

similarly held a constitutional relevance. Although Ibn Jama'a's discussions resembled those of his main influences, especially al-Mawardi, they were also in fact a reflection of his interest in the moderation of and limitations on the exercise of power by the sultan, and the proper functioning of government in every political eventuality. I referred to these interests in the Introduction as the concern for the rule of law, delegation of power and limited government.

Shari'a, *tafwid*, *'ahd*, *taqlid* and *wilayat* should not be interpreted merely as terms or metaphors representing political concepts, but rather as essential and carefully selected constituents of the political languages of Islamic thinkers. They were deployed to convey complex constitutional views and were understood precisely by those target audiences and dedicatees that were acquainted with the specific conventions prevalent among the political thinkers of the late Ayyubid and early Mamluk period. For instance, idioms in political treatises authored by Shafi'i-Ash'ari legal theoreticians could be opaque to other Shafi'i jurists or traditionists who were not versed in constitutional discourses or simply not interested in questions of governance. Moreover, the same idioms may hold or be taken to hold drastically different meanings if employed by the same Shafi'i-Ash'ari legal theoreticians in different fields such as, for instance, works of substantive law; the above-mentioned use of *shari'a* comes to mind here. Likewise, there is a need to not be deceived by the reuse of excerpts from classical influences, which may appear to relate to the same historical political concepts or interactions but in fact serve purposes in completely different discourses that are pertinent only to the late Ayyubid and early Mamluk context. Only with these nuanced understandings in mind can we begin to retrieve the languages and understand the political discourses of the period, and accordingly 'read' political texts.

Ibn Cema, Bedreddin (030230)

~~Safi (181540)~~

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MADDE YAYIMLANDIKTAN
SONRA GELEN DOKÜMAN

Mohamad Et-Merheb, *Political Thought in the Mamluk Period*
The Unnecessary Caliphate, Edinburgh: Edinburgh Uni. Press, 2022
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2

Ibn Jama'a's Synthesis and Praxis of Shafi'i Political Thought

This chapter examines the synthesis of the Shafi'i strain of political thought during the Mamluk period and its praxis. It describes its development, precursors, influences and the distinctive literary styles that were used to convey it. This synthesis is embodied in the treatise *Tahrir al-ahkam fi tadbir ahl al-Islam* (*Drafting Ordinances Towards Running the Affairs of the People of Islam*) and the praxis in the life and career of its author, Ibn Jama'a. This synthesis and praxis make the *Tahrir* the ultimate manifestation of Shafi'i political thought.

Several features of the *Tahrir* make it a synthesis of Shafi'i political thought. For one, the *Tahrir* was the last of the Shafi'i political treatises of the period, and arguably the last important one ever written by a renowned Shafi'i thinker. After this period, there was only a yearning for the Shafi'i lost golden past, as illustrated in the last chapter of this book. Furthermore, layers of Shafi'i thinkers, including al-Mawardi, al-Juwayni, al-Ghazali and Ibn Talha profoundly influenced the *Tahrir*, both thematically and stylistically. The influence of these and other earlier Shafi'i writings was, likewise, evident in the style and the distinctive arrangement of sections that Ibn Jama'a opted for in his treatise. The *Tahrir's* arrangement reflected three main clusters of topics: the *imamate* and the conception of political authority; the main offices and the administration; and the rules of war – in this organisation, the *Tahrir* benefited from earlier Shafi'i treatises.

The praxis of this political thought is attested to by the life and career of Ibn Jama'a. It refers to the way the *Tahrir* was moulded by Ibn Jama'a's experience in the posts he held and, at the same time, to the way his political