

A Comparative Study of Mamluk Era's Two Literary and Historical Lasting Legacies "Sobho Al-Esh Fi Senaate Al-Enshaa and Nehayatah Al-Rabb Fi Fonun Al-Adab"

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Abstract: Following the collapse of the Ayoubi state, a state was founded on its ruins and its founders were Turkish and Cherkessian servants; therefore, they were called Mamluks. In the Mamluk era (648-922 AH), a new publishing method flourished, i.e., writing a wide range of educational books (ma'aref) under similar titles in multiple volumes as Encyclopedias. Two samples of this writing pattern were the books "Sobho al-esh fi senaate al-enshaa and nehayatah al-rabb fi fonun al-adab". The first book emphasized on history and second book is written with a focus on teachers and writing. Hence, what obsessed the researchers of this study was the difference between this movement and other scientific movements. How is it possible for such valuable and enriching works to be emerged with no political and economic support? Thus, we were to have a comparative analysis of the aforementioned books and to investigate their similarities and differences and to present a picture of political and social conditions and environmental factors influencing the prominence of the cultural heritage of Egypt in this era as the most important factor in the formation of this scientific movement.

Key words: Sobho al-esh fi senaate al-enshaa, Mosoeh (Encyclopedia), Mamluk, Egypt

INTRODUCTION

Egypt, located in northeast Africa with a vast history of culture and civilization, like all previous civilizations has had advances in various scientific fields according to the needs of its residents. The peak of these achievements was the formation of the Alexandria school in a city of the same name inspired from Greek culture. This school initiated its activity with the attraction of a large number of scholars to study and research in sciences such as medicine, astronomy, mathematics and writing. The achievements of this school included first translations of Greek science and introducing Greek-Egyptian philosophy and medicine to Muslims. Despite, the transfer of Academic Schools to Antioch, it still continued his life until the end of the first century AD. Over the next centuries, Fatimid and Ayyubid rulers' actions in the construction of schools and mosques and libraries and employing scientists in governmental agencies as well as the advent of prestigious works in various disciplines including medicine and so on were other signs of scientific dynamism in this land. However, the situation of Egypt in the seventh century AD is interesting. At that time, despite dealing with two major events (namely the decline of the Ayyubid emperor and initiation of Mamluk government life (648-923 AH) and the tacking of East

Muslim world which had scouted Science and Islamic culture for centuries in the fire of Mongols' war, this land not only suffered damage in its growing trend but also, along with the Levant and following its new rulers' policy in dealing with the Mongol, became relatively safe to scientists who had survived from the killing of Mongol. Thus, with their presence, the grounds for writing scientific papers resulting from integrating information from different Islamic lands' thinkers with the centrality of Egypt were provided. A class of this compilation was called Mosouaa (i.e., Encyclopedia) and became significantly more common over the eighth century. Three of its top leaders were Egyptian scholars and writers including Ahmad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab Al-Noviri, Ahmad Ibn Fadlallah Amri (d 749 AH/1969) and Abul Abbas Qalqashandi. What was mentioned indicates that scientific and cultural heritage of Egypt were noticed more than other elements including political and economic factors which were observed in the success of previous movements, in the development of effective scientific movement in Mamluk era. It was a spontaneous movement derived from the thinkers with reliance on their predecessors' works and finally succeeded with their own efforts. And exquisite works were presented in various scientific fields. The comparative review of two of them with a descriptive-analytical focus forms the subject of this study.

Biography of Shahab Al-din Naviri: Ahmad Ibn Abd Al-Wahhab Ibn Muhammad Ibn AbdAl-Daem Al-Qurashi, Al-Bakri, Al-Novayeri, Al-Qosi, El-Shafei (677-733 AH/657-712), known as the Shahab-Ad-Din, Egyptian author and historian was famous as a scientist and researcher having deep knowledge. He served a short time in the Mamluk Sultan Malek Nasser. After a while, he was retired (Al-Dafavi, n.d.: 2/97; Ibn Khallikan, 2004: 7/111, *ibid*, 2002: 1/165). In 21 Ramadan 733 AH/712, he passed away in Cairo at the age of 57. The cause of his death was pain around his fingers. An introduction to "Nehayatah al-rabb fi fonun al-adab".

Book preface: "Nehayatah al-rabb fi fonun al-adab" is an encyclopedia or dictionary, comprehensive of all Islamic texts and teachings, since the arrival of Islam until the author's era. It is often recorded with the same title in most of its resources and even sometimes with the title of Great History (*ibid*. 2004: 7/111; Safadi, n.d.: 1.73). In some cases, it is also entitled "Nehayatah al-rabb fi fonun al-adab" (Ibn Taqari, Al-Manhal Al-Safi, n.d.: 1/381). The collection consisted of 30 volumes and according to sources quoted by the majority of authors; it is printed in 33 volumes and Naviri spent twenty years writing it. If we consider its great volumes, it does not seem strange. Entitling his work "Nehayatah al-rabb fi fonun al-adab", he could provide managed a relatively proper fit between the title and content of the book and this was a step forward getting closer to the concept of encyclopedia, compared with previous works and even with his contemporary author Qalqashandi. Among his resources are the Qur'an, the traditions, interpretations, poetry collections and important books and writings which are rare, especially those of which we have not access as well as the news obtaining from his own objective observations.

A report on the content of the book: This huge collection with its fluent and plain writing Arabic language is written in 33 volumes under five branches of knowledge including world and universe, man and his belongings, quiet animals, plants and art branch. Art branch with the inclusion of 20 volumes of the total book volumes forms the most important part of the encyclopedia and includes the history of the prophets including Adam, Abraham, Jesus and so on. Furthermore, the second chapter is related to the times of Prophet Ibrahim (PBUH) to Prophet Shoaib (PBUH). The third chapter contains the days of Moses (PBUH) and Jesus and the Apostles. It also covers news from other regions including: China, India, Iran, Greece, Sryanyan, Jellalgah, Frankish as well as news on Aram flood, the Arabian days and events in the age of ignorance. Finally, the fifth Chapter entitled the Islamic State News covers news from the era of the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH), Rashedin Caliphs, the Umayyad and

Abbassid Caliphs, caliphs and rulers of Andalusia and Iranian dynasties and Egypt rulers from Tulun to Mamluk era.

Qalqashandi Biography: Qazi Ahmad Ibn Ali Ibn Ahmad Ibn Abdullah Ibn Jamal Al-Qalqashandi Al-qahery (al-Masri) Al-Shafei (756-821AH/734-797) with the nickname Abul Abbas and the title Shahabuddin (Ibn Hajar Asqalani, n.d.: 1/468; Sakhavi, n.d.: 1/355) is the eighth and ninth century author and literary figure, author of the great and valuable book "Sobho al-esh fi senaate al-enshaa", the latest great encyclopedia of Mamluk era was born in Egypt (756 AH/734). He studied and taught in Cairo and Alexandria and joined the Court of authors during Soltan Zaher Barqoug King. It seems that Qalqashandi continued this job until the year (816 AH/796) and perhaps over the rest of his life. Meanwhile, he was writing his book (Qalqashandi, 1987: 1.8). Finally, he passed away on staturday, 10 Jamadi Al-Akhar (821 AH/797) at the age of 85 year in Cairo. In addition to his book "Sobho al-esh fi senaate al-enshaa".

An introduction to Sobho al-esh, book preface: The original title of the book as the author refers to in the prologue of his book is "Sobho al-esh fi senaate al-enshaa". However, other sources have mentioned this book under different titles including "Sobhol al eshaa fi al ghavenino al-enshaa" (*ibid*., 2002: 1/177; Sakhavi, n.d.: 1/355), "Sobho al-esh fi senaate al-enshaa" (Ibn Hajar, 2010: 1/468; Ibn Imad, 1406: 9/218), "Sobho al-esh fi senaate al-enshaa" (Ibn Taqari, n.d.: 1/362; Baghdadi, n.d.: 1/122) and or simply just Qalqashandi (1987) (as the author of this book) (Bakr Abu Zayd, 1407: 1/150). The book is named "Sobho al-esh fi senaate al-enshaa" "over a time. It was written by the author between 791-814 AH/768-790 over 14 years. Ragarding the number of book volumes, some people such as Sakhavi mention it in 4 volumes (Sakhavi, n.d.: 2/8). Some current authors know it in 20 volumes. There is no doubt that this claim is based on the number of volumes that have been published. However, it seems that 14 volumes mentioned by Zarkli in Al-Alam are correct (*Ibid*., 2002: 1/177) and the current copies are concrete evidences for this statement. In the appellation "Sobho al-esh", as the editor points out and literally suggests, Qalqashandi regards its work as the morning light shining in the world and through this light night will find its own way towards lightness. Qalqashandi in the compilation of hid encyclopedia relied on two types of sources including: Recordings of writing Court such as king and diplomatic documents as well as the most important books and writings written in different academic disciplines.

"Sobho al-esh fi senaate al-enshaa" consists of an introduction, 10 articles and a conclusion. Qalqashandi in

his book covers writing etiquette, the truth and nature of the composition and the formation of the writing Court, writing instruments and writing rules, geographical issues, a variety of titles and nicknames, corresponding, types of leadership and their hierarchy, religious commandments, authorization, types of oaths, peace letters and techniques of writing.

A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON “SOBHO AL-ESH FI SENAATE AL-ENSHAA AND NEHAYATAH AL-RABB FI FONUN AL-ADAB”

Mamluk government and its political, social and economic conditions: In the seventh century, the Muslim world was faced with the establishment of the white slaves government which took the political sovereignty of Egypt for three centuries. And two reigns caused different political, economic, social and cultural contexts in Egypt. And it was the Bahri Mamluk period which, despite dealing with internal conflicts and external aggressions such as the Crusades and the Mongol destructive attacks, managed to stand out well and provided favorable political, economic and military conditions in Egypt. However, the era of king tower was accompanied by a crisis in various aspects such as political crises such as hereditary government and speculation, scholars and jurists' reduced or cut wages, imposed heavy taxes on foreign merchant ships importing and exporting goods for government and finally discovered the Cape of good hope and the loss of gains from mediating role in trade routes and economic crisis. However, scientific and cultural activities despite all the ups and downs continued its life in this land in peace because of the adequacy of maritime security and political and military rulers and kings tower and their attention to scholars and jurists such as Noviri and Qalqashandi in official government. The evidence of this claim is valuable works by historians and writers such as Ibn Kathir (d. 774 AH 722), Ibn Taqeri Brady (d 874 AH 848), Meqrizi (d 845 AH 751), Zahabi (d 748 AH 726), Ibn Hajar Asqalani (d 852 AH 827), Ibn Aibek Davadary (alive until 736 AH 714), Ibn Khaldun (d 809 AH 785) and so on until the first quarter of the tenth century (Ghofrani, 1998).

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SOBHO AL-ESH AND NEHAYATAH AL-RABB BOOKS

First, the authors of both works were Sunnis and follower of the Shafi'i school, with the difference that, according to Noviri in *Nehayatah al-rabb* and other resources, Maliki was his father's religion. Therefore, he joined this religion later. Deciding on whether changing the religion from Maliki to Shafi'i was by his own choice

or by the force of government is controversial among scholars. However, according to his book and other resources, it can be inferred that the latter case is unlikely (Mahdavi, 1972). The question here is: Why did not he choose other religions, for example, Hanafi?

According to the appellation of these two works and what Krachkovsky (2000) presents after reviewing these works as well as an introduction to the book written by Qalqashandi, the importance of writing and its required materials is emphasized (Novayeri, 1423: 1/34). It seems that both authors were looking for writing a book by which the writer and the scribe more easily reach their goal, i.e., awareness of the writing requirements. And in terms of writing style, "literary writing" is one of the salient features of the works in this period (Ibid., 2000: 314-15). Both works, due to their authors' employment in the writing Court which is an indication of their expertise, either as notification or in practice have emphasized on the use of written literature and its implications for text adornment in a different way. As a part of the book introduction on art literature was previously mentioned. Introduction is rather artificial; however, its content with the exception of preliminary written on each of the techniques which in this case also acted in the style of the introduction of the book is written by simple and clear prose, full of traditions and verses and poems (Qalqashandi, 1987).

However, Qalqashandi in his book have used the same methods of his contemporary scholars including styles and literary industries such as rhyme and puns and Tarsi' and paradox and those methods that those, including himself, in literary courts had relied on. His writing style is manifested in his book introduction which contains artistic prose and in part of which he refers to the superiority of prose on poem. And accordingly, compared with less Noveiri (2010), he has made less obedience to the lyrics and verses (Qalqashandi, 1987).

Other component of this era was the arrival of scientific and literary Arabic words which can be seen in both works, especially in terms of bureaucracy terms. Some examples include: "Al-bashghT as-shatranj" In "Sobho al-esh" (Ibid., 1987: 2/65, 2/159, 5/433); "Al shakeri, khan, khoshdash" (Ibid., 1423: 32/20, 33/201, 5/99) in Noveiri (2010)'s "Nehayatah al-rabb".

Although, both works are known as the Encyclopedia has underlined a particular subject and this emphasis is not hidden from the eyes of contemporary writers and former biographers as Qalqashandi is known as a scholar and Noveiri is known as a historian and author of the Great history. In *Nehayatah al-rabb*, a part which is highly attended and nearly two-thirds of the collection is devoted is history branch. At the beginning

of this branch, Noveiri, with mentioning some verses from the Holy Quran to learn from the past and pointing out the importance of history knowledge for the public and the reasons of such importance actually represents his perspective towards history. This is greatly close to the perspective of Ibn Maskouyeh who has considered history from a philosophical and moral point of view. Regarding his references, it should be said that the traditions on prophets' news to the initiation of Eram news are Al-Emad (1986), Sahabeh, especially Abdullah Ibn Abbas, Jabir Ibn Abdullah Ansari, Malik Ibn Anas, Ka'b Al-Ahbar, Wahb Ibn Munabbih, etc. They are quoted with the used of terms such as An and Gal or Ghil.

Subsequently, the next Prophets are mainly quoted from Ibn Ishaq and Kasaei. In the news of China, India, Egypt and Saqalbeh and pre-Islam Iran, he generally quotes from Masoudi "Moravej Al-Zahab". Regarding the Islamic history, he has used the books of historians such as Ibn Al-Athir, Muhammad Ibn Sa'd and Tabari and Ibn Abd Al-Abir and sometimes Mohamed Ibn Omar Waqidi and quotes them with using terms such as: Ghal, Aan, haki, roi.

Akhshydyan the books of historians such as Muhammad bin Abdullah bin Ahmad Msbhy author News Egypt that left more than forty volumes, Ibn Zvlaq author of "virtues Egypt and News properties", Altnvkhy author of "Nshvar Almhazrh and Almkzrh news" is used. In addition to quoting Ibn al-Athir's "Al-Kamel" in mentioning traditions, Noveiri has tried to take advantage of the author of history books, whether local or general, whose works were of credit in the field concerned. Regarding the Akhsheidyan State, he used the books of historians such as Muhammad Ibn Abdullah Ibn Ahmad Mosahebi, the author of the book Egypt News whose Volum No. 40 is only remained and Ibn Zolaq, the author of "Fasael msr va akbarohava khavaseha "and Al-Tanoukhi the author of neshvae al-mohazera va akhbare al mozakera. It should be mentioned that although Noveiri has tried in various positions to play his role as a neutral historian, regarding the "Fatimids", he was biased and followed anti-Fatimid flow of ideas whose founders were some people such as Khajeh Nezam AL-Molk. He also used a title suggesting doubt in Fatimid ancestry and quotes from people like Abu Bakr Ibn Al-Tayeb known as Baqillani who was the author of "Kashfo al-asrar va hattk o al-star and Abu Mohammad Abdul Aziz Ibn Shaddad the author. They were influenced by anti-Fatimid flow. In this way, Noveiri doubted in their ancestry and severely undermined their beliefs and knew them as co-religionists of Khorramdin. In the News of Andalusian Umayyad, he quoted from Ibn Al-Raqiq, the author of "Tarikh Afrighia" and Ibn Moyassar the author of "History of Egypt" and so on. Regarding Mamluk government, he quoted from books entitled "sayrata

al-zaheria" by Qazi Abdolah Ibn Abd Al-Zaher and "Tarikh al-yonini". Reporting Kharazmshahian and Mongols' State, he relied on the narrations of Muhammad Ibn Ahmad Ibn Ali El-Monshi Al-Nasavi. He also observed the characteristic of integrity in the writing of history in the quoted traditions; however, he is not always a mere narrator, he critically reviews traditions. He respectfully speaks of the family of the Prophet (PBUH) and mentions them in the introduction with respect and dignity and is not afraid to narrate them as it can be seen in various parts of his work. He even pointed out the event of Ghadir about which most Sunni sources remain silent. However, he sometimes judges based on religious sentiments of the judgment which are not in any way compatible with the traditions. They somehow seem like a justification than a logical proof. Another problem with his work is that despite the distance of his works with the early Islam and his critical viewpoint applied in his work, some examples of superstition and what is more a fiction than fact are visible in his work, including the story of the Prophet's breast opening (Sharhe Sadr).

Qalqashandi throughout his work emphasized on writing industry and matters related to the composition Court and Islamic organizations and everything that a scribe and author of the writing Court is required to have knowledge of. Therefore, the most important and largest part of his Encyclopedia is dedicated to corresponding and its variants which started from half of the sixth volume and ends at half of the ninth volume. His attention to history, compared to Noveiri, has been minimal and dedicated only 55 pages of his work on two topics: the historical information in the form of Al-Avail (the first and greatest, etc.) of which a scribe's ignorance is not accepted when negotiating with other large kings or other dignities as well as using them during the speech by a scribe. He just quoted from two authors, Abu Hilal Askari and Sa'alebi. However, many historical materials can be found within the contents of his book. His approach to history rather than taking lessons was to use and to state while writing. Qalqashandi had an opener view than Noveiri. For example, regarding the Fatimid state, he narrated it without any bias and provided valuable information on its bureaucratic apparatus. This made his book one of the richest sources in this field.

Moreover, other feature of Sobho al-esh is the author's integrity, showing the vowels for words in some cases including the names of the tribes of Arabs to avoid misreading. This is one of the characteristic of modern dictionaries. Qalqashandi like Noveiri respects the family of the Prophet (pbuh) and in Al-Avail, he regards Imam Hassan and Imam Hussein (AS) in terms of ancestry the noblest men of the nation and introduces Fatima in terms of lineage the noblest woman and wife among the Ummah. Like Noveiri, he considers Imam Hassan (AS) among the Rashedin Caliphs and he speaks of Imam Ali (AS) as

Amir-Al-Moemenim when introducing Bani-Hamedan lineage the Prophet put. The problem with both *Nehayatah al-rabb* and *Sobho al-esh* is that they, regardless of the position of prophethood of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and his understanding of the requirements in this context, mentioned some traditions from his companions which sometimes put them at a level beyond the prophet in terms of knowledge. For example: the narrative on the Hijab verse in both books.

In addition to what already noted, other features which make, not only these two works but also each work valuable is documentation. In *Nehayatah al-rabb*, except in cases where the people like Ka'b Al-Ahbar and the like are directly quoted without citing the source, other cases are cited by the author's name or the work or both along with aforementioned terms. In *Sobho al-esh*, the name of author has always been accompanied with his work.

The resources used in *Sobho al-esh* often refer to the title of the book and the author. They are mostly are from highly quoted and excelled in their field, some of which include:

- "Altaarifo bal-Mostaleh Al sharif va orfo al taarife" by Ibn Fazl Alah AL-Omari
- "Altaghiff" by Ibn Nazir Al-Jaysh
- "Mava Al-bayan" by Ali Ibn Khalaf, a book on Fatimid State
- "Moaalem al-ketaba" by Ibn Sheit
- "Alaval" by Abo Helal Askari
- "Al-Amwal" by Abi Obaid
- "Zakhirata Al-kotab" by Ibn Hajeb Noaman
- "Sano al-ketab" by Abi Jafar AL-Nohas
- "Ghavni al-davavin" by Ibn Mamati
- "Taghvimo al Boldan" by Al-Moayed Saheb Hamat (Ibid, 1987: 1.15)

In some cases, these two encyclopedias can complement each other, including the part that Noveiri speaks of plants and their properties and their classification. In this regard, the amount of herbal information provided for the reader transmits is greater than those provided by Qalqashandi. This applies to other items such as "silent animal (quiet)" or "man and his belongings". These two subjects actually are more complete in "*Nahayatah al-rabb*" than "*Sobho al-esh*".

CONCLUSION

Despite, the Mamluk rulers' unfamiliarity with science and culture, Egypt in the age became the emerging ground of Islamic science from writing biographies and literary sciences, religion science and so on as well as of Encyclopedia scribing. Two examples of these works are "*Nehayatah al-rabb fi fonun al-adab* and *Sobho al-esh fi senaate al-enshaa*" which were descriptively-analytically

compared in this article and their distinctions and similarities were mentioned. The results of this review considered the features such as the words involved, using abbreviations, observing the principle of integrity, using the principles of the common literature in the Mamluk era, using reliable sources of news and reliable documentaries and writing them with a common objective as the commonalities of these two works. Their distinguishing features include different writing style which makes *Nehayatah al-rabb* an encyclopedia and *Sobho al-esh* closer to the narrow sense of Mosoeh, different contents which led to differences in writing literature having a separate written literature making one of them associate with poetry and prose and smooth and polished verses and traditions and another one associate with rhyme and artistic prose and Tarsi' and different social political conditions. According to some studies, including reports of donating books such as *Nehayatah al-rabb* to the Mamluks rulers Nhayhalarb book, if it is correct, Noveiri was banned by and had a secluded life or the appointment of scientific experts such as Qalqashandi and Noveiri and others to important administrative and governance positions has never meant giving importance to science and scholars. The first case was common among scribes in different eras. It seems that the latter case was to have a more efficient use of expert forces but not scientists and scholars' honor and esteem. What strengthens this theory is harsh encounter along with violence and killing and jurists and scholars' cutting pensions by them.

By using these tips, a factor such as government can be put aside in this intellectual movement and it can be mentioned that this movement was spontaneous and driven from the heart of Islamic lands and gradually formed because of cross-ethnic and cross-national communications of Muslims, especially Muslim scientists around the world. And with the beginning of the Mongol invasions and due to the insecurities in rest of the Muslim world, Islam was drawn towards Egypt which was safe against Mongol invasions as a result of Mamluks' measures and flourished by scholars of this country and refugees and resulted in some valuable benefits. We hope that further study and research by scholars are conducted in this regard.

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