Notes to the Introduction


2 To give a more literal translation of the subtitle than that in §0.1.


5 In English, Martini Bonadeo, Philosophical Journey, 111–43; in French, al-Baghdādī, Relation de l’Égypte, 457–94. A detailed and fascinating commentary appears in the articles by Shawkat Toorawa, cited below.

6 Cf. the chronology in Toorawa, “Travel in the medieval Islamic world: the importance of patronage, as illustrated by ‘Abd al-Latif al-Baghdadi (d. 629/1231) (and other littérateurs),” 63–65.

7 From ‘Abd al-Laṭīf’s Kitāb al-Naṣīḥatayn, quoted in Martini Bonadeo, Philosophical Journey, 175.


9 Kitāb al-Naṣīḥatayn, translated in Martini Bonadeo, Philosophical Journey, 179.

10 Makdisi, quoted in Toorawa, “Travel,” 61.

11 Translation from Toorawa, “Portrait,” 107 n. 103.

12 The dedicatee of this version is al-Mustanṣir’s late grandfather, al-Nāṣir, who had died in 622/1225.
13 Makdisi, quoted in Martini Bonadeo, *Philosophical Journey*, 139 n. 152.

14 Al-Baghdādī, *Kitāb al-Ifādah* (1403/1983), 166–67; cf. Martini Bonadeo, *Philosophical Journey*, 108 n. 3. Regarding “al-Muṭajjin,” the letters ṭ and j are supposed not to occur together in chaste Arabic words. My suggestion of “potboiler” is partly inspired by a nickname of a former president of Yemen, who, owing to an alleged fondness for consumption, was known as “ʿAlī Maqlā,” “ʿAlī Fry Pot.”

15 Al-Baghdādī, *Kitāb al-Ifādah* (1403/1983), 168; a rather loose translation, but I wanted to find at least an approximate rhyme.


19 Mackintosh-Smith, *Ghost Writer*, 5.


25 Encyclopaedia of Islam, s.v. “al-Nāṣir” (J. R. Blackburn).

26 Cf. n. 7 to the text.


35 See, respectively, “Green Chamber” in the Glossary, and n. 108 to the text.


Q Rūm 30:9. Though only one of many such verses, it seems to have some special relevance to Egypt: on a visit to Luxor, ‘Abd al-Laṭīf’s near contemporary al-Harawī, a noted guidebook writer and graffiti artist, wrote the text on the chest of a colossus (Kitāb al-Ishārāt, 44).

Miquel, La géographie humaine du monde musulman jusqu’au milieu du IIe siècle, 1, chapter 8.

Encyclopaedia of Islam, s.v. “Nabāt” (R. Kruk).


Browne, The Voyage of the World, 158.


Yule, The Travels of Marco Polo, 1:313; italics added.

Manguel, The Library at Night, 247.

Al-Baghdādī, Relation, 364; al-Baghdādī, Eastern Key, 229 has the copycat “detestable barbarism.”

The short paragraph §2.2.27 does seem to give vent to moral outrage. But ’Abd al-Laṭīf’s reaction is one of surprise at people’s ignorance of divine law, rather than anger at their innate wickedness.

Manguel, A Reader on Reading, 247.

Quoted in al-Baghdādī, Riḥlat ’Abd al-Laṭīf, 10.

See n. 224 to the text.

Goitein, Mediterranean Society, 2:141.

Goitein, Mediterranean Society, 4:239.

Quoted in Irwin, Night and Horses and the Desert, 221.

Al-Baghdādī, Kitāb al-Ifādah (1403/1983), 162.

Al-Baghdādī, Kitāb al-Ifādah (1403/1983), 164.


Stern, “A Collection of Treatises by ’Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī,” 56 and plates II–V.


Those of Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī and Abū Shāmah, recycled in the later Ibn Taghrībirdī, who is quoted in turn in al-Baghdādī, Riḥlat ’Abd al-Laṭīf, 10.


Al-Maqrîzī, Khiṭat, 1:115.
62 Ibn Ḥajar, Al-Durar al-kāminah, 2:184–86.
63 Al-Maqrīzī, Khīṭaṭ, 1:120–21.
64 Al-Baghdādī, Kitāb al-İfādah (1983), 167.
69 The first three chapters of this translation are actually by Pococke the Younger.
70 The minutiae of this ill-starred publishing history are recounted in al-Baghdādī, Relation, xiv–xv and Schnurrer, Bibliotheca Arabica, 150–53.
71 Renan may have had a point when, contemplating Silvestre de Sacy, he saw “the strange spectacle of a man, who, though he possesses one of the vastest eruditions of modern times, has never had an important critical insight” (quoted in Irwin, For Lust of Knowing: The Orientalists and their Enemies, 166). But we are still the beneficiaries of that erudition today.
72 E.g. it is not the Nile that supplies the drinking water of the coast dwellers (al-Baghdādī, Relation, 3), but rain (al-Baghdādī, Eastern Key, 21; cf. §1.1.4, below).
73 E.g. by turning a “trustworthy and truthful” informant (§1.4.70, below) into a person called “El Amin ‘l’ Sadk” (al-Baghdādī, Eastern Key, 171).
74 Irwin, Night, viii.
76 Al-Baghdādī, Eastern Key, 8.
77 Al-Baghdādī, Eastern Key, 8.
78 I have told the tale of ʿAbd al-Laṭīf’s text and of his alleged postmortem visits to suburban London at greater length in a small study, Ghost Writer.
79 Manguel, A Reader on Reading, 151.