GUMILYOV JOURNAL OF HISTORY
ISSN: 3080-129X. eISSN: 3080-6860
WORLD HISTORY – ДУНИЕЖҮЗІ ТАРИХЫ – ВСЕМИРНАЯ ИСТОРИЯ

Research Article
IRSTI 03.81.37, 03.09.25

https://doi.org/10.32523/3080-129X-2026-154-1-60-75

The Chronicle of Baybars al-Manṣūrī al-Nāṣirī 'Zubda(t) al-Fikra(t) fi Tārīkh al-Hijra(t)' in the Studies of the Mamluk State in Egypt in the Early Bahri Period

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Abstract. The article deals with the place and role of the 'Zubda(t) al-Fikra(t) fī Tārīkh al-Hijra(t)' by Baybars al-Manṣūrī (d. in 1325) in the contemporary Mamluk studies, as well as with posssibilty of its wider implementation in Middle East studies. The author of this Chronicle was a prominent amīr and official in the early Bahri period. Despite the importance of the Chronicle in deep understanding of the early Mamluk history, the political development of the Mamluk state, and the transformation of its political institutions under the influence of the Turk legacy of the first Mamluk elite, this source was published according to academic standards relatively late, only in 1998 by Donald Richards. After that, 'Zubda(t)...' is commonly cited in almost all academic works devoted to the Bahri period. The article considers the history of academic research on the source, various approaches to its significance, as well as possible implementation in studies beyond the Mamluks state, particularly for studying the history of the Golden Horde and the Ilkhanate. The article summarizes the importance of 'Zubda(t)...' because of the following considerations: a) it is still insufficiently studied and brings new information into the Mamluk studies; b) Baybars al-Manṣūrī is a very rare example of a member of the highest military and political elites who composed a full historic chronicle. Moreover, he personally participated in many events which are mentioned in his work; c) During to his Turk (presumably Kipchak) origin, Baybars al-Manṣūrī was aware of traditional Turk political and social institutes and made a special emphasis on these elements, while they were unclear and of less importance for later Mamluk authors; d) The Chronicle covers a relatively long period of time (1252-1307 AD), which allows making statistic observations and calculations, as well as to trace the evolution of main political and social institutes within the early Bahri period.

Keywords: 'Zubda(t) al-Fikra(t) fī Tārīkh al-Hijra(t)'; Baybars al-Manṣūrī; Egypt; Mamluks; Bahri; Richards; the Golden Horde; Mamluk Chronicles

For citation: Filipau A. The Chronicle of Baybars al-Manṣūrī al-Nāṣirī 'Zubda(t) al-Fikra(t) fī Tārīkh al-Hijra(t)' in the Studies of the Mamluk State in Egypt in the Early Bahri Period. *Gumilyov Journal of History.* 2026. Vol.154, no.1, pp.60-75. https://doi.org/10.32523/3080-129X-2026-154-1-60-75

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Мысырдағы ерте бахриттік кезеңдегі мамлүк мемлекетінің зерттелуіндегі Байбарс әл-Мансури ан-Насиридің «Хижра тарихындағы ой қаймақтары» хроникасы

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Аңдатпа. Мақалада Байбарс әл-Мансури (1325 ж. қ.б.) қалдырған «Хижра тарихындағы ой қаймақтары» атты еңбектің қазіргі мамлүктанудағы орны мен рөлі, сондай-ақ Таяу Шығыс тарихын зерттеудегі кеңірек қолдану мүмкіндіктері қарастырылады. Бұл хроникаңың авторы ерте бахриттік кезеңдегі көрнекті әмір және мемлекет қайраткері болған. Мамлүк мемлекетінің ерте тарихын, оның саяси дамуын, алғашқы мамлүк элитасының түркілік мұрасы ықпал еткен саяси институттардың трансформациясын терең түсіну үшін бұл деректің маңызы зор болғанына қарамастан, оның ғылыми басылымы салыстырмалы түрде жақында 1998 жылы Дональд Ричардс тарапынан жарық көрді. Осыдан кейін «Ой қаймақтары» бахриттік кезеңге арналған академиялық еңбектердің басым көпшілігінде кеңінен қолданылатын дереккөзге айналды. Мақалада сондай-ақ дерекке қатысты академиялық зерттеулердің тарихы, оның маңызына берілген түрлі бағалар және мамлүк мемлекетінің шекарасынан тыс аймақтарды, атап айтқанда Алтын Орда мен Хулагу әулеті мемлекетінің тарихын зерттеудегі қолдану мүмкіндіктері талданады. Мақалада «Ой қаймақтарының» маңыздылығы мынадай тұжырымдар арқылы негізделеді: а) бұл дерек әлі де жеткілікті деңгейде зерттелмеген және мамлүк тарихнамасын жаңа мәліметтермен толықтырады; ә) Байбарс әл-Мансури – жоғары әскери-саяси элита өкілдерінің арасынан толыққанды тарихи хроника жазған өте сирек мысалдардың бірі. Сонымен қатар ол өз еңбегінде баяндалған оқиғалардың көпшілігіне тікелей қатысқан; б) түркі (шамамен қыпшақ) текті автор ретінде Байбарс әл-Мансури дәстүрлі түркі саяси және әлеуметтік институттарын жақсы білген және оларға ерекше назар аударған, ал кейінгі мамлүк авторлары үшін бұл элементтер көмескіленіп, маңызы төмендей түскен; в) хроника уақыт жағынан кең кезеңді (1252-1307 жж. хижра бойынша) қамтиды, бұл статистикалық бақылаулар жүргізуге, есептеулер жасауға және ерте бахриттік кезеңдегі негізгі саяси және әлеуметтік институттардың эволюциясын қадағалауға мүмкіндік береді.

Түйін сөздер: «Хижра тарихындағы ой қаймақтары»; Байбарс әл-Мансури; Мысыр; мамлүк; бахриттік кезең; Ричардс; Алтын Орда; мамлүк хроникалары

Сілтеме жасау үшін: Филиппов А. Мысырдағы ерте бахриттік кезең мамлүк мемлекетінің зерттелуіндегі Байбарс әл-Мансури ан-Насиридің «Хижра тарихындағы ой қаймақтары» хроникасы. *Gumilyov Journal of History.* 2026. T.154, no.1. б.60-75. https://doi.org/10.32523/3080-129X-2026-154-1-60-75

Хроника Бейбарса аль-Мансури ан-Насири «Сливки мысли в истории хиджры» в изучении государства мамлюков в Египте в раннебахритский период

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Аннотация. В статье рассматривается место и роль произведения «Сливки мысли в истории хиджры» Байбарса аль-Мансури (ум. 1325 г.) в современных мамлюковедческих исследованиях,

а также возможность её более широкого применения в исследованиях Ближнего Востока. Автор этой хроники был видным эмиром и государственным деятелем в раннебахритский период. Несмотря на важность хроники для глубокого понимания ранней истории мамлюков, политического развития мамлюкского государства, трансформации его политических институтов под влиянием тюркского наследия ранней мамлюкской элиты, научное издание этого источника произошло относительно недавно – только в 1998 году – Дональдом Ричардсом. После этого «Сливки мысли...» стали широко цитироваться почти во всех академических работах, посвященных бахритскому периоду. В статье также рассматривается история академических исследований источника, различные оценки его значения, а также возможное применение в исследованиях за пределами мамлюкского государства, в частности, для изучения истории Золотой Орды и Государства Хулагуидов. В статье делается вывод о важности «Сливок мысли...» по следующим соображениям: а) этот источник до сих пор недостаточно изучен и обогащает мамлюковедение новой информацией; б) Бейбарс аль-Мансури представляет собой очень редкий пример представителя высшей военной и политической элиты, написавшего полноценную историческую хронику. Более того, он лично участвовал во многих событиях, упомянутых в его труде; в) будучи тюрком (предположительно кипчакским) по происхождению, Бейбарс аль-Мансури был осведомлен о традиционных тюркских политических и социальных институтах и делал особый акцент на этих элементах, в то время как для более поздних мамлюкских авторов они были неясны и имели меньшее значение; г) хроника охватывает относительно длительный период времени (1252-1307 гг. от Р.Х.), что позволяет проводить статистические наблюдения и расчеты, а также прослеживать эволюцию основных политических и социальных институтов в раннебахритский период.
Ключевые слова: «Сливки мысли в истории хиджры»; Бейбарс аль-Мансури; Египет; мамлюки; Бахри; Ричардс; Золотая Орда; мамлюкские хроники

Introduction

The chronicle of Baybars al-Mansuri al-Nasiri, "The Cream of Thought in the History of the Hijra / According to the Chronology of Hijra" (Zubda(t) al-Fikra(t) fī Tārīkh al-Hijra(t)), is one of the earliest Mamluk chronicles, which contains important information about the emergence and initial period of development of the Mamluk state. However, it was introduced into full-fledged scientific circulation relatively late. Only after the completion of Donald Richards' fundamental critical edition of the source in 1998, the text of the chronicle started to be actively used in various works on the history of the Mamluks (Sidarus 2020: 141). Currently, the Arabic text (but without D. Richards' scientific introduction) is available on the websites of many Arabic electronic libraries.

"Zubda(t) al-Fikra(t)..." occupies a special place in the Mamluk period, as it is the only historical chronicle about the early Bahri period written by a representative of the Mamluk elite who held high positions in the state apparatus (Richards 1998: XV-XIX). Largely due to the unique nature of this chronicle, Baybars al-Mansuri himself has become, perhaps, one of the most famous amirs in Mamluk historiography.

Methods and Materials

The focus of this article is the state and prospects of using Baybars al-Mansuri al-Nasiri's chronicle "The Cream of Thought in the History of the Hijra / According to the Chronology of the Hijra" in Mamluk studies, identifying further potential directions for studying the source.

In this context, the author seeks not only to provide a snapshot of current works that actively use "The Cream of Thought…" but also to characterize the source in the context of the peculiarities of reflecting the historical process and the formation of concepts for its development in the Mamluk period itself. Baybars al-Mansuri al-Nasiri, also known by one of his positions as Baybars al-Dawadar, was a member of the Mamluk elite who rose to the highest positions in the state. He took a personal part in many military and political events that he describes. Most of what we know about him comes from his own writings. The author of the chronicle was probably born no later than 645 AH / 1247 or 1248 AD. This date is determined approximately, based on the message that at his death he was about 80 years old, although it must be taken into account that these are lunar years (Sidarus 2020: 143), thus, he died at the age of 77-78 years, and the date 1245/1246, which is sometimes indicated as the year of his possible birth, is not correct due to confusion between solar and lunar years when indicating the amir's age. As Baybars al-Mansuri himself says, he arrived in Egypt in 659 AH, that is, in 1260 or 1261 AD, when he should have been about 14 years old.

His two nisbas – al-Mansuri and al-Nasiri – unequivocally indicate the Maliks under whom he was in service: al-Mansur Qalawun [1279-1290], although he joined him when he was still an amir, and al-Nasir Muhammad [1293-1294, 1299-1309, 1309-1341]. As a member of the Mamluk corps of the Amir Qalawun, Baybars participated personally in a number of military campaigns of Sultans al-Zahir Baybars [1260-1277] and al-Mansur Qalawun and others, including participation in the siege and capture of Acre in 1291 under the son and successor of al-Mansur Qalawun, Sultan al-Ashraf Khalil [1290-1293]. In 1293, under the young al-Nasir Muhammad, he was appointed "amir / muqaddim of a thousand" and "dawadar." The peak of his career can be considered the position of naib of Egypt / governor of the Sultan in Egypt, which he held for just under one year, in 1311-1312. After that, the Amir fell into disgrace and spent five years in prison (Ashtor 1986: 1127-1128). Despite all this, the personality of Sultan al-Nasir Muhammad in "The Cream of Thought..." is assessed at a very high level.

Researchers unanimously note the scholarship and good style of Baybars al-Mansuri's writings (Ashtor 1986: 1128 et al.). The author of this article, who has spent a lot of time working with the text of "The Cream of Thought..." and the works of other Mamluk chroniclers - al-Ayni, al-Maqrizi, Ibn Taghribirdi, Ibn Duqmaq, Ibn al-Dawadari - also would like to note the elegance of style and fascinating presentation in the chronicle composed by Baybars al-Mansuri.

In addition to his own text, Baybars al-Mansuri included into "The Cream of Thought..." numerous poetic fragments composed by other authors (some of these poetic pieces are related to the plot, while others pay tribute to and illustrate the work of the mentioned poet, usually in an obituary), individual khutbas (Friday prayers), diplomatic correspondence (for example, between the Ilkhans and the Mamluk sultans), individual decrees (manshurs) of the Mamluk sultans, individual firmans of other rulers (for example, of the Ilkhan Ghazan Khan, Ilkhan [1295-1304]).

The meaning of the title of the Chronicle is quite transparent - "The Cream of Thought" is a special epithet (practically not used in modern Arabic), reflecting that the author produced an extract of available information and presented its most valuable and significant parts. It must be understood that when we talk about "The Cream of Thought...", we are usually talking about a small part of the work, relatively original and not based on the chronicles of previous historians. In the original manuscript, this is the penultimate (tenth) of eleven volumes, which in total cover the history of the Islamic world from the Hijra of the Prophet to 724 AH (1324 AD). The

publisher and researchers of the source believe that the relatively original text begins in 650 AH (1252 AD) and ends in 709 AH (1309 AD). It is within these chronological frameworks that D. Richards carried out the scientific publication of the source. The chronicle in its scientific edition breaks off literally in mid-sentence ("...and this is Amir Saif ad-Din Burlaghi, Amir Izz ad-Din al-Baghdadi, Amir Shams ad-Din al-Dakaz [al-dkz] salahdar and Amir..." (Baybars 1998: 417). It is obviously not finished, and the date 709 AH in this case seems absolutely random.

The date of 724 AH, mentioned, among others, in the publication of E.W. von Tiesenhausen, is associated with the alleged death of Baybars al-Mansuri al-Nasiri (725 AH / 1325 AD). According to the established tradition in Muslim historiography, his chronicle was included in later chronicles and, thus, created the appearance of continuous transmission of historical knowledge from chronicle to chronicle, from chronicler to chronicler.

Literature Review

In this context, the need for a critical edition of the source is undoubtedly overdue. Until 1998, the materials of "The Cream of Thought..." were used in fragments in academic research. For example, the publication of "Collection of Materials Relating to the History of the Golden Horde, Volume I. Excerpts from Arabic Writings" (Tiesenhausen 1884) presented a Russian translation of separate parts of the Chronicle (Tiesenhausen 1884: 76-123). The source itself was entitled "The Cream of Reflection about the Chronicle of the Hijra. From the Chronicle of Rukn al-Din Baybars." E.W. von. Tiesenhausen used the manuscripts (or fragments of manuscripts) with the text of "The Cream..." available to him at that time, but relied mainly on the manuscript from the British Museum (Tiesenhausen 1884: 76). The London manuscript (now kept in the British Library – Add MS 23325/2) became the basis for the modern scientific publication of the source. The book presents fragments in Arabic with the author's translation into Russian. In some cases, even after the publication of D. Richards' edition, the text cited by E.W. von. Tiesenhausen remains relevant for modern researchers (Timokhin 2020: 395).

In modern historiography, it is argued that Baybars al-Mansuri's secretary, a Coptic author al-Qiss al-Shams Abu al-Barakat Ibn Kabar (d. 724 / 1324), made a significant contribution to the writing of "The Cream of Thought...". In particular, this issue is discussed in detail in the corresponding article by Adel Y. Sidarus. The researcher believes that the secretary's contribution may even be more significant than that of the Amir's (Sidarus 2020: 146). We believe that this issue needs further discussion, as the personality of Baybars al-Mansuri is quite unusual compared to other Mamluk amirs, and many fragments of the text have a definitely personal nature. In the part of the text that was actively used in the preparation of our book "The Formation of the Mamluk State in Egypt in the Second Half of the 13th Century," Baybars al-Mansuri is certainly identified as the author, with his numerous remarks and comments in the first person. For example, we find phrases such as "Baybars al-Dawadar, who transmits these records," "the narrator said," "I was appointed," etc.

A partial translation of the source into English, made by David Cook, was published in 2020 in the book "Chronicles of Qalawun and his son al-Ashraf Khalil" (Chronicles 2020). It also presents English translations of fragments of other works attributed to Baybars al-Mansuri – "al-Tuḥfa al-mulūkiyya fi al-dawla al-Turkiyya" and "Mukhtārāt al-akhbār." As far as the author of this article knows, there is no complete published translation into other languages. There are translations of certain fragments of the chronicle on the Internet (including those made by the

author of this work). Currently, a scientific translation of "The Cream of Thought..." into Kazakh and Russian, made by Doctor of Philology Samal Abaevna Tuleubaeva, is almost completed. As the author of the translation notes, "... [it] will allow a deeper understanding of the events and realities of the Mamluk period, primarily the era of the reign of Sultan al-Zahir Baybars" (Tuleubaeva 2024: 102).

Results

The structure of "The Cream of Thought..." is traditional for this genre of literature. The text is divided by years. Each year begins with a report on events in Egypt and al-Sham. Then, separate sections are devoted to events in other parts of the Islamic world, mainly in the Rum Sultanate, the Ilkhanate, and the Golden Horde. Information from other regions, such as the Maghreb, al-Andalus, and Yemen, is rarely included. At the end of each year, famous people from among religious figures, writers, and pious individuals who died in that year are listed.

The chronicle is a full-scale history of Islam, which, like many other similar compilations, is based mostly on well-known sources, such as al-Tabari's "History of the Prophets and Kings," Ibn al-Athir's "The Complete History," and others.

In addition to the Mamluk history itself, "The Cream of Thought..." is increasingly used as an auxiliary source for the study of other regions.

Thus, for example, the Chronicle of Baybars al-Mansuri became the central source in A.A. Porsin's fundamental work "The History of the Golden Horde of the late XIII - early XIV centuries in the work of Rukn ad-Din Baybars al-Mansuri "Zubdat al-Fikra" (Porsin 2018). The researcher considers the chronicle in question to be one of the most important sources for studying the early history of the Golden Horde, noting the following: "The choice of the object of study is simple: it can be stated with certainty that for the Golden Horde history of this period the "Zubdat al-Fikra" is the second most informative source, after "Jami' al-Tawarikh" by Rashid al-Din. This work had a huge impact on the further views of Mamluk historiography on this issue, reflected in the works of al-Nuwayri, Abu al-Fida, Ibn Khaldun and al-Ayni (Porsin 2018: 5). A.A. Porsin drew attention to the selective approach in Baybars al-Mansuri's coverage of events in the Golden Horde - the reigns of Khans Berke [1257-1266] and Uzbek [1313-1341], when the relations between Mamluk Egypt and the Ulus of Jochi were at their peak, are covered rather sparingly (Porsin 2018: 8) (or in the standard volume for a work of the genre under consideration, if we are talking about political events outside of Egypt - A.F.), but the internecine struggle in the Golden Horde in the last years before the death of Nogai Khan and after his death (1300) is considered unusually in details (Porsin 2018: 7-8).

A.A. Porsin concluded that in the 1290s, Baybars al-Mansuri, when writing his chronicle, apparently did not have exclusive sources about events in the Golden Horde and described them rather briefly and schematically. Then, after 1313, a text came to him that described in detail the internal political struggle in the Ulus of Jochi in the late 13th – early 14th centuries, and this text was revised and integrated into "The Cream of Thought..." (Porsin 2018: 257). Accordingly, it clearly stands out both in its volume and in the detail of presentation from other subjects related to the description of historical events outside of Egypt and al-Sham. This text was, apparently, dictated by someone from the surviving supporters of the deceased Taz and Tunguz (some of the participants in the internecine war who opposed Uzbek – A.F.), who were brought as part of one of the embassies sent from the Golden Horde to Egypt after the accession to power of Khan Uzbek (Porsin 2018: 259).

Nevertheless, according to D.M. Timokhin and V.V. Tishin, "...a significant part of A.A. Porsin's conclusions is based primarily on logical guesses. Often, he formulates only one of the possible solutions to a particular issue as the main one, and then relies on it not as a hypothesis, but as a fact" (Timokhin 2020: 394). A significant part of the criticism is built around A.A. Porsin's ambiguous attitude to Turkic onomastics (Timokhin 2020: 396-397). Nevertheless, although the conclusions about the specific source of BaYbars al-Mansuri's information about the internal political struggle in the Golden Horde at the turn of the 13th-14th centuries can be challenged, the fact of the obviously disproportionate attention to this internecine strife in "The Cream of Thought..." remains. Thus, in particular, this plot is completely absent in Ibn Duqmaq's "Precious Stone in the Biography of Caliphs, Maliks and Sultans", while al-Maqrīzī devotes only a few lines to it (al-Maqrīzī 1997: 200).

Zh.M. Sabitov and S.A. Tuleubaeva used "The Cream of Thoughts..." to study specific aspects of the history of the Sultanate of Rum, the Ilkhanate, and the Golden Horde, especially the relationships between them. The researchers concluded that "this source contains many new scientific data on the history of Egypt, as well as on the history of Asia Minor, the Ilkhanate, and the Golden Horde" (Sabitov, Tuleubaeva 2024: 9-10).

Undoubtedly, the Chronicle is valuable for studying not only the history of the Mamluk state but of the entire region as a whole. Robert Irwin (1946-2024), a British specialist in the history of the Middle East in the Middle Ages, noted that the great interest of historians to the early Bahri period was primarily due to Mamluks struggle with the Crusaders. Paradoxically, according to R. Irwin, this period was studied mainly on sources created during the al-Burji period (Irwin 1986: 33). In our opinion, there is nothing paradoxical in this, since the very specificity of the Mamluk chronicles assumed a gradual "swelling" of material about the same event from chronicler to chronicler. As a result, the events of the early Bahri period are described in the later chronicles in the greatest detail, which sharply increased the attractiveness of these chronicles for historians-narrativists.

Discussion

In modern historiography of the Mamluk period, a stable model was developed for studying various processes that took place in Mamluk Egypt, as well as the political institutions that existed within it. An analysis of the Mamluk Bibliography Online resource shows that when covering a number of problematic issues, a cross-cutting approach prevails, using asynchronous sources selected by the author according to a criterion that is not always clear.

This approach rarely brings accurate results. There is no secret that Mamluk chroniclers were least concerned with recreating historical reality. The very concept of a chronicle in that period was focused on reinterpreting, first of all, phenomena and events that were contemporary to the chroniclers, as well as understandable and acceptable to their target audience, and allowed them to defend and affirm a certain relevant idea. A similar situation exists with political and state institutions. The traditionalism of Egyptian society during the Mamluk period is difficult to deny, but the assumption that political and state institutions functioned unchanged for several centuries seems more than far-fetched (Filipau 2021: 23).

In Mamluk studies, in principle, the tradition of mixed use of various chronicles has dominated for a long time, starting from the chronicles of the early Bahri period and ending with sources from the late Burji era. To a large extent, this mixture was due to the relative weakness of the

source study of the Mamluk period and the gradual introduction of new sources into scientific circulation. Such an array seems unjustifiably large, because there was an obvious evolution of political institutions in different eras of the Mamluk state (Filipau 2021: 29).

By the time the Mamluk state emerged, the Muslim historiography had developed its own conceptual understanding of history and a well-developed toolkit for studying it. As Franz Rosenthal, one of the most prominent researchers of traditional Muslim historiography, notes, two main terms were used in the Islamic world to denote "history" (in the closest European understanding of the word) – "('ilm) al-akhbār" and "tārīkh" (Rosenthal 1997: 11). As a rule, "al-akhbār" (this is the plural of the word "khabar") meant "information about remarkable events." In modern Arabic, this word is translated as "news, reports." In the context of the development of Islam, this concept was increasingly associated with information about the activities of the Prophet Muhammad and great figures of Islam in the past (Rosenthal 1997: 11). In the chronicles of the Mamluk period, the term "akhbār" is used, as a rule, when describing individual subjects. Baybars al-Mansuri himself, in addition to "Zubda(t) al-Fikra(t)...", is credited with the work "Mukhtārāt al-akhbār / Selected News", which is a brief summary of the events of the Ayyubid and early Mamluk period (Mukhtār al-Akhbār) and some others. Not all of his works have reached us.

More specific, at least from the 9th century, to designate for the concept of "history" became the word 'tārīkh' which in modern Arabic translates to "history." There are various versions regarding its origin and, accordingly, its exact meaning (Rosenthal 1997: 12-13). F. Rosenthal considered the most likely version of the original meaning to be "determining the exact date by observing the phases of the Moon" (Rosenthal 1997: 13). Regardless of whether we agree with this interpretation or not, the practice of using the term "tārīkh" in Muslim historiography is closely linked to the use of precise dating, although in early works, most events were still mentioned without specifying dates (Rosenthal 1997: 14). From the second century of the Hijra (8th century AD), the term "tārīkh" also began to consistently denote "historical work / work on history" (Rosenthal 1997: 14).

Various Muslim scholars proposed different definitions of the term "tārīkh." However, the common features of all these concepts, as noted by Franz Rosenthal, were the definition of the issue of "tārīkh" as circumstances related to people and time, detailed to varying degrees, but included within the overall framework of random circumstances existing for people and in time (Rosenthal 1997: 16). Thus, the main content of history became the changes affecting human behavior - the adaptation of people to their times, to their era (Rosenthal 1997: 16).

Franz Rosenthal identifies the following genres in Muslim historiography (Rosenthal 1997: 66):

- Khabar (habir history). Considered the oldest form of Muslim historiography, it is a relatively brief description of a single event (usually a battle) (Rosenthal 1997: 66). In large historical works, "khabar" was included as sections devoted to a particular event. In many cases, as in the case of the chronicle of Baybars al-Mansuri, the "khabar" sections were called "dhikr/ mention" (Baybars 1998). In later literature, the "khabar" sections were usually presented as vivid narratives with the inclusion of various details and dialogues. In this respect, "The Cream of Thought..." uses "khabar" quite moderately, compared, for example, with the works of al-Maqrizi. The third feature of the "khabar" sections in major historical works that F. Rosenthal identifies is the inclusion of poetic fragments (Rosenthal 1997: 67), which is very characteristic of the work of Baybars al-Mansuri. In fact, the term "akhbār" mentioned earlier is the plural of the word "khabr."

▪ Annals (Rosenthal 1997: 71). As the name suggests, they presented information according to the year-by-year principle. For the first time, this principle was used in its most complete form in the work of the famous historian Muhammad al-Tabari (839-923) "History of the Prophets and Kings," although F. Rosenthal reasonably points out that such a large-scale work could not have appeared without prior works (Rosenthal 1997: 71). Considering that the annals/chronicles of Muslim authors had a universalist character, F. Rosenthal, in our opinion, quite rightly suggests Byzantine influence, in particular, the influence of the "Chronography" of John Malalas (Rosenthal 1997: 76). The annals themselves, written by one author or another, represented, from the point of view of Muslim historiography, a continuation of earlier written annals. F. Rosenthal notes that, as a rule, chronicles attributed to a specific author actually served as a continuation of chronicles written by his predecessors (Rosenthal 1997: 81). However, one cannot fully agree with the researcher that the annals/chronicles were based on facts (Rosenthal 1997: 81). Of course, the year-by-year principle of presentation presupposes filling each year with a set of facts, but the very selection of these facts, as well as the inclusion of fragments in the "khabar" genre, were quite sufficient tools to formulate and promote certain historical concepts.

Typically, the authors of annals would rewrite the works of their predecessors and then continue them, filling them with recent and contemporary events. Baybars al-Mansuri says about it: "By the grace of the merciful and all-forgiving Baybars al-Mansuri al-Nasiri al-Dawadar, I received help from the possessor of greatness and power and completely finished what I chose from the truthful historical writings in this my book, which I myself completely compiled. I became engrossed in its composition and called it "The Cream of Thought in the History of Hijra." I outlined in it in chronological sequence [the history] of the religion of Muhammad, until I reached the beginning of the now existing, alongside the Islamic kingdoms, most glorious Turkic state, may the God give strength to its servants, raise its source of light, and lay at its [feet] the horizons of countries, regions, and their cities, until its power spread to the far and near, and the criminal and rebel submitted to it. It holds enemies by their forelocks and casts down the stubborn from peaks and fortresses. Verily, this state has settled [all problems], established Islam, illuminated nights and days, bared every sword for resolution [of problems] and sewed up every tear, regardless how insignificant it would be" (Baybars 1998: 155).

It should be emphasized that, due to the linear concept of history in Islam and the specifics of its chronology, the mere fact of a year-by-year presentation of information is not enough to conclude that a particular source belongs to the genre of annals.

In addition to the main genres, it is necessary to briefly note other important genres in Muslim historiography (Rosenthal 1997: 87):

▪ dynastic historiography. This genre is characterized by a peculiar combination of annals and presentation by periods of rule of a particular ruler. For a number of works, it is difficult to unambiguously assign them to one category or another based solely on external features. As a rule, dynastic historiography emphasized the moral and ethical qualities of the rulers being described, and gave a description of their appearance. The Chronicle of Baybars al-Mansuri has obvious elements of dynastic historiography, and the endowment of the described ruler with certain moral and ethical qualities was due to political considerations. The listing of various officials in dynastic historiography, as well as the mention of persons surrounding the ruler, is also of considerable importance to the historian (Rosenthal 1997: 87).

▪ the genre of "tabaqat," that is, the presentation of history by generations, although there is no consensus on the duration of one generation in Muslim historiography.

▪ genealogies, largely dating back to pre-Islamic times, due to the particular importance of tribal ties.

It is necessary to understand that, in Amir Mazor's apt expression, Arab medieval historiography never sought to be an "objective science." It carried didactic, moral, religious, or political content, rather than a statement of events (Mazor 2018: 103). The historical events described served as confirmation or illustration of some global idea. At the same time, we cannot assert that the very fact of the truth of an event was of no importance to medieval chroniclers. Rather, they sought to present a particular event, which they learned either from their own experience (as is often observed in the chronicle of Baybars al-Mansuri) or from other sources, in the light/aspect that seemed most advantageous to them for illustrating or confirming their own thought.

Annals, as noted above, are one of the two main types of Muslim historiography, starting from the 9th-10th centuries. Russian historians classify dynastic chronicles as the second type, in which historical events are structured according to the reign of rulers (Mikulsky 2019). D.V. Mikulsky notes that this type of chronicle is a more common genre in Muslim historiography than annals (Mikulsky 2019), but in Mamluk historiography, the latter outwardly dominate. As Hamilton Gibb notes, in the 12th-14th centuries, a distinct interest in the genre of universal chronicle is also preserved (Gibb 1960: 139), which is certainly associated with attempts to revive the idea of the Caliphate, the center of which became Egypt in 1261. Even though de facto the central place in Baybars al-Mansuri's text is occupied by the history of Egypt and al-Sham, and more specifically, the history of the Mamluk state, he builds the structure of his works in accordance with the unified system of historical identities that developed in the Muslim world in the 9th-10th centuries – into a world-historical chronicle (Kuznetsov 2010).

V.A. Kuznetsov notes that all human history in this approach acquires a common periodization, including the period of jahiliyyah (the pre-Islamic era), which is systematized and forms a certain semantic unity as the embodiment of the Divine plan (Kuznetsov 2010).

In our view, the world-historical exposition in "The Cream of Thought..." is an important element in legitimizing Mamluk rule.

Baybars al-Mansuri follows the "wave-like" concept of the development of the history of the Muslim world after the death of the Prophet Muhammad: the rise of one group or another (clan, tribal, ethnic), reaching the peak of power, and then decline. This decline could be caused by both the sinfulness of the rulers (for example, belonging to the Shiite community) and by the personal weaknesses of the malik, for example, his inability to lead the army, etc. The period of decline is accompanied by disasters, after which a new rise begins. It is characteristic that the more terrible the disasters that occurred, the more desperate the future rulers were, the more magnificent their rule will be. In particular, Baybars al-Mansuri says this about it: "And I say that success is from God. Verily, the Kingdom of the Egyptian Lands passed after the end of the state of slaves from the maliks poisoned by Shiism to the Ayyubid offspring, as has already been mentioned in the text, which we have given in full. And when God desired – Great is He and Almighty – the disappearance of this state, He doomed it to destruction. Earlier, He established in His creation that the good of the people lies in the establishment of rulers, the first in courage and bravery, and that the Turks are the most great and prudent, and that in leading them to faith there is common and private benefit. And His Might wanted to lead their community from decline and delusion to good, in order to erect with its help, the foundations of true faith and lead them to the light of religion from the dark oppression of godlessness. And because of this, the Tatar invasion and their conquest of the eastern and northern countries happened, including their attack on the Kipchak Turks. The Tatars plunged them into what memory has preserved for us; they went through murders and captivity, and captivity brought laws. The sons of the Kipchak

Turks were sold, and merchants took them far away, and some of them – all young and youthful – were brought to the Egyptian lands and to the country of al-Sham at the end of the [existence] of the Ayyubid state. The sons of Ayyub bought them in order to adorn themselves with their help in processions and to attract them to help themselves in the formation of troops, and they prepared them for misfortunes, since they (i.e., the Turks – A.F.) are brave, courageous, firm in archery, well-trained in riding, patient in terrible misfortune, accustomed to the hardships of war and accustomed from childhood to misfortunes. They (i.e., the Ayyubids – A.F.) made them great amirs and leaders of the army, elevated their dwellings and received their fortresses with their help" (Baybars 1998: 2).

Suffered hardships are the key to future greatness. This understanding of the historical process seems to be related to the concept of Divine retribution and intimidation existing in Islam. Interestingly, in presenting foreign policy events, Baybars al-Mansuri follows the same pattern: "When I finished describing its (i.e., the state's – A.F.) history, I became so fond of the greatness of its power and the scale of its maliks' activities, the organization of its services, that I remembered the founders of this religious community (milla(t)). The God vested them with power over it, exalted its leaders by their deeds, drove them out of vast countries, giving them wisdom and the reins of government over it because of such all-encompassing wisdom that minds could not comprehend its depths, and thoughts did not reach their (i.e., the depths' – A.F.) secrets, until He injected blood into them and calmed the rabble, and turned their insignificance into greatness in relation to other peoples, and them – from subordinates – into subordinators, and granted the weak among them to inherit the kingdoms of Islam and protect the possessions of the house of the Prophet, peace be upon him, as the chronicles and testimonies, going back to reliable witnesses, correctly [indicate] that battles will not cease until the Day of Judgment" (Baybars 1998).

Within the framework of classical Islam, the idea of Divine retribution and fear of God developed to explain the causes of all kinds of disasters that periodically struck the Muslim community. Genetically, it goes back to the Old Testament, being one of the basic principles of Judaism. God's punishment befalls a person if a sin is committed in a secret way or if the state leaves it unpunished. In the latter case, God's punishment befalls the entire people, immersed in immorality (Leviticus 20, 2-5; Deuteronomy 27, 24-25; 29, 28; Ezekiel 33, 2-9). Judaism distinguishes two types of retribution:

1) rewarding or punishing an individual;

2) rewarding or punishing a people or the human race (Bernfeld 1991: 672). At the same time, it is emphasized that God will never destroy his people (Bernfeld 1991: 674). In Islam, this concept is called 'rahba(t) – fear of God' and 'irhāb – intimidation'. The latter word is not used in the Koran, but the imperfect of the original verb is found (8:60) (Malik 2006). Intimidation is used by God as a way to point out to people their violations of religious law and to warn of the imminent consequences of this. As soon as Muslims return to a virtuous way of life, the disasters cease.

Accordingly, pre-Islamic and pre-Mamluk history is reinterpreted. It is perceived, even in a brief presentation, as a prelude to the rise of the Turks, as a guarantee of their unconditional devotion to Islam after a long period of disbelief, as a sign of special chosenness due to the suffering they endured before gaining power.

All subsequent history, after the Mamluks came to power, is seen as a gradual realization of the Divine plan, the peak of which falls on the ruler in whose interests the author of a particular chronicle acts. This concept becomes even more relevant in light of the restoration of the Caliphate in Egypt and the confrontation with the Mongols, reinforcing this Divine mission of

the Mamluk rulers. In particular, the struggle against the Ilkhanate and Christian states was conceptualized as a struggle of Islam against disbelief, giving a special status to the Mamluk rulers as defenders of all Islamic lands and of Islam itself as a religion.

At a lower level, this concept was more or less consistently embodied in the description of the change of power from the overthrown maliks to the new ruler.

This peculiar ascent "from good to better" in characterizing the activities of each subsequent ruler became a good tool for legitimizing the change of power within the Mamluk elite.

In this context, it is interesting to look at how Baybars al-Mansuri described the reasons for the defeat of the Mamluks under the formal leadership of al-Nasir Muhammad in the second battle of Homs in 1299: "When they saw the army weakened, and their hands tied [and unable] to do anything to the enemy, and also that waiting this time would lead to such a battle, which would turn into destruction and cause the disintegration of the kingdom and the destruction of the heads with which the bodies stand, and the supports with which the foundations are strengthened, [they fled]. And something similar was done on the day of Badr by al-Harith ben Hisham ben al-Mughira al-Makhzumi, saying in justification of his action the following couplets:

God knows that I did not abandon their battle // even when they raised horses with white foam at the mouth.

I knew that I would fight alone // I would be killed, and my enemy would not damage my grave.

And I turned away from them, // wishing for them punishment on the day of unfitness.

And it was so, and the victorious Mansuri army later took revenge and quenched their thirst for revenge with the souls of the Tatars, which we will mention later from the news" (Baybars 1998).

In this fragment, the reference to the Battle of Badr is also of significant interest. This battle was the first major engagement between the Muslims and the Quraysh (March 17, 624), ending in a complete victory for the Prophet Muhammad. Al-Harith ibn Hisham ibn al-Mughira al-Makhzumi (died 634, 636, or 639), mentioned here, participated in this battle on the side of the Quraysh, as did his brother Abu Jahl (Amr ibn Hisham), a well-known opponent of the Prophet Muhammad, who died in this battle. When the Quraysh were discussing whether to engage in battle, Abu Jahl was one of those who insisted on the battle, which ended in the defeat of the Quraysh and the death of Abu Jahl himself. Subsequently, al-Harith ibn Hisham converted to Islam and became one of the companions of the Prophet Muhammad.

Thus, the appeal to a story from the life of the Prophet Muhammad was intended to emphasize once again the temporality and planned nature of failures – there is no trouble in defeat, no shame in retreat. God will not abandon his community and will eventually grant it superiority. The retreat in the second battle of Homs is a step that saved the lives of Muslims, as would have happened if the Quraysh had retreated in the Battle of Badr.

The role of predictions is also interesting, as they played an important role in the Mamluk rulers' understanding of historical processes and are often cited in Mamluk chronicles. Amir Mazor, who studied this issue in detail, identified the following as the main subjects for predictions (Mazor 2018: 106): a) predictions about the accession to the throne of specific sultans; b) predictions about the victory of Muslims over infidels; c) predictions about the assassination or fall of a sultan; d) predictions about natural death; e) predictions about the political career or good fortune for individual emirs.

As an example of predictions in "The Cream of Thought...", one can cite the famous story with the prediction about the future sultanate of al-Zahir Baybars and al-Mansur Qalawun. The narrator said: "Here I recall what an eyewitness reported, Sultan-Shahid al-Mahdum Malik al-

Mansur Sayf ad-Din Qalawun, may God have mercy on him, about what happened to him and to Malik al-Zahir Rukn ad-Din Baybars al-Bunduqdari: "We were at that time few in number, separated and moving from place to place in fear, and we had no stability." Such an existence did not allow them to settle in a house (dār). At this time, Malik al-Nasir was zealous in searching for them, al-Mughis sought to capture them, and al-Mudzaffar in Egypt did not rely on them. [Al-Mansur Qalawun] said: "We decided in this difficult situation to visit Sheikh Ali al-Buka [may he be useful to the God - publisher's insertion], and he lived at that time in his zawiya in al-Khalili [in peace – publisher's insertion]. And I needed daily bread, I met a passerby with some food, and I asked him what he was eating to satisfy my hunger, but he refused to give it. And then I was overcome with anger so strong that I hit him hard, miscalculating the force, and in this blow was his fate and death. And I greatly regretted it and said: "Hunger and need would be better than bloodshed." And then I (variant - we - note of the publisher) went further to the sheikh, and when we arrived at him, he greeted the Amir Rukn ad-Din and shook his hand. And I approached him to greet him, and he showed disgust towards me, turned his face away from me, and said: "This one dares to murder a soul, which is haram of God." I was surprised by his discovery, his awareness, his disgust at my handshake, and his refusal of it. Amir Rukn ad-Din Baybars showed politeness in his question and request, and he allowed us to sit down and began to get acquainted with the matter. And when we got up to say goodbye to him, he shook the hand of Amir Rukn ad-Din Baybars, called out to him, and said: "You are going to the Egyptian lands, possession of them will pass to you, try to do good." Then I approached him after he shook my hand and said to me as he said to him. And we were surprised by his saying to us, and we [were] in that position. And the Moons made their revolutions, turned over and returned, and Amir Rukn ad-Din Baybars became malik [and his laqab is malik al-Zahir]. And what happened, happened, the rule passed to al-Mahdum, may God have mercy on him, and then to the people of his house and his descendants, by the power of God and by His will. And this is an example of the miracles of the saints, the discoveries of the elect, and the awareness of those who know about secret things, as it is said: "The hearts of the knowing possess eyes, Seeing what our eyes do not see" (Baybars 1998).

Al-Ayni also conveys a series of similar predictions regarding Malik al-Mudzaffar Qutuz. Below, we provide only one of them. According to him, even before Qutuz arrived in Egypt as a Mamluk, a conversation took place between the future Malik and a servant: "The servant said to him: 'Who is your father, who is your grandfather? They are infidels, aren't they?' And he replied: 'That's not true. I am a Muslim, the son of a Muslim for ten generations. I am Mahmud ben Maudud, the son of the sister of Jalal ad-Din, the Seljuk Khorezmshah. I will definitely be a Malik in Egypt and shut the mouths of the Tatars" (al-'Aynī 2010: 255).

As Amir Mazor notes, one of the main functions of these predictions was to legitimize the power and politics of the Mamluk rulers. This idea corresponds to everything said above, emphasizing that the historical process is fully controlled by God.

These prophecies highlight an important feature of the "Malik" institution. Personal valor and military fortune are the most important signs of the Malik's legitimacy, and they are present in him because they are predetermined by God. Deprivation, trials, and hardships are a necessary stage on the path to the triumph of the will of the Lord. At the level of the Malik, this is manifested in their personal hardships (like Qutuz, Baybars, Qalawun), and at the level of the Muslim community, in defeats, wars, and disasters. All this marks the beginning of a kind of new microcycle – from misfortune to happiness.

Conclusion

The importance of "The Cream of Thought..." for studying the history of the Mamluks is explained by the following reasons:

- The source has not been fully studied in Mamluk studies and thus introduces a significant degree of novelty to its research;
- The author of the chronicle was a witness and participant in most of the events described in it. In addition, this is a rare example of the vision of a representative of the Mamluk military and administrative elite being presented to the reader. There are a few sources like that, and they do not belong to the most famous Mamluk historians. For example, al-Ayni (1360-1453) was a jurist. Al-Maqrizi (1364-1442), one of the most frequently cited Mamluk historians, was also a jurist. Ibn Taghribirdi (1410/1411-1470), although born into a noble Mamluk family, also did not pursue a military career. The biography of Baybars al-Mansuri obviously stands apart from the biographies of these three most famous Mamluk historians, and other authors of the period under consideration, whose works have been introduced into scientific circulation;
- The chronicle covers a significant period of time, within which it is possible to trace generational changes and collect relatively sufficient material for statistical analysis. The biographies of al-Zahir Baybars or al-Mansur Qalawun, written by Ibn Abd az-Zahir, do not provide such an opportunity, although they certainly cover many events in much more detail.
- Baybars al-Mansuri knew the realities of Turkic society well and paid attention to the relevant points, which seemed insignificant to the authors of later periods when covering the political history of the first decades of Mamluk rule.

In addition, the fact that the group of Mamluks that dominated the government in Egypt in 1250/1252-1260 (the as-Salihiyya faction) was defeated in the internal political struggle, leaving no tradition of court (panegyric) historiography, is of considerable importance. Baybars al-Mansuri, on the other hand, could collect information about the first years of the reign of the Mamluk rulers from eyewitnesses, although, of course, this is no more than an assumption due to chronological coincidence.

A promising area of research in Mamluk studies is a comparative analysis of the narratives of later Mamluk chroniclers with their views on political and social processes, with the works of earlier Mamluk historians, in particular, with the work of Baybars al-Mansuri al-Nasiri considered in this article. It would be naive to assume, based on the peculiarities of Muslim historiography (see, for example, the works of V.A. Kuznetsov, D.V. Mikulsky, F. Rosenthal, etc.), that Mamluk chroniclers sought (and, in general, were able) to accurately reflect the events of the past. It is more likely that they described the past based on the needs of the present. However, in many ways, their selective approach is valuable - thinking in terms of their era, the authors transferred mechanisms and foundations that were understandable to them to past events, interpreting them more from modern positions than from the realities of the events described. Simply put, when describing the mechanism of the change of power in the late Bahri period, a later author did so based on the normality of the period contemporary to him. This hypothesis seems promising to us for the subsequent active use of "The Cream of Thought..." in Mamluk studies.

The concept of the historical process in Baybars al-Mansuri is predominantly universal in nature, presenting Mamluk rule as an integral part of world history, both Muslim and non-Muslim. The revival of the Abbasid Caliphate in Egypt in 1261 gave a huge impetus to this understanding of the historical process. An important place in his concept of the historical process is occupied by the concept of Divine intimidation and suffering as a necessary factor in

the subsequent greatness of the state, headed by a group that has gone through suffering. This concept was clearly reproduced at the macro level and relatively stable at the micro level when characterizing individual cases of change of power.

The historical process is predetermined and controlled by God, who reveals its essence and points to the correctness of certain actions, to the preference of certain persons in various ways, the most common of which are predictions. In particular, a corresponding prediction was made regarding the future reign of the maliks al-Zahir Baybars and al-Mansur Qalawun.

The very greatness of the Mamluk state was interpreted through its role in the fight against specific opponents at this historical stage - the Mongols (the Ilkhanate) and the Christians (Crusaders). Providence as the engine of history leads at this historical stage the chosen people (qawm) – the Turks – represented by outstanding rulers, the elect of whom (people and rulers) is confirmed by going through suffering to military successes and the triumph of Islam, expressed at this stage through victories over the Crusaders and Tatars.

Acknowledgements

We would like to express our gratitude to the editorial board and the reviewers of the journal for the opportunity to publish this research, as well as for their attention to detail, professionalism and valuable recommendations during the preparation of the article for publication.

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Conflict of Interest Statement: the author declares no conflicts of interest. ***Мүдделер қақтығысы туралы мәлімдеме:*** автор мүдделер қақтығысының жоқ екенін мәлімдейді. ***Заявление о конфликте интересов:*** автор заявляет об отсутствии конфликта интересов.

Information about the article./ Мақала туралы ақпарат / Информация о статье
Entered the editorial office / Редакцияға түсті / Поступила в редакцию: 30.01.2026.
Approved by reviewers / Рецензенттер мақұлдаған / Одобрено рецензентами: 20.02.2026.
Accepted for publication / Жариялауға қабылданды / Принята к публикации: 20.03.2026