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Urban Society in Damascus as the Mamluk Era Was Ending

INTRODUCTION

How were the Mamluks, formerly military slaves and of a different race and religion, able to govern cities occupied principally by Arab Muslims for more than 250 years? Nearly forty years have passed since Ira M. Lapidus presented a stimulating thesis, and abundant documentation, in an attempt to answer this question. His thesis is still influential: The Mamluks did not simply have military and political superiority; they also linked peasants and nomads to the cities by means of active social and economic actions, forming a variety of networks between these rural outsiders and the two main classes in urban society, the notables and the common people. Thus, the ruling Mamluks' linkage of the ulama and the common people into one political and social unity was characteristic of the structure of urban society during the Mamluk dynasty. Lapidus called such a system of political and social relations the "Mamluk regime"¹ and argued that it had its origin in the Seljukid era of the eleventh to twelfth centuries and worked well even after the rise of the Ottoman dynasty.²

In this article the author examines urban society at the end of the Mamluk period. According to Lapidus, the Mamluk regime suffered a serious crisis in this period, but later recovered under Ottoman rule. Earlier studies have thus far described this period as one of decline or disorder, but have given no analyses of the socio-political structure except those of Carl F. Petry, who regards it as a period of innovation because of the leadership of the sultans.³ The article discusses

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¹Ira M. Lapidus, *Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, MA, 1967). On the Mamluk regime, see 43, 191.

²Ira M. Lapidus, "The Evolution of Muslim Urban Society," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 15 (1973): 41; idem, *Muslim Cities*, student edition (Cambridge, MA, 1984), xiii–xiv; idem, *A History of Islamic Societies* (Cambridge, 1988), 353–64. I have discussed methodological problems of Lapidus' urban study in *Islamic Urban Studies: Historical Review and Perspectives*, ed. Haneda Masashi and Miura Toru (London, 1994), 89–91, 116–18, 340.

³Carl F. Petry has published two illuminating works on the socio-political structure of Egypt at the end of the Mamluk period. See *Twilight of Majesty: The Reigns of the Mamlūk Sultans al-Ashraf Qāyibāy and Qānshūh al-Ghawrī in Egypt* (Seattle, 1993); *Protectors or Praetorians?: The Last Mamlūk Sultans and Egypt's Waning as a Great Power* (New York, 1994).



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a period of about fifty years, from the reign of Sultan al-Ashraf Qāyṭbāy (872–901/1468–96) to the occupation of Cairo by the Ottomans, paying primary attention to the political changes outlined below.

First came the financial problem. At the end of the Mamluk period the state constantly faced serious financial crises, due to the decrease of income from *iqṭā'* land as agricultural production fell and the salaries paid to mamluks and officials increased. Meanwhile, however, the Mamluk state needed to dispatch the army against repeated Ottoman incursions from the northern frontier into Syria, which required an extraordinary budget. The financial problem was therefore closely linked to state security. Sultan Qāyṭbāy inaugurated a new financial policy of imposing taxes on properties owned by civilians and donated as *waqf*, as well as reducing the salaries of military and state officials, thus changing the balance of state income and expenditures. The sultans who succeeded him followed this policy. Although such a policy was criticized by the ulama and the citizens as oppressive conduct (*ẓulm*) against the shari‘ah and ‘*ādah* (customary law), its purpose was to replace income lost from the *iqṭā'* system, by increasing taxes on the cities and their inhabitants.⁴

Second came the decline of the mamluk army, a phenomenon so precipitous that the sultans and provincial governors began to use non-mamluk military forces. The sultans’ mamluks, called *julbān*, often revolted against the sultans, demanding the customary extra payments (*nafaqah*) during mobilization and at the succession of a new sultan, or complaining about delays in payment of their monthly stipend. These revolts were caused not only by a lack of military discipline but also by the weakening of the state economically. Having lost their *iqṭā'* income, the mamluks had become salaried workers who depended on the stipend paid to them by the sultans. They could not sustain themselves without an extra payment, in the face of the financial crisis and sudden rise in commodity prices, which reduced the real value of their incomes. The sultans, recognizing the weakness of the military, organized a new army (called the Fifth Army) consisting of non-mamluks, conscripted black slaves (‘*abīd*), and the urban outlaws called *zu‘r*, in order to reform a military system that at that time depended solely on the mamluks. This new army consisted of infantry equipped with firearms and hired at lower salaries

⁴Soon after his succession, Sultan Qāyṭbāy at the council meeting (*majlis*) twice proposed a new taxation plan on the citizens and the *waqf* properties. He had no choice but to withdraw it, however, because of strong opposition from the ulama. Then he adopted a policy of salary cuts instead. See Ibn Taghribirdī, *Hawādith al-Duhūr fī Madā al-Ayyām wa-al-Shuhūr*, ed. William Popper (Berkeley, 1930–42), 635–37, 689–93; Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Inbā’ al-Haṣr bi-Abnā’ al-‘Aṣr*, ed. Ḥasan Ḥabashī (Cairo, 1970), 33–37; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’ i’ al-Zuhūr fī Waqā’ i’ al-Duhūr*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafá (Cairo and Wiesbaden, 1960–75), 3:13–15, 20–23.



than the mamluks, thus challenging the privileged status of the mamluks.⁵

The financial and military crisis became crucial at the end of the Mamluk period, after Qāytbāy, and this necessitated reform of the state itself, which up until that time was based on the *iqtā'* and the mamluk system. The above-mentioned new financial and military policies were introduced to achieve such reform. The new targets were cities and citizens, and this inevitably caused changes in urban administration. In this article we will examine the changes in urban society, focusing on Damascus. The main sources are journals by Ibn Iyās (d. ca. 930/1524), Ibn Ṭūlūn (d. 953/1546), and Ibn Ṭawq (d. 908/1502).⁶ These are detailed diary-like chronicles and give us clues as to how the inhabitants behaved toward external political and economic pressures and developed new networks as the era ended, even though this behavior was often implicit and concealed behind the apparent disturbances.

CHANGE OF LEGAL ADMINISTRATION

BRIBERY AND CONFISCATION (*MUṢĀDARAH*)

We find a remarkable number of descriptions of bribery in relation to appointment to office, as well as of confiscation of property by forcible means (*muṣādarah*): for bribery, 49 cases are found in *Badā'i'*, 34 in *Mufākahat*, and 22 in *Inbā'*; for confiscation, 78 cases are found in *Badā'i'*, 21 in *Mufākahat*, and 12 in *Inbā'*. Instances of both bribery and confiscation are found throughout the Mamluk period, but in the following discussion we will focus on particular features at the end of the period.⁷ Bribes were customarily offered at the time of appointment to

⁵The sultans' mamluks revolted about thirty times during the fifty years at the end of the Mamluk period, and most of the revolts were caused by their economic difficulties such as the termination of salary payments and food distribution. They had to maintain their households, pay wages to their subordinates, pay house rents, buy clothes, etc. (Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 4:369, 483–86).

⁶Muḥammad Ibn Iyās was the son of a mamluk living in Cairo. See Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 4:47, 136. Muḥammad Ibn Ṭūlūn was a Hanafi jurist living in the Ṣāliḥīyah Quarter in Damascus, who wrote a detailed chronicle of Damascus as well as a review of the provincial governors: *Mufākahat al-Khillān fī Ḥawādith al-Zamān*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā (Cairo, 1962–64), and *I'lām al-Warā bi-Man Wullīya Nā'iban min al-Atrāk bi-Dimashq al-Shām al-Kubrā*, ed. 'Abd al-'Azīm Ḥāmid Khaṭṭāb (Cairo, 1973). See Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Al-Fulk al-Mashhūn fī Aḥwāl Muḥammad Ibn Ṭūlūn* (Damascus, 1348); Ibn al-Ḥanbalī, *Shadharāt al-Dhahab fī Akhbār Man Dhahab* (Beirut, n.d.), 8:298–29; Stephan Conermann, "Ibn Ṭūlūn: Life and Works," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 8, no. 1 (2004). Aḥmad Ibn Ṭawq lived in Damascus and provides a record of daily life there. See Ibn Ṭawq, *Al-Ta'līq: Yawmīyāt Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Ṭawq*, ed. Ja'far al-Muhājir (Damascus, 2000–5), 1:8–11.

⁷I have discussed bribery and property confiscation in Miura Toru, "Administrative Networks in the Mamlūk Period: Taxation, Legal Execution, and Bribery," in *Islamic Urbanism in Human History*, ed. Sato Tsugitaka (London, 1997). Bernadette Martel-Thoumian's recent article, "The



office, and there seems to have been standard amounts (such as 3,000 dinars for the chief judgeship of Cairo). The sultans could amass a huge amount of income from bribes by making frequent appointments of high officials.⁸ As for confiscation, the amounts extracted were often more than 10,000 dinars, higher than the amount of bribes, and these were exacted to cover the extra payments (*nafaqah*) mentioned above.⁹ Both bribery and confiscation were used as financial measures to cover the state income deficit. The main targets were civil officials living in the cities, thus transferring the wealth of the citizens to the state.

The constant bribery and confiscation caused changes in the administrative process and the quality of the officials. First, high officials needed to have considerable wealth to pay bribes and endure confiscations.¹⁰ Second, the bribery was pervasive, from high officials to minor ones and common people, as shown in the following report. In Rajab 922/August 1516 when the Ottoman sultan Selim entered Aleppo in peace, he reproached three chief judges of Cairo (who were arrested there) for their unjust conduct, saying that "you have received bribes (*rishwah*) at the trial under the shari'ah and assumed the office of chief judge, seeking for it by money, and did not prevent the oppressive conduct (*ẓulm*) of the Mamluk sultans towards the citizens." The new Mamluk sultan al-Ashraf Ṭūmānbāy (r. 922/1516–17) stated at the appointment of four new chief judges of Cairo in Dhū al-Ḥijjah 922 that "I have not received any bribe from them, and therefore you must not take bribes from any citizen."¹¹ This report tells us that bribery had pervaded the whole administration, so widespread as to reach the judges and nullify any chance for justice at trials over which they presided. Furthermore, the bribery relating to judges was more frequent than other types.¹² We cannot simply

Sale of Office and Its Economic Consequences during the Rule of the Last Circassians (872–922/1468–1516)," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 9, no. 2 (2005), is a detailed research contribution but does not make use of my earlier work.

⁸Ibid., 46–49.

⁹Of the forty-seven cases reported in *Badā'i'*, confiscation of more than 10,000 dinars occurs in about two-thirds (thirty-four cases). Intentional confiscations for the extra payments are found: *Badā'i'*, 3:394, 407, 409, 442–43. For the average amount of confiscation, see *ibid.*, 52.

¹⁰The average bribe for the chief judge (3,000 dinars) was equivalent to five years' salary, assuming his salary was fifty dinars (Miura, "Administrative Networks," 48–49). Since such a huge bribe was required, even wealthy men lacking the knowledge and skill needed for state civil officials were appointed simply by offering it (Ibn Taghribirdī, *Ḥawādith*, 771, 780–81; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 4:257, 264).

¹¹Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 5:117.

¹²Bribery to get the position of chief judge appears in 56% (18 cases) of the total in *Badā'i'* and 30% (6 cases) of the total in *Mufākahat*, while it rises to 65% (13 cases) in *Mufākahat* in the case of the appointment of deputy judges. A judge who did not receive a bribe at his trial was praised, which ironically shows the generality of taking bribes at trials (Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Inbā'*, 346–47, 451;



ascribe the prevalence of bribery to the depraved morals of the ulama. We must analyze the changes in the administrative system itself, which we will do in the next section, using as an example the Furfūr family, who monopolized the office of Shafi‘i chief judge in Damascus for 35 years.

THE FURFŪR FAMILY OF DAMASCUS

Two Shafi‘i chief judges, Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Maḥmūd (d. 911/1505)¹³ and his son Walī al-Dīn Muḥammad (937/1531),¹⁴ were both known as Ibn al-Furfūr, a name which was ascribed to their ancestor. As for the origin of this Furfūr family, all that is known is that Shihāb al-Dīn’s father Maḥmūd served Ibn Muzhir (d. 893/1488), confidential secretary (*kātib al-sirr*) of the Sultanate, and Shihāb al-Dīn himself was a head of Ibn Muzhir’s bureau at Damascus.¹⁵

Shihāb al-Dīn was appointed the Shafi‘i chief judge of Damascus, in addition to his existing posts as *nāẓir al-jaysh* (superintendent of the army), *wakīl al-sultān* (go-between for the sultan), and *nāẓir al-qal‘ah* (superintendent of the Citadel), when he was thirty-three years old, in Ṣafar 886/April 1481. This was only five days after the former chief judge Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn’s appointment. The chronicle (*Inbā’*) explains this sudden change as owing to three reasons: Shihāb al-Dīn, who with a fine countenance and voice and chivalrous mind (*futūwah*) was a right hand (*akḥṣā’*) to Ibn Muzhir, offered a bribe of 30,000 dinars and got a recommendation from the Shaykh al-Islām.¹⁶ Ibn Muzhir, as a confidant of the sultan, had influence when it came to office appointments, and the judges were usually appointed from among the staff who served his bureau.¹⁷ His close relationship to Ibn Muzhir dating from his father’s time, and a large bribe, secured the appointment of Shihāb al-Dīn.

Shihāb al-Dīn continued to be the Shafi‘i chief judge for twenty-five years until his death in Jumādā II 911/November 1505. Furthermore, in Rabī‘ I 910/August

Ibn Iyās, *Badā‘i*, 4:353, 460).

¹³Al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Daw’ al-Lāmi’ li-Ahl al-Qarn al-Tāsi’* (Cairo, 1353–55), 2:222–23; Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Quḍāt Dimashq al-Thaghr al-Bassām fī Dhīkr Man Wulliya Qaḍā’ al-Shām*, ed. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid (Damascus, 1956), 180–81; Najm al-Dīn al-Ghazzī, *Al-Kawākib al-Sā’irah bi-A’yān al-Mi’ah al-‘Ashirah*, ed. Jibrā’īl Sulāymān Jabbūr (Beirut, 1945–59), 1:141–45; Ibn al-Ḥanbalī, *Shadharāt*, 8:49; Ibn Ayyūb, “Kitāb al-Rawḍ al-‘Āṭir fīmā Tayassara min Akhbār Ahl al-Qarn al-Sābi’ ilā Kḥitām al-Qarn al-‘Āshir,” Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz Orientalabteilung MS 9886, fol. 37v.

¹⁴Cf. al-Ghazzī, *Kawākib*, 2:22–24; Ibn al-Ḥanbalī, *Shadharāt*, 8:224–25.

¹⁵Al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Daw’*, 2:222; 10:137.

¹⁶Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:33–34, 36, 39; Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Inbā’*, 513–14. Ibn Ṭawq, *Ta’līq*, 1:49, 51. The amount of his bribe was reported at 32,000 dinars in *Mufākahat*.

¹⁷Al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Daw’*, 9:88–89; Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Inbā’*, 288, 297; Ibn Iyās, *Badā‘i*, 3:255.



1504 he was appointed the Shafi'i chief judge of Cairo, in addition to Damascus, and was allowed to pass the office to his deputy in his will.¹⁸ At the same time his son Walī al-Dīn became deputy judge at the tender age of fifteen years; at his father's death the following year, he succeeded to the post of chief judge and held this office for about ten years, until Rabī' I 921/May–June 1515.¹⁹ The office of the Shafi'i chief judge was the highest among the four chief judges, as he supervised *waqf* foundations and could appoint his own deputies (*nā'ib*).²⁰

Shihāb al-Dīn appointed twenty-four deputy judges during his tenure, with up to fourteen at one time. He controlled the ulama of the Shafi'i law school by the appointment of deputies, so that he appointed a man of knowledge like al-Nu'aymī (d. 927/1521) and dismissed a deputy who opposed him.²¹ He also took a bribe when assigning a deputy office.²² His influence extended to the other law schools so much as to make his nephew Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn al-Furfūr (d. 936/1529) a superintendent and professor of the Qāṣṣā'iyyah Madrasah, and to discharge Ibn al-Qaṣīf, the Hanafi chief judge. Badr al-Dīn finally assumed this office succeeding Ibn al-Qaṣīf in Muḥarram 902/October 1496.²³ As he held this office until Dhū al-Ḥijjah 913/March 1508, the Furfūr family monopolized the highest offices of two influential law schools for ten years after 902.

Shihāb al-Dīn seems to have been a powerful mediator among the ulama in matters of appointments to office, liberation from imprisonment, and the like.²⁴ He cultivated close connections with military officers such as the provincial governor (*nā'ib*) by means of gifts and banquets.²⁵ Such connections increased his influence, so that he was able to play an influential role in the conflict between the provincial governor and the common people, who resisted his attempt to tax them, preventing

¹⁸Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:280; al-Ghazzī, *Kawākib*, 1:141; Ibn al-Ḥanbalī, *Shadharāt*, 8:49. Ibn Iyās reports this concurrent occupation of two chief judgeships as unprecedented (*Badā'i'*, 4:84).

¹⁹Assuming deputy judgeship: al-Ghazzī, *Kawākib*, 1:141; Ibn al-Ḥanbalī, *Shadharāt*, 8:49. Appointment as chief judge: Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:294. Resignation: *ibid.*, 383.

²⁰Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-A'shā fī Ṣinā'at al-Inshā'* (Cairo, 1913–22), 4:192.

²¹Fourteen deputy judges: 'Alā' al-Dīn al-Buṣrawī, *Tārīkh al-Buṣrawī*, ed. Akram Ḥasan al-'Ulābī (Damascus and Beirut, 1988), 123 (al-Buṣrawī himself was mentioned as one of the deputy judges in Ibn Ṭawq, *Ta'liq*, 1:126). On al-Nu'aymī: Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:162. Dismissal of deputy judges: *ibid.*, 174, 207, 220.

²²Bribe: Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:46, 49, 50; Ibn Ṭawq, *Ta'liq*, 1:83, 195.

²³Ibn al-Ḥanbalī, *Shadharāt*, 8:147; Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:169, 269, 313; Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Quḍāt*, 230, 235–37, 239; al-Ghazzī, *Kawākib*, 1:13–14.

²⁴Appointment: Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:151, 273; al-Nu'aymī, *Dāris fī Tārīkh al-Madāris*, ed. Ja'far al-Ḥasanī (Damascus, 1948–51), 2:23. Debt: Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:161–62. Liberation: *ibid.*, 1:158, 202. Mediation: Ibn Ṭawq, *Ta'liq*, 2:629.

²⁵Gift: Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:215. Banquet: *ibid.*, 253; Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Quḍāt*, 181.



the governor from attacking them in 905/1500.²⁶ He had gained considerable influence in Damascene politics and society and was known to be a man of wealth, having *iqṭā'* land in the provinces and a residence in Damascus, owning shops and public baths, and holding *waqf* properties.²⁷

Strong opposition developed against the rising influence of the Furfūr family. In Rajab 893/June–July 1488 a lampoon on the deputies of Shihāb al-Dīn was thrown into the Umayyad Mosque. It ridiculed his deputy judges one by one in the form of a poem.²⁸ Once again, in Rabi' II/March–April 1489, another lampoon was thrown into the court of the governor's palace (*dār al-sa'ādah*), in which a deputy was accused of oppressive behavior (*ẓulm*) at a trial and the forcible imposition of taxes (*balṣ*).²⁹ These lampoons asserted that the deputies acted tyrannically at their most important job, conducting trials. An order was sent to summon to Cairo two deputies, two notaries (*shāhid*), a *dawādār* (executive secretary), and a bailiff (*naqīb*) working under Shihāb al-Dīn in Shawwāl 895/September 1490. Here we note that those to be summoned were called "*jamā'ah* (faction, household) of the Shafi'i chief judge, Shihāb al-Dīn,"³⁰ which shows that the subordinate staff (deputies, notaries, etc.) was regarded as within the faction of Shihāb al-Dīn, and the organization itself was criticized.

Based on two incidents that occurred after the death of Shihāb al-Dīn, it seems that the Furfūr family organized a faction/household composed of both familial and non-familial members. First, when Shihāb al-Dīn died on 2 Jumādā II 911, his son Walī al-Dīn sent an urgent message from Cairo to announce that he had been appointed chief judge to succeed his father on 9 Jumādā II and all deputy judges should remain in office. One of the deputies, al-Nu'aymī, hesitated to conduct a trial, however, because the sultan had not authorized the assignment of

²⁶Shihāb al-Dīn was described as being strong in his struggles with the governors (al-Buṣrawī, *Tārīkh al-Buṣrawī*, 229). Conflict in 905/1500: Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:227. He also prevented the clash in 891/1486 thus leading to the peace announcement (Ibn Ṭawq, *Ta'liq*, 2:627–28).

²⁷*Iqṭā'*: Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:103, 105, 110, 258. Residence: *ibid.*, 253, 351; al-Buṣrawī, *Tārīkh al-Buṣrawī*, 114. Shops: Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:117. Bath: *ibid.*, 243; Ibn Ṭawq, *Ta'liq*, 2:1061. *Waqfs* and *milk*: Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 2:115 and recorded *waqf* and *milk* properties of the Furfūr family in the Land Survey Registers at the beginning of Ottoman rule (Tapu Tahrir Defteri, no. 393:12, 112, 185, and no. 602:11, 22, 99, 140, 347). Wealth: Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 4:84.

²⁸Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:96.

²⁹*Ibid.*, 112. Al-Buṣrawī, *Tārīkh al-Buṣrawī*, 133. Ibn Ṭawq reported about this lampoon that Shihāb al-Dīn rejected it as a slander before the governor, and there is no criticism of him in Ibn Ṭawq's report, unlike Ibn Ṭūlūn's. See Ibn Ṭawq, *Ta'liq*, 2:839.

³⁰Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:133, 143. Al-Buṣrawī reported that his deputy judge al-Sibt was also summoned (al-Buṣrawī, *Tārīkh al-Buṣrawī*, 143–44). Ibn Ṭawq, *Ta'liq*, 2:981.



deputies. Nevertheless, the other deputies continued their work.³¹ We know from this report that appointment to the office of deputy judge lapsed when the official who had made the appointment left office, and permission of the sultan was needed to re-assign the deputy. To keep his own faction together, Walī al-Dīn declared the deputies would continue in office before getting the sultan's permission. Walī al-Dīn benefited the deputies by assuming his late father's office and assigning the office of deputy to each of them, so they did not follow al-Nu'aymī. The second incident was that members of the faction (*jamā'ah*) of Walī al-Dīn were arrested and subjected to confiscation in Dhū al-Ḥijjah 911/April–May 1506, only a half-year after the first incident. Six persons, including Muḥammad, the *dawādār* of Walī al-Dīn and his late father, and the *ustādār* (majordomo) of his father, were arrested and sent to prison to be mulcted.³² The reason for this arrest and confiscation was not made public, but its purpose must have been to reprimand the Furfūr family as a group because the target of the punishment was obviously the subordinate staff responsible for its management, such as the *dawādār* and the *ustādār*.³³ These reports show that the Furfūr family had organized a faction/household including non-familial members, who were united by their common interests.

JAMĀ'ĀHS IN LEGAL ADMINISTRATION

The term *jamā'ah* means a group in general, and was often used at the end of the Mamluk period to designate a specific faction led by a boss, attaching to it his own name or his post. The most frequent ones were those of provincial governors and chief judges.³⁴ The word *bāb*—originally meaning gate—was also used to designate a household or faction performing administrative tasks under the boss.³⁵

The organization of *jamā'ahs* under judges was demonstrated during the two incidents in which Ibn Furfūr's group was summoned and later mulcted. The members can be classified into two groups: legal administrative staff such as the *nā'ib*, *shāhid*, and *naqīb* on one hand, and the management staff such as the *dawādār* and *ustādār* on the other hand.

³¹Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:294. At the appointment of Shihāb al-Dīn to be chief judge, he sent a letter to declare the continuance of the predecessors of deputy judges (Ibn Ṭawq, *Ta'liq*, 1:53).

³²Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:300.

³³Dawādār Muḥammad served two heads of the Furfūr family and took an important role as envoy on behalf of one (Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:215, 297). He was blamed at the time of confiscation in 894/1489 as well as of the summons in 895 (Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:108, 133), which suggests to us his responsibility for household management.

³⁴We find twenty-one examples of governor's *jamā'ahs* and thirteen of chief judge's in *Mufākahat*.

³⁵Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Inbā'*, 409, 450; al-Buṣrawī, *Tārīkh al-Buṣrawī*, 106, 215.



First I will examine the legal administrative staff.³⁶ A *nā'ib* was a deputy judge appointed by the chief judge of each of the four Sunni law schools to conduct trials under his auspices. The number of deputy judges exceeded one hundred in Cairo and might have been about twenty in Damascus.³⁷ They conducted trials at the notary's office and even in the street,³⁸ and they seem to have been taking bribes, as is shown in an order stating that a *nā'ib* should be dismissed when he received anything at trial.³⁹ Walī al-Dīn Ibn Furfūr issued an order to his *nā'ibs* that they must not hear a complaint, authorize a document, or hold a trial other than at the house of the chief judge, in order for him to oversee the legal process, but nevertheless the *nā'ibs* were soon permitted to conduct trials freely. The *nā'ibs* resisted this new order and conducted trials and certified documents at their own houses in order to profit personally.⁴⁰

Shāhids acted as witnesses at trials, as well as for marriage contracts and commercial transactions.⁴¹ They were also called '*adl*.'⁴² They received a fee for notarizing contracts or for being a trial witness,⁴³ had shops (*ḥānūt*, *dukkān*) and

³⁶Regulations on legal administrators can be found in these sources: al-Mawārdī, *Al-Aḥkām al-Sultānīyah wa-al-Wilāyāt al-Dīnīyah* (Cairo, 1960), 71, 76; Ibn Abī al-Dam, *Kitāb Adab al-Qadā'*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā al-Zuhaylī (Damascus, 1982), 98–100, 105–9. Émile Tyan studies those officials using legal and administrative texts in his *Histoire de l'organisation judiciaire en pays d'Islam*, 2nd ed. (Leiden, 1960), 200–61.

³⁷Sultan al-Ghawrī, in Dhū al-Ḥijjah 919/January 1514, restricted the number of deputy judges for each Sunni law school in Cairo to 40 for the Shafī'is, 30 for the Hanafis, 20 for the Malikis, and 10 for the Hanbalis, a total of 100 (Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 4:352). In Damascus in 902/1496 there were as many deputy judges as 10 for the Shafī'is, 5 for the Hanafis, and one for each of the other two schools, making a total of 17 (al-Buṣrawī, *Tārīkh al-Buṣrawī*, 190). The number of Walī al-Dīn's deputy judges reached 16 at one time (Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:309).

³⁸Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh al-Duwal wa-al-Mulūk* (Beirut, 1936–42), 9:298–99; Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Inbā'*, 341, 375, 439.

³⁹Bribe: al-Buṣrawī, *Tārīkh al-Buṣrawī*, 190. Order: Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Inbā'*, 493.

⁴⁰Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:311. At the time of Shihāb al-Dīn in Muḥarram 897/November 1491, a royal order came out to prohibit the *nā'ibs* of the Furfūr family from judging at their houses and keeping a *shāhid*, *wakīl*, and *rasūl*, but it was the order written by Shihāb al-Dīn (Ibn Ṭawq, *Ta'liq*, 3:1082).

⁴¹Joseph Schacht, *An Introduction to Islamic Law* (Oxford, 1964), 192–94; R. Peters, "Shāhid," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., 9:207–8. Ibn Ṭawq worked as a *shāhid*, and then recorded in his journal different kinds of contracts in which he was engaged (Ibn Ṭawq, *Ta'liq*, 1:40, 59, 96, 101, 2:842, etc.).

⁴²Al-Ghazzī, *Kawākib*, 1:285, 304; 2:31.

⁴³It was reported that the fee was three dirhams for a certificate written at the office of the *muḥtasib* (market inspector) in Damascus, and the total number of certificates came to 3,000 in a day and the *rasūls* executing this work gained one dinar each per day (Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Inbā'*, 389). The Ottoman sultan Selim I, before his entry into Damascus, sent a new judge there to proclaim



bureaus (*markaz, maktab*) in the city, and performed their work at mosques and madrasahs and city gates in Damascus and Aleppo.⁴⁴ Descriptions of *shāhids* are often found in the biographies of the ulama: for example, that they acquired their incomes by working as a *shāhid*⁴⁵ or began their career as a *shāhid*.⁴⁶ The position of *shāhid* was usually the first job for legal administrators. As an example, a *nā'ib* of Shihāb al-Dīn Ibn Furfūr, 'Uthmān, was originally a weaver, then became a madrasah gatekeeper, and worked as a notary under the Hanafī chief judge. He was promoted to *nā'ib* by paying a bribe and remained at this post for more than twenty years.⁴⁷ We find many cases of promotion from *shāhid* to *nā'ib*, or of holding both positions at the same time.⁴⁸ The offices of *nā'ibs* and *shāhids* might be centers of legal administration where people were trained not so much in legal theory as in legal practice, and where a personal network (*jamā'ah/faction*) would be created.⁴⁹

Naqībs were bailiffs, also called *rasūl*, who executed legal judgements. They received a fee from a plaintiff and made a profit by exacting more from a defendant. In Cairo in Jumādā I 919/July 1513, the sultan ordered *naqībs* and *rasūls* under the amirs (military chiefs) not to extort payments from the parties to a trial.⁵⁰ At that time the amirs used to profit by holding a trial at the bench (*dikkah*) in front of their house gates.⁵¹ This order aimed to prevent the subordinates from oppressing the parties. The Damascus governor also prohibited *naqībs* from exacting a penalty without a plaintiff in Dhū al-Ḥijjah 918/February–March 1513.⁵²

Wakīls (go-betweens) arbitrated a matter between the party and the judge. We found a notable example of a *wakīl* in Sharaf al-Dīn, who served the chief judge

that the fee for a marriage contract was to be 25 dirhams, of which 20 dirhams were for the judge and 4 for the *shāhid* (Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 2:29–30, 41).

⁴⁴Shops in Cairo: Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Inbā'*, 306; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 4:347. Office in Damascus: al-Ghazzī, *Kawākib*, 1:118, 271; Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:345; al-Buṣrawī, *Tārīkh al-Buṣrawī*, 128, 231. Office in Aleppo: al-Ghazzī, *Kawākib*, 1:22, 269. At the gate of the Umayyad Mosque: Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:138–39; al-Ghazzī, *Kawākib*, 1:285.

⁴⁵Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Inbā'*, 306, 450; al-Ghazzī, *Kawākib*, 1:176, 178, 271, 279.

⁴⁶Al-Ghazzī, *Kawākib*, 1:270, 320.

⁴⁷Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:50; al-Buṣrawī, *Tārīkh al-Buṣrawī*, 107, 190, 221; al-Ghazzī, *Kawākib*, 1:260.

⁴⁸Promotion: Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:310–11; al-Ghazzī, *Kawākib*, 1:189, 2:9. Concurrent work of *nā'ib* and *shāhid*: Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Inbā'*, 341.

⁴⁹Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 4:131.

⁵⁰Ibid., 320.

⁵¹Ibid., 302, 312. This is a kind of *mazālim* court (administrative court) supervised by administrative executives, such as the sultan and provincial governors.

⁵²Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:374. Ibn Furfūr's *naqībs* also exacted money (Ibn Ṭawq, *Ta'liq*, 2:1199).



in spite of his ignorance and illiteracy. He bribed his boss to hear the cases and then extorted bribes from the parties. After a while he found favor with the judge and was consulted about important matters, lived in a mansion, and bought slaves, until he became so powerful that chief judges went to call on him instead of the reverse. Finally, however, in 876/1472 he was prohibited from performing the duties of a *wakīl*.⁵³

The increase of lawsuits in larger cities accelerated this tendency of seeking more profit in legal administration. A curious order was issued in Rabī‘ II 914/July–August 1508, forbidding the bringing of a suit against anybody without just cause (*ḥaqq*), and demanding that the accused not be deprived of anything by such an unjust lawsuit. A similar order in Dhū al-Ḥijjah 914/March 1509 provided that a lawsuit would not be accepted unless the defendant agreed to the claim.⁵⁴ These orders show that lawsuits and trials had turned into a means for the strong to exploit the weak. Trials were no longer to maintain justice and fairness (*‘adl*) in society or to prevent oppressive conduct (*ẓulm*), but were instead a means to pursue the private interests of both citizens and legal administrators.

We can surmise the features of legal factions and their staffs at the end of the Mamluk period. First, they gained their income by receiving fees, bribes, and exactions pursuant to the performance of legal functions. It is noteworthy that such income was not necessarily regarded as irregular or illegal, but instead as proper in lieu of salary, as the following episode demonstrates. ‘Izz al-Dīn, the Hanbali chief judge, did not solicit bribes at trials, because he received sufficient income from his madrasah salary and income from rented properties.⁵⁵ Legal staff could become wealthy by increasing their income from bribes and fees like the above-mentioned *wakīl*. Second, it was not necessary to have had a madrasah education in order to carry out the work of a notary and go-between. To give an example, a *shāhid* from a peasant background (*fallāḥ*) came to Damascus to be a *rasūl*, then became a *ballāṣī* (tax collector) and later worked as a *shāhid*. He was eventually banished because of his crime of forging a royal order.⁵⁶ His example shows that the easiest way for newcomers to the city to earn a living was to be employed as subordinate staff such as a *rasūl* or *ballāṣī* under the patronage of an influential man. After gaining experience in legal practice, they could advance to

⁵³Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Inbā’*, 408–11. Other *wakīls*: *ibid.*, 224, 518–19; al-Buṣrawī, *Tārīkh al-Buṣrawī*, 104.

⁵⁴Ibn Iyās, *Badā’ i’*, 4:134; Ibn Ṭūlūn, *I’lām*, 214. At the *maẓālim* court of the sultan, bribes were offered (Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Inbā’*, 367). Therefore the sultan was forced to control the increase of lawsuits brought to him in Sha‘bān 876/January 1472 (*ibid.*, 400–1).

⁵⁵Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Inbā’*, 345–47, 450–51. He was famous for his austerity and did not employ *nā’ibs*, *naqībs*, and *rasūls* as the other chief judges did.

⁵⁶Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:334.



become a *shāhid* or *nā'ib* and make more money.

Legal factions absorbed a large number of subordinate staff in the cities, based on the common interests for each member in making money from legal execution, plus their own training and promotion system inside the *jamā'ah*, until they strengthened and extended their organizations. To control such an extended faction (*jamā'ah*) required a managing staff of *dawādārs* and *ustādārs* such as that of the *jamā'ah* of Ibn Furfūr. We know about the prevalence of such *jamā'ah* organizations at the end of the Mamluk period because of the legal reform ordered by the Ottoman sultan Selim I and carried out from Sha'bān 922/August 1516 to Rabī' I 924/February–March 1518. In both Cairo and Damascus, the judges' courts were concentrated in one place, the number of *nā'ibs* and *shāhids* was reduced, and the judges' *rasūls* and *wakīls* were dismissed. Strong resistance to this reform existed, however. No one in Cairo or Damascus obeyed the order. After Selim's departure to Istanbul, the provincial governor of Damascus, Jānbirdī al-Ghazzālī (r. 924–27/1518–21), allowed *shāhids* to go back to their offices and restored the "*jamā'ah* of the judges, that is, *shāhids* and *rasūls*."⁵⁷ Legal factions (*jamā'ah*) could survive despite the Ottoman attempt at reform because they had already taken root in urban society.

The chief judges organized their factions, composed of subordinate staff, and executed legal affairs to gain huge profits by means of these *jamā'ahs*. This was why they sought the post of chief judge in spite of paying a large bribe and enduring property confiscation. We find similar organizations led by *kātibs al-sirr* and *muhtasibs* as well.⁵⁸

CHANGE OF CITY ADMINISTRATION

TAXATION AND MILITARY CONSCRIPTION

Mamluk sultans, facing the two serious problems of the need to mount military expeditions abroad and financial crisis, introduced a new tax policy, to be imposed on citizens and *waqf* properties. Such policies were imposed in Syrian cities as well,⁵⁹ and provincial governors of Damascus instituted the new taxation. Syrian cities were threatened by the invasion of the Ottoman army. How to pay the costs of war and raise the necessary military personnel and supplies were crucial problems of urban politics. In this section we will examine how these problems were solved, as well as investigate the changes in city administration, focusing on Damascus.

⁵⁷Ibid., 2:29–30, 41, 88–89; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 5:165–66, 243; al-Ghazzālī, *Kawākib*, 1:169.

⁵⁸Kātib al-Sirr Ibn Muzhir: Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:381; Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Inbā'*, 222, 314, 409; al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw'*, 9:89. *Muhtasib*: Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Inbā'*, 389, 430. See also Miura, "Administrative Networks," 59–66.

⁵⁹Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 3:280, 4:23.



The provincial governor, called the *nā'ib al-salṭānah*, oversaw the administration of Damascus, with its population estimated at 50,000 to 60,000 persons.⁶⁰ The chronicles report a new type of taxation imposed on the citizens and city quarters (*ḥārah, maḥallah*),⁶¹ the first example was in Muḥarram 890/January 1485 and there eventually were sixty-eight examples prior to the end of the Mamluk period. Most of these were by order of provincial governors. After 904/1499, the tax was imposed every year.⁶² In contrast, Cairo had only eight examples of such taxation according to Ibn Iyās' *Badā'i*. What was the reason for its frequency in Damascus?

PURPOSE AND OBJECT

The imposition of occasional taxes in Damascus had two purposes: one, to fund the conscription of infantry soldiers for foreign expeditions (twenty-one cases) and the other, to impose an extra tax, allegedly as punishment, on a quarter where a murder was committed (fourteen cases). In contrast, in Cairo, seven of eight cases of taxation are for expeditionary costs, primarily to pay extra allowances to the mamluks rather than for infantry. As for the object of taxation, in Damascus taxes were imposed on all the city quarters or collected from an individual quarter,⁶³ whereas in Cairo they were levied on immovable properties of *waqf* and *milk* (private ownership), and a portion of rental income was collected.⁶⁴ The amounts

⁶⁰My estimate of the population of Damascus and its quarters at the end of the Mamluk period is based on a household survey at the beginning of Ottoman rule in Damascus. Cf. Jean-Paul Pascual, *Damas à la fin du 16e siècle d'après trois actes de waqf ottomans* (Damascus, 1983), 1:23–27. The approximate number of quarters was estimated as 70 inside the city wall (*madīnah*) and 30 in the Šālīḥīyah Quarter, on the basis of the descriptions of Ibn Ṭūlūn (Ibn Ṭūlūn, "Ḥārāt Dimashq al-Qadīmah," *Al-Mashriq* 35(1937) and Ibn Kinnān, *Al-Murūj al-Sundusiyah al-Fasīḥah fī Talkhīṣ Tārīkh al-Šālīḥīyah*, ed. Muḥammad Aḥmad Dahmān (Damascus, 1947).

⁶¹There is no comprehensive study of the city taxation system during the Mamluk period, except that we know *zakāt* and *maks* were imposed on goods and trade, and *mushāharah* was imposed on daily commodities, at the end of the Mamluk era. Cf. Hassanein Rabie, *The Financial System of Egypt A.H. 564–741/A.D. 1169–1341* (London, 1972), 80–107.

⁶²The descriptions were collected from the sources of *Mufākahat, I'lām*, and *Tārīkh al-Buṣrawī*. Those who imposed the tax were provincial governors, 21 cases; governor's *jamā'ah*, 6 cases; *khāṣṣakī* (sultan's guardsmen), 4 cases; and Mamluk sultans, 2 cases. In addition, 12 cases seemed to be by governors, judging from their taxation procedures.

⁶³Taxation on all the quarters of Damascus was 23 cases, and on individual quarters, 25 cases.

⁶⁴Taxation in Cairo: in Rabī' I 894 (Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 3:260–61), in Rabī' I–II 896 (ibid., 278–280), in Muḥarram 907 (ibid., 4:14–17, 20) and in Rajab 917 (ibid., 242). Here the owners of *milk* properties such as houses (*bayt, rab'*), shops (*ḥānūt*), public baths (*ḥammām*), vegetable gardens (*ghayṭ*), mills (*ṭāḥūn*), and vessels (*markab*) collected the rent in advance from their lessees to pay the provisional tax to the sultans (ibid., 4:16). Such taxation can be found previously for dispatching the troops against the Mongols (700/1300) and Timur (803/1401); see Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah* (Beirut, 1966), 14:14; al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk li-Ma'rifat Duwal*



of taxation are known in the case of Damascus; the least one being 50 dinars from each quarter and larger amounts, including 1000 dinars imposed on the Shāghūr Quarter and 20,000 dinars on the whole city of Damascus.⁶⁵

EXPEDITION AND INFANTRY

A new tax to fund an expedition was inaugurated in Jumādā II 891/June 1486. At that time the provincial governor of Damascus, Qijmās al-Ishāqī (r. 892–902/1487–97), was asked to dispatch an expeditionary force by the commander of the Egyptian army in Aleppo. The governor read the letter from the commander in the presence of ulama and other officials, and apologized for the need to collect money from them to dispatch infantry troops against the Ottoman army.⁶⁶ In this case the purpose of taxation is clearly to send infantry troops; eight other cases were described as simply for an expedition. Can we assume these orders were also specifically for infantry?

The primary reason to use infantry is obvious. Due to the weakening of the Mamluk army, the need for infantry increased, for these troops could be hired by wage (*jāmakīyah*, *ma'lūm*). Provincial governors ordered the conscription of men to serve as infantry in support of the mamluks, and the number of troops reached 4,000.⁶⁷ Another reason is technical: the use of gun power was becoming more necessary at the end of the Mamluk period. The Ottomans were able to use gun power, and therefore the Mamluk sultans were forced to organize infantry troops other than their mamluks. They organized the Fifth Army from non-mamluks and trained non-mamluk slaves (*'abīd*) to use guns.⁶⁸ In Damascus, we find many examples of infantry troops (forty-five cases).⁶⁹ It is natural to assume that infantry

al-Mulūk, ed. Sa'īd 'Abd al-Fattāh 'Āshūr (Cairo, 1939–73), 1:906–7, 3:1052–53.

⁶⁵Taxation of 50 dinars: Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:245. Taxation of 1000 dinars: *ibid.*, 247, 249; al-Buṣrawī, *Tārīkh al-Buṣrawī*, 179. Taxation of 20,000 dinars: *Mufākahat*, 1:254.

⁶⁶Ibn Ṭūlūn, *I'lām*, 72; al-Buṣrawī, *Tārīkh al-Buṣrawī*, 112. Ibn Ṭawq reported that the heads (*kubrā*) of quarters were asked to collect the money for infantry at an amount of 15 dinars for each infantryman (Ibn Ṭawq, *Ta'līq*, 2:625–29).

⁶⁷In 903/1498 the provincial governor ordered the military dispatch. Most of the mamluks, however, were unwilling to go on the expedition, and eventually only 70 mamluks as well as many infantrymen went (Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:196–97). The number of infantry troops: *ibid.*, 342 and *idem*, *I'lām*, 232.

⁶⁸David Ayalon, *Gunpowder and Firearms in the Mamluk Kingdom*, 2nd ed. (London and Worcester, 1972), 59–83. Ayalon stressed the unwillingness of the mamluks to wear guns and the Mamluk Sultanate's delay in using firearms. Robert Irwin refutes these assertions by Ayalon in his recent article, "Gunpowder and Firearms in the Mamluk Sultanate Reconsidered," in *The Mamluks in Egyptian and Syrian Politics and Society*, ed. Amalia Levanoni and Michael Winter (Leiden, 2004). The Fifth Army: Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 4:324, 369. *'Abīd*: *ibid.*, 3:383, 4:84, 5:81, 107, 134.

⁶⁹The descriptions are collected from *Mufākahat* and *I'lām*.



troops must have been equipped with firearms, although their specific use is mentioned in only two cases.⁷⁰ While the sultans in Cairo, using non-mamluks, organized a new army to employ firearms, infantry was conscripted from the city quarters in Damascus.⁷¹

The next problem was how to conscript infantry and cover their wages. We can find answers from the descriptions that follow. In Muḥarram 907/August 1501 the deputy governor ordered conscription of troops from each quarter and announced that the conscripts' allowances should be collected from their respective quarters.⁷² In Jumādā I 912/October 1506 the provincial governor asked each quarter for twenty infantrymen to accompany him on an expedition, and the *'arīfs* (administrative heads) of the quarters began to collect money to support these soldiers.⁷³ As these two descriptions show, the quarters were levied heavily, contributing both infantrymen and their wages. However, a clever means of dealing with this problem was devised: The outlaws (*zu'r*) of the quarter were conscripted and the inhabitants paid their wages. This mechanism is mentioned in the report of Jumādā I 908/November–December 1502, which says that the provincial governor collected the money to be paid to infantrymen, but could not collect it from the *zu'r* whom he would conscript.⁷⁴ As the following section explains, the *zu'r* were outlaw groups who usually brought arms with them. This solution worked well for all parties concerned. For the governor, the *zu'r* provided a strong military force. For the *zu'r*, conscription was a way to acquire weapons as well as wages. For the inhabitants of the quarter, it enabled them to avoid conscription. The provincial governors could acquire the infantry troops at the expense of the inhabitants. This is why they repeated this policy, and by pursuing this policy they could solve their financial and military problems simultaneously.

PENALTY TAX FOR MURDER

The provincial governor imposed a penalty tax on the inhabitants of any quarter where a murder had occurred. For example, at the Mazzāz quarter in Ramaḍān 906/1501 a man was killed and robbed of his horse. Several days later the *ustādār*

⁷⁰Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:211, 289.

⁷¹Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:118. Ibn Ṭawq states that unjust exaction spread in the city due to the infantry conscription (*Ta'liq*, 2:937–38).

⁷²Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:245.

⁷³*Ibid.*, 309.

⁷⁴Ibn Ṭūlūn, *I'lām*, 164. In Jumādā II–Rajab 898/February–March 1493 the provincial governor ordered the collection of 20 dinars per infantryman, totalling 10,000 dinars for the whole city, equivalent to 500 infantrymen (Ibn Ṭawq, *Ta'liq*, 3:1174–75, 1178, 1189). Other cases of conscripting the *zu'r* for infantry in Damascus: Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 92, 190, 195, 330, and those in Cairo: Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 3:230, 5:119, 140.



of the governor imposed a penalty tax on the inhabitants there.⁷⁵ Judging from this report, the provincial governor imposed a penalty on the quarter whether the killer lived there or not. The governor had good reason for this penalty taxation, as he stated when he imposed a penalty of 1000 dinars on the Şālihīyah Quarter in Dhū al-Qa‘dah 901/August 1496: “I did not impose [a penalty] without a basis in shari‘ah. One of the Hanafī ulama told me that the *diyyah* (blood money) should be collected from the inhabitants of the quarter when a murdered person was found there and the killer was unknown.”⁷⁶ This legal ground originated from the theory of the Hanafī law school, called *qasāmah* (compurgation). Joseph Schacht explains it thus: “If the body of a person is found who has obviously been killed, the inhabitants of the quarter, the owner of the house and his ‘*aqīla* (relatives) must swear fifty oaths that they have not killed him and do not know who has killed him. They thereby become free from liability to *qiṣāṣ* but must as ‘*aqīla* pay the blood money.”⁷⁷ The legal texts of the twelfth century developed this theory to specify that all inhabitants of the quarter were responsible as a group for the murder or compurgation,⁷⁸ responding to the development of city quarters.

The provincial governors used this legalism to repeatedly impose penalty taxation. The chronicle states, “at the end of this month incidents of murder occurred many times because of the absence of the governor, and his deputy again imposed the penalty for the reason of murder, which was oppressive to the people.”⁷⁹ This shows that the governors willingly imposed the penalty on the quarter, rather than pursuing the killer. It is obvious they took the penalty to cover their lack of income, in place of normal taxation,

The amount of the penalty imposed was much larger than that collected to support the conscripted infantry, reaching 1000 dinars in the great quarters like the Şālihīyah. This could be a financial boon for the governor, but on the other hand was oppressive to the inhabitants, causing dissension between the rulers and citizens. The inhabitants of the Masjid al-Qaṣab Quarter gathered to ask for God’s relief (*takbīr*) from a huge imposition due to a murder in Jumādā II 905/January 1501.⁸⁰ On the side of the rulers, al-‘Ādil Ṭūmānbāy, after assuming the position of sultan in Damascus in Jumādā I 906/November 1500, issued a decree that the inhabitants of the quarter where a murder occurred should not be liable for the

⁷⁵Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:234.

⁷⁶Al-Buṣrawī, *Tārīkh al-Buṣrawī*, 179.

⁷⁷Schacht, *Introduction*, 184.

⁷⁸Al-Kāsānī, *Kitāb Badā’i’ al-Şanā’i’ fī Tartīb Sharā’i’* (Cairo, 1327–28), 7:286–96.

⁷⁹Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:317; idem, *I’lām*, 209.

⁸⁰Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:227; idem, *I’lām*, 103. The inhabitants of the Şālihīyah Quarter protested the penalty tax in 901/1496 (Ibn Ṭawq, *Ta’līq*, 3:1430–31).



penalty; rather they should strive to pursue the killer. The decree of Sultan al-‘Ādil was engraved on the stone wall of each quarter.⁸¹ But this decree was issued so the sultan could win the favor of the citizens, and it was rescinded after four months.⁸² The opposition led to bloodshed in Rabi‘ I 910/August 1504, when Muḥammad Bardadār, the bailiff of the governor, went to the Maydān al-Ḥaṣā Quarter to exact the penalty because its inhabitants killed his colleague, and his fellows were attacked and killed on their way. The next day, the inhabitants stoned those who tried to bury those killed, and antagonism deepened between the two groups. The governor launched an effort to arrest the killers, but the *zu‘r* began to support the inhabitants. The governor was then forced to issue a decree of *amān* (peace), attributing the murder of Muḥammad Bardadār to a dog.⁸³ In this incident, the governor was on the side of the victim and could demand blood money from the inhabitants. Nevertheless they showed strong resistance to the imposition of this financial penalty. Why did the governors cling to the blood penalty, which caused heavy oppression? The governors of Damascus had no other means but the blood penalty to increase their incomes, whereas the sultans in Cairo could gain an immense amount by bribes and property confiscation to overcome a financial crisis.⁸⁴

TAX COLLECTION AND THE *JAMĀ‘AHS* OF THE GOVERNORS

The governors used differing tax collection procedures to fund expeditions and for the murder penalty. We know that when Governor Qijmās attempted to raise money to dispatch an expedition of infantry in 891/1486 the response from the citizens was to protest and assert that his actions were motivated by self-interest and were illegal. As the people prepared to stone him, Qijmās went to the house of Shaykh al-Islām Taqī al-Dīn Abū Bakr Ibn Qāḍī ‘Ajlūn (d. 928/1522),⁸⁵ to talk him into asking the influential people of each quarter to cooperate in tax collection. As the Shaykh al-Islām consented to this request and justified the taxation, *‘arīfs*

⁸¹Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:234; idem, *I‘lām*, 129. It remained until the twentieth century and was recorded in Jean Sauvaget, “Decreets mamelouks de Syrie,” *Bulletin d’études orientales* 2 (1932): 44. Sultan Qāyṭbāy issued a similar decree (*I‘lām*, 129).

⁸²Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:234.

⁸³Ibid., 279–80.

⁸⁴Property confiscation in Damascus was conducted on a smaller scale than that of Cairo in terms of the number and amount. The number of confiscations in Damascus noted in *Mufākahat* and *I‘lām* for the period 885–922 was 17 (in contrast to 73 cases in Cairo in the same period), and in only 4 cases were more than 10,000 dinars confiscated.

⁸⁵He was a Shafi‘i jurist and played a role in negotiations on matters of civil life such as the rise of commodity prices and the alcohol trade (Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:29–30, 32, 41). Cf. al-Ghazzī, *Kawākib*, 1:114–18; Ibn al-Ḥanbalī, *Shadharāt*, 8:157.



(administrative heads of the quarters) and other influential persons began to collect the money.⁸⁶ At first, the governors strove to get the consent and cooperation of the ulama to defend this taxation. Later, however, only two examples of their seeking such support can be found,⁸⁷ indicating it probably was unnecessary.

In practical terms, 'arīfs of each quarter were charged with the task of collection, as in the example of Qijmās. The following report is suggestive: In Jumādā I 912/September 1506 when the governor ordered the conscription of twenty infantrymen from each quarter, 'arīfs of the quarters began to collect money following the example of Qijmās.⁸⁸ A noteworthy incident occurred during the twenty years between these two reports. When the order of infantry conscription was given in Muḥarram 907/July 1501, outlaws (*ghawghā'*) began to plunder the quarter. They justified their actions by insisting that the order stipulated that their wages should come at the expense of each quarter. This caused severe harm to the inhabitants, who appealed to the deputy governor. He suddenly decided to collect 50 dinars from each quarter, 40 dinars of which was allotted to the infantry.⁸⁹ The example of Qijmās in 891/1486 was mentioned as precedent for the collection in 912/1506 to avoid such confusion.

Who were the 'arīfs of the quarter? In spite of only meager information about the duties of the 'arīfs, we can say that they were the administrators responsible for security as well as tax collection in each quarter, and were appointed by the governor.⁹⁰ 'Arīfs pocketed the money collected from the quarter and seemed to have taken tips in exchange for allowing some to avoid paying, for the governor ordered 'arīfs to collect taxes in Jumādā I 893/April 1488, warning that no one should seek the protection of 'arīfs.⁹¹ When *zu'r* of the quarters were ordered to take part in an expedition in Ṣafar 914/June 1508, 'arīfs were asked to cover their expense, so as not to burden the citizens.⁹² The governor must have recognized the abuse committed by 'arīfs while collecting taxes. The people's strong opposition to the exploitation of the 'arīfs often led to their murder.⁹³

⁸⁶In other sources, three chief judges as well as Taqī al-Dīn were reported as cooperating in the taxation: Ibn Ṭūlūn, *I'lām*, 73–74; al-Buṣrawī, *Tārīkh al-Buṣrawī*, 112. See also note 66.

⁸⁷Refusal of taxation by the judge: Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:119. Refusal by shaykh of the quarter in Aleppo: *ibid.*, 282.

⁸⁸Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:309; *idem*, *I'lām*, 203.

⁸⁹Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:245; *idem*, *I'lām*, 148. Ibn Ṭawq reported in 893/1488 that it was usual to collect 60 dinars for infantry in the city (*Ta'liq*, 2:781).

⁹⁰Appointment: Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 2:24, 104. Keeping security: *ibid.*, 1:344, 2:11.

⁹¹Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:89; *idem*, *I'lām*, 76.

⁹²Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:330.

⁹³*Ibid.*, 2:21, 22.



Subordinate officials of the provincial governor such as the *ustādār*, the *dawādār*, and the *bardadār* collected the murder penalty, and they were often collectively called the *jamā'ah* of the governor.⁹⁴ The governor's *jamā'ah* was composed of two different groups, one being subordinate officials such as *ustādār*, *dawādār*, *khāzindār* (grand treasurer), *bardadār*, and *mihmandār* (host manager), the same posts that can be found in the central government of Egypt. These were administrators whose function was to perform political and administrative tasks for the provincial governor.⁹⁵ The *dawādār* was mainly responsible for tax collection, for the arrest and execution of criminals, and for supervising the *jamā'ah* itself.⁹⁶ They were primarily from the mamluks of the governor, and later the governors would value them above higher officials of the provincial government like *ḥājib al-ḥujjāb* (grand chamberlain).⁹⁷

The second group executed public policy: for example, the *ballāṣī* and *naqīb* carried out commands of the governor and the *dawādār*.⁹⁸ The *ballāṣī* was a tax collector, but only part time because the first group of *bardadār* and *ra's al-nawbah* (guard) held these positions concurrently.⁹⁹ They might also be recruited from the common people, as announced in the decree of Rabī' I 912/August 1506 that recently appointed *ballāṣīs* were dismissed and should return to their own professions.¹⁰⁰ The third group was mercenaries, such as the *'abīd* (black slaves) and the *zu'r*. *'Abīd* were hired by wage and worked as private soldiers of the governors, equipped with firearms, especially in the civil war against the sultan. They were also employed to make collections from citizens and for security.¹⁰¹ Lastly, the governors hired drifters (*gharīb*) entering the city and robber chieftains,¹⁰²

⁹⁴On *ustādār*: Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:234, 247, 377, 2:3, 7; idem, *I'lām*, 150. *Dawādār*: Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:89. *Bardadār*: Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:273, 279. *Jamā'ah*: ibid., 315, 348.

⁹⁵On *khāzindār*: Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:203, 303, 346, 355, 370. *Mihmandār*: ibid., 81, 215, 227. On other subordinate officials, see also notes 94, 96, 97.

⁹⁶On the *dawādār*: Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:151, 264. Expedition commander: ibid., 172, 277, 344. Arrest and execution: ibid., 255, 258–59, 291, 370. Leader of the governor's *jamā'ah* after his death: ibid., 80, 83, 86. On a powerful *dawādār*, Jandar: Ibn Ṭawq, *Ta'liq*, 3:1161.

⁹⁷*Dawādār* and *khāzindār* assumed the office of deputy-governor, in place of the great chamberlain (*ḥājib al-ḥujjāb*) who by the regulations had this office (Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:104, 309, 317, 330, 2:11).

⁹⁸On *naqīb*: Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:215. *Ballāṣī*: ibid., 251–52, 257; idem, *I'lām*, 159.

⁹⁹Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:221, 252, 254.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., 306.

¹⁰¹*'Abīd's* wages: ibid., 263. Gun arms: ibid., 201. Private mercenaries: idem, *I'lām*, 99, 105. Exploitation: idem, *Mufākahat*, 1:280. Police: ibid., 260.

¹⁰²*Gharīb*: Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:263. Robber: ibid., 288.



in their attempt to maintain control by incorporating marginal men in urban society into their *jamā'ah*.

The new taxation to support conscripted infantry and the imposition of the murder penalty benefited the governors financially and militarily. To perform these new procedures efficiently, they organized the *'arīfs* in each quarter while also maintaining their *jamā'ahs* as a distinct group separate from the formal administrative organization. Thus, they could control the inhabitants of the quarters directly. Next we will examine the actual conditions of people under this system of rule.

THE CITY QUARTERS AND THE COMMON PEOPLE

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE QUARTERS

There were two conflicts in Damascus that reflect political developments of the quarters at the end of the Mamluk period. One was the civil war from Šafar to Rabī' II 903/October to December 1497, and the other was the popular revolt in Jumādā I 907/October 1501.

In 903/1497 Āqbirdī (d. 904/1499), after being defeated by the sultan in Cairo, marched to Damascus. Īnāl al-Faqīh, the recently-appointed governor of Damascus, joined him. When their alliance against the sultan became known on 26 Šafar, citizens hastened to bring their property inside the city walls for fear of an attack by the rebellious troops. The next day the mamluks who supported the sultan gathered at the citadel. However, a split occurred among them and they were left leaderless. Ultimately they all fled from the citadel in fear of an attack by the rebels. On 29 Šafar the rebels first clashed with the inhabitants of the Šāliḥīyah Quarter in the northern suburbs, which had remained on the sultan's side, and established their base at the Maydān al-Ḥaṣā Quarter in the southern suburbs of Damascus, from which they planned to attack the inner city. On the sultan's side, the *nā'ib al-qal'ah* (governor of the citadel) was made commander and continued to wage battle for a month and a half. On 16 Rabī' II, the rebels launched a final attack with all their force, but could not enter the city. Hearing that the army, led by the new governor Kurtbāy al-Aḥmar (r. 903–4/1497–98), was approaching Damascus to subdue them, the rebels then abandoned Damascus for Aleppo.¹⁰³

It is noteworthy that the common people and *zu'r* fought on both sides. One report was that nobody supported the sultan other than the common people (*al-'awāmm*), especially those of the Shāghūr Quarter, and that Āqbirdī was amazed at the strength of the common people who fought equally with his army.¹⁰⁴ Several

¹⁰³Ibid., 185–96.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., 200.



reports also document the participation of the *zu'r* in the battle. Responding to the sultan's dismissal of Governor Īnāl and his demand for their submission, the rebels claimed it was a false report in order to keep the *zu'r* on their side.¹⁰⁵ This report suggests the *zu'r* were an indispensable force for the rebels. We know that they were employed as infantry because the people complained that the *zu'r* behaved as they pleased in each quarter because the Turks (mamluks) valued them as infantry.¹⁰⁶ Both groups often used firearms that were normally employed only by infantrymen. Therefore the *zu'r* might participate in the battles as infantry with guns. As the Shāghūr Quarter was a base of the *zu'r*, it is possible that they comprised the militia of the Shāghūr who fought against the rebels so bravely.

Also notable are the political activities of the people organized in each quarter, especially at major quarters located in the suburbs. At the time of Āqbirdī's rebellion, the Shāghūr and Šāliḥīyah Quarters were allied with the sultan and defended the inner city, while the Maydān al-Ḥaṣā and the Qubaybāt Quarters sided with the rebels. They were not forced to take sides, but allied themselves with one side or the other depending on their personal politics. The Šāliḥīyah Quarter fought against the rebels on the side of the sultan and refused the rebels' proposal of alliance, which demanded that they supply one hundred soldiers and safeguard the women and belongings of the rebels.¹⁰⁷ The inhabitants of the Maydān al-Ḥaṣā and Qubaybāt Quarters demanded their protection when moving to the Qabr 'Ātikah Quarter to take refuge from the combat.¹⁰⁸ In contrast, the quarters located between the Maydān al-Ḥaṣā and the inner city, such as al-Suwayqah, Qaṣr al-Ḥajjāj, and Masjid al-Dhabān, were often battlefields and suffered devastation.¹⁰⁹ Suburban quarters were exposed to the dangers of attack and plunder by invaders, and the inhabitants there moved to shelter in the inner city, with its protection of a strong city wall, as shown in the war of 903/1497. The four suburban quarters participating in the civil war with their own armies and of their own volition seem to have learned from bitter experience, however, that this was the best and indeed the only way to defend their quarters.

The popular revolt in 907/1501 illustrates political developments in the major suburban quarters of Damascus. First, the inhabitants of the Shāghūr and the

¹⁰⁵Ibid., 194.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., 195.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., 199. See also Miura, "The Šāliḥīyya Quarter in the Suburbs of Damascus: Its Formation, Structure, and Transformation in the Ayyūbid and Mamlūk Periods," *Bulletin d'études orientales* 47 (1995): 164.

¹⁰⁸Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:189, 191, 195.

¹⁰⁹Al-Suwayqah: Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:192. Qaṣr al-Ḥajjāj: ibid., 192–95. Masjid al-Dhabān: ibid., 189, 192–93, 195.



Maydān al-Ḥaṣā Quarters gathered at the congregational mosque of Muṣallā al-ʿĪdayn on 14 Jumādā I and allied to fight against the injustice (*ẓulm*) of the governor and his faction.¹¹⁰ Governor Qānṣūh al-Burj (r. 906–10/1501–4) had levied taxes on quarters like the Maydān al-Ḥaṣā and the Shāghūr and others so frequently that there was no quarter which had not been taxed during the one and one-half months since his arrival.¹¹¹ Here the word *ẓulm* is used in reference to this taxation by his *jamāʿah*. On that day the inhabitants of the Shāghūr Quarter clashed with the *jamāʿah* of the sultan, and the sultan dispatched the army, against which the people fought, allied with the *zuʿr*. Meanwhile “the strength of the people and the *zuʿr* overwhelmed the army,” defeating it, until the people of the quarter demanded that the governor of the citadel, sent as a messenger of the sultan, should transfer three officials (*ustādār*, *ballāṣī*, and the *naqīb* of the *muḥtasib*),¹¹² all of whom were responsible for collecting taxes. On the 15th and 16th, the people constructed barricades in their quarters, fought the army, and forced it to retreat. At night the governor, fearing their attack, sent a mission of the governor of the citadel and judges, to talk to their representatives (*akābir*) and promised to accept their demands to abolish taxation on markets and houses and execute the tax-collectors (*ballāṣī*). The people of the quarter accepted his answer as satisfactory.¹¹³ This, however, was only a temporary concession. Three months later the governor began to levy taxes on the inhabitants again and attacked the *zuʿr* of the Shāghūr Quarter and others. This time, his army defeated the *zuʿr*, put their leaders to death, and pillaged the Shāghūr Quarter.¹¹⁴ The *zuʿr* could not cope with the governor’s army by themselves. It was the collaboration of the *zuʿr* and the common people that had brought them victory over the governor in the revolt of 907/1503.

The political change is clear from the stories of the civil war in 903 and the revolt in 907: First, while the declining power of the mamluk army was apparent, the armed people had gained sufficient strength to fight in place of the mamluks, or to cope with them. The governors employed the *zuʿr* as infantry, which increased their own power. Second, the suburban quarters stopped depending on the power of the governor and instead initiated their own independent political actions. Third, the *zuʿr* played an important role in the popular movement of the quarter.

¹¹⁰Ibid., 250; idem, *Iʿlām*, 152.

¹¹¹Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:249; idem, *Iʿlām*, 151.

¹¹²This *naqīb* had been a broker (*simsār*) and was blamed as a subordinate of the tyrant (Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:279).

¹¹³Ibid., 250–52; idem, *Iʿlām*, 152–54.

¹¹⁴Taxation: Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:254, 258; idem, *Iʿlām*, 157, 159. Arrest and attack: Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:258–60; idem, *Iʿlām*, 160–61.



THE ACTIVITY OF THE ZU'R AND THEIR CHARACTER

The original meaning of the word *zu'r* is "thin-haired," and it also has the meanings of "lacking in wealth" and "lacking in virtue."¹¹⁵ At the end of the Mamluk period it designates a specific group of outlaws, using three variations of the root (*zu'r*, *ahl al-za'ārah*, *az'ar*).¹¹⁶ The words *ghawghā'*, *awbāsh* (both mean mobs), and *manāhīs* (scoundrel) were also used to designate specific groups like the *zu'r*.¹¹⁷ Here we examine their activities and their character, lumping them all together under the term *zu'r*.¹¹⁸ (See Appendix Table, Activities of the *Zu'r* in Damascus.)

ACTIVITIES OF THE ZU'R

We classified the activities of the *zu'r* into four categories in Table 1:

TABLE 1. TYPES OF ACTIVITIES OF THE ZU'R

Categories	Actions and their Frequencies	
Violence	Murder 30 (5 of these were victims)	Plunder and attack 24
Public	Procession 13	Militia 11
Mass Struggle	Fighting 15	Revolt 6
Others	Arrest and Execution 26	

¹¹⁵Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab* (Cairo, 1300–7), 5:411–12.

¹¹⁶Activities of the *zu'r* in Damascus were recorded for the first time in 889/1484, and thereafter reports of their activity suddenly increased, so that the number of reports concerning the *zu'r* totaled 111 by the decline of the Mamluk Dynasty, according to the sources of *Mufākahat*, *I'lām*, *Tārīkh al-Buṣrawī*, and *Ta'liq*. The term *az'ar* is used to designate individuals of the *zu'r*, especially the head (Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:283, 259, 315; idem, *I'lām*, 181). The term *zu'r* is a plural form of *az'ar*, designating the group of the *zu'r*.

¹¹⁷The words *ghawghā'* and *awbāsh* are sometimes connected to the word *zu'r*, such as *ghawghā' al-zu'r* and *awbāsh al-zu'r* (see Appendix Table). The same group is described by both words, *zu'r* and *ghawghā'*. Other words are also used to designate similar groups of the *zu'r*; *shabāb* (originally youth): Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 2:105; idem, *I'lām*, 260, 266; *manāhīs* (originally bandit): Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:66.

¹¹⁸The leading studies on the *zu'r* are: Lapidus, *Muslim Cities*, 153–63, 173–77; Akram Ḥasan al-'Ulābī, *Dimashq bayna 'Aṣr al-Mamālīk wa-al-'Uthmāniyyīn* (Damascus, 1982), 95–110; 'Abd al-Waddād Barghūt, "Jawānib Ijtimā'iyah min Tārīkh Dimashq fī al-Qarn al-Khāmis 'Asharah min Makhṭūṭ Ibn Ṭawq," in *Kitāb al-Mu'tamar al-Duwalī li-Tārīkh Bilād al-Shām* (Damascus, 1974). In a paper published in 1989, I described relations between the quarters of Damascus and the *zu'r*: Miura, "The Structure of the Quarter and the Role of the Outlaws: The Ṣālihiya Quarter and the *Zu'r* in the Mamluk Period," in *The Proceedings of the International Conference on Urbanism in Islam*, vol. 3 (Tokyo, 1989). In a recent paper by James Grehan, the author's analysis of motivation for the revolts in the quarters neglects a key topic: the socio-political relationships of the *zu'r* to the quarters and the common people there. "Street Violence and Social Imagination in Late-Mamluke and Ottoman Damascus (ca. 1500–1800)," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 35, no. 2 (2003).



The activities in the first category are the most frequent, which shows that the *zu‘r* most commonly committed illegal acts of violence. In regard to murder, they intentionally killed *‘arīfs*, *ballāšīs*, and *naqībs* who collected taxes,¹¹⁹ which means that these murders had a political basis. They could be hired to kill anyone—for example, to kill the aide of an arbitrary ruler (*a‘wān al-ḡalamah*) or, just the opposite, to assassinate at the request of a ruler a shaykh who helped those who were unjustly oppressed.¹²⁰ The targets of their plundering and attacks were indiscriminate. They were strong enough to attack with impunity even in the light of day, and to celebrate their success by holding a banquet at which they displayed their loot.¹²¹ Afterwards they sold the loot and pocketed the money.¹²² The *zu‘r* plundered as they pleased, especially when a state of anarchy prevailed owing to the death of a governor or to civil war, and the citizens feared them.¹²³ They are differentiated from simple robbers (*surrāq*, *ḡarāmīyah*)¹²⁴ stealing at night. We can say, based first of all on their behavior, that the *zu‘r* were an outlaw group that maintained its livelihood by violent acts such as plunder and murder.

If they had only committed illegal acts, they would soon have disappeared or lived at the edge of society. Their second role reveals their public function. They were conscripted as infantry by the governors and asked to participate in public processions such as receiving delegations. In Muḡarram 909/July 1503 the governor included the armed *zu‘r* in a procession, though he had previously prohibited the arming of the *zu‘r*.¹²⁵ The third category is mass struggle, that is, combat among the *zu‘r* of different quarters (four cases) and revolts against the rulers (six cases). It is noteworthy here that the *zu‘r* organized the whole quarter for combat. In Dhū al-Ḥijjah 907/June 1502 the *zu‘r* of the Maydān al-Ḥaṣā Quarter rose as one against the governor in response to the execution of their leader. People fled their houses and the heads of the Muṣallā Quarter and others constructed barricades to defend their quarters.¹²⁶ The fourth category, arrest and execution, represents the

¹¹⁹ *‘Arīf*: Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 2:24. *Ballāšī*: *ibid.*, 1:221. *Naqīb*: *ibid.*, 176.

¹²⁰ Tool of the tyrant: Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:181. Shaykh: *ibid.*, 279–79; *idem*, *I‘lām*, 177; al-Ghazzī, *Kawākib*, 1:77–78.

¹²¹ Ibn Ṭūlūn criticized this banquet in his chronicle: They rob the poor by force. They shall never be happy no matter how much they are proud of their power and wealth. (Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:180).

¹²² *Ibid.*, 239.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 1:183–85, 2:27–28. On the fear of the citizens, see column “Fear” in the Appendix Table.

¹²⁴ *Surrāq*: Ibn Ṭawq, *Ta‘līq*, 2:582, 891, 914, 3:1436, 1509, 1516. *Ḥarāmīyah*: Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:68; Ibn Ṭawq, *Ta‘līq*, 1:510, 2:649, 3:1486.

¹²⁵ Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:268.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 258–59; *idem*, *I‘lām*, 160.



results produced by the activities in the other three categories.

The above-mentioned three categories describe the ambiguous character of the *zu'r*. The first category shows an outlaw character, those who did not hesitate to employ violence in the violation of the law. Their violence, however, was not only for their own interests, but had an additional effect on the city and its quarters. The second category tells us that their organized power was indispensable to citizens as well as rulers, to defend the city and its properties. Furthermore, from the third category, we see that they took over leadership of the battles to defend the quarter whether the inhabitants wanted them to or not. In all these categories, the activities of the *zu'r* were closely related to the socio-political changes of the city and the quarters.

RELATION TO THE RULERS

The governors could not ignore the habitual plundering and murders of the *zu'r*, since they not only destabilized the civil order, but also at times attacked the governors and their subordinates. Therefore the governors began to take action against the *zu'r*, for example by issuing a decree prohibiting the *zu'r* from arming themselves.¹²⁷ Especially after the civil war in 903/1497 when the need for armed infantry increased, Governor Kurtbāy organized new troops by, on the one hand, conscripting 'abīd (black slaves) from among the citizens and training them in the use of firearms, and on the other hand, clamping down on the *zu'r* until most of them fled the city during his reign.¹²⁸ Soon after the revolt of 907/1503, the governor ordered the arms merchants to submit a document swearing not to sell arms to anyone but the mamluks.¹²⁹ He began to take measures against the *zu'r* after the end of 907, arresting the *zu'r* leaders of the Maydān al-Ḥaṣā Quarter and others and executing them on Dhū al-Ḥijjah 907/July 1502, attacking the Shāghūr Quarter with the 'abīd and mamluk army, killing the *zu'r* leaders of the Shāghūr and the Qarāwinah in the battle, plundering the markets there, and burning the quarters.¹³⁰ Both governors, having experienced the danger of employing the *zu'r* as auxiliary forces, intended to train the 'abīd instead of the *zu'r* and to check the latter by the former.

Nevertheless these measures proved unsuccessful in the end. In reaction, the *zu'r* attacked the quarter of the 'abīd and plundered it in Rabī' I 910/August 1504.¹³¹ At the same time, the amirs began to hire the *zu'r* for their private armies

¹²⁷Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:197, 299, 314, 331.

¹²⁸Ibid., 201–3; al-Buṣrawī, *Tārīkh al-Buṣrawī*, 228.

¹²⁹Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:252.

¹³⁰Ibid., 258–59, 260–61; idem, *I'lām*, 160–61.

¹³¹Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:280.



even though the hiring of the *zu'r* had been prohibited by decree in Shawwāl 905/May 1500.¹³² This decree was ignored by the amirs even after the great chamberlain (*ḥājib al-ḥujjāb*) remonstrated with Governor Arikmās for giving arms to their leaders in Sha'bān 911/January 1506.¹³³ Thereafter, the *zu'r* were always conscripted from each quarter and the role of the *'abīd* was completely eroded.¹³⁴

Why did these measures against the *zu'r* lack consistency and effectiveness? Our answer: because the *zu'r* were necessary and indispensable for the governors and amirs facing the declining power of the mamluks. Put another way, although mamluks were the sole military force for a long time, other military forces eventually appeared to compete with the mamluks around the turn of the sixteenth century. Therefore the governors needed to keep the *zu'r* on their own side, by bestowing robes of honor (*khil'ah*) and asking for an oath of homage,¹³⁵ just as they did with the mamluks.

RELATIONS TO THE QUARTERS

The activities of the *zu'r* were usually related to the quarters in terms of organization. Table 2 shows their relations to the individual quarters:

TABLE 2. RELATIONS BETWEEN THE ZU'R AND THE QUARTER

Shāghūr	24	Maydān al-Ḥaṣā	11
Šāliḥīyah	11	Muṣallā	5
Qubaybāt, Shuwaykah	4 for each	Qarāwinah, Mazābil, Qabr 'Ātikah	2 for each
Bāb al-Jābiyah	2	Qaṣr al-Ḥajjāj	1

Table 2 lists 68 cases and 11 quarters; of these 11 quarters, all except Bāb al-Jābiyah were located in the suburbs of Damascus outside the city wall. The activities of the *zu'r* were most conspicuous in the suburbs. They seemed, however,

¹³²Ibn Ṭūlūn, *I'lām*, 108. A similar decree is found in Ramaḍān 906 (Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:233).

¹³³Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:283, 295, 298; idem, *I'lām*, 181, 197, 198–99. In addition, the two persons who struggled for the office of governor's *dawādār* both hired the *zu'r* (Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:269).

¹³⁴Conscription and imposition for expeditions was most frequent during the period 912–22/1506–16: in all, 13 cases, representing 62% of the total number.

¹³⁵*Khil'ah*: Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:185; idem, *I'lām*, 78. Swearing homage: idem, *Mufākahat*, 1:282–83; idem, *I'lām*, 180.



to be present in all quarters, as the phrase "the *zu'r* of each quarter" appears.¹³⁶ Furthermore they were also in the villages surrounding Damascus, as the head of the *zu'r* in the Shāghūr Quarter called on the *zu'r* of Damascus and the Ghūṭah (surrounding villages of Damascus) to plunder and held a great banquet.¹³⁷ The *zu'r* were most active in the five quarters of Shāghūr, Maydān al-Ḥaṣā, Ṣāliḥīyah, Muṣallā, and Qubaybāt, where they fought with each other, while also allying themselves to fight against the governor, especially if he oppressed them.¹³⁸

The quarter became a unit by which to organize the *zu'r* under their head (called by them *shaykh* or *kabīr*), especially in the above-mentioned major suburban quarters. The *zu'r* head of the Shāghūr Quarter was famous for being titled *sharīf* and *sayyid* (meaning descendant of the Prophet Muḥammad)¹³⁹ and had wide influence over other quarters, as mentioned before. The heads of the *zu'r* in Maydān al-Ḥaṣā and Bāb al-Jābiyah were also heads (*shaykh*) of the quarters at the same time,¹⁴⁰ which means the head of the *zu'r* not only led the *zu'r* in his quarter but also represented the quarter itself.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE PEOPLE

The *zu'r* were a menace to the population and their attacks and plundering were aimed at ordinary people as well as the wealthy and upper classes. Rivalry between the governors and the *zu'r* might have been a cause for the *zu'r* to seek revenge. The murders increased the blood penalty on the quarters. The following describes the *zu'r* in the quarters:

Taxation and property confiscation increased recently in each quarter, and the *zu'r* became angry, wanting to pay nothing at all. Some of them pressured the shops under their control, to make them sell at a higher price than other shops and to get kickbacks from them. When being taxed for the quarter, they tried to evade the imposed levy by transferring the money to other shops. They enjoyed their fill of food and drink, and were depraved in their exploitation of women and Muslim property. When you find a man brandishing a horrible dagger in the middle of his body, it is indeed

¹³⁶Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:316; 330; idem, *I'lām*, 208.

¹³⁷Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:283.

¹³⁸Struggle between the Maydān al-Ḥaṣā and the Shāghūr Quarters: Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:179, 232. Between the Qubaybāt and the Maydān al-Ḥaṣā: *ibid.*, 182. Alliance: *ibid.*, 260; idem, *I'lām*, 160–1.

¹³⁹*Sayyid*: Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:219; *sharīf*: *ibid.*, 225.

¹⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 289, 332; idem, *I'lām*, 191.



a criminal who is short and ugly to support confiscation by the ruler.¹⁴¹

As shown by this description, the *zu'r* in each quarter controlled the markets and shops from which they pocketed kickbacks to the extent that no one could do business without paying a kickback (*fā'idah*) to them.¹⁴² In exchange, they protected (*yaḥmī*) the shops from taxation by the governor.¹⁴³ Considering this relationship between the *zu'r* and the quarter, the governor's attempt to exact taxes from shops under their control was a threat to their control of the shops and the quarter itself. This is why they often killed *ballāṣīs* and *'arīfs* who collected tax from the quarter.

We now come to a re-examination of the popular revolt in 907/1503, especially the relationship between the *zu'r* and the quarter. The revolt began, it is clear, with the alliance of the Shāghūr and Maydān al-Ḥaṣā Quarters. A victory of the people against the governor was achieved through an alliance between the *zu'r* and the common people. Three questions arise, however, about participation by the *zu'r*.

The first is whether the *zu'r* participated in the revolt from its beginning or later rallied the people in their support. The report of *I'lām* on the first clash says "the inhabitants (*ahl*) of the Shāghūr Quarter clashed with the *jamā'ah* of the governor. Other *zu'r* appeared there after hearing of the clash, and united against the mamluk army." The *zu'r* of the Shāghūr must have participated in the first clash and asked for help from other *zu'r*.

The second question is who the chiefs (*akābir*)¹⁴⁴ of the people were who met with the delegation of the governor on 16 Jumādā I to talk about a peace agreement. Lapidus supposed them to be shaykhs of the quarters. He insisted that the shaykhs and the *zu'r* dealt separately with the governor in these negotiations and that the *zu'r* continued to murder officials, only afterwards making peace with the governor. In his study, he equates the shaykhs of the quarters with leading notables such as influential ulama who represented the interests of the inhabitants and negotiated on their behalf, and he assumes that they used the power of the *zu'r* as a counter-

¹⁴¹Ibn Ṭūlūn, *I'lām*, 195. A similar description is found in Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:292–93, relating that the *zu'r* commanded the markets (*sūq*) under them not to cooperate in the imposition. We find a description of Ibn Ṭawq in 901/1496 of the *zu'r* going around the markets in the inner city with their swords drawn and demanding money from the merchants and others (Ibn Ṭawq, *Ta'liq*, 3:1437).

¹⁴²Ibn Ṭūlūn, *I'lām*, 208.

¹⁴³Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:316; idem, *I'lām*, 208.

¹⁴⁴*Akābirhum*: Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:251; *akābir al-ḥārāt*: idem, *I'lām*, 154.



balancing power to that of the governor.¹⁴⁵ His lucid explanation contradicts the sources, however, concerning both this event and others. The sources do not use the term *shaykh* but rather *akābir* to designate the chiefs in the negotiations. As the word *akābir* was often used to designate the leaders of the *zu'r*,¹⁴⁶ it is possible to suppose that *akābir* here means the leaders of the *zu'r*. Lapidus' explanation is based on his thesis that the shaykhs and the *'arīfs* represented the interests of the inhabitants and negotiated on their behalf.¹⁴⁷ As for the descriptions of the shaykhs and *'arīfs* of Damascus in the *Mufākahah*, *I'lām*, and *Tārīkh al-Buṣrawī*, we find no cases in which they actually acted in the interests of the people of the quarter.¹⁴⁸ Considering that a leader of the *zu'r* was also the shaykh of the quarter, and that the shaykhs of the quarters, along with the *ballāṣīs* and *naqībs*,¹⁴⁹ were denounced in a decree by the sultan, the assumption that the shaykh of the quarter was an autonomous representative for the inhabitants is far too simplistic.¹⁵⁰

Finally, the course of events after the treaty of 16 Jumādā I gives us a key to understanding the role of the *zu'r* in the revolt. On 4 Jumādā II, the next month, the governor sent a messenger to the head of the *zu'r* in the Shāghūr Quarter. The governor promised not to demand blood money for those killed in the fight, not even from those responsible for it, and concluded a peace (*ṣulḥ*) with the *zu'r*, much to the relief of both the citizens and the governor. Then the *zu'r* of the Shāghūr, Maydān al-Ḥaṣā, and Qubaybāt quarters held a peace-making banquet for the governor.¹⁵¹ Observing these complicated procedures, we see that the *zu'r* fought against the governor, and therefore the *zu'r* anticipated the imposition of

¹⁴⁵Lapidus, *Muslim Cities*, 156–57.

¹⁴⁶*Akābir*: Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahah*, 1:283; idem, *I'lām*, 180; *kabīr*: idem, *Mufākahah*, 1:247, 259.

¹⁴⁷Lapidus, *Muslim Cities*, 92–93.

¹⁴⁸Lapidus regards the shaykhs as mediators between the rulers and the common people, citing examples of the latter's opposition to the former's imposition in 890 (correctly 891) and in 907 (ibid., 93). These sources, however, simply describe the opposing ones as *al-nās* (citizens), and do not mention shaykhs (Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahah*, 1:254; idem, *I'lām*, 72–74).

¹⁴⁹In Dhū al-Ḥijjah 918/February–March 1513 a decree was issued to prohibit the activities of shaykhs of the quarters (*mashā'ikh al-ḥārāt*), body guards (*ru'ūs al-nuwab*), and *naqībs* (Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahah*, 1:374). *Ru'ūs al-nuwab* in general designates the office responsible for guarding the sultan, but the three cases in Damascus were all tax collectors (*ballāṣī*: Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahah*, 1:70, 221; Ibn Ṭawq, *Ta'liq*, 3:1509). The purpose of this decree was clearly to prohibit exploitation by these three offices. It is plausible to assume that the shaykhs of the quarters were actual rulers of the quarters, like the *zu'r*, rather than communal representatives of the inhabitants.

¹⁵⁰Al-'Ulabī in his study defines the shaykhs of the quarters as dominating the inhabitants of quarters and speaking in the name of the inhabitants before the provincial rulers, whereas the *'arīfs* dominated the inhabitants, taking root in the quarters and cooperating with the rulers in taxation. No reference is given, however, to the original sources (al-'Ulabī, *Dimashq*, 95–96).

¹⁵¹Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahah*, 1:251–52; idem, *I'lām*, 154–55.



blood money. True peace could not come without a solution to the problem of blood money. It is noteworthy that before making peace the governor was most worried that his *ballāṣīs* would not perform their task and the collection of taxes might stop.¹⁵² As mentioned above, the people demanded transfer of the *ustādār* and *ballāṣī* who were responsible for tax-collection. The crucial issue was the governor's taxation of the quarters by his *jamā'ah*, and the *zu'r*'s resistance by force.

This evidence leads us to conclude that the *zu'r* fought against the governor throughout the revolt in 907/1503 simply to prevent taxation in their quarters. They fought to defend their interests in the quarters, and not to aid the people. This explanation is consistent with the character of the *zu'r*, who defended their own interests at all times; the alliance between the common people and the *zu'r* was possible because abolition of the tax was a common interest and goal for both. The governors were eager to control the *zu'r*, and conversely the *zu'r* resisted the arrest of their leaders with all possible force.¹⁵³ Thus, they competed and struggled with each other to gain control over the quarters. Whoever succeeded there would get the money, whether as a tax or as a protection fee (*ḥimāyah*).

SOCIAL BACKGROUND

The *zu'r* ruled the quarters of Damascus and their inhabitants during the final years of the Mamluk period. At the same time, they confronted the authority of the governors and thereby protected the inhabitants from the exactions of the governors. For the quarter inhabitants, to take shelter under the *zu'r* meant protection from the governor's exploitation, and if one became a *zu'r* himself, he could escape from the rule of both the governor and the *zu'r* and gain wealth and power. The influence of the *zu'r* emerged suddenly and became widespread in a very short time.¹⁵⁴ This sudden development might be caused by such socio-political change around the quarters.

It is difficult to know the organizational development of the *zu'r* and its inner structure, because sources on the members and the organization of the *zu'r* are scarce. In spite of this, we find among its members common people such as brokers (*dallāl*), weavers (*ḥā'ik*), carpenters (*najjār*), and tin makers (*samkarī*).¹⁵⁵ The report of Ibn al-Mibrad (d. 909/1503), a Hanbali jurist, on a strange event of mass assassinations in 902/1496–97 shows changes in the esteem for *zu'r* among the ulama.

¹⁵²Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:252; idem, *I'lām*, 154.

¹⁵³See Appendix Table, nos. 60, 79, 81, and 92.

¹⁵⁴See note 116.

¹⁵⁵Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:204, 238, 2:105; idem, *I'lām*, 191.



This year, after the death of governor Qānṣūh, a legal scholar published his opinion that the murder of the subordinates of unjust tyrants (*ẓalamah*) should be permissible, and encouraged the *zu'r* to assassinate them. A simple-minded man killed a subordinate or gave silver coins to the *zu'r* to assassinate a subordinate. After the killing, the murderer declared that the person killed was a subordinate [of the unjust tyrant]. Due to this, so many fatalities occurred that about thirty persons were killed in the Ṣāliḥīyah Quarter and about one hundred in the inner city. . . . I was asked about this issue two times. . . . [My answer is] both lack legality. The *zu'r* must not be encouraged.¹⁵⁶

This opinion of Ibn al-Mibrad represented the traditional idea of the ulama to oppose both the *zu'r* and unjust rulers and not to justify the violence of the *zu'r* as a weapon against injustice. This idea had no power, however, due to the fact that rulers, chief judges, and the *zu'r* all competed with each other for profit and power. Therefore the new opinion that condoned the violence of the *zu'r* as a means of removing injustice is worth noting. Such an opinion must have encouraged the weak and suffering to seek the protection of the *zu'r*.

In this year of 902 murders by the *zu'r* and clashes among the quarters indeed continued, even up to the time of the great pilgrimage festival.¹⁵⁷ On 14 Dhū al-Ḥijjah 902/8 August 1497, the *zu'r* of the Maydān al-Ḥaṣā Quarter invited those of the Shāghūr, Qubaybāt, and Ṣāliḥīyah quarters and others to a banquet to make peace. Amirs, the *nā'ib al-qal'ah*, and other mamluks participated as well as three persons who were rumored to be leaders of the *zu'r*; one was Taqī al-Dīn, deputy judge of Ibn al-Furfūr, and another was al-Sayyid Ibrāhīm, the *naqīb al-ashraf*.¹⁵⁸ The third, Ibn al-Muḥawjib (d. 912/1506), is described as generous, with real power, someone to be asked for aid by those who suffered injustice, and visited by influential ulama and amirs.¹⁵⁹ We cannot ascertain that these three were

¹⁵⁶ Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:181–82. The response of Ibn al-Mibrad on this matter is held at the National Asad Library of Syria under the title "Al-Dhu'r fī Aḥwāl al-Zu'r" (Ms. 3243).

¹⁵⁷ Murders: Ibn Ṭawq, *Ta'liq*, 3:1491, 1500; quarter clashes: *ibid.*, 1507–8.

¹⁵⁸ Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:180; Ibn Ṭawq, *Ta'liq*, 3:1513. On Qādī Taqī al-Dīn Ibn Qādī Zar': Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:63, 272, 284, 349; Ibn Ṭawq, *Ta'liq*, 1:370, 437; al-Ghazzī, *Kawākib*, 1:119; Ibn al-Ḥanbalī, *Shadharāt*, 8:90. On al-Sayyid Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad: Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:189, 315; al-Buṣrawī, *Tārīkh al-Buṣrawī*, 33, 57; al-Ghazzī, *Kawākib*, 1:100–1; Ibn al-Ḥanbalī, *Shadharāt*, 8:60.

¹⁵⁹ Al-Ghazzī, *Kawākib*, 1:136–37. His influence on the governors and other ulama: Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:189, 202, 249, 307; al-Buṣrawī, *Tārīkh al-Buṣrawī*, 74, 178, 191, 223, 229; Ibn Ṭawq, *Ta'liq*, 1:194, 2:813, 3:1367, 1514. Another example is that the *nāzirs* of the Umarīyah



in fact the leaders of the *zu'r*, but they must have had actual connections to the *zu'r* to mediate in their conflicts even though they did not hold high official positions.

The *zu'r* were illegal outlaws who acted in their own self interest, whether on the side of the rulers or on the side of the common people. Due to this ambiguous character, the governor could not subdue them, until they turned into the representatives of justice who opposed injustice often through violence.¹⁶⁰

CONCLUDING REMARKS: THE CHANGING STRUCTURE AND DYNAMISM OF URBAN SOCIETY

The purpose of this article has been to examine the theory of Muslim urban society and the Mamluk regime presented by Ira M. Lapidus, by re-constructing the structure of urban society at the end of the Mamluk period. Lapidus argued that the mamluks were able to rule Muslim urban society by combining the ulama and the common people into one social group. His theory is based on the assumption that three major groups—the mamluks, the ulama, and the common people—comprised that urban society. These three, however, were changing at the end of the Mamluk period.

First, the mamluks' military power had weakened and they had become "salaried workers" in the city after losing their principle source of income (*iqṭā'*). Meanwhile, influential amirs and provincial governors formed their *jamā'ahs*, organizing 'abīd and the *zu'r* as private troops and using subordinates like *ballāṣī* to perform tasks of city administration and maintain their rule. The mamluks thus lost their unity as a political force, and social differentiation appeared among them. Second, a similar differentiation or polarization can be seen among the ulama. High officials such as the chief judges also organized their *jamā'ahs* by using subordinate staff in their faction to shoulder city administration and politics together with the influential members of the military, and to exploit the citizenry. Ulama other than the high officials seemed to be hired for these *jamā'ah* as subordinates or to depend on allowances from *waqf* properties as before. Frequent struggles over *waqf* institutions and *waqf* properties¹⁶¹ suggest that *waqfs* had been a major economic resource for the ulama. Ultimately they lost their dignity and role as religious and legal intellectuals and forfeited their influence on urban society, except for a few high officials like Ibn Furfūr. Finally, the common people of the third stratum were

Madrasah in the Šāliḥīyah Quarter hired robbers (*ḥarāmīyah*) and the *zu'r* in opposition to the governor (see Miura, "The Šāliḥīya Quarter," 159–60).

¹⁶⁰It is noteworthy that the outlaws called *shuṭṭār* and *zu'r* fought against the injustice of judges, *muḥtasibs*, and other officials, supporting the just rulers, sultans and caliphs, in the oral folk literatures of the Mamluk period such as *Sīrat al-Zāhir Baybars* and *Sīrat 'Alī Zaybaq*. It might reflect the popular image of the *zu'r*, which shall be discussed in my future work.

¹⁶¹Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 1:113, 202, 319, 321, 346, 385. Ibn Ṭawq, *Ta'liq*, 1:109.



ruled directly by the *jamā'ahs* of the governors, influential amirs, and high officials, and they were also squeezed by force. In such severe conditions, the common people had only three possible choices: suffering the exactions unwillingly, being a subordinate of the person who ruled, or taking shelter under the protection of the *zu'r*. The *zu'r*, with their violence and organization, created in the quarters a domain that even the ruling power could not invade, ignoring authority and the law. The *zu'r* can be regarded as *jamā'ahs* inside the quarter for people who had no other way to participate.

In the cities, at the end of the Mamluk era, the provincial governors, amirs, high officials, and the *zu'r* all formed their own factions (*jamā'ahs*) to strengthen their domains and to achieve their own interests. They struggled with each other by force. Here, in fact, the three strata of mamluks, ulama, and the common people had already dissolved and lost their bases as social strata as well as political actors. They all began to move into the factions. Scholars have regarded such social mobilization so far as being, on the one hand, decline and depravity or corruption and, on the other hand, regarded social mobilization as disorder. Recent studies, however, have shed light on both mobilization and factionalization of society under Ottoman rule in Egypt and Syria.¹⁶² Although we might discuss at greater length whether the socio-political change discussed in my article was only a temporary phenomenon, appearing solely at the end of the Mamluk period, we should also consider the dynamism and potential inherent in any urban society that enables illegitimate organizations like *jamā'ahs* and *zu'r* to become cores of administration and rule, and to represent two contradictory notions of justice ('*adl*) and injustice (*ẓulm*).

¹⁶²The growth of influential families, both military and civil, in Ottoman Egypt and Syria can be regarded as re-organization of the societies by the household factions. See Abdul-Karim Rafeq, *The Province of Damascus 1723–1883* (Beirut, 1966); Linda Schatikowski Schilcher, *Families in Politics: Damascene Factions and Estates of the 18th and 19th Centuries* (Stuttgart, 1985); and James Reilly, *A Small Town in Syria: Ottoman Hama in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (Oxford, 2002).



APPENDIX TABLE: ACTIVITIES OF THE ZU'R IN DAMASCUS

No.	Yr.	Mo./Day	Terms	Quarters							Activities							Indiv.		Sources	Notes							
				MH	SR	SA	Q	MU	SH	Mu	P/A	Pr	Mi	F	R	A/E	O	F	Herd			Pers name						
1	889	10/?	C																							T:202		
2	890	1/1	A																								I:70	
3	890	1/30	A, F																								T:441, M1:66	
4	890	6/17	H																								T:488	
5	890	10/11	A																								T:524	
6	892	8/8	A																								T:713	
7	893	6/19	A																								M1:92	
8	894	11/29	C																								M1:110	
9	899	2/10	C																								M1:153	
10	899	8/3	A																								T:1281	
11	899	8/6	C																								T:1282	
12	900	11/11	D																								M1:166	
13	901	2/8	C																								T:1386	
14	901	12/29	A																								T:1437	extortion
15	901	12/?	B																								M1:168	
16	902	7/22	A																								T:1478	
17	902	9/22	A																								T:1491	
18	902	9/23	A																								T:1491	
19	902	10/23	A																								M1:176	
20	902	10/24	A																								T:1499	
21	902	10/24	C																								M1:177	
22	902	10/26	A																								T:1500	
23	902	10/27	A																								T:1500	
24	902	11/23	A																								M1:179	
25	902	11/30	F																								M1:179, T:1507	
26	902	12/6	A																								T:1511	Mazābil
27	902	12/8	A																								T:1512	
28	902	12/8	A, F																								T:1512	police
29	902	12/14	A, F																								M1:180, T:1513	banquet, Mazābil and Qabr 'Ātikah
30	902	12/15	A																								T:1513	



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