The presentation of the plague of 749/1348 and the *fitna* of

Two of Ibn Kathîr's detailed reports are analysed as stories and the aim is to identify the message he wants to transmit through them. The focus is on Ibn Kathîr's narrative techniques and a connection is drawn to Hayden White's archetypes of stories.

by IRMELI PERHO

Mamluk period chronicles, biographical dictionaries and *tabaqat* compilations of social groups form a rich deposit of source material for studying the events of the period, the society they occur in and the individuals participating in them. In the recent years modern scholars have become increasingly aware that the sources should also be understood as literary products that have authors whose interpretations of the events influenced the way they presented their material. Regardless whether they wrote about the distant past or described the events of their own times, they had to choose what was important to include and what could be left out.

Further, the authors were not primarily focused on preserving historical facts for future generations but, instead, they wrote for the benefit of a contemporary audience using history as a means of transmitting their ideological and political thoughts. The audience of the historiographical works was wide, ranging from scholars and interested individuals listening to the texts in mosques and other public areas to the members of the ruling elite similarly occupied in their palaces and mansions. The authors' consideration of their audience also affected the way they wrote and the literary techniques they employed.¹

In this article, I will look into the chronicle *al-Bidaya wa-l-nihaya* of

762/1361 by the Damascene scholar Ibn Kathîr

the Damascene scholar Ibn Kathîr (d. 774/1373) and analyse the author's presentation of two major events in order to find out what kind of ideological messages he wanted to convey and how did he do it. Both events occurred within the period 749-768 AH / 1348-1366 CE, i.e. the two last decades included in Ibn Kathîr's chronicle.²

Ibn Kathîr and al-Bidaya wa-l-nihaya

In the late 7th and early 8th century AH, Damascene historiography was represented by a group of historians who shared a background as hadith scholars and are known to have co-operated closely with each other, benefiting from each other's work. Ibn Kathîr was the youngest member of the group that included his teacher Shams al-Din Muhammad al-Dhahabi (d. 748/1348), the author of the vast *Ta'rikh al-islam*, and 'Alam al-Din al-Qasim al-Birzali (d. 739/1339) who wrote on the history of Syria.³ Al-Birzali wrote his chronicle, *al-Muqtafa*, as a continuation of *Kitab al-rawdatayn fi*

akhbar al-dawlatayn al-nuriyya wa-l-salahiyya by Abu Shama (d. 665/1267) and Ibn Kathîr, in turn, considered that the latter part of his own chronicle continued al-Birzali's work.⁴

The title of Ibn Kathîr's chronicle, *al-Bidaya wa-l-nihaya* (*The Beginning and the End*), shows that he designed his work as a universal history, where the beginning was the creation of the world and the end was apocalypse. In the introduction of the book, Ibn Kathîr listed the four periods presented in the book: the first was the creation, the second was the time of the prophets, culminating with the life (*sira*) of the last prophet. The third period consisted of the subsequent events, including the chronicle of the author's own life time. The last period contained the events of the last days and resurrection as described in the Islamic tradition.⁵

The study of the narrative techniques used by Ibn Kathîr in *al-Bidaya wa-l-nihaya* has only begun recently. Aaron Hagler has discussed Ibn Kathîr's description of the events of early Islamic history

that eventually led to the emergence of the Sunni-Shi'a sectarian divide. He has analysed the literary-narrative strategies that Ibn Kathîr employed in order to defend the Companions of the Prophet against pro-Shi'a accusations of rebellion.⁶

Al-Bidaya wa-l-nihaya is a vast work and contains a myriad of embedded stories in its description of historical events. The two events analysed in the present article occurred in the period when Ibn Kathîr, after the death of his teacher Shams al-Din Muhammad al-Dhahabi, remained the sole representative of his group of Damascene historians. In that final period, the choices he made in selecting what to present and how to describe were solely based on his own estimation and therefore illustrate what kind of ideas he wanted to transmit.

Archetypes of stories

Hayden White has presented a typology of plot structures historians use in order to transform a sequence of historical records into a story. He identified four archetypes: Tragedy, Comedy, Romance and Satire.⁷ He used the typology to describe the plot structures in 19th century European historiography, but it is possible, at least to some degree, to use the archetypes in analysing Mamluk historiography as well. It seems though that Satire is an archetype that falls outside the emplotments favoured by the Mamluk period historians as they did not generally take the ironic standpoint that Satire requires. The three remaining archetypes are more relevant and are used frequently.

In a society where the dominant world view was religious and people believed in a god that took an active role in their lives, Tragedy as an emplotment would appear as the most natural choice, because it is an archetype story where the audience learns to accept the limitations of human influence over events and, in the Mamluk period context, to recognize the supreme power of God. However,

even if the historians shared the religious beliefs of their contemporaries and in the large scheme of things accepted the existence God's overall plan, their reports of particular events tend to present them as results of the choices and decisions, good or bad, made by the individuals rather than seeing them as indications of unavoidable divine will. This makes place for an emplotment such as Comedy where «hope is held out for the temporary triumph of man over his world».⁸

Also Romance is sometimes used as a story structure, for example by Ibn Taghribirdi in his presentation of the achievements of Sultan Qutuz. Romance is defined by Hayden White as a story structure where good triumphs over evil, virtue over vice and light over darkness.⁹ Ibn Taghribirdi's description of Sultan Qutuz and the battle of 'Ayn Jalut in Syria in 658/1260 is Romance, where the Sultan represents the good whereas the Mongols, the enemy, represent the evil threat that has to be defeated. Ibn Taghribirdi portrays Sultan Qutuz as a larger than life figure, a hero whose victory over the Mongols had been foretold by the Prophet in a dream vision that Qutuz had received when he was still a young Mamluk soldier.¹⁰

The plague of 749/1348

Ibn Kathîr's chronicles of each year begin with a list of the ruling establishment in the Mamluk realm: the names of the sultan, atabegs, governors, and chief judges in Cairo and Damascus. After that he gives rather short and concise reports of various events in a strictly chronological order from month to month. Further, he provides short obituaries of notables, both amirs and scholars, placing them where they chronologically belonged among other events.

Also the year 749 opens with the standard list but immediately after Ibn Kathîr turns his attention to the main event of that year, namely,

the plague pandemic that had a devastating impact on the populations in the Middle East and eventually also in Europe, where the plague became known as the Black Death. He describes how the plague was first only news from distant areas such as Crimea, but soon the illness reached Cyprus where it had catastrophic consequences. Then it was already in the coastal regions of Syria and within the first two months of the year, 10 000 people had died in al-Ghazza. The news of the fast advancing plague alerted the population of Damascus to the danger that the disease would eventually spread to the city and they responded to the threat by organizing communal prayers and recitations of devotional texts. Here Ibn Kathîr breaks the chronological flow of his report by inserting a statement that anticipates the final outcome: «God protected Damascus and kept it safe, even though a number of its inhabitants perished.»¹¹ The prayers and recitations would not prevent the disease from reaching Damascus but in the end the plague would subside. In the chronology of Ibn Kathîr's story, the promised relief was still far in the future and the city would struggle with the illness for more than a year, but by placing the statement here, at the very beginning of his description, Ibn Kathîr wants to remind his audience who presumably listened to his report well after the tribulations that God as an active force in the events of history did in the end save them.

After comforting his audience with the prospect of future relief, Ibn Kathîr continues to describe the grim reality of the plague: in the month of Rabi' al-awwal the daily death toll was one hundred but in the following month the number increased to more than two hundred deaths each day. When stating the ever increasing number of deaths, Ibn Kathîr repeats either the formula «We turn to God for help» (*bi-Allah al-mus-ta'an*) that is often used in adversity or the verse

«Surely we belong to God, and to Him we return»¹² that is usually quoted when someone has recently died. By doing this, he emphasizes the seriousness of the situation, the constant presence of death and how little control the Damascene population had over their fate. The context of the verse stresses patience in adversity: «yet give thou good tidings unto the patient who, when they are visited by an affliction, say, 'Surely we belong to God, and to Him we return'; upon those rest blessings and mercy from their Lord, and those – they are the truly guided.»¹³

In Rabi' al-akhar, a major religious event was organized by the authorities as an attempt to fight the plague. The population was first asked to fast for three days and then gather together to pray for deliverance. According to Ibn Kathîr, the majority joined the fast and then on the third day they gathered at the prayer site. Ibn Kathîr describes it

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as a remarkable event, as it was not only the Muslims who came together to pray but also the religious minorities – the Jews, Christians and Samaritans – joined the crowd. Ibn Kathîr reports how people came from all sides (*min kull fajj 'amiq*) and further underlines the magnitude of the crowd by providing a list of the participating population groups: they were the shaykhs, the old, the young, the poor, the amirs, notables and the judges.¹⁴ Regardless of the effort of the Damascene population, the death toll continued to grow and people feared for their lives.¹⁵ It was not until the following year that the situation improved and the plague finally passed.¹⁶

Ibn Kathîr's story of the plague in Damascus

can be identified as Tragedy, where the whole community is the protagonist that in vain tried to avert the destruction and death caused by the plague but had to accept patient suffering as the only way to deal with the affliction. It was God who had created the plague and it could only be God who in the end would lift it.

Baydamur's rebellion (*fitna*) in 762/1361

The story of Amir Sayf al-Din Baydamur al-Khwarizmi¹⁷ is also cast as Tragedy where the protagonist challenges the authority of the Sultan's atabeg but is eventually punished as a rebel against the Sultan himself. Baydamur was appointed the governor (*na'ib al-saltana*) of Damascus in 761/1360, in the last few months of Sultan al-Nasir Hasan's rule.¹⁸ As a culmination of a power struggle between the Sultan and one of his powerful mamluks, Amir Yalbugha al-'Umari, the two parties battled outside Cairo and the Sultan ended up as Yalbugha's prisoner. He was brought to Yalbugha's house where he just disappeared and was never seen again. According to the later historian, al-Maqrizi, Yalbugha tortured and killed Sultan al-Nasir Hasan and buried him in his house.¹⁹

In Ibn Kathîr's presentation, the conflict becomes an instance of divine retribution where God took active part in the event. Ibn Kathîr reports that Sultan al-Nasir Hasan had become increasingly greedy, wasted money on buildings that nobody needed and made people's lives difficult. Both the elite (*al-khassa*) and the commoners (*al-'amma*) had turned against him and in this situation «God ordained his destruction by the hand of [...] Yalbugha.»²⁰ He further underlines this by quoting the Qur'an: «Say: 'O God, Master of the Kingdom, Thou givest the Kingdom to whom Thou wilt, and seizest the Kingdom from whom Thou wilt, Thou exaltest whom Thou wilt, and Thou abasest whom Thou wilt; in Thy hand is

the good; Thou art powerful over everything.»²¹ He then adds a poem and an anecdote, both of them dealing with the brevity of human life and the suddenness of death.²²

Yalbugha's faction selected al-Nasir 'Hasan's young nephew al-Mansur Muhammad as the new sultan but Yalbugha became the actual ruler as the Sultan's atabeg. Changes in power balance at the Sultan's court usually affected all holders of high offices and therefore the governor of Damascus, Amir Baydamur, was understandably uncertain of his own future. Ibn Kathîr obviously did not share the governor's worries, because he described them as the governor's imaginings (*tawahhum*).²³ However, the governor started his preparations for the possibility that he would be removed from his post and decided that he would not obey such an order, because he would consider it coming from Yalbugha whose authority he did not recognize. This meant that he would rebel only against Yalbugha, the Sultan's atabeg but not against the Sultan himself. He tried to strengthen his position by requesting from the Damascene scholars legal rulings on the permissibility to revolt against a person who had murdered the previous Sultan, taken his property and established himself in a position of power.²⁴

Baydamur sent the request also to Ibn Kathîr who answered that if the purpose of the *fatwa* request was to gain support among the notables and military, then the request should first be sent to the major judges and shaykhs and only after that to the other scholars of law.²⁵ Ibn Kathîr's evasive answer is in marked contrast to his actions six years later, when another governor wanted to confiscate the property of Syrian Christians in compensation for the Crusaders' destruction in Alexandria. Ibn Kathîr strongly opposed to the confiscation because it would violate the *dhimma* of the Syrian Christians and would therefore be against *shari'a*. In this case he was keen to express

his opinion even though he knew that some Cairene scholars had assured the Sultan of the legality of the action.²⁶ This incident shows that Ibn Kathîr did not generally avoid putting forward his views and thus his evasive response to Baydamur indicates his rejection of Baydamur's plan. Ibn Kathîr's opinion was presumably connected with his perception of the fate of Sultan al-Nasir Hasan as a divine intervention. If Yalbugha had acted as God's tool of retribution, a rebellion against him could not be justified.

Other scholars were more favourable to Baydamur's plans and soon a letter was drafted and dispatched to Cairo. It stated that the Damascene judges of the four schools and the numerous Syrian amirs who had rallied to Baydamur's call supported the Sultan but were in opposition to Atabeg Yalbugha and did not approve of his political actions.²⁷ Baydamur prepared for battle and several amirs joined him in the effort but as soon as the news came that Atabeg Yalbugha and the

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Sultan were riding with the army towards Syria, the military coalition supporting Baydamur quickly crumbled. Even before any news of the departure of the army from Egypt had reached Damascus, Ibn Kathîr implies that the coalition was unstable. After reporting on the various movements of the Syrian troops he describes how Baydamur and one of his commanders, Tuman Tamur, returned to Damascus, both in full military gear, «and both fearing that one would arrest the other».²⁸ Ibn Kathîr's description not only creates a life-like scene but he also gives an impression of fictional drama by writing like a story-teller who

knows what the two characters are thinking and shares the knowledge with his audience.

After realizing that many of his allies had given up the rebellion and accepted Atabeg Yalbugha's rule, Baydamur withdrew together with two of his closest allies into the citadel of Damascus and prepared for a siege.²⁹ Their chances were few and Ibn Kathîr comments on their predicament by quoting two verses of the Qur'an: «God prevails in his purpose» and «Wherever you may be, death will overtake you, though you should be in raised-up towers.»³⁰ The verses express both his condemnation of Baydamur's actions and his conviction that the rebellion would end in failure.

A few days later Yalbugha, Sultan al-Malik al-Mansur and the Egyptian army arrived in the outskirts of Damascus and the civilian population (*ahl al-balad*) went out to welcome them whereas Baydamur remained entrenched in the citadel. On this occasion, Ibn Kathîr once again indicates the likely result of the conflict by repeating the verse he had quoted earlier: «Wherever you may be, death will overtake you, though you should be in raised-up towers.»³¹ In order to avoid a prolonged siege, the chief judges were sent to negotiate with Baydamur for a peaceful solution. A promise of safe conduct (*aman*) was given and Baydamur left the citadel with his family and the next day a similar agreement was made with the other amirs who had been with him in the citadel. However, in spite of the promised safe conduct, Baydamur and his allies were soon arrested and put in chains. Ibn Kathîr mentions that people feared the amirs would be harmed, but he does not criticize the obvious breach of the treaty. Instead, he quotes once again the verse «Surely we belong to God, and to Him we return» reminding his audience that his sympathies do not lie with Baydamur whose fate was now in God's hands.³² It is from the Egyptian historian al-Maqrizi that we learn about the fact that the arrests did not pass without protest.

According to al-Maqrizi, a Damascene Hanbali judge went to Atabeg Yalbugha and criticized the arrests saying: «This is not a reconciliation (*sulh*).» Yalbugha apologised for the action, thus admitting the breach of treaty, but defended the arrests by claiming that they were necessary in order to guarantee the Sultan's inviolability (*hurma*) and that the arrested amirs would soon be released. This of course did not happen but instead, Baydamur and his allies were sent to prison in Alexandria.³³

Ibn Kathîr's description of Baydamur's rebellion does not only focus on the military events but also presents its effect on the civilian life in Damascus. In his strictly chronological report, Ibn Kathîr describes a gradually growing tension among the civilians. At first people were not worried even though there were some signs of increased activity among the military. Only some farmers in the outlying areas imagined (*tawahhamu*) that there was danger and rode to Damascus for safety. When the prospect of a war became gradually more obvious, Ibn Kathîr remarks that people became more distressed and adds «May God make it end well» (*yuhsin Allah al-'aqiba*).³⁴ He repeats the same wish later when he reports on the increasing fear among the civilian population who were horrified that the city would become a battle ground because Baydamur seemed to consider the citadel as his headquarters, always returning there after riding out on expeditions outside the city. Rumours told that Yalbugha was on the way with the army and when Baydamur begun to further improve the citadel's fortifications, the fear went up one more notch and Ibn Kathîr expresses this by quoting the same verse that he had used in connection with the plague indicating that a disaster was about to strike and nobody would be safe: «Surely we belong to God, and to Him we return.»³⁵ Then it emerged that the rumour of Yalbugha's immediate

arrival was false and the people's fear subsided, even though Baydamur continued his preparations for a siege. A week later the people woke up to the fact that the city gates were not opened in the morning but remained locked. The fear surged again and Ibn Kathîr marks this by once again repeating the above quoted verse.³⁶ This time there was no last moment relief as it was true that Yalbugha and the Egyptian army were just outside the city walls. However, the threatening conflict was soon resolved due to Baydamur's swift surrender and the siege was avoided.

The events related to the rebellion lasted for three months, starting in Sha'ban and ending in Shawwal. The rebellion was obviously the major event of the year and Ibn Kathîr writes it as a coherent story that could well have been read or told to a contemporary audience. He interrupts the

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flow of the story only once by inserting two notices: an obituary of an Egyptian scholar and a comment on the detention and release of a group of traders. He marks the insertion with a short anticipation of future development of the rebellion: «Another troop of three thousand followed the first one on the eve of Tuesday, the eighth of Ramadan, as will be presented.»³⁷ After the interruption Ibn Kathîr returns to his report on the rebellion by repeating the information given in the anticipation placed at the start of the interruption. This gives the impression that the inserted two notices were added afterwards in order to maintain the strictly chronological character of *al-Bidaya*.

Ibn Kathîr's story of Baydamur has a lot of

action and he shows convincingly the gradual development of the rebellion from Baydamur's first thoughts to actual military activities. Baydamur becomes the tragic hero who did not recognize the divine plan behind Yalbugha's actions but committed himself to a doomed challenge. In Ibn Kathîr's presentation, Baydamur's failure is inevitable because, as in the event of plague, people cannot influence or counter God's plans.

Baydamur was imprisoned in Alexandria but was later released and had a long and eventful career that lasted for almost thirty years. Ibn Kathîr reports that in 767/1366 Baydamur had approached his former foe Atabeg Yalbugha in Cairo requesting a reappointment as a military commander in order to fight against the Crusaders. Ibn Kathîr ends his note with the words «End of report, God knows best.»³⁸ It may be that this was just a standard formula ending a short notice that he had received and may have had doubts of but it could also indicate his view of Baydamur's situation, stating that Baydamur was now about to get a positive role to play in God's plan. Later the same year Baydamur did indeed return to Syria as a military commander, appointed by Atabeg Yalbugha and Ibn Kathîr records his arrival without offering any comment.³⁹ Two years later Baydamur became once again the Governor of Damascus, but as *al-Bidaya wa-l-nihaya* ends with events occurring in Rabi' al-thani in 768/1366 it cannot give any indication of Ibn Kathîr's reaction to the re-appointment of Baydamur in 769/1367.⁴⁰

Ibn Kathîr died in 774/1373 when Baydamur was still Governor but he lost the position for a short time the following year gaining it back again three months later.⁴¹ Baydamur was subsequently appointed as the Governor of Damascus several times and according to al-Maqrizi, Baydamur's last appointment in 784/1382 was his sixth term in the

office.⁴² Baydamur may have regularly gained high status appointments but it was with the same regularity that he lost them, sometimes ending up in prison. His final appointment in 784/1382 lasted for four years until he was once again imprisoned in 788/1386.⁴³ After that he disappeared from the reports of the chronicles.

Conclusions

In spite of the strictly chronological structure of *al-Bidaya wa-l-nihaya*, Ibn Kathîr presented the two events coherently with only very few interruptions and told them in a way that an audience must have found captivating. By a judicious use of pious formulas and Qur'an quotations he was able to create an atmosphere of gradually increasing fear and nervousness, in the first case fear of a pandemic and in the second fear of war and destruction. In the report of Baydamur's rebellion, he presented a story that occasionally gained fictional character due to his knowledge of the inner thoughts of some of the main characters. Ibn Kathîr's main message in describing the two events, the plague and Baydamur's rebellion, seems to have been to present God as an active force that influenced history and that historical events followed God's plan. Individuals may experience the effects of God's plan as tribulations, sometimes as a devastating illness and sometimes as a personal adversity and danger, but the only way to deal with the tribulations is to patiently endure them, because fighting against them is futile.

Ibn Kathîr casted both of the events as Tragedies and by doing so underlined the subordination of human life to divine power. Ibn Kathîr's choice of Tragedy for his description of the plague appears obvious as there was after all very little anyone could do except to be patient and endure. To use the same emplotment for Baydamur's rebellion that was a political event is less obvious. It seems that it was Ibn Kathîr's insistence in

interpreting Amir Yalbugha? as the tool that God had used to destroy Sultan al-Nasir Hasan who for Ibn Kathîr represented corruption. This view of the conflict was not generally accepted among later historians such as Ibn Taghribirdi who had a very positive view of al-Nasir Hasan's achievements and character.⁴⁴ In Ibn Taghribirdi's presentation Yalbugha is not God's tool to fight the evil but a villain who brutally murdered his own *ustadh* and patron. Further, a hint of Romance appears in Ibn Taghribirdi's report when he tells that in the end the evil deed was justly punished when Yalbugha in turn was murdered: «Certainly, the almighty God paid Yalbugha in his own coin for what he did to his *ustadh*.»⁴⁵

As to Baydamur, Ibn Taghribirdi pointed out his long career that lasted over two decades and commented that Baydamur was one of the very few amirs to occupy high positions during such a long period of time.⁴⁶ In Ibn Taghribirdi's presentation Baydamur's fate was not so much Tragedy as Ibn Kathîr portrayed it but more like Comedy, where the protagonist experienced ups and downs in his career. He was not defeated by the adversities he encountered and his acceptance of reappointments in positions of power showed that he retained a hope for at least temporary triumphs.

It is clear that the Mamluk period chroniclers did not always agree in their interpretations of the events and the roles of the characters and, therefore, it was obviously the individual historian who chose whether a sequence of events was casted as Tragedy, Comedy or Romance.

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1 Donald P. Little, «Historiography of the Ayyubid and Mamluk epochs», in *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, ed. Carl F. Petry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), vol. 1, 428-429, pointed out that the Syrian historian al-Jazari (d. 739/1338) and the Egyptian historian Ibn al-Dawadari (d. after 736/1335) chose a light literary style with inclusion of entertaining material to make their texts more interesting for a wide

audience. Irmeli Perho, «Ibn Taghribirdi's stories», in *Mamluk Historiography Revisited – Narratological Perspectives*, ed. Stephan Conermann (Bonn: Bonn University Press, 2018), 137-151, studies the historian's narrative methods that display his interest in educating future rulers by using historical persons as examples of a ruler's strengths and weaknesses.

2 The modern editions of the chronicle end with the murder of Amir Yalbugha in Rabi' II, 768, i.e. ending about six years before the author's death. However, Younus Mirza in «Ibn Kathîr (d. 774/1373): His Intellectual Circle, Major Works and Qur'anic Exegesis» (PhD Dissertation, Georgetown University, Washington D.C., 2012), 103, has pointed out that Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani's *Inba' al-ghumr bi-anba al-'umr*, which is a continuation of al-Bidaya, begins with the year 774 suggesting that Ibn Kathîr's chronicle may have originally been a bit longer.

3 Ibn Kathîr, *al-Bidaya wa-l-Nihaya*, ed. 'Abd al-Qadir al-Arna'ut and Bashshar 'Awad Ma'ruf (Dimashq: Dar Ibn Kathîr, 1431/2010), vol. 16, 289: In his obituary of Shams al-Din Muhammad al-Jazari (d. 739/1338), Ibn Kathîr mentioned that Jamal al-Din Yusuf al-Mizzi (d. 742/1341), al-Birzali and al-Dhahabi relied on al-Jazari's work and benefited from it. In «Historiography of the Ayyubid and Mamluk epochs», 427-428, Donald P. Little talked about the scholars' close association and collaboration and added Qutb al-Din Musa al-Yunini (d. 726/1326) to the group.

4 *Al-Bidaya*, vol. 16, 285 and Mirza «Ibn Kathîr», 105.

5 *Al-Bidaya*, vol. 1, 7-8.

6 Aaron Hagler, «Sapping the Narrative: Ibn Kathîr's Account of the shura of 'Uthman in *Kitab al-Bidaya wa-l-Nihaya*», *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 47, nr. 2 (April, 2015), 303-321 and «Sunnifying 'Ali: Historiography and Notions of Rebellion in Ibn Kathîr's *Kitab al-Bidaya wa-l-Nihaya*», *Der Islam* 97, issue 1 (May, 2020), 202-232.

7 Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in 19th-Century Europe* (Baltimore Md: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), 7-11.

8 Hayden White, *Metahistory*, 9.

9 Hayden White, *Metahistory*, 9.

10 Yusuf b. Taghribirdi, *al-Nujum al-zahira fi muluk Misr wa-l-Qahira* (al-Qahira: Matba'at Dar al-Kutub, 1357/1938), vol. 7, 88. An analysis of Ibn Taghribirdi's presentation of Sultan Qutuz in Irmeli Perho, *Ibn Taghribirdi's portrayal of the first Mamluk rulers* (Ulrich Haarmann Memorial Lecture, ed. Stephan Conermann, vol. 6) (Berlin: EbVerlag, 2013), 16-20.

11 *Al-Bidaya*, vol. 16, 341. In Mielke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 5, 54, 63-66, stories are defined as sequences of events that are presented in a certain manner. The stories have an in-built chronology that is

- sometimes broken by anticipations and retroversions, i.e. references to future or past events.
- 12 Surat al-Baqara, 156. The English translations of the verses quoted in the article are from A. J. Arberry, *The Koran interpreted* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1955), al-quran.info.
- 13 Surat al-Baqara, 155-157.
- 14 *Al-Bidaya*, vol. 16, 342.
- 15 *Al-Bidaya*, vol. 16, 343.
- 16 *Al-Bidaya*, vol. 16, 347.
- 17 Ibn Kathīr did not give Baydamur's nisba, but it is recorded in Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, *al-Durar al-kamina fi a'yan al-mi'a al-ithamina*, ed. al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Warīth Muhammad 'Alī (Bayrut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1997), vol. 1, 303 (biography 1394).
- 18 *Al-Bidaya*, vol. 16, 404.
- 19 Taqī al-Dīn Ahmad b. 'Alī al-Maqrīzi, *Kitāb al-suluk li-ma'rifat al-muluk*, ed. Sa'id 'Abd al-Fattāh 'Ashūr (al-Qahira: Matba'at Dar al-Kutub, 1970), vol. 3, 62.
- 20 *Al-Bidaya*, vol. 16, 411: «fa-'inda dhalika qaddara Allah halakahu 'ala yad [...] Yalbugha».
- 21 Surat Al 'Imran, 26.
- 22 *Al-Bidaya*, vol. 16, 412-413.
- 23 *Al-Bidaya*, vol. 16, 415: «qad tawassama wa-tawahhama».
- 24 *Al-Bidaya*, vol. 16, 416.
- 25 *Al-Bidaya*, vol. 16, 416.
- 26 *Al-Bidaya*, vol. 16, 460-461.
- 27 *Al-Bidaya*, vol. 16, 417.
- 28 *Al-Bidaya*, vol. 16, 418: «wa-kull minhuma kha'if min al-'akhar an yamsikahu».
- 29 *Al-Bidaya*, vol. 16, 418.
- 30 *Al-Bidaya*, vol. 16, 419. Surat Yusuf, 21 and Surat al-Nisa', 78.
- 31 *Al-Bidaya*, vol. 16, 420. Surat al-Nisa', 78.
- 32 *Al-Bidaya*, vol. 16, 421. Surat al-Baqara, 156.
- 33 Al-Maqrīzi, *al-Suluk*, vol. 3, 67. The sending of prisoners to Egypt is also in *al-Bidaya*, vol. 16, 423.
- 34 *Al-Bidaya*, vol. 16, 418.
- 35 *Al-Bidaya*, vol. 16, 419. Surat al-Baqara, 156.
- 36 *Al-Bidaya*, vol. 16, 419-420.
- 37 *Al-Bidaya*, vol. 16, 417.
- 38 *Al-Bidaya*, vol. 16, 465.
- 39 *Al-Bidaya*, vol. 16, 467.
- 40 Al-Maqrīzi, *al-Suluk*, vol. 3, 149.
- 41 Al-Maqrīzi, *al-Suluk*, vol. 3, 221 transfer to Aleppo in Jumada al-thani 775 and vol. 3, 224 return to Damascus in Ramadan 775.
- 42 Al-Maqrīzi, *al-Suluk*, vol. 3, 466.
- 43 Al-Maqrīzi, *al-Suluk*, vol. 3, 549.
- 44 Yusuf b. Taghribirdi, *al-Nujum al-zahira fi muluk Misr wa-l-Qahira* (al-Qahira: Matba'at Dar al-Kutub, 1368/1949), vol. 10, 315.
- 45 Yusuf b. Taghribirdi, *al-Nujum*, vol. 10, 314: «La jarama anna Allah ta 'ala 'azza wa-jalla 'amala Yalbugha al-madhkur min mamalikihi bi-jins ma fa 'alahu ma'a ustadhihi.»
- 46 Yusuf b. Taghribirdi, *al-Nujum al-zahira fi muluk Misr wa-l-Qahira* (al-Qahira: Matba'at Dar al-Kutub, 1372/1952), vol. 11, 56.