

Revision in the Manuscript Age: New Evidence of Early Versions of Ibn Ḥajar's *Fatḥ al-bārī*

JOEL BLECHER, *George Washington University*

“I never saw anybody who wrote a book, and did not say the next day: If this would be changed, it would be better, and if something like this would be added, it would be preferable.”

al-Baysānī¹

Introduction

What was it like to compose and revise a multi-volume work of Islamic exegesis in the manuscript age? This essay examines a newly-discovered manuscript that contains two early versions of Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī's (d. AH 852/AD 1449) renowned *ḥadīth* commentary, *Fatḥ al-bārī*. The copy was first dictated by Ibn Ḥajar to another scholar almost twenty years prior to the work's official “completion” (*khatm*), pronounced in 842/1438, and almost thirty years before the work's unofficial completion with Ibn Ḥajar's passing. The manuscript also preserves emendations and elaborations that Ibn Ḥajar added in a later version. An analysis of the multiple layers of revision contained in this document not only advances our understanding of how Ibn Ḥajar refined his exegetical strategies as he composed his *magnum opus*; it also brings to light the way in which exegesis was influenced by the complex social practice of drafting, revising, and completing a multi-volume work in the competitive and pious Mamluk scholarly environment.

Despite the fact that multi-volume works of exegesis composed in the Mamluk period were often written across several decades, such works have of-

ten been treated largely as finished products, or static representations of an author's thought.² Perhaps this is because our own scholarly culture's roots in philological work and the field's continuing need for critical editions have driven our fascination with the *aṣl*, the definitive hand-exemplar.³ Or perhaps this is because a number of works strive to achieve the effect of “completion,” smoothing over the rough edges that inevitably emerge in any compositional process. But a substantial intellectual work is not only a representation of an author's *vision*, it is also necessarily a representation of an author's *revision*. By mining archives that are littered with Mamluk-era material artifacts of works-in-progress, as Frédéric Bauden, Li Guo, Sami Massoud, and others have already begun to do, we can bring to light these stories that sit at the intersection of Mamluk social and intellectual history.⁴

² This is the state of the field, despite Rosenthal's appeal almost seven decades ago for studies that address the “progressive development within individual” pre-modern Muslim authors: see *ibid.*, 66–68.

³ For a critique of this approach from a medieval Europeanist's perspective, see John Dagenais, *The Ethics of Reading in Manuscript Culture: Glossing the Libro de buen amor* (Princeton, 1994).

⁴ Frédéric Bauden, “Maqriziana II: Discovery of an Autograph Manuscript of al-Maqrīzī: Towards a Better Understanding of His Working Method Analysis,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 12/1 (2008):

¹ Franz Rosenthal, *The Technique and Approach of Muslim Scholarship*, *Analecta Orientalia* 24 (Rome, 1947), 67–68.

The case study in which I will explore the broader theme of revision in the manuscript age is the composition of Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī's *Fath al-bārī*, a multi-volume commentary on the prestigious *ḥadīth* collection *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. It is a work that Islamicist Norman Calder once called “the most magnificent achievement of exegetical discourse.”⁵ What were the social and intellectual challenges and considerations that came into play as this work was revised in the context of Mamluk-era scholarly culture? While most of our understanding about the composition process of *Fath al-bārī* has come from reading narrative sources like biographical dictionaries and authorial prefaces, an examination of new manuscript evidence can yield new insights into the development of Ibn Ḥajar's *magnum opus*, and the composition of exegetical works more broadly in the context of the Mamluk period.

A Recently Discovered Early Copy of *Fath al-bārī*, Dictated to a Student

While I was digging through copies of *Fath al-bārī* at the manuscript library attached to the Süleymaniye in Istanbul in the summer of 2014, one in particular caught my eye: a partial copy shelved under “Mahmud Paşa 79.” There, in the colophon, a scribe claimed the work was dictated to him by Ibn Ḥajar in 822/1419 (see Figs. 1 and 2),⁶ roughly ten years before parts of the work were first commissioned by potentates of Transoxania and Tunisia,⁷ twenty years before the entire work was publically pronounced “complete” at a celebratory concluding reading (*khatm*) in 842/1438,⁸ and thirty years before Ibn Ḥajar's

51–118; Li Guo, “Ibn Dāniyāl's “Dīwān”: In Light of MS Aya-sofya 4880,” *Quaderni di Studi Arabi* 5/6 (2011): 163–76; Sami G. Massoud, “Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbā's “al-Dhayl al-Muṭawwal”: The Making of an All-Mamluk Chronicle,” *Quaderni di Studi Arabi* 4 (2009): 61–79.

⁵ Norman Calder, *Islamic Jurisprudence in the Classical Era* (Cambridge, 2010), 115.

⁶ See Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Fath al-bārī* (Süleymaniye Library Istanbul, 1419), Mahmud Paşa 79, f. 317a.

⁷ See Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Inbāʾ al-ghumr bi-abnāʾ al-ʿumr fī al-tārīkh*, ed. Ḥasan Ḥabashī, 4 vols. (Cairo: al-Majlis al-ʿAḳā lil-Shuʿūn al-Islāmiyya, 1969), 3:434; Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Intiqād al-iʿtirād* (Riyadh: Maktabat Rushd, n.d.), 1:8. For a more detailed description and analysis of this process, see Joel Blecher, “Hadith Commentary in the Presence of Students, Patrons, and Rivals: Ibn Ḥajar and Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī in Mamluk Cairo,” *Oriens* 41/3–4 (2013): 265–68.

⁸ Shams al-Dīn al-Sakhāwī, *al-Jawābir waʾl-durar* (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 1999), 2:675–6; al-ʿAsqalānī, *Intiqād al-iʿtirād*, 1:7.

death in 852/1449. Mahmud Paşa 79 begins by commenting on chapters of the *adhān* (the call to prayer) and concludes by commenting on the *kitāb al-zakāt* (alms tax), which corroborates Ibn Ḥajar's own account that he had largely composed about a third of the work by 822/1419, and had dictated portions of it to students.⁹

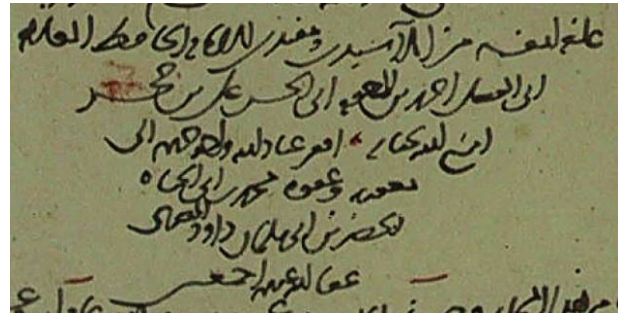


Figure 1—The colophon of Mahmud Paşa 79 that states the work was copied “from the dictation” of “al-Imām al-Ḥāfiẓ” Abū al-Faḍl Ibn Ḥajar.

See Fig. 1: *‘allaqahu li-nafsih min imlāʾ sayyidī wa-mufidī al-Imām al-Ḥāfiẓ al-ʿAlīm /1/ Abī al-Faḍl Aḥmad al-Maḥmūd Abī al-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn Ḥajar /2/ amta ʿAllāh bi-hayātihi aḥqar ʿibād Allāh wa-aḥwājibum ilā /3/ maghfiratihī wa-ʿafwihī Muḥammad ibn Abī al-Ḥayāt /4/ al-Khidr ibn Abī Sulaymān Dāwūd al-Miṣrī /5/ ʿafā Allāh ʿanhum ijmaʿīn /6/*¹⁰

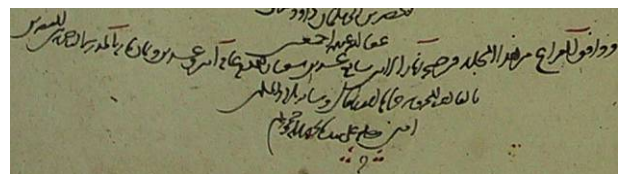


Figure 2—The colophon of Mahmud Paşa 79 states that the volume was completed on the last hour before dawn on Monday, Shaʿbān 17th, 822 / September 18th, 1419.

See Fig. 2: *wa-wāfiq al-farāgh min hādihā al-mujallad fī ṣaḥīḥat nahār al-ithnayn sābiʿ ʿisrīn shaʿbān muʿazzam ʿām ithnayn wa-ʿisrīn wa-thamānī miʿa biʾl-madrassa al-Nāṣiriyya Bayn al-Qaṣrayn /1/ biʾl-*

⁹ al-Sakhāwī, *al-Jawābir waʾl-durar*, 2:675–6. al-ʿAsqalānī, *Intiqād al-iʿtirād*, 1:7.

¹⁰ Süleymaniye Library Istanbul, Mahmud Paşa 79, f. 317a. My thanks to Drs. Frédéric Bauden, Cécile Bonmairage, and Issam Eido and for their assistance in deciphering the text of the colophon and audition statements that follow. Mairaj Syed and one of the anonymous reviewers also provided helpful comments on drafts of these passages. Any errors or misreadings are my own.

*Qāhira al-Maḥrūsa ḥamāha Allāhu ta'ālā wa-sā'ir bilād al-Muslimīn /2/*¹¹

Adjacent to the colophon, a marginal note indicates that additions (*zawā'id*) were incorporated into this copy in 850/1446, based on a version transmitted by Ibn Ḥajar's long-time companion and distinguished recitation assistant, Burhān al-Dīn ibn Khidr (see Fig. 3).¹² Rather than being destroyed or discarded, as many holograph drafts were,¹³ or preserved "as is" for posterity, a later hand updated the early dictated copy with Ibn Ḥajar's additional passages. It must have been seen to have had some practical or symbolic value, likely as a source for future copies, or a reference work that could be modified as Ibn Ḥajar updated his copy. Both the colophon and the audition statement adjacent to it pray that God keep and preserve Ibn Ḥajar's life, corroborating the fact that Ibn Ḥajar was alive at the time the colophons were recorded.

The note does not stipulate that Ibn Khidr's copy was an exemplar (*aṣl*), and as we will see, the *zawā'id* only partly reflect the recension preserved in modern printed editions.¹⁴ In effect, this manuscript, Mahmud

Paşa 79, preserves not one but two early versions of *Faṭḥ al-bārī*.

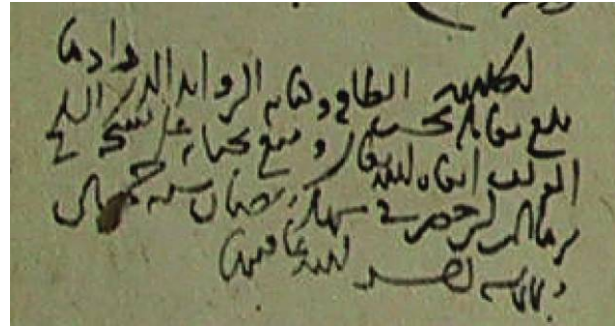


Figure 3—The audition statement adjacent to the colophon testifies that the copy was collated with the documented elaborations (*al-zawā'id*) that the author [i.e. Ibn Ḥajar] added to it according to a copy of Shaykh Burhān al-Dīn Ibn Khidr in Ramadan 850/November or December 1446.

See Fig. 3: *al-ḥamdullilāh /1/ balagha muqābalatan bi-ḥasab al-tāqa wa-kitābat al-zawā'id alladhīna zādahā /2/ al-mu'allaf abqābu Allāhu ta'ālā wa mata' Allāh bi-ḥayātibi 'alā nuskhat al-Shaykh /3/ Burhān al-Dīn Ibn Khidr fī shahr Ramaḍān sanat khamsīn /4/ wa-thamānī mi'a aḥsan Allāhu 'āqabahā /5/*¹⁵

Who was the scribe who received *Faṭḥ al-bārī* years in advance of rulers in the Islamic east and west? Apparently a mid-level bureaucrat and an aspiring scholar named Ibn al-Miṣrī.¹⁶ The full name given in the colophon is Muḥammad ibn Abī al-Ḥayāt al-Khidr ibn Abī Sulaymān Dāwūd al-Miṣrī, and we are fortunate that Ibn Ḥajar happened to write his obituary. According to Ibn Ḥajar, Muḥammad ibn al-Khidr ibn Dāwūd, also known as Shams al-Dīn and Ibn al-Miṣrī, was born in Aleppo around 768/1366–67 and died in Jerusalem in 841/1437–38.¹⁷ He grew up studying with a number of reputable scholars in Greater Syria,

transmitted after Ibn Ḥajar's death. See Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Faṭḥ al-bārī*, ed. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ibn Bāz, 13 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifā, 1970), 1:3–4; and his *Faṭḥ al-bārī*, ed. Shayba al-Ḥamad (Riyādh: Ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Āl Saʿūd, 2000), 1:21–26. For the purposes of this article, all references to *Faṭḥ al-bārī* will be to the Bin Bāz edition unless otherwise noted.

¹⁵ Süleymaniye Library Istanbul, Mahmud Paşa 79, f. 317a.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ al-ʿAsqalānī, *Inbāʾ al-ghumr*, 4:86. As might be expected, there are some minor discrepancies between the names of Ibn al-Miṣrī's ancestors. Among them, the colophon appears to read Ibn Abī Sulaymān Dāwūd, whereas Ibn Ḥajar recalls Ibn Akhī Sulaymān Dāwūd. This discrepancy notwithstanding, the broader evidence removes any doubt concerning this match. It is possible that the

¹¹ Mahmud Paşa 79, f. 317a.

¹² al-Sakhāwī, *al-Dawʾ al-lāmiʿ li-ahl al-qarn al-tāsiʿ* (Beirut: Dār al-Jil, 1992), 1:43–45.

¹³ See Bauden, "Maqriziana II," 56.

¹⁴ Like many great works of Islamic literature, there is no critical edition of *Faṭḥ al-bārī*. Early copies of the work that were based on Ibn Ḥajar's exemplar have, however, survived (see, for example, a copy collated against an *aṣl ṣahīḥ* in 856/1452, held at Princeton University Library's Rare Books and Special Collections, shelved under 87Yq; and a possible holograph kept at El Escorial shelved under 1451; see *GAS*, 121). One of the earliest printed editions of *Faṭḥ al-bārī*, the Būlāq edition of 1882–83, does not describe the manuscript sources used to establish the printed text. Bin Baz's edition, dated to 1950, represents some improvement in that he checked the Būlāq edition against two manuscripts, one of which was collated in 1234/1819. Unfortunately, the prestige of these manuscripts is not derived from any special connection to Ibn Ḥajar's *aṣl*, but from an ownership statement in which one of the manuscripts was endowed to the Saudi ruler Fayṣal ibn Turkī (d. 1865). These manuscripts' authority were maintained in the library of one of the descendants of Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, which may have brought further esteem to them in Bin Bāz's view. Shayba al-Ḥamad's 2000 edition of *Faṭḥ al-bārī* is more visually appealing, but offers no indication of how he established that the text of *Faṭḥ al-bārī* (the manuscripts pictured in the editor's introduction under the misleading title "description of manuscripts" are of *Ṣahīḥ al-Bukhārī*, a work not originally included in *Faṭḥ al-bārī*). Nevertheless, in the absence of a critical edition in print, we can use Bin Bāz's edition as an example of a version of *Faṭḥ al-bārī* based on a later recension of the text. Bin Bāz saw few variants between his 19th-century manuscripts and the Būlāq edition, which may be indicative of the extent to which *Faṭḥ al-bārī* was conservatively

after which he settled in Cairo for a time, and performed scribal work at the chancery (*dīwān al-inshāʿ*) at the pleasure of a high ranking minister for the military (*nāẓir al-jaysh*). Ibn al-Miṣrī then travelled to Jerusalem, where he was appointed Shaykh at a madrasa called al-Bāsiṭiyya. Most significantly for our purposes, the obituary states that Ibn al-Miṣrī had written down Ibn Ḥajar's dictated commentary on *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*.¹⁸ Ibn al-Miṣrī's early dictated copy, shelved as Mahmud Paşa 79, must be that very copy that Ibn Ḥajar mentioned in the obituary.

Where and for whom did Ibn al-Miṣrī copy Ibn Ḥajar's dictation of *Fatḥ al-bārī*? The colophon states that it was completed at the madrasa named for al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn (al-Nāṣiriyya), in a neighborhood of Cairo lodged between two Fatimid-era palaces, Bayn al-Qaṣrayn (see Fig. 2).¹⁹ The copy was made for Ibn al-Miṣrī's private use (*ʿallaqabu lī-nafsihi*, see Fig. 1).²⁰ A lack of formality of the handwriting suggests as much, as any scribe in the service of the chancery would surely be capable of calligraphy more consistent with professional conventions.

Note that I use the phrase “early dictated copy” here rather than “draft,” since the technical terms *naskh* (“copy”) and *min imlāʿ* (“from dictation”) were used in the colophon and audition statements to describe the manuscript rather than *musawwada* (“draft”), which would better describe a rough draft composed in the author's own hand. That said, to suggest a better but still imperfect analogy, we might think of this early dictated copy less like a rough draft that was polished into a final copy, and more like an “advance copy” of a first edition that was later expanded and revised for a second and third edition. Nevertheless, it should be clear that this document offers us a rare opportunity to see both the social and intellectual considerations pertaining to the revision of *Fatḥ al-bārī* over the course of its composition. Indeed, this manuscript can shed light on at least three layers of revisions and additions that *Fatḥ al-bārī* underwent.

confusion between Abī and Akhī was the result of a scribal error or an accident of memory.

¹⁸ Ibid. “*samiʿa minnī wa-kataba fī al-implāʿ min Sharḥ al-Bukhārī*.”

¹⁹ Süleymaniye Library Istanbul, Mahmud Paşa 79, f. 317a.

²⁰ This is what is sometimes termed a “scholar's copy.” See Adam Gacek, *Arabic manuscripts: a vademecum for readers* (Leiden, 2009), 78.

To offer a rough idea of these additions quantitatively, we can compare the number of words in a sampling of text from the early dictated copy—say, the first three folios—with the total number included in printed editions that are based on later recensions of *Fatḥ al-bārī*.²¹ While the sample from Ibn al-Miṣrī's copy contains 2,185 words, for instance, the printed editions contain 2,979 words, which means that 794 words were added later. More research needs to be done to refine this picture, but based on this limited sample, which appears consistent with my preliminary findings in other samples, roughly 25% (26.66%) of the “final” version did not appear in the earliest recension. In other words, for every three words Ibn Ḥajar dictated in 822/1419, he would add one more by the time he passed away in 852/1449.

On the one hand, a 25% change may seem of great consequence. Indeed, even a 1% change over the course of the work's composition could be qualitatively significant. On the other hand, *Fatḥ al-bārī* was already a long work, by Ibn Ḥajar's own concession.²² If roughly three-quarters of *Fatḥ al-bārī* were ready for the “final” exemplar in 822/1419, what made Ibn Ḥajar return to these earlier chapters, years later, to add more? Having established that this manuscript, “Mahmud Paşa 79,” is indeed an early dictated and later revised copy of Ibn Ḥajar's *Fatḥ al-bārī*, the next question we must ask is: what kinds of revisions and expansions did *Fatḥ al-bārī* undergo, and why?

Strategies of Revision and Expansion: Updating *Fatḥ al-bārī* Over Time

Ibn Ḥajar revised *Fatḥ al-bārī* in serial iterations over long periods of time in response to his predecessors' work and that of his rivals. These revisions and additions operated at two levels: to prove the superiority of Ibn Ḥajar's work amidst a competitive scholarly scene while simultaneously championing hermeneutic norms that Ibn Ḥajar believed best preserved the meaning of the *ḥadīth*. In sum, these revisions and additions stood to offer the commentator both social and intellectual rewards. To shed light on this process, I will briefly examine and analyze an example from

²¹ See n. 14 above.

²² See al-ʿAsqalānī, *Fatḥ al-bārī*, 1:5. At certain moments during the commentary, Ibn Ḥajar laments this constraint. See, for instance, *ibid.*, 2:431.

each of the three observable layers of revisions and additions.

The first layer, in which the dictation was checked by audition and collation soon after it was first copied, can be seen in the interlinear cancellations and marginal corrections that match the handwriting in the body of the text. Ibn al-Miṣrī, who was known as Shams al-Dīn, signs an audition statement telling us as much:

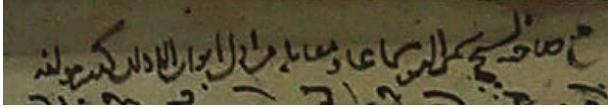


Figure 4—The audition statement of Ibn al-Miṣrī, Mahmud Paşa 79, f. 2a: “[The copy’s] owner, Shaykh Shams al-Dīn [a *laqaḥ* of Ibn al-Miṣrī’s] completed the audition and collation from the beginning of the chapters on the *adhān*. Signed by its author [Shams al-Dīn].”

See Fig. 4: *balagha Ṣāhibuhu Shaykh Shams al-Dīn samā’an wa-muqābalatan min awal abwāb al-adhān katabahu mu’allifuhu*²³

In this layer, however, we find more than just minor corrections to scribal and dictation errors, although there are plenty of those as well: we sometimes see a reconsideration of Ibn Ḥajar’s interpretation of a *ḥadīth*, or his predecessors’ understanding of it. Consider, for instance, Ibn Ḥajar’s analysis of a *ḥadīth* on the “seven [types of believers] that will be shaded” on the day of resurrection. Among those seven types are those who maintain chastity, stating “I fear God,” and those who remind themselves of God through practicing *dhikr*, repeatedly uttering his name. In the early dictated copy, Ibn Ḥajar quotes a previous commentator, Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf al-Kirmānī (d. 786/1384), who groups these seven types into two broad categories: those who are saved by obedience to God “by the tongue,” and those who are saved by obedience to God “by the body.”²⁴ But al-Kirmānī never fully explained how each of the seven types, including the chaste and the practitioner of *dhikr*, are distributed into these two categories.

Enter Ibn Ḥajar: he first proposes that the type of person al-Kirmānī means by obedience to God “by the tongue” is “the one who says I fear God” (*al-qā’il innī akhāf Allāh*) and remains chaste. In the collation,

however, Ibn Ḥajar cancels this statement, and substitutes it with the notion that obedience through the tongue means “the one who utters [the name of God repetitively] in remembrance” (*al-dhākir*) (see Fig. 5).²⁵

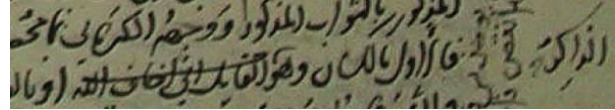


Figure 5—Ibn Ḥajar’s student cancels the dictation “the one who says I fear god” (*al-qā’il innī akhāf Allāh*, crossed out phrase in the center-left) and replaces it with “the one who utters [the name of God repetitively in remembrance]” (*al-dhākir*) (right margin) (Süleymaniye Library Istanbul, Mahmud Paşa 79, f. 30a.).

These two explanations are so different that they cannot be a scribal error. What, then, can account for the change? While Ibn Ḥajar’s initial solution is technically correct—the chaste person utters “I fear God” with his or her tongue—there is an astute logic behind Ibn Ḥajar’s cancellation and substitution. Indeed, “the one who says I fear God” to maintain their chastity (*iffā*) fits better in the category of obedience to God “through the body,” whereas *al-dhākir* seems better placed in the category of obedience to God “through the tongue.” Yet Ibn Ḥajar’s confusion reveals an ambiguity that may arise from al-Kirmānī’s categories themselves. The tongue, after all, acts in the service of the body. Although Ibn Ḥajar could have eschewed al-Kirmānī’s categories altogether, he either could find no better alternative or found them useful enough to keep.

While it may be easy to characterize those exegetes who quote past authorities as a signal of repetition or intellectual stagnation, the first layer of revisions from this marked-up early dictated copy of *Fath al-bārī* clearly indicates the extent to which exegetes sometimes considered and reconsidered the commentary of their predecessors.

The Second Layer: Revising for Rivals and *Sharḥ al-Ḥadīth bi’l-Ḥadīth*

The second layer is visible in the hand of an anonymous scholar or scribe who recorded Ibn Ḥajar’s additions (*zawā’id*) in the margins almost twenty-eight

²³ Süleymaniye Library Istanbul, Mahmud Paşa 79, f. 2a.

²⁴ Compare with Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-Kirmānī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Abī Abd Allāh al-Bukhārī bi-Sharḥ*, 2nd ed., 25 vols. (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā’ al-Turāth al-Arabī, 1981), 5:47.

²⁵ Süleymaniye Library Istanbul, Mahmud Paşa 79, f. 30a. Bin Bāz’s edition currently has *al-dhikr* (“remembrance”). Perhaps Ibn Ḥajar revised it a third time, but most likely *al-dhākir* is the reading Ibn Ḥajar preferred, as he was listing actors, not actions. See al-‘Asqalānī, *Fath al-bārī*, 2:143–44.

years after the work was first dictated, eight years after the work was declared “complete” at the *khatm*, and two years before Ibn Ḥajar passed away. As stated above, these additions were included on the basis of comparing Ibn al-Miṣrī’s early dictated work against a copy belonging to Ibn Ḥajar’s distinguished recitation assistant Burhān al-Dīn ibn Khidr in the year 850/1446. Although Ibn Khidr’s copy reflected the text at a much later date, it was not a final exemplar. This means that the marginal additions were based on yet another copy of the text that later must have undergone further revision.

Although we do not know the identity of the collator who inked these additions in the margins, we can rule out a number of prime suspects. Our anonymous collator was working nine years after Ibn al-Miṣrī passed away, so it could not have been him. We can also rule out Sakhāwī, or Ibn Ḥajar himself, whose distinctive handwriting does not resemble that of our collator’s.²⁶ One possibility, although it is purely speculative, is that it was Ibn al-Miṣrī’s son Khidr, a learned scholar in his own right who updated *Fatḥ al-bārī* after having inherited the work from his father.²⁷ And yet, if this were so, one might have also expected Ibn al-Miṣrī’s son to have signed his contribution.

One clear pattern in this second layer is Ibn Ḥajar’s additional references to other *ḥadīth* collections that he neglected to mention in the first layer. I will walk through this layer in more detail because it reflects the project that ultimately distinguished Ibn Ḥajar’s genius as a commentator: to explain a *ḥadīth* by reference to another *ḥadīth* (*sharḥ al-ḥadīth bi’l-ḥadīth*).

To take one illustrative example from the early dictated copy, Ibn Ḥajar discusses a tradition in the “Book of Friday Prayers” (*Kitāb al-Jum‘a*) that claims that it was the third Caliph, ‘Uthmān, rather than the Prophet, who instituted an additional call to prayer (*adhān*) in the marketplace of Medina prior to Friday prayers. The practice of an additional call to prayer on Fridays, which was said to have been described by the second Caliph ‘Umar’s son (d. 73/693) to have been “an innovation” (*bid‘a*) generated many differences

of opinion over its origin and permissibility.²⁸ After explaining each of the *lemmata*, Ibn Ḥajar briefly discusses what he thought Bukhārī intended to prove by including this *ḥadīth* in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* under the heading “The Friday Call to Prayer.”²⁹ But he does not discuss the controversial origins of the practice.

In the *scholia* added in the margin nearly three decades later, however, we see that Ibn Ḥajar has included an entirely new section, under the heading “Two Notes of Caution” (*tanbīḥān*) (see Fig. 6).³⁰ Here we find Ibn Ḥajar addressing the origins of the controversial marketplace *adhān* forthrightly. He references three additional *ḥadīth*: one that suggests the practice was actually initiated by the second Caliph, ‘Umar; a second that reports that no one, not even ‘Uthmān, instituted the practice of an additional *adhān* in Medina’s marketplace; and a third report that claimed that Ibn ‘Abd al-Malik redefined the status and location of an additional *adhān*.³¹ In all three cases, Ibn Ḥajar offers withering criticism of the trustworthiness and plausibility of each *ḥadīth*’s chain of transmission. In the case of the third *ḥadīth*, he goes so far as to scold other commentators of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* for even troubling to include such an untrustworthy *ḥadīth*, as he could find no pious ancestors (*salāf*) who transmitted it, and deeming its content inconsistent with the *prima facie* meaning of the *ḥadīth* authenticated by al-Bukhārī.³²

Although Ibn Ḥajar leaves the commentators he wishes to criticize unnamed, by process of elimination it must have been his contemporaries Ibn al-Mulaqqin and Badr al-Dīn al-‘Aynī, who were the only notable

²⁸ This debate continues to be the subject of many Shī‘ī, Salafī and legal school polemics questioning the authenticity of the practice to this day.

²⁹ Süleymaniye Library Istanbul, Mahmud Paşa 79, f. 136b–137a.

³⁰ Copyists would often omit marginal notes, so “[t]he publishing technique of the manuscript age thus made no allowance for marginal notes and footnotes. However, the need for such notes was felt, and a substitute invented. Beginning in the thirteenth, or rather the fourteenth century, authors increasingly used the device of inserting additional remarks, which often were lengthy excurses, in the context, but separating them from it by an introductory expression, such as *tanbīḥ*, or *fā’idah*, ‘note’”: Rosenthal, *Technique and Approach of Muslim Scholarship*, 40.

³¹ al-‘Asqalānī, *Fatḥ al-bārī*, 2:394–95.

³² This could be described as a form of Mamluk-era *matn* criticism. For more on the history of this technique, see Jonathan A. C. Brown, “How We Know Early Ḥadīth Critics Did *Matn* Criticism and Why It’s So Hard to Find” *Islamic Law and Society* 15 (2008), and “The Rules of *Matn* Criticism: There Are No Rules,” *Islamic Law and Society* 19/4 (2012).

²⁶ For examples of Ibn Ḥajar’s and al-Sakhāwī’s handwriting, consult A. J. Arberry, *The Chester Beatty Library: A Handlist of the Arabic Manuscripts*, 8 vols. (Dublin, 1955), vol. 2, plates 59, 64, and 65.

²⁷ For Ibn al-Miṣrī’s son Khidr’s biography, consult al-Sakhāwī, *al-Daw’ al-lāmi‘*, 3:179–80.

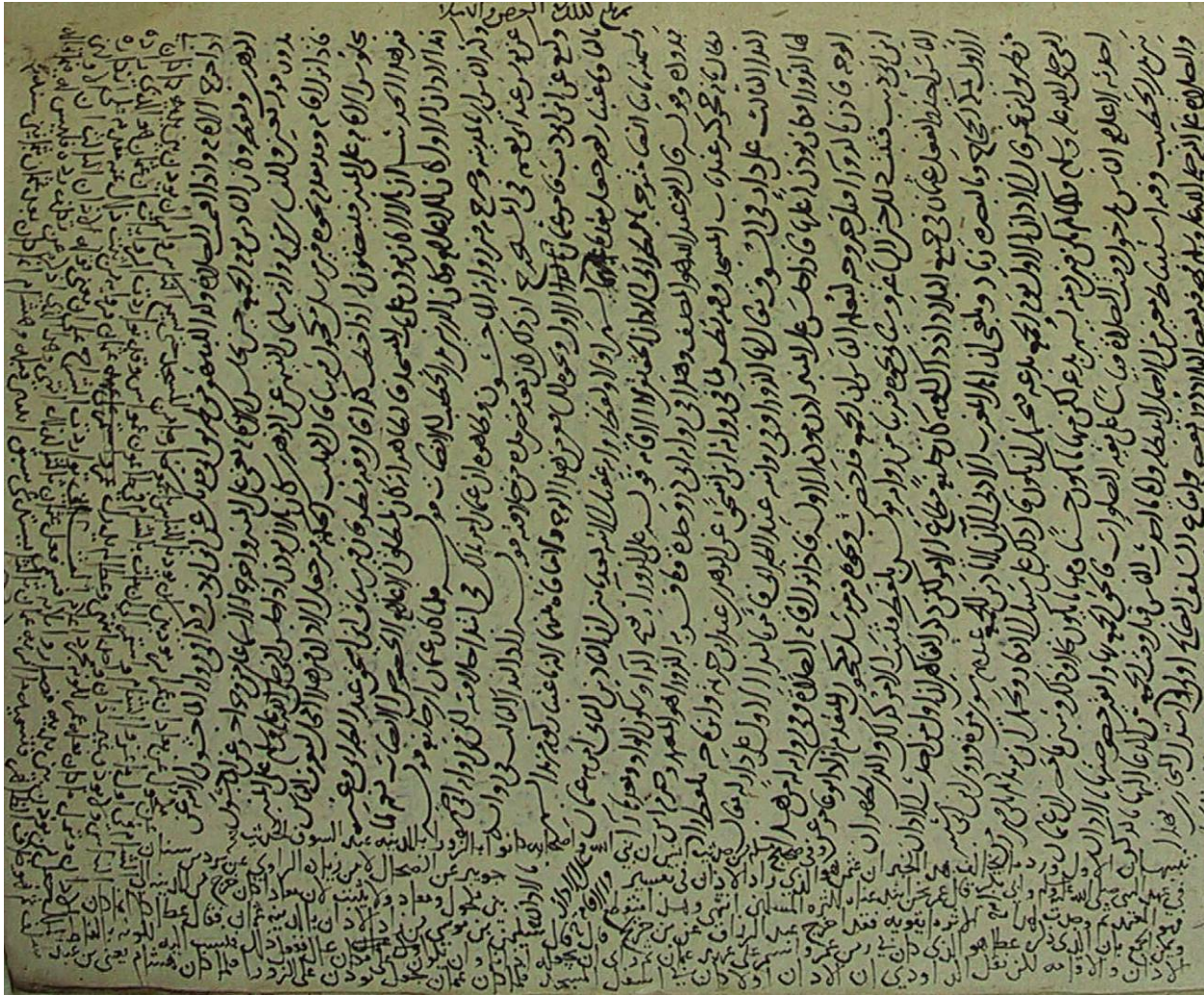


Figure 6—“Two notes of caution” (*tanbihān*) addresses unnamed commentators who included *ḥadīth* of dubious origin in their work. The *tanbihān* spirals across the bottom and left margins in this image of a folio rotated once counter-clockwise (Süleymaniye Library Istanbul, Mahmud Paşa 79, f. 136b–137a).

scholars who included these three *ḥadīth* in their commentaries.³³ That Ibn al-Mulaqqin and al-ʿAynī agree with Ibn Ḥajar’s opinion that it was indeed ʿUthmān who instituted an additional *adhān* is beside the point. The clear message, underlined by the fact that Ibn Ḥajar returned to this passage to add “two notes of caution,” is that his contemporaries should not have included untrustworthy material just for the sake of including it.

In this way, we can reconstruct a micro-narrative about Ibn Ḥajar’s thought process in crafting this sec-

tion. In Ibn al-Miṣrī’s early dictated copy, Ibn Ḥajar omitted any mention of those three *ḥadīths*, perhaps judging them unworthy for inclusion through silence. Norman Calder, in discussing the genre of *tafsīr*, described this activity as “scholarly exclusion,” and framed it as an inevitable reaction to “the danger of a tradition grown unmanageably large.”³⁴ In the later copy, Ibn Ḥajar, presumably after reading his colleagues’ work in which these three *ḥadīths* were included without reproach, decided it was part of his

³³ Umar Ibn al-Mulaqqin, *al-Tawḍīḥ li-sharḥ al-Jāmiʿ al-Ṣaḥīḥ* (Qatar: Dār al-Falāḥ, 2009), 7:514–21; Badr al-Dīn al-ʿAynī, *ʿUmdat al-qārī fī sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 25 vols. (Beirut: Idārat al-Ṭabāʿat al-Muniriyya, 1970), 6:210–12.

³⁴ Norman Calder, “Tafsīr from Ṭabarī to Ibn Kathīr: Problems in the Description of a Genre, Illustrated with Reference to the Story of Abraham,” in *Approaches to the Qurʾān*, ed. G. R. Hawting and Abdul-Kader Shareef (New York, 1993), 103–104.

charge to include those *ḥadīths*, if only to unequivocally reject them.

Ibn Ḥajar's practice of including additional references, then, was not only a quantitative matter that would prove to a competitive scholarly community that his commentary was more comprehensive than anyone else's, although this was surely a factor. Nor was it simply a mark of his living devotion and piety, a *ḥadīth* scholar who sacrificed all of the time and energy he could muster to clarifying the mission of God's Prophet, although this was also surely a factor. What was most at stake here for Ibn Ḥajar in making his revision was a certain commentarial hermeneutic—one he helped to define as *sharḥ al-ḥadīth bi'l-ḥadīth*—that sat at the intersection of both social and intellectual goods: if the *ḥadīths* to which a commentator refers are to have any persuasive or normative value for an audience, their authenticity must first be judged to be sound.

A Third Layer: Traces of al-ʿAynī and Ibn Ḥajar's Intellectual Rivalry

The final layer of additions consist of later interpolations that can be observed by comparing this early dictated copy with one based on the exemplar that was circulated after Ibn Ḥajar's death. We do not know precisely when these later additions were composed. One possibility is that they are contemporaneous to the second layer (i.e., ante-850/1446), but that the anonymous editor of the second layer omitted them by accident. This explanation is plausible where minor additions and alterations have been overlooked by the anonymous collator of the second layer. However, there are frequently key lines and long passages of commentary that are included in printed editions that are not indicated either in Ibn al-Miṣrī's version or the version used by the anonymous collator in 850/1446. In these cases, it is hard to believe that our anonymous collator would have neglected to incorporate these passages while diligently including others.

Since we know from the narrative sources that Ibn Ḥajar continued to add material during the ten years that followed the work's "completion" (or *khatm*),³⁵ a more plausible conjecture is that the additions in the second layer reflect the state of *Fath al-bārī* at the time of the *khatm*, but do not reflect any changes which Ibn Ḥajar made in the intervening decade before his

passing in 852/1449. In any event, we can posit that our third layer consists of further changes made to *Fath al-bārī* after the copy of Burhān al-Dīn ibn Khidr used by our anonymous collator was first put to paper. That said, these further changes did not necessarily occur after 850/1446 (the date the second layer was added), as the anonymous collator of the second layer may have been updating Ibn al-Miṣrī's copy with an already out-of-date version of *Fath al-bārī*.

The example I will discuss in relation to this layer involves Ibn Ḥajar's rival, Badr al-Dīn al-ʿAynī. To that end, I will first draw on narrative sources, largely chronicles and biographical dictionaries, to understand the social, historical, and cultural context in which their competitive dynamic emerged. The rivalry had become public by the winter of 820/1417, which happened to be the same the moment in which al-ʿAynī began his own commentary on *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, some three years after the initial writing down of Ibn Ḥajar's work.³⁶ At that time, al-ʿAynī had been appointed to teach *ḥadīth* at the now-famous mosque complex built by Sultan al-Muʿayyad Shaykh (r. 814–24/1412–21) near Bāb Zuwayla in Cairo. Trouble began brewing when al-Muʿayyad Shaykh ordered the construction of new minarets on the complex that were to dominate the cityscape in a conspicuous display of the sultan's power and piety. One of the minarets displayed a perilous tilt after the construction completed, which became an embarrassment for the sultan and a safety hazard for the neighborhood and the construction workers.³⁷ Bāb Zuwayla was closed for a month while

³⁶ al-ʿAynī called it *ʿUmdat al-Qārī*. The dates by which al-ʿAynī's commentary was completed are documented in a colophon transcribed in Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī and Muḥammad Zakariyyā al-Kāndahlawī, *Lāmiʿ al-dārārī ʿalā Jāmiʿ al-Bukhārī*, 10 vols. (Mecca: al-Maktaba al-Imdādiyya, 1975), 1:404. See also al-ʿAsqalānī, *Intiqāḍ al-ʿtirāḍ*, 1:10.

³⁷ See al-ʿAsqalānī, *Inbāʾ al-ghumr*, 7:280. Ibn Taghrībīrdī recounted this narrative under the events of 821 rather than 820, which is perhaps why Anne Broadbridge overlooked Ibn Ḥajar's own account of the exchange in her discussion of it in "Academic Rivalries and the Patronage System in Fifteenth-Century Egypt: al-ʿAynī, al-Maqrīzī, and Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 3 (1999): 85–107. See also Yūsuf Ibn Taghrībīrdī, *al-Nujūm al-zāhira fī mulūk Miṣr wa'l-Qāhira*, 16 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, 1992), 13:225. I use Ibn Ḥajar's date, not only because he was personally involved in the events, but also because he included many chronological details that Ibn Taghrībīrdī lacks regarding the events, such as the detail that the events unfolded in the last days of the month Dhū al-Ḥijja. The later Syrian historian Ibn Asbāt (d. ca. 926/1520) adds to the confusion by dating the event to 816. See Ibn Asbāt, *Ṣiḍq al-akhbār* (Tripoli, Lebanon: Jurūs Burs, 1993), 2:775.

³⁵ al-Sakhāwī, *al-Dawʾ al-lāmiʿ*, 2:38.

workers demolished the minaret.³⁸ Meanwhile, the poets of Cairo mocked the fiasco mercilessly, and couplets concerning the leaning minaret proliferated.³⁹ Ibn Ḥajar himself felt prompted to weigh in with a couplet of his own:

The mosque of our protector
al-Mu'ayyad was splendid
Its minaret radiated grandeur and grace
It says, as it stands aslant, "Be gentle
For there is nothing more detrimental to my
beauty than the evil eye (*al-ʿaynī*)"⁴⁰

The final line was widely received as a pun on al-ʿAynī's name on account of the rivalry between the two scholars, and al-ʿAynī's clear occupational link to the complex, both as an educator and as the appointed supervisor of pious endowments (*nāẓir al-ahbās*) under the sultan.⁴¹ In Ibn Ḥajar's own recounting, however, he disavowed any such ill intentions, asserting that "any person who has a sense of etiquette (*al-ādāb*) knows that [the lines] were not [composed] for him."⁴² However, among those who shared that perception was al-ʿAynī himself, and we can imagine that al-ʿAynī would not have looked upon Ibn Ḥajar's pronouncement about al-ʿAynī's sense of etiquette kindly. Al-ʿAynī chose to respond in kind, cutting Ibn Ḥajar with an insulting pun of his own at the end of the second couplet:

The minaret was unveiled as a magnificent bride
Its demolition was destined by God's decree
They say it was brought on by the evil eye,
I say: "That's mistaken"
Nothing prompted the destruction except
the low-grade stone (the vile *ḥajar*).⁴³

In our own "Twitter age," similarly populated by political celebrities obsessed with their own reputations,

³⁸ Ibn Taghribirdī, *al-Nujūm al-zāhira*, 13:225.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.; al-ʿAsqalānī, *Inbāʾ al-ghumr*, 7:281.

⁴¹ Ibn Taghribirdī, *al-Nujūm al-zāhira*, 15:287. The 1971 printed edition goes so far as to make the connection explicit by printing "al-ʿAynī" rather than "al-ʿaynī." See Ibn Taghribirdī, *al-Nujūm al-zāhira fī mulūk Miṣr wa'l-Qāhira*, 16 vols. (Cairo: al-Muʾassasa al-Miṣriyya al-ʿĀmma lil-Taʿlīf wa'l-Ṭibāʿa wa'l-Naṣh, 1971), 14:75–76. All references in this essay will be to the 1992 edition, unless stated otherwise.

⁴² al-ʿAsqalānī, *Inbāʾ al-ghumr*, 7:281.

⁴³ Ibn Taghribirdī, *al-Nujūm al-zāhira*, 13:225.

it is not difficult to imagine the potential for two short lines to spark a very public spat. Poetic praise (*madīḥ*) or poetic insult (*hijāʾ*) from the lips of a distinguished authority could hold great sway in shaping one's reputation. Moreover, taunting by rhyming couplet made the verbal jab easy to remember and quick to circulate.

Decades later, the historian Ibn Asbāt (d. ca. 926/1520) would remember the exchange more dramatically, fancifully restaging the verbal skirmish in the presence of the sultan.⁴⁴ While Ibn Asbāt or his source concocted this new element, there is a sense in which the modified narrative remains faithful to the potentially high political stakes of such a quarrel unfolding in full view of the public eye. If a scholar like al-ʿAynī or Ibn Ḥajar could be credibly linked to the fall of a minaret, by neglect or by superstition, it would be disastrous for his career. In fact, several decades later, Ibn Ḥajar himself was forced from an appointment as chief justice on the basis that he had neglected to repair a minaret that fell, causing several casualties.⁴⁵

Anecdotes such as these, along with many others documented in the work of Anne Broadbridge, show that the commentarial rivalry between al-ʿAynī and Ibn Ḥajar was driven in part by competition over appointments, political influence, and symbolic capital.⁴⁶ But as evidence from this early dictated manuscript show, this rivalry was not limited to competition over political ambition, defense of reputation, and other social stakes. The intellectual goods at stake in this rivalry were just as vital.

Ibn Ḥajar suspected that some of the students who copied early dictations of *Fath al-bārī* shared their notes with al-ʿAynī. Thus, in Ibn Ḥajar's estimation, al-ʿAynī's commentary on *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* used an early dictated copy of *Fath al-bārī* as a source to plagiarize and criticize. Not one content to sit on his heels, Ibn Ḥajar composed a written response to al-ʿAynī's criticisms in a work titled *Intiqāḍ al-iʿtirāḍ*.⁴⁷

An example of one of their many intellectual disputes was Ibn Ḥajar's explanation for why al-Bukhārī used the obscure phrasing *al-adhān mathmā mathmā* in the chapter heading on "Doubling the Call to

⁴⁴ Ibn Asbāt, *Ṣiḍq al-akbbār*, 2:775–76.

⁴⁵ Sabri Kawash, *Ibn Ḥajar al-Asqalānī: A Study of the Background, Education, and Career of a ʿĀlim in Egypt* (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1968), 167.

⁴⁶ See Broadbridge, "Academic Rivalries": 85–107.

⁴⁷ See al-ʿAsqalānī, *Intiqāḍ al-iʿtirāḍ*, 7–11.

Prayer,” when there is no *ḥadīth* authenticated by al-Bukhārī that uses this phrasing. In Ibn al-Miṣrī’s early dictated copy of Ibn Ḥajar’s commentary, he solves this problem in the following way (see Fig. 7):

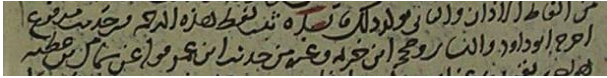


Figure 7—“The wording of this chapter heading is established by a *ḥadīth* that can be attributed to the Prophet (*marfuʿ*). Abū Dāwūd and al-Nasāʿī found a corroborating chain of transmission for it (*akbrajabu*)—and Ibn Khuzayma and others authenticated it—with the *ḥadīth* of Ibn ʿUmar” (Süleymaniye Library Istanbul, Mahmud Paşa 79, f. 3b).

See Fig. 7: *Thubita lafẓ hādhibi al-tarjama fī ḥadīth marfuʿ /1/ akbrajabu Abū Dāwūd wa-al-Nasāʿī, wa-ṣahḥahahu Ibn Khuzayma wa-ghayrubu min ḥadīth Ibn ʿUmar /2/*

This may seem like a minor point of phrasing. However, interpreting al-Bukhārī’s quizzical chapter headings, or *sharḥ tarājim al-Bukhārī*, was another key way in which Ibn Ḥajar had distinguished the genius of his commentary. Since Ibn Ḥajar was referencing other *ḥadīths* in order to explain the phrasing in the *ḥadīth*—the technique of *sharḥ al-ḥadīth biʾl-ḥadīth*—both of the interpretive strategies Ibn Ḥajar most prized were being put to the test.

But Ibn Ḥajar’s first attempt at an explanation, in this case, leaves something to be desired. If one consults the *ḥadīth* of Ibn ʿUmar in Abū Dāwūd’s collection and others, one finds a completely different wording: instead of “*mathnā mathnā*,” one finds that the *adhān* in the time of the Prophet was described as “*maratayn, maratayn*.”

Ibn Ḥajar must have realized this passage in *Fath al-bārī* needed more work because in the third layer of addition, he included new information and an important qualification:

Thubita lafẓ hādhibi al-tarjama fī ḥadīth li-Ibn ʿUmar marfuʿ akbrajabu Abū Dāwūd al-Ṭayālīsī fī musnadibi, fa-qāla fīhi “mathnā, mathnā.” Wa-huwa ʿind Abī Dawūd wa-al-Nasāʿī, wa-ṣahḥahahu Ibn Khuzayma wa-ghayrubu min hādihā al-wajh lākin bi-lafẓ “maratayn, maratayn.”

The wording of this chapter heading is established by a tradition of Ibn ʿUmar that can be attributed to the Prophet (*marfuʿ*). Abū Dāwūd al-Ṭayālīsī found a corroborating chain of

transmission for it (*akbrajabu*) it in his *Musnad*. He says in it “*mathnā, mathnā*.” It is also found in [the collections of] Abū Dāwūd and al-Nasāʿī. Ibn Khuzayma and others authenticated it, but worded it in the following way: “*maratayn, maratayn*.”⁴⁸

Here Ibn Ḥajar better lives up to his reputation. The revised version clarifies that a different Abū Dāwūd, Abū Dāwūd al-Ṭayālīsī (d. 204/819), transmitted the *ḥadīth* by a chain of transmission in which Ibn ʿUmar recalled that the *adhān* in the time of the Prophet was “*mathnā, mathnā*.” In this version, he makes clear that the other Abū Dāwūd, Abū Dāwūd al-Sijistānī, along with others, narrated the *ḥadīth* of Ibn ʿUmar with a different expression: “*maratayn, maratayn*.” The hidden benefit that Ibn Ḥajar wanted students of *ḥadīth* to take away was that al-Bukhārī was tipping his cap (or his turban, if he wore one) to the authority of the phrasing “*mathnā, mathnā*.”

Enter al-ʿAynī: according to Ibn Ḥajar in his *Intiqād al-iʿtirād*, al-ʿAynī took issue with Bukhārī’s title and Ibn Ḥajar’s interpretation of it, stating, “this is not the pronunciation of the *ḥadīth* being referenced” (*laysa lafẓ al-ḥadīth al-madhkhūr*), but that instead it should be pronounced, on the basis of a *ḥadīth* from the *Sunan* of Abū Dāwūd, “*maratayn maratayn*.”⁴⁹

This rubbed Ibn Ḥajar the wrong way. He speculated that either al-ʿAynī read a copy of *Fath al-bārī* in which the quote from Abū Dāwūd al-Ṭayālīsī was missing, or al-ʿAynī thought that Abū Dāwūd al-Ṭayālīsī and Abū Dāwūd al-Sijistānī were the same person.⁵⁰ Assuming it was the latter, Ibn Ḥajar proceeded to give al-ʿAynī a stern lecture about the difference between the two Abū Dāwūds, and for repudiating an erudite point.⁵¹

Although we do not know what copy of *Fath al-bārī* al-ʿAynī had in his possession, the discovery of Ibn al-Miṣrī’s early dictated copy in which the reference to Abū Dāwūd al-Ṭayālīsī is missing lends a point in al-ʿAynī’s favor. If al-ʿAynī indeed read an early copy of *Fath al-bārī* similar to Ibn al-Miṣrī’s—which seems overwhelmingly likely given Ibn Ḥajar’s own account that al-ʿAynī obtained early dictation notes from one of Ibn Ḥajar’s students—then al-ʿAynī can hardly be faulted for criticizing Ibn Ḥajar’s interpretation.

⁴⁸ See al-ʿAsqalānī, *Fath al-bārī*, 2:82; emphasis mine.

⁴⁹ See al-ʿAsqalānī, *Intiqād al-iʿtirād*, 1:354.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

Although al-ʿAynī distinguished his commentary on *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* through his use of rhetoric, grammar, and language to explain *ḥadīth* rather than his knowledge of other *ḥadīth* as Ibn Ḥajar did, al-ʿAynī surely knew enough about *ḥadīth* to know the difference between Abū Dāwūd al-Ṭayālīsī and Abū Dāwūd al-Sijistānī. In this case, al-ʿAynī's only shortcoming was that he did not know that a prophetic *ḥadīth* contained in Abū Dāwūd al-Ṭayālīsī's *Musnad* employed the phrasing “*mathnā, mathnā*.” But even Ibn Ḥajar missed this point in 822/1419, as Ibn al-Miṣrī's early dictated copy clearly preserves.

There is an intriguing epilogue to this story that raises fresh questions about the way in which Mamluk-era scholars read and responded to one another's work. If one relies on modern editions of al-ʿAynī's *ʿUmdat al-qārī* based on a later manuscript recension,⁵² rather than Ibn Ḥajar's description of al-ʿAynī's commentary in *Intiqād al-iʿtirād*, one is surprised to find the text free from any criticism of Ibn Ḥajar or his work. Al-ʿAynī made no mention of Abū Dāwūd, nor of al-Sijistānī or al-Ṭayālīsī. He made no mention of “*maratayn maratayn*.” Instead, he offered, as was typical of his approach, a linguistic explanation for the obscure phrase. This suggests that al-ʿAynī read Ibn Ḥajar's critique of him, and revised his own work accordingly. Compare, for instance, al-ʿAynī on “*bāb mathnā mathnā*” according to Ibn Ḥajar's *Intiqād al-iʿtirād* (1), with al-ʿAynī on “*bāb mathnā mathnā*” according to printed editions of *ʿUmdat al-qārī* based on later recensions (2):

(1) *Laysa lafẓ al-ḥadīth al-madhkhūr wa-innamā rawāhu Abū Dāwūd ʿan Ibn ʿUmar bi-lafẓ “Innamā kān al-adhān ʿalā ʿabd rasūl Allāh maratayn maratayn.”*

[*Mathnā mathnā*] is not the pronunciation of the aforementioned *ḥadīth*. Rather, as Abū Dawūd related on the authority of Ibn ʿUmar: “The *adhān* was doubled [*maratayn maratayn*] during the time of the Prophet of God.”⁵³

⁵² Like *Fath al-bārī*, there is no critical edition of *ʿUmdat al-qārī*. Although the Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya edition makes no mention of any manuscript sources, the Muniriyya edition, used for this article, claims that its text was “compared with a number of manuscripts” but offers no further details about the provenance of the manuscripts they consulted. Nevertheless, we should assume that the modern editions broadly reflected a later manuscript tradition, likely from the late medieval Islamic period.

⁵³ al-ʿAynī, *ʿUmdat al-qārī*, 5:109.

(2) *Hādhā bāb yudhkar fīhi al-adhān mathnā mathnā, wa-mathnā hākadhā mukarraran riwāyat al-Kushmihaynī, wa-fī riwāyat ghayrihi mathnā mufarradan, wa mathnā mathnā maʿdūl min ithnayn ithnayn. . .*

This chapter mentions in it the doubling (*mathnā mathnā*) of the *adhān*. “*Mathnā mathnā*” is repeated in this way in the recitation of [*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*] of al-Kushmihaynī. According to other recitations it is a single “*mathnā*.” And “*mathnā mathnā*” is derived from the same root as *ithnayn ithnayn* (two two). . .⁵⁴

What we take away is the clear sense that Ibn Ḥajar and al-ʿAynī were actively reading and responding to one another's works-in-progress, making revisions accordingly, knowing their readers would be judging them against one another. It also shows just how difficult it was for authors to control the text of their works once they had been dictated, even if they were circulating as private copies among a very limited readership. In other words, whether authors liked it or not, these early dictated works-in-progress exerted influence, and one could be held accountable for what one dictated in an early copy. The experience of reading and writing in Mamluk-era intellectual culture could thus involve circulating and competitively responding to works-in-progress prior to and sometimes even after a work was declared complete.

Conclusion

Even though I have shown, on the basis of chronicles and biographical sources, that Ibn Ḥajar was motivated to revise and re-revise *Fath al-bārī* out of a desire to compete with rivals, this is only a partial understanding of commentary as a social practice. An examination of the three layers of additions made visible by new evidence from Ibn al-Miṣrī's early dictated copy of *Fath al-bārī* sheds light on Ibn Ḥajar's commitment to better preserve the meaning of the Prophet's example. Since the *ḥadīth* commentary tradition is oriented towards goods that can only be defined by the tradition itself, while also being embedded in larger institutions of power, I would argue that it qualifies as a “social practice” in the sense used by Talal Asad and Alasdair

⁵⁴ Ibid.

MacIntyre.⁵⁵ Hence, by framing *ḥadīth* commentary as a social practice, I am suggesting that historians of Mamluk intellectual life consider the competition for social goods *and* the competition for exegetical goods. This Asadian/MacIntyrean conception of a “social practice” expands Pierre Bourdieu’s more limited conception, popularized by Mamluk historian Michael Chamberlain, which analyzed competition for material and symbolic goods, but did not fully consider those goods on offer within an interpretive tradition.⁵⁶ Concerning this religious and intellectual commitment, it is worth considering three concluding points that are distinctive to the composition of exegetical works, especially in a culture that canonized *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*.

First, the practice of reading *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* was a cyclical one, with recitations of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* performed at the citadel in Ramadan in the presence of the sultan.⁵⁷ We should therefore be unsurprised that Ibn Ḥajar would have returned to add more and more to his commentary on it even in the years and decades following his early dictation of the text to Ibn al-Miṣrī.

Second, like many exegetes of canonized and sacralized texts, commentators viewed the act of explaining *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* as an act of devotion whose goal would never be fully reached in their lifetimes.⁵⁸ In his piety, Ibn Ḥajar endlessly struggled to compile the most comprehensive and the most trustworthy interpretations of the *ḥadīth*. Death, ostensibly willed by God, surpassed the *khatm* as the true moment at which the scholar’s commentary was at last brought to an end.

Third, scholars were commenting on a traditionally transmitted text not only for themselves and their contemporary readers, but for future audiences. The future Ibn Ḥajar may have hoped for was one in which the day of resurrection was around the corner; but he was prepared for the long haul. Nearly five hundred years separated Ibn Ḥajar and al-Bukhārī, and Ibn

Ḥajar might have reasonably expected that Muslim scholars would still be debating the origins of a *ḥadīth* or the phrasing of a chapter heading five hundred years in the future. Indeed, they did and they do. To this end, *Faṭḥ al-bārī* was revised and elaborated upon for decades with the knowledge that nothing like it had ever been produced,⁵⁹ and that it might have to sustain the community as a monument for centuries to come.

Nevertheless, as valuable as this monument has been, new evidence from Ibn al-Miṣrī’s early dictated copy shows scholars how much there is to learn if we look past the artifice of a monumental work’s completeness. In his book *Patterns of Intention*, Michael Baxandall wrote that:

Cezanne had said, and Picasso later quoted him with approval as saying, that every brushstroke changes a picture. The point they were making was not that a finished picture will look different if even one brushstroke is removed or changed. They meant that in the course of painting a picture, each brushstroke will modify the effect of the brushstrokes so far made, so that with each brushstroke the painter finds himself addressing a new situation. . . . This effect is very powerful, however clearly the painter has in mind a final character.⁶⁰

Baxandall was discussing Picasso’s process, but this idea can enrich our analysis of works-in-progress in the manuscript age. The power of recognizing a commentary and its revision as a serial performance is that we can bring a stereoscopic “relief to the process.”⁶¹ We are no longer limited to seeing and analyzing a work retrospectively from the moment of completion, when the exegete finally declared that the work approximated what he had intended to complete. Instead, we can reconstruct the exegete’s intention forwards as he first began to solve an old question. With each word dictated, and each explanation inked on paper, new

⁵⁵ See Talal Asad, “The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam,” in *Occasional Papers* (Washington, D.C., 1986), 14–15; Alisdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 3rd ed. (Notre Dame, IN, 2007), 222.

⁵⁶ Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of A Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, 1977), 171–83; Michael Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus* (Cambridge, 1994), 22 and passim.

⁵⁷ Blecher, “Ḥadīth Commentary in the Presence of Students, Patrons, and Rivals”: 275–76.

⁵⁸ For a comparative discussion of this trans-scriptural commentarial assumption and others, see John Henderson, *Scripture, Canon, Commentary* (Princeton, 1991), 140–55.

⁵⁹ Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406) had heard many shaykhs of his time say that “‘commenting on Bukhārī’s text remains an outstanding debt (*ḍayn*) over the community (*umma*),’ meaning that a scholar (*‘ālim*) of the community has not [yet] fully taken on the requirements of commentary in this [full] sense.” ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 2001), 560, and *The Muqaddimah*, trans. Franz Rosenthal, 3 vols. (Princeton, NJ, 1967), 2:457–59.

⁶⁰ Michael Baxandall, *Patterns of Intention: On the Historical Explanation of Pictures* (New Haven, CT, 1985), 62.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 63.

riddles, new debates, and new ambiguities emerged, both for him and his readership.

In other words, to view *Fatḥ al-bārī* as a single, coherent text is to subscribe to the artifice of completion and singularity of intention that any *khatm*, if properly performed, retroactively crystallizes. This artifice of a “completed” work is itself worthy of contemplation, not just for the sake of convenience, but because the artifice of a “completed” work is an authoritative and powerful representation of an author’s thought at an important moment in time. But this artifice is also contingent on concealing and excluding the compli-

cating and densely layered stories of how a “completed” work came to be.

As new evidence from Ibn al-Miṣrī’s early dictated copy shows us, the rich life of debate in the Mamluk scholarly scene is hidden in plain sight in the lines of *Fatḥ al-bārī*. At stake in the life of this debate were both the social rewards in which Ibn Ḥajar was a fearsome competitor, and the intellectual rewards, in which his intentions for what the work could achieve, in better preserving the meaning of the Prophet’s authenticated sayings and practices, evolved over time.