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Did the Virtuosity of the Pen Compensate for the Shortfall of the Sword? Remembering the Eighth Crusade against Tunis (1270)

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Abstract: The Eighth Crusade was launched by Saint Louis against Tunis in Summer 1270. For a few months, the French kingdom and its allies posed a serious threat to the Hafsid regime. Even though they ultimately failed to conquer the capital city, they heavily weakened the rule of al-Mustaṣṣir (r. 1249–77), emptying his coffers and damaging his prestige. In this paper, we first inventoried the points at stake. Then, we identified the rationale behind the expedition, evaluated the balance of the armed forces, and measured the losses and gains for each side. Second, the sources showed how the authors could depict the situation and assess its aftermath, depending on their political agenda. The Hafsid thurifers tended to minimize the sultan's impotency, while others (e.g., the Mamluks) sometimes harshly criticized it. Third, the courtiers resorted to poetry and satirized “al-Fraṣṣīṣ” for his setback of the Seventh Crusade (1248–1254) which he had led too. They mocked him in famous epigrams that we translated and analyzed. In conclusion, we examined why they concealed the blow. The Literati of the Restoration (ca 1370–1488) strove to portray al-Mustaṣṣir as a model king for the First Golden Age (until 1277) in a long series of sovereigns that stretched over more than two centuries.

Keywords: Hafsids; Tunis; poetry; panegyric; *madḥ*; satire; *hiḡā'*



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1. Introduction

In Summer 1270, a crusading army led by Saint Louis landed on the shores of Ifrīqiya. Thousands of men in arms settled in Carthage and began the siege of Tunis, the Hafsid capital city. This shocking move came as a surprise. When the French King gathered his troops in Aigues-Mortes on 1 July, he kept the real destination secret. He potentially wanted to take his revenge on Egypt, where he had been defeated and captured twenty years before. What made him change his mind? Why didn't he sail directly to Acre, a city that was under pressure in the 1260s?

A necessary return to the sources provides a complex canvas intertwining different sequences of events, details, and motives that contradict each other. The seminal monograph written by Richard Sternfeld (1896) is still relevant. In addition, we relied on the study of Sāmiya Āmir (2002) who cross-referenced foreign and Arab sources in order to retrace the entire process step by step. One might look at the military campaign from the attacking side and assess the gains and losses of the initiative. *Perseverare diabolicum* grasped the essence of 1270, according to Xavier Hélyar (2016) whose book retells *le récit d'un désastre* (the story of a disaster). Changing the scale, Michael Lower (2018a) discovered that “the Tunis Crusade entangled people from every corner of the Mediterranean world [where] the ambitions of four powerful Mediterranean dynasts collided”.¹

This contribution aims to measure the distance between facts and words. We, therefore, focus on the debated key points that generated discourses, such as why choose Ifrīqiya? How many fighters comprised the forces (quantities)? Who was involved (qualities)? What happened on the battlefield? How did the different protagonists behave and interact?

How did the crusade end? Once these narremes were identified, we address the histories they have begotten, particularly between the local writers and their eastern counterpoints, highlighting an ideological competition regarding the claims of the lost caliphate. We conclude with the memories shaped by poets in order to vilify the French undertaking, namely which contents were conveyed and what messages were left to the next generations?

2. Material Facts

What can be retrieved behind the episode called *nuzūl al-naṣārā*? What happened? We organized our inquiry according to a typical before, during, and after timeline. We combined different perspectives and debates from [Āmir \(2002\)](#), [Hélary \(2016\)](#), and [Lower \(2018a\)](#). The goal was not only to offer a broad sketch but also to identify the salient aspects of the subsequent writings.

2.1. Before the Eighth Crusade

We understand the “before” issue as a twofold problem, namely (1) leaving and (2) landing.

What motivated Louis IX to launch a new expedition overseas²? After the failure of the Seventh Crusade against Egypt (1248–1254), avenging and redeeming himself has been regarded as the main driver. He took the cross in 1267 and Realpolitik also guided his mind. The ascension of Baybars (r. 1260–1277) and the Mamluk polity represented a significant danger for the Latin Outremer who requested considerable backing, i.e., additional men and more means. It was also an opportunity to test the new generation of French chivalry.

Nevertheless, a worldly aspect surfaced in some Arabic sources ([Al-Yūnīnī \(1955\)](#) and [Al-Dahabī \(2003\)](#)) that somehow overlapped with a pure religious commitment. European merchants (*tuḡḡār*) complained to Louis IX about harsh treatments inflicted by the Tunisian authorities. The king launched a massive expeditionary corps to retaliate and recover their funds. Factually, the sole financing by the Church amounted to 800–900,000 livres tournois (ca 65–73 tons of silver/5,4–6 tons of gold), which is believed to be rather out of proportion. This disclosure was not to Saint Louis’ advantage. No other testimony substantiates the charge. Until further evidence can be found, it has been viewed as a likely calumny (or expansion) to soil his reputation. Later, Ibn Ḥaldūn and Ibn al-Šammā borrowed (?) a similar canvas (see below) with a possible embassy being dispatched to France to settle the dispute.

Why Tunis³? The Hafsid sultan had been on good terms with his neighbor, Frederick II of Palermo, to whom he had been paying a tax to buy wheat from Sicily in the 1240s. The same applied to Italian cities where trade treaties had been signed, such as Genoa (1250), Venice (1251), Pisa (1234, to the benefit of Florence), and the Catalans (1252; they would defend Tunis in 1270). This explains why Ifrīqiya favored the Hohenstaufen rather than the House of Anjou.

The destination of Tunis was a surprise, announced only after they set sail from Cagliari (even this halt was unexpected). If the crusade succeeded, they would have established an outpost linked to Sicily (under the rule of Charles of Anjou, Louis’ sibling) from where it would have been easier to threaten Egypt. This could have been partly achieved in a peaceful way through trade. Is this what the brother of the French King had in mind? He was not informed until the last moment (on 13 July). Furthermore, he hastened slowly to rejoin them at the end of August.

Creating a strategical bridgehead by force in view of an ensuing expedition to free Jerusalem made sense, as well as controlling the harbor facilities. However, the ideological enthusiasm should not be neglected (e.g., Geoffroy de Beaulieu⁴). Michael Lower convincingly showed⁵ that the dream of converting Ifrīqiya to Christianity existed (and persisted).

2.2. During the Eighth Crusade

How many men were involved on the ground⁶? Evaluating their number implied cross-checking uneven data. The Venetians were initially contracted to transport soldiers,

mounts, and equipment. Fifteen large vessels would have ferried ca 18,000 men ($12 \times 1000 + 3 \times 2000$). However, they withdrew, fearing the consequences for their Mediterranean stakes. The Genoese replaced them, supplying at least 12 ships.

Joinville counted ca 2500–2800 knights in Egypt during the preceding crusade (1248–1254), specifying that each knight had two fighters on horses and four infantrymen, accounting for approximately 20,000 fighters.

Who participated⁷? The Genoese. Their Annals quoted a significant figure of approximately 10,000 men (sailors) embarked on 55 vessels. Even if the number was exaggerated, they were numerous. While they were probably unenthusiastic at the start of the undertaking—since they didn't want to compromise their national positions in the Hafsid lands—they finally had their share of combat. The English. They were represented by Prince Edward (b. 1239, r. 1272–1307) and Prince Edmund Crouchback (b. 1245), the sons of Henry III, as well as their cousin Henry of Almain (b. 1235, murdered in 1271). They arrived on 10 November. However, it was far too late. It was not a European venture comparable to the Third Crusade (1189–1192), which was headed by Philip II, Richard I, and Frederick I. Who would have dared to break their ties with Egypt?

What was the outcome of the struggle⁸? The crusaders landed on 18–19 July and quickly established their encampment at La Goulette where they overran a fort. They seized Carthage on 24 July. This was achieved by the Genoese who had, so far, remained behind. Then, they commenced a phase of entrenchment. Louis IX decided to wait for his brother. Charles needed a month and a half to cover by sea ca 250 km. However, he had another objective (Greece and a war against Constantinople) and felt reluctant to spoil the connections he had with al-Mustansir. In the meantime, delaying his arrival saved Ifrīqiya who could better organize its defense. Daily skirmishes (*karr wa-farr*) harassed the crusaders. Additionally, in summertime, diseases killed far more soldiers than the engagements. It was in a devastated camp that the French King died from fever on 25 August. On the very same day, the King of Sicily made landfall with a small army (less than 1000 men).

A respectable end to the war necessitated accomplishing more on the ground. The big push came with the Battle of the Lake (4 September), a tremendous victory that caused thousands of Muslim casualties. One month later (2 October), the sultan's tents were looted. Both sides needed to negotiate. Tunis would not withstand a siege and the coming winter hovered over the Christians.

2.3. After the Eighth Crusade

What kind of conclusion solved the crisis? A truce was agreed upon (for 15 *hiḡrī* years) as a result of bipartite talks (18–23 October, through the mediation of the tribal chief of the Banū Tūḡīn; finalized on 30 October?) that were ratified on 5 November. Only the Arabic text was available for consultation⁹. It was edited and translated by Silvestre de Sacy (1831), but the finest analysis has been realized by Mohamed Ouerfelli (2019).

It stipulated indemnities—210,000 ounces of gold (ca 6.4 t)—remitted to the crusaders (after all, the rank and file had nurtured hope in the plunder of Tunis) and a payment to the King of Sicily of “tributary” arrears—the last five owed years, and a doubling of the standard sum. What did it refer to? Michael Lower understood it as “commercial access fees”, i.e., the right to buy wheat from Sicily¹⁰. However, he then qualified this evaluation¹¹, saying “what may once have been a wheat import fee had become a definitive tribute: a fixed annual payment that seemed to promise political subordination in return for peace”.

The rest is a pure tragedy. The English rallied on 10 November, when it was all over. As the treaty demanded, the whole army retreated and sailed back to the northern coasts. However, on 23 November, a dreadful tempest sank 18 ships in the vicinity of Trapani and killed 4000 souls. A poet from Toulouse recalled¹² their fate as a sign of Providence.

[...]

Et que vint sur eux la malédiction de Dieu

Vu que quand ils vinrent à Trapani, les navires et les avirons
 Cassaient et s'entrechoquaient, car un vent furieux
 Les amena au port
 [...]
 [...] And God cursed them,
 For when they came to Trapani, ships and oars
 Were breaking and rattling, because a furious wind
 Brought them to the harbor
 [...]

Hélary concluded that the crusade was an complete setback. Its meticulous preparation could not alter the course of events; attacking Tunis in July was an absurdity. However, this feeling should be nuanced. The 13th century marked a global turn characterized by the incapacity to save the Outremer territories. The military option, therefore, became less attractive. Furthermore, as Lower argues, the campaign was a multiple players configuration¹³. Louis IX lost, Charles temporarily won (material advantages with little investment), al-Mustansir lost (prestige and wealth), and Baybars [and the Mamluks] won (their contest to deserve the “caliphal anointing”, see below). A chapter was closed.

3. Discursive Assessments: The Ghost Caliphate

We now turn to the discourses that emerged in the wake of this crusade and reacted to its outcome. It was possible to outline the broad spectrum of commentaries as a continuum oscillating between praise and satire. However, we tied them to the issue of the caliphate that we develop hereafter. We hypothesized that the judgments we encountered were influenced by this geopolitical agenda. In order to test such an assumption we divided them into two areas: local and eastern opinions, since the Mamluk sphere represented an ideal competitor on this topic.

3.1. *The Lost Amīr al-Mu'minīn*

In order to comprehend what conceals the backstage of any report dealing with the developments, we need to briefly stop and take a look at 1258. On 20 February, the last Baghdadi Abbasid caliph, al-Musta'ṣim, was executed by order of the Mongol Khan Hulagu. Following the sack of the imperial capital, his uncle Abū l-'Abbās Aḥmad fled to Cairo. There, the Mamluk sultan Baybars installed him as the new caliph, al-Mustansir, in 1261. By doing so, the newborn Egyptian rule strived to strengthen its legitimacy.

For Tunis, the vacancy was complete with the [awaited] fall of the last Almohad [caliph] in 1269. Here, we examined a specific sequence. The founding father, Abū Zakariyyā Yaḥyā (r. 1228–1249) gained autonomy, then independence, in his two-decade reign. Did his prominence on a Maghreb-wide scale grant him a *de facto* “supra-dynastic authority” (Jadla 2021, p. 615)? His secretary Ibn al-Abbār (d. 1260, executed by al-Mustansir) and a famous poet of his time Ḥāzim al-Qarṭāḡannī (d. 1285) called him *ḥalīfa* (Jadla 2021, p. 615). His son struggled to conserve his heritage, having to suppress internal challenge and tribal turmoil. Adopting a caliphal *laqab* in 1253 (or in 1259? 1261?¹⁴), he received allegiance from Mekka. However, we suspect this was a forgery which did not have any diplomatic value, but rather symbolically counterbalanced the vicissitudes he endured. It was, pragmatically speaking, one-sided as a coin for strictly inner transactions.

At the dawn of the 1260s, there were two caliphs named al-Mustansir, one in Tunis and one in Cairo (replaced in 1262 by a distant parent, al-ṣakīm).

3.2. *Eastern Writers: Chasing Two Hares, Saint Louis and al-Mustansir*

The first remark that struck us was the absence of any interest concerning the 1270 attack in the Orient. We found no mention of this event (see bibliography). Neither Ibn Ḥallikān (1971) (d. 1282) in his *Wafayāt*, nor Abū l-Fida' (1997) (d. 1331) in his *Muḥtaṣar*,

Al-Nuwayrī (2004) in his *summa*, the *Nihāya* (scr. 1314–1330), Ibn Taḡrī Birdī (1972) (d. 1470) in his precise and factual *Nuḡūm*, or Al-Saḥāwī (2005) (d. 1497) in his *Manhal*, say a single word.

What can we read in the contemporary sources?

7th/13th Century: A Ridiculous Caliph Facing a Serious War

Ibn Šaddād (d. 1285—who fled to Cairo in 1261 where he served Baybars and his successors) wrote a detailed and well-informed obituary in his *Tārīḥ*¹⁵ about al-Mustaṣṣir who died in 1277. Unfortunately, this precious text was mutilated and it lacked the passage that potentially traces the arrival of the crusaders. Nevertheless, the [apocryphal] anecdote considering the caliphal title was worth a glimpse. After he removed his rival uncles, the sultan assembled the believers (*al-mu'minīn*), scholars (*al-ulamā*), and notables (*akābir*), asking them “are you believers (*mu'minūn*)? Yes we are. Am I your emir (*amīr*) or not? Yes you are. So, if we put together my epithet (*naṭ*) and yours, what shall we write? Commander of the believers (*amīr al-mu'minīn*—which is the caliphal title)”. Then, they circulated the titlature for four months by land and two months by sea¹⁶. What was implied here? It was a unilateral and local decision. There was no foreign acknowledgement or allegiance; it was disconnected from the entire geopolitical background and was only valid within his own lands (*ilā sāyir bilādihi*). Moreover, it identified the flaw in the juridical bases. The sarcasm behind these few lines seemed obvious.

Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir (d. 1293) described the landing of the French [King] (*nuzūl al-firansīs*) in Tunis in his *Rawḍ*¹⁷. The news reached Cairo (via the governor of Alexandria) that a massive army comprising 5000 knights and the same number of *trkbliyya* [stable boys? squires? crossbowmen, from the Latin *arcuballista*?] and *ḡrhiyya* [*ṣarhiyya*? lancers?], not including the seafarers—gained the upper hand in a pitched battle against the Hafsid forces and was nearing the capital city. However, they were waiting for the English King (*malik al-anktār*). The Mamluk assured al-Mustaṣṣir of his assistance. He instructed the tribes in the western part of his country as far as Cyrenaica to dig wells and support the advance of a regular Egyptian army. However, the approach of Bedouin auxiliaries and the death of Louis put an end to the operation. Peace was concluded, and the French retreated on 5 Šafar [669]/23 September [1270] (which contradicts the accepted timeline). The tone remained surgical and devoid of any personal utterance.

The next century underwent an interesting development.

8th/14th Century: Aggressors Motivated by Money

Al-Yūnīnī (d. 1326) offers in his *Dayl*¹⁸—a continuation of Ibn al-Ġawzī's *Mirāt al-zamān*—a singular version that incriminates Christian [litt. *tuḡḡār minhum*, “from them”] traders who counterfeited Hafsid dirhams. As a result, Genoese goods were confiscated in the entire territory and the French King was summoned for help (*istaṣraḥa ahl Ġinwa bi-Ray dā Frans*). He sailed to Tunis accompanied by 400,000 men (*sic*, comprising approximately 26,000 knights; 400 ships were mobilized to transport them) with his Sicilian allies. It detailed the attitude of the sultan (*ṣāhib Tunis*) who cautiously ordered his soldiers to sidestep any direct clash. Furthermore, the Franḡ bribed the Arabs so that they did not engage in combat. The final agreement reenacted the old pact between al-Mustaṣṣir's father and the emperor (al-Inbirāṭūr, i.e., Frederick II).

Al-Dahabī (d. 1348) relied on the former and related in his *Tārīḥ al-Islām*¹⁹, [sub anno 669 AH] the same alternative scenario—recovering money seized from foreign nationals (*intiṣāran li-ahl Ġanaṭwa bi-sabab mā uḥida min amwālihīm*). However, this was summarized in only a few lines. The peace was signed on the condition that Tunis returned the seized assets to the Genoese (*fa-waqa'a l-ṣulḥ alā radd māl ahl Ġanaṭwa*). Thus, we have come full circle.

Al-Umarī (d. 1349) dedicated a whole entry in his *Masālik*²⁰ under the year 651/1253–4²¹ to the Hafsids: “*Dīkr aḥbār al-ṣafsiyyīn mulūk Tūnis*”. We focused especially on p. 235 where the author reminded us of the violent competition between al-Mustaṣṣir and his

uncles. After their elimination, he consolidated his throne and claimed the caliphal *laqab*. Al-Fransīs (*sic*) nearly robbed Ifrīqiya (*wa-ašrafat Ifrīqiya ‘alā l-dahāb*). However, it was saved by God (*fa-aṣamahā Llāh*). The French [King] died and his troops parted ways. Clearly, the Hafsid leader was not praised for his actions. Instead, divine intervention was invoked for the outcome, without any hint of the burdensome negotiations.

Ibn Kaṭīr (d. 1373) laconically mentioned in his *Bidāya*²² the numerous fights and the subsequent truce concluded after the heavy losses both sides had incurred: *wa-fihā [=669/1270] ġarat ḥurūb yaṭūlu dīkruhā bayna ahl Tūnis wa-l-faranġ tumma taṣālahū ba‘da dālīka ‘alā l-hudna wa-waḍ‘ al-ḥarb ba‘da mā qutila min al-farīqayn ḥalq lā yuḥṣawna*.

In our view, the new narreme of a war waged on commercial grounds arose to discredit the French King who defended the vile interests of a mercantile nation. We now turn to the later period.

9th/15th Century: A Fraudulent Caliph

Al-Qalqašandī (d. 1418) wrote several comments in his *Ṣubḥ* (Al-Qalqašandī 1987) on the titlature matter. He explained that Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad, the son of Abū Zakariyyā ‘Yaḥyā, was the first to assume the caliphal *laqab* as al-Mustanṣir [bi-Llāh], adding that this pretension—*iddi‘ā* sounds depreciatory—was suspicious, such as their genealogical claims that they ultimately descended from ‘Umar b. al-Ḥaṭṭāb²³. He elaborated on the calculation made by the latter to sustain his statement. The caliphate had disappeared everywhere (*al-ḥilāfa fī zamanīhi tā‘aṭṭalat fī ġamī‘ al-aqtār*)²⁴. In another work, *Mā‘āṭir* (Al-Qalqašandī 1964) *al-ināfa*²⁵, he even blatantly denied this usurpation. The fact that the founding father had avoided it (*yamtanī‘u*) confirmed its refutation for the [whole] dynasty (*yu‘akkidu nafy al-ḥilāfa ‘anhum*). This case was felt by the author, who was a secretary at the Mamluk chancery, as a real issue in the Maghreb since the temptation was permanent between those who crossed the Rubicon (the Umayyads of Córdoba and the Almohads) and those who refrained from crossing and preferred the more modest *amīr al-muslimīn* (the Almoravids, and after them the Abdelwadids and the Merinids [until Abū ‘Inān])²⁶.

Al-Maqrīzī (2002) (d. 1442) ignored 1270 in his *Durar* and in his *Muqaffā* (Al-Maqrīzī 1991). However, it was in his *Sulūk* (Al-Maqrīzī 1997)²⁷ that we identified a few terse lines. The mood was definitely negative. Al-Mustanṣir sent gifts to Cairo where they were shared between the emirs (an ostentatious disdain). His correspondence was judged too brief, and the answer contained a number of reproaches. He openly behaved inappropriately (*al-tazāhur bi-l-munkarāt*) in that he hired Franks and that he didn’t rise up against them [= in 1270] but remained hidden (*lam yahrūġ lammā nāzalūhu wa-kāna mustahfiyan*). The verdict was that such a man ought not lead the believers (*mitluka lā yaṣluḥu an yaliya umūr al-muslimīn*).

Ibn Ṭaġrī Birdī (d. 1470) showed his outright contempt for the nearby caliphate in his *Nuġūmi*²⁸: *wa-fihā [652] waṣalat al-aḥbār min al-ġarb bi-stīlā‘ insān ‘alā Ifrīqiya wa-dda‘ā annahu ḥalīfa wa-talaqqaba bi-l-Mustanṣir*, which translates to “in 1254-5, the news arrived from West that a [lambda] individual had seized power in Ifrīqiya. He alleged to be a caliph and was to be called al-Mustanṣir”.

Following this overview of eastern sources, we now recap the main points. The Mamluks mocked from the very beginning (see Ibn Ṣaddād) the Hafsid *amīr al-mu‘minīn* since they couldn’t tolerate a rival, even nominal, because they lacked legitimacy. However, as long as the Franks threatened the Levant, they concentrated their fire on the enemy, Louis IX. The danger was serious enough to be warded off by devising a venal plan when the king stooped to distort a holy goal. When its memory began to fade—when Acre was captured in 1291—the authors switched to al-Mustanṣir and satirized him.

3.3. Local Writers: Coping with a Failure

The two references that follow do not fall too far from the events. [Al-Tiġānī \(1981\)](#) was probably born a few years after, and Ibn Ḥaldūn drew material from contemporary documents. The former was too mute and the latter too talkative.

ʿAbd Allāh al-Tiġānī (fl. ca 1311) was the secretary of the sultan Ibn al-Liḥyānī. He wrote a dense travelogue that depicted Ifrīqiya at the turn of the 14th century, both historically and geographically for a great part of it. He concealed the whole episode, even though he certainly had known direct witnesses. As a rule, he wisely shunned any potentially scandalous event.

Ibn Ḥaldūn (1332–1406, scr. 1375-) was loquacious in his *Ibar* [= *Tārīḥ*], providing no less than five pages. The first one framed the religious stakes in the Mediterranean until the Seventh Crusade, which he recalled carefully. Then he narrated the decision made by Sanlūwīs to launch a raid against Tunis after the merchants had pleaded a case. They asked for the 300 dinars they lent to al-Lulyānī to be refunded. He was a statesman who was executed in 1260-1 for embezzlement. Can it be derived from a lapsus calami for al-Liḥyānī? France organized a coalition of [seven²⁹] kings (England, Scotland, Aragon [but also Sicily])³⁰ and the Hafsid was aware of a forthcoming offensive, which went against the common idea that he was taken aback. He not only prepared to resist but also tried to discourage his enemy via emissaries. Ibn Ḥaldūn appeared rather informed of the situation (e.g., the trip; the council of defense; the fortifications). He was the sole historian who accounted for the sultan's strategy. Tunis was well fortified and could withstand a siege, unlike other cities, and it was convenient to situate the aggression there³¹. He portrayed al-Mustanṣir in a favorable light as a proactive ruler. He evaluated the opposing forces comprising 6000 knights, 30,000 infantrymen, and 300 vessels (large and small). The siege lasted for four to six months. The peril provoked a general mobilization (*ḡihād*). He enumerated a long list of tribes that came to the rescue of Tunis³². However, we read that the *qu'ūd*³³ of the sultan was suspected or even accused of planning to retreat to Kairouan because they endured severe plight (*ibtalā*) in the capital city. Once again (see above), God killed Saint Louis. Rumors surrounded his death: natural causes, a lost arrow, epidemics, or even a poisoned sword offered by the sultan. Then, the Christians decided to decamp, and they made their evacuation conditional on the "reimbursement" of their logistical expenses (*an yabḍula lahā mim mā ḥasarūhu fī mu'nat ḥarakatihim*). The subjects contributed willingly—a questionable specification. A deal was struck for 15 years. The final shipwreck (see above) doesn't close the section. The author evoked a diplomatic correspondence where al-Mustanṣir informed his counterparts in the Maghreb how he had defended the Muslims (*difā ihī 'an al-muslimīn*). On the whole, this version minimized the criticisms addressed to the sovereign and justified his tactics during the hardships.

The next authors constituted the basis of the so-called Hafsid historiography, which began with the [political] Restoration (ca 1370–1488) when the dynasty recovered from internal and external crises. Such a deliberate and global action came late, almost two centuries after the birth of the Banū naḥṣ in Ifrīqiya, mainly in order to remember and celebrate their power. It was bolstered by a relative political stability. There were three long reigns³⁴. Retrospectively, it can be viewed as a swan song—while the Merinids began their "saga" when they toppled the Almohads³⁵—whose function was to preserve an official memory³⁶. Moreover, none of these histories were the result of any sultan's request.

Ibn Qunfud (scr. 1404), inscribed, in his *Fārisiyya*, 1270 within the "big incidents (*ḥawādīṭ 'izām*—and not the more neutral *aḥdāt* for events)" that punctuate the reign of al-Mutanṣir. The landing of seven kings (*sic*) made a strong impression, so that the Hafsid would envisioned relocating to Constantine. They finally left following the collection of ca 50 t of silver. At that time, a report (*bayān*) of this war existed in the great (*kabīr*) sultanian (*mutawakkilī*) register (*kitāb*), an official record, however now lost.

Ibn Al-Šammā (scr. 1457) elaborated on the financial pretext in his *al-Adilla*³⁷. Al-Liḥyānī (He is one removed uncle of al-Mustanṣir) borrowed 300 gold dinars from French

(? *min arḍihī*) traders. However, they could not produce any document attesting the transaction when they demanded its repayment. They complained to Louis IX who was very annoyed. He bore resentment after he was told that al-Mustaṣir taunted his previous captivity in Egypt. The chronicler related this fiasco at length: his army had been cut to pieces, he himself had been caught and jailed (in the house of Ibn Luqmān), and then humiliated and exposed on camelback with his companions. He was released after one month following the payment of a heavy ransom. Additionally, he committed perjury since he had sworn to leave Muslim lands alone. Ibn al-Šammā copied from the Ibn Ḥaldūn stories based on hearsay to explain Saint Louis' demise (putting however the circumstance on the holy day of Ashura, 29 August). The account broadly³⁸ matched the elements we found in the French sources (see above). Again, we perceived the echo—strong enough to compel him to write two lines about a problematic non-engagement—that the sultan did not *go out* (*lam yaḥruḡ*) to combat, but 1000 brave horsemen held his gate against his foes. Nevertheless, no explicit denigration was voiced.

Al-Zarkašī (scr. 1477 or 1489) remained completely silent on this episode in his *Dawlatayn*, which was a strange choice when we remember that he heavily drew from Ibn Ḥaldūn's *Tārīḥ*. However, he ignored this development.

What can we state? The autochthonous historiography seemed more complex in its whereabouts.

Firstly, we understand that discussing the Eighth Crusade causes embarrassment, and hence, some deafening silences (al-Tiḡānī or al-Zarkašī). Secondly, what did the record (*kitāb*) contain (only referenced by the *Fārisiyya*)? Thirdly, Ibn Qunfuḍ betrayed the sultan's fear, kindly asking his reader to browse the long explanations—*wa-l-šarḥ yaṭūlu fī ḥabar ḥādīhi l-waqā'a*—in the extant report. On the whole, the penholders either avoided discussing the attitude of al-Mustaṣir (Ibn al-Šammā) or provided a rationale in order to eventually excuse what could be taken for cowardice (see what the Egyptians wrote above).

A twin trend emerged in the discourse that combined both key personae. The French King chronologically received the toughest hit, enhanced by the defamation of covering up a mean pecuniary endeavor. We believe that it corresponded to the anathematization of a danger whose expression decreased in parallel with its reality.

Concurrently, during the 14th century, a legend arose (with plausible historical bases) that al-Mustaṣir refused to fight. This was mainly expounded in the Mamluk sources so that they could call into question his claim of the caliphate. However, the Hafsid writers saved him, even if considerable water had flowed under the bridge. The reasons of his "redemption" were multiple. We considered his place in the founding Golden Age³⁹ (the right of the past), but also the literary exemplarity he embodied⁴⁰ and the fact that he was the first (*awwal man...*) to bear the title of *amīr al-mu'minīn* in his dynasty. So much for historiography.

4. Poetical Memories: The Insulted Enemy

Turning now towards poetry, we noticed that the pieces tackling our topic exclusively focused on vilifying al-Fraṣṣīš. On other occasions, we retrieved several panegyric verses celebrating al-Mustaṣir for his various achievements (political, military, architectural, etc.). However, the latter is completely absent for 1270. Even in Europe, it is not anecdotal that French literati expressed a widespread resentment about the outcome of the Eighth Crusade. Anelier put it as follows⁴¹.

La croisade se sépara, et fut mauvaise la renommée,
Et parut bien péché, et branche de trahison
Et que vint sur eux la malédiction de Dieu
[...]

Expectations were betrayed. They should have retaken Jerusalem. Death was a deserved punishment. What was it about the Arabic poems that castigated him? They

worked together. The first took stock of his wrong deeds—blaming his past. The second predicted his passing as the price of his hubris—foreshadowing his future.

4.1. Admonishing Saint Louis

Ibn Maṭrūḥ, a poet for the Egyptian sultan⁴², recited a famous epigram, probably to Saint Louis while he was imprisoned (in April 1250). However, Ibn al-Šammā had the context transposed because the chapter (*faṣl*) he arranged was designed to treat the sole campaign against his homeland⁴³. He then imagined a new mise-en-scène to suit his project, delaying the artistic creation by twenty years. The sultan of Egypt, having received reports of the expedition, wrote to the King of France detailing what Kamāl (*sic*) al-Dīn b. Maṭrūḥ had composed. It was declaimed by a messenger in the middle of his council⁴⁴ as a pure [and bold] exhortation (v. 1) in view of what he was planning.

مقال صدق من قؤول فصيح	قل للفرنصيص إذا جئته
1. Tell to the French (al-Franṣīs) when you meet him	True words from an eloquent sayer
من قتل عُبَّاد يسوع المسيح	أجرك الله على ما جرى
2. God has rewarded you for what happened	Killing the followers of Jesus Christ
ريح [و] تحسب أن الزمر طبل	قد جئت مصر تبتغي أخذها
3. You came to Egypt, desiring its conquest	Thou drum, mistook flutes for wind
ضاق به عن ناظريك الفسيح	فساقك الحين إلى أدهم
4. The fate led you to darkness ⁴⁵	Where your eyes had no perspective
بسوء تدبيرك بطن الضريح	وكل فرسانك أودعتهم
5. All your knights were slain	To the deepest of the grave by your wrong guidance
إلا قتيل أو أسير جريح	سبعون ألفا لا يرى منهم
6. Seventy thousand, we only see them	Killed, imprisoned, or injured
لعل عيسى منكم يستريح	أعادك الله إلى مثلها
7. God sends you back to the same	May Jesus get rid of you
فرب غش قد أتى من نصيح	إن كان باباكم من ذا راضيا
8. Should your Pope be satisfied with that	When often a lie slips from counsel
لأخذ ثأر أو لفعل قبيح	وقل لهم إن أزمعوا عودة
9. Tell them if they decide to come again	And take revenge or commit villainy
والقيد باق والطواشي صبيح ⁴⁶	دار ابن لقمان على حالها
10. The house of Ibn Luqmān has not changed	The fetters are still there, also the eunuch Šabīḥ

What were the defects of al-Franṣīs? What kind of image did they reflect? What effect did they produce in order to bolster the authority of a fragile caliph?

The satire was delivered as a *naṣīḥa* (e.g., v. 1, where *faṣīḥ* can be replaced by *naṣīḥ*), an admonition whose purpose was to educate the prince. Ibn Maṭrūḥ offered him a mirror of his actions to show him his errors. “Look at what you’ve done!”

First, the collapse was a divine retribution (e.g., vv. 2 and 7) that ironically testified to the massive slaughter of 70,000 Christians victims. The quantity that was initially so frightening became a proof to demonstrate the extent of the fallacy. It disqualified the religious basis on which the whole operation was built (e.g., v. 8). In other words, God was on the side of the Muslims, and the episode was tantamount to an ordeal.

Second, Louis IX was a bad commander. His evaluation was blinded by his desire for conquest, underestimating the military potential of Egypt (v. 3). On the ground, he turned out to be a poor strategist (v. 4, *bi-sū’ tadbīrika*), causing tremendous losses. He was held

responsible for the sacrifice of his elite (v. 4, *awda'tahum* [...] *baṭn al-ḡarīḥ*) as if his trial were conducted by Ibn Maṭrūḥ.

Third, Louis IX was well-advised to abandon any hope of possessing Egypt. Plotting vendetta or misdeed would only lead him to an identical outcome: a humiliating custody in the model of Dār Ibn Luqmān. The Frenchman was jailed for his crime(s) similar to an ordinary convict. This treatment desecrated his aura of sanctity, similar to his abasing parade of head to tail on camelback⁴⁷. The warning strengthened the defender.

4.2. Bis Repetita

Binding Tunis and Egypt was commonplace, while Ibn al-Dawādārī explained that Louis IX was recommended by his Grandees (*kibār dawlatihi*) to meditate upon his experience (the Seventh Crusade) to learn not to commit the same mistake again. It was in his “interest to head for Tunis in the regions of Ifrīqiya” (*min al-maṣlaḥa an taqṣida Tūnis fī bilād Ifrīqiya*). from there, it would be possible to rally Egypt by land and by sea⁴⁸. It would be a stage, not an end.

As Marx put it in his *Brumaire*, “Hegel remarks somewhere that all great world historic facts and personages appear, so to speak, twice. He forgot to add: the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce”. Is 1270 laughing at 1250? “Strange coincidence, when al-Franṣīṣ reached Tunis one of the [local] scholars pronounced a nice distich” (*Wa-min ḡarīb al-ittifāq anna l-franṣīṣ lammā dahala Tūnis qāla aḥad udabā'ihā šīran ḥasanan*⁴⁹):

- | | | |
|---|---------------------|--|
| | فتياً لما إليه تصير | يا فرنسيس هذه أخت مصر |
| 1. O Franṣīṣ this one is Egypt's sister | وطواشيك منكر ونكير | So prepare to your fate |
| 2. There you'll have the House of Ibn Luqmān for a tomb | | لك فيها دار ابن لقمان قبر |
| | | And your eunuch will be Munkar and Nakīr |

Was it a bad omen? Yes, when we read what immediately follows: destiny confirmed augury (*fa-ṣaddaḡat al-aqdār qawlahu*). However, it was not only a bad omen. The Hafsid authors opportunely borrowed the Mamluk umbrella and prestige. They repelled the Seventh Crusade (in 1250) and then the Mongols (in 1260), displaying a firm grip on the East. The Ifrīqiyan regime was never in a position to equal their power. She was her little sister.

Here, a literary device was reused in a connected (or better, a contiguous) situation. Since it validated a won conflict, Ibn al-Šammā was well-advised to exploit its value and discretely adapt its timeline. The entire layout of his *Adilla* attested to its orientation. Louis IX launched his second crusade for the wrong reasons. He had also been defeated two decades before. Therefore, he should have learned his lesson in Egypt (longer poem). He ended his folly in Tunis (shorter poem). There was no need for another diatribe when the original one had been appropriated. A scathing libel sufficed to restate the “truth”.

To summarize, the Saint Louis in verse was neither legitimate nor competent. He was duly punished and warned. *Perseverare diabolicum*. He lost face, then his life. The total absence of al-Mustanṣir in this genre might result from a gross calculation, maximizing the evil wrapping the chief of the crusaders and minimizing the deficiency tainting the sultan's demeanor. This was all the more obvious as the virtues of the first caliph were extolled in all the great works of the Hafsid historiography: ten times in the *Fārisiyya*, four times in the *Adilla*, once in the *Dawlatayn*⁵⁰.

5. Conclusions

We tried to illustrate how problematic the Eighth Crusade was in the field of discourse, whether historical or poetical. Al-Mustanṣir went through difficult months and escaped the disgrace of losing his capital city. His stature was somewhat dented. What happened in the writings? Disputes.

Cairo and Tunis contended for a title. There could only be one *amīr al-mu'minīn*. The Mamluks and Hafsiids were competing to grab this emblem. The formers scorned the latter's revendication.

Christians and Muslims contended for Ifrīqiya. Here, things were more complex. Saint Louis was a wrongdoer and a culprit. In the Arab sources, he was unrightful and unqualified. He led a merchants' crusade, *auri sacra fames*, and commanded his men poorly. He was the archetype of a bad ruler.

However, his opponent, the sultan, presented a contrasting picture, depending on the painter's views. How were we to construe that God saved the caliph? As a rival of Egypt, he remained cowardly confined behind his walls, refusing to fight with an attitude that questioned his capacity to exert his sovereignty. As a key link in the dynastic chain, his apparent inaction was silenced, set aside, or justified.

There were two losers on the battleground, which constituted both sides in a way. No wonder that specialists usually regard 1270 as the Last Crusade. On the Hafsiid side, the pen strived to compensate for what can be seen as a real shortfall by distorting the data and hiding and altering the taboos. The enemy was turned into a monster stirred by hubris who crossed many lines. He was overcome. God intervened to save the Muslims. However, His *necessary* irruption implied that the worldly caliphate was unable to meet the military challenge. Such an assumption generated a textual ambivalence exploited by the headwinds of geopolitics at that time. Their oxymoronic remnants surfaced in historiography and poetry. Alas, *one must imagine al-Mustanşir happy*.

6. A Post-Mortem Epilogue

We owe our esteemed colleagues Louis Fandre and Aurélien Montel a unicum dealing with the aftermath of 1270⁵¹. Remembering that the English nephews of Saint Louis arrived too late, the following excerpt from Girard (1685)'s *Histoire* shed a singular light on what they might have done when they discovered that the campaign was already over (see below). Firstly, the fleets of Charles and Henry of Almain would have caused enough fear to compel Tunis to negotiate a truce at any cost. Secondly, the latter could have sailed further to Tripoli and captured the city by surprise. Henry only remained five days, but it was enough to extort 45,000 écus from the population.

Deprived of any counternarrative, should we discard this apostil? We will not decide. If it retells an authentic event, it will testify to how exposed the coastal areas were at that time and how powerless the Hafsiid regime was for facing the raids perpetrated by superior crusader might. In that case, the penholders silenced it in order to minimize the imbalance of the forces. If it only expresses verisimilitude, does it unearth and gather materials retaining memories from analogous blows? The successful attack of Genoa in 1355? The Spanish conquest of 1510? At any rate, its insertion in an account recorded in the second half of the 17th century is no accident. It echoes favorably how the English admiral John Narbrough convincingly beat the Tripolitan fleet in 1676. The section questions what we knew and caused us to rethink the value of memories: "On ne trouve pas dans l'histoire que les Anglais aient été les maîtres de Tripoli, mais c'est la tradition des habitants de cette ville".

Les Anglais, souverains de Tripoli.

8^e domination. L'an de J.C. 1270.

En ce temps-là les princes chrétiens allaient à l'envi à l'expédition de la Terre Sainte. Le roi saint Louis passa par deux fois en Afrique, en 1250 et en 1270. Il força la ville de Carthage, et ayant ensuite assiégé Tunis, il réduisit cette place à la dernière extrémité. La peste cependant ravageait le camp des Français et le saint roi mourut dans son camp d'une dysenterie le 25 août 1270. Peu de jours après son frère, le roi de Sicile Charles d'Anjou, et Henri [d'Almayne] comte de Cornouailles neveu de // Henri III roi d'Angleterre, arrivèrent devant Tunis avec leurs flottes. Et, bien que la ville fût aux abois la peste qui augmentait tous les jours obligea Charles à accorder la paix aux Tunisiens à condition qu'ils lui payeraient 40,000 écus tous les ans, qu'ils délivrent tous les esclaves chrétiens qui étaient

dans tout le royaume de Tunis, et qu'ils souffrent que les missionnaires chrétiens y prêchent publiquement l'Évangile.

On ne trouve pas dans l'histoire que les Anglais aient été les maîtres de Tripoli, mais c'est la tradition des habitants de cette ville, et elle se trouve soutenue par les circonstances de l'histoire générale. En effet, dès que Charles d'Anjou eut fait ce traité, il résolut de démarrer de Tunis et de retourner en Sicile. Mais le comte de Cornouailles ne voulut pas se retirer sans se signaler en Afrique. Les Tripolitains disent ne savent pas qui surprit leur ville, mais ils disent que ce fut la même année que saint Louis assiégea Tunis, et par conséquent ce ne peut être que ce comte.

This is a modernized version established for a forthcoming edition. The original text can be read on the manuscript (ff. 98r-v) (Figure 1):

8th domination. The year of J.C. 1270.

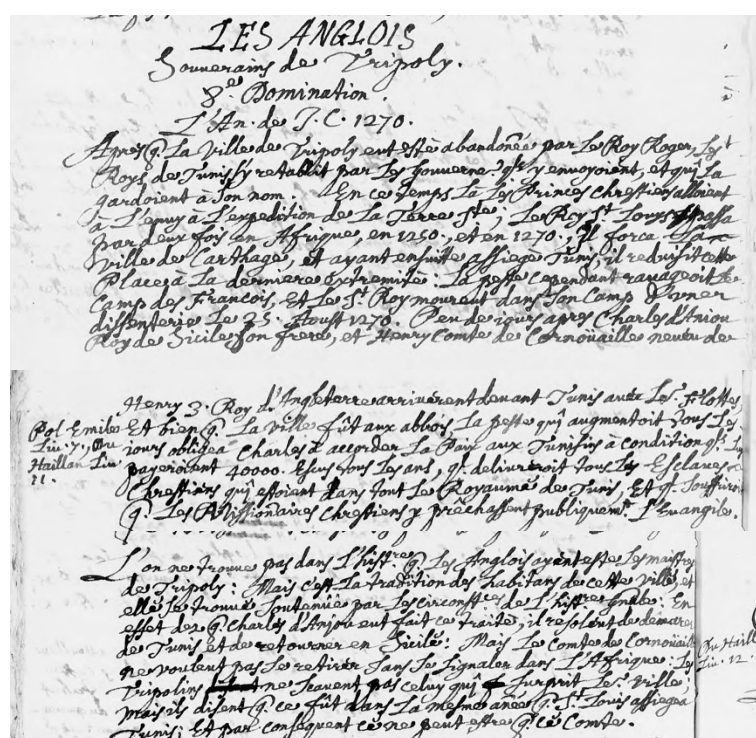


Figure 1. The English, sovereigns of Tripoli.

In this time, the Christian princes were repeatedly crusading to the Holy Land. King Saint Louis went twice through Africa, in 1250 and in 1270. He conquered the city of Carthage and thereafter besieged Tunis, pushing its defenders to their very limits. However, a plague ravaged the camp of the French and the holy king died there of dysentery on 25 August 1270. A few days later, his brother, Charles of Anjou, the King of Sicily, and Henry [of Almain], the Earl of Cornwall a nephew of Henry III, the King of England, arrived at Tunis with their fleets. Even though the capital was hard pressed, the plague that increased day by day forced Charles to grant peace to the Tunisians, provided that they would pay him 40,000 écus on a yearly basis, that they would free all Christian slaves living in the Kingdom of Tunis, and that they would tolerate Christian missionaries publicly preaching the Gospel.

It is not found anywhere in history that the English were the masters of Tripoli. This was the tradition inherited and preserved by its inhabitants, and it was sustained by the circumstances of general history. As a matter of fact, as soon as Charles of Anjou concluded that treaty, he resolved to cast off from Tunis and return to Sicily. However, the Earl of Cornwall begrudged to leave without achieving some great deed in Africa. The Tripolitans say ignore who took their town by surprise. However, they reported that it was the

same year that Saint Louis besieged Tunis. Consequently, it could only have been Henry of Almain.

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Notes

- ¹ We added to our final bibliography some references suggested by one anonymous reviewer whom we thank warmly for this enrichment. The works of [Richard \(1992, 1999\)](#), on the crusades, of [Perry \(2019\)](#) and [Lower \(2018b\)](#), on the Hafsid geopolitics related to this issue, and of [Longnon \(1974, 1976\)](#), on the Ifrīqiyan agenda of Charles of Anjou, deepened our understanding.
- ² Hélyar, *Dernière*, ch. 1.
- ³ Hélyar, *Dernière*, ch. 4 and ch. 5.
- ⁴ He detailed Saint Louis' reasons *apud* [Longnon \(1974\)](#), p. 56.
- ⁵ Lower, *Tunis*, ch. 3 and ch. 6.
- ⁶ Hélyar, *Dernière*, ch. 2 and ch. 4.
- ⁷ Hélyar, *Dernière*, ch. 1 and ch. 4.
- ⁸ Hélyar, *dernière*, ch. 6 and ch. 7.
- ⁹ It is kept within the Trésor des Chartes at the Archives nationales de France, J937.1 now in the fonds Musée AE/III.
- ¹⁰ Lower, *Tunis*, p. 94.
- ¹¹ Lower, *Tunis*, p. 139.
- ¹² Anelier, *apud* Hélyar, *Dernière*, p. 197.
- ¹³ Lower, *Tunis*, ch. 1 and 2.
- ¹⁴ [Jadla \(2021\)](#), p. 616 sqq. tries to “reconstruct the order of events” starting from Brunschvig, *Berbérie* 1, p. 40.
- ¹⁵ [Ibn Šaddād \(1983\)](#), *Tārīḥ*, pp. 188–200. The editor says on p. 200 fn 2 that the ff. (*sic*) 134v–135r have been lost (*sāqīṭātān fī l-aṣl*). The manuscript is an unicum kept at the Süleymaniye [originally at the Selimiye Library of Edirne], call number 2306, *ibid.*, p. 27. We wonder how this could happen especially because ff. 134r and 135v are available. We suppose that the photographer who sent the pictures to Aḥmad nuṭayṭ missed these two pages and jumped from f. 134r to f. 135v.
- ¹⁶ Ibn Šaddād, *Tārīḥ*, p. 192.
- ¹⁷ [Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir \(1976\)](#), *Rawḍ*, pp. 373–74; also see pp. 336–337 for the prodromes.
- ¹⁸ Al-Yūnīnī, *Dayl*, pp. 454–56.
- ¹⁹ [Al-Dahabī \(2003\)](#), *Tārīḥ*, 15, p. 31 and pp. 298–99 for al-Mustaṣṣir’s necrology; we found no information in his *Siyar a’lām al-nubalā’*.
- ²⁰ [Al-‘Umarī \(2010\)](#), *Masālik*, 27, pp. 234–38.
- ²¹ Why [6]51 AH? “Because it falls in the middle of their reign” (al-‘Umarī, *Masālik*, p. 234), even if his entry stretches from 603 AH until 721 AH, making 659 more exact.
- ²² [Ibn Kaṭīr \(1988\)](#), *Bidāya*, 13, pp. 258–59.
- ²³ Al-Qalqašandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 5, p. 449, also 5, p. 130; 8, p. 80.
- ²⁴ Al-Qalqašandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 5, p. 131; the Umayyads [of Córdoba] in 1031, the Almohads in 1269, the Fatimids of Egypt in 1171, the Abbasids in 1258. On a mysterious *laqab* he might have used in his correspondence (*sayf ḡamā at al-šākirīn*, when even Ibn Ḥaldūn questioned on this matter couldn’t answer), see 6, p. 57.
- ²⁵ Al-Qalqašandī, *Ma’āṭir*, 2, p. 259.
- ²⁶ Al-Qalqašandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 5, p. 456 and 6, p. 125.
- ²⁷ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, p. 77 and p. 102 for al-Mustaṣṣir’s necrology.
- ²⁸ Ibn Ṭaḡrī Birdī, *Nuḡūm*, 7, p. 32.
- ²⁹ [Ibn Ḥaldūn \(2000\)](#), *Tārīḥ*, 6, p. 428: *wa-kānū sab’at ya’āsīb* [litt. dragonflies] *fīhim al-Firansīs wa-aḥūhu Ġarūn/l* [for Carol] *šāḥib Ṣiqillīyya wa-šāḥib al-ḡuzur*...
- ³⁰ Ibn Ḥaldūn says (*Tārīḥ*, 6, p. 426) he is drawing on Ibn al-Aṭīr (his *Kāmil*), but he died in 1233... He also quotes his grandfather.

- 31 Ibn Ḥaldūn, *Tārīḥ*, 6, p. 427. “The sultan agreed on that and they let them alone with the installation of a camp”, *fa-wāfaqa l-sultān alā hādā wa-hallaw wa-ša’nihim min al-nuzūl*.
- 32 Ibn Ḥaldūn, *Tārīḥ*, 6, p. 428. “The Muslims congregated in myriads”, *wa-ḡtama’a min al-muslimīn ‘adad lā yuḥṣā*.
- 33 This word is the classical antonym of *hurūḡ*, “going out to fight”.
- 34 Abū l-‘Abbās (r. 1370–1394, 24 years), Abū Fāris (r. 1394–1434, 40 years) and Abū ‘Amr ‘Uthmān (r. 1435–1488, 53 years).
- 35 Shatzmiller (1982), *Historiographie*, p. 109 sq.
- 36 Shatzmiller (1982), *Historiographie*, p. 35: “... celui d’être témoin de la décadence prochaine de la civilisation humaine qui impose son enregistrement en œuvre historique...”, after a “calamiteux VIIIe/XIVe siècle” (ibid., p. 31.)
- 37 Ibn [al-]Šammā’ (1984), *Adilla*, pp. 69–73; see our revised edition and translation too: Garnier, *Histoires*, pp. 460–69.
- 38 Tunis paid ca 42 t of silver according to the crusaders, ca 56 t for Ibn al-Šammā’, for example.
- 39 See what we wrote in Garnier (2022), *Histoires*, ch. 6, p. 260 *passim*.
- 40 See our forthcoming article on this issue (Garnier 2023).
- 41 See note 12.
- 42 Ibn Ḥaldūn, *Tārīḥ*, 6, p. 426. Ibn Qunfuḍ (1968) (*Fārisiyya*, p. 110) situates the anecdote during the Seventh Crusade. He calls the poet Ḡamāl al-Dīn b. Maṭrūḥ, who lived in the 13th century (1196–1251); see Adam Talib, “Ibn Maṭrūḥ”, *EI3*. For a contemporary witness, see Ibn Wāṣil (1953–1977), *Mufarriḡ*, 1, p. 174 *passim*.
- 43 Ibn al-Šammā’, *Adilla*, p. 69: “al-faṣl al-rābi’ fī dīkr nuzūl al-naṣārā bi-Tūnis ma’a malik al-franṣīš [corr. malikihim al-franṣīš] wa-mā l-sabab fī dālīka”
- 44 Ibn al-Šammā’, *Adilla*, p. 70.
- 45 The word *adham* can also be understood as “masses”.
- 46 *Apud* Ibn Ḥaldūn, *Tārīḥ*, 6, pp. 426–27; Ibn Qunfuḍ, *Fārisiyya*, p. 110; Ibn al-Šammā’, *Adilla*, p. 71. We stick to the latter’s version. Here are some relevant discrepancies: Ibn Ḥaldūn, v. 1 *من وزير نصيح*, v. 5 *كل أصحابك*, v. 7 *ألهكم الله*. Ibn Qunfuḍ adds one verse after v. 8:
- أنصح من شق لكم أو سطيح
فاتخذوه كاهنا إنه
- The best counsel among those who grieved or
Take him as a soothsayer because he is
- died for you
- 47 Ibn al-Šammā’, *Adilla*, p. 70. We may know his name, Aḥmad b. Ismā’īl al-Zayyāt (Eddé 1996), the two verses being quoted by al-Maqrīzī (*Sulūk*) and Ibn al-Furāt (*Tārīḥ al-duwal*).
- 48 Ibn al-Dawādārī (1960–1994), *Kanz*, 8, pp. 101–2. Under the year 661 AH (*sic*) i.e., 1263 CE.
- 49 Ibn al-Šammā’, *Adilla*, p. 71.
- 50 Al-Zarkaṣī (1966) is the only one who dares mentioning two verses composed by Ibn al-Abbār against al-Mustanṣir (pp. 35–36¹/75–76²).
- 51 Girard, *Histoire*, 2, ff. 98r–v. We warmly thank MM. Fandre and Montel for allowing us to reproduce here a part of their unpublished work. Besides, they kindly provided us with all contextualizing elements.

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