Wissam H. Halawi
University of Lausanne

Marriage and Kinship among the Amirs of the Banū al-Ḥusayn: The Rise of the Buḥturid Qadis in Rural Mamluk Syria (Eighth/Fourteenth Century)

Under Mamluk rule, the Buḥturid amirs embodied power in the Gharb region of Syria, earning them the honorific title of the "amirs of the Gharb."[1] They were recognized by the authorities, owned properties *(amlāk),* had land concessions *(iqṭāʿs)* of which they claimed ownership from the *rawk al-nāṣirī* onwards, levied taxes in the name of the sultan *(istikhrāj al-ḥuqūq al-sulṭānīyah),*[2] and were respected by village headmen *(ruʾasāʾ)* and peasants *(fallāḥūn)* alike.[3] Yet "amirs of the Gharb" was not an official title, since it is absent from the majority of chancellery documents copied by Ṣāliḥ Ibn Yaḥyá. Nevertheless, the Buḥtur were officially viewed as non-Mamluk amirs, that is, free men forming a contingent within the circle of Mamluk officers *(ḥalqah).*

In 691/1292, several Buḥturid amirs were admitted as officers of the *ḥalqah*[4] and succeeded—not without difficulty—in maintaining their position and passing it on to their descendants. They were assigned minor commands, and with the exception of Buḥtur ibn Ṣāliḥ al-ʿAramūnī (d. 700/1301), who rose to the rank of *tabalkhānah*[5] in the final year of his life,[6] the highest military charge obtained by a Gharb amir was twenty heavy cavalry *(ṭawāshī).* This was the case of the eminent al-Ḥusayn, who particularly marked the history of his family, first by founding the amirate of ʿBayy where he settled with his kin and then by establishing a system of matrimonial alliances within the group. The lineage of al-Ḥusayn—the Banū al-Ḥusayn—was the main branch of the Buḥtur family during the eighth/fourteenth and ninth/fifteenth centuries, and its members were local authorities

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[1] Ṣāliḥ Ibn Yaḥyá, *Tārīkh Bayrūt wa-huwa akhbār al-salaf min dhurriyat Buḥtur ibn ʿAlī Amīr al-Gharb bi-Bayrūt; Tārīḥ Bayrūt: Récits des anciens de la famille de Buḥtur b. ʿAlī, émir du Gharb de Beyrouth,* Histoire et sociologie du Proche-Orient, 35, ed. Francis Hours and Kamal Salibi (Beirut, 1969), 43, 52, 58, 68, 71, 179, 192. See also Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Al-durar al-kāminah fī aʿyān al-miʾah al-thāminah,* ed. ʿAbd al-Wārith M. ʿAlī (Beirut, 1997), 2:31; Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Khalīl ibn Aybak al-Ṣafadī, *Al-wāfī bi-al-wafayāt,* ed. Aḥmad al-Arnāʾūṭ and Tazkī Muṣṭafá (Beirut, 2000), 12:223.

[2] Ibn Yaḥyá, *Tārīkh Bayrūt,* 40.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid., 84–85.

[5] On this second-rank amirate, see Bernadette Martel-Thoumian, *Les civils et l'administration dans l'état militaire mamlūk (IXe/XVe siècle)* (Damascus, 1992), 66.

[6] Ibn Yaḥyá, *Tārīkh Bayrūt,* 79.

Figure 1. The Gharb Region in Mamluk Syria

who served the central government. This article focuses on al-Ḥusayn's accomplishments, most notably the alliance strategies forged, primarily by marrying his daughters into other prominent families of the region, which led to the founding of a lineage of Buḥturid qadis.

Unsurprisingly, the Gharb amirs adhered to a clan system. The descendants of Buḥtur, the eponymous founder of the family about whom little is known, formed the house *(bayt)* of Buḥturid in the eighth/fourteenth century, driven by an esprit de corps that enabled them to remain united for nearly two centuries. Even though the clan union of the Buḥturid amirs predated the amir al-Ḥusayn, the latter became the main actor in the political and social affirmation of his family by rendering their authority more far-reaching and princely. In the villages neighboring ʿBayy, the place of origin of the Buḥtur, al-Ḥusayn helped to set up his brothers and first cousins, while forging alliances with ruling or noble families further afield. As a result, the Buḥtur family eventually included a branch of local qadis or "qadi substitutes *(nāʾib al-qāḍī),*" which attests to the considerable delegation of judicial power under the Mamluks. As shown in this article, the rise of the first Buḥturid qadis depends on two factors: on the one hand, al-Husayn's political and cultural strategy to bring greater visibility to his family and secure their local power; and on the other, the conception of clan kinship reflected in his matrimonial strategy aimed at extending his authority in the Gharb region.

Building an Amirate in ʿBayy under the Third Reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad (709/1310–741/1341)

Ḥajī the Great was the first amir of the house of Buḥtur to settle in ʿBayy. He exchanged his house in the village of Ṭardalā for the dwelling *(bayt)* of a person named Ibrāhīm in the existing village of ʿBayy.[7] His brother Khuḍur then came to join him and built in the vicinity two adjoining *ʿullīyah*s[8] with a residential and reception function along with their outbuildings.[9] The eminent al-Ḥusayn, the son and principal heir of Khuḍur, later completed the work begun by his parents, making him the greatest builder in the house of Buḥtur. He erected living quarters, reception halls, *īwān*s, a water basin, a *majlis,*[10] and a stable, while also

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[7]Ibid., 107.

[8]The term *"ʿullīyah"* can signify "elevated room," similarly to other terms derived from the same root *ʿLW:* "*ʿulī* (bedroom on the first floor)," "*ʿalwā* (upper floors)," or even "*ʿalawī* (heavenly or superior)"; see Reinhart Dozy, *Supplément aux dictionnaires arabes* (Leiden-Paris, 1967), 2:166–67.

[9]Ibn Yaḥyá, *Tārīkh Bayrūt,* 107–8.

[10]This *majlis* or meeting place should not be confused with that of the Druze. On the institution of the Druze *majlis,* see Wissam H. Halawi, "La réforme druze dans les montagnes syriennes au IXe/XVe siècle," *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerrané* 135 (2014): 117–19.

helping his brothers and cousins to settle in the surrounding area.[11] By the time of al-Ḥusayn's death in the middle of the eighth/fourteenth century, the village of ʿBayy had become an amirate with juxtaposing *bayt*s and *ʿullīyah*s.[12]

Several houses built by al-Ḥusayn—or his descendants—are still visible in ʿBayy; some are currently occupied by Druze religious or were sold by the Lebanese state to influential individuals for private use; others are reduced to a state of ruins. Although the modifications made to these buildings over the centuries are uncertain, it is evident to the naked eye that the *ḥārah*[13] mentioned by Ibn Yaḥyá was more than just a street in the village. The *ḥārah* of the amirs would therefore have occupied a significant part of the village. The question arises as to whether another *ḥārah* was inhabited by peasants. Finally, it should be noted that the current inhabitants of ʿBayy date to the ninth/fourteenth century the market streets—commonly known as *"sūq"*—located near a large building with a central courtyard and water basin.

Domestic and civil architecture may be a significant source of information for the historian, as shown in Bethany Walker's book on Tall Ḥisān,[14] a Mamluk village in present-day Jordan. However, our knowledge of rural settlements in premodern Syria is still imperfect. Even though all the other buildings in the area, mainly those of amirs Abillama in Matn and Shihāb in Dayr al-Qamar,[15] date from the Ottoman era, it cannot be said that the building projects of al-Ḥusayn and his descendants were unusual in Mamluk-era villages. Nevertheless, the mapping of the buildings by al-Ḥusayn and his descendants across time shows that these buildings in ʿBayy made it the site of an amirate, and draws a parallel between this building activity and the building projects of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and Mamluk governors of Damascus (Sayf al-Dīn Tankīz), Aleppo (ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Alṭunbughā), and Tripoli (Sayf al-Dīn Ṭaynāl).[16] The foundation of ʿBayy should therefore be considered as part of an ambitious sultanate and amirate policy.

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[11] Ibn Yaḥyá, *Tārīkh Bayrūt,* 108–9.

[12] For a schematic reconstruction of the buildings of the Buḥtur family in ʿBayy, see Wissam H. Halawi, *Les Druzes aux marges de l'Islam: Ésotérisme et normativité en milieu rural XIVe–XVIe siècle* (Paris, 2021), Fig. 21.

[13] I translate the term *ḥārah* as "village," but it can also be rendered as "street" or "neighborhood."

[14] Bethany Walker, *Jordan in the Late Middle Ages: Transformations of the Mamluk Frontier* (Chicago, 2011). See also idem, "Sowing the Seeds of Rural Decline? Agriculture as an Economic Barometer of Late Mamluk Egypt," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 11, no. 1 (2007): 173–99.

[15] See Ray Jabre Mouawad and Lévon Nordiguan, *Les Abillama, émirs du Metn: Histoire et palais XIIIe-XIXe siècle* (Beirut, 2013). So far, there has been no archaeological survey of the village of Dayr al-Qamar.

[16] See Anne Troadec, "Les Mamelouks dans l'espace syrien: stratégies de domination et résistances (658/1260–741/1341)" (Ph.D. diss., Paris, 2014), 202–5.

In his contribution to the collective volume titled *Palais et maisons du Caire,* Jacques Revault depicts how the sultan al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad (d. 741/1341) "during his long reign gave a remarkable impulse to Mamluk architecture between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries."[17] Michael Meinecke[18] also describes the third reign of al-Nāṣir (709/1310–741/1341) as an architectural "apogee," recognized by art historians as a period of exceptional activity for the construction and renovation of buildings.[19]

A few textual historians view al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's government in more measured terms. Amalia Levanoni speaks of an "illusion of growth" in her monograph on the third reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad,[20] who, in her view, undermined the state finances by his excessive overspending[21] as he sought to establish his authority and create the image of a great sovereign. The same may not be said of Jean-Claude Garcin, who portrays him as a sovereign who transformed Cairo,[22] or Julien Loiseau, for whom "the beautiful epoch of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad … was also the medieval apogee of the Egyptian capital."[23] The architectural policy of the sultanate was accompanied by the rise in power of the Mamluk amirs, who be-

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[17] Jacques Revault, "L'architecture domestique du Caire à l'époque mamelouke (XIIIe–XVIe siècles)," in *Palais et maisons du Caire,* vol. 1, *Époque mamelouke (XIIIe–XVIe siècles),* ed. Jean-Claude Garcin, Bernard Maury, Jacques Revault, and Mona Zakariya (Paris, 1982), 89 (my translation).

[18] Michael Meinecke, *Die Mamlukische Architektur in Ägypten und Syrien (648/1250 bis 923/1517)* (Glückstadt, 1992). See also the review of Oleg Grabar, "Michael Meinecke and His Last Book," *Muqarnas* 13 (1996): 1–6.

[19] On this subject, see Doris Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks: A History of the Architecture and its Culture* (London/New York, 2007), esp. chap. 13–16; idem, "Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and al-Ašraf Qāytbāy—Patrons of Urbanism," in *Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid, and Mamluk Eras: Proceedings of the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd International Colloquium organized at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven in May 1992, 1993, and 1994,* ed. Urbain Vermeulen and Daniel De Smet (Louvain, 1995), 267–84; idem, "Muhandis, Shad, Muʿallim: Note on the Building Craft in the Mamluk Period," *Der Islam* 72 (1995): 293–309; Sheila S. Blair and Jonathon M. Bloom, *The Art and Architecture of Islam, 1250–1800* (New Haven/London, 1995), esp. chap. 6.

[20] Amalia Levanoni, *A Turning Point in Mamluk History: The Third Reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad Ibn Qalāwūn (1310–1341)* (Leiden, 1995), 155ff. On the third reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, see also David Ayalon, "The Expansion and Decline of Cairo under the Mamlūks and its Background," in *Itinéraires d'Orient: Hommages à Claude Cahen, Res Orientales,* ed. Rika Gyselen and Raoul Curiel (Bures-sur-Yvette, 1994), 13–20; Robert Irwin, *The Middle East in the Middle Ages: The Early Mamluk Sultanate, 1250–1382* (Carbondale, 1986), 105–24 (chap. 6).

[21] On the sultan's expenditure on construction projects, see Levanoni, *Turning Point in Mamluk History,* 156–65.

[22] Jean-Claude Garcin, "Habitat médiéval et histoire urbaine à Fusṭāṭ et au Caire," in *Palais et maisons du Caire,* vol. 1, *Époque mamelouke,* 163.

[23] Julien Loiseau, *Les Mamelouks (XIIIe–XVIe siècle): Une expérience du pouvoir dans l'Islam médiéval* (Paris, 2014), 125 (my translation).

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came "miniature sultans in their respective provinces"; this tension between the power of the amirs and the authority of the sultan is placed at the heart of Anne Troadec's analysis of epigraphic inscriptions at the time of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.[24]

The amirs' desire to compare themselves to the sultan, sometimes even competing with his power, was echoed in the realm of domestic architecture. This was the case with the great amirs of the eighth/fourteenth century, as attested by the palace of Qawṣūn-Yashbak in Cairo.[25] The other amirs of lesser means imitated their wealthier counterparts by building prestigious residences,[26] which would suggest that al-Ḥusayn's construction of a princely village at ʿBayy was intended to flaunt his local hegemony within the limits of his means.

Drawing on the information provided by Ibn Yaḥyá in his chronicle, it is possible to reconstruct the dwellings of the amirs of ʿBayy in the middle of the eighth/fourteenth century. First, the habitations include the *bayt* that Ḥajī the Great exchanged for his house in Ṭardalā, the two adjoining *ʿullīyah*s and their outbuildings, and the *bayt* built by Khuḍur when he came to settle in the immediate vicinity.[27] This part of the village had several dwellings before al-Ḥusayn decided to set up his court there, thus making it a place of residence and power.[28]

In the year 696/1296–97, when he was only twenty-eight years old, the amir al-Ḥusayn erected two adjoining *ʿullīyah*s with outbuildings between the building (*ʿimārah*) of his uncle and that of his father.[29] After his father's death, he then had built the lower *qāʿah,* the *īwān,* and the *baḥrah* or water basin, although some of his contemporaries mention that the foundations were laid in his father's time.

Al-Ḥusayn later undertook the construction of a large *ʿullīyah* with outbuildings, and then an adjoining *bayt* and a *ḥammām;* this architectural complex was located to the north of the original buildings.[30] Based on a note penned by al-Ḥusayn, Ibn Yaḥyá states that he had committed the sum of ten thousand dirhams to complete the construction of the *ḥammām* but was obliged to seek the help of the local inhabitants *(al-nās),* because it was exceedingly difficult to cut out a large block of rock *(shaqīf)* where the saunas were to be installed. This event took place in 725/1325, but a few years earlier in 719/1319, a *qanāh,* or subterranean canal, was dug to provide water to the new dwellings, which provides some indication as to the scale of the construction works.

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[24] Anne Troadec, "Les Mamelouks dans l'espace syrien," 200–12 (for the citation, see 200).

[25] Revault, "L'architecture domestique du Caire," 51–74.

[26] Ibid., 88.

[27] Ibn Yaḥyá, *Tārīkh Bayrūt,* 57.

[28] Al-Ḥusayn's court is described by Ibn Yaḥyá, *Tārīkh Bayrūt,* esp. 82–83, 168.

[29] The description of this dwelling at the time of al-Ḥusayn is based on ibid., 107–10.

[30] The information provided by Ibn Yaḥyá regarding the houses of Ḥusām al-Dīn and Ibn Maʿn allows us to situate the buildings in the north of the village.

Indulging in his taste for luxury, the amir also erected a large *bayt* on the southern slope of the village, which was adjoined by two *ṭabaqah*s, known as al-Dahshah or the Marvel, as well as a stable *(isṭabl)* and a large *majlis*.[31] One of his last building achievements was a *qāʿah* situated at the village gate *(bawwābat al-ḥārah),* which he had constructed for his son Taqī al-Dīn Ibrāhīm.

Ibn Yaḥyá does not specify the location of the domed mosque *(al-masjid wa-al-qubbah)* built by al-Ḥusayn. The author mentions other amirs of the *bayt* who were helped by al-Ḥusayn to build their home not far from his residence. He recounts that the amir Fakhr al-Dīn, the grandson of Ḥajī the Great, after marrying the daughter of al-Ḥusayn, settled in an *ʿullīyah* built to the northwest of the latter's building *(ʿimārah).* Similarly, Fatḥ al-Dīn, the younger brother of al-Ḥusayn, settled in a new *ʿullīyah* that adjoined the *ʿimārah* of his father Khuḍur, while ʿIzz al-Dīn, another younger brother, took up residence in a *qāʿah* with a cellar *(qabw),* which was situated between the *ʿullīyah*s of al-Ḥusayn and his father.

Regarding the amir Ḥusām al-Dīn, the brother of Fakhr al-Dīn whose place of residence is known, he defied al-Ḥusayn by building an *ʿullīyah* with a portico *(usṭuwān)* right in front of the dwelling of the eminent amir, thus blocking his view. In retaliation, al-Ḥusayn helped a member of the Maʿn family to build his *ʿullīyah* in front of that of Ḥusām al-Dīn so as to block his view.

Several decades later, Sayf al-Dīn Yaḥyá I (d. 790/1388) followed the example of his grandfather al-Ḥusayn by constructing the *qāʿah* bearing his name in ʿBayy. This reception room had marble floors, arabesque-covered walls, and a private water supply.[32] The amir Sayf al-Dīn also undertook the reconstruction of the village's *īwān* originally built by al-Ḥusayn and also widened the water canal *(qanāh)* to increase its flow.[33] Another amir from the Banū al-Ḥusayn, Sayf al-Dīn Zankī (d. 864/1459–60), constructed his own *ʿullīyah* next to a stable.[34]

There is every indication that al-Ḥusayn was behind the architectural development of the village by giving it a princely allure with the construction of important buildings—the large *bayt, īwān,* large *majlis, ḥammām,* stable, and mosque—to accommodate a court and receive distinguished guests. Moreover, Ibn Yaḥyá

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[31]On the foundation inscription of the *bayt kabīr,* see Halawi, *Les Druzes aux marges de l'Islam,* Fig. IV-3. On the building's exterior facades, outbuildings (kitchen, sink), and reception rooms, see ibid., Fig. IV-VIII.

[32]Ibn Yaḥyá, *Tārīkh Bayrūt,* 193. The author provides no information that situates this room in relation to the previous constructions of al-Ḥusayn.

[33]Ibid. There is also the *īwān* and water supply system that the amir Sayf al-Dīn had built in Beirut.

[34]Aḥmad Ibn Sibāṭ, *Ṣidq al-akhbār: Tārīkh Ibn Sibāṭ,* ed. ʿUmar Tadmurī (Tripoli, 1993), 2:809.

points out that al-Ḥusayn's indulgent spending exceeded his means,[35] which led him to incur many debts *(duyūn),*[36] some of which were reimbursed by his son Zayn al-Dīn. Yet the prestigious constructions are undoubtedly in keeping with the image of power that al-Ḥusayn wanted to project at the local level, not to mention the image of grandeur that he sought to convey to the central government.

Bayt as a Place for Living and Kinship

Claude Lévi-Strauss defined the house as "a corporate body holding an estate made up of both material and immaterial wealth, which perpetuates itself through the transmission of its name, its goods, and its titles down a real or imaginary line, considered legitimate as long as this continuity can express itself in the language of kinship and affinity and, most often, of both."[37] In his chronicle, Ibn Yaḥyá associates the term *bayt* with two socially distinct realities: on the one hand, a living space shared by the members of an extended family, and on the other, an abstract space expressing the bonds of kinship.

To describe the settlement of the Buḥturid amirs in ʿBayy, Ibn Yaḥyá uses the word *bayt* in addition to *ʿullīyah* (elevated room) and *qāʿah* (ceremonial room). Al-Ḥusayn and his kin also had several residential buildings constructed in the village *(ḥārah),* including houses known as *bayt* or *bayt kabīr,*[38] although Ibn Yaḥyá does not specify their size or shape. While the *bayt* was probably a domestic dwelling,[39] its precise structure in the mountainous regions of pre-modern Syria is still unknown. As the archaeological remains in ʿBayy are yet to be investigated, I will draw on Nimrod Luz's description of the Mamluk *buyūt* identified in Jerusalem, Tripoli, and Ṣafad, which are comprised of residential rooms accessible from a central courtyard.[40]

Ibn Yaḥyá also gives the term *bayt* the signification of extended patrilineal clans: he first mentions Buḥtur, the founder *(jadd,* lit. grandfather) of the

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[35]Ibn Yaḥyá, *Tārīkh Bayrūt,* 108–9. On al-Ḥusayn's overspending, see the author's note in the margins of his manuscript.

[36]Ibid., 176.

[37]Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Way of the Mask* (Seattle, 1982), 194. See also idem, "Maison," in *Dictionnaire de l'ethnologie et de l'anthropologie* (Paris, 1991), 434–36; idem, *Paroles données* (Paris, Plon, 1984), 189–241 (chap. "Clan, tradition, maison").

[38]Ibn Yaḥyá, *Tārīkh Bayrūt,* 108.

[39]These places of residence were probably shared by many family members: for example, Zayn al-Din grew up with his cousins Khuḍur and Ḥajī (Ibn Yaḥyá, *Tārīkh Bayrūt,* 44, 76); Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Yūsuf lived with his children in the *ʿimārah* of his father Khuḍur (ibid., 146); and Sulaymān lived with his children in the *qāʿah* of his distant cousin al-Ḥusayn (ibid., 223).

[40]Nimrod Luz, *The Mamluk City in the Middle East: History, Culture, and the Urban Landscape* (Cambridge, 2014), 75–76.

"house,"[41] and then traces the *nasab* of the *"bayt,"* going back to the oldest ances- tor, Jumayhar.[42] This genealogy would have been transmitted from generation to generation,[43] even though, according to the author, some "foolish" people *(ḥamqá)* doubted its accuracy.[44] Ibn Yaḥyá finally focuses on the individuals who were the "glory of the house *(majd al-bayt),"*[45] notably the eminent al-Ḥusayn, who "built the house *(shayyada al-bayt),"*[46] and his son Zayn al-Dīn.

Ibn Yaḥyá uses the term *bayt*[47] to denote both a place of communal living and an expression of kinship. Thus, the amirs of ʿAramūn, though settling in a neighboring village, continued to belong to the house of Buḥtur as *qarāʾib* or close kin. The notion of *bayt,* as a consequence of *qarābah,* was defined in relation to a personal authority—head of the family—who was recognized by the entire family group bound together by tribal[48] or clan ties.

From Kinship to Political Alliance among the Buḥtur

The notion of *qarābah* or kinship among the Banū Buḥtur allows us to redefine the criteria for linking the different families of the amirs to the *bayt,* even though the bonds of solidarity within the group have always been viewed as the re- sult of consanguineous kinship. The term *qarābah* literally conveys the notion of closeness *(qarīb* "close") and distance *(baʿīd* "distant") from the perspective of the physical space separating two individuals or groups as well as the concept of kinship ties within a lineage or genealogy *(nasab).* Thus, it not only expresses the spatial proximity between the inhabitants of a village or region, rendered by

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[41]Ibn Yaḥyá, *Tārīkh Bayrūt,* 39.

[42]On Jumayhar, see Halawi, *Les Druzes aux marges de l'Islam,* 527, 598–600.

[43]For the genealogy of the Banū Buḥtur from the time of Jumayhar onwards, see ibid., Fig. 32.

[44]Ibn Yaḥyá, *Tārīkh Bayrūt,* 42.

[45]Ibid., 58.

[46]Ibid., 82.

[47]On the term *bayt* as a synonym of "tent," "dwelling," or even "*sharaf* (honor)," see Mohammed Hocine Benkheira, "Le vocabulaire arabe de la parenté dans les sources anciennes," in *La Famille en islam d'après les sources arabes,* ed. Mohammed Hocine Benkheira, Avner Giladi, Catherine Mayeur-Jaouen, and Jacqueline Sublet (Paris, 2013), 51. In the Mamluk context, *bayt* signifies military house; see Mathieu Eychenne, "Le *bayt* à l'époque mamelouke," *Annales islamologiques* 42 (2008): 275–95. On the use of the term *bayt* in other Semitic languages and among the pre- Islamic Arabs to designate a travelling temple or shrine, see Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, *La religion discrète: Croyances spirituelles dans l'islam shi'ite* (Paris, 2006), 35, n. 55.

[48]The conception of the *bayt* as both a physical space and a unit of kinship, and the links between *qarābah* and *jiwār,* physical proximity and degree of kinship, fit into a tribal society. However, these do not exist only in tribal societies.
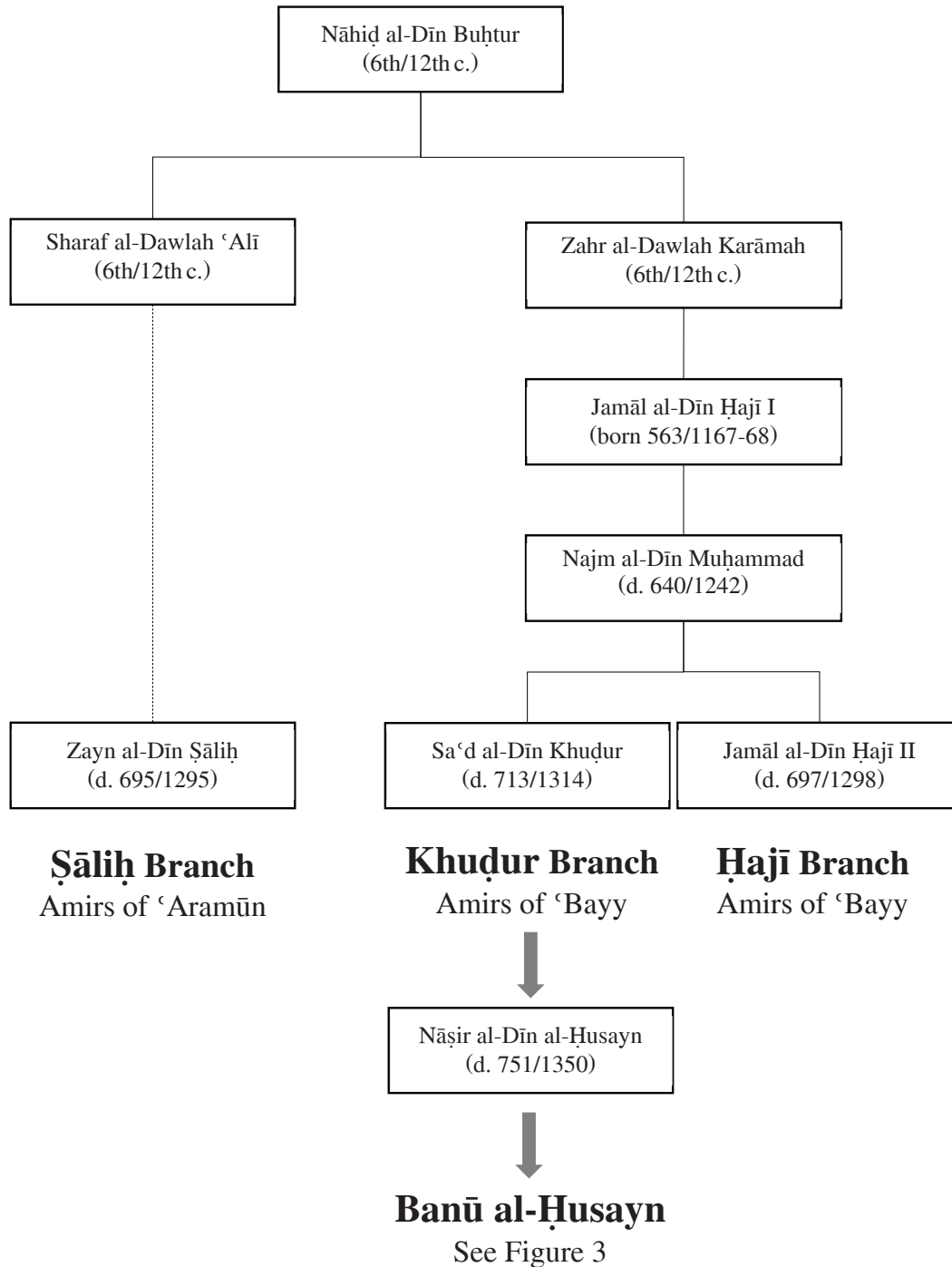
Figure 2. Main family branches of the Banū Buḥtur

the word *jiwār* (neighborhood), but it also indicates the degree of kinship between two individuals from the same family.

The links of consanguinity within the *bayt* will be studied below in the framework of the system of matrimonial alliances set up by al-Ḥusayn. In this context, *qarābah* will be analyzed in the sense of closeness founded on a political alliance between the representatives of the house of Buḥtur. I will thus show how al-Ḥusayn conceived solidarity between the amirs of his region and established himself as a local authority during the *rawk al-nāṣirī*. Indeed, al-Ḥusayn's preeminence, already manifest during the foundation of ʿBayy as a place of personal and family power, cannot be separated from the visibility sought for his social group in the Gharb, which emerges as a founding moment for the house of Buḥtur.

When al-Ḥusayn protested against the *rawk al-nāṣirī* imposed by the Mamluk authorities between 712/1313 and 713/1313,[49] he pleaded on behalf of all his *aqārib* (sing. *qarīb* "close"), who were subsequently conceded one or more *iqṭāʿ*s.[50] He justified his request by his kin's special interest in their land, which was inhabited by their *rijāl* (men) and *ʿashīrah* (clan or blood relations).[51] According to al-Ḥusayn and his allies *(aqārib),* their *iqṭāʿ*s could no longer be taken away from them, or even renegotiated or reassigned, since they had been managing them for so long, and passing them in inheritance, that these *iqṭāʿ* lands had become their property *(amlāk).*[52]

This incident reveals two important aspects: the notion of *qarābah* based on common strategic interests, and the preeminence of al-Ḥusayn over his *aqārib* or other members of the group. In his petition to the governor of Damascus, al-Ḥusayn stresses the role played by the Banū Buḥtur amirs in defending the boundaries of Beirut as well as their loyalty to the sultan.[53] In exchange, he indirectly asks the sultan not to record his *iqṭāʿ*s and those of his family in the *rawk*. Not only does al-Ḥusayn emerge here as the head of the Banū Buḥtur and the legitimate intermediary with the state, but he also emphasizes the local power of his kin. This family power nevertheless had to be continually renewed with the state authorities to counter the ambitions of other families in the Gharb. Indeed,

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[49]On the new cadaster organized by the sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, see Troadec, "Mamelouks dans l'espace syrien," 356–59.

[50]Ibn Yaḥyá, *Tārīkh Bayrūt,* 86.

[51]Ibid. According to Mohammad Hocine Benkheira, the term *ʿashīrah* refers to "close male kin" (see Benkheira, "Vocabulaire arabe," 48). On the use of this term in reference to sociability or friendship within a group, see Boris James, "Une ethnographie succincte de 'l'entre-deux kurdes' au Moyen Âge," *Études rurales* 186 (2010): 23–24.

[52]It should be noted that the Banū Buḥtur needed approval from the Mamluk authorities for their *iqṭāʿ* assignments, which was given to them by *manshūr.* See Halawi, *Les Druzes aux marges de l'Islam,* 572–76.

[53]Ibn Yaḥyá, *Tārīkh Bayrūt,* 86.

during the *rawk al-nāṣirī,* the Banū Buḥtur emerged victorious and succeeded in asserting themselves against their sworn enemies, the Banū Abī al-Jaysh.[54]

According to Ibn Yaḥyá, the Banū Abī al-Jaysh descended from the Banū Saʿdān in ʿAramūn. They had previously resided on the coast at Khaldah, south of Beirut, before holding *iqṭāʿ*s in the Gharb and becoming amirs like the Banū Buḥtur.[55] However, they were never part of the house of Buḥtur, contrary to Sami Makarem's theory that links them to the Arislān.[56] In his view, in the ninth/fifteenth century, an amir of the Banū Abī al-Jaysh married a woman descended from the Banū Buḥtur in order to seal the unity of the Gharb amirs. However, neither this marriage nor the affiliation of the Banū Abī al-Jaysh with the Arislān[57] (or vice-versa) is attested in the chronicles of Ibn Sibāṭ or Ibn Yaḥyá. For his part, Kamal Salibi suggests that the Banū Abī al-Jaysh were decimated by the Banū Buḥtur in the late eighth/fourteenth century when their *iqṭāʿ*s passed into the hands of the latter.[58]

During the *rawk al-naṣirī,* al-Ḥusayn and his kin united against any revision of the cadaster. Al-Ḥusayn's preoccupation was thus to conserve his personal advantages and those of his family, who were also his principal allies in the region. The strategic alliances offered by *qarābah,* the esprit de corps stemming from the clan structure of the Buḥtur, were thus vital to ensure a strong territorial cohesion. They allowed al-Ḥusayn to legitimize the power of his family at the local level and in the eyes of the central government, while establishing his reputation as a clan leader and renewing the support given by the different family clans within the group. This local union based on family and political ties did not go unnoticed by the Mamluk state, which confirmed the leading role of al-Ḥusayn

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[54]For the favorable response of Tankīz, governor of Damascus, see Ibn Yaḥyá, *Tārīkh Bayrūt,* 94. On the animosity between the Banū al-Jaysh and the Banū Buḥtur, see ibid., 54, 63, 67, 75, 89–94, as well as Kamal S. Salibi, "The Buḥturids of the Ġarb: Mediaevel Lords of Beirut and the Southern Lebanon," *Arabica* 8, no. 1 (1961): 94.

[55]Ibn Yaḥyá, *Tārīkh Bayrūt,* 41–42, 198.

[56]Sami N. Makarem, *Lubnān fī ʿahd al-umarāʾ al-Tanūkhīyīn (Lebanon under the Tanūkhid Emirs)* (Beirut, 2000), 201. On the supposed link between the Banū al-Jaysh and the Arislān, see ibid., 269. The author draws on the *sijill* or register of the Arislans, which is of dubious authenticity: see *Al-sijill al-Arislānī,* ed. Muḥammad Khalīl Bāshā and Riyāḍ Ghannām (Beirut, 1999).

[57]Ibn Yaḥyá (*Tārīkh Bayrūt,* 92, 180, 215) mentions an amir named Rislān, the son of a certain Masʿūd, whose grandson ʿImād al-Dīn Mūsá was the last representative of the house before being killed in 791/1389. The influential Arislān family, which nowadays plays a leading political role in Lebanon, portrays a different view of its origins and filiation. Based on the family archives that were orally transmitted and later put into writing, its members developed their own account of their origins that counters that of the Buḥtur (see *Al-sijill al-Arislānī*). Similar to the latter, they consider themselves to descend from the Tanūkh and Banū al-Jaysh who were once amirs of the Gharb. For the lineage of the Arislān as described in the *Sijill,* see Makarem, *Lubnān,* 313.

[58]Salibi, "Buḥturids of the Ġarb," 94.

Saʿd al-Dīn Khuḍur
(d. 713/1314)

Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Ḥusayn
(d. 751/1350)

Zayn al-Dīn Ṣāliḥ II
(d. 779/1378)

Taqī al-Dīn Ibrāhīm
(d. 764/1363)

Nāṣir al-Dīn Ḥusayn
(d. 863/1458-59)

Sayf al-Dīn Yaḥyá I
(d. 790/1388)

Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad
(d. 783/1381)

Fakhr al-Dīn ʿUthmān
(d. 796/1393)

Sharaf al-Dīn ʿĪsá
(d. 826/1423)

ʿAlam al-Dīn Sulaymān
(d.?)

Sayf al-Dīn Yaḥyá II
(d. 864/1459-60)

Zayn al-Dīn ʿUmar
(d. 860/1455-56)

ʿIzz al-Dīn Ṣadaqah
(d. 848/1444-45)

Sharaf al-Dīn Mūsá
(d. 892/1486-87)

Nāṣir al-Dīn Khālid
(d.?)

Sayf al-Dīn Zankī
(d. 864/1459-60)

Jamāl al-Dīn Ḥajī
(d.?)

Zayn al-Dīn Ṭāhir
(d.?)

Sayf al-Dīn Abū Bakr
(d.?)

Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad
(d.?)

Sharaf al-Dīn Yaḥyá
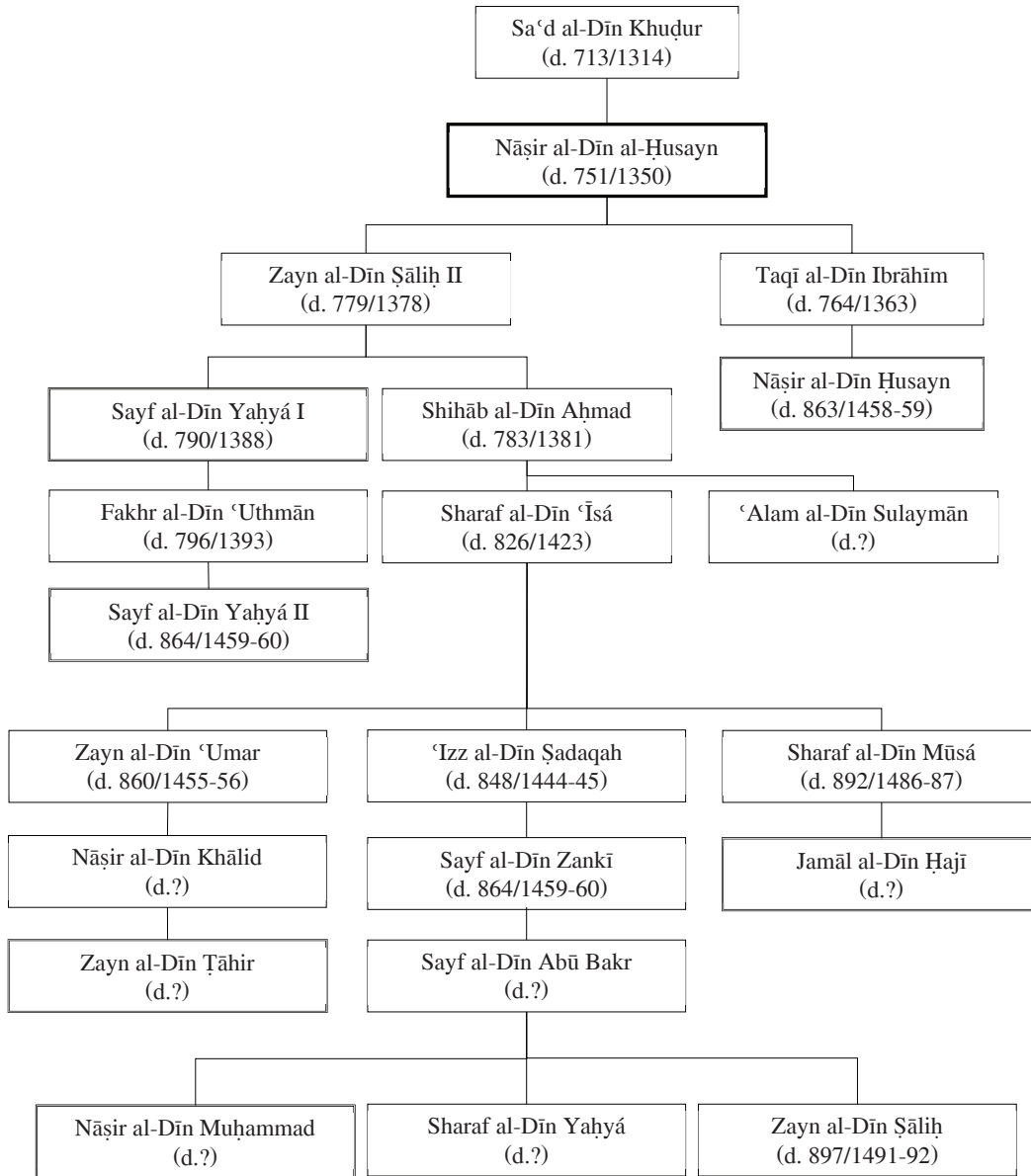(d.?)

Zayn al-Dīn Ṣāliḥ
(d. 897/1491-92)

Figure 3. The Banū al-Ḥusayn Branch

and his clan allies in presiding over the region. Consequently, the Buḥtur family, and in particular, the Banū al-Ḥusayn branch, became the privileged partners of the Mamluk political authorities, especially the governor of Damascus.

"Banū al-ʿamm": Male Kinship

Turning to the marriages among the Buḥtur, Ibn Yaḥyá mentions the successive wives of each amir included in his chronicle as well as their children and respective spouses. He also clarifies the degree of kinship of the spouses by using the terms *ibnat ʿamm* or *ibnat khāl* for first cousins.[59] For second or more distant cousins, Ibn Yaḥyá disregards the maternal lineage and only states the degree of kinship in relation to the male ascendants, as attested by the expression *ibn ʿamm abīhi* (first cousin of his father).[60] This reinforces the male expression of kinship within the *bayt,* as the names of women are absent from the *nasab* of any members of the group.

Even though Ibn Yaḥyá most frequently employs the term *aqārib* to denote the kin of an amir, he also uses the expression "*banū al-ʿamm* (paternal cousins)"[61] to designate the amirs of ʿAramūn, whose degree of kinship to the amirs of ʿBayy seems to be merely an "agnatic illusion."[62] The usage of the singular form of *khāl, khālah,* and *ʿammah* indicates the closeness between two individuals in a group. While Ibn Yaḥyá refers to cousins as *qarāʾib* (consanguineous kin), patrilineal filiation prevails in the expression *banū al-ʿamm,* which Mohammed Hocine Benkheira believes to result from unilineal filiation.[63] Regarding *ʿamm,* Benkheira derives his interpretation from the root *ʿMM:* the abstract notion that emerges is characterized by the general, the common, and the vulgar contrary to *khāṣṣ* and *khāṣṣah,* which relate to the private and elite spheres. Thus, according to Benkheira, the anthropological sense of the term *ʿamm* would emphasize the father's first cousins in a patrilineal society, whereas female kinship would remain part of the intimate or private sphere, thus explaining its absence from the chronicles.

The semantic analysis of André Miquel adds some interesting details to this interpretation.[64] According to Miquel, *aʿmām,* the plural form of *ʿamm,* designates

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[59]See, among others, Ibn Yaḥyá, *Tārīkh Bayrūt,* 189, 191.

[60]Ibid., 202.

[61]Ibid., 64, 166.

[62]Here I borrow the expression of Édouard Conte on elective kinship: "Affinités électives et parenté arabe," *Études rurales* 157–158 (2001): 86.

[63]Benkheira, "Vocabulaire arabe", 57–58. In the author's view, unilineal filiation would reflect an anthropological reality based on the vision of the authors of ancient texts, which historians should not disregard.

[64]See Jean Cuisenier and André Miquel, "La terminologie arabe de la parenté: Analyse sémantique et analyse componentielle," *L'Homme* 5, nos. 3–4 (1965): 33–36.

all ascendants: in the expression *muʿamm wa-mukhwal,* the derivative *muʿamm* from the term *ʿamm* denotes patrilineal ancestry as a whole, unlike the terms *khāl* and *mukhwal.* Indeed, *khāl* signifies a maternal uncle and never refers to kinship in more general terms like cousinhood, whereas *mukhwal* only appears in the expression in question. These two interpretations converge somewhat, since in both cases the first cousins of the father epitomize visible kinship in a patrilineal Arab society.

Likewise, in Ibn Yaḥyá's chronicle, female filiation is only mentioned in relation to cousins of the first degree; in other cases, it is simply assimilated with agnatic filiation. These expressions are always employed in the context of matrimonial ties within the *bayt,* which reveals the existence of marriages between cross or parallel cousins.[65] These endogamous alliances recall the concept of the Arab marriage, even though the latter is theoretically a union between two parallel patrilateral cousins. Was intermarriage in the *bayt* initially an elitist practice in the Gharb? And when did it become systematic within the group?

"Marrying the Closest" among the Banū Buḥtur

Ibn Yaḥyá provides only scarce information about the marriages in the *bayt* during the four first generations.[66] He does not mention the wives of Buḥtur—the eponymous founder of the *bayt*—or those of his two sons, ʿAlī and Karāmah.[67] The mother of Ḥajī I, the grandson of Buḥtur, is designated by the teknonym *(kunyah)* "Umm Ḥajī," suggesting that Ibn Yaḥyá knew neither her name nor her *nasab.*[68] Muḥammad, son of Ḥajī I, married an unknown woman from the village of al-ʿAzzūnīyah,[69] located in the far east of the Gharb region between the villages of ʿAyn Dārā and Shārūn, which was not in the immediate vicinity of Ṭardalā, where the Banū Buḥtur lived at the time.

Ibn Yaḥyá gives further details on the marriages in the fifth generation, stating the identity of Ṣāliḥ's wife and the filiation of Khuḍur's second wife. However, he does not mention the first wife of the latter or name the two wives of Ḥajī the

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[65] Cross cousins are the children of opposite-sex siblings, while parallel cousins are the children of two brothers or two sisters; see Laurent S. Barry, Pierre Bonte, Salvatore D'Onofrio, Nicolas Govoroff, Jean-Luc Jamard, Nicole-Claude Mathieu, Enric Porqueres i Gené, Jérôme Wilgaux, András Zempléni, and Françoise Zonabend, "Glossaire de la parenté," *L'Homme* 154–155 (2000): 723.

[66] "Marrying the closest": Here I borrow the title of the edited volume by Pierre Bonte, ed., *Épouser au plus proche: Inceste, prohibitions et stratégies matrimoniales autour de la Méditerranée* (Paris, 1994).

[67] Ibn Yaḥyá, *Tārīkh Bayrūt,* 39–44.

[68] Ibid., 45.

[69] Ibid., 50.

Great.[70] This is all the more surprising considering that Ḥajī the Great lived only a few decades before the birth of Ibn Yaḥyá and that his wives gave birth to five amirs who were contemporaries of the author. After the death of his first wife, Khuḍur married Sārah, whose maternal grandmother belonged to the *bayt* before marrying an outsider.[71] Indeed, Ibn Yaḥyá only gives the identity of the wives from the Banū Buḥtur, as distant marriages were viewed as matrimonial strategies to forge alliances between local families. For this reason, Khuḍur's first wife from the village of Kfar-Silwān, as well as Ḥajī the Great's two wives, remained anonymous, while the name of Ṣāliḥ's wife, Ṣādiqah, is cited, as she was part of the Buḥtur family.[72]

Marriages contracted at the time of al-Ḥusayn, who belonged to the sixth generation of the *bayt,* are fully documented in Ibn Yaḥyá's chronicle. Al-Ḥusayn first married the daughter of Ṣāliḥ and Ṣādiqah, who was his paternal aunt.[73] The two spouses were thus unilateral cross cousins.[74] Al-Ḥusayn's second wife, whom he wedded after the death of his first wife, was not a member of the *bayt* but the daughter of a renowned man whom the sultan had presented with a *khilʿah* (robe of honor or gift).[75] Ibn Yaḥyá refers to the mutual aid between al-Ḥusayn and his father-in-law.

Al-Ḥusayn's brothers married their cousins from the Ḥajī branch: Muḥammad and Ḥasan married the two daughters of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, the son of Ḥajī the Great, while Yūsuf wedded the daughter of Aḥmad ibn Ḥajī.[76] Al-Ḥusayn's sister married Yūsuf ibn Ṣāliḥ, who belonged to the house of the ʿAramūn amirs,[77] while al-Ḥusayn himself was married to Yūsuf's sister. Indeed, the matrimonial alliances between these two families of amirs go back to Ṣādiqah, al-Ḥusayn's paternal aunt, who was already married to Ṣāliḥ al-ʿAramūnī. These alliances between members of the three branches of the house—Khuḍur, Ḥajī, and Ṣāliḥ—become reinforced among the daughters of al-Ḥusayn: five married the ʿAramūn amirs, and two wedded the descendants of Ḥajī the Great.[78] Regarding the daughters of Sulaymān, the brother of al-Ḥusayn, the majority married amirs from the latter's

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[70] Ibid., 55.

[71] Sārah bint ʿAlam al-Dīn ʿAlam belonged to the Banū ʿAbd Allāh family and came from Kfar Fāqūd, a village in the Shūf; see Ibn Yaḥyá, *Tārīkh Bayrūt,* 57.

[72] Ibid., 75.

[73] On the marriage of al-Ḥusayn with the daughter of Zayn al-Dīn Ṣāliḥ al-ʿAramūnī, see Ibn Yaḥyá, *Tārīkh Bayrūt,* 133. On his kinship with Ṣādiqah, the sister of Khuḍur, see ibid., 75.

[74] The amir married his paternal first cousin, of whom he was the maternal cousin.

[75] Ibn Yaḥyá, *Tārīkh Bayrūt,* 133–34.

[76] Ibid., 144, 146, 147.

[77] Ibid., 79.

[78] Ibid., 134–35.

lineage: three of his daughters wedded the grandsons of Zayn al-Dīn, the son of al-Ḥusayn, while the fourth married her first cousin, the son of Yūsuf.[79]

The descendants of Zayn al-Dīn, al-Ḥusayn's son, also married within the *bayt*. Two of his sons wedded women from the Ḥajī branch, and a third married the daughter of an ʿAramūn amir;[80] in addition, three of his granddaughters, Umaymah bint Aḥmad, Ḥasanah bint ʿAlī, and Malīḥah bint Abū Bakr ibn Aḥmad, married ʿAramūn amirs.[81] In her first marriage, Sārah, the daughter of Ibrāhīm, the youngest son of al-Ḥusayn, married her first cousin, Aḥmad ibn Zayn al-Dīn ibn al-Ḥusayn.[82] Among the Ḥajī, other unions took place with the Ḥusayn branch: Sitt al-Jamīʿ, the daughter of ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd ibn Aḥmad, and Mawminah, the daughter of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, respectively married Mūsá and Yaḥyá, the sons of Zayn al-Dīn ibn al-Ḥusayn.[83] The ʿAramūn amirs continued to form alliances with descendants of the house of al-Ḥusayn: besides the aforementioned marriages among the Ṣāliḥ, we can observe the marriages of Nujaymah, the daughter of Mūsá ibn Yūsuf, with the son of Zayn al-Dīn ibn al-Ḥusayn; Ḥasan ibn Mūsá and Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī with Ḥasanah, Umaymah, and Malīḥah, the granddaughters of Zayn al-Dīn; and finally, Aḥmad ibn Ḥalīl ibn Mufarraj with Sārah bint Ibrāhīm ibn al-Ḥusayn.[84]

This practice of marrying close kin among the Buḥtur highlights the place of so-called Arab marriages in the *sunnah* (good practice) of the *bayt*.[85] Of the sixty-eight marriages reported by Ibn Yaḥyá, only twelve (i.e., 17.5%) are between patrilateral parallel first or second cousins. The other marriages in the *bayt* may be categorized as follows: twelve (17.5%) between patrilateral parallel third or fourth cousins; eight (12%) between patrilateral parallel cousins of the fifth degree or more; eleven (16%) between cross cousins of unilineal descent; nine (13%) with outsiders with existing kinship ties to the family; and eight (12%) with outsiders without kinship ties.

The union of patrilineal parallel cousins, commonly designated by the expression "Arab marriage," has been the subject of several interpretations relating to the segmentary kinship system in Arab societies based on matrimonial strategies. Let me first cite the alliance theory, also known as the general theory of exchanges, according to which Claude Lévi-Strauss interprets Arab marriages

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[79] Ibid., 148.

[80] Ibid., 155, 191–92.

[81] Ibid., 191.

[82] Ibid., 187.

[83] Ibid., 155, 201.

[84] Ibid., 189, 191, 199, 224.

[85] For the expression *sunnat al-bayt fī al-zawāj* in Ibn Yaḥyá's chronicle, see ibid, 175.

from a structuralist perspective.[86] In the functionalist method, this type of union may be explained through its economic and political functions.[87] Other conceptions have been espoused by Murphy and Kasdan, among others, who describe the Arab marriage as a means of organizing the ruptures and alliances necessary for the perpetual redefinition of "discrete groups."[88] This perspective—contrary to the unilineal approach of the first two theories—considers these groups to be structurally bilateral.[89]

Lastly, Pierre Bonte questions the foundations of the Arab marriage.[90] Although the author acknowledges the importance of Ladislav Holy's research on the notion of "appreciation,"[91] he criticizes the assumption that the Arab marriage is always preferred from both a normative and statistical point of view. Bonte views the prohibition of hypogamy as the only positive rule that conditions statutory equality in Arab-Muslim societies and indirectly attributes a normative character to the Arab marriage. Laurent Barry shows how the Arab marriage is

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[86]Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Les structures élémentaires de la parenté* (Paris, 1949); idem, *Anthropologie structurale* (Paris, 1974), esp. chap. 15. According to Lévi-Strauss, marriage can be explained by kinship structures as opposed to functional rules. The author thus conceives the Arab marriage as a means of escaping from elementary kinship structures, since a woman is given to seal a covenant between agnates; by contrast, marriages between cross cousins perpetuate a fixed pattern, since, from generation to generation, one woman is exchanged for another.

[87]Fredrik Barth, "Father's Brother's Daughter Marriage in Kurdistan," *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 10 (1954): 164–71; Raphael Patai, "The Structure of Endogamous Unilineal Descent Groups," *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 21, no. 4 (1965): 325–50; Emrys Lloyd Peters, "Aspects of Affinity in a Lebanese Maronite Village," in *Mediterranean Family Structures,* ed. J. G. Peristiany (Cambridge, 1976), 27–79.

[88]Robert F. Murphy and Leonard Kasdan, "The Structure of Parallel Cousin Marriage," *American Anthropologist* 61, no. 1 (1959): 17–29; idem, "Agnation and Endogamy: Some Further Considerations," *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 23, no. 1 (1967): 1–14.

[89]In the context of bilateral descent, the lineage does not determine the formation of a social group; it is rather a consequence of the chosen matrimonial alliance strategy, whether endogamous or exogamous.

[90]Pierre Bonte, "Manière de dire ou manière de faire: Peut-on parler d'un mariage 'arabe'?" in *Épouser au plus proche,* ed. Bonte, 371–98.

[91]Holy focuses on marriage between cousins, notably in the context of the Arab marriage, in order to show that it is a "conceptual artifice without intrinsic unit," since such unions adopt a different signification depending on the context; Ladislav Holy, *Kinship, Honor and Solidarity: Cousin Marriage in the Middle East* (Manchester, 1989), 31. The author considers the Arab marriage to be favored, and throughout his study, he asks the question: how and why would this type of marriage be preferred or more appreciated among the members of a group? See also idem, *Anthropological Perspectives on Kinship* (London, 1996).

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the least endogamous of unions, because, in his view, kinship is not transmitted by the father (blood)[92] but instead by the mother (maternal milk).[93]

In the house of Buḥtur, marriages between patrilateral parallel cousins (17.5%) are not representative of the matrimonial system, as men can choose from several women in their extended household or even contract a marriage with an outsider as long as the social rank is respected. The social norm reflected in the Arab marriage is thus not a positive rule among the Banū Buḥtur, as it does not generate a negative rule prohibiting other forms of marriage. This type of alliance is likewise not a normative preference, as no specific matrimonial rule is stipulated in the sources. It would therefore seem that this mechanism of marital union is simply not observed in the *bayt:* the descendants of an Arab marriage do not necessarily contract a marriage of the same type, perhaps because no such requirement exists or because of the lack of cousins to perpetuate the alliance strategy of their parents.[94]

Although Arab marriages between patrilateral parallel first cousins were not customary in the *bayt,* 63% of unions were contracted between members of the group. This attests to the strong preference of the Buḥturid amirs to marry someone from one of the clans in their extended family and hence from the same social category. The matrimonial strategy of "marrying the closest" was initiated by al-Ḥusayn: he gave his daughters in marriage to the ʿAramūn amirs or, as we will see below, to influential men outside the *bayt* who were his friends and allies. In this sense, women may be viewed as vectors for the transmission of kinship both within and outside the group through endogamous and distant marriages.

The Buḥturid kinship system contained bilateral rather than purely patrilineal ties (contrary to what the sources suggest at first glance),[95] meaning that it em-

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[92]Blood is not the material support for kinship transmission according to Laurent Barry, "Les modes de composition de l'alliance: Le 'mariage arabe,'" *L'Homme* 147 (1998): 17–50. For Édouard Conte, blood represents a shared responsibility between members of the group; Conte, "Affinités électives," 66–68.

[93]Barry, "Mariage arabe," 17–50. The author criticizes the functional view of the Arab marriage, which is not unique in his opinion. On this subject, see Sophie Caratini, "À propos du mariage 'arabe': Discours endogame et pratiques exogames: l'exemple des Rgaybāt du nord-ouest saharien," *L'Homme* 110 (1989): 30–49; Jean Cuisenier, "Endogamie et exogamie dans le monde arabe," *L'Homme* 2 (1962): 80–105; Sophie Ferchiou, "Structures de parenté et d'alliance d'une société arabe: Les ʿaylât de Tunisie," in *Hasab wa nasab: Parenté, alliance et patrimoine en Tunisie,* ed. Sophie Ferchiou (Paris, 1992), 137–67.

[94]Élisabeth Copet-Rougier describes the Arab marriage as an "impossible model" to perpetuate across multiple generations, because the group gradually turns into a cross marriage as it grows; Élisabeth Copet-Rougier, "Le mariage 'arabe': Une approche théorique," in *Épouser au plus proche,* ed. Bonte, 453–73, esp. 455.

[95]For a more detailed presentation of the Buḥturid bilateral kinship system, see Halawi, *Les Druzes aux marges de l'Islam,* 539–43.
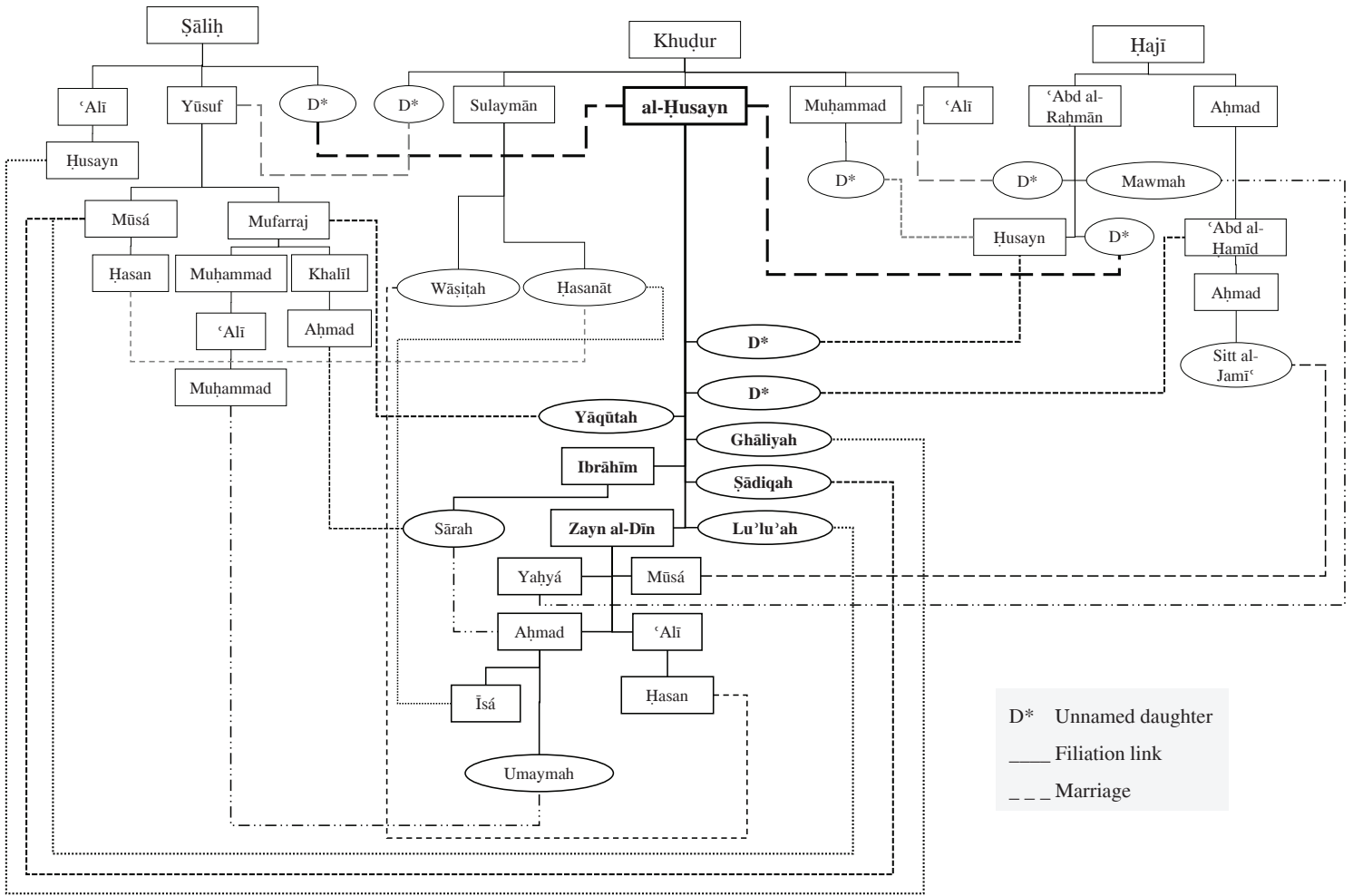
Figure 4. Family Branches and Marriages among the Banū Buḥtur

phasized female as well as male kinship. However, this finding does not suggest that the rural Buḥturid society had a unique kinship system among pre-modern Middle Eastern kinship systems. Eve Krakowski reaches similar conclusions in her study of an urban minority group.[96] Apart from Krakowski and Rapoport's[97] studies—the latter focuses on the economic aspect of divorce—no other study has yet examined the diversity of medieval families in a social history approach.

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[96] Eve Krakowski, *Coming of Age in Medieval Egypt: Female Adolescence, Jewish Law, and Ordinary Culture* (Princeton, 2018).

[97] Yossef Rapoport, *Marriage, Money and Divorce in Medieval Islamic Society* (Cambridge, 2007).

Matrimonial Strategies of al-Ḥusayn: Elective Kinship and Durable Alliances

At the time of the amir al-Ḥusayn, personal affinities influenced the matrimonial alliances arranged among the Buḥtur. While *qarābah* in the *bayt* denotes both spatial proximity and kinship, it also implies a feeling of affinity that is expressed in the context of marriage according to the Buḥturid *sunnah.* Affinity was thus a *sine qua non* of marriage, as revealed by the union of al-Ḥusayn's youngest daughter with Mūsá al-ʿAramūnī. In his note on the groom, Ibn Yaḥyá explains this choice: al-Ḥusayn cherished Mūsá and took care of his affairs; in return, Mūsá showed great affection for his maternal uncle and successively married his two daughters[98] to maintain his fondness for him *(ḥifẓ al-mawaddah li-khālihi).*[99] This affection was not reserved for Mūsá alone, since his brother Mufarraj also married one of his uncle's daughters and benefited from his generosity: al-Ḥusayn built him a *qabw* (cellar) and *majlis* (reception room).[100]

While al-Ḥusayn's fondness for the ʿAramūn amirs is evident, it is not limited to this branch of the *bayt,* as he also intervened in the affairs of other members of his family. He thus gave his grandson, Muḥammad ibn Zayn al-Dīn, the first two houses that he had constructed in ʿBayy and decided to marry him to Sitt al-Jamīʿ, whose father was one of his closest friends.[101]

Al-Ḥusayn also expressed his preference for some amirs of the Ḥajī branch, such as ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd ibn Aḥmad, to whom he betrothed one of his daughters.[102] However, he was acrimonious toward his brother ʿAbd al-Qāhir ibn Aḥmad, who in turn married two outsiders, Ṣādiqah and then her sister Shamsah,[103] who were the daughters of Miʿḍād, the *muqaddam* of the Shūf region in Saida.[104] Indeed, al-Ḥusayn preferred endogamous marriages, favoring unions between members

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[98]Both levirate and sororate were common practices in the house of Buḥtur. Mūsá's marriage is therefore not exceptional: his third cousin, Muḥammad, married Umaymah, the granddaughter of Zayn al-Dīn, and then her sister Malīḥah after the death of the former (Ibn Yaḥyá, *Tārīkh Bayrūt,* 224). In the Ḥajī branch, ʿAbd al-Qāhir ibn Aḥmad married Ṣādiqah and then Shamsah; the latter was previously married to Ḥajī ibn Aḥmad, but after being widowed, she married her brother-in-law (ibid., 185). Similarly, Ḥasanāt, the wife of Aḥmad ibn Ḥajī the Great (ibid., 151), married her brother-in-law ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Ḥajī the Great following the death of her first husband (ibid., 155).

[99]Ibn Yaḥyá, *Tārīkh Bayrūt,* 164–65.

[100]Ibid., 163.

[101]Ibid., 187.

[102]Ibid., 160.

[103]Ibid., 158.

[104]Ibid., 185.

of his own family branch, the Khuḍur. Once the group had increased in size,[105] the lineage of al-Ḥusayn occupied a central place in the matrimonial system of the *bayt.* More than half of the marriages contracted among the Buḥturid amirs henceforth took place between one of al-Ḥusayn's descendants and someone from another branch of the house; the remaining marriages occurred between the Khuḍur branch—not from the direct lineage of al-Ḥusayn—and other members of the Buḥtur family.

These marriages point to the new alliance strategy adopted by al-Ḥusayn. Previously, consanguineous proximity had been of little importance in the *bayt;* as a result, marriages were not endogamous and could be contracted with individuals outside the group. Khuḍur and Ḥajī the Great, not to mention all the amirs from the previous four generations, married outsiders. By contrast, the marriages contracted during al-Ḥusayn's lifetime were conditioned by his desire to become closer to the amirs of ʿAramūn, namely, the Ṣāliḥ, who likewise sought to marry into the family branch of al-Ḥusayn.

Al-Ḥusayn's nephews tended to marry their cousins from the Banū al-Ḥusayn branch rather than other members of the group. Indeed, the preferred type of marriage at this time allowed a family member to be as close as possible to the eminent amir or maintain ties with him. However, his matrimonial strategy was not limited to unions between members of the group, as he also arranged distant marriages, which led to the integration of two new groups into the *bayt:* the amirs of Ramaṭūn and the qadis of Bayṣūr.

This extension of the *bayt* through the affiliation of the Buḥturid amirs with outside groups took place exclusively through al-Ḥusayn's arrangement of distant marriages.[106] He thus cemented his friendship with the Ramaṭūn amirs by marrying his only two sons to Ramaṭūn women. Similarly, he betrothed one of his daughters to the qadis of the Gharb who originated from the village of Bayṣūr. In the eyes of the local chroniclers, these two families henceforth belonged to the *bayt,* which explains why they gave precise indications about their members. Although the sources do not describe al-Ḥusayn's motives, these exogamous marriages appear to seal an existing friendship between the eminent amir and the founders of these two lineages. It was indeed al-Ḥusayn who arranged these alliances, which endured until the early tenth/sixteenth century.

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[105] The *bayt,* initially composed of three men (Khuḍur, Ḥajī the Great, and Ṣāliḥ al-ʿAramūnī), had sixteen individuals by the time of al-Ḥusayn, that is, just one generation later, and thirty-six in the following generation.

[106] On elective kinship in the context of Arab societies, see, among others, Conte, "Affinités électives," 65–94.
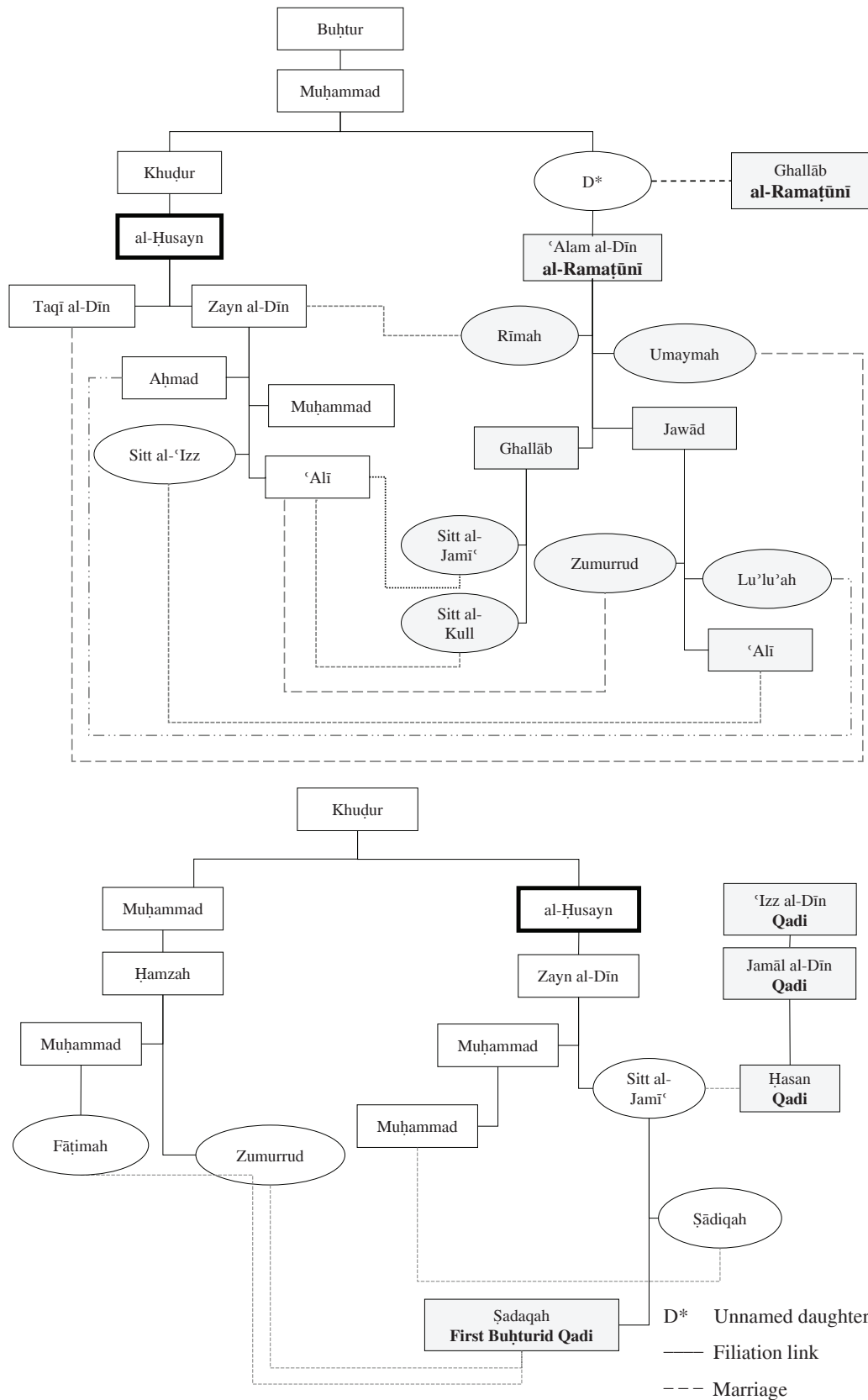
Figure 5. Distance Marriages among the Banū al-Ḥusayn

The Ramaṭūn Amirs

Ibn Yaḥyá describes al-Ḥusayn's closeness with the Ramaṭūn in the following manner: "When al-Ḥusayn sat in a *majlis,* his cousin Shujāʿ al-Dīn would be on his right and ʿAlam al-Dīn al-Ramaṭūnī on his left; his other kin would sit lower down, each according to his rank."[107] In 709/1309, al-Ḥusayn granted ʿAlam al-Dīn the title of amir *(taʾammara)* and gave him half of the agricultural land known as the *Small Amarīyah,*[108] which he had owned before acquiring the more prosperous area called the *Large Amarīyah.* This was the first time that a member of the Ramaṭūn branch had received the title of amir or was granted an *iqṭāʿ.*[109] Was it in al-Ḥusayn's power to grant amiral titles to his supporters and allies, and to distribute *iqṭāʿ*s as he saw fit? This would run contrary to what we expect from the centralized Mamluk system, and would suggest a great degree of autonomy granted by the Mamluk state to the amirs of the Gharb. In fact, as with the *manshūr*s of the *iqṭāʿ*s,[110] the amiral titles were most probably granted by al-Ḥusayn but subsequently confirmed by the Mamluk authorities. Al-Ḥusayn therefore enjoyed considerable autonomy, although he could not ignore the central authorities.

The new amirs originated from the village of Ramaṭūn near ʿBayy. They subsequently became the masters of ʿAynāb, gradually acquiring the *iqṭāʿ*s of this locality from the descendants of Najm al-Dīn, the son of Ḥajī the Great, who founded the house of ʿAynāb after being disinherited by his father.[111]

The affiliation of the Ramaṭūn with the amirs of ʿBayy dates back to the time of al-Ḥusayn's paternal aunt who married Ghallāb, the father of ʿAlam al-Dīn.[112] While this union brought the two families together and probably marked the beginning of the friendship between al-Ḥusayn and his cousin ʿAlam al-Dīn, the Ramaṭūn were not yet members of the *bayt.* And the marriage of al-Ḥusayn's paternal aunt was by no means exceptional, as marital unions tended to be exogamous at that time.

After the Ramaṭūn became amirs and al-Ḥusayn's two sons wedded ʿAlam al-Dīn's daughters,[113] the descendants of al-Ḥusayn joined the *bayt.* Marriages between the two families became more prevalent, as evidenced by the marriages between al-Ḥusayn's grandsons and ʿAlam al-Dīn's granddaughters.[114] Should these

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[107] Ibn Yaḥyá, *Tārīkh Bayrūt,* 168.

[108] This made ʿAlam al-Dīn an amir of five, since the *Small Amarīyah* was worth ten (ibid., 81, 133).

[109] Ibid., 168–69, 172.

[110] See above, n. 50.

[111] Ibn Yaḥyá, *Tārīkh Bayrūt,* 51–52, 161; Ibn Sibāṭ, *Tārīkh,* 857.

[112] Ibn Yaḥyá, *Tārīkh Bayrūt,* 168.

[113] Ibid., 184–86.

[114] Ibid., 186–87.

later alliances be viewed as endogamous marriages? Ibn Sibāṭ clearly describes the affiliation of the Ramaṭūn amirs with the house of Buḥtur: "They became a single *bayt* through marriage, and the descendants of ʿAlam al-Dīn were henceforth related *(yunsabūn)* to the amirs of the Gharb."[115]

The Buḥturid Qadis and the Mamluk Jurisdiction

In addition to the Ramaṭūn family, al-Ḥusayn forged alliances with a family from the village of Bayṣūr, likewise on the basis of his close friendship. At the beginning of the eighth/fourteenth century, a man from the village of ʿAyn Ksūr was in charge of the judicature of the Gharb.[116] However, al-Ḥusayn interceded—perhaps around 710/1310, at the same time as his intercession for Ramaṭūn—with the Mamluk authorities on behalf of his allies in Bayṣūr so that they would be conferred the *niyābat al-quḍāh* (qadi substitute or local qadi institution)[117] of the Gharb. Ibn Sibāṭ's account is unambiguous on this issue: "The judicature *(qaḍāwah)* first belonged to a man from ʿAyn Ksūr called Abū al-Sarāyā ibn Abī al-Qāsim; it was transmitted between them [i.e., members of his family] until it was accorded to Abū al-ʿIzz following the intervention of al-Ḥusayn."[118]

At the time of this episode, ʿIzz al-Dīn Abū al-ʿIzz was close to al-Ḥusayn, but the two men were not related. Although the sources remain silent about the reasons for the amir's intervention, he most likely wanted the local judiciary to be led by individuals who were favorable to him. In this case, why not advocate a member of his own family? It is quite possible that al-Ḥusayn's kin were not capable of fulfilling the function of qadi, as the role required special religious training. But it is also quite possible that the choice of al-Ḥusayn was part of his matrimonial strategy, that is to expand his clan by allying with relatives who were not part of his family.

The first qadi in the Buḥtur family was Ṣadaqah (d. 835/1431–32), the greatgrandson of both ʿIzz al-Dīn and al-Ḥusayn.[119] Indeed, al-Ḥusayn had arranged the marriage of his granddaughter Sitt al-Jamīʿ to Ḥasan, the grandson of the new qadi in the Gharb.[120] This alliance between the two families then continued: the qadi Bahāʾ al-Dīn Ṣadaqah first married Zumurrud, his maternal third cousin and daughter of al-Ḥusayn's nephew, and after her death, he wedded Fāṭimah, the

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[115]Ibn Sibāṭ, *Tārīkh,* 857.

[116]Ibid., 862.

[117]For the usage of this expression in the sources, see Ibn Yaḥyá, *Tārīkh Bayrūt,* 223, and Ibn Sibāṭ, *Tārīkh,* 862–69.

[118]Ibn Sibāṭ, *Tārīkh,* 862–63.

[119]Ibn Yaḥyá, *Tārīkh Bayrūt,* 223; Ibn Sibāṭ, *Tārīkh,* 863.

[120]Ibn Yaḥyá, *Tārīkh Bayrūt,* 186.

niece of his first wife.[121] His sons ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn and Zayn al-Dīn successively succeeded him as head of the *niyābat al-quḍāh* in the Gharb,[122] followed by Shams al-Dīn, the son of the latter.[123] The distant marriage arranged by al-Ḥusayn thus provided the *bayt* with a lineage of qadis, adding judicial authority to the political authority already held by the Buḥturid amirs descended from the Banū al-Ḥusayn branch.

The sources nevertheless provide scarce information on the *niyābat al-quḍāh* in the Gharb. The Buḥturid qadis were probably promoted to the function of *nāʾib* (qadi substitute) by the qadi of a larger city, who delegated power to the *nāʾib*s at the local level.[124] The Gharb qadis, or more precisely the qadi representatives, belonged to the Mamluk administration as local representatives of state jurisdiction. Ibn Sibāṭ mentions the death of the qadi ʿAlam al-Dīn ibn Jamāl al-Dīn in 912/1506, a qadi substitute from another family in the village of ʿAyn Dārah in the Shūf. Although the author does not expand on the subject, the existence of several representatives of the Mamluk judicial authorities in the Gharb and Shūf provides some insight into the organization of the judicature in Bilād al-Shām during this period.

Based in medium-sized towns or large cities, the qadis delegated judicial authority to their local representatives in rural areas, such as the Gharb and Shūf. The qadi substitutes were from local families and passed their judicial position on to their descendants. The Mamluk authorities also delegated the exercise of justice in local communities to dhimmis, as shown in the valuable deeds of sale drawn up by the Maronite Patriarchate of Qannūbīn in rural Syria.[125] However, in parallel to this exclusively intra-community justice system, the Maronite Patriarch regularly sought a Muslim qadi to draw up contracts for land purchases, regardless of whether the seller was Muslim or Christian.[126]

The equivalent of a qadi from the Shafiʿi *madhhab* (doctrinal school of law) to whom the Maronite Patriarch turned for purchase deeds was necessarily the Buḥturid qadi in the Gharb. Nevertheless, the Christian qadi, who had the authority to approve transactions between the Patriarch and the members of his own community, was not the same as the Druze qadi, known as the *sāyis,* whose

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[121] Ibid., 223.

[122] Ibn Yaḥyá, *Tārīkh Bayrūt,* 223; Ibn Sibāṭ, *Tārīkh,* 864–65.

[123] Ibn Sibāṭ, *Tārīkh,* 865.

[124] Émile Tyan, *Histoire de l'organisation judiciaire en pays d'Islam* (Paris, 1938–43), 1:148–49.

[125] Wissam H. Halawi and Élise Voguet, "*Dhimmī*-s de la Syrie rurale et institutions mameloukes: de l'utilisation de la théorie shāfiʿite à l'autonomie juridictionnelle du Patriarcat maronite d'après cinq actes d'achat inédits (IXe/XVe siècle)," *Islamic Law and Society* 27. No. 4 (2020): 51–59.

[126] Wissam H. Halawi and Élise Voguet, "La propriété foncière du monastère de Qannūbīn: un témoignage sur le paysage agraire du nord du *Jabal Lubnān* (fin xive–mi xvie siècle)" (forthcoming).

function was established in the Gharb in the late ninth/fifteenth century.[127] As the *sāyis* was not the state-recognized representative of the qadi, any judgments or contracts drawn up for example as a *wafqīyah*[128] were without legal value in an official court. Indeed, as the Druze were not dhimmis, their cases had to be brought before a Muslim qadi.

In the Gharb, the Buḥturid qadi was the only one to be recognized by the Mamluk authorities. His Druze religious affiliation is never mentioned by Ibn Yaḥyá, nor by Ibn Sibāṭ afterwards. These local chroniclers did not oppose the Druze identity with Islam. They even considered some Buḥturid amirs to be eminent Islamic scholars.[129] The exclusion of the Druze qadi *(sāyis)* from the Mamluk judicial system was due to the legal doctrine of Druze law, which did not recognize other Islamic legal doctrines. By establishing the institution of the *sāyis,* Druze law submitted the religious Druze to an exclusive community judicature of state justice.[130]

The precise jurisdiction of the local qadi substitutes, whether Buḥturid qadis from the Gharb or Shūf, is not specified in the chronicles. It is thus unknown whether their justice applied to all inhabitants of the region regardless of their religious affiliation or whether the local qadi was sometimes solicited depending on the nature of the conflict or case in question. At present, the rules codifying the *niyābat al-quḍāh* in the Gharb and Shūf under the Mamluk reign are still unknown. However, by receiving the delegation of justice from the Mamluk authorities, the Buḥturid qadis undoubtedly exercised justice in the region on behalf of the state, like any substitute of the qadi in the provinces of the sultanate. That was certainly different for the Druze religious: they applied Druze law for their private matters, under the control of the *sāyis,* while they had to submit their extracommunity affairs to the local qadi recognized by the Mamluk sultanate.

Conclusion

In the eighth/fourteenth century, the eminent al-Ḥusayn implemented various matrimonial strategies by which the members of his family married their cousins or the descendants of his close friends. Drawing on his status and ties with both his kin and the Mamluk authorities, al-Ḥusayn played a central role in forging

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[127]On this subject, see Wissam H. Halawi, "L'arbitrage et la médiation des cheikhs religieux chez les Druzes du Gharb au IXe/XVe," *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerrané* 140 (2016): 110ff. For a more detailed presentation, see idem, *Les Druzes aux marges de l'Islam,* 487–94.

[128]On the *waqfīyah* in Druze law, see Halawi, "L'arbitrage et la médiation," 116–17.

[129]See Wissam H. Halawi, "Le druzisme prémoderne en Syrie: émergence du droit druze et des premières institutions religieuses," *Arabica* 65 (2018): 476–82.

[130]For more details, see Halawi, *Les Druzes aux marges de l'Islam,* 438ff.

the alliances that gave the Buḥtur family the structure described in the chronicle of Ibn Yaḥyá. The ever-growing family group comprised several clans settled in different villages. Thus, by establishing rules of good practice *(sunnah)* in the *bayt* for the matrimonial, political, and economic domains, the Buḥtur succeeded in maintaining their esprit de corps. This notably took place through the customary law of endogamous marriages, and even unions contracted outside the family became endogamous, as the new family members were incorporated into the *bayt.*

The clan identity of the family clearly owed its existence and survival to this matrimonial *sunnah* of the *bayt,* which was promoted by al-Ḥusayn with his unparalleled strategic spirit. By marrying their first cousins, the Buḥturid amirs favored the closeness of kinship ties, which is the primary connotation of the term *qarābah,* thus ensuring that all members of the group were *awlād ʿamm* (first cousins). This system of alliance was continued by al-Ḥusayn's descendants, the new clan leaders within the Banū Buḥtur, which confirms not only the pertinence of this matrimonial strategy but also the lasting cohesion created by these marriages for the members of the group. Indeed, at this time, the house of Buḥtur became visible on both a social and political level.

The marital unions arranged between the Buḥtur and the Gharb qadis, originally from the village of Bayṣūr, allowed al-Ḥusayn to have representatives of the Mamluk judiciary within his own family. The Gharb amirs consequently formed a political and judicial elite in the rural landscape of Bilād al-Shām during the Mamluk period. Although the emergence of Buḥturid qadis was certainly part of al-Ḥusayn's matrimonial strategy, it is also a reflection of his credibility in the eyes of the central administration. By interceding with the Mamluk authorities on behalf of his allies in Bayṣūr, the amir al-Ḥusayn succeeded in making them judicial representatives in the Gharb, which reveals not only the importance of this judicial function but also the local prestige that it brought to all members of his family.