



The Ottoman Ibadis of Cairo

Ibadi Muslims, a minority religious community, historically inhabited pockets throughout North Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, and the East African coast. Yet less is known about the community of Ibadi Muslims that relocated to Egypt. Focusing on the history of an Ibadi-run trade depot, school and library that operated in Cairo for over three hundred years, this book shows how the Ibadi Muslims operated in and adapted to the legal, religious, commercial, and political realms of the Ottoman Empire from the seventeenth to early twentieth centuries. Using a unique range of sources, including manuscript notes, family histories and archival correspondence, Paul M. Love, Jr. presents an original history of this Muslim community told from the bottom up. Whilst illuminating the events that shaped the history of Egypt during these centuries, he also brings to life the lived reality of a Muslim minority community in the Ottoman world.

PAUL M. LOVE, JR. is Associate Professor of North African, Middle Eastern, and Islamic History at Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane, Morocco. He is a former Fulbright scholar and received three prestigious Critical Language Scholarships from the United States Department of State. His research has been funded by the Arcadia Foundation, the Council for American Overseas Research Centers, the Social Sciences Research Council, the American Institute for Maghrib Studies, and the Woodrow Wilson Foundation. He previously published *Ibadi Muslims of North Africa* (2018).

The Ottoman Ibadis of Cairo

A History

PAUL M. LOVE, JR.
Al Akhawayn University, Morocco



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For Sarra, Sophia, and Julia

نَحْبُكُم بَارِشَا!

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As I write this, I am listening to my daughter Julia (four) explain to her sister Sophia (six) the bad dream that has woken her up at 6:20 a.m. The soothing calm of their whispering voices, the quiet of this morning in Ifrane, and the warmth of our home despite the cold outside, together remind me how fortunate I have been to have had this space to work on this book over the past several years. What a pleasure it is to sit down and thank all the people who have helped me do it. But first, a quick note on how I arrived at this point.

The present book emerged out of a realization I had when writing my first book on the history of late medieval Ibadi Muslim communities in the Maghrib. Despite my best efforts to go back further in time, most of the manuscripts I used dated from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries. To my surprise, a significant number of those had been copied not in the Maghrib but in Cairo, at a place referred to in the colophons as the “Wikālat al-Jāmūs.” This place, so central to the production of knowledge for Ibadis over more than three centuries, rarely featured in histories of the community. This realization led me to write this book. The researching and writing of it, however, were only possible because of the support and collaboration I have received from a wide variety of people and institutions.

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