ISTANBUL MEDENIYET UNIVERSITY
INSTITUE OF GRADUATE STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL OTTOMAN STUDIES

Sufi Tradition in Ottoman Egypt According to Al-Jabarti's Aja'ib al-athar

Master's Thesis

Şeyma Mert

June 2025

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Style and Reference Manual Statement

Having reviewed this thesis written under my supervision, I confirm that it has been written in accordance with Chicago Manual of Style and used its footnote reference format consistently throughout the entire text.

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Declaration of Originality

I hereby declare that all information in this thesis has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conducts, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

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GENİŞ ÖZET

El-Ceberti'nin Aca'ibü'l-Asar Adlı Eserine Göre Osmanlı Mısırı'nda Sufi Gelenek

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Danışman: Doç. Dr. Fatih Bayram

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Bu tez, on sekizinci yüzyılın sonu ve on dokuzuncu yüzyılın başlarında, İslam düşüncesi ve tasavvuf tarihinde önemli bir yere sahip olan Mısır tarihçisi 'Abd al-Rahman el-Ceberti'nin (1753-1825) *'Acâ'ibü'l-âṯâr fi't-terâcim ve'l-aḫbâr* eserinde yansıttığı tasavvufa dair görüşlerini ve bu çerçevede Sufi hayatlarını ve geleneklerini ele almaktadır. Çalışma dönemin önde gelen mutasavvıf şeyhlerinden, Muhammed Murtaza ez-Zebidi, Abdullah eş-Şerkavi ve Ahmed ed-Derdîr'in hayatlarını, eserlerini ve toplumsal rollerini kapsamaktadır. Mezkûr şahsiyetler tasavvufa katkılarının yanı sıra, Mısır'ın Osmanlı ve Fransız dönemlerinde düşünsel ve siyasal rolleriyle de etkili yere sahiptirler. Bunlara ek olarak, el-Ceberti'nin bu mutasavvıfları tasvir etmesine ve değerlendirmesine odaklanmaktadır. Giriş, dört ana bölüm ve sonuçtan oluşan bu tez; Osmanlı Mısır'ındaki siyasal, sosyal ve dini algı ile tasavvufun bunların içindeki yerini detaylı bir şekilde incelemektedir.

Ceberti, Kahire'de doğmuş ve Mısır'ın en çalkantılı dönemlerinden birinde yaşamıştır. Ataları, Habeşistan'ın Cebert bölgesinden geldikleri için kendisi Ceberti künyesiyle tanınmaktadır. 11 yaşında hafız olan Ceberti, eğitimli, Hanefi mezhebine mensup, muhafazakâr bir aile ortamında yetişmiş El-Ezher'de klasik İslami eğitim almıştır. Bu da onun küçük yaşlarda entelektüel bir çevre ile tanışmasına neden olmuştur. Babası, hayatta kalan tek oğlu olan Ceberti'ye büyük bir miras, değerli hocalar ve ileri gelen devlet adamlarından oluşan son derece nitelikli bir çevre bırakmıştır. Kendi kütüphanesine sahip olan Ceberti, el-Ezher'den mezun olduktan sonra matematik, astronomi ve geometri alanlarında kendini geliştirmiş, Osmanlı Veziri Koca Yusuf Paşa kendisine takvimler hazırlatmış ve bir eser yazmasını isteyerek kendisine ödüller vermiştir. Mısır, Fransızlar tarafından işgal edilince Napolyon tarafından halkla yönetim arasında irtibatı sağlamak amacıyla kurulan divana üye olarak atanmıştır. Ceberti, Kavalalı Mehmed Ali Paşa'ya her zaman muhalefet etmiş, 1822 yılında oğlu Halil öldürülünce, Ceberti'nin Mehmed Ali Paşa'ya karşı olan tenkitleri yüzünden

öldürüldüğü düşüncesi yaygınlık kazanmıştır. Ceberti yaşadığı yas nedeniyle görme yetisini kaybetmiş ve vefatına kadar inzivaya çekilmiştir.

Yazdığı eserlerden en meşhuru olan, *'Acâ'ibü'l-âṯâr*, "Ceberti'nin Mısır Tarihi" olarak adlandırılmasının yanı sıra dönemin dini, kültürel ve sosyal analizlerini içeren önemli bir kaynaktır. Bu eser, Osmanlı idaresindeki Mısır tarihine dair en önemli ve erişilebilir birincil kaynaklardan biridir. Ceberti bu kroniğini, Halvetiyye tarikatına mensup bir Müslüman tarihçi bakış açısıyla yazmıştır. Ona göre Allah, bu dünyayı ödül ve ceza düzeniyle yönetmektedir. Bu çerçevede, Memlüklerin zulmü ve Osmanlıların baskısı, Fransızların Mısır'ı işgal etmesine zemin hazırlamıştır. Eserde ayrıca Memlüklerin çöküşünden sonra Mehmed Ali Paşa'nın yükselişi ve onun idari, ekonomik ve tarımsal reformları eleştirel bir biçimde ele alınmıştır.

Ceberti'nin kroniğinde biyografik unsurların yanı sıra müellifin olaylar üzerinden bireyleri ve toplumsal yapıyı analiz eden tespitleri, tasavvufu ve sufileri ön plana alan yaklaşımı dikkat çeker. O dönemin Osmanlı Mısır'ı göz önüne alındığında, tarikatlar, halk inançları, mevlit kutlamaları, el-Ezher ve ulemaya dair konular bu bağlamda öne çıkmaktadır.

Ceberti, eserinin dördüncü cildini tamamlayamadan vefat etmiştir. Vefatından sonra, on dokuzuncu yüzyılın başlarında parçalar halinde düzenlenip yayınlanan eserin üç ciltlik versiyonunun 1825'te neşredilen el yazması kopyaları bulunmaktadır. Mehmet Ali Paşa ve destekçilerinin tüm kopyaları imha etme girişimleri başarısız olmuş ve 1879-80'de Bulak matbaasında eserin ilk baskısı yapılmıştır. Bu çalışmada Fransız işgali hakkındaki içeriği nedeniyle yalnızca üçüncü cilt basılmış ve 75 yıl boyunca tek kopya olarak kalmıştır. Daha sonra Arap Yayın Konseyi eseri yedi cilt olarak basmışsa da bu baskı eksik ve yanlış bir dizinle yayınlanmıştır. 1990'ların sonunda Kahire'de ve Beyrut'ta iki baskının daha yayınlanmasının ardından, nihayet Shmuel Moreh Ceberti'nin gözetiminde kopyalanmış olanlar da dahil olmak üzere birçok başka el yazmasını birleştirerek Ceberti'nin Tarihçesini yayınlamıştır. Moreh'in bu yeni baskısı, muazzam boyutunun yanı sıra, Osmanlı Mısır'ını inceleyen tüm araştırmacılar için özel bir kaynaktır.

Tezimizde özel olarak incelenen mutasavvıflardan ilki Murtaza ez-Zebidi'dir. Zebidi'nin hayatı Ceberti'nin en uzun ve detaylı nekrolojilerinden biridir. On sekizinci yüzyılın önemli alimlerinden olan Zebidi, 1732'de doğmuş olup, aslen Hindistan'ın Bilgram kasabasından gelen bir aileye mensup olduğuna inanılmaktadır. Yemen, Hicaz, Bağdat, Basra ve son olarak Kahire'ye ulaşan geniş bir coğrafyada ilim tahsili yapmıştır. Kendisini "eğitimde Kadiri, pratikte Nakşibendi" olarak tanımlayan Zebidi, bu yolculuklar neticesinde farklı sufi çevrelerle muhatap olmuş, çeşitli tarikatlara intisap etmiştir. Bu da çeşitli ilmi iletişim ağlarını keşfetmesine ve alimlerle arasındaki bağlantıları

güçlendirmesine zemin hazırlamıştır. Karşılaştığı tarikatların silsilelerini toplamış ve 128 farklı tasavvuf zinciri yazmıştır. Zebidi, tasavvufu bireysel bir arınma yöntemi olmasının yanı sıra ilmi bir miras olarak telakki etmiştir. Ciddiyetle tasavvufa dahil olmasına rağmen kendi Sufi tarikatini kurmamış hatta sufi topluluklardan hiçbirine sadık olmadığı gerekçesiyle eleştirilmiştir. Kahire'ye yerleştikten sonra Zebidi bölgede büyük tesire sahip alimlerden biri olmuş, ders halkaları oluşturmuş ve birçok öğrenci yetiştirmiştir. Eserleri, tasavvuf çevrelerinin yanı sıra fıkıh, kelam ve hadis alimleri tarafından da ilgi görmüştür. Bu nedenle Zebidi'nin hayatı tasavvufun bireysel ve kurumsal anlamda nasıl öğretildiği ve uygulandığını gösteren önemli bir örnektir.

En önemli eseri olan *Taj al-'arus*, Arapça lügat çalışmaları içinde en detaylı ve kapsamlı olanlardan biridir. Eserleri, çağdaşı alimlerin ihtiyaçlarını karşılamanın yanında, tarih boyunca İslam bilginleri üzerinde kalıcı bir etki bırakmıştır. Çok iyi bir yazar, muhteşem bir koleksiyoncu ve nadir kitap dağıtıcısı olan Zebidi, Avrupalı birçok yayıncıyı gölgede bırakan geniş dağıtım ağı nedeniyle matbaa dönemi öncesi Arap yayıncılığına büyük katkılarda bulunmuştur.

Tezde, Zebidi'nin yaşadığı dönemin toplumsal yapısı, alimler arasındaki entelektüel etkileşim ve tasavvufla ilişkisi detaylı biçimde ele alınmıştır. Yazdığı eserlerin listesini de içeren bu çalışmada, Zebidi'nin ilmi yolculuğunda karşılaştığı alimler, tasavvuf yolundaki mürşitleri ve ona katkıları önemli bir yer tutmaktadır. Bu çalışma, Zebidi'nin tasavvufi duruşunu ve Ceberti'nin onunla ilgili değerlendirmelerini anlamak adına önemli bir içeriğe sahiptir.

Ceberti, hocası Zebidi'nin biyografisine onun hakkında derin hürmet ifadeleriyle başlamış, bunun yanı sıra yeri geldikçe hocasına karşı eleştirel bir tutum sergilemekten kaçınmamıştır. Zebidi'nin lugat çalışmaları, hadis yorumları ve tasavvufi eserleri, onu zamanın en değerli alimlerinden biri yapmış olsa da Ceberti, hocasının halk arasındaki etkisiyle fazla meşhur olmasını eleştirmiştir. Bu durum, Ceberti'nin tasavvufun tarif ettiği sufi tipiyle pratikte karşılaşılan arasında tespit ettiği çelişkiden kaynaklanmaktadır. Eleştirilerinin yanı sıra Ceberti hocasını muhteşem bir insan olarak tarif etmiş ve kendisini onunla bağlantılı hissetmiştir.

Tezde incelenen ikinci mutasavvıf ise Abdullah Şerkavi'dir. 1737 yılında Şarkiye vilayetinde doğmuş ve Kur'an-ı Kerim'i ezberledikten sonra Medresetü's-Sinaniyye, ve Medresetü't-Taybarsiyye'de eğitim almıştır. Daha sonra el-Ezher'de birçok değerli alimden ders alırken, tasavvufa giriş yapmış ve Halvetiyye tarikatına intisap etmiştir. Halvetiyye tarikatının Hifniyye kolunun kurucusu Muhammed el-Hifni'ye bağlanmış, onun vefatının ardından da Şeyh Mahmud el-Kürdi'ye intisap edip seyr-i sülukunu tamamladıktan sonra, Kurdi'nin halifesi olmuştur. Ezher'de ders vermeye başlayarak birçok öğrenci

yetiştirmiş ve nihayet el-Ezher şeyhliğine getirilmiştir. Ceberti, kroniğinde Şerkavi'nin halkla bağlantısını, siyasi olaylardaki duruşunu ve liderliğini ayrıntılı şekilde anlatmıştır. Şerkavi, dini ilimlerin yanı sıra siyasi ve toplumsal meselelerde de söz sahibi olmuştur. Fransız işgali döneminde, Fransızlar tarafından önemli bir din bilgini olarak, yine onlar tarafından düzenlenen ve İslam otoritesi ile sömürge gücünün kesiştiği noktada konumlandırılan ilk idari konsey divanına atanmıştır. Bu ise, onun dini otorite ve siyasi iktidar arasında kalmasına sebebiyet vermiştir. Birçok konuda Napolyon'la anlaşmazlık yaşamış ve ona karşı tavır almaktan çekinmemiştir. Ayrıca -daha sonra pişman olsa da- Mehmet Ali Paşa'nın Mısır'a vali olarak tayin edilmesinde büyük etkisi olmuştur.

Ceberti, kroniğinde el-Şarkavi'ye karşı eleştirel bir yaklaşımda bulunmuş; tarihsel çalışmalarına karşı basit ama gizli bir küçümseme göstermiş ve birçok eseri taklit ettiği için onu eleştirmiştir. Ayrıca, Şerkavi'nin mimari ve tarihi servete sahip bir Memlük yapısı olan Umm Anuk Camisini yıkmasını ve eserinde kendi çalışmasına atıfta bulunmadan kullanmasını eleştirmiştir. Bu tezde Şerkavi'nin dini ve siyasi etkilerinin yanı sıra, eserlerine de yer verilmiştir.

Tezde ele alınan üçüncü mutasavvıf ise Ahmed ed-Derdîr'dir. 1715 yılında Yukarı Mısır'daki Asyût şehrine bağlı Menfelût kasabasında doğan Derdîr, küçük yaşta Kur'an-ı Kerim'i ezberledikten sonra, ilim tahsili için Kahire'ye gitmiştir. Ezher'de devrin en seçkin alimlerinden eğitim almış, fıkıh, kelam ve tasavvuf alanlarında derinleşmiştir. Halvetiyye tarikatının Karabaşiyye koluna intisap eden Derdîr, zühd ve takva ile örnek bir sufi hayatı yaşamıştır. Aynı zamanda toplumsal meselelerde aktif bir rol üstlenmiştir. El-Ezher'de uzun yıllar ders vererek birçok öğrenci yetiştirmiştir. Maliki fıkhına dair eserleriyle büyük şöhret kazanmıştır. Derdîr'in tasavvufi anlayışı, şeriat merkezli bir zühd çizgisinde şekillenmiş, sufi terbiyede mürşidin rehberliğini esas almıştır. Derdîr'in Sufi geleneğindeki rolü öncelikle yazılarından bilinmektedir. Eserlerinden biri olan *Tuḥfetü'l-iḫvân fî âdâbi ehli'l-ʿirfân*, tasavvufta temel bir metin olarak kabul edilebilir. Ceberti, kroniğinde, Derdîr'i yüksek ahlakı, alçakgönüllülüğü ve halkla kurduğu samimi ilişkisi nedeniyle övmüştür. Aynı zamanda onun tasavvufi vakarını ve ilim-irfan sahibi kişiliğini ideal bir sufi örneği olarak sunmuştur. Diğer iki mutasavvıf gibi Derdîr de ilimle tasavvufu birleştirerek hem zahirî hem batınî ilimlerde derinleşmiştir. Ceberti'nin nazarında olumlu bir portre çizmiştir. Derdîr'in mütevazı hayatı ve gösterişten uzak duruşu, Ceberti'nin eleştirilerinden büyük ölçüde muaf kalmasını sağlamıştır.

Ceberti'nin tasavvufa yaklaşımı, diğer alimlere göre daha eleştirel fakat dengeli ve seçicidir. Halvetiyye tarikatının Karabaşiyye koluna mensup olan Ceberti, tasavvuf karşıtı değildir. Sadece bazı sufi uygulamalarını kabul

etmez. Ceberti'nin tasavvuf anlayışına göre bireyin Allah'a ulaşma gayreti ilme dayalı ve gösterişten uzak şekilde olmalıdır. Hurafeleri, bidatları, menfaat odaklı ve toplumda itibar kazanmak için yapılan sufi ritüellerini eleştirmiştir. Zebidi ve Şerkavi, Ceberti'nin kroniğindeki bazı alimlere kıyasla olumlu örnekler arasında zikredilebilir. Her iki alim de tasavvuf ve diğer ilimleri birleştirmiş, şeriat dairesinde kalmış ve topluma faydalı olmuşlardır. Fakat, ikisi de zengin ve lüks hayat tarzını benimsedikleri için Ceberti'nin eleştirisine maruz kalmışlardır.

Ceberti'nin tasavvufa bakış açısı, araştırmacılar için bu kritik geçiş döneminin anlaşılmasına önemli bir katkıda bulunur. Ceberti eserinde el-Ezher eğitimiyle tasavvufun birleşik farkındalığını tasvir etmektedir. Bu duruşuyla Osmanlı döneminde İslam tarihçiliği, kültür, din ve bilimler arasındaki ilişkiyi yeniden canlandıran ilk Arap-Müslüman tarihçi olarak kabul edilebilir. Bu çalışmada, Zebidi, Şerkavi ve Derdîr gibi tasavvuf ehli alimler üzerinden yapılan analizler, Ceberti'nin tasavvufa yaklaşımı ve dönemin tasavvufi anlayışının özellikleri sergilenmektedir. Gelecekteki çalışmalarımda, Zebidi, Şerkavi ve Derdîr'in yanında *Acâ'ibü'l-âṯâr'* da adı geçen diğer mutasavvıflar ile İslam dünyasının farklı coğrafyalarından mutasavvıfların karşılaştırmalı incelemelerini sunmayı umuyorum.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ceberti, Mısır, Sufi, Zebidi, Şerkavi, Derdîr

ABSTRACT

Sufi Tradition in Ottoman Egypt According to Al-Jabarti's Aja'ib al-athar

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Master's Thesis, Department of International Ottoman Studies

Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Fatih Bayram

June 2025

This thesis examines, 'Abd al-Rahman al-Jabarti's (1753-1825) viewpoint of Sufism and notable Sufi shaykhs as documented in his historical work *'Aja'ib al-athar fi al-tarajim wa-al-akhbar*. Specifically, it focuses on three crucial scholars and Sufi shaykhs, Murtada al-Zabidi, 'Abd Allah al-Sharqawi, and Ahmad al-Dardir who lived in the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century. By studying their lives, views, and roles in society, this thesis analyzes al-Jabarti's appreciation of the deep spiritual values of Sufism and criticism of some widespread Sufi practices, as he viewed them as awkward. This thesis begins with al-Jabarti's life, including his style of writing history, the way he used his sources, and publication details of his chronicle. This assists in understanding his views on Sufism. While al-Jabarti respects classical Sufi principles and knowledge, he mentions his concerns about practices that, in his view, wander from wisdom and Islamic law. By reading his chronicle closely and comparing it with other historical and biographical resources, this thesis presents al-Jabarti as not just only a historian but also as a social and religious analyst. In addition, his writings reflect his reformist thinking, which was common in his time. Overall, this study contributes to readers' comprehension of Sufism, religious identity, and the sense of balance of tradition and reform in the late Ottoman Egypt. At the same time, it leads to internal criticisms of Muslim scholars and their way of dealing with religious authorities, which are still important.

Keywords: Al-Jabarti, Eygpt, Sufism, Al-Zabidi, Al-Sharqawi, Al-Dardir

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ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1. The portrait of "the Austronomer": ʻAbd al-Rahman al-Jabarti

Figure 2. The portrait of ʻAbd Allah al-Sharqawi

INTRODUCTION

Sufism has long held a distinctive and mostly debated position in the Islamic world. Many Muslims admire it as the spiritual center of Islam, yet others criticize it as an origin of innovation and divergence. This contrast between admiration and criticism is also what drew me to the topic. I became curious about how such a tradition could be both spiritually central and socially contested. Many scholars view Sufism as both a social movement and socio-religious practice. However, it is held responsible for the disorganization of Muslim society and creating complications for political power.[1] Under Ottoman rule, Egyptian society was profoundly religious, and Sufism was a significant part of the religious life. It was a common and influential movement that spread throughout society. Sufism shaped the Egyptian people's spiritual, cultural, and social life during this time. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, in Ottoman Egypt, Sufi orders were crucial in religious life, culture, and social structure. However, this period also experienced growing concerns between *ulama* and reformers about the decline in the insight and reliability of Sufi practices. One of the most well-known scholars dealing with these concerns was ʻAbd al-Rahman al-Jabarti (1753-1825), an Egyptian scholar and historian who lived through this time of significant change.[2]

This thesis examines al-Jabarti's point of view on Sufism as presented in his comprehensive chronicle, *ʻAja'ib al-athar*. It focuses on three well-known Sufi shaykhs, Murtada al-Zabidi, Shaykh al-Azhar 'Abd Allah al-Sharqawi, and Ahmad al-Dardir. They are influential scholarly and mystical leaders during al-Jabarti's time. Along with a deep study of their biographies and the framework

[1] Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, "XV. ve XVI. Yüzyıllarda Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Tasavvuf Karşıtlığı," essay, in *Doğuştan Günümüze Tasavvufa Dair Tartışmalar On Üç Asırlık İhtilaf ve Mücadele*, ed. Frederick De Jong and Bernd Radtke, vol. IV/A-1.8., 4 (Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2020), 449, https://isamveri.org/pdfdrg/D283729/2020/2020_OCAKAY.pdf.
[2] Michael Winter, *Egyptian Society Under Ottoman Rule, 1517-1798* (Routledge, 2014), 124; Michael Winter, "The Sufi Personality of the Egyptian Historian ʿAbd Al-Raḥmān al-Jabartī (1753–1825)," essay, in *Cultural Pearls from the East: In Memory of Shmuel Moreh (1932-2017)* (Brill, 2021), 266.

al-Jabarti uses to write about their lives, perspectives, and social roles. This thesis tries to expose how he considered the benefits, risks, and connections of Sufism in late Ottoman Egypt. In addition to understand al-Jabarti's perspective on Sufism and Sufi scholars, this study will also explore his life story.

I chose this topic because it touches on some of the main issues I care about in Islamic thought. While reading al-Jabarti, I often felt that he was not just reporting events but reflecting deeply on the meaning of faith, knowledge, and spiritual life. The way he described figures like al-Zabidi, al-Sharqawi, and al-Dardir helped me think about how religious scholars respond to change, how they struggle with power, and how they stay true to their path. Writing this thesis was not just a research process for me. It became a way to understand the inner world of these scholars and to reflect on what kind of religious thought still speaks to our time. Through this process, I also found myself thinking more critically about the kinds of religious voices that still speak to us today and why.

The Egyptian historian ʻAbd al-Rahman b. Hasan al-Jabarti al-Zaylaʼl al-Hanafi is best known for chronicling Egypt's French invasion and occupation from 1798 until 1801. He recorded the loss caused by the occupation of the only society he was familiar with. He depicted the overall picture of the first six months of the occupation. After that, he wrote more bitter judgments after the Ottoman Empire which reestablished his authority in Egypt in 1801. Then, he started writing comprehensive chronicle about Ottoman Egypt from 1688 till 1821.[3]

This multi-volume chronicle, known in Arabic as *ʻAjaʼib al-athar fiʼl-tarajim waʼl akhbar*, can be translated as "The Marvelous Compositions of Biographies and Chronicles"[4] although it is widely known as "Al-Jabarti's History of Egypt"[5]. Al-Jabarti wrote his chronicle from the point of view of a Muslim historian of the

[3] Jane Hathaway, "Abd Al-Rahman Al-Jabarti (1753-1825)," essay, in *History From Loss*, ed. Marnie Hughes-Warrington and Daniel Woolf (Routledge Taylor&Francis Group, 2023), 120–27.
[4] Shmuel Moreh, ed., "Introduction," in *The Marvelous Chronicles: Biographies and Events 'Aja'ib al-Athar Fi l-Tarajim Wa-l-Akhbar*, vol. 1 (Institute of Asian and African Studies, 2013), 1.
[5] Jane H. Murphy, "Al-Jabarti," *Encyclopaedia of the History of Science, Technology, and Medicine in Non-Western Cultures*, 2016, 232–37, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-7747-7_10180.

Khalwatiyya order, who believed that God rules this world by reward and punishment. According to this, the Mamluks' cruelty and the Ottomans' tyranny ultimately led to the French occupation of Egypt (1798–1801). He also wrote about the rise of Muhammad Ali after the end of the Mamluk period, and he criticized him for reforms in administration, economy, and agriculture. He kept writing his chronicle until the end of 1236/1821.[6] For a long time, *Aja'ib al-athar* was only available in Arabic. Afterward, an international team of experts on the history of Egypt, under the supervision of Thomas Philipp and Moshe Perlmann, translated it into English and published it in 1994.[7] This four-volume translation with a helpful guide[8] is appropriate for use in scholarly research.[9] Recently, there was a new edition, which Shmuel Moreh published.[10] It is a five-volume work for historians who would like to study Ottoman Egypt in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Many historians interested in Arab and Ottoman society have studied al-Jabarti's writings for his many views of daily life in an Arab-Ottoman city during those times. Moreover, Al-Jabarti's writings in French science had already attracted historians. They used his works to understand Islamic and European engagements widely. Nowadays, scholars are focusing on al-Jabarti's studies on medicine and astronomy and a large-scale network between scholars and teachers of the sciences. However, it still seems that al-Jabarti's life has not been studied sufficiently. Although he wrote hundreds of biographies of others, his contemporaries and the copyists of his works did not write his biography, except for his friend and mentor Murtada al-Zabidi in his *Mu'jam Mukhtass*.[11]

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[6] Moreh, "Introduction," 1-11.
[7] Abd Al-Rahman Al-Jabarti, *Abd Al-Rahmann al-Jabarti's History of Egypt: 'Ajaib al-Athar Fi'l-Tarajim Wa'l-Akhbar*, ed. Thomas Philipp and Moshe Perlmann, 4 vols. (Franz Steiner Verlag, 1994).
[8] Thomas Philipp and Guido Schwald, *A Guide to 'Abd Al-Raḥmān al-Jabartī's History of Egypt: 'Ajā'ib al-Āthār Fī 'l-Tarājim Wa'l-Akhbār* (Franz Steiner Verlag, 1994).
[9] Jane Hathaway, *Al-Jabarti's History of Egypt* (Markus Wiener Publishers, 2009), xi
[10] Al-Jabarti, *Ajaib Al-Athar Fi l-Tarajim Wa-l-Akhbar (The Marvelous Chronicles: Biographies and Events)*, ed. Shmuel Moreh, 5 vols. (Hebrew University Institute of Asian and African Studies, Max Schloessinger Memorial Foundation, 2013).
[11] Murphy, "Al-Jabarti," 232-37; Jane Murphy, "Improving the Mind and Delighting the Spirit: Jabarti and the Sciences in Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Cairo" (PhD diss., Princeton

Nevertheless, I focus on al-Jabarti's perspective on Sufism, especially his affiliation with the Khalwati order and his accounts of prominent shaykhs, because these subjects remain underexplored and directly motivate the purpose of this thesis. In al-Jabarti's chronicle, religious life in Egypt, particularly Sufism, is an important topic. In the context of Ottoman Egypt, al-Jabarti also discussed Sufi brotherhoods, social traditions, *mawlids*, and institutions like al-Azhar and the scholarly class.[12] Al-Jabarti's view of Sufism is complicated. He respected its classical teachings and spiritual knowledge but also showed confusion or worries about popular Sufi practices that lacked a scholarly or legal basis.

All references to *'Aja'ib al-athar* in this study are taken from the English translation by Thomas Philipp and Moshe Perlmann (1994), unless otherwise stated. This thesis is organized as follows: Through this process, I also found myself thinking more critically about the kinds of religious voices that still speak to us today and why. The first chapter presents a biographical review of al-Jabarti, his academic background, and his connection to his contemporary scholarly and Sufi societies. In addition, it introduces the chronicle *'Aja'ib al-athar*, analyzing its sources, publication history, and historical importance.

In the second chapter of this thesis, al-Jabarti's extensive biography of Murtada al-Zabidi (1732–1791) is examined, focusing on his scholarly networks, Sufi affiliations, and writings. Al-Jabarti presents Zabidi's life, which spans from India to Yemen and Egypt. He is one of the richest and most influential biographies in *Aja'ib al-athar*.[13] Al-Jabarti wrote about Zabidi with striking admiration, emphasizing his mastery in language, theology, and tradition. His words reflect a sincere respect for his mentor's intellectual and spiritual presence.

University, 2006); Shmuel Moreh, *Egyptian Historian 'Abd al-Rahman al-Jabarti: His Life, Works, Autographs, Manuscripts and the Historical Sources of 'Aja'ib al-Athar* (Oxford University Press, 2014), 1-17.

[12] Winter, "The Sufi Personality of the Egyptian Historian ʿAbd Al-Raḥmān al-Jabartī (1753–1825)," 264.

[13] Abid Yaşar Koçak, "El-Murtedâ Ez-Zebîdî. Tâcu'l-'Arûs Müellifi," *Nüsha: Şarkiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 6, 2 (2002): 101–14; Stefan Reichmuth, "Murtadā Az-Zabīdī (d. 1791) in Biographical and Autobiographical Accounts. Glimpses of Islamic Scholarship in the 18th Century," *Die Welt Des Islams* 39, no. 1 (1999): 64–102, https://doi.org/10.1163/1570060991648923.

His kindness and generous hospitality to the foreigners that crowded his home, particularly during the pilgrimage time, prove his wide fame all over the Muslim world. Visitors from different parts of the Muslim world came to his home, where they found both intellectual exchange and generous treatment. Al-Jabarti's biography offers valuable insight into his scholarly contributions. Although he occasionally criticizes him, his overall tone reflects deep respect.

Al-Zabidi's life offers important insights into the scholarly and spiritual networks of the eighteenth century. His connections and Sufi activities show how knowledge and influence traveled across regions in his time.[14] During his life, Sufi brotherhoods became more active and visible across the Muslim world. The Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya order was expanding from India to the Middle East. Al-Zabidi took part in this wider spiritual movement. He studied within the Qadiriyya and Naqshbandiyya traditions in Yemen and India, and later joined other well-known Sufi groups in Egypt. He collected more than a hundred chains of spiritual transmission (*silsila*), which he carefully preserved and shared with others. Al-Zabidi did not establish his own Sufi order but became a respected figure who granted *ijaza* and shared *silsilas* with others, expanding his influence beyond Egypt.[15]

In addition, Al-Zabidi wrote on many subjects, showing his broad interests and deep knowledge. In his letters and authorizations, he often explained why he wrote a work and who it was for. Al-Zabidi influenced later scholars through his widely read works. He actively collected and shared rare books. In addition, he contributed significantly to the circulation of knowledge before the printing era. One of his important works, the unfinished *Mu'jam Muktass*, is a collection of biographies of his teachers, students, and friends. It is also valuable for al-Jabarti, who copied many entries from it. The work combines several genres like *ijazat*, travel reports, and literary notes. It gives insight into

[14] Stefan Reichmuth, *The World of Murtada Al-Zabidi (1732-91) : Life, Networks and Writings* (Gibb Memorial Trust, 2009), vii-xi.
[15] Ibid., ix-x.

Zabidi's wide network, including rulers, rural scholars, and ordinary people from different regions and social backgrounds.[16]

In the third chapter of this thesis, al-Jabarti's another biography of Shaykh al- Azhar 'Abdallah al-Sharqawi's (1737-1812) life, al-Jabarti's criticisms, Sufism in his life, and his works will be analyzed. Al-Sharqawi worked as the head of al-Azhar during a thundering time labeled by the French occupation of Egypt. As a noteworthy religious scholar, he was assigned to the first administrative council *diwan* organized by the French, which positioned him at the crossing point of Islamic authority and colonial power. Al-Jabarti, in his chronicle, presents a critical image of al-Sharqawi. He documents a simple but hidden contempt for his historical works, which he criticizes for being imitative, including his self-seeking manner. Additionally, he disapproves of al-Sharqawi for destroying a Mamluk-era mosque of a particular architectural and historical fortune and also using al-Jabarti's work for his biographical writing without referring to him, which features a tensity between academic honesty and changing the system of power during the late Ottoman Egypt time.[17]

In the fourth chapter of this thesis, Ahmad al-Dardir's (1715-1786) life, Sufism in his life, the conditions of his times, and his writings will be examined. He is one of the rare shaykhs that al-Jabarti admires without criticizing in his *Aja'ib*. He claims that al-Dardir was not only a leading shaykh of the Maliki School and the official mutfi but also, in his view, the shaykh of all Egypt at his time. According to al-Jabarti, he was always honest in his devotion to God and determined in his pursuit of righteousness.[18] However, al-Jabarti did not write much about al-Dardir in the Khalwati tradition, even though they were both disciples of Shaykh al-Hifni. He played a significant role in disseminating the Khalwatiyya order throughout Egypt. He was the head of his own Sufi branch

[16] Ibid., xii; Ahmet Eşer, "İlmi Biyografi Kaynağı Olarak Murtażâ Ez-Zebîdî'nin El-Mu'Cemü'l-Muḫtaṣ'ı [Al-Muʿjam Al-Muḫtaṣ Of Murtaḍā Al-Zabīdī As A Scientific Biographical Resource]," *Cumhuriyet İlahiyat Dergisi-Cumhuriyet Theology Journal*, 3, 25 (2021): 1203–29, https://doi.org/10.18505/cuid.983661.
[17] Hathaway, *History of Egypt,* 292.
[18] Al-Jabarti, *Abd Al-Rahmann al-Jabarti's History of Egypt,* 2: 243.

named Dardiriyya. Al-Dardir's role in the Sufi tradition is primarily known through his writings. One of his writings, *Tuhfat al-ikhwan fi bayan tariq ahl al-'irfan*, can be considered a main work in *tasawwuf*. This work's content will be analyzed in the same chapter, which gives a clear guide for his disciples and a reminder to his colleagues of the Sufi path.[19]

This thesis presents al-Jabarti's views on Sufism in the context of his time, providing more refined knowledge of Sufi history and how Islamic scholars wrote about it. Moreover, it enlightens how Muslim scholars of the early modern period tried to balance tradition with reform. This challenge remains deeply relevant in contemporary Islamic thought and debates on tradition and reform.

[19] Walead Mohammed Mosaad, *Islam before Modernity: Aḥmad al-Dardīr and the Preservation of Traditional Knowledge* (Gorgias Press LLC, 2022), 280.

CHAPTER 1: ABD AL-RAHMAN B. HASAN AL-JABARTI

1.1 His Life

Abd al-Rahman al-Jabarti was born in Cairo in 1753. He belonged to a rich and famous *ulama* family. His name came from the region of al-Jabarti, called Djibouti, in the horn of Africa, where his seventh grandfather had moved to Egypt early in the sixteenth century. His father was Shaykh Hasan al-Jabarti (1697-1774), a noted Muslim scholar-official who had extensive connections in the Ottoman Empire at the time. Al-Jabarti described his father as a great *alim* with excellent connections to other *ulama* and men of the world. He was leading Islamic scholars from all over the region, the military administrators of Egypt, provincial officials, and their counterparts. He was a friend of the *amirs* in Egypt, the Ottoman government, and even the sultan. Sultan Mustafa III (1757-74) sent him books on Hanafite jurisprudence. Hasan al-Jabarti knew Turkish and Persian very well. In addition to Islamic studies, he taught geometry, mathematics, astronomy, algebra, and other sciences. He got married into a rich family and had a wealthy grandmother. He did not spend his time in business. His grandmother provided some buildings as *waqf* for him. He had forty children, but 'Abd al-Rahman was the only one to survive to maturity. His father died at the age of seventy-seven when his son, 'Abd al-Rahman al-Jabarti, was twenty-one. His mother was a white slave girl named Zulaykha either a Georgian or a native of Circassia, north of Georgia in the Caucasus. Al-Jabarti's father bought her while on the pilgrimage in 1744 and married her almost eight years after she matured.[20]

Al-Jabarti's family belonged to the Hanafi rite of Sunni Islam. His father and many generations of forefathers had been important scholars of the Hanafi rite. When he was young, al-Jabarti studied the seminal Hanafi juridical texts and many commentaries. Reading the biography sections in his chronicles, it is clear that he was a diligent student of his father, studying texts with other young

[20] Hathaway, *History of Egypt*, xvi-xvii; Lars Bjøerneboe, *In Search of the True Political Position of the 'Ulama : An Analysis of the Aims and Perspectives of the Chronicles of Abd al-Rahman al-Jabarti (1753-1825)* (Aarhus University Press, 2007), 89–101.

scholars. Nonetheless, he also studied with many other leading members of the *ulama* based at Al-Azhar. Not only Hanafi scholars but also prominent Shafi'i and Maliki scholars gave him lessons.[21] He also followed his father's trail by researching the sciences, especially astronomy and medicine. He calculated eclipses of the moon and the sun, *tawqit* (defining prayer times), and the *qibla* (direction to pray towards Ka'ba) of the *mihrab* in mosques.[22]

The *État moderne* section of the *Description de l'Égypte* displays portraits of various professionals from the Egyptian society. One of these, titled "The Astronomer" (Figure 1), may actually portray al-Jabarti. According to André Raymond, the man on the portrait is most likely al-Jabarti, since he was the only astronomer in Cairo from 1798 to 1801. He was one of the few scholars in Cairo who studied and owned the kind of astronomical instruments shown in the image. If this identification is true, Hathaway states that the portrait displays al-Jabarti around the age of 44. He seems to be at the top of his intellectual life and feeling the effects of the big changes caused by the French occupation.[23]

He studied with Hanafi scholars Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahman al-'Arishi, Sayyid Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Hanafi and al-Murtada al-Zabidi. In addition, Shafi'i scholars Shaykh Ahmad al-Damanhuri, Shaykh Ahmad al-'Arusi Muhammad al-Janaji, and the Maliki scholar Muhammad al-Maliki were also his teachers in al-Azhar. Furthermore, he mentioned some other scholars like Shaykh Mahmud al-Kurdi, Sayyid 'Abd al-Rahman al-'Aydarus, 'Ali al-Sa'idi, Ahmad al-Dardir, and Abu 'l-Imdad Ahmad ibn Wafa as his teachers.[24]

Other than this, he had friends like Sayyid Isma'il al-Khashshab, one of the leaders at that time, an administrative officer of France, and then Muhammad Ali. In addition, Shaykh Hasan al-'Attar was his friend, a poet and grammarian. Al-'Attar became Shaykh of Al-Azhar at the time of Muhammad Ali.

[21] Hathaway, *History of Egypt,* xvii.
[22] Moreh, *Egyptian Historian 'Abd al-Rahman al-Jabarti,* 11.
[23] Jane Hathaway, "Abd Al-Rahman Al-Jabarti (1753-1825)," 123; André Raymond, "À Propos de Deux Portraits de La Description de l'Égypte: 'L'Astronome' et 'Le Poète,'" *Annales Islamologiques*, 35, 2001, 385–92.
[24] Bjøerneboe, *In Search of the True Political Position of the 'Ulama*, 89-90.

Furthermore, he had other friends connected from the ruling class and administration, such as Muhammad Efendi and Ibrahim Celebi ibn Ahmad Agha al-Barudi. He also had connections with bedouin Shaykh Suwaylim ibn Habib and emir Humam al-Hawwari, one of the head chiefs of the bedouin in Qalyubiya.[25]

Because of his father's wealth, Al-Jabarti was in the desirable position of not having to work for a living his whole life. He spent his life first in his father's house. After that, he built a residence in 1777 at al-Sanadiqiya near Al-Azhar. He married three times and had two sons and a daughter. [26]

Although he was not like his father, being a professional member of the *ulama*, al-Jabarti retained his father's connections to al-Azhar. Especially at a young age, he was the head of a residential college that housed students from al-Jabarti, his family's homeland. He also served as the head of a mosque in Lower Egypt that a distant ancestor built. He wrote a biography for a friend who died in 1815, affirming that he was a supervisor of Cairo's admirable al-Qarafa cemetery at that time. He even had the power to grant or withhold permission for burial there. At the same time, he refined his Sufism through regular meetings with shaykhs such as al-Hifni and al-Sadat and regular attendance at Khalwati, Wafa'i, and other Sufi orders' hikers. He also attended informal discussion groups, known by the Arabic term *majlis*. These groups discussed intellectual and religious issues of the time, much as in European salons of the same period.[27]

During the French occupation, al-Jabarti visited libraries, research institutes, and laboratories that the French had set up in the houses of a few scholars who had fled the city. He even praised the French scholars for their thoughtfulness in welcoming curious Egyptian scholars. In addition, he served on the third governing council, or *diwan*, with his friend Khashshab, which the French organized in November 1800 under General Jacques Menou.

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[25] Ibid., 90.
[26] Hathaway, *History of Egypt,* xix; Bjøerneboe, *In Search of the True Political Position of the 'Ulama*, 90-101.
[27] Hathaway, *History of Egypt,* xix-xx.

Under Muhammed Ali's regime, the historian became less publicly visible. Also, his advanced age and the death of his mentors, friends, and associates among Egypt's *ulama* and scholars played a role in his withdrawal. In addition to all these, his son was murdered in June 1822. Rumors were spread about this incident that it was about Al-Jabarti's criticism of Muhammad Ali. Some historians state that the agents of Muhammad Ali to get revenge for his father's literary attacks killed him. The effect of this tragedy on al-Jabarti was enormous, which made him stop writing the chronicle in September 1821. Jane Hathaway states that the final years of his life were very sorrowful and unfortunate.[28] His eyes went blind because of the incident, but this could also be because of a cataract. On the other hand, there is no record regarding the date of al-Jabarti's death. For this reason, historians disagree about the date of his death. It is not even recorded on his tombstone. Perhaps because he was an unwanted man by Muhammad Ali, no one dared to write about the death of his son Khalil or the exact date of his death or its cause. Based on a document about his inheritance, Moreh recorded al-Jabarti's death between Wednesday 24 and Friday, 26 Ramadan 1240, 14-16 May 1825.

The fact that no manuscript of *'Aja'ib al-athar is* kept in the libraries of Istanbul, Damascus, or Jerusalem as far as we know, it may be thought that he was an unwanted man in the Ottoman Empire. According to Moreh, this absence may be due to his criticism of the Ottoman rulers.[29] However, Ahmet Cevdet Paşa the Ottoman imperial historian praised al-Jabarti in his *Tarih-i Cevdet*. In fact, he depended mostly on al-Jabarti. At times he copied from his chronicle verbatim and he declared that he had the opportunity to access al-Jabarti's yet-unpublished manuscript.[30]

[28] Ibid., xx.
[29] Moreh, *Egyptian Historian 'Abd al-Rahman al-Jabarti,* 49-52; Halil Ibrahim Erol, "Mısır'da Tarihçilik ve Tarih Yazıcılığı (1800-1850)" (PhD diss., Istanbul University, 2019), 94-95.
[30] Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *Tarih-i Cevdet*, 12 vols. (Matbaa-i Âmire, 1853); Patrick Scharfe, "Muslim Scholars and the Public Sphere in Mehmed Ali Pasha's Egypt, 1801-1841" (PhD diss., The Ohio State University, 2015).

Al-Jabarti had a significant private library at his house, and students could read and borrow books, which was usual at that time. It was very common in those days to have a private library, which contained a broad span of subjects, from legal works to theology, literature, poetry, history, geography, medicine, and astrology. Interestingly, they were accessible to the public to read, copy, and even borrow books as if they were public libraries.[31]

Overall, these biographical details reveal the depth behind al-Jabarti's historical writing. His observations appear shaped not only by knowledge but also by a personal connection to the world he witnessed. This approach adds a reflective tone to his chronicle, offering insight into how lived experience informs historical perspective. Some parts of his writing may appear critical of the Ottoman authority, but this does not mean he was entirely against it. His attitude was shaped by events, and his judgments were based on what he witnessed. Later Ottoman scholars took his work seriously. For instance, Ahmet Cevdet Pasha mentioned al-Jabarti with praise in his Tarih-i Cevdet and made use of 'Aja'ib al-athar while writing his own history. He even noted that he had reached a copy of the manuscript before it was published. This shows that al-Jabarti's chronicle was read, respected, and considered a reliable source by later Ottoman historians.

1.2 His Historical Works

Al-Jabarti was an *alim* and a well-educated historian. He had great connections that seemed to share his connections and interests with religious institutions like al-Azhar and Sufi brotherhoods such as the Khalwatiyya and Wafa'iyya. Moreover, what makes him unique is his capacious historical works. As Shmuel Moreh summarized, Al-Jabarti wrote the *Ta'rikh muddat al-Faransis bi-Misr* in 1798. It is a history of the French occupation in Egypt from 1213 (1798) to 1216 (1801) in MS Mudda. Regardless of the title, this work covers only the first seven months of French occupation. Moreh states that this was a draft version

[31] Nelly Hanna, "Culture in Ottoman Egypt," essay, in *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, ed. M. W. Daly (Cambridge University Press, 1998), 98.

because it lacks *basmalla*, a traditional way of starting a book. Also, many notes in the margins of this manuscript appear to be al-Jabarti's work toward a new version. Moreh published and translated this manuscript.

In December 1801, al-Jabarti finished *Mazhar al taqdis bi-zawal dawlat al-Faransis* ('The demonstration of piety in the demise of French society', in MS Mazhar). The manuscript was submitted to the Ottoman commander-in-chief, vizier Yusuf Pasha. He entered Egypt in 1801 after the French left. In 1805-6, Al-Jabarti started the third version, *'Aja'ib al-Athar fi'l-Tarajim wa-'l-Akhbar* ('The marvelous compositions of biographies and wondrous seeds of men and their deeds' in MS Aja'ib). He wrote the fourth volume and edited the copies of his first volumes until 1821.[32]

In his chronicle, al-Jabarti mentions that he did not write his work to any notable person, *amir* or vizier. He did not admire anybody untruthfully who would criticize or praise someone in a way that would deny human morality.[33]

His refusal to write in praise of any ruler suggests a commitment to independent judgment. Rather than tailoring his work to suit authority, he seems to have aimed for moral clarity. This sense of responsibility strengthens the credibility of his historical voice.

1.3 His Chronicle: 'Aja'ib al-Athar fi'l-Tarajim wa-'l-Akhbar

Al-Jabarti's *'Aja'ib al-Athar fi'l-Tarajim wa-'l-Akhbar* may be considered a departure from the old Islamic social, economic, and military order after the Karlowitz Treaty of 1699. In his chronicle, he covered the late Mamluk period under Ottoman rule (1688-1798), French occupation (1769-1849), and the period of reform established by the ruler of Egypt, Muhammad Ali (1805-1821). As Moreh notes, during this period the high status of the *ulama* deteriorated, and they lost their influential role as advisers to rulers. Al-Jabarti witnessed the factors of the ending of the feudal Mamluk regime and its administrative,

[32] Bjøerneboe, *In Search of the True Political Position of the 'Ulama*, 92-93; Moreh, *Egyptian Historian 'Abd al-Rahman al-Jabarti,* xiii.
[33] Al-Jabarti, *Abd Al-Rahmann al-Jabarti's History of Egypt,* 1: 8.

military, economic, and social structure under the effect of European powers like France, Russia, and Britain. This collapse influenced Muhammad Ali to build a new system according to European style, which is why he declined the status of the classical *ulama*. He advanced a new military class and chose administrative officials of al-Azhar students from rural regions and graduates of his newly maintained military colleges with secular sciences. [34] When I first read parts of this chronicle, I was drawn to the intensity of its tone. It felt like a personal testimony as much as a historical account. This emotional layer gave me a new perspective on what it means to write history in times of upheaval.

Ajaib al-athar is not a lifetime work of al-Jabarti. According to the information provided by al-Jabarti, the first three volumes were written between 1805 and 1806, and the fourth volume was written between 1806 and 1821.[35] However, he became involved in a trans-provincial biographical project by Muhammad Khalil al-Muradi, the successful young mufti of Damascus. He launched an arrangement to collect biographies of leading *ulama* and political figures from around 1689 until 1786 throughout the Muslim world. Murtada al-Zabidi, an outstanding Indian scholar in Cairo, collaborated with al-Muradi for this project and invited al-Jabarti to study together. However, al-Muradi and al-Zabidi died in the plague of 1791, which affected the whole eastern Mediterranean. Al-Muradi's gathered biographies were, in the end, put together in the biographical abstract *Silk al-durar fi a'yan al-qarn al-thani 'ashar* (The String of Pearls: Notables of the Twelfth Century), which mostly covered only Greater Syria. He copied many biographies from Al-Zabidi's biographical dictionary *Mu'jam Mukhtass*, which al-Jabarti also contributed to his chronicle. At least 168 biographies from al-Zabidi's dictionary *Mu'jam* and 24 biographies from al-Zabidi's work *al-Murabba al-Kabuli fi-man rawa 'an al-Shams al-Babili*, al-Jabarti were copied to his chronicle. He changed the order of the biographies from alphabetical to chronological. After the death of al-Zabidi, al-Muradi asked al-

[34] Moreh, "Introduction," 6-8.
[35] Ahmet Özel, "Acâibü'l-Âsâr," in *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (TDV İslâm Araştırmaları Merkezi, 1988).

Jabarti to collect all the biographies al-Zabidi had collected to add to his chronicle. However, Al-Jabarti could not send the biographies to al-Muradi on time. Al-Muradi also asked other Egyptian scholars to send him biographies of *the ulama*. Some reached him on time, and he added them to his *Silk al-Durar*. These biographies were sent in letters within presents with merchants traveling between Cairo, Mecca, Damascus, Medina, and other cities in the Arab world. This shows the fabulous cooperation between Arab scholars. They did not demand a copyright or a mention in the chronicle. After the death of al-Muradi, both biographies and chronicles were in the hands of al-Jabarti. These endowed much of the biographical material included in the first two volumes of *Ajaib al-athar*. In addition, al-Jabarti did not publish these biographies right away. Instead, he kept them to himself until 1805.[36]

The first volume starts with an introduction, in which al-Jabarti presents his views on historiography and why he wrote the history. Although al-Jabarti wrote his reasons for writing this chronicle in the introduction, according to Hathaway, his explanation is not clear but only displays his thoughts.[37]

> "I desired to assemble these (accounts of events and biographies) and record them in a well-arranged chronological order so that it might be easy for the attentive student to review them and obtain the benefit he desires. He who reads them will learn a lesson from past calamities, be consoled in whatever misfortune befalls him, and remember the lesson, 'Only men possessed of minds remember'" (Qur'an 13:19).[38]

After this, he gives five categories of human justice and initiates a long digression on the origins of chronology and writing history. He started his narrative from Adam as a traditional way of starting and mentioned up to Prophet Muhammad and the Rashidun Caliphate. After the Abbasid caliphate, he briefly included the states that ruled Egypt. He also wrote about the Ottoman

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[36] Hathaway, *History of Egypt,* xxi-xxiii; Stefan Reichmuth, "Notes on Murtada Al-Zabidi's *Mu'jam* as a Source for al-Jabarti's History," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam 25*, 2001, 374–83; Shmuel Moreh, "Al-Jabarti's Method of Composing His Chronicle: *'Aja'ib al-Athar Fi'l-Tarajim Wa'-'l-Akhbar*," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam 25*, 2001, 346–73.; Moreh, "Introduction," 6-8.

[37] Hathaway, *History of Egypt,* xxiii.

[38] Al-Jabarti, *Abd Al-Rahmann al-Jabarti's History of Egypt*, 1: 1.

period, starting with the conquest of Egypt by Selim I. Finally, he wrote about the emergence of the military factions named *Qasimi* and *Fikari* in Egypt.[39]

Al-Jabarti wrote the narrative parts of his chronicle for each year and then added the biographies of *ulama* and scholars who passed away in the year or period mentioned. Even though the title of the chronicle covers both narratives of events and obituary life histories, there is no equal division between these two types of material. Most biographies are in volumes one and two, covering between 1688 and 1798. They are mainly written in Egypt, and also all over the Muslim Arabic-speaking world are included.[40] The reason is that al-Jabarti could not write personal accounts of events before the late 1770s. In volume three, which starts with the French invasion of Egypt, *Akhbar*'s "news" takes place since, by this time, al-Jabarti was keeping journals of events as they happened. For this reason, the historical narratives in these parts are highly detailed, whereas the parts of the narrative before 1798 have considerable gaps.[41] This also may be why Jabarti first mentioned *tarajim* and then *akhbar* in the title, which may point to the chronicle's capacity of the biographical content.[42]

In volumes 3 and 4, al-Jabarti wrote a venerable, unique work, including events from the French Occupation of 1798 until 1821 when Muhammad Ali ruled Egypt. Only three biographies were taken from al-Zabidi's biographical dictionary and included in these volumes. Also, what makes the last two volumes unique creations is his dedication to Egypt, the process of *ulama* and wealthy people, and his criticism of the Mamluks, the secular French, the dishonesty of the Ottomans, and the cruel authority of Muhammad Ali. He witnessed the changing of old Muslim cultural, social, military, and administrative views in Egypt due to the effects of European influence and the corruption and weakness of the Ottoman Empire. He experienced the birth of a new era. According to al-Jabarti, the main reason for the declining military power of both the Mamluks

[39] Ibid., 1: 1-41
[40] Moreh, "Introduction," 6.
[41] Hathaway, *History of Egypt,* xxiv.; Al-Jabarti, *Abd Al-Rahmann al-Jabarti's History of Egypt,* vol. 3.
[42] Özel, "Acâibü'l-Âsâr," 314-15.

and the Ottomans was changing the old style of military education and training, customs and decline of obedience to the Qur'an and *sunnah* and religious passion and forgetting the true meaning of jihad. He disapproved of the Mamluk and Ottoman despotism and the monopolies of Muhammad Ali, the cruelty, administrative and financial abusiveness, bribery, and the heavy tax burden on people, especially on *ulama*. [43] The tone of the chronicle conveys more than a series of events. It reflects a strong emotional attachment to a certain moral and religious order that was being transformed. This makes the text informative and deeply expressive of the concerns of its time.

1.3.1 Sources of The Chronicle

Scholars disagree on the historiography of Egypt during the Ottoman Mamluk period.[44] For many years, the classical wisdom believed that al-Jabarti emerged as more or less unique work and brought back into use the Arabic chronicling tradition that had died with the Mamluk sultanate. According to David Ayalon, al-Jabarti was a passionate scholar who was struggling alone to restore a nonexistent tradition.[45] Al-Jabarti was certain that his time was lacking any major historiographical work.[46] However, Daniel Crecelius believes the opposite. He thinks this period was rich in literary and colloquial Arabic. Also, he claims that al-Jabarti's work is not a primary source of Egyptian history for the eighteenth century but only a carrier of prior sources.[47]

According to Shmuel Moreh, scholars have different viewpoints toward the holiness and function of the Arabic language and style because of the understanding of the Qur'an as the highest point of spiritual and cultural wording in Islam. This gave loyalty and respect to the Arabic language and authorized style. That is why religious scholars and elite people only wrote on

[43] Moreh, "Introduction," 8-9.
[44] Moreh, "Introduction," 1.
[45] David Ayalon, "The Historian Al-Jabartī and His Background," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*23, no. 2 (1960): 217–49, https://doi.org/10.1017/s0041977x00149912; Hathaway, *History of Egypt,* xxv.
[46] Al-Jabarti, *Abd Al-Rahmann al-Jabarti's History of Egypt,* 1: 8.
[47] Daniel Crecelius, "Ahmad Shalabi Ibn 'Abd al-Ghani and Ahmad Katkhuda 'Azaban al-Damurdashi: Two Sources for *al-Jabarti's Aja'Ib al-Athar Fi'l-Tarajim Wa'l-Akhbar*," essay, in *Eighteenth-Century Egypt: The Arabic Manuscript Sources* (Regina Books, 1990), 89–102.

serious topics like religion, history, rulers' letters, poetry, and ethical literature. Anything not written in this kind was rejected, like informal stories, impractical literature, shadow plays, and arts, which were transported orally and sometimes written in informal Arabic. Educated people believed that this literature was considered unworthy of record. During the Mamluk period, *ulama* and *amirs* close to the Sultans and their secretaries who could access the official documents wrote chronicles.[48]

On the other hand, Jane Hathaway states that al-Jabarti did not restore the Mamluk historiographical tradition alone by himself. He owes more than he admits to early eighteenth century annals.[49]

In the introduction to *Ajaib al-athar*, al-Jabarti clearly expressed only two recent historical sources that he examined: the chronicle of Ahmad Çelebi ibn ʻAbd al-Ghani and the Damurdashi chronicles. He also mentioned in passing the seventeenth-century chronicler Muhammad ʻAbd al-Muʼti al-Ishaqi, who was a judge in Cairo and, in 1623, wrote a short work covering the entire history of Egypt. On the other hand, al-Jabarti underrated the importance of historians' chronicles, mainly in colloquial Arabic written by military men, and he rejected them in his introduction to *Aja'ib al-athar*.[50] However, recent studies have shown that al-Jabarti borrowed a great deal of portions from *Awdah al-Isharat* (1737) by the *alim* Ahmad Celebi and the colloquial chronicles *Kitab al-Durra al-Musana fi Akhbar al-Kinana* by Ahmad al-Damurdashi. Hathaway claims that most narrative parts of volume one of *Ajaib al-athar* are drawn directly and even sometimes almost verbatim from these two sources. He also mostly depended on *Dhikr ma Waqa'a bayna 'Askar al-Mahrusa al-Qahira Sanat 1123* (1711) by Ali b. Muhammad al-Shadhili al-Farra and *Ta'rikh Waqa'I Misr* (1152/1739) by Mustafa al-Qinali al-Madah. They were mainly "ordinary soldiers" who wrote histories

[48] Moreh, "Introduction," 1-2.
[49] Jane Hathaway, "Religious and Intellectual Life," essay, in The Arab Lands Under Ottoman Rule 1516-1800, 2nd ed. (Routledge, 2020), 114–37.
[50] Al-Jabarti, *Abd Al-Rahmann al-Jabarti's History of Egypt,* 1: 5-8.

in a colloquial style according to al-Jabarti. Also, his borrowing from al-Ishaqi is indirect, but it is still possible to notice. [51]

When all these are considered, we may claim that al-Jabarti is unwilling to accept his obligation to previous generations of historians. Actually, al-Jabarti's chronicle comprises a large and well-esteemed body of archives of Ottoman Egypt with different lengths and quality. These chronicles come from varying traditions and reflect a vast collection of different perspectives. At that time, like any other member of Egypt's elite, he was well-informed about important fifteenth-century Mamluk chroniclers such as Taqi al-Din Ahmad ibn 'Ali al Maqrizi (1364-1442). Al-Jabarti cited his famous topographical compendium of Cairo, *Al-Mawa'iz wa'l-I'tibar bi-dhikr al-khitat wa'l-athar*, known as Khitat more than once in *'Aja'ib al-athar*. He also cited Abu'l-Mahasin Yusuf ibn Taghri Birdi (1411-70) and Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti's (1445-1505) chronicles. Even though it is difficult to indicate early Mamluk period chronicles in Ottoman-era Egypt, he mentioned some early Mamluk-era historians in his introduction.[52]

In addition, al-Jabarti mentioned Ahmad ibn Zunbul (d. ca. 1567), a popular scholar and fortune-teller. His chronicle had been translated into Turkish and used as a source in some of the Turkish chronicles of Egypt under Ottoman rule. Al-Jabarti briefly mentioned in his introduction that Ibn Zunbul's work is written in simple, informal Arabic and contains imagined dialogues between historical figures. Furthermore, in his introduction, he named five categories of human beings who give justice in more detail, which was also written in the last pages of al-Ishaqi's chronicle. Also, al-Jabarti took a fictional story of the vizier Shamsi Pasha proposing bribery to Sultan Selim II, which was well known in Ottoman circles, from Ibn Ishaqi's chronicle.[53] However, Ibn Zunbul's or al-Ishaqi's chronicles were not the major influence in al-Jabarti's chronicle.

[51] Hathaway, *History of Egypt,* xxv; Crecelius, "Ahmad Shalabi Ibn 'Abd al-Ghani and Ahmad Katkhuda 'Azaban al-Damurdashi," 89–102; Moreh, "Introduction," 6.
[52] Hathaway, *History of Egypt,* xxv-xxvi.
[53] Al-Jabarti, *Abd Al-Rahmann al-Jabarti's History of Egypt,* 1:10-14, 33-34; P. M. Holt, "Al-Jabartī's Introduction to the History of Ottoman Egypt," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 25, no. 1 (February 1962): 38–51, https://doi.org/10.1017/s0041977x0005624x.

Furthermore, al-Jabarti did not cite the far more extensive chronicle of Muhammad ibn Abi'l-Surur al-Bakri al-Siddiqi (1597-1676) that was written in the first half of the seventeenth century. However, it seems he indeed was aware of them.[54]

One of the other sources he used was the chronicle of Ahmad Çelebi ibn 'Abd al-Ghani, *Awhah al-isharat fi man tawalla Misr al-Qahira min al-wuzura wa'l-bashat (The Clearest Signs: The Ministers and Pashas Who Governed Cairo),* written toward the middle of the eighteenth century. This extensive work, over 600 pages, covers events from the Ottoman conquest through 1150/1737. Nothing much is known about the author besides the little information he wrote in his narrative. He was probably a Sufi like his father Shaykh 'Abd al-Ghani. His Turkish title, *çelebi*, was famously used among Sufis. His history is written chiefly in informal Arabic and contains large parts of imagined dialogues. Even though al-Jabarti gives the impression that Ahmad Çelebi's chronicle was of little or no use to him, he copied large sections word by word. Actually, it seems Ahmad Çelebi's work is a critical source for sections of *'Aja'ib al-athar* that cover the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.[55]

In addition, the group of four Arabic histories known collectively as the Damurdashi chronicle is also a source for al-Jabarti's chronicle. The author of the latest and most extended chronicle entitled *Al-Durra al-Musana fi Akhbar al-Kinana (The Protected Pearl: Events in Egypt [land of the Kinana tribe]*, Ahmad Katkhuda 'Azaban al-Damurdashi was a high-ranking officer. Damurdashi or Demirdaşi in Turkish refers to Shams al-Din Muhammad Damirdash, one of the three leaders of the Khalwati Sufi order who came to Egypt from eastern Anatolia in the late fifteenth century. Each shaykh had his branch with his own Sufi lodge. Damirdash's lodge became extremely popular among the Ottoman soldiers following Selim I's conquest of Egypt along with Shaykh Ibrahim-i Gülşeni's

[54] Hathaway, *History of Egypt,* xxvi.
[55] Ibid., xxviii.

lodge.[56] The earliest of four chronicles of the Damurdashi group were collected around 1740, and the other three in the mid-1750s, starting with the end of the reign of Sultan Mehmed IV (1648-87). Al-Jabarti also has a similar starting date for his own chronicle. All four chronicles are primarily written in informal Arabic. Turkish words are also commonly used, and Turkish orthography is applied in some places. Furthermore, the Damurdashi histories are connected with military regiments. Al-Jabarti seems to have made use of their chronicle about the starting points and conflicts of the Faqari and Qasimi factions.[57]

Furthermore, Al-Jabarti's biographical remarks also have a long tradition. Even though he was inspired by the efforts of his partners al-Muradi and al-Zabidi, his biographical collection is the undervalued source of almost two hundred biographies written in *'Aja'ib al-athar*.[58] Collected biographies such as the Prophet Muhammad's companions' lives had first started early in Islamic history. During the Mamluk Sultanate, historians brought a peak of complexity to the type of biographical compilation. According to Jane Hathaway, al-Jabarti must undoubtedly have been influenced by the excellent Mamluk biographical dictionaries, above all, those of Ibn Taghri Birdi and Abu'l-Abbas Ahmad ibn Khallikan(1211-82). Also, he was probably influenced by more recent compilations in the central Ottoman lands. Al-Muradi, Al-Zabidi, and al-Jabarti's father Hasan seems to be familiar with the complications of Taşköprülüzade (1495-1561) and Ahmad Resmi Efendi (1700-83). Taşköprülüzade collected biographies of noticeable Ottoman *ulama*, and Ahmad Resmi Efendi collected the lives of chief scribes *reisülküttab* and Chief Harem Eunuchs.[59]

Above all, al-Jabarti inserted significant parts of biography with significant parts of events, especially in his first two volumes, which is rare. He copied, summarized, supplemented, criticized, and listed the works of his

[56] Ibid., xxix; B.G. Martin, "A Short History of the Khalwati Order of Dervishes," essay, in *Scholars and Sufis: Muslim Religious Institutions since 1500*, ed. Nikki R. Keddie (University of California Press, 1972), 290–97.
[57] Hathaway, *History of Egypt,* xxix.
[58] Moreh, "Introduction," 6-8.
[59] Hathaway, *History of Egypt,* xxx.

predecessors, especially those of al-Zabidi. They were on religious, historical, literary, scientific, and cultural acts before the French occupation and on the new economic and political interests of the European powers during the eighteenth century. He quoted some poems and *maqamat* collected by poets and writers, which indicates the cultural life of that time. By writing these, al-Jabarti maintained many works that were unavailable or lost to scholars and other readers for many years. Even though some modern scholars have criticized him because he did not cite his sources and even diminished the works of others, he mostly narrowed them in the first and second volumes of *'Aja'ib al-athar*. The third and fourth volumes represent al-Jabarti's effort, excluding only al-Zabidi's work. That is why David Ayalon called al-Jabarti "a giant among dwarfs." Moreh claims that actually, there was not any other historian of Egypt during that period than him who could compete with his talent to understand the personalities of the biographies he wrote or his ability to examine and express historical events. Moreover, in the third and fourth volumes, he used the style of Ottoman writers' biographies to write about many religious scholars, Mamluk and Ottoman leaders, and military and administrative people. He also used the Mamluk historical method to chronologically write the daily and monthly events. This way he merged two different styles of historical writing fabulously.[60]

1.3.2 Publication History of the Chronicle

Al-Jabarti died before finishing the final volume of *'Aja"ib al-athar*. The three-volume version began circulating among Cairo's leading *ulama* and other elite members like the poet Ismail al-Khashshab. French administrators were probably aware of al-Jabarti's work but could not read it. Some handwritten copies were produced after the author's death in 1825. The governments of Muhammad Ali and his followers tried to buy all the copies they could find to demolish the chronicle because of its cruel criticisms of Muhammad Ali. At last, the printing press at Cairo's Nile port of Bulaq produced the first printed edition of *'Aja'ib al-athar* in 1879-80. The third volume of the chronicle, which was about

[60] Ibid., xxx.; Moreh, "Introduction," 6-10; Ayalon, "The Historian Al-Jabartī and His Background," 217–49.

the French occupation, was printed first. This edition has four volumes. It remained the only complete edition of Al-Jabarti's chronicle for over seventy-five years. Then *Lajnat al-Bayan al-'Arabi* (Council for Arab Publication) produced a seven-volume edition (1959-67). This edition contains an index, but it is incomplete and contains mistakes. [61]

In the late 1990s, two more editions were produced in Cairo and Beirut. Al-Jabarti's chronicle is an inestimable source not only for Egypt's political circumstances during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries but also for socioeconomic conditions, popular protests, the effects of natural disasters, economic crises, and the prices of basic supplies.[62]

Moreover, some parts of volume three of *'Aja'ib al-athar*' have been translated into French by Alexandre Cardin. The translation's title is *Journal d'Abdurrahman Gabarti, pendant l'occupation française en Égypte…* and because of the title, historians over a century thought the work was a translation of the earlier *Mazhar al-taqdis*.[63] There was no complete translation of al-Jabarti's chronicle until the nine volumes *of Merveilles Biographiques et Historiques* were published in Cairo over eight years (1888-96). However, this translation is faulty and unfaithful to the original. In the 1960s and 1970s, some parts of the chronicle had been produced in Russian. Also, Arnold Hottinger published some passages in German in 1983. Finally, in 1994, the German publishing house Franz Steiner Verlag in Stuttgart produced the four-volume translation in English. Thomas Philipp and Moshe Perlmann edited this translation, and it is the work of an international team of scholars who studied Ottoman Egypt or related works. The Bulaq Chronicle edition was divided into some sections and translated by two scholars. Even though this translation has some unidiomatic word choices, it is a

[61] Hathaway, *History of Egypt,* xxxi.
[62] Ibid., xxxi.
[63] Shmuel Moreh notes that although many scholars have pointed out the limitations of Cardin's French translation, few have carefully examined it. Through a comparative reading, Moreh demonstrates that the translation includes passages found only in volume three of *'Aja'ib*, not in *Mazhar al-taqdis*, and concludes that Cardin produced a selective summary of the third volume. See Shumel Moreh, "Reputed Autographs of 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Jabartī and Related Problems," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 28, no. 3 (October 1965): 537-38, https://doi.org/10.1017/s0041977x00071433.

lovely translation and meets the critical standards.[64] Even though this extraordinary chronicle was about Ottoman Egypt, it has not yet been translated into Turkish. However, it has recently started to get scholars' attention in Turkey.[65]

'Aja'ib al-Athar fi'l-Tarajim wa-'l-Akhbar was printed several times, but these editions were always based on the Bulaq edition. They did not follow the author's autograph or manuscripts that al-Jabarti edited with his handwriting. They were based on manuscripts copied after al-Jabarti's death. The copyists also changed the grammar and al-Jabarti's style to sync with the rules of classical Arabic and official titles and place names. Only Dr. 'Izz al-Din 'Abd al-Karim's edition, published by the Mabduli Book Shop in Cairo, was compared to the Bulaq edition with a microfilm of a manuscript. However, the manuscript belongs to a group of manuscripts in which the copyist corrected their style, grammar, the names of people and places, and unclear terms.[66]

On the other hand, Shmuel Moreh published a new critical edition of al-Jabarti's chronicle. He had spent many years studying al-Jabarti and his chronicles. In this new edition, Moreh combined some other manuscripts. He integrated all the manuscripts he found into his new edition and primarily examined the manuscripts that had been copied under al-Jabarti's own supervision. During his research, he had found an autograph of al-Jabarti's *Mazhar al-Taqdis* at the Cambridge University Library and a draft of the first three volumes of *'Ajaib al-Athar*, bought by J. L. Burckhardt (1784-1817).[67] Later on, Moreh found manuscripts that al-Jabarti wanted to be copied on by him. He checked these copies in person and wrote his corrections in the margins with his handwriting. He also wrote the title page and the last lines of the manuscripts.

[64] Hathaway, *History of Egypt,* xxxi-xxxiii.
[65] Recent studies of Ottoman Egypt Historiography in Turkey: Fatma Zehra Beyaz, "Osmanlı Mısır'ında Ulema-Siyaset İlişkisi: Ezher Örneği" (master's thesis, Istanbul University, 2020); Halil Ibrahim Erol, "Mısır'da Tarihçilik ve Tarih Yazıcılığı (1800-1850)" (PhD Diss., Istanbul University, 2019), 94-95; Hande Meliha İçaçan, "Mustafa Behcet Efendi ve "Târîh-i Mısır" adlı tercümesi (İnceleme ve metin)" (master's thesis, Istanbul University, 2020).
[66] Moreh, "Introduction," 11.
[67] Ibid., 11. J. L. Burckhardt called himself al-Shaykh Ibrahim after converting to Islam.

These manuscripts form the second copy of the chronicle and are also in three volumes written in *Maghribi* handwriting and kept in the Cambridge University Library. Al-Jabarti reexamined and made alterations in the margins and wrote the title pages of volumes two and three. It seems that al-Jabarti wanted the manuscripts to be copied for his friend Hasan al-Attar to show to scholars and rulers during his journey, which was common those days. This three-volume copy, which al-Jabarti edited and wrote the title pages and last lines for each volume, is kept in the Bibliothèque Nationale. In Moreh's new edition, he compared this copy with the Bulaq edition and Cambridge autograph. The third manuscript that al-Jabarti edited is only a copy of the third volume. It is kept in the Dar al-Kutub in Cairo.[68]

None of the copies of *'Ajaib* has the name of the copyist and the date they were written except this third manuscript. At the end of the third volume, it is written that on 22 Rajab 1237/1822, Ahmad Muhammad completed the copy. It was read to the author himself on 14 Rabiulavval 1240. At this time, al-Jabarti had already lost his eyesight, so the copy was read to him. Moreh compared this copy with the Bulaq edition and the other manuscripts. It proves that this copy was devoted to the other manuscripts. On the other hand, it also proves that the Bulaq editor's manuscripts corrected the grammar and style and changed certain names, both of people and locations. For example, in the Bulaq group of manuscripts, which were copied after the death of al-Jabarti, some changes were made in favor of Muhammad Ali. The title *Pasha* was added after his name.[69]

During his research, Moreh found the manuscripts of the Bulaq group of *'Ajaib*. These manuscripts were kept in the Bulaq Press Library and donated to the Dar al-Kutub in Cairo. The editor possibly used these manuscripts when writing the Bulaq edition. There is also another manuscript of *'Aja'ib*, which is in four volumes in the Dar al Kutub. It was copied almost the date of the Bulaq edition publication. The copyist admitted that he changed some words. Most

[68] Ibid., 12-13.
[69] Ibid., 14.

likely, the editor of Bulaq Press used these copies. In addition, most of the Bulaq edition is from a mixture of manuscripts that were copied after the death of al-Jabarti. On the other hand, Moreh's edition depended on the author's autographs and copies made in his lifetime to try to keep the author's style.[70]

Finally, even though additions to Moreh's new edition do not make a huge difference in what is already known about the history of the period, Moreh's edition is more precise and absolute than the older editions. Moreover, the new edition does not have corrections for the linguistic mistakes that al-Jabarti made. Many writings in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries contained colloquialisms, wrong spellings, and grammar errors. Therefore, it was common for modern editors to correct the language and write it in standard classical Arabic. However, unlike other editors, Moreh kept the original language and form of al-Jabarti's chronicle. In addition to that, the new edition has an index, which is the fifth volume, unlike the old versions of the chronicle. It consists of more than a thousand pages. The index is handy for scholars interested in cultural and social history. It also contains unique categories like food, types of clothes and garments, rugs, shoes, remedies, and economic and medical terms. In addition, the index groups different titles and positions of people together in one entry. It is helpful to identify them even if their appellations changed over time. There is also an index entry for the life of author al-Jabarti that is collected together. Thus, it is very useful for researchers who are interested in his life. Despite its massive size, the new edition of *'Aja'ib al-athar* is an excellent source for all historians who study the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.[71]

1.4 His Point of View on Sufism

According to al-Jabarti's biography, his father notes that Hasan al-Jabarti was initiated into the Naqshbandi Sufi order by Shaykh Abu'l Hasan al-Sindi.

[70] Ibid., 15-18.
[71] Nelly Hanna, "Al-Jabarti, ʿAjaʾib al-Athar Fī l-Tarajim Wa-l Akhbar (The Marvelous Chronicles: Biographies and Events). Edited by Shmuel Moreh," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 137, no. 4 (December 16, 2021), https://doi.org/10.7817/jameroriesoci.137.4.0853.

Even though his father had a mystical bent, it is hard to tell whether Abdurrahman al-Jabarti's *sufi* initiation was influenced by his father. In his biography of the rector of al-Azhar, Shaykh Muhammad al-Hifni or Hifnawi (d. 1767), al-Jabarti initiated the Khalwati Sufi order and particularly the Karabashiyya branch, which was initiated by al-Hifni's brother Shaykh Yusuf al-Hifni.[72] He also mentioned an important Khalwati order, Shaykh Mahmud al-Kurdi (d. 1781), as his shaykh and master.[73]

After al-Hifni's death, al-Jabarti initiated Shaykh Shams al-Din Abu'l-Anwar al-Sadat. At that time, he was the head of the Wafa'i Sufi order. The Sadat family was descended from Ali ibn Abi Talib, the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law. However, over time, al-Jabarti started to be disenchanted with Shaykh al-Sadat's eagerness to acquire wealth, as he mentioned in the biography of the Shaykh.[74]

By writing his chronicle *'Aja'ib*, 'Abd al-Rahman al-Jabarti represents the efforts of Sufi orders and scholars to save the outstanding past of Islam to confront European imperialism.[75]At the time when he lived, Ghazali's mystical beliefs were in trend. Sufism was essential to al-Jabarti. The Khalwatiyya order, to which he belonged, was based upon the Qur'an and the *sunna*. He was also into mystic sciences and practices. At that time, in the Ottoman Empire, Sufism influenced Muslim people. They believed by practicing *Sufi* rituals, they achieved internal happiness. Therefore, according to Moreh, al-Jabarti put spiritual disclosures above logic. He was a Muslim East historian who wrote his writings based upon Islamic faith beliefs and God's strength of will for world history.

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[72] Hathaway, *History of Egypt,* xviii; Kerim Kara, "Karabaş Veli," in *TDV Islâm Ansiklopedisi*, (TDV İslâm Araştırmaları Merkezi, 2001). The Karabashiyya branch, which comes from the Khalwati Shabani Sufi order, got its name from Karabas Veli (d. 1686), who founded the branch. Thousands of people initiated to Karabas Veli's branch, and he raised many khalifahs. Even Mehmed IV initiated him and asked for a Khalifah to come to the palace to do devan dhikr. Karabashiyya suborder originated in seventeenth-century Istanbul and spread quickly to Aleppo and Damascus by damascene master Shaykh Sayyid Mustafa al-Bakri as-Siddiki (d. 1749). He initiated the young Muhammad al-Hifni, and Hifni brought the branch to Cairo, where it flourished. By the time he died, the suborder had entered Al-Azhar's faculty.

[73] Bjøerneboe, *In Search of the True Political Position of the 'Ulama*, 90.

[74] Hathaway, *History of Egypt,* xvii.

[75] Moreh, *Egyptian Historian 'Abd al-Rahman al-Jabarti,* xiii.

In Islam, a hierarchical system starts with God, the prophets, saints, rulers, *ulama*, and the ordinary people. However, al-Jabarti put the *ulama* above the rulers because of the corruption and tyrannical rulers at that time. This meant *ulama* became the leader of the Muslim world after God and the prophet.[76] Also, al-Jabarti mentions that the Mamluks and their workers were new converts to Islam. They were Christians and kidnapped or bought as slaves during childhood to the military and converted to Islam. The corrupt military system no longer had a good training or enough Islamic education to those people. The system lacked to encourage obedience and loyalty. Nonetheless, those young Mamluks did not know Islamic *shari'a*.[77] Because of all this, when writing his historical works, he was focused on keeping and increasing the status of *ulama* as a counselor to rulers who expected to rule according to *shari'a*. He kept away from the influence of political and administrative affairs.[78]

In the eighteenth century, Sufism in Egypt was led by the descendants of the prophet Muhammad called the *ashraf*, descendants of Abu Bakr called the *Bakriyya*, and descendants of 'Ali called the *Sadat*. As spiritual religious guides, they prohibited themselves from the political and military authorities. They instead chose to lead the *Sufis*. It is because *Sufi* orders and scholars believed serving secular authorities would cause them God's punishment and oppression. They were respected by the sinful military and political rulers of the Mamluk and Ottoman times and had religious authority over them.[79]

Al-Jabarti also mentions that the ideal Muslim scholar should have a good manner, behave with humbleness and be modest with food and clothing and help to the poor. An *'alim* should be gentle, humble and not popular. In addition, he should refuse to the take any presents from rulers, and refuse to allow people to kiss hands. He should not be riding horses, wearing valuable garments or enter the house of an *amir*. He should focus on learning and scholarship.[80]

[76] Ibid., 2.
[77] Ibid., 309.
[78] Ibid., 27.
[79] Ibid., 27,305.
[80] Ibid., 311.

On the other hand, al-Jabarti criticized the moral decline of some scholars of his time. According to him, those scholars were not focusing on loyalty to God. Instead, they became obsessed with wealth, status, power, and personal competition. As an example, he referenced Shaykh Shams al-Din Muhammad Abu'l-Anwar 'Abd al-Rahman, Shaykh al-Sadat. Al-Jabarti believes that this is not the right way for an ideal scholar and pious Muslim to be. He describes his house as similar to the houses of *amirs*, spacious and lavishly decorated with grand halls and luxurious furnishings. This reflects a society where status was held by wealth, luxury, and social status rather than religiosity and knowledge. Therefore, al-Jabarti distinguished between *ulama* and Sufi leaders, primarily descendants of the Prophet Muhammad. *Ulama* were scholars dedicated to studying and explaining religious writings, while Sufi leaders were responsible for defending the faith and blending religious authority with mysticism.[81]

Even though when he was writing biographies of Sufi scholars, especially the al-Sadat and the Bakri families, he used - the title *sidi* (my master) *Shaykh al-Saifada* (the head of the Sufi order), these kinds of standard titles at the start of the biographies should be read carefully. At the end of those biographies, al-Jabarti usually wrote about the person's bad reputation and character and how he was untruthful at the end of his life. Abu al-Anwar al-Sadat's biography is one of the examples of this type in his chronicle.[82]

In his chronicle, al-Jabarti gives details of the Khalwatiyya sufi order that he initiated. The order's name comes from Sidi Muhammad al-Khalwati. Those Sufis, also known as Karabashiyya, distinguish this branch from others of the Khalwatiyya order. According to him, the esteemed people of the Khalwatiyya order follow different paths. They follow the teachings of al-Junayd and focus on spiritual advancement. This order sustains the noble, righteous, and tolerant principles of Divine Law without imposing any undue hardship. It is regarded as the finest of orders, mainly because of its special saying: "There is no god but

[81] Ibid., 303-04
[82] Ibid., 300.

God." This praise, also mentioned in a hadith, is considered the most profound of all declarations.[83]

In the chronicle, al-Jabarti also described the manners of initiating the Khalwatiyya order. He wrote about a certificate of initiation, which Sayyid al-Bakri al-Siddiqi al-Khalwati gave. At the back of the certificate was a description: The person who wanted to initiate sits before the shaykh, and the shaykh faces the qibla. The obedient recites the surah al-Fatiha and places their right hand into the shaykh's hand to give his soul to him and ask for his help. Then he repeats what the shaykh says three times: "I seek the forgiveness of Almighty God." Then, the master says: "I take refuge in God from the accursed Devil," and then recites the verse: "Believers, turn to God in sincere repentance… (until the words) … surely Thou art powerful over everything." (66:8-9) Next, the shaykh recites a verse from Surat al-Fath concerning obedience to God, confirming there is no misunderstanding and copying of the Prophet: "Those who swear fealty to thee swear fealty in truth to God… (until the words)… God will give him a mighty wage." (48:10) After that, the shaykh recites Al-Fatiha, prays for both himself and the aspirant. He advises the aspirant to engage in extra prayers and the order's spiritual practices. He also emphasizes the importance of self-observation and interior judgment of the Sufis and their mystical experiences.[84]

Al-Jabarti also wrote about the seven stages and the degrees of the seven names. The soul has a degree for each name and is identified with a unique name. The first name is "There is no god but God." At this stage, the soul is called "commanding" *ammara*. The second name is "Allah," and at this level, the soul is called "blaming" *lawwama*. The third name is "He is" *huwa*; here, the soul is known as "inspiring" *mulhima*. The fourth name, "Truth" *haqq*, marks the first step toward sainthood. At this stage, the soul is called "at peace" *mutma'inna*. The fifth name is "The Living One" *ḥayy*, where the soul is described as "satisfied" *raḍiya*. The sixth name is "The Self-Subsisting" *qayyum*, and at this point, the soul

[83] Al-Jabarti, *Abd Al-Rahmann al-Jabarti's History of Egypt,* 1:490.
[84] Ibid., 1:491-92.

is called "approved" *marḍiya*. The seventh name is "The Subduer" *qahhar*, in which the soul reaches the state of "perfection" *kamila*. This represents the final teaching. All of these names, except the last one, are taught to the right ear. However, the seventh name is whispered into the left ear. Other than these, al-Jabarti wrote the Khalwatiyya order's Sufi chains of transmission starting from Prophet Muhammad, who got it from the angel Gabriel, who got it from God. The prophet taught Ali. Ali taught al-Basri, and it continued. Al-Jabarti wrote the order's Sufi chain until his shaykh Muhammad al-Hifni. Then, he wrote about many shaykhs and assistants that Shaykh al-Hifni taught.[85]

Finally, al-Jabarti's approach to Sufism seems shaped by both reverence and caution. His alignment with the Khalwati tradition coexists with a sharp eye for misuses of spiritual authority. This perspective reflects a desire to preserve the ethical depth of Sufism while distancing it from popular excesses.

[85] Ibid., 1:493-98.



Figure 1. Credit to Portrait by André Dutertre, entitled *the Astronomer*, from the New York Public Library Digital Collections

CHAPTER 2: MURTADA AL-ZABIDI

2.1 His Life

Al-Jabarti compiled and wrote many biographies in his chronicle, critically inspecting almost all scholars. In *'Aja'ib al-athar*, the most detailed necrologies are dedicated to three notable scholars of the eighteenth century. The first is his father, Hasan al-Jabarti, the ideal Muslim scholar. The second is Murtada al-Zabidi, who is an average yet noteworthy scholar. The third is Shaykh al-Sadat, who is noted as a negative characteristic of a religious scholar. This chapter examines al-Jabarti's second broad biography of Murtada al-Zabidi 1145-1205 (1732-1791).

Al-Jabarti records his master's name as Shaykh Abu 'l-Fayd al-Sayyid Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Razzaq, known as Murtada al-Husayni al-Zabidi al-Hanafi. According to al-Jabarti, his long name gives information about himself and his genealogy. He was born in 1145 (1732-33), and al-Jabarti heard it from his speech and writing. Even though al-Jabarti mentions his birth date, he does not record where he was born. He only mentions him growing up in his town and traveling to acquire knowledge and going to pilgrimagej many times.[86]

However, being a *sharif* and later becoming an admired genealogist, it seems strange that al-Zabidi's family background was mainly left unnoticed during his life in Arabia and Egypt. Yet, not much later, his Indian origin was featured by the Indian scholar Siddiq Hasan Khan (1307/1890). Al-Zabidi usually referred to himself as al-Husani al-Wasiti. This can connect him to the well-known family of provincial *sayyids* in Bilgram, India. Yet, no complete background genealogy has appeared in his exclusive writings. Another source for his genealogical chain by his relative, the historian and poet Gualm 'Ali Azad Bilgrami (d. 1200/1785), is disputable. On the other hand, al-Zabidi did not note anything about him being from Bilgram in any of his works. It is still unclear

[86] Al-Jabarti, *Abd Al-Rahmann al-Jabarti's History of Egypt,* 2:322

whether he was born in Bilgram itself or in the Bilgrami escape, which had lain out through different regions of India at that time.

Moreover, his name is vague: *Murtada*. The historian Gulam 'Ali Azad Bilgrami (d. 1200/1785), his relative, calls him al-Muqtada in his later studies. Al-Zabidi may have changed his name after living in Yemen. It is not awkward when a standard collection of names, titles, and honorifics follows a person's fame in the world of Mughal-era scholars and notables. Under Aurangzeb's late seventeenth-century rule, honorific names were awarded widely. According to al-Zabidi's long-standing scholarly connection with Arabic names, like *laqab* and *kunya*, this would be set with a vast historical system.

There is an *ijazat* certificate of transmission for the Iraqi scholar Ibn al-Suwaydi on 14 Jumada II 1194 (17 July 1780), in which al-Zabidi wrote his date of birth and ancestors. In this *ijazat*, he states that he was born within the first ten days of the month of Muharram in 1145, which is between 24 June and 3 July 1732. After that, he connects his lineage back to Imam Abu al-Husayn 'Abdallah b. Ahmad al-Muktafi b. 'Isa b. Musa al-Asbagh b. Zayd al-Shahid b. 'Ali Zayn al-'Abidin b. al-Husayn b. 'Ali b. Abi Talib and adds his origin of ancestors as Wasit in Iraq. At the end of this *ijazat*, al-Zabidi details himself, listing his ancestry, geographical origins, and spiritual and scholarly connections. This is the most detailed autobiographical document of al-Zabidi's origins that is known so far.[87]

Many historians depend on this *ijaza* and record his hometown as Bilgram, located approximately 25 km from Kannauj in northern India. His ancestors are Bilgram Sayyids, who came from Wasit, Iraq, to India and traced their genealogy back to Abu'l-Farrah al-Wasiti, an heir of Ali ibn Abi Talib. He moved to India due to Hulagu's invasion of Baghdad in 656/1258. This lineage is the origin of al-Zabidi's Wasiti *nisba*. He wrote his genealogy in the *ijazat*, tracing it back to Zayd ibn Ali Zayn al-Abidin, the grandson of Husayn ibn Ali. Due to this lineage, he was mentioned by the *nisbas* Husayni, Alawi, and Zaydi, including the titles *sayyid* and *sharif*. According to Abd al-Hayy al-Kattani, al-Zabidi was known as

[87] Reichmuth, *The World of Murtada Al-Zabidi (1732-91),* 1-2.

Zabidi regarding his knowledge and renown, Hanafi in jurisprudence, Ash'ari in faith, Qadiri in affiliation, and Naqshbandi in divine discipline *suluk*. In addition, he was generally granted honorific *kunyas* indicating compliment and admiration, like Abu'l-Fayz, Abu'l-Waqt, Abu'l-Jud, and Abu'l-Ashbal. Because of his relationship with the Wafaiyya Sufi order and connection to Shaykh Abu'l-Anwar Ibn Wafa, al-Zabidi was noted by the *nisba* Wafai.[88]

Other than his genealogy, according to al-Jabarti, his physical appearance can be described as being in medium height, slim body, golden complexion, and rounded, shapely limbs. His hair was mostly gray, and his beard was straight. His turban was in the style of the people of Mecca. Al-Jabarti describes his turban in detail. It was wrapped with white muslin; the ends of it overlaid his nape. It was decorated with silk fabric and tassels. He dressed in fine, luxurious clothing.

His character was excellent and pleasurable. He was cheerful, modest, solemn, and smiley. He had a talent for telling stories and conjuring anecdotes and analogies. He was clever, shrewd, and bright. In addition, his intensity of memory was incomparable.[89] Al-Zabidi's long journey across various regions and intellectual circles reflects a determination that adds depth to his scholarly legacy. This narrative highlight how knowledge during that period was pursued through both physical movement and deep personal commitment. His biography allows a better understanding of the scholarly ideals of the time, shaped by travel, encounter, and endurance.

2.1.1 His Scholar Network, Studies, and Travels

Al-Jabarti documents the *ulama* whom al-Zabidi met in his life. He met Shaykh 'Abdallah al-Sindi, Shaykh 'Umar ibn Ahmad ibn 'Aqil al-Makki, and 'Abdallah al-Saqqaf. He also met Muhammad ibn 'Ala al-Din al-Mizijaji,

[88] ʿAbd al-Ḥayy ibn ʿAbd al-Kabir Kattani, *Fihris Al-Fahāris Wa-al-Ithbāt Wa-Muʿjam al-Maʿājim Wa-al-Mashyakhāt Wa-al-Musalsalāt* (Dar al-Gharb al-Islami, 1982), 1:527; İsmail Durmuş, "ZEBÎDÎ, Muhammed Murtazâ," in *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (TDV İslâm Araştırmaları Merkezi, 2013).

[89] Al-Jabarti, *Abd Al-Rahmann al-Jabarti's History of Egypt*, 2:346.

Sulayman ibn Yahya, and Ibn al-Tayyib. In 1163 (1749-50), he met Sayyid 'Abd al-Rahman al-'Aydarus in Mecca and Shaykh 'Abdallah Mirghani al-Tarifi.[90]

According to al-Jabarti's chronicle, after traveling to Yemen, Al-Zabidi returned and settled in al-Ta'if in the year 1166 (1752-53).

In addition to this, al-Jabarti writes about what al-Zabidi studied. Studying jurisprudence with Shaykh 'Abdallah and many of his literary works allowed him to consent to teach. With Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahman al-'Aydarus, he studied the *Mukhtasar* of al-Sa'd. Al-Zabidi was with Shaykh al-'Aydarus regularly, and he dressed al-Zabidi with the Sufi *hirqah*. He also permitted al-Zabidi to spread his statements and his words. He studied a portion of the *Ihya' 'ulum al-din* with him and permitted him to recite it. Shaykh al-'Aydarus inspired him to go to Cairo by informing al-Zabidi about the scholars, *amirs*, and literary people who lived there.[91]

After that, al-Zabidi traveled to Cairo with the pilgrimage caravan on 9 Safar 1167 (1753) and settled in Khan al-Sagha. The first scholar he connected with and studied was Sayyid 'Ali al-Maqdisi al-Hanafi. He attended the lessons of Shaykh Ahmad al-Malawi, al-Jawhari, al-Hifni, al-Bulaydi, al-Sa'idi, al-Mudabighi, and many others. They educated, authorized, and certified his work, scholarship, and astonishing memorization skills. Isma'il Katkhuda of the 'Azaban was concerned about him and supported him for some time to get recognition and notability among the elite and ordinary people. As his popularity grew, he gained prominence, wore fine clothing, and rode well-bred horses.[92]

He met notable scholars when he traveled to Upper Egypt three times. Humam, the shaykh of the Bedouins, appreciated al-Zabidi, along with Isma'il Abu 'Abdallah, Abu 'Ali, the Awlad Nusayr, and the Awlad Wafa, who awarded him gifts and treated him well. Moreover, he traveled often to Lower Egypt and visited Damietta, Rosetta, Mansura, and other significant seaports. He was also received well by the residents and the supreme people. He met leading scholars

[90] Ibid., 2:322.
[91] Ibid., 2:322-23.
[92] Ibid., 2:323.

and academic figures and exchanged teaching authorizations with them. While traveling, he documented several travelogues and his experiences in Upper and Lower Egypt. These travelogues contained humorous anecdotes, conversations, and panegyrics in prose and poetry. If they were put together, they would make a capacious volume. During one of the usual *Mawlid* gatherings, in the courtyard of the Banu Wafa, Sayyid Abu al-Anwar ibn Wafa gave al-Zabidi the nickname Abu al-Fayd, which means "the overflowing one". Al-Jabarti gives the date of this occasion as Tuesday, 17 Sha'ban 1182 (December 27, 1768).[93]

Later on, he married and started to live in al-Ghisal Lane. At the same time, he maintained his residence at Wakalat al-Sagha. He began writing a commentary on *al-Qamus*, which took several years to finish. He gave the title *Taj al-'Arus,* which was about 14 volumes. After completing his dictionary in 1181 (1767-1768), he hosted a grand banquet at Ghayt al-Madiyya. He invited many scholars and Shaykhs to present his work. They admired, showed their joy, and asserted their knowledge and proficiency in linguistic sciences. They wrote panegyrics about him in compositions and poetry. Al-Jabarti writes all the shaykhs who eulogized al-Zabidi about his *Taj al-'Arus*: Shaykh 'Ali al-Sa'idi, Shaykh Ahmad al-Dardir, Sayyid 'Abd al-Rahman al-'Aydarus, Shaykh Muhammad al-Amir, Shaykh Hasan al-Jaddawi, Shaykh Ahmad al-Bili, Shaykh 'Atiya al-Ajhuri, Shaykh 'Isa al-Barawi, Shaykh Muhammad al-Zayyat, Shaykh Muhammad 'Ubada, Shaykh Muhammad (ibn Ibrahim) al-'Awfi, Shaykh Muhammad al-Hiwari, Shaykh Abu 'l-Anwar (ibn Wafa), Shaykh 'Ali al-Qinawi, Shaykh 'Ali Khara'it, Shaykh 'Abd al-Qadir ibn Khalil al-Madani, Shaykh Muhammad al-Makki, Sayyid 'Ali al-Qudsi, Shaykh'Abd al-Rahman, Shaykh 'Ali al-Shawari, Shaykh Muhammad al-Khirbabtawi, Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahman al-Muqri', and Shaykh Muhammad Sa'id al-Baghdadi (al-Suwaydi).[94]

Al-Jabarti notes that al-Suwaydi was the last person to eulogize him, and he was there when he was eulogizing al-Zabidi. This poetic eulogy is an example

[93] Ibid., 2:323.
[94] Ibid., 2:323-24.

of a highly elaborated one rich in metaphor and classical Arabic rhetorical style. It was the middle of Jumada II, 1194 (June 1780), and al-Suwaydi's poetic eulogy is as follows:

"The illustrious al-Murtada commented on the *Qamus* and added an ocean to it, which the *Qamus* had missed"

"The Sihah of al-Jawhari and other works had become the enchantment of cities when Moses threw (his rod)."

"For he revealed the oyster of the mind in proceeding through the mass of the velars, making them tame."

"And he built an extraordinary foundation, choosing for its perfection, his *Mukhtar* as grounding."

"His fire, from his bright lantern, has lighted up the eye of the ignoramus, and it sees him as precious."

"He is incomparable al-Farid, and his composition will not be repeated since a fraud will not imitate it."

"The tongue of my poetry cannot praise him; may God spread his prose as sanctification."

"And may He let our master, illustrious one of our age, continue in every region as the leading guide."

"If he turns towards me with a glimpse of a look, I am happy and cannot become miserable."

"May I present blessing and peace upon his grandfather as a generous gift, which cannot be measured."

"And to the family and friends and this al-Murtada, and the one he is pleased with and chooses as a friend."[95]

In addition, Al-Jabarti included several more eulogies written by other scholars to al-Zabidi. On the other hand, al-Zabidi also wrote a eulogy when he was asking al-Jabarti's father for authorization, and al-Jabarti added this to his chronicle:

[95] Ibid., 2:324.

“O my master! Sea of knowledge! O he whose brilliance surpasses the sun's light both East and West."

“O heir of al-Nu’man in jurisprudence and judgment and abstinence, which has spread both far and near”

“Your thirsty servant has come seeking an expression from which he will gain the fulfillment of a wish.”

“And asks authorization for this book by praising it so that it will surpass all other books.”

“May the God of the throne award you from Him favor and a pleasant life, in security without sorrow."

“And receive you with the decree on His day of reckoning of goodness, and reward you with kindness and nearness."

“May He erect on the horizons the banners of his knowledge and combine with success his heartfelt devotion.”

“May the God of the Throne, My Lord, bestow favor upon the contented one Muhammad sent to the Persians and Arabs."

“And follow him with the Family and Companions, all as stars of guidance, reviving my heart with their mention.”[96]

Mamluk *Amir* and a regent of the Ottoman Empire, Muhammad Bey Abu al-Dhahab, constructed a mosque called in his name near al-Azhar. He also built a library there, and while obtaining many books, he was informed about Al-Zabidi's dictionary. By adding this dictionary to his library, people told him that his library would significantly improve its reputation and be better than other libraries. Then, he became interested in al-Zabidi's work, pursued it, and finally bought it for 100,000 silver dirhams for his library.

Furthermore, al-Zabidi continued his studies and hunted through disciplines like genealogy, chains of transmission, and the historical development of hadith that many current scholars had abandoned. In addition,

[96] Ibid., 2:326-27.

he worked on reconciling the methodologies of early and later scholars. He collected many books, epistles, didactic poems, and works in *rajaz* meter on these.

In early 1189 (1175-76), he moved to a residence in al-Lala Market opposite the mosque of Muharram Efendi. It was near the mosque of Shams al-Din al-Hanafi. The community in that region was populated with dignitaries and influential people. He got their admiration, became close with them, and even exchanged gifts. Meanwhile, he maintained a manner of detachment and held back himself. He gave them sermons and provided them with amulets, incantations, and valuable lessons. He was also permitted to recite *wird* and *Hizb* to them.

Al-Jabarti states that many people pursued his company from every direction. They came to him because of his foreign background, unique character, and not being similar to Egyptian scholars. Knowing Turkish, Persian and even some Georgian caused people around him to admire him more. His reputation grew, and accounts of his life and character circulated widely.[97]

After that, he began to dictate hadith in the traditional way of the early scholars. He fully recited the chain of transmission, the reciters, and the excerpts from his memory in different ways. He would dictate the hadith of kindness, its chain of authorities, and transmitters to people who wanted to learn from him. He would also write a document for them containing an authorization and a certificate of attendance, which they substantially favored. Afterward, some scholars from al-Azhar proceeded to him and pursued his approval. Yet, he insisted they first study the earliest books. They agreed and arranged to meet privately at the mosque of Shaykhun in al-Saliba on Mondays and Thursdays. Some of the people from the community, including Shaykh Musa al-Shaykhuni, the mosque's imam and librarian, joined them and began with Sahih al-Bukhari following the recitation method of Sayyid Husayn al-Shaykhuni. Al-Zabidi was an older man respected by the community and others. Word spread about the efforts of al-Azhar scholars such as Shaykh Ahmad al-Sajai, Shaykh Mustada al-

[97] Ibid., 2:327.

Ta'i, Shaykh Sulayman ibn Taha al-Akrashi, and others. Thus, his notability increased, drawing more scholars and notables wishing to learn from him.

Thereafter, he shifted from hadith recitation to teaching jurisprudence, and his class enlarged remarkably. However, most of the scholars from Al-Azhar stopped attending his class, but he did not need their presence anymore. He began to teach to a large audience from *Sahih al-Bukhari* or *Fada'il al-A'mal*. He quoted the men of his chain of authorities and narrators from his memory and continued with verses of poetry. His talent to quote comprehensively startled the people because they were unfamiliar with this teaching from Egyptian scholars.

In addition, he set up another class in the mosque of al-Hanafi, where he taught *al-Shama'il* on uncommon days after the afternoon prayer. His popularity grew even more, and people attended from all directions to his class. Not only to listen to his teachings but also to see his unique foreign appearance and attire, which made him unlike the local scholars. Many noteworthy people invited him to their houses and hosted grand feasts on his behalf. He attended these feasts with his best students, a reciter, a stenographer, and the registrar of names. During these events, he read sections from hadith collections like *al-Thalathiyyat* of al-Bukhari, al-Darimi, or *al-Musalsalat* to the host and people who attended the feast. At the same time, daughters and wives of the household would listen to him from behind a curtain. Al-Jabarti gave every detail of these gatherings in his chronicle as if there were vessels in front of people burning ambergris and aloes-wood scent throughout the reading. Moreover, the registrar would take attendance, including women, boys, and girls, along with the date. Then, the shaykh would write beneath the document, "This is correct." They followed the method of earlier traditionalists, as seen in ancient manuscripts. They would conclude the lessons with a prayer for the Prophet in a customary manner.[98]

In his chronicle, al-Jabarti states that he was the witness at most of these lessons and gatherings, including private ones in al-Zabidi's house in Khan al-Sagha. Al-Jabarti also invited him to these lessons at his house in al-Sanadiqiyya

[98] Ibid., 2:328.

and Bulaq. They also went to places in their spare time, such as Ghayt al-Madiyya and Azbakiyya, but even then, they spent most of their time quoting sections of *hadith* and other hearings with existing documents.

Furthermore, eminent *amirs*, like Mustafa Bey al-Iskandarani and Ayyub Bey al-Daftardar, became loyal to him. They customarily visited his house and attended his lessons while presenting generous gifts. Al-Zabidi purchased servant girls, prepared meals for his guests, and appreciated visitors from long distances. One of them was ʻAbd al-Raziq Efendi al-Rais, who came all the way from Istanbul to Cairo after hearing about al-Zabidi. He studied *Maqamat al-Hariri* and wanted to receive an *ijaza* from him.[99] After al-Zabidi's lessons at the Shaykhun Mosque, he would visit him and read from the *Maqamat*, trying to go through as much as possible and asking for explanations of the deeper meanings. Al-Jabarti briefly mentions this visit in his chronicle, but no further information is given about al-Raziq's background or role.

In addition, Albanian-Egyptian statesman Muhammad Pasha 'Izzat al-Kabit also visited al-Zabidi and upraised his importance. He invited him to the Citadel and presented him with sable fur. He also arranged enough portions for him, like meat, butter, rice, firewood, and bread from his stores. Moreover, he was afforded a munificent salary in the register of the Two Holy Cities and goods from the warehouse. Finally, his renown extended to the government, and in 1191 (1777), an official order granted him a daily fund of 150 silver *paras*. His reputation had spread increasingly that he was invited to the court. Even though he accepted at first, he declined later on. Despite that, officials sent letters, besides luxury gifts, treasures, and valuable goods in chests. His fame continued to an extent and reached the rulers in Istanbul, the Hijaz, India, Yemen, Syria, Basra, and Iraq, besides rulers of the Maghrib, Sudan, Fezzan, Algeria, and other faraway states. Gifts progressively continued arriving at him everywhere, even with remarkable presents. There were Fezzan sheep, which looked unusual, with

[99] This was most likely Abdu'l-Razzaq Bahir, who had served as *reis al-kuttab* in 1186/1772, participated in the Ottoman-Russian war, and later worked as the administrator of the Mint in Egypt. See Reichmuth, *The World of Murtada Al-Zabidi (1732-91),* 68-69.

large bodies and heads similar to calves in size. He sent these sheep to the sons of the sultan Abdülhamid I, who were fascinated by them. Similarly, he received rare gifts like parrots, slave boys, girls, and eunuchs. In response, he would send the gifts from one place to another, making sure that each place got gifts unknown to their land, and in return, he received more presents. He received exotic and valuable items like cashew juice, preserves, aloe wood, amber, and perfume from the *ratls* of many places like India, San'a in Yemen, Cyrenaica, and others.[100]

Moreover, al-Zabidi's fame in the Maghrib grew remarkably and earned an honorable status. People started to believe mystically in his headship. While on pilgrimage, it became customary for people to visit Cairo, visit him, and present him with a gift. If they did not see him, they considered their pilgrimage incomplete. When someone visited him, he would ask his name, honorific title, where he is from, neighborhood, profession, and children. He would write them down or memorize these details. If someone else comes to visit him later on from the same region, he would recall their connection, asking about their wellness by their name and village. This would astonish the visitors and express admiration by bowing or kissing the ground, believing his knowledge comes from spiritual insight.

During the pilgrimage season, al-Zabidi's house was crowded with visitors who came to inquire about his blessings from morning to night. They would bring something like silver, dates, wax, or other things, according to their budget. They also carried letters and gifts from their lands, written by scholars and leaders wishing for his reply. Despite its size, receiving even one scrap of paper from him was a great honor. They believed that it warranted the acceptance of their pilgrimage. However, the people who did not receive anything were scorned by their communities and carried the humiliation for the rest of their lives.

[100] Ibid., 2:329-30.

For now, he commenced a commentary on *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din* by al-Ghazali. He finished a fine copy of the chapters and sent them to Istanbul, Syria, and the Maghrib to gain attraction, just like with his commentary on *al-Qamus*.[101]

Furthermore, as mentioned before, al-Jabarti included much of the biographical content from al-Zabidi's *Mu'jam* to his chronicle. In al-Zabidi's *Mu'jam*, there are approximately twenty-five biographies of scholars from Saharan and sub-Saharan Africa. However, al-Jabarti ignored all of them. Some examples of al-Zabidi's visitors are Ahmad al-Bakka'i, 'Abdallah b. Muhammad al-Kunta'i, Ahmad al-Habib b. al-Mukhtar b. 'Abd (sic) b. Muhammad b. al-Qadi 'Abdallah al-'Alawi al-Nasiri, 'Umar b. al-Mukhtar al-Shinqiti, and others. He seemed to consider these people insignificant among many other visitors from other regions. This contrast displays the viewpoint and curiosity between al-Zabidi and his student al-Jabarti. Al-Jabarti's chronicle focuses mainly on Egypt and nearby areas. Nevertheless, al-Zabidi's work illustrates a more regionwide perspective. A significant number of the African visitors noted in his Mu'jam can be found through Arabic sources arising from their home regions. As one of the first known examples, this triangulation is impressive in that African and Middle Eastern biographical recordings verify and accompany each other.[102]

The diversity and reach of al-Zabidi's intellectual relationships illustrate the importance of human connection in sustaining and transmitting knowledge. These networks facilitated learning and preserved trust and continuity within the tradition. This model enriches the understanding of how Sufi and academic circles operated across boundaries.

2.1.2 The Death of His Wife

In 1196(1781-82), al-Zabidi's wife Zubayda passed away and he was deeply affected by her death. According to al-Jabarti, he elegized his wife in the style of *Majnun Layla*, and al-Jabarti recorded them in his chronicle. He wrote:

[101] Ibid., 2:330.
[102] Stefan Reichmuth, "Murtaḍā Al-Zabīdī (1732–91) and the Africans: Islamic Discourse and Scholarly Networks in the Late Eighteenth Century," essay, in *The Transmission of Learning in Islamic Africa*, ed. Scott S. Reese (Brill, 2004), 121–53.

“O one who reproaches him who has suffered a loss like my calamity, He will continue being melancholy, after which he will renounce consequences."
“The hand of separation, death, has struck my nature, there has befallen my order the adversities of misfortune. Whenever I visited Zabad in the early morning, I would return to my journey with a full travel bag”
“I see the earth folding for me that which is distant (namely) of the white bashful ones, the beautiful buxom ones, A young woman of generosity, liberality, gentleness, and shyness. And nothing but experiences disclose character”
“May I be sacrificed for her whose cloak does not deserve blame, chief of a folk, noble, most genial."
“Upon her be God's peace in His every circumstance, may favor accompany it (peace) above the high ranks."
“Throughout time, no dove of a thicket has wailed with (such a) grief which stirs up sadness in every elegist.”[103]

Besides, Al-Jabarti wrote more of al-Zabidi's poetry to his wife and mentioned that he excluded others to avoid outrageous length. These praises prove how much he deeply admired his wife and was deeply saddened. However, he remarried again.

2.1.3 His Withdrawal From Public Life

Until then, when al-Zabidi's celebrity reached a matchless level, his fame extended widely, and he obtained enormous honor from the elite and the locals but withdrew from public life. Al-Jabarti recorded that he constricted himself to his home. He distanced himself from his colleagues, and he only appeared on infrequent occasions for particular purposes. He disclaimed his public lessons, kept away from women's quarters, and locked his door. He also refused the luxury gifts sent by grand Egyptian *amirs*. Once during Ramadan, Ayyub Bey al-Daftardar sent his son with fifty *ardabbs* of wheat and a large amount of rice, butter, honey, and oil, including 500 *riyals* in coins, and bundles of lovely garments made with Indian fabrics, broadcloths, and many other things.

[103] Al-Jabarti, *Abd Al-Rahmann al-Jabarti's History of Egypt,* 2:331.

However, he returned them all. In addition, Mustafa Bey al-Iskandarani wanted to meet him, but he obscured himself and refused to meet him. When Hasan Pasha arrived in Cairo, al-Zabarti did not visit him; instead, he visited al-Zabidi and gave him lovely fur, an equipped horse, decorated saddles, and saddlecloths that cost 1000 dinars. He always accepted his intercession and would receive it with high respect if he sent him a message.[104]

Al-Jabarti also reported a striking case that, al-Zabidi once wrote to Cezzar Ahmet Pasha, claiming to be the expected Mahdi and would gain great significance. Cezzar Ahmet Pasha hoped and believed in this prediction and kept the letter within his ceremonial garment with his talismans and amulets. He thought this without any doubt and revealed this secret to people who wanted to gain knowledge of fortune telling through geomancy.[105] However, this report has been met with doubt by some modern scholars. Suat Yıldırım, for instance, finds it very unlikely that al-Zabidi, who was a well-respected and knowledgeable scholar, would make such a messianic claim. He emphasizes that even though it is not entirely impossible, it would be highly unexpected for someone like al-Zabīdī to fall into such a claim, which would normally not be appropriate even for a beginner on the Sufi path.[106]

Regardless of the doubts surrounding this incident, al-Jabartī provides further details about al-Zabīdī's reputation and how others treated him. In addition, when travelers came from Cairo, he would ask about him. He would accept them with glory and give them presents if they expressed him with high regard. Nevertheless, if they said something negative about him, he would withdraw them. His faithfulness remained constant to him until they both died.

Once, during al-Zabidi's period of isolation, Sultan Mulay Muhammad of Morocco sent him gifts, which al-Zabidi accepted with appreciation and responded with prayers and praises. Then, in 1201 (1786-87), the sultan sent him a gift again, but he did not accept it and returned it. Unluckily, the gift got lost

[104] Ibid., 2:333-34.
[105] Ibid., 2:334.
[106] Suat Yıldırım, "Muhammed Murtazâ Ez-Zebîdî," *EAÜİFD* VI (1986): 31.

before it could reach the sultan again. When the sultan heard this, he wrote a letter reproaching him for returning the gift and stating that if he did not want to accept it, he could dispense between people with low incomes so they would share the reward. However, he sent it back, and now it is lost. In addition, the sultan also condemned his commentary on *Ihya''Ulum al-Din* and suggested that he should have spent his time on more valuable attempts.[107]

As seen, even his closest friend and student, al-Jabarti, does not mention anything about the date or reason of his retreat. However, such a significant decision must have had a reasonable cause. This has remained a point of curiosity among historians. The fact that al-Zabidi began his commentary on the *Ihya'* and was clearly influenced by the work's powerful spiritual messages is the first reason that comes to mind. However, Suat Yıldırım argues that this alone cannot fully explain his retreat. According to his research, the retreat did not occur immediately after al-Zabidi started the commentary. In fact, the process of writing was still ongoing for several years after he began the *Ihya'* commentary, and it took around five years before he withdrew into seclusion.[108]

Yıldırım also reminds us that this period coincided with the death of al-Zabidi's wife. The elegies he wrote for her show an unusually deep emotional attachment and grief. His age might have also contributed to a growing sense of the transience of life.[109] Therefore, his decision to retreat should not be seen solely as a result of al-Ghazali's powerful call to turn away from fame, politics, and worldly attachments. It likely had personal and health related dimensions as well. This phase of his life appears to mark a turning point shaped by inner struggle and reflection. It reflects how periods of retreat may serve not as withdrawal from responsibility, but as moments of reassessment and transformation within a scholar's ethical and spiritual framework.

[107] Al-Jabarti, *Abd Al-Rahmann al-Jabarti's History of Egypt,* 2:334.
[108] Yıldırım, "Muhammed Murtazâ Ez-Zebîdî," 30.
[109] Ibid., 31.

2.1.4 His Sudden Death

Al-Jabarti described al-Zabidi's death in his chronicle sorrowfully. He wrote that erudition and generosity grieved his passing while the doves of the sanctuary mourned him. He became infected with the plague in the month of Sha'ban. One day, when he went to pray on a Friday at al-Kurdi Mosque located opposite his home, he became ill and returned home after prayer. That night, his tongue silenced. By Sunday, he died. However, according to al-Jabarti, al-Zabidi's wife and relatives obscured his death until they took away valuable stuff, money, treasures, furniture, and bound volumes. After that, they announced his death, which was on Monday. When people heard about the death of al-Zabidi, 'Uthman Bey Tabal al-Ismaili and Ridwan Katkhuda al-Majnun came and claimed that al-Zabidi had appointed them as his chosen guardians and executors. This was plotted easily because Husayn Agha, al-Zabidi's wife's brother-in-law, was a follower of al-Majnun. Along with them, Mustafa Efendi Sadiq also took ownership of whatever they wished and selected items from the outer room.

Hereinafter, they attended his funeral, prayed, and buried al-Zabidi in a grave he had prepared beside his first wife in the shrine known as Sayyida Ruqayya. The scholars of al-Azhar were unaware of his death, as the city was preoccupied with the ongoing plague and because his house was far from al-Azhar. Those people who heard his death and tried to go to his funeral found out that they were already too late to join the funeral procession.

Further on, Ridwan Katkhuda passed away, and Uthman Bey became responsible for administration. However, he neglected the estate and allowed al-Zabidi's wife and relatives to protect his legacy. They transformed his precious stuff into their house. This incident was forgotten for months until the administration control shifted to the Egyptian *amirs* from Upper Egypt.

At that time, al-Zabidi’s wife remarried a soldier from their retainers. To prohibit any possible heirs from claiming the property, she and her new husband presented the property before a *qadi* and claimed it as a heritage for the widow. They offered only selected clothes, some furnishings, books, and some waste

materials and sold them publicly. They gained approximately 100,000 silver *paras* from the sale, and the treasury claimed some of the money. The rest was kept with the previously hidden assets. The estate was expensive.

The late Hasan al-Hariri, a close friend and follower of al-Zabidi, visited him on the Saturday before his death. He told al-Jabarti that when he was allowed inside al-Zabidi's room, he was lying in bed and unable to speak. At the same time, his wife and in-laws were desperately removing hidden goods from chests and storages, stacking them in the hallway. He described in detail that he saw a pile of Indian fabrics, cashmere, brocades, and untrimmed furs, along with unknown goods, in containers and sacks. He also saw an extensive collection of valuable pocket watches in their original packages from their country of origin, which were dispersed on the rugs of the hall. Hasan al-Hariri sat beside al-Zabidi for some time and held his hand. He opened his eyes and looked at al-Hariri as if he was questioning what was happening around him. After, he closed his eyes and became unconscious. Al-Hariri left him afterward. When he was exiting the house, he saw many large and small beeswax candles and camphor, both processed and raw. He saw more stuff he had never seen before and did not want to pay much attention.[110]

Al-Jabarti declared that he did not have a son or daughter, so he did not mention anything about al-Zabidi's son. In fact, according to al-Jabarti, nobody has written an elegy in his memory. However, Reichmuth states that al-Zabidi had a son named Abdallah Abu'l-Fadl, written in two biographical notes in his *Mu'jam*. He mentions that he attached *ijazat* for him from two scholars from Baghdad in 1196/1781. As his son was not mentioned before or after, it seems he died in early infancy. The continuing years were very miserable for al-Zabidi. This can be noticed from his colophons of the *Ihya'*, which he completed in 1197-1199/1783-1785. They carry sorrowful notes on his own weakened body and mind, including the general struggle of Muslim life.[111] At the end of his

[110] Al-Jabarti, *Abd Al-Rahmann al-Jabarti's History of Egypt,* 2:344-46.
[111] Reichmuth, *The World of Murtada Al-Zabidi (1732-91),* 75-76.

biography, al-Jabarti prays for his master and friend al-Zabidi, asking God to grant his resting place in a palace and enclose his tomb with mercy and forgiveness.[112]

2.2 Al-Jabarti's Criticism Towards Al-Zabidi

In the chronicle, biography of al-Zabidi contains indirect but notable use of double meaning. While praising al-Zabidi, al-Jabarti conceals criticism. This is may be because al-Zabidi did not include his father's biography in *Mu'jam Mukhtass*. He intimated his displeasure by saying al-Zabidi neglected to write biographies of significant scholars.[113]

Moreover, al-Jabarti mentions behaviors that religious scholars should avoid. Then, he describes how al-Zabidi dressed in luxury clothing and rode fine horses. He also notes that his elaborate turban was made from fine fabric and decorated with silk tassels, which was unsuitable for a religious scholar. He highly disapproved of luxurious clothing, especially silk, which the Prophet Muhammad condemned.[114]

In addition, al-Zabidi was well-honored and respected among leaders and scholars. The Ottoman Sultan and the Mamluk rulers respected al-Zabidi. He was a Sufi, a *muhaddith*, a *faqih*, and a lexicographer. According to him, a good *alim* must respect and trust the *ashraf*, the Sufis, and *awliya* (saints), praise them, and visit their graves. An *alim* who defended the Sadat al-Wafa'iyya obtained significant status and became well-known and highly regarded. The rulers also favored them. However, *ulama* interested in secular sciences such as medicine, history, and astronomy experienced a decline in their status among the rulers and public.[115]

Nevertheless, al-Jabarti disapproved being popular, and seeking the favor of rulers for the religious scholars. According to him, al-Zabidi was self-admiring

[112] Al-Jabarti, *Abd Al-Rahmann al-Jabarti's History of Egypt,* 2:346.
[113] Moreh, *Egyptian Historian 'Abd al-Rahman al-Jabarti,* 312; Yıldırım, "Muhammed Murtazâ Ez-Zebîdî," 32.
[114] Moreh, *Egyptian Historian 'Abd al-Rahman al-Jabarti,* 313.
[115] Ibid., 306.

himself in his knowledge and wanted to display his works. For example, when he completed *Taj al-'Arus*, he held a big banquet and invited shaykhs and scholars. He also impressed many people, especially pilgrims from the Maghrib, with his extraordinary memory. He pretended that he owned divine insight (*kashf*) and accepted countless gifts from these pilgrims. Other than this, he praised the rulers observable in his letter to Cezzar Ahmet Pasha. He wrote that the Pasha, to be the *Mahdi al-Muntazar* would gain significant importance.[116]

On the other hand, when al-Zabidi's wife died, he sorrowed deeply. As mentioned, he even wrote poems in her honor and remained near her grave for many days. Al-Jabarti, in his chronicle, criticized al-Zabidi's grief for the death of his wife. He buried her at the shrine known as the Shrine of Sayyida Ruqayya. He made a tomb over her grave. He included a compound and screens and furnishings. He lit candles. He stayed there for many days.

Along with him were people, including reciters and chanters. He served broth, couscous, coffee, and drinks to people. He also bought land near the grave and built a little house. He let her mother stay in that house and spent some days there. However, after her, he got married to another woman. He was married to this woman when he died, and she attained all of his wealth.[117]

Al-Zabidi was an immigrant to Egypt, a philologist, and a hadith scholar who became well-known through the traditional method of teaching hadith, his famous dictionary *Taj al-'Arus*, and his description of *Ihya 'Ulum al-Din*. In fact, according to al-Jabarti, he was seeking to attract attention to self-glory. He cultivated people by writing poetry full of praises about the origins of *sharifs*. He also granted special licenses, *ijazat,* and permissions to teach several sciences. He even insisted on owning secret knowledge and the potential to envision the future. He expressed admiration for rulers and desired wealth. He accepted gifts from rich or poor, which he abandoned later.[118]

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[116] Ibid., 313.
[117] Al-Jabarti, *Abd Al-Rahmann al-Jabarti's History of Egypt,* 2:330-33.
[118] Moreh, *Egyptian Historian 'Abd al-Rahman al-Jabarti,* 314.

Al-Jabarti's careful blend of respect and critique presents a nuanced portrait that reveals the complexity of intellectual relationships. Rather than undermining his mentor, his remarks appear to underscore the gap between public influence and personal virtue, a tension that carries relevance in both historical and contemporary scholarly dynamics.

2.3 His Life Within the Context of His Era

Murtada al-Zabidi's life and career display certain historical evolutions – mostly dramatic- of his time, as outlined by Reichmuth. These shifts affected his movements and formed his broad network of associations. To be able to understand al-Zabidi, and his writings, it is essential to learn these significant historical contexts.

According to Reichmuth, al-Zabidi witnessed the significant decentralization and decline of the prominent Muslim empires, with the loss of particular territories to Europeans. He left India in 1748, which coexisted with severe confusion across the subcontinent. The Mughal Empire could not fully recover from Nadir Shah's highly destructive invasion in 1739, and this disaster led to continuous power struggles, including Mughal warlords, Sikhs, Afghans, and Marathas. On the other hand, European colonial aims extended to the British and French, who had just finished the First Carnatic War (1746-1748), making them mobile participants in these disputes.

These disruptions naturally formed the people al-Zabidi came across. As Reichmuth notes, he met scholars, Sufis, and travelers from Central Asia, Hijaz and Daghestan, who Nadir Shah's invasions had probably displaced. His connections also stretched to the Ottoman world. He had strong ties with high-ranking Ottoman officials and even achieved a relationship with Sultan Abdülhamid I. Even though he was loyal to the Ottoman Empire all his life and viewed its power as firm, in his writings, he confessed significant defeats of the empire, especially territorial losses to Russia, for instance, the annexation of

Crimea and Muslim opposition to Russian growth in the Caucaus, which began in his time.[119]

In addition, there was an increase in the independence of some territories inside and outside the Ottoman Empire. This led to the disclosure of new provincial educated elites across rural, urban, and nomadic societies, with Sharifian families having an essential role among them. From semi-independent North African provinces, al-Zabidi gained many influential people's respect and friendship. He had strong relationship with the Sultan of Morocco and his court, including the Sultan of Darfur. On the other hand, most of his contacts were from provincial families he had met while traveling in Egypt and Palestine and people who had visited him in Cairo. Many came from Anatolia, North Africa, and the eastern and western lands of Sudan, Palestine, and the Sahara. Some came from modest families, and others from well-known families dealing with religious or political movements. Al-Zabidi's writing *Mu'jam*, a comprehensive biographical dictionary, covers critical historical records of these developments and the rise of these notable families. More than 20 percent of the people he mentions were from Sharifian families. The increasing fame of *Ashraf* and *Sayyids* in different parts of Muslim society became a common situation. It became widespread, with South Arabian *sayyids* demonstrating themselves throughout the Middle East, across the Indian Ocean, and from East Africa to South Asia and the Malay Archipelago. Their extending influence granted the regionalization of political and religious power, supporting the gathering of *ulama* across the Muslim world.[120]

Furthermore, to better acknowledge al-Zabidi's life, the patterns of interaction and exchange from the 16th to the 18th century should be inspected. Europe's growth caused a more united global economy with the motion of precious metals and consumer goods like coffee, tea, and tobacco that nurtured permanent connections between continents. Regardless of opening a way to Europe past the Cape of Good Hope, the Indian Ocean trade market, including

[119] Reichmuth, *The World of Murtada Al-Zabidi (1732-91),* viii.
[120] Reichmuth, *The World of Murtada Al-Zabidi (1732-91),* ix.

East Africa, Arabia, the Middle East, and the Mediterranean, was determined and later expanded. It seems until the eighteenth century, Indian Ocean merchandising connected trade networks among South Asia, the Middle East, and the Mediterranean. European traders usually followed the routes of Muslim traders and sailors who had led up to them. Muslim traders and others used European ships for transportation and trading.

Moreover, al-Zabidi was one of the most fortunate migrant scholars of the eighteenth century who moved from the Indian Ocean to the Middle East. He actually followed the route of his South Arabian master, 'Abd al-Rahman al-'Aydarus (d.1192/1778). He also established connections with India and had moved to Cairo and the Levant before al-Zabidi. But al-'Aydarus did not gain the same degree of scholarly achievement as him. Al-Zabidi, as a scholar of Indian origin, had an exclusive impact on North Africa, the Sahara, and Sub-Saharan Africa. Getting his education in Yemen and the Hijaz served him to blend different aspects of scholarship that he later extended by his connections through other regions. In fact, al-Zabidi hid his Indian identity and adopted a Yemeni identity, which proves that having a Yemeni identity gives him a better reputation as a scholar than being from India. In addition to that, his background provides a reason for his limited involvement with European impact. His knowledge of the European events is based on unwritten sources rather than personal experience.[121]

Viewing al-Zabidi within the broader political and cultural context of his time adds necessary layers to his intellectual persona. His position within the changing currents of power and thought suggests that scholarship was not isolated from its environment, but actively shaped by it.

2.4 Sufism in His Life

Murtada al-Zabidi is exceptionally well known as one of the most productive Islamic scholars of the late eighteenth century. He is famous with his

[121] Ibid., x-xi.

Taj al-Arus, *Ithaf al-Sada al-Muttawin*, and commentary on Gazzali's *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din.* His offerings to the hadith scholarship are also massive. He had connections with some of the most valuable chains of transmission early in his life, which polished his fame as a high scholar. However, compared to this, his strong Sufi affiliations and active involvement with many kinds of Sufi orders got less attention from scholars and historians. Being a master in philology, hadith, and Sufism simultaneously gave him a critical understanding of the world of Sufism during his time.[122]

2.4.1 India

As already mentioned, al-Zabidi described himself as "Qadiri by training, Naqshbandi by practice". His grandfather, Muhammad Qadiri (d. 1145/1732), was one of the first scholars in the family to travel to the Middle East and got connected with Qadiri circles in Iraq and Syria. After this, he received his basic education; he was integrated into the circle of Ghulam Naqshband (d. 1126/1714), in Lucknow. Then he went to Saudi Arabia, for education and pilgrimage purposes, including Baghdad and Karbala. At this time, he visited the Sufi lodge (*zawiya*) of 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani's successors in Hama. There, he was dressed in the Sufi cloak k*hirqah* by Shaykh Yasin ibn 'Abd al-Razzaq al-Hamawi and announced him as his *khalifa*. Before returning, he spent time at 'Abd al-Qadir's *zawiya* and received *ijazat* for the *Shadhiliyya* and *Rifa'iyya* branches. After returning, he taught and influenced many people into the *Qadiriyya* order. Al-Zabidi was also affected by this *Qadiri* lineage, which he learned from his brother.

Other than his family, al-Zabidi's Sufi connections were shaped by two scholars in India. The first one is Shah Wali Allah al-Dihlawi (d.1176/1762), whom al-Zabidi visited in Delhi. Al-Zabidi got many chains of transmissions from him for the Junaydiyya, Uwaysiyya, and other kinds of branches of the Naqshbandiyya like the Mujaddidi branch of Ahmad Sirhini (d. 1034/1624), which became the supreme Naqshbandi order later. The other scholar who

[122] Stefan Reichmuth, "Murtaḍā Al-Zabīdī and His Role in 18th Century Sufism," essay, in *Le Soufisme à l'époque Ottomane : XVIe-XVIIIe Siècle = Sufism in the Ottoman Era : 16th-18th Century* (Institut français d'archéologie orientale du Caire, 2010), 383–84.

affected al-Zabidi in his early years in India was Khayr al-Din ibn Muhammad Zahid al-Surati. He also studied in Hijaz under Muhammad Hayat al-Sindi in Medina and received a strong affiliation with the Naqshbandiyya. Before leaving India, al-Zabidi met him in 1161/1748. With al-Surati, he studied Bukhari's *Sahih* and obtained instruction in the Naqshbandi *dhikr*, including the *Khatm-i Khwajagan*, with a *silsila* chain going back to Ahmad Sirhindî. Studying hadith and practicing Sufism became essential in al-Zabidi's academic and religious views throughout his life.[123]

2.4.2 Yemen

Al-Zabidi lived in Zabid in Yemen for several years and started identied as "a Zabidi by upbringing and abode" *Zabidi mansha'an wa-qararan*. Life in Zabid was shaped by both literary culture and Sufi practices. For scholars, *adab* was the one of the main doors to the *tasawwuf*. Thus, many Sufi orders were practiced in Zabid at that time. Some originated there, and others were brought by travelers, such as the Indian Naqshbandiyya introduced by Taj al-Din Zakariyy al-Surbuhli al-'Uthmani (d. 1050/1640), including Ibn Arabi's beliefs were noteworthy.

His experience in Yemen reflects a broader scholarly movement rooted in southern Arabia during that time. The role of southern Arabian scholars in the eighteenth century is clearly reflected in the career of figures like al-Aydarus. They acted as important links between different parts of the Islamic world, carrying knowledge and scholarly traditions across regions. The schools of Zabid gained a strong reputation during this period. Their influence reached beyond Yemen and shaped many other regions. Al-Zabidi saw his time in Zabid as so important that he referred to himself with the title "al-Zabidi," even though he was originally from India. This background shows how interconnected and active the Islamic scholarly world was during that time.[124]

In Yemen, al-Zabidi's teachers were Muhammad ibn 'Ala' al-Din (1102-1180/1691-1766) and 'Abd al-Khaliq ibn Abi Bakr ibn al-Zayn (1100-1181/1688-1768), from Mizjaji family. Al-Zayn traveled to many places and learned hadith

[123] Reichmuth, "Murtaḍā Al-Zabīdī and His Role in 18th Century Sufism," 384–385.
[124] John Obert Voll, *Islam: Continuity And Change In The Modern World* (Routledge, 2018), 93.

and Sufism from notable scholars in Medina and Mecca, like Muhammad Hayat al-Sindi and Muhammad Tahir ibn Ibrahim al-Kurani. Other than this, a famous Ahdal family in the Tihama region were scholars and Sufis. They founded their own Sufi order. Sulayman ibn Yahya ibn 'Umar al-Ahdal (1137-1197/1725-1783), was one of al-Zabidi's intimate masters. He honored al-Zabidi with the Sufi *khirqa* of his family's *tariqa*. He favored al-Ghazali's *'Ihya* and read and discussed it daily. He completed his recitation with the attendance of the scholars in his town.[125]

2.4.3 Hijaz

When al-Zabidi was in Yemen, he visited the Hijaz several times. It was a meeting place for many scholars and Sufi orders. While in Mecca, al-Zabidi met and became close to the Indian scholar Muhyi al-Din Nur al-Haqq al-Mutawakkili al-Atawi (d. 1166/1753). In Medina, he visited the new *zawiya* of Samman family. They influenced followers from many places including West Africa, the Sudan, Hadramawt, and Indonesia. Shaykh Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim Samman honored al-Zabidi's initiation into the Qadiriyya and Khalwatiyya orders. He possibly helped al-Zabidi engage with Egyptian followers of Samman's shaykh, Mustafa al-Bakri (d. 1162/1749).[126]

During al-Zabidi's visit to al-Ta'if, he met two highly notable Sufi *sayyids* who profoundly influenced him. The first one is 'Abdallah b. Ibrahim b. Hasan al-Mirgani, known as al-Mahlub 1119-1207/1701-1792. Al-Zabidi first saw al-Mirgani in Mecca in 1163/1750 and warmly welcomed him. Al-Zabidi stayed with him, served him like a follower, and listened to his teachings. He copied and edited some of al-Mirgani's writings. Al-Zabidi got an *ijaza* for all of his teachings. Al-Mirgani stated some of them were received directly from the Prophet. He also showed al-Zabidi his genealogy, wrapped in green silk and stored in a chest. Al-Zabidi took it as a sign of blessing and accepted it without any doubt, even though it pursued back to the 11th *imam*, an unusual ancestor for him. Overall, al-Mirgani was an important *shaykh* in forming al-Zabidi's spiritual and Sufi views.

[125] Reichmuth, "Murtaḍā Al-Zabīdī and His Role in 18th Century Sufism," 385–86.
[126] Ibid., 386-87.

The second Sufi *sayyid* is 'Abd al-Rahman b. Mustafa al-Aydarus (1135-1192/1723-1778). He belonged to the Ba'Alawi *sayyids* from Tarim. He was the successor of Abu Bakr B. 'Abdallah al-Aydarus (d. 914/1508) and founded the Sufi order called Aydarusiyya. Mostly, Aydarus members were traveling scholars to many parts of the Indian Ocean, Malay Archipelago, and East Africa. 'Abd al-Rahman was also an effective writer for his family, and he traveled to many places. After his education in Tarim, he traveled to India and studied with many scholars and Sufis. One of his teachers was Muhammad Fakhr al-'Abbasi, also one of al-Zabidi's teachers. After studying in Surat and Hadramawt, he went to al-Ta'if, where he met 'Abdallah al-Mirgani. Before al-Zabidi met him, he visited Egypt twice and met scholars, Sufis, and *amirs* in Cairo. Al-Zabidi met him in al-Ta'if in 1163/1750 and deeply impressed al-Zabidi. Then, they met again, and al-Zabidi spent six months in al-Ta'if with al-'Aydarus. During his stay, al-Zabidi studied directly with him and received both Sufi and non-Sufi transmissions. He also collected and checked these transmissions in Egypt and composed them into a book. Besides transferring Sufi heritages, al-'Aydarus was a great Sufi teacher, and many-sided poet. Al-Zabidi included them in his *Mu'jam*, among which were added by al-Jabarti to his chronicle later. In addition, al-'Aydarus faithfully admired Ibn 'Arabi and defended Sufi music and dance. Al-Zabidi quoted some verses from *wahdat al-wujud* doctrine, which he discussed in his commentary on Gazzali's *Ihya'*.

Both being Husayni Sayyids with Indian connections, al-Zabidi and al-'Aydarus highly respected each other. Al-Aydarus's journeys, literary and poetic activities, Sufi connections, and even his involvement with the doctrine of *wahdat al-wujud* most likely influenced al-Zabidi's own network of transmissions and impressions of the Indian Sufi traditions, supporting his status as a significant scholar in Islamic tradition.[127]

[127] Ibid., 387-88; Reichmuth, *The World of Murtada Al-Zabidi (1732-91)*, 34-39.

2.4.4 Egypt

When al-Zabidi moved to Egypt, al-'Aydarus returned to Egypt and united there again. Al-Zabidi's visitors and people who requested Sufi transmissions in Egypt increased enormously. Al-Zabidi compiled his *sanads* into a book of ten quires at the request of al-'Aydarus, and he titled the book *Al-Natha al-Qudsiyya bi-Wasitat al-Bida al-Aydarusiyya.* Al-Zabidi made a significant number of copies and circulated them among Sufi disciples.[128]

In Egypt, al-Zabidi's engagement with Sufism was not only practical but also intellectual. According to Recep Önal, one of the best examples of this is his famous commentary on al-Ghazali's *Ihya'*, called *Ithaf al-Sada al-Muttaqin*. In this work, al-Zabidi tried to revive and defend al-Ghazali's moderate understanding of religion and spirituality. He represented a balanced and thoughtful revivalist approach, which was important for later reform movements, especially in the Indian subcontinent.

Al-Zabidi was deeply connected to the Sufi world. As Recep Önal noted, his commentary on the *Ihya'* also showed a clear and practical definition of Sufism, focusing on daily ethics and spiritual development. This made his approach different from more abstract or metaphysical explanations of Sufism, like those of Ibn Arabi. His understanding was closer to everyday Sufi life and fit well with the religious environment in Egypt at that time, which was home to many Sufi orders and active scholars.[129]

As can be seen from this example, al-Zabidi, starting from the early stages of his scholarly career, was involved in organizing, preserving, and transmitting Sufism. His great connection with Sufi understanding is noticeable from his cooperation with shaykhs in Egypt, where he compiled their *sanad* chains of transmission and his teachings.

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[128] Reichmuth, *The World of Murtada Al-Zabidi (1732-91),* 48; Reichmuth, "Murtaḍā Al-Zabīdī and His Role in 18th Century Sufism," 388.
[129] Recep Önal and Süleyman Akkuş, "Muhammed Murtaza Ez-Zebidi'nin Hayatı ve İlmi Kişiliği," *Akademik İncelemeler Dergisi*, 2, no. 2 (2014): 303-04.

Another example is *Lugat al-La'ali' min al-Jawhar al-Gha'li*, who wrote a collection of transmissions of Shaykh Muhammad al-Hifnawi in 1167/1754 and got his *ijaza* from him. These literary works for shaykhs and other scholars became very common for al-Zabidi. He produced more collections of Sufi transmissions, commentaries of Sufi prayers, poems, short Sufi manuals, and a long poem on the Naqshbandiyya, which was new in Egypt then. For al-Zabidi, the range of these works for the Sufi orders was definitely extending.[130]

Furthermore, the *shaykh al-sajjada* of the Bakriyya order, Muhammad ibn Ahmad 'Abd al-Munim al-Bakri, honored him with Sufi *khirqa*. During the 1170s/1756-1766, al-Zabidi initiated a close bond with the Wafa'iyya order. With great Sharifian roots, this Sufi order was very famous in Egypt. Al-Zabidi was initiated into this Sufi order by Shaykh Muhammad Abu Hadi al-Wafa'i. He granted al-Zabidi with multiple *kunya* names. The honorific title Abu'l Fayd was given to him when he finished the first part of his lexicon. Al-Zabidi wrote two books on the Wafa'iyya order. The first one was about their branches and their history. The second one was about their ritual of granting the *kunya*, which al-Zabidi was professional in Arabic naming patterns and functions, including the history of the *kunya* forms lexicon. This can display the wide range of writings that he was able to provide for the Sufi circles.[131]

In Zabidi's life, another vital shaykh was 'Abd al-Wahhab b. 'Abd al-Salam al-Marzuqi al-'Afifi (d. 1172/1759), leader of the Burhaniyya order. He was very well known for his *baraka,* spiritual blessing. People frequently visited his tomb. However, it collapsed in 1178/1764 because of heavy rains. A new Tomb and *Zawiya* were quickly built at a safer site. Al-Zabidi also visited his tomb many times. He was thoroughly attached to Shaykh al-'Afifi. One time, he described a healing vision of him in a dream during an illness. In addition, al-Zabidi explained and supported the transfer of the tomb in a praise poem. Al-Zabidi's

[130] Reichmuth, *The World of Murtada Al-Zabidi (1732-91),* 48; Reichmuth, "Murtaḍā Al-Zabīdī and His Role in 18th Century Sufism," 388-89.
[131] Reichmuth, *The World of Murtada Al-Zabidi (1732-91),* 48-49; Reichmuth, "Murtaḍā Al-Zabīdī and His Role in 18th Century Sufism," 389.

upholding of the widespread veneration of al-'Afifi's tomb was later strictly criticized by al-Jabarti. This proves al-Zabidi's full support for shaykh venerations, positioning him with desired Sufi traditions.

Moreover, al-Zabidi's effect broadened through many Sufi communities in other provinces of Egypt. For instance, in Sirbin in the northeastern Delta, there was a Shaykh Zayn al-Din b. 'Abd al-Wahhab, whom al-Zabidi had a strong connection with. He wrote a book on the Uwaysiyya order and its *sanad* for his heir ʻAbd al-Wahhab, titled *ʻAqilat al-atrab fi Sanad al-Tariqa wa'l-Ahzab*. This shaykh admired al-Zabidi extensively. He built a house for him at their *maqam* and invited al-Zabidi to live there, yet he declined this invitation.[132]

Similar to this, al-Zabidi visited the Muwajjah family in Kafr Khamis. He acquired an affiliation to the Zanfaliyya, branch of the Ahmadiyya. Muhammad b. ʻAli al-Muwajjah desired a book from al-Zabidi. He wrote one of the most significant Sufi books, titled by *ʻIqd al-jawhar al-tamin fi'l-dikr wa-turuq al-ilbas wa-l-talqin,* completed in 1181/1768 at the tomb of Sidi Ramadan, the ancestor of the Muwajjah family, in Kafr Khamis in the month of Ramadan. This work was more than a usual *ijazat*, which introduced an overall introduction to the basic foundations of Sufism, including 128 different Sufi orders and their chains of transmission and teachings from over 40 Sufi shaykhs. It covers an extensive historical outline of the Sufi tradition from Yemen, Hijaz, Egypt, Syria, Iran, India, and North Africa. Consequently, this work can be considered the final comprehensive outcome of al-Zabidi's many connections and philological writings for his shaykhs. By this, he made a collection of *turuq* for himself, which appears to be almost unique in the history of Sufism.[133]

In addition, in his *Mu'jam*, al-Zabidi records four Sufi orders: Uwaysiyya, the Ahmadiyya, the Qadiriyya, and the Naqshbandiyya. In this collection, the biographies of Sufis are written with strong impressions of brotherhood and love,

[132] Reichmuth, *The World of Murtada Al-Zabidi (1732-91),* 49; Reichmuth, "Murtaḍā Al-Zabīdī and His Role in 18th Century Sufism," 390.
[133] Reichmuth, *The World of Murtada Al-Zabidi (1732-91),* 49-50; Reichmuth, "Murtaḍā Al-Zabīdī and His Role in 18th Century Sufism," 392-93.

which can be seen in almost half of the biographies. It reflects the merge of his relations with his Sufi connections. For example, his connection with the Sufi circles of the Nile Delta grew with Ahmad ibn 'Isa al-Khaliji. He was a Sufi sayyid initiated to the Ahmadiyya and Rifa'iyya. He was also initiated to Naqshbandiyya by al-Zabidi. Often, al-Zabidi visited al-Khaliji and also met in Tanta. They went to other Sufi *dargahs* and attended poetic meetings. About him, al-Zabidi wrote that he could not find another person similar to him as a great friend in practicing the rituals and principles of Sufism in Egypt. These recordings reveal al-Zabidi's Sufi relationships, particularly displayed in the *Mu'jam*.[134]

This broader biographical pattern in the *Muʿjam* also supports the view that al-Zabidi's connection with Sufism was both practical and textual. In this regard, Ahmet Eşer studied the biographical entries in al-Zabidi's *Muʿjam* and classified them based on the professions and roles of the individuals. According to his analysis, although the majority were jurists and literary scholars, a significant number about seventy-five figures were described with Sufi titles such as saint (*wali*), disciple (*murid*), ascetic (*zahid*), ecstatic (*majdhub*), or *shaykh*. This clearly reflects al-Zabidi's deep interest in Sufism and his strong connections with Sufi figures. This tendency can also be seen in his use of expressions in the *albasat al-khirqa* form, where he reports giving the Sufi cloak to certain individuals. Furthermore, he includes shaykhs from several Sufi paths such as the Khalwatiyya, Isawiyya, Bakriyya, Wafa'iyya, Qadiriyya, Uwaysiyya, and Burhaniyya in his *Muʿjam*, showing the wide range of his Sufi affiliations.[135]

Furthermore, al-Zabidi's biographical collection also reflects regional contrasts according to Sufi subjects. The Central Maghreb (Algeria, Tunisia, and Tripolitana), with 42.2%, and the Nile Delta, with 41.6%, show up as regions with the highest Sufi subjects. On the other hand, Cairo had a lower amount with

[134] Reichmuth, "Murtaḍā Al-Zabīdī and His Role in 18th Century Sufism," 391; Reichmuth, *The World of Murtada Al-Zabidi (1732-91),* 196-197.
[135] Eşer, "İlmi Biyografi Kaynağı Olarak Murtażâ Ez-Zebîdî'nin El-Mu'Cemü'l- Muḫtaṣ'ı [Al-Muʿjam Al-Muḫtaṣ Of Murtaḍā Al-Zabīdī As A Scientific Biographical Resource]," 1217.

33.9%, continued by Upper Egypt with 26.5% and Morocco with 25.1%, including Ottoman Anatolia, and beyond with 29.8%. This analysis can put Sufism at the top position in terms of the other subjects and interests in al-Zabidi's network. His connection with Sufism mostly coincided with his hadith transmission, mysticism, and writings. Yet, Sufism stayed separate from religious fields like fiqh and theology. Therefore, this analysis may introduce the position of Sufism according to scholarships that run in al-Zabidi's connections, including his academic and social networks.[136]

Based on these broad Sufi connections, his role went beyond simple transmission or companionship. He contributed to the rethinking of Sufism in his time. His commentary on al-Ghazali's *Ihya'* played a role in shifting Sufi ideas away from the metaphysical framework of Ibn al-Arabi and toward a more disciplined, *shari'a* centered understanding. In his intellectual and spiritual path, he brought together different Sufi trends. These included the Neo-Sufism of Shah Wali Allah in India, the Naqshbandi ideas that developed in both India and the Arabian Peninsula, and the Khalwatiyya-based revivalist spirit in the eastern Mediterranean.[137]

Overall, his Sufi involvement emerges not as institutional ambition but as a quiet commitment to spiritual discipline. The decision not to found his own order may reflect a deliberate distancing from authority structures in favor of a more inward path. This approach offers insight into how sincerity and humility could define Sufi leadership without formal titles.

2.5 Al-Zabidi as a Universal Publisher

According to Yıldırım, al-Zabidi's scholarly life was both rich and dynamic, shaped by his frequent travels and constant engagement in the transmission of knowledge. His name appears repeatedly throughout Abd al-

[136] Reichmuth, "Murtaḍā Al-Zabīdī and His Role in 18th Century Sufism," 391-92; Reichmuth, *The World of Murtada Al-Zabidi (1732-91)*, 196-209.
[137] Voll, *Islam: Continuity And Change In The Modern World*, 71.

Hayy Kattani's *Fihris al-Faharis*, often through his teachers or students, indicating the extent of his scholarly network.[138]

Reichmuth states that, al-Zabidi's writings were mainly written for particular people according to their request, at whose request they were arranged, or to whom they were committed. Receivers are mostly recalled in the introductions to his writings. More detailed information about them can be found in the biographical entries of *Mu'jam*, where he usually gave details of his literary connections. Some titles of missing works indicate they were written in response to questions from visitors or as gifts for students and friends. This is noticeable from titles like *Injaz al-hajah al-massa*, *Injaz W'ad al-Sa'il*, and *Kawtari al-nab' li-fatan jawhari al-tab'*.[139]

The early stages of his literary oeuvre give significant details about his two main audiences: his friends and people of high-ranking status. He used his works to fasten his connections with scholars and colleagues while he worked on literary structures to boost his status by devoting works to leading people. This double procedure carried on all his life, even during his time of relative seclusion. His literary activities stayed unshakeable on central scholarly authority, poetic exchanges, and continuously increasing sessions with *sanads* and *ijazat* that he edited with growing worldliness. During the 1170s/1756-1766 and 1180s/1767-1776, al-Zabidi increased the span of his writings and the range of his spectators.

In addition to his own writings, he also worked on editing the sanad collection that belonged to his close companion and teacher, Abd al-Rahman al-Aydarus. He produced interpretations of well-known Sufi litanies, such as Sidi Abul Hasan al-Shadhili's *Hizb al-Bahr*, and authored works on spiritual discipline and Sufi guidance. These works were modified by and served the Sufi orders of Cairo and the Egyptian regions. He also arranged his exclusive collection of Sufi *silsilas*, *Iqd al-Jawhar* and his connection with the Wafa'iyya order caused a philological analysis of their *kunya* names and their impact.

[138] Yıldırım, "Muhammed Murtazâ Ez-Zebîdî," 33.
[139] Reichmuth, *The World of Murtada Al-Zabidi (1732-91)*, 87-88.

Moreover, al-Zabidi's connections increased with the Ottoman people in Egypt. He wrote texts for his friend 'Ali ibn 'Abdallah Efendi Dirwis, an Ottoman calligrapher and the leader of the archers' guild. His connections were also broadened to Istanbul and included a *khalifa* of the Naqshbandiyya *tekke* in Eyüp. In the Eyüp tekke, he wrote a *taqriz* for one of his Sufi poems. This poem included a poetic *silsila* that reflected the lineage of the Sufi order.[140] In addition to this, his works such as the *ijaza* he gave to Sultan Abdülhamid I in 1193/1779 show his close relationship with important scholars and statesmen of the Ottoman Empire.[141] Al-Zabidi 's writings for the members of the Ottoman nobles in Cairo and Istanbul are not limited to only *ijazat*. He discussed a wide range of topics, including calligraphy, archery, Persian grammar, and hadith. He also examined unusual subjects, such as hadith reports involving demons and ideas about whether the Ottoman Empire would survive after the appearance of the Mahdi.

Additionally, Al-Zabidi wrote a more fabulous essential work, a justification of the Hanafi *madhab 'Uqud al-Jawahir al-Munifa*. It was written at the submission of the *ra'is al-kuttab* and later vizier of the Beylik Constantine, which can be considered in his writings to the Ottoman rulers. This writing was a reply to an extraordinary concern between administrative leaders regarding the state of Ottoman Empire's official *mathab*.[142]

Other than being an astonishing writer, it is evident that al-Zabidi created a market between friendship and patronage. Reichmuth states that the commercial feature of his work is not easy to detect specifically, but it is beyond doubt that he assembled extensive wealth over his career. For example, Muhammad Bey Abu Dahab gave him 100,000 silver dirhams in return for the first copy of *Taj al-'Arus*. This can be considered exceptional, but it is possible that other notables paid generously for the copies of his lexicon. Al-Zabidi advertised his publications through strategic ways, like publicly celebrating the completion of the first part of the *Taj*, obtaining *taqariz* and the announcing the first volume

[140] Ibid., 89-90.
[141] Ibid., 90; Yıldırım, "Muhammed Murtazâ Ez-Zebîdî," 27-28.
[142] Reichmuth, *The World of Murtada Al-Zabidi (1732-91),* 90.

of *ithaf* in a letter to Sulayman al-Ahdal, all of which pointed to encourage a request.

Furthermore, he collected many unique manuscripts on different subjects, and these played a key role in his broad publishing activities. His *Mu'jam* noted that he received rare books and provided them to students or found them for visitors and friends. For instance, a copy of the *Qamus* commentary by his Medinese teacher, Ibn al-Tayyib al-Fasi, was commissioned and bought by a noble visitor from Darfur.[143] Yıldırım also refers to the testimony of his contemporary, al-Hafiz Ibn Abd al-Salam, who described al-Zabidi as someone who acquired every book he encountered, either by purchasing or commissioning copies, and even borrowed books from distant regions. Such remarks point to his deep passion for knowledge. Furthermore, the support and generosity he received from notable figures provided him with the financial means to pursue learning without interruption.[144]

Moreover, Reichmuth records that, al-Zabidi sent some rare books to a well-known Sufi in Tunis many times. He also provided a North African scholar in Cairo with rare books of the Maliki School, who was writing an extensive *hashiya* on an outstanding Maliki commentary. No prices are mentioned but a large-scale network of contact is necessary for these trading and it is beyond belief these happened without any gift or payment.

It is known that al-Zabidi's autographs were highly popular. As al-Jabarti mentioned, his Moroccan visitors often presented gifts to him, trading for even small pieces of his handwritten work. Many visitors and students, including Jabarti, personally copied his writings. One of his students worked as a full-time copyist and reproduced sections of the *Taj*.[145] As Koçak reports, two scribes prepared a version of al-Zabidi's Sufi texts in Ankara: Isma'il Zayn al-Din al-Zinnari and Abd al-Mun'im Saraf al-Minyatayni, during the years 1204–1205 (1790–1791). In 1789, the second scribe also produced a well-prepared version of

[143] Reichmuth, *The World of Murtada Al-Zabidi (1732-91)*, 91.
[144] Yıldırım, "Muhammed Murtazâ Ez-Zebîdî," 33.
[145] Reichmuth, *The World of Murtada Al-Zabidi (1732-91)*, 91.

al-Zabidi's second Arabic dictionary, the *Takmila*.[146] These instances prove that al-Zabidi had a well-structured copying and publishing system, which broadened his teaching. It also overshadowed what the other scholars in Cairo could manage to produce. His friends and colleagues carried his letters and books on their journeys, as revealed by his letter to Sulayman al-Ahdal. The pilgrimage movement doubtlessly performed as a significant communication method between al-Zabidi and his students, visitors, customers through different regions.[147]

This wide circulation of his works and the appreciation shown for even small pieces of his handwriting continued after his death. As Suat Yıldırım mentions, when al-Zabidi passed away, his personal library was first valued at twenty thousand. However, the Turkish Sultan found this unfair, saying, "This is an injustice," and raised the value to seventy thousand. He then dedicated the entire collection as a waqf for students of religious sciences in Egypt.[148] This shows not only the material worth of his library but also how highly his scholarly legacy was regarded.

On the other hand, according to Stefan Reichmuth, many of al-Zabidi's writings were familiar works created to meet specific requests of a broad audience, including friends, students, families, and the general people. His collection of works indicates short informative writings and verses on grammar, hadith, and usul al-fiqh including expositions on current discussions like the lineage of the Prophet's parents, the questions about coffee, tobacco, and the legitimacy of Sufi *sama'*. His writings displayed the interests of his audience, which were on philology, genealogy, Sufi *sanads*, hadith, and arranged collections of prayers. These works formed systematic collections of common traditional materials, supplemented by the wide range of sources for collecting rare books. Nonetheless, it is interesting that the textbooks and commentaries

[146] Koçak, "Al-Murtaza al-Zabidi ve ʿİkd al-Cavhar al-Samın'i" introduction, 22, 26, 27, 29, 31, 33, 35, 37, 42; Reichmuth, *The World of Murtada Al-Zabidi (1732-91),* 91-92.
[147] Reichmuth, *The World of Murtada Al-Zabidi (1732-91),* 92.
[148]Yıldırım, "Muhammed Murtazâ Ez-Zebîdî," 32; citing *Tadhkirat al-Muḥsinīn* in *Fihris al-Faharis*, vol. 1, p. 411.

used in Al-Azhar and other institutions are mostly not present in his titles or sources. He did not write textbooks, but made his own unique charming publication market, including hadith scholarship with Sufi influences and an extensive range of philological and genealogical topics.[149]

Al-Zabidi's dedication to the collection and circulation of rare works highlights a sense of guardianship over the intellectual heritage of his time. His efforts to preserve and share knowledge across regions and generations represent a valuable contribution to the continuity of Islamic learning in the pre-print era.

2.5.1 His Work

During his life, al-Zabidi had written over two hundred titled works, varying from many volumes to short writings of few pages or even a single page. His involvement in periodic poetry was also remarkable. In addition, he provided many untitled *ijazat* permissions of different lengths and details laid out through various regions. Over three hundred of these works are in reference and Arabic manuscript collections within and beyond the Muslim world. As more private and public manuscript collections in the Middle East, North Africa, and other regions become reachable to researchers, the amount of his works is expected to increase.

Al-Zabidi's collection of manuscripts can be found in many libraries, including Cairo, Medina, Leiden, Princeton, Berlin, Istanbul, Ankara, Rabat, Damascus, and Lucknow. Dar al-Kutub Library in Cairo has the most known collection of al-Zabidi's manuscripts. Some of his significant autographs, including *Mu'jam Muktass*, turned out to be in the library of Shaykh al-Islam Ahmed Arif Hikmet (d. 1270/1854) in Medina, which is now part of the University Library. Another significant collection of al-Zabidi's manuscripts in Princeton, Leiden, and Berlin came to these places through scholars from Medina

[149] Reichmuth, *The World of Murtada Al-Zabidi (1732-91),* 91-92; As a genealogist, he also has an unfinished commentary on a significant genealogical work of al-Nagafi's al-Musaggar al-Kassaf. For detail see: Stefan Reichmuth, "The Infinite Task of Genealogy: Some Notes and Observations on Murtaḍà al-Zabīdī (d. 1205/1791) as a Commentator of al-ʿAmīdī al-Nağafī and His al-Mušağğar al-Kaššāf (Late 9th/15th-Early 10th/16th Century)," *Oriente Moderno 103* 1 (2023): 83–113, https://doi.org/10.1163/22138617-12340311.

who lived in Cairo in the late nineteenth century. Amin b. Hasan al-Hulwani al-Madani (d. 1316/1898) is an example of these scholars who was a friend of the Swedish Arabist, Count Carlo Landberg. In 1883, he brought his library to Holland. Brill bought it and later sold different parts to institutions in Berlin, Leiden, and Princeton. He also collected many manuscripts that were most likely received in Egypt; it is possible that some of al-Zabidi's autographs were in them. Several of his original manuscripts still exist today. Some are in the Yahuda collection at Princeton, some in the Süleymaniye Library in Istanbul, and others in private libraries. For example, ʻAbd al-Hayy al-Kattani added a few *ijazat* to his personal archive. More of al-Zabidi's manuscripts in other collections are expected to be found with further research.

Al-Zabidi arranged numerous lists of his writings for some autobiographical documents, making reconstruction of his works easier. The most substantial of these are placed in his *ijazat* for Muhammad Sa'id ibn al-Suwaydi in 1194 (1780) and Muhammad ibn Isma'il al-Rab'i 1195 (1781) and a letter to his master Sulayman al-Ahdal in Zabid 1193/1779-1195/1781. These lists' time coincides with the height of his career in Egypt. Moreover, apart from *Taj al'-Arus*, Muhammad ibn ʻAbd al-Salam al-Nasiri (d. 1239/1823) collected a list of 123 of al-Zabidi's writings in his *Rihla* when he stayed in Cairo 1196-1197/1782-1783. His list contains some little-known works that carry the same value as those found in al-Zabidi's collections.

Al-Zabidi mainly referenced his works in his lexicon, *Taj al-ʻArus*, and arranged titles by Sallas in a work list. If al-Zabidi did not mention them, many of these titles would not exist now because they are undetectable. This shows his efforts to keep his reputation as a scholar. Additionally, some references to his writings can be found in his commentary on Ghazali's *Ihya*.

Furthermore, al-Zabidi wrote *Safinat al-Najat*, a capacious notebook he started in 1182/1769. This notebook is another precious document for researching al-Zabidi's oeuvre, which includes drafts of texts and poems and genealogical notes, which proves the broadness of his academic activity. For instance, on a page, he noted soap prices in Damietta besides the *wird* of the

Naqshbandiyya order and his *sanad* for it. Some parts of this notebook are distinctive; at the same time, others are progressed into works like *Mu'jam*. This reflects the different stages of his writing process for scholars.

On the other hand, one difficulty in reconstructing al-Zabidi's works is the many different kinds of titles indicated in some of his works. Occasionally, he wrote two or more titles for the same work in his lists and autographs. For example, his writing on the Prophet's maternal lineage came up with three variants: *al-'Iqd al-Munazzam fi Dhikr Ummahat al-Nabi al-Mukarram, 'Iqd al-Juman al-Muntazam fi Dhikr Ummahat al-Nabi al-Mukarram,* and *al-'Iqd al-Munazzam fi Ummahat al-Naba Salla Allahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam*. His tobacco writing also appeared as *Hadiyyat al-Ikhwan fi Shajarat al-Dukhkhan* and *Tuḥfat al-Irwan fi Ḥukm al-Dukhkhan*. His work on pre-Islamic *maysir* game titled *Naswat al-Irtiyaḥ fi Bayan Haqiqat al-Maysir wa-l-Gidah* in its manuscript, but he mentions it in *Mu'jam as Nafḥat al-Manṣur fi l-Azlan wa-Suwar Aysar al-Juzur*. Mostly, the title differentiations take place in his genealogical works of Arab nations, which are not available but exist in *Taj al-'Arus* with a variety of names: *al-Musajjarat, Musajjar al-Ansab, Sajar al-Ansab,* and *Kitab Ansab al-'Arab*. This complication seems to be an effect of al-Zabidi remembering the titles from his mind when arranging the lists or renaming them after editing. In some issues, whether titles show different versions of a work or stages in its development is obscure.

After al-Zabidi passed away, another reliable list of his works was arranged by al-Jabarti. He had access to many of his manuscripts. After Sıddıq Hasan Khan al-Qannawji (d. 1307/1890), the Nawwab of Bhobal embraced al-Jabarti's list into *Abjad al-'Ulum*.[150] Apart from his commentaries on *Taj al-'Arus* and *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*, al-Jabarti mentioned many works of him. Al-Zabidi wrote a wide variety of books that cover hadith, jurisprudence, Sufism, Quranic explanation, and historical reports. However, besides what al-Jabarti mentioned in his chronicle, al-Zabidi wrote more than these. Al-Zabidi cited some of his

[150] Reichmuth, *The World of Murtada Al-Zabidi (1732-91),* 85-87; Muḥammad Sıddıq Ḥasan Al-Qannawji, *Abjad Al-Ulum* (al-Maktabah al-Quddusiyah, 1983).

writings, which are still in copies traced in different manuscript collections. Unfortunately, most of his writings are only known by their titles.[151]

Besides al-Jabarti, Abd al-Hayy al-Kattani (d. 1962) arranged new sources on al-Zabidi's life and works in the early twentieth century. He compiled them in *Fihris al-Faharis*, significantly from the Magrib. He was the first scholar to use manuscripts efficiently, so they are maintained in Medina.[152] In addition to Kattani's later efforts, Yıldırım notes that even during al-Zabidi's own lifetime or shortly thereafter, several scholars wrote about his life and intellectual activity. For example, al-Hafiz Ibn 'Abd al-Salam al-Nami wrote around ten pages about him in his *Rihla*. Other scholars such as the hadith scholar al-Kazbari of Damascus, 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-Rasul al-Makki from Mecca, and al-Qadi Ibn al-Hajj also included biographical entries on al-Zabidi in their works. Moreover, his student Abu Ras al-Mu'askari from Algeria wrote *al-Sayl al-Muntadif fi Asanid al-Shaykh Murtada,* which lists al-Zabidi's *isnads*. Another student, al-Shihab Ahmad ibn 'Abdullah, included him in '*Uqud al-Juman*. Although many of these sources remain unpublished, they show the high respect and recognition al-Zabidi received. Kattani even mentioned that he intended to write a separate and full biography of him, as al-Zabidi was one of his most important sources in *Fihris al-Faharis*.[153]

The printed editions of *Taj, Tahmila*, and other writings by al-Zabidi depended on the knowledge given by al-Jabarti, Siddiq Hasan Khan, and al-Kattani. References to manuscript catalogs were barely added. Scholars have largely overlooked the *ijazat* for Ibn al-Suwaydi, even though it was published in Damascus in 1928. Carl Brockelmann, in his introduction on Zabidi in *Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur*, was the first researcher to use several manuscript catalogs available to him, building on the lists of al-Jabarti and al-Kattani. Hashim Taha Sallas made an outstanding upgrade to al-Zabidi's works with his monograph on *Taj al-'Arus*, published in Baghdad in 1401/1981. He prepared the

[151] Reichmuth, *The World of Murtada Al-Zabidi (1732-91),* xii.
[152] Reichmuth, *The World of Murtada Al-Zabidi (1732-91),* 87; Kattani, *Fihris Al-Fahāris,* 1:527-543.
[153] Yıldırım, "Muhammed Murtazâ Ez-Zebîdî," 32-33.

most extensive work on al-Zabidi's writings, organizing and commenting on them. His list connects al-Zabidi's own references, the *Taj al-'Arus,* later sources, and entries from original manuscript catalogs. Unfortunately, Sallas did not manage to examine manuscript catalogs personally. Moreover, Rukhsana Nikhat Lari, who wrote a monograph in al-Zabidi, made a close correspondence. It was published in Lucknow in 1990 and included references from Indian library catalogs. At the same time, Abid Yaşar Koçak made a significant contribution by writing a thesis on *Iqd al-Jawhar* in Istanbul in 1986. He examined and described various unique manuscripts of al-Zabidi's writings maintained in Türk Tarih Kurumu in Ankara and several manuscripts kept in Medina.[154]

Regardless of his bond to traditional Islamic and Arabic scholarship materials, some of al-Zabidi's works extend for their excellent span and go beyond the standard academic style. Reichmuth wrote these remarkable works in a list format to point out their significance in his study:

Reichmuth put al-Zabidi's *Alfiyyat al-sanad*, his *urjuza* of 1500 verses, at the top of the list. It is the best and shortest chain of hadith transmission at his time, including brief accounts of his teachers and transmitter. He also added his commentary to his work. It is distinctive writing of a verified *ijaza* that remains a deep study.[155]

Another work by al-Zabidi is *'Iqd al-jawhar al-tamin fi'l-dikr wa-turuq al-ilbas wa-l-talqin*, which he wrote in response to a request from his friend Abu'l-Hama'il 'Ali b. Ahmad al-Muwajjih. His friend had asked him to clarify the conditions and etiquette of *dhikr*, as well as the proper procedures for giving the Sufi cloak (*khirqa*), spiritual initiation, and *talqin* (instruction in remembrance). Al-Zabidi

[154] Reichmuth, *The World of Murtada Al-Zabidi (1732-91),* 88; Carl Brockelmann, *Geschichte Der Arabischen Litteratur*, 2:287; Abid Yaşar Koçak, "Al-Murtaza al-Zabidi ve ʿİkd al-Cavhar al-Samın'i" (PhD. diss., Istanbul University, 1986), introduction, 20-43; Recent theses about Murtada al-Zabidi in Turkey: Cemal Abdullah Aydın, "Muhammed Murteza Ez-Zebidi'nin Tacu'l-Arus Min Cevahiri'l-Kamus Isimli Eserindeki Hadislerin Tahric ve Değerlendirilmesi (Elif Maddesi)" (master's thesis, Marmara University, 2002); Recep Önal, "Muhammed Murtazâ Ez-Zebîdî'nin Hayatı, Eserleri Ve Nübüvvet Anlayışı" (master's thesis, Sakarya University, 2007); Zeynep Şeker, "Zebidi'nin İhya Yorumu (Kitabü Kava'idi'l-'Akaid 'in Uluhiyyet Bahisleri Bağlamında)" (master's thesis, Sakarya University, 2015).

[155] Reichmuth, *The World of Murtada Al-Zabidi (1732-91),* 92-93.

completed the work in 1768.[156] It also provides a report on 128 Sufi orders and their founders, as well as al-Zabidi's chains of transmission for them, which is a great collection of a specific kind of Sufi historiography.[157]

In *Lugat al-la'ali al-mutawatir*, he gathered 71 *mutawatir* hadith and traced each one back to at least ten Companions of the Prophet. This work stands out as one of the most detailed contributions to hadith scholarship. As mentioned earlier, *Mu'jam al-Muktass*, an unfinished study, contains over 600 biographies composed during the last years of his life. It includes teachers and hadith scholars, Sufis, poets, friends, and students throughout the Islamic world. It includes travel documents, poetry, and quotations, which gives it a significant mixture of biography, autobiography, and anthology.

Another study is his *Taj al-'Arus,* the most comprehensive Arabic lexicon ever written. Al-Zabidi incorporated a commentary on the last lexicon and a merging of various sources into his work, extending the borders of its genre. It is still his famous work.

Two known manuscript copies of this work exist. One is preserved in the Turkish Historical Society Library (Türk Tarih Kurumu Kütüphanesi) in the section of the late Muhammad Tanci, consisting of 58 folios bound in a single volume. The other copy is located in Medina, in the Shaykh al-Islam Arif Hikmet Library, catalogued under number 260/55.

Al-Zabidi also wrote a valuable genealogical work on the Ayyubid dynasty. It is still the briefest and most complete work in Arabic historiography. He also wrote about the Prophet's female ancestors and the Abbasid caliphs in Egypt.

A history of Arabic calligraphy, his *Hikmat al-israq* is distinctive in uniting transmission from Abbasid and Maluk calligraphy to the Ottoman tradition from the 16th century ahead. This mixture seems to have not been studied in Arabic

[156] Önal and Akkuş, "Muhammed Murtaza Ez-Zebidi'nin Hayatı ve İlmi Kişiliği," 307.
[157] Reichmuth, *The World of Murtada Al-Zabidi (1732-91),* 93.

studies before. The work was probably dedicated to one of the local Ottoman calligraphers in Egypt.

In addition, al-Zabidi had collections of contemporary poetry written in his *Mu'jam*. Al-Jabarti included these mostly in *Aja'ib*, effectively presenting the poetic history of Arabic literature of the eighteenth century.

He wrote *Uqud al-Jawahir al-Munifa*, a unique defense of the Hanafi madhab. This argument is uncommonly seen within Hanafi jurisprudence.

Another major work, *Ithaf al-sada al-Muttaqin*, remains the only comprehensive commentary on al-Ghazali's *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*. In fact, it is much more than an ordinary commentary, containing a wide analysis of al-Ghazali's hadith sources, including substantial discussions on theology, medicine, law, and other sciences. It is actually a valuable theological encyclopedia similar in range to *Taj al-'Arus*.[158] Almost all biographical and *tabaqat* works that mention al-Zabidi's life refer to this commentary. He worked on it for eleven years without pause and completed it in 1201/1786 in ten large volumes. It became one of the defining achievements of his career. The complete work was first printed in Fez between 1301 and 1304 (1883–1886) in thirteen volumes. A separate Cairo edition was published in 1311 (1893) at the Meymaniyya Press in ten large volumes. A more recent and scholarly edition was prepared by Muhammad 'Ali Baydawi and printed in Beirut in 2002 in fourteen volumes. Today, manuscript copies of the first and second volumes are preserved at the Süleymaniye Library in Istanbul, under catalog number 330. In addition, a Turkish translation and commentary based on this work was prepared by Yusuf Ahmed Sidki in the 19th century. Titled *Siyeru Umm al-Muwahhidin Tercümesi ve Şerhu Ihya 'Ulum al-Din*, this nine-volume work is kept in the Istanbul University Library.[159]

Other than these works of al-Zabidi, Reichmuth has most recently written works that display some of the characteristics of his unique scholarly style.[160] Not only this, but he also wrote about al-Zabidi's life and networks in rich detail in

[158] Reichmuth, *The World of Murtada Al-Zabidi (1732-91)*, 92-94.
[159] Önal and Akkuş, "Muhammed Murtaza Ez-Zebidi'nin Hayatı ve İlmi Kişiliği," 306.
[160] Reichmuth, *The World of Murtada Al-Zabidi (1732-91)*, 94.

his book. In addition, Reichmuth listed al-Zabidi's 225 writings, 36 other poems, and 34 other ijazat in alphabetical order, based on remaining manuscripts, printed editions, and different catalogs, and references cited by al-Zabidi himself and scholars. Reichmuth only included *ijazat* in his list, which exists in manuscript or publication form or witnessed by al-Kattani. Even though al-Zabidi mentions in his *Mu'jam* many more *ijazat* he had written, Reichmuth did not include them in his list. These lists contain more than the studies of al-Jabarti, Brockelmann, Sallas, Koçak, Larch, Önal, Akkuş, Yıldırım and other scholars by establishing and describing many available works. He researched Cairo manuscripts, including photocopies, microfilms, and digital copies in Berlin, Leiden, Princeton, Medina, and Istanbul. Overall, it seems many more of al-Zabidi's work can be found through further research, repaired cataloging, and the greater accessibility to manuscript collections in the Middle East and North Africa.[161]

Overall, this chapter offers a focused analysis of Murtada al-Zabidi's life and Sufi identity through the detailed account presented by al-Jabarti. While many previous studies have emphasized al-Zabidi's linguistic works and hadith scholarship, this chapter highlights his deep involvement in various Sufi orders and his wide spiritual network across India, Yemen, the Hijaz, and Egypt. By examining his relationships with key Sufi figures, his role in the transmission of Sufi knowledge, and his position within the broader intellectual and social landscape of the 18th century, this study brings a new perspective to his scholarly identity. It also draws attention to the way al-Jabarti both praised and criticized him at the same time, offering insight into how Sufi authority was shaped, questioned, and recorded during the period.

[161] Ibid., 98.

CHAPTER 3: SHAYKH AL-AZHAR ʿABD ALLAH AL-SHARQAWI

3.1 His Life

In *Aja'ib al-Athar*, al-Jabarti recorded another significant biography of al-Sharqawi. He documented his name as Shaykh Abdallah ibn Hijazi ibn Ibrahim al-Shafi'i al-Azhari, but he is mainly known as al-Sharqawi. Thus, in this chapter, his name, al-Sharqawi, will be used, and his life, al-Jabarti's criticism towards him, Sufism in his life, and his works will be examined.

Al-Sharqawi was famous as one of his time's most recognized scholars, jurists, and grammarians. He was honored with the title Shaykh al-Islam and Shaykh al-Azhar. He was born around 1150 (1737-38) in Tawila in the Sharqiyya Bilbays region close to al-Qurayn. When he was growing up in al-Qurayn, he memorized the Qur'an. He studied in Madrasat al-Sinaniyya and Madrasat al-Taybarsiyya, then registered to al-Azhar.

He studied with notable scholars like Muhammad al-Malawi, al-Jawhari, Ali b. Ahmad el-Adevi, Muhammad al-Hifni and his brother Yusuf, al-Damanhuri, al-Bulaydi, 'Atiyya al-Ajhuri, Muhammad al-Fasi, 'Ali al-Mansafisi (al-Sa'idi), and 'Umar al-Tahlawi. He solely studied the Muwatta' with 'Ali ibn al-'Arabi, known as al-Saggat.

At first, he was impoverished, but his colleagues gave him charitable support. After a while, his recognition increased and brought him financial strength. Some Syrian merchants and others gave him charity and gifts. Al-Jabarti stated that he dressed well, parallel to his financial status, and his turban grew. Recording this detail displays al-Jabarti's criticism towards al-Sharqawi as it happened when he wrote al-Zabidi's biography.[162]

Al-Sharqawi initiated the Khalwatiyya order and became a disciple of Muhammad al-Hifni. After his death, he continued with Shaykh Mahmud al-Kurdi. After al-Kurdi passed away, al-Sharqawi became his successor. Some of

[162] Al-Jabarti, *Abd Al-Rahmann al-Jabarti's History of Egypt,* 4: 221; Hilal Görgün, "ŞERKĀVÎ," in *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (TDV İslâm Araştırmaları Merkezi, 2010), 11-12.

his students and colleagues came to him every night to perform *dhikr* together. Some days, he gave them food, and when there was a funeral or religious event, they visited houses to chant, pray, and recite the Quran. Their chanting words included "Help, o Bakri," "Help, o Hifni," and "Help, o Sharqawi." After the occasions, they received meals and money.

Finally, some of his attendants helped him buy a house in the Kitama Quarter called al-'Ayniya.[163] Al-Sharqawi's status rose with his new position as Shaykh al-Azhar between 1793 and 1812 after Shaykh Ahmad al-'Arusi died.[164] Al-Jabarti mentions his turban again, stating that it has become massive. However, he had an opponent for the position of Shaykh al-Azhar named Shaykh al-Sawi. One day, when al-Sawi was teaching at Salahiya Madrasa, which was one of the responsibilities of a shaykh al-Azhar, al-Sharqawi got the position of his new job. But al-Sawi was one of al-'Arusi's best students, and he had previously appointed him to teach at the Madrasa. Eventually, they agreed, and al-Sharqawi accepted the position of Shaykh al-Azhar in the office while al-Sawi continued to teach in the Madrasa.[165]

However, al-Sharqawi's supporters encouraged him to take the position of al-Sawi. He also got the support of Shaykh Muhammad ibn al-Jawhari and Ayyub Bey al-Daftardar. With his supporters, he went to the Madrasa and taught a lesson. Al-Sawi disfavoured that and consulted with his clever friends like Shaykh Badawi al-Haytami and his supporters. Al-Sawi went to Ridwan, the *katkhuda* of Ibrahim Bey al-Kabir, and asked for his help, owing him money. Ridwan *Katkhuda* went to al-Sharqawi and convinced him. The next day, they gathered in al-Sharqawi's house, including al-Sawi and both sides' supporters. Al-Sharqawi announced that teaching in the Madrasa belongs to him, whereas he is giving it to al-Sawi. In return, al-Sawi criticized him. He continued to teach in Madrasa until he died, and after that, al-Sharqawi took over without any debate. After some time, he requested the fees from the tomb al-Shafi'i's

[163] Al-Jabarti, *Abd Al-Rahmann al-Jabarti's History of Egypt,* 4: 222.
[164] Winter, *Egyptian Society Under Ottoman Rule, 1517-1798*, 141.
[165] Al-Jabarti, *Abd Al-Rahmann al-Jabarti's History of Egypt,* 4: 222.

guardians near the Madrasa. But they denied it. He replied to them with unpleasant words. These unlikable events induced his short-term abolition from public jobs until the pasha forgave him. After this, he did not teach again, and Shaykh Muhammad al-Shubrawini was appointed to his position.[166]

Once, people suffered under the oppressive taxation policies inflicted by Mamluk leaders Ibrahim and Murad Bey. A large group of commission members from Sharqiyya journeyed to Cairo to seek al-Sharqawi's assistance, as he was the tax collector *multazim* in their region. In 1794, he led major protests in Cairo against new taxes that placed heavy pressure on rural areas and damaged his own tax farms. With the help of other scholars, he persuaded Murad Bey to sign a tax reform agreement in 1209 (1795). According to Lars Bjørneboe, this widely known incident displays the social disruption of that time, which did not mean to declare that the *ulama* moderated between the ruling class and public opponents. By contrast, this incident exemplifies the interests of al-Sharqawi personally. This example shows how the *ulama* acted as part of the ruling class and gained public support through their influence.[167]

During the French occupation of Egypt in 1213 (1798), al-Sharqawi and other well-known scholars left Cairo. Yet, they came back after Napoleon guaranteed the safety of the religious scholars. Acknowledging the importance of the socio-political impact held by the *ulama*, Napoleon desired to accomplish their help alongside his occupation of Egypt. To gain their favor and support in a political step, he asked them and granted them complete representation in the *Diwan*. Among the granted scholars was al-Sharqawi, who was appointed president of the council on several occasions by Napoleon and supported moderate Muslim movements.

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[166] Al-Jabarti, *Abd Al-Rahmann al-Jabarti's History of Egypt*, 4: 222.

[167] Hilal Görgün, "ŞERKĀVÎ," 12; Bjøerneboe, *In Search of the True Political Position of the 'Ulama*, 65; Afaf Lutfi Al-Sayyid Marsot, "The Political and Economic Functions of the 'Ulama' in the 18th Century," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 16, 1 (1973): 137, https://doi.org/10.1163/156852073X00085; Scharfe, "Muslim Scholars and the Public Sphere in Mehmed Ali Pasha's Egypt, 1801-1841," 24-26.

Al-Sharqawi benefited from the modern scientific research and academic resources were made accessible to him by the *Institut Français* while trying to help release Egypt from the French occupation. Although Napoleon outwardly upheld the principles of equality, liberty, and fraternity, these principles had no impact on the scholars. Even though the French appointed him to this position, he usually disagreed with Napoleon and did not stay away from indicating his opposition. Significantly, with the guidance of al-Sharqawi, *ulama's* main and firm affair was freeing their homeland from the French. [168]

One day, the scholars of the *diwan* came together and visited the head of the *diwan*. After that, they were all invited to meet with the commander-in-chief, the commander in chief of the French. Al-Sharqawi also attended this meeting with others. After they arrived and sat for a while, the commander-in-chief brought a ceremonial garment made of three colored pieces, red, white, and blue, which symbolized the French national colors. He proceeded toward al-Sharqawi and put it over his shoulders to signify approval. Yet, al-Sharqawi suddenly removed the garment, put it on the ground, and politely refused the gesture. The interpreter tried encouraging the scholars by saying this garment was a sign of friendship with the commander-in-chief. Its purpose was to honor and glorify the scholars, leading them to get more admiration and respect from soldiers and the public. The scholars replied that this would make them lose their value and reliability from the viewpoint of Muslims. The refusal displeased the commander-in-chief significantly with al-Sharqawi. He declared him an inappropriate figure for leadership, including similar expressions in French.[169]

On the other hand, Al-Jabarti states that this career gave him the most substantial wealth from the fees awarded for his job and control issues for the

[168] Hilal Görgün, "ŞERKĀVÎ," 12; S.M. Yunus Gilani, "The Socio-Political Role of Intellectual: A Study of the Leading Egyptian 'Ulama (1798-1870)," *Insight Islamicus*, 1, 2 (2002): 73-74.
[169] Abd al-Rahman al-Jabarti, *Al-Jabartī's Chronicle of the First Seven Months of the French Occupation of Egypt: Muharram-Rajab 1213/15 June-December 1798*, ed. Shmuel Moreh (E.J. Brill, 1975), 72-73.

military offices of some *amirs*, including deposits abandoned by people during the revolution.[170]

In 1801, when the Ottoman army reached Egypt, French leaders imprisoned al-Sharqawi and some other scholars in the Citadel. Approximately 100 days later, they were released after signing the treaty among Sadrazam Yusuf Pasha, the British General Hutchinson, and the French commander Abdullah Jacques Menou in June 1801. Al-Sharqawi's strategic approach, supervision, and influence served the Egyptian opposition greatly, which engaged a significant role with the Ottoman army in expelling the French from Egypt.

After the French withdrawal, political issues proceeded, and Egypt stepped into disorganization and uncertainty until 1805. During this time of instability, religious scholars took charge. With the leadership of Shaykh al-Sharqawi and Sayyid 'Umar Makram, the *ulama* chose Muhammad Ali as the new ruler of Egypt. They played a prominent role in persuading the Ottoman Sultan Selim III to discharge Hurşid Ahmed Paşa and appoint Muhammad Ali as the new governor of Egypt. The decree from Istanbul stated that, since both the *ulama* and the *Sadat* supported Muhammad Ali, he would be assigned to govern Egypt. Unfortunately, Muhammad Ali let down the *ulama* shortly after assuming power. Rather than assisting Islamic values and traditions as a protector, he maintained an authoritarian regime and followed policies that threatened Egypt's religious and cultural character. This disloyalty left al-Sharqawi deeply disappointed.

During the 1807 British occupation of Alexandria and their attack on Rashid, al-Sharqawi and Umar Makram guided attempts to manage public opposition and provided weapons, playing a significant role in the British withdrawal.[171]

Al-Sharqawi, with his wealth, bought a grand house near al-Azhar, and he notably increased his income through his wife's cleverness. His wife, the

[170] Al-Jabarti, *Abd Al-Rahmann al-Jabarti's History of Egypt,* 4: 222-23.
[171] Hilal Görgün, "ŞERKĀVÎ," 12; Gilani, "The Socio-Political Role of Intellectual," 74.

daughter of Shaykh ‘Ali al-Za’farani, took a primary role in running his affairs and gathered business benefits. Al-Sharqawi trusted his wife and did nothing without asking her. In 1217 (1802-03), their son Sidi 'Ali's marriage was attended by the pasha and many notables. The event was grand. The pasha alone gifted 80,000 dirhams, and others brought expensive gifts.

Besides these financial benefits, al-Sharqawi helped his students, who were staying in the Taybarsiyya Madrasa next to the al-Azhar gate. To support them more, he determined quarters in the Riwaq al-Mu’ammar. Yet, a disagreement between the students settling there led to an assault on the *riwaq’s* supervisor. Shaykh Ibrahim al-Sajini, the head of the *riwaq*, stood against al-Sharqawi’s students and eventually dismissed them from the Taybarsiyya complex.

As regards, al-Sharqawi asked for the help of a blind female jurist (*faqiha*), one of his students. She talked to ‘Adila Hanim and convinced her husband, Ibrahim Bey *al-Wali*, to arrange other quarters for al-Sharqawi’s students. Ibrahim Bey allocated a house across from the mosque next to the Jawhariyya Madrasa and, without any payment, enlarged it to form a customized *riwaq* for al-Sharqawi’s students. To annoy and take revenge on Shaykh al-Sajini, he brought construction materials, stones, and marble columns from the historic mosque of Sultan al-Zahir Baybars, located outside of al-Husayniya, which al-Sajini supervised.

Further, he arranged the construction of pillars, a vault, and an organization for daily bread distribution. Bread was obtained from the mosque's granary and appointed to bakers for payment. These breads were distributed to the residents of this new *riwaq* and the chosen ones from al-Sharqawi’s hometown.

Moreover, in the desert suburbs near Bab al-Barqiyya, there was a small dervish mosque initiated by Queen Tokay al-Nasiriya. It was supervised by a court official, Ibn al-Shahini, and after his death, al-Sharqawi assumed its supervision and income. The *zawiya* suffered damage during the French occupation of Egypt, as the French destroyed the minaret and parts of the

northern wall and left it. After the French withdrawal, the mosque remained in disrepair.

Near the mosque's entrance was a waterwheel (*saqiya*), operating to serve people and animals. Al-Sharqawi deactivated the waterwheel and restored it with a newly built mosque, embracing a domed tomb for himself. This arrangement included a distinguished square tomb accompanied by silver soldiers and a residential complex with facilities. He converted the waterwheel place into a well, and after a while, the original *saqiya* was forgotten.[172]

Al-Sharqawi fell ill and passed away on Thursday, 2 Shawwal 1227 (1812). They held his funeral prayer at al-Azhar, and many people came to attend. He chose his own burial place and was later laid to rest there. His family and friends held an enormous *mawlid* celebration, which al-Jabarti described and criticized with detail in his chronicle.[173] In addition, his *waqf*, which consisted of land, a bathhouse, shops, and residential properties, was later nationalized during the British invasion by Khedive 'Abbas Hilmi II in the late 19th century.[174]

The *waqf* of al-Sharqawi is as follows: He had ten *qirats* in Tawila, Sharqiyya, and two more *faddans*. One *qirat* was in Tukh al-Qarmut, and he added eight more *qirats*. He had all land, *tin sawad in nahiyyat al-Arish* in Sharqiyya, near Bilbays. He owned a village, *kilala-min ghair misaha*, in Mit Hadid in Mansura. According to Marsot, the land in Tukh was one of the best in that area. He also got paid from the *Jawali* (the *jizya* tax), which amounted to 777 *'uthmani*, and 150 *'uthmani* as *'ulufat* from the Mustahfazan. He also had a public bath, seven shops,

[172] Al-Jabarti, *Abd Al-Rahmann al-Jabarti's History of Egypt,* 4: 224-25. The previous mosque's name was Mosque of Umm Anuk, as the historian al-Maqrizi mentioned in his book al-Khitat, and al-Jabarti recorded his writing in his chronicle. According to al-Maqrizi, Lady Tukay had managed the mosque to face the tomb of the Amir Tashtamur Al-Saqi. She invited Sufi practitioners and Qur'an reciters and included some awqaf. She made sure to get salaries for her slave girls from the waqf income, as she was also enslaved before marrying Sultan al-Malik al-Nasir. She was renowned for her beauty, influence, and luxurious way of life. When her husband died, her power remained until she died during the plague year of 749 (1348-49). She left an enormous wealth, including well-established charitable works, and was buried in the small mosque until al-Sharqawi ruined it.

[173] Al-Jabarti, *Abd Al-Rahmann al-Jabarti's History of Egypt,* 4: 226.

[174] Hilal Görgün, "ŞERKĀVÎ," 12.

a small warehouse, and his massive house.[175] This waqf record shows that al-Sharqawi was a respected religious figure and a person with significant economic power. He owned lands in both urban and rural areas. He was also linked to the financial and military system of the time. These details reflect his strong position in both the religious and political life of his society.

3.2 Al-Jabarti's Criticism Towards Al-Sharqawi

When writing the biography, Al-Jabarti criticized al-Sharqawi in many ways. He mentioned his turban several times, as it was getting larger as he got wealthier, which al-Jabarti never approved.

In addition, al-Jabarti criticized his wealth by saying, "The world was good to him, and his appetite for worldly things increased." These words suggest that he does not approve of al-Sharqawi's wealth.[176] When al-Jabarti's biographies are closely examined, it appears that most religious scholars depended on personal connections and political relationships with wealthy elite like Mamluk notables or renowned merchants. Primarily, financial strength was not established outside of their careers. Except for scholars like al-Jabarti, who inherited their fathers' wealth, most started their scholarly journey with little or no financial assets, and al-Sharqawi is just one of them. He was notably impoverished at the beginning, but his *waqf* displays that he was a wealthy man. According to al-Jabarti, his wealth mostly came from gifts, and even after he became rich, the gifts continued. When the French occupied Egypt, he became the president of the *diwan*, and his salary was 14,5000 *paras* per month. Moreover, most of his belongings were agricultural lands, and they were well organized in two plots. His urban belongings supplied him with significant income every month.[177]

[175] Al-Sayyid Marsot, "The Political and Economic Functions of the 'Ulama' in the 18th Century," 153.
[176] Al-Jabarti, *Abd Al-Rahmann al-Jabarti's History of Egypt,* 4: 223.
[177] Al-Sayyid Marsot, "The Political and Economic Functions of the 'Ulama' in the 18th Century," 130–54.

Furthermore, he extremely criticized al-Sharqawi for knocking down the Mosque Umm Anuk rather than restoring it, advocating that prohibition could have led to honor for him during his life and after his death.[178]

Regarding literary endowment, without giving the work title, al-Jabarti details how al-Sharqawi compiled a biographical work of ancient and contemporary Shafi'i jurists. For ancient biographies, he depended on sources of Abd al-Wahhab al-Subki and al-Isnawi. For contemporary ones, he relied on al-Jabarti's work. Al-Jabarti actually recorded this by saying al-Sharqawi copied "word to word" from his chronicle.[179] This seems to be his final scholarly work, and he named it *Tuhfetu'l-Bahiyya fi Tabakat al-Shafi'iyya.*[180]

Yet before that, he wrote a short four-sectioned historical work chronicling the arrival of Vizier Yusuf Pasha and the French removal from Egypt. It ended with a two-page abstract of the Ottoman regain of Egypt. This work was a request of Vizier Yusuf Pasha, whom al-Jabarti and a group of religious scholars, including al-Sharqawi, received in 1801. In return, al-Jabarti wrote his *Mazhar al-Taqdis*, and al-Sharqawi wrote his work for him. However, al-Jabarti insists that the work was meant only to praise Yusuf Pasha's arrival; it consists of inaccurate recordings such as Shaban, the son of the *amir* Husayn ibn al-Nasir Muhammad ibn Qalawun, written as the son of Sultan Hasan.[181]

Moreover, al-Jabarti and other Islamic scholars strongly criticized certain practices observed during the *mawlids,* especially, the mixing of men and women, which sometimes resulted in morally inappropriate behaviour. He was particularly critical when *mawlids* were organized for uncertain reasons or arranged for personal or financial approach. According to al-Jabarti, al-Sharqawi's *mawlid* was a great example of manipulating religious practices for their interests.[182] In his chronicle, he documented and criticized al-Sharqawi's

[178] Al-Jabarti, *Abd Al-Rahmann al-Jabarti's History of Egypt,* 4: 225.
[179] Erol, "Mısır'da Tarihçilik ve Tarih Yazıcılığı (1800-1850)," 158.
[180] Al-Jabarti, *Abd Al-Rahmann al-Jabarti's History of Egypt,* 4: 226.
[181] Ibid., 226; Moreh, *Egyptian Historian 'Abd al-Rahman al-Jabarti,* 44.
[182] Winter, "The Sufi Personality of the Egyptian Historian ʿAbd Al-Raḥmān al-Jabartī (1753–1825)," 273-74.

funeral and *mawlid*, including his turban on top of his tomb. According to him, his family and friends enhanced a massive turban on top of his coffin, covered with green and red Kashmiri shawls, much larger than he wore in life. A person at the entrance demanded a dirham from visitors to the tomb. Later, his family and friends arranged a massive *mawlid* celebration merging with al-'Afifi's. They asked the Ottoman governor to write a *firman* and made official public announcements and formal invitations. In the chronicle, al-Jabarti described the situation with high criticism. They prepared luxurious food, with sweets and roasted meats. They also had music with commercial stands around the tomb, which seemed like a festival. What is worse, they stepped on the surrounding graves, lit fires, dumped trash, and used the places as a restroom. Al-Jabarti described the noise and chaos caused by the crowd as unbearable. He compared their shouting, fireworks, and disorder to something worse than devils gathering around graveyards. He found their actions excessive and meaningless. Most of the people who took part came from poor backgrounds. They had unstable jobs and sometimes no food for the next day. Some even borrowed money just to buy candles or pay drummers and musicians. They spent the night awake, convincing themselves that they were worshipping God, but in reality, they were only deceiving themselves.[183]

The criticism directed at al-Sharqawi seems to point beyond personal matters. It expresses a deeper concern with the risks that come when religious authority becomes closely tied to power. Al-Jabarti's discomfort reveals his expectations from scholars, especially during moments of colonial and internal crisis.

3.3 Sufism in His Life

Al-Sharqawi acquired the Sufi order of Shaykh Mahmud al-Kurdi. Al-Jabarti notes that they attended his *dhikrs* and gatherings together. About his sufi path, al-Jabarti notes that he initially sought to join the Khalwatiyya order, under

[183] Winter, "The Sufi Personality of the Egyptian Historian ʿAbd Al-Raḥmān al-Jabartī (1753–1825)," 275.

the guidance of Shaykh Muhammad al-Hifni. However, during his spiritual training, he experienced a mental and emotional breakdown, which affected his mind. As a result, he was hospitalized for a while. After he recovered, he finished his initiation with Shaykh al-Kurdi, appointed him as successor. Al-Sharqawi became his close attendant.[184]

Al-Shaqawi's thoroughly personal transfer into Sufism illustrates his own spiritual journey and the broader religious view of that period. His connection with Shaykh al-Hifni and Shaykh al-Kurdi positions him in a well-known society of Sufi-oriented scholars who influenced religious education in Egypt. Al-Sharqawi's engagement with the Khalwatiyya order and his renown under Shaykh al-Kurdi represent the blend of Sufi worship and scholarly status that became central to Al-Azhar's role during the Ottoman era. In addition, al-Azhar had become the premier center of Islamic learning in Egypt, where religious discipline was progressively connected in Sufi networks, and scholars such as al-Sharqawi imaged this mixture of spiritual and academic authority.

For many Egyptian scholars, there was little encouragement to look for favoritism or positions in Istanbul because al-Azhar already served a well-maintained and honored path for religious education and career advancement within Egypt.

In the Ottoman period, al-Azhar functioned as Egypt's largest and most influential center of religious discipline. Students from across the Delta and Upper Egypt started coming together there. However, the main reasons for this growth and the disclosure of Egypt's religious class system, such as the Mashyakhat al-Azhar, remains inadequately researched. The internal form of al-Azhar's scholarly notables, their appointment process, the hereditary or patronage transmission of posts, and the role of regional, tribal, familial, and ritual connections still need more investigation.

In al-Azhar, a religious nobility began to form, usually depending on Sufi traditions, such as Shaykh al-Hifni, Shaykh Ahmad al-Dardir, and Shaykh 'Abd-

[184] Al-Jabarti, *Abd Al-Rahmann al-Jabarti's History of Egypt,* 4: 222.

Allah al-Sharqawi, all attended to Khalwatiyya order. They symbolize the development of localized religious aristocracy in Egypt. Their impact displays how spiritual and educational authority in Egypt survived embedded in regional networks other than being combined under the centralized Ottoman structure. Yet, it remains insufficiently explored.

In Tanta, in the Nile Delta's center, another Islamic "university" was established based on the al-Azhar model at the end of the 18th century. Al-Azhar's increasing attraction was further influenced by the arrival of students from across the Muslim world, which maintained their own *riwaqs*. Local notables often sponsored these *riwaqs*, such as Ibrahim Katkhuda, who funded one for students from Upper Egypt in the 17th century. Likewise, the fact that Kazdaghlis funded *riwaqs* for students from India and Indonesia is evidence of the trading and cultural connections established by scholars in Egypt's Ottoman period with the Islamic world. The stream of students from these regions proves that religious studies had not wholly disappeared from the rural areas, regardless of the decline of traditional madrasas. Biographies of Azhar-trained scholars from the time, including the necrologies documented by al-Jabarti, display tight affiliations with Sufi society and relaying knowledge through spiritual genealogy from shaykhs to disciples. It becomes certain that scholarly and Sufi identities were inseparably connected. [185]

Al-Sharqawi's Sufi affiliations helped shape both his spiritual outlook and his place in public life. His connection to key Sufi figures supported his growth within scholarly circles and gave him a respected position within the religious

[185] Rachida Chih and Catherin Mayeur-Jaouen, "Introduction Le Soufisme Ottoman vu d'Égypte (Xvie-Xviiie Siècle)," essay, in *Le Soufisme à l'époque Ottomane, XVIe-XVIIIe Siècle = Sufism in the Ottoman Era, 16th-18th Century* (Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 2010), 1–55. Al-Azhar was founded in 970 CE by the Fatimids, which stood as Egypt's head center of Islamic learning during the Ottoman period. This transfer happened besides the decline of provincial madrasas and other teaching schools, including the mosques of Cairo, which provided an option for religious instruction. Physically, al-Azhar keeps the signs of its long and layered history. It has an Ottoman time porch, minarets from the 14th to 16th centuries, madrasas from the Mamluk period, a dome, and a grand central courtyard from the 10th century. It also has a prayer hall, primarily built in the 17th century. It illustrates the architectural development of a mosque, which embodies a deep and complex historical view, even though it is not considered Cairo's most beautiful mosque.

community. This shows how Sufism remained closely linked to authority and guidance in that period.

3.4 His Work

Al-Sharqawi taught at al-Azhar, the Sinaniya Madrasa in al-Sanadaqiya, and the *riwaqs* of al-Jabarti and Taybarisya. He was a productive author who wrote on subjects such as theology, *fiqh*, and Sufism.

He wrote *Fath al-Mubdi bi-Sharh Mukhtasar al-Zabidi*, a commentary on al-*Tajrid al-Sarih li-ahadith al-Jami al-Sahih,* which has been published in several editions.

Hashiyat al-Sharqawi 'ala Sharh al-Tahrir is a commentary on Shaykh al-Islam Abu Yahya al-Zakariyya al-Ansari's *Tuhfat al-Tullab*, which is a significant Shafi'i fiqh text. One of the copies of this commentary was republished by Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya in 1997, including a report by Sayyid Mustafa ibn Hanafi al-Dhahabi. At the top of the pages, Tuhfat al-Tullab by Shaykh al-Ansari is written, and below it, al-Sharqawi's commentary is added, and at the bottom, the report of al-Dhahabi is attached. It is a comprehensive work covering Shafi' fiqh with commentary and enriching Islamic thought and jurisprudence.[186]

In addition, he wrote a commentary on *Taysir* by Yahya al-'Amriti titled *Fath al-Qadir al-Habir bi-Sharh Taysir al-Tahrir*, a poetic version of al-Ansari's *Tahrir*.

Sharh al-Hikam al-'Ata'iyya (*al-Minah al-Qudsiyya*) is a commentary on Ibn 'Ata' Allah's *al-Hikam*, a classic Sufi text.

His other work is *Sharh al-Hikam al-Sufiyya* (*al-Futuhat al-Saniyya*), a commentary on Kurdish Sufi epigram and advice.

Sharh Asma' Allah al-Husna is co-published with Shaykh Yahya al-Shirvani al-Bakubi's work *Sharh Wird al-Sattar*. Al-Bakubi's work is a devotional document read by all the members of almost all the branches of Khalwatiyya, and many scholars wrote a commentary on *Wird al-Sattar,* including al-Sharqawi. There are

[186] 'Abd Allah Sharqawi, *Hashiyat Al-Sharqawi ʿala Tuhfat al-Tullab Bi-Sharh Tahrir Taqnih al-Lubab* (Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, 1997).

three distinct sections in this book. The first part starts with prayers directed to Allah, citing His mercy and greatness, and includes *dhikr*. The second part consists of *Asma' al-Husna*, the ninety-nine names of Allah; each one leads with magnificent features. It includes praising Allah and Prophet Muhammad. It also explains a hadith, *Jaber*, which describes how to be close to Allah. The third part contains blessings on the Prophet Muhammad, the first four Caliphs, the Prophet's family *ahl-bayt*, Hamza and Al-'Abbas, al-Muhajeren, and al-Ansar. After completing these three sections, the book concludes with the last *dhikr*.[187]

Al-Jami' al-Hawi fi Marwiyyat al-Sharqawi is a collection of narrations assigned to al-Sharqawi.

Hashiya 'ala Sharh al-Hudhudi 'ala Umm al-Berahin is a commentary on Hudhudi's commentary of the *Umm al-Barahin* by al-Sanusi.

Tuhfat al-Nazirin fi Man Waliya Misr min Muluk wa Sulatin is a chronicle of rulers of Egypt. This historical work was solitarily published in Cairo in 1286 (1869). The work was also published in the margins of another historical work, *Kitab Akhbar al-Awwal fi man Tasarraf fi Misr min Arbab al-Duwal* by Abd al-Ghani ibn Ali al-Ishaqi (d. 1650). Later on, a critical edition was written by Rihab Abdulhamid al-Qari. *Tuhfat al-Nazirin* is a brief collection of earlier historical sources. Even though he cited some sources clearly, like Imam al-Suyuti's *Husn al-Muhadara* and chronicles from Wahb ibn Munabbih and Qatada, he hints at other scholars like al-Mas'udi and al-Quda'i without mentioning their names or works. Moreh criticized this work as it was written in a dry and overly simple style compared to al-Jabarti's chronicle.[188]

Al-Tuhfa al-Bahiyya fi Tabaqat al-Shafi'iyya is a biographical dictionary of Shafi'i scholars from 1495-1709.

Mukhtasar Shama'il al-Nabi is a brief commentary on al-Tirmidhi's work describing the Prophet's characteristics.

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[187] 'Abd Allah Sharqawi, *Sharh Wird Al-Sattar* (Purchase; Sulaiman Bookshop; 1973, 1788).
[188] Erol, "Mısır'da Tarihçilik ve Tarih Yazıcılığı (1800-1850)," 159; Al-Jabarti, *Al-Jabartī's Chronicle of the First Seven Months of the French Occupation of Egypt*, 29.

Sharh Wird al-Sahar (*Al-Fayd al-'Arshi 'ala al-Fath al-Qudsi*) is a commentary on the morning *wird* of the Bakriyya branch of the Khalwatiyya order.

Sharh Wird al-Settar is another commentary on a *wird* by Qutbuddin al-Bakri.

Rabi' al-Fawa'id fi Adab al-Tariq wa Tartib al-Awrad is a Sufi exposition on manners and rituals.

There are other works assigned to al-Sharqawi, which are *al-Jawahir al-Saniyya fi Sharh al-'Aqa'id al-Mashriqiyya, al-'Aqa'id al-Mashriqiyya, Sharh Risalat 'Abd al-Fattah al-'Adili, Risala fi La ilaha illa Allah, Risala fi Mas'ala Usuliyya fi Jam'al al-Jawami', Thabt al-Sharqawi* and *Mukhtasar Mughni al-Labib.*[189]

His written output appears limited when compared to other scholars of his time. Al-Jabarti's remarks suggest that his public role carried more weight than his academic legacy. This difference allows for a comparison between types of influence among religious figures like some shaped thought through writing, others through leadership.

[189] Hilal Görgün, "ŞERKĀVÎ," 12; Al-Jabarti, *Abd Al-Rahmann al-Jabarti's History of Egypt,* 4: 221-22; Carl Brockelmann, *History of the Arabic Written Tradition Supplement Volume 2*, trans. Joep Lameer (Brill, 2018), 150, 367, 458.

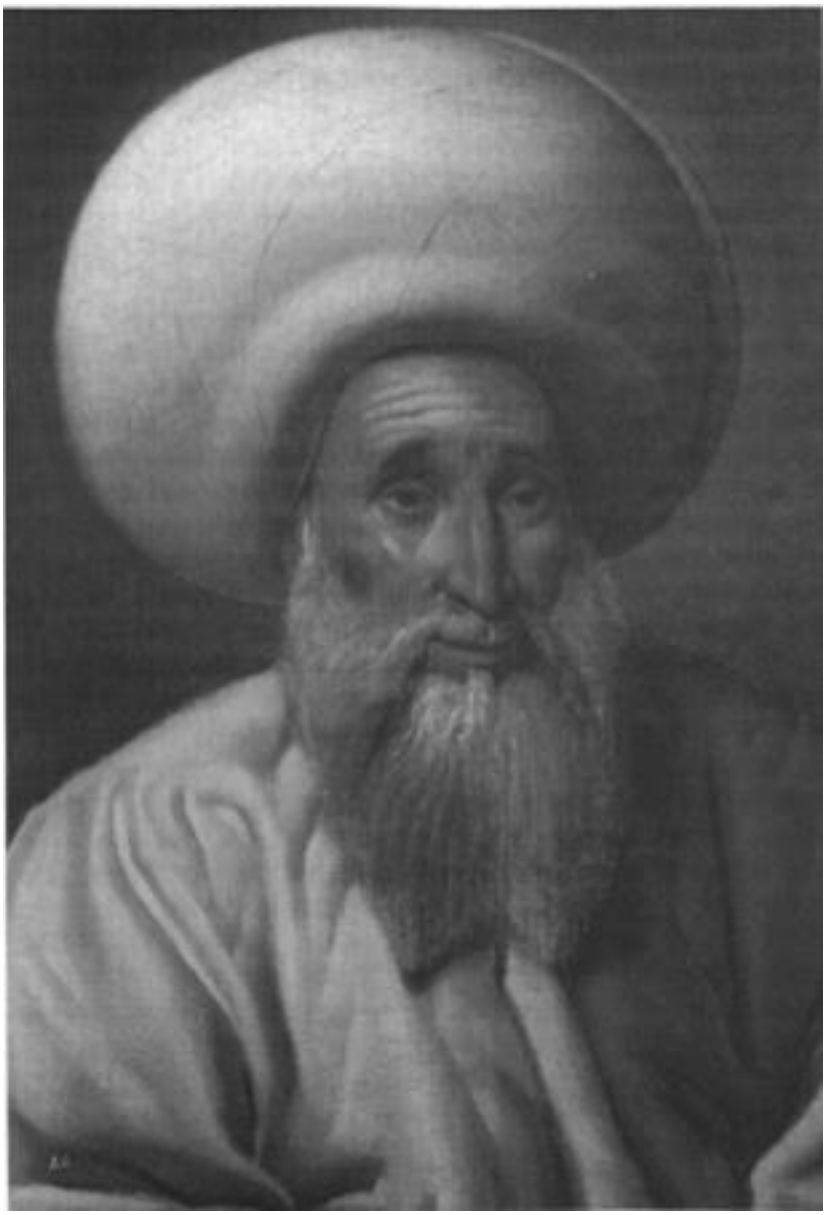


Figure 2. Portrait by Michel Rigo entitled *'Abd Allah al-Sharqawi* from Darius Spieth, "MICHEL RIGO AND BONAPARTE'S EGYPTIAN CAMPAIGN (1798-1801) Pottf Aits of the Divan in Cairo," *1650-1850: Ideas, Aesthetics, and Inquiries in the Early Modern Era* 13, no. 8 (2006): 145.

CHAPTER 4: AHMAD AL-DARDIR

4.1 His Life

Among the most noteworthy biographies in *Aja'ib al-Athar*, al-Jabarti documented another notable figure, Shaykh Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Abi Hamid al-'Adawi al-Maliki al-Azhari al-Khalwati. He is mainly known as al-Dardir. He was an outstanding scholar of his time and unique in rational sciences and traditional knowledge. He was a shaykh of the people of Islam and a source of favor for all people. In this chapter, al-Dardir's life, al-Jabarti's perspective towards him, Sufism in his life, his life in the conditions of his times, and his work will be analyzed.

There is not much biographical information about al-Dardir other than al-Jabarti's recordings, and even al-Jabarti has a little entry about him. In addition, little is known about al-Dardir's early life before he entered the scholarly classes at al-Azhar.[190]

As he mentioned, Shaykh al-Dardir was born in Bani 'Adi in 1127 (1715).[191] Al-Dardir started his education under the guidance of his father, Muhammad, who was a well-respected Qur'an teacher. He learned to read, write, and memorize the Qur'an at a young age. His father was religious, and al-Dardir even assigned spiritual acts to him. His father never accepted payment for teaching and often helped his poor students. His mother once saw the light in his father's room at night, and his father claimed that it came from sending prayers to the Prophet. Al-Dardir also stated that during times of hardship, his father recited Surat Quraysh over a small meal, which becomes enough to feed many people. Later, al-Dardir would do the same recitation to unlock doors without keys, which made him well-known for his spiritual act.

[190] Mosaad, *Islam before Modernity*, 45; Rachida Chih, "2 Autorité Religieuse et Rôle Public d'un Ouléma d'al-Azhar Au Xviiie Siècle: Vie et Carrière Du Cheikh Ahmad al-Dardîr (1715-1786)," essay, in *L'autorité Religieuse et Ses Limites En Terres d'islam*, vol. 110 (Brill, 2013), 34.
[191] Al-Jabarti, *Abd Al-Rahmann al-Jabarti's History of Egypt,* 2: 242.

These prove that al-Dardir was raised with a strong Sufi influence, which was usual for someone from his background. Sufism was central to people's lives in Egyptian rural areas and Cairo. This spiritual childhood shaped how he undertook education. Most of his writings, even those in theology or law, contain sections on Sufism.[192]

Being from Upper Egypt, al-Dardir was trained in the Maliki school of law, which was common in that region. According to Mosaad, historians should have a detailed explanation of why Malikism took power in Upper Egypt, particularly since later Sunni rulers like Salah al-Din favored the Shafi'i school. Mosaad thinks it could be because of geographical and political distances from Cairo, less affected by changing government policies. This distance probably has also put up a weaker connection to the state, with people placing more faith in Islamic values and their local communities.[193]

After finishing his early education in Bani 'Adi, al-Dardir's desire to learn made him travel to al-Azhar Mosque, where he attended the lessons of the scholars. Not much was recorded about this period, but it is assumable that he studied the standard religious sciences of the time, such as Arabic grammar, theology, jurisprudence, and Sufism.[194]

He studied the *Awwaliya* under Shaykh Muhammad al-Dafri and learned hadith from Shaykh Ahmad ibn Mustafa al-Sabbagh and Shams al-Din al-Hifni, who also trained him in the Sufi path. He studied jurisprudence from Shaykh Ali al-Sa'idi until he excelled. Shaykh al-Hifni introduced him to the *dhikr* and the Khalwati Sufi Order practices and became one of his most trusted deputies.[195] He received authorization from his shaykh al-Hifni and aroused significant notability within the Sufi community. He played an essential role in spreading the Khalwatiyya order throughout Egypt.[196] Eventually, he found his own sub-

[192] Mosaad, *Islam before Modernity*, 45-46.
[193] Ibid., 46-47.
[194] Ibid., 47.
[195] Al-Jabarti, *Abd Al-Rahmann al-Jabarti's History of Egypt,* 2: 242-43.
[196] Ahmed Alaeddin Abdulhamid Da'ber, "DERDÎR," in *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (TDV İslâm Araştırmaları Merkezi, 1994), 168-69.

branch and spiritual lodge, *zawiya*. After his death, his branch, Dardiriyya-Khalwatiyya, was absorbed into the Siba'iyya branch by his student and disciple, Salih al-Siba'i.[197]

According to al-Jabarti, al-Dardir gave *fatwas* with remarkable wisdom, modesty, and honesty, even during the lifetimes of his scholars. He also attended the lessons of other respected scholars like al-Malawi and al-Jawhari. But he always had a strong loyalty to Shaykh al-Hifni and Shaykh al-Sa'idi. He was a noble character, endowed with sharp and excellent intelligence.

Al-Jabarti also explains al-Dardir's surname in his chronicle. Once, al-Dardir mentioned that a Bedouin tribe had passed through his village, and its leader had that name. His grandfather was born at that time. He was given the exact name of that leader as a good omen because of his honorable reputation.[198] His title was later passed down to his son Muhammad and grandson Abu al-Barakat Ahmad.[199]

Furthermore, al-Jabarti recorded the names of Shaykh al-Dardir's major works and stated that he also composed many other works in both writing and poetry. Al-Jabarti included one of his poems as he heard himself:

"Let him who associates with men."

"Persevere in kindness and void quarreling."

"Let him beware of what is tortuous in their character:"

"What road is there in which there is no bending?"[200]

After the death of Shaykh 'Ali al-Sa'idi 1189 (1775), al-Dardir was appointed as the leading Shaykh of the Maliki school, the official mufti, supervisor of *waqf* properties, and head of the *riwaq* for students from Upper Egypt at al-Azhar. Due to his authority and deep knowledge of Maliki jurisprudence, he earned the honorary title "Little Malik." He taught in the Sa'idi Madrasa and supervised its endowments. He continued teaching many Islamic

[197] Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam* (Clarendon Press, 1971), 77; Mosaad, *Islam before Modernity*, 49.
[198] Al-Jabarti, *Abd Al-Rahmann al-Jabarti's History of Egypt,* 2: 243.
[199] Da'ber, "DERDÎR," 168.
[200] Al-Jabarti, *Abd Al-Rahmann al-Jabarti's History of Egypt,* 2: 243.

sciences, including jurisprudence, theology, *hadith*, *tafsir*, and Arabic language. Although he was not appointed Shaykh al-Azhar, a position mostly given to Shafi'i scholars, al-Jabarti records that al-Dardir was still majorly considered the leading religious authority in Egypt. He educated many scholars who would later become well-known figures. His notable students were Ahmad al-Sawi, Salih al-Siba'i, 'Arafa al-Desuqi, 'Abd al-'Alim al-Sanhuri, and Mustafa al-'Uqbawi.[201]

After a time of illness, he passed away on the 6th of Rabi'l Awwal (December 27, 1786). His funeral prayer was held at al-Azhar in front of a large crowd. He was buried in the *zawiya* he had built in the al-Kakhiyyin region, near the mausoleum of Sidi Yahya ibn 'Aqib. When founding this *zawiya*, he requested from al-Jabarti that he wanted the same direction as the prayer niche toward Mecca.

Al-Jabarti also documented al-Dardir's *zawiya*'s origin, which was remarkable. Sultan Mulay Muhammad of Morocco sent many gifts to the scholar of al-Azhar, caretakers of shaykhs' tombs, and the people of Mecca and Medina for a long time. In 1198 (1783-84), he supported financially, including an amount for Shaykh al-Dardir. However, the sultan's son found himself in economic hardship when he was living in Cairo after his pilgrimage. He tried to take the money by force from its keeper but failed. When Shaykh al-Dardir heard about the incident, he gave the sultan's son his full share and said, "How can we, strangers, take a man's money while his son is in need?".[202]

When the sultan heard what Shaykh al-Dardir did, he was deeply moved. He sent him a gift ten times greater than the last the following year. Al-Dardir accepted it and performed a pilgrimage. After returning, he used the remaining money to build the *zawiya*, his final resting place. Al-Jabartī uses this story to display al-Dardīr's integrity and high regard among all social classes.[203]

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[201] Da'ber, "DERDÎR," 168; Mosaad, *Islam before Modernity*, 49.
[202] Mosaad, *Islam before Modernity*, 50; Al-Jabarti, *Abd Al-Rahmann al-Jabarti's History of Egypt,* 2: 243-44.
[203] Mosaad, *Islam before Modernity*, 50; Al-Jabarti, *Abd Al-Rahmann al-Jabarti's History of Egypt,* 2: 244.

Al-Jabarti ended his biography by praying and praising him with the words that he truly left behind no equal.[204]

During his lifetime, Egypt experienced a decline in the Ottoman administrative system, which opened the gates for local *amirs* to take advantage of this weakness. These *amirs* often tyrannized both scholars and the general population. To resist this injustice, al-Dardir bravely stood up and supported innocent people through speeches, writings, and direct actions, making an enduring influence.[205]

Other than al-Jabarti, another notable source on al-Dardir is Murtada al-Zabidi's *Mujam al-Muktass*. Al-Zabidi and al-Dardir were close friends, and he was al-Zabidi's master. In his writing, al-Zabidi wrote an entry on al-Dardir that was similar to al-Jabarti's. It seems al-Jabarti copied the biographical entry from al-Zabidi.

He recalls that al-Dardir loved him for the sake of God and that they visited the graves of saints together. He attended some of al-Dardir's lessons and praised him as unmatched in rational and traditional subjects. Al-Zabidi also records one of al-Dardir's works on rhetoric, which was written on his suggestion when they were together at the shrine of Ahmad al-Badawi in Tanta.[206]

Later, Sufi writers like Yusuf al-Nabbani added al-Dardir to their works. He describes him with the words "the sun of gnostic knowledge" in his work *Jami' Karamat al-Awliya'*. He also states that all Muslims from different backgrounds agreed with his high rank and sainthood. He even added a story of someone using al-Dardir's name in prayer during hardship. After that, al-Dardir appeared in a dream and helped the person out of trouble. Finally, Muhammad Makhluf adds al-Dardir as the first scholar of the 25th generation after Imam Malik in his work, *Tabaqat al-Malikiyya.* Even though Makhluf quotes al-Jabarti word for word, he gives more detail about al-Dardir's writings.[207]

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[204] Al-Jabarti, *Abd Al-Rahmann al-Jabarti's History of Egypt,* 2: 244.
[205] Da'ber, "DERDÎR," 168.
[206] Mosaad, *Islam before Modernity*, 50-51.
[207] Ibid., 51-52.

His early education and later reputation show how one scholar could gain respect through both knowledge and personal behavior. His journey from a small town to becoming a well-known teacher at al-Azhar shows how learning and sincerity continued to hold value during a time of many changes.

4.2 Al-Jabarti's Perspective Towards Al-Dardir

In *Aja'ib*, al-Jabarti admires al-Dardir completely. When comparing many other scholars in his chronicle, it is highly unusual for al-Jabarti to praise someone from the beginning to the end of his biography. He notes that al-Dardir was not just someone appointed as the leading Shaykh of the Maliki school or the official mufti. In al-Jabarti's eyes, he was the real shaykh of all Egypt in his time. He praised al-Dardir by praying, "May Allah have mercy on him," and wrote how he encouraged good and prohibited bad. According to al-Jabarti, he was always honest in his devotion to God and determined to pursue righteousness.[208]

Al-Jabarti's admiration for al-Dardir stands out clearly in his writing. Unlike other figures, al-Dardir is described with warmth and respect. His character and manners seem to have left a strong impression. This image gives readers a sense of what a religious scholar could represent when knowledge and humility came together.

4.3 Sufism in His Life

Sufism has played an important role in the religious and social life of Islamic societies, but its form and emphasis have changed over time.[209] In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, some scholars observed a shift in Sufi practice. Fazlur Rahman, for example, described this change with the term "Neo-

[208] Al-Jabarti, *Abd Al-Rahmann al-Jabarti's History of Egypt,* 2: 243.
[209] Mosaad, *Islam before Modernity,* 277; Afaf Lutfi Al-Sayyid Marsot, "The Ulama of Cairo in the 18th and the 19th Centuries," essay, in *Scholars, Saints, and Sufis: Muslim Religious Institutions in the Middle East since 1500*, ed. Nikki R. Keddie (University of California Press, 1972), 149–66; See F. De Jong, *Ṭuruq and Ṭuruq-Linked Institutions in Nineteenth-Century Egypt: A Historical Study in Organizational Dimensions of Islamic Mysticism* (E. J. Brill, 1978); Louis Massignon and Herbert Mason, *The Passion of Al-Hallaj, Mystic and Martyr of Islam*, 4 vols. (Princeton University Press, 2019).

Sufism," referring to a later form of Sufism that focused more on social reform and less on personal mysticism. He explained this new style as being more reform focused than individual piety. It is usually linked with figures like Ahmad ibn Idris (d. 1253/1837), Muhammad al-Samman (d. 1189/1775), and Ahmad al-Tijani (d. 1230/1815). However, researchers like O'Fahey and Radtke questioned the term. They argued that many supposed Neo-Sufi movements did not reject the teachings of Ibn 'Arabi, did not abandon the close relationship between shaykh and murid, and did not completely break from tradition.[210]

On the other hand, John Voll accepts the term Neo-Sufism. He defends that the critique focuses on the Sufi group called Idrisis and disregards other Sufi movements in the 18th and 19th centuries.[211] However, Ahmad al-Dardir is hardly ever mentioned in these discussions. He is not linked to anti-colonial Sufi movements in West Africa led by 'Uthman Dan Fodio or the Khalwatiyya revival in Egypt led by the students of Mustafa al-Bakri. But it is known that historical connections remain like Dan Fodio's shaykh, Jibril ibn 'Umar got his spiritual teachings *wird* from al-Dardir in Cairo.[212]

Shaykh al-Dardir's position in the Sufi tradition is chiefly known through his writings. Surprisingly, al-Jabarti wrote very little about al-Dardir in the Khalwati tradition, even though they were both disciples of Shaykh al-Hifni.[213] Al-Dardir defines Sufism as "knowledge of the principles by which the heart can be rectified, as well as all of the senses." He explains that an active approach to *tasawwuf* involves careful religious discipline. This means fulfilling obligations, avoiding forbidden acts, and limiting oneself to only what is necessary even among the permissible. According to al-Dardir, following Islamic law on the outside *tariqa* results in inner spiritual truth *haqiqa.* This spiritual reality comes

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[210] Mosaad, *Islam before Modernity*, 278; R. S. O'Fahey and Bernd Radtke, "Neo-Sufism Reconsidered," *Der Islam* 70, no. 1 (1993): 52–87; Bernd Radtke, "Sufism in the 18th Century: An Attempt at a Provisional Appraisal," *Die Welt Des Islams* 36, no. 3 (1996): 326–64.
[211]John O. Voll, "Neo-Sufism: Reconsidered Again," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 42, no. 2–3 (2008): 314–30, https:// doi.org/10.1080/00083968.2008.10751385; Mosaad, *Islam before Modernity*, 278.
[212] Mosaad, *Islam before Modernity*, 279; Nehemia Levtzion and John O. Voll, *Eighteenth-Century Renewal and Reform in Islam* (Syracuse University Press, 1987), 32.
[213] Al-Jabarti, *Abd Al-Rahmann al-Jabarti's History of Egypt,* 1: 479-505.

from bad qualities from the heart. His teacher, Mustafa al-Bakri, also testified against fake Sufis who used religion for their benefit. He insisted that real spiritual success can only come through teachings from a qualified shaykh.[214]

Al-Dardir states that the shaykh or guide is highly essential. The misbehavior of fake spiritual guides has made the existence of honest and trustworthy shaykhs more crucial. Without the guide of real shaykhs, gaining profound spiritual realization is impossible. The Shaykh teaches and offers direction, protection, and clarity on the path.

In al-Dardir's writing, *Tuhfat al-ikhwan fi Adab Ahl al-'irfan*, his main work in *tasawwuf*, gives a clear guide for his disciples and a reminder to his peers on the Sufi path. Even though it is a short work (only forty-four manuscripts), it is a commentary on the path to God in a structured and straightforward style. He starts his writing by mentioning four commandments every disciple must follow: the first is *zahir* command, doing what is required like prayer. The second is *batin* command, believing rightfully. The third is *zahir* prohibition, which means avoiding forbidden behaviors like gossip. The last one is *batin* prohibition, avoiding bad inner traits like arrogance. He states that if these are disregarded, it is impossible to reach God's consciousness, *taqwa*, which is essential for deep spiritual knowledge, *'irfan*.[215]

To reach this state, al-Dardir suggests six main principles: voluntary hunger, isolation from people, practicing silence outward and inward except remembering only God, praying at night, doing *dhikr* as taught by the shaykh, and following a shaykh who has already walked through the Sufi path. These six steps are similar to al-Ghazali's teachings, but al-Dardir adds the last two, specific to the Sufi way that came after him, which modifies having a living shaykh.[216]

Al-Dardir also writes rules for how disciple should behave with their shaykh: First, sufi must show complete respect, even when the shaykh's actions are unclear. Second, sufi should put the shaykh's guidance above that of others.

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[214] Mosaad, *Islam before Modernity*, 280.
[215] Ibid., 281.
[216] Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, 152-57; Mosaad, *Islam before Modernity*, 281.

Third, sufi should ask for advice from Shaykh on significant decisions. Fourth, sufi needs to love those the Shaykh loves and avoid those he avoids. Fifth, sufi should believe that spiritual blessings come through the shaykh's existence. Sixth, sufi should always follow the *wird* the shaykh gives. Seventh, sufi must not try to copy the shaykh's private spiritual practices. Lastly, Sufi needs to continue to love and trust his shaykh. These points are not specific to the Khalwati order but display al-Dardir's view of the relationship between shaykh and murid.[217]

Furthermore, al-Dardir warns against fake shaykhs who request unquestioning loyalty like other real Sufi shaykhs. In al-Jabarti's chronicle, there are many incidents related to this issue. But al-Dardir, like others before him, focuses on the difference between the true shaykh and the false one. He says a real shaykh never asks his disciples to cut ties with others or claim exclusive power.

Besides his initiation to the Khalwatiyya order, al-Dardir was also connected to other Sufi orders like the Ahmadi-Shanawi, Shadhili, and Naqshbandi. He was honored authority *ijaza* by his shaykh 'Ali al-Sa'idi to lead dhikr ceremonies and take on disciples. In the rest of his writing, *Tuhfat al-ikhwan* advises on how to treat (*adab)* other Sufis, behave in daily life, and live in society. For instance, disciples should visit sick people, forgive mistakes, and treat each other nicely. He also suggests some works to support spiritual learning, like the *Ihya'* by al-Ghazali, the *Risala* of al-Qushayri, the *Hikam* of ibn 'Ata' illah al-Sakandari and works of Mustafa al-Bakri and 'Abd al-Wahhab al-Sha'rani.[218]

According to Walead Muhammed Mosaad, al-Dardir's extensive reading and acceptance of many Sufi traditions present that he followed the method of *tahqiq*, searching for truth among many paths rather than remaining only one way. This can be seen thoroughly in how he taught *dhikr*. For him, all the manners and training lead to an intent and powerful form of remembrance of God. Al-Dardir believes that the *dhikr* contains the following manners: being clean *zahir*

[217] Mosaad, *Islam before Modernity*, 282-283.
[218] Ibid., 284.

and *batin*, facing the *qibla* if alone, sitting in a circle if in a group or lines if there is not enough space, imagining the shaykh's presence during the dhikr, emptying the heart from all distractions, closing the eyes and sitting in the dark, repeating *la ilaha illa Allah* while moving rhythmically, repeating the same with the second name "Allah," avoiding water afterward to keep the spiritual energy, and staying still until the spiritual inspiration *warid* that leads a successful *dhikr*.[219]

According to Mosaad, al-Dardir states that the manners he wrote earlier apply mainly to the Sufi path and are not unique to the Khalwatiyya order. For the Khalwatiyya order, ideally, he adds a separate part where he writes the daily *dhikr awrad* that the disciple needs to recite. These *awrad* contain specific chapters and verses from the Qur'an, which should be read during and after extra prayers.

One significant practice al-Dardir mentions is the *wird al-sahar* of Mustafa al-Bakri, which he accepts as necessary for the Khalwati disciple. This *wird* is recited early before dawn, mainly after the night prayer *tahajjud*.

Moreover, al-Dardir strongly prioritizes the method of initiation in the Khalwati order and the special relationship between the shaykh and the murid. This contains a structured set of seven awards, each representing a unique stage of the soul. Al-Jabarti also recorded these stages in his chronicle, which is written in this thesis's first chapter. These seven levels were not unique to al-Dardir or even to al-Bakri. They originate from earlier Sufi literature.[220]

Al-Dardir also records his personal experience with the seven divine names, which began under the guidance of his shaykh, al-Hifni. Al-Hifni honored him with the authority to initiate others into the Khalwati order on the 18th of Muharram 1172 (29 July 1763), when al-Dardir was about 43. He had begun the Khalwati *wird* from al-Hifni a few years earlier, in 1760. He started with the first divine name, "La ilaha illa Allah." Al-Dardir recited this name continuously for six months until the remembrance absorbed his being that "burned his body and removed his flesh until he was nothing more than skin on

[219] Ibid., 284-285.
[220] Ibid., 285-86.

bones." Then he received the second name, "Allah". After six months, during Ramadan of 1163, he was given the third name, "Huwa," which led him into spiritual ecstasy and deep inner reflection. After a few months, al-Dardir received the fourth name, "Haqq," which al-Hifni explained as the first maqam of the murid. In 1164, he received the fifth name, "Hayy," followed by the sixth, "Qayyum," all at the time when he was in a condition of deep mystical intoxication. During this stage, he describes himself as unaware of himself and his surroundings. But outwardly, he seemed completely normal to others. He mentions this as a weird reality that people who have experienced it can understand.

Two years later, on the 26th of Ramadan 1165, he received the seventh and final name, "Qahhar." After that, he returned to a state of spiritual clarity and reached what he described as the *hadrat al-hadrat*, the highest level of divine awareness. He believed this was the last stage on the path, with no further level beyond it.[221]

Besides al-Dardir, al-Hifni also permitted a few other Sufis to initiate followers into the Khalwatiyya order. The most outstanding among them was Mahmud al-Kurdi. Later, al-Kurdi initiated Ahmad al-Tijani (d. 1230/1815), the founder of the Tijaniyya branch, and Muhammad al-Samman (d. 1189/1775), who established his branch in Sudan.

Al-Dardir has authorized two significant figures, both from Bani 'Adi. The first one is Ahmad al-Sawi, who became famous for his glosses on al-Dardir's theological and legal writings.[222]

According to Ahmad al-Shishti, al-Sawi was known for his strong discipline and deep loyalty to his teachers, especially to Shaykh al-Dardir. Their relationship was spiritual and scholarly. Al-Sawi became one of the main transmitters of al-Dardir's teachings. He worked on many of his shaykh's writings by producing glosses, commentaries, and summaries. One of these is *al-*

[221] Ibid., 286-87.
[222] Ibid., 287.

Asrar al-rabbaniyya wa-l-fuyudat al-rahmaniyya 'ala al-salawat al-Dardiriyya, which is based on a prayer text written by al-Dardir. He also explained al-Dardir's *Manzuma* about the Divine Names, and another on his *Mawlid*. His gloss on al-Dardir's commentary *Aqrab al-masalik li-madhhab al-Imam Malik*, and *Bulghat al-salik*, is especially remarkable for its attention to grammar and language. This shows how careful al-Sawi was about preserving and explaining his teacher's ideas.[223] Through al-Sawi, in the Khalwatiyya order, the regular recitation of the *wird* and the *salawat* dedicated to al-Dardir became central parts of the spiritual practice.[224]

The other major disciple was Salih al-Siba'i (d. 1221/1806), who spread the Khalwati-Dardiriyya branch after him. Al-Dardir's spiritual legacy continued through Salih al-Siba'i and his son Muhammad. They included al-Dardir's practices in their spiritual gatherings, like *Salawat al-Dardiriyya* and *Nazm fi Asma Allah al-Husna*. Most of the activity of this branch was centered in Upper Egypt.

It seems from this that al-Dardir focused most of his energy on teaching his students at al-Azhar, who then carried his teachings and litanies back to their hometowns in Upper Egypt. According to Mosaad, this method reflects what is seen in al-Dardir's writings overall. He has made an apparent effort to make Islamic knowledge reachable and understandable to more people, whether in theology, jurisprudence, or Sufism. His short and straightforward litanies were probably designed for group recitation, with simple language and rhythm. He was ready to speak up for Cairo's disqualified groups, which seemed part of a big project. It protected a tradition under pressure by making it more accessible and relevant to everyday believers.[225]

His approach to Sufism was based on discipline and careful guidance. His writings reflect the importance he placed on following a clear and respectful path. He seems to have viewed the Sufi way as something that needed both

[223] Catherine Mayeur-Jaouen, "The Small World of Aḥmad Al-Sawi (1761-1825), an Egyptian Khalwati Shaykh," essay, in *The Piety of Learning*, vol. 147 (Brill, 2017), 114.
[224] Mayeur-Jaouen, "The Small World of Aḥmad Al-Sawi (1761-1825), an Egyptian Khalwati Shaykh," 107.
[225] Mosaad, *Islam before Modernity*, 287-88.

structure and sincerity. His connection to the Khalwatiyya order shows how spiritual life was practiced through daily habits, not just ideas.

4.4 His Life in the Conditions of His Times

It is well-known that Islamic intellectual traditions developed over time. This evolution happened not only in thought but also within the social life of the Muslim world. As with other religions, Islam is also intensely public. Protecting tradition on personal practice does not usually promise survival in the wide society. For this reason, the changing relationship between political authorities, religious scholars, and the general population has taken a significant part in shaping how the Islamic tradition has been identified and practiced throughout history.

The integration between spiritual, intellectual, and political leadership was straightforward during the time of the Prophet Muhammad and the early caliphs. The Prophet organized all three, and the early caliphs represented this guide onwards. At that time, protecting tradition meant closely attaching to the Prophet's Sunna and the practices of his companions.

Nonetheless, with the Ummayyad Empire, displeasure over how leadership was transferred resulted in the development of several political and religious denominations. This time, the Ummayyads and, later, the Abbasids labeled a divergence in scholarly thinking because some scholars went against the rulers publicly while others joined the rulers. These varied responses were formed by the expanding concern over tyranny and the challenge of protecting tradition in developing political issues. This separation caused different methodologies. Some scholars depended on strict textual review of the Qur'an and hadith. Other scholars relied on rational thought, and another group, significantly from the Sufi tradition, pointed to the inner spiritual insight. Scholars like al-Ghazali especially nurtured this last point of view.

Socially, the division of scholarly authority made it possible for empires to combine power. The goal of a moral and spiritual authorized caliph slowly disappeared. As a result, the *ulama* mostly kept their distance from the rulers

because they were used or manipulated. However, complete detachment most likely was not possible. Some tense balance occurred, in which rulers patronized religious institutions, and *'ulama* joined as long as Islamic values were not distinctly ignored. This adaptation became significantly noticeable under the Ottomans, who permitted the local *'ulama* in the Arab regions to teach and explain tradition freely without disruption from the central government.[226]

The consequences of the Mongol destruction of Baghdad in 1258 and the decline of the Abbasids led to the importance of Sufi orders as new social institutions. They were mostly connected to urban merchant guilds and became significant to public and spiritual life, especially in cities like Cairo and Damascus. On the other hand, the separation between the rulers and the public deepened during this period. For instance, Egypt did not have a local ruler again until the military removal of King Farouk in 1952.

In the 18th century, this separation deepened due to foreign influence, disorder, and the absence of cultural and verbal connection between rulers and the people. For al-Dardir, the old united relationship between scholars and rulers no longer makes sense. He saw the suffering of Cairo's poor and the chaos under the leadership of figures like Ibrahim and Murad Bey. He responded to them fearlessly and spoke out. He even encouraged minor unrest to protect the people and sustain justice.[227]

Al-Jabarti recorded some of the incidents in his chronicle when a group of thieving *amirs* ravaged the countryside of the Nile Delta, robbing places like Rashid, Dasuq, and Zanklun. Their violence increased to the burning of churches and the complete ruination of Coptic villages. Among these *amirs* was Husayn Bey, who later reached Cairo to ravage, especially choosing the Husayniyya district. There, he attacked a servant's house, joined by one of the Azhar shaykhs. He took everything in the household. The next morning, the people from Husayniyya gathered with sticks, rods, and drums and marched to al-Azhar to

[226]Ibid., 288-90.
[227] Ibid., 290.

meet directly with al-Dardir. He listened to them cautiously and agreed, saying: "I am with you." The people then left al-Azhar. Al-Dardir then shut the gates of al-Azhar and took action to forcibly close the shops nearby as a dishonorable *munkara* act of protest. Afterward, al-Dardir spoke to the crowd with a great solution: "Tomorrow, we will summon the people of the surrounding areas in Bulaq and Old Cairo; then I will ride out with you, and we will plunder their houses as they plundered ours; we will either die as martyrs or God will grant us victory over them."

This brave announcement captured the attention of both the *amirs* and the Ottoman *aghas*. They rode out to al-Dardir and wanted a complete list of the stolen goods, so they promised their return. When Ibrahim Bey opposed Husayn Bey about the incident, Husayn Bey replied arrogantly, "We are all plunderers; you plunder, Murad Bey plunders, and I plunder." According to al-Jabarti, the tensions diminished. But in the end, the stolen items were never returned.

A few days later, something similar happened. A Mamluk bey stopped a ship that was bringing food to the students from Upper Egypt who lived in one of the *riwaqs* at al-Azhar. The students reacted strongly and brought the matter to al-Dardir, who led their *riwaq*. Al-Dardir immediately rode out with two Azhar shaykhs to confront the bey. After long discussions, they managed to recover some of the goods, but the bey kept most of the supplies.[228]

Another incident recorded by al-Jabarti happened during the yearly *mawlid* festival in Tanta, where al-Dardir visited the tomb of Ahmad al-Badawi. The local administrator *kashif* forced a tax of half a French riyal on each camel sold at the market. In the last days of the *mawlid*, some of the *kashif's* men laid hands on camels belonging to several *sharifs*. The *sharifs* tried to find justice and talked to al-Dardir. He rode out to the *kashif*, scolded him, and said, "You do not fear God!" Then, there was a large group behind him, and at one point, one of the *mawlid* attendees attacked the Kashif and got beaten up by the guards. The

[228] Ibid., 266-67.

situation eased finally after al-Dardir withdrew because of Ibrahim Bey's visit to convince him of their liability for peace and order.

These incidents display al-Dardir's significant social authority and the mass of his involvement. In addition, they mirror the declining impact of such influence under authority. Scholars like al-Dardir had a substantial role in maintaining social unity in earlier periods. However, their position to get involved sufficiently had clearly ended during this time.[229]

As explained by Mosaad, Al-Dardir criticized some scholars who desired influence and status at the cost of their honor. According to him, those scholars would "sell their souls" for official positions regardless of their lack of qualifications. As a Sufi shaykh, his attempts to keep religious knowledge dynamic and reachable- with public litanies and simple prayers- prove his actual concern for protecting the tradition under challenging circumstances.[230]

According to Mosaad, the well-established chronicles of scholarly depression during the Ottoman Empire must be re-examined. Instead of a time of decline, this period may be more accepted as one of transformation, where scholars like al-Dardir worked within a changing social and political region to secure the survival and continued importance of the Islamic tradition. Mosaad states that their methods may have changed, but their goal was to protect the tradition's spirit for future generations.[231]

The time in which al-Dardir lived was full of social and political shifts. Despite these changes, he kept his focus on teaching and spiritual work. This steady position shows how some scholars continued their roles without seeking public power or official recognition.

4.5 His Work

Al-Dardir was an amazingly productive scholar, having written around nineteen works. It seems he wrote more than his major masters, 'Ali al-Sa'idi and

[229] Ibid., 267.
[230] Ibid., 291.
[231] Ibid., 291.

Muhammad Salim al-Hifni. They were both leading figures at al-Azhar during their time. Al-Dardir's writings extend over a wide range of Islamic disciplines, including *'aqidah* (theology), f*iqh* (jurisprudence), *sirah* (biography of Prophet), *balaghah* (rhetoric), *tafsir* (Qur'anic exegesis), and *jadal* (dialectic). Most of his writings centered on three main subjects: jurisprudence, theology, and Sufism.[232]

Some of his most notable works are:

Manh al-Qadir fi Sharh Mukhtasar Khalil is a detailed commentary on the famous *Mukhtasar* of Khalil ibn Ishaq al-Jundi (d. 767/1366), an essential work in Maliki law. Completed in 1197/1783, it has become a main work for Maliki legal learning from Mauritania to Eastern Arabia.[233]

'Aqrab al-Masalik ila Madhhab al-Imam Malik is a treatise based on Khalil's *Mukhtasar*. However, this work focuses only on the dominant legal opinions shaped by al-Dardir. It was probably finished after Manh al-Qadir, perhaps his final legal writing.[234]

Al-Tawajuh al-Asna bi Nazm al-Asma al-Husna is a poetry of 68 lines using the 99 Names of Allah in prayer. His disciple, Ahmad al-Sawi (d. 1241/1826), noted that al-Dardir collected the whole work in one night. It is viewed as one of his last compositions.

Tuhfat al-Qari li Kitab al-Bari fi al-Mutashabih seems to address Qur'anic verses using anthropomorphic language.

*Tuhfat al-ikhwan fi'ilm al-Bayan i*s a brief treatise on metaphor and simile in Arabic rhetoric, apparently written on the recommendation of al-Zabidi.[235]

Sharh al-Dardir 'ala al-Adab al-'Adudiyya is a commentary on a treatise by 'Adud al-Din al-Iji in the area of *wad'* (definitions and the origin of linguistic usage).

Manzumat al-Munfarija

[232] Ibid., 41.
[233] Ibid., 42.
[234] Da'ber, "DERDÎR," 168-69; Mosaad, *Islam before Modernity*, 42.
[235] Da'ber, "DERDÎR," 169; Mosaad, *Islam before Modernity*, 42

Risalat al-'Iqd al-Wahid fi Idah al-Su'al 'an al-Tawhid is a short work in Ash'ari theology.

Al-Mawrid al-Bariq 'ala Ashraf al-Khala'iq is a collection of litanies and prayers focused on the Prophet.

Fath al-Qadir fi Ahadith al-Bashir is a collection that presents the opening hadiths from each general hadith collection.

Minhaj al-Sadiqin wa Tibyan al-Salikin is an unfinished treatise on Sufism. It begins with a central part of Ash'ari theology, which is influenced by the Ghazalian tradition.

Tuhfat al-Ikhwan fi Adab Ahl al-'Irfan is a text on Sufi manners and spiritual states, issuing practical guidance for seekers on the path.[236]

Asanif al-Kutub al-Sitta wa Asanaid al-A'imma al-'Arba'a is a collection of al-Dardir's scholarly authorizations *ijaza* in hadith literature and the four legal schools.

Al-Tahqiqat al-Ahmadiyya is a commentary on his theological poem, *al-Kharida al-Bahiyya*, which is finished in 1177/1763.

Mawlid al-Nabi is a poetic narration of the Prophet Muhammad's life and character. It published in Cairo in 1304, together with a commentary by Ibrahim al-Bajuri.[237]

Hashiyat al-Dardir 'ala Sharh al-Hudhudi 'ala al-Sanusiyya explains the commentary of *'Ali al-Sa'ifi on al-Sanusi's Umm al-Barahin*. This was a request from al-Hifni to supply a more accessible version for students.

Sharh al-Dardir 'ala Fawa'id al-Fara'id fi Dabit al-'Aqaid is a commentary on a theological treatise by Muhammad ibn Mustafa al-Bakri (d. 1196/1782).

Sharh al-Dardir 'ala 'Aqrab al-Masalik is his commentary on his earlier work. It remains one of the most studied Maliki texts in Egypt.

Hashiya 'ala Qissat al-Mi'raj is an interpretation of a narrative about the Prophet's Ascension by Najm al-Din al-Ghayti (d. 981/1573).[238]

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[236] Da'ber, "DERDÎR," 169; Mosaad, *Islam before Modernity*, 43.
[237] Da'ber, "DERDÎR," 169; Mosaad, *Islam before Modernity*, 44.
[238] Da'ber, "DERDÎR," 169; Mosaad, *Islam before Modernity*, 44.

Throughout all his works, his writings in Ash'ari theology and commentaries on Maliki law are considered the most noteworthy parts of his legacy. They continue to shape Islamic education in Egypt and elsewhere, significantly in traditional learning places.[239] His writings gained attention across different fields, especially in law and spirituality. They were used by both students and other scholars. His clear style and focus on ethical teachings helped shape how later readers understood the responsibilities of a scholar on the Sufi path.

[239] Mosaad, *Islam before Modernity*, 45.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has examined ‘Abd-Rahman al-Jabarti’s description of Sufism and Sufi life, significantly concentrating on the shaykhs such as Murtada al-Zabidi, ‘Abd-Allah al-Sharqawi, and Ahmad al-Dardir as presented in his comprehensive chronicle, *‘Aja’ib al-Athar fi al-Tarajim wa-al-Akhbar*. While each of these figures lived and worked in the same general historical setting, their approaches to Sufism, public engagement, and scholarship were different. By focusing on al-Jabarti's writings, this study shows how he described these scholars and how he engaged with Sufism as he perceived it, criticized certain aspects of it, and contributed to its transformation in a critical period of Ottoman Egypt.

However, trying to understand these shaykhs also meant taking a closer look at al-Jabarti. He was not just a neutral observer or only a chronicler. Studying in al-Azhar, having knowledge about Islamic sciences, and initiating the Khalwatiyya order all shaped the way he saw people and events. I came to see that his critical tone toward certain Sufi practices did not necessarily mean that he rejected Sufism altogether. On the contrary, this thesis has shown that al-Jabarti aimed to protect what he believed to be the original core of Sufism, which is rooted in knowledge, sincerity, discipline, and ethical awareness.[240]

In his writing, al-Jabarti does more than document political shifts or biographical data. In fact, he offers evaluations, moral reflections, and layered insights about the people he describes. For example, his account of al-Zabidi contains both admiration for his vast knowledge and concern about his place in elite and courtly circles. In addition, al-Jabarti describes al-Sharqawi as a capable leader during the colonial crisis but criticizes him for losing moral authority due to his political involvement. In contrast, he speaks of al-Dardir with consistent respect. He sees him as a balanced figure who is firm in his knowledge and gentle

[240] Winter, “The Sufi Personality of the Egyptian Historian ʿAbd Al-Raḥmān al-Jabarti (1753–1825)," 272.

in his manner. These differences are not accidental. Al-Jabarti's reactions reflect his values. Through them, he invites the reader to reflect as well.

My main argument is that al-Jabarti did not reject Sufism. Instead, he tried to protect what he saw as its true form, which is a tradition based on knowledge, sincerity, and spiritual ethics. Through the lives of al-Zabidi, al-Sharqawi, and al-Dardir, I found that Sufism in Ottoman Egypt had different faces: intellectual, political, and spiritual. Al-Jabarti admired al-Dardir's balance between knowledge and humility. He respected al-Zabidi's intellectual richness. However, he criticized al-Sharqawi's political ambition and superficial piety.

In this matter, *'Aja'ib al-Athar* is not just a historical work. In fact, it is a chronicle of judgments. Al-Jabarti builds on the Islamic tradition to evaluate his own time and its people. He doesn't simply record what happened. He tells us how to think about it, what to preserve, and what to be cautious of. He is not passive or neutral. His work expresses anxiety, admiration, and hope. This makes his chronicle different from many other historical sources from the period.

Working on this thesis also helped me see that al-Jabarti is far more than a typical historian. He brings together multiple worlds: tradition and modernity, rationalism and spirituality, critique and commitment. His chronicle has become one of the rare and still irreplaceable sources that allow us to understand Ottoman Egypt with nuance. Even if he copied earlier biographies or used materials from other scholars, his contribution is not minor. To collect, compare, evaluate, and represent such material with critical commentary across fields such as astronomy, mathematics, medicine, and politics is a significant intellectual achievement.[241] In that sense, *'Aja'ib al-Athar* deserves to be read not only as a historical source but as a mirror of a scholar who preserved the past while trying to warn the future.

I found it meaningful to compare the three shaykhs in my study and reflect on what they represent. Each of them offered a different model of Sufism and public leadership. Al-Zabidi appeared as the cosmopolitan and encyclopedic

[241] Moreh, Egyptian Historian' Abd al-Rahman al-Jabarti, 332.

scholar, a master of texts and language, deeply invested in reviving classical Islamic knowledge. Al-Sharqawi represented a more institutional and political figure. He is an Azhari leader who tried to resist colonial power but whose alliances drew al-Jabarti's criticism. On the other hand, al-Dardir stood out as a spiritual and pedagogical figure. He committed to inner purification, moral education, and serving society without seeking political influence.

For that reason, these comparisons made me think about my values. I saw in al-Dardir a model of balance and humility. In al-Zabidi, I admired the love of knowledge and the energy of intellectual curiosity. In al-Sharqawi, I understood the pressures of leadership and the moral risks it carries. These insights stayed with me after I finished the academic writing. They became part of my reflection on what Sufism and Islamic learning can still mean today.

In light of all this, I believe al-Jabarti's chronicle deserves even more attention. His work contains not only valuable historical facts but also deep spiritual and social questions. It is a bridge between Sufi ethics, Islamic history, and critical reflection.

While this thesis focused on three Sufi figures, *'Aja'ib al-Athar* includes many more personalities who could be studied in future work. Further research could compare al-Jabarti's method and worldview with other Muslim historians of the same period. It would also be valuable to research how his ideas influenced later generations of scholars, both inside and outside of Egypt. Moreover, comparative studies between Ottoman Egypt and regions like the Hijaz, the Maghreb, or South Asia may also reveal new understandings of shared Sufi traditions and their local adaptations.

In conclusion, this study has shown that Sufism, in al-Jabarti's writing, is a central concern, not minor but essential. His selective praise and criticism show a deep engagement with questions of spiritual tradition, ethical leadership, and public responsibility. Through his biographies of al-Zabidi, al-Sharqawi, and al-Dardir, we gain knowledge of the past and also tools to evaluate our present. I hope this thesis contributes to the ongoing interest in Sufism, Ottoman thought, and the enduring value of moral reflection in scholarship.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Al-Zabidi's Work List

1. *Abwab al-sa'ada wa-salasil al-siyada*
2. *Alfiyyat al-sanad*
3. *al-Amali al-hanafiyya*
4. *al-Amali al-Sayxuniyya*
5. *al-Anwar wa-l-hikam*
6. *'Aqilat al-atrab fi sanad at-tariqa wa-l-ahzab*
7. *al-Ara'is al-majluwwa fi dikr awliya' Fuwwa*
8. *Arba'una haditan fi r-rahma*
9. *al-Arba una al-mu'talafa fima warada min al-ahadit fi dikr Arafa*
10. *Arba una qasida fi madh al-imãm as-Safi'i*
11. *al- Arus al-majliyya fi turuq hadit al-awwaliyya*
12. *Asanid al-kutub as-sitta as-sihah*
13. *al-Azhar al-yani'a fi tafsir surat -al-Waqi'a-*
14. *Badl al-majhud fi taxrij hadit -Sayyabatni Hud-*
15. *Barnamaj li-bn axihi al-sayyid Basit 'Ali*
16. *Bulgat al-arib fi mustalah atãr al-habib*
17. *Bulug aqsa l-irab bi-Sarh <Dala il al-qurab>*
18. *Bulug aqsa I-maram fi bayan aaraf al-'ilm wa-ma yata'allaq bihi min al-ahkam*
19. *ad-Durra l-mudi a fi l-wasiyya al-murtadiyya alà al-tariqa al-mardiyya li-l-sada al-naqsbandiyya*
20. *al-Fajr al-babili fi tarjamat al-Babili*
21. *al-Fawa'id al-jalila ala musalsalat Ibn 'Aqila*
22. *al-Fayd al-fart fi asanid al-Bukhari*
23. *al-Fuyudat al-ilahiyya*
24. *Gayat al-amani fi nasab al-queb al-flani*
25. *Gayat al-ibtihaj li-muqtafi asanid Muslim b. al-Haijaj*
26. *Hadiqat al-safa fi waliday al-mustafa*

27. al-Hadiyya al-murtadiyya fi'l-Musalsal bi-l-awwaliyya

28. Halawat al-fanid fi irsal halawat al-asanid

29. Hikmat al-israq ila kuttab al-afaq

30. Husn al-muhadara fi adab al-baht wa-l-munazara

31. Husn al-takhbir (?) bi-l-qira'a'inda l-takbir

32. al-Hadiyya al-murtadiyya fi l-Musalsal bi-I-awwaliyya

33. al-Hadiyya wa-l-tuhfa bi-asma' ahl al-suffa

34. Hadiyyat al-ikhwan fi sajarat ad-duxxan

35. Al-ibtihaj bi-dikr amr al-hajj

36. Idah al-madarik min nasab al-'awatik

37. al-Ihtifal bi-yawm as-sabt min sawwal

38. Iklil al-jawahir al-galiya fi riwayat al-ahadit al-aliya

39. I'am al-a lam bi-manasik hajj bayt Allah al-haram

40. Inalat al-muna fi sirr al-kuna

41. Injaz al-haja al-massa fi tahqiq lafz <Sijilmasa>

42. Injaz wa'd as-sa'il fi sarh hadit Umm Zar' min <al-sama'il >

43. al-Insaf fi l-muhakama bain <al-Ithaf> wa-<al-is'af>

44. al-Intisar li-imam a'immat al-amsar

45. al-Intisar li-waliday an-nabi al-muxtar

46. 'Iqd al-jawhar al-tamin fi'l-dikr wa-turuq al-ilbas wa-l-talqin

47. 'Iqd al-jawhar al-tamin fi'l-hadit al-musalsal bi-l-Muhammadin

48. Iqd al-juman

49. Iqd al-juman fi ahadit al-jann

50. Iqd al-juman fi su'ab al-iman

51. Iqd al-la'ali al-muntatira fi hifz al-ahadit al-mutawatira

52. al-'Iqd al-mukallal bi-l-durr al-iqyani fi ijazat awlad sayxina al-Garyani

53. al- Iqd al-munazzam fi dikr ummahat al-nabi l-mukarram

54. al-Iqd al-nafis fi sulalat mawlana Idris

55. al-Iqd al-tamin fi hadit <utlubü l-ilm wa-law kana bi-l-sin>

56. al-Iqd al-tamin al-gal [sic] fi dikr asyaxi dawi l-afdal

57. Iqrar al-ayn bi-dikr man nusiba ila l-Hasan wa-l-Husayn

58. *Irsad al-ixwan ila l-axlaq al-hisan*
59. *Irtisaf al-zulaf man ja'a fi zulal <al-Is'af>*
60. *Is'af al-asraf*
61. *al-Is'af bi-l-Hadit al-musalsal bi-l-asraf*
62. *al-Is af fi'I-muhakama bayn <al-is'af wa-l-ithaf>*
63. *Isma as-summ fi tahqiq nasab as-Safi'i min al-umm*
64. *Ithaf al-asfiya' bi-salasil al-awliya'*
65. *Ithaf al-mubtadin bi-daruriyyat al-din*
66. *Ithaf as-sada l-muttagin bi-sarh < ihya' 'ulum a-din>*
67. *Ithaf al-safa fi salat al-mustafa*
68. *Ithaf sayyid al-hayy li-salasil bani Tayy*
69. *Ithaf al-khillan fi dabt lafz <lsbahan>*
70. *Ikhtisar masyakhat Abi 'Abdallah al-Bayani*
71. *Jadwat al-iqtibas fi nasab bani l-'Abbas*
72. *Juz' fi hadit <Ni'ma l-adam al-khall>*
73. *Juz' turuq al-hadit <Ismah yusmah laka>*
74. *Kasf al-gita' 'an as-salat al-wusta*
75. *Kasf al-litam 'an adab al-iman wa-l-islam*
76. *Kawtar n-nab' li-fatan jawhari l-tab'*
77. *Kifayat al-muhtaj fi dikr man tawalla (bi-)Misr imarat al-hujjaj*
78. *Kitab 'Ali b. 'Abdallah Mawla Ahmad Katkhuda Salih*
79. *Kitab al-radd 'ala man aba l-haqq wa-dda'a anna l-jahra bi-l-basmala min sunnat sayyid al-khalq*
80. *Kitab ar-raja' wa-l-khawf min al-munjiyat*
81. *Lugat al-la'ali al-mutanatira fi'l-ahadit al-mutawatira*
82. *Lugat al-la'ali min al-jawhar al-gali*
83. *Luqat al-murjan fi hadit al-jann*
84. *Lugtat al-'ajlan fi <laisa fi l-imkan abda' mimma kan>*
85. *Ma'arif al-abrar fima li-l-kuna wa-l-alqab min al-asrar*
86. *Managib ashab al-hadit*
87. *al-Manhaj al-qawim*

88. Manzuma fi mutasabihat surat <al-Rahman>

89. Manzuma fi asar al-jalala

90. Manzuma fi usul ilm ar-raml

91. al-Maqa'id al- indiyya fi l-masahid an-Naqshbandiyya

92. Maqama (for Hasan b. Salama at-Tayyibi al-Fuwwi)

93. Maqama (for Hasan b. Nur ad-Din al-Hanafi al-Maqdisi)

94. al-Maqama al-Dajwiyya

95. al-Maqama al-naqiyya (?)

96. al-Maqama al-sundusiyya

97. al-Maqama as-Sukaybaniyya

98. Masyakhat Sams ad-Din Turansah b. Ayyub

99. al-Mawahib al-jaliyya fima yata allaq bi-Hadit al-awwaliyya

100. al-Mawarid al-bahiyya fi I-tariqa al-Naqshbandiyya

101. al-Maw' iza al-hasana fi wada Sahr Ramadan al-mubarak

102. al-Mawlid al- atir al-Sarif wa-l-safar al-zahir al-munif

103. al-Minah al-aliyya fi l-tariqa al-Naqshbandiyya

104. Minah al-fuyudat al-wafiyya bima fi surat <ar-Rahman> min al-asrar al-Khafiyya

105. al-Minah fi ansab al-khayl

106. Minhat al-ma bud fi sarh < Risalat al-Maqsud>

107. Mi'raj al-haqa'iq fi l-ittisal bi-ahl al-haga'iq

108. al-Mirqat al-aliyya fi sarh al-Hadit al-musalsal bi-l-awwaliyya

109. Mu jam

110. al-Mujam al-sagir

111. Mu'jam Suyukh al-'allama 'Abd al-Rahman al-Ujhuri saykh al-qurra bi-Misr

112. Mu jam Suyikh al-hafiz Fakhr al-Din Abi 'Amr 'Utman b. Muhammad al-Daymi

113. Mu jam suyukh Abi l-Fadl al-Bukhari

114. Mu jam Suyukh saykh al-sajjada al-Wafa'iyya

115. al-Murabba al-Kabuli fi-man rawa'an al-Sams al-Babili

116. Musamarat al-habib

117. al-Musajjarat

118. *Muzil niqab al-khafa an kuna sadatina Bani l-Wafa*
119. *Nafahat rayahn al-rawd al-wardi fi stimar al-dawla al- utmaniyya ba' da khuruj al-mahdi*
120. *an-Nafha al-quddusiyya bi-wasitat al-bid'a al-'Aydarusiyya*
121. *Nahat al- anbar fi nasab al-Shaykh Iskandar*
122. *al-Nasab al-unsi fi nasab al-sayyid al-Qudsi*
123. *Nasq al-gawali min takhrij al- 'awali*
124. *Naswat al-irtiyah fi bayan haqiqat al-maysir wa-l-qidah*
125. *an-Nawafih al-miskiyya ala l-fawatih al-Kiskiyya*
126. *Nazm aqwal al-'ulama fi l-tifl al-musrik*
127. *Nisbat as-Sayyid Muhammad Efendi b. Hawwa bt. Ahmad*
128. *Nubda sarifa tatadamman asrar al-ism al-sarif Muhammad*
129. *Nuzhat al-anzar (?) wa-jala al-absar fi dikr fawa'id al-asrar*
130. *Qalansuwat at-taj fi ba'd ahadit sahib al-isra wa-l-mi'raj*
131. *Qasa id fi madh al-qutb Abi Farraj Ahmad al-Badawi*
132. *al-Qawl al-asadd fi hukm al-stimna bi-l-yad*
133. *al-Qawl al-mabtut fi tahqiq lafz <tabut>*
134. *al-Qawl al-masmu fi l-farq bain al-ku wa-l-kursu*
135. *al-Qawl al-muharrar al-zaki fi jazat Ahmad b. Muhammad al-Antaki*
136. *al-Qawl an-nafis fi nasab Mawlay Idris*
137. *al-Qawl as-sahih fi maratib at-ta'dil wa-t-tajrih*
138. *Qurrat al-ayn bima ja'a musalsalan fi I-haditayn bi-yawm 'Asura*
139. *ar-Radd ala man aba l-haqq wa-dda'a anna I-jahra bi--basmala min sunnat sayyid al-xalq*
140. *Raf al-daym 'an nasab Bani Tamim*
141. *Raf al-hijab al-kamin 'an ittisal al-qutb al-Badw [sic, = al-Badawì?] bi Abi'l-Hasan fi'l-batin*
142. *Raf al-istibah an managib <bismillah>*
143. *Raf al-kilal'an <al-'llal>*
144. *Raf niqab al-khafa 'amman intasaba ila Wafa wa-Abi'I-Wafa*
145. *Raf al-sitara fi nasab al-Hawwara*

146. *Raf al-sakwa li-alim as-sirr wa-n-najwa*
147. *Rasfat al-mudam al-maxtum al-bikri min safwat zulal siyag al-qutb al-*
148. *Rasf al-zulal min 'ayn al-hayat fi managib al-basmala wa-l-hamd wa-l-salat*
149. *Rasf sulaf al-rahiq fi nasab hadrat al-Siddiq*
150. *al-Rawd al-mi tar fi nasab al-sayyid Ja'far al-Tayyar*
151. *al-Rawd al-mu talaf fi takhi hadit <yahmilu hada l-ilm min kulli khalaf>*
152. *Rawh al-ruh bi-ma jara lana bi-Mahalla (?)*
153. *Rihlat*
154. *Risala fi ahadit tata' allaq bi-fadl yawm 'asura'*
155. *Risala fi ahkam al-nujum al-ma rufa bi-l-tamaniya*
156. *Risala fi asma bi'r Zamzam*
157. *Risala fi asma al-Madina al-munawwara*
158. *Risala fi fara'id al-basmala*
159. *Risala fi hukm as-sama'*
160. *Risala fi htilaj al-a'da*
161. *Risala fi 'ilm al-arud*
162. *Risala fi lubs al-khirqa wa-talqin ad-dikr*
163. *Risala fi ma'na l-'isr*
164. *Risala fi l-manast wa-l-saffayn*
165. *Risala fi tabaqat al-huffaz*
166. *Risala fi tahqiq hal an-tabi'I Ahi Salim Sufyan b. Hami al-Jaysani al-mutawaffa fi'l-Iskandariyya*
167. *Risala fi tahqiq lafz al-ijaza*
168. *Risala fi tahqiq qawl Abi'l-Hasan al-Sadili <laysa min al-karam>*
169. *Risala fi tarjamat Uways al-Qarani*
170. *Risala fi usul al-ma'amma*
171. *Risala (for Idris b. Murtada al-Akhiskawi)*
172. *Risala (for 'Abd al-Mun'im al-Fazzami)*
173. *Risala ila Sulayman b. Yahya al-Ahdal*
174. *Safinat al-najat al-muhtawiya 'ala l-bida'a al-muzjat min al-fawa'id al-muntaqat*
175. *Sama <Tulatiyyat al-Bukhari>*

176. *Sanad al-Hadit al-musalsal bi-l-awwaliyya*
177. *Sanad <al-Hamasa>*
178. *Sigat al-qutb al-khami*
179. *as-Sukkar al-qasri fi ijazat al-saykh Hassuna al-Qasrì*
180. *as-Subiyya wa-khawassuha*
181. *al-Saraf al-marum fi nasab asraf al-Rum*
182. *Sarh < Hizb al-barr» li-I-sadili*
183. *Sarh khutbat al-Saykh Muhammad al-Buhayri al-Burhani ala tafsir surat ‹Yunus›*
184. *Sarh al-sadr fi sarh asma' ahl Badr*
185. *Sarh al-siga al-mutalmasa*
186. *Sarh sigat al-sayyid al-Badawi*
187. *Sarh al-silsila al-Wafa'iyya*
188. *Sarh talat siyag li-Abi l-Hasan al-Bakrì*
189. *Tafsir surat « Yunus» ala lisan al-qawm*
190. *al-Taftis fi ma'na lafz < dirwis>*
191. *Taj al-arús min jawahir <al-Qamus>*
192. *Al-Tagrid fi l-Hadit al-musalsal bi-yawm al-'id*
193. *At-Tahbir fi l-hadit al-musalsal bi-l-takbir*
194. *Tahqiq al-wasa il li-ma'rifat al-mukatabat wa-l-rasa'il*
195. *Tanqiqat fi l-ansab*
196. *Takmila 'ala sarh hizb al-Bakri*
197. *At-Takmila wa-l-dayl wa-l-sila lima fata sahib ‹al-Qamüs› min al-luga*
198. *Ta'liq al-suruj 'ala-I-duruj*
199. *at-Ta'liqa al-jalila bi-ta'liq <Musalsalat ibn Aqila>*
200. *Ta'liqat 'ala <Kitab al-musajjar al-kassaf li-usul al-sada al-asraf>*
201. *Tanbih al- arif al-basir 'ala asrar <al-Hizb al-kabir>*
202. *Tansig qalã id al-minan fi tahqia kalãm al-Sädili Abrl-Hasan*
203. *Tagriz: Tashifyya*
204. *at-Ta'rif bi-daruri 'ilm al-tasrif*
205. *at-Ta'rikh al-kabir li-ahl al-qarn al-tani 'asar*

206. *Tarwih al-qulub bi-dikr muluk Bani Ayyub*
207. *Tasliyat al-kabd al-harra bi-dikr Bani l-Zahra*
208. *Takhmis <al-Burda al-sarifa>*
209. *Takhmis <qasidat al-qat>*
210. *Takhrij ahadit al-arba in an-Nawawiyya*
211. *Takhrij hadit <Man kadiba 'alayya muta'ammidan>*
212. *Takhrij hadit <Ni'ma l-idam al-khall>*
213. *Takhrij tumaniyyat Sitt as-Sam Munisa Khatun al-muhaddita al-mu' ammara*
214. *Tibb al-qulub fi wasiyyat al-habib li-l-mahbüb*
215. *al-Tiraz al-'asjadi fi nasab khulafa al-maqam al-Ahmadi*
216. *al-Tiraz al-mudahhab fi sarh qasidat al-Baz al-ashab*
217. *Tuhfat al-albab fi ma'rifat al-alqab*
218. *Tuhfat al- id*
219. *Tuhfat ikhwan az-zaman fi hukm qahwat al-Yaman*
220. *Tuhfat al-qama'il fi madh sayyid al-'arab Isma'il*
221. *at-Tuhfa al-qudsiyya fi dawabit qawa'id al-farisiyya*
222. *Tuhfat a-wadud fi khatm <Sunan Abi Dawud>*
223. *'Ujalat al-'abir fi bahtay al-mudari wa-l-gabir*
224. *'Uqud al-jawahir al-munifa fi adillat madhab al-imam Abi Hanifa*
225. *Zahr al-akmam al-munsaqq 'an juyub al-ilham bi-sarh sigat sidi 'Abd al-Salam*[242]

Reichmuth listed other poems from al-Jabarti's chronicle, the *Mu'jam*, the *Safina*, and other sources not included in the above list.

He also listed the other *ijazat*, who al-Zabidi wrote for:

'Abd al-Rahman b. Muhammad b. Duwayy al-Gadamisi,

'Abd ar-Rahman al-Saykhuni,

Abu 'Abdallah Muhammad al-Bukhari b. al-Hajj Bu Tahir al-Filali,

Abu l-Amana Jibril b. 'Umar al-Aqdasi and his son 'Umar,

Abu Muhammad Zayyan al-'Iraqi al-Fasi,

Abu Ra's al-Mu'askari,

Ahl al-Rasidiyya,

[242] Reichmuth, *The World of Murtada Al-Zabidi (1732-91),* 98-148.

Ahl Qusantina,

Ahmad b. ‘Ubayd al-‘Attar,

al-‘Arabi b. al-Mu’ti al-Sarqi,

al-Dustur al-a’azam Abi’l-Muzaffar Muhammad Basa,

al-Hajj Balqasim b. ‘Ali Zayn al-‘Abidin b. Hasim al-‘Iraqi al-Fasi,

Hammuda al-Maqasiyi,

Kamal al-Din al-Gazzi,

Muhammad Bannis,

Muhammad b. ‘Abd al-Salam al-Nasiri,

Muhammad b. Hafiz b. Hasim al-Qadiri al-Fasi,

Muhammad b. Hammuda al-Hasani al-Tunisi al-Saffar,

‘Umar al-Mu’addib, Muhammad b. Ismail al-Rab’i,

Muhammad al-Mukhtar b. Muhammad al-Mi’tawi ad-Damrawi,

Muhammad b. Muhammad b. al-Amir Ahmad b. al-Amir ‘Abd al-Qadir b.’Izz al-Din b. ‘Abd al-Aziz b. al-Sams Muhammad, known as al-Amir Muhamamd al-sagir,

Muhammad Sadiq b. Ahmad al-Nakdi (?) al-Hanafi,

Muhammad Sa’id b. ‘Abdallah b. al-Husayn… al-‘Abbasi al-Duri al-Bagdadi, known as Ibn al-Suwaydi,

Muhmmad b. Muhammad Sakik al-Gazzi,

Muhammad b. Yusuf, al-Najib Abu l-tashil Kamal ad-Din Ahmad Efendi,

al-Sayyid Hamza b. al-Naqib al-Dimashqi,

Sulayman b. Taha al-Akrasi al-Hurayti,

al-Sultan Abu’l-Fath ‘Abd al-Hamid Khan,

al-Taranbati,

‘Umar al-Amidi al-Diyarbakri,

al-Ussabi,

‘Utman b. Mahmud al-Hazari al-Qadiri al-Bagdadi and

‘Utman b. Salim b. Salama b. Yusuf al-Wardani.

Reichmuth wrote a little description for every work, poem, and ijazat, including manuscript details, references, and publications, if available.[243]

[243] Reichmuth, *The World of Murtada Al-Zabidi (1732-91)*, 140-48.