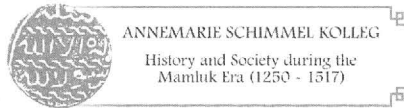


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Stephan Conermann (ed.)

Everything is on the Move

The Mamluk Empire as a Node in (Trans-)Regional
Networks

With 19 figures

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Henning Sievert (Bonn/Zürich)

Family, friend or foe? Factions, households and interpersonal relations in Mamluk Egypt and Syria

“But a great lord of the mamlüks by the name of Qānṣawh Ḥamsumi’a claimed the sultanate for himself, because in his opinion, no heathen born should be sultan. So he assembled his party of about three thousand mamlüks and laid siege to the castle to expel the [preceding sultan’s son], since whoever gained the upper hand would become sultan.”¹

1. Introduction

Compared to most medieval kingdoms, the sociopolitical makeup of the Mamluk sultanate must have made a rather peculiar impression on visitors.² In fact, the functioning and relative stability of this polity defy much of conventional wisdom in Europeanist social science and history.³ Mamluk Studies can thus significantly contribute to historical scholarship by employing an adapted anthropological approach, which may also help to provide common ground for discussion with neighbouring fields.⁴ The purpose of this contribution is therefore to suggest that some aspects of social network analysis can be utilised to improve our understanding of Mamluk politics and society. Ten years ago, I

1 “[I]tem aber nv was noch eyn groysser here van den memeloicken, Kamsauwe Hasmansmea geheysschen, der warf sich off vur eynen zoldain, as he vermeynt dat geyn geboren heyde zoldain sulde sijn. soe hadde he zo sijnre parthijen wael drij dusent mameloicken, dae myt he tzouch vur dat sloss drij dage lijgen, den jungen zo verdrijuen, as wer oeuerrhand beheldt der blijfft zoldain” (Arnold von Harff, *Die Pilgerfahrt des Arnold von Harff von Cöln durch Italien, Syrien, Aegypten, Arabien, Aethiopien, Nubien, Palästina, die Türkei, Frankreich und Spanien, wie er sie in den Jahren 1496 bis 1499 vollendet, beschrieben und durch Zeichnungen erläutert hat...* Ed. Eberhard von Grootte. Köln 1860, p. 87).

2 For the comments of late-fifteenth century visitors from the Latin west, like von Harff, see Haarmann, “Joseph’s Law.”

3 Cf. Conermann/Haarmann, 209 – 40.

4 As my approach is inevitably influenced by “Western” scholarship in general and germanophone academic discourse in particular, I will not engage in the rather unfruitful discussion as to whether or in what sense culturally “neutralised” concepts are philosophically possible, but would recommend to adapt analytical concepts to the concrete context at hand.

put forward this idea on a modest level⁵ in an attempt to make sense of power struggles for succession to the throne in the 15th century. At that time, I was unaware of Amalia Levanoni's seminal article on "The Sultan's Laqab" that was published simultaneously and – although concentrating mainly on promotion patterns and rebellion – confirmed much of what I had been arguing with regard to succession struggles. Based on extensive research and profound knowledge of the sources, her article broadens the basis for edging our conceptual tools. Without actually alluding to a network perspective, Levanoni suggests that Mamluk factionalism should not be imagined like a mechanism, but that we should differentiate the quality of relationships – the actual strength of ties and the actors' individual agency.⁶ The book of Jo van Steenbergen about *Order out of Chaos* (2006) poses similar questions, but refers to the 14th century and does not explicitly pay attention to a network approach either. Nevertheless, the impressive material and intriguing explanations assembled in that inspiring book considerably improve our understanding of Mamluk⁷ politics, especially as van Steenbergen has recently initiated the compilation of a prosopographical database that is bound to become a major research tool for network-related research.⁸

These studies have contributed substantially to the field. However, it would be helpful to refine the conceptual framework to interpret Mamluk politics and society, as the impact of elite slavery on social networks and political factions are of interest from a broader historical as well as anthropological point of view. Key terminologies in this contribution are the concepts of network, faction, and household. As these terms are often referred to rather loosely or even interchangeably, mirroring quotidian usage, differentiating and sharpening these tools should lead to a better understanding of political dynamics in the Mamluk context. On the following pages, I will first briefly dwell on social network analysis and some suitable sources and then suggest a tentative typology of relationships between individuals, namely ascribed relations of kinship and origin as well as acquired relations of patronage and friendship that can be

5 *Der Herrscherwechsel im Mamlukenreich: Historische und historiographische Studien zu Abū Ḥāmid al-Qudsi und Ibn Tağribirdī*. Berlin 2003. This contribution is based on the second part of that book, but several points have been revised. For a study guided by a network approach towards an 18th century context, cf. my *Zwischen arabischer Provinz und Hoher Pforte: Beziehungen, Bildung und Politik des osmanischen Bürokraten Rāğīb Mehmed Paşa (st. 1763)*. Würzburg 2008.

6 Levanoni, "Laqab", 88.

7 The adjective Mamluk (with capital 'M') indicates "the totality of the state, society and culture", while the spelling *mamlūk* refers to "an individual who has that legal and social status" (Richards, 40).

8 For the Mamluk Political Prosopography Project, see www.Mamluk.ugent.be/node/4 [9.2.2013].

identified in the Mamluk context. In the following section, pertinent concepts of households and factions will be explained that form the basis for succession struggles. To shed some light on the political process of which they formed part, we will then turn to the archetypical crisis of Mamluk politics, namely, succession to the sultanate. Every struggle for succession was not only a key political event (and an ordeal for those involved), but also a moment of crisis that allows us to uncover the dynamics at work, because sources reporting on it reveal details on relations they would normally have been silent about. For this reason, several examples substantiating the suggestions made in this chapter are related to 15th century succession struggles; particularly two fairly typical instances will be referred to, namely the succession to al-Mu'ayyad Ṣayḥ in 1421⁹ and the succession to aẓ-Zāhir Ğaḡmaq in 1453.¹⁰

1.1. Social Networks

Although network analysis has become well-established as a method and an interpretive perspective in the social sciences,¹¹ historians of the Middle East have remained reluctant in considering its potential. This, however, is starting to change.¹² So far, the majority of these studies employ this type of analysis in a qualitative or metaphorical way,¹³ utilising concepts, propositions and methods of network analysis by adapting them to the concrete cultural and historical

9 See the analytical narrative in Sievert, *Herrscherwechsel*, 111 – 123. This was the first instance of Circassian succession, which privileged the regent and seems to have served as a model for several subsequent succession struggles. As a result, aẓ-Zāhir Ṭaṭar ascended the throne.

10 See Sievert, *Herrscherwechsel*, 123 – 132. When this struggle occurred, the Circassian succession had already become an established practice, but unlike several sultans before him, Ğaḡmaq refrained from appointing a regent and instead strove to make his adult son al-Manṣūr 'Uṭmān his actual successor. In the end, the elderly al-Aṣraf Īnāl became the next sultan.

11 For an historical overview of network research, see Freeman, *Development*.

12 During the late 1990s and the early 2000s, a research group on Islamic networks of education led by Stefan Reichmuth and Michael Kemper at Bochum University, explored the possibilities of network analysis for the study of Muslim societies. Starting with the article of Loimeier/Reichmuth and Loimeier's edited volume *Die islamische Welt als Netzwerk*, several monographs have been published by members of this research group (listed in Sievert, *Zwischen arabischer Provinz und Hoher Pforte*, 24; see also Reichmuth, *World*). Several scholars of European history have produced sophisticated studies based on network analysis, so that a basis for comparative work is already being established. For an overview of network-oriented research in European history, see, Reinhardt, "Blick" and Reitmayer/Marx, "Netzwerkansätze;" cf. also Polexe, 34.

13 Harders, 17 – 52. This should not be confused with quantitative network analysis, which requires a body of suitable sources (see, e. g., Reichmuth, *World*). By contrast, ethnological research can rely on a relatively comprehensive documentation of relational data.

context that has generated the sources in question. Such an adapted network perspective can significantly enrich conventional philological and historical approaches without necessarily forcing modern concepts onto the historical actors' world view. Due to the fragmentary nature of historical sources, a comprehensive network can rarely be constructed. Our knowledge of its structure will therefore always be limited; but this holds also true for most contemporary networks. In spite of historical distance, we should keep in mind that the source basis of many studies in the social sciences is also far from unassailable, as – for instance – contemporary interviewees depend on their partners' trust and mutual comprehension as much as historians depend on interpreting the sources.¹⁴ However, the network perspective can lead to entirely new questions and readings of the sources, or it might reveal indirect connections like, for example, links of female relatives.¹⁵ Retrieving verifiable connections between individuals may prove useful where they would otherwise be overlooked, but even proof of their existence alone does not necessarily support further-reaching conclusions. Besides, evidence of a relationship usually represents a snapshot in time, while its content, strength and other characteristics are subject to change.

The basic assumption of the network approach is that people form relations with each other and can use them to achieve their goals. Their actions form and influence a network's configuration, which enables and supports or hinders and inhibits their action.¹⁶ The relations consist of material or immaterial exchange, like information, affection, money, property, offices, prestige, or protection, which means that they are also inherently power relations.¹⁷ From this perspective, connections and positions within a configuration are more important than common traits or cohesion. Hence, individual action is less determined by group membership, gender, estate, class or milieu than it is by the individual's position in and relations with his or her social environment or field. The existence of social boundaries and identity is of course not denied, but a network perspective enables us to perceive connections crossing such boundaries.¹⁸ The

14 In this vein, Raoul Motika doubts the applicability of network analysis onto post-soviet Azerbaijan because of the difficulty of obtaining reliable information (Motika, 132–3).

15 Some examples for female connections are given in Sievert, *Zwischen arabischer Provinz*, 138–9, 306–7, 311, 339–41.

16 Schweizer, 119–145.

17 Cf. Elias' "balances of power" (Machtbalancen) in social configuration (Elias, 11). For the pervasive tension between network structure and individual agency, or determinism and instrumental rationality versus cultural/historical conditions and meaning, see, e.g., Emirbayer/Goodwin.

18 Schweizer, 112–3; Harders, 19–20. It is important to keep in mind that network analysis is not a theory, but a method or a perspective that does not claim to describe or predict identity, motivation or agency.

structure of a social network can be characterised in several ways,¹⁹ but for the present context, only three concepts have to be considered: firstly, direction, which refers to the symmetrical or asymmetrical quality of a dyadic relation;²⁰ secondly, density – the level of connection among the “participants” in a network (i. e., realised vs. potential relations);²¹ and finally, the centrality of an actor within the network, which can be examined in several perspectives.²² Based on these concepts, this contribution suggests a qualitative approach to elucidate modes of relationships, household and faction building within the limits of the sources.

1.2. Sources

As Mamluk Egypt and Syria produced a remarkable number of written sources, it is possible to study their culture and society with a particular focus on interpersonal relations.²³ Preferably, a single source or a corpus of sources can be identified that are especially well-suited for a network approach; if this is not the case, historians have to collect bits and pieces from a plethora of sources related to the actors they are interested in. Either way, certain source types lend themselves more easily to a social network approach than others. In this regard, the most relevant type of sources are certainly the numerous biographical dictionaries from the Mamluk era, which contain information about an individual’s family, teachers, enemies etc., and which are of course heavily influenced by the intention and perspective of the compiler. In some cases, a biographical dictionary can be interpreted as the author’s ego-net,²⁴ because he included all

19 See, in general, Scott, 63–145 and Jansen, 69–162. Considerations of this kind contributed substantially to the studies mentioned in footnote 9 but shall not be pursued in this article, because it was impossible to do the necessary amount of additional work on the sources.

20 Scott, 47–9 and 68–9; cf. Jansen, 142–181.

21 Scott, 69–81; Jansen, 108–112.

22 Degree-based, local centrality considers an actor’s direct connections, closeness-based global centrality also includes the indirect connections and betweenness centrality measures his importance as an intermediary (Jansen, 127–53 and Scott, 82–9). As in the present context many relationships are directed (especially patronage), it would also be appropriate to use the concept of prestige, but this cannot be done in this contribution. Besides, the scarcity or absence of connections is significant, as well. Therefore, structural holes and weak ties are significant because, for instance, an actor who has a weak relation with two otherwise unconnected clusters may be marginal to both of them, but become crucial as a connector (cutpoint) between the two clusters (Granovetter, “The strength of weak ties” and idem, “A network theory revisited”; Burt, *Structural Holes*).

23 Stephen Humphreys has already emphasised the necessity and, indeed, possibility of studies in Mamluk households, factions and prosopography (Humphreys, 227–8).

24 As, apart from shipwrecked people or hermits, all humans are directly or indirectly connected with each other, the scope of the network under study has to be defined. A practical

persons important to himself. He may as well have wanted to display – for instance – his own family’s dignity as represented by its relations with respected contemporaries, or by metaphorical networks with certain traditions or even with his ancestors.²⁵ Autobiographical writings like those of Ibn Ḥaldūn, as-Suyūṭī or Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī, provide similar information on the relations of individuals.²⁶ So far, historiographical sources have scarcely been investigated with regard to interpersonal relations. Some chronicles address political relations quite directly, particularly when they come to the surface in times of crisis; for example, Ibn Taġribirdī paid special attention to struggles among the Mamluk emirs and their various plots, alliances and animosities.²⁷ Apart from various scholarly chronicles and world histories, diary-like “private chronicles” have also been discovered²⁸ and may occasionally offer insights into networks of less prominent actors. Apart from sources that more or less concentrate on interpersonal relations, traces of them can be found in literary sources like anthologies,²⁹ collections of letters,³⁰ encomiastic compositions,³¹ “blurbs” (*ta-qārīz*),³² or in manuscripts themselves as marginal notes, dedications or owner’s marks as well as in reading certificates.³³ Most of these sources belong to ‘ulamā’ contexts, which are also well-covered by biographical dictionaries, while non-‘ulamā’ would rather be referred to in sets of legal or commercial documents, especially endowment deeds and their administration.³⁴ The case studies on

solution for this requirement is focusing on an ego-net, which encompasses the direct relations of an actor declared as the centre as well as his indirect relations, but only including a certain number of intermediaries.

25 Cf. Reichmuth, “Beziehungen”.

26 See Reynolds, esp. 79–86 and 202–7. Ibn Ḥaldūn’s autobiography has been published some time ago as *at-Taṭrīf bi-Ibn Ḥaldūn wa-riḡlatihi ġarban wa-šarqan*. Ed. Muḡammad at-Taḡwī at-Taḡḡī, Cairo 1951.

27 His interest in the affairs of commoners was admittedly much less pronounced (Perho, 107–120). Apart from the well-known reference works, an amount of information on Ibn Taġribirdī has been compiled in the celebratory anniversary volume *al-Mu’arriḡ Ibn Taġribirdī Ģamāl ad-Dīn Abū l-Maḡāsin Yūsuf 812–874 h.*, collectively published by al-Hay’a al-Miṡriyya al-‘amma li-l-Kitāb, Cairo 1974.

28 See the edition of Ibn Ṭawq’s journal: Šihāb ad-Dīn Aḡmad Ibn Ṭawq, *at-Taṭīq. Muḡakkirāt Šihāb ad-Dīn Aḡmad Ibn Ṭawq, 874–915 h. / 1430–1509 m. Muḡakkirāt kutibat bi-Dimašq fī awāḡir al-‘ahd al-mamlūkī 885–908 h. / 1580–1502 m.* Ed. Ģa’far al-Muḡāġir. 4 vols., Damascus 2000–2007. For an “autobiographical chronicle,” see Guo, 101–21.

29 Bauer, “Literarische Anthologien,” with a list of 90 Mamluk-era anthologies.

30 A *maġmū’at inšā’* has recently been edited by Veselý, *Rauschgetränk*.

31 For this genre (Widmungsschriften), see Veselý, “Ibn Nāhid,” 157–8 and 164–5, Holt, “Offerings,” 3–6 and idem, “Biographies,” 19–27.

32 Rosenthal, “Blurbs;” Veselý, “Ibn Nāhid’s As-Sira aš-Šayḡiya” and idem, “Der Taqriṡ;” Levani, “Sirat al-Mu’ayyad,” and eadem, “Who was.”

33 See Leder/Sawwās/Šāġirġī as well as Leder, “Hörerzertifikate” and, for the Zangid and Ayyubid periods, Hirschler, 73–92

34 For example, people who were close to Ibn Taġribirdī are mentioned in his endowment deed

succession struggles this contribution refers to are based on chronicles, mainly Ibn Taġrībirdī's *an-Nuġūm az-zāhira*, which was supplemented by al-'Aynī's *Iqd al-ġumān*, Ibn Ḥaġar's *Inbā' al-ġumr* and the *Tārīḥ al-Malik al-Ašraf Qāyrbāy* that should probably be attributed to Abū Ḥāmid al-Qudṣī,³⁵ as well as the biographical dictionaries of Ibn Taġrībirdī, *al-Manhal aš-šāfi*, and of as-Saḥāwī, *aḍ-Ḍaw' al-lāmi*:

2. Types of relations

Among the first adaptations of network analytical concepts to premodern contexts was Wolfgang Reinhard's *Verflechtungsgeschichte*.³⁶ In his study of early modern Roman clergy, Reinhard identified four ideal types³⁷ of relations: kinship, friendship, patronage and common origin. Kinship and common origin are ascribed relationships that can be, but are not necessarily, activated by explicitly forming ties. By contrast, friendship and patronage are purposefully formed for mutual benefit, often with considerable effort. All this may sound rather technical, but we must not forget that relationships like these formed an important part of an individual's life.³⁸ These ideal types are not usually employed in

(Hamza, 147 – 151). The private documents of a family of *mamlūk* origin in Aleppo is treated in Saghbini, *Urkunden*. For published documents in general, see the Mamluk Bibliography provided by the University of Chicago www.lib.uchicago.edu/mideast/Mamluk and the services of the International Society of Arabic Papyrology at www.ori.uzh.ch/isap.html [9.2.2013].

35 For further information on al-Qudṣī and his work, see Sievert, *Herrscherwechsel*, 9 – 53, and idem, “Abū Ḥāmid al-Qudṣī.” In: *Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle*. Ed. Graeme Dunphy, Leiden 2010, vol. I, p. 6 – 7. In the meantime, the text has been published, based on different manuscripts, as *Tārīḥ al-Malik al-Ašraf Qāyrbāy* by 'Umar 'Abd as-Salām Tadmurī (Şaydā 2003). As the *Tārīḥ* does not give an author's name, Tadmurī treats it as an anonymous work, but Cook and Haarmann concur in its attribution to al-Qudṣī (Cook, “Abū Ḥāmid al-Qudṣī;” Ulrich Haarmann, “Einleitung”).

36 Reinhard, *Freunde*. Cf. also idem, *Papstfinanz* and idem (ed.), “Führungsgruppen.” The further development is described in Reinhardt, “Blick.” Reinhard suggested to use the term *Verflechtungsgeschichte* for a historical variety of network analysis. Unfortunately, the German historians' community preferred the clumsy loan translation *Netzwerk* and uses the term *Verflechtungsgeschichte* for the recent approach of Entangled History.

37 They have to be addressed as such because they might overlap, intersect or even merge (Reinhard, *Freunde*, 40; Pflücke, 9 and Lind, 124). I use “types” and “modes” interchangeably; the former stresses the ideal typical, and the latter the transactional aspect of interpersonal relations.

38 Despite taking a specific cultural form, neither of these types are in themselves particular to Europe, nor to the Middle East, but rather provide common ground for comparison. Apart from the mentioned types or modes, further types like religious or economic relationships (e.g., between *šayḥ* and *murīd*, or between creditor and debtor) should be included as well, but that goes beyond the scope of this contribution.

network analysis, but they can be operationalised for historical contexts and can also be found, *mutatis mutandis*, in the Mamluk context.

2.1. Ascribed relations of kinship

Kinship is an ascribed genealogical relationship, which can also be acquired by marriage or other arrangements.³⁹ As slaves, *mamlūks* were supposedly cut off from their kin. Therefore, kinship ties that are mentioned in the sources have received a certain amount of attention, but as for their slave status, it is important to stress that *mamlūks* have to be distinguished from common slaves as part of the military and, by extension, of the elite. For this reason, Ze'evi holds that Orlando Patterson's concept of social death is not fully applicable to elite slaves, because most of them were more than a "social extension of the owner", being allowed to have families or even maintain relations with their original families.⁴⁰ Within the Mamluk elite, biological kinship was supposed to matter much less than the artificial ties of military slavery, i. e., "the Mamluk's loyalty to his master, solidarity among Mamluks serving the same master (*khushdā-shiyyah*), and the concept of a 'one-generation nobility'."⁴¹ The latter phrase, coined by David Ayalon, epitomises this special feature of Mamluk society: freshly imported adolescents who had been bought by an emir, lacking any other ties, and family ties in particular, had to adapt to their master's household where they were not only converted to Islam and trained in martial arts, but also lived decisive years of their life until they were manumitted and equipped as *mamlūk* warriors.⁴² Instead of family ties, they developed a familial affection for the other household members: the master (*ustād*) who had manumitted them expected their loyalty and their fellow *mamlūks* (*ḥuṣḍāšūn*) their solidarity.⁴³ The political and military advantages of the Mamluk "system" had already intrigued Ibn Ḥaldūn, a resident of the Mamluk realm for more than twenty years. He was fascinated by the fact that the system seemed to solve the problem of waning *ʿaṣabiyya*, which, according to his theory, many dynasties had been suffering from. Ibn Ḥaldūn praises the *mamlūks*' religious zeal (*ʿazā'im imāniyya*) and nomadic virtues (*aḥlāq badawiyya*) and adds:

39 For the case of milk siblings, see Ze'evi, 76–7.

40 Ze'evi, 74–5; but cf. Yosef, 56 and 69.

41 Cited after Yosef, 55; see also Richards, 32.

42 Ayalon, "L'esclavage," 1–20 and idem, "Novice," 1–8. Cf. Haarmann, "Osten", 223–5.

43 As Carl Petry put it: "allegiance through isolation" (*Protectors*, 73). See Ayalon, "Aristocracy," 206 and idem, "L'esclavage," 29–31.

“When people of group feeling (*‘aşabiyyah*) take as followers (*iştāna‘a*) people of another descent; or when they take slaves and clients (*mawālī*) into servitude and enter into close contact with them, as we have said, the clients and followers (*muştāna‘ūn*) share in the group feeling of their masters and take it on as if it were their own group feeling.”⁴⁴

The only drawback of this ingenious system seems to have been that the civilian population was regularly terrorised by unruly *mamlūk* warriors.⁴⁵ However, numerous violations of the ‘one-generation nobility’ guideline suggest that reality did not necessarily conform to the ideal – be it in the area of slave upbringing and training, loyalty to the master and intra-*mamlūk* solidarity, or with regard to the importance of genealogical kinship and passing on elite status to the next generation.⁴⁶ Belonging to a Mamluk household established artificial kinship ties, which were represented by fictitious family relations with the *ustād* as a pseudo-father⁴⁷ and brotherhood (*uḥūwa*) between slave recruits, which indicated a very close relation between *mamlūks* who had grown up together.⁴⁸ A quasi-kin relationship between a master, his family and his slaves who lived in

44 Mottahedeh, 89–90, citing Ibn Ḥaldūn, *The Muqaddimah* I, 276, translated by Franz Rosenthal, Princeton 1967. A corresponding usage of *iştīnā‘* (training, educating, fostering, but also artificially producing, as derived from the root ṢN‘) is documented in Forand, 60. In another passage, Ibn Ḥaldūn revisits the *mamlūks*’ recruitment and its advantages for Islam: “By means of slavery they learn glory and blessing and are exposed to divine providence; cured by slavery, they enter the Muslim religion with the firm resolve of true believers and yet with nomadic virtues unsullied by debased nature [...]. The slave merchants bring them to Egypt in batches [...], and government buyers have them displayed for inspection and bid for them, raising their price above their value. They do this not in order to subjugate them, but because it intensifies loyalty, increases power, and is conducive to ardent zeal. [...] Thus, one intake comes after another and generation follows generation, and Islam rejoices in the benefit which it gains through them, and the branches of the kingdom flourish with the freshness of youth” (cited in Northrup, 242–3).

45 Thorau, 374–7. According to Thorau, these unfortunate side effects could only be contained when there was war, danger to the system itself and a militarily capable sultan (which only coincided in 1260–93).

46 For complaints about a breakdown of good education, see Haarmann, “Osten,” 248, al-Qudṣī, *Duwal*, 128–131. Deviations from loyalty and solidarity are mentioned abundantly in historiographical sources; see, e.g., Levanoni, *Turning Point*, and idem, “Laqab.” For contemporary and intergenerational family ties, Haarmann, “The sons,” idem, “Joseph’s Law,” Richards, “Mamluk amirs,” Broadbridge, “Sending,” Yosef, “Mamluks.”

47 Ayalon, “Aristocracy,” 206–7 and idem, “L’esclavage,” 31–34; cf. Haarmann, “Osten,” 223. The relationship between an elite slave and his master was often expressed in family terminology like son (*walad*) and father (*wālid*) at least from the Abbasid period onwards (Forand, 60–2). Van Steenbergen, 88–92, calls the close relationship with the master *ustādiyya*.

48 For example, since their early youth, Yaşbak as-Sāqī al-A‘rağ as well as the later sultans Barsbāy and Ğaqmaq had allegedly been brother-like close friends (*iḥwa*) of the later sultan Ṭaṭar (Levanoni, “Laqab”, 106, citing Ibn Tağribirdī and as-Saḥāwī; see also *ibid.*, 100–1, and Ibn Tağribirdī, *Manhal* IV, 275–83, No. 849).

See also Richards, 37 and van Steenbergen, 86–8.

the same household could become almost indistinguishable from genealogical kinship,⁴⁹ as a result of a shared socialisation process taking place while the *mamlūk* “son” was still a slave. In the case of elite slaves, this amounts to an undeclared adoption, an institution meant to “create kin” that had existed in the Arab context since pre-Islamic times and had been reinforced by the Turkic institution of godfatherhood (*kivrelük*),⁵⁰ or perhaps that of “surrogate father-ship” (*atalıq*), which seems to have been common in Circassia.⁵¹ The manumitter’s *mamlūk* “son”⁵² would usually indicate his new status by taking a Turkish name and acknowledging the relation to his manumitter (*muṭıq*) in his *nisba*. The act of manumission established a legally accepted form of clientage (*walā*)⁵³ and quite literally created⁵⁴ a new relative.⁵⁵ At least for those who had actually entered the master’s household, *mamlūk* ties established an ascribed form of kinship.⁵⁶ Contrary to what had formerly been maintained about a “waning of the biological family” and an “enhanced prestige of pseudo-familial ties”⁵⁷ during the Circassian period, artificial kinship did not replace genealogical kinship. They rather seem to have coexisted,⁵⁸ as it seems that *mamlūks* increasingly brought their relatives from the native lands to Egypt since the 14th

49 Ze’evi, 75; cf. Forand, 61–2.

50 Ze’evi, 76–79 (cit. 78). Ze’evi poetically compares the transformation from slave to son to the pupal stage of a butterfly (ibid., 71). For the ban of adoption (*tabannī*) according to *ṣarī’a* norms, see ibid., 76–7.

51 The latter kind of relationship might have been alluded to when Qurmuş al-A’war explained his familiarity with Ğānıbak aş-Şūfı: “How can I not support him, as I had carried him on my shoulders in Circassia and raised him like a son” (*kayfa lā akūn ma’ahu wa-qad ḥamiltuhu ’ulā katfayya fī bilād Ğarkas wa-rabbaytuhu ka-l-walad*; Ibn Tağribirdi, quoted in Levanoni, “Laqab,” 108). However, the relationship seems not to have been that impeccable, as Qurmuş finally abandoned Ğānıbak anyway, as Levanoni relates.

52 According to some legal scholars, “a client becomes like a son” (*al-walā’ yaşır ka-l-walad*, Marmon, 14–6).

53 Marmon, 14–6. This obligation was brought about by the act of manumission, not by the training and upbringing in the household.

54 Forand, 63: “The word *ṣanī’a* is applied to one who has been nourished, raised and trained by another and who, is therefore beholden to the benefactor, to whom the *ṣanī’a* stands in the relation of a servant, pupil or fosterchild.” See also the reference to *işṭinā’* cited above.

55 Marmon refers to a relevant *ḥadīth* cited in legal compendia: “*walā’* is a relation like the relation of kinship; it cannot be sold or given away” (*al-walā’ luḥma ka-luḥmat an-nasab lā yubā’ wa-lā yūḥab*, Marmon, 15–16). For early Roman *manumissio* of a *cliens* by a *patronus*, cf. Pflücke, 16–17. There were also other ways for slaves to become family, like attaining the privileged status of mother of the owner’s son (*umm walad*).

56 “Certain especially favoured *mamlūks* of an amir could often be treated as quasi-kin, in that they were brought up in all respects as part of the family” (Richards, 34). This kind of “slave kinship” might even entitle *mamlūk* kin to inheritance, although property was more easily passed on as *waqf* (Richards, 33–5 and 37).

57 Yosef, 55–6. See also Richards, “Mamluk amirs.”

58 Yosef, 55; Levanoni, “Laqab,” 104; van Steenbergen, 76–85.

century.⁵⁹ This was one of the sultan's prerogatives, which enabled emirs to do the same if they were sufficiently close to the monarch.⁶⁰ Mamluk emir's motives for bringing relatives to Egypt are difficult to ascertain, but once their relatives had arrived and had been appointed to more or less important positions, they would never fail the emir – not so much because they were biological relatives, but mainly because they were dependent on the emir who had brought them to Egypt. Not actually belonging to the *mamlūk* elite, they were more isolated in a foreign country than normal *mamlūks* used to be, so that forming relationships independent from their relatives was extremely difficult for them. They were therefore very reliable associates for the importing emir, who had, for all intents and purposes, turned them into clients.⁶¹ Circassian recruits in Egypt often met relatives and old friends from home who had been sold as slaves before them (a fact which is only occasionally alluded to in the sources), so that they might have formed relationships based on common geographical origin or kinship.⁶² Similarly, there relationships through female relatives from Circassia and through marital ties with women imported from the native lands are occasionally mentioned.⁶³ Another violation of the purported one-generation nobility rule happened when emirs managed to directly pass on military elite status to their sons (*awlād an-nās*).⁶⁴ Belonging to a Mamluk family also helped *awlād an-nās* to find a place in the administrative or religious elite, with which emirs routinely formed marriage ties, as well.⁶⁵ Obviously, both artificial and biological kinship mattered, and often coexisted.

59 Richards, 36, Yosef, 55–69.

60 Yosef, 56. While the Qalawunid dynasty, already living in Egypt, had not imported further relatives, the Circassian sultanate had no royal dynasty, so that in the 15th century, several sultans exercised their prerogative (ibid., 60–63). Yosef concludes that "...only a small cadre of favoured Mamluks could bring their relatives into the Sultanate. This group of Mamluks could shed the signs of slavery, the most important of which was the lack of family ties. Only this group, and not all the Mamluks, can be regarded as elite" (ibid., 56 (quote) and 69). Yosef's concept of slavery is based on Orlando Patterson's *Slavery and Social Death* (but cf. Ze'evi, 74–5).

61 For the concept of clientelism, see below.

62 Yosef, 61–2. For instance, the later sultan Ğaqmaq al-'Alā'i was supported considerably by his influential elder brother Ğarkas al-Mušāri: "Ğarkas was the brother of al-Malik az-Zāhir Ğaqmaq – may God award victory to him. He was the older one and the reason for his advancement (*wa-huwa l-asann wa-s-sabab fī taraqqīhi*)" (Ibn Taġrībīrdī, *Manhal* IV, 211).

63 Richards, 33–7; van Steenbergen, 84–4.

64 Haarmann, "The sons," idem, "Joseph's Law" and Richards, "Mamluk amirs," with a list of 14th century *awlād an-nās* emirs. At least in Syria, elite families of Ayyubid and Mamluk origin established themselves for several generations well into the 16th or even 17th centuries; see Richards, 37–9, Winter, "Mamluks," Meier, "Patterns," Ze'evi, 80; cf. also the Uġulbak family who belonged to the military elite for generations, as documented in Saghbini, *Urkunden*.

65 Richards, 34: "In the Mamluk state there was a commonly accepted role for family connections in both the religious and administrative spheres."

2.2. Ascribed relations of common origin

Common geographical origin (*Landsmannschaft*)⁶⁶ could also be activated as an ascribed relationship. The corresponding Mamluk concept was *ġins*,⁶⁷ which seems to have been employed to distribute the Sultanic *mamlūks* on various barracks (sg. *ṭabaqa*)⁶⁸ and was occasionally invoked in political struggle as ethnic solidarity (*ġinsiyya*).⁶⁹ From the late 14th century onwards, the Circassian element seems to have claimed political precedence against the Qıpçaq element that had predominated until then.⁷⁰ However, it is difficult to ascertain whether they did this in a protonationalist way, actually justifying predominance with Circassian origin, because contemporary authors who touched upon this topic did so in accusing the Circassians of discriminating against *mamlūks* of different origin. Other than such negative stereotyping, *ġins* seems in general to have played a minor role as a potential grounds for positively forming relationships.⁷¹ Although instances of alleged discrimination caused resentment, certain can-

66 Reinhardt, *Freunde*, 40.

67 See van Steenbergen, 92–4. Ethnic origin as a social marker was also displayed by attire (idem, 94, citing al-Maqrīzī on varying turban sizes).

68 It is, however, not entirely clear whether *ġins* really refers to ethnicity in the modern sense, or perhaps to a less clear-cut concept of origin similar to that employed in dormitories of medieval universities.

69 Ayalon, “Circassians,” Van Steenbergen, 92–4, translates *ġinsiyya* as ethnicity and suggests that it was employed by sultan al-Muzaffar Ḥaġġī “...like several other kinship ties, to enhance the sultan’s relationship with his clients, his Mamluks in particular” (ibid., 94).

70 Ayalon, “Circassians,” 137–144. Cf. Conermann/Haarmann, 218–9. Ayalon interprets the bloody struggles around 1400 marking the transition from the Qipchaq to the Circassian period not as a conflict among powerful emirs and their factions, but to a considerable degree as an ethnic conflict between Circassians and Turks (“Circassians,” 139–142). Ayalon, who published the mentioned article back in 1949, bases his argument mainly on Ibn Taġribirdī’s writings, which may be biased as that chronicler had close connections to several emirs and certain court circles and was himself the son of an emir of non-Circassian, Anatolian/Rumelian (*rūmī*) origin.

71 This can at least be said concerning the situation in the 15th century, the so-called Mongol faction (*min ġins at-tatar*) led by Quġqār al-Qurdumī in 1421 probably being the last (and quite ephemeral) faction supposedly convened on grounds of ethnicity (Irwin, “Factions”, 233). Sultan al-Mu’ayyad Ṣayḥ had started to purchase more “Turkish” slaves again to enter his *ġulbān* as a counterweight to the predominant Circassians (Ibn Taġribirdī, *Nuġūm* VI, 430). His close client Alṭunbuġā al-Qurmuṣī was said to have been of “Turkish” origin, as well (Garcin, *Regime*, 293). It has to be kept in mind, however, that geographical or toponymic attributes might simply designate different groups or factions without any reference to allegiance or group formation. For example, troops coming from Egypt to Syria could be called *miṣriyyūn* just to distinguish them from their adversaries (Al-Qudṣī, 52b–53a, and al-’Aynī, *Tqd*, 138). But as ethnical, religious or other characteristics can obviously be construed and exploited for political mobilizing, it is not surprising that in the late 13th century, allegedly Kitbuġā rallied support among Mongol *mamlūks*, while Baybars al-Ġaṣnākīr was supported by Circassians (Rabbat, 96).

didates may as well have been favoured for their patronage or friendship ties, which often coincided with and were reinforced by *ğins* ties. This is not to say that *ğins* discrimination was absent, but obviously the excluded quickly justified their misfortune by stating that belonging to ‘the *ğins*’ or ‘the people’ (*qawm*), i. e. the Circassians, was a precondition for advancement.⁷²

A functionally similar concept of common origin from the same master’s household was *huşdāşiyya*. *Huşdāşiyya* mainly served as a potential basis for establishing a relationship, which could be invoked, but did not become effective automatically.⁷³ Socialisation in the barracks (sg. *ṭabaqa*)⁷⁴ seems to have played a formative role, as each generation of new recruits established close relationships with older *mamlūks* who took an important part in their training: an “older brother” (*ağā*) instructing and looking after “younger brothers” (*in-iyāt*).⁷⁵ This means that *huşdāşiyya* was only the context in which concrete relationships were formed and that it had a differentiated structure: on the general level, all recruits of a sultan (or emir) belonged to a *huşdāşiyya*, but there were subdivisions (in the Sultanic *mamlūks*’ case, the various barracks or, *ṭibāq*), which were further divided into small groups of *ağās* and *inīs*.⁷⁶

As intensity and effectiveness of mutual ties tend to increase with diminishing group size, various *ṭabaqas* might compete with each other, while the *huşdāşiyya*, like other types of common origin, was only meaningful in relation to the outside world. The *ağā-inī* group, however, was the closest thing to a family a

72 Ayalon cites acerbic comments by Ibn Tağribirdi: “To my knowledge, he did not possess any virtues except that he was a Circassian, belonging to ‘the race’” (*wa-lā aʿrif fīhi min al-mahāsini ġayr annahu ġarkasī al-ğins min ġins al-qawm*), or: “He displays the giddiness of youth and the frivolity of the Circassians” (*wa-ındahu ṭayş aş-şubūbiyya wa-ḥiffat al-ğarākisa*) (Ayalon, “Circassians,” 143–4, citing a manuscript of *al-Manhal aş-şāfi*).

Ibn Tağribirdi maintains in *Nuğūm* VI, 547 that al-Muʿayyad Şayḥ had appointed Alṭunbuğā *atābak al-aşākir* because the latter was “not of the race of the people” (*kāna min ġayr ġins al-qawm lā ġayr*), meaning, according to Ayalon, that Alṭunbuğā did not pose a political threat because he was not of Circassian origin (Ayalon, *ibid.*). Ibn Tağribirdi’s view might, however, be influenced by a critical attitude towards Circassian predominance. His assessment of support for Huşqadam’s application for the sultanate is similar, reasoning that it would be easy to dispose of Huşqadam because he was (like Ibn Tağribirdi’s father) of Anatolian or Rumelian origin (*fa-innahu min ġayr al-ğins yaʿnī kawnahu rūmī al-ğins*; *Nuğūm* VII, 667, cited in Ayalon, *ibid.*).

73 Cf. Levanoni, “Laqab,” 92, and Ibn Tağribirdi, *Nuğūm* VI, 425.

74 The *ṭibāq* were not strictly barracks, but “included a variety of building types” (Rabbat, 94).

75 Levanoni, “Laqab,” 93. The honorary title *ağā* could also refer to a eunuch functioning as a tutor (Rabbat, 95); a eunuch *ağā* could be distinguished from a *mamlūk* called *ağā* as *ağā ṭawāşī* (al-Qudsi, *Duwal*, 129). These eunuchs probably formed relationships with the pupils (Sg. *kuttābī*) as well, but would permanently remain in their positions, in contrast to *mamlūk ağās*.

76 Levanoni, “Laqab,” 93–4 and 100–3.

young *mamlūk* recruit could have.⁷⁷ As the *inīs* were also closely related to each other, the group's structure is not typical of a patronage network (as Levanoni seems to suggest). A patronage network is characterised by low density, because the clients only have their hierarchical relationship with the patron in common, who is not interested in the creation of clusters or increased density, because such close ties would diminish his own centrality. *Huṣḍāšiyya* intensity should therefore ideally be conceptualised on these three levels: the master's household, where applicable its subdivisions, and their *aġā-inī* groups. In most cases, a Sultanic *mamlūks*' career became more complicated when he had to leave the citadel and entered an emir's household after his master's demise. The integration into an emir's household proved decisive for the further development,⁷⁸ because the relationships formed in it provided the basis for faction building. This was for the most part irrespective of *huṣḍāšiyya* with other former sultanic *mamlūks*, but often combined with familial *aġā-inī* relations. Levanoni states that "not a single coalition (*ḥizb*) was found in the Circassian period that formed around a candidate for rule in which *huṣḍāšiyya* was the central and the only unifying factor." Consequently, the political struggle took place between "coalitions through a multi-dimensional network of connections,"⁷⁹ because the inexperienced and disorganised young sultanic *mamlūks* (*ġulbān*) and the senior *mamlūks* were structurally compelled to cooperate.

2.3. Acquired relations of patronage and friendship

Patronage and client relationships denote the same concept from the patron's and the client's point of view, respectively. It is based on the asymmetry between the favour-giving patron and the loyalty-giving client, so long as the client is unable to compensate for the patron's favour.⁸⁰ Nevertheless, patronage is a

77 See the section about kinship. To give one example, Țațar had been among Barqūq's *ġulbān*, in the Zammāmiyya barracks, as had Barsbāy and Ġaqmaq, who were only one "intake" (*ḥarġ*) younger. So they had known each other well from their early youth, which formed the basis for a lasting friendship (perhaps even *uḥūwa*) between Țațar and Barsbāy as well as between Barsbāy and Ġaqmaq (both being *inīyāt* of the same *aġā*); a similar relationship (*maḥabba akīda*; *wadd qadīm wa-ṣuḥba*) is reported for Barsbāy and Țarābāy (Levanoni, "Laqab," 100–1; further examples *ibid.*, 102–3).

78 Levanoni, "Laqab," 99 and 104.

79 Levanoni, "Laqab," 109.

80 Pflücke defines patronage as a "dyadic, interpersonal contract of formal or informal character, by which a person P, on the basis of his/her superior opportunities, provides permanent protection for another person C. In return, C provides spontaneous or deferred services [...], but P's services [i. e., protection and favour] must not be compensated for, in the involved person's opinion, in order to sustain C's dependence of P." In that case, the client

reciprocal relationship that confers social status as an influential patron and as a client, respectively, of an important personality onto both partners.⁸¹ It is therefore an acquired, asymmetrical and purpose-oriented relationship that entails mutual obligations, mainly loyalty and service (*ḥidma*) on the client's part and protection and favour the part of the patron⁸², while the patron's favour (*ni'ma*) could take the form of promotions or appointments, financial and other benefits conferred upon the client by his patron, or at least through his intercession (*ṣafā'a*).⁸³

From the client's point of view, establishing and maintaining a patronage relationship was historically⁸⁴ an investment of social capital, which he entrusted to his patron for mutual benefits. The patron also invested social and economic capital as well, so that patronage was indeed a business relationship. This does not mean, however, that patronage was an exclusively utilitarian endeavor without any commitment on both sides.⁸⁵ However, it was possible (albeit not necessarily advantageous) to have more than one patron at a time,⁸⁶ and it was common to change allegiances from one patron to another. It goes without saying that the same person could at the same time be a client and a patron to different people.

While this kind of relationship is often frowned upon in modern times,⁸⁷ it formed an entirely functional and universally accepted part of life in pre-modern societies, and included moral and social obligations. In spite of the ubiquity of patronage, however, the specific conditions and characteristics of patronage relationships should be kept in mind to avoid seeing patronages everywhere, while ignoring other factors. The master-slave relationship between an *ustād* and his *mamlūk* lasted until manumission. After that, the *mamlūk* usually re-

relationship either ends or changes into a symmetrical relationship, like friendship. (Pflücke, 113).

81 Cf. Maćzak, 344.

82 See, e.g., Reinhard, *Freunde*, 19–40, cf. Schweizer, 125, as well as van Steenberg, 62–3 and 72–5. Literature on the phenomenon of patronage is abundant. See, e.g., Droste, "Patronage," 555–7; Sharon Kettering, *Patronage in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth Century France*. Aldershot 2002; Ronald G. Asch and Andreas M. Birke (eds.), *Princes, Patronage and the Nobility. The Court at the Beginnings of the Modern Age*. London 1991, and Antoni Maćzak (ed.), *Klientensysteme im Europa der Frühen Neuzeit*. München 1988.

83 This is exemplified by van Steenberg, 63–8.

84 The following past-tense remarks concern the cultural conditions of pre-modern patronage, which might well continue to be true for modern informal patronage relations.

85 Asch, 274–8; Droste, "Patronage," 555–589 and idem, "Habitus," 112–3.

86 For a different assessment, cf. van Steenberg, 59.

87 Although patronage and similar social practices seem to contravene modernity and democracy, they turn out to be practically indispensable (Asch, 266–9, citing, among others, Pierre Bourdieu's *La noblesse d'État* on France and Adam Bellow's *In Praise of Nepotism* on the United States).

mained in his master's service, but could enter a relationship with another master at some stage. Levanoni even asserts that the [clientelistic] relationship between an emir and a manumitted *mamlūk*, i. e. between two free men, "could be severed whenever one of the parties wished".⁸⁸ It is certainly true that this was a voluntary relationship, but in order to be effective it had to include mutual obligations of the patron and the client. The occasion to dissolve it might have arisen if either of the two actors involved fell short of fulfilling their obligations, or either of them might consciously accept severe damage to his reputation by violating his obligations. Apart from formally entering the service of an emir or sultan other than one's manumitter (*istiḥdām*), there were various other terms to denote a clientelistic relationship (*ittiṣāl*, *inḍimām*, *intimā*),⁸⁹ which became more important than the initial master-slave relationship. Another expression applied to clients in the sources is follower (*tābi*),⁹⁰ while the patron's clientele, i. e., the whole of his clients, was often called his entourage (*ḥāṣṣiya*),⁹¹ although it is not always clear whether this also included the household itself.

The related type of friendship is an acquired, symmetrical and purpose-oriented relationship between social equals. Pre-modern friendship⁹² was closely related to patronage, as it was also a voluntary arrangement for mutual benefits that entailed obligations and expectations. Sometimes patronage relationships were verbally veiled as friendships.⁹³ Just like patronage, this characterization of friendship might look "cold and calculating,"⁹⁴ but in the absence of legally reliable impersonal institutions, instrumentalising interpersonal relations was simply a necessity.⁹⁵ In contrast to clients and patrons, friends (who might as well be called allies in a political setting) enjoyed a symmetrical relationship which might be dissolved with much less damage to reputation and trustworthiness, depending on the situation. If friendship loses its symmetry,

88 Levanoni, "Laqab," 90.

89 Levanoni, "Laqab," 89–90 (*ittiṣala bi-*, *inḍamma ilā* and *intamā li-*). A *mamlūk* regularly entered the service of another lord (*maḥdūm*) after his manumitter (*ustād*) had died (Ayalon, "Structure," 216), so that cliental service (*ittiṣāl*, *ḥidma*) could terminologically be differentiated from quasi-kinship. It would be an important task to further study the relevant terminology employed in the sources to differentiate the mode and intensity of such relations.

90 Levanoni, "Laqab," 90.

91 See, e. g., Richards, 35–6.

92 For various aspects and recent literature, see Descharmes/Heuser/Krüger/Loy (eds.), *Varieties of friendship*, especially the article of Polexe, 31–2 and 52–66.

93 Asch, 272–4. Patronage veiled as friendship seems to have occurred in Mamluk Egypt as well, as clients were sometimes called *aṣḥāb* (van Steenbergen, 59).

94 Van Steenbergen, 77, on the business-like character of clientelism/patronage (cf. also *ibid.*, 90 and 170).

95 Asch, 268–71 and 277–8.

friends can become clients and patrons, respectively.⁹⁶ Except for the very close “old companionship” (*ṣuḥba qadīma*) or quasi-kin *uḥūwa* ties mentioned above,⁹⁷ friendship relations appear less frequently in the context of power struggle. They should, however, not be underestimated against the background of *ḥuṣḍāšiyya*, because friendships functioned as alliances between individuals.⁹⁸

2.4. Interim result: Mamluk relations

In Mamluk society, modes of interpersonal relationships similar to other societies existed. Patronage, for instance, was socially as indispensable as in the West and elsewhere, even though it took different forms. Pre-modern relationships between patrons and clients, or between friends, served mutual benefit and had mutual obligations. In addition to common biological kinship, slave kinship played a particularly important role. This does not mean that it completely eclipsed biological kinship, but creating kin by de facto adopting slaves, or former slaves, belonged to the main characteristics of Mamluk society. Many relationships, like those between master and slave, or *walā'* towards a manumitter, had a legal dimension, which should be distinguished from their social meaning and from social institutions like patronage or households. As, on the other hand, most relationships were of a multiplex nature, they regularly intersected. For example, a master could become a manumitted slave's patron or quasi-kin while both shared a *walā'* relationship at the same time, or an emir's kinsman brought to Egypt from Circassia would subsequently become the emir's client. Common origin – like ethnic background (*ḡins*) or comrade solidarity (*ḥuṣḍāšiyya*) – would be invoked as a collective self-description vis-à-vis outsiders. Ascribed relationships like these changed easily from potentiality into

96 When the regent Ṭaṭar left Cairo for Syria in 1421, he entrusted several emirs of his own faction with keeping the situation in the capital under control, among them his former *inī* Ḡaqmaq al-'Alā'i, his *uḥūwa* friend Yašbak as-Sāqī al-A'raḡ, as well as Qānībāy al-Ḥamzāwī, and Aqbuḡā at-Timrāzī. Just like Ṭaṭar himself, the four of them had been al-Mu'ayyad Šayḡ's clients (but not his *mamlūks*), but after Šayḡ's death, Ṭaṭar must have become their new patron; if they had only been his allies in a more or less symmetrical relationship, it would have been risky to leave them back in Cairo. In fact, Ṭaṭar took his most powerful allies, especially Tanibak Miyyiq, with the army into Syria (Ibn Taḡribirdī, *Manhal* IV, 275–83, No. 849, Levanoni, “Laqab,” 106, as-Saḡhāwī, *Ḍaw'* VI, 195, No. 661, Ibn Taḡribirdī, *Manhal* II, 475, No. 484). Shortly after ascending the throne, Ṭaṭar's alliance with Tanibak Miyyiq seems to have turned into a patronage relationship between the new sultan as the supreme patron and one of his influential emirs.

97 Richards, 37.

98 In this regard, friendship is analogous to an alliance between households or factions on a collective level (see below).

actuality, but would rarely be relied on as the sole link between two actors. Acquired relationships like patronage or friendship, however, needed to be established and maintained, but were much more reliable and effective, so that ascribed relations rather used to reinforce acquired relationships and constituted the background against which actual networks were formed. In this vein, *ḥuṣḍāšīyya* can be further differentiated on two or three levels, depending on the size of the household to which the *mamlūks* pledged allegiance: Beneath general *ḥuṣḍāšīyya* against other Mamluk households, *ṭabaqa* solidarity was directed against other *ṭabaqas*, while close *aḡā-inī* groups could be connected by familial quasi-kinship relationships as well as friendship and patronage. In contrast, only a small number of slave recruits could be integrated into a quasi-kin relationship with the household core to become part of the household proper (like the *ḥāṣ-ṣakiyya*), while all other retainers became clients if not paid soldiers.

3. Households and Factions

3.1. Households

The household concept has become widely accepted in the field, but it is rarely mentioned explicitly in the sources, except for some references to a house (*bayt*) or a gate (*bāb*).⁹⁹ Accordingly, the household concept is not inherently closer to the sources than the above-mentioned concepts of interpersonal relations. Unlike patronage, the household may have been taken for granted in many instances, when it was well-known that an individual belonged to a certain household. For all that we know, Middle Eastern households were comparable to the Greek *oikos* or the Roman and Latin *familia* of ancient and medieval times,¹⁰⁰ which would rather be described as a household than as a family according to modern categories.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Richards, 36; van Steenbergen, 94–5; cf. Hathaway, *Politics*, 21–2. The term gate (*bāb*, *qaṣu*, *dergāh*) used to denote the physical as well as the social institution *pars pro toto* in Middle Eastern and Ottoman contexts.

¹⁰⁰ For the *oikos*, see Cox, 130–167, and Pomeroy, 17–66. In the early Roman *familia*, *clientes* sought the legal, political and ritual protection of a *patronus*. The strong and, in fact, eponymous Roman patron-client relationship was primarily formed by manumission (*manumissio*), and was inherited by the following generations (Pflücke, 16–17).

¹⁰¹ For the related medieval and early modern concept of “Ganzes Haus,” which in central Europe included the whole retinue of a nobleman, see Brunner, 103–127; cf. also Völkel, 15.

3.2. Mamluk households between kinship and patronage

A 15th century emir's household was an extended family household,¹⁰² that is a compact, densely interrelated and economically interdependent group consisting of the grandee's genealogical family, his military and domestic slaves and his closest clients who actually had become part of the extended family.¹⁰³ However, the fact that a household formed a closely interrelated group does not necessarily mean that its members always acted unanimously, since individuals within a household as well as different households of the same lineage often became rivals. Quite adequately, Rapoport "...sheds doubt on the notion of elite households as autonomous, hierarchical and well-defined units".¹⁰⁴ In connection with the group itself, clientelistic and other ties with household members were widespread without necessitating household membership. The extended family formed a household as it lived in the same palatial mansion on a shared economic basis,¹⁰⁵ which means that permanent residents of the physical household were closer to its core than clients and further subordinates who were economically dependent on the household head. The economic basis of the household consisted of the emir's sources of income (particularly *iqṭā'āt* and perhaps *awqāf*). Perhaps the emir managed to secure similar, supplementary sources for household members by means of his influence at court, which would continue to belong to the same household so long as they were held in dependence from the emir's favour. Family members in the household core were bound by blood ties as well as marital ties, while slaves included domestic servants and *mamlūk* recruits before manumission. Among the emir's closest clients, who could become family as well, were his most trusted *mamlūks* who lived in his residence, formed his personal guard and trained the *mamlūk* recruits. It is not clear if or to what extent the emir's other manumitted *mamlūks*

102 Eric Arnold, "Households," In: *SSE*, 364–66, for the extended family household, *ibid.*, 365; cf. Marcel Nicolas, "Haushalt(ung), Haushalt(ung)s-Statistik." In: W. Bernsdorf (ed.), *Wörterbuch der Soziologie*. Stuttgart 1969, S. 413–15.

103 This broad definition of the extended family household is generally undisputed. See, e.g., van Steenbergen, 94–5 and 167. The same institution continued to exist and develop in Ottoman Egypt at least until the 17th-18th century, for which Jane Hathaway identifies three contiguous types of households; the variety closest to 15th century Mamluk households seems to be the grandee household. Hathaway criticises the vague usage of the term household, which implied the revival or uninterrupted existence of the same Mamluk institution that went unchanged from the 13th to the 19th century (*ibid.*, 47–51). Instead, the 17th century elite household should be firmly situated within the Ottoman context (*ibid.*, 27 and 167), in which households developed into an entirely new direction; in Baghdad, for example, the dominating household grew into an Ottoman-local elite that almost coincided with the imperial state structure in that province (Lier, *Haushalte*).

104 Rapoport, "Divorce," 213. Cf. Hathaway, *Politics*, 70–87 and Lansing, 177.

105 Cf. Hathaway, *Politics*, 19–20, 109–124 and 130–138.

and clients of origins other than his household resided in that very location. In the case of less affluent emirs, no such distinction may have been made; but when an emir acquired hundreds of *mamlūk* slaves,¹⁰⁶ it is hard to imagine that they stayed on all in the same place.¹⁰⁷

As a consequence of these considerations, the household of the ruling sultan can be described as an extended family household only in a very limited sense, simply because of its enormous size, including thousands of servants, officials and *mamlūks*, many of whom would enter the service of other masters than the present sultan, or remain at court after the end of his reign. The fusion of the sultan's household, court, and royal guard was a result of the sultanate's political structure that transformed the household of each new ruler into the central institution of patrimonial politics. Besides the royal household, the emirs' households were the place where the Mamluk military and elite reproduced. However, as elite status could not easily be inherited by family members like women and *mamlūks*' sons (*awlād an-nās*), a *mamlūk* close to the household head had to continue the household, starting with marrying his master's or patron's daughter. Another possibility of continuation was that, for instance after an emir's or sultan's demise, an ambitious emir married his widow to achieve control over the household and its assets.¹⁰⁸ This phenomenon should at the same time be considered as part of elite networking in general, in which women were certainly key figures, although unfortunately for the most part inaccessible to modern scholarship.¹⁰⁹ The boundary between members of the

106 Richards, 35, and van Steenberg, 89.

107 Besides, on that level, the same limitations as in the royal barracks would have applied (see below), as the number of persons involved would simply have been too great to integrate them all in sufficient density, so that inner and outer circles would necessarily have formed.

108 Several regents married widows or daughters of their predecessors especially when acting as guardian regents. ʿAṭar enforced his claims to the sultanate by marrying ḥawand Saʿādāt bt. ʿAṭar, the queen dowager and mother of sultan al-Muẓaffar Aḥmad, only to divorce her as soon as he could dispense with the support of ʿAṭar's former household and *mamlūks* (Ibn Taḡribirdī, *Nuḡūm* VI, 500 and 507; as-Saḥāwī, *Ḍawʿ* XII, 62, No. 376). Other instances include ʿAṭar who married Zaynab bt. Barqūq and Barsbāy who married Fāṭima bt. ʿAṭar (as-Saḥāwī, *Ḍawʿ* XII, 40, No. 234 and *ibid.*, p. 92, No. 572). This policy worked in both ways: When sultan al-Muʿayyad ʿAṭar married his daughter to his close client and commander-in-chief (*atābak al-ʿasākīr*) Alṭunbuḡā al-Qurmuṣī, he effectively entrusted his household to the latter, enabling him to continue it and to buttress his claim to the throne (Ibn Taḡribirdī, *Nuḡūm* VI, 411, and *Manhal* III, 62–6, No. 537). Cf. also van Steenberg, 96.

109 For intra-elite matrimonial networking within the same personal and historical context, cf. the marriages of Barsbāy and Fāṭima bt. Quḡqār (as-Saḥāwī, *Ḍawʿ* XII, 99, no. 622), as well as Sitt al-Mulūk bt. ʿAṭar and *atābak al-ʿasākīr* Yašbak as-Sūdūnī (as-Saḥāwī, *Ḍawʿ* XII, 58, no. 348). Sultan Ğaqmaq himself married the daughters of several emirs (Ğarbāš Qāšuq, Kurtbāy, Arḡūn Šāh), *ʿulamāʾ* notables (Zayn ad-Dīn ʿAbd al-Bāsiṭ, Muḥammad al-Bārīzī) and foreign rulers (an Ottoman princess and another from the Duḡādir emirate). See, e.g., Ibn Taḡribirdī, *Nuḡūm* VII, 253; al-ʿAynī, *Iqd*, 519; as-Saḥāwī, *Ḍawʿ* VII, 210; Ibn Taḡribirdī, *Manhal* IV, 647.

extended family and clients dependent on the household head as a patron was often blurred. Even though our knowledge of the cultural ramifications and possible varieties of patron-client relationships in the Mamluk context is still limited, clients who became members of a household (extended-family members) should be distinguished from clients outside the household who merely shared the same patron. As long as the focus is not on actors of the transitional stage between these two, the former should be referred to as household members, while the latter were clients in every sense of the word.¹¹⁰

If the Mamluk household established an ascribed and formally acknowledged form of artificial kinship through *mamlūk-ustād* and *ḥuṣḍāšīyya* relations, this meant that it could easily be activated and invoked in case of need. Artificial kinship also required a high density of *ḥuṣḍāšīyya* relations and – as consequence – a low centrality of the *ustād*. These characteristics indeed resembled a kinship group, but clearly differed from a patronage network (with high centrality, low density, no group consciousness and weak internal structure).¹¹¹ However, integration by quasi-familial relations in high density could only have worked in a limited setting,¹¹² as it would have been impossible to integrate several hundred or even thousands of recently recruited sultanic mamlūks (*ḡulbān*) inhabiting the royal barracks, and neither would that have been possible in large emir's households. In such an environment, the *ustād* (i. e., the sultan or, in some cases, a very affluent emir) did certainly not appear as a father figure, but rather as an employer.¹¹³ What the *ḡulbān* had in common was their

110 Hathaway makes a similar distinction with reference to the 17th century, namely between inner and outer clients. Similarly, in the Mamluk context, the term *tābi'* meant a closer client, irrespective of the individual's status as a slave or a free man. His relationship with the patron went beyond mere clientelism, especially when the *tābi'* entered his master's household and established further relations with other household members (Hathaway, *Politics*, 22–4 and 64). In this way, a former client could become a member of the patron's extended family. According to Hathaway, a client who was also a *tābi'* belonged to his master's household, while clients in general could also enter other people's service as assistants (*mülāzim*, *çıraq*) without giving up loyalty to their patron. If an Ottoman-Egyptian *tābi'* thought of himself as a quasi-relative of his master, he may as well have felt, for example, an obligation towards the latter's son (Philipp, 123–4). In the second half of the 18th century, however, the basis of loyalty seems to have been destroyed by murders of master and comrade (idem, 124–127). These later developments show that relationships vary in intensity; it will therefore not be sufficient to determine whether a patronage relationship existed at some point, but at least a distinction has to be made between actual clients and former clients who had become members of the extended family household.

111 For the marked difference between a group and a clientele (or, a patronage network), see Pflücke, 107.

112 Richards, 35; cf. Levanoni, "Laqab," 92.

113 In Irwin's words: "A Mamluk served his master because his master served him, and there was money involved" (Irwin, "Factions," 237).

patronage relationship with the sultan.¹¹⁴ Hence, the *mamlūks* who became extended family members have to be distinguished from the large number of other *mamlūks* serving the same master. Their “business-like” patronage relationship with their master was almost equivalent with that of *mamlūks* of other origin who had entered their master’s service (*mustahdamūn*), or of contractually bonded servants (*alzām*).¹¹⁵ However, to describe the relation of manumitted clients with their master, family terms were applied metaphorically,¹¹⁶ so that in evaluating the content of a relationship alluded to in the sources, it would be appropriate not to attach too much significance to a single word, but to focus on the context and the actors’ behaviour.

As inmates of the same barracks, *mamlūks* might establish relations based on common ethnic or geographical origin. In the same vein, *ḥuṣḍāṣiyya* between the sultan’s *mamlūks* could be activated as a political link for tactical purposes, for distinction, inclusion and exclusion, or perhaps forming alliances, but it had little to do with affection.¹¹⁷ The patronage relationship between a large *mamlūk* corps and their master ended with the latter’s demise, forcing the *mamlūks* to find a new patron. Therefore, the split of a corps of Sultanic *mamlūks* like that after al-Mu’ayyad Ṣayḥ’s death can not only be explained by the corps’ sheer size,¹¹⁸ but also with the fact that their parallel relationship of clientage with Ṣayḥ had simply come to an end.¹¹⁹ While the whole of the Sultanic *mamlūks* did not become part of the royal household in the narrow sense of the word, a small part

114 The business-like relationship between the *ustād* and the bulk of his *mamlūks* is aptly described by Richards: “It must surely be true that if a great amir had *mamlūks* in any considerable number, then his relationship to the mass of them must have been of a more contractual nature, based on the satisfaction of maintenance expectations on the one hand, and the performance of their duties on the other” (Richards, 35). The limited reliability of the relationship between the sultan and his *ḡulbān* became already obvious when an-Nāṣir Muḥammad accelerated the promotion of Sultanic *mamlūks* to counterbalance the emirs’ power, but seems to have overtaxed the network ties, which might have contributed to the weakening of their loyalty (cf. Levanoni, “Rank-and-file Mamluks,” 23).

115 Richards, 35–6. According to him, a *lāzim* (pl. *alzām*) was a warrior who hired himself for a lengthy period of time to a master (the references pertain to the 14th century). Both *mustahdamūn* and *alzām* could be *mamlūks* as well as non-*mamlūks*. It was also not uncommon to seek employment with one’s master’s enemy after the former had died. In this way, Īnāl an-Nawrūzī, a *mamlūk* of Nawrūz al-Ḥāfīzī, served his master in his struggle with his former ally and then rival Ṣayḥ, but after Nawrūz’s death, Īnāl entered Ṣayḥ’s service without further ado (Ibn Taḡribirdī, *Manhal* III, 200–1, No. 618). Obviously, in large Mamluk households like that of a wealthy emir, a *mamlūk*’s relationship with the *ustād* was usually not familial, but clientelistic, i. e., based on mutual benefit and not on an affective bond.

116 Forand, 60.

117 Cf. Irwin, “Factions,” 237: “What *ḥuṣḍāṣiyya* conveyed was expectations of mutual service and log rolling.”

118 Cf. Irwin, “Factions,” 238.

119 Cf. the split of the *ḡulbān* after Barsbāy’s demise (*Nuḡūm* VII, 13–4).

of the sultan's *mamlūks* did enter a kinship-like relationship with their master, particularly those referred to as *ḥāṣṣakī* who did enter the royal household and could thus gain access to influential people or the sultan himself. The privileged *ḥāṣṣakīs* were accommodated separately from the ordinary Sultanic *mamlūks*; they served as pages in the royal household, some of them being educated together with sons of the sultan, or they entered the royal guard (*silāḥdāriyya*, *ḡamdāriyya*).¹²⁰ Integration into the households of emirs must have happened in similar, less formalised ways, but clearly, only the closest *mamlūks* became part of the family.¹²¹

3.3. Factions

Political struggle in the Mamluk sultanate is often framed as factional strife between households, but to achieve a better understanding of these processes, it would be helpful to differentiate between household and faction, which are both connected with certain modes of interpersonal relations. Based on the differences between the group-related and patronage-related types of relations explicated in the previous section, I would further suggest to differentiate between two ideal types of political factions as well, which I will call group parties and patronage factions because the former is related to group formation and the latter to patronage.

3.3.1. Group parties

The members of a group party interact with each other intensely, sharing an emotional and continuous group consciousness ("emotional solidarity and esprit de corps"),¹²² which is represented by colours and emblems, meeting places and territories, slogans and myths, religious acts and rituals, public performance, storytelling and political literature.¹²³ According to Levanoni, an outstanding symbol of unity was the sultan's throne name (*laqab*). By juxtaposing

120 Rabbat, 287–91; Ayalon, "Studies," 213–15; Haarmann, "Osten," 226.

121 "Certain especially favoured *mamlūks* of an amir could often be treated as quasi-kin, in that they were brought up in all respects as a part of the family" (Richards, 34).

122 Heers, 273; K v. Beyme, "Partei, Faktion." In: *GGL*, 672–733, esp. 681. Further characteristics of groups are shared norms of communication and interaction, reciprocal social roles and shared objectives (Schäfers, 20–1). Households qualify as groups, as well.

123 Hathaway, *Tale*, 188 and passim. The book title *A Tale of Two Factions* indicates that the distinction made above is not usually made in English usage, as the Ottoman-Egyptian factions referred to in the book seem to resemble group parties in the sense described above. For similar phenomena in Buyid Iraq and Iran, cf. Mottahedeh, 150–67; cf. also Irwin, "Factions," 228–9.

the two *laqabs* taken by virtually all Circassian sultans who actually ruled, namely *aḏ-Ẓāhir* and *al-Ašraf*, Levanoni suggests that in the Circassian sultanate a political system of two opposing coalitions was established.¹²⁴ In this way, the various households, factions and generations would flock to the symbolic name of an “ancient, quasi-mythological ancestor,” thereby avoiding bloody power struggles. However, this intriguing suggestion still needs to be corroborated by further evidence that would confirm the existence of coalition or party symbols and the formation of this specific tradition.¹²⁵ A group party strives to exclude all competitors from power, hence avoiding alliances and allotting all available resources and allegiances to itself. In extreme cases – such as in medieval Italian city states – the struggle between group parties tends to involve all layers of society, because the parties consisted of noble families in the core and large numbers of clients on the fringes. This type of comprehensive power struggle obviously caused considerable damage, continuing for generations and entailing the destruction of whole city quarters. Compromise or temporal cooperation were quite uncustomary, since “[T]otal rivalry did not allow the existence of three factions,”¹²⁶ leaving only room for two rival parties. The collective sentiment of honour was highly valued; public and religious feasts acquired a serious political meaning; battle cries, party symbols, religious ceremony and political polemics were meant for moral support of the respective party.¹²⁷ Less extreme examples of what Hathaway calls bilateral factionalism occurred in various Middle Eastern settings, from the Byzantine Blues and Greens to the Qays and Yaman divide, and its 17th century Egyptian variety were the *fariqayn* of the Qāsimī and Faqārī parties. Although this full-fledged group party politics is “inherently divisive,” its assimilative power can provide cohesion to a fragmented society, instilling a sense of community and continuity, albeit only in opposing the rivaling party.¹²⁸

124 She describes it as a development “from an one-generation and uni-factional structure to a multi-generation and bi-party structure” (Levanoni, “Laqab,” 114). Of the twenty-four Circassian sultans (1382–1517), seven did indeed take the *laqab* *aḏ-Ẓāhir* and six that of *al-Ašraf*, almost all of whom were effective rulers.

125 For the Ottoman period, the functioning, symbolism and persistence of bilateral factionalism has been explained in detail by Jane Hathaway, *Tale*. Important tasks for future research will be to trace the start and development of bilateral factionalism or its predecessors in Egypt, to clarify whether late Mamluk and early Ottoman bilateral factionalism were linked and if, in what ways exactly.

126 Heers, 57.

127 Heers, 41, 54, 157–196, 257–67 and 281–90.

128 Hathaway, *Tale*, passim, esp. 27–8, 42–4 and 188–9.

3.3.2. Patronage factions

To achieve a shared goal, an existing network based on a variety of relationship types, especially on patronage, can be activated as an action set, which will henceforth be termed a patronage faction.¹²⁹ A patronage faction's sole purpose is to prevail in a conflict for obtaining or defending benefits; therefore, the faction mobilises its supporters along the threads of network relations¹³⁰ on the basis of shared or complementary interest. A patronage faction is not a corporate group, but exists for a limited period of time and only on a political level.¹³¹ These characteristics, which Robert Irwin has found in 15th century Mamluk factions as well, clearly distinguish patronage factions from households.¹³² When a patronage network transformed itself into a patronage faction for conflict, the leading emir's household formed the core, around which the clients of the leader and their household members assembled. In a third zone came clients of the clients and other indirectly connected followers recruited along network ties that were now activated. In addition, the faction accepted less committed supporters, particularly from among the Sultanic *mamlūks*, as a promising faction in a struggle for succession to the throne attracted ever more *ḡulbān* and other fellow travellers. The core household allied itself with other households (or reminded lesser households of clients of their duty) by activating potential relationships and identifying common goals.¹³³ A whole faction could also form a temporal alliance with other factions, which was facilitated by its purely "tactical" orientation.

For the same reason, patronage factions limit their recruitment of supporters, so that common people only participate in their conflict as bystanders. Hence,

129 For "Islamic" action sets, see Loimeier/Reichmuth, 148. Cf. Nicholas, 57–8 and 66. The patronage faction is equivalent to (and named after) Max Weber's Patronage-Partei (Max Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft: Grundriß der verstehenden Soziologie*, ed. J. Winckelmann, Tübingen 1976, 167). It seems to correspond roughly to a network in van Steenbergen's terminology.

130 According to Reinhard, *Freunde*, 40, recruitment along these network relations selectively prefers actors connected with the patron (*Siebungseffekt*). However, the precise character of the supporters' relations with the faction leader (or leaders) may vary individually and over time and may include other relation types than patronage, like kinship or friendship, religious or economic ties. For a similar process in group parties, cf. Lansing, 177 and 181.

131 Nicholas, 57–8 and 66.

132 Irwin, "Factions," 236–9, esp. 229: "They cannot be seen as social building blocks," quite in contrast to households: "The lesser households were the building blocks of that society" (Hathaway, *Politics*, 27). While Irwin's article, taking the development of the Mu'ayyadiyya as a case in point, offers many valuable insights, his concept of faction is not as convincing.

133 Cf. Lind, 129–130, and Maćzak, 343. Cf. also Padgett/Ansell, "Action" and, based on them, Jansen, 208–12. In medieval Florence, group parties organised along the Guelf-Ghibelline divide seem to have had an analogous basic structure, but with kinship relations at its core (Lansing, 176–80).

ideal-type patronage factions do not use shared symbols and myths, nor do they engage in political debates in polemical treatises or literary works. They are not very interested in common welfare or specific policy objectives – what matters to them is the distribution of resources. They do not carry on feuds or vendetta, on the contrary, defection is commonplace and in fact part of the game.¹³⁴

The tactical alliances patronage factions employed were very useful in winning a conflict, but after that had been accomplished, the difficult part for the rivalising faction leaders was to pick the right moment for dissolving the convenient coalition and eliminating their potential rivals. When such a manoeuvre was successful, the patronage faction would start to transform itself into a more stable and balanced non-combative patronage network to establish itself and remain in power. This involved not only disposing of enemies and inconvenient former allies and filling important positions with clients, but also integrating less closely-bound clients and accepting useful followers like the predecessor's *mamlūks* into the new ruler's clientele.¹³⁵ This process started immediately after his takeover:

“Since everyone wanted to be on the winning side, by the time an emir actually reached the throne room his faction might be inordinately large. It was usually necessary after the first flush of victory celebrations to purge the dispensable fringes of the winning coalition, in order that the fruits of victory could be shared out less fairly and more profitably.”¹³⁶

From a network perspective, group parties and households are characterised by high density and not especially conspicuous centrality of the leader or leaders. By contrast, the members of patronage networks and patronage factions tend to have only the dyadic, asymmetrical and directed relationship with the patron in common,¹³⁷ resulting in a directed network of low density, but high centrality of the leader, and lacking internal interaction and group consciousness.¹³⁸

134 Of course, the persons involved do remember what has happened (forgetting it if necessary), but a prolonged conflict over generations is not to be expected.

135 See, for instance, Ṭaṭar's manoeuvring in an effort to arrest Mu'ayyadī emirs with the help of their rivals, while at the same time accepting lower-ranking Mu'ayyadīs as clients (Ibn Taġribirdī, *Nuġūm* VI, 505–7). Among Ṭaṭar's first orders after his enthronement in 1421 was a reshuffle of several high offices, which resulted in appointments of some of his clients, several promotions to emirs of a thousand, and a number of Ṭaṭar's own *mamlūks* entering into *ḥāṣṣakiyya* (Ibn Taġribirdī, *Nuġūm* VI, 508–9 and 512).

136 Irwin, “Factions,” 238.

137 This parallelism renders their positions within the network structurally equivalent (see Sailer, 73–90, cf. Schweizer, 194–201).

138 Cf. Pflücke, 107.

3.4. Interim result: households, parties, factions

An extended family household (not to be confused with a faction or other network) consisted of genealogical kin and quasi-kin in addition to close clients, forming a dense social, economic and spatial cluster at the core of a larger network. Clients on its periphery could become extended family members, transforming patronage into marital or quasi-kinship. Adopted *mamlūk* clients, rather than biological descendants, tended to continue the household and to preserve its Mamluk elite status. The patronage network surrounding the household could be depicted as a directed graph characterised by low density but high centrality of the household head. In case of conflict, this structure retained its characteristics, but transformed itself into a patronage faction by activating potential and indirect ties and mobilizing resources to recruit further supporters for a common goal, which usually amounted to achieving or defending power. During the Circassian sultanate, the adversaries in power struggles belonged to this type of faction – political associations convened temporarily on a tactical basis – and were not part of group parties with a group consciousness and a high density, but only an inconspicuous centrality of its leaders.¹³⁹

4. Succession struggles

4.1. Stand-in sultans and regents

Succession to the throne is not infrequently a dangerous affair, but in the Circassian sultanate, this was aggravated by its weak legitimacy,¹⁴⁰ the emirs' oligarchic tendencies and the politics of factions. Besides, at least the *'ulamā'* felt that the realm must not be without a ruler even for a single day to prevent chaos.¹⁴¹ For these reasons, a new sultan was formally enthroned as soon as possible, usually immediately after or even before his predecessor's funeral, but at this point, several rivalising factions started to struggle for succession. As each faction leader, usually an emir of the highest rank (*amīr mi'a wa-muqaddam alf*), could only rely on his extended household as well as a number of clients, he

¹³⁹ As this latter type seems to have dominated the scene in the 17th and 18th centuries, mirroring profound sociopolitical changes, it would be interesting to study its possible roots in the late Circassian and early Ottoman period to connect the findings of Levanoni, "Laqab" and Hathaway, *Tale*.

¹⁴⁰ Humphreys, "Legitimacy," Haarmann, "Zwangsherrschaft."

¹⁴¹ Haarmann, "Zwangsherrschaft", 263–67; Humphreys, "Legitimacy," 7–12; cf. Levanoni, "Conception," 382–3.

had to gain the support of his *ḥuṣḍāšūn* and as many Sultanic *mamlūks* as possible.¹⁴² During such a period of transition, a deceased sultan's son was almost inevitably enthroned for a short period of time. However, since an-Nāṣir Farağ b. Barqūq's violent death in 1412, no son did ever manage to actually reign and rule.¹⁴³ This was not necessarily the intended outcome, but even sultan Ğaqmaq's endeavour to install his adult son 'Uṭmān as his successor, who was also determined to rule, failed.¹⁴⁴ Apart from a lack of support by the senior emirs, 'Uṭmān had to rely on very few emirs bound to the royal household and inexperienced *mamlūks* of his father, and to make things worse, when 'Uṭmān had to pay the enthronement bonus (*nafaqa*) to the Sultanic *mamlūks*, his second problem turned out to be that his father had left him empty coffers.¹⁴⁵

The regular overthrow of these youthful sultans cannot be dismissed as a consequence of general instability, because they usually left quietly and were treated with respect in their later lives. On the contrary, these interim rulers served to stabilise the political system. In the eyes of emirs and *mamlūks*, however, they were unfit to rule,¹⁴⁶ and the Mamluk brand of factional politics prevented them from asserting themselves against Mamluk emirs. Nevertheless, such an interregnum proved quite useful to ride out the crisis until one of the leading emirs was enthroned as the new sultan, namely either the interim sultan's regent or a rival who had defeated him. The role played by the Circassian sultans' sons amounts to what Jack Goody called a "stand-in": a person that acts as a ruler temporarily until the real successor has been determined. This person is not entitled to inherit the throne and therefore poses no threat to either the old

142 Garcin, "Regime," 300–2.

143 Sultan Qāytbāy's son an-Nāṣir Muḥammad II's brief and not very successful reign (1496–98) might be considered an exception. See Petry, *Protectors*, 18–9, Ibn Iyās III, 324–401. Between 1412 and 1516, the son of every single sultan briefly ascended the throne, except for Ḥuṣḍadam and his successors Yalbāy and Tamurbugā who lost power after a very short time (all three dying in 1467).

144 To improve 'Uṭmān's chances for staying in power, Ğaqmaq appointed him emir of a thousand (*amīr mi'a wa-muqaddam alf*) and commander-in-chief (*atābak al-'asākīr*), in spite of established privileges and career paths (Ibn Tağribirdī, *Nuğūm* VII, 237). Famously, Ğaqmaq even abdicated immediately before he died in order to install 'Uṭmān on the throne himself, instead of leaving that to the emirs (Qāytbāy would fail with the same strategy in 1496). It is, however, not entirely clear whether Ğaqmaq managed to formally designate 'Uṭmān as his successor before it was too late. While Abū Ḥāmid al-Qudṣī (*Tārīḥ*, 80b–81a) and the posterior chronicler Ibn Iyās (*Badā'i'* II, 299 and 301) claim that he did, the contemporary Ibn Tağribirdī denies it (*Nuğūm* VII, 240–1).

For succession from father to son as a breach of law or at least tradition, see Haarmann, "Joseph's Law," 55–62, and idem, "Regicide," 130.

145 Ibn Tağribirdī, *Nuğūm* VII, 383–4. Several problematic moves of al-Manṣūr 'Uṭmān and his retinue are described in *Nuğūm* VII, 388–94.

146 Holt, "Structure," 48, idem, "Position," 240 and 246–7 and idem, "Observations," 505. Cf. Haarmann, "Regicide," 130.

or the new de-facto ruler (“a royal neutral”).¹⁴⁷ By the 15th century, the Mamluk sultanate had evolved almost into an informal elective monarchy,¹⁴⁸ as the successful candidate had to convince especially the large corps of his predecessor’s *mamlūks* (*ḡulbān*), and the most promising way to do that was to present his faction as the winning one. Once established, the sultan had to balance the emirs and their retinues against each other and against the Sultanic *mamlūks* in a carefully built geometry of power that broke down as soon as he died.¹⁴⁹ Then, rivalising factions started to form and to fight each other until the most powerful and shrewd emir could decide the conflict in his favour, became sultan and established a new political balance. This meant that no candidate could immediately ascend the throne; therefore, the son’s interregnum was accepted to avoid unnecessary chaos and to gain time to organise the own faction and to mobilise resources.¹⁵⁰ The only way for the old sultan to influence the anticipated power struggle was to appoint a regent.¹⁵¹ If the deceased sultan’s household hoped that the son would actually remain sultan, this hope would regularly be in vain.¹⁵² The son’s accession to the throne, however, was in the household’s interest in order to stay in power for some more time and to make favourable arrangements for the future. The household could also support one of the old regime’s leading emirs to become the real successor and to continue (or rather re-create) the household. In this way, the old sultan could appoint this emir – often the commander-in-chief (*atābak al-‘asākīr*) – guardian to his son and/or regent of the realm.¹⁵³ The combination of guardianship, commander-in-chief and regency put this emir into an advantageous position¹⁵⁴ as guardian (*mutakallim*) of a minor sultan¹⁵⁵ and “administrator of the realm” (*mudabbir al-*

147 Goody, 10–11.

148 Not everybody was entitled to run for the sultanate, though. Apart from the stand-in sons, all sultans of the 15th and early 16th century were *mamlūks* of Barqūq or *mamlūks* of his *mamlūks* (Conermann/Haarmann, 221), a “lineage” that coincides with Circassian *ḡīns*.

149 Cf. Petry, *Twilight*, 42–3.

150 Cf. Levanoni, “Conception,” 380.

151 The sultans seem to have avoided to officially designate a powerful emir as successor for he might become a dangerous rival.

152 Fairly typical examples were, for instance, ‘Uṭmān b. Ğaqmaq (Ibn Taḡribirdī, *Nuḡūm* VII, 379–415) and Aḡmad b. Īnāl (ibid., 644–79).

153 This was the case with Šayḡ’s son Aḡmad and Aḡtunbuḡā al-Qurmušī (Ibn Taḡribirdī, *Nuḡūm* VI, 411 and 416–425); with Ṭaṭar’s son Muḡammad and Ğānībak aš-Šūfī as Regent (*mudabbir*) in collaboration with Barsbāy as his educator (*lālā*) (Ibn Taḡribirdī, *Nuḡūm* VI, 516; cf. al-Qudṣī, 55a); as well as with Barsbāy’s son Yūsuf and Ğaqmaq (al-Qudṣī, 77b and 78a).

154 This resembles the Selḡuq *atabeg* institution, which had been passed down to the *mamlūks* through the Ayyubids, even though the title changed its meaning in the process.

155 The term *mutakallim* seems to be close or equivalent to *wašī* (which is not used very often in connection with minor sultans), i. e., executor of the late sultan’s will, including the ad-

mamlaka)¹⁵⁶ or order of the realm (*nizām al-mulk*, *nizām al-mamlaka*, *amīr nizām*).¹⁵⁷ The title of grand emir (*amīr kabīr*), which was often granted to the same person, seems to have expressed a claim to royal succession as the *primus inter pares* of the emirs.¹⁵⁸

4.2. Restricted violence

Legitimacy was not achieved by pedigree, but was based on what *mamlūks* expected from a ruler, namely political and military prowess, which necessitated some form of martial display for want of glorious battles.¹⁵⁹ Instead, succession struggles were often fought, but with minimal bloodshed, as Robert Irwin's vivid description illustrates:

“Fighting for the succession in Cairo was more in the nature of a voting by a show of swords than anything a medieval Englishman would recognise as a civil war. The street fighting in Cairo tended to be a matter of armed demonstrations rather than hand-to-hand, life or death fighting. It was usually restricted to one area of the city around the horse market and the Citadel. The Mamluks rode around in armoured demonstration and occasionally engaged in skirmishes. If nothing had been decided by the end of the day, they went home to bed, and forgathered on the following morning. Partisans tended to be constantly looking over their shoulders to see how many were on their side and how many were on the other. If they sensed they were on the wrong side, part of a losing minority, then they would drift over to the other side. It did not take long, four days in 1438, seven days in 1453, two days in 1461, one day in 1468. In this sense the restricted violence of Mamluk succession disputes can be seen as tending towards a form of consensus politics.”¹⁶⁰

ministration of the minor's property and acting as his legal guardian, similar to a *walī* (Schacht, 120 and 173).

156 Holt, “Structure,” 53–4; Qalqašandī, *Ṣubḥ* VI, 69 and 147. The topics of regency and guardianship are touched upon several times in Abū Ḥāmid al-Qudsi's *Tārīḥ*.

157 This title appears in Ibn Iyās, *Badā'ī* I/2, 825 and II, 66–9. Cf. Qalqašandī, *Ṣubḥ* VI, 33 and 74. However, its usage in al-Qudsi's *Tārīḥ* makes it clear that the title denotes the regent (fol. 35b, 36a, 42a–43b, 50a–51a, 55a, 56a–b, 57a, 77b, 80a, 89b); see also Ibn Taġribirdī, *Nuġūm* VI, 531–2 and Ibn Iyās, *Badā'ī* I/2, 406 and 824–6; II, 5; cf. Sievert, *Herrscherwechsel*, 88–95.

158 See, e.g., Ibn Taġribirdī, *Nuġūm* VI, 479. Holt explains that these offices were usually held by the same person during the Circassian sultanate (“Structure,” 54–5).

159 This “primitive and barbaric” legitimation comparable to a Germanic “Heerkönig” has been put forward by Holt, “Structure,” 48 and *ibid.*, “Position,” 246–7. The issue of royal legitimacy and legitimation, which had at least three levels in the Mamluk sultanate, will not be dwelled upon in this contribution (see, e.g., Sievert, *Herrscherwechsel*, 79–81).

160 Irwin, “Factions,” 238, after Ibn Taġribirdī. Cf. al-Qudsi, 52b–53a, al-'Aynī, *Iqd*, 138 and Levanoni, “Laqab,” 114–5. Such action did, however, unsettle the subjects (see, e.g., Labib, *Handelsgeschichte*, 416). When in 1421, Ṭaṭar managed to capture his rival in Cairo, Quġqār al-Qurdumī, after winning most Mu'ayyadī and Zāhīrī *mamlūks* over to his side, the

This tendency towards a pragmatic election process may have been supported by another factor, as the 15th century Mamluk regime increasingly resembled, in spite of its military structure, an oligarchy of quite literally senior emirs:

“...most of the Mu’ayyadīs, though they enjoyed a reputation of military prowess and discipline, seem rarely to have raised a sword or even a voice in anger. They studied, administered, wheeled and dealt. These soldiers almost certainly had a higher life expectancy than the peasants they affected to protect. [...] They died in their sixties, seventies and eighties. It is at least as accurate to regard them as a political militia as a military formation.”¹⁶¹

Irwin goes on to suggest that political skill and seniority did play an important role in the slow advancement of emirs who therefore achieved the highest echelons only late in life.¹⁶² The importance of political skill becomes immediately apparent in the shrewd tactical manoeuvres employed in succession struggles. The significance of experience and seniority in age and *mamlūk* lineage was certainly reinforced by the fact that long-time activity at court or in other influential positions brought about many opportunities to make useful acquaintances and forge closer bonds as well, as network-building naturally takes time.

4.3. The *ğulbān*

Every Mamluk sultan tried to expand his power base by building up his own corps of young sultanic *mamlūks* (*ğulbān*, *muštarawāt*).¹⁶³ These newly-im-

common people feared armed conflict, but nothing happened. According to Ibn Tağribirdī, this was because Quğqār lacked a sufficient number of dedicated supporters (*‘adam ḥāšiya*) and because he was originally an emir’s *mamlūk*, thus lacking the powerful *ḥuṣḍāš* allies a former Sultanic *mamlūk* could solicit (*Nuğūm* VI, 478). As head of a patronage faction, however, Quğqār lost his followers because he did not hold up his part of the bargain. A patronage faction is established and defined by its leader (or leaders), and mainly based on patronage relationships without a strong affective, long-term bond. The alleged common origin – Mongol *ğinsiyya* – therefore proved as insufficient to stabilise the faction as their parallel patronage relationship with Quğqār.

161 Irwin, “Factions,” 240. See also Levanoni, “Laqab,” 82.

162 Irwin, “Factions,” 236; cf. Levanoni, “Laqab,” 80. Irwin even points at similarities “to modern Western business precepts, [...] and, in its stress on age, experience and dead men’s shoes, Mamluk factional politics more closely resemble our modern civil service practice than they do the fratricidal civil wars of England and France in the XVth century.” (Idem, 242–3). The *atābak al-‘asākir* Īnāl al-‘Alā’ī al-‘Ağrūd (“the bald”) can be considered a fairly typical member of the emirs’ oligarchy. When he ascended the throne in 1453 after more than five decades of service, he was already over 70 years old (Cengiz Tomar, “el-Melikü’l-Eşref Īnal”, in: *DIA* XXIX, 63–4).

163 Each generation of sultan’s *mamlūks* was thus named after their master’s throne name

ported *mamlūks*, often bought in large numbers within a short period of time, were a special category, because of their numerousness and their strategic position. At least since the second half of the 14th century, the rank-and-file *ġulbān* gained so much political significance that the sultan as well as aspiring emirs became increasingly dependent on their support,¹⁶⁴ which made it difficult to prevent them from their notorious misbehaviour.¹⁶⁵ The sultans might even have utilised the large yet undisciplined body of violent men to intimidate too powerful emirs.¹⁶⁶ The available sources describe uncontrolled rapacity, abuse of power and ultimative demands on the part of the *ġulbān*, but no coordinated rebellion without the leadership of an emir. As the Sultanic *mamlūks* lacked leaders as well as a group identity,¹⁶⁷ they could only become a politically effective force if they followed experienced and influential emirs. They could act destructively; but as an uncoordinated and inexperienced force,¹⁶⁸ their fighting capacity should not be overestimated.¹⁶⁹ During struggles for succession, most of the preceding sultan's *mamlūks* flocked to the rivalising emirs, opting for the most promising faction. From the *ġulbān*'s as well as the contending emirs' perspective, it made perfect sense to integrate the sultanic *mamlūks* individually into existing factions,¹⁷⁰ so that most of them routinely abandoned the former

(*laqab*), like Zāhiriyya (Barqūq, Ğaqmaq), Nāširiyya (Faraġ), Mu'ayyadiyya (Šayḥ), or Ašrafiyya (Barsbāy).

164 Levanoni, *Turning Point*, 17–40; 53–101; 114–32; idem, “Rank-and-File Mamluks,” 17–30. Cf. Sievert, *Herrscherwechsel*, 61–67.

165 E. g., Ibn Taġribirdī, *Nuġūm* VII, 475–6, al-Qudsi, 90b and 92b. Cf. Haarmann, “Osten,” 248, Irwin, *Middle East*, 155 and Labib, *Handelsgeschichte*, 409–10.

166 Levanoni, “Laqab,” 83–4.

167 Ibn Taġribirdī confirms their inability to form a veritable faction (*‘adam iġtimā’*, as cited in Levanoni, “Laqab,” 84).

168 Levanoni, “Laqab,” 84–7; Irwin, “Factions,” 232. In 1421, the ambitious emir Ṭaṭar was not afraid of the *ġulbān* left by Šayḥ, but took advantage of their inexperience to garner their support: He exaggerated the threat posed by Quġqār's “Mongols” and promised the Mu'ayyadi to keep Šayḥ's household in power by becoming regent for their former patron's son, which was facilitated by the fact that Ṭaṭar belonged to Šayḥ's household himself. They accepted Ṭaṭar as their leader, as Ibn Taġribirdī resentfully states: “They sided with him, were deceived by him, and entered his faction, not concealing anything from him” (*Nuġūm* VI, 425: “*fa-mālū ilayhi wa-nḥada'ū lahu wa-šārū min ḥizbihi lā yahfawna 'anhu amran min al-umūr*”).

169 On one occasion in 1438, a large force of inexperienced and perhaps inadequately trained *ġulbān* was defeated by street gangs (*zu'ar*); see al-Qudsi, 81b–82a; cf. the differing views in Ibn Taġribirdī, *Nuġūm* VII, 40, and Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i* II, 201–2.

170 For instance, most *ġulbān* of the deceased sultan al-Mu'ayyad Šayḥ became proteges of emirs who were clients of the regent Ṭaṭar (on him, see below; Levanoni, “Laqab,” 86–7, citing Ibn Taġribirdī: “... *alā anna kull wāḥid minhum intamā li-šaḥṣ min ḥawāšī Ṭaṭar*”). The same development seems to have taken place after Ğaqmaq's demise when most of his *ġulbān* abandoned his son al-Mu'ayyad Aḥmad for an alliance of senior emirs (Ibn Taġribirdī, *Nuġūm* VI, 425) and were in due course accepted into senior emirs' patronage networks (Ibn Ḥaġar al-'Asqalānī, *Inbā'* VII, 406. Cf. al-Qudsi, 50b–51a). After Ṭaṭar's rise

sultan's dissolving household.¹⁷¹ Therefore, the deceased sultan's *ġulbān* had without any doubt considerable leverage in the political struggle, but they did not become a faction of their own,¹⁷² even though they did play an important role in the political struggle indirectly by what might be termed voting with their feet. Once the next sultan had been enthroned, his predecessor's *ġulbān* were carefully screened to determine whether they could re-enter the royal barracks as Sultanic *mamlūks*, or should be transferred to an emir's household.¹⁷³

As soon as an emir became sultan, his most important task was to secure his power. For this purpose, the new sultan awarded the most influential offices and the largest prebends of the realm to clients and especially to allied emirs – often his *ḥuṣḍāšūn* – whose support had proved critical and who – by the same token – were able to threaten his rule. The previous office holders, however, were dismissed if they had supported a rival, and sent to distant provinces, their leaders being exiled, incarcerated or executed. As the new sultan depended politically on the segment of the emirs' oligarchy that supported him, he acted in fact as a *primus inter pares*. To counterbalance his powerful allies in favour of his own household and patronage network, the sultan gradually promoted his clients and acquired large numbers of *muṣṭarawāt*. A difficult task the sultan had to face at the same time consisted in successively replacing his *ḥuṣḍāšūn* first with his clients, later on with his *ḥāṣṣakīs*¹⁷⁴ and, finally, with his own *mamlūks*, but without antagonising too many powerful emirs.¹⁷⁵ Until the time was right, a precarious balance had to be preserved, allowing for a gradual roll back, starting with the weaker groups. In fact, only the few sultans who reigned for exceptionally long periods managed to staff virtually all court and government offices with their own *mamlūks*.¹⁷⁶ However, filling all offices with his own *mamlūks*

to power, several of these Mu'ayyadī *mamlūks* were appointed to high offices, often skipping steps of the usual career path, which seems to indicate that they had become his clients (Ibn Taġribirdī, *Nuġūm* VI, 482–3; cf. al-Qudṣī, 51a (= ed. Tadmurī, 118), and al-'Aynī, *ʿIqd*, 121–7).

171 *ġulbān* who had supported their late master's son were usually expelled from the citadel (Levanoni, "Laqab," 88).

172 Irwin, "Factions," 232; cf. "Laqab," 88.

173 Levanoni, "Laqab," 89. Expelled *ġulbān* had to endure considerable hardship when they entered an emir's entourage (ibid., 91).

174 The *mamlūk* pages and confidants of the sultan, who were destined for high office (Haarmann, "Osten," 226 and Ayalon, "Studies," 213–15).

175 Cf. Northrup, 263, and Ayalon, "Studies," 208. As van Steenberg, 27, puts it, the sultan's prerogative of "absolute control of access to the amirate" was politically far more important than his supreme command of the army, even though the former was a consequence of the latter. This situation was a consequence of, on the one hand, the military character of the ruling elite, and the happy absence of large-scale warfare, on the other.

176 Both Šayḥ and Ğaqmaq managed to appoint the first of their own *mamlūks* to high office only after eight and fifteen years of rule, respectively. While Šayḥ, Barsbāy and Ğaqmaq ruled long enough to appoint their own *mamlūks* to leading positions, they largely refrained

might not really have been the ruler's goal, because he had to avoid any kind of unilateral dependence, but rather establishing an advantageous balance at the expense of his *ḥuṣḍāš* allies. When a sultan died, however, the carefully constructed patrimonial power structure broke down with the demise of the supreme patron until the crisis was again resolved.

4.4. Interim result: Circassian Succession

A single patronage faction was usually not strong enough to decide the conflict in its favour and therefore formed a tactical alliance that was later dissolved in a process of stabilising the new regime's rule, transforming the new sultan's patronage faction into a large patronage network, still with his household at the core, but merging with the royal court to become the patrimonial nexus of the realm.¹⁷⁷ The old sultan could not simply pass on the throne within his household, but he could influence the ensuing struggle's outcome by appointing a regent in the name of his son. In this way, the brief reign of the stand-in sultan gave the regent and royal household associated with him an advantage, and the competing factions had time to organise and mobilise resources. Although bloodshed did happen and no concrete rules were laid down in writing, this Circassian succession emphasised political skill and seniority rather than violence, providing (perhaps unintentionally) a degree of political stability in the systemic crisis of succession. This tendency might have been reinforced by interconnectedness of the leading households and their relevant personnel, as all Circassian sultans were *mamlūks* of Barqūq (and, after several decades, *mamlūks* of those *mamlūks*). Genealogical or *mamlūk* lineage, however, was not

from doing so, which might be a result of the separation between command and rank-and-file levels (Levanoni, "Laqab," 80–1), but the sultan also had to balance the *ḡulbān*'s and the leading emirs' interests.

¹⁷⁷ In the process of demobilising the combat-oriented patronage faction into the new supreme patron's patronage network, potentially dangerous allies had to be neutralised. This did not primarily happen violently (of course that was always an option, too), but by absorbing clients from their ranks. For example, the regent Ṭaṭar in 1421 removed his ally Tanibak Miyaq from the capital and from the latter's *Zāhiri ḥuṣḍāšūn* by appointing him governor of Damascus, without alienating him by demotion. Ṭaṭar's relationship with Tanibak changed now because the new sultan became a patron of several *Zāhiri* emirs himself and was no longer dependent on Tanibak's cooperation as an ally. For Tanibak, it made sense to accept an asymmetrical relationship with the increasingly powerful regent and may even have become his client. Ṭaṭar consistently expanded his clientele by releasing incarcerated or exiled emirs and their retainers. Some of these were Ṭaṭar's *ḥuṣḍāšūn*, but all of them became his clients, who had to rely especially on his protection because of their many enemies (Ibn Taḡribirdī, *Manhal* VI, 375; cf. *ibid.*, IV, 17; for the emirs in question, see *Manhal* IV, 16–21 and 222–4; VI, 152–6 and 374–8, as-Saḡāwī, *Ḍaw'* X, 275–6, No. 1084).

enough to ascend the throne; a key factor in the ensuing contest, for the most part staged as a martial performance, was winning the support of the late sultan's *mamlūks*. The Sultanic *mamlūks* did not form a faction nor a group of their own, but rather resembled armed voters.

4.5. Excursus: emirs and cardinals

There are certain similarities between the households and networks of Mamluk emirs and those of late medieval and early modern Roman high clergy, for the Roman Church was one of the few political system in Europe that precluded genealogical heredity of offices.¹⁷⁸ Theoretically, celibacy and elective monarchy should have caused a renewal of the oligarchy every time a new pope was elected, but in practice, these factors did not inhibit political continuity at all. According to Reinhard, both factors were compensated for by the extraordinary institutional stability of church administration and by high vertical and horizontal mobility – the latter of which seems to be true for the Mamluk sultanate as well, while the stability of administration is more difficult to determine.¹⁷⁹ Like a Mamluk emir, a Roman cardinal could usually not pass on his status genealogically. But the emir – as mentioned above – had the option of marrying his daughter to his most trusted client, which was not feasible for the cardinal.

In political systems with genealogical heredity, kinship and patronage relationships worked analogously, usually forming the inner circle of a political actor's ego net.¹⁸⁰ By contrast, what the Mamluk sultanate and Roman high clergy had in common was a political system “without heredity and therefore with a reduced continuity of opportunities”,¹⁸¹ which favoured and in fact necessitated recruitment by patronage. In both Cairo and Rome, this did of course not preclude relations of kinship, friendship or common origin, but patronage relationships often superseded them in both settings. Considering the (albeit limited) parallels with Papal Rome, it would be interesting to know whether the surprising durability of the conflict-ridden Mamluk polity could be explained by well-established patronage structures and factionalism,¹⁸² in addition to the role of the stand-in sultan. For example, due to the frequent changes in early modern

178 Cf. Völkel, 8–9, 401 and 403.

179 Reinhard, *Freunde*, 46–75; cf. Lind, 125–129.

180 Lind, 123–126: “Kin and clients were patronised in the same way. Family and patron-client links would together form a personal network” (idem, 123). Cf. Maćzak, 343, 350 und 356.

181 Reinhard, *Freunde*, 52: “ohne Erbllichkeit und daher mit verminderter Kontinuität der Chancen”, see also *ibid.*, 58.

182 Cf. Maćzak, 350 and 357. For stabilising effects of factionalism, see Hathaway, *Tale*, 188–9; Levani, “Laqab,” 113–5; Irwin, *Middle East*, 152.

Rome's power structure, multiple contacts with potential patrons or allies and enhanced network density were more promising strategies of political success than aggressive and prolonged factional rivalry.¹⁸³ In Circassian Egypt, the same could be said for *mamlūks* who kept several options open to change allegiances if necessary, and the political system remained remarkably stable in spite of frequent unrest and power struggles, partly because these struggles were usually resolved very quickly instead of prolonged fighting.

5. Conclusion

Certain patterns of interpersonal relations took a distinctive form in Mamluk society. Genealogical kinship was supplemented by quasi-kin relations, i. e. the familial integration of slaves into their master's household. Since full elite status could only be obtained by *mamlūks* recruited in that way, biological kin was on the one hand of secondary importance because imported family members would be dependent to their *mamlūk* kin in a clientelistic fashion.

On the other hand, family relations were a key component of household formation, and genealogical patterns of thought permeated biological as well as *mamlūk* kin relationships. Another ascribed relationship could be active on the basis of common origin, which might refer to geographical or ethnic background or to having had the same *ustād*. The latter relationship (*ḥuṣḍāšīyya*) should be further differentiated in terms of density and centrality, which had implications for its quality, as for instance quasi-kinship in small households or *aḡā-inī* relationships resembled family ties, while large regiments of slaves would instead form a patron-client relationship with their master. The most important acquired relationships were patronage and friendship (an alliance between individuals). Especially the asymmetrical variation – patronage – could easily eclipse a non-familial relationship between a master and his manumitted slave, because changing one's patron was common practice. An improved understanding of Mamluk politics would benefit from a focus on interpersonal relations between individual actors, acknowledging that their allegiances and relations varied in intensity or changed completely over time. In addition, it is crucial to distinguish between the different types of networks that I have tentatively described as extended family households, patronage networks, group parties and patronage factions. In contrast to an emir's extended family household consisting of a limited number of people, a sultan would simply be the patron of his hundreds or thousands of *mamlūk* recruits. While households

¹⁸³ Reinhard, *Freunde*, 59–71. Adversaries in the Papal Estates admittedly managed to solve political differences with less resort to violence than their Mamluk counterparts.

could easily become the core of a group party, in the Mamluk sultanate they were combined with their master's patronage network that could be transformed into a patronage faction for the purpose of prevailing in specific conflicts. The way in which these conflicts within the emirs' oligarchy were settled is in accord with the types of relationships that underly patronage factions as opposed to group parties. In addition to the concept of dynamic patronage factions and their alliances, the performance of "restricted violence" to win the armed voters' support and the stabilising role of the predecessor's son as a stand-in should be inextricably connected to the Mamluk version of patrimonial rule.

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