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On the Success of Ibn Saʿīd al-Maghribī's *al-Mughrib* in the Islamic East

The purpose of the present study is twofold: on the one hand, to re-evaluate the figure of poet, historian, writer and geographer Ibn Saʿīd al-Maghribī (d. 685 H/1286 CE) based on the historical context and personal circumstances that undoubtedly influenced his intellectual production and the dissemination of his work, especially in the Islamic East. On the other hand, its purpose is to point out that the quality and value of his oeuvre is the result of his intense, lifelong efforts to achieve the most complete intellectual training possible, which led him to search out teachers and books ceaselessly across the territories that he visited, right up to the end of his life.¹ This strong literary background was also his way of life and sustenance, and an important motivation to carry out his travels in search of patronage. His departure from al-Andalus alongside his father was motivated mainly by the political situation following the death of military leader Ibn Hūd of Murcia (d. 635 H/1238 CE). Ibn Saʿīd and his father Mūsā, who had been supporters of Ibn Hūd, found themselves at that moment in a complicated personal and economic situation, and were forced to find new ways of life in exile. As we shall see, their ‘cover letter’ and livelihood was their work *al-Mughrib fi ḥulā al-Maghrib*, which was especially true in the case of Ibn Saʿīd following the death of his father in Alexandria in 640 H/1243 CE.

¹ This study is complemented by that of Víctor de Castro, also in this volume, which focuses on the geographical concepts employed by Ibn Saʿīd in his works and the controversy they generated regarding his understanding of the Maghrib.

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1 Ibn Saʿīd's biography

His full name was Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Mūsā b. Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Malik b. Saʿīd.² Although he is known by the *nisba* al-Maghribī, properly speaking he was an Andalusi, born in Granada on 30 Ramaḍān 610 (12 February 1214), as he himself indicates when discussing this city in *al-Mughrib fī ḥulā al-Maghrib*.³ He came from an illustrious family of noble Arab lineage, the Banū Saʿīd al-ʿAmmārī, whose origins date back to the Prophet Muḥammad's famous Companion ʿAmmār b. Yāsir, who supported ʿAlī, cousin and son-in-law of Muḥammad, in his confrontation against Muʿāwiya, founder of the Umayyad dynasty.⁴ Ibn Saʿīd wrote a work dedicated to the ʿAlid lineage entitled *Kunūz al-maṭālib fī āl Abī Ṭālib* (The trove of information about Abū Ṭālib's family), which has been interpreted as evidence of his support for the Shīʿī cause. The modern scholar Jasim Alubudi, for example, believes that in his works Ibn Saʿīd actively admits he is a Shīʿī, which he argues would explain the harsh criticism of his works by authors such as Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-ʿUmarī (d. 749 H/1349 CE), as Víctor de Castro explores in his contribution to this volume.⁵

Ibn Saʿīd's ancestors, who were of Yemeni origin, emigrated to al-Andalus following the demise of the eastern Umayyad dynasty. The founder of the lineage in al-Andalus was ʿAbd Allāh Ibn Saʿīd b. ʿAmmār, military chief of the Yemeni troops in Damascus, who settled in Qalʿat Yaḥṣub (Alcalá la Real) as its governor.⁶ This place eventually became known as Qalʿat Banī Saʿīd,⁷ and, centuries later during the Almohad period, the Banū Saʿīd answered to the Muʿminid caliphs.

² For more information about his complete biography see Cano Ávila/Tawfik 2007; Monferrer 2012; Alansari 1992; Arié 1988; Granja 1981, 88–89; Potiron 1965; Potiron 1966; Hoenerbach 1989; Hoenerbach 1991.

³ Ibn Saʿīd, *al-Mughrib* (1953), 2: 103.

⁴ Reckendorf, “ʿAmmār b. Yāsir”, *EF*.

⁵ Jasim Alubudi does not give any specific testimony drawn from the works of Ibn Saʿīd where the author recognizes his affiliation to this doctrine. Rather, he bases his arguments on the praise that Ibn Saʿīd bestows on the Fāṭimid rulers of Egypt in the *Mughrib*, and on his description of Ṭabaristān and how Shīʿism is followed by the people of that country, as cited in the work *al-Radd* by Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-ʿUmarī (d. 749 H/1349 CE). See al-ʿUmarī, *al-Radd* (2009), 141; see also the introduction by Jasim Alubudi to his edition and translation of al-ʿUmarī, *al-Radd* (2009), 27–28. Regarding Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-ʿUmarī, as Víctor de Castro shows in his study in this volume, he in fact valued not only Ibn Saʿīd's works, which were an important source for him, but also his overall literary and intellectual contributions. He only attacked Ibn Saʿīd over his decision to include Egypt as part of the Maghrib.

⁶ Ibn Saʿīd, *al-Mughrib* (1953), 2: 161; Potiron 1965, 79–82.

⁷ Ibn Saʿīd, *al-Mughrib* (1953), 2: 161.

Ibn Saʿīd lived out his youth in the city of Seville, the political and intellectual capital of the Almohad caliphate, where he was trained in language, poetry and other branches of knowledge under the most renowned teachers active in the city, including the grammarian and Seville native Abū ʿAlī al-Shalawbīnī,⁸ and the writer Abū Bakr b. Hishām.⁹ Likewise, among his fellow students were figures such as the poet Abū Ishāq Ibn Sahl al-Isrāʾīlī¹⁰ and Abū al-Ḥajjāj al-Bayyāsī,¹¹ among others. However, the most important influence on his education undoubtedly came from his father, Mūsā Ibn Saʿīd,¹² who served as a role model both intellectually and in life.

Thanks to his father's interest in books and position as governor of Algeciras – a post later occupied by Ibn Saʿīd under the sovereignty of Ibn Hūd of Murcia in the year 631 H/1233-4 CE¹³ – he had the opportunity to frequent gatherings with the most important writers and poets of the city. He made several trips within al-Andalus, mainly to the southwest of the peninsula, which would provide him with many contacts and an excellent knowledge of the cities of al-Andalus and their intellectual context, as reflected in the *Mughrib*.¹⁴

2 A forced exile?

After the death of Ibn Hūd in 635 H/1238 CE and the rise of the Naṣrid sultan Muḥammad I, the situation became increasingly trying for Ibn Saʿīd and his father.¹⁵ They ultimately opted to leave al-Andalus in 636 H/1238-9 CE when Ibn

8 Ibn Saʿīd, *Ikhtisār al-qidh* (1980), 152; Haremska 2012.

9 Ibn Saʿīd, *al-Muqtaṭaf* (1984), 217; Carmona, 2004.

10 Ibn Saʿīd, *al-Muqtaṭaf* (1984), 218; Ibn Saʿīd, *Rāyāt al-mubarrazīn* (1978), 22, 148–149; López y López, 2007.

11 PUA (Prosopography of the ʿulamāʾ of al-Andalus), id. 11913; Aguirre, 2012.

12 Ibn Saʿīd, *al-Mughrib* (1953), 2: 170–171.

13 The end of Almohad rule in al-Andalus ushered in the “Third Period of *Taifas*”. The most prominent of those who revolted against the Almohads was Ibn Hūd al-Mutawakkil (d. 635 H/1238 CE), an alleged descendant of the Banū Hūd of Zaragoza. He began his revolt in the Valley of Ricote (Murcia) and managed to take control of the majority of al-Andalus, recognizing the ʿAbbāsīd Caliphate and bearing the honorary titles (*alqāb*) of Amīr al-Andalus and Amīr al-muslimīn. For a general perspective on this period see Vidal Castro 2000; Vidal Castro 2012; Carmona González 1994; Molina López 1979.

14 Ibn Saʿīd, *al-Mughrib* (1953), 2: 172–173.

15 As already noted, Mūsā Ibn Saʿīd had been governor of Algeciras under Ibn Hūd, and Ibn Saʿīd replaced him during a brief period of time, in the year 631 H/1233-4 CE. See al-Maqqarī, *Nafh al-ṭib* (1968), 2: 270–271; Ibn Saʿīd, *Ikhtisār al-qidh* (1980), 2.

Saʿīd was 24 years old, stating their intention to go on pilgrimage to Mecca – a common practice among Andalusis in times of political upheaval in the face of uncertainty as to how their new rulers would treat them.¹⁶

In the case of Ibn Saʿīd and his father Mūsā, their support for Ibn Hūd situated them as enemies of the new Naṣrid ruler. They left for the East with few economic resources, but with their intellectual background as their bargaining chip for survival. Ibn Saʿīd spent the rest of his life travelling in different regions of the Islamic world, frequenting – as he had in al-Andalus – scholars from each city and visiting the most prestigious libraries, in search of patronage from different governors and notables in Egypt and Syria, under both Ayyūbid (566–648 H/1171–1250 CE) and Mamlūk (648–922 H/1250–1517) rule.¹⁷

Neither Ibn Saʿīd nor his father would ever return to their homeland: Mūsā Ibn Saʿīd died in Alexandria in 640 H/1243 CE and Ibn Saʿīd in Tunis in 685 H/1286 CE. It was in Egypt where the author, following the family tradition, finished shaping the monumental literary encyclopedia that is the *Mughrib*.

3 *Al-Mughrib fī ḥulā al-Maghrib*

Ibn Saʿīd was one of the most prolific Andalusī authors, writing many works on a wide range of subjects such as poetry, music, travel, biography, genealogy, geography, and history, including a work about his own lineage, the Banū Saʿīd, entitled *al-Ṭālīʿ al-saʿīd fī taʾrīkh Banī Saʿīd* (Good fortune in the history of the Banū Saʿīd). Unfortunately, many of his writings have been lost, and some are only partially preserved, which prevents us from arriving at an overall picture of his literary production.¹⁸

¹⁶ Other Andalusis before Ibn Saʿīd and his father, in similar situations, had already followed this course of action: they claimed that they intended to perform the pilgrimage when in reality they were fleeing from a difficult political situation in which their properties had been confiscated and they feared for their lives. The closest and most famous case is that of Abū Bakr b. al-ʿArabī and his father, who left al-Andalus when the Almoravids took over. Abū Bakr b. al-ʿArabī did not return until he had obtained letters from al-Ghazālī and the ʿAbbāsīd caliph that helped him win over the new rulers. See Cano Ávila/Sanjuán/Tawfik 2009; Marín 1995, 126–127.

¹⁷ Ibn Saʿīd, who had left al-Andalus because of an unstable political situation, found himself in similar circumstances a few years later in Cairo. He witnessed the turbulent times as power changed hands from the Ayyūbid dynasty to the Mamlūks. This may have been the motivating factor in his move first from Cairo to Damascus, and then from Damascus to Baghdad. Finally, the Mongol threat may have led him to return to Tunis in the year 652 H/1254 CE.

¹⁸ Vidal Castro 2002; Arié 1988; Viguera Molins 2006; Potiron 1966.

In the case of *al-Mughrib fī ḥulā al-Maghrib* (The extraordinary jewels of the West), a historical-literary-geographical anthology aimed at compiling a selection of the literary production of Maghribi authors, Ibn Saʿīd was in fact not the sole author, but rather built on the work of a series of previous authors who had worked on the volume before him. Since all that remains of the introduction are a few fragments, we cannot know exactly what criteria were used in selecting the materials and authors.¹⁹ Nonetheless, much of the value of this work lies in the precision with which these sources are cited, as well as the relevance of the materials collected, some of which originally belonged to works now lost. In addition, Ibn Saʿīd and his co-authors collected a large amount of oral material, much of it belonging to local folklore, which is an aspect of the project that until now has been afforded little consideration.²⁰

3.1 *Al-Mughrib's* composition: A family matter²¹

The composition of *al-Mughrib fī ḥulā al-Maghrib* is in fact the result of the work of six different writers over a period of 115 years.²² The starting point was in the early 6th/12th century, specifically a work written in 530 H/1135 CE (now lost) by the poet al-Ḥijārī,²³ entitled *al-Mushib fī faḍāʾil/gharāʾib al-Maghrib* (Proverb of the merits of the West)²⁴ and dedicated to his patron, ʿAbd al-Malik b. Saʿīd, great-grandfather of Ibn Saʿīd, during his stay in Alcalá la Real.

After the efforts of al-Ḥijārī, ʿAbd al-Malik decided to continue the work, adding to it more men of letters that he considered should be included. After him, his

¹⁹ The introduction to the *Mughrib* has not been preserved in the Cairo *codex unicus*. Some fragments, however, are quoted by al-Maqqarī. See al-Maqqarī, *Nafh al-tib* (1968), 2: 329–330.

²⁰ See for instance the fable of the father, the donkey and the son. This fable of Eastern origin, which became widespread in medieval Europe from the 13th century to the 16th century, was first recorded in Arabic by Ibn Saʿīd during his stay in Cairo. See Molina/Castro 2019.

²¹ Viguera 2006.

²² Ibn Saʿīd himself states this at the end of each chapter of the only preserved copy of this work, for instance, at the end of the fourth chapter: *al-rābiʾ min Kitāb al-Mughrib fī ḥulā al-Maghrib alladhī šannafahu bi-l-muwarāthati fī miʾati wa-khamsa ʾashrata sanatan sittatun wa-hum Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥijārī wa-ʿAbd al-Malik b. Saʿīd wa-Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-Malik wa-Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Malik wa-Mūsā b. Muḥammad wa-ʿAlī b. Mūsā*. See Ibn Saʿīd, *al-Mughrib* (2003), 11, 58–59.

²³ Lirola Delgado 2012.

²⁴ This work, together with the *Mughrib*, was one of the main sources used by al-Maqqarī (d. 1041 H/1632 CE) for the geographical and poetic portion on al-Andalus in his celebrated *Nafh al-tib*. See al-Maqqarī, *Nafh al-tib* (1968), 1: 686–693.

sons Aḥmad and Muḥammad continued to enrich the work with their own contributions, but it was the son of Muḥammad, Mūsā Ibn Saʿīd, who became the most devoted to the family opus, working tirelessly on it, first alone and then with his son Ibn Saʿīd, until the last day of his life.²⁵

As Luis Molina and Víctor de Castro state in a recent article,²⁶ Mūsā was not merely a link in this chain of family members who, after al-Ḥijārī, involved themselves in the composition of this work brought to fruition by Ibn Saʿīd. Instead, he should be considered the true author of the work (or at least the writer who contributed the most to it), which his son would take up and complete following his death with a first version finished in 641 H/1243 CE. Ibn Saʿīd had been collaborating with his father for some time on the *Mughrib*, and Mūsā in all likelihood had already made it available to readers before Ibn Saʿīd finished it. The drafting of the *Mughrib*, therefore, as Luis Molina and Víctor de Castro maintain, was well advanced by the time of Mūsā's death.

Without changing the basic structure of the work, Ibn Saʿīd – the last author – added the information he collected in the course of his travels, mainly regarding his experiences in Egypt and his fruitful visits to many important libraries in Baghdad and Aleppo. Once Ibn Saʿīd took over the *Mughrib*, he produced several versions, some shorter and some longer, as he incorporated materials extracted from sources both written and oral that he encountered during his travels. The first version of the work is believed to have been composed shortly after the death of his father Mūsā, around the year 641 H/1243 CE. The second version, according to Ibn Saʿīd, was written in the year 645 H/1247-8 CE, and the third, according to the *Mughrib* manuscript, was finished in the year 647 H/1249 CE, during the years he resided in Aleppo.

Once Ibn Saʿīd and Mūsā arrived in the East, they seem to have realized that the same formula used in the *Mughrib* could be expanded to include the Mashriq, which would also increase their opportunities for finding patronage. Thus, a work entitled *al-Mushriq fī ḥulā al-Mashriq* (The shining jewels of the East) arose as a continuation of the *Mushriq*, this time covering the authors of the East, an idea that occurred to Mūsā some time prior to his death on 8 Shawwāl 640 H/31 March 1243 CE.²⁷ Ibn Saʿīd explains in the introduction to the *Mushriq*²⁸ that:

²⁵ Ibn Saʿīd, *al-Mughrib* (1953), 2: 170; al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥ al-ṭīb* (1968), 2: 334.

²⁶ See Molina/Castro 2019.

²⁷ Ibn Saʿīd, *al-Mughrib* (1953), 2: 171.

²⁸ This introduction is cited by the editor of the *Mughrib* in the part corresponding to al-Fuṣṭāṭ. See Ibn Saʿīd, *al-Mughrib* (2003), 18–19.

It occurred to him (Mūsā) the idea of writing a book similar to the *Mughrib* but devoted to the East. He pursued this goal for a long period of time, consulting many books, as he enjoyed access to the libraries of the great kings and notables of whom he was a companion, frequenting and meeting people interested in these matters, having dedicated his long life to this task and to observing books, until his life came to an end (...).²⁹

To carry out this task, Ibn Saʿīd followed in the footsteps of his father: he consulted many books in the libraries of kings and illustrious people, frequented experts in the field, gathered a wealth of information about each region, and collected poems. Thus, Ibn Saʿīd was the one who in 647 H/1249 CE culminated (*mukammil*) the work begun by his father.³⁰ However, in the case of the *Mushriq*, his contribution was greater than in the *Mughrib*, given the vast material he collected on his travels to the East, mainly in cities like Cairo, Baghdad, Aleppo and Damascus.

In a passage quoted by Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-ʿUmarī, Ibn Saʿīd voices his pride in the work he carried out on both the *Mughrib* and the *Mushriq*, saying:

Because it was an inheritance, it has reaped the fruits of all the books, and in the course of its long gestation it has been purified into the cream of time. No period was beyond the reach of its hands and no country failed to be trodden by its feet. In sum, it became a book of rest, though writing it had subjected ears, eyes, hands and mind to fatigue (...).³¹

3.2 *Al-Mughrib's* structure and methodology

In a general sense, the *Mughrib* and the *Mushriq* both rest on territorial divisions of the regions covered, and share a common structure: both compile biographies ordered geographically and classified by “kingdoms” (*mamālik*)³² that were, at

²⁹ *thāra bi-khāṭirihi (Mūsā) an yuqābila al-Mughrib bi-kitāb yumāthiluhu ʿan al-Mashriq wa-istaʿāna ʿalā hādhā al-gharaḍ bi-l-mudda wa-kathrat al-kutub wa-l-taḥakkum fī khazāʾin man ṣaḥībahu min ʿuzamāʾ al-mulūk fa-man dūnahum wa-kathrat al-mukhālaṭa wa-l-mumāzaja li-ahl hādhā al-shaʾn wa-ṭawwala al-ʿumr al-mufarragh li-hādhā al-gharaḍ wa-fawāʿid al-asfār ilā an qaṭaʾahu intihāʾ al-ʿumr...* (Ibn Saʿīd, *al-Mughrib* [2003], 18).

³⁰ Ibn Saʿīd, *al-Mughrib* (1953), 2: 172.

³¹ *janat lahu bi-l-muwāratha thamarāt al-kutub wa maḥaḍat fīhi bi-l-muṭāwala zubd al-ḥuqb, fa-lam taqṣur yaḍuhu ʿan ʿaṣr min al-a-ṣār wa lā qaṣṣarat khuṭāhu ʿan quṭr min al-aqṭār, fa jāʾa kitāb rāḥatin qad taʾibat fīhi al-asmāʾ wa-l-abṣār wa-l-aydī wa-l-afkār* (al-ʿUmarī, *Masālik al-abṣār* [2010], 13: 189–194). I would like to thank Luis Molina for his suggestions and corrections in the translation of this text.

³² The territorial division that Ibn Saʿīd proposes for al-Andalus seems to be based on a past geographical division, when the political entity of al-Andalus occupied the majority of the Iberian Peninsula, and for some time (5th/11th century) was divided into different kingdoms (the

the same time, subdivided into provinces (*kuwar*) and cities (*mudun*). For each of them, the *Mughrib* offers a list of personalities subdivided into social categories: emirs, viziers, scholars, poets and other less prominent figures.

The length of each one varies, based on the literary production of each region – and perhaps on the degree to which works from each region were available to Ibn Saʿīd. As far as we know,³³ the *Mughrib* contained at least fifteen books: the first six about Egypt; books seven, eight and nine about North Africa; and the remaining six about al-Andalus.

It is important to clarify a few points in relation to the *Mushib*, the work upon which the *Mughrib* is built, even though it has not been preserved. If we look at instances where it was drawn upon by later authors, and the short references about its content and structure, it seems that the *Mushib* only contained six volumes (*mujalladāt*), all dedicated to al-Andalus. Thus, Ibn Saʿīd only makes reference to the *Mushib* in the part of the *Mughrib* that deals with al-Andalus, and does not mention al-Ḥijārī in the preserved volumes dedicated to Egypt. Al-Maqqarī, too, who made ample use of the *Mushib* in his *Nafḥ al-ṭib*, only used or cited *al-Mushib* and al-Ḥijārī when describing the Iberian Peninsula (al-Andalus) and its scholars and writers. We can therefore assume that it was Ibn Saʿīd and Mūsā's idea to include Egypt as part of the Maghrib, after travelling to the East and settling in Egypt. It is not possible to establish exactly when they first included Egypt in the *Mughrib*, just as we cannot attribute this geographical conception exclusively to Ibn Saʿīd, as it may have been his father's. While it seems logical to assume that they included Egypt as part of the Maghrib together after settling in Egypt, perhaps it was Ibn Saʿīd who thought of it himself after the death of Mūsā in 640 H/1243 CE, when he settled in Cairo and brought to completion the first version of the *Mughrib*.

We cannot be sure if the *Mushib* was a source for the *Mughrib*'s information – now lost – on North Africa and Ifrīqiya, as it is not mentioned by later authors in relation to these regions. Until new evidence comes to light, and taking into account the title of the work (*al-Mushib fī faḍā'il al-Maghrib*), it is logical to think that the *Mushib* contained information at least on North Africa. It is possible, too, that al-Ḥijārī did not complete it and was only able to compose the part

Taifas). This division no longer existed in the author's time, since al-Andalus had been reduced to the small kingdom of Granada ruled by the Naṣrid sultans. In relation to Ibn Saʿīd's geography see Vernet 1953; Vernet 1958; Meouak 1996; Viguera 1999; Rei 2003; Mazzoli-Guintard 2009; Mazzoli-Guintard/Viguera Molins 2017.

³³ For the manuscript record see section 5.2.

on al-Andalus, which is the one for which we do find quotations in works by subsequent authors.³⁴ A similar question can be raised in relation to the order of each geographical area in the *Mughrib*. As we know it today, the work begins with Egypt, continues with Ifrīqiya and North Africa, and ends with al-Andalus. Was this the original order of the *Mushib*, the foundation of the *Mughrib*? Or was this, at least, al-Ḥijārī's intention? As mentioned, given that the quotations preserved from the *Mushib* deal only with al-Andalus, the final structure of the *Mughrib* seems to have been devised by Mūsā and Ibn Saʿīd once they started their journey to the East through North Africa and Ifrīqiya, finally settling in Egypt.

One of the developments that Ibn Saʿīd introduced into his work was the tripartite division of each territory. This division is especially significant in the part on al-Andalus,³⁵ divided into three clear regions: eastern, central and western, with a chapter devoted to each one, subdivided, as we have said, into “kingdoms” and cities. The part concerning Egypt³⁶ – which still requires further study – also has a tripartite structure, but with some differences: it is divided into an upper, a middle and a lower region, each one with its respective “kingdoms” (*mamālik*), each of which is in turn divided into eastern and western provinces or *kuwar*. In contrast to the section on al-Andalus, it is difficult to perform an in-depth analysis of the section on Egypt because not enough chapters have come down to us. It is worth noting that, as Ibn Saʿīd himself points out, he penned specific chapters in this section enumerating various dynasties such as the Ṭūlūnids, the Ikshīdids, and the Ayyūbid sultans, as quasi-independent history chapters.³⁷

3.3 Sources of *al-Mughrib*

As already mentioned, in the *Mughrib* Ibn Saʿīd is very careful about citing the sources he and the other members of his family have used in researching the

³⁴ See Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *al-Iḥāṭa* (1973–78), 3: 432–435; al-Maqqarī, *Nafh al-ṭīb* (1968), 2: 330, 337, and 4: 123–124, 314–315.

³⁵ Some chapters of the Andalusī section (specifically the chapters on Córdoba, Toledo, Málaga, Elvira, and Almería) have been translated into Spanish by Hanaa Mohamed-Hammadi Mejdoubi. See Ibn Saʿīd, *al-Mughrib* (2014–18).

³⁶ The Egyptian portion of the *Mughrib* is entitled “al-Iklīl fī ḥulā wādī al-Nīl”.

³⁷ The titles of the respective chapters are: “Kitāb al-durra al-maknūn fī ḥulā dawlat Banī Ṭūlūn”, “Kitāb al-ʿuyūn al-daʿj fī ḥulā dawlat Banī Ṭaghj”, and “Kitāb al-rawḍ al-mahḍūb fī ḥulā dawlat Banī Ayyūb”. He also wrote a specific chapter dedicated to the ʿAbbādī dynasty of Seville that has not been preserved and that was included in the *Mughrib*, in the part on al-Andalus. See Ibn Saʿīd, *al-Mughrib* (2003), 29–30.

Mughrib, and records how this information was obtained and how reliable it is. Common phrases used when citing sources are, “And from the book of X”, “and X said”, “and it was said that”, “I read in X”, “I found this in the book of X”, or “I borrowed this from X”.

We can classify the main sources of the *Mughrib* into three groups:

1. Written sources,³⁸ which are quite numerous and constitute the backbone of the work. They were gathered during the travels of the Banū Saʿīd.
2. Oral sources. The Banū Saʿīd frequented many scholars and men of letters in their corresponding periods (throughout more than a century), with whom they exchanged their works and collected from them not only fragments of prose and poetry but also popular proverbs, sayings or fables.
3. Direct observations, collected mainly by Mūsā and Ibn Saʿīd. Thus, for example, in the part of the *Mughrib* dedicated to Cairo, Ibn Saʿīd says that apart from recording fragments of al-Bayhaqī, al-Qurṭī and other authors, he has added everything he has seen with his own eyes about the city of Cairo, because he has lived in it for many years.³⁹

If we classify the sources according to geographical criteria we can divide them into: Andalusī sources (for instance, Ibn ʿAbd Rabbihi, Ibn al-Faraḡī, and Ibn Bassām), Eastern sources (like al-Thaʿālibī and Ibn Ḥawqal), and North African sources (such as al-Raḡīq and Ibn Ghālib). No monographic study has yet been carried out on this subject.

4 *Al-Mughrib* in the East: Ibn Saʿīd and his travels

Whereas Mūsā Ibn Saʿīd can be credited with writing the largest share of the *Mughrib*, his son Ibn Saʿīd is the principal figure responsible for disseminating it. As is well known, Andalusī and Maghribī regularly travelled to the East for study, trade and other reasons.⁴⁰ As we have seen, following the death of Ibn Hūd,⁴¹ Ibn Saʿīd and his father, feeling helpless in the face of a difficult situation,⁴² decided to leave al-Andalus in the year 636 H/1238-9 CE under the guise of performing the *ḥajj*. They travelled by land across the territories of the Maghrib,

³⁸ In relation to his written sources see Meouak 1993.

³⁹ Ibn Saʿīd, *al-Nujūm* (1970), 22.

⁴⁰ For a general perspective, see Arié 1995; Marín 1995; Ávila 2002; Marín 2005.

⁴¹ See above, footnote 13.

⁴² Ibn Saʿīd, *Ikhtisār al-qidḥ* (1980), 60–61.

visiting Fez, Tunis and other important towns and cities. In Tunis they met Abū al-ʿAbbās al-Tifāshī, with whom they established a close friendship and who would subsequently help Ibn Saʿīd gain access to the court of the sultan of Ifrīqiya, Abū Zakariyyāʾ Yaḥyā (r. 626–646 H/1229–1249 CE). During this period, in both al-Andalus and North Africa, they met important figures such as Ibn al-Abbār (d. 661 H/1260 CE), Abū al-Walīd al-Shaqundī (d. 630 H/1232 CE),⁴³ Abū al-Ḥasan Sahl Ibn Mālīk (d. 639 H/1241–2 CE) and Ibn al-ʿAskar (d. 636 H/1239 CE). From Tunis they went on to Egypt, arriving in Alexandria in 639 H/1241 CE. While Mūsā stayed on there, Ibn Saʿīd continued to Cairo, before returning to Alexandria to be with his father, who died a year later on 8 Shawwāl 640 H/31 March 1243 CE.

After the death of his father, Ibn Saʿīd again settled for several years in the Ayyūbid Cairo of al-Malik al-Šāliḥ Najm al-Dīn Ayyūb (r. 637–647 H/1240–1249 CE). His return to the city was a great literary event: a banquet was offered in his honor, with important personages in attendance, including the governor of Cairo (and later of Damascus) Jamāl al-Dīn al-Amīr Mūsā Ibn Yaghmur (599–663 H/1203–1265 CE), who became his patron and to whom he dedicated a summary of (or rather an excerpt from) the *Mughrib*, entitled *Rāyāt al-mubarrazīn wa-ghāyāt al-mumayyazīn* (The flags of the champions and the goals of the outstanding ones),⁴⁴ while finishing the *Mughrib*.

Ibn Saʿīd completed a first version of the *Mughrib* in 641 H/1243 CE,⁴⁵ which was very well received in Cairo. Among its enthusiastic readers was the Ayyūbid Sultan of Egypt, al-Malik al-Šāliḥ (601–647 H/1205–1249 CE),⁴⁶ who granted its author access to the royal libraries.

In addition to his constant visits to libraries in search of knowledge and materials for his works, Ibn Saʿīd was also an expert in the manuscript markets of his time. This is recorded in the *Mughrib*, where he tells, for example, that “the *ḍiḥ* of Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Kizānī was well known among the people, and was often sold in the souks of Cairo and al-Fuṣṭāṭ”.⁴⁷ Ibn Saʿīd was not satisfied with simply recording what he heard, insisting that his informants share with him any further materials and anecdotes to help round out his books.

⁴³ Ibn Saʿīd composed an appendix to his famous *risāla* in praise of al-Andalus. See al-Shaqundī, *Risāla* (1976).

⁴⁴ See the study, edition and Spanish translation of this work by García Gómez 1978.

⁴⁵ See Molina/Castro 2019.

⁴⁶ See Ibn Saʿīd, *Ikhtisār al-qidḥ* (1980), 6–7.

⁴⁷ Ibn Saʿīd, *al-Mughrib* (2003), 261.

Ibn Saʿīd also makes note of the places where he tracked down rare manuscripts,⁴⁸ as well as the generous people who lent him their books (and the stingy ones who did not). The binomial *generosity/greed* is a constant in Ibn Saʿīd's works, to such an extent that we can use it to classify the many scholars that show up in his writings. For instance, during his stay in Cairo he met Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Marwān al-Zanātī,⁴⁹ Najm al-Rayḥānī and Ibn Ḥabāqa al-Khazrajī, all of whom he showered in praise for their generosity in giving him access to their libraries and providing him with information about the Egyptian literary scene.⁵⁰

An important issue for Maghribi travellers and pilgrims was the dangerous and rude reception that they sometimes received when arriving in Alexandria and other Egyptian ports.⁵¹ For this reason, Ibn Saʿīd highlighted the role of Maghribis who had settled in the East⁵² and helped their Western countrymen on their way to Mecca via Egypt.⁵³

An important moment in Ibn Saʿīd's life that contributed to the dissemination of his work was when, in the year 644 H/1246 CE, he met Ibn al-ʿAdīm, writer and vizier of the Ayyūbid sultan of Aleppo, al-Nāṣir al-Malik (625–658 H/1228–1260 CE), who had come to Cairo on one of his embassies. Ibn Saʿīd left Cairo to accompany his friend Ibn al-ʿAdīm to Aleppo, to the court al-Nāṣir al-Malik, who gave him a lavish reception. He remained there for three years (644–647 H/1246–1249 CE), during which time the sultan granted him access not only to his royal libraries but also to those of Mosul and Baghdad, in exchange for a copy of the *Mughrib*.⁵⁴

48 Al-Maqqarī reports that Ibn Saʿīd found in the ʿĀdiliyya *madrasa* of Damascus – the library of the Ayyūbid sultan al-ʿĀdil I (d. 615 H/1218 CE) – a copy of the *History* of Ibn ʿAsākir (d. 571 H/1176 CE) that was completed and summarized by Abū Shāma (d. 665 H/1268 CE), from whom he heard about this work when he was living in Damascus. See al-Maqqarī, *Nafh al-ṭib* (1968), 2: 299.

49 Al-Maqqarī, *Nafh al-ṭib* (1968), 2: 301–302.

50 Ibn Saʿīd, *al-Mughrib* (2003), 267, 322.

51 Marín 2004, 217–220.

52 Pouzet 1975.

53 One example is Qutb al-Dīn Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. ʿAlī b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Qaṣṭālānī. See Ibn Saʿīd, *al-Mughrib* (2003), 269.

54 This information is recorded not only by al-Maqqarī, *Nafh al-ṭib* (1968), 2: 272–273, but before him by Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Aʿmāl al-aʿlām* (2003), 270. Both authors report that the sultan was pleased with a poem that Ibn Saʿīd recited as soon as he arrived, and invited him to sit with him. The sultan asked him about his country (the Maghrib) and the reason and purpose of his travels. Ibn Saʿīd replied that he had gathered in two books, one dedicated to the East entitled *al-Mushriq fī ḥulā al-Mashriq* and another to the West, *al-Mughrib fī ḥulā al-Maghrib*, the excellences of these territories and their literati. The sultan offered him access to his libraries and brought for him

In 647 H/1249 CE, perhaps owing to the unstable situation in the East as a whole, but in particular in Cairo, following the death of Ayyūbid sultan al-Malik al-Šāliḥ and the Mamlūks' imminent ascent to power, Ibn Saʿīd – as he had done before in al-Andalus – decided to make the pilgrimage to Mecca and then headed to Damascus, where he explored the libraries of the city and its surroundings. In 648 H/1250 CE he went to Homs, Mosul and Baghdad,⁵⁵ where he visited, as recorded by al-Maqqarī,⁵⁶ a total of 36 libraries, where he copied the most important manuscripts he encountered. As just a few years later the city was sacked by the Mongols, many quotations from these works have come down to us only through Ibn Saʿīd's writings.⁵⁷

Later he moved to Basra, passing through Armenia (Arrajān), and returned to Mecca. In 652 H/1254 CE he set sail for Tunis, where he entered into the service of the Ḥafṣid emir Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Mustanṣir (r. 646–677 H/1249–1279 CE). He stayed there for a few years before returning to the East in 666 H/1267 CE, this time to visit Iran, passing through Baghdad on the way, and returning to Tunis for good in 674 H/1276 CE, where he continued to serve al-Mustanṣir until his own death in 685 H/1286 CE.⁵⁸

Ibn Saʿīd travels were undoubtedly the main vehicle for the transmission of his work,⁵⁹ and he continually expanded his network of contacts with each new city he visited. Such contacts served both as sources to include in his work as well as transmitters to disseminate it. As the author himself informs us, he sometimes travelled in a group, in the company of other scholars such as Ibn Jannān al-Shāṭibī.⁶⁰ The fact that they travelled together further facilitated dissemination, as they exchanged their respective works with one another.

In his biographical notes, Ibn Saʿīd relates the encounters with those he met, and the constant exchange of verses, prose and licenses between them.⁶¹ Given the number of his trips in the East and North Africa, he had ample opportunity to

works from Baghdad and Mosul, in exchange for a copy of the *Mughrib*. Al-Maqqarī also records that Ibn Saʿīd composed for this sultan another work entitled *Mulūk al-shiʿr*. See al-Maqqarī, *Nafh al-ṭib* (1968), 2: 295.

55 In relation to his stay in Baghdad see Alubudi 2004.

56 Al-Maqqarī, *Nafh al-ṭib* (1968), 2: 273, 370; Ibn Saʿīd, *al-Muqtaṭaf* (1984), 41.

57 See Amitai 1987.

58 This travelling from one place to another without definitively establishing himself in the East seems to indicate that Ibn Saʿīd did not feel comfortable under Mamlūk rule, unlike many other Andalusī scholars.

59 Marín 1995, 129–130.

60 Pouzet 1975, 174.

61 For a list of these encounters in Egypt see Ibn Saʿīd, *al-Mughrib* (2003), 35.

make his work known, at least in oral form. This happened not only in the East, but also earlier, when he was still living in his homeland. If we consider that even before leaving behind al-Andalus, Mūsā, in collaboration with his son, had already completed a sizeable portion of the work, they must have spread information about its contents among the poets and scholars they interacted with in Algeciras.⁶²

In spite of this, only one incomplete manuscript has been preserved, in the case of both the *Mughrib* and the *Mushriq*.⁶³ However, we know that there were a number of copies that circulated in the East and the West during Ibn Saʿīd's lifetime and after his death, a subject we will continue to explore in the following section.

5 Contemporary and later diffusion of *al-Mughrib*

During Ibn Saʿīd's time his work was disseminated by his teachers or fellow students such as Ibn Mufarrij al-Umawī,⁶⁴ Aḥmad Ibn Ṭalḥa and Ibn Sahl al-Isrāʾīlī. His relationship with them involved teaching, gatherings, exchanging compositions, and reciting their poetry to one another. We know, however, almost nothing about Ibn Saʿīd's disciples.⁶⁵ Only one of his works⁶⁶ points out the existence of a disciple named Hudhayl al-Ishbīlī, who could also have helped spread the author's work.

Three scholars, besides Ibn Saʿīd himself, played a prominent role in the diffusion of the *Mughrib*:

1. Muḥammad b. Hamūshk al-Tinmalī, to whom Ibn Saʿīd dedicated extensive biographies in his own writings.⁶⁷ He was born in Ceuta and received his education in this city and Algeciras; he then settled with his family in Tunis, where he lived the rest of his life. Ibn Saʿīd and Ibn Hamūshk knew each other very well and shared common ancestors.⁶⁸ Ibn Hamūshk was a teacher of Ibn Rushayd (d.

⁶² See al-Maqqarī, *Nafh al-ṭib* (1968), 2: 328.

⁶³ The only manuscript preserved of the *Mushriq* is the one located in Cairo, in the History section of the Taymūr Library, MS 2532.

⁶⁴ Ibn Saʿīd, *Ikhtisār al-qidh* (1980), 181.

⁶⁵ None of the authors that have included a biography of Ibn Saʿīd in their works record any information about this issue. See a list of these authors in the table below.

⁶⁶ Ibn Saʿīd, *al-Ghusūn* (1977), 69–71.

⁶⁷ Ibn Saʿīd, *Ikhtisār al-qidh* (1980), 11, 98–108.

⁶⁸ Potiron 1965, 82–83, 85–87.

721 H/1321 CE)⁶⁹ and, as the latter indicates in his *Rihla*, Ibn Saʿīd transmitted and licensed to Ibn Hamūshk the great majority of his works, and it was through him that Ibn Rushayd became aware of them.⁷⁰ Ibn Hamūshk had a scribe who made a copy of each of Ibn Saʿīd's works, including, of course, the *Mughrib*. He thereby gathered a larger collection of Ibn Saʿīd's works than had ever been made before. He did not lend them out, but readily had copies made for anyone who came to see them.⁷¹

2. Sharaf al-Dīn Abū al-ʿAbbās Aḥmad b. Yūsuf al-Tifāshī,⁷² who was from Tifāsh in Ifrīqiya, and travelled to Cairo, where he lived for many years on his search for knowledge⁷³ and patronage. He contributed to the eastward transmission and spread of the works of Ibn Saʿīd,⁷⁴ of whom he was master-disciple. Al-Tifāshī was an admirer of the beauty and value of the *Mughrib*, praising it in several of his own verses.⁷⁵ An important document preserved by al-Maqqarī is the *ijāza*⁷⁶ that al-Tifāshī – and one of his disciples – received from Ibn Saʿīd to transmit his work:

And I found in the handwriting of ʿAlī b. Mūsā b. Saʿīd – God the Highest have mercy on him – at the end of a volume of the *Kitāb al-Mughrib* the following: “And I granted the license to the *shaykh*, to the high *qāḍī* Abū al-Faḍl Aḥmad b. al-Shaykh al-Qāḍī Abū Yaʿqūb al-Tifāshī to transmit this work of mine, *al-Mughrib fī maḥāsīn al-Maghrib*, and to transmit

69 Ibn Rushayd, born in Ceuta, was an important jurist (*faqīh*), preacher, traditionist, prose writer, *ḥāfiẓ*, and the author of an important travelogue or *riḥla*. According to Ibn Rushayd, Ibn Hamūshk was born in Ceuta and was a prominent scholar who maintained correspondence with jurists, chiefs (*ruʿasāʾ*) and emirs. See Ḥaddādī 2003, 337–338; Lirola Delgado 2006.

70 Escorial, MS 1737, folio 101, in the 6th part not edited.

71 Ḥaddādī 2003, 337–338.

72 Sharaf al-Dīn al-Tifāshī came from Tifāsh, a city located in Ifrīqiya. He travelled to Egypt to learn and teach, and returned to his hometown where he headed the judiciary. Later, he returned to the East but lost his possessions and his books at sea so he sought refuge with Muḥammad b. Nadī al-Jazarī – an important character on which we will return later – with whom Ibn Saʿīd also lived for a time and for whom he copied the *Mughrib* and the *Mushriq*. Al-Tifāshī composed several works for this governor, including the 24-volume work *Faṣl al-khiṭāb*. He died in the year 651 H/1253 CE. He was also the author of the work *Azhār al-afkār* that served Ibn Saʿīd as a source of information. See Ruska/Kahl, “al-Tifāshī”, *EP*.

73 In Cairo, al-Tifāshī was disciple of ʿAbd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī (d. 629 H/1231 CE), a famous scholar trained in many subjects, including *ḥadīth*, grammar and calligraphy, but mainly known for his medical knowledge. In relation to his life and search for knowledge and patronage, see Toorawa 2004.

74 See Ibn Saʿīd, *Ikhtisār al-qidh* (1980), 163–164; al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥ al-ṭib* (1968), 2: 324–325; al-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfi* (1983), 8: 188–190.

75 Ibn Saʿīd, *al-Mughrib* (2003), 40.

76 Ibn Saʿīd, *al-Mughrib* (2003), 48.

it to anyone he wishes, trusting in his judgment and wisdom. And I also granted the license (*ijāza*) to his noble disciple (*fatā*) Jamāl al-Dīn Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr b. Khaṭṭlakh al-Fārisī al-Urmawī to transmit it from me and to anyone he wishes. Written by its author, ‘Alī b. Mūsā b. Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Malik b. Sa‘īd on the date on which the copy of this volume was completed”.⁷⁷

It is difficult to establish with precision when and how Ibn Sa‘īd granted this license or *ijāza* to al-Tifāshī and his disciple because we have little information about al-Tifāshī’s life in Cairo. As Ibn Sa‘īd stated in his work *Ikhtisār al-qidh al-mu‘allā*,⁷⁸ in the biography of Abū al-Ḥajjāj b. ‘Utba al-Ishbīlī, al-Tifāshī informed him about the stay of this scholar in Cairo (*akhbaranī ṣāhibuhu bi-Miṣr Abū al-Faḍl al-Tifāshī*). We can therefore assume that Ibn Sa‘īd met al-Tifāshī in person when he settled in Cairo after the death of his father and before travelling to Aleppo with Ibn al-‘Adīm, between the years 640 H/1243 CE and 644 H/1246 CE. Another question is when Ibn Sa‘īd recorded this license in the *Mughrib*. According to the editors of the *Mughrib*, it is not found in the *codex unicus* preserved in Cairo, so it must have been part of the broader manuscript that al-Maqqarī handled and that could be the last version of the *Mughrib*, or one of the last ones, written by Ibn Sa‘īd after the year 647 H/1249 CE, the date of the Cairo manuscript.

3. Kamāl al-Dīn Ibn Abī Jarāda Ibn al-‘Adīm,⁷⁹ born in 588 H/1192 CE, was an outstanding man of letters who served as vizier to the Ayyūbid governor of Aleppo, al-Nāṣir al-Malik. He dedicated his life to writing and reading, producing copies of many works, in addition to composing one work of his own, *Ta’rīkh Ḥalab* (History of Aleppo). He also owned a sizeable library that Ibn Sa‘īd mentions several times having used, along with the books he consulted in it. Ibn al-‘Adīm met Ibn Sa‘īd on one of his embassies to Egypt, specifically in the year 637 H/1239 CE, as Ibn Sa‘īd describes in his work *al-Muqtaṭaf*,⁸⁰ and, as mentioned above, they later travelled together to Aleppo.

Ibn Sa‘īd, in his biography of Ibn al-‘Adīm,⁸¹ describes this important encounter, and adds the following:

It was said that in Aleppo they called him *ra’īs al-aṣḥāb*.⁸² When I arrived with him in this city he lodged me in a house that had a garden with running water, and he told me, “You

⁷⁷ Al-Maqqarī, *Nafh al-ṭīb* (1968), 2: 332.

⁷⁸ Ibn Sa‘īd, *Ikhtisār al-qidh* (1980), 163–164.

⁷⁹ Lewis, “Ibn al-‘Adīm”, *EP*; Canard 1973.

⁸⁰ Ibn Sa‘īd, *al-Muqtaṭaf* (1984), 298.

⁸¹ Ibn Sa‘īd, *al-Muqtaṭaf* (1984), 199–200.

⁸² This term seems to refer to a person with a position of prestige and economic means who was continually surrounded by people with the same intellectual concerns and motivations – hence

are an Andalusī. I have heard that in your houses there is no lack of such things". He prepared plenty of food and entertainment for me each day. He also told me, "This will mean that you do not need to ask for anything or have to serve the sultan until he himself comes to you; trust in my commitment to you. I have described you to him as a noble and honorable man". I clung to this and he behaved above and beyond my expectations.

Ibn al-ʿAdīm died in the year 660 H/1262 CE. Upon his death, al-Maqqarī quoted from Ibn Saʿīd:

Among the works of Nūr al-Dīn Ibn Saʿīd there is *ʿUddat al-mustanjiz wa-ʿuqlat al-mustawfiz*. In it he mentions that he travelled from Tunis to the East on his second trip in the year 666 [H/1267 CE] (...) and mentions in [this work] that when he entered Alexandria he did not find anyone to inform him about al-Malik al-Nāṣir. He was informed of his situation and of what had happened to him with the Tartars, who killed him after having granted him the *amān* (...) and during this event al-Badr Ibn al-ʿAdīm was also killed.⁸³

We also know that Ibn Saʿīd had relations with some of Ibn al-ʿAdīm's relatives, including his nephew al-Iftikhār b. al-ʿAdīm,⁸⁴ and with his grandfather, Abū al-Majd Muḥammad Ibn al-Wazīr, to whom he wrote a letter when he was in Tunis serving the Ḥafṣid sultan, during his first trip to the East.⁸⁵

One important encounter for the spread of Ibn Saʿīd's work was when al-Tifāshī and Ibn al-ʿAdīm met face to face in Cairo.⁸⁶ The former recited to the latter several poems by Ibn Saʿīd, and stated that he had taken them from the *Mughrib*. We do not know when this meeting took place, but it must have been before Ibn Saʿīd copied the *Mughrib* for Ibn al-ʿAdīm in Aleppo.

In addition to Ibn Saʿīd's three contemporaries mentioned above, who were decisive in the spread not only of the *Mughrib* but also of other works by Ibn Saʿīd, Mamlūk authors also became interested, finding it to be a very valuable source, especially for information on al-Andalus and North Africa. For instance, Abū al-Fidāʾ invokes the *Mughrib* to recriminate Ibn Khallikān for a mistake he made when dealing with a scholar from Salobreña, ʿUmar b. Muḥammad al-Shalawbīnī, a mistake that could have been avoided had he consulted the *Mughrib*.⁸⁷ Among the Mamlūk authors familiar with Ibn Saʿīd's works, al-Ṣafādī

the term *aṣḥāb* (friends) – of whom he was the visible head (*raʾīs*) and surely the one who organized the *majālis* (encounters) where they would meet.

⁸³ Al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥ al-ṭib* (1968), 2: 368.

⁸⁴ Al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥ al-ṭib* (1968), 2: 369.

⁸⁵ Ibn Saʿīd, *Ikhtishār al-qidḥ* (1980), 6.

⁸⁶ Recorded by al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥ al-ṭib* (1968), 2: 325.

⁸⁷ See Abū al-Fidāʾ, *al-Mukhtaṣar* (1907), 3: 177; Abū al-Fidāʾ, *Taqwīm al-buldān* (1848–83), 2: 254.

(d. 763 H/1362 CE) possessed copies that were all in Ibn Saʿīd's own hand. In the biography dedicated to Ibn Saʿīd in his work *al-Wāfi bi-l-wafayāt*,⁸⁸ al-Ṣafadī states that his copies include *al-Mughrib*, *al-Mushriq*, *Kitāb al-Gharāmiyyāt*, *Ḥulā al-rasā'il*, *Kunūz al-maṭālib fī āl Abī Ṭālib*, and *al-Murqīṣ wa-l-muṭrib*.

The following table includes some of the authors – mainly Mamlūk but also Maghribi and Ottoman – who made use of Ibn Saʿīd's works either directly or indirectly. They engaged especially with the *Mughrib* and the *Mushriq*, but also with other works that have not been preserved, like *ʿUddat al-mustanjiz* and *Ḥulā al-rasā'il*. Thus, we can see that his works were disseminated not only during his lifetime, but after his death as well.

Tab. 1: Authors who made use of Ibn Saʿīd's works

Authors	Works
Ibn al-ʿAdīm (d. 660 H/1262 CE)	<i>Taʾrīkh Ḥalab</i>
Ibn ʿAbd al-Malik (d. 701 H/1302 CE)	<i>al-Dhayl wa-l-takmila</i>
Ibn Rushayd (d. 721 H/1321 CE)	<i>Milʾ al-ʿayba</i>
Abū al-Fidāʾ (d. 731 H/1331 CE)	<i>Taqwīm al-buldān</i> <i>al-Mukhtaṣar fī akhbār al-bashar</i>
Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-ʿUmarī (d. 749 H/1349 CE)	<i>Masālik al-abṣār fī mamālik al-amṣār</i>
al-Ṣafadī (d. 763 H/1362 CE)	<i>al-Wāfi bi-l-wafayāt</i>
Ibn Shākir al-Kutubī (d. 764 H/1363 CE)	<i>Fawāt al-wafayāt</i>
Ibn Baṭṭūṭa (d. 769 H/1368 CE or 778 H/1377 CE)	<i>Riḥla</i>
Ibn al-Khaṭīb (d. 776 H/1374 CE)	<i>Kitāb Aʾmāl al-aʾlām</i> <i>al-Iḥāṭa fī akhbār Gharnāṭa</i> ⁸⁹
Ibn Farḥūn (d. 799 H/1397 CE)	<i>al-Dibāj al-mudhhab</i>
Aḥmad al-Rabāʿī (d. 9th/15th century)	<i>Masraḥ al-afkār fī nasamāt al-azhār</i>

⁸⁸ Al-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfi* (1983), 22: 253.

⁸⁹ Ibn al-Khaṭīb made extensive use of the works of Ibn Saʿīd, to the point that some of them served as direct inspiration for his own writings. In the *Iḥāṭa* he dedicates a biography to Ibn Saʿīd in which he says, “he was a prodigy travelling through the countries, interviewing prominent men to enjoy their libraries, recording the valuable data of the East as well as the West”. See Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *al-Iḥāṭa* (1973–78), 4: 152–158.

Authors	Works
Ibn Khaldūn ⁹⁰ (d. 808 H/1406 CE)	<i>Kitāb al-'Ibar (including the Muqaddima)</i>
Ibn Duqmāq (d. 809 H/1407 CE)	<i>al-Intiṣār li-wāsiṭat 'aqq al-amṣār</i>
al-Qalqashandī (d. 820 H/1418 CE)	<i>Ṣubḥ al-a'shā</i>
al-Maqrīzī (d. 845 H/1442 CE)	<i>Kitāb al-Khiṭaṭ</i> <i>Ighāthat al-umma</i>
Ibn Taghrībirdī (d. 874 H/1470 CE)	<i>al-Manhal al-ṣāfi</i>
al-Sakhāwī (d. 901 H/1496 CE)	<i>al-'Ilān bi-l-tawbīkh</i>
al-Suyūṭī (d. 910 H/1505 CE)	<i>Bughyat al-wu'āt</i> <i>Ḥusn al-muḥaḍḍara</i>
Ibn al-Qāḍī (d. 1024 H/1616 CE)	<i>Durrat al-ḥijāl</i>
al-Maqqarī (d. 1041 H/1632 CE)	<i>Nafḥ al-ṭīb</i> <i>Azhār al-riyāḍ</i>
Ḥājji Khalīfa (d. 1067 H/1657 CE)	<i>Kashf al-zunūn</i>

It is worth nothing that of these works, *Masraḥ al-afkār* by 9th/15th-century Tunisian author Aḥmad al-Raba'ī has been fundamental for the preservation of materials compiled in two of Ibn Saʿīd's works, *Uddat al-mustanjiz* and *Ḥulā al-rasā'il*, since these were subsequently lost.⁹¹

5.1 Ibn Saʿīd's copies for his patrons

Ibn Saʿīd made, over the course of his lifetime, various copies of his works that he presented to sultans, governors and other important figures of the day. Ḥājji Khalīfa, in his book *Kashf al-zunūn*,⁹² states that the *Mughrib* was composed (*al-lafahu*) for Muḥyi al-Dīn b. Nadī al-Jazarī (d. 651 H/1253 CE), who ruled in al-Jazīra (Northern Iraq),⁹³ first as independent governor after the death of his father Shams al-Dīn, and then under the supervision of Ayyūbid Sultan al-Kāmil b. al-ʿAdīl (r. 614–636 H/1218–1238 CE) and his successors. Muḥyi al-Dīn b. Nadī al-Jazarī surrounded himself with scholars who wrote works for him, among them

⁹⁰ The information that Ibn Khaldūn includes in his *Muqaddima* about *muwashshahāt* and *azjāl* is extracted for the most part from the *Mughrib*, possibly one of the best Arab-Islamic sources for this type of poetry. See Lévi-Provençal 1954.

⁹¹ Al-Raba'ī, *Masraḥ al-afkār* (1992).

⁹² Ḥājji Khalīfa, *Kashf al-zunūn* (1941), 2: 1747.

⁹³ Ibn Saʿīd, *al-Mughrib* (2003), 54. On al-Jazarī, see al-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfi* (1983), 1: 143–144.

Ibn Saʿīd.⁹⁴ Ḥājji Khalīfa seems to have taken this information from al-Ṣafadī's biography of Ibn Saʿīd in his work *al-Wāfi bi-l-wafayāt*, as well his biography of Muḥyi al-Dīn al-Jazarī, where he states,⁹⁵ "Ibn Saʿīd wrote (*ṣannafa*) for him a copy of the *Mughrib* and the *Mushriq* and he also composed poems in his honor".

Taken on its own, the report by al-Ṣafadī, later recorded by Ḥājji Khalīfa, may seem to imply that the *Mughrib* was exclusively the work of Ibn Saʿīd, who wrote it (*ṣannafa* / *allafa*) for al-Jazarī. Since we know this is not the case, this report should be interpreted as referring to the fact that Ibn Saʿīd made a copy (*nuskha*) of the *Mughrib* and the *Mushriq* for his patron, which must have led al-Jazarī to believe – or to boast – that Ibn Saʿīd had actually composed them for him. The *Mughrib* is, of course, the result of the work of several members of Ibn Saʿīd's family, Ibn Saʿīd being the final author (*mukammil*) in this long line.

Another copy is mentioned by al-Maqqarī in the biography dedicated to Ibn Saʿīd in *Nafh al-ṭib*,⁹⁶ where he reports that Ibn Saʿīd "wrote" a copy of the *Mughrib* for the sultan of Aleppo, al-Malik al-Nāṣir, when they met, as we have already mentioned, in the company of Ibn al-ʿAdīm.

5.2 The Dār al-kutub al-miṣriyya manuscript

Despite the fact that the *Mughrib* was well known, its modern editors believe that there were probably few copies in circulation. The dissemination of the *Mughrib* – as well as other works by Ibn Saʿīd, such as the *Mushriq* – seems in fact to have occurred basically in a fragmentary way by means of oral transmission or through the use of quotations from the few original copies made by Ibn Saʿīd – such as those made for Ibn al-ʿAdīm and Muḥyi al-Dīn al-Jazarī – and those made by others such as Ibn Hamūshk and perhaps by al-Tifāshī.⁹⁷ Al-ʿUmarī and al-Maqqarī – and perhaps Abū al-Fidāʾ as well – seem to have had access to a complete copy

⁹⁴ We do not know exactly when Ibn Saʿīd met Ibn Nadi al-Jazarī. It could have happened when Ibn Saʿīd travelled to Baghdad, Homs and Mosul, in the year 648 H/1250 CE, from the court of the Ayyūbid sultan al-Nāṣir al-Malik.

⁹⁵ Al-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfi* (1983), 1: 143–144.

⁹⁶ Al-Maqqarī, *Nafh al-ṭib* (1968), 2: 272–273. See also Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Aʿmāl al-aʿlām* (2003), 270.

⁹⁷ As with the oral license granted to Ibn al-ʿAdīm, we know that in Cairo Ibn Saʿīd granted al-Tifāshī a license or *ijāza* to transmit the *Mughrib*; however, at present we cannot be certain whether al-Tifāshī had a copy of this work.

of the *Mughrib*, as they quote many materials taken from this work that do not appear in the only extant copy, preserved at Cairo's Dār al-kutub al-miṣriyya.⁹⁸

This copy is of great value since it appears to have been made by the author himself, and may possibly be the first copy he made while in Aleppo. This is what the editors of the text have proposed given the deletions, blank spaces, and numerous corrections found in the text. Ibn Saʿīd states at the end of every extant volume that the copy was made for Ibn al-ʿAdīm, specifically for his noble library, during the years that the author spent in Aleppo (644–647 H/1246–1249 CE). Later – we do not know when – this copy reached al-Ṣafadī's hands, since his signature appears in the manuscript to indicate that he owned it,⁹⁹ as well as the signatures and brief notes of others who used this copy after him:¹⁰⁰

1. Praying to God for its owner, it was used by Ibrāhīm b. Duqmāq [d. 809 H/1407 CE], may God forgive him and have mercy on him, Amen.
2. And it was read by Aḥmad b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Awḥadī in the year 802 (H/1399 CE).
3. And, praying to God for its owner, it was used by Aḥmad b. ʿAlī al-Maqrīzī in the year 803 (H/1400 CE).
4. [And it was read by] Khalīl b. ʿUmar al-Muḥtāj al-Ashʿarī.
5. [And] Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. al-Qaṣṣāṣ al-Miṣrī al-Bakrī al-Wafāʾī in the year 974 (H/1566 CE).
6. [And] al-Sharīf Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Ḥanafī al-Ḥamawī in the year 1087 (H/1676 CE).
7. [And] Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Amīr in the year 1191 (H/1777 CE).
8. And this volume was seen and read from beginning to end by the *faqīh* Ḥasan b. Muḥammad al-ʿAṭṭār (...) who believes this is a work unlike any other ever written. I managed to see it in the al-Muʿayyad library in the year 1243 (H/1827 CE), and I pray God will allow me to see the rest of this work by his grace and generosity.

The undated signature of al-Suyūfī also appears in the margins of one of the pages, and al-Maqrīzī, who consulted this work in Cairo, left in the margin of the

98 The copy of the *Mughrib* used by al-Maqqarī and al-ʿUmarī, as mentioned before, must have been the last one made by Ibn Saʿīd. Perhaps it is a copy of the Cairo manuscript, but in any case, it was one of the last copies written by Ibn Saʿīd. See Ibn Saʿīd, *al-Mughrib* (2003), 48–49.

99 The cover of volume four states, “Read and borrowed from its owner by Khalīl b. Aybak b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Ṣafadī, may God forgive him”. See Ibn Saʿīd, *al-Mughrib* (2003), 54.

100 Ibn Saʿīd, *al-Mughrib* (2003), 59–60.

biography devoted to Ibn Sūrīn a long note where he adds further information about this author and his writings.¹⁰¹

All these signatures confirm that by the end of the 8th/14th century, specifically before 809 H/1407 CE, the date of Ibn Duqmāq's death, the Dār al-kutub al-miṣriyya manuscript was already in Cairo, although it is possible that al-Ṣafadī himself had already brought it there at an earlier date while serving in the Egyptian capital. Al-ʿAṭṭār's signature confirms that at least part of the manuscript had already been lost at the al-Muʾayyad mosque before 1243 H/1827 CE, the year he consulted it. Another important moment recorded in the manuscript itself, in the 9th/15th century, was when it was deposited as a pious donation (*waqf*) by the Mamlūk sultan al-Malik al-Muʾayyad Abū al-Nāṣir (r. 814–823 H/1412–1421 CE) in the library of the Muʾayyadiyya mosque.¹⁰² It is Shams al-Dīn al-Sakhāwī (d. 901 H/1496 CE), in his work *al-Iʿlān bi-l-tawbikh li-man dhamma ahl al-taʾrīkh*, who records this information.¹⁰³

The manuscript consists of 1300 pages, classified into four volumes that have not been preserved in their original order. The successive editors of the *Mughrib* have managed to restore order to the preserved volumes, especially Shawqī Ḍayf, the editor of the Andalusī portion. The first, second and third of the six chapters dedicated to Egypt have been lost; chapters seven, eight and nine devoted to Ifriqiya and North Africa have been lost; and of the six chapters dedicated to al-Andalus (that is, from chapter ten to fifteen) the tenth is lost – although a large portion has been preserved thanks to al-Maqqarī's *Nafḥ al-ṭīb* – and chapters eleven, twelve, thirteen, fourteen and fifteen are preserved, except for a few pages relating to Seville and the ʿAbbādī dynasty.

6 Concluding remarks

Ibn Saʿīd experienced mixed feelings upon his arrival in Egypt. On the one hand, he was fascinated by the majestic palaces, buildings and gardens of Cairo and Fuṣṭāṭ, but on the other, he was distressed by the Egyptian capital's bustling crowds.¹⁰⁴ Ibn Saʿīd puts forth the pros and cons of a city as exciting and thrilling as Cairo was at that time. His criticism, however, has garnered more attention than his praise, so that medieval and modern authors alike have characterized

101 Ibn Saʿīd, *al-Nujūm* (1970), 249, n. 2.

102 This mosque was built between 1405 and 1410 CE. See Ibn Saʿīd, *al-Mughrib* (2003), 60.

103 Al-Sakhāwī, *al-Iʿlān* (1986), 269.

104 Blachère 1975; Bejarano 1995; Marín, 2004.

him as a pro-Maghribi writer critical of Egypt and its people – even though he chose to include Egypt as part of the Maghrib, as analyzed by Víctor de Castro in this volume.

Likewise, when speaking of al-Andalus, Ibn Saʿīd does not always indulge in praise; he can be severe even in discussing the inhabitants of his native Alcalá la Real (Qalʿat Banī Saʿīd or Qalʿat Yaḥṣūb). For instance, when speaking of the people of Locubín (al-ʿUqbīn),¹⁰⁵ one of the fortresses of the district of Alcalá la Real, he says, “The people of Locubín are characterized by their ignorance, dominated by nomadism (*badāwa*), and are far removed from the manners of civilization (*ādāb al-ḥadāra*)”.¹⁰⁶

Ibn Saʿīd thus paints a complex picture of the lands that appear in his *Mughrib*. The work was also the product of a complex history that involved the integration of different layers of materials, first in al-Andalus through a long period when it seems to have been limited to the Maghrib proper (i.e. not including Egypt), and later when Ibn Saʿīd, having settled in the East, decided to add Egyptian materials, and to create a parallel anthology of Mashriqi materials in a separate work, the *Mushriq*. Ibn Saʿīd himself produced different versions of the *Mughrib* and the *Mushriq* during his stay in Aleppo, and these copies are the ones that seem to have made his work known in the East and most especially in Egypt, as they were the ones consulted and quoted by Egyptian scholars. Of fundamental importance in this process was the presence of one of these copies in the 9th/15th century in the library of the Muʿayyadiyya mosque as a pious donation (*waqf*) instituted by the Mamlūk sultan. This moment marks the passage of Ibn Saʿīd's literary anthology from a restricted court and scholarly setting to one in which scholars in general could have access to it, thus making the production of new copies less of a necessity. Various other copies are known to have existed – among them those made by Ibn Hamūshk and perhaps by al-Tifāshī – although it is not clear if they included both the *Mughrib* and the *Mushriq* or only the former. Also, we have no information about their later history, as no Maghribi manuscript has been preserved. Did the *Mushriq* circulate in the Maghrib? Did Andalusī authors, such as Ibn al-Khaṭīb, who never went to Egypt, have access to the final copies of the *Mughrib* and the *Mushriq* made by Ibn Saʿīd himself, or was he quoting from earlier copies, or even indirectly? Unfortunately, at the present stage of our research, these questions must remain unanswered.

¹⁰⁵ In relation to this castle see Castillo 1974; Castillo 2009.

¹⁰⁶ Ibn Saʿīd, *al-Mughrib* (1953), 2: 186.

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