Madrasahs, Their Shaykhs, and the Civilian Founder: The Bāsiṭīyah Madrasahs in the Mamlūk Era

Daisuke Igarashi
Madrasahs, Their Shaykhs, and the Civilian Founder: The Bāsiṭīyah Madrasahs in the Mamlūk Era

Daisuke IGARASHI*

Zayn al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ ibn Khalīl, a high-ranking bureaucrat in the fifteenth-century Mamlūk government, founded five madrasahs in Cairo, Jerusalem, Damascus, Mecca, and Medina, all of which were named “Bāsiṭīyah” after the founder’s name. This paper seeks to determine who the founder appointed to posts in his madrasahs, especially those of shaykh of Sufis (shaykh al-taṣawwuf/al-ṣūfīyah), and why he made these choices. Our investigation shows that there were various personal and political reasons behind the founder’s selection of the shaykh(s). When he was still in a relatively low position, ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ selected a well-known ‘ālim (religious intellectual) as shaykh of his Cairene institution in order to burnish its reputation. After his advancement, he appointed his favorites and private staff, some of whom had close ties with the Bārizī family, as the shaykh(s) of Cairene and Jerusalemite Bāsiṭīyahs. He thus engaged in patronage to reward people close to him and to strengthen his connections with the Bārizī family. In Mecca, on the other hand, he chose prominent scholars of local prominent families for political reasons. In Damascus, he also selected a well-known scholar of a local scholarly family as shaykh, but this selection was based on a private relationship with the family rather than politics. Except in the case of the Medinan Bāsiṭīyah that he newly established for a specific person, he did not take the initiative in the selection of the shaykh(s) after his downfall. This power had fallen from the founder’s hand and passed to the interested ‘ulamā’.

Keywords: madrasah, Mamlūk sultanate, civilian elite, manṣab, shaykh al-taṣawwuf

I. Introduction

Under the Mamlūk sultanate, the architectural patronage of the sultans and amirs flourished in Egypt, Syria, and Hijaz; thus, hundreds of religious institutions, including mosques, madrasahs (schools), and khângâhs (Sufi convents) were founded throughout the period. With their establishment, many manṣabs or stipendiary posts, such as those of teacher (mudarris), student, Sufi, shaykh of Sufis (shaykh al-taṣawwuf/al-ṣūfīyah), imām, and khaṭīb (preacher) were created. These positions afforded a livelihood to ‘ulamā’ (sg. ‘ālim: religious intellectuals), who competed over manṣabs (Chamberlain 1994, 91-107). However, the founders of institutions took an active interest in making appointments; those of madrasahs often selected scholars to whom they were personally connected, either as teachers or in other capacities (Berkey 1992, 99-102). However, little is known about the founders’ strategies behind the selection of staff.

This paper focuses on the five madrasahs established by Zayn al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ ibn

*Lecturer, Chuo University / Visiting Researcher, Department of Islamic Area Studies, Center for Evolving Humanities, Graduate School of Humanities and Sociology, The University of Tokyo
Khalīl, a high-ranking bureaucrat in the fifteenth-century Mamlūk government; it seeks to determine who the founder appointed to posts in his madrasahs, especially those of shaykh al-taṣawwuf, and why he made these choices. The implications of such selections are revealed through the investigation of the careers of appointees, their relationships with the founder, and the personal, social, and political circumstances under which appointments were made.

II. The Career of ʻAbd al-Bāsiṭ

Zayn al-Dīn ʻAbd al-Bāsiṭ ibn Khalīl was born in Damascus in 784 AH/1382-83 AD. Little is known about his family, except that the sultan gave his father Khalīl a village named Jisrayn at Ghūṭah near Damascus and that his mother was of Circassian origin (Dāris, Vol. 2, 142). There are no indications that he received an Islamic education, something common among ʻulamā'; rather, he apprenticed himself to Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn al-Shihāb Maḥmūd, the kātib al-sirr (chief-secretary) of Damascus, and received training in clerical work. ʻAbd al-Bāsiṭ was taken into Ibn al-Shihāb Maḥmūd’s confidence. At that time, Mamlūk Syria was in the midst of a civil war. Prominent amirs based in Syria, such as Jakam, Nūrūz al-Ḥāfīzī, and Shaykh, often revolted against Sultan al-Nāṣir Faraj ibn Barqūq in Egypt (Holt 1986, 179-182). Ibn al-Shihāb Maḥmūd enjoyed the friendship of Amir Shaykh (the future sultan al-Mu’ayyad Shaykh), under whom he kept his position as kātib al-sirr. Shaykh was installed as the viceroy of Damascus but rebelled against Faraj. However, when the army of Sultan Faraj advanced into Damascus in 812/1409 after Shaykh’s escape, Ibn al-Shihāb Maḥmūd was executed. ʻAbd al-Bāsiṭ, who came into personal contact with Shaykh through his master, started to work under the latter.

Faraj’s death and Shaykh’s accession to the sultanate in 815/1412 was the turning point of ʻAbd al-Bāsiṭ’s career. He moved to Cairo with Shaykh and his followers. The new sultan appointed him nāẓir al-khizānah (the controller of the sultanic treasury). Originally the nāẓir al-khizānah was not a high-ranking position in the Mamlūk government; however, since this office managed the sultan’s private purse, its importance and influence grew as the sultans strived to secure a private income through their own property, thus making them independent of deteriorating governmental revenue (Igarashi 2011, 94-96). Actually, ʻAbd al-Bāsiṭ held concurrently the position of the nāẓir al-musta’jarāt al-sulṭānīyah bi-al-Shām wa-al-Qāhirah, the supervisor of the sultan’s leased property in Syria and Cairo, although the date of the appointment is unknown (Ḍaw’, Vol. 4, 24). Gradually he obtained the confidence of Shaykh, who greatly relied on and often visited him. In 818/1415-16, Shaykh appointed ʻAbd al-Bāsiṭ to the additional post of nāẓir al-kiswah (controller of the Kaʻbah covering) (Sulūk, Vol. 4, 382).

A year and three months after the death of Shaykh in 824/1421, four sultans were enthroned one after another (al-Muẓaffar Aḥmad ibn Shaykh, al-Ẓāhir Ṭaṭar, al-Ṣāliḥ Muḥammad ibn Ṭaṭar, and al-Ashraf Barsbāy). ʻAbd al-Bāsiṭ jockeyed for position in this time of political instability. On 17 Dhū al-Qa‘dah 824/3 November 1421, Sultan Ṭaṭar appointed him nāẓir al-jaysh (the head of the Army bureau), one of the important civilian positions in the Mamlūk

---

2 However, it is not known if the village was an iqṭā’, a rizqah (land allotted from state lands to people as a pension), or private land (milk).
3 On his biography, see Ḏaw’, Vol. 10, 63; Manhal, Vol. 11, 133-134.
government; thereafter, he kept this post throughout the long, sixteen years reign of Sultan Barsbāy. He achieved great political power. Many prominent figures such as amirs, bureaucrats, judges, intellectuals (mashāykh al-ʻilm), and merchants frequented his private residence (Sulūk, Vol. 4, 1170). Barsbāy often entrusted him with special tasks, such as the supervision of the construction of the Ashrafiyah madrasah, which was founded by the sultan in Bayna al-Qaṣrayn in the central part of Cairo;\(^4\) the construction of the city wall of Alep;\(^5\) and the management of affairs in Mecca and Medina. He also had a major voice in Barsbāy’s financial policy. On 22 Ṣafar 838/27 September 1434, Sultan Barsbāy appointed ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ’s mamlūk and dawādār (executive secretary), Jānibak, to the office of ustādār al-ʻāliyah, head of al-Dīwān al-Mufrad, a financial bureau responsible for the distribution of stipends among the sultanic mamlūks;\(^6\) in effect, the actual management of the dīwān was assigned to ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ (Nujūm, Vol. 15, 51-52; Inbā’ al-Ghumr, Vol. 3, 537). Subsequently, on 8 Shawwāl 839/25 April 1436, the sultan put ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ in charge of the general management of the Dīwān al-Wizārah (the vizier’s bureau or the financial bureau), including the power to appoint the vizier, the head of the dīwān, and the staff (Nujūm, Vol. 15, 77-78; ‘Iqd\(^2\), 473). Thus, he assumed the heavy duty of operating the two important financial dīwāns of the government, both of which were in acute financial difficulties at this time (Igarashi 2006).

Although ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ kept his influence and position under Sultan al-‘Azīz Yūsuf ibn Barsbāy, who succeeded his late father Barsbāy in 841/1438, his fortunes underwent a rapid deterioration with the dethronement of al-‘Azīz Yūsuf and al-Ẓāhir Jaqmaq’s accession to the sultanate in 842/1438. As soon as Jaqmaq suppressed the rebellion of the viceroy of Alep, Taghrībirmish, who rejected the new sultan’s enthronement and rose against him, Jaqmaq suddenly stripped ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ of all his offices and placed him, his son and wife, his mamlūk Jānibak, and a large number of his attendants under arrest. After the confiscation of his property, ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ and his family and attendants were banished from Cairo to Mecca. They left Cairo on 15 Rabi‘ al-Thānī 843/25 September 1439 (Sulūk, Vol. 4, 1170; Nujūm, Vol. 15, 334-335; ‘Iqd\(^2\), 547).\(^7\) In this abrupt way, ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ’s public career came to an end. In the next year, he received the sultan’s permission to move to Damascus with the Syrian ḥajj caravan. Although he had abandoned his desire for rehabilitation (Tibr, 330), he wished to return to Cairo. By sending lavish gifts to the sultan, his desire was fulfilled. After a short stay of a few days in Cairo in 847/1443 (Nujūm, Vol. 15, 357; Tibr, 66-67; ‘Iqd\(^2\), 599-600; Nuzhah, Vol. 4, 275-276), he was permitted to reside there in 848/1445 (Nujūm, Vol. 15, 367; Tibr, 101; ‘Iqd\(^2\), 630-631; Nuzhah, Vol. 4, 310-311). He lived unobtrusively in the dwelling where he had resided during his golden age, until his death on 4 Shawwāl 854/10 November 1451.

It must be noted that ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ was not a religious intellectual but a technocrat. The “Men of the Pen” (arbāb al-aqlām) — civilian officeholders in Mamlūk Egypt and Syria — fell into two categories. They were either “bureau officials” (arbāb al-wazā’if al-dīwānīyah) who served in governmental bureaus and engaged in clerical and financial work, such as the vizier, the kātib

\(^4\) ‘Iqd\(^2\), 202. The inscription band on the façade of the Ashrafiyah madrasah names ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ as the supervisor of the construction (Behrens-Abouseif 2007, 252).

\(^5\) Al-Durr al-Muntakhab, fols. 86v-87r; ‘Iqd\(^2\), 315; Nujūm, Vol. 14, 309.

\(^6\) On al-Dīwān al-Mufrad and its importance in the Mamlūk history, see Igarashi 2006.

\(^7\) On the downfall of ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ and his banishment, see Nujūm, Vol. 15, 327-331, 333-335; Daw’, Vol. 4, 25.
al-sirr, and the nāzirs of the dīwāns (for example, nāzir al-jaysh, nāzir al-khāṣṣ, and nāzir al-dawlah), or “religious officials” (arbāb al-waẓā’if al-dīnīyah) who were involved in judiciary and education, such as chief judges, deputy judges, teachers, and controllers of religious institutions and their endowments. However, the division between the two categories was not strict. Although civilians, in general, specialized in and built up their careers in one of the two categories, more than a few broke boundaries and pursued careers in both of them. Abd al-Bāsiṭ was classified among the former type. In addition, he was not from an elite, intellectual family that produced bureaucrats and religious officials. Without familial backing, he advanced from the post of minor secretary to become one of the greater eminences of the government; he succeeded in retaining his official status for a long period of time not only because of his bureaucratic competence but also because of his personal contacts with the sultans and other important figures, his practice of offering presents and bribes to them, and his occasional currying of favor with his political rivals.

His close relationship with Kamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn al-Bārizī (796-856/1394-1452), the son of Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn al-Bārizī (the kātib al-sirr of Sultan Shaykh), was very important. After his father’s death, Kamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn al-Bārizī successively filled the posts of the kātib al-sirr and nāzir al-jaysh of Egypt, the kātib al-sirr of Damascus, and the chief Shāfiʻī judge of Damascus. He then established his position in the central government under Sultan Jaqmaq and kept the office of kātib al-sirr for fourteen years (842-856/1438-1452) (Martel-Thoumian 1992, 251-252). When Sultan Jaqmaq removed ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ from his offices and sought to confiscate his property, Kamāl al-Dīn ibn al-Bārizī interceded with the sultan for leniency. As a result of his intersession and with the help of his sister Mughul, who was a wife of Sultan Jaqmaq, ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ was spared harsh treatment such as torture, the amount of confiscated money was reduced from 1,000,000 to 250,000 dīnārs, and he was banished with honor to Mecca (note 7).

‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ built up a colossal fortune during his service for seven sultans, beginning to amass it even when he was nāzir al-khizānah, a relatively low-ranking office. Although his property was confiscated when he fell from power, his retention of considerable wealth is clear

8 Petry 1981, chap. 4, especially 203-205; Martel-Thoumian 1992, 373-382. Kamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn al-Bārizī whose career will be mentioned later is an example of an intellectual who built up his career in both categories.
9 Some scholars are mistaken in thinking that ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ was from the religious elite on the basis of the fact that his name is usually referred to in sources as al-Qāḍī Zayn al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ, since the title “al-Qāḍī” usually meant “judge” (for example, Fernandes 1997, 116). However, his career shows that he did not have the education and experience to be a judge. The “al-Qāḍī” should be regarded as a title generally bestowed on the high-ranking civilians of the government (Bāshā 1989, 424).
10 For example, Martel-Thoumian deals with ten important families that produced civilian officials for generations (Martel-Thoumian 1992, 183-325).
11 The sources reveal his closeness with important figures, including military men, bureaucrats, and religious officials, such as al-Nāṣirī Muḥammad, the son of Sultan Barsbāy (Sulāk, Vol. 4, 1170); the chief Shāfiʻī judge Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī; the nāzir al-khāṣṣ Jamāl al-Dīn Yūsuf ibn Kātib Jakam (Daw’, Vol. 4, 26); Muḥibb al-Dīn ibn al-Ashqar, the successor of ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ as nāzir al-jaysh (Nuzhah, Vol. 4, 122; Nujūm, Vol. 15, 327-328); the naqīb al-jaysh Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Razzāq ibn Ḥabīb al-Ṣawā, the head of the Manjak family, an important Damascene military family and the father of the husband of ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ’s daughter (Nujūm, Vol. 15, 357; Dāris, Vol. 2, 142).
12 On ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ’s struggle against his political enemies, such as Jānibak al-Ashtāfī, Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Muzhir, and Jawhar al-Qunuqbay, see Manhal, Vol. 7, 139-140; Nujūm, Vol. 15, 553.
from the expensive gifts that he presented to Sultan Jaqmaq in 847/1443 and 848/1445.

Although views on his personality and achievements widely differ, he was praised for his large-scale charitable works and almsgiving. His architectural patronage throughout Egypt, Syria, and Hijaz was remarkable: he founded six religious/educational institutions in Cairo, Jerusalem, Damascus, Gaza, Mecca, and Medina, all of which were named “al-Bāsiṭīyah” after the founder’s name, in addition to a mausoleum (turbah) in the Shaḥrā’ area of Cairo (DW, 13/84) and two sabīls (public fountains) in Mecca (Itḥāf, Vol. 3, 537; Shifā’, Vol. 1, 338; WA, j189) and Medina (Wajīz, 1177; WA, j189). To the best of my knowledge, he was the civilian who established the largest number of religious/educational institutions of the Mamlūk period. Whatever his motivation for such large-scale charitable works, there is no doubt that his gigantic fortune made them possible.

The natures of the six religious/educational institutions that he founded are ambiguous. Although generally labeled madrasahs in sources, they were sometimes referred to as khānqāhs or masjids (mosques). However, as Berkey points out, clear functional distinctions between madrasahs and khānqāhs broke down in the fifteenth century. Many institutions established in the period combined the functions of madrasah (instruction in Islamic law) and khānqāh (support of the performance of ritual Sufi worship [ḥuḍūr]) and were designated sometimes by the former term and sometimes by the latter. Moreover, in many institutions, law students were required to be Sufis, and the teacher of jurisprudence (fiqh) was both a shaykh al-taṣawwuf and responsible for leading the Sufi exercises (Berkey 1992, 56-60; Fernandes 1988, 33, 50). We have no hard evidence to support the existence of teachers of jurisprudence and students of jurisprudence in the institutions founded by ʻAbd al-Bāsiṭ, except the Meccan Bāsiṭīyah, which will be discussed below. In contrast, the sources make it clear that each of the institutions had Sufis and a shaykh. It is thus reasonable to suppose that the shaykhs of his institutions served concurrently as teachers of jurisprudence and that Sufis functioned concurrently as students of jurisprudence, according to the custom of the madrasah-khānqāhs of the period.

Let us now consider the careers of the staff, especially the shaykhs of the five madrasahs established by ʻAbd al-Bāsiṭ, and the reasons for their selection. We will not, however, consider here his madrasah in Gaza, since the sources contain no information on it, not even its construction date, except that it was located outside the city wall at al-Shajāʻīyah area (Sadek 1991, 325).

III. Cairene Bāsiṭīyah

In 822/1419, when he was still at the office of the nāẓir al-khizānah, ʻAbd al-Bāsiṭ started to construct his first madrasah in front of his new house in the Khuṭṭ al-Kāfūrī area of Cairo, which he had purchased in the preceding year. With the construction of this memorial building, which

14 For example, the funerary complex of Sultan al-Mu’ayyad Shaykh (known as al-Jāmi’ al-Mu‘ayyadi or as al-Madrasah al-Mu‘ayyadiyyah), which was established at almost the same time as the Cairene Bāsiṭīyah, also combined these two functions in the same people: the Sufis and students of jurisprudence of four Sunni schools were identical, and the Ḥanafi professor was concurrently the shaykh of the Sufis (WA, q938; ‘Abd al-ʻAlīm 2003, 138-141).
16 This house was originally known “Dār Tankiz (The palace of Tankiz)” and was part of the endowed property as a waqf (religious trust) of the Baḥrī Mamlūk amir Tankiz (Khiṭaṭ, Vol. 3, 179).
was contiguous to his private house — the customary practice of amirs and the civilian elite who erected religious monuments — he probably intended to ingratiate himself into the neighborhood and earn prestige and authority there (Behrens-Abouseif 2007, 16-17). This madrasah functioned as a Friday mosque (jāmi‘), providing for the recitation of a khutbah (sermon) during congregational prayers; however, opinion is divided on the date in which the first Friday prayer was held at the institution. According to al-Maqrīzī, it was on 2 Ṣafar 823/28 February 1420 (Khiṭaṭ, Vol. 4, 354). On the other hand, Ibn Ḥajar claims that the recitation of a khutbah was permitted by the sultan in Jumādá al-Ākhirah of 823/June-July 1420 and that the first khaṭīb took place on 1 Rajab/12 July of the same year (Inbā‘ al-Ghumr, Vol. 3, 226). Detailed information on the institution, such as subjects taught, teaching staff, and other regulations, are unknown because of the lack of the waqf deeds. However, according to al-Maqrīzī, Sufis (fuqarā‘) and their shaykh (shaykh al-taṣawwuf) were employed and were supplied with daily meals and monthly salaries from the institution’s waqfs (Khiṭaṭ, Vol. 4, 354). Al-Maqrīzī reports that the institution included dwellings for the Sufis, but no architectural indication exists for them (Behrens-Abouseif 2007, 247-249). The first Sufi group exercise (ḥaḍrah) was performed on 1 Rajab 823/12 July 1420 (Khiṭaṭ, Vol. 4, 354). We cannot find in the sources any clear descriptions that the institution held classes in jurisprudence; however, judging from the fact that the successive shaykh of the institution were all scholars of the Shāfi‘ī school, it is reasonable to suppose that they served concurrently as teachers of Shāfi‘ī jurisprudence and that Sufis were their students, as in other fifteenth-century madrasah-khānqāhs. Although it is not clear if the institution held classes in other subjects or not, the fact that a Hanafi scholar taught in a later period17 may indicate at least a class in Ḥanafī jurisprudence (or other subject, such as Hadith). The building of the institution included a sabīl-kuttāb, a multistory structure containing a public fountain and a primary school. Ibn Iyās reports that ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ built a ribāṭ (hospice) for women, foreigners (ghurabā‘), and Sufis behind the madrasah (Badā‘i‘, Vol. 2, 59; Fernandes 1997, 116); however, to the best of my knowledge, no descriptions of the ribāṭ are contained in other sources.

When ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ established the institution, he appointed ‘Izz al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Salām ibn Dāwūd al-Qudsī (771 or 772-850/1369-70 or 1370-71-1446)18 as the first shaykh al-taṣawwuf (Khiṭaṭ, Vol. 4, 354). ‘Izz al-Dīn al-Qudsī was a well-known religious intellectual who taught Hadith at the Jamāliyah madrasah and jurisprudence of the Shāfi‘ī school at the Kharrūbīyah madrasah and was one of the prominent Shāfi‘ī deputy-judges in Egypt. Beyond the academic circle of the ‘ulamā‘, he formed intimate relationships with the elite of the Mamlūk government, such as Fatḥ al-Dīn Fatḥ Allāh, the kātib al-sirr under the Sultan Faraj, and Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn al-Bārizī, the kātib al-sirr at that time. When Sultan Shaykh established his funerary complex, which included a Friday mosque and a madrasah for four Sunni madhabs (the complex was known as al-Jāmi‘ al-Mu‘ayyadī or al-Madrasah al-Mu‘ayyadīyah) by the Zuwaylah Gate of Cairo in 822/1419, he stipulated that his kātib al-sirr Nāṣir al-Dīn ibn al-Bārizī would assume the posts of khaṭīb and khāzin al-kutub (librarian) of the institution and that his

---

17 The Ḥanafī scholar Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Amshāṭī (d. 885/1480) filled the posts of mudarris of jurisprudence and Hadith and of shaykh al-taṣawwuf at various madrasas, including the Bāṣītīyah (Ḍaw‘, Vol. 6, 301-304).

18 On his biography, see Ḍaw‘, Vol. 4, 203-206; Tibr, 153-156; Wajīz, 609.
descendants would succeed him (WA, q938; ‘Abd al-‘Ālim 2003, 144). When Nāṣir al-Dīn ibn al-Bārizī and, subsequently, his son Kamāl al-Dīn actually filled the positions, ‘Izz al-Dīn al-Qudsī served as the deputy of the khaṭīb, probably because of his friendly relationships with them. Although he resigned as the shaykh of the Cairene Bāsiṭīyah in 831/1428, when he became the shaykh of the Ṣalāḥīyah madrasah in Jerusalem with the support of Badr al-Dīn ibn Muzhir, the kātib al-sirr at that time, ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ afforded him financial assistance and continued to treat him handsomely (Daw’, Vol. 4, 205).

After ‘Izz al-Dīn al-Qudsī’s resignation, ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ appointed Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Adhra‘ī al-Shāfiʻī (d. 851/1447)19 as the shaykh of the Cairene Bāsiṭīyah. Al-Adhra‘ī was an ‘ālim, originally from Damascus, where he gained knowledge (‘ilm) and learned tasawwuf. When he was the imām of the Umayyad mosque, the then viceroy of the Damascus Shaykh, the future sultan Mu’ayyad Shaykh, heard his recital of the Qur’ān and appointed him as his private imām. He became Sultan Shaykh’s close companion (nādīm). Sultan Shaykh chose him as the imām of his funerary complex in Cairo and granted him permission to cede the post to his descendants. He was also an intimate friend of al-Nāṣir al-Dīn ibn al-Bārizī and his son Kamāl al-Dīn, and he went on a hajj pilgrimage with the later. Al-Adhra‘ī became close to ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ, accorded him the respect that none of his close companions (nudamā’) could gain, and thus appointed him as the shaykh of his institution (Tibr, 188). He served in this capacity at the Cairene Bāsiṭīyah for twenty years, until his death in 851/1447 at the age of seventy-three.

After al-Adhra‘ī’s death, Sirāj al-Dīn ‘Umar ibn Ḥusayn ibn al-‘Ibādī al-Azharī al-Shāfiʻī (804-885/1401-02-1480)20 became shaykh in 851/1447, when ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ went into retirement. Born in a village in al-Gharbīyah in Egypt, this distinguished ‘ālim was learned in various branches of knowledge and served in religious and educational offices, holding various positions including that of imām at the Jamālīyah madrasah, mudarris of jurisprudence at the Barqūqīyah and the Qarāsunqurīyah madrasahs, shaykh of the Khānqāh of Sa`īd al-Su`adā’, and nāẓir al-aḥbās and shaykh of the Cairene Bāsiṭīyah. Given his fame as a distinguished ‘ālim, he became the shaykh al-shāfiʻīyah without any objection. He kept his post at the Cairene Bāsiṭīyah until his death in 885/1480; his children succeeded him in various offices, including that of shyakh of the Bāsiṭīyah.

When still a relatively low-ranking official, ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ thus selected a distinguished scholar to whom he was not personally close as the first shyakh of his new institution, probably to burnish its reputation. Furthermore, it seems reasonable to suppose that through the appointment of a notable who enjoyed an intimate relationship with Nāṣir al-Dīn ibn al-Bārizī, ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ tried to form a connection with the latter, the most prominent bureaucrat at that time. His selection of the second shyakh shows, in comparison, that ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ, now firmly established in the Mamlūk government, placed greater importance on intimacy rather than fame. It also seems that his intimate ties with the Bārizīs were also an important factor behind this nomination. The third shyakh, who assumed the post when ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ had already retired into private life, was an eminent scholar and a holder of many religious and educational offices; however, there is no indication that he had a connection with the founder.

19 On his biography, see Daw’, Vol. 1, 276; Tibr, 188-189; Wajīz, 616-617.
20 On his biography, see Daw’, Vol. 6, 81-83; Wajīz, 908.
The Cairene Bāsiṭiyah hosted a khaṭīb because it functioned as Friday mosque. Although the first shaykh ‘Izz al-Dīn al-Qudsī initially also exercised this function (Inbā’ al-Ghumr, Vol. 3, 226), an independent khaṭīb was installed soon afterward. According to al-Maqrīzī, the first khaṭīb was Fatḥ al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Naqqāsh, one of the notary publics (shuhūd al-bawānīt) and documentary clerks to judges (muwaqqiʿī al-quḍāt) (Khiṭaṭ, Vol. 4, 354); however, there is no more detailed information about him. We can find in Ibn Ḥajar’s Inbā’ al-Ghumr another person who served as the khaṭīb of the institution, Fatḥ al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Mālikī ibn al-Naʻās, a legal documentary clerk (muwaqqiʿ al-ḥukm), who was known for the beauty of his writing and his copious knowledge of documents. It was ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ who arranged a fine funeral when Ibn al-Naʻās died in 837/1433-4 and who invited prominent figures, such as the Ḥanbalī chief-judge to it (Inbā’ al-Ghumr, Vol. 3, 528). This episode indicates ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ’s favors to him. Both men were of clerical and not scholarly backgrounds, similar to that of ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ himself.\footnote{21}

### IV. Jerusalemite Bāsiṭiyah

In Jerusalem, the third-holiest city in Islam, ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ founded a madrasah-khānqāh at the northern border of the Ḥaram, above the north portico in front of the Dawādārīyah khānqāh, and established waqfs for it in Junmādā al-Ūlā 834/January-February 1431. Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh al-Rāzī al-Harawī, who was one of the prominent ‘ulamā’ in Jerusalem and rose to the office of chief Shāfiʿī judge of Cairo, started to build a madrasah at the place; but he died on 19 Dhū al-Ḥijjah 829/22 October 1426 before its completion, and the institution was left unfinished. ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ took over his project, completed its construction, and endowed the institution with assets as a waqf.\footnote{23} The madrasah-khānqāh came to be known as Bāsiṭiyah, a derivative of ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ’s name; al-Harawī’s body was buried there, and ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ stipulated that at the end of their group exercise (ḥuḍūr), the Sufis of the institution would recite the Fātiḥah for the merit (thawāb) that al-Harawī would receive (Uns, Vol. 2, 39, 112). This institution also included a sabīl-kuttāb for orphans; according to the waqf deed recorded in the Ottoman Taḥrīr register No. 522, it housed ten orphans and a mu’addib (primary school teacher), who taught the Qur’ān and Arabic writing (khaṭṭ ʻarabī). Ten dirhams per capita were supplied to the orphans, and fifty dirhams were supplied to the mu’addib as a monthly salary. An additional thirty dirhams per capita were supplied to the orphans as a clothing allowance on the occasion of ʻĪd al-Fitr. The pay of a water-career (saqqā’) and his equipment was also distributed from the waqf income (Taḥrīr, 38, 178; Burgoyne 1987, 521).

With the opening of the Jerusalemite Bāsiṭiyah, ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ appointed Shams al-Dīn Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn al-Khiḍr ibn Sulaymān ibn Dāwūd al-Ḥalabī al-Shāfiʿī (768-841/1366-67-1437-38), known as Ibn al-Miṣrī, as its shaykh.\footnote{24} Ibn al-Miṣrī was a nephew of

---

\footnote{21} Because the Arabic letters of the two khaṭībs’ nisbahs (surnames) (al-Naqqāsh and al-Naʻās) are alike, it is possible that al-Maqrīzī or Ibn Ḥajar miswrote the nisbah. If so, judging from the fact that the name (ism) of the second khaṭīb’s father, Aḥmad, coincides with the first khaṭīb’s name, it may be that we are dealing here with a father and son.

\footnote{22} For detailed information about the institution, see Burgoyne 1987, 519-525; ‘Abd al-Mahdī 1981, Vol. 2, 112-118.

\footnote{23} According to Taḥrīr, the three-quarter of the village of ʻĪr Bāḥir in the district of Jerusalem was endowed as a waqf for the Jerusalemite Bāsiṭiyah (Taḥrīr, 38, 178; Burgoyne 1987, 521).
a cultured man (adīb), al-Ra‘īs Sulaymān ibn Dāwūd, and was originally from Alep, where he was educated and worked first as a notary public (shāhid) and then as a documentary clerk (muwaqqiqī). He escaped the disaster of Timur’s invasion and fled to Cairo. In the city, he worked initially under Jamāl al-Dīn al-Ustādār, who was a prominent military-financier under Sultan Faraj, as his private muwaqqiqī. He was subsequently employed at the dīwān al-inshā‘ (the bureau of documents) as muwaqqiqī al-dast (scribe of the royal bench in the palace of justice) and as the private muwaqqiqī of ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ, a position also held by his son Muḥammad (Ḍaw’, Vol. 9, 79-80). He went to Jerusalem to function as the shaykh of the Bāsiṭīyah and remained in that office until his death in Rajab 841/December 1437-January 1438.

After Ibn al-Miṣrī’s death, ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ appointed Sharaf al-Dīn Yaḥyá ibn Aḥmad al-Ḥamawī al-Qāhirī al-Shāfī‘ī (789-853/1387-1450), known as Ibn al-‘Aṭṭār,25 as the second shaykh. Ibn al-‘Aṭṭār went to Jerusalem in Ramaḍān 841/February-March 1438. He was a well-known, cultured man (adīb), and according to al-Suyūṭī, one of the very best poets of the day (shu‘arā‘ al-ʻaṣr) (Naẓm, 176). His family was originally from Hama in Syria. His father Aḥmad was a military man who worked as mihmandār and served several amirs as their private ustādār. He was engaged by the viceroy of Hama Ma‘mūr al-Qalamṭāy as his private ustādār and moved to Karak, when Ma‘mūr was installed as its viceroy. Yaḥyá was born there in 789/1387. Aḥmad came to serve Sultan al-Zāhir Barqūq during his confinement in Karak, but he died in 792/1389-90, just before Barqūq’s restoration to the sultanate. After Aḥmad’s death, his son Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad, the elder brother of Yaḥyá, went to Cairo and met Sultan Barqūq. Barqūq saw his deceased father’s face in Muḥammad and granted him rizqahs in Hama and then the office of ḥājib (chamberlain) in Hama (Ḍaw’, Vol. 7, 32). Yaḥyá was educated in Cairo, where he studied Arabic and jurisprudence. As his father and brother, Yaḥyá was also brought up as a military man. However, because his military service did not go well, he became a civilian and started to work as muwaqqiqī al-dast.

It is worth pointing out that there was a deep feeling of fellowship between the ‘Aṭṭār and Bārizī families, both of which were from Hama. Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn al-‘Aṭṭār’s two daughters, Fāṭimah (Ḍaw’, Vol. 12, 100) and Sārah (Ḍaw’, Vol. 12, 52), were married to Nāṣir al-Dīn ibn al-Bārizī’s two sons, Kamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad and Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad. Yaḥyá ibn al-‘Aṭṭār was treated with as much respect as Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Bārizī’s sons (Ḍaw’, Vol. 10, 217). Yaḥyá’s brother Muḥammad was appointed to the viceroyship of Alexandria by Sultan al-Mu‘ayyad Shaykh through the recommendation of Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Bārizī (Ḍaw’, Vol. 7, 32). It is likely that Yaḥyá also assumed the office of muwaqqiqī al-dast with the support of Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Bārizī, who was the kātib al-sirr, that is, the head of the bureau of documents. When Ibn al-Miṣrī went to Jerusalem, Yaḥyá ibn al-‘Aṭṭār came to serve ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ as his private muwaqqiqī in place of Ibn al-Miṣrī. Thereafter, Yaḥyá ibn al-‘Aṭṭār resigned the office of muwaqqiqī, but he kept an intimate relationship with ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ as his close companion (nadīm).26 Although Yaḥyá ibn al-‘Aṭṭār assumed the office of the shaykh of the Jerusalemite Bāsiṭīyah in 841/1438,

---

26 In addition, Yaḥyá’s nephew Aḥmad ibn al-‘Aṭṭār became a private dawādār of the Amir Timurbāy al-Timurbūghāwī through the recommendation of ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ (Ḍaw’, Vol. 2, 83).
he later resigned it. Although it is clear that he was at the position until Jumādá al-Ākhirah 842/November-December 1438, the date of his resignation is unknown; thus, it is an open question if he resigned before ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ’s downfall at the end of the year or after it.

When he resigned the office of the shaykh, Yaḥyá ibn al-‘Aṭṭār recommended Taqī al-Dīn Abū Bakr ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Qalqashandī (783-867/1382-1463) to ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ as his successor (Uns, Vol. 2, 189; Daw’, Vol. 10, 218). Taqī al-Dīn al-Qalqashandī was a well-known Jerusalemite Shāfi‘ī scholar who studied Arabic, the law of succession (farā‘īd), and arithmetic (hisāb), taught at the Tārimīyah (Tāziyah?) madrasah in 827/1423-24, and served as a deputy of the shaykh of the Ṣalāḥīyah madrasah, ‘Izz al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Salām al-Qudsī, who was the ex-shaykh of the Cairene Bāṣīṭīyah. Although he assumed the office of the shaykh of the Jerusalemite Bāṣīṭīyah through the recommendation of Ibn al-‘Aṭṭār, he seemed to have a connection with ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ before his assumption to the office, since al-Sakhāwī states that he established his leading position (riyāsah) in Jerusalem under the reign of Sultan Barsbāy, who died in 841/1438, and that through the intermediation of ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ, the sultan sent a khil‘ah (robe of honor) and other gifts to him every year (Ḍaw’, Vol. 11, 71). He seemed to have kept his position as the shaykh of the Bāṣīṭīyah until his death in 867/1463.

V. Damascene Bāṣīṭīyah

In Damascus, his hometown, ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ reconstructed his house at al-Jisr al-Abyaḍ in the Ṣāliḥīyah quarter, the northern suburb of Damascus, as a madrasah-khānqāh and endowed it as a waqf in 836/1432-33. According to al-Nu‘aymī, when Sultan al-Ashraf Barsbāy and his army stopped at Damascus en route to Āmid for an expedition against Aqquyunlu, ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ, who was accompanying the sultan (‘Iqd, 430), feared that the soldiers would stay at his house, so he set up a miḥrāb inside the house and endowed it as a waqf (Ḍāris, Vol. 2, 142). This institution had an unknown number of Sufis and their shaykh. This institution also functioned as sabīl-kuttāb. The building included a dwelling (qā‘ah) for the shaykh, toilet, lodgings, a stone basin (jurn) to provide water for the public, two drinking troughs (ḥawḍ), and a courtyard (ṣaḥn) with a pond (birkah). The primary school for orphans was on the second floor of the building (Qalā‘īd, 277-278).

The first shaykh of the Damascene Bāṣīṭīyah was Burhān al-Dīn Ibrāhīm ibn Ahmad al-Bā‘ūnī (777-870/1376-1465). Al-Sakhāwī reports that when ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ visited Damascus (probably he was in attendance upon Sultan Barsbāy, who was leading the expedition against Aqquyunlu), Ibrāhīm al-Bā‘ūnī called on him at his house at al-Jisr al-Abyaḍ in the Ṣāliḥīyah quarter. He was profoundly impressed with the building. When he said goodbye and went to the gate, some of the followers of ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ were waiting to him. They told him their master’s plan to reconstruct this house as a madrasah and to appoint him as its shaykh (Ḍaw’, Vol. 1, 27). The Bā‘ūnī family had a scholarly reputation in Damascus. Ibrāhīm al-Bā‘ūnī’s father Ahmad worked as the chief Shāfi‘ī judge of Damascus for about three years (793-796/1391-94) under Sultan Baqrūq and for four months under Sultan Faraj in 812/1409. He was then

27 On his biography, see Daw’, Vol. 11, 69-71; Uns, Vol. 2, 188-190; Nazm, 96; Wajīz, 754.
28 On the institution, see Dāris, Vol. 2, 141-143; Qalā‘īd, 274-278.
29 On his biography, see Daw’, Vol. 1, 26-29; Nazm, 13-15.
chief Shafi‘i judge of Cairo for a while under Sultan Faraj (Qudat Dimashq, 122-124). Jamāl al-Dīn Yusuf, Aḥmad’s son and Ibrāhīm’s younger brother, was, consecutively, the secretary of Safad in 828/1424-25, the chief Shafi‘i judge of Safad (830-836/1426-1432), the Shafi‘i deputy-judge of Damascus, the kātib al-sirr and the chief Shafi‘i judge of Safad (appointed in 839/1435), the chief Shafi‘i judge of Tripoli, the chief Shafi‘i judge of Alep, and finally the chief Shafi‘i judge of Damascus in 847/1443. He filled this last position six times during the periods 847/1443 and 870/1465 (Qudat Dimashq, 172-174). As for Ibrāhīm, he served as a deputy-judge of his father, when the latter was appointed the chief-judge in 812/1409. He was employed as a deputy of his father’s offices, such as khaṭīb of the Umayyad mosque and shaykh al-shuyūkh of the Sumaysāṭīyah khānqāh. Although he filled the office of the khaṭīb of the Umayyad mosque, he, unlike his father and brother, seems to have retained a distance from the governmental post, as is evident from his rejection of the post of the chief Shafi‘i judge of Damascus (Daw’, Vol. 1, 26). Rather, he was well-known for his high culture (adab) and the fact that “he became the shaykh al-adab of the Syrian provinces without any objection” (Daw’, Vol. 1, 29). Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Bā‘ūnī (780?-871/1378-79?-1467), another brother of Ibrāhīm and Yusuf, was one of the poets who wrote verse praising ʻAbd al-Bāsiṭ; his adulatory poem of ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ in the rajaz (arjūzah) meter was well-known (Ḍaw’, Vol. 4, 26). Although it is not clear whether his brother’s flattery played a part in Ibrāhīm’s appointment as the shaykh, we can be sure that his selection deepened the friendly relationship between Bā‘ūnīs and ʻAbd al-Bāsiṭ. Ibrāhīm kept his position until he died in 870/1465 in his dwelling at the Bāsiṭīyah. ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ had already passed away.

VI. Meccan Bāsiṭiyah

‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ made his ḥajj pilgrimage to Mecca a total of five times: once in 817/1415 under the reign of Shaykh; twice in 826/1423 and 834/1431 under the reign of Barsbāy; once in 843/1440, at the time when he stayed in Mecca in banishment; and once in 853/1449-50, the year before his death during the reign of Jaqmaq. Each time when he visited Hijaz for the ḥajj pilgrimage, he performed generous charitable works, such as almsgiving (ṣadaqah), and distributed architectural patronage in the region, including Mecca and Medina, the two holy cities in Islam. It must be noted that in addition to his religious piety, his official involvement in the Mamlūk ruling policy toward Hijaz motivated him to perform these activities. When he was appointed as nāẓir al-kiswah in 818/1415-16, he was in charge of providing kiswah to the Ka‘bah every year, an important function that announced who was the Guardian of the two Holy Cities, until his downfall. Moreover, he was entrusted by Sultan Barsbāy, who tried to establish direct political

---

30 On the madrasah, see Mortel 1997, 246-247.
32 When the funds for the Kiswah were exhausted during the reign of Sultan al-Mu‘ayyad Shaykh because of the ruin of the Baysūs village in the district of Dāwāḥi al-Qāhirah that was an endowed waqf for it, Sultan Shaykh entrusted ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ with the task of the Kiswah. ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ managed the task well (Daw’, Vol. 4, 26; Sulūk, Vol. 4, 382; ‘Iqd’, 303). Although he was removed from the post once when he became the nāẓir al-jaysh in 824/1421 (Itḥāf al-Ghumr, Vol. 3, 250), it is clear that he was reappointed to it, since Sultan Jaqmaq appointed Wālī al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Saffī to the office of nāẓir al-kiswah instead of ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ in Muḥarram 843/June 1439 (Nujūm, Vol. 15, 328-329; ‘Iqd’, 535; Sulūk, Vol. 4, 1155).
control over Hijaz, with the conduct of Meccan affairs and the promotion of the welfare (maṣāliḥ) of Meccan society (Iḥāf, Vol. 3, 596).

When he was at Mecca for his third pilgrimage in 834/1431, ʻAbd al-Bāsiṭ purchased a house in the northern area of the ʻArafa. This house was originally a madrasah founded by the ʻAlawī Mamlūk Amir Arghūn Shāh al-Nāṣirī c. 720/1320-21; however, it was confiscated by the sons of Sharif Rājiḥ ibn Abū Numayy during the middle of the eighth/fourteenth century and was being used by them and their descendants as a residence. When he left Mecca to return to Cairo, ʻAbd al-Bāsiṭ ordered his ustādār Rukn al-Dīn ʻUmar al-Shāmī to remain in Mecca and to oversee the reconstruction of the house as a new madrasah for ʻAbd al-Bāsiṭ (Iḥāf, Vol. 4, 59). Rukn al-Dīn began its reconstruction in 835/1431 (Iḥāf, Vol. 4, 63-64). Because Mecca was the holiest city in Islam, not only the Mamlūks of Egypt but also rulers of various regions of the Islamic world, such as Yemen and India, established religious institutions in the city. However, it is curious that after the madrasah of Arghūn Shāh al-Nāṣirī, the Mamlūks founded no new ones (Mortel 1997). ʻAbd al-Bāsiṭ restarted large-scale religious-architectural patronage of the Mamlūks after a hundred year silence. It is likely that this construction project was linked closely with Sultan Barsbāy’s policy in Hijaz at that time, which sought to establish direct political control over the region. On the basis of the policy, ʻAbd al-Bāsiṭ appears to have established the madrasah principally to display the power of the Mamlūk sultanate and its suzerainty over Mecca. Jalāl al-Dīn Abū al-Saʻādāt Muḥammad ibn Ṭuhayrah (795-861/1393-1457) took the post of teacher (tadrīs) in the new madrasah and began to lecture (probably on Shāfiʻī jurisprudence) in Dhū al-Hijjah 835/August 1432 (Iḥāf, Vol. 4, 63-64). The construction of the building was completed in 836/1432 (Iḥāf, Vol. 4, 66). As in the other institutions founded by ʻAbd al-Bāsiṭ, we can be fairly certain that the teacher served concurrently as shaykh al-taṣawwuf and that the students were also Sufis, given the fact that resident Sufis were at the madrasah from its opening (al-Durr al-Kamīn, 483, 1207) and that shaykhs were appointed, as is indicated below.

Jalāl al-Dīn Abū al-Saʻādāt Muḥammad ibn Ṭuhayrah, the first shaykh/mudarris of the Meccan Bāsiṭīyah, was a Shāfiʻī scholar who attained a prominent position in academic circles in Mecca and came to be referred to as “the intellectual of Hijaz (ʻālim al-Ḥijāz)” (Ḍaw’, Vol. 9, 216; Nayl, Vol. 6, 13). He was a Ṭuhayrah, a prominent Meccan scholarly family that had produced some of the chief Shāfiʻī judges of the city, including his father Kamāl al-Dīn Abū al-Barakāt (Ḍaw’, Vol. 9, 77-78) and his relative Muḥibb al-Dīn Abū al-Fatḥ (Ḍaw’, Vol. 2, 134-135). When Muḥibb al-Dīn Abū al-Fatḥ died in 827/1424, Abū al-Saʻādāt was at Cairo. Through his appeal to the Cairene Mamlūk government, he was first appointed as the chief Shāfiʻī judge of Mecca in Jumādá al-Ūlā 827/April 1424; here turned to Mecca in Ramaḍān/July-August of that year. He kept his position until he was removed and Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ʻAlī al-Shībī assumed the position in Shaʻbān 830/May-June 1427. ʻAbd al-Bāsiṭ appointed him as the first

33 On Sultan Barsbāy’s policy toward Hijaz, see Meloy 2010, 113-139.
34 On the madrasah of Arghūn Shāh al-Nāṣirī, see Mortel 1997, 240-241.
35 In the same year as the establishment of the Meccan Bāsiṭīyah, Amir Khushqadam al-Zāhirī, the zimāmdār (chief eunuch) and the amīr al-ḥājj of the year, also founded a madrasah in Mecca (the Zimāmīyah madrasah) (Mortel 1997, 247-248). It is likely that he established his madrasah with the same political aim as ʻAbd al-Bāsiṭ.
shaykh/mudarris of the newly-established Bāsiṭiyah when Abū al-Sa‘ādāt had left government service. He continued in the office of shaykh for seven years, until he was removed from it when he was reinstalled as chief Shāfi‘ī judge of Mecca in 837/1433-34, since ‘Abd al-Bāsiţ had stipulated that the mudarris of the institution was not permitted to hold concurrently the office of judge (al-Durr al-Kamīn, 340).

We have no clear information in sources about the person who succeeded Abū al-Sa‘ādāt ibn Žuhayrah; however, it seems that Amîn al-Dīn Abū al-Yaman Muḥammad al-Nuwayrī (793-853/1391-1449), who, according to the al-Durr al-Kamīn, resigned as the shaykh of the Bāsiṭiyah in 842/1438-39 (al-Durr al-Kamīn, 1122), assumed this position. He was also of a Meccan scholarly family, and his father Jamāl al-Dīn Abū al-Khayr worked as the deputy-judge for his cousin, the chief Shāfi‘ī judge ‘Izz al-Dīn al-Nuwayrī, and then as the chief Shāfi‘ī judge of Medina (al-Durr al-Kamīn, 201-202). Abū al-Yaman al-Nuwayrī served as a deputy of the khaṭīb of al-Masjid al-Ḥarām and then acquired half of the post. He then replaced Jalâl al-Dīn Abū al-Sa‘ādāt ibn Žuhayrah (mentioned above) as the chief Shāfi‘ī judge of Mecca in 842/1438 (Ithāf, Vol. 4, 127-128); he held concurrently the post of judge of Jedda. Hereafter, he competed with Jalâl al-Dīn Abū al-Sa‘ādāt ibn Žuhayrah for the office of the chief Shāfi‘ī judge of Mecca until his death in 853/1449. It seems reasonable to suppose that when he became the chief Shāfi‘ī judge of Mecca in 842/1438, he left the position of the shaykh of the Meccan Bāsiṭiyah, in accordance with the stipulation mentioned above.

After al-Nuwayrī’s resignation, ‘Abd al-Bāsiţ appointed Sirāj al-Dīn ʻUmar al-Shībī (812-881/1409-10-1476), known as Ibn Abī Rājiḥ, as the third shaykh of the Meccan Bāsiṭiyah. The Shībī family inherited the office of custodian (sādin, ḥājib) of the Ka‘bah for generations (Ṭāsān 1990, 295), and Sirāj al-Dīn also assumed this position in 843/1439, after his brother Jamāl al-Dīn Yūsuf’s death. He was born in Adana, grew up in Mecca, and went to Egypt and Syria in 840/1436-37, where he was taught by prominent scholars.

It is, therefore, apparent that ‘Abd al-Bāsiţ appointed scholars from Meccan distinguished families. In other words, ‘Abd al-Bāsiţ, an influential, top-level official of the central government of the Mamlūk sultanate and responsible for Hijaz administration, backed local notables for the salaried position at the Mamlūk monumental institution that he himself established. The selection of Ibn Žuhayrah as the first shaykh with the stipulation forbidding the simultaneous retention of the office of chief-judge can be explained by his desire to support the fallen notable until his rehabilitation. At the same time, the fact that two shaykhs of the institution rose to the post of the chief Shāfi‘ī judge of Mecca, upon appointment by the Mamlūk sultan of Egypt, proves that ‘Abd al-Bāsiţ selected persons who possessed not only expert knowledge and familial reputation but also useful contacts with influential figures in the central government, all of which were required for becoming the chief judge. It is probable that their relationships with ‘Abd al-Bāsiţ as shaykhs of the Bāsiṭiyah helped them to become chief judges.

However, the background of the fourth shaykh was very different from that of his predecessors’. He was Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī al-Shawā‘iṭī (781-863/1379-1459),

38 On his biography, see al-Durr al-Kamīn, 1120-1122; Ḍaw’, Vol. 10, 332.
39 All of the three shaykhs, i.e. Ibn Žuhayrah, al-Nuwayrī, and al-Shībī had traveled to Egypt and Syria.
who succeeded ʻUmar al-Shībī as the *shaykh* of the Bāsiṭīyah in 854/1450-51, when the latter relinquished the office. Al-Shawāʾīṭī was a Sufi at the Bāsiṭīyah since its foundation in 835/1432. He served as deputy to the *shaykh* of ʻUmar al-Shībī for some time and then assumed his master’s office (*al-Durr al-Kamīn*, 483). In short, a twenty-year senior member of the institution rose to become the *shaykh*. ʻAbd al-Bāsiṭ passed away on 4 Shawwāl of the year/10 November 1450. Although it is unclear whether al-Shawāʾīṭī assumed the office before or after ʻAbd al-Bāsiṭ’s death, the founder, who had already lost his political power, seems to have lacked the energy or the motivation to be actively involved in the selection of a candidate as *shaykh*. It is likely that the appointment was decided by those concerned, and ʻAbd al-Bāsiṭ gave only official approval to al-Shawāʾīṭī.

VII. Medinan Bāsiṭīyah

When he arrived at Medina to visit the Prophet’s Mosque, prior to his *ḥajj* pilgrimage to Mecca in 853/1449, the last year before his death, ʻAbd al-Bāsiṭ founded a madrasah at a place contiguous to the Salām Gate (*Bāb al-Salām*), the west gate of the city. The first *shaykh* of the Medinan Bāsiṭīyah was al-Sayyid Zayn al-Dīn ʻAlī ibn Ibrāhīm al-ʻAjamī al-Juwyimī al-Shāfiʻī (ca. 785-860 or 862/1383-84-1455-56 or 1457-58). He was originally from a town in Shīrāz. He traveled widely, studying in such places as Shīrāz, Khurāsān, Mecca, and Jerusalem. Finally, he took up residence in Medina in about 840/1436-37, in accordance with the promise that he made to his brother, who died there. Although he was an erudite scholar, there is no evidence that he filled religious or educational offices, except the post of *shaykh* of the Medinan Bāsiṭīyah. Rather, he was engaged as *mukattib* (a teacher of the art of writing) and, according to al-Suyūṭī, “he became one of the best writers of the day” (*Naẓm*, 130). According to al-Sakhāwī, “it was said that the founder (*wāqif*: i.e. ʻAbd al-Bāsiṭ) built it (the Medinan Bāsiṭīyah) for the sake of him” (*Tuḥfah*, Vol. 2, 235). It is improbable that the two men knew each other by sight before the appointment or that ʻAbd al-Bāsiṭ selected him with the intention of utilizing the relationship for some political reason. Rather, it seems reasonable to suppose that out of respect for him, ʻAbd al-Bāsiṭ founded the institution for his new acquaintance, who had distanced himself from posts, wealth, and politics, as the last religious-charitable act of patronage of his life.

VIII. Conclusion

Our investigation shows the diversity of relationships of ʻAbd al-Bāsiṭ and the *shaykh*s of his madrasahs. When he was still in a relatively low position, ʻAbd al-Bāsiṭ selected a well-known ʻālim as *shaykh* of his Cairene institution in order to burnish its reputation. After his advancement, he appointed his favorites and private staff, some of whom had close ties with the Bārizī family, as the *shaykh*s of Cairene and Jerusalemite Bāsiṭīyahs. He thus engaged in patronage to reward people close to him and to strengthen his connections with the Bārizī family. It is important to note that in selecting the *shaykh*s, he seems to have preferred those, like himself, who were experienced in clerical work. In Mecca, on the other hand, he chose prominent

---

40 On his biography, see *al-Durr al-Kamīn*, 480-484; *Ḍaw’,* Vol. 2, 28-29.
42 On his biography, see *Tuḥfah*, Vol. 2, 235; *Ḍaw’,* Vol. 5, 158-159; *Naẓm*, 130.
scholars of local prominent families for political reasons. In Damascus, he also selected a well-known scholar of a local scholarly family as shaykh, but this selection was based on a private relationship with the family rather than politics. These facts indicate that ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ actively and strategically utilized his appointive power to the offices of his foundations. However, it is noteworthy that he restrained himself from abusing his rights. Although he took the initiative in the selection of the shaykhs, he never dismissed them on his own initiative; when an appointee died or resigned, he simply asserted his influence in the selection of his successor. Except in the case of the Medinan Bāsiṭīyah that he newly established for a specific person, he did not take the initiative in the selection of the shaykhs after his downfall. We may say that this power had fallen from the founder’s hand and passed to the interested ‘ulamā’.

*This work was supported by JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number 24720321.

References

[Sources/Abbreviations]


DW: Waqf deeds, Dār al-Wathā‘iq al-Qawmīyah, Cairo.


Sulūk: al-Maqrīzī, Kitāb al-Sulūk li-Ma‘rifat Dīvān al-Mulūk, ed. by Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Ziyādah et al., 4 vols., Cairo,
1939-73.


Tibr: al-Sakhāwī, Al-Tibr al-Masbūk fi Dhayl al-Sulūk, Cairo, n.d.


WA: Waqf deeds, Wizārat al-Awqāf, Cairo.


[Secondary Works]


Meloy, J. L. 2010: Imperial Power and Maritime Trade: Mecca and Cairo in the Later Middle Ages, Chicago.


