

A GLIMPSE ON THE USE OF THE ḤARRĀQAS IN THE RED SEA AND ON THE NILE FROM THE FĀṬİMĪD TILL THE END OF MAMLUK PERIODS *

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Abstract

In the Medieval period, domination of the seas meant holding both the regional power and the power over trade, and that is the reason why the high seas witnessed numerous struggles throughout history. Over time, trade relations between states gained an international dimension due to advances in shipbuilding technology. Ships were the means of transport used for military and commercial purposes. One of the types utilized in Middle Ages was the *ḥarrāqa*, which was designed to attack enemy ships by means of fire. The present study intends to determine the reasons for the use of the vessels called *ḥarrāqas*, by whom they were utilized and their functions in the Red Sea and on the Nile River in the light of classical Arabic sources.

Keywords: Ḥarrāqa, ship, Red Sea, Nile, sultāns, amīrs, wars, ceremonies, transportation.

Öz

Ortaçağ'da denizler üzerindeki hâkimiyet hem bölgesel iktidarın hem de ticârî gücün elde tutulması demekti, bu yüzden tarih boyunca açık sular pek çok mücadeleye sahne olmuştur. Zamanla gemi teknolojisindeki gelişmeler sebebiyle devletler arasında ticarî ilişkiler uluslararası bir boyut kazanmıştır. Gemiler askerî ve ticarî amaçlarla kullanılan ulaşım araçlarıydı. Ortaçağ'da kullanılan gemi türlerinden biri de düşman gemilerine ateş yoluyla saldırmak için tasarlanan *ḥarrâka* idi. Bu makale *ḥarrâka* denilen gemilerin kullanılma nedenlerini, kimler tarafından kullanıldığını ve Kızıldeniz ile Nil Nehri'ndeki fonksiyonlarını klâsik Arap kaynakları ışığında açıklamayı hedeflemektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ḥarrâka, gemi, Kızıldeniz, Nil Nehri, sultanlar, emirler, savaşlar, törenler, ulaşım (nakil).

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The *ḥarrāqa* was a type of ships, used for incinerating the enemy vessels with naphtha during the Medieval period, and the Crusades in particular. Accompanying great capital ships, it was one of the most important battleships that contributed to Islamic naval forces; and consisted of 100 oars according to Ayyūbīd historian Ibn Mammātī (544-606/1149-1209).¹ Indeed, in addition to Ibn Mammātī's account, other sources shed further light upon the use of *ḥarrāqas* in the Mediterranean Sea. The following discussion aims to provide a detailed analysis regarding the military and civil functions the *ḥarrāqa* fulfilled in the Red Sea and on the Nile.

As regards the use of *ḥarrāqas* in the Red Sea, al-Maqrīzī (766-845/1364-1442), writes: “*In 512 (1118-9), the ships dispatched from ‘Aydḥāb by Qaṣim b. Hāshim, the governor of Mecca, crossed the merchants’ path and ravaged everything they could find. Bursting with rage, the Fāṣimīd vizier al-Aḫḍal b. Badr al-Djamālī said: ‘The Governor of Mecca ravished the merchants in my country, and I, personally, will stand up against him with a navy with one end in ‘Aydḥāb and the other in Jeddah.’ Subsequently, the notables of Mecca were informed of the situation and were warned to return these merchants and pilgrims reaching Mecca. A notice was sent to the governor of Qūṣ ordering that he himself or someone nominated by him ensure that no one should board on jallābs², that he identify the number of ḥarrāqas and shawānī³ on the coast of ‘Aydḥāb and pro-*

¹ al-As‘ad b. al-Muḥaḍḍḥab ibn Mammātī, *Qawānīn al-Dawāwīn*, ed. ‘Aziz Suryāl ‘Atīyya, Cairo 1943, p. 340. For the type of the vessel that was used frequently in the Mediterranean Sea, “Greek Fire”, and the ways the fire was used as a weapon, see: Aly Mohamed Fahmy, *Muslim Sea-Power in the Eastern Mediterranean From the Seventh to the Tenth Century A. D.*, Cairo: National Publication & Print 1966, pp. 134-136; ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Zakī, *Al-Silāḥ fī al-Islām*, [?] 1951, p. 21; Su‘ād Māhir, *al-Baḥriyya fī Miṣr al-Islāmiyya*, Cairo 1967, pp. 339-340; Darwīsh Nukḥaylī, *Al-Sufun al-Islāmiyya ‘alā Ḥurūf al-Mu‘jam*, Alexandria 1974, pp. 32-37; Dionisius A. Agius, *Classic Ships of Islam from Mesopotamia to the Indian Ocean*, Leiden-Boston 2008, pp. 299-301; Ḥabīb. Zeyyāt, “Mu‘jam al-Marākib wa al-Sufūn”, *Al-Mashriq* 42, Beirut 1949, pp. 330-331; Douglas Haldane, “The Fire-Ship of al-Sālih Ayyūb and Muslim Use of “Greek Fire””, *The Circle of War in the Middle Ages, Essays on Medieval Military and Naval History*, ed. Donald J. Kagay-L. J. Andrew Villalon, Woodbridge 1993, pp. 137-144; Vassilios Christides, “Islamic World Vessels”, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Maritime History II*, ed. John B. Hattendorf, Oxford-New York 2007, 264-265; Vassilios Christides, “Naḫḫ”, *EP* (English), VII, 884-890; Vassilios Christides, “Greek Fire”, *EP* (English), IV, 146-148. For the *ḥarrāqa* as a riverfaring craft on the Tigris and Euphrates, see: Aly Mohamed Fahmy, Su‘ād Māhir, Darwīsh Nukḥaylī, Dionisius A. Agius, Ḥabīb. Zeyyāt.

² For further information about this type of vessel: Nukḥaylī, *Al-Sufun al-Islāmiyya*, pp. 27-29.

³ For further information about this ship whose singular form is *shīnī*, see: Fahmy, *Muslim Sea-*

vide them with necessary equipment and armory. And finally, he was supposed to go to 'Aydḥāb and make sure that the citizens understand the imminence of war around the coast of Ḥijāz. Afterwards the five ḥarrāqas, newly constructed, were dispatched to Ḥijāz..."⁴

Clearly enough, the information presented by al-Maqrīzī indicates that the *ḥarrāqas*, along with the *shawānī*, were among the most important and indispensable types of vessels in the Fāṭimīd navy. The five above-mentioned new *ḥarrāqas* sent by the government to assist other ships around the coast of Ḥijāz reveal that this vessel type was employed by the Fāṭimīds not only for defending the coastal frontier, but also for monitoring the sea against hostile activities.

The Fāṭimīds maintained another flotilla consisting of five ships at port of 'Aydḥāb for the purpose of protecting the merchantmen sailing between 'Aydḥāb and Sawākin, and for safeguarding the Kārimī merchant caravans against pirate raids in the course of years. The flotilla was later reduced to three vessels, charging the governor of Qūṣ to maintain and outfit this squadron.⁵ Although Qalqashandī (756-821/1355-1418) does not specify the type of ships stationed in Qūṣ, it is reasonable assume that *ḥarrāqas* were among the escort vessels.

In 577 (1181-2) Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Ayyūbī ordered the construction of five *ḥarrāqas* in the shipyard of Cairo to transport *amīrs* and soldiers to Yemen.⁶ On

Power, pp. 131-132; Nuḵhaylī, *Al-Sufun al-Islāmiyya*, pp. 83-85; Christides, "Islamic World Vessels", *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Maritime History II*, 263-264; Vassilios Christides, "Shīnī, shīniyya, shānī", *EP* (English), IX, 444-445.

⁴ Taqīyy al-Dīn Abū al-'Abbās Aḥmad Ibn 'Alī al-Maqrīzī, *Itti'āz al-Ḥunafā bi 'Akhbār al-A'imma al-Fāṭimīyyīn al-Khulafā*, ed. M. H. M. Aḥmad, Cairo 1973, III, 58. Cf. Nuḵhaylī, *Al-Sufun al-Islāmiyya*, p. 33; Yaacov Lev, *State and Society in Fatimid Egypt*, Leiden-New York-København-Köln 1991, p. 105; Elsayyed 'A. Sālim, *al-Baḥr al-Aḥmar fī al-tārīkh al-Islāmī*, Alexandria 1993, s. 88; Haldane, *ibid*, p. 139.

⁵ Aḥmad ibn 'Alī Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-a 'shā fī šinā'at al-inshā'*, Cairo 1914, III, 524. Cf. Yaacov Lev, *Saladin in Egypt*, Leiden-Boston-Köln 1999, p. 171; Dionisius Agius, "The Arab Šalandī", *Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras III*, ed. U. Vermeulen-J. Van Steenberghe, Leuven 2001, p. 53; Vassilios Christides, "Roman and Byzantine Naval Power in Decline in the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean" *Ekklesiastikos Pharos 95*, Alexandria-Johannesburg 2013, p. 85, f. 23.

⁶ Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk li-Ma'rīfat Duwal al-Mulūk*, ed. Muḥammad M. Ziyādah, Cairo 1956, I, Part 1, p. 76. Cf. A. M. al-'Abbādy-Elsayyed 'A. Sālim, *Tārīkh al-baḥriyya al-Islāmiyya fī Miṣr wa'l-Šām*, Beirut 1981, p. 219; Lev, *Saladin in Egypt*, p. 171. Haldane (*ibid*, p. 139) reports that although Fāṭimīd navy was destroyed in Fuṣṭāṭ in 1169, fire-ship technology as well as fire-ships were found in surrounding ports, the Ayyūbīds used this technology for their own benefits and

16th Rabī' I 638 (5 October 1240) the Sulṭān al-Malik al-Şāliḥ Naḍjm al-Dīn Ayyūb (637-647/1240-1249) sent *ḥarrāqas* and *shawānī*, which he had prepared in advance, from the Red Sea to Yemen, headed by the assigned *amīrs* and troops.⁷

Although the available primary sources do not provide much detail about the use of *ḥarrāqa* ships in the Red Sea, Yaacov Lev⁸ argues that the *ḥarrāqas*, together with other army vessels, were among the most important war ships that defended the coastal frontiers of the Islamic Red Sea against the Crusaders.⁹

Records that mention the use of *ḥarrāqas* around the Nile are not only sufficiently revealing but also abundant compared to the records mentioning *ḥarrāqas* operating in the Red Sea. Classical Arabic sources suggest that these crafts were used not only for military, but also for formal ceremonies and civil purposes. Nuwayrī al-Iskandarānī (d. 775/1374) reports that they “[w]ere among the ships known in the Nile Delta and functioned as luxury vessels for rulers and *amīrs*.”¹⁰

In his Mawā'iz al-Maqrizī adds: “Do not forget! ‘And to Him belong the

as a result, “Greek Fire” technology was commonly used after the collapse of the Fāṭimīd state.

⁷ Maqrizī, *Sulūk*, I, Part 2, 306.

⁸ *Saladin in Egypt*, p. 182.

⁹ On the attacks of Crusaders to the Red Sea, see: Gary Le Viera Leiser, “The Raider Crusader in the Red Sea 578/1182-3”, *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 14, [?] 1977, pp. 87-100; Ebru Altan, “Renaud de Châtillon: Antakya Prinkepsi (1153-1160), Mâverâ-i Ürdün Senyörü (1177-1187)”, *Tarih Dergisi* 55, İstanbul 2013, pp. 15-16. Even though *ḥarrāqas* were used in the Red Sea, the reason that the sources did not mention these vessels in the Red Sea was, maybe, the belief that iron ships were drawn to the Red Sea due to the presence of magnetic field caused by rocks and mountains. See: Zakarīyā ibn Muḥammad Qazwīnī, *‘Adjā’ib al-makhlūqāt wa-ghrā’ib al-mawdjūdāt*, Cairo [n.d.], pp. 136-137; Muḥammad ibn Qāsim Nuwayrī al-Iskandarānī, *Kitāb al-Ilmām bi-al-i’lām*, ed. ‘Aziz Suryāl ‘Aṭiyya, Hyderabad 1969, II, 247; G. F. Hourani, *Arab Seafaring in the Indian Ocean in Ancient and Early Medieval Times*, Princeton University Press 1995, pp. 151-152. Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn al-Mas‘ūdī (*Murūdj al-dhahab wa-ma‘ādin al-djawhar*, ed. M. M. ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd, [?] 1973, I, 163) indicates that the reason for using ropes instead of nails is because the Red Sea weakens the irons. For further reading about Arab navigation in the Red Sea, see: G. R. Tibbets, “Arab Navigation in the Red Sea”, *The Geographical Journal* 127/3, London 1961, pp. 322-334; Vassilios Christides, “Some Remarks on the Mediterranean and Red Sea Ships in Ancient and Medieval Times: A Preliminary Report”, *Tropis* 1, Piraeus 1985, pp. 75-82; Vassilios Christides, “Some Remarks on the Mediterranean and Red Sea Ships in Ancient and Medieval Times: Part II”, *Tropis* 2, Delphi 1990, pp. 87-99.

¹⁰ Nuwayrī al-Iskandarānī, *ibid*, II, 249; Nuḥaylī, *Al-Sufun al-Islāmiyya*, p. 35.

ships [with sails] elevated in the sea like mountains. ¹¹ *Ghurābs*¹², *shawānī* and *ḥarrāqas* were huge even faster than the wind and arrow; stones, irons, and people were often seen on these ships and they grant victory during wartime. ¹³ All these quotations leave no doubt that *ḥarrāqa* was used not only as a river craft, but also played an integral role as a military vessel throughout the period under discussion.

When the Crusaders, who conquered Damietta in the reign of the Ayyūbīd Sulṭān al-Malik al-Kāmil (615-635/1218-1238), marched towards the interior of Egypt, the Islamic navy landed troops with a huge *ḥarrāqa* and 100 *shawānī* to fight them at the bay known as *Baḥr al-Maḥalla* (616/1219-20).¹⁴

Yet once again during the reign of al-Malik al-Kāmil one *ḥāḍjib* called -Ṣāliḥ al-Arbilī- got on a *ḥarrāqa* with the sulṭān while holding the sulṭān's hem with one hand and with the Nile on his left, he recited this poem:

If one wants wealth, said in the proverb,

Should be around the sea or the king as both bring wealth!

How can poverty visit my house? Since I have two seas! One of them is at the peak and the other is flowing...

¹¹ *Qur'ān* 55:24 - "وَلَهُ الْجَوَارِ الْمُنشَآتُ فِي الْبَحْرِ كَالْأَعْلَامِ"

¹² For further information about this type of vessel: Fahmy, *Muslim Sea-Power*, pp. 132-133; Nuḥhaylī, *Al-Sufun al-Islāmiyya*, pp. 104-112; Dionisius A. Agius, "Maqrīzī's Evidence for the *Ghurāb*: The Galley of the Mamlūks", *Law, Christianity, and Modernism in Islamic Society*, ed. U. Vermeulen-J. M. F. van Reeth, Louvain-Belgium 1998, pp. 185-197.

¹³ Maqrīzī, *Al-Mawā'iz wal-I'tibār fī dhikr al-khiṭaṭ wal-Āthār*, ed. A. F. Sayyid, London 2002-2004, III, 237.

¹⁴ Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, I, Part 1, 203; Maqrīzī, *Mawā'iz*, I, 591. Cf. 'Abbādy-Sālim, *ibid*, p. 234; Haldane, *ibid*, p. 142. 'Izz al-Dīn Abī al-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Abī al-Karam ibn al-Aṭḥīr (*al-Kāmil fī al-Ta'rīkh*, Turkish trs. Abdülkerim Özeydin-Ahmet Ağırakça [*İslām Tarihi İbnü'l-Esîr; el-Kāmil fī'l-Târîh Tercümesi*], İstanbul [n.d.], XII, 281-282) reports that Muslim ships on the Nile headed to the battle field without specifying any vessel name. In addition, the same author states that al-Malik al-Kāmil built up many bridges on the *Ashmūn* branch of the Nile, helped Muslims to pass the river via these bridges and held the path which the Crusaders would pass; and that the well-known and large Crusader ship, known as the *maramma*, was full of all arms, food, and weapons needed by them and was coming closer to the Muslims; and that there were a lot of *ḥarrāqas* protecting this ship. He also states that the Muslims captured this large ship and the *ḥarrāqas* following a set of battles. After this victory the Crusaders evacuated Damietta (7 Raġjab 618/27 August 1221). Cf. Maqrīzī, *Mawā'iz*, I, 593. For further information about the *maramma* vessel, see: Nuḥhaylī, *Al-Sufun al-Islāmiyya*, pp. 140-141.

Sea [the Nile] is on my left, the perfect king is on the right!¹⁵

While mentioning the Crusader attack on Damietta in 647 (1249), Ibn Wāṣil (604-697/1207-1298) stated that *ḥarrāqas* and *shawānī* fully-equipped with warriors appeared before the walls of Manṣūra.¹⁶ In Muḥarram of 648 (April-May 1250) Louis IX of France (1214-1270), marched with his army towards the inner suburbs of Damietta. However, they were captured while trying to return to Damietta along with their ships in the area of *Munyat Abī ‘Abdallāh*, located in the east bank of the Nile within Damietta. After Louis IX’s request of safe-conduct [*amān*] was accepted and once the remaining forces fighting against the Muslims were killed, Louis IX was taken to Manṣūra on a *ḥarrāqa* accompanied by other ships.¹⁷

Abū al-Fidā’ (672-732/1273-1331) also mentions the escape attempt of Ayyūbīd sultān Tūrānshāh by getting on a *ḥarrāqa* in 648 (1250).¹⁸ The main reason why the sultān chose a *ḥarrāqa* vessel was probably due to its higher cruising performance compared to other ships.

After the fall of the Ayyūbīds, al-Malik al-Zāhīr Baybars announced one of the ‘Abbāsids as the caliph in order to gain sacred legitimacy and consolidate his power. The sultān of the Mamlūks got on a *ḥarrāqa* with Caliph al-Mustansir to go to Egypt from the *Qal‘at al-Djabal* and navigated through the Nile, arriving at

¹⁵ Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Muqaḥḥā al-Kabīr*, ed. M. al-Yalaoui, Beirut 1991, I, 500.

¹⁶ Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Sālīm ibn Wāṣil, *Mufaridj al-kurūb fī akhbār Banī Ayyūb*, ed. Mohamed Rahim, Harrasowitz Verlag–Wiesbaden 2010, p. 13. Cf. Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, I, Part 2, 337; Nukhaylī, *Al-Sufun al-Islāmiyya*, p. 33. When al-Malik al-Şālīh went to Manṣūra with his navy and army to fight against the Crusaders and died there, his death announcement was kept in secret by his wife Şahdjar al-Durr and his death body was brought to Rawḍa Castle from Manṣūra by *ḥarrāqa* and it was kept there until 27 Raġjab 648 (25 October 1250). See: Maqrīzī, *Mawā‘iz*, IV/II, 493, 598-599. Cf. Haldane, *ibid*, p. 143.

¹⁷ Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad Ḍḥahabī; *al-‘Ibar fī khabar man ġabar*, ed. Abū Hācer Muḥammad al-Sa‘īd b. Bassiyūnī Zaghlūl, Beirut 1985, III, 258-259; Abū al-Maḥāsīn Yūsuf ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nuġjūm al-Zāhira fī Mulūk Miṣr wāl-Qāhira*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥusayn Şhams al-Dīn, Beirut 1992, VI, 322-323; ‘Abd al-Ḥayy ibn Aḥmad ibn al-‘Imād, *Shadharāt al-dḥahab fī akhbār man dhahab*, ed. ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Arnā‘ūt-Muḥammad al-Arnā‘ūt, Beirut 1991, VII, 414. Maqrīzī (*Mawā‘iz*, I, 602) notes that seven *ḥarrāqas* belonging to Muslims were captured by the Crusaders in Baḥr al-Maḥalla before the seizure of Louis IX and his soldiers, as well as the Muslims in the ships were escaped (1 Ḍhu ‘l-Ḥiġġja 627/7 Mart 1250).

¹⁸ Ismā‘īl ibn ‘Alī Abū al-Fidā’, *Al-Mukhtaṣar fī akhbār al-baṣhar*, ed. Muḥammad Zaynhum ‘Azab-Yaḥyā Sayyid Ḥusayn, Cairo [n.d.], III, 220-221.

Qalʿat al-Djazīra in 19 Raḍjab 659 (19 June 1261).¹⁹

Al-Maqrīzī further adds: “When the Ayyūbīds declined and the Turkic Mamlūks came to power, they neglected the navy until the period of al-Malik al-Zāhir Baybars. He, [Baybars], then examined the *shawānī* used for the war and called for the officers in the navy. Amīrs were using seamen on the *ḥarrāqas*, and al-Malik Baybars ordered once again the construction of *shawānī*, the cutting of timber, and making these ships as strong as they were once during the reign of al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ Naḍīm al-Dīn Ayyūb. He himself supervised the progress of works by paying regular visits to the shipyards in Egypt; led the addition of 40 more ships to the fleet besides *ḥarrāqas* and *ṭarāʿid*²⁰ in *Shawwāl* 669 (May-June 1271).²¹ Evidently, the *ḥarrāqas* were also one of the vessel types often used on the Nile during the Mamlūk period.

When the Nubian King Dāʿūd tyrannized his own country and spread fear in the Egyptian land, the sulṭān of the Mamlūks al-Malik al-Zāhir Baybars, taking advantage of the Nubian King’s relatives coming to him for sanctuary, furnished the army with necessary equipment and reinforced it with *ḥarrāqa* soldiers [crews] on *Shaʿbān* 674 (January-February 1276).²² This evidence corroborates that crew members of *ḥarrāqas* were entrusted in the campaign against Nūba and given the number of the ships; there were -probably- more than enough seamen recruits.

Following his accession to the throne of the Golden Horde [*Bātūʿids*] (1236/40-1502), Malik Özbek Khān (1313-1341), a descendant of the Mongol Čingiz-Khānid Dynasty, desired to establish a relationship with the Mamlūks by way of marriage. To this end, he sent one of his relatives as bride to Egypt to marry the Mamlūk Sulṭān al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad b. Qalāwūn (709-741/1310-1341), who was in his third reign. The prospective bride arrived at Alexandria in the month of Rabīʿ I in 720 (April-May 1320). Upon disembarking the ship, she

¹⁹ *al-Muqaffā*, I, 697.

²⁰ For further information about this vessel whose singular form is *ṭarīda*, see: Fahmy, *Muslim Sea-Power*, pp. 136-137; Nuḵhaylī, *Al-Sufun al-Islāmiyya*, pp. 89-92; Christides, “Islamic World Vessels”, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Maritime History II*, 265.

²¹ Maqrīzī, *Mawāʿiz*, III, 615-616. Cf. Haldane, *ibid*, p. 142.

²² Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, ed. Muḥammad M. Ziyādah, Cairo 1970, I, Part 3, 621; Maqrīzī, *Mawāʿiz*, I, 547-548; Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥīm ibn al-Furāt, *Taʿrīkh Ibn al-Furāt*, ed. Q. Zurayq, Beirut 1942, VII, 45-46. Cf. Sālim, *al-Baḥr al-Aḥmar*, s. 92.

was welcomed by 18 *ḥarrāqas* and *ḥāḍjibs*, which were put under her authority once she landed, and subsequently boarded the biggest *ḥarrāqa*, which belonged to the sultān, while the rest embarked on other *ḥarrāqas*. When they arrived at the royal palace, the sultān's prospective bride was again warmly welcomed by the regent [*nā'ib*] of the sultān Amīr Sayf al-Dīn Arghūn (25 Rabī' I 720/5 May 1320).²³

Likewise, another source also provides the information that: “Sultān *al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad b. Qalāwūn* assigned himself a vessel called *shabbāra*²⁴; *shabbāras* were medium length, elaborate ships, propelled by oars which were round-ended. Although they were well-built, the sultān later preferred the *ḥarrāqa* instead of the *shabbāra*.”²⁵

Al-Maqrīzī talks about two hearsays, suggesting that land and engineering surveys on the Nile were done using *ḥarrāqas*. According to the first record *al-Khaṭīrī* Mosque was demolished as the waters of the Nile flooded the shores of *Būlāq* in 738 (1337-1338). Upon this incident, Sultān al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad b. Qalāwūn sailed from *Qal'at al-Djabal* to the Nile on a *ḥarrāqa*, along with the soldiers and engineers he recruited from Damascus, Aleppo, Egypt and Euphrates.²⁶ Making mention of the bridge constructed between *al-Djiza* and *Rawḍa* in 749 (1348-1349), *al-Maqrīzī* also states that the regent [*nā'ib*] of the current Sultān al-Nāṣir Ḥasan -Baybughā Arwas- and *amīrs*, got on *ḥarrāqas* with engineers sailing through the Nile in order to conduct surveys.²⁷

All captured rebels were transported by *ḥarrāqas* to the prisons in Alexandria and Qūṣ. The relevant sources provide sufficient evidence on this issue. During the reign of Sultān al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad b. Qalāwūn, Amīr Tankiz, who revolted against the sultān, was taken to Alexandria with on a *ḥarrāqa* and executed there (741/1340-1).²⁸ In 742 (1341), *Amīr* Qawṣūn sent certain *amīrs* to Alexandria for imprisonment, who, however, managed to return to Cairo

²³ Aḥmad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab*, ed. I. Shams al-Dīn, Beirut 2004, XXXII, 250-251.

²⁴ For further information about this type of vessel, see: Nukḥaylī, *Al-Sufun al-Islāmiyya*, pp. 72-73.

²⁵ Nuwayrī al-Iskandarānī, *al-Ilmām*, II, 250-251; 'Abbādy-Sālim, *ibid*, p. 226.

²⁶ Maqrīzī, *Mawā'iz*, III, 555-556.

²⁷ Maqrīzī, *Mawā'iz*, III, 558-559. Cf. Haldane, *ibid*, p. 142.

²⁸ Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, ed. Muḥammad M. Ziyādah, Cairo 1971, II, Part 1, 506-507; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nudjūm*, IX, 116-117.

somehow. Later on, the very same *ḥarrāqa* ship carrying them as prisoners this time transported *Amīr Qawṣūn* himself to Alexandria.²⁹ Again in 742 (1341), when the *amīrs* convened to dethrone al-Malik al-Manṣūr Abū Bakr, son of al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad b. Qalāwūn, they took him along with his five brothers, slaves, and wives to the banks of the Nile and transferred them altogether on a *ḥarrāqa* to Qūṣ.³⁰ By the time the six children of al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad b. Qalāwūn returned from Qūṣ to Cairo on 7 Ramaḍān 742 (14 February 1342), the *amīrs* who were planning to welcome them were already boarded on *ḥarrāqa*.³¹

Upon the release of the *Amīr Shaykhūn*, who had been imprisoned in Alexandria due to the problems between *amīrs* in the reign of al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ (752-755/1351-1354), on his way to Cairo on a *ḥarrāqa*, the *ḥarrāqa* of another *amīr* approached his ship to give him the good news that he had been appointed as the regent [*nā'ib*] of Ḥamā province. *Amīr Shaykhūn* was so delighted to hear the news and when he arrived in Cairo there were more than 1.000 ships around his *ḥarrāqa* 752 (1351-2).³²

Amīrs who were captured in the year 791 (1388-9), during the period of al-Malik al-Manṣūr Ḥādjdjī, were also transported to the prison in Alexandria by *ḥarrāqas*.³³

Sources inform us that the Mamlūk Sulṭān al-Malik al-Ashraf Barsbāy (825-841/1422-1438) ordered the arrest of his *amīr* Taghrībirdī al-Maḥmūdī and had him sent to Alexandria by a *ḥarrāqa* on 13 Djumādā II 830 (11 April 1427).³⁴ However, the same authors -in other parts of their works- tell us that the Mamlūk sulṭān al-Malik al-Mu'ayyad *Shaykh* (815-824/1412-1421) went on a trip on the Nile with a *ḥarrāqa* on 27 Djumādā I 822 (21 June 1419).³⁵

²⁹ Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, ed. Muḥammad M. Ziyādah, Cairo 1958, II, Part 3, 595.

³⁰ Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, II, Part 3, 570; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nudjūm*, X, 14.

³¹ Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, II, Part 3, 599; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nudjūm*, X, 45.

³² Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, II, Part 3, 848; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nudjūm*, X, 201, 204.

³³ Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, ed. S. 'A. 'Āshūr, Cairo 1970, III, Part 2, 627.

³⁴ Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, ed. S. 'A. 'Āshūr, Cairo 1972, IV, Part 2, 842; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nudjūm*, XIV, 141-142. See also similar to *ḥarrāqa* examples of the use of the Nile: Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, I, Part 2, 577; Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, ed. Muḥammad M. Ziyādah, Cairo 1970, III, Part 1, 131-132; Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, IV, Part 1, 480, 501-502; Maqrīzī, *Mawā'iz*, III, 618; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nudjūm*, XII, 135; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nudjūm*, XV, 96; 'Abbādy-Sālim, pp. 225-226, 241.

³⁵ Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, ed. S. 'A. 'Āshūr, Cairo 1972, IV, Part 1, 500; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nudjūm*, XIII, 233-234.

As mentioned earlier, the *ḥarrāqas* were also used during the formal ceremonies on the Nile. In this regard, Qalqashandī provides the following evidence: “The *sulṭān* could sail to the bay aboard these ships, but he customarily would neither use an umbrella nor would he mount his horse until the arrival of the ship. His ship-boarding was nothing like any ceremony held at the squares and festivals. When the *miqyās* [nilometer]³⁶ officer started his duty, the *sulṭān* would get aboard leaving his castle and had his meal there with his *amīrs*. After the *miqyās* officer was given a bowl of heated saffron, he would swim to the pole in the Nile and apply the saffron to the pole. The *ḥarrāqa* carrying the *sulṭān* was very well decorated along with those of his *amīrs*. After the curtains over the window facing *miqyās* were pulled open, the *ḥarrāqa* of the *sulṭān* would be berthed to the spot where he used to swim by jumping directly into the river through the window. In addition to the *ḥarrāqas* of the *amīrs* around the *sulṭān*, ships filled with people eager to watch the *sulṭān* swim would rush the area and they would go up to the entrance of the bay like this. The greatest *ḥarrāqa* of the *sulṭān* known as *dhahabīya* and the *ḥarrāqas* of the *amīrs* would cruise around with some flame shots being performed. Afterwards they would move on up to al-Sadd [dam], and with the routes blocked to make way for him, the sultan would return to the castle on horseback.”³⁷

This follows that the *ḥarrāqas* were alternatively known as *dhahabīya* in the Mamlūks period. In fact, the word *dhahabīya* was used to describe the color of *ḥarrāqas* during the late Middle Ages. *Dhahabī* [golden] was the color of the *sulṭān*'s *ḥarrāqa*. Indeed, according to Qalqashandī, *ḥarrāqas* were used for navigation as well as for naphtha attacks. However, it is quite obvious that the ships known as *dhahabīya* did not have the naphtha attack feature.³⁸

³⁶ For further information about the *Miqyās* [Nilometer], see: J. Ruska-D. R. Hill, “*Miqyās*”, *EP* (English), VII, 39-40.

³⁷ Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-a-‘shā fī ṣinā‘at al-inshā‘*, IV, 47-48; Nukhaylī, *Al-Sufun al-Islāmiyya*, p. 36; ‘Abbādy-Sālim (*ibid*, pp. 227-228) combines two other resources with Qalqashandī's records and describes the formal ceremony on the Nile in a similar way. Maqrīzī (*Mawā‘iz*, III, 617) records that flame was sprayed to *shawānī* for show and training during official ceremonies. For similar statements, see also: Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, I, Part 3, 928. The belief that the flame was sprayed by *ḥarrāqas* seems to be reasonable.

³⁸ Nukhaylī, *Al-Sufun al-Islāmiyya*, p. 36. For further information about the *dhahabīya*, see: Nukhaylī, *Al-Sufun al-Islāmiyya*, pp. 50-51. In fact there are different information and commentaries about the *ḥarrāqas* on the Nile. ‘Abbādy-Sālim (*ibid*, p. 137) states that ships known as *ḥarrāqas* were also known as ‘*uṣḥārī* before Mamlūks (!..). Furthermore, ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baḥdādī, who lived between 557-629/1162-1231, states in his work (*al-Ifāda wa ‘l-i ‘tibār fī al-umūr al-muṣḥahahadāh wa-al-ḥawādith al-mu ‘āyanah bi-arḍ Miṣr*, ed. A. G. Sabānū, Damascus 1983, p. 71): “They (in

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To sum up; this essay suggests that the *ḥarrāqas* were used not only for the purpose of war in the Mediterranean Sea but also by the sultāns and *amīrs* on the Nile and in the Red Sea region. They served for various purposes including carriage of goods, transport of passengers for short-distance trips on the Nile, official ceremonies, and warships as well. Contemporary historians refer to the *ḥarrāqas* as large ships, operated in the Red Sea and on the Nile. However, given the use and the number of these ships, we may justifiably infer from sources, which are analyzed in the previous pages, that the *ḥarrāqas* became smaller but swifter over time without losing their function. Undoubtedly, the sultāns' and *amīrs*' preference of the *ḥarrāqa* over other crafts is certainly an indication of their strength and reliability. Last but not least, it is likewise clear that until the end of the fifteenth-century, this kind of ships was widely used by Muslim dynasties of central and peripheral Egypt.

Egypt) have various ships. The weirdest one is 'ushārī. Its shape looks like *shabbārat al-Tigris*. But they are wider, taller and smoother. They are made of strong wood. There is a wooden hut on the surface, on the top dome, windows are opened like a door. In the hut there is one toilet and a wardrobe. It is coated with best quality paints and golden gilt. These ships are used for the sultān and leaders (الروسا) of the states. Thus, the leader sits at the head, while the men around him and the crew always stand up. Seamen are under the surface of the ship and during their time on the ship they do not even notice who comes onboard, only doing their job." For further information about the 'ushārī: Nukhaylī, *Al-Sufun al-Islāmiyya*, pp. 95-101. Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh al-Lawā'ī al-Ṭandjī ibn Baṭṭūṭa, who lived between 703-770/1304-1368, (*Rihla*, Turkish trs. A. S. Aykut [*İbn Battūta Seyahatnāmesi*] İstanbul 2004, II, 908) states that he boarded ships that resembled *ḥarrāqas* in China. Translator of Abū l-'Abbās Shams al-Dīn ibn Khallikān (*Wafayāt al-A'yān wa-Anbā' Abnā' al-Zamān*, Eng. trs. Mac Guckin De Slane [*Ibn Khallikan's Biographical Dictionary*], Beirut 1970, I, 174-175) states that a particular type of ship named *shabbāra* utilized in Iraq is used in Egypt as well with the name of *ḥarrāqa*.

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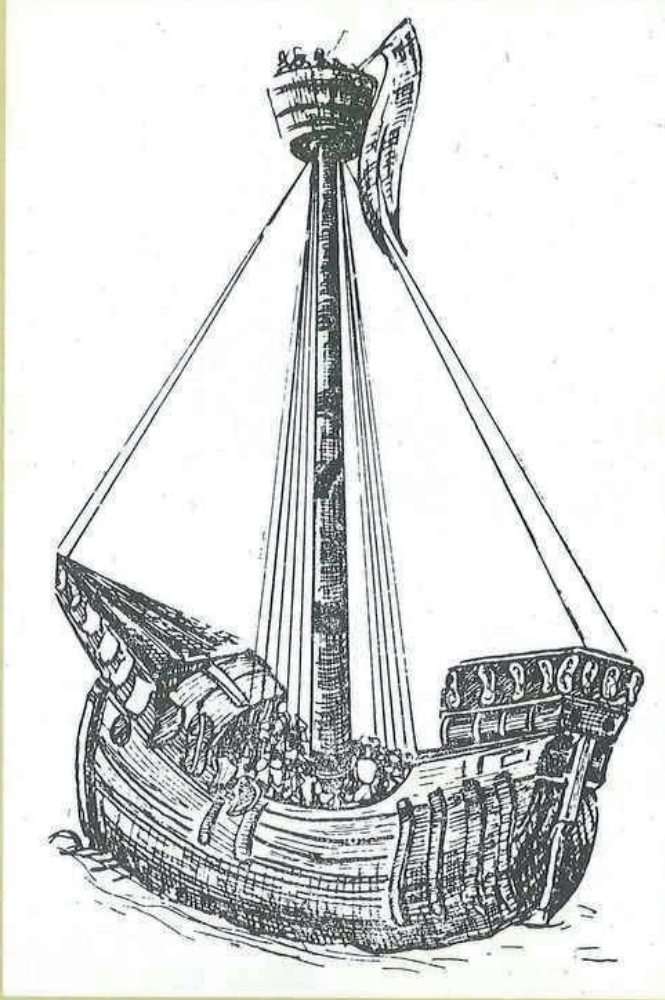
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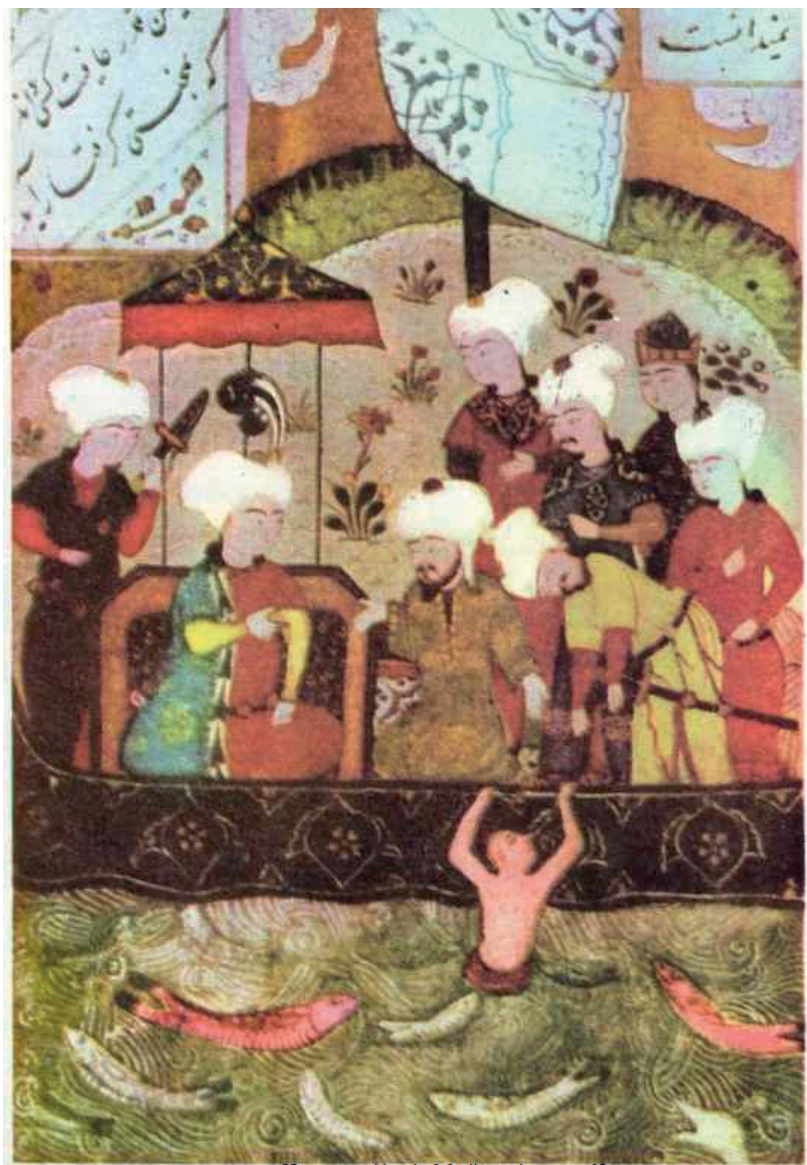
Ek 1



Harrāqa used by the Muslims, plaque no: 50
(Su'ād Māhir, *al-Bahrīyya fi Misr al-Islāmīyya*, Cairo 1967)

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Ek 2



Ḥarrāqa used by the Muslims, plaque no: 63
(Su'ād Māhir, *al-Bahriyya fi Misr al-Islāmiyya*, Cairo 1967)

لوحة رقم ٦٥

Ek 3



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Ek 4



Siege and conquest of
 Damietta by Crusaders (İşin
 Demirkent, *Hacı Sefirleri
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 188)

Ek 5

While King of France, Louis IX and Crusaders were entering Damietta
(Işın Demirkent, *Haçlı Seferleri Tarihi*, İstanbul 1997, p. 215)



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Ek 6

Islamic army captures King of France, Louis IX
(Işın Demirkent, *Haçlı Seferleri Tarihi*, İstanbul 1997, p. 217)

