

**Culture matérielle
et contacts diplomatiques
entre l'Occident latin, Byzance
et l'Orient islamique
(XI^e–XVI^e siècle)**

Édité par

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Lists of Gifts in the Mamluk Diplomatic Tradition

Frédéric Bauden

1 Introduction

In 922/1516 when the envoy of the king of Abyssinia, the Negus Dāwīt II (r. 1508–40), reached Cairo on his way to Jerusalem to perform the pilgrimage, he presented a gift (*taqdima*) on behalf of his ruler to the Mamluk sultan, Qānṣawh al-Ghawrī (r. 906–22/1501–16). The gift did not make a memorable impression on the sultan because its value was assessed to be five thousand dinars or even less. Ibn Iyās (d. 930/1524), the chronicler who recorded this embassy, states that once the contents were displayed, the conveyor was firmly upbraided for the poor value of the gift. Documents and sources were brought forward. These included lists (*qawā'im*)¹ of gifts offered over the last century by the Negus' predecessors as well as chronicles in which previous Abyssinian embassies and the gifts they presented to the Mamluk sultans were described. This material was read aloud to the envoy to show him the discrepancy, which everyone could see, between the value of the gifts he was carrying on behalf of his ruler and those of the past.²

This description of the reception of an embassy, and specifically of the offerings the envoy presented to the Mamluk ruler, offers glimpses into several material aspects of gift-giving in the Mamluk diplomatic tradition. Not only is it evidence that the value of gifts was assessed upon their presentation to the ruler, but that this value was compared with gifts brought to previous sultans.³

1 The word can also be understood as referring to registers, but as we see, in this specific context lists are clearly meant.

2 Ibn Iyās, *Badā'ir al-zuhūr* i, 10–2 ('thumma inna l-qāsid arsalā ilā l-sultān taqdima lam takun kabīrat amr qīla quwwimat bi-naḥw khamsat ālaf dīnār aw dūn dhālik fa-lammā 'āyanahā wubbikha l-ladhī ṭala'a bihā wa-uḥḍira lahu qawā'im bi-hadāyā mulūk al-Ḥabasha ilā l-mulūk al-sālifa mithl al-Ashraf Barsbāy wa-l-Ẓāhir Qā'itbāy wa-ghayr dhālik min al-mulūk wa-uḥḍira lahu 'iddat tawārikh bi-dhikr hādāyā mulūk al-Ḥabasha ilā mulūk Miṣr fa-qurī'at'). On Abyssinian embassies to the Mamluk sultanate, see Qāsim, 'Alāqāt Miṣr; Loiseau, *The Haṭī* and the sultan.

3 These practices were not peculiar to the Mamluk chancery. On the contrary, testimonies from late antiquity regarding the Islamic or the Byzantine world demonstrate that these practices were quite common. See, for instance, Cutler, *Gifts and gift exchange* 257–8.

Such a comparison was possible because the chancery had written testimonies, be they of an archival or narrative nature. Archival lists of gifts were preserved in case similar assessments had to be made in the future. Narrative accounts were available for periods for which no such lists had been kept. Sometimes these accounts included copies of original documents that were invoked for the same purpose.⁴ Once appraised, a gift of lesser value could be interpreted as a lack of respect and a possible attempt to show the Mamluk sultan that the status attributed by the Mamluk chancery to the foreign ruler was being challenged by the latter.⁵

Gift-giving in a diplomatic context has drawn the attention of scholars for decades, particularly in the field of Islamic studies.⁶ Renowned for the wealth of its documentary and narrative sources which have preserved numerous testimonies about gift exchanges, the Mamluk period has been the focus of several studies, including, recently, a seminal one.⁷ Nevertheless, there remain multiple topics that deserve to be considered. Lists of gifts are one of the topics that has barely been addressed so far, even though archival and narrative sources offer sufficient material to study these lists that remain central to the culture of giving in the diplomatic context.⁸ The preserved evidence raises several questions: What was the purpose of such lists? How were they defined in the Mamluk diplomatic tradition? What were their physical characteristics? How were

4 Chroniclers keeping track of official documents in their works played a role in the preservation of these in a system in which original documents came to be disposed of, probably from the end of the eighth/fourteenth century. On the archival function of chronicles in the Mamluk period, with a focus on Ibn al-Furāt's (d. 807/1405) chronicle, see Bora, *Writing history*.

5 Rulers could also challenge the status the Mamluk chancery attributed to them in their written messages, as witnessed by the Ottoman case, for instance. On this question, more particularly in the case of the Ottomans, see D'hulster, *Fixed rules*; Yüksel Muslu, *The Ottomans and the Mamluks*. The issue of challenging one's status was certainly more relevant to rulers who were part of the abode of Islam than to those who belonged to another system of values and did not use one of the main languages prevailing in the Muslim world at that time to communicate with the Mamluk sultan.

6 See, for instance, Komaroff, *Gifts of the sultan* and the bibliography there.

7 Behrens-Abouseif, *Practising diplomacy*. As the author acknowledges (*ibid.* xxi), her study is biased by the fact that she relied primarily on Mamluk sources and neglected other Muslim and European documentary and narrative sources. Some additional glimpses about diplomatic gifts can now be found in Bauden and Dekkiche, *Mamluk Cairo*. See also Saletti's chapter in this volume. The first study specifically dedicated to gift exchanges during the Turkish period of the Mamluk sultanate is the one published by al-Waqqād, *al-Hadāyā wa-l-tuhaf*.

8 A study entirely based on lists of gifts mentioned in narrative sources with regard to the Ottoman-Mamluk diplomatic exchanges must be mentioned: Muhanna, *The sultan's new clothes*. The focus, though, is on the nature of the offerings reciprocated by the rulers of the Ottoman and Mamluk dynasties.

the gifts described in these lists? How was the list conveyed to the ruler? How was it then archived? In what follows, I propose to address each of these issues based on the evidence of documents (original lists of gifts and copies in collections of letters) as well as narrative sources. These lists can be defined as part of the material culture of gifts, i.e., everything that relates to the materiality of the gift-giving. Beyond the materiality of the lists, we also address the nature of the gifts exchanged between the Mamluk sultan and the king of Aragon over a period of thirty years at the beginning of the eighth/fourteenth century, a period particularly well documented on both sides.

2 The Corpus

The core part of the corpus on which this study is based consists of three original lists of gifts sent by the Mamluk sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad (r. 693–4/1293–4, 698–708/1299–1309, 709–41/1310–41), Qalāwūn's son, to the Aragonese king James II (r. 1285–1327). The three documents are kept at the Archives of the Crown of Aragon (Archivo de la Corona de Aragón, ACA)⁹ in Barcelona within an exceptional dossier of seven original Mamluk letters addressed to the same ruler and his successor, Alfonso IV (r. 1327–36), over a period of some thirty years.¹⁰ The number of original Mamluk documents available at the ACA makes this archival repository quite significant for the Mamluk period.¹¹ There are three reasons such an exceptional dossier is available in Barcelona. First, Aragon maintained commercial links with the Mamluks from the inception of the Mamluk sultanate; its kings entered into diplomatic contact with the Mamluk sultans well before the fall of Acre, and they maintained these rela-

9 ACA, Cartas árabes, nos. 146, 149, 163. Henceforth, we refer to them as lists 1, 3, and 2 as they are respectively numbered in appendix 1 at the end of this chapter.

10 The first letter is dated dated 5 Rajab 699/28 March 1300 while the last is dated 1 Jumādā I 730/20 February 1330. The letters were edited and translated by Alarcón y Santón and García de Linares, *Los documentos* 344–71. It is important to note that some fragments and documents were overlooked by both authors. See Bauden, *Mamluk diplomatics* 11–5. On this corpus, see also Atiya, *Egypt and Aragon*; González Maurazos, *La documentación diplomática*. On the relations between Egypt and Aragon, see also Masiá de Ros, *La Corona de Aragón*; al-Ḥajjī, *al-'Alāqāt*; Jaspert, *The crown of Aragon*.

11 In terms of the number of original Mamluk documents held, it even precedes the most important archival repositories of Italy (Florence and Venice). For an inventory of the original Mamluk documents, the translations of some of these, as well as the other documents addressed to the Mamluk authorities, see Bauden, *Mamluk diplomatics* 66–73. We must now add seven to the total number of documents kept at the ACA and linked to the Mamluks mentioned in this inventory (ninety-one). See Bauden, *Le Traité*, n. 8.

tions regularly until the downfall of the Mamluks in 923/1517. But considered alone, this is not sufficient to explain why a higher number of original documents was preserved in Barcelona in comparison with other European states because, in terms of diplomatic contacts, Aragon did not differ from other commercial powers, like Venice for instance, where fewer original Mamluk documents are available. The second reason must be found in the way documents were conserved and in the local context of Aragon. James II's reign is now recognized as corresponding with the moment when the rules for the conservation of documents issued and received by the chancery underwent a momentous revolution.¹² Furthermore, the Aragonese chancery had recourse to Jewish secretaries, particularly at the end of the thirteenth and beginning of the fourteenth century, who knew Arabic. This coincides with the time period during which the majority of the Mamluk documents were held at the ACA.¹³ Unlike other European powers, who relied on translations by local interpreters working in their consulates, the Aragonese chancery had an interest in keeping original documents in Arabic because they had local translators.

Be that as it may, the three lists are unique, not only because no other similar item is found in any of the other European archival repositories, but also because they have attracted little interest so far even though their existence was revealed more than eighty years ago. Moreover, while these three lists were published on different occasions, several parts of the text have not been deciphered satisfactorily and the meaning of the technical terms in these lists has not been interpreted. Finally, no one has ever tried to improve the rendition of these texts. One list was first published and translated as early as 1938 by Atiya, who drew attention to the significance of the Barcelonan archives for the study of Mamluk-Aragonese diplomatic relations.¹⁴ Two years after Atiya's booklet was printed, the two remaining lists were published and translated, together with all the other Arabic documents held at the ACA, but for unknown reasons, the two editors failed to include the list previously published by Atiya.¹⁵ At the end of this chapter (see appendix 1), we have included a new reading, translation, and study of the three lists in question. Each of the lists is also reproduced here for the first time.

12 See Péquignot, *Au nom du roi* 48–52.

13 On the role of Jews at the Aragonese court, see Assis, *Diplomàtics jueus*; Romano, *Hispanojudíos traductores*; Jaspert, *Mendicants* 125–33; Echevarría, *Trujamanes and scribes*. I thank Alessandro Rizzo for this last reference.

14 Atiya, *Egypt and Aragon* 29–32. The same list was later studied by Viladrich, *Noves dades*, who apparently was not aware of Atiya's edition and translation.

15 Alarcón y Santón and García de Linares, *Los documentos* 346 (edition), 349 (translation), 361–2 (edition) and 364–5 (translation).

The ACA also preserves the translation of one Mamluk list of gifts whose original was lost, as well as copies of lists of gifts sent by the Aragonese king to the Mamluk sultan. These copies convey useful information for a comparison of the exchange of gifts between the two sovereigns.¹⁶

Apart from these documents held in Barcelona, and given the lack of Mamluk archives, we also benefit from copies of documents found in collections of letters, usually authored by anonymous clerks working at the chancery.¹⁷ These copies offer useful comparative examples, particularly of the way the gifts were itemized, in the document or separately. We noted that most of the time, the authors of these collections of letters took great care to reproduce the physical features of the letters, and consequently the physical arrangement of the various items that were part of a list of gifts.

Last but not least, in their chronicles, historians of the Mamluk period transmitted numerous reports about the exchange of gifts and amply described the nature of the gifts received or offered. In some rare cases, these historians paid great attention to reproducing the way the items were displayed on the original document. Sometimes the manuscripts of these chronicles must be privileged rather than their edited version because editors were careless of these physical features.

3 Lists of Gifts in the Mamluk Diplomatic Context

In a treatise of the mirror-for-princes genre composed in 709/1309 for the sultan who had just usurped al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's throne, the author imparted to the new ruler some advice on the way to conduct the affairs of state among which was the receipt of foreign ambassadors.¹⁸ During the reception, presents, as the author underlined, should be kept at some distance, close to the nearest door. They should be brought upon the sultan's request once the latter is informed that the ambassador's ruler has sent gifts along with his envoy and be displayed in front of the sultan, be they riding animals, predatory birds, or cloths, together

16 These were published by Masiá de Ros, *La Corona de Aragón*.

17 These include Anonymous, *Collection of letters*, MS Arabe 4440 (Paris, BnF), and Anonymous, *al-Durar al-manthūrāt*, MS Vollers 663 (Leipzig). An Ottoman collection of letters is also useful in this sense: Ferīdūn Beg, *Mecmū'a*.

18 Al-'Abbāsī, *Āthār al-uwal* 194–5. On the significance of this small section for the study of diplomatic conventions in the Mamluk period, see Bauden, *Les Relations diplomatiques* 11.

with the list (*thabat*) detailing them (*yataḍamman dhālik*).¹⁹ The term used by the author (*thabat*) has juridical ground as it is used to describe something that has firmness and, consequently, a proof or a voucher. While this example proves useful to understand the significance and the usefulness of the list of gifts in the Mamluk context, it lacks the chancery background where such lists were issued. Moreover, the author speaks of the receipt of gifts from the Mamluk point of view, thus describing foreign practices related to the sending of gifts, but does not imply or validate that this practice was also observed by the Mamluk chancery. Under discussion here is whether the list was regarded as an official document with any legal value, and if it was issued by the chancery that was responsible for the redaction and the delivery of the letter or by another bureau, like the sultan's Treasury. To answer such questions, chancery manuals composed by Mamluk secretaries during the eighth/fourteenth and ninth/fifteenth centuries are useless. Though various types of documents are considered and described in great detail in these manuals, none of them tackles, even briefly, the issue of the gifts and how they should be itemized. We are thus left with no information of any kind, be it normative or not, on these questions and can only rely on the evidence that has reached us in the form of original lists and copies found in various sources.

Let us first consider the letters that the lists of gifts now held in Barcelona accompanied.²⁰ For list 1, the letter contains an elucidating passage: "We dispatched to his Excellence the King fabrics from our lofty chests as a token of love and friendship as this is witnessed by the sheet (*waraqā*) sent herein enclosed (*ṭayyahā*)."²¹ Given that the letters issued by the Mamluk chancery adopted the shape of an oblong scroll, the sheet in question (*waraqā*) was thus rolled up—*ṭayy* designates the folding or the rolling up of something—together with the letter. This practice is confirmed by the other Mamluk letters held at the ACA, though the way the process is described can vary slightly from one letter to another: in the 703/1304 and 705/1306 letters, the list is said to be in the folding or, more precisely, the bend (*ʿitf*) of the accompanying letter, imply-

19 Al-ʿAbbāsī, *Āthār al-uwal* 195.

20 Including a letter dated 703/1304 for which the list of gifts has been lost. See Alarcón y Santón and García de Linares, *Los documentos* 350–4, no. 147.

21 'Wa-qad sayyarnā li-ḥaḍrat al-malik 'alā sabil al-mawadda wa-l-ṣadāqa min khazā'ininā l-ʿāliya min al-qumāsh mā tashhad bi-hi l-waraqā al-musayyara ṭayyahā'. ACA, Real Cancellaría, Cartas árabes, no. 146; Alarcón y Santón and García de Linares, *Los documentos* 346 (ed., *ṭayyahumā* must be read *ṭayyahā* as confirmed by the original document) and 349 (trans.).

ing, once again, that it is rolled up with the main text;²² in the 714/1315 letter, the list is characterized as joined (*qarīn*) to the letter.²³ A further proof consists of the Catalan translation of another list of gifts joined to a letter whose original is now lost but was received in 1319. At the end of the letter, the sultan informed the King of Aragon that his envoys were accompanied by gifts selected in his Treasury that were detailed in the small sheet of paper (*cedula*) joined in the fold of the letter.²⁴ Before detailing the items included in the list, the translator indicated where its contents were found, i.e. on a small sheet of paper, thus corroborating what the letter expressed.²⁵ It is also worth noting at this point that lists 1 and 3 are nowadays pasted at the end of the roll while list 2 is kept independently.

From these four examples, all concerning the King of Aragon, it can be concluded that the list of gifts was appended to the letter in one way or another: either separately or physically joined to it (pasted). As a consequence, once the letter was rolled up and sealed, the list remained invisible until the letter was delivered to the ruler to whom it was addressed. Once conveyed, the letter was unsealed and progressively unrolled to read its contents until the end where the

22 'Wa-qad sayyarnā lahu min al-hadiyya 'alā ḥukm al-armaghān mā tashhad bi-hi l-risāla al-musayyara 'itfa hādḥā l-jawāb' (and, as required by the rules of offering [*armaghān* is a Turkish word meaning gift, offering; see Doerfer, *Türkische und Mongolische Elemente* 2, 45], we dispatched to him gifts as the accompanying letter sent in the bend of this answer witnesses). ACA, Real Cancillería, Cartas árabes, no. 147; Alarcón y Santón and García de Linares, *Los documentos* 351 (ed.) and 354 (trans.).

'Wa-sayyarnā ilā l-malik min al-hadiyya 'alā ḥasab al-baraka wa-l-armaghān ṣuḥbat al-majlis al-sāmī al-amīr Fakhr al-Dīn rasūlinā mā tashhad bi-hi l-waraqa al-musayyara 'itfahā' (and we dispatched to the King a gift, commensurate with benediction and offering, together with the eminent Excellence the amir Fakhr al-Dīn, our envoy, as attested by the sheet sent in the bend of this [letter]). ACA, Real Cancillería, Cartas árabes, no. 148; Alarcón y Santón and García de Linares, *Los documentos* 356 (ed.) and 360 (trans.).

23 'Wa-qad sayyarnā li-ḥaḍrat al-malik min abwābinā l-sharīfa 'alā sabīl al-baraka mā taḍammanathu l-waraqa al-musayyara qarīn mithālīnā hādḥā min al-khazā'in al-'āliya' (and we dispatched to his Excellence the King, from our noble Doors and as a way of benediction, [things] from our lofty chests that the sheet sent and joined to this letter of us includes). ACA, Real Cancillería, Cartas árabes, no. 149; Alarcón y Santón and García de Linares, *Los documentos* 361 (ed.) and 364 (trans.).

24 Masiá de Ros, *La Corona de Aragón* 315 ('e enviem en lur companya del rebost del molt alt ço ques conte en la cedula qui es escrita; la qual es tramesa en lo pleg d aquesta letra dels rebosts molt alts'). In his instructions to his ambassadors in 1322, James II enjoined them to thank the sultan for the gifts detailed in the small sheet of paper ('Encara reebe les joyes quel Solda li trames per aquells missatges meteys; axi com eren escrites in I cedula de paper'). Ibid. 324.

25 Ibid. 315 ('aço es en una cedula').

list of gifts was discovered. Importantly, the inclusion of the list of gifts inside the letter is also attested for the Aragonese side. In his letter to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad dated 1314, James II announced to him:

And indeed, given that we thought that they would be appreciated and valued by your honorable Presence, we dispatched to you, as a token of love and friendship, via the above-mentioned ambassadors, some of the finest products from our land that are mentioned in the small sheet (*cedula*) folded inside this letter of ours.²⁶

On the Mamluk side, the practice of including the list inside the letter seems to have been used well after the period under consideration. In his chancery manual, al-Qalqashandī (d. 821/1418) copied a letter sent to the khan of the Golden Horde in 776/1374–5 in which the list of gifts is said to be rolled up (*ṭayyahā*) inside the letter.²⁷ A body of evidence shows that this practice was perpetuated throughout the ninth/fifteenth century. The Paris collection of letters (MS Ar. 4440) has preserved several examples, for instance, in a letter to a Timurid prince around 844/1440 it is stated that a list of gifts is enclosed, i.e., rolled up (*ṭayyahā*) in the letter.²⁸ The same collection further widens our perspective on this issue because in two cases in the body of his letter, the secretary referred to the appended list of gifts pasted (*mulṣaqa*) at the end (*bi-dhayl*) of the letter,²⁹ a practice already observed for lists 1 and 3 in Barcelona more than a century earlier.

26 Ibid. 305 ('E serts per ço cor nos havem pensat que seran plasents e agradoses davant la vostra presència honrada, trametem vos en senyal damor e damistat per los dits missatges nostres alcunes joyes de nostra terra axi com son nomenades en la cedula la qual es plegada dins aquesta letra nostra'). The same is true in letters from 1318 ('nomenades e scrites en I scrit que es enclos dins aquesta carta') and 1322 ('qui son escrites en I escrit qui dins aquesta letra es enclos'). Ibid. 311 and 323.

27 'Wa-qad wajjahnā ilā l-maqām al-'ālī ... ṣuḥbat rusulinā l-madhkūrīn min al-aqmisha al-sikandarī wa-ghayrihā 'alā sabil al-hadiyya wa-l-mawāhib al-saniyya mā taḍammanathu l-waraqā al-mujahhaza ṭayyahā' (and we dispatched to the lofty Excellence ... along with our above-mentioned envoys Alexandrian cloths and other [things] as sublime gifts and presents that the sheet enclosed herein itemizes). Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣuḥb al-a'shā* vii, 298.

28 Anonymous, *Collection of letters* fol. 66^b ('wa-jahhaznā ṣuḥbatahu min hadāyā hādhihi l-bilād mā huwa mufaṣṣal fi l-qā'ima al-mujahhaza ṭayyahā' [and we dispatched along with him gifts from these lands that are detailed in the list sent herein enclosed]). For the dating of this letter, see Dekkiche, *Correspondence* 133.

29 Anonymous, *Collection of letters* fol. 51^a ('wa-jahhaznā 'alā yadihi min al-an'ām al-sharīfa bi-mā sa-yuḥītu bi-hi 'ilmuhu bi-muqtaḍā l-qā'ima al-mulṣaqa bi-dhayl hādihā l-jawāb al-sharīf' [and we dispatched along with him noble bounties of which he will take cog-

We are now in a good position to state that lists of gifts in the Mamluk period were appended to the letter, sometimes pasted at the very end of the scroll, and other times rolled up with it.³⁰ We must now turn our attention to what these lists were called and what this implied in juridical and diplomatic terms. We have already seen that al-‘Abbāsī characterized a list as a voucher (*thabat*) that attested to the contents. The Aragonese documentation illustrates another representation of the way lists were conceived in the Mamluk diplomatic tradition of the early eighth/fourteenth century. Though the original preserved lists do not enlighten us on this, the letters they were included with refer to them as a sheet (*waraqā*) in three cases³¹ and as a letter (*risāla*) in the last case.³² As the list of gifts referred to in this letter has not been preserved, we are unable to discern if it was distinguished by any physical feature from the others labeled as sheets, though we can state that it was not pasted, like list 2, and this contributed to its loss in the ACA. In any case, some conclusions can be drawn from these examples. At the beginning of the eighth/fourteenth century, the sheet was simply designated as such and was not referred to by any specific term with a legal function, as we might conclude based on al-‘Abbāsī’s characterization of it as a voucher (*thabat*). The term *waraqā* (‘sheet’) can be compared with the term *cedula* used by the Aragonese chancery to define lists of gifts in the same period. However, it seems that the term used for the lists of gifts in the letters issued by the Mamluk chancery evolved somewhat, as is witnessed by the numerous examples already quoted above from the second half of the eighth/fourteenth and the whole of the ninth/fifteenth

nizance through the list pasted at the end of this noble answer]). The letter is undated but addressed to the Ottoman sultan Sulaymān I (r. 806–24/1403–21).

Ibid. fol. 84^a (‘wa-‘alā yadihi hadiyya tu’akkid asbāb al-ittihād wa-khālīṣ al-maḥabba wa-ṣāfi l-widād bi-muqtaḍā qā’ima mulṣaqa [written by mistake ملطفة] bi-dhayl hādhihi l-mukātaba’ [he carries a gift that confirms the reasons for unity, the sincere love, and pure friendship [between us], according to a list pasted at the end of this letter]). The letter is undated but addressed to the Ottoman sultan Murād II (r. 824–48/1421–44).

- 30 In some collections of letters, the gifts are sometimes detailed in the body of the letter before the eschatocol. Ibid. fol. 54^b; Feridūn Bey, *Mecmu‘a* i, 214, 239. However, given that these are copies, the person who copied the letters might have included the lists of gifts at the point where they are briefly mentioned. In the absence of original documents, as in the case of those held in the ACA, these examples can hardly be considered as proof that the practice of itemizing the gifts in a separate document was not applied generally by the Mamluk chancery.
- 31 Letters nos. 146 (with reference to list 1), 148 (with reference to list 2), and 149 (with reference to list 3). See above fn 21, 22, and 23.
- 32 Letter no. 147. See above fn 22.

century.³³ In these examples, the lists of gifts are constantly referred to as *qā'ima*, a term that better corresponds to the function of the document in question, i.e., a list in which the items are laid out in a specific manner. Indeed our three lists display this particular layout: the items are arranged in one or two columns and each item is first briefly described on one or two lines, followed by the number of pieces included on the subsequent line. In some cases, more details are given regarding the physical feature of some of the objects (color, size, container) with a clear indication of the exact number for each sub-category.³⁴ Such particulars are introduced by the word *tafṣīl* (specification) written in an abbreviated form above the said itemization. We notice a similar presentation in a list of gifts sent by Muḥammad, the son of Qānṣawh al-Ghawrī, to the Ottoman sultan Salīm I (r. 918–26/1512–20) upon the latter's conquest of Egypt (923/1517). This list was later copied in an anonymous collection of documents.³⁵ In the body of the text, the document is clearly labeled as a *qā'ima*, i.e., a list, of the presents that were dispatched to Salīm I.³⁶ This additional element, from the very end of the Mamluk sultanate, helps us understand that the practice of listing the gifts in a layout in columns continued for the duration of the sultanate and that, at some point during the eighth/fourteenth century, the term *qā'ima* came to be used to define it.

This impression is corroborated by other lists of gifts found in copies of letters from the mid-ninth/fifteenth century. As the following example shows (see fig. 13.1), the copyist faithfully reproduced the layout of the document he was copying from, thus ordering the items in columns, each item on two lines with the number of pieces offered whenever it is mentioned.³⁷

33 See fn. 27, 28, and 29. To these examples, we can add the following passage from a letter authored by Ibn Ḥijja (d. 837/1434) in 825/1422 and issued for the Qaramanid sultan: 'wa-qaḍ jahhaznā l-majlis [...] bi-mā 'alā yadihi min al-hadiyya 'alā qā'idat al-mulūk wa-bayān hādhihi l-qā'ida taḍammanathu l-qā'ima' (and we sent the Excellence [...] who carries the gift according to the rulers' practice, and the list's contents is evidence of this rule). Ibn Ḥijja, *Qahwat al-inshā'* 376. See also Anonymous, *Collection of letters* fol. 49^a: 'qumāsh sikandarī mu'ayyan fi qā'ima' (Alexandrian fabrics itemized in the list). This letter was most probably sent to the Hafsid sultan in 838/1434–5.

34 See list 2, ll. 11–5; list 3, ll. 7–13 and 14–18.

35 Anonymous, *al-Durar al-manthūrāt* fol. 79^a, on which see Bauden, Mamluk diplomatics 40.

36 'Qā'ima maktūb fihā l-mujahhaz ...' (List where what was dispatched is written ...). The document has recently been edited and studied by Muḥammad 'Alī, *Qā'imāt hadayā*.

37 In this case, the gifts were detailed in the letter and not in a separate list. The letter, dated 861/1457 and addressed to the Qara Qoyunlu sultan, was published by Dekkiche, *The letter* 625–6. Here the reading of some words has been improved and accompanied by a translation. Another list laid out in a similar fashion can be found in the same manuscript: Anonymous, *Collection of letters* fol. 82^b.

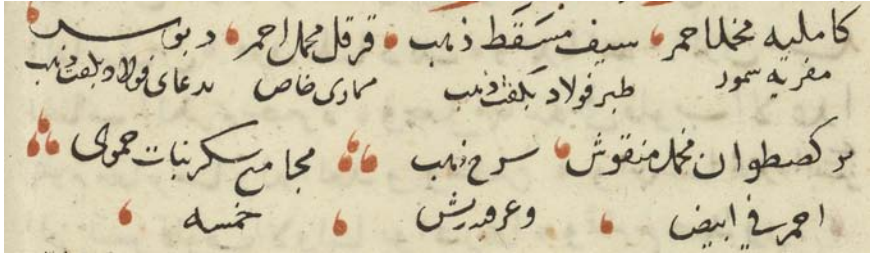


FIGURE 13.1 Copy of a list of gifts mentioned in the body of a letter
PARIS, BNF, MS AR. 4440, FOL. 171^B

دبوس	قرقل مخمل أحمر	سيف مُسَقَط ذهب	كاملية مخمل أحمر
بدغاني فولاذ بكفت ذهب	مسمازي خاص	طبر فولاد بكفت ذهب	مفرية سمور
مجاميع سكر نبات حوي خمسة	سرج ذهب	بركصطوان مخمل منقوش	أحمر في أبيض
	وعرقية [زار] كـ[ش]		
A crimson velvet <i>kāmīlyyya</i> ³⁸	A sword damascened ³⁹ with gold	A brigandine ⁴⁰ with crimson velvet	A mace with a steel haft
furred with sable	A steel axe overlaid ⁴¹ with gold	and nails, individualized	overlaid with gold ⁴²
A caparison with velvet and red on white inscriptions	A gilded saddle and a gold embroidered ⁴³ skull-cap	Candy sugar loaves from Hama five	

Some chroniclers who, because of their work at the chancery, paid great attention to documents followed a similar approach. In his biography of the Mamluk sultan al-Ashraf Khalil (r. 689–93/1290–3), composed during the latter's reign, Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir (d. 692/1293) described a Nubian embassy that reached Cairo in 690/1291. The envoy carried a gift noted by the chronicler. The unique manuscript of this history—a presentation copy made by the author or at his request—is instrumental, as the author arranged the items brought

38 A tight sleeved overcoat with a vent at the back from the hem. See Nicolle, *Early medieval Islamic arms* 87–8.

39 *Musaqqat*: see Mayer, *Mamluk costume* 44.

40 *Qarqal*: see *ibid.* 40–1.

41 *Kaft*: see *ibid.* 18n2.

42 The word is difficult to interpret. In another list of gifts in the same manuscript (Anonymous, *Collection of letters* fol. 82^b), the word is written زدغاني.

43 *Zarkash*: the word was badly written by the copyist, but it is clear in another list of gifts in the same manuscript (Anonymous, *Collection of letters* fol. 82^b).

by the Nubian envoy in a list format (see fig. 13.2).⁴⁴ Unfortunately, editors often disregard such specific physical characteristics that can be lost if the manuscript cannot be checked easily. Thus, it can be more difficult to spot similar cases in the printed sources. Be that as it may, when he recorded the gifts, Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, who headed the chancery for several years of his long career, followed a presentation that he was familiar with, i.e., the list. This example tends to prove that the practice studied here was already respected in the seventh/thirteenth century, something that makes sense given that our first list is dated to only a decade after Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir wrote his chronicle.

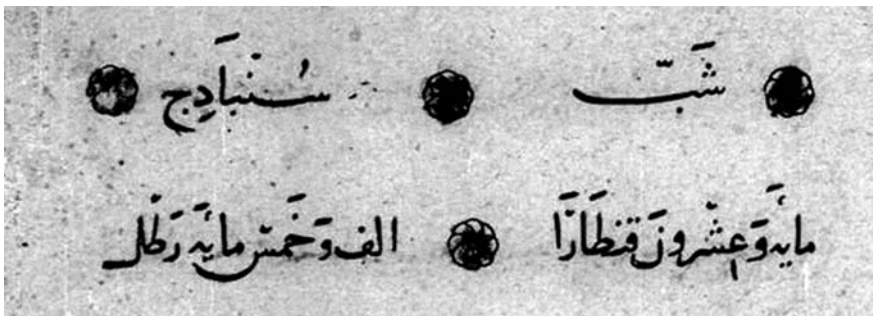
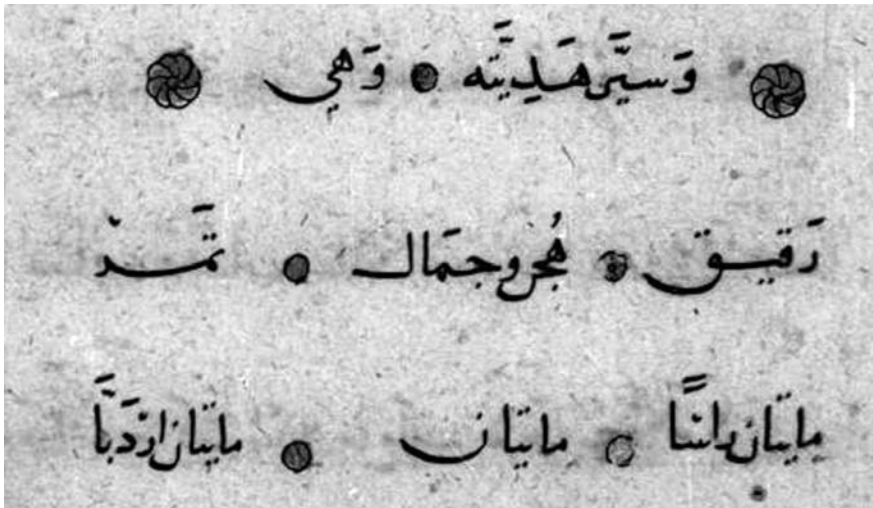


FIGURE 13.2 A list of gifts offered by the king of Nubia to al-Ashraf al-Khalil as copied in Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir’s *al-Altāf al-khafīyya*
MUNICH, BAYERISCHE STAATSBIBLIOTHEK, MS ARAB. 405, FOLS. 57B–58A

44 The presentation of the list in the current edition is faithful to the manuscript. See Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, *al-Altāf al-khafīyya*, ed. Moberg, 40–1.

تمر مايتان اردباً	وسير هديته وهي هجن وجمال مايتان	رقيق مايتان راساً
سنبادج الف وخمس مائة رطل		شب مائة وعشرون قنطاراً
and he dispatched his gifts which were		
slaves	riding camels and camels	dates
two hundred head	two hundred	two hundred <i>irdabbs</i> ⁴⁵
alum		emery
one hundred twenty <i>qintārs</i> ⁴⁶		one thousand five hundred <i>raṭls</i> ⁴⁷

It has been established with some confidence that the Mamluk chancery used a particular layout for its lists of gifts dispatched along with the accompanying letters. The question remains if this practice was particular to this type of document or if it was applied in a more general way with any document in which items needed to be listed. To answer this question, we must consider other documents that were not issued by the chancery. The collection of al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf in Jerusalem constitutes a treasure trove as it contains documents of an official or private nature—in the latter case mostly juridical documents—dating from the end of the eighth/fourteenth century.⁴⁸ Among the hundreds of papers, some documents offer elements that are comparable to our lists of gifts both in terms of layout and in the naming of the list. For instance, a list of objects left in an endowment for the benefit of a college (*madrasa*) in 781/1379 starts with the words *qā'ima mubāraka* (“a blessed list”) and adopts the same presentation as our lists: from two to four articles per line, in columns, with an additional description on a second line.⁴⁹ Other kinds of documents dealing with accounts show an even greater affinity to our lists, as in a case in which the revenues of an endowment are registered for the year 791/1389. Interestingly, the document is called a *waraqā* (sheet), reminding us of the way the lists of gifts were referred to in the accompanying letters at the very beginning of the same century.⁵⁰ The revenues are presented in two columns

45 A measure of capacity corresponding to 90 liters. See Hinz, *Islamische Masse* 39.

46 A measure of weight (45 kg). Ibid. 24–5.

47 Another measure of weight (450 g). Ibid. 29.

48 On these documents, see Little, *A catalogue*.

49 Al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf, doc. 595. Illustrated in Little, *The Ḥaram documents* 68.

50 Al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf, doc. 774^a. Illustrated in Little, *The Ḥaram documents* 67, who also

and the sheet was folded vertically once, then in half again, thus leaving three folds in the paper. The second column of revenues starts just after the central fold and stands within the distance that separates it from the third one (bearing in mind that the Arabic begins from the right). Similar folds can be observed in our lists 1 and 3. List 1 was folded once vertically while list 3, which is larger than list 1, was folded twice vertically and then once horizontally. The paper was folded, then unfolded, before the lists were pasted at the end of the roll as these folds did not relate to the letter onto which it was pasted.

The link with accounting documents or other documents that itemized goods goes beyond mere physical similarities. This category of legal documents can be identified by another important characteristic; namely, the frequent use of the numbers spelled out in the *siyāqa* script. This type of script features an abbreviated and, most of the time, highly stylized way of writing words. In one of his articles on al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf documents, Donald Little analyzed the way such numbers were written and at the end of his study he appended a list of them.⁵¹ The examples he identified in the documents related to the estates of a merchant and his wife; these examples exactly match the appearance of the numbers found in our lists 1 and 3 (see figs. 13.11 and 13.20). While the number one (*wāḥid*) was sometimes written in full, at times it was rendered by a single *dāl* corresponding to the final letter of the word (see fig. 13.3). The number two (*ithnān*), on the other hand, is represented by the main strokes that would delineate the word but with some letters overlooked (like the *thā'* and the *nūn*) and others connected. Ultimately, the word corresponds to a single stroke of the pen (see fig. 13.4). Compound numbers were written separately, but each number was usually reduced to the first letter (see figs. 13.5–6 for fifteen and one hundred twenty).

Additionally, Little noticed that for some amounts corresponding to money, the numbers in *siyāqa* script were followed by a *mīm* which he identified as the final letter of the word *dirham* or its plural, depending on the number agreement.⁵² In lists 1 and 3, the same phenomenon can be observed (for one

refers to another *waraqā* (doc. no. 773^a) containing an itemization of expenses very similar in its layout to doc. no. 774^a.

51 Little, Documents 177–9.

52 Ibid. 177. In fact, it appears that the situation is a bit more complicated. The abbreviation changed according to the agreement applied to the word *dirham*: singular in the indirect case (following a number from 100) = *hā' mīm* (هم), i.e., the last two letters, or just *mīm* (م); singular in the direct case (following a number between 11 and 99) = *mīm alif* both connected (ما); plural in the indirect case (following a number between 3 and 10) = *alif mīm* both connected (لم). These forms are all visible in the examples he gives.



FIGURE 13.3
The number 1 in *siyāqa* script
ACA, CARTAS ÁRABES, NO. 149, RECTO



FIGURE 13.4
The number 2 in *siyāqa* script
ACA, CARTAS ÁRABES, NO. 149, VERSO



FIGURE 13.5
The number 15 in *siyāqa* script
ACA, CARTAS ÁRABES, NO. 149, VERSO



FIGURE 13.6
The number 120 in *siyāqa* script
ACA, CARTAS ÁRABES, NO. 149, VERSO



FIGURE 13.7
The words *alf dirham*
ACA, CARTAS ÁRABES, NOS. 149, VERSO [LEFT] AND 163, RECTO [RIGHT]



FIGURE 13.8
The words *alf dirham*
JERUSALEM, AL-ḤARAM AL-SHARĪF, DOC. NO. 774^A RECTO

thousand *dirhams*) and compared with another example found in a document from al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf (see figs. 13.7–8).⁵³

Finally, al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf documents offer an additional element of comparison with our lists. Whenever the details of the gifts are mentioned, a small sign like an abbreviated word precedes them (see fig. 13.9). A very similar sign

53 The same *siyāqa* numbers were used by the Rasulid chancery in Yemen as witnessed by the list provided by the author of the *Nūr al-ma'ārif* composed at the end of the seventh/thirteenth c. See Anonymous, *Nūr al-ma'ārif* ii, 59–61. The author calls them “the accounting numbers” (*a'dād al-ḥisāb*).



FIGURE 13.9

The abbreviated form for *tafşiluhu*

ACA, CARTAS ÁRABES, NOS. 149, RECTO (LEFT) AND
163, RECTO (RIGHT)



FIGURE 13.10

The abbreviated form for *tafşiluhu*

JERUSALEM, AL-ḤARAM AL-SHARĪF, DOC. NO. 769 RECTO

also appears in some documents from al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf (see fig. 13.10). This sign is tentatively interpreted as representing an abbreviation of the word *tafşiluhu*, meaning “the detail of which is.”⁵⁴ The abbreviation differs slightly in lists 1 and 3, where it is limited respectively to *taf[şilu]hu* and *tafş[iluhu]*, while in al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf document it is rendered *tafş[ilu]hu*.

All the similarities just noted between our lists and specific categories of documents from al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf demonstrate that the lists of gifts were written by people who were familiar with accounting. Not only do they share the same physical characteristics (sheets folded vertically, itemization of the goods in columns), but they were also written in hurried handwriting, almost devoid of diacritical dots, with numbers in *siyāqa* script. The initial words of the three lists (“What was supplied from the lofty treasury”) indicate that the document was issued by the office of the sultan’s treasury which received instructions from the chancery to prepare the selected goods to be offered to the king of Aragon.⁵⁵ As is understandable, the sultan’s treasury had at its disposal a certain amount of time to assemble the gifts and pack them. This is corroborated by the date that was added to the list in two cases (lists 2 and 3). In both cases, the span of time mentioned is less precise in comparison with the date of the letter: it says that the gifts were prepared during the first ten days of the month. The folds are helpful here as they allow us to understand that the document issued by the sultan’s treasury was dispatched along with the packaged goods to the chancery. Once it reached this office, the gifts could be checked

54 In some letters, the word is used to refer to the appended list. See Anonymous, *Collection of letters* fol. 80^a (letter dated 859/1455 and sent to the Ottoman sultan): ‘al-asārā wa-l-ghilmān wa-l-aqmisha wa-ghayrihā dhikhruhā fī tafşilihā’ (prisoners, slaves, fabrics, etc., all mentioned in the detailed statement).

55 Each of the three lists starts with a word derived from the verb ‘*abba’a*’ which means to pack, to prepare. See below, in the commentary to lists 1 and 2. As confirmed by a contemporary witness, the sultan’s treasury was run by a judge (see below 361), which strengthens the common link highlighted between the lists of gifts and the documents of a legal nature found in the collection of al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf.

and the list was then appended to the letter, that is, pasted to the end of it, as in lists 1 and 3.

By contrast, list 2 differs completely from the other two lists. Physically, it looks like a small roll composed of three narrow sheets pasted one below the other—the typical format used by the chancery for most of its documents—; it is also written very clearly with numerous diacritical dots, like the letter it accompanied; the secretary left some blank space at the top and a blank margin on the right side; and it was not folded. In structure, it is even closer to what would correspond to a document issued by the chancery: the text is introduced by the *basmala*, a feature that is lacking in the two other lists, and ends with the *hasbala* and the *taşliyya*. The differences noted in list 2 seem to relate to the circumstances in which the list of gifts was appended. It appears that in this particular case the document prepared by the sultan's treasury was in fact reissued by the chancery. The chancery may have acted in such a manner because the document from the sultan's treasury was deemed too untidy to be pasted at the end of the letter, or because it was damaged or ruined between its transfer from the office of the sultan's treasury to the chancery. Its particular shape—a small roll—explains why the chancery decided not to paste it at the bottom of the letter, and instead placed it at the end and rolled it up with the letter. Being independent, the list was more likely to be kept separately in the archives of the Crown of Aragon, as is the case with this list,⁵⁶ or even to be misplaced and lost.⁵⁷

Thus far, Mamluk lists of gifts have been dealt with according to the various aspects of their materiality. Besides their physical appearance and their internal structure, these diplomatic instruments also served as a verification tool that permitted, on one hand, the Mamluk chancery to check that the gifts prepared by the treasury and the contents of the list tallied. On the other hand, it permitted the Aragonese chancery to ascertain that not a single item had disappeared or been substituted during the voyage. In most cases, this function was validated by mention of the existence of a list of gifts in the body of the letter, at the point where the envoy was evoked, usually at the very end of the text, just before the eschatocol. An additional formula, inviting the foreign ruler to acknowledge receipt of the gifts, was sometimes added, further strengthening the corroborative function of the list.⁵⁸ Of course, such a request for confir-

56 The list is kept under a different number and separated from the letter it accompanied in the ACA: no. 163 of the list and no. 148 for the letter.

57 This is what happened with the list that accompanied the letter dated 703/1304. See above fn 20.

58 See, for instance, Anonymous, *Collection of letters* fol. 80^a: 'wa-l-marjuww min ikrām

mation could only be formulated in cases in which embassies were exchanged on a regular basis, i.e., with the dispatch of a Mamluk embassy accompanying the foreign one returning home.⁵⁹ In some cases, the reception of the gifts on the Mamluk side was acknowledged in the response, as in 730/1330, when the sultan conveyed his gratitude to Alfonso IV for sending gyrfalcons.⁶⁰

4 Lists of Gifts as Mirrors of the Diplomatic Exchanges

The value of the Mamluk lists held in Barcelona can be described as twofold: to historians, they offer incomparable data on the diplomatic exchanges; to art historians, and particularly those interested in Mamluk textiles, they provide exceptional glimpses into one category of objects that have undergone significant developments in recent years.⁶¹ Mamluk textiles have been preserved by the hundreds in various museums around the world. Nevertheless, historians and philologists often work independently from art historians and textile specialists and vice versa.⁶² Undoubtedly, linking a specific product briefly described in these lists or sources with specimens of textiles found in muse-

al-kirām ḥusn al-qubūl wa-l-ihtimām' (good receipt and solicitude are hoped from the nobles' kindness).

59 Thus it does not come as a surprise if such requests were never expressed in the case of letters addressed to the king of Aragon.

60 'Wa-waṣala mā aṭḥafa bi-ihdā'ihi min al-sanāqīr allatī hiya min afkhar jinsihā wa-akram mā tūṣaf bi-nafāsat nafsihī wa-rasamnā bi-taslimihā mimman ḥaḍara bi-hā' (the gyrfalcons, that are the most splendid of their species and the most noble thing that can be described [in terms] of their exquisiteness and that he offered, have arrived, and we ordered that they be received from the person who brought them). ACA, Real Cancellaría, Cartas árabes, no. 152; Alarcón y Santón and García de Linares, *Los documentos* 370 (ed.) and 371 (trans.).

61 This statement was first made by Atiya, *Egypt and Aragon* 29 ("This and the ever-increasing collections of the Arabic and Coptic Museums in Cairo together with the gleanings from the chronicles of Maqrīzī, Ibn Iyās and other contemporaries, may provide another researcher with an admirable basis for a special study of a fascinating subject"), 69 ("Finally, the list of Egyptian gifts appearing under the Third Embassy [705/1306] is another subject of interest to the student of both Mamlūk history and of the history of mediæval commerce in the Levant. The inventory of articles of luxury which an Eastern monarch deemed worthy of presentation to a Western sovereign ought to serve some purpose"). Unfortunately, thus far, the poor editions of these lists have hindered such an investigation. They are briefly mentioned and studied in Behrens-Abouseif, *Practising diplomacy* 96, 99–100, 136, 170, but on the basis of these editions, several misinterpretations about the true contents of these lists arose.

62 Cf. Walker, *Rethinking Mamluk textiles* 176: "One senses that lexicography has taken precedence over the material culture, which is, of course, the primary object of study."

ums remains a challenge, but this can be overcome if specialists of both fields cooperate in the future.⁶³

Beyond the lists that detailed them, the gifts exchanged between the Crown of Aragon and the Mamluk sultanate are worthy of analysis in the frame of this study. As already stressed by Anthony Cutler, gifts “served a variety of ends—social, political, and ideological—and were therefore means to the attainment of objectives rather than objectives in themselves.”⁶⁴ The nature of these gifts, their intrinsic, symbolic, and economic value, the way they were procured, and their fate after their receipt are all themes that need to be addressed.

In this respect, it should be noted that the symbolic value of gifts sometimes went beyond the usual meaning of “symbolic.” In his magnum opus, al-Qalqashandī reports an exchange of gifts between the king of Castile and al-Nāṣir Muḥammad that took place at an unspecified time.⁶⁵ With regard to the way to address the king of Castile (“the King of the Franks in Toledo, which is part of the lands of al-Andalus”), he explains that the king, whose title is al-Adhfūnsh (Alfonso),⁶⁶ was malicious and evil-intentioned toward the Muslims and that he once sent a gift to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad that included a sword, a Venetian garment, and a rectangular couch that resembled a bier, as if to say:

63 From a historical/lexicographical point of view, textiles were well served by a study like that of Serjeant, *Islamic textiles*, but the author largely overlooked the period that followed the seventh/thirteenth century, i.e., the Mamluk period: “These [Mamluk sources], however, lie outside the early period, which is being discussed here, and, indeed, would involve more research than time permits, for the post-Mongol period is very well documented.” Ibid. 27n51. Mayer, *Mamluk costume* is helpful in bridging the gap; but the author was mainly interested in costumes, not textiles: “The history of Mamluk costume—other than arms and armour—has to be written without taking the garments themselves into account.” Ibid. 11. New documents that prove useful for the study of both costumes and textiles in the Mamluk period can be found in al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf in Jerusalem. On this aspect, see Little, *The Ḥaram documents* 69 (no. 611). For more specific studies on Mamluk fabrics, see Marzouk, *History*; Hussein, *Mamlukische Kunstformen*; Ellis, *Embroideries and samplers*; Barnes and Ellis, *The Newberry collection* (catalog of the Newberry collection at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford). The most recent study accompanied by a catalog of Mamluk cloths preserved at the Benaki Museum in Athens, many of which are unpublished, and an up-to-date bibliography for Mamluk textiles is Sardi, *Mamluk textiles*. I thank the author for sharing a copy of her work. Recently, the Mongol textiles and costumes received the attention they deserved: Shea, *Mongol court dress*.

64 Cutler, *Gifts and gift exchange* 278.

65 The passage is borrowed from Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-‘Umārī, *al-Ta’rīf* 78, who was contemporary with the event reported here. He was born in 700/1301 and died in 749/1349, thus it took place during the second quarter of the first half of the eighth/fourteenth century.

66 The name Alfonso came to be used by the Mamluk chancery as a title for any of the Christian kings of Andalus. See below 362.

“I will kill you with this sword, then shroud you in this garment, and carry you [to the grave] on this bier.” By reply, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad sent a black rope and a stone, meaning: “You are a dog to which this stone is thrown at, or that is tied up with this rope.”⁶⁷ This story clarified the idea that gifts could have a specific meaning, like a rebus, in the way they were associated. Mamluk authors stressed the significance of this system of codes, which clerks working at the court could not ignore.⁶⁸ This kind of symbolic value attributed to gifts does not seem to have been at play between the Crown of Aragon and the Mamluk sultanate, two powers that maintained cordial diplomatic exchanges for most of the eighth/fourteenth century.

According to Mauss, “just as a courtesy has to be returned, so must an invitation.”⁶⁹ While the sociologist had in mind the invitation to social/religious events, his interpretation may serve as a starting point from which to analyze a phenomenon that appears in letters addressed by the king of Aragon to his Mamluk counterpart. In his letter dated 10 June 1309, James II invited al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to let him know if he was interested in any product from Aragon; he said: “Should you like anything from our realms or our lands, let us know.”⁷⁰ Even though such an invitation from the Aragonese side runs as a leitmotif through all subsequent correspondence between the two powers,⁷¹ it was never

67 Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-aʿshā* ix, 250.

68 See Bauden, *Les Relations diplomatiques* 13–4. On the function of gifts as non-verbal messages, particularly coded ones, as evidenced in the Arabic literature mainly from the Abbasid to the Ayyubid period, see Gherseti, *The rhetoric of gifts*.

69 Mauss, *The gift* 63.

70 See Masiá de Ros, *La Corona de Aragón* 303 (‘E si alcunes coses vos plaen de nostres regnes e de nostres terres fets nos o saber’).

71 See *ibid.* 305 (‘E Rey si en nostre Regnes ne en nostres terres son coses algunes que venguen de grat a la vostra altea françosament les requerits e les demanats cor nos havem gran volentat e harem grand plaer cumplir vostra volentat’ [letter dated 8 September 1314]); 311 (‘E si alcunes coses son en nostres regnes e en nostres terres que venguen de plaer a la vostra altea demanats les e requerits les francosament a nos, cor de cumplir vostra volentat nos navem gran cor e gran volentat en complirem molt agradablement’ [letter dated 27 August 1318]), 323 (‘E si a vos Rey plaen de nostres Regnes e de nostres terres coses alcunes molt vos pregam que les demanets cor nos molt agradosamente e pagada cumplirem ça que a vos placia’ [letter dated 13 February 1322]), 332 (‘E siats cert que d aço farets a nos molt gran plaer, ens obligarets a totes coses que vos ajats mester en los Regnes e terres nostres e vos ho grayrem molt; E si alcunes coses vos plaen d aquestes partides fets nos ho saber ab fianza d obtenir’ [letter dated 3 July 1327]), 337 (‘E si a vos Rey venen a plaer de nostres Regnes e terres coses algunes, pregam vos que les demanets, car nos molt pagadament e agradosa complirem ça que a vos placia; E jasia que les coses non sien daquella valor; ni en aquella quantitat ques covendria a la vostra altea e a nos; Empero per algun regoneximent de amiztat e en senyal de bona amor e pensant nos quens seran plasens’ [letter dated 1 July 1329]).

reciprocated on the Mamluk side. Such solicitude from Aragon was probably justified by its particular position; namely, a power that was trying to establish and maintain diplomatic relations with the Mamluk sultanate to gain some advantage. In each case, the embassies from Barcelona went to Cairo with one or more requests: the release of prisoners, the defense of Christian communities, the protection of the Holy Sepulchre. The Mamluk sultan was of course eager to keep the flow of Catalan merchants visiting its harbors but, apart from that commercial interest, which did not warrant diplomatic contacts, he never found himself in a position similar to that of the king of Aragon. Nevertheless, the Mamluk letters witness that he did not make special requests for specific goods from Aragon. In only one case, when the sultan acknowledged receipt of the gyrfalcons, do we perceive that this particular gift was highly appreciated.⁷² By contrast, in his letters to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, the king of Aragon included special requests, like one concerning St Barbara's relics, a request repeatedly sent but not fulfilled.⁷³ Sometimes these requests were only expressed in the ambassadors' instructions, as in 1322, when James II enjoined his emissaries to try to get from the sultan, apart from the saint's relics, pieces of the Holy Cross, and Christ's chalice, both said to be in the sultan's treasury.⁷⁴ James II also expressed his wish to receive, from the sultan or by any other means, the much sought-after bezoar, precisely described in the ambassadors' instructions as coming from India, being an antivenom and of various colors, the most precious being, by order of importance, yellow, then green, and finally dark.⁷⁵ Thus,

72 See above fn 60.

73 On this, see Vincke, *Die Gesandtschaften*; López de Meneses, *Pedro el Ceremonioso*.

74 'Item li diguen el preguen tant com pusguen que com lo Rey d Arago; axi com a ell e als altres Reys e princeps e altres crestians del mon se cove haia gran devocio en la Vera Creu; E haia antes quel Solda ne ha en son tresor en gran quantitat e haia entes encara que ell ha lo Calze en que Jeshu Xrist consegua lo dia de la Cena que li ho vulla trametre per los dits missatges; E haura li mostrada molt senyalada amor; E encara lo cors de Santa Barbara, lo qual es en son poder.' Masiá de Ros, *La Corona de Aragón* 325. The registers of objects from James II's royal chamber offered to various relatives and members of his court include numerous objects containing a piece of the Holy Cross, but there is no evidence that these pieces were procured by the sultan, rather they were acquired in various ways on the local markets. See Martínez Ferrando, *La cámara real* 42 ('et quandam aliam crucera argenti deauratam, et supra crucifixum est quadam crux de ligno Domini'), 43, 50 ('ligno vere crucis'), 71 ('crux veri ligni crucis nostri Domini Jhesuchristi'), 73 ('ligno vere et sancte crucis Domini'), 74 ('crux de sacro ligno, vere et digne crucis Domini'), 75, 76, 77, 79, 102, 115, 120, 124, 142, 143, 165, 173, 179, 180.

75 'Item sien informats los misatges de procurar e de haver ab tota diligencia del Solda sin ha en son poder, hon pora trobar e haver com mils puxen de una manera de pedres qui en lenguatge de persia es apellada betzaar qui es pedra de mena; E fas en les parts de India; E segons que metges dien val contra tot veni; E han de moltes colors entre les quals dien

James II's offers to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad were far from disinterested: the Mamluk sultan was invited to express his wishes, and in return, he would have been obliged to repay the Aragonese king by granting him some advantage or sending specific gifts that he did not usually offer.

In her seminal study, Doris Behrens-Abouseif noted that an analysis of the gifts offered by the Mamluks suggests that "the Mamluk sultans premeditatedly avoided making diplomatic gifts of objects that were common export goods."⁷⁶ This she based on the fact that Mamluk artifacts that were commonly imported by Europeans (silver inlaid metal vessels, enameled glass, glazed pottery, carpets) were not among the objects listed as gifts. The lists of gifts sent to the king of Aragon suggests that her statement is partially valid. The main artifact—as witnessed by its position at the top of the lists—was represented by various luxury samples of fabrics manufactured by the state atelier in Alexandria, fabrics that were customized, in some cases, with the addition of embroidery of the titles and the names of the sultan. Such artifacts could not be found in the local markets, as textiles bearing such inscriptions were reserved for the elite who received such fabrics from the sultan's treasury upon their nomination to an official position in the Mamluk apparatus. Most of the items sent to the king of Aragon varied in their composition (silk, linen, cotton), their colors (multicolored, single colored), their decoration (embroidered bands with or without writing, animal and human figures, vegetal ornaments), and their sizes. Such artifacts were exclusive objects that reflected court practices: these fabrics were worn by the sultan himself, his mamluks, the military, and civil servants, and foreign representatives could admire them when they were displayed during official ceremonies at the palace or in the streets of Cairo. During al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's reign, textiles and costumes also underwent a watershed development.⁷⁷ At the same time, James II was known for his interest in garments.⁷⁸ The Mamluks' gifts of such excellent samples—items that could not be found in local markets—showed the capabilities of the state atelier and must have been enthusiastically welcomed by the Aragonese.⁷⁹

los savis que val mes la gropa; e puy la vert; e puy la foscha' Masiá de Ros, *La Corona de Aragón* 325.

76 Behrens-Abouseif, *Practising diplomacy* 170.

77 Walker, *Rethinking Mamluk textiles* 168 and 171.

78 Martínez Ferrando, *Datos sobre el vestuario* 231 ('No fué Jaime II un monarca indiferente a la ostentación en el vestir, tanto en lo que se refiere a su persona como a las de sus hijos'). The significance given to the garments worn by members of an Aragonese embassy was also part of the process. See also Péquignot, *Au nom du roi* 254–7. On costumes in Catalonia during the fourteenth century, see Aymerich Bassols, *L'art de la indumentària*.

79 Several of these fabrics were then offered by James II to some of his relatives and members

Apart from the fabrics, the Mamluk sultan's gifts also included arms, such as handbows and pellet-bows. Such artifacts could not be bought locally by foreign merchants, nor could they be exported, though the pellet-bows were mainly used for hunting purposes. The bows manufactured in Damascus were particularly renowned; we notice that most of the bows received by James II were then distributed to his sons.⁸⁰ Balsam oil, which was produced as a state monopoly, was systematically included among the gifts. Due to the symbolic value of this gift, particularly for Christian monarchs, and the difficulty of procuring it outside the sultan's treasury,⁸¹ it is not surprising that this product was highly prized by the king of Aragon.⁸² The container in which it was presented, a glass bottle, was also part of the gift and was certainly another example of the high quality of Mamluk craftsmanship—such a detail was hardly overlooked by the chancery.⁸³ Finally, spices were incorporated: aloeswood and candied ginger. These products could be considered export goods, and indeed, Catalan merchants traded in them, but in quantities that are poorly documented for the beginning of the eighth/fourteenth century.⁸⁴ Thus, for the period under consideration such products still represented hard-to-find commodities.⁸⁵

On the Aragonese side, the lists of gifts illustrate a different situation. Though the products itemized are characterized as “some treasures from our land,”⁸⁶ none were manufactured in or were from Aragon. The gyrfalcons were imported from the subarctic regions, while the various pieces of fabric came from France or Flanders (Châlons, Reims, Douai, Ypres). The choice of the gyrfalcons was a strategic one: there was no more prized gift in terms of economic and symbolic value in the eyes of the Mamluk sultan. As for the fabrics, the king of Aragon tried to respond in kind to the most precious of the Mamluk gifts. However, he was unable to send any kind of fabric manufactured in Aragon, as

of his court. See Martínez Ferrando, *La cámara real* 17, 21, 30, 31, 46, 96, 115, 124, 139, 142, 146, 165, 170, 177, 199, 205.

80 Ibid. 98, 143, 199–200.

81 On the sultan's treasury, see below 361.

82 It features regularly among the gifts James II offered to his relatives and members of his entourage. See *ibid.* 98, 100, 143, 157, 176, 199–200.

83 For the possible identification of such a container for balsam oil, see fig. 13.18.

84 The data we have regard a period that follows the one considered here, as it starts from the mid-eighth/fourteenth century. See Coulon, *Barcelone* 443–9 (for ginger). Only sandalwood is mentioned and in small quantities (*ibid.* 470).

85 Both products were shared by James II with his relatives and entourage. See Martínez Ferrando, *La cámara real* 17, 30, 60, 67, 81, 98, 99, 100, 111, 142–3, 148, 157, 199–200.

86 ‘alcunes joyes de nostra terra’. See above fn 26.

the quality of these products was well below those produced in Flanders, northern France, or Italy.⁸⁷ Finally, the gray squirrel hides (“penes vayres”) originated in the subarctic regions, like the gyrfalcons.⁸⁸

The procurement of the goods exchanged by the two rulers is also worthy of investigation. On the Mamluk side, the lists undoubtedly indicate that the items were prepared and thus selected from among the goods that were kept in the sultan’s treasury. The office of the treasury took charge of all the gifts that were made at the sultan’s request, whether in a diplomatic or internal context. The treasury contained products that were local, like pieces of fabrics specifically manufactured by the state atelier of Alexandria, robes of honor,⁸⁹ arms, or balsam oil. Other goods from abroad, such as aloeswood and candied ginger that had been received as gifts or imported, were also kept in rooms of the treasury and could be recycled whenever necessary.⁹⁰

In Barcelona, as we saw, none of the goods sent to Cairo could be described as local products, contrary to what the letters suggested and despite the king’s invitation to the sultan to inform the ambassadors about specific Aragonese goods he might wish for. The goods offered as gifts had to be chosen from the contents of the royal chamber or otherwise acquired. Concerning the Mamluk sultan, the second option seems to have been applied, as is documented. Through a document dated 20 December 1321,⁹¹ James II granted a certain Geraldo de Olivera all the profits he would make during the trip to Alexandria in exchange for transporting the king’s ambassadors and his gifts for the sultan. Thanks to this, we know that the choice of gifts and their respective quantities had been decided more than eight months before the embassy was finally sent, and that de Olivera was asked to acquire the said gifts at his own expense, though he received 15,000 “*solidos*” from the king for the concession thus granted.⁹² If this was not an exceptional case, we can conclude that gifts

87 See Coulon, *Barcelone* 318.

88 See Ashtor, *Levant trade* 163.

89 *Khil’a* (pl. *khila’*) in Arabic. On robes of honor in general, see Gordon, *Robes and honor*. For the Mamluk period, see Mayer, *Mamluk costume* 56–64; Petry, *Robing ceremonies*.

90 Both commodities came from East Asia and were regularly among the gifts sent by the Rasulid sultans of Yemen. See below fn 157 for the aloeswood and fn 168 for ginger.

91 The letter addressed to the sultan is dated 11 September 1322. See Masiá de Ros, *La Corona de Aragón* 322–5.

92 “Teneamini etiam procurare emere vestris sumptibus et habere quinque falcones gerifaltes primis inter quos sit unus albus si poterit reperiri et duas pecias preseti rubei, alteram de Duay et alteram de Ipre: item duas pecias panni de Xalone optimi, alteram coloris lividi clari et alteram coloris viridi festaquini: item octo pennas varias et sex pecias telarum de Rems tenues et obtimas.” See Masiá de Ros, 320 (where “de Ipre” was not properly read). The amount mentioned can be compared with those attributed for other embassies. See

for the Mamluk sultan were bought specifically for him, and based on the nature of the products, they were all procured abroad, despite what the message in the letters conveyed.⁹³

If we observe the way the goods were arranged in the lists from both the Aragonese and Mamluk sides, we can glean some information on the economic and symbolic value attributed to them by the sender.⁹⁴ For Aragon, we notice that the gyrfalcons appeared first. They are followed by the luxury fabrics, respectively in order of importance: the vermilion *pressets*⁹⁵ and the *draps* of Châlons (*Xalo*). The gray squirrel furs are next, just before the Reims cloths (*teles*).⁹⁶ From the Mamluk side, the various kinds of fabrics always precede the other categories of goods, which are displayed in the following order: bows, balsam oil, aloeswood, and ginger.⁹⁷ This order of precedence reveals that the goods with a higher economic value were also luxury items.

The narrative of the Ethiopian embassy with which this article opened demonstrates that the value of gifts were assessed by the Mamluk chancery, though we do not know the basis for such an economic estimate. Unfortunately, we lack information regarding a similar phenomenon at the Aragonese court. Of course, the economic value was important but was not the only way to appreciate a gift. Beauty, rarity, luxury, and utility were criteria that could increase the merit of a gift in the eyes of its recipient. For the Mamluks, the gyrfalcons from the king of Aragon certainly represented the most valuable gifts in terms of price, rarity, beauty, and utility. Their placement at the top of the list and their recurrence from one list to another, even with an increase in numbers, illustrate that the Aragonese court was fully aware of their importance. Specifically, the white variety was known to be extremely sought-after in the Mamluk realm, and the Crown of Aragon did not neglect

Péquignot, *Au nom du roi* 255–6. In 1313, a safe conduct was issued by James II's chancery in favor of a merchant at the king's service who was requested to travel to France, England, and Provence to procure gyrfalcons for the king's personal use. See Martínez Ferrando, *Jaime II* ii, 89 (no. 134).

93 See appendix 2, lists 2–5, where each list is introduced by words like: 'Aquestes coses davyal escrites son preses de la casa e del rebost del Rey d'Arago' (These things written below were taken from the house and the treasury of the king of Aragon).

94 See the various lists in appendix 1 and 2.

95 This was a kind of fabric, most often in vermilion, and said to be of Persian origin. See Gual Camarena, *Vocabulario*, s.v. "presset"; Farauto de Saint-Germain, *Vocabulari*, s.v. "perset" and "preset." The varieties sent by the king of Aragon included those manufactured in Douai and Ypres.

96 The Reims cloths precede the gray squirrel furs only once (see list 3 in appendix 2).

97 The last three elements are not always included together in the four lists. In one case, the aloeswood precedes the balsam oil (see list 1 in appendix 1).

this.⁹⁸ On one occasion, in 730/1330, we see that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad even went as far as to express his contentment for receiving five specimens.⁹⁹ As for the gifts received on the Aragonese side, except for one ambassador's appreciation,¹⁰⁰ we only know that the goods were appreciated through their redistribution to various members of the royal family and of the court, as the registers of the royal chamber confirm.¹⁰¹

The lists of gifts on both sides also provide a wealth of information on patterns regarding the quantities of each item, though we must keep in mind that the lists from each side are not exactly contemporary (from 699/1300 to 719/1319 for the Mamluks and from 1314 to 1329 for Aragon). For the Mamluk side, we notice that, with the start of the exchange of embassies from 699/1300 (see table 13.1), some categories of gifts were already regularly included in the dispatch: fabrics, handbows and pellet-bows, aloeswood, balsam oil, and ginger were the usual goods sent to the king of Aragon, while gyrfalcons, fabrics, and gray squirrel hides constituted the three main kinds of gifts sent to the Mamluk sultan. The variation in the quantities of each category is also significant: from 705/1306, all the quantities doubled or nearly doubled for each category on the Mamluk side.¹⁰² As for Aragon (see table 13.2), the quantities of goods offered slightly changed in 1318: that year, the number of fabrics was almost halved (from 18 to 10) and the number of gray squirrel hides decreased from 12 to 8. These numbers were maintained for the next two embassies, but in 1322, the number of gyrfalcons increased significantly from 3 to 5. This shift in quantity shows that the Aragonese chancery must have taken into consider-

98 In preparation for the 1323 embassy, a request was made to procure five gyrfalcons including one white, if it could be spotted. See fn 92. According to a contemporary testimony, the white variety could fetch up to 1,000 dinars in Egypt at the end of the seventh/thirteenth century. See Allsen, *Falconry* 142. In 1347, Pope Clement VI granted the king of Sweden a five-year authorization to sell gyrfalcons to the sultan of Cairo, a further proof that the Mamluk sultans' taste for gyrfalcons was as renowned as the animal itself. See Hildebrand, *Svenskt diplomatarium* v, 711–2 (no. 4230). See also Alkhateeb Shehada, *From the far North*.

99 See fn 60.

100 In 1306, the ambassador Eymerich Dusay spoke of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's gifts itemized in list 2 as being 'alcunes altres coses que son asats poques' (a few other things that are not much). See Masiá de Ros, *La Corona de Aragón* 297. This assessment may be linked to the negative outcome of his embassy and his desire to belittle what the Mamluk sultan offered to James II.

101 See above fn 79, 80, 82, 85.

102 Aloeswood is missing from the 719/1319 list, but there is some confusion in the translation. The quantity of candied ginger is expressed in dirhams, a unit normally used for the aloeswood. Moreover, several pieces of aloeswood were offered by James II to several of his relatives and members of the court the same year, which proves that aloeswood was part of the Mamluk gift. See Martínez Ferrando, *La cámara real* 142–3.

TABLE 13.1 Gifts offered by the Mamluk sultan to the King of Aragon

Year	Fabrics	Hand- bows	Pellet- bows	Aloeswood	Balsam oil	Ginger
699/1300	10	5	3	2 (pieces)	60 (<i>mithqāls</i>)	3 (jars)
705/1306	20	10	5	1,000 (dirhams)	120 (<i>mithqāls</i>)	–
714/1315	20	10	5	1,000 (dirhams)	120 (<i>mithqāls</i>)	5 (jars)
719/1319	20	10	5	–	120 (bezants)	5 (dirhams?)

TABLE 13.2 Gifts offered by the King of Aragon to the Mamluk sultan

Year	Gyrfalcons	Fabrics	Hides
1314	3 (white)	18	12 (gray squirrel)
1318	3 (1 white, 2 gray)	10	8 (gray squirrel)
1322	5	10	8 (gray squirrel)
1329	5 (gray)	10	8 (gray squirrel)

ation the preference for the gyrfalcons on the Mamluk side. Their procurement from the subarctic zone made them a particularly expensive gift. The comparison of the lists on each side thus reveals a pattern related to the value of the gifts as a whole: the value must have remained generally the same, though some modifications were made from one category to another. Another pattern at play relates to the lists on the Mamluk side, where the gifts were always reciprocal: here, it is the invariability of the lists that is striking, even though the types of fabrics could vary greatly as the three lists preserved show.

Gifts worked as vehicles that embodied the sender's intent with regard to the recipient and his court. In this context, gifts became the property of the ruler who received them. It is reasonable to wonder what happened to these objects. That is, what was the afterlife of gifts? Once the gifts were received on the Aragonese side, there are indications that some of the objects were transferred to the royal chamber. For James II's reign, we know of one example of an inventory carried out by the chamberlain in 1323, detailing the contents of the royal chamber.¹⁰³ The perusal of this list is rather disappointing in terms

103 It was published by Martorell y Trabal, *Inventari dels bens*. It is also reproduced in Martínez Ferrando, *La cámara real* 182–98.

of items that can be identified as produced in the Mamluk realm. Only a few pieces of textiles are indicated as Alexandrian products,¹⁰⁴ while the origin of a few additional objects is described very broadly as either *morisch*¹⁰⁵ or *sarrahi-nesch*.¹⁰⁶ Any attempt to associate one of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's gifts offered to James II with one of the Alexandrian textiles recorded in this inventory is impossible, because the descriptions do not necessarily coincide and none of these is indicated as a gift received from the Mamluk sultan.

However, other documents preserved at the ACA prove more useful in our attempt to understand how and when exactly the gifts were recycled upon receipt. These documents were written by James II's chamberlain who took note of the gifts that were made in the king's name to various people (the king's children, relatives, religious and civil authorities, etc.) between 1302 and 1326.¹⁰⁷ One of these documents consists of a list of objects that were distributed on 1 July 1315. These objects included various quantities of balsam oil, numerous pieces of aloeswood, ten bows, six pellet-bows, eighteen pieces of fabrics, and four containers of candied ginger.¹⁰⁸ If we compare this list of objects with the list of gifts dispatched by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in 714/1315 (see table 13.1), we immediately notice that the quantities tally exactly with those reported in the list or are slightly less than them.¹⁰⁹ More than a mere coincidence (the Mamluk letter is dated 10 Dhū l-Ḥijja 714/17 March 1315, two and one-half months before the above-mentioned objects were distributed), the correlation between

104 Martorell y Trabal, *Inventari dels bens 558* ('item .i. traverser ab cuberta de bort d Alexandria'), 559 ('item .i. pessa de bort d Alexandria de seda listada ab camp vermell'), 561 ('item .iii. draps de seda e .ii. borts d Alexandria, [...], item .i. pessa de drap appellat bort d Alexandria a semblant de manil').

105 Ibid. 555 ('item .ii. palis de drap d aur morischs') and 558 ('correja de seda de obra morischa').

106 Ibid. 557 ('item .i. cuyr redon veyl ab obres sarrahinesques') and 558 ('item .ii. lits sarrahineschs de sandell. item .i. lit sarrahinesch d os trencat e afoilat').

107 These documents were published by Martínez Ferrando, *La cámara real*.

108 Ibid. 97–9. The balsam oil was distributed in a small flask (*barralet*) or vial (*amphiol*), the aloeswood in pieces (*pecia*). The candied ginger is described as *gingebrata* with no indication (in the wording itself) of what kind of container it was in.

109 With one noticeable exception: the pellet-bows. Five were sent and six were given. It is possible that there is a mistake in the list. Martínez Ferrando, *La cámara real* 98 was unable to interpret the word describing the pellet-bow: 'duos ... de Roclono ? de cornu' where "Roclono" should be read "Rotlo" or "Rotlon", i.e., pellet. See Gual Camarena, *Vocabulario*, under "rotlons" (in a document dated 1432, 'no gos tirar als murs ne torres del Temple pedres ne rotlons, ab balestes ne archs'). It should also be noted that, apart from the gifts mentioned above, four portable wood tabernacles were allotted. These could have been brought back by the ambassador who acquired them during his stay in Egypt or they may have been among the objects kept by the royal chamber.

the two lists reveals that the sultan's gifts were offered by James II shortly after they were received. The 1319 list, which is available only in translation,¹¹⁰ confirms that the Aragonese king was accustomed to allotting the sultan's offerings almost upon receipt, because the dates and the quantities once again coincide. The letter was issued on 14 Şafar 719/6 April 1319 and the gifts were redistributed, together with other objects from the royal chamber, by James II on 6 August of the same year.¹¹¹ The gifts included several pieces of aloeswood, five vials of balsam oil, one large jar of candied ginger, six bows, five pellet-bows, and nine pieces of fabric.¹¹² The gifts that were not fully shared on such occasions were kept in the royal chamber for other opportunities, as the registers once again confirm.¹¹³

By considering the recycling of diplomatic gifts, we close the circle of gift exchange between the kingdom of Aragon and the Mamluk sultanate. As we saw, both sides carefully selected the objects and the products they wanted to share. On one hand, the Mamluks mainly opted for local goods, thus encouraging the spread of luxury products that were manufactured in the sultanate and of spices that transited via its markets. On the other hand, Aragon chose to send luxury products of foreign origin, thus encouraging the trade in goods guaranteeing high profit margins, goods that its merchants distributed in the markets of North Africa and the Near East. All in all, each actor acted similarly: both of them economized.¹¹⁴

110 See appendix 2, list 1 and table 7.

111 Martínez Ferrando, *La cámara real* 142–3; Martínez Ferrando, *Jaime II* ii, 210–1.

112 Martínez Ferrando, *La cámara real* 142–3. Some of the fabrics are described as Alexandrian and mainly made of decorated silk ('de sirico lista'), by which one must understand that they had bands of embroidered inscriptions. In this case, the number of pellet-bows corresponds to the exact number of pieces that were offered, which seems to confirm that for 1315 there must be a mistake in the list.

113 Other pieces of aloeswood and a medium-sized vial of balsam oil are offered one month later (2 August 1315; *ibid.* 100). The same process is observed in 1319: on 18 August, two pieces of fabrics with gold brocade and lined with white fabric ('duos pannos auri saracénicos forratos de panno albo') are attributed (*ibid.* 106). On 5 October 1323, other objects were offered to the queen and various other persons (*ibid.* 199–200). The list includes numerous objects similar to those usually sent by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad (fabrics, some indicated as from Alexandria, handbows and pellet-bows, balsam oil, aloeswood). A Mamluk letter was addressed to James II on 15 Şafar 723/23 February 1323 (ACA, Real Cancillería, *Cartas árabes*, no. 150; Alarcón y Santón and García de Linares, *Los documentos* 365–6). Even though the letter does not mention gifts, it can be understood from the distribution that took place seven months later that gifts were indeed offered on that occasion.

114 Cutler, *Gifts and gift exchanges* 278.

Appendix 1: Edition, Translation, and Commentary of the Three
Mamluk Lists of Gifts Preserved at the ACA

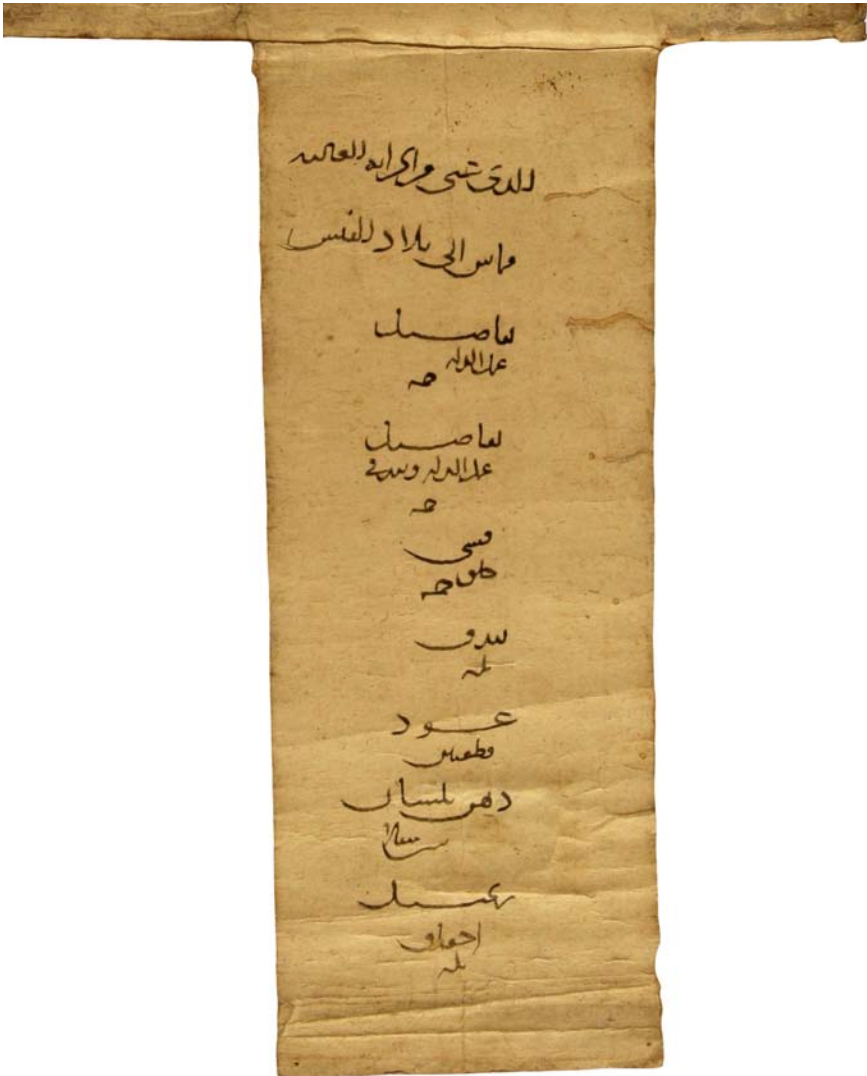


FIGURE 13.11 ACA, Cartas árabes, no. 146, recto

List no. 1¹¹⁵ (attached to letter dated 5 Rajab 699/27 March 1300).

Description

The document consists of a sheet of Oriental paper (with laid lines perpendicular to the text; chain lines are not visible) measuring between 92 and 96 mm wide and 244 and 246 mm long. The sheet is pasted to the end of the roll that corresponds to the letter. Before being pasted to the roll, the sheet was folded once vertically as the fold visible on the picture (see fig. 13.11) demonstrates. The first line of the text starts 30 mm from the upper edge. The right margin varies from a minimum of 28 mm (l. 1) to a maximum of 37 mm (l. 6), with an average of 33 mm. The interlinear space measures between 20 and 24 mm. Apart from slight damage in the right margin caused by paper worms, the state of the document can be assessed to be fair. As is the case with the roll, this sheet was restored with another sheet of paper pasted on its back; in it a small frame was cut out so a small inscription that appears on the verso of the document remains visible (see fig. 13.13). It seems, however, that the beginning of the inscription was covered by the pasted sheet. With one exception (l. 2), the text is entirely devoid of diacritical dots and some parts were written in a hurried handwriting (unauthorized ligatures, numbers in full letters written in the *siyāqa* style), which may impair its decipherment.

Edition

Recto.

الذي عبي من الخزانة العالية	1
قماش الى بلاد الفنش	2
تفاصيل	3
عمل الدار	4
خمسة	5
تفاصيل	6
عمل الدار وبندي	7
خمسة	8
قسي	9
حلق	10
خمسة	11
بندي	12
ثلاثة	13

115 ACA, Real Cancillería, Cartas árabes, no. 146. First published and translated in Alarcón y Santón and García de Linares, *Los documentos* 346 (edition) and 349 (translation). Alarcón y Santón and García de Linares' edition was also reproduced, with no attempt to improve their decipherment, by al-Ḥajjī, *al-'Alāqāt* 114. The contents were analyzed on the basis of the above-mentioned poorly edited version by Behrens-Abouseif, *Practising diplomacy* 96.

عود	14
قطعتين	15
دهن بلسان	16
ستين مثقالا	17
زنجبيل	18
احقاق	19
ثلاثة	20

Diacritical dots: l. 2: القدس.

Verso.

[الحمد لله وحده وصلى الله على سيدنا محمد واله وسلم] 1

Translation

Recto.

- 1 What was supplied from the lofty treasury
- 2 Cloth [to be sent] to the lands of Alfonso
- 3 Pieces of fabrics
- 4 Made by the [royal] manufacture
- 5 Five [pieces]
- 6 Pieces of fabrics
- 7 Made by the [royal] manufacture and Venetian
- 8 Five [pieces]
- 9 Bows
- 10 Bows with [thumb] rings
- 11 Five [pieces]
- 12 Pellet-bows
- 13 Three [pieces]
- 14 Aloeswood
- 15 Two pieces
- 16 Balsam oil
- 17 Sixty *mithqāls*
- 18 Ginger
- 19 Jars
- 20 Three

Verso.

- 1 Praise be to God alone and God bless our lord Muḥammad and his family and grant them salvation

Commentary

Recto.

L. 1. *‘ubbī’a*: the verb *‘aba’a* and its second form *‘abba’a* have a similar meaning, which is “to pack up, prepare, arrange things.” The second form is probably meant here as we see with list no. 2, ll. 2 and 8. The translation adopted (“to supply”) takes into consideration the complement that follows, which indicates an origin.

al-khizāna al-‘āliya: “the lofty treasury” or “the lofty chest” was one of the offices of state held by an inspector. Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-‘Umarī (d. 749/1349), a former secretary who authored a chancery manual, describes this office as follows:

Initially the Chest was of great standing because it was the depository of the wealth of the realm. However, when the Privy (*al-khāṣṣ*) Purse establishment was introduced, it weakened the importance of this one, called the Chest. It began to be referred to as the Great Chest, but this is a case of the title exceeding what it describes. Nowadays it retains nothing except robes of honour which are distributed by it or casual revenues which are received and disbursed. For the most part the Inspector is a judge or some associate of a judge.¹¹⁶

The “office of the chest” was thus responsible for the supply of robes of honor (*khila‘*) distributed to various people—those appointed to official positions, but not exclusively as ambassadors, for instance, were also entitled to such robes upon their arrival and departure. However, this list of gifts, as well as the two others, indicates that this office was also in charge of the supply of offerings to be sent to foreign rulers. Clothes could be defined as *khazā’inī*, i.e., from the treasury.¹¹⁷ In list no. 2 (ll. 2–3), the office is described in fuller terms (*al-mawlawiyya al-sultāniyya al-malakīyya al-nāṣiriyya*, i.e., “the lofty treasury of our lord the sultan al-Malik al-Nāṣir”), while in list no. 3, l. 1 (dated 714/1315), the word *khāṣṣ* (privy) is appended to it, indicating that a change had taken place, to which Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-‘Umarī hints: after his third accession to the sultanate, in 709/1310, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad strengthened his grip on power and introduced several measures, among others, the abrogation of the vizierate and the establishment of the privy purse.¹¹⁸ The institution of the latter deprived the office of the treasury of all its substance.¹¹⁹

116 Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-‘Umarī, *Masālik al-abṣār* 121 = trans. Richards 36. See also al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-a’shā* iv, 31.

117 Serjeant, *Islamic textiles* 11.

118 Levanoni, *A turning point* 30.

119 By the end of the century, the evolution was complete and the room devoted to the treasury was transformed into a prison, while its contents (robes of honor) were kept by the inspector of the privy purse at his own house. See al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawā’iz wa-l-i’tibār* iii, 735.

L. 2. *qumāsh*: as underlined by Mayer, who devoted a full appendix to it at the end of his seminal study on Mamluk costumes,¹²⁰ this is an obscure word that can refer to cloth or clothing, and in the latter case, various kinds of clothing. In the context of the list studied here, the word clearly means cloth or any woven textile, given that all the words that follow refer to various kinds of fabrics and not garments.

bilād Alfūnsh: the ruling king of Aragon at the time the letter and the appended list of gifts were issued was not named Alfonso but James. The way the Mamluk chancery referred to the kingdom of Aragon in its official correspondence was obviously not based on factual elements, but on a kind of internal memory based on past events. Undoubtedly, the negotiations that led to the conclusion of a truce (*hudna*) between King Alfonso III (r. 1286–91) and al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn (r. 678–89/1279–90), at the former's explicit request, contributed to the establishment of such a memory. In the document of the truce, Alfonso III's name is rendered as "Alfūnsh" and his territories are referred to as *bilād al-Raydarāghūn* (the lands of *el Rey d'Aragón*, the Spanish rendition of 'the king of Aragon').¹²¹ According to al-Qalqashandī, by the end of the eighth/fourteenth century, "Adfūnash" had become the standard way for the chancery to refer to the Spanish kings, be it the king of Aragon, of Castile, or anyone else, while the form most commonly used was "Alfunsh."¹²²

L. 3. *tafāṣīl*: the plural of *tafṣīla*, the *ism al-marra* (*nomen vicis*) of the verb *faṣṣala*, one of the meanings of which is well attested in dictionaries: "to cut a piece of cloth for a garment" or "to cut out a garment." In its technical sense of "a piece of cloth cut out for a garment," *tafṣīla* only appears in very specialized glossaries.¹²³ Serjeant renders *tafāṣīl* as garments,¹²⁴ but this appears too far-fetched, as what is meant is really a piece of cloth, as in this case. In list 3, l. 5, we see that the cloth is mentioned as not tailored (*qumāsh ghayr mufaṣṣal*), a further confirmation that the terms used to describe the textiles refer to types of fabrics and not garments. Furthermore, these cuts were given in a measurement sufficient to produce a garment.

L. 4. *ʿamal al-dār*: in her study of textiles, Kalfon interpreted these words as describing "a special confection" or as meaning "home made."¹²⁵ Atiya opted for a more specific translation with regard to list no. 2: "home-manufactured (i.e., in the state fac-

120 Mayer, *Mamluk costume* 75–80. See also Kalfon Stillman, *Arab dress* 70.

121 See Ibn ʿAbd al-Zāhir, *Tashrif al-ayyām* 157 and 160.

122 Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-aʿshā* v, 484; Holt, Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's letter 24. On the difficulty Mamluk chancery secretaries had in figuring out who was ruling over what in the Iberian peninsula, see König, *Arabic-Islamic views* 319–22.

123 For instance Dozy, *Supplément* ii, 272.

124 Serjeant, *Islamic textiles* 150.

125 Kalfon Stillman, *Arab dress* 58; Stillman, *Female attire*, 97n2 ('All production of this kind was carried out in homes, but some garments were especially cut and fit').

tory).¹²⁶ *Dār* (home) is indeed used here with a very specific meaning, i.e., the *dār al-ṭirāz*, the textile mill, a state-run atelier that produced cloth—including the annual veil (*kiswa*) for the Ka'ba in Mecca—for the state but not exclusively.¹²⁷ It draws its name from the woven or embroidered inscriptions containing the sultan's titles and name, one of the sultan's prerogatives through which he expressed his power.¹²⁸ In the period under consideration, Alexandria was the most important city for the manufacture of fabrics, both in terms of variety and quality, as witnessed by the description provided by Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī.¹²⁹ By contrast, al-Qalqashandī stressed that this state-run atelier manufactured the tailored clothes for the sultan, and various kinds of fabrics were brought from it to the privy purse.¹³⁰ However, the expression *'amal al-dār* appearing in the lists under consideration here also must have covered another meaning, i.e., a specific type of cloth. This is evidenced by the fact that *'amal al-dār* appears together with other kinds of cloth (see l. 7 below), but also because other types of cloths known to be products of the textile mill in Alexandria are connected with the *'amal al-dār* type as, for instance, in the following quotation: "One thousand cuts of fabrics with wild animal chase (*ṭardwaḥsh*)¹³¹ [scenes] and of the *'amal al-dār* [type] were carried to the treasury."¹³² The *ṭardwaḥsh* was in fact produced by the state-run textile mills as is confirmed by Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī:

Ṭardwaḥsh, which is produced in the Fabrics Manufactory (*Dār al-Ṭirāz*) in Alexandria, Fustat and Damascus, consists of bands (*jākhāt*), some of which have inscriptions giving the Sultan's titles, others the "hunt" motif or birds, and

126 Atiya, *Egypt and Aragon* 31.

127 On this institution in general before the Mamluk period, see Kalfon Stillman and Sanders, *Ṭirāz*; for the Mamluk period, see Marzouk, *History of textile industry* 65–80; Kalfon Stillman, *Arab dress* 133–7.

128 Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-'ashā* iv, 7.

129 Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī, *Masā'il al-abṣār* 150–1 = trans. Richards 51.

130 Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-'ashā* xi, 426.

131 This type of fabric is one of the rare examples in which a name provided by the sources can be identified beyond doubt with artifacts that have been preserved. The first who made the link between this technical name and the preserved artifacts is Marzouk, *History of textile* 59–60. For an illustration of one example datable to the reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, see Mackie, *Symbols of power*, fig. 7.20 (three embroidered bands, one in the middle representing a hunting scene with a leopard attacking an antelope with a tree on each side [the motif is repeated], and two above and below with the same inscription repeated and giving the titles and name of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad). For more examples, see also Sardi, *Mamluk textiles* i, 66–7, 222–3.

132 Al-'Aynī, *Iqd al-jumān* v, 245 ('wa-ḥumila ayḍan ilā l-khizāna tafāṣīl ṭardwaḥsh wa-'amal al-dār alf tafāṣīla') about Sallār's personal belongings, which were confiscated upon his arrest in 710/1310.

yet other colors mixed with gold thread (*qaṣab*). Decorations (*nuqūsh*), embroidered (*ṭirāz*) with gold thread, are intercalated between these panels.¹³³

L. 7. *bunduqī*: this adjective can refer to the city of Venice (al-Bunduqiyya) or the hazelnut (*bunduq*), thus either from Venice or of a color which is close to hazel. Given that the adjective is connected to *ʿamal al-dār* (made by the [royal] manufacture) by the conjunction ‘and,’ the color is not meant here, rather it refers to two types of fabrics. According to Ashtor, *bunduqī* used alone in sources can only allude to a cloth manufactured in Venice that was made of a material other than wool, because in such a case it would be rendered by the expression *jūkh bunduqī*.¹³⁴ A Yemeni source from the end of the seventh/thirteenth century, the *Nūr al-maʿārif*, which consists of a collection of documents related to taxes applied in Yemeni harbors during the reign of al-Muẓaffar Yūsuf (r. 647–94/1250–95) and gathered at his death, already mentions a Venetian cloth clearly imported from Venice¹³⁵ that was locally embroidered with silk. However, could a cloth imported from Venice be meant in our list? If this was the case, it would have been a luxury good given that it was offered to the king of Aragon. Nevertheless, it is unlikely that the Mamluk sultan would include among his gifts to a Christian ruler a product imported from another Christian power. Gifts were the occasion for Mamluks to symbolically express their power by offering the best products of their country or the part of the world where they reigned. Of course, *bunduqī* could also be used to describe a kind of cloth of Venetian inspiration, i.e., an imitation.¹³⁶ The author of *Nūr al-maʿārif* indeed provides some evidence for the existence of an Egyptian fabric called *bunduqī*.¹³⁷ Thanks to this source, we know that this fabric was particularly difficult to sew because of the high quality of its thread and its width.¹³⁸ According to the same

133 Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-ʿUmarī, *Masālik al-abṣār* 131 (‘al-ṭardwaḥsh yuʿmal bi-Dār al-ṭirāz bi-l-Iskandariyya wa-bi-Miṣr wa-bi-Dimashq wa-huwa mujawwakh jākhāt kitāba bi-alqāb al-sulṭān wa-jākhāt ṭardwaḥsh aw-ṭayr wa-jākhāt alwān mumtazij bi-qaṣab mudhahhab tufaṣṣal bayna hādhihi l-jākhāt nuqūsh wa-ṭirāz hādha min al-qaṣab’) = trans. Richards 41. The translation was slightly adapted to better reflect the text.

134 Ashtor, *Les Lainages* 672.

135 Anonymous, *Nūr al-maʿārif* i, 288–9.

136 Anonymous, *Nūr al-maʿārif* i, 142–4. See also Vallet, *Entre deux “mondes”* 217–8, where the author misunderstood the passage as meaning that *bunduqī* referred to a kind of silk for embroideries. The term, mentioned along with another type of cloth—the *sūsī*—, is used to define the kind of cloth that was embroidered and not the material used for the embroideries. In the text, various qualities (*raṭī* or ‘*āl*’ high’, *wasat* ‘medium’, *khashin* ‘coarse’) are listed for both types of cloth which could be decorated with various types of embroideries.

137 Anonymous, *Nūr al-maʿārif* i, 521, where the fabric is mentioned along with other types of cloth (*sūsīyya*, *maqṭaʿ*) of Egyptian origin. The author specifically adds “and the other kinds of Egyptian fabrics” (*wa-sāʿir aṣnāf al-bazz al-miṣri*).

138 *Ibid.* 149 (‘wa-l-bunduqī ʿasir ayḍan li-ajl raṭʿ khayṭihi wa-li-ajl ʿurḍihi’).

source, when this fabric entered the treasury, it was three cubits (*dhirāʿ*), nine fingers (*iṣbaʿ*) less one-sixth long.¹³⁹ This interpretation better suits the context of this list of gifts and is supported by the context just evoked: these cuts of fabrics must have been a mixture of material of the kind typical of the local production (“made by the [royal] manufacture”) and another that was a Venetian-style fabric. Otherwise, there would be no reason to differentiate between the item listed just before (l. 4) and this one.¹⁴⁰

Ll. 9–10. *qusī ḥalaq*: *qaws* (sg. of *qusī*) designates any type of bow. The appended word (*ḥalaq* “ring”) specifies the kind of bows, i.e., handbows, with a drawing-ring to pull back the strings, and draw the bow.¹⁴¹ In list 2, l. 25, the handbows are described in a more precise way: *qusī ḥalaq lil-yad* (“bows with [thumb] rings for the hand”). The handbows offered here were of the composite type, which implies that the bow was made of a wood core, sinew backing, and horn belly, as opposed to a long bow.¹⁴² The composite bow was renowned as a warfare weapon¹⁴³ and was particularly appreciated as a gift. We do not know where they were produced, but a passage regarding a list of gifts dispatched by the Mamluk sultan to the khan of the Golden Horde in 661/1263 included “Damascene bows with [thumb] rings and silken strings.”¹⁴⁴ Thus, Damascus must have been renowned for its manufacture of handbows.¹⁴⁵ In Aragon, these bows were known as “turchesos” (Turkish), a term that applies to the origin of the com-

139 Ibid. 289. The *bunduqī* is described as *ishkillāt*, which the editor fails to identify as a variant of *ṣiqḷātūn* (see Lombard, *Les Textiles* 242–4). The carpenter’s cubit (*dhirāʿ najjārī*) is meant here; it measured—at least in Egypt—77.5 cm. See Hinz, *Islamische Masse* 60. A finger corresponded to 1/24 of a cubit, thus, in this case 3.23 cm. The length thus corresponded to a little less than 2 meters 60 centimeters.

140 Al-Ṣāghānī (d. 660/1262) registered the word *bunduqī* in his dictionary and described it as a cloth made of high quality (*raḡī*) linen (*kattān*). See al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-ʿarūs* xxv, 100–1 (al-Zabīdī adds that the adjective must be derived from the name of Venice, thus excluding the link with the hazel color, but he was writing in the twelfth/eighteenth century). Furthermore, in a Persian source of the ninth/fifteenth century dealing with garments, *bunduqī* was still being used to designate a fine white Egyptian cloth for making shirts. Serjeant, *Islamic textiles* 139n9, doubted this was Venetian made.

141 *Ḥalaq* (pl. of *ḥalqa*) is also used to designate the rounded notch in the nockpiece of an arrow, but this is not what is meant here. See al-Baklamishī, *Saracen archery* 182. On the drawing-ring, see *ibid.*, 35; Anonymous, *Arab archery* 123–4. Note that none of these sources use the word *ḥalqa* to define this device.

142 On the composite bow, see Anonymous, *Arab archery* 11–2 and 160–2; Paterson, *The archers*; Latham and Paterson, *Archery* 79–82.

143 Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-aʿshā* ii, 134–5, classifies it as such (*ādāb al-silāḥ*).

144 Ibn ʿAbd al-Zāhir, *al-Rawḍ al-zāhir* 173: ‘qusī ḥalaq dimashqiyya awtār ḥarīr’. The same passage appears in Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdat al-fikra* 84, but there the author overlooked the descriptive terms (*qusī ḥalaq*).

145 In his mirror-for-princes work composed in 709/1309, al-ʿAbbāsī, *Āthār al-uwal* 315 confirms that the bows manufactured in Damascus were the most excellent (‘al-dimashqiyya ajwad min ghayrihā’).

posite bow associated with Turks rather than to the geographical origin (the Mamluk sultanate) of the production of these bows.¹⁴⁶

L. 12. *qusī bunduq*: as in the previous case, the second term specifies the type of bow intended here. The term *bunduq* is used to designate the hazelnut, and by extension any small round object used as a projectile, i.e., a pellet or a bullet. The second meaning coincides with the type of bow described here, namely, a bow used to shoot pellets.¹⁴⁷ These pellets could be made of clay, glass, or metal.¹⁴⁸ Considered a hunting weapon to catch birds, it should not be mistaken for the crossbow,¹⁴⁹ from which it differed, as al-Qalqashandī explained: “the pellet-bow: at the center of its string is a rounded piece called the shell, inside of which the pellet is placed at the time of the shot. Nowadays it is also called the bullet-bow.”¹⁵⁰ The description given by al-Qalqashandī fits perfectly with the representation of a pair of pellet-bows on a Mamluk blazon contemporary with the document under consideration (see fig. 13.12). The owner of the blazon was a *bunduqdār*, i.e., keeper of the pellet-bow. In the list of gifts sent to the khan of the Golden Horde in 661/1263, along with the composite bows, pellet-bows were also offered, together with their silken strings (*awtār ḥarīr*).¹⁵¹ As we see in the two forthcoming lists, the pellet-bows were also offered with their silken strings to the king of Aragon.¹⁵² In the inventory of James II’s royal chamber, these bows are called ‘archus de rotlo,’ which exactly tallies with the pellet-bow.¹⁵³

146 See Martínez Ferrando, *La cámara real* 98 (‘duos archos turquesios de eorum aptos ad faciendum sagittas’), 143, 199–200.

147 On this kind of bow, see Anonymous, *Saracen archery* 19.

148 Dozy, *Supplément* i, 118.

149 The crossbow was rather called *qaws al-rijl* (foot-bow) because it was drawn by applying the pressure of both feet together with the strength of the back, usually with the help of a stirrup (*jarkh*). See Anonymous, *Saracen archery* 18. The fact that the pellet-bow and the crossbow were two different types of bows is proven by the list of gifts sent to the khan of the Golden Horde in 661/1263: the list included, beside the composite bows, pellet-bows (*qusī bunduq*), and crossbows (*ajrākh*, another term for the crossbow; see Anonymous, *Saracen archery* 184).

150 Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-a’shā* ii, 138 (‘qaws al-bunduq: wa-fi wasaṭ watarīhi qīṭ’a dā’ira tusammā l-jawza wa-tūḍā’ fihā l-bunduqa ‘inda l-ramy wa-tusammā hādhihi l-āla ayḍan qaws al-julāhiq’). For an image showing two archers using their pellet-bows to hunt birds, see Nicolle, *Arms and armour* 139 and 405 (fig. 337j, from a Mamluk basin in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Museum no. 740–1898), 205. Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-a’shā* xii, 269–73, recorded two examples of a deed to designate a referee for those playing a game with pellet-bows.

151 Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, *al-Rawḍ al-zāhir* 173.

152 List no. 2, l. 25 (‘qusi bunduq bi-awtārihā’ [pellet bows with their strings]); list no. 3, l. 32 (‘tawattarat’ [provided with strings]).

153 See Martínez Ferrando, *La cámara real* 98, 143, 199–200. See also above, note 109.



FIGURE 13.12 The blazon of Aydakin al-'Alā'ī al-Bunduqdār showing two addorsed pellet-bows (Mosque lamp, Egypt, shortly after 684/1285)
COURTESY THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK,
MUSEUM NO. 17.190.985

L. 14. *ūd*: in list 2, l. 27, this is more precisely called *ūd bakhūr*, i.e., the aloeswood used as incense.¹⁵⁴ Aloeswood, or agarwood as it is also called, refers to several species of resin-infused wood that belong to four genera (*Aquilaria*, *Gyrinops*, *Aetoxylon*, and *Gonystylis*).¹⁵⁵ It mainly came from South Asia and was imported to Egypt through Yemen, as witnessed by *Nūr al-ma'ārif*, where several types are listed.¹⁵⁶ The unit of measure for this product in this list of gifts is given according to the quantity (2 pieces), while in the other two lists it is expressed in terms of weight. The Mamluk sultans received aloeswood as gifts from their Rasulid counterparts, as in 684/1285, when three

154 But not exclusively: objects were also carved in aloeswood in Europe. See Cutler, *Gifts and gift exchange* 272n143, and Martínez Ferrando, *La cámara real* 148 for Catalonia ('unum servitorium de lignoloe cum pede circulo et orla argenti [...]').

155 See López-Samson and Page, *History of use* 108.

156 Anonymous, *Nūr al-ma'ārif* i, 441–2, 461, 524. See also Heyd, *Histoire* ii, 581–5.

trunks reached Cairo, each carried by two men.¹⁵⁷ In the registers of James II's royal chamber, this product is called "ligno aloe" or "linaloe" and was distributed to members of the royal family or to the court in the form of chunks ("trossius," "trocio," or "troceo") or pieces ("pecias").¹⁵⁸

L. 16. *duhn balsān*: the famous balsam oil came from Maṭariyya, a village located in the northern part of Cairo, not far from Heliopolis. Highly valued for its historical association with the visit of the holy family, sources inform us that the precious liquid was worth its weight in gold and that it was one of the most precious gifts that was commonly sent to foreign rulers, mostly, but not exclusively, to Christians because the balsam was also renowned for its medicinal properties. The sultan's treasury oversaw its production and its distribution.¹⁵⁹ As indicated in list 2, ll. 27–8, the precious oil was presented in a glass bottle (*ḍimna fuqqā'a zujāi*) that was made specifically for this purpose, and the quantity is expressed in a measure of volume, the *mithqāl*, which corresponded to 4,68 grams.¹⁶⁰ In this case, the quantity of oil (60 *mithqāls*) amounted to 281 grams.¹⁶¹ The product was distributed by James II to his family and members of his court in containers identified as vials ("ampulleta").¹⁶²

L. 18. *zanjabīl*: ginger was another spice that was greatly appreciated in medieval Europe.¹⁶³ Various kinds were known, some were imported from Southeast Asia, others were produced in the Middle East. It was traded in various forms: fresh, dried (*yābis*), in powder (*maṭḥūn*), and candied with sugar or honey (*murabban*).¹⁶⁴ A list of goods traded in Barcelona in an unspecified period, but probably from the fourteenth century, also mentions fresh ginger preserved in lemon juice.¹⁶⁵ We see with list 3, l. 19,

157 See Ibn al-Furāt, *al-Tārikh* viii, 28–9; Vallet, Entre deux "mondes" 285. In 705/1305, gifts from the Rasulid sultan reached Cairo and they again included trunks of aloeswood, each carried by two men on their shoulders. See Shāfi' b. 'Alī, *Sīrat al-Malik al-Nāṣir*, topic 21.

158 See Martínez Ferrando, *La cámara real* 17, 30, 60, 67, 81, 98, 100, 111, 142–3, 148, 157, 199–200.

159 On the medical usages of the balsam oil of Maṭariyya and its link with the historical context, see Milwright, The balsam of Maṭariyya. On the link with the visit of the holy family and testimonies of medieval European travelers and pilgrims, see Zanetti, Matarieh; Saletti, La Sacra famiglia. On the product as a diplomatic gift in general, see Behrens-Abouseif, *Practising diplomacy* 146–8; offered or requested by Muslim rulers, see 47, 54–5, 87–8, 149. See also Heyd, *Histoire* ii, 575–80 as well as chapters 9 and 10 in the present volume.

160 Hinz, *Islamische Masse* 4.

161 In lists 2 and 3, this amount is doubled. Compared to the annual production for good years, which was estimated at 60 *raṭls*, i.e., approximately 30 kg, half a kilo was a good amount.

162 See Martínez Ferrando, *La cámara real* 100, 176, 199–200.

163 See Heyd, *Histoire* ii, 619–23.

164 See Anonymous, *Nūr al-ma'ārif* i, 106.

165 See Masiá de Ros, *La Corona de Aragón* 493 ('gingebre vert ab suc de límans, Gengibre preparado con zumo de limón').

that the ginger offered to the king of Aragon was indeed of the candied variety¹⁶⁶ and that it was presented in jars (see comment for next line). In the registers of the royal chamber of James II, the candied ginger is called *gingebrata*.¹⁶⁷

L. 19. *aḥqāq*: plural of *ḥuqqa*, i.e., jar, pot. In list 3, l. 20, we see that the candied ginger was preserved in jars (*ḍimna aḥqāq*). These jars were apparently made of stone,¹⁶⁸ and list 3 indicates that they came in two formats: large (*kibār*) and normal (*ʿād*). In the inventory of James II's royal chamber, the candied ginger was offered once in a large vial ("ampulletam magnam"), perhaps the equivalent of one of the large jars mentioned.¹⁶⁹

166 In a contemporary source, the candied ginger is said to be imported from India: Anonymous, *Nūr al-maʿārif* i, 431–2.

167 See Martínez Ferrando, *La cámara real* 99, 143.

168 Candied ginger (*zanjabīl murabban*) received by the Mamluk sultan from his Rasulid counterpart in 799/1397 was offered in stone jars (*ḥuqq ḥijāra*). See Ibn al-Furāt, *al-Tārīkh* ix/2, 459 (where the editors were unable to interpret the word *murabban* and rendered it unpointed as it appears in the manuscript: مرابا).

169 See Martínez Ferrando, *La cámara real* 143.

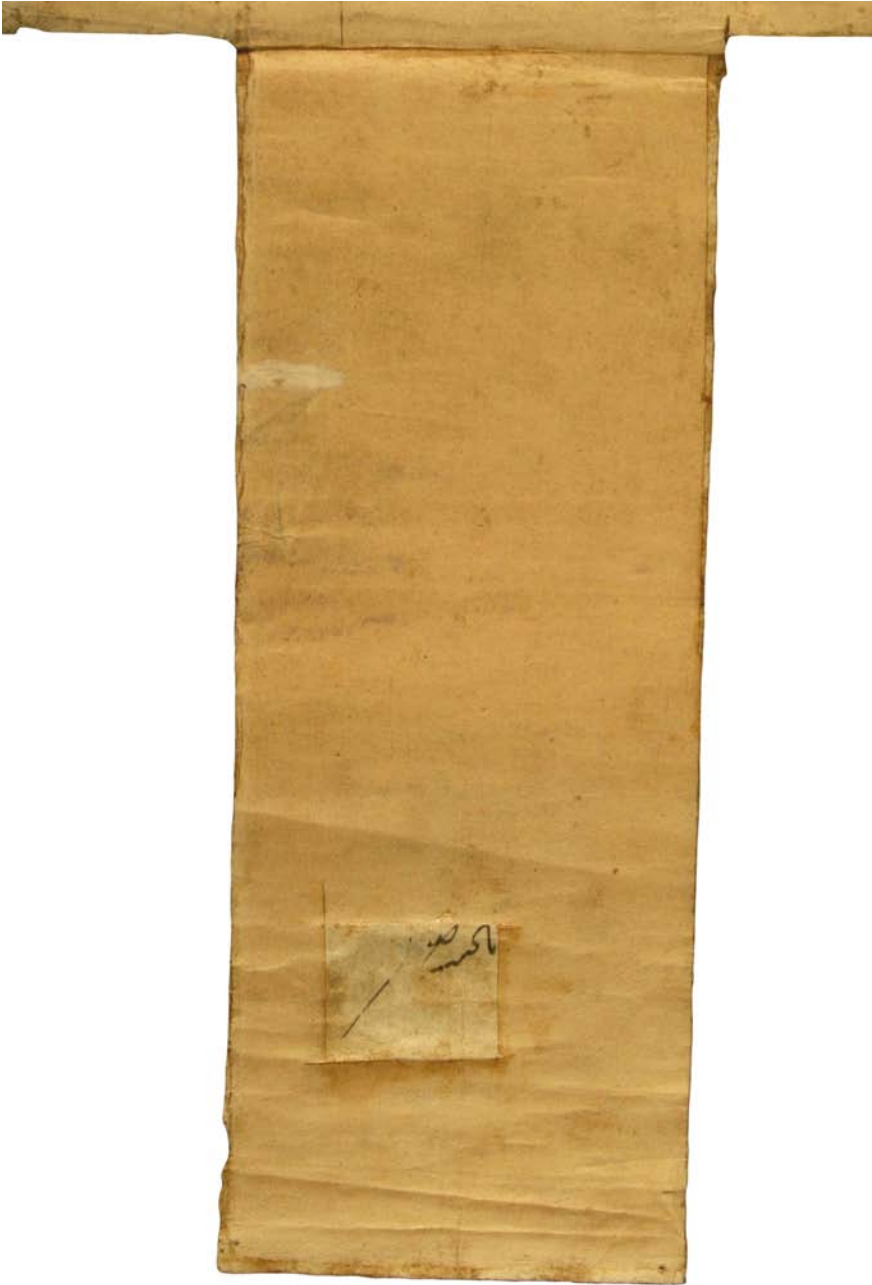


FIGURE 13.13 ACA, Cartas árabes, no. 146, verso

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 الْحَجَّاجُ بْنُ عَبْدِ الْقَادِرِ الْمَوْجِبِ
 السَّاطِقِ لِلْمَلِكِ الْمُسْلِمِ شَيْخِ الْمَلِكِ
 مَا كَمَا مُسَيَّرًا لِلْمَلِكِ بِرَأْسِ
 سَابِجٍ بِجَلْبُونِ خَدْمَةِ الْبَلَدِ الْبَلَدِ
 غَيْرِ عَيْشَانِ الْأَمِينِ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ الْمَوْجِبِ
 سَنَةِ ٧٥٠ مِائَةً

تَقْدِيمُ قَائِمِ
 عَشْرِينَ قَطْعَةً

تَعْوِيلُ ذَلِكَ

تَمَاسِيلُ كَيْ طَرِزُ	عَمَلُ الدَّارِ الْبَيْتِ
تَعْرِيقُ نَهْدِ	الْمَنْطِقِ
أَمَانُ	الْحَمْدُ أَصْفَرُ
	أَمَانُ وَبَلَدُ
عَمَلُ الدَّارِ الْبَيْتِ	نَمَائِزُ الْبَيْتِ
لَهُ	حَمْرِي طَبْعُ الْبَيْتِ
تَمَلِجُ الْبَيْتِ طَرِزُ	نَمَائِزُ الْبَيْتِ طَبْعُ
	لَهُ
نَمَائِزُ الْبَيْتِ	نَمَائِزُ الْبَيْتِ
شَيْخِ الْمَلِكِ	نَمَائِزُ الْبَيْتِ
شَيْخِ الْمَلِكِ	١٥٥٠

فَوَيْلُ حَمْرِي
 مَوْجِبُ

اصْنَانُ ذَلِكَ

فَتَى كَيْفُ الْبَلَدِ	فَتَى كَيْفُ الْبَلَدِ
عَشْرُونَ	عَشْرُونَ
فَتَى كَيْفُ الْبَلَدِ	فَتَى كَيْفُ الْبَلَدِ
فَتَى كَيْفُ الْبَلَدِ	فَتَى كَيْفُ الْبَلَدِ
فَتَى كَيْفُ الْبَلَدِ	فَتَى كَيْفُ الْبَلَدِ
فَتَى كَيْفُ الْبَلَدِ	فَتَى كَيْفُ الْبَلَدِ

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 حَسْبُكَ

FIGURE 13.14
ACA, Cartas árabes, no. 163, recto

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 الْمُعْتَبَرِي مِنَ الْخِزَانَةِ الْعَالِيَةِ الْمَوْلُودِيَّةِ
 السُّلْطَانَةِ الْمَلِكِيَّةِ الْمُنَاصِرَةِ خَلَّدَ اللَّهُ مَلِكَهُ
 مَالِكِيهَا مُسَيَّرًا إِلَى الْمَلِكِ الرَّدْرَائِي
 صَاحِبِ رَجُلُونِهِ حُجْبَةِ الْمَجْلِسِ السَّامِيِّ الرَّعْبِيِّ
 مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ الْأَفْرَمِيِّ فِي الْعَهْدِ الْأَوَّلِ شَحَارَ
 سَنَةِ عَشْرٍ وَسَبْعِ مِائَةٍ

FIGURE 13.15 ACA, Cartas árabes, no. 163, recto, part 1

تعبیه قماش
عشرون قطعه

تفصیل ذلك

عمل الدار مصمت ثلثه قطع	تفصیل کچی رطنه نقش و مصمت اشان
اجر اصفر اشان واحد	
تفصیل مقتمه حدهی رطنه اربعه	عمل الدار ملون بلنه
تفصیل نذنی رطنه ثلثه	مقطع یاخ رطنه

FIGURE 13.16 ACA, Cartas árabes, no. 163, recto, part 2

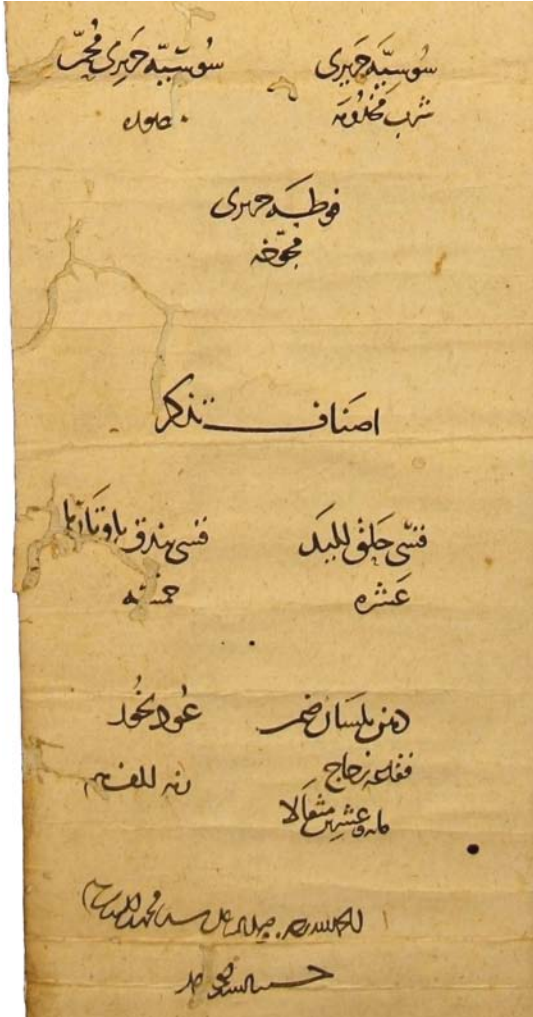


FIGURE 13.17 ACA, Cartas árabes, no. 163, recto, part 3

List no. 2 dated to the first ten days of Sha‘bān 705¹⁷⁰ [/16–25 February 1306] (annexed to a letter dated 1 Sha‘bān 705/16 February 1306¹⁷¹)

Description

In contrast to lists nos. 1 and 3, this one is independent of the letter to which it is related. The list consists of a small scroll composed of three sheets (*waṣl*, pl. *awṣāl*) 138 mm wide (see figs. 13.14–7). The length of each sheet varies as follows: sheet 1 is between 233 and 235 mm, sheet 2 is between 371 and 372 mm, and sheet 3 is between 227 and 228 mm. The paper is Oriental and has chain lines grouped by twos (11 mm between two lines and 40 mm between groups) and perpendicular to the text as well as laid lines, twenty of which cover 29 mm. The first line of the text starts at 106 mm from the upper edge. The width of the right margin of the first sheet varies considerably because of the presentation of the text, where items are displayed in two columns. The width of the right margin for the first six lines lies between 37 and 41 mm, then for the remaining lines, it stands between 23 and 56 mm. The interlinear space also varies greatly from 17 to 44 mm. While the document was damaged by paper worms, it remains legible. Overall, it is in good condition. It has been through some restoration work which consisted in strengthening the sheet by pasting another sheet on its back which was devoid of any inscription. The text is written in very legible handwriting with only a limited number of unauthorized ligatures between letters. Most of the diacritical dots are indicated together with numerous vowels and other orthoepic signs as well as, in two cases, a *mater lectionis* to specify the phonological value of a letter (l. 2: a small ‘ayn placed below the same letter in the word; ll. 16 and 25: a small *hā’* placed below the same letter). The numbers are spelled out and not in the *siyāqa* style observed in list no. 1.

Edition

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ	1
المُعَسِّي مِنَ الْخِزَانَةِ الْعَالِيَةِ الْمَوْلَوِيَّةِ	2
السُّلْطَانِيَةِ الْمَلِكِيَّةِ النَّاصِرِيَّةِ خَلَّدَ اللَّهُ مَلِكَ	3
مَالِكِهَا مُسِيرًا إِلَى الْمَلِكِ الرَّيْدَرَاغُونِ	4
صَاحِبِ بَرَجَلُونَةَ صُحْبَةَ الْمَجْلِسِ السَّامِيِّ الْأَمِيرِ	5

170 ACA, Real Cancillería, Cartas árabes, no. 163. First edited and translated in Atiya, *Egypt and Aragon* 29–32. Atiya’s edition was then reproduced, without any attempt to improve his decipherment, by al-Ḥajjī, *al-‘Alāqāt* 149–50. The list’s contents were the subject of the following study: Viladrich, *Noves dades*. Behrens-Abouseif, *Practising diplomacy* 99 analyzed the gifts on the basis of Atiya’s defective edition.

171 ACA, Real Cancillería, Cartas árabes, no. 148. Published by Alarcón y Santón and García de Linares, *Los documentos* 355–60.

نَحْرُ الدِّينِ عُثْمَانَ الأَفْرَمِي فِي العِشْرِ الأَوَّلِ مِنْ شَعْبَانَ	6	
سَنَةُ خَمْسٍ وَسَبْعِ مِائَةٍ	7	
تَعْبِيَّةُ قَاشٍ	8	
عِشْرُونَ قِطْعَةً	9	
تَفْصِيلُ ذَلِكَ	10	
عَمَلُ الدَّارِ مُصَمَّتِ	تَفَاصِيلُ كَنْجِي بِطُرُزٍ	11
ثَلَاثَةُ قِطْعٍ	نَقْشٌ وَمُصَمَّتٌ	12
تَفْـ[صِيْل]ـه	اِثْنَانٌ	13
أَحْمَرٌ أَصْفَرٌ		14
اِثْنَانٌ وَاحِدٌ		15
تَفَاصِيلُ مُقْتَرَحَةٍ	عَمَلُ الدَّارِ مَلُونٌ	16
حَرِيرِي مُطْرَزةً اَرْبَعَةً	ثَلَاثَةٌ	17
تَفَاصِيلُ بِنْدِقِي مُطْرَزةً	مَقْطَعٌ بِيَاضٍ بِطُرُزٍ	18
ثَلَاثَةٌ		19
سُوسِيَّةٌ حَرِيرِي مُجَمَّرٌ	سُوسِيَّةٌ حَرِيرِي	20
مِصْرُورَةٌ	شَرِبٌ مَخْدُومَةٌ	21
	فُوطَةٌ حَرِيرِي	22
	مَجْجُوحَةٌ	23
	اصْنَافٌ تَذَكُرُ	24
قَسِي بِنْدِقٍ بَاوْتَارَهَا	قَسِي حَاقٍ لِلْيَدِ	25
خَمْسَةٌ	عَشْرَةٌ	26
عُودٌ بِجُورٍ	دَهْنٌ بِلِسَانِ ضَمْنٍ	27
زَنَةُ الفِ [دِر]هَمٍ	فَقَاعَةُ زَجَاجٍ	28
	مِائَةٌ وَعِشْرِينَ مِثْقَالًا	29
	الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَحْدَهُ وَصَلَّى اللهُ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ	30
	حَسْبُنَا اللهُ وَنَعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ	31

Diacritical dots: l. 1: الرحم, الرحمن, الربحيم; l. 2: المولويه, العاليه, الخزانة, المعبي, من, الخزانة, العاليه, المولويه; l. 3: الملكيه, السلطانة; l. 4: الناصره, خلد فخر, عثمان, الأفرمى; l. 6: صاحب, رجلونه, صحبه, المجلس, الامير; l. 5: مسيرا, الربدراغون; l. 7: نبي, شعاع; l. 8: سنه, خمس, وسبع, مايه; l. 9: قماش; l. 10: عشرون, قطعه; l. 11: تفصيل, ذلك; l. 12: مصمت, بطرز, نفاصيل; l. 13: قطع, ثلثه, ومصمت; l. 14: نقش, اثنان, اصفر; l. 15: اثنان; l. 16: اثنان; l. 17: مقترحه, سوسيه; l. 18: بلثه, مطرزه; l. 19: مقطوع, بياض, بطرز, تفاصيل, ندى, مطرزه; l. 20: ثلثه; l. 21: حريرى, سوسيه; l. 22: شرب, مخدومه; l. 23: فوطه; l. 24: مجوخه; l. 25: اصناف, تذكر; l. 26: ليده, قسى, ندى, باوتارها; l. 27: نحور; l. 28: دهن, ضم, نحور; l. 29: فقاعه, زجاج, رنه, الف; l. 30: وعشرين, مثملا.

Translation

1. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful
2. What was supplied from the lofty treasury of our Lord
3. the Sultan al-Malik al-Nāṣir—may God perpetuate the reign
4. of its ruler—to be sent to the King “el Rey d’Aragón,”
5. ruler of Barcelona, with the eminent presence, the amir
6. Fakhr al-Dīn ‘Uthmān al-Aframī during the first ten days of Sha’bān
7. in the year seven hundred five
8. A pack of cloths
9. Twenty pieces¹⁷²
10. The detail of these [is as follows]
11. Cuts of *kanjī* fabrics with
embroidered inscriptions, Made by the [royal] factory,
of a single color
12. decorations, and of a single color Three pieces
13. Two [pieces] The detail of which [is as follows]
14. Red Yellow
15. Two [pieces] One [piece]
16. Made by the [royal] factory,
multicolored Cuts of fabrics of a new fashion
17. Three [pieces] with silk and embroidered
inscriptions
Four [pieces]
18. One length of white material with
embroidered inscriptions Venetian cuts of fabrics with
embroidered inscriptions
19. Three [pieces]

¹⁷² As already noted by Atiya, *Egypt and Aragon* 31, the total fabrics itemized below does not tally as one counts only nineteen pieces. We saw (see above 345) that this list does not correspond to the one that was issued by the sultan’s treasury, but that it was reissued by the chancery. The mistake made in the number of pieces of cloths could result from the copying process.

- | | | |
|-----|--|---|
| 20. | Silken <i>sūsīyya</i> garment | Dyed red silk <i>sūsīyya</i> garment with |
| 21. | with appliquéd very fine linen | human figures |
| 22. | | Woven silk cloth with |
| 23. | | embroidered bands |
| 24. | | [Other] notable fabrics |
| 25. | Bows with [thumb] rings for the hand | Pellet-bows with their strings |
| 26. | Ten [pieces] | Five [pieces] |
| 27. | Balsam oil in | Aloeswood |
| 28. | a glass container | Weight: One thousand dirhams |
| 29. | One hundred twenty <i>mithqāls</i> | |
| 30. | Praise be to God Alone and His blessing be upon our lord, Muḥammad, and his family, and also His peace | |
| 31. | God is our sufficiency, and He is an excellent steward! | |

Commentary

L. 4. *al-raydarāghūn*: the Arabic rendition of the Spanish title (*el Rey de Aragón*) seems to be first attested in the Mamluk sources in 668/1270 when reference is made to the king of Aragon helping Louis IX during the latter's crusade in Tunisia.¹⁷³

L. 5. *ṣāhib Barjalūna*: this is first mentioned in a Mamluk source for the above-quoted event, under *Malik Barshalūna*. The orthography of the city's name does not seem to have been fixed at the Mamluk chancery. In list 3, l. 2, it is written *Barshanūna*.

L. 6. *Fakhr al-Dīn ʿUthmān al-Aframī*: Mamluk sources provide little information about this person. His name is only quoted in relation to the 705/1306 embassy to Aragon, to which this list of gifts is connected.¹⁷⁴ Thanks to the Mamluk letters linked to the 699/1300, 703/1304, and 705/1306 embassies, we know that his full name was Fakhr al-Dīn ʿUthmān al-Nāṣirī and that he had been the majordomo (*ustādār*) of ʿIzz al-Dīn Aybak al-Afram (d. 695/1296), before entering the service of the sultan as his *nisba* al-Nāṣirī suggests. His Arabic name, ʿUthmān, indicates that he was not a Mamluk, but contrary to Holt's assertion,¹⁷⁵ his *nisba* al-Nāṣirī clearly links him to the reigning sultan. Even though he was probably not a high-ranking officer, he was chosen as the main envoy to travel to Barcelona on no less than three occasions between 699/1300 and 705/1306. His repeated selection to travel to the same destination indicates that Fakhr al-Dīn ʿUthmān must have had some particular knowledge of Aragon.¹⁷⁶

173 Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk* i/2, 365 (*Raydārakūn*).

174 See Atiya, *Egypt and Aragon* 22n2.

175 Holt, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's letter 25.

176 In the 699/1300 letter, he is described as accustomed to being sent as an envoy ('waman lahu ʿāda bi-l-rusliyya min ʿindinā ilā l-mulūk'). See Alarcón y Santón and García de

L. 8. *ta'bi'a*: the *maṣdar* of the verb *'abba'a* (see list 1, l. 1), i.e., the action of preparing, packing. Dozy translates it as *charge* ("load"), *cargaison* ("parcel"), as well as *pièce d'étoffe* ("piece of cloth") (in which case it is found also in its plural form *ta'ābi'*), for which meaning he relied on Quatremère's translation of al-Maqrīzī's *al-Sulūk*.¹⁷⁷ Based on the more narrow context in which it is used, as in our document, Von Kremer proposed *Geschenke (Kleider, Stoffe)* "Gift (cloths, clothes)," in addition to the more general *Ausstattung* ("equipment, furnishing").¹⁷⁸ Here, the word is used in combination with *qumāsh* (cloths) and thus can be interpreted as "cloths that were prepared, packed." In this context, it could almost be translated as a bundle or even bundles in the plural. In a list of gifts prepared to be sent in the Mamluk sultan's name to the amir of the Arabs on the occasion of the marriage of the latter's granddaughter, Ibn al-Furāt states that "one *ta'bi'a* containing twenty-five cuts of fabrics was prepared as well as, for his mother, one *ta'bi'a* with a tent," all of which was selected from the sultan's treasury.¹⁷⁹ In another source that is contemporary with our list, an embassy was dispatched to the khan of the Golden Horde and on this occasion, orders were given to send a gift composed of *al-ta'ābi' al-sikandariyya*, the royal balsam oil and other items certified by the lofty treasury.¹⁸⁰ This usage of *ta'ābi'*, clearly specified by the origin (Alexandria, and more probably the textile mill) and separated from the remainder of the other categories of gifts (balsam oil, etc.), like in this list and the following one, demonstrates that it was indeed used to designate a pack or bale of cloths.

L. 11. *kanji*: the word is said to derive from Ganja in Azerbaijan. This is typically one of those terms used for a particular type of fabric produced in a given area or city. Later it came to be imitated in other regions, though it kept its original name, even after the disappearance of the textile industry in the area of its origin. According to Serjeant, the city was renowned for the production of woolen stuffs of all kinds.¹⁸¹ For Quatremère,

Linares, *Los documentos* 350. Thus, it was clear that this was not his first mission abroad and given that he was sent three times to Barcelona, we might surmise that he had some knowledge of the region and/or of the language.

177 Dozy, *Supplément* ii, 90. Cf. al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, trans. Quatremère i/2, 76 ('*ta'bi'at qumāsh'*).

178 Von Kremer, *Beiträge* ii, 14.

179 Ibn al-Furāt, *al-Tārīkh* viii, 155 ("'*ubbi'at ta'bi'a lil-amīr Ḥusām al-Dīn Muḥannā b. 'Īsā malik al-'Arab bi-sabab zawāj bint bintihi khamsa wa-'ishrīn qiṭ'a wa-ta'bi'at wālidatihi bi-khayma min al-khizāna 'alā 'ādatihā'*). In the Fatimid period, a *dār al-ta'bi'a* was instituted but it was not related to fabrics. Its goal was to supply the palaces with plants and flowers on a wide variety of occasions. See al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawā'iz wa-l-ītibār* ii, 392–3.

180 Shāfi' b. 'Alī, *Sīrat al-Malik al-Nāṣir*, topic 19, fol. 44^{a-b} ('*wa-taqaddamat al-marāsim al-'āliya bi-tajhīz mā yujahhaz ma'ahum min al-hadiyya ka-l-ta'ābi' al-sikandariyya wa-duhn al-balsān al-khāṣṣ wa-ghayr dhālik mim mā tashhad bi-hi l-khizāna al-'āliya'*).

181 Serjeant, *Islamic textiles* 70 and 150. See also Dozy, *Supplément* ii, 377 and 492.

the *kanjī* was exclusively made of silk,¹⁸² while Serjeant describes it as made of silk and cotton, which seems to be closer to the true nature of this cloth.¹⁸³ In his description of the different kinds of fabrics used to make the costumes of those nominated to a military or civil position in the Mamluk state apparatus, Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-ʿUmārī classifies the *kanjī* as an intermediary category in terms of status, used for both military and civil appointees. Inside this intermediary category, there were three types of *kanjī*, two of them corresponding to a particular level for the military appointees and one for the civil ones. For the military appointees, the higher level received a *kanjī* with decoration in a contrasting color, or of a single color but of a different shade, while for the lower level the *kanjī* was of a single color. The civil members, identified as the vizier and the secretaries of the chancery, were entitled to a white *kanjī* which was differentiated on various levels by the addition of an element such as silk embroidery, fur, or an undercoat of a green *kanjī* for the highest, etc.¹⁸⁴

bi-ṭuruz: the term was incorrectly read *bi-ẓahr* by Atiya, who interpreted it as designating the lower surface of the cloth.¹⁸⁵ *Ṭuruz* is the plural of *ṭirāz* which can be translated here as embroidered bands of inscriptions.¹⁸⁶ In this list and the following one, the passive participle of the form II verb (*muṭarraz*) can be substituted for the former without changing the meaning.¹⁸⁷

muṣmat: the term is well attested in the dictionaries to mean “of a single color,” as opposed to *mulawwan* (multicolored; see below l. 16).¹⁸⁸

L. 12. *naqsh*: sometimes used in the plural (*nuqūsh*) or as a passive participle (*manqūsh*). Serjeant translated this term in various ways: to adorn with designs or to embroider in colors.¹⁸⁹ The word is indeed attested with both meanings in most dictionaries.

182 Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, trans. Quatremère ii/2, 77.

183 Serjeant, *Islamic textiles* 150. See also Dozy, *Supplément* ii, 377 and 492. In 1317, the doge of Venice received from the viceroy of Alexandria ‘duos pannos chenzi therificos’, thus, two cloths of silk *kanjī*. See Thomas and Predelli, *Diplomatarium veneto-levantinum* i, 103.

184 Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-ʿUmārī, *Masālik al-abṣār* 132–3 = trans. Richards 41–2. See also Mayer, *Mamluk costume* 59 who, however, relied on the same passage as quoted by al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawāʿiẓ wa-l-ʿitibār* on the basis of the Būlāq edition, where the word *kamkhā* (Chinese figured silk, later damask) was substituted for *kanjī*. In al-Maqrīzī’s holograph copy of this volume (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan, Isl. MS 605, p. 486), it clearly reads *kanjī* and not *kamkhā*. This correct reading appears in al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawāʿiẓ wa-l-ʿitibār* iii, 737.

185 Atiya, *Egypt and Aragon* 30–1.

186 See Serjeant, *Islamic textiles* 7–15 (“embroidered bands or strips of writings”), 23 (*muṭarraz* “embroidered with the *ṭirāz* containing the name of”), 150 (*ṭuruz* “embroideries”); Kalfon Stillman and Sanders, *Ṭirāz* 534. See also Walker, Rethinking Mamluk textiles 182; Sardi, *Mamluk textiles* i, 41–8.

187 It was read as *muzahhara* by Atiya, *Egypt and Aragon* 30–1, who left it untranslated.

188 See Serjeant, *Islamic textiles* 92, 101, 114, 117, 128, 167.

189 See *ibid.* 11 (“adorned with red gold, having pictures of beasts and birds upon it”), 22 (“with

Given that it is used here along with *tīrāz*, it cannot be interpreted as an embroidered inscription, because this would be redundant.¹⁹⁰ In modern Egyptian Arabic, it is still used to describe a patterned cloth or a cloth with figures (*qumāsh manqūsh*).¹⁹¹ It is in this sense that it features in a garment that Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-ʿUmarī (who was contemporary with our document) describes as: “white silk embroidered with the sultan’s titles, along with dazzling decorations (*nuqūsh*) in coloured silk.”¹⁹²

L. 13. *taff[šīlu]hu*: the word is written in an abbreviated form. The form in question varies slightly in list 3 (ll. 7, 16, 22). Its usage is attested in documents of accounts.¹⁹³

L. 16. *mulawwan*: the meaning of the word (variegated, multicolored) is well attested.¹⁹⁴

muqtaraḥa: the word was correctly read by Atiya¹⁹⁵ who translated it as “made to order” without any further justification. The word is clearly written in the document with all its diacritical dots and two short vowels indicating that it is a passive participle of the verb *iqṭaraḥa*, which means “to invent, originate, think up.” Thus, the fabric so described must have been of a type that had recently been introduced on the market and was fashionable. In this sense, it described a new type of costume introduced by Sallār, who was the viceroy of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad until 710/1310. According to al-Kutubī (d. 764/1363), “Sallār was elegant in the way he dressed; he originated things in clothing which are named after him.”¹⁹⁶ One of the innovations named after him (the *Sallārīyya*) has been identified with the *bughluṭāq* (a type of upper garment with short sleeves). As stressed by Mayer, he did not invent this garment, as it was attested in the

drawings or colored”), 41 (with its edges ornamented), 43 (designs), 58 (variegated), 62 and (embroidered in colors), 114 (decoration), 160 (“with wonderful pictures, with pretty decoration”).

190 According to the context, *naqsh* can also mean “the act of inscribing something” either in a hard material or a fabric. See, for instance, the following quotation from al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-aʿshā* iv, 7: ‘wa-minhā [rusūm al-mulk wa-ālātuhu] naqsh ism al-sultān ‘alā mā yunsaj wa-yuraqqam min al-kiswa wa-l-ṭuruz al-muttakhadha min al-ḥarīr aw al-dhabab bi-lawn mukhālif li-lawn al-qumāsh aw al-ṭuruz’ (One of the royal appurtenances is the inscription of the sultan’s name in a color different from the clothes and the stripes made [*muttakhadha*; “to make, manufacture”, see Lane, *Madd al-qāmūs* i, 30] of silk or gold that are woven and embroidered). My translation differs from Serjeant, *Islamic textiles* 147. The word is also used to refer to a way of embroidering or decorating the edge of a garment. See Anonymous, *Nūr al-maʿārif* i, 144.

191 Badawi and Hinds, *A dictionary* 880.

192 Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-ʿUmarī, *Masālik al-absār* 130 (‘ḥarīr abyāḍ marqūm bi-alqāb al-sultān ma’a nuqūsh bāhira min al-ḥarīr al-mulawwan’) = trans. Richards 41.

193 See above 344.

194 See Serjeant, *Islamic textiles* 144.

195 Atiya, *Egypt and Aragon* 30.

196 Al-Kutubī, *Fawāt al-wafayāt* ii, 87 (‘wa-kāna [Sallār] ḥarīfan fī libsihi qṭaraḥa ašhyā’ fī l-malbas wa-hiya ilayhi mansūba’).

sources for the reign of Baybars (r. 658–76/1260–77). Rather, he contributed to its popularization in the Mamluk realm by asking tailors to manufacture it specifically for him and by wearing it.¹⁹⁷ It might also mean more than that, i.e., that Sallār requested the inclusion of features in the fabric or the garment. Be that as it may, the term found in the list of gifts indicates that a new type of fabric was produced when Sallār was the viceroy. This might be something he originated in clothing, as underlined by the above-mentioned quotation.

The word *muqtarah* appears in other passages related to textiles. However, the word is often rendered in a different way by editors who did not always pay attention to the reading found in the manuscripts. For instance, in the description of the types of fabrics used in the garments distributed to state officials, Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-ʿUmarī mentions that the type of garment attributed to the second level of the military appointees, i.e., the *ṭardwaḥsh* (the fabric with hunting scenes), is worn above a coat made of Alexandrian *muqtarah*. In the edition, the word is rendered *mufarraj*, which in fact corresponds to another type of fabric.¹⁹⁸ The word is correctly read in another passage in the same book, where Ibn Faḍl Allāh details the various textiles manufactured in Alexandria.¹⁹⁹ The fact that *muqtarah* must also be read in the first passage is corroborated by its quotation by the ninth-/fifteenth-century historian al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1442). Unfortunately, the editor did not reproduce the reading found in al-Maqrīzī's holograph, rather he retained the one found in the edition of Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-ʿUmarī (*al-mufarraj*).²⁰⁰ The holograph leaves no doubt that the correct word is *muqtarah* as fig. 13.18 shows.

Another ninth-/fifteenth-century author, al-Qalqashandī, also quoted the word in a passage listing the fabrics produced by the state atelier in Alexandria. His description offers us additional details about this kind of cloth.²⁰¹ All these passages help us better

197 Mayer, *Mamluk costume* 23–5. See also Dozy, *Dictionnaire détaillé* 81–4 (*bughluṭāq*) and 209–10 (*salārī*).

198 Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-ʿUmarī, *Masālik al-abṣār* 131 ('wa-taḥtahu qabā' min al-mufarraj al-iskandarānī') = trans. Richards 41. For *al-mufarraj*, see below the commentary to l. 21 in list 3.

199 Ibid. 150 ('wa-l-muqtarah') = trans. Richards 51, with no further explanation apart from the note that in another edition the word is read *muftariḥ*, a word Dozy, *Supplément* ii, 249, translated as a kind of Alexandrian fabric ("sorte d'étoffe d'Alexandrie").

200 Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawā'iz wa-l-i'tibār* iii, 737. It should be noted that the Būlāq edition displays the correct reading, something that Ayman Fu'ād Sayyid neglected to mention in his apparatus. Mayer, *Mamluk costume* 58–60, translated this passage on the basis of the Būlāq text; he read the word *mufarrij* (sic for *mufarraj*) with no further indication, but probably because he thought that *muqtarah* was a mistake for *mufarrij*.

201 Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-a'shā* xi, 426 ('al-aqmisha al-mukhtalifat al-ṣifāt min al-ḥarīr wa-muqtarah al-mukhawṣ bi-l-dhahab' [textiles of different types made of silk and *muq-*

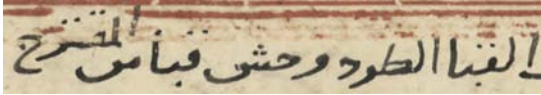


FIGURE 13.18 The word *al-muqtarah* as it appears in al-Maqrīzī's holograph of *al-Mawā'iz wa-l-ītibār*
COURTESY UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN,
ANN ARBOR, ISL. MS 605, P. 486

interpret the *muqtarah* as a new type of fabric, the production of which was probably popularized by Sallār. The date of the list of gifts, contemporary with Sallār, who held the reins of government at that time, corroborates this hypothesis.

L. 18. *maqta'*: the term is attested from Fatimid times, as several documents from the Geniza demonstrate.²⁰² Goitein described it as “a piece of a kind of cloth with this same name or a robe made of it.”²⁰³ Kalfon Stillman, who studied the same documents, defined the *maqta'* as “a stuff with a linen warp and a cotton woof, or all linen,” or “a kind of fabric.”²⁰⁴ In one case, she even noted it as “a garment synonymous with a *thawb*,” convinced that it must have been a robe and not just a piece of cloth that came in a variety of fabrics (silk, linen, etc.).²⁰⁵ Dozy listed the term as meaning a fabric made of linen (“*étoffe de lin*”) while Serjeant interpreted it as referring to robes of cotton or just cloths.²⁰⁶ Atiya, who studied this list of gifts, stressed that the word is still used in Egypt to describe a bolt of cloth. In the *Nūr al-ma'ārif*, the *maqta'* is mentioned along with *shuqaq* (sg. *shuqqa*), i.e., oblong pieces of linen, both used to make tents.²⁰⁷ Various kinds and categories are listed in the same source: high, medium, low *maqta'* from

tarah decorated with gold]). According to al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-'arūs* xvii, 573, the *mukhawwaṣ bi-l-dhahab* means silk brocade to be “woven with gold in the form of *khūṣ*, i.e., palms.” The *khawwāṣ* designates the person who sells and weaves the palms. Ibid. 570. The term used for fabric might mean that the gold thread was woven in the same way as palms were, producing some kind of a zigzag pattern.

202 In two sources from the fourteenth century it is also attested in Catalan under the form *macta*. See von Brunn, *Katalanische Stoffe* 155–8; Alcover and Moll, *Diccionari*, s.v. “*mactà*”; Farauo de Saint-Germain, *Vocabulari*, s.v. “*mactà*” (“*tela, estofa de lli*”, linen cloth).

203 Goitein, *A Mediterranean society* iv, 409n222. See also Goitein and Friedman, *Indian traders* 571 and 576 (an Alexandrian *maqta'*), 784 (a full *maqta'*, a locally-made *maqta'*, two Alexandrian *maqta'*s, and three others are mentioned in a dowry).

204 Kalfon Stillman, *Female attire* 22 and 84–5. See also Anonymous, *Nūr al-ma'ārif* i, 131m062 (a linen fabric with silk).

205 Kalfon Stillman, *Female attire* 99.

206 Dozy, *Dictionnaire détaillé* 180n2, 368; Dozy, *Supplément* ii, 374; Serjeant, *Islamic textiles* 112 and 155.

207 Anonymous, *Nūr al-ma'ārif* i, 170.

Egypt (*miṣrī*) in general, *maqṭaʿ* from Qūṣ, golden (*mudhahhab*), whitened (*maqṣūr*), and raw (*khām*) *maqṭaʿ* from Damietta.²⁰⁸ In one case, the material used (silk) is also described.²⁰⁹ From all these attestations, we can speculate that, even though the term could be used to describe a cut/bolt of fabrics (like *tafṣīla*, for instance) as explained by Atiya,²¹⁰ the *maqṭaʿ* was mainly a linen cloth that sometimes included silk or it may have been made exclusively from silk, or decorated with embroidery, such that its quality could vary greatly, and that it was sold in a specific width and length. Its format meant that it could be used for various purposes, either alone (e.g., in turbans) or with several pieces sewn together (e.g., in tents, clothes).

bayāq: the term clearly indicates the color of the fabric (white or whitened).²¹¹

L. 20. *sūsīyya*: the plural of which is *sawāsī* (see list 3, l. 25). This is another word that indicates a geographical origin (Sūs) for a given product that later came to be imitated in other regions. The Sūs in question has been the object of some conjecture: either Susa (Shūsh) in Iran, where royal factories of textiles are attested before Islam, or Soussa (Sūsā) in Tunisia, a city praised by al-Idrīsī (d. ca. 560/1165) for the quality of its turbans.²¹² The word also appears in Catalan documents from the eighth/fourteenth century under the form *sucie*.²¹³ The *sūsīyya* is first attested in the Fatimid period, as confirmed by various documents from the Geniza.²¹⁴ It was mainly woven with linen, but silk could also be used along with linen.²¹⁵ The *Nūr al-maʿārif* lists it along with the

208 Ibid. 455–6. See also Vallet, *Entre deux "mondes"* 232.

209 Anonymous, *Nūr al-maʿārif* i, 572 (*maqṭaʿ ḥarīrī*).

210 This is confirmed by cases in which the word is used together with a kind of fabric, like *bunduqī*, for instance. Both terms can be found in a sale list of textiles datable to Jerusalem at the end of the eighth/fourteenth century, al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf, doc. 777 recto, ll. 7 and 12. In the same document, it also appears alongside a color ('azraq' [blue], 'lu'lu'ī' [pearly]), or a finishing ('mubaṭṭan' [lined], 'muḥashshan' [edged]).

211 See Serjeant, *Islamic textiles* 13n7.

212 Ibid. 44–5, 183–4; Dozy, *Dictionnaire détaillé* 317n8. Serjeant was unsure about the exact origin of this type of garment: "Sawāsī, another uncertain word which has been taken here as a plural of Sūsī, the well-known fabric. It may, however, be the name of some kind of garment, the name having been extended from the place to a special piece of clothing, or it may even be merely the name of some type of fabric without relation to any place of origin, as we now say 'damask.' I have become very uncertain whether to derive this name from Sūs in Khuzistan, Sūs in North Africa, or Suez in Egypt. As this textile is of linen, and we have no reference to linen in Sūs in Khuzistan, I think that the cloth intended is Suez cloth, and that it is a trade-name for cloth exported from Egypt by this route." Serjeant, *Islamic textiles* 130n66. The Suez origin must be discarded as the adjective to be derived from it would be *suwaysī* not *sūsī*.

213 von Brunn, *Katalanische Stoffe* 155; Alcover and Moll, *Diccionari*, s.v. "mactà".

214 Goitein and Friedman, *Indian traders* 169 (a precious item for which an amount of 30 dinars was paid), 176, and 179.

215 Serjeant, *Islamic textiles* 130 ("large Sūsī fabrics [sawāsī] of linen [kattān]").

bunduqī as a type of fabric that can be embroidered²¹⁶ and emphasizes that it is particularly difficult to sew because of its width and its thickness.²¹⁷ According to the same source, when this fabric entered the Rasulid treasury, it was thirty-one and one-half cubits long.²¹⁸ In this list of gifts and the following one (list 3, l. 25), the *sūsīyya* offered included silk (*ḥarīrī*).²¹⁹ In one case, all of the fabric was then dyed red (*muḥammar*; see below).

muḥammar: the use of the passive participle of the verb *ḥammara* indicates that after its production the *sūsīyya* was dyed completely, in this case it was dyed red. It cannot be interpreted as meaning that the silk of which it was made was dyed red.²²⁰

L. 21. *sharb*: this is a kind of linen cloth that was renowned for its fineness and its quality, even in the Fatimid period, as the documents from the Geniza witness.²²¹ Produced in various regions, and, in several cities in Egypt, including Alexandria, Dabīq, Tinnīs, and Damietta, it became a specialty of Alexandria after the decline of the textile industry in the other localities. For the early eighth/fourteenth century, we have a very precise description of the value of this fabric thanks to Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-ʿUmarī:

I was shown by the Khwājā (Master) Jamāl al-Dīn Yūsuf al-Māḥūrī lengths of very fine white linen (*sharb*) of the *mumarrash* variety (just like wasps wings they were!), which he had ordered in Alexandria to present to the Sultan Abū Saʿīd. I do not believe that any material in the world could match this. He also said that when he ordered them, each length, quite plain, cost him 700 dirhems, and the band, also plain, cost the same. So altogether each length cost 1,400 *waraq* dirhems, that is, 700 *nuqra* dirhems. This material is made solely of linen, and of any silk that may be worked in the decorative band, though most of that is linen, for the background [lit. the white] is never made of silk, but the wording itself, which forms the decoration of the band, may be. He added that a dirhem weight

216 Anonymous, *Nūr al-maʿārif* i, 143, where various qualities are detailed: high (*rafīʿ*), medium (*wasat*), and coarse (*khashīn*). See also Vallet, *Entre deux "mondes"* 233.

217 Anonymous, *Nūr al-maʿārif* i, 148 ('ammā l-sūsī fa-huwa 'asir min ḥaythu annahu 'arīd wa-mutaṣallib fa-yat'ab minhu l-ṣānī' kathīr').

218 Ibid. 289. The iron cubit (*dhirāʿ al-ḥadīd*) is meant here. If its value was equal to those from Egypt and Hijaz, it measured 58.187 cm. See Hinz, *Islamische Masse* 58. Thus in this case a little more than 18 m.

219 The lack of agreement between adjectives in relation with a noun in the feminine is common in the Egyptian dialect, particularly when detailing objects.

220 A similar combination is to be found in Anonymous, *Nūr al-maʿārif* i, 519, where three cuts of fabric (*tafāṣīl*) made of silk (*ḥarīrī*), then dyed in red (*muḥammarā*), and later embroidered with inscriptions (*bi-ṭuruz*) are mentioned.

221 Goitein, *A Mediterranean society* iv, 166; Goitein and Friedman, *Indian traders* 448; Kalfon Stillman, *Female attire* 60 and 71.

of this linen fetches more than its weight in silver, and that what goes into the decorative band fetches many more times its weight. It is in this *sharb* product, rather than any other of the different sorts and varieties of material that are made there, that Alexandria excels.²²²

Thanks to this passage, we know that this product was a luxurious cloth that could be decorated with embroidered bands.

makhdūma: the diacritical dot is present along with vowels that render the reading of this word easy but nevertheless difficult to translate with certainty.²²³ Its use together with a garment is attested in dictionaries to indicate that the garment will last for a certain time and therefore, that it was strong enough to be worn for a long period.²²⁴ This meaning does not seem to apply to this case. In modern Egyptian Arabic, the verb is also used to indicate that something is done with care or skill but again this sense seems too obvious for a fabric that Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-ʿUmarī described as one of the most excellent products made in Alexandria. Clearly, the word must represent a kind of work done on or with the *sharb* in connection with the main support, i.e., the *sūsiyya*. It appears that the same word is used in contemporary Morocco to describe a specific type of needlework made with interlaced silk and gilt thread,²²⁵ and such needlework can be viewed in videos, where it is described as embroidery made with canvas.²²⁶ On the basis of these data, we can surmise that the very fine and light linen fabric (*sharb*) was embroidered (most probably with silk thread) and then appliquéd on the *sūsiyya*, a technique evidenced by several examples of preserved Mamluk textiles.²²⁷

222 Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-ʿUmarī, *Masālik al-abṣār* 150–1 = trans. Richards 16.

223 The possibility that the word could be read *makhdhūma* must be put aside. The verb *khadhama* means to cut and the adjective *khadhīm* is used to define a garment that is shabby (al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-ʿarūs* xxxii, 64), which does not fit the context.

224 See Lane, *Madd al-qāmūs* ii, 711: ‘hādha l-qamiṣ yakhdum sana’ (this shirt will serve, or last a year).

225 Khalifa, *al-Haraka al-ʿilmīyya* i, 101 (‘wa-takūn al-simāta min khuyūṭ mubrama makhdūma bi-l-ḥarīr wa-l-dhahab’).

226 The search for “مخدومة بالحريز” on Google returns several results.

227 I thank Shireen El Kassem for discussing the probability of this interpretation with me. In the register of textiles and objects used for the religious offices of James II and other members of the court, dated 1309, a piece of fabric of Muslim origin was reserved for the queen’s usage. Its description reminds us of the piece described here: ‘unum pannum auri sarracenicum, cum orlis de sendato, ad signum regale, forraturum panno livido linno’ (one Saracenic cloth with gold [threads] and borders with embroidered silk inscriptions, lined with a pale linen cloth). See Martínez Ferrando, *La cámara real* 31. The expression “ad signum regale” could be interpreted as referring to James II’s personal sign (see Péquignot, *Au nom du roi* 280), but given that the cloth was most probably Egyptian and that Mamluk cloths with the sultan’s titles and name were offered to James II, it could also indicate that the cloth bore the sultan’s name.

muṣawwara: the term refers to the *sūsiyya*. Thus, it can be interpreted as figures (*ṣuwar*) of birds or wild animals²²⁸ embroidered on the red dyed silk background of the *sūsiyya*.²²⁹

L. 22. *fūṭa*: this garment is also well-known throughout the Muslim world²³⁰ and its existence is attested even in the documents of the Geniza.²³¹ It corresponds to a woven cloth or a wrap, i.e., a long piece that can be used to cover the whole body, like a sari, or its inferior or upper part only, including as a headgear.²³² It was made of silk, silk with linen, high-quality linen, or even goat's hair.²³³ This garment also appears a few times in *Nūr al-ma'ārif*, once as specifically produced in Alexandria or Qūṣ and of various types, and in another place as a garment made of various kinds of fibers (silk, linen, silk mixed with linen, cotton).²³⁴ In this list, it is clearly indicated as being made of silk (*ḥarīrī*) with decorated bands (*mujawwakha*, see immediately below).

L. 23: *mujawwakha*: Atiya read this word *mukhawwakha* and translated it as peach colored,²³⁵ even though all the diacritical dots are indicated as are the vowels. The word is clearly attested with regard to the decoration of textiles, as in the description of the *ṭardwahsh* (fabric with hunting scenes) provided by Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umārī (already quoted) where it is connected with *jākhāt*, which thus confirms its reading.²³⁶ Quatremère, who was the first to edit and translate the passage in question, offered no explanation for his rendering of *jākhāt* as “stripes/bands” and *mujawwakh* as “composed of stripes/bands.”²³⁷ His translation was nevertheless then recorded by Dozy.²³⁸ Neither form is registered in classical dictionaries and apart from Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umārī's text, which was then quoted by al-Maqrīzī and al-Qalqashandī, these terms only appear in the contemporary *Nūr al-ma'ārif* where it is used to designate a type of

228 See Serjeant, *Islamic textiles* 22 (pictures of elephants), 154 (figures of birds and wild animals).

229 As already advanced by Atiya, *Egypt and Aragon* 32. In the registers for 1323, several objects are listed; these correspond with the gifts received by James II from al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. They include a ‘pannum de lana diversorum colorum cum figuris hominum et animalium et de parra’ (one multicolored woolen cloth with human and animal figures and vine leaves). See Martínez Ferrando, *La cámara real* 199.

230 See Dozy, *Dictionnaire détaillé* 339–43; Serjeant, *Islamic textiles* 37, 55–6, 58, 114.

231 See Kalfon Stillman, *Female attire* 214–6; Kalfon Stillman, *Arab dress* 49; Goitein and Friedman, *Indian traders* 175–80.

232 See Kalfon Stillman, *Female attire* 214–6; Goitein and Friedman, *Indian traders* 175.

233 Goitein and Friedman, *Indian traders* 176.

234 Anonymous, *Nūr al-ma'ārif* i, 146, 447–8, 481, 483, 487. See also Vallet, *Entre deux “mondes”* 231.

235 Atiya, *Egypt and Aragon* 30 and 32.

236 See above 363.

237 Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, trans. Quatremère ii, 71.

238 Dozy, *Supplément* i, 230.

fabric distributed to the children of a ship captain sailing to India; in this case, each received one with several bands of a single color and gold.²³⁹ Quatremère obviously relied on the context and not on a definition found in a dictionary, but the surviving examples of this type of fabric confirm his interpretation.²⁴⁰

L. 24. *aṣnāf tudhkar*: these words pose no particular problem in translation. They are placed here to separate more clearly what precedes (what is only composed of cloth) from what follows (products of a different nature) in the list of gifts.

L. 28. *fuqqā'at zujā*: a container or vase that is a well-known object.²⁴¹ Here it was made of glass.²⁴² The shape of the *fuqqā'a* can be tentatively identified with a flask or sphero-conical vessel that has long puzzled scholars from the time they were discovered in archeological contexts. In terms of their use, they have been tentatively identified as Greek fire, hand grenades, or fire blowers, flasks for alcoholic beverages or mercury, water-pipes, and finally as perfume flasks.²⁴³ A particularly interesting example is preserved at the Victoria and Albert Museum (see fig. 13.19): it is made of enameled glass bearing inscriptions with the name of the Rasulid sultan of Yemen, al-Ashraf 'Umar (r. 694–6/1295–6); accordingly, we can date it as almost contemporary with our list. Though medieval authors explain the value of balsam oil by Christian rulers, it featured among gifts sent to Muslim rulers too.²⁴⁴ Thus, it is very tantalizing to identify this vessel with the kind of container that was usually sent with balsam oil and that is specifically designated as a *fuqqā'a* too.

zinat alf [dīr]ham: Atiya read these words as *zina lil-fam*, which he translated “One weight for the mouth.”²⁴⁵ He was obviously puzzled by the use of the abbreviation of dirham written at the end of *alf* (one thousand), which is common in numbers written in *ṣiyāqa* script.²⁴⁶ The weight of the aloeswood is expressed here in dirhams, a unit of weight that corresponded in Egypt to 3.125 grams.²⁴⁷ The total weight of the aloeswood thus exceeded 3 kilograms.

239 Anonymous, *Nūr al-ma'ārif* i, 519 ('thalāthat jākhāt: fāranjī wa-dhahab wāḥid, jākhāt khuḍr wa-dhahab wāḥid, jākhāt azraq wa-dhahab wāḥid'). Dozy, *ibid.*, also registered another possible quotation of this term in the *Thousand and One Nights* in Maximilian Habicht's edition, where the word is wrongly written *jājāt*. He appears to be correct, as it is used in a similar context where an overcoat is described.

240 See above fn 131.

241 See Dozy, *Supplément* ii, 274.

242 See Lutfi, *al-Quds al-mamlūkīyya* 303 (“it seems that *fuqqā'a* was another word for bottles”). They could also be made of clay (*fakkkhār*). See Anonymous, *Nūr al-ma'ārif* i, 101. In this source, it often appears under the form *fuqqā'yya*. *Ibid.* i, 246, 302, 304, 306, 308.

243 See Pradines, The sphero-conical vessel.

244 See Behrens-Abouseif, *Practising diplomacy* 47–8, 54, 87–88, 130.

245 Atiya, *Egypt and Aragon* 30 and 32.

246 See above 342.

247 Hinz, *Islamische Masse* 3.



FIGURE 13.19
Mamluk sphero-conical glass
bottle made for the Rasulid
Sultan al-Ashraf 'Umar (r. 694–
6/1295–6)
COURTESY VICTORIA AND
ALBERT MUSEUM, LONDON,
WILFRED BUCKLEY COLLEC-
TION, MUSEUM NUMBER:
C.153–1936

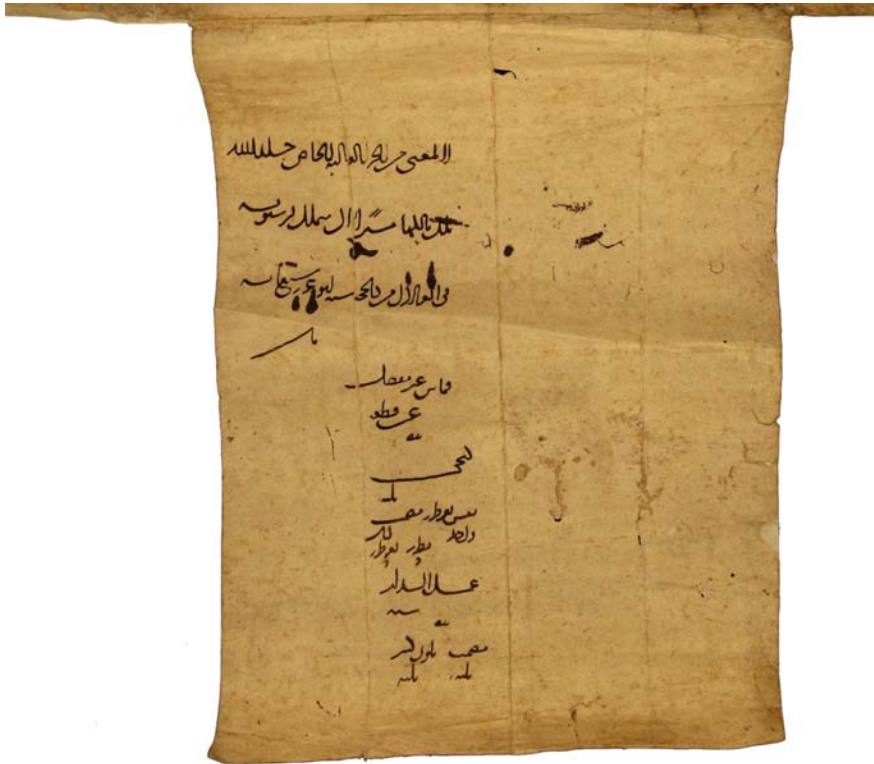


FIGURE 13.20 ACA, Cartas árabes, no. 149, recto

List no. 3 dated to the first ten days of Dhū l-Ḥijja 714²⁴⁸ [/8–17 March 1315] (attached to a letter dated 10 Dhū l-Ḥijja 714/17 March 1315)

Description

The document consists of a sheet of Oriental paper (with laid lines perpendicular to the text, twenty laid lines occupying 28 mm; the chain lines are not visible). It measures 184–7 mm in width by 262–4 mm in length and is pasted to the end of the scroll that contains the letter. Before being pasted, the sheet had been folded vertically once, then in half again, and then once horizontally at the center. This process left folds that are still clear in the pictures (see figs. 13.20–1): the vertical folds measure 46–7 mm while the horizontal fold divides the sheet into two parts respectively measuring 125 and 139 mm. The text is on the left half on the recto, and on the verso the text is written in two columns, each occupying one half. The first line of the text starts 59 mm from the superior edge of the sheet on the recto and 18 mm on the verso, while the width of the right margin is 103–8 mm. The interlineary space between the first three lines on the recto measures 25 mm. Then, for the remainder of the text, it is limited to the minimum, with some slight variation. Paper worms lightly damaged the paper but these do not affect the written parts. The sheet was restored with two small pieces of paper meant to cover the holes created by the paper worms. Fortunately, the restoration does not impair the reading of the text. With the exception of one case (l. 1), the text lacks diacritical dots completely and is written in a hurried handwriting that mainly features the use of unauthorized ligatures between some letters and the use of numbers written in full letters according to the *siyāqa* style. Both make deciphering the whole text a challenge, particularly for the technical words.

Edition

Recto.

المعسى من الخزانة العالية الخاص خلد الله	1
ملك مالكمها مسيراً الى متملكك برشنوننة	2
في العشر الاول من ذي الحجة سنة اربع عشرة وسبع مائة	3
هـ	4
قماش غير مفصل	5

248 ACA, Real Cancillería, Cartas árabes, no. 149. First published and translated in Alarcón y Santón and García de Linares, *Los documentos* 361–2 (edition) and 364–5 (translation). Alarcón y Santón and García de Linares' edition was then reproduced, with no attempt to improve their decipherment, by al-Ḥajjī, *al-Ālāqāt* 165–6. The contents of the list were studied by Behrens-Abouseif, *Practising diplomacy* 99–100 on the basis of Alarcón y Santón and García de Linares' unreliable edition. It also led Ashtor, *Levant trade* 25 to some erroneous conjectures.

عش- [رون] قطعة	6
تفص- [يله]	7
كنجي	8
ثلاثة	9
نقش بغير طرز مصمت	10
واحد اثنان	11
بطرز بغير طرز	12
[واحد] بد [واحد] بد	13
عمل الدار	14
ستة	15
تفص- [يله]	16
مصمت ملون كبير	17
ثلاثة ثلاثة	18

Diacritical dots: l. 1: العاليه.

Verso.

مروزي مطرز	19
زنجبيل مر با	
واحد	20
ضمن احقاق	
مفرج مطرز	21
خمسة	
خمسة	22
تفص- [يله]	
تفصيل بياض	23
كبار عاد	
مطرزة ثلاثة	24
اثنان ثلاثة	
سواسي حريري محمر	25
اثنان	26
مخدومة	27
منصرة	
واحد واحد	28
قسي	29
خمسة عشر	30
حلق	31
بندي	
عشرة كل منها توترت	32
خمسة	33
دهن بلسان	34
ماية وعشرين مث[قد] بالا	35
ان شاه الله تعالى	
عود بخور	36
الحمد لله وحده وصلواته على سيدنا محمد واله وسلم	
زنته	37
الف [در] هم	38

ح



FIGURE 13.21 ACA, Cartas árabes, no. 149, verso

Translation

Recto.

1. What was supplied from the lofty and private treasury—may God perpetuate
2. the reign of its ruler—to be sent to the ruler of Barcelona
3. during the first ten days of Dhū l-Hijja in the year seven hundred fourteen
4. End
5. Untailored cloths
6. Twenty pieces
7. The detail of which is
8. *Kanjī* fabric
9. Three [pieces]
10. with decorations but without of a single color
embroidered inscriptions

- | | | | |
|-----|--------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 11. | One [piece] | | Two [pieces] |
| 12. | | with embroidered inscriptions | without embroidered inscriptions |
| 13. | | One [piece] | One [piece] |
| 14. | Made by the [royal] mill | | |
| 15. | Six [pieces] | | |
| 16. | The detail of which is | | |
| 17. | of a single color | | multicolored and large |
| 18. | Three [pieces] | | Three [pieces] |

Verso.

- | | | | |
|-----|--|--|--------------------------------|
| 19. | Mervian cloth with embroidered inscriptions | | Candied ginger |
| 20. | One [piece] | | in jars |
| 21. | Fabric with large interstices and embroidered inscriptions | | Five [pieces] |
| 22. | Five [pieces] | | The detail of which is |
| 23. | Cuts of fabric of white material | | Large Normal |
| 24. | embroidered | Three [pieces] | Two [pieces] Three [pieces] |
| 25. | Red dyed silk <i>Sūsiyya</i> fabric | | |
| 26. | Two [pieces] | | |
| 27. | with appliquéd [fine linen?] | with Christian designs | |
| 28. | One [piece] | One [piece] | |
| 29. | Bows | | |
| 30. | Fifteen [pieces] | | |
| 31. | Handbows | Pellet-bows | |
| 32. | Ten [pieces] | Each of them with its strings | |
| 33. | | Five [pieces] | |
| 34. | Balsam oil | | |
| 35. | One hundred twenty <i>mithqāls</i> | | |
| 36. | Aloeswood | If God Exalted wills | |
| 37. | Its weight | Praise be to God Alone and His blessing be upon our lord, Muḥammad, and his family, and also His peace | |
| 38. | One thousand dirhams | <i>h</i> | |

Commentary

Verso.

L. 19. *marwazī* (Mervian, from Merv in Khurāsān):²⁴⁹ like *bunduqī*, *kanjī*, and *sūsiyya*, *marwazī* belongs to a category of fabric produced in a city from which it was exported. Later it was imitated and modified in other regions of the Islamic world, thus it lost its original link with the city where it was invented. Mervian cloth is attested in the sources and in documents from the Geniza, evidence that it is an old type of fabric. From the Sassanid period Merv was famous for its textile industry and, in Islamic times, produced silk and cotton textiles.²⁵⁰ In the Mamluk period, the *marwazī* corresponded to a certain kind of silk fabric, as shown by the following quotation related to an event contemporary with the list of gifts under discussion. With regard to Sallār's belongings confiscated upon his arrest in 710/1310, al-'Aynī speaks of a *khargāh kiswatuhā atlas aḥmar ma'dinī mubattan bi-azraq marwazī wa-bābuhā zarkash miṣrī* ("and a tent with cloth composed of Ma'din red satin²⁵¹ lined with Mervian blue [satin] and its door made of Egyptian brocade").²⁵² It must have been a costly product as only one piece was offered to the king of Aragon.

murabban: associated here with ginger, this is a candied version prepared with sugar or honey.²⁵³

L. 21. *mufarraj*: this word is sometimes rendered by editors of Mamluk sources as *mufarraḥ*, a reading that is rejected by most scholars nowadays.²⁵⁴ Marzouk even conjectured that the word should be read *mubarraj* or *mu'arraj*, i.e., a cloth ornamented with signs of the zodiac or zigzag stripes. As the example provided by our list demonstrates, there is no need to read it differently than *mufarraj*, even if the diacritical dots are missing for the *fā'* and the *jīm*.²⁵⁵ Though it seems to be associated with the

249 According to Muslim authors, *marwazī* is the *nisba* for people originating in that city while *marwī* is reserved for the products manufactured there. According to Dozy, *Supplément* ii, 585, *marwazī* is also used to refer to textiles, as is demonstrated by the example in this list of gifts.

250 See Serjeant, *Islamic textiles* 43 and 87–90; Kalfon Stillman, *Female attire* 22 and 154.

251 *Ma'dinī*: as explained by Dozy, *Dictionnaire détaillé* 83n2; Dozy, *Supplément* ii, 104, the true meaning of this word remains obscure. Some scholars derive it from the city of Ma'din in Armenia or from Zauzen, in the province of Nishapur, but these suggestions remain purely conjectural. It could also mean "with metallic glints."

252 Al-'Aynī, *Iqd al-jumān* v, 245–6.

253 See above 368.

254 Dozy, *Supplément* ii, 249.

255 There could be a relation between *al-mufarraj* and *almofreixe* (attested under various forms: *almofrej*, *almofres*, etc.) appearing in Catalan documents related to trade and described as a cover (mainly for the bed). See Gual Camarena, *Vocabulario*, s.v. *almadreixe*. In 1305, such a fabric was offered by James II: 'primo, siquidem in civitate Barchinone tradidistis ad opus cuiusdam almofreyii, quod fieri mandavimus, in quo lectus ... deffertur, duo coria de cordubano'. See Martínez Ferrando, *La cámara real* 17.

farjýyya, a kind of mantle with an opening (*farj*),²⁵⁶ it cannot be translated here as such because clothes are not part of the offerings made to the king of Aragon, rather he was sent pieces of fabrics, as we saw. I suggest that this was a cloth whose main feature was large interstices in its decoration.²⁵⁷

L. 23. *tafāšil bayād*: both words have already been commented upon.²⁵⁸ It should be noted that the same kind of cloth was sent by the Mamluk sultan to the khan of the Golden Horde in 686/1287, where it is described as Alexandrian, with dazzling, high-quality embroidery with the names of the sultan in gold thread or in silk, and the width of the embroidered band measuring four closed fingers (i.e., 8–9 cm).²⁵⁹

L. 27. *munaşşara*: just as the term *muşallab* was used to indicate designs representing the cross on a garment,²⁶⁰ it makes sense to interpret the word *munaşşar* (passive participle of *naşşara* “to christianize”) as referring to the presence of Christian designs. The fabric could have been specially made for the king of Aragon, or it may have been one of the products manufactured for the Christian community in the Mamluk realm.²⁶¹

L. 38. *h̄*: This sign corresponds to the letter *h̄ā*’ followed by a small stroke and not a *rā*’ as some scholars believed.²⁶² It is tentatively explained by al-Qalqashandī as an abbreviation for the *ḥasbala*, a formula that, in most cases, was written out in full letters before the abbreviation.

Appendix 2: Lists of Gifts in Catalan Related to Aragonese-Mamluk Diplomatic Contacts

1 *Translation of a List of Gifts Sent by al-Nāşir Muḥammad to James II in 1319*²⁶³

aço es en una cedula

Co qui es trames del rebost molt alt a la presencia molt alta en lo Kalenar de vi dies en Abril any de MCCCXIX.

Primerament

Draps xx peçes els quals son IIII cascun d’una hobra

256 See Serjeant, *Islamic textiles* 24, 118n39.

257 See de Biberstein Kazimirski, *Dictionnaire* ii, 563.

258 See above 362 and 384.

259 See Ibn al-Furāt, *al-Tārīkh* viii, 51.

260 Lane, *Madd al-qāmūs* iv, 1713.

261 For some examples of Mamluk textiles with representations of Christian motifs (figures in the orans posture), see Sardi, *Mamluk textiles* i, 243–4.

262 See Björkmann, *Diplomatic* 302 on the basis of al-Qalqashandī, *Şubḥ al-a’shā* vi, 270, where it is badly reproduced typographically.

263 Edited in Masiá de Ros, *La Corona de Aragón* 315.

E VI d'obre de casa quels III son duna manera e els II d'altra
 Item dos altres d'una manera
 Item v d'altre manera

axi son XX

Item III blancs sergats
 Item I blancs
 Item archs turqueses XV. X de flotes e v de rotols.
 Item olí de balsam. CXX peçes de bezants
 Item gengebrades v drachmes.

2 *List of Gifts Sent by James II to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in 1314*²⁶⁴

Aquestes coses davyal escrites son preses de la casa e del rebost del Rey d'Arago; E son trameses al molt alt e molt noble el Solda de Babilonia ab los honrats mis-satges del dit Rey d'Arago en G. de Casanadal en n'Arnau Çabastida;

Primerament falchons griffalts blancs;	III
Item peçes de pisset vermeyl;	II
Item peçes de draps verts det Xalo;	II
Item peçes de draps blaus det Xalo;	II
Item penes vayres;	XII
Item peçes de teles de Rems;	XII

3 *List of Gifts Sent by James II to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in 1318*²⁶⁵

Aquestes coses d'avall scrites son preses de la casa e del rebost del senyor Rey d'Arago; E son trameses al molt alt e molt noble al Solda de Babilonia ab los honrats missatges del Rey d'Arago en F. de Vilafrancha e n'Arnau Çabastida:

Primerament	I Gerifalt blanc e II grises
Item	II pressets vermeylls
Item	II draps de Xalon
Item	VI peçes de teles de Rems
Item	VIII penes vayres

²⁶⁴ Edited in *ibid.* 305.

²⁶⁵ Edited in *ibid.* 311.

4 *List of Gifts Sent by James II to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in 1322*²⁶⁶

Aquestes coses davayl escrites son preses de la casa e del rebost del senyor Rey d'Arago; E son trameses al molt alt e molt noble al Soldan de Babilonia per los honrats missatges del dit senyor Rey d'Arago en Berenguer des Castellbisbal e en Guerau Ça Olivera;

Primerament falchons gerifalts prims	V
Item peçes de pisset vermeyl ça es de Duay	I
Item de Ipre peça	I
Item peçes de drap de Xalo, ço es de festequí	I
Item de blau clar peça	I
Item penes vayres	VIII
Item peçes de teles de Rems	VI

5 *List of Gifts Sent by Alfonso VI to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in 1329*²⁶⁷

Aquestes coses davayl escrites son preses de la casa e del rebost del senyor Rey d'Arago; E son trameses al molt alt e molt noble al Soldan de Babilonia per los honrats missatges del dit senyor Rey d'Arago; en Francescho Marches e en Ramon Ça Vayl;

Primerament falchons grifalts prims gris	5
Item peçes de pisset vermeyl	2
Item peçes de drap de Xalon	2
Item penes vayres	8
Item peçes de teles de Rems	6

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²⁶⁶ Edited in *ibid.* 323–4.

²⁶⁷ Edited in *ibid.* 337.

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