

SAMI G. MASSOUD  
MCGILL UNIVERSITY

## Notes on the Contemporary Sources of the Year 793

I will leave to others the responsibility of speaking about Donald P. Little's career and the pivotal place he occupies in the field of Mamluk studies. As for me, perhaps the most appropriate way to pay tribute to him is to provide readers with the results of a study<sup>1</sup> which uses the method that he pioneered and which has ever since been identified with him.

In Little's words,

The nature of the method is disarmingly simple; it is nothing more than comparison, close word-by-word comparison of individual accounts of topics within annals and biographies,<sup>2</sup> with a threefold aim. One, given the fact that historians followed in most cases the conventions of the annalistic and biographical genres almost slavishly, what variations can be found in the treatment of individual authors? It is obvious that the variations constitute the author's originality, whether they consist of stylistic innovations, departures from the conventions of the genres, or the introduction of original subject matter. . . . A second, related, purpose is to characterize Mamlūk historiography in general . . . ; in other words, having pointed out variations, I would attempt to establish the similarities in approach, technique and subject matter. Included under this purpose is the desire to indicate the type of data which can be gleaned from Mamlūk sources, both as to the quantity and quality, so that the beginner in Mamlūk studies can readily discover what variety of subjects the historians both discuss and omit, as well as the difficulties which he can expect to encounter as a result of the mode of presentation. Third and most importantly, I am trying to

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<sup>1</sup>The study presented here is culled from my on-going Ph.D. research, which deals with the historiography of the early Circassian period, and particularly from Chapter Two, the topic of which is the year 793. Chapter One deals with the year 778 and is still unpublished, but I will be making systematic reference to it throughout this article.

<sup>2</sup>In this article, I will be dealing only with *ḥawādith*.



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DOI: [10.6082/M1QV3JPP](https://doi.org/10.6082/M1QV3JPP). (<https://doi.org/10.6082/M1QV3JPP>)

DOI of Vol. IX, no. 1: [10.6082/M1TX3CF3](https://doi.org/10.6082/M1TX3CF3). See <https://doi.org/10.6082/SE2H-QY96> to download the full volume or individual articles. This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY). See <http://mamluk.uchicago.edu/msr.html> for more information about copyright and open access.

establish what Claude Cahen calls a “repertorium”<sup>3</sup> of the sources of the period, by which I mean an analytical survey of the sources which aims at classifying them in terms of their value to modern historians. All the goals can be achieved by comparison, which, in the last analysis, aims at disentangling the inter-relatedness and inter-dependence of the sources so as to discover the original contribution of each historian. . . .<sup>4</sup>

Little chose to compare annals, by means of textual collation, in order to identify similarities and variations that would explain the complex of borrowings and indebtedness amongst the historians he studied and their works. One advantage of such a “micro” approach to historiography is the detailed knowledge it gives researchers into the events of a given year. Such intimate knowledge will help in exploring, when possible and relevant, the scope and impact of some given events, and their interrelations; in other words, what do the sources tell us about important historical occurrences and how do they impact on our knowledge and understanding of them? This endeavor overlaps with the third objective highlighted above by Little, namely the relative merit of a given source not only on historiographical, but also on historical grounds.

The choice of the year 793/1390–91 as the focus of my research is not accidental. Chronologically, this year falls almost in the middle of the early Circassian period, which ran roughly from the late 770s/1370s until the early ninth/fifteenth century.<sup>5</sup> From the standpoint of historiographical production, this span of time is truly crucial as it witnessed the withering away of an entire generation of historians, those who had lived through and beyond the reigns of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn (d. 741/1341). Thus, Ibn Kathīr’s (d. 774/1373) *Al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah* does not extend beyond 768/1367,<sup>6</sup> and the two works

<sup>3</sup>Claude Cahen, “Editing Arabic Chronicles: A Few Suggestions,” *Islamic Studies* 1, no. 3 (September 1962): 4.

<sup>4</sup>Donald P. Little, *An Introduction to Mamlūk Historiography: An Analysis of Arabic Annalistic and Biographical Sources for the Reign of al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn* (Wiesbaden, 1970), 2–3 (hereafter cited as *An Introduction*).

<sup>5</sup>This would correspond roughly to the reign of Barqūq as *amīr kabīr* (779–84/1378–82) then sultan (784–91, 792–801/1382–89, 1390–99).

<sup>6</sup>The last entry of the book is the report about the murder of Yalbughā al-‘Umarī; *Al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah*, ed. Aḥmad Abū Milḥim (Beirut, 1987), 14:338–39. On the later parts of Ibn Kathīr’s chronicle see Ashtor’s contention, originally advanced by Laoust, that the last part of *Al-Bidāyah* was written not by Ibn Kathīr himself but by one of his students, probably Ibn Ḥijjī: “Études sur quelques chroniques mamloukes,” *Israel Oriental Society* 1 (1971): 284. Al-‘Umarī had led a revolt in 762 against his *ustādh* and sultan al-Nāṣir Ḥasan (d. 762/1361), which resulted



of another Syrian historian who was not connected to the Syrian school,<sup>7</sup> Ibn Ḥabīb al-Ḥalabī's (710–79/1310–77) *Tadhkirat al-Nabīh fī Ayyām al-Manṣūr wa-Banīh*<sup>8</sup> and *Durrat al-Aslāk fī Mulk Dawlat al-Atrāk*<sup>9</sup> end respectively in 770 and 777. As for Egypt, the other major pole of the Mamluk Sultanate, the *Naṭr al-Jumān fī Tarājim al-A'yān*, the chronicle of al-Muqrī (who was still alive in 766/1364–65), the last of the Egyptian historians to have been a contemporary of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, ends in 745/1345.<sup>10</sup> It is true that a new generation of historians like Ibn Khaldūn<sup>11</sup> (732–808/1332–1406), Ibn al-Furāt<sup>12</sup> (735–807/1335–1404-5), Ṣārim al-Dīn Ibrāhīm Ibn Duqmāq<sup>13</sup>

in the latter's assassination. See al-Maqrīzī's *Kitāb al-Sulūk li-Ma'rifat al-Duwal wa-al-Mulūk*, ed. Sa'īd 'Abd al-Fattāh 'Āshūr (Cairo, 1970), 3:1:155 (hereafter cited as *Al-Sulūk*) for a brief summary of Barqūq's travels and activities following the murder of Yalbughā al-'Umarī in 768/1366; see also Walter J. Fischel, "Ascensus Barcoch (I) and (II): A Latin Biography of the Mamlūk Sultan Barqūq of Egypt (d. 1399) Written by B. de Mignanelli in 1416," *Arabica* 6 (1959): 64ff.

<sup>7</sup>On the debate concerning the appropriateness of differentiating between Syrian and Egyptian "schools" of historical writing, see Little, *An Introduction*, 46, 95, 98; Li Guo, "Mamluk Historiographic Studies: The State of the Art," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 1 (1997): 29–33, 37–39; and David Reisman, "A Holograph MS of Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah's *Dhayl*," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 2 (1998): 24–25, 27–28 and the references therein. See also below.

<sup>8</sup>Edited by Muḥammad Muḥammad Amīn with an introduction by Sa'īd 'Abd al-Fattāh 'Āshūr, (Cairo, 1976–86) (hereafter cited as *Tadhkirah*). This work covers the years 687 to 770.

<sup>9</sup>Of the three manuscripts available of this work, two, MSS Bodleian Marsh 591 and Bodleian Marsh 223, start at the year 648, and the third, Bodleian Marsh 319, at the year 762. The three manuscripts end respectively in 777, 714, and 801. It is MS Bodleian Marsh 319 which will be used throughout this research since it is the only one to include the annals 778 to 801 (fols. 134a ff) ostensibly written by Zayn al-Dīn Ṭāhīr (after 740–808/1340–1406), Ibn Ḥabīb's son. Contrary to what 'Āshūr claims in his introduction to the *Tadhkirah*, this *dhayl* (hereafter cited as *Dhayl Durrat al-Aslāk*), at least MS Bodleian Marsh 319, ends in 801 and not 802; see his introduction to the *Tadhkirah*, 1:20. More on Zayn al-Dīn Ṭāhīr below. The *Durrat al-Aslāk* and its *dhayl* were apparently edited and translated by A. Meursinge and H. F. Veijers in the middle of the nineteenth century, but I have not been able to get hold of their work; see *Orient* 2 (1840–46): 195–491.

<sup>10</sup>On this author and his work, see Little, *An Introduction*, 40.

<sup>11</sup>*Kitāb al-'Ibar wa-al-Mubtada' wa-al-Khabar* (Beirut, 1971) (hereafter cited as *Al-'Ibar*); *Al-Ta'rīf bi-Ibn Khaldūn wa-Riḥlatihi Gharban wa-Sharqan*, ed. Muḥammad ibn Tāwīt al-Ṭanjī (Cairo, 1951).

<sup>12</sup>*Tārīkh al-Duwal wa-al-Mulūk*, ed. Quṣṭanṭīn Zurayq and Najlā' 'Izz al-Dīn (Beirut, 1936–38) (hereafter cited as *Tārīkh al-Duwal*); "Al-Muntaqá min Tārīkh Ibn al-Furāt," MS Chester Beatty 4125, fols. 2b–178b (hereafter cited as "Al-Muntaqá min Tārīkh Ibn al-Furāt").

<sup>13</sup>Three editions of *Al-Jawhar al-Thamīn fī Siyar al-Khulafā' wa-al-Mulūk*, the lesser of the two extant histories written by Ibn Duqmāq, are available: Sa'īd 'Abd al-Fattāh 'Āshūr's edition (Mecca, 1983) (hereafter cited as *Al-Jawhar 'Āshūr*); Muḥammad Kamāl al-Dīn 'Izz al-Dīn 'Alī's edition in two volumes (Beirut, 1985) (hereafter cited as *Al-Jawhar 'Alī*); and 'Umar 'Abd al-Salām Tadmurī's edition entitled *Al-Nafḥah al-Miskīyah fī al-Dawlah al-Turkīyah* (Sidon and



(745–809/1349–1407), Ibn H̥ijjī (751–816/1350–1413),<sup>14</sup> Badr al-Dīn al-‘Aynī<sup>15</sup> (762–855/1361–1451), al-Maqrīzī<sup>16</sup> (766–845/1364–1441), Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī<sup>17</sup> (773–852/1372–1449), Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah,<sup>18</sup> and others would insure a solid transition in historical writing from the Turkish to the Circassian period. But globally, whereas Bahri Mamluk historiography has been subjected to rigorous and comprehensive source analysis,<sup>19</sup> with the exception of a certain number of studies of a limited scope,<sup>20</sup> nothing of the sort has been undertaken with regard to the early Circassian period.<sup>21</sup> Consequently, beyond general historiographical surveys, we still have not established the value of Burjī<sup>22</sup> historical works in their

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Beirut, 1999) (hereafter cited as *Al-Nafḥah*), which corresponds to volume two of ‘Izz al-Dīn ‘Alī’s edition, namely the Mamluk period. The appellation of *Al-Nafḥah al-Miskīyah* was given by Tadmurī to the MS of *Al-Jawhar* that he edited and which extended, contrary to the other two, to the year 805. Throughout this article, it is this latter version of *Al-Jawhar* which will be used since its edition is more recent and since also the overlapping sections do not differ significantly from one edition to the other (ibid., 18–19). Also by Ibn Duqmāq is the more substantial *Nuzhat al-Anām fī Tārīkh al-Islām*, ed. Samīr Ṭabbārah (Beirut, 1999) (hereafter cited as *Nuzḥah Ṭabbārah*) and MS Gotha Orient. A 1572, fols. 1b–137a. More on Ibn Duqmāq below.

<sup>14</sup>“Tārīkh Ibn H̥ijjī,” MSS Köprülü 1027, Chester Beatty 4125, Chester Beatty 5527, and Berlin Ahlwardt 9458; see below for relevant folio numbers.

<sup>15</sup>“Iqd al-Jumān fī Tārīkh Ahl al-Zamān” (hereafter cited as “Iqd”), MSS Ahmet III 2911/B2, Ahmet III 2911/19, and Dār al-Kutub 1584 *Tārīkh*, fols. 160–476.

<sup>16</sup>*Al-Mawā‘iz wa-al-I’tibār bi-Dhikr al-Khīṭaṭ wa-al-Āthār* (Beirut, n.d.); *Al-Sulūk*, vol. 3.

<sup>17</sup>*Al-Durar al-Kāminah fī A’yān al-Mi’ah al-Thāminah* (Beirut, 1993) (hereafter cited as *Al-Durar*); *Inbā’ al-Ghumr fī Abnā’ al-‘Umr* (Beirut, 1986) (hereafter cited as *Inbā’*).

<sup>18</sup>Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah*, ed. ‘Adnān Darwīsh (Damascus, 1977–97) (hereafter cited as *TIQS*).

<sup>19</sup>Notably Little, *An Introduction*; Ulrich Haarmann, *Quellenstudien zur frühen Mamlukenzeit*, *Islamkundliche Untersuchungen* 1 (Freiburg, 1969).

<sup>20</sup>To my knowledge, there are studies that do just that, but they are very much limited in scope: Amalia Levanoni, “Al-Maqrīzī’s account of the Transition from Turkish to Circassian Mamluk Sultanate: History in the Service of Faith,” in *The Historiography of Islamic Egypt (c. 950–1800)*, ed. Hugh Kennedy (Leiden, 2001), 93–105; Reisman, “A Holograph MS,” 19–49; Donald P. Little, “A Comparison of al-Maqrīzī and al-‘Aynī as Historians of Contemporary Events,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 7, no. 2 (2003): 205–15; Sami G. Massoud, “Al-Maqrīzī as a Historian of the Reign of Barqūq,” ibid., 119–35. In his “Circassian Mamluk Historians and their Quantitative Economic Data,” *Journal of the American Research Center in Cairo* 11–12 (1974–75): 75–87, Jere L. Bacharach does survey and compare Circassian sources but his focus is entirely on economic data.

<sup>21</sup>Donald P. Little, “Historiography of the Ayyūbid and Mamlūk Epochs,” in *The Cambridge History of Egypt 640–1517*, ed. Carl Petry (Cambridge, 1998), 433.

<sup>22</sup>Notwithstanding David Ayalon’s argument in favor of not using the term Burjī to describe the Circassian period, I will use this word interchangeably with that of Circassian to describe the



own right and in relation to one another. But even at this level, the key period which witnessed the end of Qalāwūnid rule and the rise of Barqūq and the Circassians is particularly understudied: with the exception of a few words scattered here and there in scholarly articles and monographs, and in the introductory notices of editions of primary sources, nothing compares with the surveys authored by Linda S. Northrup<sup>23</sup> on the early Bahri period, and by Carl S. Petry on the late Circassian era.<sup>24</sup>

Beyond these historiographical considerations, other factors also weighed into the selection of the year 793 for analysis. On the political level, it is undoubtedly one of the most remarkable years of the reign of al-Zāhir Barqūq (784–91, 792–801/1382–89, 1390–99).<sup>25</sup> It represents the culmination of a series of events that started with the rebellions of Miṅtāsh<sup>26</sup> and Yalbughā al-Nāṣirī,<sup>27</sup> respectively at the end of 789 and in Ṣafar 791,<sup>28</sup> his eviction from power by the latter pair in

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Mamluk polity which came into existence with the advent of Barqūq and ended in 922/1517 with its defeat at the hands of the Ottomans; Ayalon, "Baḥrī Mamlūks, Burjī Mamlūks—Inadequate Names for the Two Reigns of the Mamluk Sultanate," *Tārīkh* 1 (1990): 3–53.

<sup>23</sup>Linda S. Northrup, *From Slave to Sultan: The Career of al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn and the Consolidation of Mamluk Rule in Egypt and Syria (678–689A.H./1279–1290A.D.)*, Freiburger Islamstudien 18 (Stuttgart, 1998), 25–61.

<sup>24</sup>Carl S. Petry, *The Civilian Elite of Cairo in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1981), 8–14; idem, *Twilight of Majesty: The Reigns of Mamluk Sultans Al-Ashraf Qāytbāy and Qanṣūh al-Ghawrī in Egypt* (Seattle, 1993), 5–14; idem, *Protectors or Praetorians? The Last Mamluk Sultans and Egypt's Waning as a Great Power* (Albany, 1994), 5–12.

<sup>25</sup>On Barqūq, see Gaston Wiet, "Barqūq, al-Malik al-Zāhir Sayf al-Dīn," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., 1:1082; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Manhal al-Ṣāfi wa-al-Mustawfā ba'd al-Wāfi*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥammad Amīn et al. (Cairo, 1986), 3:285–342 (hereafter cited as *Al-Manhal*). See also references in The Chicago Online Bibliography of Mamluk Studies: <http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/su/mideast/mamluk>.

<sup>26</sup>Tamurbughā al-Ashrafī, also known as Miṅtāsh, was a mamluk of al-Ashraf Sha'bān who succeeded in finding himself a place in the sun in the first part of Barqūq's reign, a period whose political history still needs to be written. It was his rebellion at the end of 789 in the city of Malaṭya where he was viceroy, and the subsequent rallying of Yalbughā al-Nāṣirī to his cause, which eventually led to the downfall of Barqūq in 791. On Miṅtāsh, see *Al-Manhal*, 4:94–99, no. 782.

<sup>27</sup>Yalbughā al-Nāṣirī was a member of Yalbughā al-'Umarī's inner circle (*khāṣṣakīyah*) but was superseded in the quest for power by al-'Umarī's younger mamluks, chief among them Barqūq. He joined the rebellion against the sultan in 791 when he was the viceroy of Aleppo, the very city where he would meet his maker in 793. On him, see "Al-Manhal," Dār al-Kutub MS 13475 *Tārīkh*, fols. 842a–845a (hereafter cited as "Al-Manhal").

<sup>28</sup>Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah fī Mulūk Miṣr wa-al-Qāhirah*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥusayn Shams al-Dīn (Beirut, 1992), 11:206 ff, 210 ff. Within the framework of this article, I will make use of *Al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah* when making casual references to political events that took place



Jumādā II 791,<sup>29</sup> his exile to al-Karak and his escape therefrom in Ramaḍān,<sup>30</sup> his military feats and defeats in Syria in late 791 and early 792,<sup>31</sup> and his return to the throne in the middle of Ṣafar 792.<sup>32</sup> After 793, Barqūq was not to suffer from any *major* threat until his death in 801/1399.

What also stands out in the year 793 is the Syrian dimension of a large proportion of the events that were the object of reports. What took place in Syria in 793 ran the gamut of problems often encountered by Mamluk rulers in that part of their empire: intrigue on the part of former and present foes and friends, the involvement of Arab and Turcoman nomadic formations in the political and military affairs of the region, the power relations between the Mamluk polity and its vassal states, etc.<sup>33</sup> To this one ought to add Barqūq's own visit to Syria from Ramaḍān until Dhū al-Ḥijjah, because of the inability of Yalbughā al-Nāṣirī<sup>34</sup> to score a decisive victory against Miṭṭāsh, let alone capture him. Last but not least is the particular state of war brought about by the quasi-“siege” of Damascus by Miṭṭāsh and his allies, from the beginning of Rajab until the middle of Sha‘bān. During this period, the Miṭṭāshīs, who were entrenched outside the western wall of Damascus, fought against the loyalists under the command of Yalbughā al-Nāṣirī, while the links of both groups to the Syrian hinterland remained uninterrupted.<sup>35</sup>

A few words concerning the sources are in order here. First, we are clearly dealing with two different sets of sources which will be studied as such: one group comprises the Egyptian Ibn Duqmāq, Zayn al-Dīn Ṭāhir,<sup>36</sup> Ibn Khaldūn,

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during the period at hand. Three editions of *Al-Nujūm* will be used here: Shams al-Dīn's edition mentioned above (hereafter cited as *Al-Nujūm*); *The History of Egypt, 1382–1467 A.D.*, part 1, 1382–1399 A.D., trans. William Popper, University of California Publications in Semitic Philology 13 (Berkeley, 1954); and *Abū'l-Mahāsīn Ibn Taghrī Birdī's Annals*, ed. idem, University of California Publications in Semitic Philology 5, pts. 1–3 (746–800 A.H.) (Berkeley, 1932–35).

<sup>29</sup>*Al-Nujūm*, 11:234ff.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*, 268ff, 287 ff.

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, 294ff.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*, 12:3ff.

<sup>33</sup>On all this, see below.

<sup>34</sup>After they had taken power in Cairo following their successful rebellion against Barqūq, Yalbughā al-Nāṣirī and Miṭṭāsh ended up fighting it out as a result of the coup undertaken by the latter against the former. Upon the return of Barqūq to power, Yalbughā al-Nāṣirī was released from prison and later nominated viceroy of Damascus, a position that entailed, among other things, the prosecution of the war against Miṭṭāsh. More on this below.

<sup>35</sup>See especially Ibn Ṣaṣrā, *Al-Durrah al-Muḍī'ah fī al-Dawlah al-Zāhirīyah*, ed. and trans. William M. Brinner as *A Chronicle of Damascus, 1389–1397* (Berkeley, 1963), 76–91 (hereafter cited as *Al-Durrah al-Muḍī'ah* and as *A Chronicle of Damascus* for the English text); and “Tārīkh Ibn Ḥijjī,” MS Kōprülü 1027, fols. 94b–99b (hereafter cited as “Tārīkh Ibn Ḥijjī”).

<sup>36</sup>More on the nature of Zayn al-Dīn Ṭāhir's *Dhayl Durrat al-Aslāk* below.



and Ibn al-Furāt, and the other, the Syrian Ibn Ḥijjī and Ibn Ṣaṣrā. As will become apparent below, the distinction established between the two groups has more to do with the geographical home-base of these writers than with the existence of Syrian and Egyptian “schools” of historical writing. Second, all the above-mentioned historians were contemporaries of the events of 793 and included in their works original data.<sup>37</sup> While al-‘Aynī at thirty-one years of age, al-Maqrīzī at twenty-seven, and al-‘Asqalānī at twenty were young men, they were old enough to have heard of, followed, or been impressed by the events of that year. Two of them, al-‘Aynī and al-‘Asqalānī, actually intervened directly in the main body of their respective works as self-conscious narrators: the former in signaling his return from Aleppo to Cairo<sup>38</sup> and the latter in mentioning his trip to Qūs in the Ṣa‘īd.<sup>39</sup> But despite the importance of these “newcomers” and the fact that their works merit systematic analysis in their own respect,<sup>40</sup> they and later historians like Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, Ibn Taghrībirdī (812–74/1409–70), al-Jawharī al-Ṣayrafī<sup>41</sup> (819–900/1416–94), Ibn Iyās<sup>42</sup> (852–930/1427–97), ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ Ibn Khalīl al-Malāṭī<sup>43</sup> (844–920/1440–1515), and others were yet to make their mark in terms of producing primary historical data *for this particular year*: globally, with the notable exception of al-‘Aynī, who presented in his *Iqd* reports about Syria that are not found elsewhere,<sup>44</sup> all these historians owe the overwhelming majority of their *akhbār* either to Ibn al-Furāt and, possibly, to Ibn Duqmāq,<sup>45</sup> or to al-Maqrīzī, whose *Al-Sulūk*, though written differently, is nothing but a shorter yet almost identical copy of *Tārīkh al-Duwal*. It is for this reason that the works of these newcomers will not be studied here, even though reference to them will be made when needed.

<sup>37</sup>Even though some of them did rely on other histories in the elaboration of their own work.

<sup>38</sup>“*Iqd*,” MS Ahmet III 2911/B2, fol. 99a.

<sup>39</sup>*Inbā’*, 3:77.

<sup>40</sup>This is indeed what I have embarked upon in Chapter Two of my dissertation.

<sup>41</sup>*Nuzhat al-Nufūs wa-al-Abdān fī Tawārīkh al-Zamān*, ed. Ḥasan Ḥabashī (Cairo, 1970).

<sup>42</sup>*Badā’i’ al-Zuhūr fī Waqā’i’ al-Duhūr*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā (Wiesbaden, 1974–75).

<sup>43</sup>*Nayl al-Amal fī Dhayl al-Duwal*, ed. ‘Umar Tadmurī (Beirut, 2002) (hereafter cited as *Nayl al-Amal*).

<sup>44</sup>See for example the details he gave about the execution of Yalbughā al-Nāṣirī at the hands of Barqūq in the citadel of Aleppo at the end of Dhū al-Qa‘dah: “*Iqd*,” MS Ahmet III 2911/B2, fol. 98a, “*Iqd*,” MS Dār al-Kutub 1584 *Tārīkh*, fols. 433–34. Al-‘Aynī’s account is similar, though not identical, to Mignanelli’s for the same event; see Fischel, “*Ascensus Barcoch* (II),” 161.

<sup>45</sup>See below.



Ibn Duqmāq is undoubtedly one of the most original historians of the early Circassian period. Already in the opening pages of his *Inbā'*, Ibn Ḥajar readily stated that "most of what I have copied [in the *Inbā'*] is from [Ibn Duqmāq] or from what Ibn al-Furāt had copied from him."<sup>46</sup> On the same page, Ibn Ḥajar also noted that al-'Aynī had so extensively borrowed from Ibn Duqmāq that he copied entire pages from his work, spelling mistakes and all.<sup>47</sup> Ibn al-Furāt and al-'Aynī's indebtedness to Ibn Duqmāq, alluded to by Ibn Ḥajar, has been confirmed by my own study: at least for the year 778, the *Tārīkh al-Duwal*<sup>48</sup> is more copious in terms of sheer data than Ibn Duqmāq's major work *Nuzhat al-Anām fī Tārīkh al-Islām*,<sup>49</sup> but the accounts of the latter form the backbone of the former to which Ibn al-Furāt added his own original material; as for al-'Aynī, the annal of the year 778 in his *'Iqd al-Jumān* is basically an identical copy of Ibn Duqmāq's *Nuzhah*.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>46</sup>1:3.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid. Ibn Ḥajar wrote that al-'Aynī "mentions in his description of some events what indicates that he actually witnessed them . . . [but] the event would have taken place in Egypt while he was still in 'Ayntāb. . ." (ibid.). The maliciousness displayed here by Ibn Ḥajar towards al-'Aynī can be attributed to the academic clash between them concerning diverging ways of interpreting al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ*; on this, see Anne F. Broadbridge, "Academic Rivalry and the Patronage System in Fifteenth-Century Egypt: Al-'Aynī, al-Maqrīzī, and Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 3 (1999): 98–101; and Aftāb Aḥmad Raḥmānī, "The Life and Works of Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī," *Islamic Culture* 47 (1973): 59–61, 172–74.

<sup>48</sup>The *Tārīkh al-Duwal* annal of the year 778 is found in MS Chester Beatty 4125, fols. 28a–45b; on the "survival" of parts of Ibn al-Furāt's work in excerpts made by Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, see Reisman, "A Holograph MS," 26–27, 31–32.

<sup>49</sup>See previous note.

<sup>50</sup>The value of Ibn Duqmāq as a major historian of the period at hand is corroborated by a host of other factors. For example, the secondary sources that deal with his works (Muḥammad Kamāl al-Dīn 'Izz al-Dīn 'Alī, *Arba'at Mu'arrikhīn wa-Arba'at Mu'allafāt min Dawlat al-Mamālīk al-Jarākisah* [Cairo, 1992], 122–23; Tadmurī's introduction to *Al-Nafḥah*, 16–17; Eliyahu Ashtor, "Some Unpublished Sources for the Bahrī Period," in *Studies in Islamic History and Civilization*, ed. U. Heyd [Jerusalem, 1961], 28–29) mention a host of people whose historical writings he used as sources, but none of these save three, namely Badr al-Dīn Ibn Ḥabīb al-Ḥalabī, his son Zayn al-Dīn Ṭāhir, and al-Nuwayrī al-Iskandarī (still alive in 775/1372), the author of a history of Alexandria (*Kitāb al-Ilmām bi-al-I'lām fīmā Jarat bi-hi al-Aḥkām wa-al-Umūr al-Maqḍīyah fī Wāqī'at al-Iskandarīyah*, ed. 'Azīz Suryāl 'Aṭīyah [Hyderabad, 1968–76]), lived during this period nor wrote about it. One then might assume that Ibn Duqmāq relied on oral information or eyewitness accounts, his and other people's, to write "the history of events of his own time" (Ashtor, "Études," 28). This might actually explain the absence, in his historical narrative, of references to sources which are nevertheless to be found in the text of his obituaries, where Badr al-Dīn Ibn Ḥabīb al-Ḥalabī, his son Zayn al-Dīn Ṭāhir, and the poet al-'Aṭṭār are very frequently copied and, more often than not, acknowledged; on al-'Aṭṭār, see *Al-Manhal*, 2:177–79.





If one were to place the Egyptian historians of the year 793 in descending order of importance, circumstantial factors would however place Ibn Duqmāq at the bottom of the list. The only extant work by Ibn Duqmāq that deals with this year is his *Al-Jawhar al-Thamīn fī Siyar al-Khulafā' wa-al-Mulūk*,<sup>51</sup> a dynastic history covering the entirety of the Burji period until 805,<sup>52</sup> which is however poorer in information than his more detailed annalistic history, the *Nuzhat al-Anām fī Tārīkh al-Islām*, upon which it is based.<sup>53</sup> As a matter of fact, there is nothing in the meager, slightly more than two pages<sup>54</sup> of *Al-Nafḥah* dealing with 793. The existence in this work of a cluster of "meaty" *akhbār* that deal with Barqūq's stay in Aleppo at the end of Dhū al-Qa'dah<sup>55</sup> will allow us to formulate tentative conclusions regarding the genealogy of accounts found in Ibn al-Furāt's *Tārīkh al-Duwal*, but there is hardly anything original in the rest of the text except the mention by the author of the sultan's stop, unreported by others, at Irbid on his way to Damascus.<sup>56</sup> To be able to reconstruct the major events of the year, especially those taking place in Syria, one has to turn to sources other than *Al-Nafḥah*.

More informative than Ibn Duqmāq's *Al-Nafḥah* is *Dhayl Durrat al-Aslāk*.<sup>57</sup> In his introduction to the edited text of *Tadhkirat al-Nabīh*, a work written by Ibn Ḥabīb al-Ḥalabī, Sa'īd 'Abd al-Fattāḥ 'Āshūr advanced the hypothesis that Zayn al-Dīn Ṭāhir had not only written a continuation of his father's *Durrat al-Aslāk*, from 778 until 801, *Dhayl Durrat al-Aslāk*,<sup>58</sup> but that the whole of the former work as well as its *dhayl* were actually authored by none other than Zayn al-Dīn

<sup>51</sup>See above, n. 13.

<sup>52</sup>Both *Al-Jawhar* 'Āshūr and *Al-Jawhar* 'Alī end in 797, and *Al-Nafḥah* in 805.

<sup>53</sup>According to Sa'īd 'Abd al-Fattāḥ 'Āshūr, two manuscript volumes of the *Nuzḥah* that start respectively in 659 and 777 are available at Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah in MS 1740 *Tārīkh (Al-Jawhar* 'Āshūr, 13). No indication of the year with which volume two ends is provided. However, in his introductory comments to his edition of the *Nuzḥah* covering the years 628–59, Samīr Ṭabbārah wrote that Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah has an eighty-page manuscript of this work which starts with the reign of al-Manṣūr 'Alī in 778 and ends in 804 (*Nuzḥah* Ṭabbārah, 15). Whether or not he is referring to the second volume of Dār al-Kutub MS 1740 *Tārīkh* is not clear. Regardless, all attempts to get hold of this *Nuzḥah* manuscript, which supposedly contains the annal of the year 793, have led to naught as it was apparently lost! Incomplete sections of the years 804–5/1401–3 from the *Nuzḥah* have been preserved in selections made by Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah in "Al-Muntaqā min Tārīkh Ibn Duqmāq," MS Chester Beatty 4125, fols. 197a–206a; see Reisman, "A Holograph MS," 27, 31, 39, 40.

<sup>54</sup>*Al-Nafḥah*, 262–64.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., 263–64.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., 263.

<sup>57</sup>See above, n. 9.

<sup>58</sup>MS Bodleian Marsh 319, fols. 134a ff.



Ṭāhīr himself.<sup>59</sup> Both external<sup>60</sup> and internal<sup>61</sup> evidence seem to indicate a certain consensus which goes against ‘Āshūr’s reasoning, namely that Ibn Ḥabīb al-Ḥalabī wrote *Durrat al-Aslāk* and that his son continued it as a *dhayl* from 778 onward. But perhaps the strongest evidence against the principal argument advanced by ‘Āshūr in support of his contention, namely the striking similarity between *Durrat al-Aslāk* and its *dhayl* in terms of the heavy and systematic use of *saj’*,<sup>62</sup> is to be found in the *Dhayl Durrat al-Aslāk* itself. My research on the annal of the year 778 has shown that the narrative of political events was dwarfed by the sheer quantity of biographical data, principally obituaries.<sup>63</sup> But starting with the year

<sup>59</sup>According to ‘Āshūr, many aspects of the subject matter of both *Tadhkirah* and *Durrat al-Aslāk*, notably the overlapping years from 678 to 770, are so similar that it is more likely than not that the former served as the *muswaddah* for the latter: the text of *Tadhkirah* was subjected to *tasjī’*, and the years 648 to 677 and 771 to 777 were added to it in order to produce *Durrat al-Aslāk*. Furthermore, ‘Āshūr commented that the similarity between that section of *Durrat al-Aslāk* attributed to Ibn Ḥabīb al-Ḥalabī, and *Dhayl Durrat al-Aslāk*, which was written by his son Zayn al-Dīn Ṭāhīr, is so evident in terms of style and tone that it is difficult to differentiate between the two (Introduction to the *Tadhkirah*, 28–29).

<sup>60</sup>Ibn Ḥajar commented in his obituary of Ibn Ḥabīb al-Ḥalabī that one of his literary productions consisted of the adaptation in *saj’* of another author’s work, and that he had written *Durrat al-Aslāk* in the same style, something which “is indicative of great knowledge and proficiency in verse and prose, even though he was not of the highest caliber in either one;” *Al-Durar*, 2:29, no. 1534. This might indicate that Ibn Ḥabīb was *capable* and *willing* to use *saj’* and/or other styles of writing: it is possible then that he wrote the two works, that is *Tadhkirah* and *Durrat al-Aslāk*, for different audiences, and that he wanted in the latter work to show what a *littérateur* he was. ‘Āshūr did fault Ibn Ḥajar for having said in his *Inbā’* (1:250) that both works were written in prose, and in his *Al-Durar* (2:30), that Ibn Ḥabīb al-Ḥalabī used the same method in writing *Tadhkirah* as in *Durrat al-Aslāk*: “the study [?] proved that what Ibn Ḥajar advanced is far from the truth, as the style of the *Tadhkirah* is far removed from heavy [*mutakallif*] *saj’* and prose, so that such a statement applies only to the *Durrat al-Aslāk*” (Introduction to *Tadhkirah*, 30). ‘Āshūr did not, however, take into consideration the passage written by Ibn Ḥajar and quoted at the beginning of this footnote that highlighted Ibn Ḥabīb’s editorial prowess and versatility, which could have undermined his own line of argument.

<sup>61</sup>In the obituary he wrote of two of his brothers in the annal of the year 777 of *Durrat al-Aslāk*, Ibn Ḥabīb al-Ḥalabī specifically referred to them as “*ikhwatī*” (MS Bodleian Marsh 319, fols. 132b–133a); see also *Al-Durar*, 2:65, no. 1607, 4:104, no. 284. In support of ‘Āshūr’s contention, one might have argued that Zayn al-Dīn Ṭāhīr wanted his father to assume the authorship of something he himself had produced. This is possible but very unlikely especially since none of the contemporary sources saw fit to mention such a feat of filial love and loyalty. Last but not least, if Zayn al-Dīn Ṭāhīr were indeed the author of all of *Durrat al-Aslāk*, why would he not have laid claim to the authorship of the entire work instead of simply stating in the margin of the first folio of the 778 annal that he was continuing his father’s history?

<sup>62</sup>MS Bodleian Marsh 319, fols. 134a ff.

<sup>63</sup>The section of *Dhayl Durrat al-Aslāk* comprising appointment and political reports covers



788,<sup>64</sup> and especially with 789,<sup>65</sup> one notices a propensity on the part of Zayn al-Dīn Ṭāhir to use less and less *saj'* in his reports, save for those with some degree of biographical content,<sup>66</sup> and to make more and more space for political events.<sup>67</sup> This trend is evident in the annal of the year 793: of a total of about twenty-four folios, eleven report political and military events as well as appointments.<sup>68</sup>

These reports do not cover the whole range of events included by, say, Ibn al-Furāt and Ibn Ḥijjī. Zayn al-Dīn Ṭāhir does not seem to have departed from the fundamental format he adopted from his father's *Durrat al-Aslāk*, in that he paid little attention to issues which were unimportant to the eyes of the Aleppo-born-and-raised Egyptian *littérateur*<sup>69</sup> and civil servant that he was.<sup>70</sup> Thus, with

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twelve folios (*ibid.*, 133b–139), while obituaries take up nineteen folios (*ibid.*, 139b–148b). However, much of the appointment reports are basically long biographical sketches, and the narrative of what could be construed as “political events” *per se* covers only four folios out of a total of thirty-one.

<sup>64</sup>In the annal of the year 788, the account of the completion of Barqūq's Bayn al-Qaṣrayn madrasah complex contains no discernible signs of *saj'* (“*Dhayl Durrat al-Aslāk*,” MS Bodleian Marsh 319, fols. 220b–221a). The same cannot be said of the other non-biographical account, that relating the plague in Alexandria (fols. 222b–223a), which is replete with *saj'*; maybe its very topic, one that deals with such a great calamity, made it prone to such a stylistic treatment. Regardless, a scientific edition of *Durrat al-Aslāk* and its *dhayl* is needed before any conclusions about the modality of the use of *saj'* by Zayn al-Dīn Ṭāhir and his father can be formulated; see above, n. 9.

<sup>65</sup>*Ibid.*, fols. 228a–b, the account of the expedition sent by Barqūq to the northern marches of Syria to deal with Miṅṣh's rebellion and Tamerlane's incursions in Anatolia.

<sup>66</sup>Namely those dealing with appointments and obituaries. There are parts of reports concerning events of a political nature where Zayn al-Dīn Ṭāhir did use *saj'*, but these are confined to *akhbār* prone to stylistic licence: for example, those dealing with a characteristic “villain” such as Yalbughā al-Nāṣirī in the annal of 791 (*ibid.*, 237b–238a; 239a; etc.) or where the author utilized panegyrics to relate something about the sultan, such as his entry into Damascus in Ramaḍān 793 (*ibid.*, 268a–b), etc.

<sup>67</sup>To the extent that important events worthy of reporting did take place during a year, given Zayn al-Dīn Ṭāhir's lack of interest in stories which were however faithfully noted by historians such as Ibn al-Furāt and others. Thus, the annal of 790, an admittedly uneventful year, contains nothing but appointments and obituaries; see *ibid.*, fols. 233b–236b.

<sup>68</sup>Appointment reports that contain a core of historical data but which are submerged by the usual stock formulae used by Zayn al-Dīn Ṭāhir have not been included in the calculation. See for example the *khbar* concerning the appointment of Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qayṣarī as chief Hanafī qadī in Cairo: *ibid.*, fols. 264b–265a.

<sup>69</sup>The obituaries written about him are replete with verses he composed on a variety of occasions; see *Al-Manhal*, 6:366–68, no. 1220; al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Daw' al-Lāmi' li-Ahl al-Qarn al-Tāsi'* (Beirut, 1992), 4:3–5 (hereafter cited as *Al-Daw'*).

<sup>70</sup>*Al-Manhal*, 6:366–68, no. 1220; *Al-Daw'*, 4:3–5.



the exception of religious appointments which took place in both regional poles of the Mamluk empire, there are no reports that deal specifically with Egypt. All three military appointments are to Syrian *niyābāt*<sup>71</sup> and most<sup>72</sup> of the political/military events that are reported by Zayn al-Dīn Ṭāhir take place in Syria.<sup>73</sup> He also recounted military operations in Syria,<sup>74</sup> details about the itinerary of the sultan from Egypt thereto,<sup>75</sup> his arrival and stay in Damascus at the end of Ramaḍān,<sup>76</sup> his trip to Aleppo and his stay there,<sup>77</sup> and his return to Cairo by way of Damascus at the end of the year.<sup>78</sup>

The Syrian "dimension" of much of the reports in *Dhayl Durrat al-Aslāk* is likely due to the position of Zayn al-Dīn Ṭāhir. It is probable that he received his Syrian data, limited as they may be,<sup>79</sup> from an extended network of acquaintances he maintained in his land of origin,<sup>80</sup> an endeavor made easier by the position he occupied in the chancellery, the department of the Mamluk bureaucracy responsible,

<sup>71</sup>See "Dhayl Durrat al-Aslāk," MS Bodleian Marsh 319, fols. 263a–b, 266a–b, and 266b–267a. Interestingly, these appointments and those of religious figures occur haphazardly in the main body of the text and their appearance does not seem to obey any chronological consideration.

<sup>72</sup>Only a handful of events, such as the few details about the preparations for the sultan's departure to Syria, took place in Egypt; see *ibid.*, 267a–b.

<sup>73</sup>Many of these reports were noted by Syrian sources only, and by Ibn Khaldūn; more on this below.

<sup>74</sup>These would include, among others, the skirmishes between the forces of Syrian *nawwāb* and those of Miṭāsh ("Dhayl Durrat al-Aslāk," MS Bodleian Marsh 319, 263a–b); the arrival of Miṭāsh to Damascus at the very beginning of Rajab and the beginning of warfare around the city (264a); the encounter between the loyalists and the rebels at al-Kiswah, a village located south of Damascus, at the end of Sha'bān, following the lifting of the siege of Damascus by Miṭāsh earlier in the middle of the month (268a); the raids ordered by the sultan against the Turcomans following his arrival to Aleppo at the end of Shawwāl (269a–b), etc.

<sup>75</sup>*Ibid.*, 268a.

<sup>76</sup>*Ibid.*, 268a–b.

<sup>77</sup>*Ibid.*, 269a–270a.

<sup>78</sup>*Ibid.*, 270a–271a. The two *akhbār* of the sultan's arrival to Ḥamāh and Homs (270a) on his way back to Damascus are unique to *Dhayl Durrat al-Aslāk*.

<sup>79</sup>His reports are limited in terms of both their quantity and depth when compared to the rich and dense narratives in Ibn Ṣaṣrā's and Ibn Ḥijjī's works. There is nothing, for example, in his *Dhayl Durrat al-Aslāk* about the siege of Damascus, save for the report about Miṭāsh's arrival to the city and the mention of the raid his lieutenant Shukr Aḥmad launched inside the city; see above, n. 74.

<sup>80</sup>Such a network could have been established by members of his own family, namely his father and his uncle Sharaf al-Dīn Ḥusayn, whose biographies mention their travels between Syria and Egypt during their lifetime; see *Al-Durar*, 2:29, no. 1534, and 4:104, no. 284, and "Dhayl Durrat al-Aslāk," MS Bodleian Marsh 319, fol. 132b.



among other things, for the correspondence of the sultan.<sup>81</sup> It is also possible that he himself was part of Barqūq's expedition to Syria. Even though he made no mention of himself, he did note in his work that most men of the sword and of the pen accompanied the sultan at the end of Sha'bān 793 on his expedition to Syria, and that only a very few functionaries and amirs remained behind in Egypt in the service of Kumushbughā al-Ḥamawī, the *nā'ib al-ghaybah*.<sup>82</sup> That he might have been part of the movement of the court to Syria<sup>83</sup> is a possibility since he was probably still in the employ of the state in 793.<sup>84</sup>

It is unlikely that Zayn al-Dīn Ṭāhir used for his Syrian reports any of the sources that are available to us. His writing style is unique, and a collation of reports which have a common theme, found in the *Dhayl Durrat al-Aslāk* and in contemporary works, shows no convincing evidence of similarity amongst them.<sup>85</sup> Thus, he either had access, as was argued above, to special sources of information about Syria,<sup>86</sup> or he disguised, whether willfully or not, data that he borrowed from contemporary works.

In light of what was said above, what is the historiographical significance of *Dhayl Durrat al-Aslāk*? The annal of 793 in this chronicle does give us a certain picture of this year's events, but it is far from complete. The overall paucity of data in Zayn al-Dīn Ṭāhir's work has two consequences: first, even though he might have relied on written sources, it is less than likely that his work would have preserved important data from an otherwise no-longer-extant history; and second, there are no indications that his non-biographical reports have found

<sup>81</sup>On those attributes of the *dīwān al-inshā'*, where Zayn al-Dīn Ṭāhir is reported to have worked, which are relevant here, see Petry, *Civilian Elite*, 204–5, and Bernadette Martel-Thoumian, *Les civils et l'administration dans l'État militaire mamluq (IXe/XVe siècle)* (Damascus, 1992), 40–1.

<sup>82</sup>"Dhayl Durrat al-Aslāk," MS Bodleian Marsh 319, fols. 267a–b.

<sup>83</sup>This would not have been the first visit he made to his homeland after his installation in Egypt at an unknown date: as late as 791, he recorded in his work that he was in the company of Yūnus al-Nawrūzī, Barqūq's *dawādār*, when the latter, on his way to Egypt after his defeat at the hands of Yalbughā al-Nāṣirī, was killed in Syria in Rabī' II 791 by the Arab tribal leader 'Anqā' Ibn Shaṭī; see *ibid.*, fol. 239a, and the obituary of Yūnus in *Al-Nujūm*, 11:320.

<sup>84</sup>Even though it is impossible to ascertain Zayn al-Dīn Ṭāhir's presence in the chancellery in the year 793, it is probable that he was working in this office, because as late as 795 he is placed there by one of the sources: Ibn al-Furāt cited a written *khavar* from Ibn Duqmāq (an echo of which can be found in *Al-Nafḥah*, 269–70) where the latter reported hearing the information from Zayn al-Dīn Ṭāhir, who is presented as one of the secretaries of the *dast* and the scribe of an Amir Qulumṭāy al-'Uthmānī (*Tārīkh al-Duwal*, 9:2:247–48).

<sup>85</sup>With the exception of one report whose wording is close to one found in Ibn al-Furāt's *Tārīkh al-Duwal*; on this see below, and also n. 110.

<sup>86</sup>These might have included written sources not available today; on this see below.



their way into the works of other historians.<sup>87</sup> He did however have an impact on other historians as he is one of the most often-quoted sources in the obituaries section of contemporary and later chronicles.<sup>88</sup> Ultimately, the originality of *Dhayl Durrat al-Aslāk* lies in the person of Zayn al-Dīn Ṭāhir, a man with a foot in both his homeland of Aleppo and his Cairene place of residence, a situation which greatly influenced him and his work. The whole purpose of *Dhayl Durrat al-Aslāk* appears to have been to inform the reader in a peculiar literary style, from a Syro-Egyptian perspective, about the civilian *a'yān* of the Mamluk Sultanate, while providing information about the military elite, without however dwelling upon the vicissitudes of political history.

Another émigré, but from the Maghrib this time, was to succeed better than Zayn al-Dīn Ṭāhir in linking together in an uninterrupted narrative the events taking place in Egypt and Syria. So much has been said about Ibn Khaldūn and his important contributions to many fields of knowledge that it is unnecessary within the framework of this article to embark upon the exploration of ground better covered elsewhere.<sup>89</sup> Suffice it to note that by the year 793, nine years after his arrival to Egypt,<sup>90</sup> he had integrated well into Cairene society: he had befriended a number of important personalities such as Alṭunbughā al-Jūbānī<sup>91</sup> (d. 792/1389)

<sup>87</sup>There is however the possibility that some small sections, words really, from some of his reports might have found their way into the works of others. For example, the expression “*alā hīn ghaflah*” used by Zayn al-Dīn Ṭāhir (“*Dhayl Durrat al-Aslāk*,” MS Bodleian Marsh 319, fol. 263b) to describe the arrival of Miṭāsh to the province of Aleppo before he headed for Damascus and laid siege to the city, is to be found in Ibn Taghrībirdī’s *Al-Nujūm* to explain the speed with which al-Nāṣirī left Damascus to confront Miṭāsh when news of his arrival reached him (11:21); see also below, n. 110.

<sup>88</sup>See below. Attested borrowings from *Dhayl Durrat al-Aslāk* are too numerous to be mentioned. Suffice it here to say that for the year 778, Ibn Duqmāq quotes Zayn al-Dīn Ṭāhir numerous times in his obituaries section where he sometimes confuses him with his father, Ibn Ḥabīb al-Ḥalabī; see for example for the year 778, Ibn Duqmāq’s “*Nuzhah*,” MS Gotha Orient. A 1572, fols. 122a–b, and for the year 793, Ibn al-Furāt’s *Tārīkh al-Duwal*, 9:2:286–87 (unless the confusion is the copyist’s mistake).

<sup>89</sup>There are four hundred seventy-eight entries under Ibn Khaldūn’s name in the Chicago Online Bibliography of Mamluk Studies and one hundred ten under al-Maqrīzī’s versus seven under al-‘Aynī.

<sup>90</sup>He arrived in Cairo during Shawwāl 784/December 1382; Walter J. Fischel, *Ibn Khaldūn in Egypt: His Public Functions and his Historical Research (1382–1406): A Study in Islamic Historiography* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1967), 15.

<sup>91</sup>*Ibid.*, 20, 36, 38–39, 76, 164. On Alṭunbughā al-Jūbānī, see *Al-Manhal*, 3:57–61, no. 536.



and Barqūq himself,<sup>92</sup> had been appointed chief Maliki qadi in 786–87/1384–85,<sup>93</sup> but had lost favor with al-Zāhir after he had signed, in Rajab 791, a Miṭāsh-inspired *fatwá* requiring the execution of the sultan then in exile at al-Karak.<sup>94</sup>

Any mention of Ibn Khaldūn's contribution to the field of historiography invites the inevitable comparison of the introduction of *Al-'Ibar*, the seminal *Muqaddimah*, to the rest of the work. With regard to the relationship between these two parts, opinions among scholars are divided: some see in the latter the continuation of the original thinking found in the former,<sup>95</sup> while others have argued that those parts of *Al-'Ibar* that cover earlier periods have little originality.<sup>96</sup> An analysis of the passages of *Al-'Ibar* which deal with the year 793 reveals nothing of the powerful thinking behind the writing of the *Muqaddimah*: here as elsewhere,<sup>97</sup> Ibn Khaldūn presented an uninterrupted narrative of political events unencumbered by religious appointments and similar reports.<sup>98</sup>

The reporting of the events of 793 starts with a long passage about the tribulations of the career of Kumushbughā al-Ḥamawī (d. 801/1399), an amir of Yalbughā al-'Umarī,<sup>99</sup> and his arrival to Cairo during the month of Ṣafar.<sup>100</sup> This is then followed by a very similar report dealing this time with the summoning from Syria of yet another leading amir, Aytamish al-Bajāsī (d. 802/1399).<sup>101</sup> And whereas in other chronicles the news of the arrival of the emissary of the ruler of Tunis is covered in two to three lines,<sup>102</sup> in *Al-'Ibar* it occupies half a page and

<sup>92</sup>Fischel, *Ibn Khaldūn in Egypt*, 20–22, 71–81.

<sup>93</sup>Kamal Salibi, *Listes chronologiques des Grands Cadis de l'Égypte sous les Mamlouks* (Paris, 1957), 112–13.

<sup>94</sup>Fischel, *Ibn Khaldūn in Egypt*, 34–36; see also *Tārīkh al-Duwal*, 9:1:112.

<sup>95</sup>See for example Muḥammad Muṣṭafá Ziyādah, who claimed that Ibn Khaldūn was the founder of a school of historical writing that blossomed in Egypt and attracted many thinkers such as al-Maqtīzī: *Al-Mu'arrikhūn fī Miṣr fī al-Qarn al-Khāmis 'Ashar al-Mīlādī/al-Qarn al-Tāsi' al-Hijrī* (Cairo, 1954), 6.

<sup>96</sup>Little, in his *An Introduction*, has shown that those parts of *Al-'Ibar* that deal with the reign of Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad had simply been culled from other histories (75–76); see also his "Historiography," 435.

<sup>97</sup>This is certainly the case with the sections of *Al-'Ibar* dealing with the year 778.

<sup>98</sup>*Al-'Ibar*, 5:499–503.

<sup>99</sup>See "Al-Manhal," fols. 112b–114a. On Yalbughā al-'Umarī, see above, n. 6.

<sup>100</sup>*Al-'Ibar*, 5:499–500.

<sup>101</sup>*Ibid.*, 500. On Aytamish al-Bajāsī, see *Al-Manhal*, 3:143–151, no. 588. The arrival of Aytamish and Kumushbughā, noted Ibn Khaldūn, reflected Barqūq's renewed confidence and came as the result of the strengthening of his rule: *Al-'Ibar*, 5:499, 500.

<sup>102</sup>*Al-'Ibar*, 5:501; *Tārīkh al-Duwal*, 9:2:248–49; *Al-Sulūk*, 3:2:735; *Nayl al-Amal*, 2:300.



details the long links between the two rulers.<sup>103</sup> The rest of the reports of the year deal with *the* political story of 793, Miṅṭāsh's on-going rebellion against the sultan, and contain, with the exception of details about the siege of Damascus, all its key events: the arrival of Miṅṭāsh to Damascus; the departure of the sultan for Syria; news about the major battles outside of Damascus between Yalbughā and his foes; the sultan's arrival to Damascus and later to Aleppo;<sup>104</sup> the events taking place in and around Aleppo leading to the arrest and execution of Yalbughā al-Nāṣirī; then the sultan's return to Egypt.<sup>105</sup> For these, Ibn Khaldūn relied both on *Tārīkh al-Duwal* and on a source or sources depicting in some detail political and military events in Syria. Even though Ibn Khaldūn sometimes summarized and/or reworded Ibn al-Furāt, the influence of the latter on the former<sup>106</sup> can clearly be seen in the following passage:

Ibn al-Furāt: ". . . wa-nazala [Miṅṭāsh] bi-al-Qaṣr al-Ablaq wa-nazala al-umarā' alladhīna ma'ahu fī buyūt alladhī ḥawl al-Qaṣr wa-anzala jamā'ah min aṣḥābihi fī Jāmi' Tankiz wa-jamā'ah fī Jāmi' Yalbughā." (*Tārīkh al-Duwal*, 9:2:255)

Ibn Khaldūn: ". . . fa-nazala [Miṅṭāsh] bi-al-Qaṣr al-Ablaq wa-anzala al-umarā' alladhīna ma'ahu fī al-buyūt ḥawālī al-Qaṣr wa-fī Jāmi' Shakan [*sic*] wa-Jāmi' Baybuqā [*sic*]." (*Al-'Ibar*, 5:501)

In other passages,<sup>107</sup> it is less blatant but still discernible in terms of the choice of items and their order of appearance. For example, contrary to Ibn al-Furāt, Ibn Khaldūn did not describe the present sent to the sultan on his way to Aleppo by the Turcoman chief Sūlī Dūlghādir,<sup>108</sup> but he did note, like the author of *Tārīkh*

<sup>103</sup>Here Ibn Khaldūn showed his interest in things diplomatic and in matters pertaining to his region of origin, the Maghrib.

<sup>104</sup>*Al-'Ibar*, 5:501–2.

<sup>105</sup>*Ibid.*, 502–3.

<sup>106</sup>I am not ruling out the possibility that both used a common source. As I noticed in the case of the year 778, Ibn Khaldūn's accounts are so close to Ibn al-Furāt's, and the latter's to Ibn Duqmāq's, that it is difficult to establish with great certainty the indebtedness of *Al-'Ibar* to either *Nuzhah* or *Tārīkh al-Duwal*. In the absence of the *Nuzhah* annal for the year 793, it will be impossible to completely rule out a common source for Ibn Khaldūn and Ibn al-Furāt.

<sup>107</sup>*Al-'Ibar*, 5:500/*Tārīkh al-Duwal*, 9:2:250–51; 5:501/ 9:2:255; 5:502/9:2:266–67, etc.

<sup>108</sup>Along with Sālim al-Dūkārī, Dūlghādir is frequently mentioned in the events of the year 793. On Sūlī and his family, see J. H. Mordtmann and V. L. Ménage, *Encyclopédie de l'Islam*, 2nd ed., 2:246–47, and *Al-Manhal*, 6:183–86, no. 1164. As to Sālim al-Dūkārī, apart from the obituary of a person, Dimashq Khuḡā ibn Sālim al-Dūkārī, who appears to be his son (*Al-Manhal*, 5:324–25, no. 1028) and the scattered references throughout contemporary and later histories, I have not as of yet





*al-Duwal*, the arrival of a delegation from the tribe of ʿIsá and Muḥannā<sup>109</sup> pledging loyalty to Barqūq. The wording is somewhat different, but the contents are the same.

Things become more problematic, however, when dealing with the reports of Syrian origin and/or dealing with Syria. The problem lies in the fact that despite a number of similarities between them and those of other historians, namely Zayn al-Dīn Ṭāhir, it is nearly impossible to determine their genealogy. For example, contemporary reports about al-Nāṣirī's meeting with the sultan when the latter entered southern Syria on his way to Damascus in the middle of Ramaḍān have a word or words in common, particularly those used to describe Barqūq's behavior towards al-Nāṣirī,<sup>110</sup> but Ibn Khaldūn said that the meeting took place at the fortress of Qāqūn,<sup>111</sup> Zayn al-Dīn Ṭāhir<sup>112</sup> at al-Lujūn,<sup>113</sup> and Ibn Ṣaṣrā at al-Ghawr!<sup>114</sup> Finally, adding to the confusion, there is the problem of chronological inconsistency in a report mentioned only by Ibn Khaldūn, Ibn Ṣaṣrā, and Ibn Ḥijjī. According to what can be gleaned from the Syrian sources, on the sixteenth of Sha'bān Tumāntamur, a pillar of the Miṭāshī camp, deserted and joined al-Nāṣirī. This desertion and the fear that more would take place led Miṭāsh to

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located detailed information about him. On the general topic of the Turcomans during the Mamluk period, see Barabara Kellner-Heinkele, "The Turkomans and *Bilād al-Shām* in the Mamluk Period," in *Land Tenure and Social Transformation in The Middle East*, ed. Tarif Khalidi (Beirut, 1984), 169–80.

<sup>109</sup>The tribal formation of renegade Arab amir Nu'ayr Ibn Ḥayyār; on him see "Al-Manhal," fols. 812a–813a. On the Arab tribes during this period see M. A. Hiyari, "The Origins and Development of the Amirate of the Arabs During the Seventh/Thirteenth and Eighth/Fourteenth Centuries," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 38, no. 3 (1975): 508–24; A. S. Tritton, "The Tribes of Syria in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries," *ibid.* 11 (1943–46): 567–73.

<sup>110</sup>For example, the verb *tarajjala* used by Zayn al-Dīn Ṭāhir and Ibn Khaldūn.

<sup>111</sup>Qāqūn was located off the coast half way between Gaza and northern Palestine; see *A Chronicle of Damascus*, 245, n. 1481. In *Al-'Ibar*, the name of this locality is given as Qānūn.

<sup>112</sup>Al-'Aynī, al-Maqrīzī, and Ibn Taghrībirdī also placed the meeting at the same location as Zayn al-Dīn Ṭāhir; see, respectively, "Iqd," MS Ahmet III 2911/B2, fol. 97b; "Iqd," Dār al-Kutub MS 1584 *Tārīkh*, fols. 431–32; *Al-Sulūk*, 3:2:748; *Al-Nujūm*, 11:26. More importantly, Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah in his *TIQS* also referred to al-Lujūn; it might very well be that this report was taken from Ibn Ḥijjī, even though, in the light of what will be argued below, it is impossible to confirm.

<sup>113</sup>Al-Lujūn is located about twenty miles north of Qāqūn; see William Popper, *Egypt and Syria under the Circassian Sultans, 1382–1468 A.D.: Systematic Notes to Ibn Taghrībirdī's Chronicles of Egypt* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1955–57), 1:48 and map no. 13.

<sup>114</sup>A region of the Jordan valley located south of Lake Tiberias; see *A Chronicle of Damascus*, 87, n. 511. All the locales mentioned here are part of one of the routes from Gaza to Damascus; see Popper, *Egypt and Syria Under the Circassian Sultans*, 1:48 and map. no. 13. This route includes a stop at Irbid, a city where, according to Ibn Duqmāq, the sultan stopped on his way to Damascus; see above, n. 56.



lift his siege of the Syrian capital; on the following day, al-Nāṣirī's forces would experience a crushing defeat at the hands of Nu'ayr at Ḍumayr.<sup>115</sup> Curiously, Ibn Khaldūn placed the desertion of Tumāntamur<sup>116</sup> *after* the battle of Ḍumayr, contrary to what the Syrian sources maintain. What is to be made of all this? With regards to the report concerning the arrival of Barqūq to Syria, because of the variety of locales, we might posit the following: either all the authors used a common source<sup>117</sup> but played around with historical truth and thus made al-Nāṣirī welcome the sultan to Syria in three different places[!], or we are in the presence of three different strains of *akhbār*, namely Ibn Khaldūn's unknown source (Qāqūn), Ibn Ṣaṣrā's own eyewitness and/or first-hand account (al-Ghawr), and Zayn al-Dīn Ṭāhir's (al-Lajjūn).<sup>118</sup> This of course is pure conjecture: beyond establishing the existence of a Furātian and Syrian strain of *akhbār* in *Al-'Ibar*, there is no way of ascertaining the identity of the latter group of reports.<sup>119</sup>

Ibn al-Furāt's *Tārīkh al-Duwal* is the most copious and comprehensive of all the surviving historical works produced during this period. For the year 793, it contains the overwhelming majority of all those reports concerning Egypt and the general political/administrative/religious appointments mentioned by all histories. All the historians who wrote about this period<sup>120</sup> are either directly indebted to him or, knowingly or unknowingly, incorporated his *akhbār* by means of a third party.<sup>121</sup> as was noted earlier, al-Maqrīzī's *Al-Sulūk*, for example, which is nothing but a "slimmer" rewritten version of *Tārīkh al-Duwal*, was to become the foundation for the works of historians such as Ibn Taghrībirdī, Ibn Iyās, and others.

However, *Tārīkh al-Duwal* contains none of the wealth of information found in the works of the Syrian authors about the nearly two months<sup>122</sup> of fighting in and around Damascus between the Miṣṣāshīs and Yalbughā al-Nāṣirī. This aspect of the war in Syria was very well "covered" by Ibn Ṣaṣrā and Ibn Ḥijjī, and one has to wait until Barqūq's departure from Cairo<sup>123</sup> before the appearance in *Tārīkh*

<sup>115</sup>See below.

<sup>116</sup>In *Al-'Ibar*, it is Yamāztamur (5:502).

<sup>117</sup>Maybe unknown Syrian source(s) or Ibn Duqmāq's *Nuzhah*? See below.

<sup>118</sup>We could be dealing with four strains of *akhbār* if we include al-'Aynī, who alone provided details not found elsewhere, namely the description of the horse on which Barqūq made Yalbughā ride; see n. 110.

<sup>119</sup>See below the discussion about the possible nature and identity of this or these Syrian source(s).

<sup>120</sup>Save for Ibn Ṣaṣrā and possibly Ibn Ḥijjī; see below.

<sup>121</sup>See above.

<sup>122</sup>Rajab and Sha'bān; see above and below.

<sup>123</sup>*Tārīkh al-Duwal*, 9:2:259ff.



*al-Duwal* of *akhbār* from or about Bilād al-Shām, sometimes paralleling those of the two Syrian authors, especially his stay in Aleppo and the events surrounding it.<sup>124</sup> Before Barqūq's arrival in Syria, Ibn al-Furāt's reports about this region lacked detail and were of a second-hand nature since they were brought to Cairo by post-riders or by representatives of both Syrian and Egyptian military office-holders shuttling between the two regions. The analysis of these reports in *Tārīkh al-Duwal* might help clarify the reasons behind certain inconsistencies between this chronicle on the one hand, and mainly Syrian sources on the other. There is a systematic difference between the way Ibn al-Furāt's reports from Syria via post-riders and messengers described what was going on in Syria, and the evidence presented by Ibn Ḥijjī and Ibn Ṣaṣrā.

The first report about events in Damascus was that brought on 5 Rajab by Kumushbughā al-Ṣaraytamurī, the *dawādār* of Qarādamurdāsh al-Aḥmadī<sup>125</sup> (d. 794/1392), then viceroy of Aleppo, who informed people in Cairo about the arrival of Miṭāsh to the Syrian capital.<sup>126</sup> The second report<sup>127</sup> arrived on 27 Rajab by means of a post-rider with news that Miṭāsh had been defeated and was besieged at Qaṣr al-Ablaq<sup>128</sup> after the arrival of loyalist soldiers from Gaza and of Arghūn Shāh al-Ibrāhīmī,<sup>129</sup> the amir whom Barqūq had recently nominated *ḥājib al-ḥujjāb* of Damascus.<sup>130</sup> The Syrian sources do not agree with this turn of events. First, if one considers that it takes about four days for a post-rider to ride the Damascus–Cairo route,<sup>131</sup> the only victory the messenger could have been referring to was the retaking on the twenty-third of this month of an important landmark, the building of Bahādur,<sup>132</sup> by al-Nāṣirī and his forces; but no mention is made of a defeat of the rebels significant enough to lead to their flight from the city, which is one of the claims of the messenger.<sup>133</sup> Even more surprising is that

<sup>124</sup>Ibid., 266–71.

<sup>125</sup>On him see "Al-Manhal," fols. 589b–590b.

<sup>126</sup>*Tārīkh al-Duwal*, 9:2:256; *Al-Nafḥah*, 262–63.

<sup>127</sup>*Tārīkh al-Duwal*, 9:2:256–57.

<sup>128</sup>A palace built by al-Zāhir Baybars outside of the city's western wall; see *A Chronicle of Damascus*, 36, n. 216.

<sup>129</sup>On him see *Al-Manhal*, 2:323–34, no. 376, and *Al-Ḍaw'*, 2:367, no. 825.

<sup>130</sup>*Tārīkh al-Duwal*, 9:2:254.

<sup>131</sup>Popper, *Egypt and Syria Under the Circassian Sultans*, 1:45.

<sup>132</sup>This building was probably located just west of the city's walls in an area which included Yalbughā's mosque, al-Maydān, and Qaṣr al-Ablaq, where the Miṭāshīs were conducting their siege of the city.

<sup>133</sup>A similar inconsistency can be found in another report dated 5 Sha'bān brought to Cairo by a mamluk of the viceroy of Ṣafad with news, yet again, of Miṭāsh's escape from Damascus and his pursuit by Yalbughā. Not only do the Syrian sources *not* mention any flight on the part of Miṭāsh



no mention is made of the defeat<sup>134</sup> at ‘Aqabat al-Tīnah<sup>135</sup> on 6 Rajab, at the hands of Miṭāshīs and Yamanī tribesmen,<sup>136</sup> of a Barqūq party from the Biqā‘ comprising Ibn al-Ḥanash,<sup>137</sup> Tankizbughā (the Barqūqī viceroy of Baalbek), and Qaysī tribesmen and others, on its way to help al-Nāṣirī.<sup>138</sup>

Even more at odds with events on the ground in Syria are two reports dated at the beginning of Ramaḍān. On the first of that month, a letter was brought to Cairo by a messenger from the sultan who was on his way to Syria but had not yet reached Qaṭyā, at the gates of the Sinai peninsula, the contents of which were that Miṭāsh had been defeated and had escaped from Damascus.<sup>139</sup> A few days later, on the fourth, an Amir Sūdūn al-Ṭayyār al-Zāhirī arrived in Cairo with briefs from the sultan confirming to those in Cairo the veracity of this news, and informing them that Miṭāsh was under siege<sup>140</sup> at the citadel of al-Zur‘ah.<sup>141</sup> The most striking aspect of these last two reports is that while it was true that Miṭāsh had finally fled Damascus<sup>142</sup> on 16 Sha‘bān<sup>143</sup> and that Yalbughā al-Nāṣirī had managed to beat a party of Miṭāshīs at al-Kiswah<sup>144</sup> eleven days later on the twenty-seventh,<sup>145</sup> the sultan and the Cairenes had not yet been informed about the crushing defeat suffered by Yalbughā al-Nāṣirī at the hands of Nu‘ayr near the village of Ḍumayr on the seventeenth of that month.<sup>146</sup> News concerning this

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and his Turcomans, but they even note that the latter retook from the loyalists the building of Bahādur, thus causing them great loss! See *Tārīkh al-Duwal*, 9:2:257; “*Tārīkh Ibn Ḥijjī*,” fol. 96b; *Al-Durrah al-Muḍī‘ah*, 86; and *TIQS*, 1:374.

<sup>134</sup> *Al-Durrah al-Muḍī‘ah*, 80–81; “*Tārīkh Ibn Ḥijjī*,” fols. 96a–b; and *TIQS*, 1:374.

<sup>135</sup> A spot probably located halfway between Baalbek and Damascus in the Anti-Lebanon range; see *A Chronicle of Damascus*, 112, n. 676.

<sup>136</sup> This party was led by Shukr Aḥmad (a.k.a. Aḥmad Shukr; more on him below) and Ibn Hilāl al-Dawlah, a Yamanī leader from al-Zabadānī region west of Damascus; see *ibid.*, 106, n. 632.

<sup>137</sup> Son of Ibn al-Ḥanash, an important tribal chief from the Biqā‘ who had been viceroy of Baalbek and was executed by Miṭāsh in 792; see *ibid.*, 16, n. 106, and the sources cited therein.

<sup>138</sup> On this battle, see below.

<sup>139</sup> *Tārīkh al-Duwal*, 9:2:262.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>141</sup> A town in the Hawrān region of Syria; see *A Chronicle of Damascus*, 128, n. 759, and the references therein.

<sup>142</sup> News about Miṭāsh’s flight was again brought to Cairo on 6 Sha‘bān and 13 Ramaḍān, respectively: *Tārīkh al-Duwal*, 9:2:262–63 and 264.

<sup>143</sup> Because of the betrayal of one of his right-hand men, Tumāntamur; see above.

<sup>144</sup> A village south of Damascus; see *A Chronicle of Damascus*, 74, n. 453, and the references therein.

<sup>145</sup> *Al-Durrah al-Muḍī‘ah*, 93; *Al-Ibar*, 5:502; *TIQS*, 1:379.

<sup>146</sup> *Al-Durrah al-Muḍī‘ah*, 91–92; “*Tārīkh Ibn Ḥijjī*,” fols. 99a–b; *Al-Ibar*, 5:502; *TIQS*, 1:379.



battle, in which one of the sons of Manjak al-Yūsufi<sup>147</sup> was killed,<sup>148</sup> reached Cairo, according to Ibn al-Furāt, only during the first third of Ramaḍān,<sup>149</sup> at a time when Barqūq was in Palestine on his way to Syria.

It is tempting to impute the inconsistencies pointed out above to the vicissitudes of historical writing or to mere coincidence. In other words, Ibn al-Furāt simply included in his work the material that was available to him,<sup>150</sup> and that material brought to Cairo by messengers simply did not mention the defeat at Ḍumayr. But equally plausible is the view that the contents of the messages arriving to Cairo, at least until Barqūq reached Syria, were consciously altered by their senders, either to downplay defeats and to camouflage them as victories for fear of incurring the wrath of the sultan, or as a delaying tactic. Even though Barqūq had strengthened his hand in the cut-throat environment of Mamluk politics, there were still people who resented his return to power, and a number of those were in Syria. In Damascus itself, there were many parties who actually supported Miṅṭāsh during the disturbances of 791–92, and one ought to keep in mind that back then the city did not fall to the besiegers led by Barqūq because of the steadfastness of its defenders.<sup>151</sup> In 793, yet again, the Syrian sources talk about the sympathy felt by certain sections of the population for Miṅṭāsh: the *‘āmmah*, the inhabitants of the neighborhoods of al-Shuwaykah and al-Shāghūr,<sup>152</sup> and most importantly, the members of the household of Baydamur al-Khawārizmī (d. 789/1386). Baydamur had assumed the viceroyalty of Damascus a total of six

<sup>147</sup>A former viceroy of Syria and a “mentor” of Barqūq during his youth; see Fischel, “*Ascensus Barcoch* (I),” 65–66. According to Mignanelli, three sons of his, Ibrāhīm, ‘Umar, and Faraj, had supported Barqūq’s bid to return to power in 791 after he came out of al-Karak; *ibid.*, 155.

<sup>148</sup>The sources are not too clear about the casualties of this battle. Ibn Ṣaṣrā claimed that one thousand two hundred sixty people were killed on both sides while Ibn Khaldūn mentioned the figure of fifteen Syrian amirs (*Al-Durrah al-Muḍī’ah*, 93; *Al-‘Ibar*, 5:502). The same confusion exists as to which one of Manjak’s sons died at Ḍumayr: Ibn al-Furāt and Ibn Khaldūn noted that it was Ibrāhīm, while Ibn Ṣaṣrā stated that it was ‘Umar (*ibid.*, and *Tārīkh al-Duwal*, 9:2:263). The only reference in the sources to Faraj is that of Ibn Ḥijjī, who noted that on 12 Sha‘bān his house was looted by the populace during the battle of the Qanawāt, a neighborhood west of the city center (“*Tārīkh Ibn Ḥijjī*,” fols. 98b–99a).

<sup>149</sup>*Tārīkh al-Duwal*, 9:2:263.

<sup>150</sup>Even if these reports were originally authored by somebody else, say Ibn Duqmāq, the inconsistencies pointed out above would still hold, unless it can be shown that Ibn al-Furāt falsely claimed that post-riders and the like brought these *akhbār* to Cairo when in reality they had a different history.

<sup>151</sup>The defenders were mostly members of the populace, but they included amongst them prominent citizens such as Ibn al-Qurashī, who was going to be executed on the orders of Barqūq; see *Tārīkh al-Duwal*, 9:2:256, and his obituary, 284–85.

<sup>152</sup>Two neighborhoods located just outside the city’s southern walls.



times<sup>153</sup> and had died in custody after Barqūq had ordered him removed from office in 788.<sup>154</sup> Contrary to the sons of Manjak al-Yūsufī, that other viceroy of Damascus, who sided with Barqūq during 791–93, Muḥammad Shāh ibn Baydamur (d. 793/1391) and the supporters of his household fought alongside Miṭāsh even when the latter moved against Yalbughā al-Nāṣirī in Sha‘bān 791.<sup>155</sup> He was nominated *atābak* of Damascus by Miṭāsh in Ramaḍān 791<sup>156</sup> and participated in numerous confrontations with the forces loyal to Barqūq, until his capture in 792<sup>157</sup> and his execution in Cairo by Kumushbughā al-Ḥamawī in 793.<sup>158</sup> It was also Shukr Aḥmad, a former Baydamurī amir, who led the raid into Damascus the day of his arrival with Miṭāsh on 1 Rajab 793, and rode to his *ustādh*’s home where he was joined by another one of Baydamur’s sons, Aḥmad, whose execution by Barqūq on 21 Dhū al-Ḥijjah was movingly described by Ibn Ṣaṣrā.<sup>159</sup> Last but not least, the viceroy of Damascus Yalbughā al-Nāṣirī stands out as the official with the most reasons and with the capability to mislead the sultan and his court back in Egypt. He had often been at odds with Barqūq when the latter was an “‘Umarī” mamluk,<sup>160</sup> then *atābak*,<sup>161</sup> and when he became sultan.<sup>162</sup> It would not be surprising then that Yalbughā al-Nāṣirī would have used his powers as the head of the Syrian political apparatus to propagate false news in Egypt. In the sources rumors about his treachery abound.<sup>163</sup> Eventually, when he reached Aleppo, Barqūq became assured about his suspicions when Sālim al-Dūkārī, who allegedly had captured Miṭāsh and had promised to release him into the custody of the sultan,

<sup>153</sup>Ibn Ṭūlūn, *I’lām al-Warā bi-man Wuliya Nā’ iban min al-Atrāk bi-Dimashq al-Shām al-Kubrā*, ed. Muḥammad Aḥmad Duhmān (Damascus, 1984), 53 (hereafter cited as *I’lām*); *Al-Manhal*, 3:498–99.

<sup>154</sup>Ibid; and *Al-Nujūm*, 11:201. This was not the first time Baydamur had been removed from this office by Barqūq; see *Al-Nujūm*, 11:135 [780] and 147 [782].

<sup>155</sup>See *Tārīkh al-Duwal*, 9:2:292; *Al-Nujūm*, 11:274ff.

<sup>156</sup>*A Chronicle of Damascus*, 39–40.

<sup>157</sup>Ibid., 91.

<sup>158</sup>On Muḥammad Shāh ibn Baydamur’s tribulations in 793, see *Al-Durrah al-Muḍī’ah*, 74; *Tārīkh al-Duwal*, 9:2:252, 268.

<sup>159</sup>*Al-Durrah al-Muḍī’ah*, 103–9.

<sup>160</sup>Yalbughā al-Nāṣirī was one of the few amirs not to rebel against al-Ashraf Sha‘bān in ‘Aqabah during the events of the year 778, whereas Barqūq was, as a former mamluk of Yalbughā al-‘Umarī, very much involved in the coup; see Fischel, “*Ascensus Barcoch (I)*,” 67–68.

<sup>161</sup>*Al-Nujūm*, 11:129–30.

<sup>162</sup>See above, n. 27.

<sup>163</sup>*Al-Durrah al-Muḍī’ah*, 76; “*Tārīkh Ibn Ḥijjī*,” fol. 95b; *Al-Ibar*, 5:501–2; “*Dhayl Durrat al-Aslāk*,” MS Bodleian Marsh 319, fols. 264a–b.



sent him a letter detailing the extent of the relations between al-Nāṣirī and Miṅṭāsh.<sup>164</sup> This led to the execution of Yalbughā al-Nāṣirī on 27 Dhū al-Ḥijjah.<sup>165</sup> The best summary of the situation described here can be found in the words of Mignanelli, who, we are told by Fischel, knew Barqūq personally. Of the events in Syria, he remarked that

[The sultan] was told that Nāṣirī was concealing much and so he was inwardly worried. Nāṣirī was said to be doing this to avoid being himself slain by Barqūq or becoming of little value when once Miṅṭāsh was destroyed or slain. Of this Nāṣirī was very much afraid. Barqūq sent many letters to Nāṣirī, but they availed little. Nāṣirī excused himself for his weakness against Miṅṭāsh and Nu‘ayr. Wherefore, the sultan girded himself for a journey to Syria. [Upon Barqūq’s arrival there] Nāṣirī excused himself, claiming he could not do more. Barqūq accepted his excuses [but inside] he thought that Nāṣirī was in collusion with Miṅṭāsh so that they might be able together to usurp control of Syria.<sup>166</sup>

Here, as elsewhere, in light of the available sources, we are dealing with sheer conjecture. As a matter of fact, one of the reports brought to Cairo on 5 Sha‘bān by the mamluk of the viceroy of Ṣafad, announcing the escape of Miṅṭāsh from Damascus,<sup>167</sup> might very well weaken the hypothesis advanced above. The viceroy of Ṣafad, Iyās al-Jirjāwī (d. 799/1396),<sup>168</sup> was a supporter of Barqūq throughout the period of 791–93,<sup>169</sup> and it would be curious that he would have “fed” the court in Cairo information that did not correspond to the reality on the ground. Of course, there are ways with which one can circumscribe this issue: maybe al-Jirjāwī, who entered Damascus on 8 Rajab and participated in the fighting alongside al-Nāṣirī,<sup>170</sup> felt he could not afford to inform Barqūq about the inability of his forces to break the stalemate; maybe he considered the loss of the building of Bahādūr on the part the Miṅṭāshīs as a major setback for the rebels, and a troop movement on their part as a retreat; maybe he was in on the conspiracy;

<sup>164</sup>*Tārīkh al-Duwal*, 9:2:270–71; *Al-Ibar*, 5:503; “Dhayl Durrat al-Aslāk,” MS Bodleian Marsh 319, fol. 296b.

<sup>165</sup>See the references in the preceding note, and *Al-Durrah al-Muḍī‘ah*, 101. Also see above, n. 44.

<sup>166</sup>Fischel, “*Ascensus Barcoch* (II),” 160.

<sup>167</sup>See above, n. 133.

<sup>168</sup>See *Al-Manhal*, 3:124–25.

<sup>169</sup>See for example *A Chronicle of Damascus*, 13, 20, 62, etc.

<sup>170</sup>*Al-Durrah al-Muḍī‘ah*, 81; “*Tārīkh Ibn Ḥijjī*,” fol. 96b.



or maybe, even at the risk of pushing the conspiracy theory to its limits, the mamluk who brought the news to Cairo was “briefed” by Yalbughā’s men, etc. However, the fact remains that many of the *akhbār* reported in *Tārīkh al-Duwal* as having arrived between 27 Rajab and the first ten days of Ramaḍān, some through the sultan, who, while on his way to Damascus, was probably still getting his information from post-riders from Syria, simply do not correspond to what was going on according to sources “on the ground.” Generally, the nature of the reports used by historians depends on such factors as the format of their work, their own intellectual aptitudes and interests, their geographical location, their sources, etc. In light of the discussion above, attention ought also to be paid to the channels through which information transited before it reached the historian, and more importantly to the agenda of those military figures, bureaucrats, and others who controlled its flow and content: a tall order indeed in view of the paucity of data that would allow for such an investigation.

Apart from the issue raised above, structurally and from the point of view of the nature of their contents, Ibn al-Furāt stuck to an annalistic format with reports following one another in a strict chronological order and the obituaries placed at the very end. But as for the potential sources of *Tārīkh al-Duwal*, the absence of Ibn Duqmāq’s *Nuzhah* will not permit us to ascertain the genealogy of Ibn al-Furāt’s reports. This problem is somewhat alleviated by the fact that *Tārīkh al-Duwal* does contain references to other authors. Ibn Duqmāq is quoted five times by Ibn al-Furāt, twice in the main text of *Tārīkh al-Duwal*,<sup>171</sup> and three times in the obituaries.<sup>172</sup> Although, unfortunately, neither of the first two reports are mentioned in *Al-Nafḥah*, there is still the possibility of comparing those “meaty” passages<sup>173</sup> in the latter work with the corresponding ones in *Tārīkh al-Duwal*. The following report describes Miṭṭāsh’s descent from the north towards Damascus:<sup>174</sup>

<sup>171</sup>*Tārīkh al-Duwal*, 9:2:254–55, 261.

<sup>172</sup>*Ibid.*, 275, 282, 285.

<sup>173</sup>These were probably reduced in size by Ibn Duqmāq to fit *Al-Nafḥah*, which is a summary of *Nuzhah*.

<sup>174</sup>Words and sentences that are not italicized indicate similarities between the two texts. Punctuation mine.





<p>Ibn Duqmāq: "Minṭāsh <i>haḍara</i> min Mar‘ash ‘alā al-‘Imq ‘alā Sarmīn ilā qarīb Ḥamāh; <i>fa-haraba</i> nāyib Ḥamāh, <i>fa-dakhala</i> <i>Minṭāsh</i> <i>fa-lam</i> <i>yushawwish</i> ‘alayhim;</p>	<p>Ibn al-Fūrāt: "<i>Tawajjaha al-amīr</i> Minṭāsh min Mar‘ash ‘alā al-‘Imq ‘alā A‘zāz ‘alā Sarmīn ilā qarīb Ḥamāh; <i>fa-sami‘a</i> nāyib Ḥamāh <i>bi-ḥuḍūrihi</i>, <i>fa-akhadha harīmahu wa-tawajjaha ilā Tarāblus</i>, <i>fa-lammā waṣala</i> <i>Minṭāsh ilā Ḥamāh</i>, <i>lam yajid bi-hā aḥadan yudāfi‘ahu</i> <i>fa-dakhalahā bi-al-amān wa-al-iṣmān</i> <i>fa-tazaghratū lahu al-nisā’</i> <i>fa-nādā la-hum bi-al-amān</i> <i>wa-lam</i> <i>yushawwish</i> ‘alayhim;</p>
<p>thumma <i>kharaja minhā ilā Ḥimṣ</i> <i>fa-dakhalahā</i> <i>wa-lam</i> <i>yushawwish</i> ‘alayhim;</p>	<p>thumma <i>kharaja minhā wa tawajjaha ilā Ḥimṣ</i> <i>fa-lam yajid bi-hā man yudāfi‘ahu</i>, <i>wa-kāna nāyibuhā qad sami‘a bi-quḍūmihi</i>, <i>fa-tawajjaha ilā Dimashq</i> <i>fa-dakhala</i> <i>Minṭāsh ilayhā</i> <i>wa-lam</i> <i>yushawwish</i> ‘alā aḥad min ahlihā;</p>
<p>thumma <i>tawajjaha ilā Ba‘albak</i> <i>wa-kāna nāyibuhā qad sami‘a bi-quḍūmihi</i> <i>ayḍan</i>, <i>fa-tawajjaha ilā Dimashq</i>;</p>	<p>thumma <i>tawajjaha minhā ilā Ba‘albak</i> <i>wa-kāna nāyibuhā qad sami‘a bi-quḍūmihi</i> <i>ayḍan</i>, <i>fa-tawajjaha ilā Dimashq</i>, <i>fa-dakhala</i> <i>Minṭāsh ilā Ba‘albak</i>, <i>thumma kharaja minhā wa-qaṣada</i> <i>Dimashq</i>;</p>
<p><i>fa-lammā sami‘a al-Nāṣirī</i> <i>ḥuḍūrahu</i> <i>kharaja ilayhi min al-Zabadānī.</i>" (<i>Al-Nafḥah</i>, 263)</p>	<p><i>fa-lammā sami‘a al-Nāṣirī</i> <i>bi-ḥuḍūrihi</i> <i>kharaja ilayhi min ṭarīq al-Zabadānī.</i>" (<i>Tārīkh al-Duwal</i>, 9:2:255)</p>



The similarities between the two texts is self-evident, and one might safely assume that it was Ibn al-Furāt who borrowed from Ibn Duqmāq rather than the other way around,<sup>175</sup> since *Nuzhah* would have probably provided a larger account than that of *Al-Nafḥah*.

Another possible source for *Tārīkh al-Duwal* is Zayn al-Dīn Ṭāhir and his *Dhayl Durrat al-Aslāk*, which is frequently quoted by Ibn al-Furāt. Zayn al-Dīn noted in his narrative of the events leading to the siege of Damascus that as Yalbughā al-Nāṣirī left the city to confront the rebels who were reported in Baalbek, Miṭāsh headed to the Syrian capital so that they unknowingly crossed each other's path.<sup>176</sup> The words he used for that last bit of information, *fa-takhālafū fī al-ṭarīq wa-sabaqahu Miṭāsh*, are almost identical to those of Ibn al-Furāt, *fa-khālafahu fī al-ṭarīq wa-atá ilá Dimashq*.<sup>177</sup> Even though the narratives of Ibn al-Furāt and Zayn al-Dīn Ṭāhir are clearly not identical, they do appear at more or less the same point in the narration in both *Tārīkh al-Duwal* and *Dhayl Durrat al-Aslāk*. If one discounts the randomness of the appearance of this cluster of words, the issue of the direction of the borrowing, small as it may be, still has to be addressed, but it is more likely than not that it was Ibn al-Furāt who borrowed from Zayn al-Dīn Ṭāhir. Up until the arrival of the sultan in Damascus, the reports concerning Syria reported in *Tārīkh al-Duwal* arrived, as we noted above, with post-riders or with representatives of military office-holders. A notable exception is the *khavar* which appears under the heading "News about Miṭāsh's

<sup>175</sup>In his obituary of the qadī al-Qurashī, where Ibn al-Furāt quotes Ibn Duqmāq directly (9:2:275), the contents of the citation appear, edited, in two different reports in the main body of *Tārīkh al-Duwal* (253, 254). In another obituary (281–82), Ibn al-Furāt quotes Ibn Duqmāq jointly with Walī al-Dīn Abū Zar'ah ibn al-'Irāqī (762–826/1360–1422), but since the latter is not known to have written a history that extended that late in the century, we are probably dealing here with material culled from a work of a biographical nature. Ibn al-'Irāqī's *Al-Dhayl 'alá al-'Ibar fī Khavar Man 'Abar* was edited by Šāliḥ Maḥdī 'Abbās in three volumes (Beirut, 1989). On Ibn al-'Irāqī's life and works, see this edition, 1:7–32; *Al-Ḍaw'*, 1:336–44; Moḥammad ben Cheneb and J. de Somogyi, "Al-Dhahabī," *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., 2:214–16; and Caesar E. Farah, *The Dhayl in Medieval Arabic Historiography* (New Haven, 1967), 20–21.

<sup>176</sup>"Dhayl Durrat al-Aslāk," MS Bodleian Marsh 319, fol. 264a.

<sup>177</sup>*Tārīkh al-Duwal*, 9:2:255. Similar wordings can be found in the works of other historians such as Ibn Khaldūn ("*fa-khālafahu Miṭāsh ilá Dimashq*," *Al-'Ibar*, 5:501), Ibn Ḥajar ("*fa-khālafahu Miṭāsh ilá Dimashq*," *Inbā'*, 3:55), and Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah ("*fa-tafāwatū fī al-ṭarīq wa-jā' a Miṭāsh bi-'askarihi*," *TIQS*, 1:373). The reliance of these three authors on Ibn al-Furāt has already been established above; see also Reisman, "A Holograph MS." As to the sense of the verb *khālafā* in this particular context, which can be read as "preceded," the meaning that was imparted to it here, namely the crossing of paths, is probably the right one since Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah used a synonym, the verb *fāwata*.



heading toward Bilād al-Shām,<sup>178</sup> in which Ibn al-Furāt took a break from presenting dated reports one after the other, and offered the reader a long, unencumbered narrative dealing with the itinerary of Miṭāsh from northern Syria until his arrival in Damascus on 1 Rajab. Perhaps he used parts of Zayn al-Dīn Ṭāhir's account along with that of Ibn Duqmāq to construct this particular paragraph. After all, as I have noticed in the case of the year 778, Ibn al-Furāt copied almost word for word a great deal of the reports in *Nuzhah* and used them as the foundation of his annal without ever citing Ibn Duqmāq. It is thus not impossible that he placed Zayn al-Dīn Ṭāhir's sentence construction and other information in his text and added to it the data he gleaned from *Nuzhah*. Last but not least, no mention is made of Ibn al-Furāt in *Dhayl Durrat al-Aslāk*, whereas between 791 and 796 Zayn al-Dīn Ṭāhir is mentioned in the edited text of *Tārīkh al-Duwal* eleven times, including nine direct quotations in the obituaries section.<sup>179</sup>

*Tārīkh al-Duwal* remains indispensable reading for those interested in the events of the year 793, but one cannot get a sense of all that happened in the Mamluk realm, and certainly of the events of the siege of Damascus, by relying solely on it. The Syrian sources are therefore essential to any attempt at reconstructing the events of the year.

Very little if anything is known about Ibn Ṣaṣrā, one of two Syrian historians who were contemporaries to the events of the year 793, since there is no mention of him or of his works in the available primary sources. All that can be ascertained about him is that he was part of a scholarly Damascene family with long academic and religious credentials, that he lived at the end of the eighth/fourteenth century and at the beginning of ninth/fifteenth century, and that he finished his *Al-Durrah al-Muḍī'ah fī al-Dawlah al-Zāhirīyah* sometime between Sha'bān 799 and Shawwāl 801.<sup>180</sup> It is thus not the details of his biography that make him and, more precisely, his work so important: their significance lies elsewhere.

Even though Ibn Ṣaṣrā claimed in the opening pages of his work that he had abridged the biography of Barqūq in order to produce *Al-Durrah al-Muḍī'ah*, this work nonetheless provides detailed first-hand eyewitness descriptions of years (791–99/1389–97)<sup>181</sup> pivotal in the life and career of the sultan, notably the period running from 791 through 793, and it does so from a purely Syrian, and particularly Damascene, perspective. This Damascene perspective is reflected at a very basic

<sup>178</sup>*Tārīkh al-Duwal*, 9:2:255.

<sup>179</sup>See references in the index prepared by Zurayq and 'Izz al-Dīn, 9:2:527.

<sup>180</sup>All of the data contained in this and the following paragraphs was taken from Brinner's comments in his Preface to *A Chronicle of Damascus*, mainly x–xix.

<sup>181</sup>According to Brinner, *Al-Durrah al-Muḍī'ah* might have actually begun earlier with the accession of Barqūq, but the only extant manuscript deals with the years mentioned here; *ibid.*, xv.



level in the myriad references to the topography of Damascus, whether buildings, mosques, neighborhoods, etc., a mass of information about landmarks, some gone, others still extant, that does not appear to have been subjected to any analysis beyond the rich commentaries and information provided by Brinner in the footnotes of the English translation. This, when combined with the highly unconventional style and format of this work, makes it all the more important for our purposes here.

Even though its basic division is the year and its narrative is arranged according to the chronological unfolding of days and months, *Al-Durrah al-Muḏī'ah* owes little else to the annalistic format used by most major historians. In Brinner's words, the author's "major concern was not, obviously, the bare recounting of the events of a year, but the dramatization and highlighting of some of these events, using them as the points of departure for moralizing sermons comparing this transient world with the Hereafter, on the duties of rulers and their subjects, and on the evil of the times."<sup>182</sup> This moralizing dimension of the text of *Al-Durrah al-Muḏī'ah* can be seen in a large number of its passages where Ibn Ṣaṣrā reflects upon the ephemeral nature of worldly events in the overall scheme of things;<sup>183</sup> more than one third of the work is made up of non-historical material, stories, anecdotes, etc. Moreover, *Al-Durrah al-Muḏī'ah* contains no biographical and appointment reports of any type,<sup>184</sup> save for information about people and leaders

<sup>182</sup>Ibid.

<sup>183</sup>The following passage in which Ibn Ṣaṣrā decries the regime set up by Miṣṣāsh upon his arrival to Damascus on 1 Rajab, is typical: "Aḥmad Shukr [the leader of the Miṣṣāshī raid into Damascus] summoned Iyās, the mamluk of Ibn al-Ghāwī, and made him governor of the city. Ibn al-Zu'ayfirīnī rode with them, desiring to become chief caḏī of Damascus; for Miṣṣāsh had promised that to him and that Aḥmad Shukr would be viceroy of Damascus. Aḥmad Shukr made a circuit of the city and left Bāb al-Farādīs for the Mayḏān. The Miṣṣāshīs followed and had a great feast [celebrating] their entry into the city. God the Exalted erased their hearts, and they did not remember the consequences of deeds, because all of this [happened] so that he might execute [His] judgment and decree. In the *Ḥadīth* it is [written] that when God the Exalted desires to execute His judgment and decree, he deprives wise men of their intelligence. Praise be to Him, there no god but He. Their rule over the city lasted less than a day, for affairs came into the hands of people not suited to them, and for this reason their term was brief. . . . [Those appointed by Miṣṣāsh] wrote out many paper-patents for amirs and chief officials, for people are covetous, and the love of this world destroys them." (*A Chronicle of Damascus*, 107–8).

<sup>184</sup>Very little of the religious life of Damascus is reflected in *Al-Durrah al-Muḏī'ah*, as opposed to "Tārīkh Ibn Ḥijjī," which contains a fair number of biographies and reports about the learned class of the city; see below. Reference to religious figures or religious life was made by Ibn Ṣaṣrā only when it was part of his general narrative on political events (see below, the references to the role played by men of religion during the struggle for Damascus) or when it allowed him to sermonize; see, for example, *ibid.*, 87–88. The only exception to this rule is when he reported a few appointments made by Barqūq upon his return to Damascus, notably that of al-Bā'ūnī (d. 816/1413) as chief



presented *in* and as an *integral* part of a basically uninterrupted narrative. In many ways, this work reads like a historical novel whose reports have a “hot off the press” feel to them.<sup>185</sup> But it is the details about the military engagements between Miṅṭāsh and Yalbughā al-Nāṣirī, their locale and what they tell us about Syrian society at the end of the eighth/fourteenth century, that make *Al-Durrah al-Muḍī’ah* essential reading. Here one ought to mention the dramatic descriptions<sup>186</sup> Ibn Ṣaṣrā gives of the battles which took place in and around Damascus and their consequences: trench<sup>187</sup> and siege<sup>188</sup> warfare, artillery exchanges,<sup>189</sup> the strategic placing of artillery pieces,<sup>190</sup> street fighting,<sup>191</sup> the state of mind of the fighters and its impact on the prosecution of the war,<sup>192</sup> etc.

*Al-Durrah al-Muḍī’ah* also contains more specific information about the configuration of the groups involved in the unrest and in fighting one another, details that are conspicuously absent from most of the Egyptian sources. For example, in depicting Miṅṭāsh’s flight from the city after the defection of Tumāntamur,<sup>193</sup> Ibn Ṣaṣrā mentions in detail the names of the different groups

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Shafi’i qadi, a man obviously liked by Ibn Ṣaṣrā despite (or because of!) what he said about him concerning his mistreatment of his fellow jurists; *ibid.*, 103.

<sup>185</sup>This can be seen in the recounting of the events concerning Miṅṭāsh’s dash from the Anatolian marches southward. Ibn Ṣaṣrā provides glimpses of his descent from the northern districts to Damascus interspersed with commentaries: the fleeing viceroy of Ḥamāh is mentioned by name; Yalbughā al-Nāṣirī is made to swear when news about Miṅṭāsh’s arrival there reached him, and his alleged verbal recommendation to the *nā’ib al-qal’ah* to fortify the citadel was noted, and so was his request that lantern-men call upon the soldiers to prepare for war; as the viceroy left the city, people reacted with fear and moved *intra-muros*, while news about Miṅṭāsh and his allies, whose names and whereabouts are dutifully noted, located him nearer and nearer to the provincial capital; and with the arrival of the bulk of the rebel troops to al-Mizzah in the evening of the last day of Jumādā II, the fear and sense of insecurity of the population increased, worked as it was by rumors and memories of the siege at the hands of Barqūq; *Al-Durrah al-Muḍī’ah*, 75–76.

<sup>186</sup>See Ayalon’s comment that these were “perhaps the most vivid picture of artillery in action throughout Mamluk history,” in *Gunpowder and Firearms in the Mamluk Kingdom: A Challenge to a Mediaeval Society* (London, 1956), 27. Also quoted in *A Chronicle of Damascus*, xix.

<sup>187</sup>*Al-Durrah al-Muḍī’ah*, 78.

<sup>188</sup>*Ibid.*, 81.

<sup>189</sup>*Ibid.*, 79.

<sup>190</sup>*Ibid.*, 79–80.

<sup>191</sup>*Ibid.*, 78, 84, 86.

<sup>192</sup>In his long account of the battle of Ḍumayr alluded to on a number of occasions above, one can clearly see the attention to detail shown by Ibn Ṣaṣrā as he attributed the crushing defeat of al-Nāṣirī to the utter state of fatigue of his troops of which Nu‘ayr, his foe and victor, was well aware; *ibid.*, 91–92.

<sup>193</sup>See above.



(the populace, Turcomans from Tripoli, tribesmen from Jubbat ‘Asāl,<sup>194</sup> Turks and soldiers from Şafad, and others) who were involved in the looting that took place in al-Maydān and al-Şālihiyah. More important still are the data concerning the various military forces on the ground during this period. Ibn Şaşrā talks, for example, about the defeat of ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Ibn al-Ḥanash,<sup>195</sup> the leader of the Qaysīs, at the hands of Shukr Aḥmad and a party of Yamanī tribesmen,<sup>196</sup> on 6 Rajab, at ‘Aqabat al-Tīnah;<sup>197</sup> he notes that one thousand of the *fallāḥūn* who accompanied ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Ibn al-Ḥanash were killed, two hundred Qaysīs and eight soldiers (ostensibly Mamluks from the garrison of Baalbek)<sup>198</sup> were captured, while the Yamanī *‘ushrān* prevailed upon the Qaysī *‘ushrān*.<sup>199</sup> Are we dealing here with four (peasants, Qaysīs, Mamluks, and Qaysī *‘ushrān*), three (peasants, Qaysīs=Qaysī *‘ushrān*, and Mamluks) or two (Qaysīs=Qaysī *‘ushrān*=peasants and Mamluks) categories of fighters in the loyalist camp? Any one of the three classifications can be read into the text. Any attempt at clearing the confusion would require pondering the term *‘ushrān*, which has been rendered in English in a variety of ways: tribesmen, by Brinner;<sup>200</sup> Druze tribesmen and/or clansmen living in the highlands of southern Lebanon and northern Palestine who sometimes divided along Qays and Yaman lines, by Popper; great agricultural tribes of Syria, by Poliak;<sup>201</sup> etc. Generally, argues Irwin, the term “seem[s] to have been used to describe semi-nomadic or sedentarized tribal groups, in contradistinction

<sup>194</sup> A district in the Anti-Lebanon range; see *A Chronicle of Damascus*, 124, n. 735.

<sup>195</sup> Son of Ibn al-Ḥanash, an important tribal chief from the Biqā’ who supported Barqūq during the disturbances of 791–93 and was executed by Miñāsh in Rabī’ II 792; see *ibid.*, 16, n. 106 and the sources cited therein, and 83. ‘Alā’ al-Dīn would in his turn meet his maker on 16 Sha‘bān at the battle of Ḍumayr; *ibid.*, 80–81, 91–93. On the al-Ḥanash family, see Francis Hours and Kamal Salibi, “Muḥammad Ibn al-Ḥanash, muqaddam de la Biqā’, 1499–1518, un épisode peu connu de l’histoire libanaise,” *Mélanges de l’Université Saint-Joseph, Beyrouth* 43 (1968): 3–23, esp. 3–5 for the period studied here.

<sup>196</sup> For a concise overview of the Qays and Yaman tribal mythology as it impinged on Syrian politics during the years 791 to 793, see Robert Irwin, “Tribal Feuding and Mamluk Factions in Medieval Syria,” in *Texts, Documents and Artefacts: Islamic Studies in Honour of D. S. Richards*, ed. Chase Robinson (Leiden, 2003), 253–54.

<sup>197</sup> See above.

<sup>198</sup> The viceroy of this city, Tankizbughā (in the text of *Al-Durrah al-Muḍī’ah*, Dankizbughā) was accompanying Ibn al-Ḥanash with his men; see *A Chronicle of Damascus*, 112 and n. 675.

<sup>199</sup> *Al-Durrah al-Muḍī’ah*, 80–81.

<sup>200</sup> *A Chronicle of Damascus*, 11, n. 71.

<sup>201</sup> This sentence, with the exception of the reference to Brinner, is a paraphrase of Irwin, “Tribal Feuding,” 255–56; see references in nn. 11–16 therein.



to more purely nomadic tribes, such as the Banū Faḍl.<sup>202</sup> With this in mind, and with the help of Ibn Ḥijjī's *Tārīkh*<sup>203</sup> and Ṣāliḥ Ibn Yaḥyá's<sup>204</sup> *Tārīkh Bayrūt*, we can argue the following: one group consisted of Ibn al-Ḥanash and his Qaysī followers who were either mounted or on foot,<sup>205</sup> a distinction which would probably correspond to a division between, respectively, more sedentarized (peasants) and less sedentarized nomadic (tribal chieftains) components within this group;<sup>206</sup> according to Ṣāliḥ Ibn Yaḥyá's history, the Druze feudal chiefs of the Lebanese mountains, his ancestors at least, were also involved in battles around Damascus including that of Ḍumayr<sup>207</sup> and presumably that of 'Aqabat al-Tīnah, and they could correspond to the Qaysīs mentioned by Ibn Ṣaṣrā in the text;<sup>208</sup> finally, one finds the mamluks of the viceroy of Baalbek. Evidently, to echo Irwin's comments, much still needs to be done before a clearer picture of what constituted the Syrian army at the end of the eighth/fourteenth century can

<sup>202</sup>Ibid., 256.

<sup>203</sup>"Tārīkh Ibn Ḥijjī," fols. 96a–b. On Ibn Ḥijjī, more below.

<sup>204</sup>An early fifteenth-century historian from the mountains of Lebanon, his work is *Akhbār al-Salaf min Dhurrīyat Buḥtur ibn 'Alī Amīr al-Gharb bi-Bayrūt*, a.k.a. *Tārīkh Bayrūt*, ed. Kamal Salibi et al. (Beirut, 1969) (hereafter cited as *Tārīkh Bayrūt*), a history of his Druze feudal family based in the vicinity of Beirut.

<sup>205</sup>This distinction was made by Ibn Ḥijjī; "Tārīkh Ibn Ḥijjī," fol. 96a.

<sup>206</sup>This could correspond to the *fallāḥūn* and to the Qaysī *'ushrān* of the first classification of fighters. Hours and Salibi note, with reference, it is true, to Muḥammad, an early tenth/sixteenth-century member of the Ibn al-Ḥanash family, that his leadership smacked more of that of a bedouin chief than that of a Lebanese mountain feudal (read sedentary) lord, because of the little concern he showed for building enduring symbols of attachment to the land, such as roads, bridges, and the like ("Muḥammad Ibn al-Ḥanash, muqaddam de la Biqā'," 23). It is probable that in addition to his immediate mounted entourage of retainers, 'Alā' al-Dīn Ibn al-Ḥanash had armed peasant clients.

<sup>207</sup>*Tārīkh Bayrūt*, 209–12, 215–16. A member of his family died during this encounter; see 209–10.

<sup>208</sup>The Qaysī Druze chieftains of Lebanon and 'Alā' al-Dīn Ibn al-Ḥanash might have commandeered the same pool of armed peasants of the southern Lebanese highlands, even though I have not come across any evidence for that.



be seen; *Al-Durrah al-Muḍī'ah* would be a strong starting point for such an endeavor.<sup>209</sup>

Reading *Al-Durrah al-Muḍī'ah* is not however without its problems. From a historical perspective, the dating of its events is dismal in many parts of the text at hand. Whether it is Ibn Ṣaṣrā's fault or that of the copier of the manuscript, it is impossible to tell, but one still has to rely on both *Tārīkh Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah* and *Tārīkh Ibn Ḥijjī* in order to set straight the chronological unfolding of events.<sup>210</sup>

<sup>209</sup>Ibn Ṣaṣrā also provides historians with detailed insight into an interesting aspect of warfare in a densely populated urban environment, namely the way various groups fared under extraordinary circumstances. Beyond the description of the fear and suffering experienced by the civilian population (see, for example, *Al-Durrah al-Muḍī'ah*, 78–79) and the sometimes forced mobilization of popular groups in the battles that were fought (ibid., 79, 81–82, 83, 88), Ibn Ṣaṣrā's chronicle deals as well with the everyday details of life in a city at war. For example, there is a story from the beginning of the siege (ibid., 78–79) which relates that in the Miṣṣāshī-held areas, located mostly outside the western walls of the city, it was, literally, business as usual as trade in foodstuffs went on unhindered, so much so that, in a figure of speech, "anyone could eat as much meat as he desired" (*A Chronicle of Damascus*, 110). In the same vein, he describes how the necessity of some inhabitants to go back and forth between the areas held by the "other side" and their place of residence had repercussions on the very psychology of the fighters in terms of their fear of spies and fifth columns heading into the areas they controlled, and consequently, on the problems the people who shuttled faced in terms of abuses, unwarranted suspicions, mistaken identities, and tragedies. All of these elements can be seen in a story (*Al-Durrah al-Muḍī'ah*, 86–87) about a boy placed by al-Nāṣirī on guard duty at Bāb al-Naṣr, a gate located near the citadel in the western wall, in order for him to squeal on those he could identify as pro-Miṣṣāshīs from amongst the people who went back and forth between the areas held by Miṣṣāsh and those held by the loyalists. The words of Ibn Ṣaṣrā are worth quoting: "When he said of anyone, 'seize him!' they [the Barqūqī police] would seize him immediately and take everything on him and with him. If they had any concern for him, they imprisoned him, otherwise they killed him. Fear overcame the people because of the lad, [both] the one who had gone out and the one who had not, [the latter] fearing that he would identify him as someone else, be burned immediately and perish in the fire. . . . He aroused dread in the hearts of the people who feared him more than they did the viceroy of Syria." (*A Chronicle of Damascus*, 119–20).

<sup>210</sup>For example, the last complete date that appears in the narrative before dating becomes erratic for a few pages is 12 Rajab (*Al-Durrah al-Muḍī'ah*, 80). The following date to appear in the narrative is the Monday that follows Friday 12 Rajab, which would be the fifteenth of the month (ibid., 81). The report that comes after, the one about the great fires that ravaged numerous neighborhoods and buildings west of the city, is simply introduced with the mention "*wa-rakiba thānī yawm Iyās wa-al-Nāṣirī . . .*," which would have to correspond to 16 Rajab (ibid.). After the mention of an event taking place on "*thālith yawm*" (ibid., 81–82), the next two dated reports are from Thursday 15 Rajab (ibid., 83), yet another impossibility, and from the eighteenth of the same month (ibid.); only then did Ibn Ṣaṣrā date a *khbar* on Saturday 20 Rajab (ibid.), which does correspond to the actual calendar of the year 793. An even more blatant dating error is the story relating the alleged departure of Barqūq from Cairo to Syria in Rajab, while in fact he did not leave Cairo until 22 Sha'bān (ibid., 84).





This shortcoming of *Al-Durrah al-Muḍī'ah*, as well as those associated with the very style of the text,<sup>211</sup> does not temper in any way its undeniable value for modern historians interested in the history of Damascus during this troubled period. But did his fundamental concern with his home-town influence the way Ibn Ṣaṣrā recounted some important events? The question is relevant on at least two levels. The first has to do with historical consistency. In a *khbar*<sup>212</sup> dated from the first third of Rabī' II, Ibn Ṣaṣrā described the departure to Cairo of a party of amirs and other personalities who had been imprisoned in Damascus as a result of their involvement in anti-Barqūq politics in Damascus during the siege of the city in 792. The leader of this party was one Alābughā al-'Uthmānī<sup>213</sup> (d. 793/1391) who, according to *Al-Durrah al-Muḍī'ah*, accompanied the group to Gaza. Other contemporary historians claim, contrary to Ibn Ṣaṣrā, that Alābughā al-'Uthmānī went all the way to Cairo with his prisoners; they also made much of the arrival, along with this group, of Aytamish al-Bajāsī, whose return to Cairo and more-than-warm reception on the part of Barqūq was dutifully highlighted.<sup>214</sup> Does this mean that the "coverage" available to Ibn Ṣaṣrā in terms of his sources did not extend beyond Gaza? It is highly unlikely, since his work does contain reports, though few in number, of things Egyptian,<sup>215</sup> but even then, one still cannot account for the absence of Aytamish from his report.<sup>216</sup> The second level has to do with the sources Ibn Ṣaṣrā used for extra-Damascene events. Following the departure of the sultan from Damascus to northern Syria around 8 Shawwāl, only five *akhbār* dealing with Aleppo are reported: the news about the sultan's arrival there, which reached Damascus via one of al-Nāṣirī's mamluks;<sup>217</sup> another about a military expedition to al-Bīrah<sup>218</sup> which Barqūq had

<sup>211</sup>See *A Chronicle of Damascus*, xix–xxv.

<sup>212</sup>*Al-Durrah al-Muḍī'ah*, 74.

<sup>213</sup>See his obituary in *Tārīkh al-Duwal*, 9:2:278.

<sup>214</sup>*Ibid.*, 250–51; *Al-'Ibar*, 5:500.

<sup>215</sup>See, for example, the news about the execution in Cairo of a number of amirs: *Al-Durrah al-Muḍī'ah*, 74.

<sup>216</sup>The same overall ignorance of events which occurred far from Damascus was noted by Popper with regards to other Syrian locales (*A Chronicle of Damascus*, xv). Maybe most revealing of Ibn Ṣaṣrā's "world view" is a report in which he relates the appointments made by Barqūq while in Aleppo: of all the detailed information concerning the appointments made by the sultan to Syrian viceroalties (Damascus, Aleppo, Ḥamāh, Tripoli, and Ṣafad) after the execution of Yalbughā al-Nāṣirī, only the appointee to that of Damascus, Buḥā al-Ṭūlūtāmūrī, is mentioned by name; on Buḥā (d. 794/1391) see *Al-Manhal*, 3:375–80, no. 671.

<sup>217</sup>*Al-Durrah al-Muḍī'ah*, 99.

<sup>218</sup>A town located slightly northeast of Aleppo; see *A Chronicle of Damascus*, 135, n. 797.



ordered early on in his stay;<sup>219</sup> a report about the execution of Yalbughā al-Nāṣirī as it was communicated to him by “one of the prominent people;”<sup>220</sup> and another about his arrest, brought to Damascus by a post messenger.<sup>221</sup> All of these reports can be accounted for, save for the one relating the expedition to al-Bīrah which is of unknown origin, but which can be found, written differently, in Zayn al-Dīn Ṭāhir’s *Dhayl Durrat al-Aslāk*. Did the two historians use a common source or two different sources concerning the same event? So far, it is impossible to ascertain.<sup>222</sup>

The other Syrian contemporary source for the year 793 is Ibn Ḥijjī, the author of an annalistic chronicle identified throughout this research as *Tārīkh Ibn Ḥijjī*. In the introduction<sup>223</sup> to his *Tārīkh*, Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah states that his teacher Ibn Ḥijjī wrote a history which covered the years 741–47 and 769–815 minus the year 775. Ibn Ḥijjī, before his death, asked him [“*awṣānī*”] to fill in the chronological gap from 748 to 768, but when he embarked upon this endeavor, he noticed that his master had failed to include in his work a large number of obituaries and events mostly from outside of Syria. This led Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah to write a long *dhayl* in which he expanded his master’s text while following his methodology, namely the monthly presentation of the events and obituaries. The end result was a *dhayl* to Ibn Ḥijjī’s history identified in this research as *Al-Dhayl al-Muṭawwal*,<sup>224</sup> which came into existence as a result of a two-stage process. Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah started with an initial recension of his teacher’s history by copying it and often<sup>225</sup> annotating it with marginalia, and then later incorporated these annotations as

<sup>219</sup> *Al-Durrah al-Muḍī’ah*, 99–100. Ibn Ṣaṣrā notes that the amirs sent to al-Bīrah were Yalbughā al-Nāṣirī, Aytamish al-Bajāṣī, one Kumushbughā, and Buṭā al-Ṭūlūtāmūrī. In n. 795 of his *Chronicle of Damascus*, Brinner refers the reader to another footnote, n. 220, which indicates that the Kumushbughā in question here is none other than Kumushbughā al-Ḥamawī. The problem is that, according to all other sources, al-Ḥamawī was in Egypt as *nā’ib al-ghaybah*. Ibn Ṣaṣrā might have been referring to Kumushbughā al-Ṣaghīr, whom sources say had been part of the expeditionary force which accompanied the sultan to Syria; see *Tārīkh al-Duwal*, 9:2:260.

<sup>220</sup> *A Chronicle of Damascus*, 136; *Al-Durrah al-Muḍī’ah*, 101.

<sup>221</sup> *Al-Durrah al-Muḍī’ah*, 100.

<sup>222</sup> See below.

<sup>223</sup> All the information in this paragraph is based on Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah’s introduction to his work, 2:111–12, and on Darwīsh’s French translation of it on pages 29–30 of the French introduction.

<sup>224</sup> In doing this, I only follow Adnān Darwīsh’s characterization of this work; see *TIQS*, 2:27.

<sup>225</sup> These annotations are sometimes absent from large numbers of folios. In the case of the annal of the year 804 which I have examined, out of a total of sixteen and a half folios, about a third are more or less systematically annotated; see Chester Beatty 4125, fols. 252b–261a. In the annal of the year 793, six folios out of fifteen are for all intents and purposes devoid of marginalia; “*Tārīkh Ibn Ḥijjī*,” fols. 93b–100b.



well as passages taken from *Al-Muntaqá min Tārīkh Ibn al-Furāt*<sup>226</sup> and other sources<sup>227</sup> into a second recension, i.e., *Al-Dhayl al-Muṭawwal*.<sup>228</sup> This latter work was then summarized into a smaller one; it is this shorter work, about one third of the original, which was edited in four volumes by ‘Adnān Darwīsh as *Tārīkh Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah*.<sup>229</sup>

Since the sections of *Tārīkh Ibn Ḥijjī* that are still extant in MS Berlin Ahlwardt 9458 do not include the year 793,<sup>230</sup> one has no choice but to turn to the two recensions of Ibn Ḥijjī’s work made by Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah. The problem in this endeavor has to do with the existence of a plethora of texts, all written in Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah’s distinctive and highly unreadable handwriting, scattered in a var-

<sup>226</sup>This can be ascertained from the results of Reisman’s article and my own research on the year 778; see “A Holograph MS,” 32–37. “*Al-Muntaqá min Tārīkh Ibn al-Furāt*” (MS Chester Beatty 4125, fols. 2b–178b) is ostensibly composed of selections from *Tārīkh al-Duwal* made by Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah covering the years 773–93/1371–90. However, at least for the year 793 (ibid., 166a–178b), we are dealing here with much more than mere selections: all save a few of the reports of the edited version of Ibn al-Furāt’s chronicle can be found in Chester Beatty MS 4125. The main difference between the two is that Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah did “manipulate” Ibn al-Furāt’s text by placing the obituaries at the end of the events of each month, very much like his mentor Ibn al-Ḥijjī had done in his “*Tārīkh*.” One still needs to determine how much of Ibn al-Furāt’s obituaries Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah kept in “*Al-Muntaqá min Tārīkh Ibn al-Furāt*.”

<sup>227</sup>See Reisman, “A Holograph MS,” 39–42.

<sup>228</sup>Ibid., 32; 47, fig. no. 2. For example, the annal of the year 804 in MS Chester Beatty 5527 (fols. 235a–253b) is based on the recension made by Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah (MS Chester Beatty 4125, fols. 252b–261a) of “*Tārīkh Ibn Ḥijjī*” (MS Berlin Ahlwardt 9458, fols. 129a–140a), to which were added passages from “*Al-Muntaqá min Tārīkh Ibn Duqmāq*” (MS Chester Beatty 4125, fols. 197a–203a). This pattern for the elaboration of Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah’s second recension has already been established by Reisman; see above, the many references to his “A Holograph MS.”

<sup>229</sup>However, as Reisman noted in his review of Darwīsh’s edition, since *TIQS* is actually an abridgement of *Al-Dhayl al-Muṭawwal*, it could more aptly be titled *Al-Mukhtaṣar*. See Reisman, *Mamlūk Studies Review* 5 (2001): 175; idem, “A Holograph MS,” 29.

<sup>230</sup>MS Berlin Ahlwardt 9458 covers the years 796 to 815, minus 805 and 808.



iety of manuscripts, notably Chester Beatty 4125 and 5527, and Köprülü 1027.<sup>231</sup> Reisman's research and my own cursory examination of the MS Chester Beatty 5527 indicate that it does contain a certain number of years from the second recension, but not the annal of 793. Köprülü 1027 on the other hand does contain an annal of the year 793.<sup>232</sup>

This annal<sup>233</sup> is peculiar in a number of respects. First, it does not cover the whole year, as there is a hiatus, with no change in the numbering of the folios, from the final third of Sha'bān<sup>234</sup> to the last of the obituaries of Dhū al-Ḥijjah.<sup>235</sup> Second, there is no heading for the months of Şafar, Rabī' II, and Jumādā I, and no reports are to be found under the months of Muḥarram and Rabī' I, except for obituaries.<sup>236</sup> Third, the text is marred not only by the difficult handwriting of Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, but also by the very bad state of the manuscript itself which often makes it impossible to decipher, especially, but not exclusively, the marginal annotations. Despite these difficulties, there are many factors which indicate that we are most probably dealing with a text originally authored by Ibn Ḥijjī. First, there is the available textual evidence. Compared to that of *Tārīkh Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah*, the annal of 793 in Köprülü 1027 includes none of the passages easily

<sup>231</sup>MSS Chester Beatty 4125, Chester Beatty 5527, and Köprülü 1027 were kindly lent to me by David C. Reisman.

<sup>232</sup>Based on my own *cursory* exploration of this manuscript and on Reisman's research, Köprülü 1027 appears to contain the following, in this order: 787–88 (fols. 2a–22b); notes on 789–91 (fols. 47b–51a); 791–97 (fols. 50b–187a); notes on 797–99, 801, 803–11, 799–801, 803, 808, 811 (fols. 187b–193a); 791 (fols. 193b–230b; these correspond to the text of "Al-Muntaqā min Tārīkh Ibn al-Furāt" until the month Ramaḍān). I have been able to determine that at least annals 792 and 793 are *not* part of the second recension. The emphasis on the uncertainty concerning the contents of this manuscript is warranted because it includes numerous pages of text and notes whose identity cannot be ascertained; this and other manuscripts from the hand of Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah await thorough investigation.

<sup>233</sup>"Tārīkh Ibn Ḥijjī," fols. 93b–100b.

<sup>234</sup>The last report is dated 22 Sha'bān and is to be found at the bottom of fol. 99b.

<sup>235</sup>*Ibid.*, fols. 100a–b.

<sup>236</sup>With regard to the last characteristic, one might assume one of two things: that Ibn Ḥijjī saw nothing in the first three months of 793 that needed to be recounted, or that Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah purposely decided, when doing his recension of this year, to bypass some of the data in "Tārīkh Ibn Ḥijjī." Either one of these possibilities might then explain the fact that for the months of Muḥarram, Şafar, and Rabī' I *all* the reports in *TIQS* were culled from Ibn al-Furāt's *Tārīkh al-Duwal* (*TIQS*, 1:368–69). There is also the possibility that Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah in the admittedly smaller *TIQS* wanted to emphasize the reports dealing with or originating in Egypt by relying on Ibn al-Furāt, but the presence of a very large number of Syrian reports in the rest of the annal goes against such a view.



traceable to Ibn al-Furāt's *Tārīkh al-Duwal*,<sup>237</sup> but contains either longer versions of Syrian reports found in *Tārīkh Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah*<sup>238</sup> or, again, Syrian *akhbār* totally absent from the latter.<sup>239</sup> This, plus the presence of a number of *ḥawāshī*<sup>240</sup> in the margins, lead me to conclude that the folios at hand are part of the first recension made by Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah of his teacher's history, and thus a fairly exact, although incomplete,<sup>241</sup> reproduction of Ibn Ḥijjī's work.<sup>242</sup>

<sup>237</sup>In both its edited and "Al-Muntaqá min Tārīkh Ibn al-Furāt" forms.

<sup>238</sup>See, for example, the longer description made by Ibn Ḥijjī of the aftermath of the battle of Dumayr; "Tārīkh Ibn Ḥijjī," fols. 99a–b; *TIQS*, 1:377.

<sup>239</sup>See, for example, the story of the capture by the Qaysīs of a Yamanī grandee inside the city of Damascus during the struggle for the city; "Tārīkh Ibn Ḥijjī," fol. 96b. On this report, see below.

<sup>240</sup>The question of the nature and origin of the marginal annotations, most of them unreadable, is of great importance. To follow Reisman's reasoning ("A Holograph MS," 31–32), we might assume that those that end with *ḥ* for *ḥāshiyah* and are embedded in *TIQS* were those reports added by Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah to the text of "Tārīkh Ibn Ḥijjī" in order to produce the second recension. In the case of the annotations which end with *ṣ* for *ṣaḥḥ*, two hypotheses can be advanced: either Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah was correcting Ibn Ḥijjī's reports or he was adding to the text information he simply omitted by mistake from the latter's work. In the absence of the original "Tārīkh Ibn Ḥijjī" annal for 793 and of Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah's second recension for that same year, and in view of the sorry state of the folios being studied, it is not possible to establish with certainty the nature of these annotations. For the purposes of this study, only those marginal annotations that are readable, are long enough to constitute full-fledged *akhbār*, are clearly identified with a *ṣ* for *ṣaḥḥ*, and do not appear in an obituaries section of the text will be taken into account in the analysis that follows. This amounts to only one report found in the margin of fol. 96b, which deals with the battle that allowed the loyalists to remove the Minṭāshīs from the house of Bahādur; on the battle(s) for the house of Bahādur, see above.

<sup>241</sup>It is more than probable that most of the non-Furātian material in *TIQS* from the end of Sha'bān to the obituaries of Dhū al-Ḥijjah originated in "Tārīkh Ibn Ḥijjī," so well established is Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah's indebtedness to his teacher, but to be on the safe side, they will not be used since there is uncertainty regarding them. Moreover, even though fols. 93b–100b in MS Köprülü 1027 do contain marginalia whose genealogy one cannot ascertain, these are not overwhelming in number and many of them are located in the obituaries sections of the annals. The extant folios for the year 793 in MS Köprülü 1027 will suffice for our purposes here since they cover most of the important events of the siege of Damascus.

<sup>242</sup>It is thus likely that the text at hand is from the first recension. However, in light of its peculiarities noted above and as a result of the collation I have undertaken of the text of the first recension and that of the original "Tārīkh Ibn Ḥijjī" for the year 804, it is more than possible that we are dealing with yet a different stage of the process of Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah's writing of his *Al-Dhayl al-Muṭawwal*.



Even though its first “real”<sup>243</sup> reports deal with the execution of a number of amirs in Egypt,<sup>244</sup> *Tārīkh Ibn Ḥijjī* is a chronicle whose entire focus is on Syria, more precisely Damascus, very much like Ibn Ṣaṣrā’s *Al-Durrah al-Muḍī’ah* with which it shares many characteristics. The concern for things Syrian can be seen at many levels. All the appointments, religious and political, mentioned in it deal specifically with Syria, and more particularly with Damascus. Ibn Ḥijjī for example notes in four different reports the whereabouts of Arghūn Shāh al-Ibrāhīmī (d. 801/1398),<sup>245</sup> an amir whose claim to fame, during the early parts of the year 793, was his appointment to the *ḥujūbīyah* of Damascus at the end of Jumādā II.<sup>246</sup> In the same vein, the only two religious appointments noted in this work are those of Syrian qadis, one to Tripoli and the other to Damascus.<sup>247</sup> Interestingly, the attention paid to things religious by Ibn Ḥijjī, a member of the learned class of Damascus, intersects with the very large body of reports that deal with the battles that took place in his city throughout Rajab and Sha‘bān. On numerous occasions, he noted the role played by the qadis in the fighting,<sup>248</sup> their role as moral authorities in the city,<sup>249</sup> the use of *zakāt* money in the war effort,<sup>250</sup> etc. But the war for Damascus was not only an occasion for Ibn Ḥijjī to talk about his peers: it occupies in its own right a pivotal position in his work.

In this respect, *Tārīkh Ibn Ḥijjī* provides very rich data, some of it unique, concerning, for example, the positions of the Miṣṣāshīs at the very beginning of

<sup>243</sup>This is if one disregards the first report, which is basically a list of military, administrative and religious officials in Egypt and Syria; “*Tārīkh Ibn Ḥijjī*,” fol. 93b.

<sup>244</sup>*Ibid.*, fol. 94a. Many of the Egyptian *akhbār* are of a political nature and deal with the execution of amirs and personalities who were identified with or worked for the Miṣṣāshī regime in both Syria and Egypt; see *ibid.*, fols. 96b, 97a.

<sup>245</sup>On him, see *Al-Manhal*, 2:223–24.

<sup>246</sup>See “*Tārīkh Ibn Ḥijjī*,” fols. 94b, 96a, 96b–97a, 99a. The only other nomination of a member of the military class in this annal is that of a Qarābughā al-‘Alā’ī as *shādd al-awqāf* (*ibid.*, fol. 94b).

<sup>247</sup>*Ibid.*, fols. 94a–b.

<sup>248</sup>For example, as guardians of those gates located in the western wall of the city which were exposed to Miṣṣāshī attacks (*ibid.*, fol. 95b; see also fol. 98b).

<sup>249</sup>On two occasions during the siege of the city, the qadis listened to letters sent to them from Cairo, one from the caliph and the other from the sultan, respectively urging the people to fight on in favor of Barqūq and thanking them for their steadfastness (*ibid.*, fols. 96b, 97b). In two other *akhbār*, Ibn Ḥijjī reports the involvement of two religious figures in anti-Barqūq activities, one as purveyor of fodder to the Miṣṣāshīs, and the other for having corresponded with the sultan’s enemies (*ibid.*, fols. 97b–98a).

<sup>250</sup>This, notes Ibn Ḥijjī, weakened the four *madhāhib* financially, especially since they had incurred many losses as a result of the destruction of *awqāf* which occurred as a result of the fighting; see *ibid.*, fols. 97a–b.



the siege,<sup>251</sup> troop movements<sup>252</sup> and actual encounters between the protagonists,<sup>253</sup> etc. However, in most of its reports concerning the war, this chronicle provides data that either complements or parallels that found in *Al-Durrah al-Muḍī'ah*, even though generally the latter is richer in details.<sup>254</sup> all the important military engagements<sup>255</sup> are recorded in both works and some even elicited similar responses on the part of the two authors. The crushing defeat of the loyalists at Ḍumayr<sup>256</sup> prompted both Ibn Ṣaṣrā and Ibn Ḥijjī to muse, in admittedly different styles,<sup>257</sup> about the humiliation, disarray, and physical destruction of Barqūq's troops following this battle. Last but not least, *Tārīkh Ibn Ḥijjī*, here again like *Al-Durrah al-Muḍī'ah*, also presents glimpses of a social environment in the grips of a brutal war. Among other things, it sheds light on the crystallization of the population's loyalties around one of the two warring camps,<sup>258</sup> and especially on the deep-rooted antagonisms between Qays and Yaman displayed during the conflict.<sup>259</sup> The description of the degree of violence, often wholesale slaughter, that accompanied the encounter between the two camps is certainly not peculiar to Ibn Ḥijjī. Ibn Ṣaṣrā gives a much more vivid and dramatic description than Ibn

<sup>251</sup>Ibid., fol. 96a.

<sup>252</sup>For example, ibid., fol. 97a.

<sup>253</sup>For example, ibid., fols. 98a, 98b, 99a.

<sup>254</sup>For example, as was noted above, Ibn Ṣaṣrā gives a detailed description of the various groups involved in the looting of al-Maydān, following Miṭāsh's precipitous departure from his encampment, whereas Ibn Ḥijjī simply says it was the populace who were responsible for this deed (ibid., fol. 99a; *Al-Durrah al-Muḍī'ah*, 90–91).

<sup>255</sup>See "Tārīkh Ibn Ḥijjī," fols. 95b, 96a–b, 98b–99b; *Al-Durrah al-Muḍī'ah*, 78, 79, 80–81, 83, 89–93.

<sup>256</sup>"Tārīkh Ibn Ḥijjī," fols. 99a–b; *Al-Durrah al-Muḍī'ah*, 91–92. In this particular report, Ibn Ḥijjī includes a small, albeit interesting piece of information concerning warfare: the fact that the bedouins initiated combat by literally encircling the forces of Yalbughā al-Nāṣirī ("*fa-dāra 'alayhim al-'arab ḥalqah*").

<sup>257</sup>Ibn Ṣaṣrā uses a measure of derision ("the troops returned and entered the city after having recovered somewhat from their condition, each two riding one donkey . . ." [A *Chronicle of Damascus*, 125]) but lets 'Alā' al-Dīn Aybak (d. 803/1400) speak through his verse; on this poet see references in ibid., 34, n. 207 and "Al-Manhal," fols. 496a–497a. Ibn Ḥijjī, on the other hand, devotes half a folio to describing the sorry state of the troops as they returned to the city in groups, through mountains, streams, and valleys, some "wounded or missing some limb . . ." etc.; "Tārīkh Ibn Ḥijjī," fols. 99a–b.

<sup>258</sup>Ibn Ḥijjī refers specifically to the '*aṣabīyah* that overtook the population of Damascus: the populace (the people of al-Shuwaykah and al-Shāghūr, and a few of the inhabitants of Maydān al-Ḥaṣā) supported Miṭāsh [*"fa-ṣāra fī al-'awām 'aṣabīyah ma'a Miṭāsh"*], while the elite [*"jumhūruhum"*] supported al-Nāṣirī ("Tārīkh Ibn Ḥijjī," fol. 95b).

<sup>259</sup>See Irwin, "Tribal Feuding."



Ḥijjī of the killing of Qaysīs from the Biqā‘ valley at the hands of Ibn Hilāl al-Dawlah and his Yamanīs at al-Maydān following the encounter at ‘Aqabat al-Tīnah,<sup>260</sup> but Ibn Ḥijjī provides for the same incident a more tragic dimension: two of the Qaysīs who had managed to flee and sought refuge in a mosque were caught and killed inside the religious edifice. In another report,<sup>261</sup> Ibn Ḥijjī reports that when Qaysīs arrested a well-respected Yamanī dignitary at Sūq al-Muṭarrizīn,<sup>262</sup> the population, presumably of that neighborhood, released him from custody. Ibn Ḥijjī not only mentions this man’s name, Ibn ‘Abd al-Dā’im, but also notes that he lived within the city and that he was one of the grandees of Jubbat ‘Asāl, a rural area west of Damascus.<sup>263</sup> What is of interest in this last account is that even though the distribution of groups, sects, and communities in the urban setting of Damascus is broadly known,<sup>264</sup> this “living” geo-topographical detail and others found in this chronicle and *Al-Durrah al-Muḍī‘ah* might provide us with further sociological data on the interaction of Damascus and its hinterland in terms of population movement and urban settlement. In the same vein, this report echoes, if only obliquely, a story by Ibn Ṣaṣrā<sup>265</sup> that tribesmen from Jubbat ‘Asāl participated in the sack of al-Ṣāliḥīyah and al-Maydān following Miṭāsh’s hasty withdrawal therefrom.<sup>266</sup>

What is one to make of the presence, in both *Tārīkh Ibn Ḥijjī* and *Al-Durrah al-Muḍī‘ah*, of such a large body of common reports? In other words, what is the likelihood of mutual borrowings or interdependence? Beyond the existence of certain minute common elements found in the narration of a number of these reports, we cannot establish a pattern of borrowing between the two. One might then postulate the existence of a common source, either oral or written, which possibly recounted events that neither of them had witnessed and whose *akhbār* they then reported differently. The similarity might ultimately be no more than circumstantial, and thus the end product of the sheer “Syrianness” of the events of the year and that of the two authors themselves: Ibn Ḥijjī and Ibn Ṣaṣrā lived

<sup>260</sup>See “Tārīkh Ibn Ḥijjī,” fols. 96a–b; *Al-Durrah al-Muḍī‘ah*, 80–81.

<sup>261</sup>See “Tārīkh Ibn Ḥijjī,” fol. 96b.

<sup>262</sup>There is one reference to this market in H. Sauvaire, “Description de Damas: La conclusion,” *Journal Asiatique* (November-December 1895): 433. Its location is probably somewhere in the northeastern quarter of the city; see Émilie E. Ouéchék, *Index Général de la “Description de Damas” de Sauvaire* (Damascus, 1954), 97.

<sup>263</sup>See above, n. 194.

<sup>264</sup>See, for example, Ira M. Lapidus, *Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, MA, 1967), 85–88, 90–91, 93–94.

<sup>265</sup>“Tārīkh Ibn Ḥijjī,” fol. 99a; *Al-Durrah al-Muḍī‘ah*, 90–91.

<sup>266</sup>In this case, we are probably dealing with Qaysīs hailing from the same region.





through difficult times and wrote, as eyewitnesses, about the ordeal of their city, each in his own style and according to his personal concerns.

To be sure, the two works are dissimilar in many respects. As was noted by Brinner,<sup>267</sup> *Al-Durrah al-Muḍī'ah* appears to owe nothing to other sources in terms of overall format and style, and it is perhaps this "insularity" of Ibn Ṣaṣrā's work that most distinguishes it from Ibn Ḥijjī's. *Tārīkh Ibn Ḥijjī*, despite its basic Syrianness, is a typical example of Mamluk historiography, an annalistic chronicle which includes socio-political and religious reports, along with obituaries. Ibn Ḥijjī himself, unlike Ibn Ṣaṣrā, whose conspicuous absence in the sources of the period amounts to sheer "invisibility," was very much part of the Mamluk Syro-Egyptian socio-intellectual scene. According to al-Sakhāwī, he visited Cairo on numerous occasions and apparently interacted with people such as Ibn Ḥajar and al-Maqrīzī.<sup>268</sup> Maybe this exposure to Egyptian scholarly circles can account for the possibility that he might have relied on Egyptian sources directly for some of his few Egyptian reports. Thus, we can observe similarities between both Ibn Ḥijjī's and Ibn al-Furāt's accounts of the nomination of a new chief Hanafī qadi in Cairo:

Ibn al-Furāt: ". . . wa-nazala qarīb al-maghrib wa-kāna yawman mashhūdan. . . ." (*Tārīkh al-Duwal*, 9:2:258–59)

Ibn Ḥijjī: ". . . wa-nazala qarīb al-maghrib fī haybah 'azīmah." (*Tārīkh Ibn Ḥijjī*, MS Köprülü 1027, fol. 99a)

Undoubtedly, the most important characteristic of the year 793 is the Syrianness of most of its events and the way these impinged on historiographical production. All the contemporary authors included in varying degrees reports dealing with Syria and/or originating there. But as was demonstrated above, despite the fact that some of these common reports contain similar elements, one cannot establish definite patterns of filiation amongst the sources: the historians either had access to each other's works, say for example, Ibn Khaldūn using either Ibn Ḥijjī's or Zayn al-Dīn Ṭāhir's chronicle, and then reworded whatever they took; or they drew upon another source or sources which are no longer extant.

With regard to this or these "other" Syrian source(s) assumed to be lurking in the background, even though we lack the evidence to make a decisive identification, there are some clues as to what the environment in which they were produced might have been. In his introduction to the English translation of *Al-Durrah*

<sup>267</sup>See *A Chronicle of Damascus*, xv–xvi.

<sup>268</sup>*Al-Ḍaw'*, 1:270–71.



*al-Muḍī'ah*, Brinner notes that the list of the *nuwwāb* of Damascus presented by Ibn Ṣaṣrā within the framework of the annal of 799<sup>269</sup> is similar to that of Ibn Ṭūlūn (d. 953/1546) in his *I'lām al-Warā bi-man Wuliya Nā'iban min al-Atrāk bi-Dimashq al-Shām al-Kubrā*.<sup>270</sup> The section of the *I'lām* which dealt with the period between 658–863/1260–1458 is basically the recension of a work on the same topic, namely the viceroys of Damascus, written by a Shams al-Dīn al-Zamalkānī,<sup>271</sup> to which Ibn Ṭūlūn added comments and corrections.<sup>272</sup> Brinner hypothesizes that al-Zamalkānī's "work, which has not otherwise been preserved, seems to have been based on the same source as that used by Ibn Ṣaṣrā considerably earlier."<sup>273</sup> The point here is that there appears to have been in Syria a number of authors who were not particularly famous but whose historical works or oral reports were nevertheless used either by their contemporaries or by later historians.

One last question needs to be tackled. Beyond a Syrianness born out of circumstance, to what extent, if any, do the works of Ibn Ḥijjī and Ibn Ṣaṣrā belong to such a thing as a Syrian school?<sup>274</sup> For the sake of clarification, I shall quote David Reisman, who has managed to effectively and concisely summarize the whole question of the dichotomy between "Egyptian" and "Syrian" schools of historical writing:

<sup>269</sup>*A Chronicle of Damascus*, 235–52.

<sup>270</sup>See above, n. 153; see also *Les Gouverneurs de Damas sous les Mamlouks et les premiers Ottomans*, ed. and trans. Henri Laoust (Damascus, 1952) (hereafter cited as *Gouverneurs*).

<sup>271</sup>The only thing known about al-Zamalkānī is that he died in or after 863/1458.

<sup>272</sup>*I'lām*, 30.

<sup>273</sup>*A Chronicle of Damascus*, xviii. Another historian is mentioned by Ibn Ṭūlūn in the first pages of *I'lām*, one 'Alī al-Yaldānī (d. 814/1412), yet another Damascene who also wrote about the same topic. Ibn Ṭūlūn notes that he had not used that source even though the historian Taqī al-Dīn al-Asadī [Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah?] notes its existence in his *Tārīkh*; see *I'lām*, 29–30; *Gouverneurs*, xvii. This al-Asadī was quoted four times in *I'lām*: in one instance it was his *Dhayl* (*I'lām*, 66, year 836), and in the rest his *Tārīkh* (ibid., 29, year 814; 60, lines 1 and 14, year 817). Is the historian Taqī al-Dīn no other than Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, one of whose *nisab* is al-Asadī? In light of what we know about him (see Darwīsh's French introduction, 2:19–27), we might assume so, since Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah did write histories covering the years noted above. One comment concerning the introduction to the French translation of the *I'lām*: Laoust was wrong in assuming that the Sayyid al-Ḥusaynī whose *Dhayl* 'alā 'Ibar al-Dhahabī Ibn Ṭūlūn used to complement the data presented by al-Zamalkānī, was Ḥamzah Ibn Aḥmad al-Dimashqī al-Ḥusaynī (d. 874/1469) (see *Al-Daw'*, 3:163–64), since the Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn Ḥamzah al-Ḥusaynī who actually wrote the *Dhayl* 'alā 'Ibar al-Dhahabī died in 765/1364; see Duhmān's introduction to the *I'lām*, 13, and Darwīsh, 2:36.

<sup>274</sup>See above, n. 7.



Broadly speaking, [Egyptian histories] are chiefly political histories while [Syrian histories] are intellectual histories. Such intellectual histories are by no mean concerned with the history of ideas (which is a distinctly modern concept); rather the primary intention of intellectual histories of the Mamluk period is to produce a record of events and people connected to the institutions and fields of religion, law and education. Moreover, the "Syrian school" of historians, as distinct from its Egyptian counterpart, produced works which, in terms of their structure, devote much more attention to biographies and specifically to biographies of people from the intellectual class. While the division of historical writing into *ḥawādith* (report of events) and *tarājim* (biographies) is common to both genres, the differences that allow us to speak of the "Egyptian school" and the "Syrian school" are really those of emphasis.<sup>275</sup>

Notwithstanding its fundamental Syrianness, the factors noted in the above quotation lead one to safely disregard *Al-Durrah al-Muḍī'ah* as belonging to the "Syrian histories" category. Things are more problematic with regard to *Tārīkh Ibn Ḥijjī*. The nagging uncertainty that obscures the true nature of this work<sup>276</sup> prevents one from making too many sweeping statements regarding the respective importance in it of *ḥawādith* and *tarājim*. However, if the contents of the existing text are any indication, out of its thirteen folios, only a little more than three consist of obituaries,<sup>277</sup> compared to the thirty-one pages devoted by Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah in his *Tārīkh* to obituaries out of a total of fifty-three. In terms of the parameters set out by modern-day scholars, the relatively smaller space Ibn Ḥijjī devotes to obituaries places his work outside of the so-called "Syrian school."

Perhaps the whole distinction between the two schools no longer holds with regard to the period at hand. After all, it was formulated with regard to histories written during more or less the first half of the fourteenth century by two important groups of scholars, one Egyptian and the other Syrian, with different career paths, ethnic, ideological, intellectual backgrounds, and working relationships.<sup>278</sup> While it is true that Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah's *Tārīkh*, and, consequently, *Al-Dhayl al-Muṭawwal*, belong, from the point of view of Reisman's citation, to the Syrian school, the categorization of the works of Ibn Ḥijjī, Ibn Ṣaṣrā, and even Zayn

<sup>275</sup>"A Holograph MS," 24.

<sup>276</sup>See above.

<sup>277</sup>A cursory look at the "Tārīkh Ibn Ḥijjī" annal for the year 804 in MS Chester Beatty 5527 reveals similar proportions.

<sup>278</sup>Guo, "Mamluk Historiographic Studies," 29–32.



al-Dīn Ṭāhir will probably have to follow different considerations which will take into account the entirety of Ibn Ḥijjī's œuvre, notably the original extant annals of his *Tārīkh*, sources not yet published such as Ibn Khaṭīb al-Nāṣirīyah's (d. 843/1440) *Durr al-Muntakhab fī Takmilat Tārīkh Ḥalab*,<sup>279</sup> and, most importantly, the clear decline of Syrian historical writing in later parts of the Burjī period.

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<sup>279</sup>See Franz Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography* (Leiden, 1968), 170.

