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Traveling Scholars and their Audition Certificates: An Interpretation of the Status of late Ayyubid Aleppo (624-658/1227-1260) as a Center of Knowledge

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Traveling Scholars and their Audition Certificates: An Interpretation of the Status of late Ayyubid Aleppo (624-658/1227-1260) as a Center of Knowledge

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Know too that the sciences sink in the ground and then gush out at a certain time, as in the case of plants or springs of water: they pass from one people to another and from one region to another

- 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġhdādī

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Introduction¹

The study of manuscript notes can shed a light on the intellectual lives and movements of countless forgotten scholars who participated in knowledge production in the premodern Middle East. Premodern biographical dictionaries that have survived provide valuable insights into the lives of premodern scholars, but only the lives of the most prestigious scholars have been recorded in it. However, the absence of the less prestigious scholars from these dictionaries does not mean that they did not leave traces of their scholarly activities. Numerous scholars who attended a study session got their names recorded in an audition certificate in the manuscripts they studied.

This thesis will use such audition records to study the role of Aleppo in the transmission of Sunni knowledge during the Ayyubid rule over the city (579-658/1183-1260). The specific focus of this thesis is the late Ayyubid period, from 624/1227 until 658/1260. The reason for this focus is that during this time Aleppo is most visible in the audition certificates.

The Islamic tradition or *ḥadīth* is, after the Quran, the most important source for Islamic science. The *ḥadīth* studies what the Prophet said or did. These *ḥadīth* are transmitted from person to person. The human aspect in this *isnād*, or chain of transmission, is as important as the message itself. In other words, even though the *ḥadīth* eventually got written down, a written text only got value after it was studied in person with a teacher with an authentic and trustworthy *isnād* that goes back to the source of the text. By attending teaching sessions by a teacher who had permission to teach a book through an *isnād*, the student could obtain permission to transmit the text.²

To study *ḥadīth* and get permission to transmit these texts were important motivations to travel for scholars. Besides travel in search of knowledge, or *al-riḥla fī ṭalab al-‘ilm*, Shawkat M. Toorawa, states that the search for patrons also gave an important impulse to the travel of scholars. The governors, officials and wealthy notables of the urban centers of the Muslim world patronized scholars to increase their own prestige. In search of a patron, scholars traveled considerable distances. In addition to these motivations, many scholars performed the hajj.³ Surprisingly, with regard to the scholars of Aleppo, only one connection to the hajj could be established through the certificates.⁴

By studying at the various intellectual centers of the Islamic world, scholars could achieved such status that they could attract students themselves, and continue the chain of transmission. The paths of these transmissions, from the transmitter to the teachers of Aleppo, to the students of Aleppo who in some cases later became teachers themselves can be tracked through the audition certificates. Since many of these certificates contain names, a date, and a location, the paths the scholars took can be followed closely.

State of the field and research question

Thousands of these certificates have survived as part of the manuscripts they are written in. Although it is well known amongst scholars that these certificates allow to dig deeper into the social history than is possible through the biographical dictionaries, a lot of scholarly work on these sources still has to be

¹ Quote frontpage: Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘a, *The Best Accounts of the Classes of Physicians*, trans. and ed. E. Savage-Smith, S. Swain and G.J.van Gelder (Leiden: Brill, 2020), §15.40.8.

² Jan Just Witkam, “The Human Element Between Text and Reader: The Ijāza in Arabic Manuscripts,” in *Education and learning in the early islamic world*, ed. Claude Gilliot (Burlington: Ashgate Variorum, 2012), 150.

³ Shawkat Toorawa, “Travel in the Medieval Islamic World: The Importance of Patronage, As Illustrated By ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī (d. 629/1231) (And Other Littérateurs).” In *Eastward Bound: Travel and Travellers 1050-1550*, ed. Rosamund Allen (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 53-6.

⁴ Shawkat Toorawa, “Travel in the Medieval Islamic World: The Importance of Patronage, As Illustrated By ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī (d. 629/1231) (And Other Littérateurs).” In *Eastward Bound: Travel and Travellers 1050-1550*, ed. Rosamund Allen (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 53-6.

done.⁵ To give the research on manuscript notes a new impulse, Andreas Görke and Konrad Hirschler published an edited volume on these notes in 2011.⁶ A new boost to the study of audition certificates was given by the launch of the *Audition Certificates Platform* (ACP). This website has been online since November 2023. The ACP made 3524 certificates available for study. In March of 2024, an updated version was released containing 4030 certificates.⁷

Most of the studies on manuscript notes from the Ayyubid period focus on Damascus.⁸ The period when the Ayyubids ruled large parts of Egypt, Syria, the Hijaz, and other regions fall in period that modern scholars call the *Syrian Century*. This period, which lasted roughly from the early sixth/twelfth century until the middle of the seventh/thirteenth century is a period when Syrian cities grew very wealthy. Besides that, these cities attracted scholars, at the cost of Baghdad which had always been the center of knowledge of the Islamic world, but as we will discuss, started to attract fewer students in this period.⁹ Not only the studies of manuscript notes from this period focus on Damascus, also studies of the social and intellectual history of this period mainly focus on Damascus.¹⁰ Besides that, the studies of the intellectual history of the cities of the Ayyubid realm also focus on the other main city: Cairo.¹¹ On top of that, there are also studies that focus on the Ayyubid realm as a whole.¹² The intellectual histories of other cities of the Ayyubid period rarely get scholarly attention.

Looking beyond Cairo and Damascus, Aleppo seems a logical city to focus on. Several studies point out that Aleppo was one of the wealthiest and most important cities in the Ayyubid Period. Most studies agree that Cairo was the most prosperous city of the Ayyubids. As for the second city, some argue that Ayyubid Aleppo was surpassed by Damascus.¹³ While other studies claim Aleppo even

⁵ Andreas Görke and Konrad Hirschler, ed., *Manuscript notes as documentary sources* (Beirut: Orient-Institut Beirut, 2011), 10, 13, 73.

⁶ Görke and Hirschler, *Manuscript notes*.

⁷ "Unlocking the transmission archive in Arabic manuscript cultures," *Audition Certificates Platform*, accessed May 14, 2024, <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/cms/project-aims>.

⁸ Konrad Hirschler, "Reading certificates (samā'āt) as a prosopographical source: Cultural and social practices of an elite family in Zangid and Ayyubid Damascus," in *Manuscript notes as documentary sources*, ed. Andreas Görke and Konrad Hirschler (Beirut: Orient-Institut Beirut, 2011), 73-92.

⁹ Konrad Hirschler, *The Written Word in the Medieval Arabic Lands: A Social and Cultural History of Reading Practices* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 59, 63; R. Stephen Humphreys, "Zengids, Ayyubids And Seljuqs," in *The new Cambridge medieval history*, ed. D. Luscombe, and J.Riley-Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 727.

¹⁰ See, for example: Joan E. Gilbert, "Institutionalization of Muslim Scholarship and Professionalization of the 'Ulamā' in Medieval Damascus," *Studia islamica*, no. 52 (1980): 105-134; Frank Griffel, "Al-Ghazālī Or Al-Ghazzālī? On A Lively Debate Among Ayyūbid And Mamlūk Historians In Damascus," *Islamic Thought in the Middle Ages*, no. 75 (2008): 101-112.

¹¹ Ira M.Lapidus, "Ayyūbid religious policy and the development of schools of law in Cairo," *Colloque international sur l'Histoire du Caire* (1972): 279-286; Daniella Talmon-Heller, "'Ilm, Shafā'ah, and Barakah: The Resources of Ayyubid and Early Mamluk Ulama," *Mamlūk Studies Review*, XIII, no 2 (2009): 23-46; Merah Souad and Tahraoui Ramdane, "INSTITUTIONALIZING EDUCATION AND THE CULTURE OF LEARNING IN MEDIEVAL ISLAM: THE AYYÜBIDS (569/966 AH) (1174/1263 AD) LEARNING PRACTICES IN EGYPT AS A CASE STUDY," *Al-Shajarah, Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization of the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM)* (2017): 245-276.

¹² Among others: Sonja Brentjes, "Ayyubid Princes and Their Scholarly Clients From the Ancient Sciences," in *Court Cultures in the Muslim World, seventh to nineteenth centuries*, ed. Albrecht Fuess and Jan-Peter Hartung (New York: Routledge, 2011), 326-356; Alex Mallett, "Islamic Historians of the Ayyūbid Era and Muslim Rulers from the Early Crusading Period: A Study in the Use of History," *Al-Masāq* 24, no. 3 (2012): 241-252; Miriam Hoexter, Shmuel N Eisenstadt, and Nehemia Levtzion, "Religion in the public sphere: rulers, scholars, and commoners in Syria under Zangid and Ayyubid rule (1150-1260)," in *The Public Sphere in Muslim Societies* (United States: State University of New York Press, 2002), 49-63.

¹³ Yasser Tabbaa, *Constructions of Power and Piety in Medieval Aleppo*, (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), 2.

surpassed Damascus in this period.¹⁴ Stephen Humphreys even called Aleppo the crown jewel of the Ayyubid realm.¹⁵

There are studies that give insights into the intellectual activities of Ayyubid Aleppo. First there is *Constructions of Power and Piety in Medieval Aleppo* by Yasser Tabbaa. Although the focus of this work is the architectural history of the city, the study gives great insights in the patronizing activities of the rulers and the leading families. On top of that, it discusses the infrastructure in Aleppo that provided for scholarly activities.¹⁶ Another study on the intellectual history is *An Ayyubid Notable and His World: Ibn al-'Adīm and Aleppo as Portrayed in His Biographical Dictionary of People Associated with the City* by David Morray. As the title suggests, this is a study of the scholarly elite of Aleppo based on the work of Ibn al-'Adīm.¹⁷ As discussed above, this biographical dictionary portrays only the scholars that Ibn al-'Adīm deemed worthy. This thesis will compare the findings from the study of the audition certificates to the findings of these studies. Other studies on Ayyubid Aleppo have a focus on its political history.¹⁸

A second scholarly discussion that this thesis engages with is the recent effort to challenge the so-called *Decline Paradigm*. The thirteenth century is often placed in the *post-classical* period.¹⁹ In the edited volume *Inḥiṭāṭ - the Decline Paradigm: Its Influence and Persistence in the Writing of Arab Cultural History* Syrinx von Hees says this period is still too often perceived as a period of intellectual decline in the Arab world. In the book, she argues this notion is unjust, and she calls for a reexamining of this period.²⁰ Joosse and Pormann challenge the same notion in their article *Decline and Decadence in Iraq and Syria after the Age of Avicenna?*²¹

The limited research on the intellectual history of Ayyubid Aleppo, and the thousands of understudied audition certificates from this period will be addressed in this thesis through the lens of mobility. Mohamad El-Merheb and Mehdi Berriah argue in their edited volume *Professional Mobility in Islamic Societies (700-1750)*, that mobility is one of the key characteristics of the premodern Muslim world. However, despite this, mobility is rarely at the center of research. Approaching the premodern history of the Muslim world through this focus will lead to new insights, they argue.²² The same observation is made by Shawkat Toorawa. According to him, the “fascinating and complex subject of travel” in the medieval Islamic world, has been disproportionately focused on a handful of travelers. He states that there is attention to search for knowledge as a motivation to travel. However, he argued

¹⁴ D.W. Morray, *An Ayyubid Notable and His World: Ibn al-'Adīm and Aleppo as Portrayed in His Biographical Dictionary of People Associated with the City* (Leiden: Brill, 1994) 3.

¹⁵ Humphreys, “Zengids,” 738.

¹⁶ Tabbaa, *Power and Piety*.

¹⁷ Morray, *An Ayyubid Notable*.

¹⁸ Yasser Tabbaa, “Defending Ayyubid Aleppo: the fortifications of al-zāhir Ghāzī (1186–1216),” in *Muslim Military Architecture in Greater Syria: From the Coming of Islam to the Ottoman Period*, ed. Hugh Kennedy (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 176–183; Taef Kamal el-Azhari, “Ḍayfa Khātūn, Ayyubid queen of Aleppo 634-640 A.H./1236-1242 A.D.,” *Japan Association for Middle East Studies (JAMES)* 15 (2000): 27-55. Jørgen S. Nielsen, “Between Arab and Turk: Aleppo from the 11th till the 13th centuries,” *Byzantinische Forschungen* 16 (1991): 323-340.

¹⁹ See, for example: Carl Brockelmann, “Einteilung der arabischen Literaturgeschichte,” *Brockelmann Online* by Carl Brockelmann, consulted online on 20 December 2023; L.W.C. (Eric) Van Lit, “Commentary and Commentary Tradition,” *MIDÉO*, 32 (2017), §1, <http://journals.openedition.org/mideo/1580>.

²⁰ Syrinx von Hees, (Ed.), *Inḥiṭāṭ - the Decline Paradigm: Its Influence and Persistence in the Writing of Arab Cultural History* (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2017), 7-9.

²¹ N. Peter Joosse and Peter E Pormann, “Decline and Decadence in Iraq and Syria after the Age of Avicenna? ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī (1162-1231) between Myth and History,” *Bulletin of the history of medicine* 84, no. 1 (2010): 1–29.

²² Mohamad El-Merheb and Mehdi Berriah, *Professional Mobility in Islamic Societies (700-1750)* (Leiden: Brill 2021), 1.

that the search for patronage as motivation is absent from the existing scholarship on travel in the Muslim world.²³

Based on the existing scholarship and scholarly debates on knowledge production in Ayyubid lands, this thesis will analyze audition certificates from the late sixth/twelfth century and the first half of the seventh/thirteenth century through the lens of mobility to answer the question: To what extent can the study of audition certificates through the lens of mobility give insights in the status of late Ayyubid Aleppo (624-658/1227-1260) as a center of knowledge? The first chapter will put late the Ayyubid Aleppo into the historical context and will describe the social structure of the city, to get an understanding of the factors that attracted scholars to the city. In chapters two and three the travels of the scholars of Ayyubid Aleppo, as recorded in the audition certificates, will be examined. These chapters are exploratory and interpretative in nature. Exploring what the audition certificates imply about the motivations for traveling to the city, in particular the search for knowledge and the search for patronage, will help to get a better understanding of what the city had to offer for traveling scholars. The findings will be used to assess the status of Aleppo as a center for transmission of knowledge.

Chapter two starts with a case study of the scholar Shams al-Dīn Abī al-Ḥajjāj Yūsuf ibn Khalīl ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Dimashqī (Ibn Khalīl, d. 648/1250). Ibn Khalīl is the Aleppine teacher who is mentioned in most certificates over the longest period of time. An audition certificate usually provides only sparse personal information. However, by combining the small bits of information given across all the certificates it is possible to construct a detailed biography. We start with his family background. This is followed by a reconstruction of his *riḥla fi ṭalab al-‘ilm*, based on the surviving certificates. Ibn Khalīl is the only scholar with a link in the certificates with both Aleppo and the hajj, so we briefly shed light on his pilgrimage. He spent the last decades of his life in Aleppo. His certificates will be examined to find out if there are implications for the factors that brought him to the city. Moreover, this chapter will search for signs that help understand what his presence in the city added to its status.

In chapter three the findings of the case study of Ibn Khalīl will be compared with patterns in the certificates of other scholars in Ayyubid Aleppo. The scholarly life of most other scholars is more scattered and fragmented in the certificates. The picture that arises by combining this fragmental information with the findings of the case study of Ibn Khalīl, will get interpreted to get an understanding of the role of Aleppo in the transmission of knowledge in the first half of the thirteenth century. From the flow of knowledge towards Aleppo, to the spread of it from Aleppo to other centers of the Islamic world. Focusing first on the teachers of Aleppo, and afterward on the students will give a clear picture of the differences between two generations of transmission. This will highlight the changes that took place in the scholarly activities of this period.

Sources and methodology

The sources this thesis will build on are audition certificates. There are two kinds of audition certificates: listening certificates (*ijāzat al-samā’*) and reading certificates (*ijāzat al-qirā’a*). An *ijāzat al-samā’* was issued after a session during which a teacher, or *musmi’*, read or recited a text to a group of students. An *ijāzat al-qirā’a* was issued after a student read a text to his teacher. The teacher could be the author of the book that was studied, or someone who could claim a trustworthy chain of transmission of the text. These reading sessions were mostly not private. Other people attended these sessions. Their names are also recorded in the *ijāza*. By obtaining an *ijāza* the participant got the licence to transmit the text. Not only scholars attended these sessions. Also non-scholars, like military, traders, craftsmen, children and slaves are recorded in the certificates. The audition certificates are mostly written on the last pages of a manuscript, or at the end of a section or part of a book, and sometimes

²³ Toorawa, “The Importance of Patronage,” 53.

in the beginning, or in the middle of a chapter. The oldest audition certificates date back to the 5/11th century.²⁴

The information that these certificates provide varies, but they always provide names: the names of the *musmi'*, the transmitter(s), the auditors who attended the session, the reader, the one writing the session down, the copyist or the owner of the manuscript. Not every certificate provides all this information. A few certificates only name one person. However, the bulk of the certificates mentions a teacher and one or more auditors.²⁵

Besides from their role in the session recorded in the certificate, information can be extracted from the names, and how the individual names are addressed. An Arabic name consist of five components. It starts with a *laqab*, which is an honorific title or nickname. This can provide clues for a religious profession, when it contains *al-Dīn*, or a role in the military or government when it includes *al-Dawla*. This is followed by a *kunya*, or patronym. This is *abū* (father of) or *um* (mother of) followed, in most cases, by the name of the eldest son or in rare cases the eldest daughter. However, the *kunya* can also be an expression of hope for a future child. Besides that, the *kunya* can also mark a peculiarity or characteristic of the person. The next component of an Arabic name is the *ism*, or personal name. This is followed by a *nasab*, or genealogy. This is mostly *ibn* (son of) followed by the name of the father. In rarer cases, instead of *ibn*, it can also be *bint* (daughter of), or *sibt* (grandson of). This is followed by the name of the (grand)father, and can go several generations back. Finally, the last part is the *nisba*, or relational name. This part of the name can refer to a place of origin, although this is not necessarily the place of birth. It can also be where the family traces its roots. Besides that, the *nisba* can also refer to the profession, or the religious school the person followed. Not every Arabic name consists of all these five components. Furthermore, not all components of the name of an individual are always mentioned in the certificates.²⁶

The name and way of addressing tell some things about the person behind it. First, the titles, and the number of titles, that are used to address a person, help to understand their status. If a person belonged to an influential family, or descended from an influential person, it is also often mentioned in the certificate. Secondly, the profession of the participant can be derived from the name, or the way someone is addressed. People from the military are often addressed by formal titles like, for example, *amīr*. Furthermore, a *laqab* including *al-Dawla* suggests a role in the military. Next, a *nisba* with a military reference suggests a role in the army. Finally, a Turkic name, when the person cannot be linked to scholars, traders, or craftsmen, also suggest the person in question had a military background. The same goes for the officials. People working for the administration are often addressed by their official function, or this function is part of their *nisba*. The family relations can be derived from the *nisba*. Besides this, in many cases family members attended a session together. The family connections are recorded in certificates. Sometimes also the slaves that belonged to a household who were present at the session are recorded.²⁷

Besides the names, certificates can also state the date and location of the session. The date is usually specific, as it oftentimes mentions the day of the week, the day of the month and the year. In some cases, it even mentions the time of the day. The location of the session is recorded in approximately half of the certificates. Furthermore, as location sometimes the exact building or institution where the session took place is mentioned, but in others only the name of the city is recorded. In some cases, it suggests the book was studied while the owner was traveling, when it states a location between two cities.²⁸

²⁴ Adam Gacek, *Arabic Manuscripts: A Vademecum for Readers* (Boston: Brill, 2009), 52; Witkam, "The Human Element," 149, 151, 155; Hirschler, "Reading certificates," 80-1; Hirschler, *The Written Word*, 41-3.

²⁵ Gacek, *Arabic Manuscripts*, 53.

²⁶ Konrad Hirschler, *A City is Reading: Popular and Scholarly Reading Sessions* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2022), 34; EI², s.v. "Kunya."

²⁷ Hirschler, *A City is Reading*, 36.

²⁸ Gacek, *Arabic Manuscripts*, 53.

Even though potentially a lot of information can be derived from the certificates, the certificates contain several challenges for the kind of historical research this thesis aims to conduct. To be able to trace movement of and contacts between scholars, more is needed than a single attestation of a name. However, because people are not always recorded by their full name it can be hard to identify a person. There are some things to look out for. It is obviously easier to find a person with a rare name, or rare combination of the various components of an Arabic name. Circumstantial information can be used to find people. So can the date, location and combination of attendees help to pinpoint someone who cannot be identified by his name alone. Also, when variations of a name occur in certificates in the same manuscript, especially when there is an ownership note, then it can be safely assumed that it concerns the same person. Finally, even though most people in the certificates did not make it into the biographical dictionaries, some did. So, comparing the information that is found in the narrative sources with the certificates also can help with identifying a name in a certificate.

There is also a distinction to be made between original and copied certificates. During this research it seemed that the copied certificates were less reliable. On some occasions, names of people are found in certificates dated to long before they were born. Also, copied certificates placed people in places they were unlikely to have reached with the means of travelling of that time, from the location where they were located based on original certificates or narrative sources. This could be the result of a careless mistake during the copying or a deliberate falsification. Whatever the case, the copied certificates were treated more carefully than the originals.

The study of audition certificates was given a big boost by the launch of the online database of the ACP. At the moment when this thesis was written, the database contained 4030 certificates. 1407 of those are from the Ayyubid period. More than half of these certificates (787), mention a location. Of the 32 cities that are mentioned in the certificates from this period on ACP, Aleppo is with 39 certificates the fourth most mentioned city, after Damascus (431), Cairo (82) and Baghdad (75).²⁹

A closer look shows that all Aleppine certificates are dated between 612/1215 and 648/1250. Based on the ACP, Aleppo is in this timeframe more present in the certificates than Baghdad (34) and Cairo (21), but still far behind Damascus (222). Another survey of certificates found a slightly different distribution of certificates. Although the same conclusion is drawn with regard to Damascus, Cairo, Aleppo and Baghdad, that survey places Mecca among the places where most certificates are issued. While there are still 10 certificates on ACP from Mecca from the Ayyubid period, it is exceeded by the number of certificates in other cities.³⁰

The different picture by the survey and the ACP is the result of the fact that there is not yet a complete database of audition certificates. The ACP is still in an early stage of collecting and editing audition certificates. The version 2.0 contains certificates from manuscripts from four libraries: the Staatsbibliothek Berlin, the Forschungsbibliothek Gotha, the Bibliothèque Nationale de France and the Syrian National Library. From these libraries, not even all certificates have been identified. Besides that, the fact that the starting point of the ACP was Stefan Leder's work on the certificates of Damascus, might explain why the majority of the certificates are from there.³¹ Many other libraries have manuscripts with certificates. Which means that only a small part of all the surviving certificates have

²⁹ The ACP locates one certificate in Damascus, that was issued in Aleppo. In the edition the word 'al-Shām' - referring to Damascus - is between brackets. The original note is slightly damaged on the place where the certificates names location. However, after a close look at picture of the original note, I read the word 'Ḥalab'. Moreover, the *musmi'*, Ibn Khalīl, who will be discussed in Chapter two was 85 at the time. All other of his certificates around that time are from Aleppo. It seems unlikely that he had traveled to Damascus at that age. Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Berlin State Library, Ms. or. Quart 1060, 49r, N. 4, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/2850>, accessed June 10, 2024.

³⁰ Witkam, "The Human Element," 157.

³¹ "Unlocking the transmission archive in Arabic manuscript cultures," *Audition Certificates Platform*, accessed May 14, 2024, <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/cms/project-aims>.

been digitized. Still, the ACP provides a big enough sample size to start a research on scholars from Ayyubid Aleppo.

To include more certificates from Aleppo, I searched for certificates outside the ACP. The search for certificates only underscores the benefit the ACP brings to the field. The manuscripts that were taught in Ayyubid Aleppo have spread to libraries around the world. Each library has its own method of cataloging manuscripts, and certificates are not always catalogued. As for dating these manuscripts, different methods are used. Carl Brockelmann dates the works by the year they were written by the author.³² For finding manuscript notes this is not very helpful, since the thesis will deal with a period where texts were copied over the centuries. Another way manuscripts are catalogued is by the date of the copy, as is the case in Witkam's inventory.³³ A copying date, can give an indication if there is a possibility that the manuscript was in use in the Ayyubid period. Searching by place can also be helpful. However, using the search term "Aleppo" to find manuscripts from a time where scholars were highly mobile, is also not a waterproof method. Despite this, I found manuscripts at Leiden University, İl Halk library in Manisa and the Köprülü library in Istanbul that contained certificates that were valuable for this research.³⁴ Editions of these certificates are added in the Appendix, except for the certificates in the manuscript from the Köprülü library, because they were already part of an edition of the text the manuscript contains.³⁵ With this, I gathered a sufficient amount of certificates to make a solid analysis.

³² Brockelmann, *Brockelmann Online*.

³³ Jan Just Witkam, "Inventory of the Oriental manuscripts in Leiden University Library," (Leiden 2002-2019), accessed December 20, 2023, <https://www.islamicmanuscripts.info/inventories/leiden/index.html>.

³⁴ MS Istanbul, Köprülü Kütüphanesi, Fazıl Ahmed Paşa, 00040-002, 359527, 236v, 251r and 251v; MS Leiden, University Library Or.621, 258v; MS Manisa, İl Halk Kütüphanesi / 1781/8, 120r, 151v.

³⁵ Abū Nu'aym al-Işfahānī, *Fāḍā'il al-Khulafā' al-Arba'a wa Ghayrihim*, ed. Mohammed Hassan Mohammed Hassan Isma'il (Beirut: Dar Al Kotob Al Ilmiyah, 2003), 85, 100-1, 107-8.

1. Ayyubid Aleppo

“Oh city of wonder!” Twelfth century traveler Ibn Jubayr (d. 614/1217) seemed to have been blown away by the beauty of Aleppo when he visited the city in 580/1184. In his enthusiasm he claims that it is “one of the cities that have no like,” and that the city is worthy of a seat of the Caliph.³⁶ However, although Aleppo is among the oldest cities in the world, when Ibn Jubayr visited this city, the wealth and splendor observed by him was relatively recent. In the centuries after the Abbasids moved their capital to Baghdad, the Syrian cities were far away from the political, economic and cultural center of the Islamic world. This changed after the arrival of the Crusaders. Although the Crusader states posed a military threat to the Syrian cities, their arrival on the eastern Mediterranean lands also attracted trade. This trade passed through the Syrian cities and gave them an enormous economic boost. For Aleppo, situated on the crossroad of trade routes, this period was one of economic prosperity.³⁷ The city of Aleppo played a key role in the Venetian trade with China. In the first half of the thirteenth century the rulers of Aleppo signed four trade treaties with Venice.³⁸ This new prosperity led to a population growth. To house the expanding population, new suburbs were built outside the city walls.³⁹ When ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī (d. 629/1231) visited the city for the second time in 626/1229, after an absence of almost 20 years, he writes that the city had “grown immensely and that its prosperity and security had increased.” He contributes this to the “good deeds” of atabeg Shihāb al-Dīn Tūghrūl (d. 631/1233). However, it is important to keep in mind that this atabeg was his patron.⁴⁰

Although in name part of the Ayyubid confederation, Aleppo acted highly autonomous within this confederation. The city was the only city within the Ayyubid lands that was ruled by the direct descendants of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn (d. 589/1193), whereas the other parts of the realm were mostly ruled by his brother al-‘Ādil (d. 615/1218) and his descendants.⁴¹ Al-‘Ādil tried to exert influence over Aleppo by marrying his daughter Ḍayfa Khātūn (d. 640/1242) to Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn’s son al-Ẓāhir Ghāzī (r. 582-613/1186-1216). The only influence al-‘Ādil gained with this move seemed to be symbolic.⁴² Politically, Aleppo was a stable and centralized city state. Until the city was conquered by the Mongols in 658/1260, no major political crises occurred. Two times its rulers tried to seize power in Damascus, first in 597/1201, and later in 648/1250. Only the latter attempt was successful. Besides this, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn’s descendants interfered little in Ayyubid affairs. After al-‘Ādil died, Aleppo’s rulers turned their attention towards Konya, where the Seljuks of Rum were at the height of their power. Perhaps a sign of this relation between two powerful states, the Seljuks of Rum attacked Aleppo in the same year.⁴³ The political enmity with Damascus did not stop scholars from traveling between the two cities, as will be discussed below.

After al-Ẓāhir Ghāzī died in 613/1216, his son al-‘Azīz Muḥammad (d. 634/1236) became the ruler of Aleppo, at least in name, since he was four years old at the time. He ruled until 634/1236, when he died at the age of twenty-four. During his rule, the most powerful figure in Aleppo was his atabeg Shihāb al-Dīn Tūghrūl (d. 631/1233). Al-‘Azīz Muḥammad was succeeded by his infant son, al-

³⁶ Muḥammad b. Aḥmad Ibn Jubayr, *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr: Being the Chronicle of a Mediaeval Spanish Moor Concerning His Journey to the Egypt of Saladin, Arabia, Baghdad, Jerusalem and Sicily*, ed. and trans. Ronald J. C. Broadhurst (London: Jonathan Cape, 1952), 260-3.

³⁷ Humphreys, “Zengids,” 727-8; Tabbaa, *Power and Piety*, 15.

³⁸ Morray, *An Ayyubid Notable*, 126; Tabbaa, *Power and Piety*, 28.

³⁹ Anne-Marie Eddé, “Bilād Al-Shām, from the Fāṭimid Conquest to the Fall of the Ayyūbids (359–658/970–1260),” in *The New Cambridge History of Islam*, ed. Maribel Fierro (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 192-3.

⁴⁰ Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘a, *Physicians*, §15.40.6-7.

⁴¹ Eddé, “Bilād Al-Shām,” 187.

⁴² Humphreys, “Zengids,” 747-8.

⁴³ Humphreys, “Zengids,” 748-50.

Nāṣir Yūsuf (d. 658/1260). It is during the rule of al-Nāṣir Yūsuf that his grandmother Ḍayfa Khātūn takes up the effective rule over the city, until her death in 640/1242.⁴⁴

In 642/1244 the threat of the Mongols was felt in Aleppo for the first time. The Mongols seemed to have come as close as twelve kilometers, but they did not advance on the city. Through diplomatic ways, al-Nāṣir Yūsuf, tries to wane off the Mongols. In 648/1250 a coup by the *mamluks* ended the Ayyubid rule in Egypt. The same year the Ayyubids of Aleppo seized power in Damascus, and for a short period Aleppo seemed at the peak of its might. However, in 658/1260 the Mongol armies under Hülegü (d. 633/1265) swept over Syria, and conquered Aleppo. These events mark the end of the political power of the Ayyubids. After the Mamluks defeated the Mongols on the 19th of Ramaḍān/3rd of September that same year, Syria came under their control and Cairo would become their undisputed capital.⁴⁵

The educational infrastructure of Ayyubid Aleppo

In order to understand what drew scholars to Aleppo, it is important to dive deeper into the social structure and patronaging activities of the political and economic elites of the city. In Ayyubid Aleppo support for scholars came mainly from two groups. First, from the court, that is, the ruling family and people close to it, who played a role in the city's bureaucracy. Second, from the patrician families.

The social structure of the court in Aleppo did not differ much from other contemporary Islamic courts. It was, at least in name headed by the sultan, who was a descendant from the Ayyubid family. This family had Kurdish origins. However, during the time when they ruled over Aleppo, they were highly Arabized.⁴⁶ They exercised power through their army. This army was composed mainly of men with no roots in Syria. Also, the princes and the women were part of the court. The Ayyubid women at the court were enthusiastic patronizers of religious institutions.⁴⁷

The Ayyubid army consisted mostly of Kurdish and Turkish horsemen, Turcoman and Arab infantry, and elite *mamluks* or slave soldiers. The size of the cavalry was estimated at 3000 to 5000 horsemen. This force was similar to the army of Damascus. Egypt's army seems to have been significantly larger in this period, with estimated somewhere between 8500 and 12000 horsemen. In the early Ayyubid period, this military class did not play any role in the cultural life of the city. In late the Ayyubid period, the military seemed to start participating in the cultural life.⁴⁸ Judging by the names and titles, as pointed out in the introduction, persons with a military background appear several times in the Ayyubid era certificates. The earliest one dated 612/1215. The *musmi'* of this certificate is addressed as *al-amīr al-kabīr* (the great emir). This shows an active involvement by members of the military class in the scholarly life.⁴⁹ Other certificates show the *kunya* al-Turkīor a Turkish name (Aybak) as participants in a *majlis* in Aleppo in the first half of the thirteenth century.⁵⁰

⁴⁴ Morray, *An Ayyubid Notable*, 4; Tabbaa, *Power and Piety*, 29.

⁴⁵ Eddé, "Bilād Al-Shām," 194.

⁴⁶ Tabbaa, *Power and Piety*, 31.

⁴⁷ Tabbaa, *Power and Piety*, 27-28.

⁴⁸ Tabbaa, *Power and Piety*, 30-1; Eddé, "Bilād Al-Shām," 190.

⁴⁹ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Berlin State Library, Landberg 47, 32v, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/2694>, accessed April 30, 2024. For converting *Hijri* dates to the Gregorian calendar the Hijri-Gregorian Converter was used: "Hijri-Gregorian Converter," IslamiCity, accessed January-June, 2024, <https://www.islamicity.org/hijri-gregorian-converter/#>.

⁵⁰ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3748/5, 140v, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1424>, accessed April 30, 2024; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Berlin State Library, Petermann II 30, 54v, N. 2, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/2998>, accessed April 30, 2024.

Beside the members of the Ayyubid family, the court consisted of people close to and trusted by the rulers. These were eunuchs, slaves, freed slaves, and Muslims from other parts of the Islamic world. They worked at the court as viziers, governors, supervisors or scribes. They were cut off from all family bonds, and owed everything they had to the court.⁵¹ They were part of the scholarly life of Aleppo, and occasionally someone who seemed to belong to the court, appears on a certificate. One certificate mentions Muḥammad ibn Ṣālah ibn Ibrāhīm al-Āmidī al-Kātib. The *nisba* al-Āmidī, suggests roots in Āmid, present day Diyarbakir, meaning outside of Aleppo. However, a *nisba* can be misleading, as it could also refer to distant ancestry. The *nisba* al-kātib suggests a function as civil servant or administrator.⁵² And even though it is not specified in which institution this person worked as a scribe, analyzing his name paints a picture in accordance with the description of people at the court.⁵³ Another courtier that appears in the certificates is *al-khāzin* (the treasurer) Abū al-Faḍal Jaʿfar ibn Abī Ḥāmid ibn Salmān.⁵⁴ His name is also found in another certificate with the *nisba* al-Ḥalabī.⁵⁵ Members of the court were active in patronizing religious institutions. The *de-facto* ruler atabeg Shihāb al-Dīn Tūghrūl was the most active in this regard. He completed al-ʿAzīz Muḥammad’s madrasa. On top of that, he commissioned the construction of at least two Ḥanafī madrasas and a *khānqāh*.⁵⁶

Notable Families

The other group that was deeply involved in patronizing scholars and religious institutions in Ayyubid Aleppo were the *aʿyān*, or the notables. These were the wealthy families who made their fortunes with trade and agriculture. What makes these notables stand out, compared to contemporary families in other cities, is their deep historic roots in the city. These families were prominent long before the Ayyubids seized power in Aleppo.⁵⁷ The families were: Banū al-Khashshāb, Banū al-ʿAjamī, Banū al-ʿAdīm (also known as: Banū Abī Jarāda), Banū al-Muqaddam, Banū Shaddād, Banū ʿUṣrūn, Banū ʿAlwān al-Asadī.⁵⁸

The Banū al-Khashshāb were present in the city since the middle of the tenth century. This was a Shiʿa family.⁵⁹ In the certificates, the *nisba* al-Khashshāb appears a couple of times, although none of these certificates could be linked to Aleppo.

Most of the Sunni families of Ayyubid Aleppo followed the Shāfiʿī or the Ḥanafī school of thought. When Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn came to power in Aleppo, he strongly supported the Shāfiʿīs and removed everyone who followed other schools of thought from official positions. As a result, Shāfiʿī families flourished during the Ayyubid period, at the cost of the Hanafī families.⁶⁰

⁵¹ Tabbaa, *Power and Piety*, 30.

⁵² EI³, s.v. "Kātib/Kuttāb."

⁵³ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3747/6, 95v, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1413>, accessed April 30, 2024.

⁵⁴ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3747/6, 95r, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1411>, accessed April 30, 2024; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3748/5, 140v, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1424>, accessed April 30, 2024; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3750/6, 78v, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1546>, accessed April 30, 2024.

⁵⁵ Abū Nuʿaym, *Fāḍāʾil al-Khulafāʾ*, 100-1. The original certificates from this edition come from MS. Köprülü Kütüphanesi, Fazıl Ahmed Paşa, 00040-002, 359527. The certificate of this manuscript related to Ibn Khalīl are found on: 236v, 251r and 251v.

⁵⁶ Tabbaa, *Power and Piety*, 37-8.

⁵⁷ Tabbaa, *Power and Piety*, 31-3.

⁵⁸ Morray, *An Ayyubid Notable*, 40.

⁵⁹ Tabbaa, *Power and Piety*, 40.

⁶⁰ Morray, *An Ayyubid Notable*, 123.

The most prominent family in Ayyubid Aleppo was the Banū al-‘Ajamī. They build palaces that could compete with the palaces of the Ayyubids in the citadel, in both size and sophistication. They were the “leaders of the Shāfi‘ī community.”⁶¹ Their influence went beyond Aleppo, and they had connections with the Abbasid court in Baghdad.⁶² As their *nisba* suggests⁶³, they had Persian roots. In the middle of the eleventh century, the family moved from Nishapur to Aleppo. Many of its members played important roles in the intellectual life of the city. The members of the family were enthusiastic builders, and they provided many facilities for religious education in the city. Four madrasas were built in their name. Among them, is the first Sunni *madrasa* in Aleppo, the *madrasa* al-Zajjājiyya. Another prominent institution is the *madrasa* al-Sharafiyya. This was one of the largest Ayyubid madrasas, and was built on the main road between the citadel and the Umayyad mosque. Furthermore, two mosques and one *khānqāh* were built by the family.⁶⁴

Their construction projects of scholarly institution shows their deep involvement in the scholarly activity of Aleppo. Moreover, it is said the family had produced the city’s leading scholars.⁶⁵ However, so far I have not found any certificate where an al-‘Ajamī was mentioned as a *musmi*‘. Furthermore, only one certificate mentions a person with the *nisba* al-‘Ajamī as a reader during a session in Aleppo.⁶⁶ The institutions they build are visible in the certificates. The *madrasa* al-Sharafiyya is mentioned multiple times, albeit all in certificates from the Mamluk Period (658-922/1260-1517). The same goes for a session in the *madrasa* al-Zajjājiyya, dated 794/1392 and a certificate that records a session in the abode of the Banū al-‘Ajamī, dated 730/1330.⁶⁷ This is not to say that no sessions took place in one of their institutions in the Ayyubid period, as many of the Ayyubid Era certificates just mention the city name, or no location at all. Moreover, as mentioned in the introduction, only a fraction of certificates from Ayyubid Aleppo have been studied so far – a lot might still be hidden in unstudied texts.

Other prominent Shāfi‘ī families are the Banū Shaddād, the Banū ‘Uṣrūn, and the Banū ‘Alwān al-Asādī. The Banū Shaddād is famous for the two historians that come from the family: Bahā’ al-Dīn ibn Shaddād (d. 632/1234) and ‘Izz al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Shaddād (d. 684/1285). A *madrasa* and the *dār al-ḥadīth* are attributed to the family. So far, I have not found any Ayyubid era certificate that mentions a member of this house. Also, no certificate that records a session in one of their institutions is found. The next family, the Banū ‘Uṣrūn, built at least one *madrasa* that carried their name.⁶⁸ However, in the Ayyubid certificates from Aleppo their names are absent. From all Shāfi‘ī families, the Banū ‘Alwān al-Asādī is the most visible in the certificates. In an early Ayyubid certificate, dating to 589/1193, a member from the house leads a session as *musmi*‘ (Appendix, A). In the late Ayyubid period, this role was no longer practiced by the family, but there is a certificate that lists a member of the family as reader.⁶⁹

One of the few prominent Hanafī houses in Ayyubid Aleppo was the Banū al-‘Adīm, also known as Banū Abī Jarāda. The heyday of the family’s status was during the Zangid rule (522-579/1128-1183).

⁶¹ Tabbaa, *Power and Piety*, 41.

⁶² Morray, *An Ayyubid Notable*, 122; Tabbaa, *Medieval Aleppo*, 78.

⁶³ ‘Ajam meaning ‘foreigner’ or ‘non-Arabs’, mostly referring to Persians: Edward William Lane, *An Arabic–English Lexicon* (Beirut: Librairie Du Liban, 1968), 1967.

⁶⁴ Tabbaa, *Power and Piety*, 41.

⁶⁵ Tabbaa, *Power and Piety*, 123, 125, 130-7.

⁶⁶ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3744/6, 48v, N. 3, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1224>, accessed May 1, 2024.

⁶⁷ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3749/7, 196v, N. 3, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1466>, accessed May 1, 2024.

⁶⁸ Morray, *An Ayyubid Notable*, 134.

⁶⁹ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3739/2, 21r, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/993>, accessed June 13, 2024.

Their status declined, as a result of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's policies of favoring the Shāfi'ī school of thought. The most famous scholar from this house is the historian Kamāl al-Dīn Abū al-Qāsim 'Umar ibn Aḥmad ibn Hibat Allāh ibn al-'Adīm (d. 660/1262).⁷⁰ One of the Aleppine certificates recorded his name as participant, in a session dated 625/1228.⁷¹ The same manuscript also contains a certificate that he copied.⁷² Other members of the Banū al-'Adīm also appear in several certificates. Similar to other Aleppine families, no certificate mentions them as *musmi'*, but there is a certificate where a member, 'Abd al-Wāḥib ibn Abī Jarāda al-Ḥalabī, participated as reader.⁷³ This name is also found as copier of several older certificates.⁷⁴ The family built at least one *madrassa*. No certificate mentions a session that took place there. In *Gotha Research Library Ms. orient. A 1751 224r N. 3* members of the family were mentioned. They are addressed as the 'noble children' (al-awlād al-nujabā') of the grand chief, the benefactor (al-ṣadr al-kabīr al-mun'im) Muḥayyī al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad from the Banū Abī Jarāda. They were accompanied by their *mu'addib*, who was an elementary teacher, boys' teacher, or tutor for studying the Quran.⁷⁵ The way they are addressed confirms their status. Their role in the session seems to do that less so.

It is interesting to see that the Ayyubid certificates from Aleppo seem to paint a different intellectual climate than is found in works of Tabbāa and Murray. The leading families do not figure prominently in the certificates as could be expected on the basis of their position in the intellectual and cultural landscape of the city. Most striking is that members of these families appear a few times as *musmi'*. Finally, no Ayyubid certificate mentioned any of the institutions built by these families. This does not mean that no session took place there, since in more than half of the certificates only 'Ḥalab' (Aleppo) is mentioned as the location of the session.

Institutions for education

While discussing the leading families of Aleppo, already some educational institutions of Aleppo have been mentioned. Elaborating on this topic provides a deeper understanding of the educational infrastructure of the city.

At the heart of the city's cultural and religious life lies the Great Mosque, or the Umayyad mosque. Although the Umayyads were the first to have constructed a mosque that continues to carry their name, already by the Ayyubid period hardly anything was left of the original structure. The

⁷⁰ Murray, *An Ayyubid Notable*, 125; Tabbāa, *Power and Piety*, 42.

⁷¹ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3765/9, 48r, eds. Said Aljoumani, عبد الله باوزير <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/4019>, accessed May 1, 2024.

⁷² Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3765/9, 54v, N. 2, eds. Said Aljoumani, عبد الله باوزير <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/4024>, accessed May 1, 2024.

⁷³ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3750/6, 77v, N. 4, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1540>, accessed May 1, 2024.

⁷⁴ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Berlin State Library, Ms. or. Quart 1060, 48v, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/2843>, accessed May 1, 2024; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Berlin State Library, Ms. or. Quart 1060, 48v, N. 4, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/2846>, accessed May 1, 2024; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Berlin State Library, Ms. or. Quart 1060, 49r, N. 2, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/2848>, accessed May 1, 2024.

⁷⁵ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Gotha Research Library, Ms. orient. A 1751, 224r, N. 3, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/759>, accessed May 16, 2024; On the *mu'addib*: Maya Shatzmiller, *Labour in the Medieval Islamic World* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 163.

mosque was totally rebuilt in the twelfth century.⁷⁶ The mosque was a popular location for the teaching sessions. It is mentioned eight times in the Ayyubid certificates, which makes it the most mentioned place from Ayyubid Aleppo on the audition certificates. In the certificates the Umayyad mosque is referred to as 'jāmi' Ḥalab' (congregational mosque of Aleppo). Other mosques that are mentioned in the certificates from Ayyubid Aleppo are the al-Artāhī mosque (1 certificate⁷⁷), the mosque of the Banū al-Qaysarānī (1 certificate⁷⁸), and the Qabāt mosque (2 certificates⁷⁹).

Another religious institution that hosted teaching sessions was the *madrasa*. The *madrasa* was devoted in the first place to teaching Islamic law, according to one or more of the (Sunni) *madhhabs*, or schools of law. Physically, the building provided space where teachings could take place, and provided rooms where the students could live. Which *madhhab* the *madrasa* served depended on the wishes of the patron of the *madrasa*.⁸⁰ The rise of the *madrasa* in the second half of the fifth/eleventh century is often contributed to the Seljuk vizier Niẓām al-Mulk (d. 485/1092). Although similar institutions existed before he founded the famous Niẓāmiyya *madrasa* in Baghdad, Niẓām al-Mulk made the *madrasa* a tool for the state. Through the *madrasa* rulers could spread and control their Sunni policy. Early *madrasas* functioned to counter Shia institutes build by the Fatimids. In Aleppo, where there was a considerable Shia population, the building of the first *madrasa* - the Zajjājiyya *madrasa* in 560/1116– was met with violent opposition. A second function of the *madrasa* was to train loyal officials.⁸¹ The number of *madrasas* exploded under Ayyubid rule. Ibn Jubayr mentions that there were five or six of these institutes in Aleppo when he visited the city in 580/1184.⁸² At the end of the Ayyubid rule there must have been 45 *madrasas*.⁸³

Mudarris or professor of law was the highest position in the *madrasa*. The *mudarris* belonged to one of the Sunni *madhhabs*.⁸⁴ In Aleppo, this position was mostly reserved to members of the leading families.⁸⁵ The term appears on rare occasions in certificates from the Ayyubid period. It is found in one certificate from Mecca, dated 644/1247. In the same period, but outside the Ayyubid realm, the term is found in one certificate from Baghdad, dated 600/1203.⁸⁶ However in the Aleppine certificates no one is addressed with this title.

The *madrasa* al-Sharafiyya was among the most prominent *madrasas* of the city. Other prominent *madrasas* where the *madrasa* al-Shādhbakhṭiyya⁸⁷ and the *madrasa* al-Firdaws, built by

⁷⁶ Tabbaa, *Power and Piety*, 16.

⁷⁷ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate BNF Paris, Suppl Turc 984, 98r, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/569>, accessed June 8, 2024.

⁷⁸ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Berlin State Library, Petermann II 30, 54v, N. 2, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/2998>, accessed June 8, 2024.

⁷⁹ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3757/8, 115v, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/2135>, accessed June 8, 2024; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3765/9, 48r, eds. Said Aljoumani, عبد الله باوزير <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/4019>, accessed June 8, 2024.

⁸⁰ George Makdisi, *The rise of colleges: institutions of learning in Islam and the West* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1981), 27-8.

⁸¹ Tabbaa, *Power and Piety*, 123-8.

⁸² Ibn Jubayr, *Travels*, 263.

⁸³ Eddé, "Bilād Al-Shām," 193.

⁸⁴ Makdisi, *The rise of colleges*, 34, 153.

⁸⁵ Morray, *An Ayyubid Notable*, 134.

⁸⁶ Mecca: Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate BNF Paris, Arabe 722, 95v, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/304>, accessed May 6, 2024; Baghdad: Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3759/4, 54r, N. 3, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/2391>, accessed May 6, 2024.

⁸⁷ Morray, *An Ayyubid Notable*, 133

Ḍayfa Khātūn.⁸⁸ The *madrassa* al-Ḥallāwiyya was the leading Ḥanafī *madrasa*. Ibn al-‘Adīm referred to it as *al-madrassa al-kabīra* (the great school).⁸⁹

Contrary to the fact that the *madrasa* was the leading place of education in this period, and that during this time many *madrasas* were built in Aleppo, the *madrasas* of the city occur only rarely in the certificates. Only two certificates mention the *madrasa* where it was issued. In contrast, on ACP there are 80 certificates that state that they were issued in a *madrasa* in Damascus.

The first Aleppine *madrassa* that is mentioned in a certificate is the *madrasa* Ibn Rawāḥa.⁹⁰ This is probably one of the *madrasas* the wealthy merchant Zakī al-Dīn Ibn Rawāḥa (d.622/1225) built. Not much is written about this *madrasa*. From what is known, the Banū ‘Alwān al-Asadī was connected to it, and provided its *mudarris*.⁹¹ The certificate, that is dated two years after the death of the patron of the *madrassa*, mentions many names from the Banū ‘Alwān al-Asadī.

Another *madrasa* that occurs in the certificates is the *madrasa* of Iftikhār al-Dīn.⁹² This is the scholar Iftikhār al-Dīn Abū Hāshim ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib ibn al-Faḍl ibn ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib al-Hāshimī (al-Hāshimī, d. 616/1219-20), who was the *musmi* of the session. He was a leading Ḥanafī scholar, at that time, and the *mudarris* of the *madrassa* al-Ḥallāwiyya. Since the *madrasa* of Iftikhār al-Dīn is absent from the literature, it is likely that this session took place in the *madrasa* where he was the *mudarris*.⁹³ He was also recorded as a *musmi* on a certificate that is dated a few months earlier. This certificate does not mention the location of the session. So this session could also have taken place in the *madrassa* al-Ḥallāwiyya.⁹⁴

Besides the sessions that took place in religious institutions, there are also certificates that recorded sessions in secular buildings. Some sessions were held in a *khān*. A *khan* is a hotel or inn with accommodations for travelers, that served commercial purposes with warehouses and shops. Besides merchants, it also housed traveling scholars. It was not uncommon for these traveling scholars to hold teaching sessions in a *khān*.⁹⁵ This can be seen in a certificate that records a session held in *khān* al-Sulṭān Ḍāhir, that took place in Dhū al-Qa‘da 634/July 1237.⁹⁶ The *musmi* ‘Abū al-Munajjā ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Umar ibn ‘Alī ibn ‘Umar al-Lattīy (al-Lattīy, fl. 634/1237), was a scholar from Baghdad.⁹⁷ The certificates show that he traveled to Al-Karak and Damascus before he arrived in Aleppo. In the Al-Karak certificate he is just called al-Lattīy, but it is in the same manuscript, and his role is the same as in the certificate from Aleppo. Therefore, it seems safe to assume, it is the same person.⁹⁸ A session

⁸⁸ Tabbaa, *Medieval Aleppo*, 168-82.

⁸⁹ Morray, *An Ayyubid Notable*, 1.

⁹⁰ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3765/9, 55r, N. 1, eds. Said Aljoumani, عبد الله باوزير <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/4026>, accessed May 2, 2024.

⁹¹ Morray, *An Ayyubid Notable*, 126, 135.

⁹² Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Berlin State Library, Landberg 47, 32v, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/2694>, accessed May 2, 2024.

⁹³ Morray, *An Ayyubid Notable*, 35, 42, 175.

⁹⁴ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Berlin State Library, Landberg 47, 32r, N. 3, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/2693>, accessed May 2, 2024.

⁹⁵ Makdisi, *The rise of colleges*, 23-4.

⁹⁶ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3757/8, 116r, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/2137>, accessed May 3, 2024.

⁹⁷ Abū ‘Abdillāh Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Al-Dhahabī, *Ta’rīkh al-Islām*, vol.46, ed. Umar Abd al-Sallam Tadmuri (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, 1998), 240.

⁹⁸ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3757/8, 113v, N. 2, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/2127>, accessed May 3, 2024.

he led a month later was held in the Qabāt mosque.⁹⁹ So, it might be that the first session was held shortly after his arrival in the city. Whereas a month later he was already settled in the city. Another certificate from the *khān* al-Sultān Zāhir, records a session by Abū al Qāsim Muḥammad ibn Abī al-Mas'ūd ibn al-Qumayra al-Mu'tamin (al-Mu'tamin, d. 650/1252-3). This *musmi'* is not found in other certificates, so it is only possible to get an idea of his travels through narrative sources. According to al-Dhahabī, he was a traveling merchant from Iraq, who traveled to Syria and Egypt.¹⁰⁰

As for royal institutions, the citadel of Aleppo is not mentioned in the surveyed certificates, so there are no traces of education at the court. In contrary to Damascus, whose citadel is mentioned in several certificates.¹⁰¹ A royal institution that is mentioned is the *dār al-'adl*.¹⁰² The *dār al-'adl*, which can be loosely translated as palace of justice, was a building that represented the bond between the ruler and the people of the city. This building was only built in capital cities, so the fact that it was present in Aleppo, already says something about the political status of the city. The *dār al-'adl* in Aleppo was built in 1189. In it, the ruler of Aleppo held public hearings, once or twice a week.¹⁰³

Teaching sessions were also held at the private residence of scholars. This practice was common in the so-called *pre-madrassa* period.¹⁰⁴ The introduction of the madrasa did not stop this practice in Aleppo, as seen in two certificates issued at the house of the *musmi'*.¹⁰⁵ Sessions in the private sphere of a teacher were less accessible for a non-scholarly audience. Although some teachers held popular sessions at their house.¹⁰⁶ When comparing the data on sessions at a private residence in the Ayyubid period on the ACP, we see that in Aleppo 2 out of the 38 (5%) certificates were issued at a private house. The same percentage of private sessions is found in Bagdad (4 out of 75). In Cairo, 9 out of 82 certificates (11%) were issued at the teachers house. In Damascus 53 out of 432 sessions (12%) were held at a private residence. The highest percentage of home teaching sessions is found in Isfahan, where 3 out of 14 sessions (21%) were held at a house of the teacher. The fact that only a small percentage of teaching session in Aleppo were held in a private residence, could be a sign of a well-functioning public educational infrastructure.

⁹⁹ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3757/8, 115v, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/2135>, accessed May 3, 2024.

¹⁰⁰ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3757/9, 150r, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/2187>, accessed May 3, 2024; Abū 'Abdillāh Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Al-Dhahabī, *Kitāb al-'Ibar fī Khabar man Ghabar* (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, 1985), 3:266.

¹⁰¹ For example: Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Gotha Research Library, Ms. orient. A 590, 99v, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/837>, accessed May 3, 2024; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Berlin State Library, Wetzstein II 1326, 246r, N. 2, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/3417>, accessed May 3, 2024.

¹⁰² Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3763/5, 48v, N. 5, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/3778>, accessed May 3, 2024.

¹⁰³ Nasser O. Rabbat, "The Ideological Significance of the Dār al-Adl in the Medieval Islamic Orient," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 27, no. 1 (February 1995), 3-10.

¹⁰⁴ Letizia Osti, "Culture, Education and the Court," in *Crisis and Continuity at the Abbasid Court*, ed. Maaike van Berkel, Nadia Maria El Cheikh et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 192.

¹⁰⁵ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3765/9, 55v, N. 1, eds. Said Aljoumani, عبد الله باوزير <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/4028>, accessed June 8, 2024; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3765/9, 55v, N. 3, eds. Said Aljoumani, عبد الله باوزير <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/4030>, accessed June 8, 2024.

¹⁰⁶ Hirschler, *A City is Reading*, 37, 45.

2. Ibn Khalīl: a case study

Shams al-Dīn Abū al-Ḥajjāj Yūsuf ibn Khalīl ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Ādamī al-Dimashqī was born in Damascus in the year 555/1160-1. He started to devote himself to the collection of *ḥadīth* at the age of thirty. For this he left Damascus and traveled to Baghdad, Isfahan and Egypt where he studied at a great number of teachers. Eventually he settled in Aleppo. There he would spend the last decades of his life. He died on 10 Jumādā al-Ākhirah 648/September 15, 1250 at the age of 93 (90 solar years).¹⁰⁷ There are biographical dictionaries, that provide biographical information about him. First, there is *Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāz* by al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348).¹⁰⁸ This work was written within one century after Ibn Khalīl’s death. The second source is *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥuffāz* by al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505).¹⁰⁹ This work is a continuation of al-Dhahabī’s *Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāz*.¹¹⁰ It is written two centuries after Ibn Khalīl’s life. His biography can also be found in *Ṭabaqāt ‘Ulamā’ Al-Ḥadīth* by Ibn ‘Abd al-Hādī (d. 909/1503).¹¹¹

His biographies provide general information about his life, namely when he lived, where he traveled to, and who his teachers were. The great number of certificates help to get a more detailed insight into his life. With this information it is possible to get to know more about his family, his household, his rise on the social ladder and his travels. The following case study on Ibn Khalīl is largely based on this information.

Family

Ibn Khalīl came from a scholarly family. His father was Abū al-Faraj Khalīl ibn ‘Abd Allāh.¹¹² Although he was not found in the certificates, other members of his family left their traces in the in it. Ibn Khalīl had at least two brothers. Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm and Ilyās. Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm was also a scholar, and the two brothers studied together. In 586/1190 they got an entry in the scholarly circles of Damascus, as they attended a study session at the private residence of a scholar.¹¹³ Contrary to Ibn Khalīl, Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm did not travel much, he stayed in Damascus his whole life. Despite this, he still became a *musmi’*. In 654/1256, six years after Ibn Khalīl died, he was teaching at the Umayyad mosque in Damascus.¹¹⁴

His other brother, Ilyās, did not leave any traces in the certificates. So, it is unknown if he was a scholar. However, his son Abū Bakr Khalīl ibn Ilyās ibn Khalīl, was. Between 596/1200 and 600/1204 he attended six teaching sessions in Damascus together with his uncle Ibn Khalīl.¹¹⁵ It is unclear if he continued his scholarly activities, as he is not found in certificates issued after 600/1204.

¹⁰⁷ Abū ‘Abdillāh Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Dhahabī, *Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāz* (Riyadh: Turath For Solutions, 2013), 1410-1; Jalāl al-Dīn Abū al-Faḍl ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī Bakr ibn Muḥammad al-Khaḍīrī al-Suyūṭī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥuffāz* (Riyadh: Turath For Solutions, 2013), 489; Ibn ‘Abd al-Hādī, *Ṭabaqāt ‘Ulamā’ Al-Ḥadīth, part 4* (Beirut: Al-Resalah Publishing house, 1997), 193-4. Only al-Dhahabī and al-Suyūṭī mention the specific date of his death.

¹⁰⁸ Al-Dhahabī, *Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāz*, 1410-1.

¹⁰⁹ Al-Suyūṭī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥuffāz*, 488-9.

¹¹⁰ El², s.v. “al-Dhahabī.”

¹¹¹ Ibn ‘Abd al-Hādī, *Ṭabaqāt ‘Ulamā’ Al-Ḥadīth*, 193.

¹¹² In most certificates his is mentioned with his *nasab* ‘ibn Khalīl’, or ‘ibn Khalīl ibn ‘Abd Allāh’. However one certificate also provides the *kunya* of his father, Abū al-Faraj: Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Gotha Research Library, Ms. orient. A 1775, 105v, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/766>, accessed June 9, 2024.

¹¹³ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3753/2, 35v, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1634>, accessed June 9, 2024.

¹¹⁴ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3757/1, 16v, N. 2, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/2069>, accessed June 9, 2024.

¹¹⁵ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3750/11, 154v, N. 2, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1488>, accessed April

One certificate from 638/1240 from Aleppo provides some insight into the household of Ibn Khalīl. At the session he was accompanied by his *sibt* Naṣr Allāh.¹¹⁶ The word *sibt* indicates Ibn Khalīl had a daughter, because it translates as ‘daughter’s child’.¹¹⁷ At the same session his slave (fatā) Uzbek ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Turkī was also present.

Ibn Khalīl and his travels in search for knowledge

As his biographers have shown, Ibn Khalīl went on a journey in search for knowledge. However, Ibn Khalīl’s biographers only mention the names of the places he visited and some of the teachers with whom he studied. By examining the certificates, his journey can be followed closely.

The earliest signs of his scholarly activities are dated to 572/1177.¹¹⁸ However, the certificate that mentions him is a copy, written by a person called Yūsuf ibn Sallāma al-Ḥarrānī in 638/1240. On the certificate Ibn Khalīl is mentioned with his full name, including the *laqab* Shams al-Dīn, which otherwise does not appear before 597/1200.¹¹⁹ On the other side, the *musmi’* present in this certificate, Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Naṣr al-Ṣaydalānī, as well as other persons mentioned, are also present in another certificate together with Ibn Khalīl. The second one is dated almost twenty years later, in 591/1195.¹²⁰ So, it might be that the copyist got the name wrong. Another explanation for the inconsistency with regard to the name could be that the copyist copied an older certificate, but instead of copying the variation of Ibn Khalīl’s name that he used in 572/1177, he updated the name to that by which Ibn Khalīl was known in 638/1240. By doing this, his contemporaries would understand the value of the certificate, since Ibn Khalīl was a respected scholar at that time, as will be discussed below. However, the fact that there exists another certificate with Ibn Khalīl with the same *musmi’* and reader from 591/1195, located in Isfahan, gives the strong

19, 2024; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3754/18, 198r, N. 2, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1744>, accessed April 19, 2024; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3754/8 38, الفهرس الرسالة السابعة, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1783>, accessed April 19, 2024; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3757/12, 202v, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/2046>, accessed April 19, 2024; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Berlin State Library, Ms. or. Quart 1060, 48v, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/2843>, accessed April 19, 2024; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3761/4, 28v, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/3629>, accessed April 19, 2024.

¹¹⁶ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3748/5, 140v, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1424>, accessed June 6, 2024.

¹¹⁷ Lane, *An Arabic–English Lexicon*, 1294.

¹¹⁸ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3750/6, 78r, N. 4, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1544>, accessed June 6, 2024.

¹¹⁹ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3747/6, 94v, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1408>, accessed June 11, 2024.

¹²⁰ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3764/12, 178v, N. 1, eds. Said Aljoumani, عبد الله باوزير <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/3840>, accessed April 17, 2024.

impression that the copyist misread the date, and that the actual session took place twenty years later.¹²¹

The earliest attestation of Ibn Khalīl in Damascus is found in a copied certificate dated 586/1190.¹²² After that he started his *riḥla*. In 587/1191 he arrived in Baghdad. Between Jumādā al-Ākhira 587/July 1191 and Rabī' al-Awwal 588/ March 1192 his name appears in three certificates located in Baghdad. He wrote down the oldest of the three certificates.¹²³ The second certificate mentions that he is the owner of the manuscript, which contain a text by Ismā'īl ibn Aḥmad ibn 'Umar al-Samarqandī. The session took place in the al-Qaṣr mosque, one of the six Friday mosques of Baghdad.¹²⁴ The third Baghdadi certificate states that Ibn Khalīl was the reader during the session. This session took place in the *Ribāṭ* of Abū al-Najīb.¹²⁵ In 589/1193 he attended sessions by Ibn Kulayb and Dhākir ibn Kāmil.¹²⁶ The certificates do not mention the location of the sessions. However, al-Dhahabī mentions that Ibn Khalīl attended these teachers in Baghdad.¹²⁷

At the time Ibn Khalīl visited Baghdad, the city was ruled by caliph al-Nāṣir (r. 575-622/1180-1225), who revived the political power of the Abbasids. According to El-Hibri, his court attracted scholars from Syria, Iraq and Anatolia.¹²⁸ Contemporary scholars were not charmed by the state of the city. Geographer Ibn Jubayr described the city as a "statue of a ghost", when he visited the city in 580/1184, seven years before Ibn Khalīl was there.¹²⁹ 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī says in his autobiography that after 585/1189 "there was none left in Baghdad who was able to win my heart, satisfy me completely and help me to resolve the difficulties which I felt".¹³⁰ He decided to leave and try his luck in Mosul. He later moves to Damascus where he finds "a great number of notables from Baghdad and elsewhere" who were attracted by the "generous patronage" of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn.¹³¹ So it is interesting that despite negative ideas about Baghdad by some of his contemporaries, Ibn Khalīl decided to visit the city.

After his time in Baghdad, Ibn Khalīl followed the same path as 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī. Ibn Khalīl also moved on to Mosul. He appears, as reader, on a certificate written in Mosul, dated Jumādā al-Ākhira 589/ June or July 1193. His visit to Mosul is not mentioned in his biography. Here he studied

¹²¹ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3764/12, 178v, N. 1, eds. Said Aljoumani, عبد الله باوزير <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/3840>, accessed April 18, 2024.

¹²² Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3753/2, 35v, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1634>, accessed April 18, 2024.

¹²³ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate BNF Paris, Suppl Turc 984, 90v, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/560>, accessed April 18, 2024.

¹²⁴ El², s.v. "Baghdād."

¹²⁵ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3747/6, 94r, N. 2, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1406>, accessed April 18, 2024.

¹²⁶ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Gotha Research Library, Ms. orient. A 1751, 128r, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/754>, accessed April 18, 2024; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Gotha Research Library, Ms. orient. A 1751, 224r, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/756>, accessed April 18, 2024; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Gotha Research Library, Ms. orient. A 1751, 224r, N.1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/757>, accessed April 18, 2024.

¹²⁷ al-Dhahabī, *Tadhkirat al-Huffāz*, 1410.

¹²⁸ Tayeb El-Hibri, *Abbasid Caliphate: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 225-6, 239-40.

¹²⁹ Ibn Jubayr, *Travels*, 226.

¹³⁰ Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, *Physicians*, §15.40.3.

¹³¹ Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, *Physicians*, §15.40.3.

the work of Ismā'īl ibn Aḥmād ibn 'Umar al-Samarqandī, which he also studied in Baghdad.¹³² After Mosul, like 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī, he went to Damascus. Where he participated in at least two sessions in Muḥarram and Šafar 590/January and February 1194.¹³³ Unfortunately, the certificates do not provide the information to say something about his motivations to travel back to Damascus. He did not share 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī's opinion that there were no worthy teachers left in Baghdad. Unlike 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī, Ibn Khalīl returns to Baghdad, after spending approximately a year in Damascus. In Baghdad he attended a session in a *ribāṭ*.¹³⁴

From Baghdad, he traveled further east, where he studied with Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Naṣr al-Šaydalānī in the Jūrjūr mosque in Isfahan nine months later.¹³⁵ The fact that the Kwarazmians conquered the city a year earlier, did not stop Ibn Khalīl from visiting it.¹³⁶ Al-Dhahabī does not mention al-Šaydalānī in the biography of Ibn Khalīl. However, al-Dhahabī mentions that Ibn Khalīl studied at Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl al-Ṭarsūsī and Mas'ūd al-Jamāl in Isfahan.¹³⁷ Their transmissions to Ibn Khalīl are mentioned in a certificate from a teaching session by Ibn Khalīl thirty-three years later.¹³⁸

From Isfahan, Ibn Khalīl traveled back to Damascus. There he joins a *majlis* as reader on Rabī' al-Ākhir 594/February 1198 in the Umayyad mosque.¹³⁹ In 595/1199, he makes one final journey as part of his search for knowledge. This time he traveled east, to Egypt.¹⁴⁰ He stayed there for about a year, after that, he returned to Damascus.¹⁴¹ He stayed in Damascus until 604/1207.¹⁴²

In 605/1209 Ibn Khalīl left Damascus to go on the hajj. While on the hajj Ibn Khalīl attended a study session in Mina, near Mecca.¹⁴³ So far, this is the only case I could find of a scholar who was in Ayyubid Aleppo who did the hajj. As discussed in the introduction, many certificates from Mecca are

¹³² Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3747/6, 94r, N. 3, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1407>, accessed April 18, 2024.

¹³³ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Gotha Research Library, Ms. orient. A 1775, 111v, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/773>, accessed April 18, 2024; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Gotha Research Library, Ms. orient. A 1775, 76v, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/787>, accessed April 18, 2024.

¹³⁴ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3760/1, 8v, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/2549>, accessed April 18, 2024.

¹³⁵ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3764/12, 178v, N. 1, eds. Said Aljoumani, عبد الله باوزير <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/3840>, accessed April 18, 2024.

¹³⁶ EI², s.v. "Iṣfahān."

¹³⁷ Al-Dhahabī, *Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāz*, 1410.

¹³⁸ Abū Nu'aym, *Fāḍal al-Khulafā'*, 107

¹³⁹ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3753/2, 35r, N. 4, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1633>, accessed June 6, 2024.

¹⁴⁰ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate BNF Paris, Suppl Turc 984, 83v, N. 2, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/557>, accessed May 17, 2024.

¹⁴¹ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3761/4, 28v, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/3629>, accessed June 6, 2024.

¹⁴² Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3747/10, 136v, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1298>, accessed June 6, 2024.

¹⁴³ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3758/6, 134v, N. 3, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/2226>, accessed June 6, 2024.

not yet published on ACP. So, it is likely, given the fact that the hajj was a common practice among Muslims, that further research on certificates from Mecca will find more scholars from Ayyubid Aleppo.

Ibn Khalīl in Aleppo

It is unclear when Ibn Khalīl arrived in Aleppo. His biographers do not give the date of his arrival. The audition certificates also do not provide clarity. So far, no certificate is known that mentions his name between the study session in Mina and 624/1227. From that year there is a certificate from him from Aleppo.¹⁴⁴ At that time he was sixty-nine years old. For the first time he is listed as *musmi*. Ibn Khalīl would stay in Aleppo the rest of his life. The twenty-four certificates in which he is mentioned from this period all list him as *musmi*.

Between 624/1227 and 640/1242 he held nine sessions at the Umayyad mosque in Aleppo.¹⁴⁵ In fact, all but one of the certificates that were issued in the mosque, were from sessions where Ibn Khalīl was the *musmi*. The only certificate from the Umayyad mosque without Ibn Khalīl dates to 644/1246, four years after Ibn Khalīl's last session there.¹⁴⁶ This indicates that Ibn Khalīl's position at the mosque was passed to a successor.

Ibn Khalīl is also the author of two texts. The first one, *'Awālī al-Imām Abī Ḥanafī*, he transmitted in 632/1235.¹⁴⁷ A century later, the text was transmitted in Damascus.¹⁴⁸ Towards the end of his life he transmitted his other text, *'Ashra Aḥādīth 'An 'Ashra mushāyikh*.¹⁴⁹ There are no signs that the text was studied in the first fifty years after his death. In the eight/fourteenth century, the text was studied again. First in Aleppo, and later in Damascus by someone with the *nisba* al-'Ajāmī, so this could be a member of the Banū al-'Ajāmī.¹⁵⁰

Students of Ibn Khalīl

Most of his sessions were attended by less than ten participants. In 632/1235 he first held a larger session. At that session eighteen people were present.¹⁵¹ A session held in 638/1240 attracted fifteen

¹⁴⁴ Abū Nu'aym, *Fāḍā'il al-Khulafā'*, 107

¹⁴⁵ Including the certificate discussed in the introduction, that was wrongly located in Damascus: Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Berlin State Library, Ms. or. Quart 1060, 49r, N. 4, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/2850>, accessed June 10, 2024.

¹⁴⁶ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3765/22, 243r, N. 4, eds. Said Aljoumani, عبد الله باوزير <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/4010>, accessed June 10, 2024.

¹⁴⁷ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3744/6, 48v, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1222>, accessed June 15, 2024.

¹⁴⁸ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3744/6, 49r, N. 2, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1229>, accessed June 15, 2024.

¹⁴⁹ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3749/7, 194v, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1448>, accessed June 15, 2024.

¹⁵⁰ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3749/7, 194v, N. 2, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1449>, accessed June 15, 2024; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3749/7, 195v, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1457>, accessed June 15, 2024.

¹⁵¹ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3747/6, 95r, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1411>, accessed June 6, 2024.

students.¹⁵² A certificate from 646/1248 lists seven names and adds that others were present.¹⁵³ Towards the end of his life, in 647/1249 he hosted two of his most crowded sessions, both with over forty participants.¹⁵⁴

Ibn Khalīl was an eminent scholar in Aleppo. From his earliest sessions in the city onwards, his teaching sessions were attended by prominent members of the city. The certificates from these sessions list both members from the notable families and members from the Ayyubid administration. Members from the Banū al-‘Ajamī, the Banū ‘Alwān al-Asadī and the Banū Abī Jarāda regularly attended Ibn Khalīl’s sessions. In many cases members of different families attended a session together. The presence of the Banū Abī Jarāda shows that Ibn Khalīl attracted not only Shāfi‘ī students, but also students with a Ḥanafī background.

The Banū al-‘Ajamī is the family that attended Ibn Khalīl’s sessions the most. This is significant, because as discussed in chapter one, this was the most prominent and wealthy family of Aleppo. Members of this family are found in ten certificates issued at sessions where Ibn Khalīl was the *musmi*. Three of these sessions took place in the Umayyad mosque, even though this family constructed several *madrāsas*.¹⁵⁵ The other five certificates do not mention a specific location in Aleppo. These could have taken place at one of the family’s *madrāsas*, however it is not known for certain. On one occasion a prominent member of the family was present, judging by the titles he is addressed with. This is ‘Awn al-Dīn, who got addressed as *al-ṣadr al-imām al-‘ālim al-fāḍl al-kāmil* (the chief imam and the distinguished and complete scholar).¹⁵⁶ In another session a member of the family, Abū Ṣālah, got addressed with *al-imām*.¹⁵⁷ On another occasion, Jamāl al-Dīn Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Ḥusayn attended a session of Ibn Khalīl. His name specifies that he was the son of the jurist and imam Ḍiyā’ al-Dīn of the al-‘Ajamī family, however Jamāl al-Dīn Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Ḥusayn himself is not addressed with any titles.¹⁵⁸ The same is the case with the other member of the al-‘Ajamī family. This could mean that the members of al-‘Ajamī family who studied at Ibn Khalīl were not the most prominent members of the family, besides is ‘Awn al-Dīn and Abū Ṣālah. This could also mean that the persons with the last name al-‘Ajamī did not descent from the notable family in Aleppo at all, al-‘Ajamī was a common last name. The name appears forty-three times at ACP on notes from the Ayyubid period.

From the Banū ‘Alwān al-Asadī there were more prominent members present at Ibn Khalīl’s teachings. In 624/1227, three sons of the high qadi Zayn al-Dīn Ra’īs al-Aṣḥāb Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd Allāh bn ‘Abd al-Raḥman bn al-Asadī, together with their cousin, came to the Umayyad mosque to

¹⁵² Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3748/5, 140v, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1424>, accessed June 6, 2024.

¹⁵³ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3752/7, 102r, N. 2, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1592>, accessed June 10, 2024.

¹⁵⁴ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Berlin State Library, Wetzstein I 140, 167v, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/3384>, accessed June 6, 2024; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Gotha Research Library, Ms. orient. A 1751, 224r, N. 3, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/759>, accessed June 6, 2024.

¹⁵⁵ Abū Nu‘aym, *Fāḍā’il al-Khulafā’*, 100-1; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3747/6, 95r, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1411>, accessed June 6, 2024; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3748/5, 140v, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1424>, accessed June 6, 2024.

¹⁵⁶ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Berlin State Library, Wetzstein I 140, 167v, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/3384>, accessed June 11, 2024.

¹⁵⁷ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3748/5, 140v, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1424>, accessed June 11, 2024.

¹⁵⁸ Abū Nu‘aym, *Fāḍā’il al-Khulafā’*, 100-1

study with him.¹⁵⁹ More than two decades later, one of the sons, Bahā' al-Dīn Abū al-Muḥāsīn Yusūf, returned to Ibn Khalīl. By that time, he had become a qadi himself. He was accompanied by his two uncles, who also got addressed as qadi.¹⁶⁰

The Ḥanafī family of Abī Jarāda appears later at the sessions of Ibn Khalīl. Their first mention at a session of Ibn Khalīl is on a certificate dated to 638/1240.¹⁶¹ Similar to the Banū 'Alwān al-Asadī, the sons of a prominent member of the Abī Jarāda family came together to a session.¹⁶² However, in contrary to the Banū 'Alwān al-'Asadī, members from the Abī Jarāda family are not only listed as listener, but also read a text to Ibn Khalīl on two occasions.¹⁶³

Officials

Ibn Khalīl seemed to have been in contact with members of the Ayyubid court. The impression comes from the fact that his certificates list names with a *nisba* with political connotations, like *al-khāzin* (the treasurer)¹⁶⁴ and *al-kātib*¹⁶⁵ (often referring to a secretary, administrator or civil servant in the state administration).¹⁶⁶ Moreover, there was an attendee with the *laqab* 'Ayn al-Dawla and one with the *laqab* Amīn al-Dawla.¹⁶⁷ As discussed in the introduction, these honorific titles were used for people in the military. Likewise, the presence of someone who got addressed with *al-amīr*, suggests members of the military participated.¹⁶⁸ Since members of the court were known to patronize scholars, the presence of the people discussed here gives the impression that Ibn Khalīl enjoyed patronage from the court.

Al-Dimyātī

¹⁵⁹ Abū Nu'aym, *Fāḍā'il al-Khulafā'*, 100-1

¹⁶⁰ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Berlin State Library, Wetzstein I 140, 167v, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/3384>, accessed June 11, 2024.

¹⁶¹ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3750/6, 77v, N. 4, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1540>, accessed June 6, 2024.

¹⁶² Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Gotha Research Library, Ms. orient. A 1751, 224r, N. 3, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/759>, accessed June 11, 2024.

¹⁶³ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3750/6, 77v, N. 4, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1540>, accessed June 11, 2024; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Berlin State Library, Ms. or. Quart 1060, 49r, N. 4, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/2850>, accessed June 11, 2024.

¹⁶⁴ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3747/6, 95r, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1411>, accessed June 6, 2024.

¹⁶⁵ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3747/6, 95v, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1413>, accessed June 6, 2024.

¹⁶⁶ EI³, s.v. "Kātib/Kuttāb."

¹⁶⁷ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Berlin State Library, Ms. or. Quart 1060, 48v, N. 3, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/2845>, accessed June 6, 2024; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3750/6, 78v, N. 3, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1548>, accessed June 6, 2024.

¹⁶⁸ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3750/6, 78v, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1546>, accessed June 6, 2024.

Ibn Khalīl's student that would become the most famous was the Egyptian scholar Sharaf al-Dīn Abū Muḥammad 'Abd al-Mu'min ibn Khalaf ibn Abī al-Ḥassan al-Dimyāṭī (al-Dimyāṭī, 613–705/1217–1306). He was born on the island of Tūna, near Damietta. As a student he traveled in Egypt, where he studied in Alexandria¹⁶⁹ and Damietta.¹⁷⁰ From Egypt he traveled to Syria, where he visited Damascus, Aleppo and Hama.¹⁷¹ Some of these visits can be followed in the certificates. Between 645/1247 and 647/1249, he was a student in Aleppo.¹⁷² Ibn Khalīl was not his only teacher in the city, as he also attended a session by Ibn Rawāḥa.¹⁷³ After Aleppo he went further north to Mardin and he traveled to Baghdad.¹⁷⁴ In 648/1250 he was in Baghdad.¹⁷⁵ He then went to Damascus¹⁷⁶ and visited Mecca and Medina on the hajj.¹⁷⁷ After this, he returned to Egypt where he appears once as a participant of a *majlis* in 663/1265.¹⁷⁸ On two certificates from 679/1281¹⁷⁹ and one from 690/1291.¹⁸⁰ he is mentioned as

¹⁶⁹ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Gotha Research Library, Ms. orient. A 613, 23r, N. 2, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/874>, accessed May 6, 2024.

¹⁷⁰ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Berlin State Library, Sprenger 556, 14v, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/3284>, accessed May 6, 2024.

¹⁷¹ Eī³, s.v. "Abd al-Mu'min al-Dimyāṭī."

¹⁷² Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3753/6, 78v, N. 2, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1681>, accessed May 6, 2024; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3752/7, 102r, N. 2, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1592>, accessed May 6, 2024; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3759/13, 171v, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/2332>, accessed May 6, 2024; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Berlin State Library, Wetzstein I 140, 167v, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/3384>, accessed May 6, 2024. The latter certificate mentions Ibn Khalīl as *musmi*. Based on his certificates he was most likely in Aleppo at that time.

¹⁷³ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3753/6, 78v, N. 2, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1681>, accessed June 10, 2024.

¹⁷⁴ Eī³, s.v. "Abd al-Mu'min al-Dimyāṭī."

¹⁷⁵ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3765/18, 200v, N. 1, eds. Said Aljoumani, عبد الله باوزير <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/3998>, accessed May 6, 2024.

¹⁷⁶ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3741/3, 33v, N. 8, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1126>, accessed May 6, 2024; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Gotha Research Library, Ms. orient. A 1781, 357r, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/807>, accessed May 6, 2024; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Berlin State Library, Sprenger 96b, 230r, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/3339>, accessed May 6, 2024.

¹⁷⁷ Eī³, s.v. "Abd al-Mu'min al-Dimyāṭī."

¹⁷⁸ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3755/12, 172v, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1832>, accessed May 6, 2024.

¹⁷⁹ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3752/7, 102v, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1594>, accessed May 6, 2024; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3752/7, 78r, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1601>, accessed May 6, 2024.

¹⁸⁰ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3765/18, 200v, N. 4, eds. Said Aljoumani, عبد الله باوزير <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/4001>, accessed May 6, 2024.

musmi’ of a session. He would become a leading Shāfi‘ī scholar. During his lifetime he already must have been a famous scholar, and when he died in Cairo, many attended his funeral.¹⁸¹

Isnād

Several of Ibn Khalīl’s students later transmitted texts they studied with him. Al-Dimyāṭī transmitted a text from al-Shībānī in Cairo in the year 679/1281.¹⁸² He read this text to Ibn Khalīl in 646/1248. Both the certificates from Aleppo and Cairo are original certificates, and they are both written in the same manuscript. The note from Aleppo states that the manuscript was owned by a person called Nāṣh al-Dīn.¹⁸³ Therefore, al-Dimyāṭī must have purchased the manuscript when he left Aleppo.

One of the texts Ibn Khalīl transmitted in Aleppo was *Musnad Abī Harīra* by al-‘Askarī. He transmitted the text on two occasions, first in 638/1240¹⁸⁴ and later in 643/1245.¹⁸⁵ In the first session, the text was read to him by Shams al-Dīn Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Mun‘im ibn ‘Umār ibn Hāmil al-Ḥarrānī (Ibn Hāmil). Ibn Hāmil had studied the text before. A year earlier he had read the text to Abū al-Ṭāhir Ismā‘īl ibn Ḍafar ibn Aḥmad al-Nābalusī (al-Nābalusī) in Damascus.¹⁸⁶ It could be that al-Nābalusī referred Ibn Hāmil to Ibn Khalīl in Aleppo. Although there are no certificates that show that Ibn Khalīl and al-Nābalusī studied together, it seems likely that they were acquainted with each other. In 601/1205, al-Nābalusī attended sessions by Ṭabarzad.¹⁸⁷ There are no certificates from Ibn Khalīl from that year, but between 603/1206 and 604/1207 Ibn Khalīl studied intensively with Ṭabarzad, as will be discussed below. Another teacher that was attended by Ibn Khalīl and al-Nābalusī was al-Ṣaydalānī. Al-Nābalusī cites him as the source of the transmission.¹⁸⁸ Ibn Khalīl studied at al-Ṣaydalānī.¹⁸⁹ Therefore, it looks that Ibn Khalīl and al-Nābalusī moved in the same scholarly circles.

After Ibn Hāmil read the text to Ibn Khalīl, he transmitted the text himself. In 667/1269, he transmitted it in a village near Damascus.¹⁹⁰ In 708/1308, the text got transmitted by another student

¹⁸¹ E³, s.v. “‘Abd al-Mu‘min al-Dimyāṭī.”

¹⁸² Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3752/7, 78r, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1601>, accessed June 11, 2024.

¹⁸³ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3752/7, 102r, N. 2, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1592>, accessed June 11, 2024.

¹⁸⁴ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3750/6, 78v, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1546>, accessed June 11, 2024.

¹⁸⁵ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3750/6, 78v, N. 3, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1548>, accessed June 11, 2024.

¹⁸⁶ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3750/6, 77v, N. 2, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1538>, accessed June 11, 2024.

¹⁸⁷ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3739/1, 11r, N. 2, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/970>, accessed June 11, 2024.

¹⁸⁸ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3750/6, 77v, N. 2, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1538>, accessed June 11, 2024.

¹⁸⁹ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3764/12, 178v, N. 1, eds. Said Aljoumani, عبد الله باوزير <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/3840>, accessed June 15, 2024.

¹⁹⁰ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3750/6, 78r, N. 5, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1545>, accessed June 10, 2024.

of Ibn Khalīl, Iṣḥāq ibn Abī Bakr ibn Ibrāhīm ibn al-Naḥās (al-Naḥās).¹⁹¹ No certificate is found that state that al-Naḥās read the text to Ibn Khalīl. However, he attended a session in 643/1245, that was attended by four people, where someone else read the text. Al-Naḥās is only listed as listener.¹⁹²

There is also a certificate that shows that the *isnād* from Ibn Khalīl were already transmitted further during his life. In 634/1236, Aḥmad bn Ḥamdān bn Shabīb read *Fāḍā'il al-Khulafā' al-Arba'a wa Ghayrihim* by Abū Nu'aym al-Iṣfahānī (d. 430/1038) to him. He then transmitted the text in Harran, in 638/1241.¹⁹³ The timing of these session coincides with the occupation of Harran, by the Khwarazmians.¹⁹⁴ Therefore, it could be that Aḥmad bn Ḥamdān bn Shabīb visited Aleppo to flee from the siege.

Climbing the social ladder

In the certificates there are several things that can be observed that help to understand the growing status of Ibn Khalīl. A sign of the social status of Ibn Khalīl toward the end of his time in Damascus is the proximity to al-Malik al-Muḥsin (d. 634/1236). Al-Malik al-Muḥsin was the eleventh son of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, and the brother of al-Zāhir Ghāzī who ruled Aleppo at that time.¹⁹⁵ Al-Malik al-Muḥsin was an influential scholar. Later when he moved to Aleppo, Ibn al-'Adīm highly credited him for being responsible for attracting the celebrated scholar Ṭabarzad to the city. Although it is not documented, he could also have played a role in Ibn Khalīl's move to Aleppo.¹⁹⁶ Al-Malik al-Muḥsin studied at Ṭabarzad in Damascus. At six of these sessions Ibn Khalīl was present. At the last two of these sessions Ibn Khalīl was the reader.¹⁹⁷ This shows that he already achieved a considerable status as a scholar. At

¹⁹¹ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3750/6, 66r, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1535>, accessed June 10, 2024.

¹⁹² Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3750/6, 78v, N. 3, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1548>, accessed June 11, 2024.

¹⁹³ Abū Nu'aym, *Fāḍā'il al-Khulafā'*, 85.

¹⁹⁴ EI², s.v. "Ḥarrān."

¹⁹⁵ Morray, *An Ayyubid Notable*, 46-7.

¹⁹⁶ Morray, *An Ayyubid Notable*, 46-7.

¹⁹⁷ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3739/12, 95r, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/955>, accessed June 15, 2024; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3764/15, 210r, N. 4, eds. Said Aljoumani, عبد الله باوزير <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/3861>, accessed June 15, 2024; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate BNF Paris, Suppl Turc 984, 188v, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/496>, accessed June 15, 2024; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3755/12, 171v, N. 4, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1828>, accessed June 15, 2024; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3755/12, 172r, N. 2, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1830>, accessed June 15, 2024; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3759/9, 123r, N. 3, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/2433>, accessed June 15, 2024; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3747/10, 136v, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1298>, accessed June 15, 2024.

least one of these sessions with him took place at the house of al-Malik al-Muḥsin.¹⁹⁸ When al-Malik al-Muḥsin performed the hajj in 605/1209, Ibn Khalīl joined him.¹⁹⁹

Roles of Ibn Khalīl in the teaching sessions

Ibn Khalīl's roles in the sessions also give an indication of his status. When Ibn Khalīl returned to Damascus after three study journeys he was 41 years old. He had traveled intensively and studied with many teachers, but still he had not become a *musmi'*. Could this be a sign of the strong competition in Damascus? The city became increasingly popular for scholars during this period.²⁰⁰

The next eight years he spend in Damascus he continued studying. In those years he attended twenty-two teaching settings. In several of these sessions in Damascus he was the reader.²⁰¹ In the certificates for this period in Damascus there are some indications that Ibn Khalīl was in contact with the notables of the city. This can be seen by the fact that he attended four sessions at the house of the teacher. As discussed, popular sessions could take place at the private residence of a teacher, but more often these sessions were only available for people from the scholarly milieu.

Before his *riḥla* Ibn Khalīl participates as listener at most sessions. On one occasion he performs as a reader.²⁰² In teaching sessions, there was a certain hierarchy, the reader was the student closest to the teacher.²⁰³ On his first journey to Baghdad and Mosul, he performed the role of reader more often.²⁰⁴ Interestingly, at the sessions with the teachers that are mentioned in his biography by al-Dhahabī, he is listed as listener.²⁰⁵ Contrary, the teachers at whom he read a text to on his travels, are not mentioned by al-Dhahabī.

In the year he spent in Damascus before he went on a second journey he visited some teaching sessions. However at none of these sessions he was the reader.²⁰⁶ When he returned to Baghdad for

¹⁹⁸ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3739/12, 95r, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/955>, accessed June 6, 2024.

¹⁹⁹ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3758/6, 134v, N. 3, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/2226>, accessed June 6, 2024.

²⁰⁰ Konrad Hirschler, *The Written Word in the Medieval Arabic Lands: A Social and Cultural History of Reading Practices* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 63.

²⁰¹ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Berlin State Library, Ms. or. Quart 1060, 48v, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/2843>, accessed June 6, 2024; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3761/4, 28v, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/3629>, accessed June 6, 2024;

²⁰² Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3750/6, 78r, N. 3, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1543>, accessed June 6, 2024.

²⁰³ Hirschler, *The Written Word*, 46-54.

²⁰⁴ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3747/6, 94r, N. 2, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1406>, accessed June 6, 2024.

²⁰⁵ Al-Dhahabī, *Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāz*, 1410; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Gotha Research Library, Ms. orient. A 1751, 128r, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/754>, accessed June 6, 2024; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Gotha Research Library, Ms. orient. A 1751, 224r, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/756>, accessed June 6, 2024.

²⁰⁶ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Gotha Research Library, Ms. orient. A 1775, 76v, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/787>, accessed June 6, 2024; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Gotha Research Library, Ms. orient. A 1775, 111v, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/773>, accessed June 6, 2024.

the second time he again appears as reader.²⁰⁷ Later that year, when he studied in Isfahan, he is listed as listener.²⁰⁸ No certificates from his session in Isfahan with Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl al-Ṭarsūsī and Mas'ūd al-Jamāl are found. He transmitted the text he studied with them, however these certificates do not state the role he played while studying at al-Ṭarsūsī and al-Jamāl.²⁰⁹ After his second journey until he arrives in Aleppo he is reader in half of the certificates, and listener in the other half. In the first certificate that links him to Aleppo he was the *musmi'*. This session took place in 624/1227.²¹⁰ He was already sixty-nine at that time. In all the certificate until his death he is listed as *musmi'*.

Name and titles

Besides from their role in the session recorded in the certificate, information can be extracted from the way the individuals named are addressed. The fact that we have certificates from Ibn Khalīl from different periods of his life, allows us to observe how his status as a scholar grew over time. Because titles in copied certificates can reflect more the status of the scholars at the time of copying, than the status of the scholar at the time of session of the original certificate, they are left out of the analysis of the social mobility of Ibn Khalīl. Also because in most cases the copied certificates state that it is a copy, but do not state when the copy was made.

By analyzing how Ibn Khalīl is addressed in the certificates, we observe that he was not addressed with any titles, *kunya* or a *laqab* before he finished his first journey. The original certificates from his sessions in Baghdad and Mosul just mention his personal name, his genealogy and his *nisba*.²¹¹ When he returned to Damascus he is addressed once with his *kunya*, Abū al-Hajjāj.²¹² This could mean he had become a father by then. However, as discussed in the introduction, a *kunya* could also be given to a person in other cases. Up until this point in time, no titles are attached to his name. This remains the case during his second journey to Baghdad and Isfahan. From his journey to Egypt only a copied certificate survived.²¹³ The picture that is extracted from the certificates, is that up until this point his status as a scholar must have been modest.

²⁰⁷ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3760/1, 8v, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/2549>, accessed June 6, 2024.

²⁰⁸ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3764/12, 178v, N. 1, eds. Said Aljoumani, عبد الله باوزير <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/3840>, accessed June 6, 2024.

²⁰⁹ Abū Nu'aym, *Fāḍā'il al-Khulafā'*, 100-1, 107

²¹⁰ Abū Nu'aym, *Fāḍā'il al-Khulafā'*, 107

²¹¹ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3747/6, 84r, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1391>, accessed June 6, 2024; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3747/6, 94r, N. 2, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1406>, accessed June 6, 2024; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3747/6, 94r, N. 3, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1407>, accessed June 6, 2024.

²¹² Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Gotha Research Library, Ms. orient. A 1775, 76v, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/787>, accessed June 6, 2024; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Gotha Research Library, Ms. orient. A 1775, 111v, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/773>, accessed June 6, 2024.

²¹³ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate BNF Paris, Suppl Turc 984, 83v, N. 2, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/557>, accessed May 17, 2024.

This changes when he returned to Damascus after his journey to Egypt. Although, his first certificate from when he was back in Damascus still shows no signs of an increase in status.²¹⁴ A year later, in 597/1200, we see that his scholarly career is on the rise, and his study travels seemingly begin to pay off. For the first time he is addressed with the honorific title Shams al-Dīn. Besides that, he is addressed as *al-imām al-mufīd* (the favorable imam).²¹⁵ On two other certificates from his time in Damascus he is addressed with titles. In 600/1204, he is addressed as *al-shaykh al-imām al-muṭqan al-hāfiẓ* (the elder, the perfect imam, the hafiz).²¹⁶ Three years later he is addressed as *al-shaykh al-mufīd al-‘ālim* (the favorable elder, the scholar).²¹⁷ The latter certificate is especially significant, because it was issued after a session by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn’s son, al-Malik al-Muḥsin. From the certificates from his time in Damascus we learn that Ibn Khalīl’s status as a scholar was growing in Damascus. That he is addressed as *al-imām* could mean that he was an imam leading the Friday prayers, as we saw from his time in Aleppo he had a strong connection to the congregational Mosque there. However, *al-imām* together with *al-shaykh* were also used to address scholars with a level of attainment.²¹⁸ Besides that, the title *al-ḥāfiẓ* shows that Ibn Khalīl had memorized the Quran at this point in his life.²¹⁹

In Aleppo, Ibn Khalīl was an established scholar. In the certificates from his time in the city he is called trustworthy (*al-thiqa*), veracious (*al-ṣadūq*) and authoritative (*al-thabat*).²²⁰ Moreover, he is also addressed as *shaykhunā* (our shaykh).²²¹ The certificates from Ibn Khalīl in Aleppo do not show any growth in his status. Throughout his time there he is addressed with abundant titles. This means he attained this status between 605/1209 and 624/1227, from which we do not have certificates.

To conclude, Ibn Khalīl traveled east and west on his travel for knowledge. In search for trustworthy transmitters he travel to Baghdad, Isfahan, Mosul, and Cairo. He also went on the hajj, and used that opportunity to attend a study session. He brought all these collected transmission to Aleppo. The reasons for his move to Aleppo are lost in history. However, reading across his audition certificates helps to get an idea of his motivations. This move does not seem to be motivated by the desire to attend a *majlis* of an acclaimed scholar. There are no signs that he attended a teaching session there. In all his certificates from Aleppo he is listed as *musmi*. When he taught in Aleppo, his teaching sessions were attended by members of the notable families and state officials. This could mean that Ibn Khalīl was patronized by one of these people. Another observation is that Ibn Khalīl enjoyed a high status as a scholar in Aleppo. Besides the presence of influential members of the Aleppine society, he taught at

²¹⁴ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3761/4, 28v, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/3629>, accessed June 6, 2024.

²¹⁵ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3747/6, 94v, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1408>, accessed June 6, 2024.

²¹⁶ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3747/6, 92v, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1401>, accessed April 19, 2024.

²¹⁷ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3739/12, 95v, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/956>, accessed June 6, 2024.

²¹⁸ EI³, s.v. "Imām (technical term)"; EI², s.v. "Shaykh."

²¹⁹ Ludwig W. Adamec, *Historical Dictionary of Islam* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2017), 155.

²²⁰ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3759/9, 123v, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/2435>, accessed June 6, 2024; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3747/6, 95v, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1413>, accessed April 19, 2024.

²²¹ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Berlin State Library, Ms. or. Quart 1060, 48v, N. 3, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/2845>, accessed June 6, 2024; Abū Nu‘aym, *Fāḍā’il al-Khulafā’*, 101.

the Umayyad mosque, and he is addressed with abundant titles. In Damascus, he was less decorated with honorifics, and did not become a *musmi'*, even though there are signs that he enjoyed a considerable status as a scholar. Could it be that he found more opportunities in Aleppo? There also seems to be a role for his network, in his move to Aleppo. As we saw, Al-Malik al-Muḥsin was appreciated for attracting scholars to Aleppo before. He and Ibn Khalīl studied together at several sessions in Damascus. Therefore, Al-Malik al-Muḥsin could have played a role in his move to Aleppo. While he was in Aleppo, Ibn Khalīl also was able to attract scholars. The Egyptian scholar al-Dimyāṭī and Ibn Hāmīl, who before studied in Damascus before, came to Aleppo and became students of Ibn Khalīl.

3. Ibn Khalīl and the scholarly environment of Ayyubid Aleppo

To understand to what extent Ibn Khalīl's case is representative of the scholarly activities of Aleppo, this chapter will examine certificates of other scholars associated with the city. This way we will get a broader picture of the role of Aleppo as center for the transmission of knowledge in the late Ayyubid period.

In the certificates from Ayyubid Aleppo the role of *musmi'* is performed by sixteen different individuals. Nine of these teachers left certificates that provide valuable insights in the patterns of mobility of the scholars of the city. The nine teachers are: The already discussed 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī, al-Mu'tamin, al-Hāshimī, and al-Lattīy, and Shams al-Dīn Abu al-Muẓaffar Yūsuf ibn Qizughlī (Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, d. 654/1256), Shams al-Dīn Abū al-Muẓaffar Ḥāmid ibn Abī al-'Amīd ibn Amīrī al-Qazwīnī (al-Qazwīnī, fl. 624/1227), Mawfaq al-Dīn Abī al-Baqā' Ya'īsh ibn 'Alī ibn Ya'īsh al-Naḥawī (al-Naḥawī, fl. 643/1246), Abū Qāsim 'Abd Allah ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Abd Allah ibn Rawāḥa al-Anṣārī (Ibn Rawāḥa, d.646/1248-9), and Abū al-Ḥassan 'Alī Abī Bakr ibn 'Abd Allāh ibn Rūzba al-Ṣūfī al-Baghdādī (Ibn Rūzba, fl. 626/1229).

Ibn Khalīl was one of the most well-traveled teachers in Ayyubid Aleppo. The easternmost city he visited was Isfahan. Only one Aleppine teacher travel further east. This was al-Hāshimī, who traveled to Samarqand in 550/1156.²²² However, as the date of the session shows, he is more representable for an earlier generation of scholars. Besides Ibn Khalīl and al-Hāshimī, no other teachers in Ayyubid Aleppo traveled further east than Baghdad.

The three major cities of this time - Baghdad, Damascus and Cairo – are the most visited places among the teachers of Aleppo. As discussed above, some contemporary scholars saw the status of Baghdad decreasing in this period. 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī left Baghdad in 585/1189, because he felt that there was no teacher left that could satisfy his intellectual needs. Not everyone shared this opinion. Ibn Khalīl studied in Baghdad between 587/1191 and 589/1193. After a short return to Damascus, he visited the city a second time in 591/1195. The famous historian Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī led a teaching session in Aleppo in 643/1245.²²³ He was born in Baghdad and stayed there until 597/1201, when he moved to Damascus.²²⁴ Even later Baghdad was visited by al-Lattīy. He went to Baghdad in 633/1236, the year before he arrived in Aleppo.²²⁵ Furthermore, on ACP there are 58 certificates from Baghdad issued between 585/1189 and the Mongol siege in 656/1258, 47 of these were issued before 635/1238. This number is only surpassed in the same period by Cairo and Damascus. This shows that Baghdad was still a productive center of knowledge, in contrary to 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī's view on the scholarly value of Baghdad.

The most visited city by the Aleppine teachers is Damascus. Ibn Khalīl, was born there, and as discussed in chapter two, he attended many study sessions in that city. We also saw that al-Baghdādī, al-Lattīy and Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī visited Damascus, as did Ibn Rawāḥa.²²⁶ This does not come as a surprise.

²²² Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Berlin State Library, Landberg 47, 31r, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/2689>, accessed June 10, 2024.

²²³ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3747/6, 84v, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1394>, accessed June 10, 2024.

²²⁴ El², s.v. "Ibn al-Djawzī, Shams al-Dīn Abu 'l-Muẓaffar Yūsuf b. Kizoghlu, known as Sibṭ."

²²⁵ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3757/8, 114r, N. 2, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/2129>, accessed May 6, 2024; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3757/8, 116r, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/2137>, accessed May 3, 2024.

²²⁶ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3755/22, 289v, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1912>, accessed May 6, 2024.

Damascus was the most prominent center of knowledge in this period. This can be seen in 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī's observation that many prominent scholars from Baghdad moved to Damascus in this period.²²⁷ This can also be seen in the fact that most certificates from this period are issued in Damascus.²²⁸ Moreover, Damascus is close to Aleppo. Based on Ibn Jubayr's account, the journey from Aleppo to Damascus took a week in this period. On the road between the two cities there were various facilities for travelers. The political tensions between the two cities did not stop the intellectual exchange between them.²²⁹

Besides Ibn Khalīl, four Aleppine teachers could be linked to Egypt. In the case of 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī and al-Mu'tamin, this link was only established through narrative sources.²³⁰ Based on the certificate, Ibn Rūzba can be linked to Cairo²³¹ and Ibn Rawāḥa can be linked to Alexandria.²³² However, there are fewer certificates from Aleppine scholars in Cairo, than in Damascus. This suggests that Cairo left less of a mark on the Aleppine scholarship than Damascus.

Another city that was popular among the teachers of Ayyubid Aleppo was Mosul. Ibn Khalīl visited the city in 589.²³³ Mosul was also visited by 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī.²³⁴ Both scholars visited Mosul from Baghdad before they went to Damascus. This does not seem to be the shortest route between Baghdad and Damascus. So, apparently they deemed the city worthy to travel to. Two other Aleppine teachers, al-Qazwīnī and al-Naḥawī, also likely visited Mosul. More about their visit will be discussed below.

Jerusalem²³⁵, Al-Karak²³⁶ and Erzincan (Appendix, B1 and B2) each could only be linked to one teacher from Ayyubid Aleppo. Ibn Rawāḥa was the only Aleppine teacher who was born west from Egypt. He was born on Sicily in 560/1165, during the time when the Normans intensified the suppressions of Arabs on the island, which caused many Muslims to flee.²³⁷ He studied in Alexandria in 573/1177.²³⁸ In 614/1217 he was a *musmi* in Aleppo.²³⁹ Then he traveled to Damascus, where he

²²⁷ Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, *Physicians*, §15.40.3.

²²⁸ Witkam, "The Human Element," 157.

²²⁹ Jubayr, *The Travels*, 265-70.

²³⁰ Uṣaybi'a, *Physicians*, §15.40.1; Al-Dhahabī, *Kitāb al-'Ibar fī Khabar man Ghabar*, 3:266.

²³¹ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3747/12, 159v, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1322>, accessed June 13, 2024.

²³² Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3765/22, 243r, N. 1, eds. Said Aljoumani, عبد الله باوزير <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/4007>, accessed June 11, 2024.

²³³ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3747/6, 94r, N. 3, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1407>, accessed June 6, 2024.

²³⁴ Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, *Physicians*, §15.40.3.

²³⁵ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3761/7, 70r, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/3673>, accessed June 10, 2024.

²³⁶ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3765/13, 127v, N. 6, eds. Said Aljoumani, عبد الله باوزير <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/3972>, accessed May 6, 2024.

²³⁷ Al-Maqrīzī, Taqī al-Dīn Abū al-'Abbās Aḥmad ibn 'Alī ibn 'Abd al-Qādir ibn Muḥammad. *Kitāb al-Muqaffā al-Kabīr*, ed. Mohammed Yalaoui (Beirut: Dar al-Gharb al-Islami, 1991), 4:392; EI³, s.v. "Italy, Islam in premodern."

²³⁸ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3765/22, 243r, N. 1, eds. Said Aljoumani, عبد الله باوزير <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/4007>, accessed June 11, 2024.

²³⁹ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3753/6, 62v, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1658>, accessed May 6, 2024.

led teaching sessions in 627/1230²⁴⁰ and 628/1230²⁴¹. In 644/1246 he returned to Aleppo,²⁴² here he stayed at least until 646/1248.²⁴³

With 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī and Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī Aleppo attracted two of the most famous scholars of their time. Al-Lattīy was another scholar with an impressive resume. Before he came to Aleppo he taught at the citadel in Damascus,²⁴⁴ and he was *musmi'* in some of the biggest sessions found from the Ayyubid era. One of his certificates from Damascus list 409 participants.²⁴⁵ However, contrary to Ibn Khalīl who stayed in Aleppo for more than two decades, these three scholars only stayed in the city for a short period, based on the fact that they can only be found in one or two certificates issued there.

In some cases we can follow the transmission of a text over three generations. From the transmitter to *musmi'*, and then from one of the participants from Aleppo to their students elsewhere. Eighteen certificates mention the teacher that transmitted the text to the *musmi'* of that session. In these eighteen certificates, eight different transmitters are linked to the scholars of Aleppo. The transmitters in these eighteen certificates are sometimes only mentioned with a shortened name. This is a sign that these transmitters already were famous in the scholarly circles of Aleppo. They were probably also known beyond Aleppo. As we have discussed scholars were highly mobile in this period, and a certificate with an unknown transmitter would not have much value. The eight transmitters are: Abū al-Waqt 'Abd al-Awwal ibn 'Isā ibn Sha'īb al-Sajazī, al-Kindī, Abū Muḥammad ibn al-Ṣābūnī, Abū Mukārim al-Labān, al-Salafī, Shahda, al-Ṭūsī, Abū al-Ḥassan Mas'ūd Abī Manṣūr bn Muḥammad bn al-Khayāṭ, known as al-Jamāl and Abū Ja'far Muḥammad bn Ismā'il al-Ṭarsūsī.

Al-Ṭūsī (fl. 567-605/1172-1208²⁴⁶) was the most popular transmitter in Aleppo. He is transmitted by three different teachers. The earliest transmission of al-Ṭūsī's *isnād* in Aleppo dates to 624/1227, when it was transmitted by a *musmi'* called al-Qazwīnī.²⁴⁷ Between 631/1234 and 633/1236 his *isnād* got transmitted by three different teachers in Aleppo. In 631/1234 al-Qazwīnī transmitted al-Ṭūsī's *isnād* a second time. A teacher called al-Naḥawī transmitted it in 633/1236.²⁴⁸ In 632/1235 and

²⁴⁰ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3755/22, 289v, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1912>, accessed May 6, 2024.

²⁴¹ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3755/22, 289v, N. 2, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1913>, accessed May 6, 2024.

²⁴² Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3765/22, 243r, N. 4, eds. Said Aljoumani, عبد الله باوزير <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/4010>, accessed May 7, 2024.

²⁴³ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3759/13, 171v, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/2332>, accessed May 7, 2024.

²⁴⁴ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Gotha Research Library, Ms. orient. A 590, 99v, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/837>, accessed May 3, 2024.

²⁴⁵ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Gotha Research Library, Ms. orient. A 590, 101r, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/828>, accessed May 3, 2024.

²⁴⁶ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3747/6, 94r, N. 3, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1407>, accessed June 10, 2024.

²⁴⁷ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3765/9, 55v, N. 1, eds. Said Aljoumani, عبد الله باوزير <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/4028>, accessed June 7, 2024.

²⁴⁸ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3765/9, 55v, N. 3, eds. Said Aljoumani, عبد الله باوزير <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/4030>, accessed June 10, 2024.

633/1236, Ibn Khalīl transmitted a text from Ismā'īl ibn Aḥmad ibn 'Umar al-Samarqandī.²⁴⁹ The certificates of these sessions do not specify who transmitted the text to Ibn Khalīl. However, the same manuscript contains a certificate issued forty-three years earlier in Mosul. That certificate states that Ibn Khalīl read this text to al-Ṭūsī.²⁵⁰ The four certificates that survived where al-Ṭūsī is listed as musmi' were all issued in Mosul between 567/1172 and 605/1208.²⁵¹ It can therefore be assumed that al-Qazwīnī and al-Naḥawī also visited Mosul to study with al-Ṭūsī.

Two scholars in Ayyubid Aleppo traced their transmission back to Abū al-Waqt 'Abd al-Awwal ibn 'Isā ibn Sha'īb al-Sajazī (Abū al-Waqt, fl. Baghdad, 553/1158²⁵²). In 626/1229, Ibn Rūzba cited Abū al-Waqt as his transmitter of a text of al-Bakhārī. One of the listeners at that session was Umm al-Karīm.²⁵³ She later transmitted the text in Cairo.²⁵⁴ Abū al-Waqt had transmitted also a text of al-Anṣārī to al-Lattīy, another teacher who taught in Aleppo. Two listeners at the teaching session of this text by al-Lattīy in Aleppo, later transmitted this text in Cairo. 'Abd al-Malik ibn 'Abd al-Karīm ibn 'Abd al-Raḥman ibn al-Ṭūsī did this in 661/1263.²⁵⁵ Two years later, the same text got transmitted by al-Zāhirī.²⁵⁶

Another transmission by al-Zāhirī can be followed over three generation of transmission. His other teacher in Aleppo, Ibn Rawāḥa, attended as a young student a teaching session in 573/1177 in Alexandria by a transmitter called al-Salafī to study a text by al-Dīnūrī. At this session Ibn Rawāḥa is listed as listener. Seventy years later, in 644/1246 al-Zāhirī read the text to Ibn Rawāḥa in Aleppo. Another four decades later, al-Zāhirī then in turn transmitted the text in Cairo.²⁵⁷

²⁴⁹ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3747/6, 95r, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1411>, accessed June 6, 2024; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3747/6, 95v, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1413>, accessed June 6, 2024.

²⁵⁰ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3747/6, 94r, N. 3, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1407>, accessed June 6, 2024.

²⁵¹ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3760/15, 177v, N. 2, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/3540>, accessed June 10, 2024; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3765/9, 54v, N. 2, eds. Said Aljoumani, عبد الله باوزير <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/4024>, accessed June 10, 2024; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3747/6, 94r, N. 3, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1407>, accessed June 10, 2024; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3754/3, 25v, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1773>, accessed June 10, 2024.

²⁵² Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3759/2, 21v, N. 2, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/2360>, accessed June 12, 2024.

²⁵³ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3739/2, 21r, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/993>, accessed May 6, 2024.

²⁵⁴ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3739/2, 21v, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/996>, accessed May 6, 2024.

²⁵⁵ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3757/8, 124r, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/2144>, accessed May 6, 2024.

²⁵⁶ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3757/8, 124v, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/2146>, accessed June 14, 2024.

²⁵⁷ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3765/22, 243r, N. 1, eds. Said Aljoumani, عبد الله باوزير <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/4007>, accessed June 7, 2024; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3765/22, 243r, N. 4, eds. Said Aljoumani, عبد الله باوزير <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/4010>, accessed June 7, 2024; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2),

A closer look to the paths of the students in Aleppo gives a deeper insight in the status of the city as a center of knowledge. By looking at the students of Aleppo we also can notice changes in the status of the city, as they are the next generation of scholars. In the biography of Ibn Khalīl we already discussed the people who attended his sessions. Some of his students studied in other cities before they traveled to Aleppo. Most notably was al-Dimyāṭī. He came from Egypt, and then traveled to various cities in Syria, Jazeera, Iraq and the Hijaz.²⁵⁸ However, the case of al-Dimyāṭī was an exception. Most people who attended a teaching session in Ayyubid Aleppo are mentioned only once, are only found in certificates from Aleppo or in certificates that do not mention a location. Only a small number of students on the Aleppine certificates can be traced in other cities.

Some trends can be observed from the movements of the students of Aleppo. In contrary to al-Dimyāṭī, most participants only visited cities close to Aleppo. From the people that are found in certificates from before they visited Aleppo, all were mentioned in Damascus at least once. Most of the participants of teaching session in Ayyubid Aleppo seem to have come from the surrounding cities in Syria. Besides al-Dimyāṭī, only two other participants are identified in more distant places. A student called al-Ṣarīfīnī went to Khorasan in 608/1211, before he arrived in Aleppo in 624/1227.²⁵⁹ Ibn Hāmil and al-Dimyāṭī are the only Aleppine students found in Baghdad. Ibn Hāmil went there in 625/1228, before he came to Aleppo. Al-Dimyāṭī went there as late as 648/1250, after his stay in Aleppo. The copied certificate on which he got mentioned is the last certificate on ACP located in Baghdad before the Mongol siege.²⁶⁰

Moreover, it stands out that from these traveling scholars in Aleppo there is only one student from whom we have multiple certificates from there over a longer period of time. This is al-Ẓāhirī, who was present as listener or reader on five certificates between 634/1237 and 646/1248.²⁶¹ Still several students in Aleppo later became a *musmi* in other cities where they transmitted text they studied with teachers there. Many of the students went to Cairo after the fall of the Ayyubid dynasty in 658/1260.²⁶²

audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3765/22, 233r, eds. Said Aljoumani, عبد الله باوزير
<https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/4006>, accessed May 6, 2024.

²⁵⁸ EI³, s.v. "Abd al-Mu'min al-Dimyāṭī."

²⁵⁹ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate BNF Paris, Suppl Turc 983, 8v, N. 2, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/432>, accessed June 11, 2024; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3765/9, 55r, N. 1, eds. Said Aljoumani, عبد الله باوزير <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/4026>, accessed May 6, 2024.

²⁶⁰ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Berlin State Library, Wetzstein II 1751, 37r, N. 2, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/3485>, accessed May 6, 2024; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3765/18, 200v, N. 1, eds. Said Aljoumani, عبد الله باوزير <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/3998>, accessed May 6, 2024.

²⁶¹ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3757/8, 115v, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/2135>, accessed May 6, 2024; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3763/5, 48v, N. 5, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/3778>, accessed May 6, 2024; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3757/9, 150r, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/2187>, accessed May 6, 2024; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3765/22, 243r, N. 4, eds. Said Aljoumani, عبد الله باوزير <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/4010>, accessed May 6, 2024; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3747/6, 84v, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1394>, accessed May 6, 2024.

²⁶² Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3757/8, 124v, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/2146>, accessed May

Other became a *musmi* in Damascus.²⁶³ However the already mentioned Ibn Hāmil, a scholar named al-Šābūnī and a scholar named al-Kinjī only visited Aleppo once, while most of their sessions took place in Damascus.²⁶⁴ Other cities where students from Ayyubid Aleppo held teaching sessions were Bursa, Baalbek, Zar', Jerusalem and Hebron.²⁶⁵

The status of Ayyubid Aleppo as a center of knowledge

In the late Ayyubid period, Aleppo attracted some established scholars, like 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī and Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī. Although it is unknown how Ibn Khalīl was appreciated when he arrived in the city, he eventually enjoyed a considerable status. From within the city this can be noticed by the way he is addressed, the location of his sessions and the local notables and officials who attended them. He also attracted students from outside Aleppo. A scholar of whom we have a better idea of his status at the time he came to Aleppo is al-Lattīy. Before he came to Aleppo he taught in Damascus. As we discussed, there he was a *musmi* in one of the largest teaching sessions of the time, with an audience of over four hundred people. Besides that, he also led a teaching session in the citadel there.

The teachers attracted students from outside Aleppo, who visited the city on their travel in search of knowledge. The teachers were deemed trustworthy transmitters, as can be concluded from the fact that these students, in turn passed these transmissions to their own students, when they later became teachers themselves.

6, 2024; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3757/8, 124r, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/2144>, accessed May 6, 2024; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3739/2, 21v, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/996>, accessed May 6, 2024; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate BNF Paris, Suppl Turc 984, 91v, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/562>, accessed May 6, 2024; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3753/6, 64r, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1674>, accessed May 6, 2024.

²⁶³ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Berlin State Library, Wetzstein II 1751, 42v, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/3501>, accessed May 6, 2024.

²⁶⁴ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3764/10, 157v, N. 4, eds. Said Aljoumani, عبد الله باوزير <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/3812>, accessed May 6, 2024; Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3753/6, 78v, N. 2, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1681>, accessed May 6, 2024.

²⁶⁵ Bursa: Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3759/2, 23v, N. 3, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/2373>, accessed May 6, 2024; Baalbek: Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Berlin State Library, Wetzstein II 1751, 42r, N. 2, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/3500>, accessed May 6, 2024; Zar': Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3753/6, 79r, N. 1, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1683>, accessed May 6, 2024; Jerusalem: Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3753/6, 79r, N. 2, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1684>, accessed May 6, 2024; Hebron: Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3746/2, 119v, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/1273>, accessed May 6, 2024.

The possibility for patronage is indicated by the presents of notables and officials at the teaching sessions. There is also a certificate from a session in the *dār al-‘adl*.²⁶⁶ That a teaching session was held here shows an involvement of the highest authority in the city with the scholarly milieu, given the fact that this building was closely linked to the rulers. However the names of the member of the ruling families are not found in the certificates.

From the works of Morray and Tabbaa, that were discussed in chapter one, we know that both the notable families and the members of the Ayyubid court were involved in the construction of many *madrasas*. So, the scholarly infrastructure in the city likely was another factor that increased the status of Aleppo. However, these institutions only rarely appear in the audition certificates. This does not mean that there were no teaching sessions in these buildings. Many certificates only mention the city where the session took place, or mention no location at all.

By comparing the patterns of traveling of the teachers and the students, it shows that students of Aleppo traveled less than their teachers did. Although there are some exceptions, most students only traveled within Syria. The travels to cities eastward of Baghdad might be discouraged by the advancing Mongol armies, who threatened Isfahan from 623/1226 onward.²⁶⁷ However, the journey there by a scholar linked to Aleppo took place in 608/1211. This implies that these distant travels already fell out of use before that.

Baghdad, which was visited by many of the teachers, was not visited anymore by the next generation of scholars, with the exception of Ibn Hāmil and al-Dimyāṭī, the latter visited Baghdad after his stay in Aleppo. So, Baghdad seemed to have lost the interest of the Syria scholars in the end. These findings suggest that the period from roughly 630/1232 until 650/1252 seems to be the height of the so called Syrian Century. In this period, many traveling Syrian scholars seem to prefer a visit to Aleppo over a visit to Baghdad. Although the intellectual life in the Syrian cities was already thriving in the decades before, at this point the scholarly activity in Syria seems to be unmatched by the activities in the surrounding regions.

From the certificates we can conclude the period from 624/1227 until 648/1250 the scholarly activity of Aleppo was at its peak. However, an alternative explanation could be that the fact that the students from the city are mostly found in certificates from the surrounding cities was because Aleppo only functioned as a regional center of knowledge. A similar study to the mobility of scholars of Damascus is needed to see if the same can be observed there. What is surprising is that there are no certificates from the ten years before the Mongols besieged the city in 658/1260. This could mean that Aleppo already lost its status as an intellectual center. An alternative explanation is that the Mongol conquest resulted in the destruction of the manuscripts that contained these certificates. Finally, certificates from this period might also be hidden in unstudied manuscripts. Aleppo lost its status as center of knowledge after the Mongols conquered the city. I have not found a certificate issued in Aleppo between the Mongol siege and 704/1304.

These general trends are observed by other studies before.²⁶⁸ What the study of the audition certificates add to this, is that the paths from the individual scholars can be followed more closely. On top of that, the focus on Aleppo, helps to better understand the scholarly activities in Syria outside Damascus.

²⁶⁶ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate Syrian National Library, 3763/5, 48v, N. 5, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/3778>, accessed June 14, 2024.

²⁶⁷ EI², s.v. "Iṣfahān."

²⁶⁸ Hirschler, *The Written Word*, 59, 63; Humphreys, "Zengids," 727.

Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to examine to what extent an analysis of audition certificates from the late sixth/twelfth century until the middle of the seventh/thirteenth century through the lens of mobility provides insights in the status of Ayyubid Aleppo in the so called Syrian century. By conducting this kind of historical research, this thesis addressed the limited amount of research on the intellectual history of Ayyubid Aleppo. Furthermore, it explored the opportunities that the study of the audition certificates provide for a study of geographical and social mobility. With regard to what Von Hees coined as the decline paradigm, it reaffirms that instead of decline of scholarly activities, a movement of the intellectual centers took place. Although, this thesis did not focus on the quality of knowledge production, mapping the deeper pattern of change add to the scholarship of the knowledge production in the seventh/thirteenth century.

The ACP brought thousands of audition certificates from various places in the premodern Muslim world together in one database. This allowed for a detailed reconstruction of the travels of well-documented scholars, as well as an analysis of the mobility of groups at large. This contributes to the understanding of the patterns of traveling by scholars of the Ayyubid period, on a more detailed and deeper level than was possible through narrative sources.

The focus on mobility reaffirms the impact that the growing importance of the Syrian cities as centers of knowledge had on intellectual centers of the surrounding regions. Furthermore this focus highlights the patterns of change in this period called the 'Syrian Century'.

The study of audition certificates not only helps to understand these patterns of change, it also gives implications for the motivations for traveling by the scholars. When a certain scholar can be found attending several teachers in different cities, it obviously suggests that the search for knowledge was a motivation for that scholar to travel. Moreover, the search for patronage as a motivation to travel is implied in cases when a scholar frequently is associated with members of the court and members of wealthy families. Moreover this is implied when a scholar held a teaching session in an institution that was linked to the state. The patronage attracted scholars to the city, who then in turn attracted students. The focus on the Aleppo scholars give insights in the status of Aleppo and its role in the transmission of knowledge in this period. To fully understand Aleppo's role as center of knowledge a comparative study of the mobility of Damascus, or other intellectual centers of that time is needed.

However, there are some limitations to the study of audition certificates. One limitation has to do with the nature of the certificates. Since these sources provide only limited information, and that this information is in the case of most scholars very fragmented, there is room for interpretation. With regard to the location where the certificates were issued, we observed that the exact location is not always mentioned. When a scholar is linked to a certain institution that was linked to a notable family, or members of the court, there are implications of patronage. However, since these institutions are largely absent from the Aleppine certificates, only a few of these links could be established. Moreover, some caution is needed with regard to the copied certificates. In some cases these copies contradict findings from other original certificates or narrative sources. In other cases, copied certificates are to some extent in agreement with these other sources, but show inconsistencies in the date, or in the way people in it are addressed.

A second limitation is the fact that up until this point, only a small percentage of the existing certificates have been published on the ACP. The search for certificates outside the ACP is a time-consuming process, due to the fact Arabic manuscripts are spread out over libraries all over the world, and not all manuscript libraries catalogue audition certificates. Furthermore, most certificates on ACP come from manuscripts from the Syrian National Library. The ACP contains only one certificate from the Ayyubid period from a place west of Egypt, and no Ayyubid era certificates from Anatolia.²⁶⁹ This makes it difficult to establish scholarly links between Aleppo and these regions. These results therefore

²⁶⁹ Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 2), audition certificate BNF Paris, Arabe 709, 268v, N. 2, ed. Said Aljoumani <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/ac/270>, accessed June 15, 2024.

need to be interpreted with caution. Notwithstanding these limitations, the more than four thousand certificates on ACP, together with some certificates found elsewhere, offered valuable insights in the scholarly environment of the Ayyubid world and beyond. As more certificates will be added to ACP, our understanding of the movement of people and ideas will only grow in the future.

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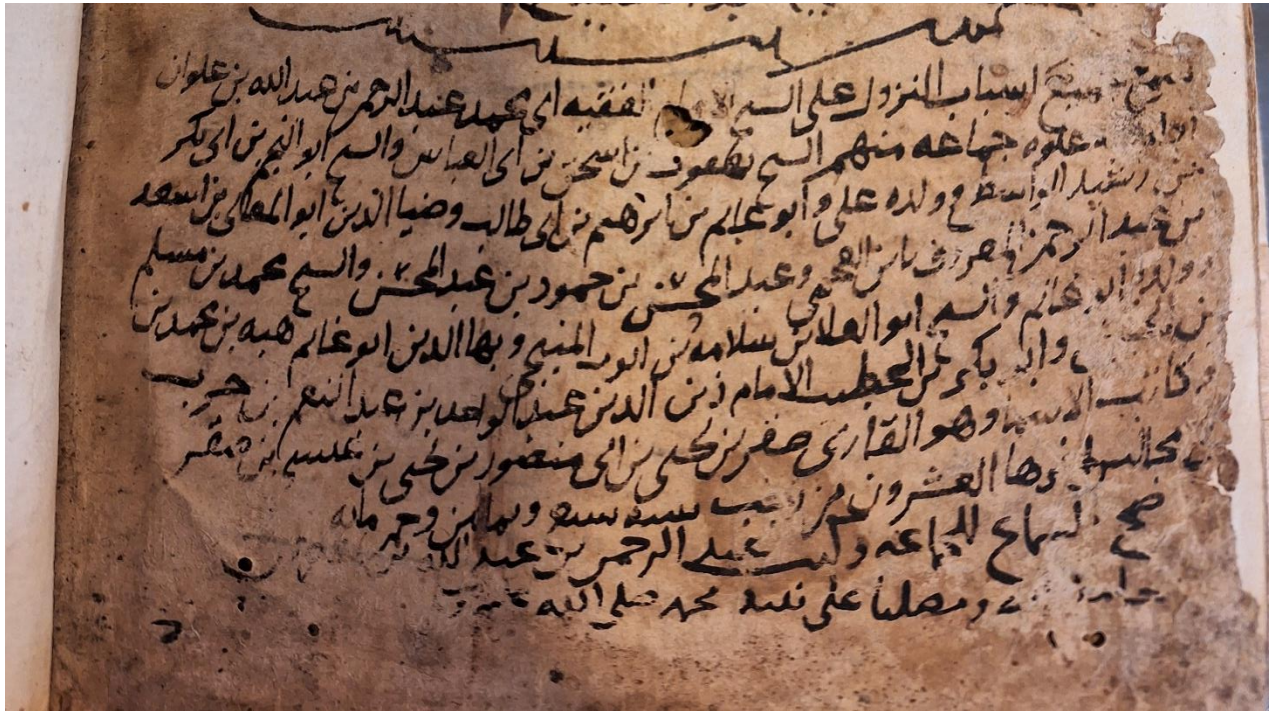
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Appendix

A

Manuscript:

Leiden MS OR. 621²⁷⁰



Note: 258v N.3

Autor: Abū al-Ḥassan ‘Alī ibn Aḥmad ibn al-Wāḥidī al-Nīsābūrī (d. 468/1076)²⁷¹
Title: Asbāb al-Nuzūl

Date: 20 Rajab 589/July 28, 1193.

Place: Unknown

Musmī‘: Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Raḥman ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Alwān

Participants: Al-shaykh Ya‘qūb ibn Ishaq ibn Abī al-‘Abās
Abū al-Najm ibn Abī Bakr ibn Rashīd al-Wāsiṭī
His son ‘Alī
Abū Ghānam ibn Ibrahīm ibn Abī Ṭālib
Ḍiyā’ al-Dīn Abū al-Mu‘ālī ibn As‘ad ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥman, known as Ibn al-
‘Ajamī
‘Abd al-Muḥassan ibn Ḥamūd ibn ‘Abd al-Muḥassan
Muḥammad ibn al-Muslim and his son Abū Ghānam
Abū al-‘Alā’ ibn Salāma ibn Ayyūb al-Munīhī
Bahā’ al-Dīn Abū Ghānam Hiba ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanbalī
Abū Bakr ibn al-Khaṭīb
Zayn al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Wāḥid ibn ‘Abd al-Muna‘im ibn Ḥarb

²⁷⁰ Witkam, *Inventory Or. 1-Or. 1000*, 261.

²⁷¹ EI² “al-Wāḥidī.”

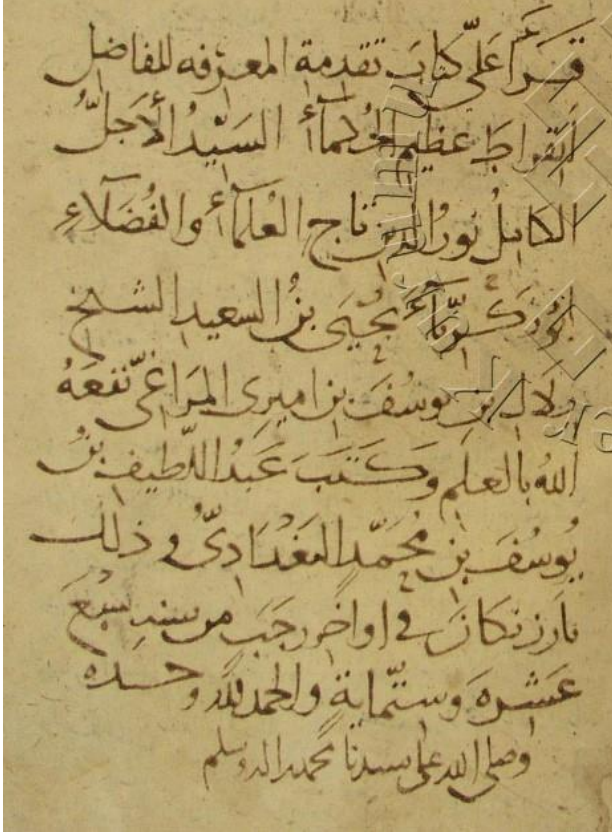
Writer of the names: Ṣaḡar ibn Yaḥyā ibn Abī al-Manṣūr ibn Yaḥyā ibn ʿIsā ibn Ṣaḡar

سمع جميع أسباب النزول على الشيخ الإمام الفقيه أبي محمد عبد الرحمن بن عبد الله بن علوان | أدام
الله علوه جماعة منهم الشيخ يعقوب بن إسحاق بن أبي العباس والشيخ أبو النجم بن أبي بكر | بن
رشيد الواسطي وولده علي وأبو غانم بن إبراهيم بن أبي طالب وضيء الدين أبو المعالي بن أسعد | بن
عبد الرحمن المعروف بابن العجمي وعبد المحسن بن حمود بن عبد المحسن والشيخ محمد بن
مسلم | وولده أبو غانم والشيخ أبو العلاء بن سلامة بن أيوب المنجي وبهاء الدين أبو غانم هبة بن
محمد بن | الحسن وأبو بكر بن المخطيب والإمام زين الدين عبد الواحد بن عبد المنعم بن حرب |
وكتب الأسماء وهو القارئ صقر بن يحيى بن أبي منصور بن يحيى بن عيسى بن صقر في مجالس آخرها
العشرون من رجب سنة تسع وثمانين وخمس مائة صح السماع للجماعة وكتب عبد الرحمن بن عبد
الله بن ... حامداً لله ومصلياً على نبيه محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم

B

Manuscript: Manisa, İl Halk Kütüphanesi / 1781/8

B1



Note: 120r N.1²⁷²

Text: Commentary on the Hippocratic 'Prognostic' (kitāb taqdimat al-ma'rifah lil-Fāḍil Abuqrāt).²⁷³

Reader: Abū Zakariyyā' Yaḥyā ibn al-Sa'īd al-Shaykh Bilāl ibn Yusūf ibn al-Amīrī al-Marāghī

Musmi': 'Abd al-Laṭīf ibn Yusūf ibn Muḥammad al-Baghdādī

Date: Late Rajab 617/September 1220

Place: Arzinkān (Erzincan)

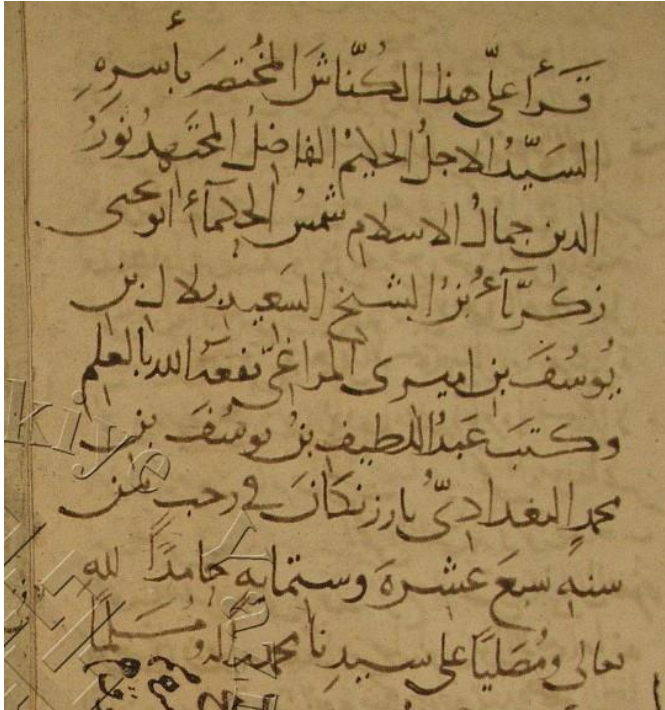
قرأ عليّ كتاب تقدمة المعرفة للفاضل أبقراط عظيم الحكماء السيد الأجل الكامل نور الدين تاج العلماء والفضلاء أبو زكرياء يحيى بن السعيد الشيخ بلال بن يوسف بن اميرى المراغي نفعه الله بالعلم وكتب عبد اللطيف بن يوسف بن محمد البغدادي وذلك بارزنگان في أواخر رجب من سنة سبع عشرة وستمائة والحمد لله وحده وصلى الله على سيدنا محمد وآله وسلم

²⁷² Image: Tâcuddîn Ebû Muhammed Alî b. el-Hüseyin el-Bulgarî, *Muhtasar fî Ma'rifeti'l-Edviye ve Mahiyetuhu. Musul ve Konya: 619 (1222)*, Türkiye Yazma Eserler Kurumu Başkanlığı, 125, accessed June 15, 2024, <https://portal.yek.gov.tr/works/detail/97951>.

²⁷³ Ibn Abî Uşaybi'a, *Physicians*, §15.40.9.

B2

151v N.1



Note: 151v N.1²⁷⁴

Text: Kunnāsh mukhtaṣar (abbreviated Compendium)

Date: Rajab 617/September 1220

Place: Arzinkān (Erzincan)

Reader: Abū Yaḥyā Zakariyyā' Yaḥyā ibn al-Shaykh al-Sa'īd Bilāl ibn Yusūf ibn al-Amīrī al-Marāghī

Musmi': 'Abd al-Laṭīf ibn Yusūf ibn Muḥammad al-Baḡhdādī

قرأ علي هذا الكناش المختصر بأسره السيد الأجل الحليم الفاضل المجتهد نور الدين جمال الإسلام شمس الحكماء أبو يحيى زكرياء بن الشيخ السعيد بلال بن يوسف بن اميري المراغي نفعه الله بالعلم وكتب عبد اللطيف بن يوسف بن محمد البغدادي بارز نكان في رجب من سنة سبع عشرة وستمائة حامدا لله تعالى ومصليا على سيدنا محمد وآله ومسلما

²⁷⁴ Image: Image: Tâcuddîn Ebû Muhammed Alî b. el-Hüseyin el-Bulgarî, *Muhtasar fî Ma'rifeti'l-Edviye ve Mahiyetuhu. Musul ve Konya: 619 (1222)*, Türkiye Yazma Eserler Kurumu Başkanlığı, 159, accessed June 15, 2024, <https://portal.yek.gov.tr/works/detail/97951>.