

# 1293: An Aragonese–Mamlūk Agreement from al-Qalqašandī's *Ṣubḥ al-a 'šā*\*

Bogdan C. Smarandache



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**Abstract:** This article analyses a treaty negotiated by the Mamlūk sultan al-Ašraf Ḥalīl (r. 689–693/1290–1293) and King James II of Aragon (r. 1291–1327) in 1293. It begins with a discussion of the treaty's authorship and provenance and then describes the context in which the treaty was developed. Here, special attention is paid to the convergence of commercial and political interests held both by the Crown of Aragon and the Mamlūk Sultanate of Cairo. The article closes with a cursory analysis of clauses in the treaty and reflections on their implications for transmediterranean relations.

## Source

Al-Qalqašandī, *Ṣubḥ al-a 'šā fī šinā 'at al-inšā*, ed. Muḥammad 'Abd al-Rasūl Ibrāhīm, 14 vols., Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Ḥadīwiyya, 1331–1338/1913–1920, vol. 14 (1920), p. 70, trans. Bogdan C. Smarandache.<sup>1</sup>

تَسْتَمِرُّ هَذِهِ الْمَوَدَّةُ وَالْمِصَادَقَةُ عَلَى حُكْمِ هَذِهِ  
الشُّرُوطِ الْمَشْرُوحَةِ أَعْلَاهُ مِنَ الْجِهَاتِ عَلَى الدَّوَامِ  
وَالْأَسْتِمْرَارِ وَتَجْرِي أَحْكَامُهَا وَقَوَاعِدُهَا عَلَى أَجْمَلِ  
الاسْتِقْرَارِ فَإِنَّ الْمَمَالِكَ بِمَا قَدْ صَارَتْ تَمَلِكَةً وَاحِدَةً  
وَشَيْئاً وَاحِداً لَا تَنْتَقِضُ بِمَوْتِ أَحَدٍ مِنَ الْجَانِبِينَ  
وَلَا بِعَزْلِ وَائِلٍ وَتَوَلِيَّةٍ غَيْرِهِ بَلْ تُؤَيَّدُ أَحْكَامُهَا وَتُدَوِّمُ  
أَيَّامُهَا وَشُهُورُهَا وَأَعْوَامُهَا وَعَلَى ذَلِكَ أَنْتَضَمْتُ  
وَأَسْتَقَرَّتْ فِي التَّارِيخِ الْمَذْكُورِ أَعْلَاهُ وَهُوَ كَذَا وَكَذَا  
وَاللَّهُ الْمَوْفِقُ بِكَرَمِهِ إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى

This friendship and alliance [between al-Ašraf Ḥalīl and King James II of Aragon, King Sancho IV of Castile, and King Dinis I of Portugal] shall endure in accordance with the conditions elucidated above by all parties forever and without interruption. Its regulation and principles shall apply by the best of applications, as if the kingdoms have by means of it become one kingdom and one entity. It shall not be cancelled with the death of anyone from any side, nor by the removal of a deputy and his replacement [by another deputy]. Indeed, its regulations shall be supported, and its days, months, and years lengthened. To this effect, it has been implemented and established on the aforementioned date, which is such-and-such [19 Šafar 692/29 January 1293], and God is in agreement, with His blessing, if God Almighty wills.

## Authorship & Work

[§1] The authorship of this agreement is a complex matter, since it is nearly identical to an earlier (unratified) treaty and since the negotiation and drafting of its terms involved

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<sup>1</sup> I have compared Muḥammad 'Abd al-Rasūl Ibrāhīm's edition with Michele Amari's and removed punctuation marks while retaining diacritical markers as they appear in Ibrāhīm's edition.

collaborative processes. Its scope undoubtedly reflects the objectives and visions of the principal sovereigns who headed negotiations in 689/1290: King Alfonso III of Aragon (r. 1285–1291) and the Mamlūk sultan Qalāwūn al-Mansūrī (r. 678–689/1279–1290). However, the treaty of 689/1290 was never ratified, so the task of finalizing the agreement three years later, fell to the Mamlūk sultan al-Ašraf Ḥalīl (r. 689–693/1290–1293) and King James II of Aragon (Catalan: *Jaume*, Castilian: *Jaime*, r. 1291–1327).<sup>2</sup> In the negotiations of 692/1293, the latter monarch also represented his brothers, Frederick of Sicily (r. 1295–1337) and the prince Pedro (d. 1296), and the additional treaty partners, King Sancho IV of Castile (r. 1284–1295) and King Dinis or Dionisio I of Portugal (r. 1279–1325). In short, al-Ašraf Ḥalīl and King James II are the architects of this agreement, but only in a theoretical sense.

[§2] Indeed, envoys played an important role in mediation; they communicated the objectives and visions of leaders engaged in negotiation, and they exercised varying degrees of agency during negotiations depending on their assignments and circumstances.<sup>3</sup> In the case of this treaty, the envoys referenced in its second clause—Ronteo de Marimon and Raymondo Alemany—had been given “full powers” to negotiate on behalf of the Christian Iberian party, but their agency must have been limited by the parties’ desire to stick to the scope of the agreement of 689/1290.<sup>4</sup> Additional components of the negotiation process involved scribes translating the demands of each party into Arabic and Latin clauses, which had to correspond in substance, in order to reach a final version of the agreement.<sup>5</sup> In this case, the scribes of the earlier agreement had played an unusually hands-on role in the drafting process.<sup>6</sup> Finally, the treaty’s development must be contextualized in the longer history of diplomatic priorities and in the evolution of Christian and Islamic legal frameworks over the course of centuries. For the purposes of this article, I focus on the role of al-Ašraf Ḥalīl and James II in the negotiation of this agreement and on aspects of the agreement that suggest departure from contemporaneous legal frameworks.

[§3] Both al-Ašraf Ḥalīl and James II inherited vast kingdoms from their immediate predecessors. Al-Ašraf Ḥalīl was son and successor to Qalāwūn, the Mamlūk sultan famous for having annexed nearly all of the remaining Frankish territorial holdings in the Levant.<sup>7</sup> Al-Ašraf Ḥalīl crowned the work of his predecessor by completing the conquest of Frankish Acre,

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<sup>2</sup> Holt, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy*, p. 131; cf. Northrup, *Slave to Sultan*, p. 155; Jaspert, *Crown of Aragon*, p. 312. There is a scholarly consensus that the agreement of 692/1293 was ratified; however, note Michele Amari’s reservations: Amari, *Trattato*, p. 6. Cf. Holt, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy*, p. 131; Ashtor, *Levant Trade*, p. 20; Coulon, *Commercial Influence*, p. 287. In a presentation for the *Commission internationale de diplomatie* (CID) held in Leipzig in October 2018, Frédéric Bauden questioned the scholarly consensus on the ratification and dating of this treaty. The publication of his conference paper is forthcoming and promises new insight into the treaty’s provenance and context. Bauden, *Traité*.

<sup>3</sup> Arabic accounts of the protracted negotiations between the Ayyūbid sultan Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn b. Ayyūb and King Richard I Cœur de Lion about a century prior to this treaty show that the sultan’s envoys were given scope to intervene in the diplomatic process and even to negotiate terms. Ibn Šaddād, *Al-Nawādir*, ed. al-Šayyāl, pp. 219–222, 228, 232–234; *Rare and Excellent History*, trans. Richards, pp. 214–216, 224, 228–229, 230–231. Other evidence shows that envoys were sometimes given detailed and precise instructions, as happened in the case of King James’s embassy to the Mamlūk sultan Muḥammad b. Qalāwūn in 722/1322. Rodríguez, *Captivity and Diplomacy*, p. 109. For an analysis of powers assigned to Aragonese envoys, see Péquignot, *Au nom du roi*, pp. 34–38, 298–329.

<sup>4</sup> Holt, *Mamluk Sultanate and Aragon*, pp. 107–108, 113.

<sup>5</sup> Immediately following the transcript of this treaty, al-Qalqašandī discusses the process whereby scribes had drafted Arabic and “Frankish” (*ifranġī*) versions of diplomatic agreements and suggests that great effort was needed to render all the demands into language that was intelligible by both sides. Al-Qalqašandī, *Šubḥ al-a‘šā*, ed. Ibrāhīm, vol. 14, pp. 70–71; Holt, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy*, pp. 5, 7–8; Kedar, *Religion*, pp. 416–417; König, *Übersetzungskontrolle*, pp. 476–477; Moukarzel, *Customs Adopted*, pp. 154–158.

<sup>6</sup> Holt, *Mamluk Sultanate and Aragon*, p. 106.

<sup>7</sup> Northrup, *Slave to Sultan*, pp. 87–90; Humphreys, *Ayyubids, Mamluks, and the Latin East*, p. 12; Holt, *Three Biographies*, p. 27.

Tyre, Sidon, Beirut, and the coastal fortresses of ‘Atlīt and Tortosa in 690/1291.<sup>8</sup> King James II was the grandson of King James I “the Conqueror” of Aragon (Catalan: *Jaume*, Castilian: *Jaime*, r. 1213–1276), whose long reign involved extensive campaigns to wrest control of the Balearic Islands as well as large parts of the eastern Iberian mainland from semi-autonomous Muslim leaders, formerly under Almohad suzerainty.<sup>9</sup> James I’s immediate successors, King Peter III “the Great” (*Pere el Gran*, r. 1276–1285) and Alfonso III (r. 1285–1291), had added Sicily and Menorca to Aragonese territory.<sup>10</sup> In short, James II inherited a composite kingdom, whose predecessors set a standard for the adept use of diplomacy, intimidation, and military force.<sup>11</sup> Prior to dispatching his first embassy to Egypt, James II had also concluded marriage alliances with his Castilian and Portuguese counterparts, thereby assuming representation of the Christian Iberian realms in his negotiations with al-Ašraf Ḥalīl, just as Alfonso III had done in 689/1290.<sup>12</sup>

## Content & Context

[§4] This section introduces the contents and structure of the treaty of 682/1293. It then provides an overview of the text in which the treaty is best preserved, the *Ṣubḥ al-a ‘šā fī šinā ‘at al-inšā’* (“Daybreak for the Night-Blind Regarding the Composition of Chancery Documents”) and its author, al-Qalqašandī (d. 821/1418).<sup>13</sup>

[§5] The treaty of 692/1293 begins with the naming of the agreement and the titulatures of al-Ašraf Ḥalīl, James II of Aragon, Sancho IV of Castile, and Dinis I of Portugal (clauses 1–2). The truce then catalogues the territories under each monarch’s authority and to which the clauses in the truce were to apply (clauses 3–6). The stipulations that follow can be summarized as follows:

7. Protection of Mamlūk territory, including its people and their possessions, from attack;
8. Protection of Aragonese territory, including its people and their possessions, from attack;
9. Prohibition of rendering aid or support to Christian forces attacking Mamlūk territory;
10. Disclosure of information on any premeditated attacks on either party;
11. Provisioning travelers shipwrecked in territories of either party;
12. Repatriation of possessions of travelers who perish in territories of either party;
13. Safe-passage for envoys;
14. Retribution for any party that breaks the agreement on the Aragonese side;
15. Authorization for the transport of war material;
16. Repatriation of Muslim captives and slaves;
17. Preference given to Islamic law for commercial transactions in Mamlūk territory;
18. Repatriation of possessions of Muslim travellers on Aragonese ships;
19. Repatriation of fugitives and their possessions;

<sup>8</sup> Irwin, *Middle East*, p. 78; Holt, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy*, p. 44.

<sup>9</sup> Abulafia, *Western Mediterranean Kingdoms*, pp. 37–46; Fierro, *Almohads*, pp. 77–79; Burns, *Islam under the Crusaders*, pp. 12–18, 26–37; Bennison, *Almoravid and Almohad Empires*, pp. 97, 116–117, 136.

<sup>10</sup> Burns, *Islam under the Crusaders*, p. 13; Holt, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy*, p. 131.

<sup>11</sup> See Burns, *Islam under the Crusaders*, pp. 11, 16, 164–173. On the origins of the Crown of Aragon, see Abulafia, *Western Mediterranean Kingdoms*, pp. 28–37.

<sup>12</sup> Holt, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy*, p. 131; Péquignot, *Au nom du roi*, pp. 457–458.

<sup>13</sup> I have borrowed this translation of the title from Marsham, *Rituals of Islamic Monarchy*.

20. Safe-passage for Christian pilgrims carrying a letter of safe passage;
21. Military aid in the case of Christian attacks on Mamlūk territory; and,
22. Collection of customs taxes according to Mamlūk practice.

[§6] These clauses are followed by a summation of the truce (clause 23), which provides the text of the excerpt above (“This friendship and alliance ...”). As in the case of the truces of 689/1290, the Aragonese had once again taken the initiative in seeking a truce in 692/1293, which suggests that the Mamlūks were the stronger, or more politically secure, of the two parties. The confidence of the Mamlūk party is also suggested by the description of the Aragonese embassy’s entreaties in an account by the sultan’s chancery scribe and biographer, Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir (d. 692/1293).<sup>14</sup> According to Mohammad Ali Al Mazawdah (*Muḥammad ‘Alī al-Muzāwada*), this slight power imbalance is also borne out in the way that the truce is framed. In particular, the preamble contains the unilateral demand that “[King James II] shall abide by all of conditions mentioned [in the clauses of the treaty]” in return for the sultan’s acceptance of the king’s demands.<sup>15</sup> Finally, clauses 7, 9, 10, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 21, and 22 favour the Mamlūks, whereas only clause 20 accords special advantages to the Christian party, further indicating a power imbalance between the two parties.

[§7] The earliest and most complete version of the treaty of 692/1293 is preserved in the *Ṣubḥ al-a‘šā fī šinā‘at al-inšā’*, a compendium of texts and commentary on the “secretarial arts” completed by Šihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. Ali b. Aḥmad al-Qalqašandī al-Šāfi‘ī in the year 814/1411.<sup>16</sup> With its vast coverage of topics pertinent to the duties and expertise required of chancery scribes, the *Ṣubḥ al-a‘šā* has been described both as a “chancery manual” and “chancery encyclopaedia”.<sup>17</sup> The work is actually an elaboration of an earlier *maqāma* work (a mixed genre of miscellaneous topics, excerpts, and anecdotes) and also draws on materials from two other chancery manuals: *al-Ta‘rīf bi-l-muṣṭalaḥ al-šarīf* by Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-‘Umarī (d. 749/1349) and Ġamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad b. al-Mukarram b. al-Manzūr al-Anṣārī’s (d. 711/1311) *Taḍkirat al-labīb wa-nuzhat al-adīb* (“The Aide Memoire for the Thoughtful and Vademecum for the Cultivated”), a work which no longer survives.<sup>18</sup>

[§8] The composer of the *Ṣubḥ al-a‘šā*—and compiler of the treaty of 692/1293—was born in 756/1355 in Qalqašanda (or Qarqašanda), in the Nile Delta, whence comes his *nisba* (the part of an Islamic name denoting origin). Al-Qalqašandī had studied law, Ḥadīth, and *adab* (belles-lettres) in Alexandria and had trained with the Šāfi‘ī jurist ‘Umar b. ‘Alī b. Mulaqqin (d. 804/1401).<sup>19</sup> He had also served as a judge early in his career. Al-Qalqašandī entered the Mamlūk chancery (*dīwān al-inšā’*) in 791/1389, where he served as a secretarial scribe (*kātib al-darġ*) for the Mamlūk sultan al-Zāhir Sayf al-Dīn Barqūq (r. 783–801/1382–1399) and his son and successor, al-Nāšir Faraġ (r. 801–808/1399–1412).<sup>20</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Muḥī al-Dīn b. ‘Abd al-Zāhir, *Tašrīf al-ayyām*, ed. Kāmil, p. 156; Holt, *Mamluk Sultanate and Aragon*, 106; Holt, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy*, p. 131. However, caution must be taken in reading this source since it originated from the inner circle of al-Ašraf Ḥalīl.

<sup>15</sup> Al-Muzāwada, al-Hudna, p. 615; Holt, *Mamluk Sultanate and Aragon*, p. 106.

<sup>16</sup> Abdelhamid and El-Toudy, Introduction, p. 15; cf. Holt, *Treaties*, p. 67. A badly damaged copy of the Arabic text of the treaty can be found in the Arxiu General de la Corona d’Aragó, cf. Alarcón y Santón and Linares, *Documentos árabes diplomáticos*, p. 344; Holt, *Mamluk Sultanate and Aragon*, pp. 105, 111–112 for differences between the two copies.

<sup>17</sup> Bosworth, al-Qalqašandī; Broadbridge, *Diplomatic Conventions*, p. 106; Abdelhamid and El-Toudy, Introduction, pp. 1, 12, 15–16; Khamisy, *Treaty of 1283*, p. 74; cf. Bauden, *Like Father, Like Son*, pp. 181–182, 214.

<sup>18</sup> Holt, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy*, p. 2; Abdelhamid and El-Toudy, Introduction, p. 14.

<sup>19</sup> Moore, *Production and Study of Shāfi‘ī Fiqh Texts*, p. 119.

<sup>20</sup> Contemporary sources for the life and career of al-Qalqašandī include the *Iqd al-ġumān* of al-‘Aynī (762–855/1360–1453), the *Kitāb al-sulūk* of al-Maqrīzī (766–845/1364–1442), *Al-Manhal al-šāfi‘ī* of Ibn Taġrībīrdī

[§9] The length of the modern edition (fourteen volumes of over 6000 pages plus a more recently published index) is a good indicator of the enormous scope of the *Ṣubḥ al-a‘šā*. The *Ṣubḥ al-a‘šā* contains masses of original documents, of which diplomatic agreements are but one type. For example, *taqlīds* (letters of appointment), which al-Qalqašandī copied from the *Taḍkirat al-labīb*, are among the numerous original documents contained in the *Ṣubḥ al-a‘šā*.<sup>21</sup> Al-Qalqašandī also drew on other sources in compiling the *Ṣubḥ al-a‘šā*, including works by the geographer ‘Imād al-Dīn Ismā‘īl b. ‘Alī Abū l-Fidā’ (d. 732/1331); al-Qalqašandī’s teacher, Ibn Mulaqqin; and another chancery manual, the *Kitāb taṭqīf al-ta‘rīf bi-l-muṣṭalaḥ al-šarīf* (“The Book of Edification of Knowing the Noble Procedures”) by Ibn Naẓir al-Ġayš (d. 786/1384).<sup>22</sup>

[§10] The work is organized with the help of headings and subheadings. Ten “discourses” (*maqālāt*) are contained in the seven volumes of the work, which each contain chapters (*bāb*, *abwāb*), and so on.<sup>23</sup> Diplomatic agreements between Muslim rulers and between Muslim and non-Muslim rulers—part of the necessary knowledge base of Mamlūk scribes—are discussed in the fourth chapter of the ninth *maqāla*, on “Truces Established Between Muslim Rulers and Unbelievers, Which Comprises Two Sections” (*fī l-hudan al-wāqī‘a bayna mulūk al-Islām wa-mulūk al-kuffār wa-fīhi faṣlān*).<sup>24</sup> The first section (*faṣl*) of the chapter focuses on principles and technical aspects of diplomatic agreements. The second contains examples of two different kinds of agreements: those granted by one party (i.e., a Muslim leader) as a concession and those negotiated between two powers. Of this latter type, al-Qalqašandī provides transcripts of five Christian-Mamlūk agreements as examples, the last of which is the treaty of 692/1293.<sup>25</sup>

[§11] In terms of diplomatic agreements, at least five Christian-Muslim accords—including the treaty of 692/1293—were copied from the now lost *Taḍkirat al-labīb*. Its author, Ibn al-Mukarram, drafted at least one of these documents in his capacity as chancery scribe and may have accessed others *ab origine*, that is, by consulting Mamlūk archives.<sup>26</sup> Al-Qalqašandī also copied one truce from Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-‘Umarī’s *al-Ta‘rīf*.<sup>27</sup> This makes the *Ṣubḥ al-a‘šā* the only source for three Arabic transcripts of Frankish-Mamlūk truces, since other truce transcripts can also be found in Mamlūk chronicles and regnal histories.<sup>28</sup> The *Ṣubḥ al-a‘šā* also preserves the only known copy of an *instrumentum reciprocum* (a type of diplomatic agreement) between the Mamlūk sultan Qalāwūn al-Manṣūrī and the Byzantine emperor Michael VIII Palaiologus (r. 1261–1282), ratified in c. 684/1285.<sup>29</sup>

[§12] The *Ṣubḥ al-a‘šā* holds an important place in the history of chancery practice in the Mamlūk period and beyond. It is both a reflection of the institutionalization of Mamlūk government and of al-Qalqašandī’s particular interest in administrative practices and customs.<sup>30</sup>

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(812–874/c. 1410–1470), *Al-Ḍaw‘ al-lāmi‘* of al-Saḥawī (831–902/1428–1497), and the *Šaḍarāt al-ḍaḥab* of Ibn al-‘Imād (d. 1089/1678–1679); however, these sources provide few details. See Bosworth, al-Qalqašandī; cf. Abdelhamid and El-Toudy, Introduction, p. 10.

<sup>21</sup> Northrup, Documents as Literary Texts, p. 122.

<sup>22</sup> Holt, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy*, p. 2; König, *Arabic-Islamic Views*, pp. 273–274; see also al-Šak‘a, *al-Uṣūl al-adabiyya*.

<sup>23</sup> See Abdelhamid and El-Toudy, Introduction, pp. 16–17; Van Berkel, Attitude Towards Knowledge.

<sup>24</sup> Al-Qalqašandī, *Ṣubḥ al-a‘šā*, ed. Ibrāhīm, vol. 14, p. 2 (the section spans pp. 2–78 in Ibrāhīm’s edition).

<sup>25</sup> Not counting the *instrumentum reciprocum* discussed in this article. See Holt, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy*, pp. 3–4, on the structure of this section of the *Ṣubḥ al-a‘šā*.

<sup>26</sup> Amari, Trattato, p. 7; Holt, Treaties, p. 67; Holt, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy*, pp. 2, 33, 122.

<sup>27</sup> Holt, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy*, pp. 2, 122.

<sup>28</sup> See Holt, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy*, pp. 2, 33, 44, 49, 73, 95 for agreements preserved in the *Ṣubḥ al-a‘šā* and in other sources.

<sup>29</sup> Al-Qalqašandī, *Ṣubḥ al-a‘šā*, ed. Ibrāhīm, vol. 14, pp. 72–78.

<sup>30</sup> Björkman, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Staatskanzlei*; Tyan, *Notariat*, pp. 18–19; Northrup, *Slave to Sultan*, pp. 200–202, 239–240.

The *Ṣubḥ al-a‘šā* is a major source for historians of Mamlūk government and administration,<sup>31</sup> law and systems of education,<sup>32</sup> interstate relations and diplomacy,<sup>33</sup> diplomatics and chancery practice,<sup>34</sup> geography,<sup>35</sup> perceptions of Western Christians and Latin Christendom,<sup>36</sup> and, more broadly, intercultural exchange across the Mediterranean.<sup>37</sup> For this reason, an enormous number of studies have referenced the work.<sup>38</sup> However, this work was only one among many Mamlūk-era projects to document administrative practices and protocols, and its impact should be appreciated in relation to these other works.<sup>39</sup> A closer examination of the surviving manuscripts of the text and the marginal and ownership notes contained therein would provide further indicators of its use in al-Qalqaṣandī’s time.

## Contextualization, Analysis & Interpretation

[§13] This section begins with an overview of diplomacy between Christian and Muslim leaders across the Mediterranean, from the advent of Islam. It then discusses the political background to the treaty of 692/1293 and provides a cursory analysis of its clauses and objectives. It closes with a commentary on some of the treaty’s unique and unusual characteristics.

[§14] Transmediterranean negotiations between Christian and Muslim leaders began virtually as soon as Islam reached Mediterranean shores. The Byzantine Empire and the Umayyad Caliphate engaged in negotiations from as early as 28 AH/648–649 AD.<sup>40</sup> The Carolingian court also exchanged embassies with the ‘Abbāsīd caliphs of Baghdad and the Umayyads of Córdoba between the second/eighth and the fourth/tenth century.<sup>41</sup> The first diplomatic exchange between the eastern and western sides of the Mediterranean might be identified in an embassy dispatched by the Byzantine emperor Theophilos (r. 829–842) to the Umayyad *amīr* of Córdoba, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān II (r. 206–238/822–852), in 224–225/839.<sup>42</sup> By the seventh/thirteenth century, countless embassies had traversed the Mediterranean, and it was not unusual for Christian and Muslim rulers from all and any sides of the sea to conclude truces or alliances.

[§15] In this complex and dynamic setting, nodes of diplomatic and commercial activity shifted between and across regions, as cities and empires contested and negotiated economic and

<sup>31</sup> Nielsen, *Political Geography*, pp. 114–133; König, *Arabic-Islamic Views*, p. 99.

<sup>32</sup> Moore, *Role of the Madrasah*.

<sup>33</sup> Canard, *Traité de 1281*; Canard, *Traité entre Byzance et l’Egypte*; Broadbridge, *Diplomatic Conventions*; Khamisy, *Unratified Treaty*; König, *Arabic-Islamic Views*, pp. 67–68; Moukarzel, *Customs Adopted*.

<sup>34</sup> Pahlitzsch, *Documents on Intercultural Communication*, pp. 376–378; König, *Arabic-Islamic Views*, pp. 63–64, n. 295, 261, 299–300.

<sup>35</sup> Khamisy, *Treaty of 1283*.

<sup>36</sup> König, *Arabic-Islamic Views*, pp. 104–105, 110–111, 176–177, 184, 205, n. 94, 206, n. 102, 209–210, 222–223, 228, 248, 258–259, 265, 272–276, 278, 291, n. 193, 319–321, 326–327.

<sup>37</sup> Wansbrough, *Lingua Franca*, pp. 78–83; König, *Übersetzungskontrolle*, pp. 476–477; Potthast, *Translations of Arabic Diplomatic Letters*; Potthast, *How Documents Were Quoted*.

<sup>38</sup> See Bosworth, *al-Qalqaṣandī*; and Broadbridge, *Diplomatic Conventions*, pp. 106–107, for additional works cited.

<sup>39</sup> Bauden, *Like Father, Like Son*, pp. 181–182, 214.

<sup>40</sup> Among numerous studies: Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes*, vol. 2,1, pp. 59–60; Kennedy, *Byzantine-Arab Diplomacy*, p. 134; Kaplony, *Konstantinopel und Damaskus*, pp. 23–32; Köhler, *Allianzen*, p. 423; Köhler, *Alliances*, p. 316; Drocourt, *Christian–Muslim Diplomatic Relations*.

<sup>41</sup> See Sénac, *Charlemagne et Mahomet*; additional studies include: Joranson, *Alleged Frankish Protectorate*; Lévi-Provençal, *Histoire d’Espagne musulmane*, vol. 1, pp. 179–184, 212; Pérez de Urbel and Arco y Garay, *España Cristiana comienzo de la reconquista*, p. 439; ‘Inān, *Dawlat al-Islām*, vol. 1, pp. 180, 196, 262; El-Hajji, *Andalusian Diplomatic Relations*, pp. 126, 129–131, 146.

<sup>42</sup> Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes*, vol. 1, p. 185; Wasserstein, *Byzantium and Al-Andalus*, pp. 80–81; Manzano Moreno, *Byzantium and al-Andalus*, pp. 220–221; Codoñer, *Emperor Theophilos*, pp. 219–220.

political hegemony over the “Middle Sea.”<sup>43</sup> Barcelona and Cairo, the two seats of Aragonese and Mamlūk power respectively, had become prominent Mediterranean commercial centres by the seventh/thirteenth century. Their geographical location—at virtually opposite ends of the Mediterranean—may have provided a necessary condition for their cooperation since their rulers’ territorial ambitions did not immediately collide. Negotiations between the two kingdoms began in the reign of the first Mamlūk sultan, Baybars al-Bunduqdārī (r. 658–676/1260–1277), and King James I of Aragon (r. 1213–1276). The first Aragonese embassy to Cairo, dispatched in c. 660/1262, was charged with securing privileges for merchants in Alexandria.<sup>44</sup> A few years later, in ca. 667/1268–1269, another embassy to Cairo presented captive Muslim merchants (without their stolen wares) as a diplomatic gesture signaling interest in an agreement. Baybars was not impressed by the gesture and no agreement resulted thereof.<sup>45</sup>

[§16] However, Aragonese embassies adopted a political agenda in the context of a decades-long territorial dispute with the Angevins over possession of Sicily. The conflict reached a culminating point in March 1282, when a popular uprising, known as the Sicilian Vespers, overthrew Angevin rule and invited Queen Constance of Aragon (r. 1276–1285) to assume suzerainty over the island.<sup>46</sup> The revolt triggered the protracted conflict known as the War of the Sicilian Vespers (1282–1302).<sup>47</sup> Before the beginning of this conflict and in his quest for allies, King Peter III of Aragon had dispatched an embassy to Egypt to establish a bilateral agreement in 678/1279.<sup>48</sup> A second embassy was dispatched three years later, though its objectives remain unknown.<sup>49</sup> Meanwhile, the Sicilian king Charles of Anjou (r. 1266–1285) had also sought friendly diplomatic relations with Baybars, which certainly signified a military threat to the Aragonese position.<sup>50</sup> The Angevin–Aragonese dispute over Sicily continued after the death of Charles of Anjou in 1285. His son, Charles of Salerno (r. 1285–1309), reasserted his claim over the island of Sicily despite a peace negotiated between 1286 and 1288, which had granted the crown of Sicily to King James II.<sup>51</sup> During this renewed conflict, King Alfonso III (r. 1285–1291), successor to King Peter III of Aragon, once again attempted to negotiate an alliance with his Mamlūk counterpart, the sultan Qalāwūn al-Mansūrī; these negotiations resulted in the treaty of 689/1290.<sup>52</sup>

[§17] It appears that the Mamlūks at first took no interest in concluding an alliance with the Crown of Aragon or the House of Anjou. However, the situation had changed for the Cairo Sultanate in the last decade of late seventh/thirteenth century. The potential danger of attack from multiple quarters, particularly Latin-Christian or Armenian invasions in coalition with the Mongol Īkhāns, seems to have fostered a real interest in an alliance with Western Christian powers.<sup>53</sup> Accordingly, Qalāwūn and his successor, al-Ašraf Ḥalīl, while welcoming diplomatic overtures from the Crown of Aragon, demanded guarantees of military cooperation so that at least their western flank could remain safe from attack. In this context, the treaty of 692/1293,

<sup>43</sup> See Jaspert, *Crown of Aragon*, pp. 307–308 and n. 2.

<sup>44</sup> Ashtor, *Levant Trade*, p. 12; Coulon, *Commercial Influence*, pp. 285, 297, 303.

<sup>45</sup> Holt, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy*, pp. 26, 129; cf. Holt, *Mamluk Sultanate and Aragon*, 114.

<sup>46</sup> The Sicilian leaders had first appealed to the Papacy to assume suzerainty over the island. Runciman, *Sicilian Vespers*, pp. 220, 225–227.

<sup>47</sup> For the history of this conflict, see Runciman, *Sicilian Vespers*, pp. 214–279.

<sup>48</sup> Wieruszowski, *Conjuraciones*, p. 581 and doc. 17 (pp. 600–601); Northrup, *Muslim-Christian Relations*, p. 97 and n. 96 (p. 130); Ashtor, *Levant Trade*, p. 14.

<sup>49</sup> Northrup, *Muslim-Christian Relations*, pp. 97–98.

<sup>50</sup> Ashtor, *Levant Trade*, p. 15; Holt, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy*, pp. 129–130.

<sup>51</sup> Runciman, *Sicilian Vespers*, pp. 262–266; Abulafia, *Western Mediterranean Kingdoms*, pp. 109–111; Holt, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy*, p. 27.

<sup>52</sup> Amari, *Trattato*, p. 3; Holt, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy*, p. 131.

<sup>53</sup> Northrup, *Slave to Sultan*, p. 155; Stewart, *Armenian Kingdom*, pp. 43–53, 60; Dashdondog, *The Mongols*, pp. 169–175, 179–184; Šu‘ayr, *Al-Taḥāluf al-armanī al-maḡūlī*, pp. 533–554; Jaspert, *Crown of Aragon*, pp. 312–313.

negotiated by Alfonso’s successor, James II, and Qalāwūn’s successor, al-Ašraf Ḥalīl, should be read as a complex agreement intended to protect trade, demarcate spheres of influence, and provide unilateral military support.

[§18] By 1297, however, James II had reconciled with both the Papacy and the House of Anjou, ending the decades-long conflict over title to Sicily.<sup>54</sup> To complicate matters, James II dispatched an embassy to the Mongols offering military aid soon after the onset of the second Mamlūk-Īlkhānid War in 1299, threatening the agreement with the Mamlūks.<sup>55</sup> Although the political and military cooperation between the Crown of Aragon and the Sultanate of Cairo was short-lived, James II and al-Ašraf Ḥalīl’s successor, al-Nāšir Muḥammad (r. 693–694/1293–1294, 698–708/1299–1309, 709–741/1310–1341), continued to correspond on particular matters, including prisoner exchanges, trade embargoes, and privileges for Aragonese merchants and pilgrims.<sup>56</sup> At times, James II enforced papal bans on trade with Islamic territories, which must have served as a bargaining chip in his negotiations.<sup>57</sup> In short, Aragonese merchants continued to conduct trade with Mamlūk Egypt outside a treaty framework.

[§19] The agreements of 689/1290 and 692/1293 thus stand out as decisively political treaties and alliances in a long series of negotiations that were previously, and subsequently, economic in focus.<sup>58</sup> In other words, the agreement combines both political and economic objectives, as the following summary shows: two clauses (7, 8) require the protection of people and goods, which could include merchants and their wares. Several clauses (11, 12, 13, 18) facilitate operations for sea-going Muslims, particularly merchants and envoys. However, the other clauses reinforce the political and even military alliance between the two states on the basis of forbidding military aid to third parties (clause 9), disclosure of third-party attacks (10), and military aid (21). One clause (15) requires the Aragonese monarch to allow the transport of war materials.<sup>59</sup>

[§20] It is arguable that the agreement also played a performative function; it served as a platform for demarcating spheres of influence, articulating claims of authority, and negotiating shared jurisdictions over peoples and territories. All these aspects are borne out by the catalogues of each ruler’s territorial holdings at the beginning of the agreement and by specific

<sup>54</sup> Ashtor, *Levant Trade*, p. 20.

<sup>55</sup> Ashtor, *Levant Trade*, p. 20–21; Péquignot, *Au nom du roi*, 405–6.

<sup>56</sup> Embassies are attested for the years 699/1300, 702/1303, 703/1304, 704/1305, 705/1306, 714/1314, 714/1315, 718/1318, 722/1322, 723/1323, 727/1327, 728/1328, and 730/1330. Atiya, *Egypt and Aragon*, pp. 12–13; Holt, *Mamluk Sultanate and Aragon*, pp. 113–114; Holt, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy*, pp. 129, 131; Ashtor, *Levant Trade*, pp. 8, 12, 14, 20, 25, 34–35, 37; Coulon, *Barcelone*, pp. 45–46; Coulon, *Commercial Influence*, pp. 285, 287, 297, 303; cf. Jaspert, *Crown of Aragon*, pp. 316–317, 326. In addition to securing privileges for Aragonese merchants, Aziz Atiya and Damien Coulon note that negotiations in 722/1322 and 727/1327 also resulted in a concession granted by al-Nāšir Muḥammad to the Crown of Aragon in the form of a monastic enclave in Jerusalem. Atiya, *Egypt and Aragon*, pp. 46–47; Coulon, *Barcelone*, p. 46.

<sup>57</sup> Ashtor, *Levant Trade*, pp. 18, 21, 34.

<sup>58</sup> This may be the reason for which scholars have emphasized different aspects of the agreement. According to Michele Amari, James II primarily sought funds for the defence of the Crown of Aragon’s territory through the negotiation of the agreement. Amari, *Trattato*, pp. 6–7; see also Coulon, *Barcelone*, p. 45. For Damien Coulon, the agreement of 692/1293, modelled after the earlier treaty of 689/1290, was conceived “basically to protect trade (...).” Coulon, *Commercial Influence*, p. 287; cf. Coulon, *Barcelone*, pp. 44–45. Robert Irwin elaborates on this point, pointing to a longer history of Mamlūk efforts at stamping out piracy. Irwin, *Supply of Money*, pp. 82–83. Peter M. Holt and Eliyahu Ashtor, on the other hand, note the important strategic function of the agreement and contextualize it within the wider Mediterranean and Middle Eastern political environments. Ashtor, *Levant Trade*, p. 20; Holt, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy*, pp. 27, 129–131.

<sup>59</sup> The transport of war material to Islamic territory was controversial in the Mediterranean due to papal injunctions. See Ashtor, *Levant Trade*, pp. 14, 17–63; Holt, *Mamluk Sultanate and Aragon*, pp. 17–18; Holt, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy*, p. 28; Christ, *Trading Conflicts*, p. 21; al-Muzāwada, *al-Hudna*, pp. 620, 624.



clauses throughout the agreement. For example, al-Ašraf Ḥalīl required the liberation of all Muslim captives or slaves brought to Aragonese, Castilian, and Portuguese territory (clause 16), an exceptional display of the Mamlūk claim to sovereignty far beyond the Mamlūks' actual territory that would have been difficult—but not impossible—to enforce.<sup>60</sup> Similarly, James II adopted the role of protector of the pilgrimage to the Holy Land by requiring that Latin Christian pilgrims be permitted to visit Jerusalem, albeit with a letter of safe passage (*kitāb*) issued by his court (clause 20). James II was arguably following a centuries-old tradition of negotiating privileges and protections for co-religionists abroad.<sup>61</sup>

[§21] The final part of the treaty, reproduced above, is particularly interesting on account of the convergence of the two parties involved. Its deeply imbued bilateralism suggests departure from what many historians understand to be the normative legal framework of Islamic law.<sup>62</sup> First, there is the issue of the indeterminate length of this agreement, which was meant to last “forever and without interruption (...).” Many historians tend to emphasize Islamic juridical limitations on agreements with non-Muslims that prescribe a maximum duration of ten years (in the Islamic lunar calendar). This limitation did indeed exist and was based on a precedent set by the prophet Muḥammad, who concluded a treaty with the Banū Qurayš of al-Ḥudaybiyya in 6 AH/629 AD for ten (lunar) years.<sup>63</sup> According to some jurists, Muḥammad's example implied that no permanent agreement, or “treaty” in the modern sense of the term, was permitted between Muslim and non-Muslim sovereigns. However, some jurists—in particular from the Mālikī school—allowed the sovereign discretion in determining the length of agreements, even with non-Muslims.<sup>64</sup> That this treaty is not limited by a set period of time, as are all the other examples in the same section of the *Ṣubḥ al-a'sā*, is therefore not wholly unusual or contrary to Islamic law.<sup>65</sup> Nevertheless, the lack of a *terminus* for the agreement does suggest a novel type of diplomatic agreement within the corpus contained in the *Ṣubḥ al-a'sā*. Indeed, the designation of this agreement in its opening as a “friendship and alliance” (*al-mawadda wa-l-muṣādaqa*) signals a closer bond between the two parties than might normally be proclaimed in an accord.<sup>66</sup>

[§22] Second, the metaphorical fusion of the Christian and Mamlūk domains into “one kingdom and one entity” (*qad ṣārat mamlakatan wāḥidatan wa-šay'an wāḥidan*) diverges completely

<sup>60</sup> The evidence for the trade in slaves originating from beyond Aragonese territory is sparse for the period in which the treaty in question was negotiated. Burns, *Muslims as Property*; cf. Abulafia, *Role of Trade*, p. 14, who notes Valencia's role in the slave trade c. 1300. See also Verlinden, *L'Esclavage*, pp. 255–273, doc. 27 (p. 882), whose examples, cases studies, and documents on the slave trade cover the period before 1293 or after 1306. Moreover, procedures existed for investigating illegitimate sources for slaves, while Jarbel Rodriguez argues that diplomatic instruments were effective in regulating the slave trade. Burns, *Slavery Episodes*, pp. 68, 70; Rodriguez, *Captivity and Diplomacy*, pp. 114–115; Meyerson, *Slavery and Solidarity*, pp. 294–296, 298. For a similar demand made by the Genoese in an agreement with the Ḥafṣids of Tunis in ca. 836/1433, see Valérian, *Rachats des captifs*, p. 355.

<sup>61</sup> See Joranson, *Alleged Frankish Protectorate*; cf. Anderson, *Islamic Spaces*. Nikolas Jaspert approaches the issue of extraterritorial privileges and protections from a slightly different angle, reading the interventions of Aragonese, Angevin, and Mamlūk sovereigns on behalf of their fellow co-religionists as acts of piety. Jaspert, *Crown of Aragon*, pp. 326–329.

<sup>62</sup> Holt, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy*, p. 27; cf. Valérian, *Rachat des captifs*, p. 358.

<sup>63</sup> Al-Māwardī, *Al-Aḥkām al-sulṭāniyya*, ed. Baġdādī, pp. 69–70; *Ordinances of Government*, trans. Wahba, pp. 55–56; Holt, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy*, pp. 3–4; Fattal, *Statut légal*, p. 71; Lambton, *State and Government*, p. 210; Drocourt, *Christian–Muslim Diplomatic Relations*, pp. 40–41; al-Muzāwada, *al-Hudna*, p. 614.

<sup>64</sup> Lambton, *State and Government*, p. 210; al-Muzāwada, *al-Hudna*, p. 615.

<sup>65</sup> A treaty between Florence and Pisa and the Ḥafṣids concluded in 824/1421 was also meant to be “eternal,” and numerous other agreements between Latin Christian and Muslim leaders in North Africa and Granada exceeded the ten-year limit. See König, *Dār al-ḥarb*, p. 49 and n. 67.

<sup>66</sup> Yet, al-Qalqašandī describes this agreement as an example of a *hudna* (truce) in a section on *hudan*. Although many Christian-Muslim agreements from the sixth/twelfth century are called *al-mawadda*, I have not seen the combined formula *al-mawadda wa-l-muṣādaqa* elsewhere. See also Holt, *Mamluk Sultanate and Aragon*, p. 107.

from the Islamic legal concepts found in juridical manuals and other texts that generally divide the world into the “Abode of Islam” (*dār al-islām*) and “Abode of Hostility” (*dār al-ḥarb*). This formulation is also exceptional with regard to the many documented bilateral agreements that were concluded between Muslim-led and Christian-led societies on the southern and northern shores of the Mediterranean between the sixth/twelfth and the ninth/fifteenth century.<sup>67</sup> According to Peter Malcolm Holt, the clause “may have served the Muslim party as a legal fiction, justifying an alliance with the Christian king by representing his realm as merged in the sultanate.”<sup>68</sup> Indeed, the application of clause 16 on Muslim captives would have brought Christian Iberian territory closer in conformity with Islamic legal prohibitions on the enslavement of Muslims. Like Islamic legal discourses on Muslims under non-Muslim rule in Christian lands,<sup>69</sup> the ambiguity of contact zones between the two Abodes,<sup>70</sup> and variability in the application of the term *dār al-ḥarb* itself,<sup>71</sup> this agreement attests to the variability of medieval conceptions of territoriality in a diplomatic context.

[§23] To conclude, the treaty of 692/1293 is part of a long line of agreements and negotiations conducted across the Mediterranean and aimed at delineating jurisdictions, demarcating territories, and articulating authority on a grand scale. Like its predecessor negotiated in 689/1290, it attests to a convergence of the political and economic interests of Christian Iberian and Mamlūk sovereigns. This convergence is reflected in the closing section of the agreement, which suggests parity between the two parties to the agreement and a sense of mutual understanding. This bilateralism defines and frames the agreement, despite a power imbalance revealed by several of its clauses and its historical backdrop.

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## Edition(s) & Translation(s)

The entirety of the *Ṣubḥ al-a‘šā* has been made accessible thanks to the edition of Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Rasūl Ibrāhīm, published in Cairo between 1913 and 1920, several reprint editions, and numerous translations of different sections of the work. Despite the presence of errors in the “Cairo edition,” as noted by Holt, it is nonetheless widely consulted by historians. The Cairo edition does not contain a comprehensive critical apparatus, so there are no systematic references to manuscripts variants. Walther Björkman (1886–1996) notes that Ibrāhīm’s edition draws on manuscripts from the Bodleian Library Oxford, the Cambridge University Library, Dār al-Kutub, the Al-Azhar Mosque Library, and a private collection in Cairo.<sup>72</sup> Björkman refers to Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Rasūl Ibrāhīm’s intermittent references to some of these manuscripts in his footnotes. He may have known about the corpus of manuscripts consulted by Ibrāhīm through personal correspondence. In addition to these manuscripts, there appear to be several others: a manuscript in Ġabal ‘Āmal, Lebanon,<sup>73</sup> an incomplete King Saud University manuscript,<sup>74</sup> a manuscript at the Algiers Bibliothèque nationale,<sup>75</sup> and an abbreviated manuscript housed at the Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi.<sup>76</sup> In the preparation of the edition and translation of the final clause of the 692/1293 treaty, I have consulted Amari’s edition of the treaty, based on Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Marsh 317; and the edition of Ibrāhīm, who most likely consulted the same manuscript for the section containing the treaty.

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<sup>67</sup> Lambton, *State and Government*, pp. 201–202; cf. Heck, “Jihad” Revisited, p. 106. For the term Dār al-Ḥarb, see König, *Dār al-ḥarb*, pp. 37, 60. For the treaties: Mas Latrie, *Traité de paix*.

<sup>68</sup> Holt, *Mamluk Sultanate and Aragon*, p. 111.

<sup>69</sup> El Fadl, *Islamic Law and Muslim Minorities*.

<sup>70</sup> Brauer, *Boundaries*, pp. 8–24.

<sup>71</sup> König, *Dār al-ḥarb*, pp. 42–51.

<sup>72</sup> Björkman, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Staatskanzlei*, p. 74, n. 1.

<sup>73</sup> Markaz al-faqīh al-‘āmilī li-ihyā’ al-turāt, URL: <http://www.alameleya.org/subject.php?id=152> (access: 11 February, 2023).

<sup>74</sup> Riyadh, King Saud University, MS 3118, <https://makhtota.ksu.edu.sa/makhtota/3371/43#.Ykx8HDWxWM8> (access: 11 February, 2023).

<sup>75</sup> Algiers, Bibliothèque nationale, MS 1897; Bauden, *Mamluk Diplomats*, p. 86.

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