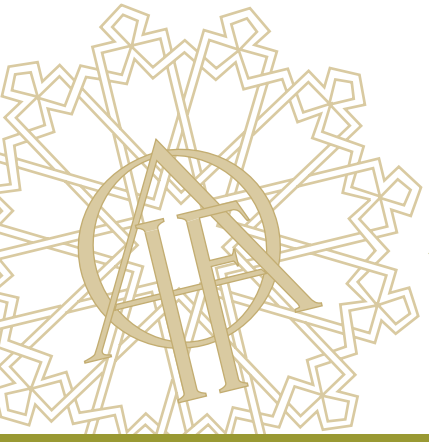
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A West African History of the Qarāfa. Takrūrī Muslims and the Great Cairene Necropolis (4th–9th/10th–15th Centuries)

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HADRIEN COLLET*

A West African History of the Qarāfa

Takrūrī Muslims and the Great Cairene Necropolis (4th–9th/10th–15th Centuries)**

ABSTRACT

In the Mamluk Orient, Takrūr was the name given to the Islamised lands of the Sahel, from the Atlantic to the Lake Chad. Many West African Muslims carrying the *nisba* "al-Takrūrī" (pl. Takārura, Takārīr, Takārna) can be found in the Mamluk domain. Some were only passing by, on the pilgrimage in Mecca, seeking to trade, or in the pursuit of scientific knowledge, following the teachings of famous scholars at prestigious institutions before going back to the Sahel after several months or years. Many settled in Egypt, Syria, or Arabia. Cairo was the main centre attracting this mobility. The necropolis of the Qarāfa was such a place where Takrūrī settled. This article endeavours to outline the first West African history of the Qarāfa.

Keywords: West Africa, Qarāfa, diasporas, mobility, Takrūr, Takrūrī, Cairo, saints, necropolis, Sahel, Mamluk period, medieval Egypt

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** This study is dedicated to the memory of Paulo Fernando de Moraes Farias.

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✦ **RÉSUMÉ**

Une histoire ouest-africaine de la Qarāfa : les musulmans *takrūrī*-s et la grande nécropole du Caire (IVe-IXe/Xe-XVe siècle)

Dans l'Orient mamelouk, Takrūr était le nom donné à la bande islamisée du Sahel, de l'océan Atlantique au lac Tchad. De nombreux musulmans ouest-africains portant la *nisba* « al-Takrūrī » (pl. Takārura, Takārīr, Takārna) peuvent être trouvés dans le sultanat mamelouk. Certains étaient simplement de passage, en route pour le pèlerinage à La Mecque, présents pour le commerce ou bien en quête de science, afin de suivre les enseignements des célèbres professeurs des non moins fameuses institutions mameloukes. Ils retournaient ensuite au Sahel après plusieurs mois ou années. Nombreux sont ceux qui s'installèrent définitivement en Égypte, en Syrie ou dans la péninsule Arabique. La ville du Caire était le principal centre d'attraction de cette mobilité. La nécropole de la Qarāfa fut l'un de ces endroits où les musulmans du Takrūr s'installèrent. Cet article propose de retracer la première histoire ouest-africaine de la Qarāfa.

Mots-clés : Afrique de l'Ouest, Qarāfa, diaspora, mobilités, Takrūr, Takrūrī, Le Caire, saints, nécropole, Sahel, période mamelouke, Égypte médiévale

✦ **ملخص**

تاريخ غرب إفريقيا المرتبط بالقرافة: مسلمو تكرور والجبانة الكبرى بالقاهرة (ق ٤-٩ هـ/١٠-١٥ م)

في الشرق المملوكي، كان اسم تكرور يُطلق على القطاع الإسلامي في منطقة الساحل الإفريقي، الممتد من المحيط الأطلسي إلى بحيرة تشاد. فيمكن العثور على العديد من المسلمين من غرب إفريقيا الذين يحملون نسبة «التكروري» (جمع: تكارُرة، تكارير، تكارنة) في السلطنة المملوكية. كان بعضهم مجرد عابرين في طريقهم إلى الحج إلى مكة، أو موجودين لأغراض تجارية أو طلبًا للعلم بهدف اتباع تعاليم أساتذة مشهورين في مؤسسات مملوكية مشهورة. وكان هؤلاء يعودون بعد عدة أشهر أو سنوات إلى منطقة الساحل. غير أن عددًا كبيرًا منهم قد استقرّ نهائيًا في مصر وسوريا وشبه الجزيرة العربية. كانت مدينة القاهرة هي المركز الرئيس لهذه الحركة ولذلك التنقل. كما كانت القرافة من بين الأماكن التي استقرّ فيها مسلمو تكرور. يتتبع هذا المقال أول تاريخ لغرب إفريقيا المرتبط بالقرافة.

كلمات مفتاحية: غرب إفريقيا، القرافة، جاليات، تنقل، تكرور، تكروري، القاهرة، أولياء، جبانة، منطقة الساحل الإفريقي، العصر المملوكي، مصر في العصور الوسطى

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1. Introduction: Requiem for the Greater Qarāfa

In the 830s/1430s, under the reign of the sultan al-Ašraf Barsbāy (r. 825–841/1422–1438), the Sheikh Mubārak Abū ʿAlī al-Takrūrī, a former black slave, had grown too weak to continue working as a dough-kneader for several bakeries (*afrān*), notably the famous one of Muʿallim Muḥammad al-Maḥallī the miller (*al-ṭaḥḥān*), located at Bāb al-Lūq. Feeling his last days coming, he settled in the Greater Qarāfa. The wondrous Ǧāmiʿ al-Awliyāʾ ("Great Mosque of the Saints", formerly known as Ǧāmiʿ al-Qarāfa), built in the image of the great mosque of al-Azhar, was once the beating heart of the Greater Qarāfa.[1] However, when Mubārak arrived, it was in ruins, and the sheikh found a high and large hill of rubble (*kūm*) at its south. He decided then to level the debris, one bit at a time, re-employing the material to erect tombs. He spent a long time there, wandering everywhere, searching for reusable fragments. Each time he found a slab of marble, he would put it on one of the tombs he had built. Close to Mubārak's place of work, north of the great mystic mausoleum of al-Udfuwī, was an elevated dome under which laid two saints, Fāṭima the Senior and Fāṭima the Minor, and a group of *šurafāʾ*.[2] Pillagers (*mufsidūn*) had lingered in that place. Mubārak took the slab of marble that was still lying on one of the two tombs and put it on a tomb he had constructed, calling it "tomb of Fāṭima the Minor". Later, he wrote on stones names of his own invention and placed them on the tombs he had built. The first name he had imagined was "Šukrān". He desired to cover this specific tomb with a piece of fabric (*sitr*). It was arranged for him and brought from the Bīmāristān al-Manṣūrī in Cairo to the Qarāfa. This transfer was a well-attended event.[3]

This anecdote is the first part of an account given by Nūr al-Dīn al-Saḫāwī (d. after 888/1484), a "sheikh of the visit" (i.e. "guide for pilgrims"). It takes us to the Greater Qarāfa in the middle of the 9th/15th century, when it was already damaged beyond repair, despite the hard work of Mubārak. The great necropolis had always been the home of ruins. However, the illustration of the *Description de l'Égypte* (1809–1822) shows the result of a process that actually started in the last decades of the 8th/14th century and accelerated at the beginning of the 9th/15th century (fig. 1). Much of greater Cairo had fallen into ruin, and if the sultans and the elites had rebuilt their capital by the middle of the 9th/15th century, it was not the case for the Greater Qarāfa.[4]

1. On this specific mosque, see Bloom 1987. See also *infra*.
2. A little south of the Ṭabāṭabā; see fig. 3.
3. Al-Saḫāwī, *Tuḥfat al-aḥbāb*, pp. 180–181; Ohtoshi 2006a, p. 94.
4. On the ruination and rebuilding of Cairo between 750/1350 and 850/1450, see Loiseau 2010.

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Fig. 1. The Qarāfa in the *Description de l'Égypte* (1809).

The immense urban history of Cairo written by al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1442), *al-Mawāʿiẓ wa-l-iʿtibār bi-ḏikr al-ḫiṭaṭ wa-l-āṯār*, initially composed between 818/1415 and 827/1424, and completed until 844/1440, give an overview of the Qarāfa, and especially of the Greater Qarāfa before its demise, when it was a very lively city inside the city.[5] Al-Maqrīzī lists built-up neighbourhoods, wells, markets, cisterns (*ṣahārīǧ*), a bakery (*furn*), villas (*quṣūr*), public fountains (*sabīl*), a gazebo (*manẓara*), and palaces of agreement or kiosks (*ǧawāsiq*). But foremost, the Qarāfa was known as a highly religious and sacred place. Therefore, it is no wonder such places are the most numerous in the *Ḫiṭaṭ*: roofless oratories (*muṣalliyāt*) and *maḥārib*, state-sponsored Sufi convents (*ḫawānīq*) or autonomous ones (*ribāṭāt*, *zawāyā*), Friday mosques (*ǧawāmiʿ*) and colleges (*madāris*).[6] The number of mosques (*masāǧid*) must have been particularly impressive, as al-Maqrīzī states, after having put forward thirty-three of them: "It is said that twelve thousand mosques stood at the Greater Qarāfa."[7] By phrasing it this way (*yuqāl innahu*, "it is said"), al-Maqrīzī clearly hints that the affirmation had to be taken with a grain of salt. Nevertheless, the need for such a great number of places of worship means that a lot of people lived in the Qarāfa among the tombs, mausolea, shrines, and sanctuaries.

5. This work and its historiographic trajectory are presented in Loiseau 2010, pp. 19–27.
6. The places pertaining to the Qarāfa are scattered throughout the *Ḫiṭaṭ*. See the volume of index from Sayyid Fu'ād's edition: al-Maqrīzī, *Ḫiṭaṭ*, *al-kašāfāt al-taḥlīliyya*.
7. Al-Maqrīzī, *Ḫiṭaṭ*, IV, p. 874.

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The history of the medieval Qarāfa has been an interest of academic studies from the early 1900s. Many scholars, among whom historians Yūsuf Rāġib, Tetsuya Ohtoshi and Christopher Taylor, have reconstructed the main sequences of its history.[8] The Qarāfa was as old as Fusṭāṭ, the first Muslim settlement in Egypt. The cemeteries first developed east of Fusṭāṭ and alongside the foot and the slopes of the sacred mountain of the Muqaṭṭam. It is possible to single out three particular moments of urbanisation in the medieval history of the Qarāfa. The necropolis was already inhabited and visited from the Tulunid period (254–292/868–905) to the Ikhshidid period (323–358/935–969).[9] Aḥmad b. Ṭūlūn (r. 254–270/868–884) notably built a monumental aqueduct that ran from the lake (*birka*) al-Ḥabash to ʿAyn al-Ṣīra, crossing the heart of the Greater Qarāfa (fig. 2).[10] The Fatimid period was the first significant moment in the urban development of the Qarāfa. In 366/976, Durzān, the caliph al-Muʿizz's concubine, built with her daughter Sitt al-Mulk the complex of the Ǧāmiʿ al-Qarāfa, a sumptuous edifice that reflected the philanthropic activities of powerful women at the time in the Qarāfa. Building within the walled city of Cairo was the prerogative of men of the court.[11] A second symbolic event takes place during the Ayyubid period (567–648/1171–1250). In 572/1176, Saladin started the construction of well-endowed madrasa near the tomb of al-Šāfiʿī (d. 204/820), founder of the Šāfiʿī *maḏhab* (legal school), and the sultan al-Malik al-Kāmil (r. 615–635/1218–1238) erected an enormous mausoleum over his tomb in 608/1211.[12] Since the foundation of al-Qāhira (358/969), the city had slowly outgrown its walls. Starting from the Ayyubids, the Qarāfa's centre of gravity gradually shifted toward what came to be known as the Lesser Qarāfa (fig. 2), with al-Šāfiʿī's mausoleum at its centre, attracting most of the burials of the new popular saints and the religious or political elite.

Finally, the urban zenith of the Qarāfa was reached under the long reign of al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad b. Qalāwūn (r. 693–694/1293–1295, 698–708/1299–1309, 709–741/1310–1341). The architectural work occurred mainly in the Lesser Qarāfa, but the necropolis as a whole drew ever more people, from the *amīr*-s to the common crowds, for visits or to settle there.[13] At that time, the Qarāfa exerted a powerful attraction on people for ambivalent reasons: it was a place where one could escape the constraints of society, where women could frequent men, where all kind of social behaviours could be found, but at the same time it was a holy place, a refuge for indigents and those fallen from grace.[14] In his *Ḫiṭaṭ*, al-Maqrīzī offered snippets of poetry to reflect this reality:

8. Guest 1926; Massignon 1958; Rāġib 1972; 1973; 1974; Ohtoshi 1993; 2006a; 2006b; Taylor 1999; el-Kadi, Bonnamy 2001; al-Ibrashy 2006.
9. Massignon 1958, pp. 55–56; Ohtoshi 2006a, p. 87.
10. Taylor 1999, p. 18.
11. Bloom 1987, pp. 16–17.
12. Taylor 1999, pp. 20, 27; Ohtoshi 2006a, p. 88.
13. Ohtoshi 2006a, pp. 89–90; al-Ibrashy 2013, p. 149.
14. Ohtoshi 2006a, pp. 95–96.

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The Qarāfa gathers two opposites, * the here below and the thereafter. It is the most excellent abode.
The outcast mingles with the illustrious in friendship. * The ascetic flies around its tombs.
How many nights did we spend in it while our companion of pleasure * sang, nearly melting stone away.

* * *

I was filled with wonder at the case of the Qarāfa! Here it was * with the sorrow of its dead and yet our heart brightened with the joy of a child.
I found it a haven for all the lovers. * The besotted were settling there, the heart was becoming infatuated with it.[15]

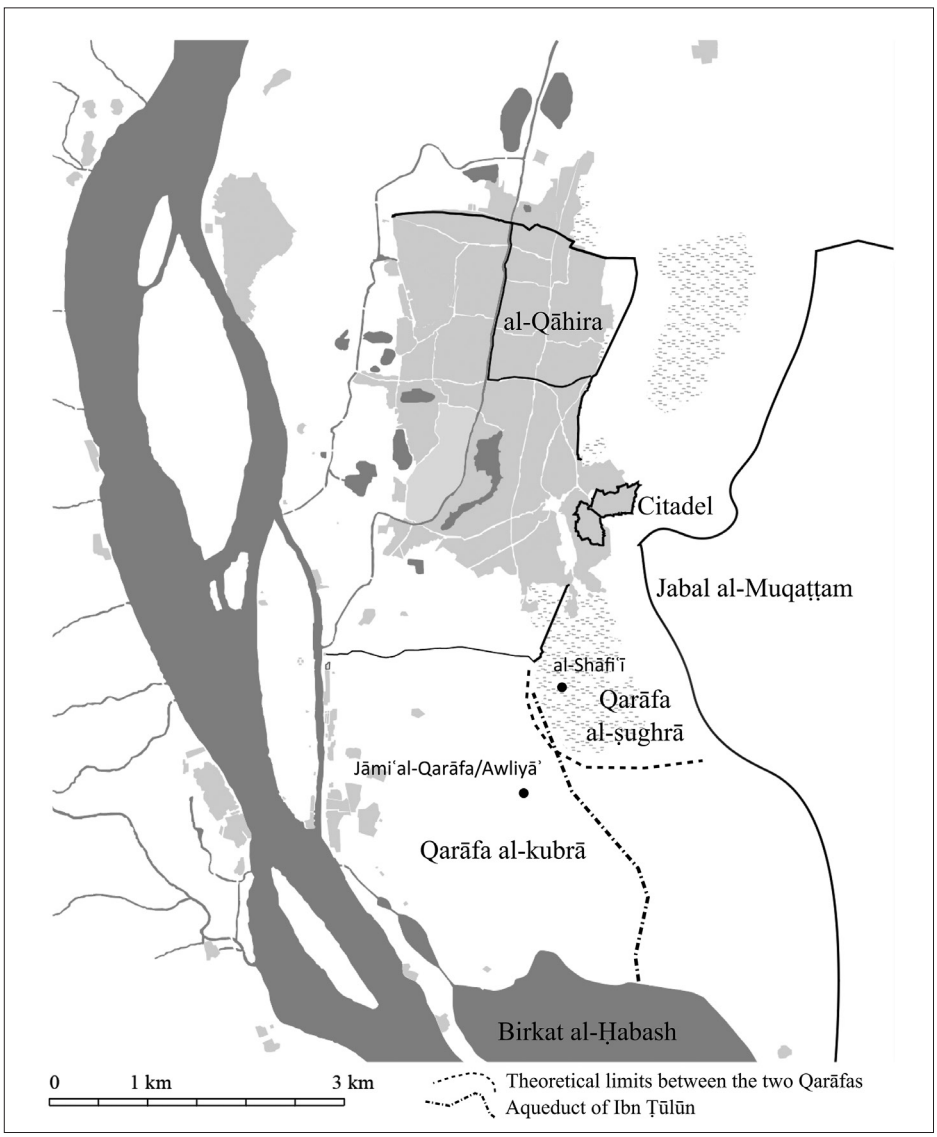


Fig. 2. General map of the Qarāfa in Cairene context (map: H. Collet; basemap: J. Loiseau 2010 ©).

15. Al-Maqrīzī, *Ḫiṭaṭ*, IV, pp. 849–850.

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2. Al-Takrūrī, a new *nisba* for Islam

Mubārak bore the name of "al-Takrūrī". The *nisba* (name of origin) "al-Takrūrī" (pl. al-Takārīr, al-Takārura, al-Takārna) appeared toward the mid-7th/13th century in the Middle East. Al-Takrūrī means "from al-Takrūr". In 1969, ʿUmar al-Naqar was among the firsts to take an interest in that name in the Egyptian context in his PhD dissertation "West Africa and the Muslim Pilgrimage: An Historical Study with Special Reference to the Nineteenth Century" and in an article published in the *Journal of African History*, "Takrūr: The History of a Name". In 1986, Nehemia Levtzion realised a similar study entitled "Mamluk Egypt and Takrūr (West Africa)".

In the Arabic sources of the Muslim West, Takrūr was a kingdom that was first described by the Andalusī geographer al-Bakrī in his *Masālik* in 460/1068. It was probably located in the valley of the Senegal River, in the Bilād al-Sūdān ("the Land of the Blacks") of the medieval Arabic geography. Warǧābī b. Rabīs (d. 432/1040–1041), one of its kings, al-Bakrī says, was the first to convert to Islam and support its diffusion in the kingdom.[16] Takrūr remained independent until its conquest by the sultanate of Mālī around the mid-7th/13th century. ʿU. al-Naqar and N. Levtzion stated that the name Takrūr appears first in the oriental Arabic sources in Ibn Ḫallikān's *Wafayāt*, written between 654/1256 and 672/1274, to denote a land and a people west to Kanem.[17] Afterward, the use of "al-Takrūrī" to refer to Sahelian Muslims became widespread, and the Islamised part of the Sahelian strip was renamed "Bilād al-Takrūr" ("the Land of Takrūr") to single it out from the broader non-monotheist Bilād al-Sūdān. However, the *nisba* "al-Takrūrī" had likely spread earlier. The earliest mention I was able to find in the chronicles is in the *Tārīḫ Irbil* of al-Mustawfī (d. 637/1239) who quotes a certain Masʿūd b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Takrūrī as one of his informers.[18]

It is generally admitted that the name "al-Takrūrī" came to define West African Muslims as a whole through the pilgrimage of Muslims coming from the kingdom of Takrūr. The kingdom is purportedly one of the first whose dynasty adopted Islam officially in the region. Then, people in Mecca, Medina, and later Cairo developed the habit of calling "Takrūrī" any black Muslim coming from the Bilād al-Sūdān. If the Kanem was first separated from the Takrūr, all the Sahelian strip, including the Chad Lake region, was gradually incorporated in the geographical acceptation of the term. It poses a problem as medieval geographers and historians had a limited geographical knowledge on the Sahel. To their eyes, a single king could rule the entire region. Therefore, they call "king of the Takrūr" whoever appears to be the hegemonic ruler of the moment, sometimes blurring our ability to tell which part of the Sahel this title refers to. In the middle of the 8th/14th century for example, there is no doubt it is the sultan of Mālī. The same goes for the period after the middle of the 9th/15th century, when the expression "king of the Takrūr" designates the sultan of Borno. But for the first half of the

16. Al-Naqar 1969, p. 367; Levtzion 1986, p. 183.
17. Al-Naqar 1969, p. 369; Levtzion 1986, p. 183.
18. Al-Mustawfī, *Tārīḫ Irbil*, I, pp. 292–293.

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9th/15th century, when the power of Mālī waned and Borno was on the rise, it is trickier to tell. In general, the use of the *nisba* "al-Takrūrī" is a curse and a blessing at the same time. It allows us to better find Sahelian Muslims in the documents, but most of the time erase all information on their origin and personal history.

As ʿU. al-Naqar's, N. Levtzion's and many others' works indicate, the history of Sahelian Muslims in Egypt has been conducted in the remit of two thematics tied to travelling. First, the journey for the pilgrimage to Mecca of which the sojourn to Cairo was one of the highlights. Second, the journey in the pursuit of science (*ṭalab al-ʿilm*).[19] Cairo had indeed become, after the Sunni restauration of the Ayyubids, the dominant centre of Islamic scholarship.[20] The Egyptian capital was also the meeting point of western and eastern mystic ways of Islam.[21] Muslims thirsty for any kind of Islamic experience could then quench their desire with normative and spiritual initiations or both. This history of mobilities between the Sahel and Egypt seems to have overshadowed another vivid historical reality. West African Muslims had also settled in Egypt, the Mamluk domain, and above all, Cairo. They were part of the social landscape, could be found in any level of society. Cairo is obviously the place we find them in greater number. Yet, there is a particular place that was closely associated to Takrūrī Muslims during the last three centuries of the medieval period: the necropolis of the Qarāfa. The subject is not entirely new, as they appear in passing in several historical studies on Cairo or the Qarāfa.[22] It is now time to make them the centre of attention.

3. The "books of the visit", *lieux de mémoire* of the medieval Qarāfa

Holy men of Islam dwelled early in the Qarāfa. Sufism and more broadly mystical Islam gained a prominent status in the Egyptian society under the Ayyubids and the Mamluks, and were favoured by the court.[23] Yet, living or dead, saints residing in the Qarāfa were visited long before these eras. The necropolis was already part of the Egyptians' spiritual daily life under the Fatimids and previously.[24] Scholars (*ʿulamāʾ*, *fuqahāʾ*) and mystics (*ṣūfiyya*, *fuqarāʾ*) respectively animated the normative and spiritual religious life, but the two worlds were deeply intermingled and connected.[25]

19. I am obviously talking of free persons, who are the focus of this study. It goes without saying that this history of mobility has also been dominated by the subject of slavery, through what is called the "trans-Saharan slave trade" or "the oriental slave trade".
20. See for example Sartain 1971.
21. Geoffroy 1995, pp. 169–212.
22. See for example Garcin 1976 (ed. 2005), pp. 426–429, who gives an intense and rapid overview of the Takrūrī in medieval Egypt.
23. Geoffroy 1995, pp. 101–107.
24. Bloom 1987, p. 14.
25. On the scholars who were Sufis and vice versa in Egypt and Syria, see Ṣafī al-Dīn, *Risāla*; Geoffroy 1995, pp. 126–127. For examples in Tunisia, Morocco, and the Saharan West, see respectively Amri 2013; Cornell 1998; Stewart, Stewart 1973. On the staging of an opposition between the two statuses for performative/personal purposes, see Cecere 2013.

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Saints could come from any level of society and reveal their sainthood in many forms. From the end of the 6th/12th century, Sufi orders (*ṭarīqa*, pl. *ṭuruq*) became the dominant institution through which mystical Islam was expressed. Yet, the term "Sufi" itself was not widespread at the time to designate a mystic.[26] In general, the fact that many individuals could experience and cumulate a variety of mystical experiences should prevent us to confine them in predetermined categories or institutions such as Sufi orders. A rich vocabulary existed for mystical attributes, reflecting the richness of the paths toward hidden realities and knowledge: the renunciant (*zāhid*), the devout (*ʿābid*), the blame-seeker (*malāmatī*), the one who used science for spiritual realisations (*al-ʿālim al-ʿāmil*), the illiterate sheikh inspired by God (*šayḫ ummī*), the master of the states (*rabb al-aḥwāl*), the one whose mind had been raptured by God (*maǧḏūb*, pl. *maǧāḏīb*), etc.[27] *Maǧāḏīb* particularly flourished under the Mamluk period. Their minds being most of the time coalesced in the invisible (*al-ġayb*), they were rarely aware of their surroundings, but their eccentric behaviour was tolerated.[28]

Saints could be distinguished with one or several of these mystical attributes. In his study on the holy men at the Qarāfa, C. Taylor gave an extensive and lengthy repository of examples about the feats, abilities, social and political functions of the saints.[29] Saints were particularly sought for regarding their capacity to answer prayers and demands through intercession with the divine.[30] The Qarāfa and its saints offered a large choice for all kind of acts of devotion with performative intents and was especially important in time of crisis for its open space and its spiritual protection, as it was the case for instance after the great earthquake of 702/1303 or in case of epidemics.[31].

Sainthood was a vivid reality in social life. The Ayyubid and Mamluk periods produced many new saints who became very popular and overshadowed older ones. Saints could also disappear from memory and history, with the ruining of their mausolea for example, as we will see in the case of many great medieval saints of the Qarāfa. Cairo and its surroundings did not have the monopoly on sainthood. Aḥmad al-Badawī (d. 675/1276), originally from Morocco, settled in Ṭanṭā in the Delta and has remained to this day the most popular saint in Egypt.[32] Alexandria or Upper Egypt also saw a blooming of saints.[33]

The pious visits to the tombs are called *ziyārāt* (sing. *ziyāra*). They were gradually organised by "sheikhs of the visit" (*mašāyiḫ al-ziyāra*) who guided groups in the necropolis alongside autonomous visits. They were especially taking care of institutionalised visits happening at set times and dates, such as the Friday visits. These sheikhs instructed the appropriate

26. For instance, in the 7th/13th century, Ṣafī al-Dīn b. Ẓāfir doesn't call Ibn ʿArabī and al-Šāḏilī "Sufis" even though they are considered among the greatest men of the history of Sufism. See Ṣafī al-Dīn, *Risāla*, p. 115.
27. Geoffroy 1995, pp. 231–232, 240, 273. *Sūfī* and *faqīr* had become synonyms during the Mamluk period.
28. Geoffroy 1995, p. 252.
29. Taylor 1999, pp. 80–167.
30. Ohtoshi 1993.
31. Ohtoshi 2006a, pp. 96–97.
32. Geoffroy 1995, pp. 169–170; Mayeur-Jaouen 2019.
33. Ṣafī al-Dīn, *Risāla*; Geoffroy 1995.

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behaviour during the tour in general and more specifically before tombs that required certain rituals (e.g. handshaking, taking out clothes) or orientated the visitors (*zuwwār*) to the saints fitting their needs (e.g. the settling of one's debt or good fortune for the journey of the hajj).[34] They were the living memory of the Qarāfa, whose topography was always evolving, keeping alive the stories of the people buried there. They must have been conscious of their unique position as they started to write "books of the visit" (*kutub al-ziyāra*), genuine guide books detailing the circuits of visits in the Qarāfa, its topography, identifying the names of the most famous tombs and giving narratives on the characters buried underneath. Four of these "books" from the medieval period are still extant.

The first, from Muwaffaq b. ʿUṯmān (d. 615/1218), is known as *Muršid al-zuwwār ilā qubūr al-abrār* or *al-Durr al-munaẓẓam fī ziyārat al-ǧabal al-Muqaṭṭam*.[35] Ibn ʿUṯmān set a kind of standard and was quoted by successive sheikhs of the visit. Nevertheless, he focuses mostly on the Muqaṭṭam district and major figures buried in the Qarāfa. It is the less detailed of the four. The second, *Miṣbāḥ al-dayāǧī wa-ġawṯ al-rāǧī wa-kahf al-lāǧī*, is from Muḥammad b. al-Nāsiḫ (d. after 699/1299–1300). It is much more detailed than the *Muršid* and was highly quoted thereafter.[36] The third, from Šams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. al-Zayyāt (d. 814/1412), *al-Kawākib al-sayyāra fī tartīb al-ziyāra fi-l-Qarāfatayn al-kubrā wa-l-suġrā*, is the most famous of the four. It describes over one thousand and nine hundred entombed persons, and is the most prolific for the Qarāfa. Finally, we find the *Tuḥfat al-aḥbāb wa-buġiyyat al-ṭullāb fī al-ḫiṭaṭ wa-al-mazārāt wa-al-tarāǧim wa-al-biqāʿ al-mubārakāt*, completed in 889/February 1484 by Nūr al-Dīn al-Saḫāwī.[37] It is less original as he drew extensively from Ibn al-Zayyāt but provides nevertheless some updates on the tombs. Furthermore, he also describes other cemeteries, such as the necropolis of the Desert (al-Ṣaḥrāʾ) favoured by the Circassian Mamluk sultans.[38]

The study of these books has a long academic tradition.[39] In 1958, Louis Massignon published a comprehensive study on the Lesser Qarāfa, "La cité des morts au Caire (Qarâfa, Darb al-Ahmar)", in which he gave a much incarnated and spiritual narrative on the visits partly based on ongoing practices at his time. L. Massignon notably dwells on the "Seven Saints", a particular tour in the Qarāfa that is stated to have started under the reign of the Ayyubid sultan al-Malik al-Kāmil. Called the "visit of the Seven", it was a visitor's favourite and was put forward by the "books of the visit". In his *Ḫiṭaṭ*, al-Maqrīzī gave two alternative lists for the Seven that had emerged at his time.[40] Of all the scholarly works on the Qarāfa, except L. Massignon's article, very few have attempted to reconstruct maps of the Qarāfa, and if so, they focused mostly on the

34. Al-Ibrashy 2006, p. 271.
35. Ohtoshi 2006b; al-Ibrashy 2006, pp. 271–272.
36. Tetsuya Ohtoshi (2006b, p. 305) tells us: "The total number of known entombed persons described sharply rises to nearly 1193", as opposed to the *Muršid* that described only over four hundred buried individuals.
37. Ohtoshi 2006b, p. 302.
38. Al-Ibrashy 2006, p. 278.
39. See the works listed *supra*, n. 8.
40. Al-Maqrīzī, *Ḫiṭaṭ*, IV, pp. 907–908.

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Lesser Qarāfa, for the Greater Qarāfa has almost completely disappeared from present Cairene landscape. The most detailed effort for mapping the medieval Qarāfa has been offered by May al-Ibrashy based on Ibn al-Zayyāt's *Kawākib* that carve the necropolis in many districts and sub-districts, not always easy to follow but nonetheless allowing to situate lost mausolea and tombs.[41]

Yet, to my knowledge, no maps have tried to situate the three lists of the Seven. Before turning to the subject of West African Muslims, it is important to visualise them in the Qarāfa, as their tombs structured the visits and the necropolis. The first list gives (fig. 3):

1. Abū al-Ḥasan b. Ṣāʾiġ al-Dīnawarī (d. 331/943);
2. ʿAbd al-Ṣamad al-Baġdādī (d. 335/946–947);
3. Ismāʿīl al-Muzanī (or al-Muznī; d. 264/877–878);
4. Bakkār b. Qutayba (d. 270/883–884);
5. al-Mufaḍḍāl b. Faḍāla (d. 181/866);
6. Abū Bakr ʿAbd al-Malik al-Qumanī (or al-Qimnī; d. 432/1041);
7. Ḏū-l-Nūn al-Misrī (d. 245/859–860).[42]

As we can see, this list contains old saints buried in the Qarāfa who were visited long before the institutionalisation of the visits. To give an order of the tombs' density in the "books of the visit", let's consider the case of al-Dīnawarī and al-Baġdādī, whose tombs are no longer extant. Their mausolea were located between the Luʾluʾa mosque and the mausoleum of the mystic poet Ibn al-Fāriḍ. Between these two extant constructions, Ibn al-Nāsiḫ's *Miṣbāḥ* gives the name of forty-two buried individual and informs on the presence of many other tombs. Yet, even if the pages belie us to think we have walked some distance in company of the sheikh, only 170 m separate the two extant monuments as the crow flies.

The first alternative list given by al-Maqrīzī states:

1. Ṣila b. Muʾammal (d. 429/1038);
2. Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Ḫuwarāzmī (d. 401/1011);
3. Sālim al-ʿAfīf (already present in the *Muršid*);
4. Abū al-Faḍl b. al-Ǧawharī (d. 480/1088);
5. Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad al-Bazzāz (already present in the *Muršid*);
6. Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Ṭayr (Ṭabb) al-Warḥš (in the state of identifiable ruins at the time of Ibn al-Zayyāt);
7. Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Ṣāliḥ al-Andalusī al-Kaḥḥāl (already present in the *Muršid*).[43]

41. Al-Ibrashy 2006, pp. 296–297.
42. Ibn al-Zayyāt, *Kawākib*, p. 580.
43. Al-Maqrīzī, *Ḫiṭaṭ*, IV/2, p. 908.

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As for the third list, some names are familiar:

1. ʿUqba b. ʿĀmir al-Ǧuhanī (d. 58/678, companion);
2. al-Šāfiʿī (d. 204/820);
3. Abū Bakr al-Zaqqāq (4th/10th c.);
4. Ismāʿīl al-Muzanī (d. 264/877–878);
5. Abū al-ʿAbbās Aḥmad al-Ḥarrār (d. around 620/1223);
6. al-Faqīh b. Diḥya al-Kalbī (d. 632/1235);
7. Ibn Fāris al-Laḫmī (appears in the *Kawākib*).

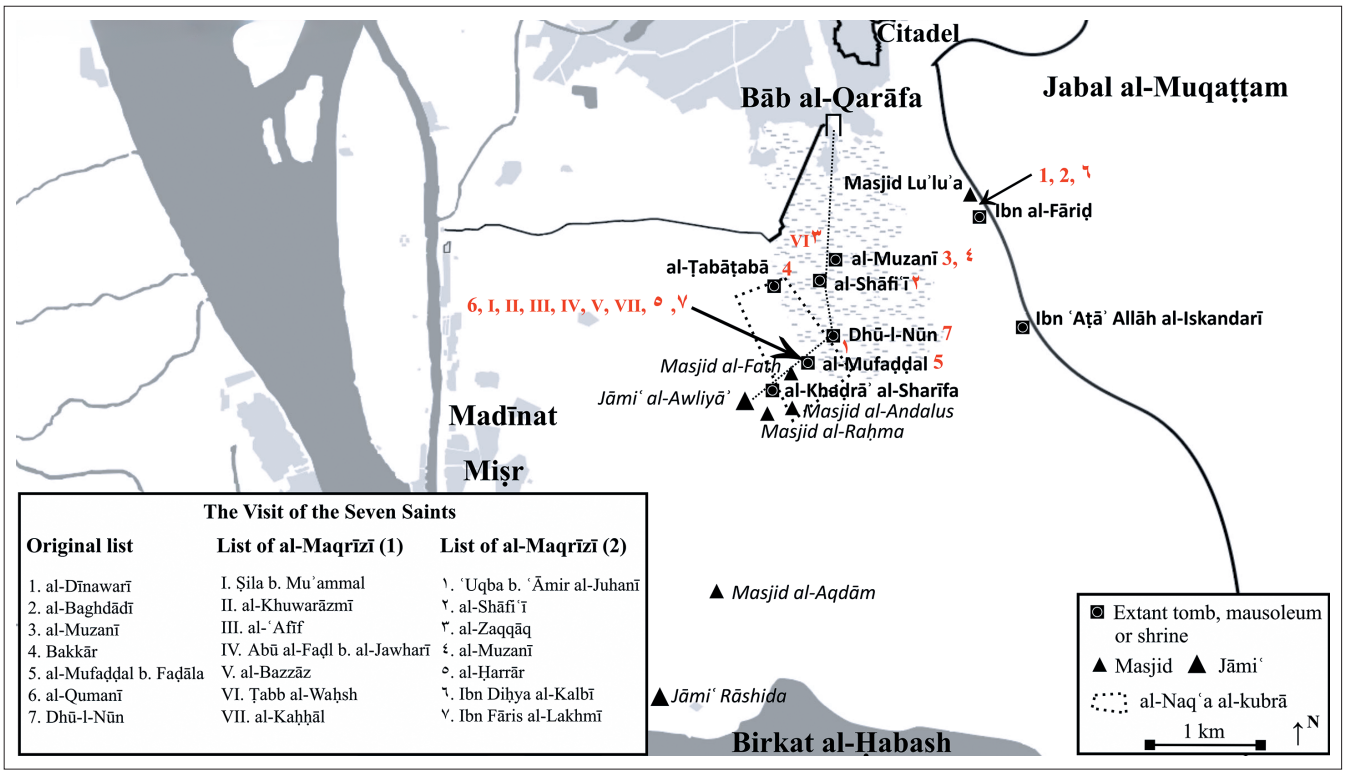


Fig. 3. The visit of the "Seven" (map: H. Collet; basemap: J. Loiseau 2010 ©).

As we can see on Figure 3, most of the saints listed lied around al-Mufaḍḍāl, at the junction between the Lesser and Greater Qarāfa. The area, called al-Naqʿa al-Kubrā, was considered the most sacred of the necropolis.

4. Early presence of Takrūrī Muslims in Cairo: Myth-coated narratives

The mentions of the oldest Takrūrī Muslims in Egypt appear in the literature of the "books of the visit" with some confusion. A great saint, Abū Muḥammad Yūsuf b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Takrūrī, lived at the time of the first Cairene Fatimid caliph.[44] Ibn al-Nāsiḫ gives a fair account of his

44. Al-Muʿizz li-Dīn Allāh (r. 341–365/953–975), fourth Fatimid caliph, arrived in Cairo in ramaḍān 362/July 972, but the city was founded after the conquest of Egypt in 358/969.

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life exposing mostly his miracles (*karāmāt*), the most famous of which tells of a time he stopped the wind, the Nile flow, and walked on water to retrieve a child abducted from his mother by Sudanic bandits who had escaped by boat. Another miracle tells us that one day, the caliph had sent men to seize gallnuts from him. Yet, when the gallnuts arrived to him, the caliph found that they had turn to stone. As soon as he gave them back to the saint, they turned back to their normal state.[45] Abū Muḥammad lived in Būlāq, on the west bank of the Nile. The great mosque there took his name, and this district took the name of "Būlāq al-Takrūrī" (or "al-Takrūr").[46] Further in his book, Ibn al-Nāsiḫ speaks of an Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad al-Takrūrī but fleetingly comments: "It is said that he is the Takrūrī mentioned before."[47] The problem is that this time, this Takrūrī is located in the Qarāfa, not in Būlāq. Ibn al-Nāsiḫ might have conveyed hearsays to mask the fact that he had no information on the latter saint or might have repeated a common confusion. In his *Kawākib*, Ibn al-Zayyāt provides more information on Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad:

> Ibn Ǧābār passed away in 973. […] On the west side, at the tip of Ibn Ǧābār['s tomb, lies] the Sheikh Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad al-Takrūrī al-Mālikī, companion of Ibn Ǧābār. He discoursed on the *uṣūl al-fiqh* of the Maliki and Shafiite school. It is said he is the Takrūrī mentioned before in Būlāq. *Rather, it is said that he was his sheikh*. He was an eloquent *faqīh* and engaged in numerous sciences. He used to say: "The wealth our bodies seed is for horses." The *amīr* of Egypt *[Kāfūr al-Iḫšīdī]* had visited him and asked prayers of him. His eyes had been touched [by a disease]. He *[Muḥammad al-Takrūrī]* implored God so He would give him back his eye, and his eye returned as it was before. Kāfūr had a hundred dinars sent to him. It appeared to the envoy that he *[Muḥammad al-Takrūrī]* was in a state of madness *[al-ǧunūn]*. He then returned to Kāfūr and said: "You sent me to a madman *[maǧnūn]*." Kāfūr answered to him: "He is not mad. He does his religious deeds at night and fast in silence during the day *[yaqūm al-layl wa-yaṣūm al-nahār]*." The man *[the envoy]* resolved to return there at night and to bring to him a company of pious men *[ǧamāʿa min al-ṣāliḥīn]*. They came to Ibn Ǧābār and asked [to see] al-Takrūrī. "But we did not find him and we stepped outside. That is when [we] saw a man praying, looked at him [from a distance], and he was al-Takrūrī! We saw him and followed him until he reached a huge door *[darb]*, which he found closed. He said: 'Is it my habit with you to close the door to my nose?' Then the door opened up and he went out [through it]. We went through behind him until we reached a cemetery. Then, he started to pray and left afterwards. Then, a wild animal *[waḥš]* arrived and rolled on the floor where he had prayed."[48]

45. Taylor 1999, p. 153.
46. The current neighbourhood of Būlāq al-Dakrūr is located further west than its medieval homonym.
47. Ibn al-Nāsiḫ, *Miṣbāḥ*, p. 139.
48. Ibn al-Zayyāt, *Kawākib*, p. 237.

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Ibn al-Zayyāt then proceed to present the Takrūrī from Būlāq, making a clear distinction between Abū Muḥammad Yūsuf al-Takrūrī and Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad al-Takrūrī. In the *Tuḥfat al-aḥbāb*, Nūr al-Dīn al-Saḫāwī reproduces faithfully Ibn al-Zayyāt's account.[49]

It was very common for companions to decide to be buried next to each other. This phenomenon produced a concentration of divine blessing (*baraka*) that in turn encouraged others to be buried next to such clusters of saints. Ibn Ǧābār, Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad al-Takrūrī's neighbour, is celebrated as a great saint in the "books of the visit". He was a figure of *al-ʿālim al-ṣūfī* as he is presented as one of the greatest scholars (*akābir al-ʿulamāʾ*) and as one of the greatest Sufi sheikhs (*kibār mašāyiḫ al-ṣūfiyya*). He had come to Egypt as a child with his father under the reign of Kāfūr al-Iḫšīdī, governor of the country (*ḥākim*) from 334/946 to 355/966 and then its sovereign ruler until his death in 357/968 under the eunuch title of *ustāḏ*. In the text above, the word "*amīr*" for Kāfūr, to be taken in the Mamluk context, may suggest that Muḥammad al-Takrūrī's interaction with him happened between 355/966 and 357/968. Ibn Ǧābār was close with Kāfūr and his entourage, with whom he had a relation of friendship. First a fine scholar, *ʿālim* and *faqīh*, he discovered Sufism and established his *zāwiya* in the Qarāfa where he had a circle (*ḥalqa*) of disciples. Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad al-Takrūrī was likely part of his circle. Toward the end of his life, he removed himself from society and retreated in the mountain of the Muqaṭṭam where he died.[50] Like his West African companion, Ibn Ǧābār was revered as a saint before his passing.

Muḥammad al-Takrūrī was buried next to another great saint, Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī al-Fuqāʿī, a close companion of Ibn Ṣāʾiġ al-Dīnawarī (d. 331/943), one of the original Seven and the great mystic of his time. Al-Dīnawarī was considered the supreme Pole (*al-quṭb al-ġawṯ*, i.e. the highest in the hierarchy of the saints) of his time and a companion of Ḫaḍir (or Ḫiḍr), the undying and invisible patron of the Sufis who would appear only to a chosen and worthy few to unveil for them the hidden knowledge.[51] This leads us to a second early place associated to West African Muslims, the Cave of the Blacks (Kahf al-Sūdān). According to the *Muršid*, the place was very famous. At the time of Ibn ʿUṯmān (before 615/1218), everybody had already forgotten when it had become associated to mystics, but everyone agreed it was first occupied by a group of Muslim Sūdān, hence the name, who had dug it in the mountain and made it their place of worship.[52] Over time, the cave was built-up and overlaid with several historical strata until the contemporaneous period.[53] The cave was favoured by the mystics for their spiritual retreat (*ḫalwa*) or their esoteric teaching. It was precisely the case of al-Dīnawarī and his disciple al-Fuqāʿī, the latter even supervising the construction of a *miḥrāb* in the cave.[54] The *kutub al-ziyāra* tell of a famous anecdote when one day the Devil himself tried to tempt

49. Al-Saḫāwī, *Tuḥfat al-aḥbāb*, p. 257.
50. Ibn al-Nāsiḫ, *Miṣbāḥ*, p. 138; Ibn al-Zayyāt, *Kawākib*, p. 236.
51. Geoffroy 1995, pp. 109, 341–343.
52. Ibn ʿUṯmān, *Muršid*, p. 21. In his *Ḫiṭaṭ*, al-Maqrīzī reprises verbatim the text of *Muršid*, IV, p. 883.
53. Massignon 1958, pp. 65–66. It was listed as national heritage in 1940.
54. Ibn al-Zayyāt, *Kawākib*, p. 48.

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them in the cave.[55] Al-Fuqāʿī was foreseen by al-Dīnawarī as the one who would succeed him at the station of the *ġawṯ*, and it came to pass. However, in "La cité des morts", L. Massignon argues that Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Takrūrī had first succeeded, for a time, al-Dīnawarī at the mountain, before al-Fuqāʿī. Sadly, he does not provide any reference, and I was not able to find any evidence in the "books of the visit" or elsewhere that supports this claim. In any case, Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad was a close companion of Ibn Ǧābār, known for his retreat at the mountain. It is likely that the Takrūrī saint also spent some time at the Kahf al-Sūdān, which had at least a dozen saints settled there at the time, and may have kept company with al-Fuqāʿī as their vicinity side by side in death suggests.[56]

As we can see, the hagiographic dimension has taken over these narratives, where the life of the saints often serves as a cautionary tale for men in power. Offending a saint always backfires while seeking their company is ever profitable. Takrūrī Muslims appear in Egypt in the remit of mystical Islam. In a dynamic context of sainthood, standing out could undeniably promote oneself to the front row of society.

Regarding these two Takrūrī-s' place of origin, we are left with more questions than answers. Their accounts appear in Ibn al-Nāsiḫ's *Miṣbāḥ* and are absent from Ibn ʿUṯmān's *Muršid* who gives far less occurrences than the other "books of the visit". The Kahf al-Sūdān makes its apparition in the *Muršid*, at a time when the *nisba* "al-Takrūrī" had purportedly not replaced "al-Sūdānī" to refer to Sahelian Muslims in Egypt. Three centuries separate the lives of the Būlāqī and Qarāfī Takrūrī saints, and Ibn al-Nāsiḫ's work. Furthermore, the author of the *Miṣbāḥ* was writing at a time when the *nisba* "al-Takrūrī" was commonly used. One tomb was located in a part of the Qarāfa that later fell in ruins and has vanished. The other one is still extant but has been moved after 790/1388 to a new location to preserve it from the Nile floods. The mausoleum of the Būlāqī is currently located in the garden of the Museum of Agriculture that just reopened after having been closed several years for renovation. No medieval inscription has survived in the current mausoleum that was entirely rebuilt in 2022 and bear the name "Sīdī al-Dakrūrī".[57] If we are to believe that they were indeed named "al-Takrūrī" (and not "al-Sūdānī") as soon as the second half of the 4th/10th century, we have therefore to reconsider the conventional chronology of the Islamisation for the Takrūr.[58] The kingdom is first featured in the work of al-Bakrī (460/1068) who defends the idea that Islam spread thereinto thanks to one of its kings who died in 432/1040. It is possible that the Takrūr's society had a much earlier Muslim component that seized the opportunity of travelling the world their newly acquired faith had opened up to them. If we set back a century the beginnings of Islamisation

55. Ibn ʿUṯmān, *Muršid*, p. 149; Taylor 1999, p. 92.

56. Ibn ʿUṯmān, *Muršid*, p. 149.

57. The last one mentioned in the documentation dates from 715/1315. See Qāsim 1945 (ed. 2017), VI, p. 254. Current plaque in the mausoleum ties the Takrūrī saint to the Āl al-Bayt through the great Maġribī mystic Abū Madyan (509–594/1115–1198). This phenomenon is common in Egypt regarding medieval West African saints whose origin has been completely forgotten and replaced with new narratives.

58. To my knowledge, the toponym "Takrūr" appears first in Arabic literature in the *Aḫbār al-zamān* of al-Masʿūdī (d. 346/957) as a land with no connection to Islam. See Cuoq (ed.) 1975 (ed. 1985), p. 62.

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in the Takrūr, the *nisba* "al-Takrūrī" could have been indeed the first Muslim Sahelian name to reach Egypt. It would explain why it was chosen to name all Muslims from this part of the world when a much greater number of West African Muslims started to make the journey to Egypt at the beginning of the 7th/13th century.

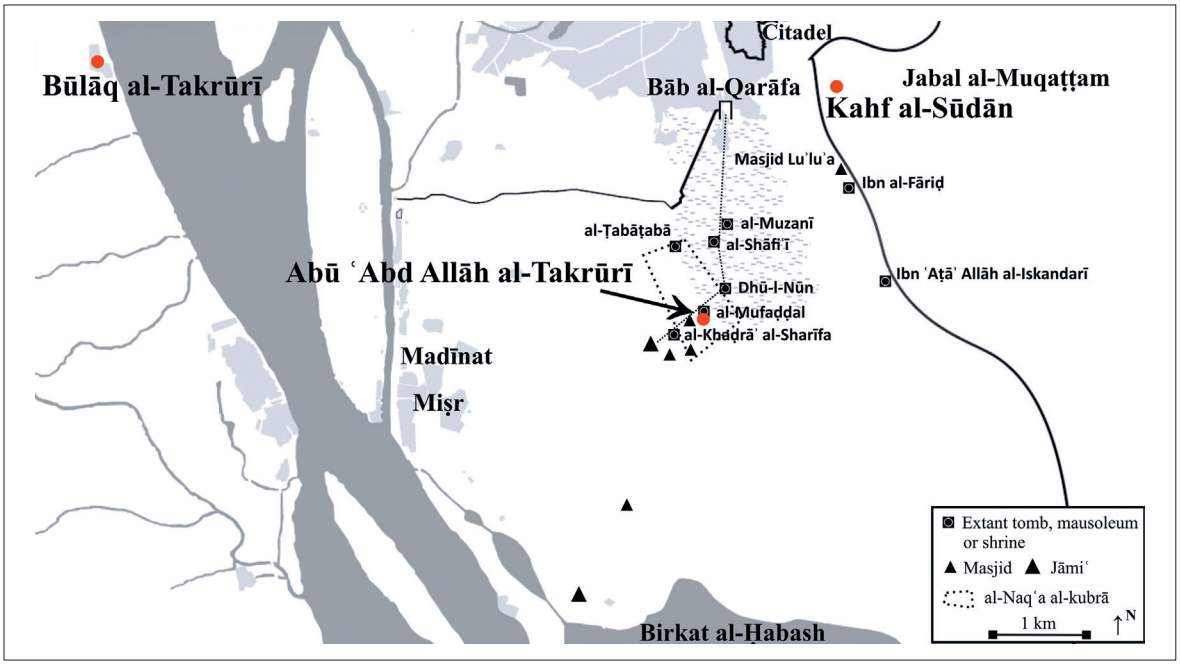


Fig. 4. The first Takrūrī presence ever recorded in Egypt (map: H. Collet; basemap: J. Loiseau 2010 ©).

5. Settling in the Qarāfa at the blessed time of the visits

As I said, Takrūrī Muslims are not featured in the *Muršid*. Almost a century later, Ibn al-Nāsiḫ gives a new picture of the Qarāfa, more detailed and attentive to what had changed. In the decades separating the two sheikhs of the visit, Takrūrī Muslims had settled in the Qarāfa, formed a community, and were even an active part of the Qarāfī society. In return, this prompted the sheikh of the visit to cast a light on a more ancient presence of members identified with their community. Outside the book of the visit, I have found only one text that mentions their presence in the 7th/13th century. The scene takes place in the surroundings of the Masǧid al-Andalus, renowned mosque of the Greater Qarāfa erected in 526/1132 (fig. 3), which offered ample space for large gatherings.[59] Al-Maqrīzī relates the story in his *Ḫiṭaṭ* upon broaching the history of the aforesaid mosque:

> When the sultan al-Malik al-Ẓāhir Rukn al-Dīn Baybars al-Bunduqdārī died in Damascus, in muḥarram 676 *[July 1277]*, and after his son al-Malik al-Saʿīd Barkah Ḫān was elevated to the sultanate, he organised a wake *[ʿazāʾ]* for his father in the Masǧid al-Andalus. Readers *[qurrāʾ]*

59. Al-Maqrīzī, *Ḫiṭaṭ*, IV/2, p. 856.

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and jurists *[fuqahāʾ]* gathered there. Kitchens were set, and a lot of dishes were prepared. It was divided between the *zawiya*-s. Huge tablecloth mats *[asmiṭa]* were laid in the tents that were set up around [the Masǧid] al-Andalus. People ate together, regardless of social categories, the readers accomplished the august reading of the Quran from one end to the other. This moment was recorded in the register of the most important affairs attested in Egypt. It happened in muḥarram 677, one year exactly after the passing of al-Malik al-Ẓāhir. Then, after that, he *[al-Malik al-Saʿīd]* performed good deeds for: a collective *[muǧtamaʿ]* of the madrasa al-Nāṣiriyya, the one next to the dome of al-Šāfiʿī, a collective of the great mosque of Ibn Ṭūlūn, a collective of the great mosque of al-Ẓāhir at Bayn al-Qaṣrayn, a collective of the madrasa al-Ṣāliḥiyya, a collective of Dār al-Ḥadīṯ al-Kāmila, a collective of the *ḫanqāh* al-Ṣāliḥiyya Saʿīd al-Suʿadāʾ, and a collective of the great mosque of al-Ḥākim. Numerous dishes were arranged for these collectives. *He performed good deeds for the Takārura by saving them a table [ḫiwān] where they could eat*. He did the same for the readers, whose table was visited by many virtuous and righteous people.[60]

As we can see, the wake was not an open event but rather received delegations of the main religious institutions of the time and selected groups. The fact that a table was arranged for the representatives of the Takārura suggests that they were already a well-established group in the Qarāfa in 677/1278 and were part of its society. Indeed, the Takrūrī Muslims were inscribed in the sacred geography of the Qarāfa beyond the sole case of Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad al-Takrūrī. Ibn al-Nāsiḫ gives a first cluster in his *Miṣbāḥ*:

At his *[the mašhad of al-Zīlʿī]* south, [lies] the Sheikh Abū Bakr al-Takrūrī, the Sheikh ʿUmar al-Takrūrī, Raḍī al-Takrūrī, and a company of people *[ǧamāʿa]* from the Takrūr, scholars *[ʿulamāʾ]*, virtuous men *[fuḍalāʾ]*, and renunciant ascetics *[zuhhād]*. It is strange *[ʿaǧīb]* that historians *[ahl al-tārīḫ]* did not mention them! Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr had already invited [historians] to mention them, their journey *[riḥla]* and their miracles *[karāmāt]*. They are people in the way of God *[ṭarīq ilā Allāh]*, they were known for that, they are facing *[muqābil]* Ḏū-l-Nūn.[61]

We can only regret, with Ibn al-Nāsiḫ, the fact that historians overlooked the stories of these saints who seemed to have gained a great reputation in their time. Nonetheless, the mention of the famous traditionist and historian Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr gives us a *terminus ante quem*. The prolific Andalusī scholar died in 463/1071.[62] Therefore, those three saints and their *ǧamāʿa* could have been part of a generation that migrated to Egypt after the one of Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad al-Takrūrī. This gives another ancient point of fixation in the Qarāfa for settling. Ibn al-Nāsiḫ provides another and last Takrūrī saint: "Next to him *[the traditionist Ḥuṭiʾa al-Laḫmī]*, the tomb of the Sheikh ʿAlī al-Takrūrī, better known as al-Fānī *["the one whose self was extinguished in God"]*. He was among the greatest saints

60. Al-Maqrīzī, *Ḫiṭaṭ*, IV/2, p. 857.
61. Ibn al-Nāsiḫ, *Miṣbāḥ*, p. 203.
62. Regrettably, I have not been able to find any text pertaining to Sahelian Muslims in his works.

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[akābir al-ṣāliḥīn]. He was buried in the enclosure *[maqṣūra]* of Ḏū-l-Nūn al-Miṣri, in the one [tomb] that is on its door in the entrance *[al-dahlīz]*."[63]

No further information is given on ʿAlī, but the fact that he was entombed in the mausoleum of Ḏū-l-Nūn, not far from the other three previous Takrūrī saints, might allow to postulate that he was from their generation (fig. 5). Ḏū-l-Nūn (d. 245/860) is one of the greatest mystics of Islam and of the original Seven.[64] He was also considered a powerful magician and alchemist. He belongs at the same time to the grand history of Sufism and of occult sciences. He was famously known for his alleged capacity to read hieroglyphs from which he drew secret knowledge.[65] I have emphasised before the close ties between the first Sahelian Muslims and mystical Islam. With magic, another dimension might arise here.

The practice of non-Islamic magic was a vivid reality in medieval Sahelian religions and societies.[66] The first five Takrūrī saints encountered so far, who lived before 463/1071, probably travelled to Egypt to settle there.[67] It would mean that they were socialised in a Sahelian environment where normative and scholarly Islam were reportedly not established at this time. Non-monotheistic religions were still vastly dominant in the Sahelian kingdoms, closely tied with the ruling elites. Such religions had a strong hidden dimension, the invisible world of spirits and deities coexisted with the living, and secret initiations were widespread in social life (for education, sworn societies of hunters or craftsmen, religion). Therefore, upon first contact, the mystical and magic dimensions of Islam could have offered discursive familiarities, such as the visible and the invisible (*ġayb*) being part of the same unbreakable encompassing reality or the existence of hidden/revealed knowledge, etc.[68] From this particular aspect only, the newly-converted Takrūrī Muslims could have found some forms of a spiritual continuity with mystical Islam. It would explain why we find them first in Egypt in this remit and why Ḏū-l-Nūn would have been a desirable funereal neighbour, being the symbol of both mystic and magic.[69]

63. Ibn al-Nāsiḫ, *Miṣbāḥ*, p. 208.
64. Massignon 1958, p. 60.
65. Coulon 2017, pp. 177–179; McGregor 2020, pp. 190–191.
66. In the middle of the 8th/14th century, al-ʿUmarī still mentions, based on his informer from Mālī, that "the people of this kingdom make much use of magic and poison"; see Levtzion, Hopkins (eds.) 1981 (ed. 2011), p. 272.
67. ʿAbd al-Barr hints that at least three of them and their society had travelled to Egypt.
68. Hamès 2008, pp. 83, 87, 94. It must be noted that with the spread of Islam in Western Sahel after the 5th/11th century, magic was irresistibly Islamised, as Constant Hamès points out.
69. On the continuous relationship between Sufism and magic, and its favourable climate under the Mamluks, see Melvin-Koushki 2017.

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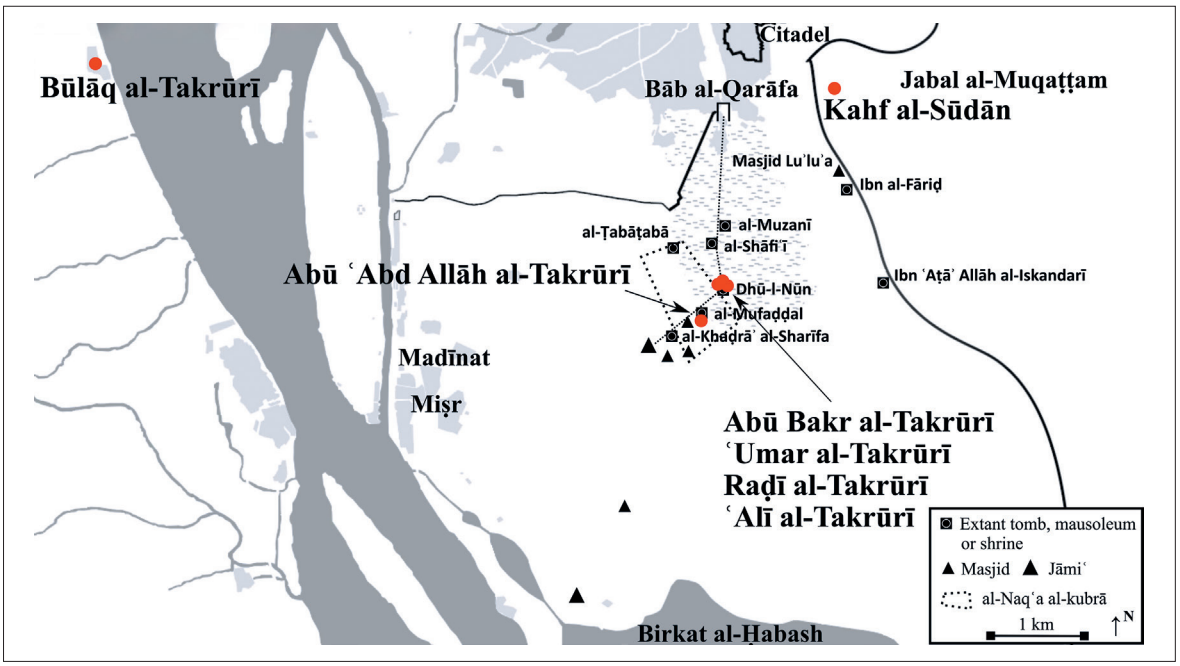


Fig. 5. The second stratum of Takrūrī saints (map: H. Collet; basemap: J. Loiseau 2010 ©).

We left the 7th/13th century with an assembly of Takrūrī Muslims gathered in the Qarāfa to pay tribute to the departed sultan Baybars. Ibn al-Zayyāt's *Kawākib*, by providing a new list of Takrūrī-s for the 8th/14th century, brings a little more substance to the table. It must be noted first that Ibn al-Zayyāt did not reprise in his work the four Takrūrī saints presented above. The reason likely lies in the remark of Ibn al-Nāsiḫ: since nobody had carried their memory, they had fallen out of history. Ibn al-Zayyāt wrote a century after his colleague. By that time, a new stratum of Takrūrī history had partly overlaid the old one:

> Then we stroll in the direction of the south, toward the neighbourhood *[al-ḥuṭṭ]* known as al-ʿAwātima in which we find an elegant mausoleum by the road *[ṭarīq]* where lies the sepulture of Sayyida Šarīfa al-Ḫaḍrāʾ and with her the tomb of the Sheikh al-Fānī al-Takrūrī (2), imam of the great mosque, mentioned by Ibn Mulaqqin in his *Ṭabaqāt al-awliyāʾ*, who died in 671 *[1272]*. In the same neighbourhood, we find the tomb of the Sheikh Ḫalīfa al-Takrūrī, who reached the age of 120 years and who died soon after [al-Fānī al-Takrūrī (2)].[70]

Let's proceed immediately with the account of the great jurist and hagiographer Sirāǧ al-Dīn Abū Ḥafṣ ʿUmar b. al-Mulaqqin (d. 804/1401): "The Sheikh ʿAlī al-Takrūrī (2), saint worshipper *[ʿabd ṣāliḥ]*, imam at the Greater Qarāfa. I met him more than once. He died in 771 *[1369–1370]* in the Greater Qarāfa and is buried there."[71]

70. Ibn al-Zayyāt, *Kawākib*, p. 326. In order to avoid the confusion with the previous one, I will call him "ʿAlī al-Fānī (2)" and do so every time a name is repeated.
71. Ibn Mulaqqin, *Ṭabaqāt*, p. 563.

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The two texts give a different date. Ibn al-Zayyāt is probably the one who mixed up centuries as al-Saḫāwī gives, in his *Tuḥfat al-aḥbāb*, Ḫalīfa al-Takrūrī's date of death, which was also 771/1369–1370.[72] The great mosque in question is the Ǧāmiʿ al-Awliyāʾ. In the *Ḫiṭaṭ*'s notice on this mosque, al-Maqrīzī explains: "I went to it when the Greater Qarāfa was populated by Sūdān Takārura inhabitants. It was sought for its *baraka*."[73] The centre of the Greater Qarāfa during the second half of the 8th/14th century was truly then, as al-Saḫāwī's editor puts it, "the Qarāfat al-Sūdān",[74] a Takrūrī imam leading the prayer in its most prestigious mosque.

Ibn al-Zayyāt lists another Takrūrī saint from the generation of ʿAlī al-Fānī (2) and Ḫalīfa:

> On his *[al-ʿAlāʾ b. Kaṯīr]* north side, by the door, the tomb of the pious man known as al-Ṣāʾiġ. He is next to the mausoleum *[turba]* of the Sheikh ʿUmar al-Takrūrī (2). This Sheikh ʿUmar was among the greatest saints. He is from the age class of the Sheikh Ḫalīfa and the Sheikh ʿAlī. He was their contemporaneous. He had written in his will to be buried there, by the road, so that people who would walk by his tomb could take him in their misericord. His mausoleum is at the south of Ibrāhīm al-Saṭṭār's mausoleum, in the vicinity of the Imam al-Šāfiʿī.[75]

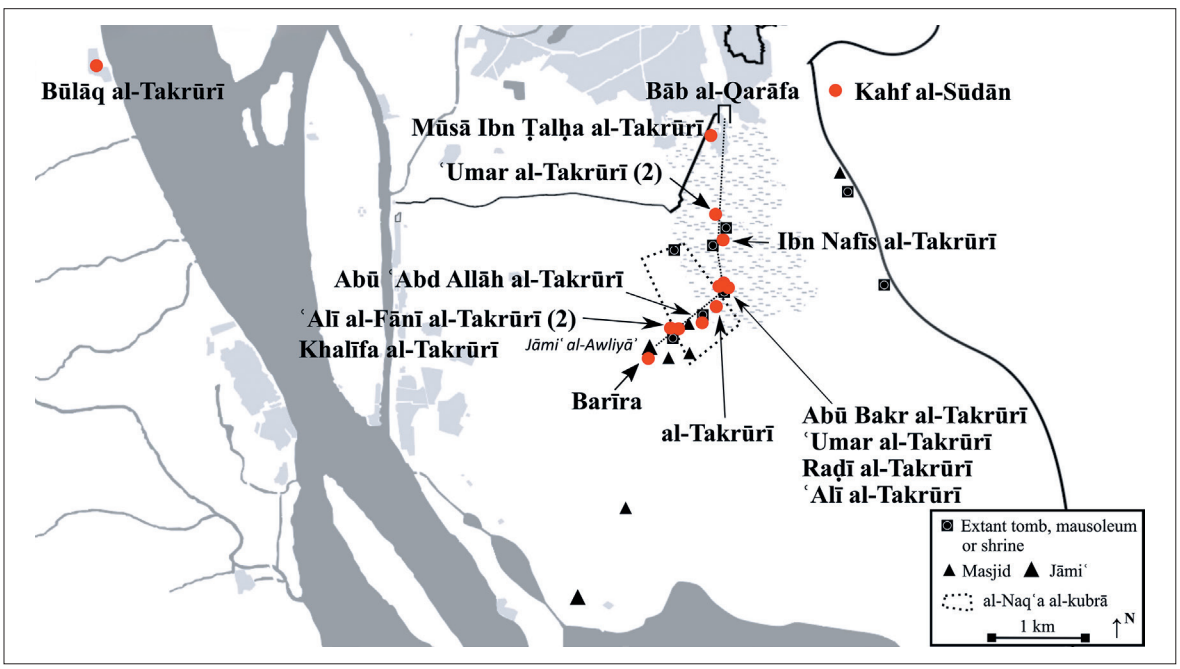


Fig. 6. The new Takrūrī saints provided by the *Kawākib* (map: H. Collet; basemap: J. Loiseau 2010 ©).

72. Al-Saḫāwī, *Tuḥfat al-aḥbāb*, p. 178. Al-Saḫāwī copied Ibn al-Zayyāt extensively. Therefore, later in the book, when talking again of ʿAlī and Ḫalīfa, he copied Ibn al-Zayyāt's text with the date "671", seemingly forgetting that he gave another date some hundred pages before. See al-Saḫāwī, *Tuḥfat al-aḥbāb*, p. 294.
73. Al-Maqrīzī, *Ḫiṭaṭ*, IV/1, p. 294.
74. Al-Saḫāwī, *Tuḥfat al-aḥbāb*, p. 405.
75. Ibn al-Zayyāt, *Kawākib*, p. 349.

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This time, we find ourselves in the centre of gravity of the Lesser Qarāfa, near the *mašhad* of al-Šāfiʿī, by its main road. Since the 7th/13th century, every Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, the corporation of the readers (of the Quran, *maqārī*) performed public readings at the tomb of al-Šāfiʿī, and urban development under the reign of the sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad (3rd r. 709–741/1310–1341) had made this part of the Qarāfa very dynamic.[76] Finally, Ibn al-Zayyāt mentions other names with little information that we can replace on a map thanks to the context:

> In the burial complex *[al-ḥawma]* of the al-Ġamriyyīn cemetery, we find a column in soft stone *[kaddān]* on which is written: "The sheikh, the saint *[al-ṣāliḥ]* Ibn Nafīs al-Takrūrī […][77]
> Then, to the west, the tomb of Mūsā b. Ṭalḥa al-Takrūrī […][78]
> Next to the mausoleum of al-Ḫuzrağī, the mausoleum of the Banū Maskīn. Between the two, the mausoleum of al-Takrūrī. And in this enclosure *[al-ḥawš]* the tomb of al-Takrūrī. He was a saint man. Ibn al-Ǧabbās mentioned him in his chronicle […][79]
> South, the tomb of the saint woman Barīra, daughter of the king of the Sūdān. She is known to answer the supplicating prayers *[al-duʿāʾ]* said al-Quršī.[80]

We have very little information on al-Quršī. Ibn al-Nāsiḫ already quotes him in the same fashion as Ibn al-Zayyāt, who says he was the author of a *Kitāb al-mazārāt* (i.e. the places that are the object of a *ziyāra*).[81] He was certainly another sheikh of the visit whose work is lost. In any case, it allows us to know that Barīra was buried there before 700/1300, even though Ibn al-Nāsiḫ deemed she was not worthy of a mention. Only two Sudanic kings are known to have made the pilgrimage to Mecca in the 7th/13th century. The first is the sultan of Kanem Dūnama b. Salma (r. 606–645/1210–1248) who probably came to Cairo in 640/1242. The second is Mansa Walī, sultan of Mālī, who made is pilgrimage under Baybars (r. 658–676/1260–1277).[82] Without being able to settle the matter, it is interesting to think that a Malian princess could have been buried at the centre of the Greater Qarāfa when the sultan of Mālī Mansa Mūsā's caravan arrived there in 724/1324. I will not develop here the story of this pilgrimage insofar as it has generated an imposing literature and will focus on the Qarāfī events.[83] That year, for four months, the Greater Qarāfa gained at least 10,000 Takrūrī inhabitants (with probably twice as much if not more beasts of burden). We can better understand now why the huge caravan was settled in the Qarāfa: ample space, under the sight

76. Massignon 1958, p. 46.
77. Ibn al-Zayyāt, *Kawākib*, p. 359.
78. Ibn al-Zayyāt, *Kawākib*, p. 92.
79. Ibn al-Zayyāt, *Kawākib*, p. 469. Al-Ǧabbās (d. after 736/1336) was a sheikh of the visit of tremendous reputation. His lost *Muḍḍib al-ṭālibīn ilā qubūr al-ṣāliḥīn* is often quoted by the extant books of the visit. See Gomʿa 2018.
80. Ibn al-Zayyāt, *Kawākib*, p. 320.
81. Gomʿa 2017, p. 13.
82. Cuoq (ed.) 1975 (ed. 1985), p. 389; Dewière 2017, pp. 428, 433.
83. See Levtzion 1986, pp. 185–195; Collet 2019a; 2019b.

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of the citadel, but first and foremost because the necropolis was home to a vast community of West African Muslims, some probably from the sultanate of Mālī itself. According to Ibn Ḫaldūn, the sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad gave a *qaṣr* to Mansa Mūsā in the Qarāfa after receiving from him the famous gift of 50,000 dinars.[84] Al-Maqrīzī defines the *quṣūr* and lists a few of them in his *Ḫiṭaṭ*: "There was at the Qarāfa several *quṣūr*. They are called *al-ǧawāsiq*, provided with gazebos *[manāẓir]*, orchards *[basātīn]*. However, the majority of them do not have gardens, nor wells, but elevated gazebos. We also say for all of them *quṣūr*."[85] Most of the *ǧawāsiq* had been constructed under the Fatimid period and were already in ruins at the time.[86] Al-Maqrīzī does not give a lot of information on these little leisurely palaces in the Qarāfa, and there is no way of knowing in which one the sultan Mūsā stayed. Furthermore, we also know, thanks to an anecdote provided by Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, that Mūsā had become close with a great Egyptian merchant, Sirāǧ al-Dīn al-Kuwayk, who hosted the sultan in the gardens of his villa by the shore of the Birkat al-Ḥabaš, at the southern extremity of the Qarāfa.[87] It may have happened after Mūsā sold the *qaṣr* he had been given to replenish his assets.[88]

Mūsā's sojourn in Cairo probably increased the number of West African Muslims in the Qarāfa. His dramatic return from Mecca cost him, according to Mamluk historians, two thirds of his caravan and he had to buy new slaves in Cairo in order to carry to Mālī the goods he had purchased. Maybe the scare of the journey through Arabia convinced some to stop their travel in Cairo, or the attraction of the city was sufficient for pious men. As we shall see in a moment, the sources speak of at least one family of Takrūrī originating from Ġānā, then province of the sultanate of Mālī, likely present in the Qarāfa before 724/1324. New settlers could find a welcoming environment. Other caravans filled with Takrūrī Muslims are recorded for the 8th/14th century and until the end of the Mamluk era.[89] In 744/1344, for instance, the caravan for the pilgrimage numbered 5,000 Takrūrī-s.[90] Did other Takrūrī sultans or Takrūrī caravans stayed at the Qarāfa? We can consider it even though no evidence supports it. The ancient, now "autochthonous", Takrūrī community of the Qarāfa incorporated certainly new members every year.

What happened during Mansa Mūsā's four-month stay in the Qarāfa is also unknown beyond what I just presented. It is difficult to evaluate Mūsā's direct influence on the fact that until the beginning of the 9th/15th century, the Greater Qarāfa was associated with its Sahelian community. A Takrūrī was at some point the imam of its most important mosque, and Takrūrī saints were spanning the sacred landscape of the necropolis when a time of hardship struck Cairo in 748/autumn 1347 with the Black Death. Outside the *Kawākib*, another Takrūrī dwelling in the Qarāfa presents characteristics that flourished in time of crisis when

84. Ibn Ḫaldūn, *ʿIbar*, V, pp. 434–435.
85. Al-Maqrīzī, *Ḫiṭaṭ*, IV/2, p. 876.
86. Taylor 1999, pp. 34–35.
87. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, *Riḥlat*, IV, p. 270.
88. Ibn Ḫaldūn, *ʿIbar*, V, pp. 434–435.
89. Garcin 1976 (ed. 2005), pp. 28–29; Dewière 2017, pp. 433–435.
90. Levtzion 1986, p. 186. The information comes from al-Maqrīzī's *Sulūk*.

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divine blessing was increasingly sought for. Short accounts completing one another are given in al-Maqrīzī's *al-Durar al-farīda* and in Ibn Taġrī Birdī's *al-Manhal al-sāfī wa-al-mustawfī baʿd al-wāfī* and *al-Nuǧūm al-zāhira fī mulūk Maṣr wa-al-Qāhira*:

> Rāšid al-Takrūrī, *al-faqīr*, *al-muʿtaqad*, the ravished in God *[al-maǧḏūb]*, resident of the Ǧāmiʿ Rāšida, outside of the city of Miṣr. I visited him. He died at the hospital *[al-bīmāristān]* in 23 ǧumādā al-āḫira 796 *[3 May 1394]*.[91]
>
> The sheikh, *al-muʿtaqad*, the saint *[al-ṣāliḥ]*, Rašīd al-Takrūrī the Black died at the hospital al-Manṣūrī on Saturday 23 ǧumādā al-āḫira. He was residing at the Ǧāmiʿ Rāšida outside the old city of Miṣr. He is the last one to have inhabited it. He was the object of the pious visit *[al-ziyāra]*. People had for him the most sublime *iʿtiqād*.[92]
>
> Rāšid, we also say Rašīd, the saint, the *muʿtaqad*, al-Takrūrī, the ravished in God *[al-maǧḏūb]*, residing at the Ǧāmiʿ Rāšida outside the old city of Miṣr. People had for him the most sublime *iʿtiqād*. They were striving for *baraka* by piously visiting him *[yatabarrakūn bi-ziyāratihi]* until he died at the hospital al-Manṣūrī on Saturday 23 ǧumādā al-āḫira 796. God Most High grant him misericord.[93]

The terms *iʿtiqād* and *muʿtaqad* (i.e. the one being the object of *iʿtiqād*) were commonly associated with the *maǧḏūb* but also with other characters like the greatest *ʿulamāʾ*.[94] *Iʿtiqād* can be compared with the concept of *walāya*, "sainthood", as *muʿtaqad*-s were considered living saints who were exhaling *baraka* or divine blessing.[95] In this regard, they were venerated by the population, from the masses to the elite.[96] *Maǧāḏīb* (sing. *maǧḏūb*) were found first living in the streets, in bakeries or public baths, but as they grew more popular, they invested extant religious institution, ruined ones or built *zāwiya*-s and mosques for themselves.[97] Rāšid might have been named after the mosque, becoming one with it. Rāšida was an ancient and prestigious *ǧāmiʿ* first built in 393/1003 and remade several times after that. Al-Maqrīzī gives a lengthy account on the mosque, which was located in a ruined neighbourhood at his time.[98] He himself visited Rāšid and probably witnessed the abandonment of the *ǧāmiʿ* after the saint died. The death of Rāšid may have been perceived then symbolically as the "death" of Rāšida, hastening its ruining.

91. Al-Maqrīzī, *Durar*, II, p. 86.
92. Ibn Taġrī Birdī, *Nuǧūm*, XII, p. 108.
93. Ibn Taġrī Birdī, *Manhal*, V, p. 341.
94. Geoffroy 1995, p. 43.
95. Geoffroy 1995, p. 43.
96. Geoffroy 1995, p. 262.
97. Geoffroy 1995, p. 255.
98. Al-Maqrīzī, *Ḫiṭaṭ*, IV/1, pp. 126–129.

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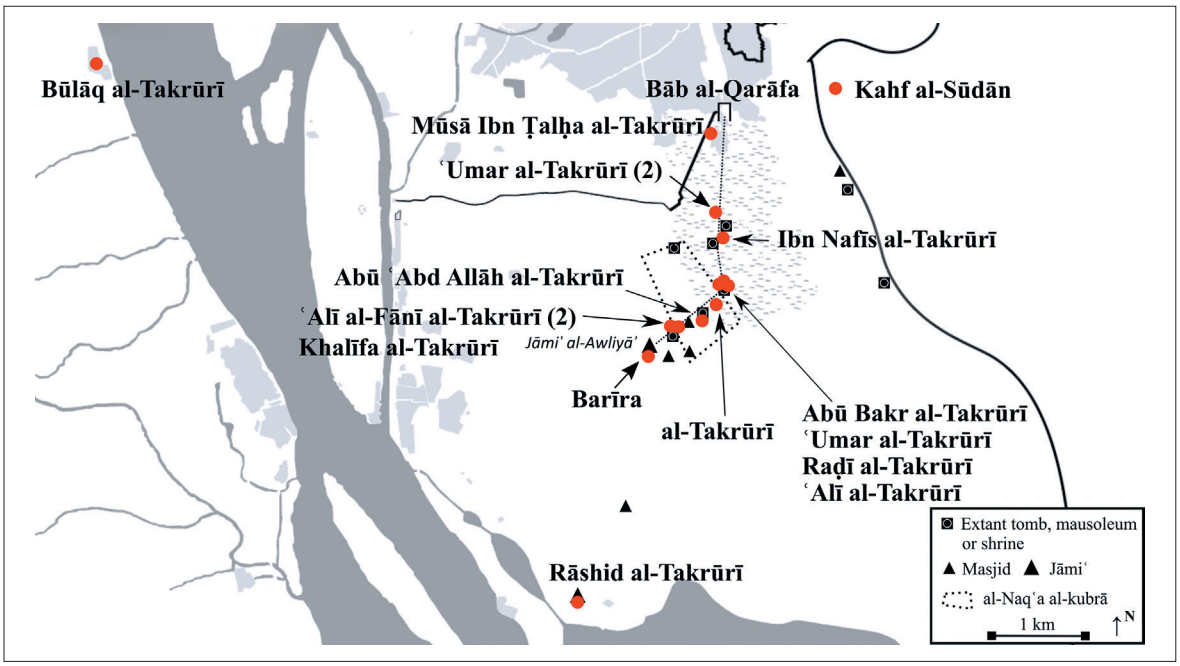


Fig. 7. Overview of the "Takrūrī moment" in the Qarāfa (map: H. Collet; basemap: J. Loiseau 2010 ©).

Figure 7 shows the tombs of Takrūrī saints being positioned along the main axis of the Qarāfa, from Bāb al-Qarāfa to the Ǧāmiʿ al-Awliyāʾ around which the main bulk of the West African communities were probably living.

Generic terms used by the sources have so far prevented us to know more about these individuals, leaving me to speculate. Luckily, medieval sources single out the life of one of these Qarāfī-born Takrūrī Muslims, whose family was originally from Ġānā (Ghana).

6. Al-ʿIzz al-Ġānī: A son of the Qarāfa at the top of Cairene intelligentsia

Muḥammad b. Aḥmad ʿIzz al-Dīn al-Takrūrī al-Ġānī, "al-ʿIzz" for his companions, has been known in the field of Sahelian studies since 1981 when an account given by al-Saḫāwī's immense biographical dictionary, *al-Ḍawʾ al-lāmiʿ*, was translated in the *Corpus of Early Arabic Sources for West African History*.[99] Yet, this translation is incomplete, and the text has not been studied to my knowledge.[100] Another short account can be found in Ibn Taġrī Birdī's *al-Nuǧūm al-ẓāhira*, also featured in the *Corpus*.[101]

A more detailed and personal—anthumous—account appears in Burhān al-Dīn Ibrāhīm al-Biqāʿī's (809–885/1407–1480) biographical dictionary *ʿUnwān al-zamān fī tarāǧim al-šuyūḫ wa-al-aqrān*, completed by posthumous accounts in two other works: al-Saḫāwī's

99. Al-Saḫāwī, *Ḍawʾ*, VII, p. 2; Levtzion, Hopkins (eds.) 1981 (ed. 2011), pp. 362–363.
100. Some parts of the text are not translated without formal caveats to the reader.
101. Ibn Taġrī Birdī, *Nuǧūm*, XVI, p. 140; Levtzion, Hopkins (eds.) 1981 (ed. 2011), p. 360.

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Waǧīz al-kalām and al-Biqāʿī's *al-Muʿǧam al-saġīr*. Al-Biqāʿī, originally from Syria, settled in Cairo where he counted among the students of Ibn Ḥaǧar al-ʿAsqalānī. Through him, he climbed the social ladder and served "as a scholar-in-residence to the Mamluk sultans Ǧaqmaq (r. 1438–1453) and Īnāl (r. 1453–1461)".[102] Al-Biqāʿī was a close friend of al-ʿIzz al-Ġānī and had much admiration for him: "Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. ʿUṯmān b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Sulaymān b. ʿUmar b. Muḥammad, al-Takrūrī, originally al-Ġānī, *nisba* for Ġānā *[Ghana]*, one of the cities of the Takrūr, al-Miṣrī, al-Mālikī, our companion *[ṣāḥibnā]*, ʿIzz al-Dīn al-Kutubī, the imam, the scholar *[al-ʿālim]*."[103]

Al-Saḫāwī gives a much more detailed onomastic opening:

> Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. ʿUṯmān b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Sulaymān b. ʿUmar b. *al-šayḫ* Muḥammad, the famous companion of al-Ḫaḍir whose tomb is at al-Qarāfa, b. Abū al-ʿAbbās al-Ḥarrāz *["the amulet maker"]*, al-ʿIzz, al-Takrūrī originally, al-Qarāfī, al-Qāhirī, al-Mālikī, al-Kutubī, known as al-ʿIzz al-Takrūrī. Also, he could formerly be called al-Ġānī, *nisba* after Ġāna, a city of the Takrūr.[104]

As often in Arabic medieval sources, a name can reveal much on the life of a person. Al-ʿIzz's family had been Muslim at least for seven generations.[105] Of his two distant ancestors, one claimed to be a companion of Ḫaḍir, the invisible companion of the Sufis, and the other was an amulet maker. We find once again the peculiar bond between Takrūrī and Islamic mystic and magic. The indication that his ancestor Muḥammad was buried in the Qarāfa suggests that this Ġānī family had settled there in the beginning of the 7th/13th century at the earliest.

Al-Saḫāwī and al-Biqāʿī also complete each other regarding al-ʿIzz's education. Born in the Greater Qarāfa at the beginning of 791/1389, he first memorised the Quran and recited it according to the reading (*riwāya*) of Abū ʿAmr with the Sheikh Šams al-Dīn ʿAlī al-Zarātītī.[106] He also memorised the *ʿUmda* and the *Risāla* of Ibn Abī Zayd and the *Alfiyya* of Ibn Mālik.[107] He was then licensed to teach such works and did so to many students but only granted one license

102. Guo 2005, p. 102. Oddly, I have not been able to find any mention of ʿIzz al-Takrūrī in the first three volumes of his autobiographical chronicle (covering 855/1451 to 865/1461) *Iẓhār al-ʿaṣr li-asrār ahl al-ʿaṣr* (also known as *Tārīḫ al-Biqāʿī*).

103. Al-Biqāʿī, *ʿUnwān*, V, p. 24.

104. Al-Saḫāwī, *Ḍaw'*, VII, p. 2.

105. Considering he was born in 791/1389, if we count thirty years for a generation from Muḥammad (180 years), we go back to the beginning of the 7th/13th century, roughly when the geographer al-Idrīsī gave his famous account in the kingdom of Ġānā, describing it well established in Islam; see Levtzion, Hopkins (eds.) 1981 (ed. 2011), pp. 109–110. If we count twenty years (120 years), we go back to the middle of the 7th/13th century, when Ġānā had become of province of Mālī, conquest that might have caused the emigration of some of its population.

106. Muḥammad Abū ʿAbd Allāh Šams al-Dīn al-Zarātītī al-Ḥanafī (748–820/1347–1417), great reader of the Quran of his time.

107. Ibn Malik is the founder to the Maliki school of law. Ibn Abī Zayd al-Qayrawānī (d. 386/996) is the third grand master of the school (the second being Saḥnūn).

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in his life.[108] He studied the *fiqh* with the Sheikh Šihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Ṣanhāǧī (i.e. possibly originating from the Saharan West), showing interesting Saharan-Sahelian relations, and al-Šams Ibn ʿAmmār.[109] The Qarāfa was certainly a great Maliki hub at the time, the dominant *maḏhab* in the Islamic West. Al-ʿIzz also learned the Arabic grammar, the prosody, and the calligraphic style of the *ġubār* with Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Bārnbārī.[110] Finally, this first stage of studies ended with the learning of the law of inheritance (*al-farāʾiḍ*) with al-Šams al-Ġarrāqī.[111] While continuing his studies, he started his activity as a copyist. For the Sheikh al-Šams al-Wasīmī, he wrote successfully the initiatory chain (*isnād*) of al-Zayn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. al-Ṣāʾiġ in a beautiful letter that caused a sensation, having displayed masterfully all the appreciated calligraphic styles of the time (*ašrār*, *muḥaqaq*, *rīḥān*, and *ġubār*).[112] Before the age of 20, he had already acquired an excellent reputation as a calligraphist as well as a person of many virtues and as an excellent storyteller.[113] In 819/1417, at the age of 28, he accomplished his first pilgrimage to Mecca, which was followed by many others according to the chroniclers.[114] He resided and studied in different places (e.g. the old Fatimid mosque al-Aqmar).

The two biographical accounts dwell then on al-ʿIzz's licenses or certificates of studies (*iǧāzāt*), drawing their information from the same informant, the Shafiite Sheikh ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn al-Qalqašandī (780–856/1379–1452), who held the *mašayḫa* of the Qarāfī madrasa al-Ṣāliḥiyya. Al-Qalqašandī regularly frequented the bookshop of al-ʿIzz of whom he was a dear companion. Among this new lists of masters: al-Tanūḫī, Abū Hurayra b. al-Ḏahabī, and Abū al-Ḫayr b. al-ʿAlāʾī.[115] He also learned a commentary of *al-Badīʿīyya* from its author al-Taqī b. Ḥiǧǧa, for whom he made several copies himself.[116] Al-Qalqašandī also saw a certificate of audition (*samāʿ*) for the *Ṯalāṯiyyāt* of al-Buḫārī that al-ʿIzz had apparently slipped negligibly in a *dīwān* of the scholar Ibn Manamnam.[117] Clearly, al-ʿIzz had received enough education to be an accomplished Maliki scholar, with a taste for copying books and writing. Some of his poetry is also given by al-Saḫāwī and al-Biqāʿī. Yet, he took another path, which led him to become one of the most prominent and thriving booksellers of his time. Al-Saḫāwī's account

108. Al-Saḫāwī, *Ḍawʾ*, VII, p. 2; al-Biqāʿī, *ʿUnwān*, V, p. 26.
109. Šams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. ʿAmmār al-Miṣrī al-Mālikī (768–844/1367–1440), great and famous Cairene Maliki scholar.
110. Appears as a master of prosody and poetry in biographies of the *Ḍawʾ*.
111. Great specialist of the time on the matter. His name appears eighty-four times in the *Ḍawʾ*.
112. Al-Wasīmī and Ibn al-Ṣāʾiġ (d. 846/1442) were both grand masters of calligraphy "*šayḫ al-kuttāb*" and reputed scholars. The former was the master of the latter. See Behrens-Abouseif 2018, p. 137.
113. Al-Saḫāwī, *Ḍawʾ*, VII, p. 2; al-Biqāʿī, *ʿUnwān*, V, p. 27.
114. Al-Saḫāwī, *Ḍawʾ*, VII, p. 2; al-Biqāʿī, *ʿUnwān*, V, p. 27.
115. Al-Tanūḫī (800–888/1397–1483) was a famous professor of Hadith established in Damascus who had numerous students. Abū Hurayra b. al-Ḏahabī was a scholar from Damascus that appears frequently in the *Ḍawʾ*, grouped with al-Tanūḫī and Abū Ḫayr b. ʿAlāʾī, also a professor of Islamic sciences who was based in Jerusalem. It might give a sense of al-ʿIzz's travels for *ṭalab al-ʿilm* but they also could have come to Cairo to teach.
116. Al-Saḫāwī, *Ḍawʾ*, VII, p. 2. Taqī al-Dīn b. Ḥuǧǧa al-Ḥamawī (767–837/1366–1433) was one of the greatest men of letter (*adīb*) from his time. From Ḥamāh in Syria, he travelled frequently to Cairo.
117. Al-Biqāʿī, *ʿUnwān*, V, p. 28.

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stops here, and we have to turn to al-Biqāʿī to gain access to this dimension of al-ʿIzz's life. The location of his bookshop is specified in an anecdote after al-Biqāʿī had finished listening to his companion's poetry: "He declaimed it with his own mouth, the Saturday 27 raǧab 846 *[10 December 1442]* in his shop *[dukkān]* of the book market, near the madrasa al-Ṣāliḥiyya."[118] We are here at Bayn al-Qaṣrayn, in the heart of al-Qāhira. Al-Biqāʿī then proceeds to give a vivid and incarnate account on al-ʿIzz's activity as a bookseller:

> He is a virtuous man, very knowledgeable about his time, gifted with a beautiful and excellent intelligence, and has a complete knowledge on books. He is the head of the book dealers *[raʾīs ahl sūq al-kutub]*. He authored lovely anecdotes *[nawādir]* and curious stories. He told me once, that he was near some rocks and that he saw, from his own eyes, in the cavity of one of these rocks, a worm *[dawda]* that had herbs for itself. Al-ʿIzz informed me on the reason of his book trade. One day, he had entered the book market. He had seen a book that was being auctioned for 24 dirhams. "I said: 25! Nobody outbid and so I bought it. Then, I went home with it. It happened to be a book of *sīmiyāʾ*, rare in its domain. I put it on a shelf and forgot about it. Wild pigeons nested on it, laid eggs therein, and nestlings eventually hatched from it. Later, while I was one day at the booksellers', a man entered with numerous bounded leaves of paper. I saw on one of them a leaf whose writing looked like the one in the book. So far, I had looked for another copy without ever finding one. I told its owner: 'Sell me this pile!' He answered: 'I offer it to you.' I then took it. I found out that the leaves were completing the ones [damaged by the birds]. I wiped them and brought them to Badr al-Dīn b. Ṣadaqa the book binder so he could bind them together. A book-broker *[dallāl ʿalā al-kutub]* was also there, an expert in books' prices and in who buys them. He said: 'I know a foreigner *[ʿaǧamī]* who greatly desires this book. He places orders for it the day of the market. One of the merchants said that this foreigner longs for this book. You bought it and you could make a profit out of it.' Then it was put up for auction, bids followed one another, and the sum reached 400 [dirhams] and more. Later, Badr al-Dīn asked me to sell it to the foreigner because he was the one who really desired it and if another one was to buy it, it would cause him prejudice. Therefore, I sold it to him, and that was how I entered the commerce of books." He told me that he had bought the *Rawḍa* of al-Nawawī,[119] in which was the handwriting of the Sheikh Badr al-Dīn al-Zarkašī. However, it was incomplete. It stayed at his place for a long time without anyone asking for it [because of the missing parts]. One day, while ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn [al-Qalqašandī] was sitting at his place, came a book broker who had put up for auction a book with a lot of leaves scattered in twenty [bundles]. Al-ʿAlāʾ told him to buy this auction. "I said: 'I do not need it.'" The broker left, then came back. Nobody had bidden. "Al-ʿAlāʾ said [again]: 'Buy them.' I said [again]: 'I don't need them. Indeed, leaves' worth depends on the content of the books. I do not deal in scattered science!' He insisted: 'Buy them!' Then I said: 'These leaves are from which book?' He answered: 'From the *Rawḍa*!' Then, my hope clang to the fact that they could be the ones missing

118. Al-Biqāʿī, *ʿUnwān*, V, p. 27.
119. Traditionist and Shafiite scholar who died in 676/1277. Credited as the one who re-organised the Shafiite school.

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> from my copy. I therefore bought them. Later, in the incomplete part [of my book], I found that these leaves corresponded perfectly [to the ones missing], sixteen pages in total that fitted in the book. I undid the binding, added the pages to their place, and had it bound [once more]. When I took it to the book binder, came Ǧamāl al-Dīn al-Maġribī, the assistant of the secretary in chief *[nāʾib kātib al-sirr]* of the chancellery, with his mule. He asked for the *Rawḍa*. Then, I showed it to him and he bought it. This is part of the wonders *[ʿaǧāʾib]* of the transactions *[al-anfāq]*."[120]

Heading the corporation of book dealers, al-ʿIzz was a central character of the book market. As we can see, he kept good company and "his shop [was] a meeting point for scholars".[121] There is a sweet sense of destiny that he entered his craft with a book of *sīmiyāʾ*, a branch of occult science that dealt first with seals and talismans but referred at this time to the magic of letters and divine names.[122] One of the few known Qarāfī Takrūrī-s who had chosen another path than mystic and occult science, al-ʿIzz's new life started symbolically with a book from this realm. The biography continues by focusing on the exploits of the *šayḫ al-kutub* ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. al-Ṣāʾiġ al-Mukattib, legend in the book market community and a companion of al-ʿIzz known for his wondrous and prodigious writing capacity.[123] Al-ʿIzz intervenes as a witness of good faith and as an auxiliary in these anecdotes.[124] Then, the account takes a more personal tone and give another dimension to the persona of al-ʿIzz. In the last two anecdotes, mystic Islam and the Qarāfa make their return:

> Al-ʿIzz al-Takrūrī informed me that two of his close parents *[qarībayn]* had died, one of old age *[hadmān]*, the other by drowning. He had seen the drowned one in a nocturnal vision *[manām]*. He had asked him about some of his deceased family members *[aqārib]* and he *[the drowning victim]* informed him about them and many things. He *[al-ʿIzz]* asked him about the one who had died of old age. He answered: "Very well, he and I are residing in one abode."
>
> He informed me that he had visited the Qarāfa one day, after his recovery *[naqūh]* from a disease, with, under him, an excellent donkey. When he arrived near the [tomb] of the *qāḍī* Bakkār, the donkey started to walk fiercely with its head held high, then kicked, showing the worst animosity. Fearing to fall [uncontrollably], he then jumped by himself to the ground. The donkey continued its outbreak of violence *[šawṭihi]* and threw every piece of equipment that was on him all over the place. He said: "I went after it with no haste and picked up the pieces of equipment. When I arrived at the place of visitation *[mazār]* of the *qāḍī* Bakkār, I stopped before it and implored

120. Al-Biqāʿī, *ʿUnwān*, V, pp. 28–29. For a slightly different translation of this excerpt, see Behrens-Abouseif 2018, pp. 76–77; for example, she did not speak of the retraction of al-ʿIzz who eventually sold the book to the foreigner, heeding his friend's advice, and not for the golden bidden price.
121. Behrens-Abouseif 2018, p. 77.
122. Coulon 2017, p. 145.
123. Behrens-Abouseif 2018, pp. 137–139.
124. Al-Biqāʿī, *ʿUnwān*, V, pp. 29–30.

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God Most High so He would give me back my donkey. I had not finished that it arrived, between two dogs as if they were leading him, until he reached me. I seized him and turned my face toward the two dogs, but did not see them."[125]

The oneiric vision (*manām*) is a common experience for Sufis. The impeccability and aura of al-ʿIzz is emphasised by the biographer, as this kind of phenomenon could also touch people who were not asking for it. Likewise, in the second story, the fact that Bakkār b. Qutayba, one of the original Seven, interceded immediately with the divine to answer al-ʿIzz's query, demonstrates that the Takrūrī was the subject of a particular consideration by higher powers. Dogs' interventions to help people are a trope of Sufi literature, which alludes that they are in fact djinns in disguise.[126] The anecdote shows that even though al-ʿIzz had moved to the urban centre of the capital, the Qarāfa had remained a part of him and his habitus. Visits to saints still held a particular place for the Qarāfī, who did not fail to return to thank those who had surrounded him growing up. The *ʿUnwān*'s account stops here. Posthumous notices in al-Saḫāwī's *Waǧīz al-kalām* and al-Biqāʿī's *al-Muʿǧam al-saġīr* complete it. Al-ʿIzz died at 66 on Wednesday 27 ǧumādā al-ulā 847/1 October 1443 at the Qarāfa.[127] The prayer for his salvation took place the same day at Bāb al-Naṣr. Yet, sign of the times, he was buried in the necropolis of the Desert (al-Ṣaḥrāʾ), developed by the Circassian sultans, then new place of election for burials.[128] By 847/1443, the Greater Qarāfa was already in an advanced state of decay.

Muḥammad al-ʿIzz was not the only al-Ġānī living in Cairo at the time. He had two cousins: Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. ʿUmar, Ḫayr al-Dīn Abū al-Ḫayr al-Sarrī b. al-Ṣadr al-Qāhirī al-Mālikī b. al-Ġānī (who died very old the 29 muḥarram 889/7 March 1484), an assistant to the inspector of the market at Bāb al-Šaʿriyya and also prominent Maliki scholar; and Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Ġānī, who inherited the former upon his passing.[129] Al-Saḫāwī does not say if they were originally Qarāfī like their cousin al-ʿIzz, but it is permissible to think so. They are other examples of Takrūrī Muslims integrated in Cairene society. By that time, they were indeed a common piece in the patchwork of people composing the social landscape.

7. The demise of the Greater Qarāfa in the 9th/15th century

When evocating the Ǧāmiʿ al-Awliyāʾ, we left al-Maqrīzī telling us that he frequented it when the Greater Qarāfa was brimming with Takrūrī Muslims. Here is the rest of the account: "I went to it when the Greater Qarāfa was populated by Sūdān Takārura inhabitants. It was sought for its *baraka*. When the events and the ordeals *[ḥawādiṯ wa-miḥan]* of 806 *[1403]* broke

125. Al-Biqāʿī, *ʿUnwān*, V, p. 30.
126. Geoffroy 1995, p. 101.
127. Maybe from the plague that broke out that year in Egypt, as it started to affect the Qarāfa regularly after 806/1403. See Dols 1977, p. 311.
128. Al-Biqāʿī, *Muʿǧam*, p. 235; al-Saḫāwī, *Waǧīz al-kalām*, p. 680.
129. Al-Saḫāwī, *Ḍawʾ*, IX, p. 265.

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out, the number of inhabitants in the Qarāfa dwindled. This mosque stayed closed every day, except for some gatherings on Fridays."[130]

In al-Maqrīzī's work, the "events and ordeals" refer to one of the deadliest recurrences of the plague that hit Cairo in 806/1403 together with a low flood, a famine, and extreme cold.[131] If the 748–749/1347–1348 outbreak had not been recorded as particularly dire for the Qarāfa, the one of 806/1403 dealt a first blow to its population, without though decimating the Takrūrī community. This cannot be said for another recurrence of the plague, which happened in 833/1430 and ravaged Egypt.[132] Ibn Ḥağar was present at the Qarāfa during this turmoil and witnessed the disaster:

> Death descended upon the Sūdān of the Qarāfa to the extent that three thousand of them perished. The presence of gravediggers and corpse washers became scarce as well as the one of the tomb builders, so much so that immense mass graves were dug in which the dead were thrown. Many shrouds were stolen, and dogs dug a lot, eating the limbs of the dead. The situation evolved out of control to such an extent that I saw with my eyes the stretchers *[nuʿūš]* [spread] between the Muṣallā al-Mʾuminī and Bāb al-Qarāfa as if they were white vultures *[raḫam]* circling around the dead. As for the streets, [the dead] were there like lines of camels, as if they were tied together and followed one another very closely.[133]

His story can be completed with one narrated by the historian al-Sayrafī (819–900/1416–1495):

> During this annihilation *[al-fanāʾ]* curious events *[ġarāʾib]* happened. At the Greater and Lesser Qarāfa were situated approximately three thousand Sudanic men, women, and children from the Takrūr. The plague *[al-ṭāʿūn]* exterminated them to the extent that only a few remained. They fled to the mountain, spend their nights there without finding any sleep because of the scale of the calamity and the loss among their people, their children, and their wives. With time, they became resident of the mountain. During the second night, thirty more souls died among them, who they buried in haste. While they were busy doing that, twenty-eight more persons perished. Only ten of them survived.[134]

If we consider that the recurrence of the plague in 806/1403 had already reduced the Takrūrī community, it would have therefore counted more than three thousand people in the Qarāfa in the second half of the 8th/14th century. Such a dreadful mortality was not only a problem for West African Muslims but for the Qarāfa as a whole. In order to endure the trial of time, a tomb needed social life, a community dwelling nearby and taking care of it

130. Al-Maqrīzī, *Ḫiṭaṭ*, IV/1, p. 294.
131. It may have taken half of the population. See Dols 1977, p. 305; Loiseau 2010, pp. 158–159; 2013.
132. This outbreak has been closely studied. See Dols 1977, pp. 204–211; Loiseau 2010, pp. 115–116.
133. Ibn Ḥağar, *Inbāʾ*, III, pp. 437–438.
134. Al-Sayrafī, *Nuzhat*, III, pp. 188–189.

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or at least people visiting it and mending it when necessary. Mausolea of Takrūrī saints had lasted through decades precisely thanks to communities, West African and otherwise, that looked after them. If the Lesser Qarāfa resisted better the depopulation of the necropolis, due to its closer proximity with the outskirts of Cairo and a more recent urban development, the Greater Qarāfa fell in ruins.[135] The demise of the Takrūrī community was certainly an important factor of the urban abandonment in this part of the necropolis.

Tuḥfat al-aḥbāb, the last book of the visit, was completed by Nūr al-Dīn al-Saḫāwī in 889/1484 after these upheavals in the Qarāfa. The time of the visits had passed its apogee. The *Tuḥfat al-aḥbāb* itself is largely a *muḫtaṣar* of Ibn al-ʿZayyāt's *Kawākib*. The Takrūrī saints present in the book are mentioned in accounts borrowed from Ibn al-Zayyāt, without any way of knowing if the tombs were still extant (probably not in the Greater Qarāfa). Nevertheless, we can find rare updates. In the case of Mūsā b. Talḥa al-Takrūrī, for example, Nūr al-Dīn al-Saḫāwī states that "[his tomb] belongs to the tombs that are not visible in this *zawiya* because of its deletion *[li-indiṯārihā]*".[136] The same can be said of Ibn Nafis al-Takrūrī, called Yaʿīš in the *Tuḥfat al-aḥbāb*. In Arabic, the two names have a close resemblance without the diacritic dots. Shabbiness could have been a reason for the misreading.[137]

The only entirely new character is Mubārak al-Takrūrī, who we left, in the introduction of this article, building new tombs from *kīmān* (sing. *kūm*), the hills of debris that had accumulated in the Greater Qarāfa. The last part of the *Tuḥfat al-aḥbāb*'s account give a sense of the needs Mubārak was filling in the Qarāfa:

> Then he *[Mubārak Abū ʿAlī al-Takrūrī]* devoted himself to build something *[ʿimāra]* in this place. He received the benefits *[al-ḫayrāt]* of al-Ḥāǧǧ ʿĪsā, *salāḥūrī* of the *amīr* Ǧaqmaq al-ʿAlāʾī the great constable *[al-amīr al-aḥūr]*, the one who rose to the sultanate, and his wife, who gave him assistance to achieve his goals. Later, a person called Ḫalīl, miller at Bāb al-Qarāfa, was reading the *Sīrat ʿantar* and the *Sīrat ḏāt al-himma*. He *[Ḫalīl]* invented names for them *[the dead of the Qarāfa]* in notebooks *[kurrās]*. He gave the notebooks to the Sheikh Badr al-Dīn b. al-Šarr in a house. He was pressed into reading them, and he read some parts for he could not read it all. Among those mentioned in the notebook were ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ, a group of Companions *[al-Ṣaḥāba]*, but it mentioned no historical people *[ahl al-tārīḫ]* and no saint people for the visit *[ahl al-ziyārāt]*. For that reason, it was not distributed, even though it contained some exact information. It spread nonetheless, even though those who were buried in the Qarāfa, among the descendants of the Prophet, the saints *[awliyāʾ]*, and the scholars were known. Indeed, it was the ancient and current abode of the caliphs, the kings, the *amīr*-s, the owner of dignities *[arbāb al-manāṣib]*, of the great erected villas *[al-quṣūr al-mašīda]*, the kiosks *[ǧawāsiq]*, the gazebos *[manāẓir]*, of mosques, places of adoration *[al-maʿābid]*, and *ribat*-s. People never ceased to visit the *zāwiya* of Abū ʿAlī al-Takrūrī, the one in question, until God took him. His passing happened the last Friday of raǧab, the year 871 *[15 March 1467]*.

135. Loiseau 2010, pp. 71–72.
136. Al-Saḫāwī, *Tuḥfat al-aḥbāb*, p. 166.
137. Al-Saḫāwī, *Tuḥfat al-aḥbāb*, p. 308.

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> He was buried in this cemetery that he had built patiently. This mausoleum *[turba]* is to the east of the mosque al-Nabbāš [next to Masǧid al-Raḥma to the east].[138]

The story on Ḫalīl is inserted in the account to mirror the one of Mubārak. It was a hard time for the sheikhs of the visit. On the one hand, Mubārak was inventing tombs and naming them whimsically. On the other hand, a storyteller and reader was writing is own book of the visit by largely inventing the names of the buried! Mubārak was entombed in the Greater Qarāfa where he had worked to mend a ruined swathe of the necropolis. Even though he was not related to the long history of Takrūrī communities producing saints in the Qarāfa, being a former slave working in bakeries, he became the last visited Takrūrī saint recorded in the medieval sources, having erected a *zāwiya* with the support of a powerful Mamluk *amīr*.

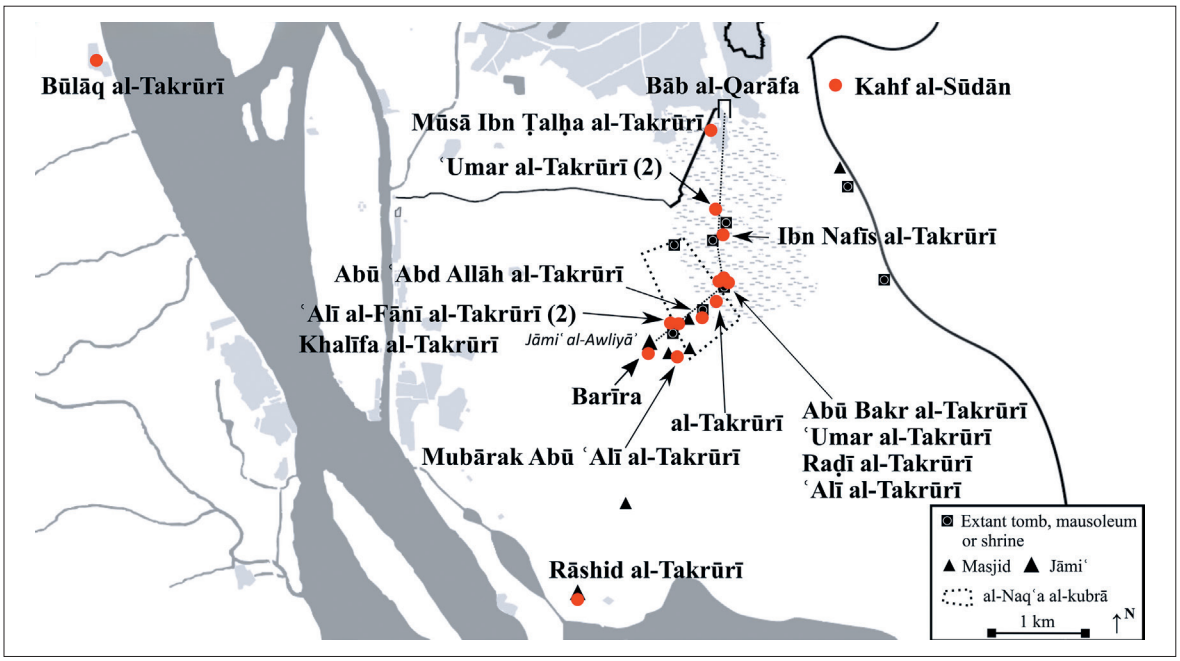


Fig. 8. Diachronic Takrūrī presence in the Qarāfa (4th–9th/10th–15th c.) (map: H. Collet; basemap: J. Loiseau 2010 ©).

138. Al-Saḫāwī, *Tuḥfat al-aḥbāb*, pp. 181–182.

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8. Conclusion: The mausoleum of ʿAbd Allāh al-Dakrūrī and the Takrūrī legacy in the Qarāfa

What remains today of this history in the Qarāfa? The necropolis' constructions have endured many more hardship through the centuries before us. Later epochs each had their own relation with the necropolis, but it was only at the end of the 19th century that appeared the need to preserve some of the architectural treasures of the Qarāfa in a context of further degradation and increasing human settlement therein.[139] The 18th of December 1881, the Khedive Tawfiq established the Comité de conservation des monuments de l'art arabe (CCMAA) under the purview of the administration of the *Waqf*-s to preserve Egypt's Islamic heritage.[140] Nowadays, anyone wandering around the Lesser Qarāfa would visit the *mašhad* of al-Šāfiʿī, located by one of its main streets. A little bit northward, a high domed mausoleum (*qubba*) dominates the same street. It is known as the Qubbat ʿAbd Allāh al-Dakrūrī. "Dakrūrī" is the phonetic evolution of "Takrūrī" in Egyptian Arabic that occurred in the post-medieval centuries from 1008/1600, "Takrūr" becoming "Dakrūr". The *Islamic Monuments in Cairo: The Practical Guide*, edited by Caroline Williams at the press of the American University of Cairo, presents it as a "little tomb-chamber, notable for its ribbed and fluted stone dome. This is the tomb of a pastry cook from Bab al-Luq who in his old age lived in the cemetery and performed pious works. When he died in 1466/871 his mausoleum became a place of pilgrimage."[141]

C. Williams' text reproduces verbatim some parts of Keppel Creswell's "Brief Chronology of the Muhammadan Monuments of Egypt to AD 1517" published in the *Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale* in 1916. In his notice on the mausoleum, K. Creswell formally identifies ʿAbd Allāh al-Dakrūrī as Abū ʿAlī Mubārak al-Takrūrī, based on a text of the *Tuḥfat al-aḥbāb* he saw in a margin of a manuscript of the *Nafḥ al-ṭīb*, the great Andalusī historical anthology of the historian al-Maqqarī who died in Cairo in 1041/1631–1632, as well as on information supplied by a Cairene official, ʿAbdul Ḥamīd Bey Muṣṭafa.[142] Therefore, we are left facing a discrepancy, as we just saw that Mubārak, according to the *Tuḥfat al-aḥbāb*, was buried in the Greater Qarāfa in a place he had striven to mend and not in the heart of the Lesser Qarāfa.

139. From the beginning of the 20th century, the Qarāfa saw the arrival of new inhabitants, mainly homeless and poor communities. Informal housing and settlements in the tombs developed rapidly. See el-Kadi, Bonnamy 2001, pp. 257–261.

140. El-Kadi, Bonnamy 2001, p. 276.

141. Williams 2008, pp. 133–134.

142. Creswell 1919, p. 137.

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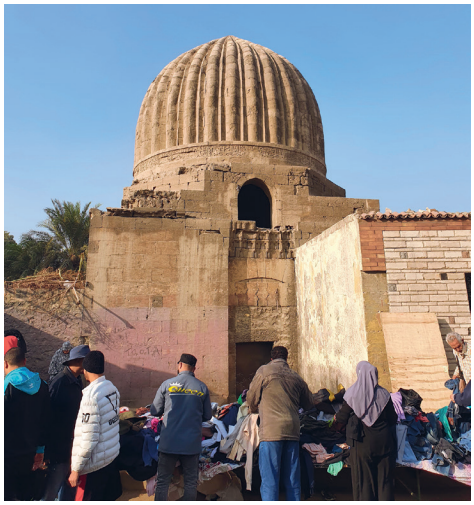


Fig. 9.



Fig. 10.



Fig. 11.



Fig. 12.



Fig. 13.

Figs. 9–13. The mausoleum of ʿAbd Allāh al-Dakrūrī (photos: H. Collet, January 2021 and 2022).

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As Figures 9–13 show, the mausoleum is in a decent state of conservation. Indeed, as soon as 1897, the CCMAA had deemed urgent to list it as a historical monument in order to protect it against a gravedigger who had started to construct against its wall.[143] The CCMAA recommended the administration of the *Waqf*-s to delimit a three-meter perimeter around the mausoleum to create a safe buffer zone in order to prevent informal constructions around it, a decision that was however never enforced.[144]

Specialist of Mamluk architecture Michael Meinecke has closely studied the mausoleum of ʿAbd Allāh al-Dakrūrī.[145] Based on an analysis of the *muqarnas*-s (figs. 10–11) and the heraldry (fig. 12) that appears at the centre of the calligraphic inscription on each side, he argues that the mausoleum presents all the archaeological features of a monument built around 740/1340.[146] Indeed, the Qubbat al-Dakrūrī is a textbook example, that can be corroborated with other monuments of the same period, of the prevailing of stone over other materials, as seen in the *muqarnas*-s no longer in stucco.[147] Likewise, the coat of arms of the Mamluk *amīr* who sponsored the construction reflects the state of heraldry of the mid-8th/14th century, when the patterns were less complex than the ones of the Circassian period (784–923/1382–1517).[148] Prior to M. Meinecke's *Die mamlukische Architektur* but following up on his remarks in "Zur mamlukischen Heraldik", Christel Kessler had focused on the domes in stone, a unique landmark of Mamluk Cairo. She defines seven technical and artistic stages of masonry dome making, from the mid-8th/14th century to 921/1515.[149] The dome of al-Dakrūrī fits the first stage in the mid-8th/14th century (fig. 9).[150]

Therefore, strong architectural evidence supports the fact that the mausoleum was not originally built for Mubārak nor by him, who was indeed buried in his now lost *zāwiya* in the Greater Qarāfa. In her effort to map the Lesser Qarāfa, M. al-Ibrashy has attributed it to ʿUmar al-Takrūrī, "ʿUmar (2)" in this study, based on the *Kawākib*.[151] ʿUmar (2) is indeed a good candidate, as we saw that he had written in his will to be buried here, by the main street so the people would not forget him, and that he was from the same generation as ʿAlī al-Takrūrī (2), imam of the Ǧāmiʿ al-Awliyāʾ who died in 771/1369–1370. What happened then? Mubārak's tomb could have been threatened, despite his effort, by the rampant ruining of the Naqʿa area and been re-entombed in the *qubba* shortly after his death. Or people could have wanted the popular saint to rest closer to a more lively and frequented area. In any case, ʿUmar (2)'s

143. Franz et al. 1898.
144. El-Kadi, Bonnamy 2001, p. 277.
145. Meinecke 1972, pp. 253–254.
146. The inscription starts on the side facing the door opening on the street with the *basmala*, then continues with the Verses 255–257 of *ṣūrat al-Baqara*, and ends with the closing formula "*ṣadaqa Allāh al-ʿaẓīm*".
147. Meinecke 1992, I, p. 91.
148. Meinecke 1972, pp. xvi, lxiv, 253–254; 1992, II, p. 183.
149. Kessler 1976, p. 4.
150. Kessler 1976, p. 6.
151. Al-Ibrashy 2006, pp. 291, 297. On my maps, I have located ʿUmar (2) at the mausoleum of ʿAbd Allāh al-Dakrūrī.

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memory was erased or overwritten by a new narrative. No dedicated inscription is found in the mausoleum nor in any document I have read. Therefore, the date 871/1467 given erroneously for the mausoleum is merely the date of Mubārak's passing.

Another hypothesis could be that Mubārak's tomb eventually fell to ruin and that his memory became somewhat attached to the old *qubba* through the Takrūrī/Dakrūrī names. "ʿAbd Allāh" is a generic and very common Muslim name slaves were receiving when they were converted to Islam by their masters. "Mubārak" could have been of his choosing, after his manumission, and might have remained part of his full appellation. The *kutub al-ziyāra* are rife with the sheikhs of the visit's exasperation with the *ʿāmma*, meaning the popular or vulgar crowds, that constantly mistook one's burial for another or invented new narratives around tombs. The *Tuḥfat al-aḥbāb*'s account on Mubārak shows that after the middle of the 9th/15th century, the informal corporation of the sheikhs of the visit was henceforth lacking the manpower to enforce a knowledge it had accumulated and passed on for centuries. Ruining, epidemics, and political instability resulted in the acceleration of an already evolving topography, physically and imaginarily. In this scenario, the Takrūrī legacy in the Qarāfa reflects the state in which the necropolis was during the second half of the 9th/15th century. A then already fuzzy substrate of Takrūrī history had served to anchor its last recorded representative.

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