacted against injustice and rebels who were just after power. Unsurprisingly, al-ʿAynī chose this revisionist juridical position, which allowed him to condemn Sultan Faraj and to legalize a rebellion like Jakam’s.<sup>118</sup>

Indeed, a few years after Jakam’s death and a few days after Sultan Faraj’s defeat and surrender, the rebels Amir Shaykh and Amir Nawrūz summoned and assembled the jurists of Egypt and Syria in order to proclaim a *fatwā* that condemned the sultan and authorized his execution.<sup>119</sup> History has not recorded whether al-ʿAynī and Ibn Ḥajar were among those jurists, but their juridical position in favor of a possible redemption of the rebel echoes the conflictual context in which they spent a long part of their lives, and perhaps specifically the reign of Sultan Faraj.

The treatment they grant Amir Jakam is not unrelated to the juridical question of rebellion. The most striking aspect of this amir’s narratives is the unanimity of the authors (historians and jurists) who witnessed these events to save his memory, despite the polyphony of history writing, despite their various political positions, and despite their personal and academic rivalries; in other words, despite their various historiographic trajectories. Amir Jakam is unanimously depicted as a just amir. He shows *ʿadl*, a meaningful term the recurrence of which in the sources is significant: it is a key notion of Islamic political and juridical culture that refers to the justice supported by the coercive power and just violence of the state.<sup>120</sup> In a context of *fitnahs*, such as in the early ninth/fifteenth-century Cairo Sultanate, the juridical expression *ahl al-ʿadl* was opposed to *bughāt* (sing. *bāghī*): it may refer to loyalists at war against unjust rebels but also to rebels at war

<sup>116</sup>That is, to pretend that a Muslim is an infidel in order to wage holy war against him.

<sup>117</sup>Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:1035–36.

<sup>118</sup>Abou El Fadl, *Rebellion*, 294.

<sup>119</sup>This event took place on 11 Ṣafar 815/23 May 1412. Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 6:311.

<sup>120</sup>Denise Aigle, “La conception du pouvoir dans l’islam: Miroirs des princes persans et théorie sunnite (xie–xive siècles),” *Perspectives médiévales* 31 (2007): 17–44; in contrast with *jihād*, which means just violence against the infidel. See Gabriel Martinez-Gros, “Introduction à la *fitna*: une approche de la définition d’Ibn Khaldun,” *Médiévales* 60 (2011): 7–15.



against an unjust sovereign.<sup>121</sup> The fact that Jakam himself used that term and chose as his royal name “the just king” (al-Malik al-Ādil) shows that he claimed the notion of legitimate rebellion meant to replace the reign of injustice.<sup>122</sup> In other words, the authors adhered implicitly to Jakam’s rebellion by using his political phraseology. They made history writing a discursive weapon that was intended to legalize retrospectively a rebellion against a sultan.

Some decades later, to defend Jakam’s honor was no longer a juridical question, as the legality of the reign was no longer an issue. The goal was then to elaborate the memory of an elite that had ruled the realm for half a century and that had been unified and established its power after a war against Sultan Faraj in which Jakam played a founding role. The moral idealization of “Jakam’s reign” that can be found under the pen of the later authors<sup>123</sup> echoes the juridical aspects of their predecessors’ writings. The historical “legalization” of Jakam’s revolt was thus a step in the process of mythification of Faraj’s reign as a cursed sultan, a scapegoat against whom the new regime became established.<sup>124</sup>

## Conclusions

Historical writings change an individual into a narrative character, which raises questions about the intentionality of the authors and their changing positions on the political and academic scenes or, in short, their historiographical trajectories.

The rebel holds a problematic status in historiography and Islamic law, between the curse of *fitnah* and quietism on the one hand (the “traditional position”), and on the other hand the justification of legitimate revolt against an unjust sovereign (the “revisionist position”).<sup>125</sup> The issue of the justice of the rebel was indeed addressed while Jakam lived: he demanded from the Aleppine jurists a juridical notice (*fatwá*) that was meant to depose al-Nāṣir Faraj *in absentia* and to legalize Jakam’s own reign. He obtained satisfaction, but the content of the

<sup>121</sup> Abou El Fadl, *Rebellion*, 30, 64 (where he evokes Ibn Taymīyah’s criticisms against such a commitment by the ulama).

<sup>122</sup> The same title had been chosen in the mid-eighth/fourteenth century by another rebel who proclaimed himself sultan in Aleppo, Amir Baybughā Rus, probably for the same reason.

<sup>123</sup> Al-Sakhāwī emphasizes Jakam’s justice three times in his obituary: during his rule as an amir in Cairo, during his rule as sultan in Aleppo, and finally he evokes it once again in the enumeration of his qualities. He adds: “with him, no one could be corrupted.” This sentence is meaningful, and it is significant that the author made it his conclusion: Jakam was not only fair; he made every subject fair as well, which is proof of his good rule.

<sup>124</sup> On the mythification and malediction of Sultan Faraj, see Onimus, *Les Maîtres du jeu*, 396.

<sup>125</sup> These expressions are used by Khaled Abou El Fadl. See Abou El Fadl, *Rebellion*, 294.



text is unknown to us.<sup>126</sup> This legal text being lost, the only traces of this situation can be found in the historiographical texts: chronicles and biographies. The historians could have neglected Jakam's rebellion, as it was aborted and its leader was defeated. However, they wondered about its status, about the justice of the rebel and consequently about the legality of the rebellion—a question that was at the junction between their historical knowledge and their juridical skills. The importance they gave to Amir Jakam shows the role they granted to him in the elaboration of the regime that was established on the cursed corpse of Sultan Faraj. There is no doubt that Jakam's rebellion marked a step in the evolution of the Cairo Sultanate, not only because it was one of the only *fitnahs* for a century where the sultanic title was claimed by a former mamluk,<sup>127</sup> but also because the members of his faction were present at the court, not to say on the throne, some decades later when history was written.<sup>128</sup>

The writing of Jakam's life must thus be apprehended in its diachrony, not only between the successive generations of authors, but also within the works of each author, in particular his client al-'Aynī. Despite the fact that neither global consistency nor a predefined program appear through this diachronic history writing, with the figure of Jakam a convergence becomes apparent: under each author's pen, this amir represents an ideal of sultanic justice.

For the first of our historians, the narrative of recent events supposes a cultural elaboration that integrates the past into the political order under construction. The absolution they give to Jakam becomes, under their pens, an element of the political culture of the mid-ninth/fifteenth century. During this first step, the salvation of the amir is mainly due to the fact that the writing was being done during the reign of Sultan Barsbāy, who was a member of (or close to) Jakam's faction. It is then determined by and linked to the evolution of the political conjuncture and powerful networks. While the monarchic power of Barsbāy was being established,<sup>129</sup> the evocation of Jakam was a concern for the contemporary historians. As Jo Van Steenberghe and Stijn Van Nieuwenhuysse said about Amir

<sup>126</sup>When Jakam proclaimed himself sultan, he gathered the jurists and notables of Aleppo. He asked them to depose Faraj and no one opposed him. A few years later, in Rabī' II 812/August 1409, Sultan Faraj summoned in Damascus the jurists who had signed this opinion (*fatwā*) in favor of Jakam, among whom was Ibn al-Shiḥnah. Ibn Khaṭīb al-Nāṣiriyyah, "Al-Durr al-muntakhab," fol. 135; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:107.

<sup>127</sup>After the third reign of Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad (710–40/1310–40), the sultanic title is scarcely claimed by rebels, like Baybughā Rus or Barqūq (who actually seized the sovereign office without rebelling).

<sup>128</sup>On the question of the efficiency of political action, see Onimus, "Écrire la vie de Jakam."

<sup>129</sup>We might qualify the opinion of Aḥmad Darrāj, who writes that Sultan Barsbāy's reign is a period of decadence and tyranny. He follows al-Maqrīzī's opinion and clearly discredits the position of the other authors. Darrāj, *L'Égypte sous le règne de Barsbay*.



Qurqumās al-Sha‘bānī, “these historians and their colleagues also participated through their many and voluminous writings in the ongoing construction and ‘structuration’ of a cultural order that aligned itself with ... the new social and political orders of the time.”<sup>130</sup> With Barsbāy’s enthronement, a new political network came to power and opened a new step in the history of the Cairo Sultanate, as well as in history writing, as every one of these historians took part in this network or at least would have to position himself with regard to it.

This construction of the monarchy of Barsbāy as a “relational product”<sup>131</sup> was one that integrated the historians, perhaps, in the structure of a deliberate cultural policy that intended to create a memory of the sultanate, and so resonated with the story of a life that the authors had to preserve and the narrative of a rebellion that had to be legalized because the new sultan had participated in it. The figure of Jakam asks the question of the relationship between power and justice: that is, the issue of the legality of the rebellion and the re-formation of a just sultanate.<sup>132</sup> In short, the historians changed themselves into judges of the past in order to legitimate the present.

After the death of all contemporary witnesses to the events, the texts of the historians of the first half of the ninth/fifteenth century became the sources for later writings. While historiographic polyphony remained due to the use of different sources according to the personal relationships between masters and disciples, the convergence toward Jakam’s absolution signified an ideological confluence. The texts of the second half of the ninth/fifteenth century idealized the past, and distilled the earlier biographies in order to extract the quintessence: Jakam’s justice. More than their predecessors, the later historians, particularly Ibn Taghrībirdī, created a myth of Jakam in opposition to the myth of Faraj.

This research on the writing of Jakam’s life is, therefore, a case study on the way history is a functional construction intended to answer a precise question: how to justify rebellion in the process of state formation? Historiographical writing, with its polyphony, its diachrony, and its inconsistency, serves not only as a juridical instrument to legalize the revolt of a defeated rebel whose partisans managed to triumph later, but also as an ideological instrument: the memorial expression of the legitimization of the regime of *fitnah* that was the Cairo Sultanate

<sup>130</sup>Jo Van Steenbergen and Stijn Van Nieuwenhuysen, “Truth and Politics in Late Medieval Arabic Historiography: the Formation of Sultan Barsbāy’s State (1422–1438) and the Narratives of the Amir Qurqumās al-Sha‘bānī (d. 1438),” *Der Islam* 95, no. 1 (2018): 153.

<sup>131</sup>“Barsbāy’s state in formation appears here as a relational product, even a particular type of social network.” Van Steenbergen and Van Nieuwenhuysen, “Truth and Politics,” 173.

<sup>132</sup>In contrast to the figure of Qurqumās, who asked a question other than the relationship between power and justice: the question of the reinforcement of the military judiciary authority. *Ibid.*, 163, 175.



in the ninth/fifteenth century, in which no sovereign ascended the throne except following an armed conflict.<sup>133</sup>

---

<sup>133</sup>On the perpetuation of the sacrificial *fitnah* during the successions in the ninth/fifteenth century, see Onimus, *Les Maîtres du jeu*, 396–99.



©2020 by Clément Onimus.

DOI: [10.6082/bjht-x067](https://doi.org/10.6082/bjht-x067). (<https://doi.org/10.6082/bjht-x067>)

DOI of Vol. XXIII: [10.6082/msr23](https://doi.org/10.6082/msr23). See <https://doi.org/10.6082/msr2020> to download the full volume or individual articles. This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY). See <http://mamluk.uchicago.edu/msr.html> for more information about copyright and open access.

## Appendix

Chronology of Amir Jakam's Career		
Dates	Appointments and imprisonments	Participation in a <i>fitnah</i>
From 801 to 804/ 1399 to 1402	In Cairo	
Rabīʿ II or Dhū al-Qaʿdah 801/December 1398 or July 1399	Amir of 10 and minor captain of the guard	
Rabīʿ I 802/December 1399		<i>Fitnah</i> of the younger amirs against Aytamish
Rabīʿ II 802/December 1399	Amir of 40	
Rabīʿ II–Rajab 802/ December 1399–March 1400		<i>Fitnah</i> of the younger amirs against Aytamish and Tanam, governor of Damascus
Ramaḍān or Shawwāl 802/ June 1400	Amir of 100	
Jumādā II 803/January 1401		Ambiguous role during Shaykh Lājīn's <i>fitnah</i>
Shawwāl 803/May 1401		<i>Fitnah</i> of Jakam against Yashbak al-Shaʿbānī
Shawwāl 803/May 1401	Grand writing-case- bearer: Jakam rules the realm until Dhū al-Ḥijjah 803/July 1401.	
Dhū al-Ḥijjah 803/July 1401		<i>Fitnah</i> of Ibn Ghurāb against Jakam
Ṣafar–Rabīʿ I 804/ September–October 1401		Most of the amirs, in- cluding Jakam, start a conflict against Sūdūn al-Ḥamzāwī.





Jumādā I–Ramaḍān 804/ February–April 1402		Dissensions between Jakam (and his ally Nawrūz) and Sūdūn Ṭāz
Shawwāl 804/May 1402		First <i>fitnah</i> of Jakam and Nawrūz against Sūdūn Ṭāz
Shawwāl 804/May 1402		Second <i>fitnah</i> of Jakam and Nawrūz against Sūdūn Ṭāz
<b>From 804 to 809/ 1402 to 1407</b>	<b>In Syria</b>	
Shawwāl 804–Ramaḍān 806/ May 1402–March–April 1404	Imprisoned in Syria in Ḥisn al-Akrād then in Marqab	
Ramaḍān 806/March–April 1404		Jakam is first allied with Damurdāsh al-Muḥammadī against Sultan Faraj, then he and his faction became autonomous.
Ṣafar 807/August 1404		Peace: Sultan Faraj grants an amnesty to all the rebels, including Jakam.
Rajab 807/January 1405	<i>De facto</i> governor of Tripoli	Jakam seizes Tripoli from Shaykh al-Sulaymānī
Shaʿbān–Ramaḍān 807/February–March 1405	<i>De facto</i> governor of Aleppo	<i>Fitnah</i> between Jakam and Damurdāsh al-Muḥammadī, who is chased away from Aleppo.
Ramaḍān–Dhū al-Ḥijjah 807/March–June 1405		<i>Fitnah</i> of Jakam, Shaykh, and Yashbak against Sultan Faraj. The rebels attack Cairo.



Rabīʿ II–Jumādā I 808/November 1405		<i>Fitnah</i> of Nawrūz against Shaykh. Jakam is quickly allied to Shaykh.
Jumādā II 808/December 1405	<i>De jure</i> governor of Aleppo	Peace: Jakam is officially appointed as governor of Aleppo.
Rajab 808/January 1406	<i>De jure</i> governor of Tripoli	
Dhū al-Qaʿdah 808/April–May 1406		<i>Fitnah</i> of Nuʿayr against Jakam min ʿIwad.
Dhū al-Ḥijjah 808/May 1406	<i>De facto</i> governor of Damascus	<i>Fitnah</i> of Jakam and Nawrūz against Shaykh and Sultan Faraj. Battle of al-Rastān and Jakam’s victory against Shaykh. Jakam seizes Damascus.
Rabīʿ I–Rajab 809/August – December 1406		Sultan Faraj’s expedition in Syria. Faraj is supported by Shaykh against Jakam and Nawrūz. Jakam flees beyond the Euphrates then comes back to Syria when the sultan rides back to Cairo.
Shawwāl 809/March 1407	Sultan in Aleppo and master of Syria	
Dhū al-Qaʿdah 809/April 1407	Death in Āmid	

