University of Groningen

Louis IX in Medieval Arabic Sources

El-Merheb, Mohamad

Published in:
al-Masaq. Islam and the Medieval Mediterranean

DOI:
[10.1080/09503110.2016.1243780](https://doi.org/10.1080/09503110.2016.1243780)

IMPORTANT NOTE: You are advised to consult the publisher's version (publisher's PDF) if you wish to cite from it. Please check the document version below.

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Publication date:
2016

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

El-Merheb, M. (2016). Louis IX in Medieval Arabic Sources: The Saint, the King, and the Sicilian Connection. *al-Masaq. Islam and the Medieval Mediterranean*, 28(3), 282-301.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09503110.2016.1243780>

Copyright

Other than for strictly personal use, it is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

The publication may also be distributed here under the terms of Article 25fa of the Dutch Copyright Act, indicated by the "Taverne" license. More information can be found on the University of Groningen website: <https://www.rug.nl/library/open-access/self-archiving-pure/taverne-amendment>.

Take-down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Downloaded from the University of Groningen/UMCG research database (Pure): <http://www.rug.nl/research/portal>. For technical reasons the number of authors shown on this cover page is limited to 10 maximum.

Louis IX in Medieval Arabic Sources: The Saint, the King, and the Sicilian Connection

Mohamad El Merheb

To cite this article: Mohamad El Merheb (2016) Louis IX in Medieval Arabic Sources: The Saint, the King, and the Sicilian Connection, *Al-Masāq*, 28:3, 282-301, DOI: [10.1080/09503110.2016.1243780](https://doi.org/10.1080/09503110.2016.1243780)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09503110.2016.1243780>

Published online: 25 Nov 2016.

Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)

Article views: 992

View related articles [↗](#)

View Crossmark data [↗](#)

Louis IX in Medieval Arabic Sources: The Saint, the King, and the Sicilian Connection

Mohamad El Merheb

ABSTRACT

This article examines the portrayal of Louis IX in medieval Arabic historiography to show the importance of cross-cultural Mediterranean interaction. It argues that the image of Louis was influenced by information originating from the Sicilian Hohenstaufen court and reports that Frederick II sent to Egypt. Arab historians connected to the courts of Frederick and Manfred disseminated a “Sicilian narrative” that shaped Louis’s portrayal in Arabic historiography. This argument on the importance of cross-cultural transfer in understanding Arabic historiography is buttressed by reports about the King, the Pope, and the Emperor that are traced back to the entourage of prominent Muslims closely linked to Sicily. Moreover, it is argued that Arab authors were aware of Louis’s proto-sanctity and pious reputation. This led to the infusion of medieval Arabic historiography with Western ideas about sacrosanctity. Finally, this research assesses how the portrayal of King Louis during his captivity was used in internal Muslim rivalries.

KEYWORDS

Historiography/Hagiography; General Louis IX, king of France; Arabs, people – historiography; Crusades – Louis IX to Egypt, Sicily (kingdom) – historiography; Egypt – historiography; Ibn Wāsil, historian; Ibn al-Khazraji, historian; Sa’d al-Dīn ibn Ḥamawīya, author; Friedrich II, Holy Roman emperor

Introduction

The study of the depiction of King Louis in Arabic historiography offers material for new approaches to the primary sources and to understanding cross-cultural influences in writing history. The army mustered by Louis IX (r. 1226–1270) during the Seventh Crusade was formidable and the campaign was the “best-organized crusade of all”;¹ it was well financed and meticulously prepared.² However, like most of the crusades, it received mediocre treatment from medieval Arabic historiography.³ One explanation is that Louis’s crusade was never considered a serious threat to Islam compared to, for instance, the sack of Baghdad by the Mongols in 1258. Arab historiography provides ample information, but this is mostly related to the fall of the Ayyūbids and the rise of the Mamlūks. This led to a conviction that “Arabic sources add little to our knowledge” of this Crusade.⁴ While this is indeed true to some extent, Louis’s portrayal in late Ayyūbid and in Mamlūk sources sheds light on the depth of the cross-Mediterranean ties and the influence they had on medieval Arabic historiography.

CONTACT Mohamed El Merheb ✉ 616882@soas.ac.uk ✉ SOAS, University of London, London, WC1H 0XG.

¹Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The Crusades: A History* (London: Continuum, 2005), p. 195.

²Jean Richard, *Saint Louis: Crusader King of France*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 106–12; Riley-Smith, *Crusades*, 193.

³*The Seventh Crusade, 1244–1254: Sources and Documents*, ed. Peter Jackson (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), p. 125.

⁴*Ibid.*

Two different forms of Western influence affected Muslim political, intellectual and religious elites. First, the depiction of Louis in Arabic historiography was influenced by sustained Sicilian political propaganda; I shall refer to this throughout this article as the “Sicilian narrative”. Ibn Wāṣil’s (1208–1298) account, as will be shown, reflects an early appearance of this narrative in the Arabic sources. Louis’s presence in the east triggered a second form of Western influence on Arabic historiography, which affected Muslim ideas about sacrosanctity. Louis’s saintly reputation among the Christians – as will be discussed – was grasped by contemporary and later Arab historians.

As will become evident, this article suggests a transfer of political and religious ideas from west to east during the period of the Crusades. Beyond the case of al-Andalus and within the eastern Mediterranean context, the eastward directional transfer is generally understudied, with the exception of a few scholarly works. Hiroshi Takayama and James Powell have presented the cases for Sicilian diplomatic and propaganda efforts, respectively, in the east around the time of the Sixth Crusade.⁵ Doris Behrens-Abouseif has argued that Sicilian influence, during the early Mamlūk period, provides the “missing link” in the evolution of Cairo’s Islamic architecture.⁶ More recently, Konrad Hirschler has suggested that Ibn al-Athīr’s (1160–1233) description of the massacre in Jerusalem in 1099 shows how Latin historiography may have influenced the Islamic narrative of the Crusades.⁷ The present research will, moreover, build on the valuable works of Anne-Marie Eddé, Claude Cahen and Peter Jackson on the Arabic sources related to Louis’s Crusade.⁸

The article has four sections. I shall begin by identifying the principal authors and informants of the Arabic historiography of Louis’s Crusade and establishing their connections to Sicily. I shall then discuss the “Sicilian narrative”, how it influenced the image of Louis, the main traits it successfully disseminated in the Muslim East, and the early role of Ibn Wāṣil’s account in spreading it. I shall then consider the imprint of the proto-sanctity of King Louis amongst Eastern and Western Christians on the Arabic sources. Finally, the portrayal of Louis in the sources, independent of any form of Western political or religious influence, will be examined. It is hoped that this work will contribute to an understanding of the complexity of medieval cross-Mediterranean relations. I shall make use of an unedited Arabic source, Ibn al-Khazrajī’s (fl. thirteenth century) *Tārīkh dawlat al-Akrād wa-l-Atrāk*, which adds to our knowledge of Frederick II’s (1194–1250) attitude towards Louis’s Crusade and the latter’s behaviour in captivity.⁹

⁵Hiroshi Takayama, “Frederick II’s Crusade: An Example of Christian–Muslim Diplomacy”, *Mediterranean Historical Review* 25/2 (2010): 169–85; James M. Powell, “Frederick II and the Muslims: The Making of an Historiographical Tradition”, in *Iberia and the Mediterranean World of the Middle Ages: Studies in Honor of Robert I. Burns S.J.*, ed. Larry J. Simon, volume I: *Proceedings from Kalamazoo* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), pp. 261–9.

⁶Doris Behrens-Abouseif, “Sicily, the Missing Link in the Evolution of Cairene Architecture”, in *Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras*, ed. U. Vermeulen and D. de Smet (Leuven: Peeters, 1995), pp. 285–301.

⁷Konrad Hirschler, “The Jerusalem Conquest of 492/1099 in the Medieval Arabic Historiography of the Crusades: From Regional Plurality to Islamic Narrative”, *Crusades* 13/1 (2014): 37–76. For a discussion on the interchange of medical knowledge, see Susan B. Edgington, “Oriental and Occidental Medicine in the Crusader States”, in *The Crusades and the Near East*, ed. Conor Kostick (London: Routledge, 2011), pp. 189–215.

⁸Anne-Marie Eddé, “Saint Louis et la Septième Croisade vus par les auteurs arabes”, in *Les Relations des pays de l’Islam avec le monde latin: Du milieu du Xe siècle au milieu du XIIIe siècle*, ed. Françoise Micheau (Paris: J. Marseille: Vuibert, 2000), pp. 72–111; Anne-Marie Eddé, “Claude Cahen et les sources arabes des Croisades”, *Arabica* 43/1 (1996): 89–97; Konrad Hirschler, *Medieval Arabic Historiography: Authors as Actors* (London: Routledge, 2011); *Seventh Crusade*.

⁹Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad Ibn al-Khazrajī, *Tārīkh dawlat al-Akrād wa-l-Atrāk* (MS, Hekimoglu 695, Istanbul: Süleymaniye); he was writing in the second half of the thirteenth century and was used exhaustively to reconstruct

The Arabic Historiography of Louis IX's Crusade and the Sicilian Connection

A prerequisite to any discussion of the “Sicilian narrative” that shaped the portrayal of Louis IX is to establish a link between the Arabic sources and Sicily. This section will demonstrate the connection between the Hohenstaufen court and two contemporary Arab recorders of Louis's Crusade, Sa'd al-Dīn ibn Ḥamawīya (1196–1276)¹⁰ and Ibn Wāṣil. In addition, it will analyse how their accounts were re-transmitted, altered and embellished by later historians. The intellectual and socio-political background of this transmission process will be also discussed.

The intellectual entourage of the Egyptian sultan al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb (1206/7–1249, r. 1239–1249) was unexceptional and depended for information on two commanders of the army. It was in no way comparable to the impressive myriad of historians that existed during the time of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn (1137/8–1193), which includes some great names, such as Ibn al-Athīr, Ibn Shaddād (d. 1234), ʿImād al-Dīn al-Iṣfahānī (d. 1201), and al-Qāḍī al-Fāḍil (d. 1200).¹¹ The list for the later Ayyūbid period features Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī (1185–1256), Ibn Wāṣil, and Sa'd al-Dīn Ibn Ḥamawīya.¹² Although Ibn Wāṣil praised the intellectual entourage (*ahl al-ʿilm*) of al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb's court by comparing some of its members to al-Qāḍī al-Fāḍil, this hardly represented the reality.¹³ The “historiographical milieu” around al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb and during Louis's Crusade relied for information on two rival *amīrs*: Fakhr al-Dīn Ibn Shaykh al-Shuyūkh (d. 1250) and Ḥusām al-Dīn al-Hadhabānī (d. 1260).¹⁴ The two were, respectively, informants to the chief contemporary Arabic historians of Louis's Crusade, Sa'd al-Dīn Ibn Ḥamawīya (a cousin of Fakhr al-Dīn, whose work is known through other historians) and Ibn Wāṣil. Both *amīrs* also enjoyed good relations with three influential secretaries: Bahā' al-Dīn Zuhayr (d. 1258), Jamal al-Dīn Ibn Matrūḥ (d. 1251) and Fakhr al-Dīn Ibn Luqmān (d. 1293). Most of the information in medieval Arabic sources related to Louis and his Crusade can be traced back, one way or another, to one of these seven individuals.

Hirschler has discussed this intellectual milieu in detail and notes the importance of Ḥusām al-Dīn, Ibn Matrūḥ, and Bahā' al-Dīn.¹⁵ Although not historians themselves, they seem to have profoundly influenced the writings about the Seventh Crusade and King Louis. This influence is evident in “networks” and “groups” that connected the historians with influential *amīrs* and secretaries.¹⁶ This complex network of relationships can be summarised as follows: Bahā' al-Dīn Zuhayr was a friend of Ibn Wāṣil and a childhood friend of Ibn Matrūḥ; Bahā' brought Ibn Luqmān into the service of al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb; Ibn

Louis's Crusade by Anne-Marie Eddé in “Saint Louis et la Septième Croisade”. It is through Eddé's work that I came across this author.

¹⁰Sa'd al-Dīn, and Ibn Ḥamawīya are used interchangeably.

¹¹Donald P. Little, “Historiography of the Ayyūbid and Mamlūk Epochs”, in *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, volume I: *Islamic Egypt: 640–1517*, ed. Carl F. Petry (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 414–20.

¹²*Ibid.*; Claude Cahen, “Une source pour l'histoire ayyūbide: Les mémoires de Sa'd al-Dīn ibn Ḥamawīya Djuwaynī”, in *Les peuples musulmans dans l'histoire médiévale* (Damascus: Presses de l'Ifpo, 1977), pp. 457–82.

¹³Hirschler, *Medieval Arabic Historiography*, 24; Muḥammad b. Ṣālim Ibn Wāṣil, *Die Chronik des ibn Wasil: G'amāl ad-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Wāṣil, mufarrig al-kurūb fi aḥbār Banī Ayyūb: kritische Edition des letzten Teils (646/1248–659/1261) mit Kommentar: Untergang der Ayyubiden und Beginn der Mamlukenherrschaft*, ed. Mohamed Rahim [Arabische Studien, volume VII] (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010), p. 27.

¹⁴Jackson, *Seventh Crusade*, 125.

¹⁵Hirschler, *Medieval Arabic Historiography*, 24.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 18.

Luqmān drafted Ibn Wāṣil's decree of nomination; Ḥusām al-Dīn introduced Ibn Wāṣil to al-Ṣāliḥ's entourage; and Ibn Wāṣil befriended Ibn Matrūḥ.¹⁷

This milieu was linked to the Sicilian court in more ways than one. Both Sa'd al-Dīn ibn Ḥamawiya and Ibn Wāṣil were connected to the sphere of influence of the Hohenstaufen court before, during and after (in the case of Ibn Wāṣil) the Seventh Crusade. Ibn Wāṣil's account of his own diplomatic mission to southern Italy reflects an admiration of Manfred's leaning towards the rational sciences and sympathy for Muslims.¹⁸ He even dedicated *al-Risāla al-anbrūriya* (The Imperial Treatise) to his host.¹⁹ Ibn Wāṣil similarly conveys an admiration for Manfred's father, Frederick, by relating a positive account of his entrance to Jerusalem during the Sixth Crusade.²⁰ As for Sa'd al-Dīn Ibn Ḥamawiya, his main informant – and cousin – Fakhr al-Dīn enjoyed a close relationship with Frederick. Fakhr al-Dīn was the main contact between [the Ayyūbid sultan] al-Kāmil [(r. 1218–38)] and Frederick and “many discussions used to take place between the two”.²¹ Frederick is even said to have complained to Fakhr al-Dīn about the Franks' attachment to the pope.²² Jean de Joinville (1225–1317) corroborates this connection further, by claiming that Secedin (Fakhr al-Dīn) “bore on his banners the arms of the emperor who had knighted him”.²³

This ostensible influence of the Hohenstaufen court on Arabic historiography persisted over the centuries to come, as the writings of the two contemporary historians of Louis's Crusade were repeatedly transmitted in later chronicles. Sa'd al-Dīn, whose work is lost, was a principal source for Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 1256).²⁴ His chronicle, likewise, is known through al-Dhahabī's (d. 1348) work.²⁵ Several later sources cite either Sa'd al-Dīn or Ibn Wāṣil or both including: Abū al-Fidā' (d. 1331), Ibn al-Dawādārī (d. after 1335), Ibn al-Furāt (d. 1405), al-Maqrīzī (d. 1442), al-ʿAynī (d. 1451), Ibn Taghrībirdī (d. 1470), and others.²⁶ Although they mostly depend on Ibn Wāṣil and Sa'd al-Dīn, the later sources show some originality in providing a further indication of a Sicilian connection. They unveil new information by referring to or reproducing letters and dialogues.

It should be noted that the mention in Arabic historiography of letters exchanged between Sicily and Egypt predates Louis's Crusade. This motif appears, for instance, in the earlier chronicle of *Al-ta'rikh al-manṣūrī*, which stops at 1233; this chronicle

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 20–7.

¹⁸Konrad Hirschler, “Ibn Wāṣil: An Ayyūbid Perspective on Frankish Lordships and Crusades”, in *Medieval Muslim Historians and the Franks in the Levant*, ed. Alex Mallett (Boston, Mass.: Brill, 2015), pp. 136–60, esp. 149.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 143.

²⁰*Ibid.*, 159.

²¹Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Sālim Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij al-kurūb fī akhbār Banī Ayyūb: 615–628*, ed. Ḥasanayn Muḥammad Rabī' and Sa'īd 'Abd al-Fattāḥ 'Āshūr, volumes V (Cairo: Maṭba'at Dār al-Kutub, 1972), IV: 242.

²²Carole Hillenbrand, *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), p. 320; Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij al-kurūb*, IV: 251.

²³Joinville mentions, “l'empereur qui l'avoit fait chevalier” in: Jean de Joinville, *Histoire de Saint Louis*, ed. Natalis de Wailly (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1888), p. 84 [198]; Jean de Joinville and Geoffroi de Villehardouin, *Chronicles of the Crusades*, trans. Caroline Smith (London: Penguin Books, 2008), pp. 194–5 [198]; Jean de Joinville, *Vie de Saint Louis*, ed. Jacques Monfrin (Paris: Garnier, 2014), p. 264 [198]. See also Thomas Curtis van Cleve, *The Emperor Frederick II of Hohenstaufen, Immutator Mundi* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), p. 203. For a discussion on Joinville's date of birth, see Jacques Monfrin in Joinville, *Vie de Saint Louis*, 13.

²⁴Cahen, “Une source pour l'histoire ayyūbide”, 469.

²⁵*Seventh Crusade*, 5.

²⁶Eddé, “Saint Louis et la Septième Croisade”, 73–5.

reproduces two letters from the Emperor to Fakhr al-Dīn.²⁷ The author, Ibn Naẓīf al-Ḥamawī, is well informed about Sicilian affairs as he reproduces reports by Arab delegates from Palermo.²⁸ These letters are mentioned here since they introduce a vital theme in the Arabic sources on the Seventh Crusade: the animosity between Frederick and the Pope.²⁹ More letters emerge and they are either mentioned or reproduced by contemporary and later sources on Louis, as detailed below.

Mufarrij al-kurūb is of exceptional importance as it contains early written indications of a Sicilian connection. Ibn Wāṣil relates that the “master of ceremonies” (*mihmandār*) in Manfred’s court revealed that Frederick sent him on a secret embassy to warn al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb and inform him that the Emperor had tried to prevent Louis from attacking Egypt.³⁰ Moreover, Ibn Wāṣil mentions a letter that the Emperor sent to Louis, after the latter’s release from captivity, in order “to remind him of his [own] sound advice and the consequences of his obstinacy and recalcitrance, and to upbraid him for it”.³¹ There is no other record of this letter, but Frederick did write to the Castilian King blaming the Pope for a disaster that could have been avoided; in this letter, the Emperor links “papal cunning” to “the fate of our beloved friend, the illustrious King of France”.³²

In line with Ibn Wāṣil’s narrative, other Arabic sources have similar letters and exchanges to disclose, and therefore reinforce the argument that Arabic historiography depended for these events on a Sicilian connection. Ibn al-Khazrajī, who like Ibn Wāṣil seems to rely on Ḥusām al-Dīn, corroborates the account of the secret imperial embassy sent to warn al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb that Louis had reached Cyprus.³³ According to Ibn al-Khazrajī, the Emperor proposed either to delay the French army for as long as possible or to broker a peace in return for the Sultan ceding Jerusalem to the Franks.³⁴ Ibn al-Dawādārī relates that the Emperor wrote to al-Ṣāliḥ advising him of the arrival of Louis in Damietta and that he personally strove to deter the French King.³⁵ Ibn al-Dawādārī, moreover, reproduces an exchange of letters between Louis and al-Ṣāliḥ, which he had personally copied.³⁶ Qaraṭāy al-‘Izzī al-Khazāndārī describes a meeting between Frederick and Louis.³⁷ He also refers to the letter sent by the Emperor to warn al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb of Louis’s arrival in Cyprus.³⁸ Moreover, Qaraṭāy reproduces the letter from Louis to al-Ṣāliḥ.³⁹ Although Qaraṭāy does not reproduce the letter of response from al-Ṣāliḥ, he explains that Maghribī Jewish chancery secretaries drafted

²⁷ Angelika Hartmann, “A Unique Manuscript in the Asian Museum St. Petersburg: The Syrian Chronicle at-Ta’rīkh al-Manṣūrī by Ibn Naẓīf al-Ḥamawī, from the 7th/13th Century”, in *Egypt and Syria*, volume III, ed. Urbain Vermeulen and Jo van Steenberghe [Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta, volume CII] (Leuven: Peeters, 2001, pp. 89–100, esp. 89.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 90.

²⁹ Muḥammad Ibn Naẓīf al-Ḥamawī, *Al-tārīkh al-Manṣūrī* (Damascus: al-Ḥijāz, 1981), pp. 189–94; *Arab Historians of the Crusades*, ed. Francesco Gabrieli and E.J. Costello (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), pp. 280–3; van Cleve, *Frederick II*, 225.

³⁰ *Seventh Crusade*, 47; Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij al-kurūb*, IV: 247.

³¹ Translation from *Seventh Crusade*, 47; Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij al-kurūb*, IV: 248.

³² *Seventh Crusade*, 173–5.

³³ Ibn al-Khazrajī, *Tārīkh dawlat al-Akrād wa-l-Atrāk*, 163ʿ.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 164ʿ; Eddé, “Saint Louis et la Septième Croisade”, 77.

³⁵ Abū Bakr ibn ‘Abd Allāh Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar wa-jāmi‘ al-ghurar*, volumes I–IX (Cairo: Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, 1972), VII: 365–6.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 366–9.

³⁷ Qaraṭāy al-‘Izzī al-Khazāndārī, *Tārīkh majmū‘ al-nawādir: Mimmā jarā li-l-awā’il wa-l-awākhir*, ed. Horst Hein and Muḥammad al-Hujayrī [Nasharāt Islāmiyya, volume XLVI] (Berlin: Schwarz, 2005), pp. 57–8.

³⁸ *Seventh Crusade*, 46–7; Qaraṭāy, *Tārīkh majmū‘ al-nawādir*, 58–9.

³⁹ Qaraṭāy, *Tārīkh majmū‘ al-nawādir*, 59–60.

the French King's letter.⁴⁰ Ibn al-Furât relates that, when Louis returned to France, Frederick sent him a letter reminding him of his advice and blaming the misfortunes on the King's obstinacy.⁴¹

The Sicilian connection is also evident from the detailed information Arabic historians provide on papal-imperial wars and relations. Ibn al-Furât, like Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī and al-Dhahabī, shows an interest in the Pope's animosity towards Frederick.⁴² The three authors are clearly relating the same events, but only Ibn al-Furât provides a complete account. His narrative covers events that deal with the papal excommunication of Frederick and the wars between the two; however, they are narrated around an alleged attempt to assassinate the Emperor and redistribute his lands among his close associates.⁴³

It is something of a challenge to decide how to treat all these letters, exchanges and dialogues and to contend for their discernible linkage to Sicily. Jackson describes Qaraṭāy as "a source of dubious reliability".⁴⁴ A basic textual analysis of the two letters exchanged between al-Ṣāliḥ and Louis, as produced by Ibn a-Dawādārī, reveals alarming similarities in style. The mere fact that Qaraṭāy felt the need to justify this resemblance, by attributing the drafting of Louis's letter to Jewish secretaries, adds serious doubt as to the authenticity of this exchange.⁴⁵ However, the historicity of Frederick's secret embassy to warn al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb is supported by Ibn Wāṣil's account of his meeting, in Manfred's court, with the Emperor's envoy to the Sultan.⁴⁶ The information on European political affairs in Ibn al-Furât's work refers to known events, although narrated in a romanticised way. It is not easy to reach a verdict on all this rich material.

Letters and dialogues have several functions including "carrying the narrative forward", making it "more enjoyable in style", and anticipating events.⁴⁷ Arabic historiography frequently employs direct speech and some of the above-mentioned letters are probably used when it is not possible to construct a direct dialogue. As there was no prospect of constructing a direct conversation between al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb and Louis, the obvious alternative may have been to draft an exchange of letters between the two. On the other hand, an encounter between Frederick and Louis was more feasible to a medieval Arabic historian. Any doubts about the authenticity of the letters and dialogues do not mean they are "completely lacking in veracity".⁴⁸

I therefore propose that the above-mentioned letters and dialogues are a literary means employed to disseminate a heavily biased version of the events of Louis's Crusade. This version is influenced by ideas stemming from Sicily and the Hohenstaufen court about Louis and his Crusade. These letters and dialogues reinforce the earlier, narratives of

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 62.

⁴¹Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Rahīm Ibn al-Furāt, *Ayyubids, Mamlukes and Crusaders: Selections from the Tārīkh al-duwal wa-l-mulūk of Ibn al-Furāt in Two Volumes*, trans. U. Lyons and M.C. Lyons, volumes I–II (Cambridge: Heffer, 1971), I: 37.

⁴²*Ibid.*, 9; Yūsuf ibn Qizughlī Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, *Mir'āt al-zamān fī tārīkh al-a'yān*, ed. Salmān Al-Jubūrī, volumes I–XXIII (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 2013), XIV–XV: 145; Yūsuf ibn Qizughlī Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, *Mir'āt al-zamān* (A.H. 495–654), ed. James Richard Jewett (Chicago, Ill: University of Chicago Press, 1907), pp. 505–6; Muḥammad ibn Ahmad al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-Islām wa-wafayāt al-mashāhīr wa-l-a'lām*, ed. 'Umar 'Abd al-Salām Tadmūrī, volumes I–LII (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabi, 1987), XLVII: 27.

⁴³Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh al-duwal wa-l-mulūk*, 9–10.

⁴⁴*Seventh Crusade*, 40.

⁴⁵Qaraṭāy, *Tārīkh majmū' al-nawādir*, 62; Eddé, "Saint Louis et la Septième Croisade", 79.

⁴⁶*Seventh Crusade*, 47.

⁴⁷Albrecht Noth and Lawrence I. Conrad, *The Early Arabic Historical Tradition: A Source-Critical Study*, 2nd ed. [Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam, volume III] (Princeton, N.J: Darwin Press, 1994), pp. 76 and 85.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, 85.

Saʿd al-Dīn and Ibn Wāṣil, which were heavily infused with Sicilian influence. Examining the portrayal of Louis in the Arabic sources will demonstrate this.

The Sicilian narrative

This section traces back and presents the “Sicilian narrative” that shaped the depiction of Louis IX in the Arabic sources, before, throughout and after the Seventh Crusade.⁴⁹ Louis is portrayed in this narrative as obstinate, religiously zealous, and militarily incompetent. Moreover, the sources repeatedly contrast him with a rational and tolerant Frederick II.⁵⁰ They show interest in the Pope’s disputes with the Emperor. Some of the information related to Louis’s Crusade is recounted by the sources using recycled texts from the Sixth Crusade. Such anecdotes are repeated in various Mamlūk sources as variants of a Sicilian-conceived narrative that made an early appearance in Ibn Wāṣil’s *Mufarrij al-kurūb*. The variants will be presented and their linkage shown to the themes disseminated by the Sicilian court or to information that originated from Sicily.⁵¹

Ibn Wāṣil’s account articulates the key themes of the Sicilian narrative and the main traits it attributed to Louis. The writer relates, on the authority of the master of ceremonies in Manfred’s court, that Frederick advised Louis not to attack Egypt and tried to “restrain” him, but the latter “did not accept” the advice.⁵² Ibn Wāṣil’s well-informed Sicilian contact visited Egypt to alert al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ. The mission was carried out secretly so that it was not said among the Franks that “the Emperor had made common cause with the Muslims”.⁵³ Two key themes of the Sicilian narrative are here making their debut in Arabic historiography: the first is the obstinacy of Louis, who does not take sound advice from Frederick, and the second is the Emperor’s warning to Egypt about the arrival of the crusade. Both themes obviously originate from Ibn Wāṣil’s informant(s) in the Sicilian court. The themes are further articulated when Ibn Wāṣil refers to the above-mentioned letter purported to have been sent by Frederick to Louis following the release of the latter from captivity; this letter attributes “sound advice” to the Emperor and “obstinacy and recalcitrance” to the King.⁵⁴ Ibn Wāṣil seems to have been informed about this letter during his encounter with the Sicilian diplomatic contact. The latter’s anecdotes sketched an image of a recalcitrant Louis, as opposed to a rational Frederick whose wisdom could have prevented the whole disaster. Ibn Wāṣil undoubtedly reflects

⁴⁹My argument for the Sicilian narrative is based solely on Arabic sources. Outside the Arabic tradition, only patchy evidence is available, possibly owing to the carefulness of the Hohenstaufen court not to leave a smoking gun. As an example of this patchy evidence, Joinville suggested that a Sicilian delegation was sent to Egypt to “hinder rather than aid” the release of Louis and his companions; Joinville and Villehardouin, *Chronicles of the Crusades*, 254 [443].

⁵⁰Frederick II’s reign marked the end of Arab presence in Sicily. This article is only concerned with the imperial image disseminated by the Arabic sources that were influenced by the Sicilian court. Whether or not the Emperor was truly an open-minded friend of the Muslims is a wholly different discussion that is not covered here. For more on this, see David Abulafia, “The End of Muslim Sicily”, in *Muslims under Latin Rule, 1100–1300*, ed. James M. Powell (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990), pp. 101–33; Dorothea Weltecke, “Emperor Frederick II, ‘Sultan of Lucera’, ‘Friend of the Muslims’, Promoter of Cultural Transfer: Controversies and Suggestions”, in *Cultural Transfers in Dispute: Representations in Asia, Europe, and the Arab World since the Middle Ages*, ed. Jörg Feuchter, Friedhelm Hoffmann, and Bee Yun [Eigene und Fremde Welten, volume XXIII] (Frankfurt-on-Main: Campus, 2011), pp. 84–106.

⁵¹Expressions such as “news came by boat from Sicily” recur often in the sources as in Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzi, *Mirʾāt al-zamān*, 505.

⁵²*Seventh Crusade*, 47.

⁵³Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij al-kurūb*, IV: 247; translation from *Seventh Crusade*, 47.

⁵⁴Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij al-kurūb*, IV: 248; translation from *Seventh Crusade*, 47.

the image of Louis that is disseminated by the narrative of his Sicilian informant(s) in the Hohenstaufen court.

Ibn Wāṣil's Sicilian narrative fits with the known order of events. His visit to Sicily took place almost a decade after the death of Frederick; he was sent by Baybars to Manfred's court in August 1261 and returned in July 1262.⁵⁵ Moreover, he was still working on his *Mufarrij* "between 670/1271-2 and 689/1290-1 at the latest".⁵⁶ This suggests that Ibn Wāṣil, following his return from his mission in 1262, inserted into his chronicle the reports he picked up from his Sicilian sources. Two things can be construed: the first is that Sicily was – as late as 1261, i.e. a decade after the battle of Manṣūra – a source of anecdotes about Louis, the Seventh Crusade, Frederick and the Pope; the second is that the Sicilian narrative was evident in the Arabic sources late in the thirteenth century. This proposed chronology coincides impeccably with a period of great complexity in the "Sicilian Question" in which Manfred, the Pope, Richard of Cornwall and his son and – most importantly by 1263 – Charles, the Count of Anjou, brother of Louis, were involved.⁵⁷

Some key elements of the narrative disseminated from Sicily, like the above-mentioned letter reprimanding Louis, were based on genuine historical events. While letters were exchanged between Frederick and Louis, it is implausible that the Emperor would have sent a letter rebuking the King for not taking his advice. Interestingly, as discussed above, we do know of the letter sent to the Castilian King in which Frederick blamed the Pope for the disaster that befell Louis.⁵⁸ In this letter, the Emperor speaks of "sensible and careful precautions" that could have been taken to avoid the defeat.⁵⁹ This letter is remarkable as it reflects an ostensible conviction, in the Sicilian court, that "sensible" dealing with the Muslim East is a prerogative of the Hohenstaufen rulers. The letter, furthermore, suggests that the Pope caused the defeat of Louis's army. The account of the letter sent to Louis may very well have been a reference to the genuine letter sent to the Castilian King. The source that provided this information to Ibn Wāṣil was clearly aware of the authentic letter. The Sicilian court of Manfred is undoubtedly the prime suspect behind this transfer of information into Arabic historiography. This flow of ideas was very effective as this narrative was retransmitted in later Muslim sources in a variety of innovative ways.

With Ibn al-Khazraji's *Tarikh dawlat al-Akrād wa-l-Atrāk*, the narrative asserts its distinctively Sicilian character as it provides unique information about Frederick's attitude towards Louis and his Crusade.⁶⁰ The main themes of Ibn Wāṣil's narrative also appear in Ibn al-Khazraji's: Frederick sent a secret messenger to warn Egypt and the Emperor's friendship with al-Kāmil continued with al-Ṣāliḥ. The author, who ostensibly relies on Ḥusām al-Dīn al-Hadhabānī, relates, "he [al-Ṣāliḥ] received the messenger of the Emperor informing him that the King of the French had reached Cyprus with many

⁵⁵Takayama, "Frederick II's Crusade", 176; Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij al-kurūb*, IV: 246–8; *Arab Historians*, 276–80; Hillenbrand, *Crusades*, 340.

⁵⁶Hirschler, *Medieval Arabic Historiography*, 13.

⁵⁷Richard, *Saint Louis*, 260–6.

⁵⁸*Seventh Crusade*, 173–5.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, 174.

⁶⁰The prolonged lives of Ibn Wāṣil (d. 1298) and other key witnesses including Ibn Luqmān (d. 1293), the missing work of Sa'd al-Dīn, the emergence of previous material, whether letters or chronicles, and the continuous contacts between Sicily and the East well after the Seventh Crusade could all explain the evolving nature of the Sicilian narrative in the Arabic historiography of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries.

horsemen and foot soldiers ... and that he was heading for Egypt ...⁶¹ Ibn al-Khazrajī reproduces the content of the secret warning message sent to al-Šāliḥ:

He [al-Šāliḥ] informed him [Ḥusām al-Dīn] about the letter that had secretly reached him from the Emperor, which no one knew about, telling that al-Fransīs [Louis] had set out with large numbers [of soldiers] and equipment hitherto unseen. "The friendship that existed between me and al-Malik al-Kāmil dictates that I act and strive for the Sultan's [al-Šāliḥ] cause. If the Sultan is in no imminent danger from his enemies, I will try to detain this King as much as I can, stop his affairs, and dissuade other Frankish kings from assisting him. Whereas if the Sultan is occupied with other matters, advise me so I can broker a peace between you both, whilst he is still in Cyprus, that is in return for conceding Jerusalem to him".⁶²

The author's uniqueness lies in his exclusive insight into Frederick's handling of the arrival of the French army. The Emperor's true intentions are generally considered to be "opaque".⁶³ Jackson discounts accusations by Western sources that the Emperor did indeed try to delay Louis's Crusade as mere "anti-Hohenstaufen gossip".⁶⁴ Richard, on the other hand, considered that Frederick's "machinations" placed obstacles in the way of the crusade.⁶⁵ Fortunately, *Tārīkh dawlat al-Akrād wa-l-Atrāk* provides tremendously valuable clues to resolve the question of Frederick's intentions. It claims that the Emperor delayed the French King and offered to detain him even further. Most significantly, it asserts that Frederick proposed to broker a peace between Louis and al-Šāliḥ. Such a peace deal would have safeguarded his interests in Jerusalem while, at the same time, preserving friendly diplomatic relations with the Ayyūbids.

The Sicilian narrative becomes more aware of the geo-political importance of Sicily and more apologetic for the Hohenstaufen political decision-making. This is evident in Ibn al-Dawādārī's chronicle where he relates:

When the King of the Franks – the Emperor – left Sultan al-Malik al-Kāmil – God have mercy on his soul – both were now friends, and they carried on exchanging correspondence, letters and gifts; this continued throughout the reign of al-Malik al-Šāliḥ too. Al-Fransīs is the greatest among the kings of the inner Franks (*al-dākhila*), with the greatest numbers of castles and troops; so he mobilised and gathered his troops and journeyed for Egypt, motivated by his treacherous soul and his greediness. He had no other passage but through the lands of the Emperor. As soon as the Emperor was informed, he wrote to the Sultan al-Malik al-Šāliḥ advising him about the arrival of al-Fransīs in Damietta. Al-Fransīs was called Raydāfrans. The Emperor wrote to the Sultan: "He has arrived with many people, I have done my utmost to deter him from his intention and though I put fear in him he would not take my counsel; so be on your guard against him".⁶⁶

Ibn al-Dawādārī's narrative, like that of Ibn Wāṣil, links Louis's Crusade to the Sixth Crusade by referring to Frederick's friendships with al-Kāmil. It also relates that Louis is obstinate and does not take counsel from the Emperor. The Sicilian version of events is further supported in Ibn al-Dawādārī's chronicle by the mention of the warning

⁶¹ Ibn al-Khazrajī, *Tārīkh dawlat al-Akrād wa-l-Atrāk*, 163^v (my translation).

⁶² *Ibid.*, 164ⁱ (my translation); Eddé, "Saint Louis et la Septième Croisade", 77.

⁶³ *Seventh Crusade*, 39. For more on this discussion, see *ibid.*, ch. 3 (pp. 39–48); on Frederick's attitude towards the Crusade, see Claude Cahen, "Saint Louis et l'islam", *Journal Asiatique* 258 (1970): 3–12, pp. 8–11; and Joinville, *Vie de Saint Louis*, 48–9.

⁶⁴ *Seventh Crusade*, 40.

⁶⁵ Richard, *Saint Louis*, 91.

⁶⁶ Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 365–6; my translation.

letter sent to al-Šālih. Additionally, the use of (*al-dākhila*) to describe the “French” Franks suggests a source of information that is familiar with Europe and probably not a *dākhila* himself, but from a coastal and Mediterranean location such as Sicily. Ibn al-Dawādārī’s account, moreover, mentions that Louis is the most powerful of the Frankish kings, while relating that he had no passage to Egypt but through the Emperor’s lands. This appears to be a Sicilian disclaimer for permitting Louis’s army to pass unhindered and so indicates a new stage of political awareness in the narrative.

The Sicilian narrative becomes more suggestive and its language grows more emotive. The reference to the link between Louis and the wider crusading movement resurfaces as Ibn al-Dawādārī introduces the exchange of letters between Louis and al-Šālih.⁶⁷ As stated above, the two letters show striking similarities and their authenticity is hard to establish. There are interesting observations to be made, nevertheless. The reference to Muslim defeats in Spain, in the letter attributed to Louis, is very suggestive.⁶⁸ It links Louis to the Spanish crusades and the subsequent hardships that befell the Muslims there.⁶⁹ Ibn al-Dawādārī’s variant of the Sicilian narrative does not stop at portraying Louis as treacherous and greedy, but strives to associate him with the wider crusading context. The graphic and emotive mention, in Louis’s letter, of the enslavement of Muslims in Spain and its heavily religious tone only serves to reinforce a vivid contrast with the image of the tolerant Hohenstaufen rulers.

The Sicilian narrative appears to be continuously infused with original material, some of which is corroborated by Western sources. Qaraṭāy’s *Ta’rīkh majmū’ al-nawādir* (c. 1330) reports an account similar to the Sicilian narrative of Ibn Wāṣil. However, his originality lies in introducing a dialogue between Frederick and Louis, and he also mentions the assistance provided to Louis in 1249 when the Emperor “made a present of victuals and 50 warhorses”.⁷⁰ He relates:

When the Emperor, the leader of the Franks, had left the Holy Land and bade farewell to al-Malik al-Kāmil at Ascalon, the two sovereigns had embraced and promised mutual friendship, assistance and fraternity. Now the only route by which the Frenchman could reach Egypt lay across the Emperor’s territory. The latter first went to him and offered him help in terms of horsemen [horses], money and livestock.⁷¹

The *Chronica majora* of Matthew Paris (d. c. 1259), an author clearly sympathetic towards Frederick, refers to supplies being sent by the latter to Louis’s army.⁷² This is not to say that excerpts of the *Chronica majora* made their way into Qaraṭāy’s *Ta’rīkh majmū’ al-nawādir*. Nevertheless, this information has, most likely, originated from a Sicilian source favourable to the Hohenstaufen, which was aware of the provisions provided by Frederick to the Seventh Crusade. Such detailed knowledge could have only been acquired through a

⁶⁷*Ibid.*, 366–9.

⁶⁸Louis’s letter says: “when we conquered al-Andalus, we enslaved women ...”; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 366.

⁶⁹Earlier Muslim authors regarded the Frankish crusades in Spain, Sicily and the Middle East as linked endeavours. For an example, this view features in Ibn al-Athīr’s account of the fall of Antioch (*Arab Historians*, 3).

⁷⁰*Seventh Crusade*, 39 and 45–6.

⁷¹Translation from *Seventh Crusade*, 46. However, my insertion highlights that the original Arabic text has “horses” rather than the “horsemen” used in Jackson’s translation. The original Arabic text is: “*qaddama lahu al-khuyūl*” in Qaraṭāy, *Tārīkh majmū’ al-nawādir*, 57.

⁷²*Seventh Crusade*, 3, 39 and 45–6; Matthew of Paris, *Chronica majora*, volume V, p. 70 (trans. Giles, volume II, pp. 306–7; trans. Vaughan p. 180) as cited in *Seventh Crusade*, 39.

prolonged process of west to east transfer of information, from Sicilian politics into Arabic historiography.

Qaraṭāy is evidently echoing the main themes of the Sicilian narrative. The alleged dialogue between the two monarchs is noteworthy, although there is no record of a meeting between Louis and Frederick ever having taken place.⁷³ In this reported encounter, Louis is portrayed as the “most powerful of the princes of the West”, obstinate, “animated by a jealous faith”, and militarily imprudent; Frederick, on the other hand, is rational, wise, and “irritated” by Louis’s obstinacy.⁷⁴ Moreover, the Emperor, addressing al-Ṣāliḥ as “my nephew” in his letter of warning, states that he tried to scare Louis out of invading Egypt, but the latter was too stubborn to listen.⁷⁵

Qaraṭāy discloses the names of some Muslim disseminators of the Sicilian narrative when he mentions the letter from Louis to al-Ṣāliḥ.⁷⁶ Although, unlike Ibn al-Dawādārī, he does not reproduce the letter of response from al-Ṣāliḥ, he does explain the resemblance between the two letters.⁷⁷ As for the names of those who drafted the letter of response or, more likely, spread the story about such letters, they are none other than Jamāl al-Dīn Ibn Matrūḥ and Bahā’ al-Dīn, the close friends of Fakhr al-Dīn, Ibn Luqmān, and Ibn Wāṣil.⁷⁸

Other historians, such as al-Dhahabī, Ibn al-Furāt, al-Maqrīzī, and Ibn Taghribirdī reiterate this portrayal of King Louis and the main themes of the Sicilian narrative that made an early appearance in Ibn Wāṣil’s *Mufarrij*.⁷⁹ An equally interesting source is a poem by Jamāl al-Dīn Ibn Matrūḥ – poems are often under studied as a historical source – composed following the release of the French King.

Ibn Matrūḥ’s poem can be considered as the earliest “oral” evidence of the prevailing image of Louis among the Muslims; it precedes the early written form of the Sicilian narrative of Ibn Wāṣil. This poem shows that the Muslim intellectual and political elite from very early on, since the death of Ibn Matrūḥ in 1251, was already soaked in Sicilian propaganda hostile to Louis and the Papacy. It is significant because its author was close to Fakhr al-Dīn (Frederick’s friend) and a prominent member of al-Ṣāliḥ’s entourage. Moreover, the poem dates back to Louis’s stay in the East. Ibn Matrūḥ’s poem appears in Ibn Wāṣil’s *Mufarrij* and most of the subsequent chronicles, with minor variations.⁸⁰ Although the poem has been translated in several works, my translation highlights some essential details regarding references to the Pope and Jesus:⁸¹

Give the Frenchman, when you shall see him, sound advice from an eloquent speech
May God reward you for the slaughter that has befallen the worshippers of Jesus the Messiah

⁷³ *Seventh Crusade*, 46 n. 20.

⁷⁴ Qaraṭāy, *Tārīkh majmūʿ al-nawādīr*, 57–8; translation from *Seventh Crusade*, 46.

⁷⁵ Qaraṭāy, *Tārīkh majmūʿ al-nawādīr*, 58–9; translation from *Seventh Crusade*, 46–7.

⁷⁶ Qaraṭāy, *Tārīkh majmūʿ al-nawādīr*, 59–60.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 62.

⁷⁸ Qaraṭāy used Ibn Matrūḥ as an informant; see Claude Cahen, “La Chronique de Kirtay et les Francs de Syrie”, *Journal Asiatique* 229 (1937): 140–5, p. 142; Eddé, “Saint Louis et la Septième Croisade”, 74–5.

⁷⁹ Al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-Islām*, 49–54; Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh al-duwal wa-l-mulūk*, 13–39; Yūsuf Ibn Taghribirdī, *Al-nujūm al-zāhira fī mulūk Miṣr wa-l-Qāhira*, volumes I–XVI (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, 1936), VI: 364–72; Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-sulūk li-maʿrifat duwal al-mulūk*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Ziyāda, volumes I–IV (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, 1936), I: 333–66.

⁸⁰ Ibn Wāṣil, *Die Chronik des ibn Wāṣil*, 71–2; al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-Islām*, 51–2; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 384–5; Ibn Taghribirdī, *Al-nujūm al-zāhira* 370; Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh al-duwal wa-l-mulūk*, 36; al-Maqrīzī, *Al-sulūk*, 363–4.

⁸¹ *Seventh Crusade*, 149; Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh al-duwal wa-l-mulūk*, 36; Eddé, “Saint Louis et la Septième Croisade”, 87; *Arab Historians*, 294–5; E.J. Davis, *The Invasion of Egypt in A.D. 1249 (A.H.647) by Louis IX of France and a History of the Contemporary Sultans of Egypt* (London, 1897), pp. 53–4.

(Yasū' al-Masīḥ)

You came to Egypt seeking to conquer it, confusing the sound of a flute, O drum, for wind
[...]

Through your bright designs, you led all your companions to the grave

Fifty thousand are now either dead or wounded prisoners

May God inspire you to similar enterprises, so that Jesus ('Īsā [al-Masīḥ]) may rest from you

If your Pope is content with this outcome, then your counsellor has misled you!

And say to them if they ever think of coming back to seek revenge or for any other purpose:

The house of Luqmān awaits you, the shackles are ready, and the *ṭawāshī* Ṣabiḥ.⁸²

Ibn Matrūḥ's poem portrays Louis as constantly in need of counsel, an incompetent strategist who leads his followers to death, and a pawn in the hand of the Pope. The use of "your Pope" (*bābākum*) by Ibn Matrūḥ, is noteworthy: the Pope stands accused of being the adviser behind this disaster, just as Frederick suggested in his letter to the Castilian King.

The arguments presented in this article are in line with recent studies dealing with the eastward transfer of information into the Muslim tradition.⁸³ Hirschler discusses how Ibn al-Athīr's narrative of the Jerusalem Massacre of 1099 might have been "an artful reworking" of Latin historiography.⁸⁴ For Hirschler, there is a case for Latin reports making their way into the Islamic narrative.⁸⁵ Powell argues that the image of the Emperor as a friend of the Muslims "stemmed from a propaganda effort carried on by Frederick's court".⁸⁶ For Powell, the letters to Fakhr al-Dīn indicate "the extent to which this propaganda was being carried on".⁸⁷ On the basis of Ibn Wāṣil's account of his encounter with the *mihmandār* in Sicily, a decade after the Seventh Crusade, it is evident that the Sicilian propaganda effort continued long after the deaths of both Frederick and Fakhr al-Dīn.

The above survey of the Arabic sources reveals the disseminators of those stories about Frederick's friendship with al-Kāmil and al-Ṣāliḥ, his acclaimed prudence, his presumed tolerance, and his wars with the Pope. They are: Fakhr al-Dīn, the custodian of diplomatic relations with Sicily;⁸⁸ his entourage, which included Ibn Matrūḥ, Ibn Luqmān and Bahā' al-Dīn; Ibn Wāṣil and his senior Sicilian diplomatic contact in Manfred's court; and various other direct and indirect Sicilian informants.

The image of Louis in the Arabic sources was a principal casualty of both Sicilian propaganda and the prolonged influx of information into the Muslim tradition, a process that is referred to in this work as the Sicilian narrative. The French King was repeatedly contrasted with the Emperor and the latter's prudence, diplomatic skills and tolerance. Louis was portrayed as an obstinate and incompetent leader in early and later sources. Moreover, he was presumed to be in the papal camp, his Crusade was recalled in the context of and compared to the Sixth Crusade, the Pope was brought into the narrative of the Seventh Crusade, and Louis was linked to the Spanish Crusades.

⁸²My translation highlights the use of "your Pope" (*bābākum*) and the poet's deliberate different usage of 'Isā the Messiah and Yasū' the Messiah when referring to Jesus. See Eddé in "Saint Louis et la Septième Croisade", 87, who notes the use of "votre Pape". More will be said about *ṭawāshī* Ṣabiḥ below.

⁸³Hirschler "Jerusalem Conquest"; Powell, "Frederick II and the Muslims".

⁸⁴Hirschler, "Jerusalem Conquest", 74.

⁸⁵*Ibid.*, 72.

⁸⁶Powell, "Frederick II and the Muslims", 264.

⁸⁷*Ibid.*, 265.

⁸⁸For more information on the role of Fakhr al-Dīn, see Takayama, "Frederick II's Crusade", 169-176.

The sanctity of Louis IX in medieval Arabic historiography

Sicily was not the exclusive source of the eastward directional flow of information and ideas that shaped the portrayal of Louis IX in Arabic historiography. By the time of his death, Louis had already succeeded in cultivating a reputation for piety and godliness that was well understood by some contemporary and later Arabic sources on the Seventh Crusade. I shall show here how Louis's Crusade brought with it a religious influence that inspired Muslim historiography's ideas about sanctity.

Arabic sources were quick to detect Louis's saintly reputation amongst the Christians. The alleged meeting between Louis and Frederick, as described by Qaraṭāy, indicates that Louis's reputation went way beyond mere religiosity. Qaraṭāy claims the King told the Emperor that nothing would prevent him from attacking Egypt "until I perish along with my army"; moreover, Frederick observed that Louis "would shun no effort for the sake of his faith and [that] he is attached to his religion unlike others [Christian kings]".⁸⁹ Evidently there is, in Qaraṭāy's narrative, a lot of anticipation of what lies ahead, including the capture of Louis in Egypt and his subsequent death in Tunis. Nevertheless, Louis is presented as a potential martyr who is very attached to Christianity, his religiosity thus making him different from other Christian kings.⁹⁰

Medieval Arabic sources that relied on Sa'd al-Dīn Ibn Ḥamawīya attributed saintly deeds to Louis in the same way as Western sources. As will be detailed below, authors such as Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, al-Dhahabī and Ibn Taghribirdī noted a central theme in the sanctity of Louis: his refusal to abandon his people and his willingness to risk his own life for their sake. This was also an important theme in the prologue of Joinville's book. Joinville mentions that Louis was repeatedly advised to leave Manṣūra for Damietta by galley, but the King unwaveringly refused to abandon his people so that he "would meet whatever end they met".⁹¹ When Charles of Anjou insisted that Louis leave, as his presence in the rear of the army was dangerously slowing down the retreat, the King replied: "Count of Anjou, count of Anjou, if you think I am a burden to you, get rid of me; but I will never leave my people".⁹² The Arabic sources seem to concur with Joinville and Charles of Anjou on this theme. Ibn Ḥamawīya, agreeing with the Western sources, noted that Louis could have escaped, but he never abandoned his troops despite knowing perfectly well the risks of his obstinacy. Al-Dhahabī related on the authority of Sa'd al-Dīn, "Should the Frenchman have wanted to, he could have saved himself by escaping on a fast horse or a boat, but he remained in the rear-guard protecting his followers".⁹³ Ibn Ḥamawīya was clearly well informed about the battle where Louis chose to remain along with the rear-guard of his army (*al-sāqa*).⁹⁴

⁸⁹Qaraṭāy, *Tārīkh majmū' al-nawādir*, 58 (my translation); translated in *Seventh Crusade*, 46–7 as: "the importance of his actions as a Christian and his attachment to his religion set him against everyone else".

⁹⁰Interestingly, Joinville mentions that the "Saracens said that the king was the most steadfast Christian one could find", in Joinville and Villehardouin, *Chronicles of the Crusades*, 236 [367]; see Jacques Monfrin's comments in Joinville, *Vie de Saint Louis*, 83.

⁹¹Joinville and Villehardouin, *Chronicles of the Crusades*, 142; Joinville, *Histoire de Saint Louis*, 3–4 [9] and [10]; M. Cecilia Gaposchkin, *The Making of Saint Louis: Kingship, Sanctity, and Crusade in the Later Middle Ages* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2008), p. 194.

⁹²Richard, *Saint Louis*, 125–6; Joinville, *Vie de Saint Louis*, 81–2.

⁹³Al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-Islām*, 50: "*al-Fransīs law arāda an yanjū bi-nafsihi khaluṣa 'alā khaylin sabaq aw fi ḥarrāqa, lākin-nahu aqāma fī l-sāqa yaḥmi aṣḥābahu*" (my translation); Ibn Taghribirdī, *Al-nujūm al-zāhira*, 365. See Eddé's discussion of *ḥarrāqa* as a boat frequently used during this Crusade; Eddé, "Saint Louis et la Septième Croisade", 105–7.

⁹⁴For different translations, see *Seventh Crusade*, 160; Cahen, "Une source pour l'histoire ayyūbide", 467–82.

Al-Dhahabî relates what, paradoxically, resembles a Muslim hagiography of Louis: “*wa-kāna ‘indahū ‘aql wa-thabāt wa-dīn fihim, wa-kānū ya’taqidūna fihī. Wa-kāna ḥasan al-khilqā*”.⁹⁵ These interesting phrases are translated by Jackson as, “He was a man of wisdom, constancy and faith (in their fashion), and they put their trust in him. He was of fine appearance”.⁹⁶ Cahen translates the passage in the following way, “*Il avait du jugement, de la fermeté, et de la religion au sens des Francs, qui avaient grande confiance en lui; il avait une belle stature*”.⁹⁷ An alternative translation is proposed here: “He was endowed with reason, with steadfastness, and with religion amongst them [the Franks]; they believed in him. He enjoyed a fine appearance.” I posit that the intended meaning of *ya’taqidūna* is to *believe* in Louis, the way medieval Christians were supposed to believe in a Christian saint.⁹⁸ The wording of Ibn Taghribirdī’s version reinforces this newly proposed translation: the Christians *believed* in Louis because he was endowed with reason, with steadfastness, and religion.⁹⁹

This awareness of Louis’s proto-sanctity in Arabic historiography began while he was still crusading in the Levant. Authors such as Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, al-Dhahabī, and Ibn Taghribirdī relied heavily on Sa’d al-Dīn Ibn Ḥamawīya, a contemporary historian of the Seventh Crusade. It can be conceived, accordingly, that the stories about Louis’s proto-sanctity were already circulating in the East during his stay there. More conclusive evidence that this reputation for holiness could have been known to Ibn Ḥamawīya comes from Joinville, whose work has been described as the “best known of the texts written to celebrate Louis’ [sic] sanctity” and which he himself referred to as the “*vie nostre saint roy Looys*”.¹⁰⁰ According to Joinville, when Louis was encamped with his army near Acre in March 1254, he was approached by a group of Armenian pilgrims who “begged” him for an audience with the “Saintly King” (*Saint Roy*).¹⁰¹ To set the perfect saintly context for his story, Joinville mentions that the King “was sitting on the sand without a carpet or anything else beneath him”; Joinville relates:

I said to him, “My lord, there’s a large crowd of people from Greater Armenia outside who are going to Jerusalem. They have asked me, my lord, to show them the saintly king. But I’ve no desire to kiss your bones just yet!” He laughed out loud and told me that I should go and fetch them, and so I did.¹⁰²

There is more than one scholarly opinion on how to interpret *Saint Roy* from old French. One early-twentieth-century work translates it simply as “the good king Louis”.¹⁰³ Gaposchkin, who discusses in detail the translation of *Saint Roy*, opts for “saint-king”

⁹⁵ Al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-Islām*, 51.

⁹⁶ *Seventh Crusade*, 160.

⁹⁷ Cahen, “Une source pour l’histoire ayyūbide”, 467; similar translation in Eddé, “Saint Louis et la Septième Croisade”, 108.

⁹⁸ Muḥammad ibn Muḥarram Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, volumes VI (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1997), IV: 386; the proposed meanings are to give allegiance, loyalty, oath, contract, and covenant.

⁹⁹ Ibn Taghribirdī, *Al-nujūm al-zāhira*, 366.

¹⁰⁰ Gaposchkin, *Making of Saint Louis*, 181.

¹⁰¹ Joinville and Villehardouin, *Chronicles of the Crusades*, 286 [565–6]; Joinville, *Histoire de Saint Louis*, 237–8 [565–6]; Joinville, *Vie de Saint Louis*, 481–2 [565–6].

¹⁰² Joinville and Villehardouin, *Chronicles of the Crusades*, 286–7 [565–6]; Joinville, *Histoire de Saint Louis*, 237–8 [565–6]; Joinville, *Vie de Saint Louis*, 481–2 [565–6].

¹⁰³ Lord John de Joinville, *Chronicles of the Crusades: Contemporary Narratives of the Crusade of Richard Coeur De Lion and of the Crusade of Saint Louis* (London: George Bell and Sons, 1908), pp. 496–7.

and notes that René Hague's choice was "holy king".¹⁰⁴ She observes that, at this point, Joinville's narrative is still "far from the aims and expectations of formal hagiography".¹⁰⁵ Joinville personally made our choice of translation easier by saying to the King, "*mais je ne bé jà à baisier vos os*".¹⁰⁶ The author clearly connoted his use of *Saint Roy* with the ritual of kissing saints' bones. Stories about the sanctity of Louis based on Joinville's narrative were circulating among the Christians of the East during his stay there. This knowledge reached Sa'd al-Dīn Ibn Ḥamawīya, the contemporary historian, and was picked up by other Muslim authors who relied on his chronicle.¹⁰⁷

While the late Ayyūbid sources understood the sanctity of Louis, Mamlūk ones were inspired by it to develop their own ideas and stories about sacrosanctity. Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī's (ca. 1327–1370) *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyya al-kubrā* contains the biography of 'Abd al-'Azīz b. 'Abd al-Salām al-Sulamī (1181/2–1262), a renowned scholar.¹⁰⁸ His name made it into the pilgrimage guides to the tombs (*ziyāra*) of Muslim saints in Cairo that were written towards the end of the thirteenth century.¹⁰⁹ Al-Subkī attributes to Ibn 'Abd al-Salām the *karāma* (a miracle accomplished by righteous men) of commanding the wind during the battle of Manṣūra.¹¹⁰ Ibn 'Abd al-Salām, who according to the author was present with the Egyptian troops, noticed that the attack by Frankish boats was gaining the upper hand; he waved his hand in the wind and shouted repeatedly: "Take them away, O wind!" causing the boats to capsize and leading to victory.¹¹¹ The author ended this story with, "*wa kāna l-fath*", using verbatim the same expression al-Dhahabī used when describing the defeat and capture of Louis.¹¹² Furthermore, al-Subkī relates that an unnamed person shouted, "Praised be God who made amongst the Muslims a man who subjugated the wind".¹¹³ This narrative is intended to announce, through the voice of an unidentified person, that a Muslim scholar endowed with sacrosanct powers arose to repel the invading army led by Saint Louis.

Louis and his Crusade brought about an interesting development in the Arabic historiography of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. On the one hand, Sa'd al-Dīn and the historians who relied on him relate hagiographical-like descriptions of Louis. On the other, later historiography proclaims a Muslim saint who stood up to Saint Louis in battle and defeated him on his own turf of sanctity and miracles. The Arabic sources

¹⁰⁴Gaposchkin, *Making of Saint Louis*, 188.

¹⁰⁵*Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶Joinville, *Histoire de Saint Louis*, 237–8; in Joinville, *Vie de Saint Louis*, 482 [566]: "*mes je ne bee ja a baisier vos os*".

¹⁰⁷A word should be said about the chronology of the historiography in relation to Louis's saintly reputation. Cahen believes that he is the only source for Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, even though the latter does not cite him; Sibṭ had access to an incomplete draft of Sa'd al-Dīn's memoirs, as he (i.e. Sibṭ) died 20 years before his friend. By the end of 653/January 1256, Sa'd al-Dīn had left Egypt for Damascus. He must have already completed parts of his chronicle since he passed it to Sibṭ, who died in 654/1256. This chronology supports the opinion that Louis's saintly reputation was known to Ibn Ḥamawīya before 1256, around the time Louis was still in the East. See Cahen, "Une source pour l'histoire Ayyūbide", 470. Alex Mallett states that Sibṭ died in 654/1257, in "Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī", in *Medieval Muslim Historians and the Franks in the Levant*, ed. Alex Mallett [The Muslim World in the Age of the Crusades, volume II] (Boston, Mass.: Brill, 2015), pp. 84–108.

¹⁰⁸Tāj al-Dīn 'Abd al-Wahhāb ibn 'Alī al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyya al-kubrā*, ed. Muṣṭafā 'Abd al-Qādir Aḥmad 'Aṭā, volumes I–VI (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1999), IV: 354–85.

¹⁰⁹Christopher Schurman Taylor, *In the Vicinity of the Righteous: Ziyāra and the Veneration of Muslim Saints in Late Medieval Egypt* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), p. 67.

¹¹⁰Al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 358; Daniella Talmon-Heller, "Muslim Martyrdom and Quest for Martyrdom in the Crusading Period", *Al-Masāq* 14/2 (2002): 132–9, p. 136.

¹¹¹Al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 358.

¹¹²Al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-Islām*, 44; al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 358.

¹¹³Al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 358.

mention the sanctity of Louis well in advance of his official canonisation, which took place between May 1282 and March 1283.¹¹⁴

Louis IX's captivity and the Arabic sources

The Arabic sources were capable of making their own sketches of the French King independently of both the Sicilian narrative and Louis's saintly reputation. I shall analyse in this section the conflicting portrayals of Louis IX in captivity by Arabic historiography and the motivations behind them.

The capture of King Louis allowed the Arabic sources to boast about this great victory, and boast they did. Ibn Matrūḥ's poem depicts the house of Ibn Luqmān, the shackles, and the *ṭawāshī* Ṣabīḥ al-Muʿazzamī as symbols of the ultimate humiliation of the Franks. Ibn Wāṣil relates that the surrender of the "accursed" King Louis to the senior cavalry officer Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥassan al-Ṣāliḥī: "Shackles were put on the legs" of Louis, who was then confined in Ibn Luqmān's house and guarded by Ṣabīḥ.¹¹⁵ Ibn al-Dawādārī reports that Ṣabīḥ was a rude and unmannerly servant (*fazz ḡhalīz*), whom Louis could no longer stand.¹¹⁶ Louis supposedly said to Ḥusām al-Dīn, "I ask you in the name of your religion to kill me at once and relieve me of this servant and the sight of him; he is the worst of what I am currently enduring now".¹¹⁷ Moreover, the sources used French royal symbols to further disgrace the defeated King. Boasting about his army's victory in Manṣūra, Tūrānshāh sent Louis's mantle to be paraded in the streets of Damascus; the following verses were recited on that occasion:

"The mantle of al-Fransīs, which has come as a gift for the leader of the *amīrs*, was paper white in colour, but our swords have dyed it with blood"; and: "our master throws open those parts that are guarded by our enemies, while he clothes his servants in the spoils of kings".¹¹⁸

The reality about the treatment of the captive King may have been different, however, as I shall show. The chivalrous conduct seems to have been on the captors' side, while Louis was accused by some sources of being arrogant and stubborn. The King was well treated, the *ṭawāshī* Ṣabīḥ was not a petty unmannerly servant, and the Ayyūbid Sultan treated his noble prisoners courteously. Tūrānshāh's letter announcing his victory mentions that, when Louis surrendered, "we showed him honour".¹¹⁹ Furthermore, Ṣabīḥ al-Muʿazzamī was a senior cavalry officer who accompanied Tūrānshāh "from Ḥiṣn Kayfā, and so [the Sultan] had promoted him and raised him in rank and power, appointing him to be commander of his guard".¹²⁰ Entrusting the captive King to a *ṭawāshī* was a sign of respect since Tūrānshāh "had followed his father in giving confidence to eunuchs

¹¹⁴Gaposchkin, *Making of Saint Louis*, 37.

¹¹⁵*Seventh Crusade*, 148; Ibn Wāṣil, *Die Chronik des ibn Wāṣil*, 70; also see Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 379; Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh al-duwal wa-l-mulūk*, 29.

¹¹⁶Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 384; Eddé, "Saint Louis et la Septième Croisade", 87.

¹¹⁷Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 384 (my translation).

¹¹⁸Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh al-duwal wa-l-mulūk*, 31; Davis, *Invasion of Egypt*, 53; Badr al-Dīn Maḥmūd ibn Aḥmad al-ʿAynī, *ʿIqd al-jumān fi tārikh ahl al-zamān*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥammad Amin, volumes I–4 (Cairo: al-Hayʾa al-Misriyya al-ʿAmma li-l-Kitāb, 1987), I: 22.

¹¹⁹Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh al-duwal wa-l-mulūk*, 30; also in Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 381: "We treated him according to our magnanimous habits"; and in Ibn Taghribirdī, *Al-nujūm al-zāhira*, 366: Louis was "honoured to the utmost".

¹²⁰*Seventh Crusade*, 148; Ibn Wāṣil, *Die Chronik des ibn Wāṣil*, 70.

...¹²¹ Additionally, al-Dhahabī relates that Tūrānshāh sent 50 robes of honour to his prisoners, but Louis refused the gift and declined the Sultan's invitation to a banquet.¹²²

With the assassination of Tūrānshāh, the portrayal of Louis becomes increasingly intertwined with major events taking place in the Muslim camp. The frequent praise of Louis in the sources should be read carefully for concealed purposes. Ibn Wāṣil relates that Ḥusām al-Dīn observed that Louis was "a thoughtful and intelligent man".¹²³ Ḥusām al-Dīn was puzzled that the King, with all his "wisdom, refinement and sound intellect", would risk his life at sea; he jokingly implied that Louis's testimony could not therefore be accepted according to Muslim jurisprudence.¹²⁴ Anecdotes of gallant discussions between Louis and Ḥusām al-Dīn are reproduced in subsequent sources.¹²⁵ These stories prompted Cahen to note that some Arab historians admired Louis's courage, loyalty and judgement.¹²⁶ Likewise, Richard concludes, "His sense of humour captivated his captors".¹²⁷ However, the anecdotes of the discussions between Louis and Ḥusām al-Dīn are intended to depict the latter as gallant and skilful. The Arabic sources celebrate Ḥusām al-Dīn's sense of humour, not Louis's. Moreover, the sources appropriated Louis's wisdom to criticise the newly emerging military junta's handling of the political situation. Al-Dhahabī recounts, on the authority of Sa'd al-Dīn, that, when an agreement was finally reached about the ransom, and once he was released and safe in his galley, Louis sent the following message to the *amīrs*:

What I have seen [reflects] how little wisdom or faith you have – how little faith, because you killed your Sultan; how little wisdom, because a king from overseas like myself fell into your hands and you demanded [only] 400,000 *dīnārs*. Had you demanded my kingdom, I should have made you a present of it in order to gain my release.¹²⁸

Gallant negotiations with Louis may have had little to do with the successful conclusion of the talks and the surrender of Damietta. Some sources reveal that Louis responded better to the coercion of Mamlūks than to the robes of honour and feasts of Tūrānshāh. Sibṭ, Ibn al-Jawzī relates that when the Mamlūks killed Tūrānshāh, "they entered the Frenchman's tent with their swords and said, 'We want the money.' And he agreed. Then they released him, and he went to Acre in accordance with the agreement they made with him".¹²⁹ Ibn al-Khazrajī confirms the less amicable nature of the talks. He portrays Louis, although treated with honour, as discourteous, arrogant, obstinate and only responsive to threats. Ḥusām al-Dīn, on the other hand, is continuously depicted in a good light. Ibn al-Khazrajī relates:

Al-Fransīs was still in the same condition, treated with honour and arrogant, so Ḥusām al-Dīn Ibn 'Alī said to al-Malik al-Mu'izz [Aybak], "I see you are occupied with your own affairs and you do not consider the matters of Damietta and al-Fransīs. I fear some other Frankish kings will enter it and then neither al-Fransīs nor anyone else would ever return it [Damietta]

¹²¹T.K. El-Azhari, "The Influence of Eunuchs in the Ayyubid Kingdom", in *Egypt and Syria*, ed. Urbain Vermeulen and J. Van Steenberghe (Leuven: Peeters, 2005), IV: 139.

¹²²*Seventh Crusade*, 160. According to Joinville, Louis did wear the clothes presented to him by the Sultan; Joinville, *Vie de Saint Louis*, 80; and Joinville and Villehardouin, *Chronicles of the Crusades*, 244–5 [403].

¹²³*Seventh Crusade*, 153–4; Ibn Wāṣil, *Die Chronik des ibn Wāṣil*, 80–81; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 384; *Arab Historians*, 298–9; Eddé, "Saint Louis et la Septième Croisade", 109.

¹²⁴*Ibid.*

¹²⁵Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh al-duwal wa-l-mulūk*, 35; al-Maqrīzī, *Al-sulūk*, 362–3.

¹²⁶Cahen, "Saint Louis et l'islam", 6–7.

¹²⁷Richard, *Saint Louis*, 132.

¹²⁸*Seventh Crusade*, 162–163.

¹²⁹*Ibid.*, 162.

to us and thus the situation will become worse". So al-Malik al-Mu'izz conveyed the matter of al-Fransîs to Ḥusām al-Dīn and told him, "Do whatever you see best and I will agree". So he [Ḥusām al-Dīn] visited him [Louis] and greeted him but he [Louis] did not answer, so Ḥusām al-Dīn instructed the translator, "Tell this cunning one, I thought you were reasonable and now I see that you are the least reasonable among men; we had followed the saying of the Prophet, 'If there comes to you a man who is respected among his own people, then honour him', but you are mean; we have honoured you but you became meaner", and he [Ḥusām al-Dīn] insulted him gravely, and he was about to put shackles on his legs, dress him in a cloak and confine him. So when he [Louis] saw the situation had changed, he agreed to cede Damietta and pay the Muslims five hundred thousand *dīnārs*.¹³⁰

Some contradictions emerge in Ibn al-Khazrajī's depiction of Louis. For instance, when the Muslims take over Damietta, Ḥusām al-Dīn tries to convince al-Mu'izz Aybak not to release King Louis, "for he is a great man, I have never come across a man having such sound judgement".¹³¹

Arabic historiography presents a mixed palette when it comes to portraying the character of Louis in captivity. The sources understood the symbols of Louis's kingship and used them to reflect a humiliating Frankish defeat. The King is presented as rude, obstinate, discourteous and unworthy of the honourable treatment he received. Nonetheless, the same informants and authors portray him as great, intelligent and judicious. The conflicting portrayals always seem to serve specific purposes in the narrative, unrelated to Louis but connected to events within the Egyptian camp and to rivalries among prominent Muslim *amīrs*.

Conclusion

The Sicilian narrative, an eastward directional transfer from Sicilian politics into Arabic historiography, influenced the portrayal of Louis IX. Muslim authors and prominent individuals connected to the Sicilian court of Frederick II and Manfred influenced the portrayal of the French King. By the time he landed in Egypt, a specific image of Louis had already been impressed upon the members of the intellectual and political Muslim elite. Starting with the early sources on the Seventh Crusade, such as Ibn Wāṣil's *Mufarrij*, Louis was repeatedly portrayed – by the Sicilian narrative – as obstinate, religiously zealous and an inept leader. He was contrasted with the tolerant and tactful Frederick, as if reasonable dealing with the Muslims was the prerogative of the Hohenstaufen. The portrayal of the French King was greatly affected by a sustained Sicilian propaganda effort before, during and after the Seventh Crusade, and under both Frederick and Manfred. All indications lead back to Sicily through authentic and romanticised anecdotes, letters and meetings. Moreover, several accounts attributed to influential Muslims – such as Fakhr al-Dīn Ibn Shaykh al-Shuyūkh and his entourage – reinforce the links of this narrative to the court in Sicily. The Pope, the Spanish crusades, previous events from the Sixth Crusade, and the papal wars against Frederick were all used by the narrative to sketch Louis.

The original Sicilian narrative evolved and developed. This narrative made an early appearance in the works of Ibn Wāṣil and other authors who relied on Sa'd al-Dīn Ibn Ḥamawiya. Nevertheless, other sources, such as Ibn al-Khazrajī, Ibn al-Dawādārī, and

¹³⁰Ibn al-Khazrajī, *Tārīkh dawlat al-Akrād wa-l-Atrāk*, 180^v–181^r (my translation).

¹³¹*Ibid.*, 181^r; Eddé, "Saint Louis et la Septième Croisade", 89; see similar accounts in Ibn Taghribirdi, *Al-nujūm al-zāhira*, 368; al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-Islām*, 52.

Qaraṭāy, show remarkable originality. They produce or mention exchanges of letters, dialogues and meetings that are not completely lacking in authenticity. They relate information based on genuine historical events, but often in romanticised ways. This gradually made the Sicilian narrative more informative of the geo-political dynamics of the Mediterranean during the thirteenth century.

Sicilian influence in the early Mamlūk period arguably goes beyond the textual level examined in this article and extends into the urban topography of Cairo. The complex of Sultan Qalāwūn, built in 683-4/1284-5, provides useful parallels to the Sicilian narrative. In her examination of this complex, Behrens-Abouseif notes the transfer of architectural patterns from Sicily back to Egypt.¹³² She concludes that the “delayed” transmission of architectural patterns into Cairene architecture, started around the end of the Hohenstaufen dynasty in 1266 and emerged later in the complex of Qalāwūn in 1284-5.¹³³ One cannot but notice the similarities with the process of extended and delayed infusion of Sicilian propaganda into the Muslim narrative of the Seventh Crusade. Chronologically, the process of transmission of Sicilian architectural patterns coincides perfectly with the period between Ibn Wāṣil’s visit to the Sicilian court of Manfred and the completion of his *Mufarrij al-kurūb*; that is also around the same time Ibn al-Khazrajī was writing his *Tārīkh dawlat al-Akrād wa-l-Atrāk*. Moreover, the idea of a similar process of “delayed” transmission from Sicilian politics into Arabic tradition could explain the information that emerged in later chronicles like Ibn al-Dawādārī’s.

The Sicilian narrative was accompanied by a religious influence that affected the Muslim account of Louis’s Crusade. Some Arabic sources grasped, very early on, the proto-sanctity of Louis among the Christians. The sources seem to refer to Louis’s candidature for sainthood well in advance of his canonisation by the Church. As is evident in the sources that relied on Sa’d al-Dīn Ibn Ḥamawīya, the valour of the French King in looking after his own people was highly appreciated. Furthermore, Louis’s sanctity influenced later Arabic sources, as is clear in Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī’s work, to create their own ideas and anecdotes about an equal Muslim saint. King Louis’s Crusade stimulated novel Muslim ideas about sanctity and miracles.

Independent of any eastward transfer of political and religious ideas from the West into the Muslim tradition, Arabic historiography was capable of outlining its own self-serving assessments of Louis. The sources revealed contradictory portrayals of Louis’s personality. These depictions often served purposes related to political events taking place in the Muslim camp. The image of Louis was thus appropriated to promote the victory of the last Ayyūbid Sultan, to praise the merits of some of the contending *amīrs*, and to critique the new emerging political system in Egypt.

It is my hope this article may have further highlighted the inter-relatedness of European and Middle Eastern medieval studies. A precious source like Ibn al-Khazrajī provides unique material related to Frederick’s attitude towards Louis and his Crusade. Accounts from one historiographical tradition may provide clues to solve long-standing puzzles in the field of historical studies of another tradition; this shows the need for more works similar to Peter Jackson’s book on the Seventh Crusade, which gathers translated Western and Eastern sources together. Likewise, I hope that the so far understudied

¹³²Behrens-Abouseif, “Sicily Link”, 288.

¹³³*ibid.*, 298.

eastward directional transfer of ideas into the Arabic tradition during the period of the Crusades is now being accepted as deeper than originally thought. Last but not least, this article offers new information on Louis's treatment during captivity, his personal comportment and the atmosphere of the negotiations that led to his release.