Notes on the Contemporary Sources of the Year 793

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

In Little’s words,

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

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 Chapter One deals with the year 778 and is still unpublished, but I will be making systematic reference to it throughout this article.

2In this article, I will be dealing only with ḥawāديث.
establish what Claude Cahen calls a “repertorium” of the sources of the period, by which I mean an analytical survey of the sources which aims at classifying them in terms of their value to modern historians. All the goals can be achieved by comparison, which, in the last analysis, aims at disentangling the inter-relatedness and inter-dependence of the sources so as to discover the original contribution of each historian. . . .

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

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

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5This would correspond roughly to the reign of Barquq as amīr kabīr (779–84/1378–82) then sultan (784–91, 792–801/1382–89, 1390–99).
6The last entry of the book is the report about the murder of Yalbughā al-ʿUmarī; Al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah, ed. Ahmad Abū Milḥim (Beirut, 1987), 14:338–39. On the later parts of Ibn Kathīr’s chronicle see Ashor’s contention, originally advanced by Laoust, that the last part of Al-Bidāyah was written not by Ibn Kathīr himself but by one of his students, probably Ibn Ḥijjī: “Études sur quelques chroniques mamloukes,” Israel Oriental Society 1 (1971): 284. Al-ʿUmarī had led a revolt in 762 against his ustādīh and sultan al-Nāṣir Ḥasan (d. 762/1361), which resulted
of another Syrian historian who was not connected to the Syrian school, Ibn Ḥabīb al-Ḥalabī’s (710–79/1310–77) Tadhkiraṭ al-Nabīḥ fī Ayyām al-Manṣūr wa-Banīḥ and Durrat al-Aslāk fī Mulk Dawlat al-Ātrāk end respectively in 770 and 777. As for Egypt, the other major pole of the Mamluk Sultanate, the Naṭr al-Jumān fī Tarājīm al-Aʿyān, the chronicle of al-Muqrī (who was still alive in 766/1364–65), the last of the Egyptian historians to have been a contemporary of al-Nāṣir Muhammad, ends in 745/1345. It is true that a new generation of historians like Ibn Khaldaṁūn (732–808/1332–1406), Ibn al-Furat (735–807/1335–1404–5), Ṣārīm al-Dīn Ibrāhīm Ibn Duaqmaq in the latter’s assassination. See al-Maqṛī’s Kitāb al-Sulāk li-Ma’rifat al-Duwal wa-al-Mulāk, ed. Saʿīd ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ ʿĀshūr (Cairo, 1970), 3:1:155 (hereafter cited as Al-Sulāk) for a brief summary of Barqūq’s travels and activities following the murder of Yalbughā al-ʿUmarī in 768/1366; see also Walter J. Fischel, “Ascensus Barcoch” (I) and (II): A Latin Biography of the Mamluk Sultan Barqūq of Egypt (d. 1399) Written by B. de Mignanelli in 1416,” Arabica 6 (1959): 64 ff.


8Edited by Muḥammad Muḥammad Amīn with an introduction by Saʿīd ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ ʿĀshūr, (Cairo, 1976–86) (hereafter cited as Tadhkirah). This work covers the years 687 to 770.

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

10On this author and his work, see Little, An Introduction, 40.


13Three editions of Al-Jawhar al-Thamīn fī Siyar al-Khulafāʾ wa-al-Mulāk, the lesser of the two extant histories written by Ibn Duqmaq, are available: Saʿīd ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ ʿĀshūr’s edition (Mecca, 1983) (hereafter cited as Al-Jawhar; “ʿAshūr); Muḥammad Kamāl al-Dīn ʿIzz al-Dīn ʿAllī’s edition in two volumes (Beirut, 1985) (hereafter cited as Al-Jawhar ʿAllī); and ʿUmar ʿAbd al-Salām Tadmūr’s edition entitled Al-Nafṣah al-Miskīyāh fī al-Dawlah al-Turkiyāh (Sidon and
(745–809/1349–1407), Ibn Ḥijji (751–816/1350–1413),14 Badr al-Dīn al-ʿAynī15 (762–855/1361–1451), al-Maqrizī16 (766–845/1364–1441), Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī17 (773–852/1372–1449), Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbāh,18 and others would insure a solid transition in historical writing from the Turkish to the Circassian period. But globally, whereas Bahri Mamluk historiography has been subjected to rigorous and comprehensive source analysis,19 with the exception of a certain number of studies of a limited scope,20 nothing of the sort has been undertaken with regard to the early Circassian period.21 Consequently, beyond general historiographical surveys, we still have not established the value of Burjī22 historical works in their

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

14“Tārīkh Ibn Ḥijji,” MSS Köprüülü 1027, Chester Beatty 4125, Chester Beatty 5527, and Berlin Ahlwardt 9458; see below for relevant folio numbers.


16Al-Mawāʾīz wa-l-Iʿtibār bi-Dhikr al-Khitāb wa-al-Āthār (Beirut, n.d.); Al-Suluq, vol. 3.


19Notably Little, An Introduction; Ulrich Haarmann, Quellenstudien zur frühen Mamlukenzei, Islamkundliche Untersuchungen 1 (Freiburg, 1969).


22Notwithstanding David Ayalon’s argument in favor of not using the term Burjī to describe the Circassian period, I will use this word interchangeably with that of Circassian to describe the
own right and in relation to one another. But even at this level, the key period which witnessed the end of Qalāwūnīd rule and the rise of Barquq and the Circassians is particularly understudied: with the exception of a few words scattered here and there in scholarly articles and monographs, and in the introductory notices of editions of primary sources, nothing compares with the surveys authored by Linda S. Northrup on the early Bahri period, and by Carl S. Petry on the late Circassian era.

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

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


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


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

Yalbughā al-Nāṣīrī was a member of Yalbughā al-ʿUmarī’s inner circle (khāṣṣakīyah) but was superseded in the quest for power by al-ʿUmarī’s younger mamluks, chief among them Barquq. He joined the rebellion against the sultan in 791 when he was the viceroy of Aleppo, the very city where he would meet his maker in 793. On him, see “Al-Manhal,” Dār al-Kutub MS 13475 Tārīkh, fols. 842a–845a (hereafter cited as “Al-Manhal”).

Ibn Tagḥribirdī, Al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah fī Mulāk Miṣr wa-al-Qāhirah, ed. Muḥammad Ḥusayn Shams al-Dīn (Beirut, 1992), 11:206ff, 210ff. Within the framework of this article, I will make use of Al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah when making casual references to political events that took place
Jumādā II 791,29 his exile to al-Karak and his escape therefrom in Ramaḍān,30 his military feats and defeats in Syria in late 791 and early 792,31 and his return to the throne in the middle of Şafar 792.32 After 793, Barquq was not to suffer from any major threat until his death in 801/1399.

What also stands out in the year 793 is the Syrian dimension of a large proportion of the events that were the object of reports. What took place in Syria in 793 ran the gamut of problems often encountered by Mamluk rulers in that part of their empire: intrigue on the part of former and present foes and friends, the involvement of Arab and Turcoman nomadic formations in the political and military affairs of the region, the power relations between the Mamluk polity and its vassal states, etc.33 To this one ought to add Barquq’s own visit to Syria from Ramaḍān until Dhū al-Ḥijjah, because of the inability of Yalbughā al-Nāṣirī34 to score a decisive victory against Mintāš, let alone capture him. Last but not least is the particular state of war brought about by the quasi-“siege” of Damascus by Mintāš and his allies, from the beginning of Rajab until the middle of Sha‘bān. During this period, the Mintāshis, who were entrenched outside the western wall of Damascus, fought against the loyalists under the command of Yalbughā al-Nāṣirī, while the links of both groups to the Syrian hinterland remained uninterrupted.35

A few words concerning the sources are in order here. First, we are clearly dealing with two different sets of sources which will be studied as such: one group comprises the Egyptian Ibn Duqmāq, Zayn al-Dīn Ṭāhir,36 Ibn Khaldūn, during the period at hand. Three editions of Al-Nuṭūm will be used here: Shams al-Dīn’s edition mentioned above (hereafter cited as Al-Nuṭūm); The History of Egypt, 1382–1467 A.D., part 1, 1382–1399 A.D., trans. William Popper, University of California Publications in Semitic Philology 13 (Berkeley, 1954); and Abū’l-Mahāsin Ibn Ṭaghrī Birdī’s Annals, ed. idem, University of California Publications in Semitic Philology 5, pts. 1–3 (746–800 A.H.) (Berkeley, 1932–35).

29Al-Nuṭūm, 11:234ff.
30Ibid., 268ff, 287ff.
31Ibid., 294ff.
32Ibid., 12:3ff.
33On all this, see below.
34After they had taken power in Cairo following their successful rebellion against Barquq, Yalbughā al-Nāṣirī and Mintāš ended up fighting it out as a result of the coup undertaken by the latter against the former. Upon the return of Barquq to power, Yalbughā al-Nāṣirī was released from prison and later nominated viceroy of Damascus, a position that entailed, among other things, the prosecution of the war against Mintāš. More on this below.
36More on the nature of Zayn al-Dīn Ṭāhir’s Dhayl Durrat al-Aslāk below.
and Ibn al-Furāṭ, and the other, the Syrian Ibn Ḥijjā and Ibn Ṣaṣrā. As will become apparent below, the distinction established between the two groups has more to do with the geographical home-base of these writers than with the existence of Syrian and Egyptian “schools” of historical writing. Second, all the above-mentioned historians were contemporaries of the events of 793 and included in their works original data.37 While al-‘Aynī at thirty-one years of age, al-Maqrizī at twenty-seven, and al-‘Asqalānī at twenty were young men, they were old enough to have heard of, followed, or been impressed by the events of that year. Two of them, al-‘Aynī and al-‘Asqalānī, actually intervened directly in the main body of their respective works as self-conscious narrators: the former in signaling his return from Aleppo to Cairo38 and the latter in mentioning his trip to Qūṣ in the Ṣaʿīd.39 But despite the importance of these “newcomers” and the fact that their works merit systematic analysis in their own respect,40 they and later historians like Ibn Qādī Shuhbah, Ibn Taghrībidī (812–74/1409–70), al-Jawharī al-Ṣayraffī41 (819–900/1416–94), Ibn Iyās42 (852–930/1442–97), ‘Abd al-Bāṣīt Ibn Khalīl al-Malāṭī43 (844–920/1440–1515), and others were yet to make their mark in terms of producing primary historical data for this particular year: globally, with the notable exception of al-‘Aynī, who presented in his ‘Iqd reports about Syria that are not found elsewhere,44 all these historians owe the overwhelming majority of their akhbār either to Ibn al-Furāṭ and, possibly, to Ibn Duqmāq,45 or to al-Maqrizī, whose Al-Sulūk, though written differently, is nothing but a shorter yet almost identical copy of Tārīkh al-Duwal. It is for this reason that the works of these newcomers will not be studied here, even though reference to them will be made when needed.

37 Even though some of them did rely on other histories in the elaboration of their own work.
39 Inbā’, 3:77.
40 This is indeed what I have embarked upon in Chapter Two of my dissertation.
44 See for example the details he gave about the execution of Yalbughā al-Nāṣirī at the hands of Barquq in the citadel of Aleppo at the end of Dhu’l-Qa‘dah: “‘Iqd,” MS Ahmet III 2911/B2, fol. 98a, “‘Iqd,” MS Dār al-Kutub 1584 Tārīkh, fols. 433–34. Al-‘Aynī’s account is similar, though not identical, to Mignanelli’s for the same event; see Fischel, “Ascensus Barcoch (II),” 161.
45 See below.
Ibn Duqmaq is undoubtedly one of the most original historians of the early Circassian period. Already in the opening pages of his Inbā’, Ibn Hajar readily stated that “most of what I have copied [in the Inbā’] is from [Ibn Duqmaq] or from what Ibn al-Furāt had copied from him.”\(^46\) On the same page, Ibn Hajar also noted that al-‘Aynī had so extensively borrowed from Ibn Duqmaq that he copied entire pages from his work, spelling mistakes and all.\(^47\) Ibn al-Furāt and al-‘Aynī’s indebtedness to Ibn Duqmaq, alluded to by Ibn Hajar, has been confirmed by my own study: at least for the year 778, the Tārīkh al-Duwal\(^48\) is more copious in terms of sheer data than Ibn Duqmaq’s major work Nuzhat al-Anām fī Tārīkh al-Islām,\(^49\) but the accounts of the latter form the backbone of the former to which Ibn al-Furāt added his own original material; as for al-‘Aynī, the annal of the year 778 in his ‘Iqd al-Jumān is basically an identical copy of Ibn Duqmaq’s Nuzhah.\(^50\)

\(^{46}\) 1:3.

\(^{47}\) Ibid. Ibn Hajar wrote that al-‘Aynī “mentions in his description of some events what indicates that he actually witnessed them . . . [but] the event would have taken place in Egypt while he was still in ‘Aynṭāb . . . .” (ibid.). The maliciousness displayed here by Ibn Hajar towards al-‘Aynī can be attributed to the academic clash between them concerning diverging ways of interpreting al-Bukhārī’s Sahih; on this, see Anne F. Broadbridge, “Academic Rivalry and the Patronage System in Fifteenth-Century Egypt: Al-Aynī, al-Maqrīzī, and Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalānī,” Mamlūk Studies Review 3 (1999): 98–101; and Aftāb Ahmad Rāḥmānī, ‘The Life and Works of Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalānī.” Islamic Culture 47 (1973): 59–61, 172–74.

\(^{48}\) The Tārīkh al-Duwal annal of the year 778 is found in MS Chester Beatty 4125, fols. 28a–45b; on the “survival” of parts of Ibn al-Furāt’s work in excerpts made by Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbāh, see Reisman, A Holograph MS, 26–27, 31–32.

\(^{49}\) See previous note.

\(^{50}\) The value of Ibn Duqmaq as a major historian of the period at hand is corroborated by a host of other factors. For example, the secondary sources that deal with his works (Muḥammad Kamāl al-Dīn ‘Izz al-Dīn ‘Alī, Arba‘at Mu‘arrīkhīn wa-Arba‘at Mu‘allaftūn min Dawlat al-Mamālik al-Jarākisah [Cairo, 1992], 122–23; Tadmur’s introduction to Al-Nafḥah, 16–17; Eliyahu Ashtor, “Some Unpublished Sources for the Baḥri Period,” in Studies in Islamic History and Civilization, ed. U. Heyd [Jerusalem, 1961], 28–29) mention a host of people whose historical writings he used as sources, but none of these save three, namely Badr al-Dīn Ibn Ḥabīb al-Halabī, his son Zayn al-Dīn TāHIR, and al-Nuwayrī al-Iskandari (still alive in 775/1372), the author of a history of Alexandria (Kitāb al-Imām bi-al-I‘lām fīmā Jarat bi-hi al-Akhām wa-al-‘Umūr al-Maqdīyāh fī Wāqi‘at al-Iskanḍarīyāh, ed. ‘Azīz Suryāl ‘Aṭṭār [Hyderabad, 1968–76]), lived during this period nor wrote about it. One then might assume that Ibn Duqmaq relied on oral information or eyewitness accounts, his and other people’s, to write “the history of events of his own time” (Ashtor, Études, 28). This might actually explain the absence, in his historical narrative, of references to sources which are nevertheless to be found in the text of his obituaries, where Badr al-Dīn Ibn Ḥabīb al-Halabī, his son Zayn al-Dīn TāHIR, and the poet al-‘Aṭṭār are very frequently copied and, more often than not, acknowledged; on al-‘Aṭṭār, see Al-Manhal, 2:177–79.
If one were to place the Egyptian historians of the year 793 in descending order of importance, circumstantial factors would however place Ibn Duqmāq at the bottom of the list. The only extant work by Ibn Duqmāq that deals with this year is his *Al-Jawhār al-Thamīn fī Siyar al-Khulafāʾ wa-al-Mulūk,* a dynastic history covering the entirety of the Burji period until 805, which is however poorer in information than his more detailed annalistic history, the *Nuzhāt al-Anām fī Tārīkh al-Islām,* upon which it is based. As a matter of fact, there is nothing in the meager, slightly more than two pages of *Al-Nafhah* dealing with 793. The existence in this work of a cluster of “meaty” *akhbār* that deal with Barqūq’s stay in Aleppo at the end of Dhū al-Qa‘dah will allow us to formulate tentative conclusions regarding the genealogy of accounts found in Ibn al-Furat’s *Tārīkh al-Duwal,* but there is hardly anything original in the rest of the text except the mention by the author of the sultan’s stop, unreported by others, at Irbid on his way to Damascus. To be able to reconstruct the major events of the year, especially those taking place in Syria, one has to turn to sources other than *Al-Nafhāh.*

More informative than Ibn Duqmāq’s *Al-Nafhāh* is *Dhayl Durrat al-Aslāk.* In his introduction to the edited text of *Tadhkirat al-Nabīh,* a work written by Ibn Ḥabīb al-Ḥalabi, Sa‘īd ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ ‘Aṣhūr advanced the hypothesis that Zayn al-Dīn Tāhir had not only written a continuation of his father’s *Durrat al-Aslāk,* from 778 until 801, *Dhayl Durrat al-Aslāk,* but that the whole of the former work as well as its *dhayl* were actually authored by none other than Zayn al-Dīn

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51 See above, n. 13.
52 Both *Al-Jawhār* ‘Aṣhūr and *Al-Jawhar* ‘Alī end in 797, and *Al-Nafhāh* in 805.
53 According to Sa‘īd ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ ‘Aṣhūr, two manuscript volumes of the *Nuzhāh* that start respectively in 659 and 777 are available at Dār al-Kutub al-Misrīyah in MS 1740 *Tārīkh* (*Al-Jawhar* ‘Aṣhūr, 13). No indication of the year with which volume two ends is provided. However, in his introductory comments to his edition of the *Nuzhāh* covering the years 628–59, Samīr Ṭabbārāh wrote that Dār al-Kutub al-Misrīyah has an eighty-page manuscript of this work which starts with the reign of al-Mansūr ‘Alī in 778 and ends in 804 (*Nuzhāh* Ṭabbārāh, 15). Whether or not he his referring to the second volume of Dār al-Kutub MS 1740 *Tārīkh* is not clear. Regardless, all attempts to get hold of this *Nuzhāh* manuscript, which supposedly contains the annal of the year 793, have led to naught as it was apparently lost! Incomplete sections of the years 804–5/1401–3 from the *Nuzhāh* have been preserved in selections made by Ibn Qādī Shuhbah in “Al-Muntaqā min Tārīkh Ibn Duqmāq,” MS Chester Beatty 4125, fols. 197a–206a; see Reisman, “A Holograph MS,” 27, 31, 39, 40.
54 *Al-Nafhāh,* 262–64.
55 Ibid., 263–64.
56 Ibid., 263.
57 See above, n. 9.
58 MS Bodleian Marsh 319, fols. 134a ff.
Tāhir himself. Both external\textsuperscript{59} and internal\textsuperscript{60} evidence seem to indicate a certain consensus which goes against ‘Āshūr’s reasoning, namely that Ibn Ḥabīb al-Ḥalabī wrote Durrat al-Aslāk and that his son continued it as a dhayl from 778 onward. But perhaps the strongest evidence against the principal argument advanced by ‘Āshūr in support of his contention, namely the striking similarity between Durrat al-Aslāk and its dhayl in terms of the heavy and systematic use of saj,\textsuperscript{62} is to be found in the Dhayl Durrat al-Aslāk itself. My research on the annal of the year 778 has shown that the narrative of political events was dwarfed by the sheer quantity of biographical data, principally obituaries.\textsuperscript{63} But starting with the year

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

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

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

\textsuperscript{62}MS Bodleian Marsh 319, fols. 134a ff.

\textsuperscript{63}The section of Dhayl Durrat al-Aslāk comprising appointment and political reports covers
788, and especially with 789, one notices a propensity on the part of Zayn al-Din Tahir to use less and less saj’ in his reports, save for those with some degree of biographical content, and to make more and more space for political events. This trend is evident in the annal of the year 793: of a total of about twenty-four folios, eleven report political and military events as well as appointments.

These reports do not cover the whole range of events included by, say, Ibn al-Furat and Ibn Hijji. Zayn al-Din Tahir does not seem to have departed from the fundamental format he adopted from his father’s Durrat al-Aslak, in that he paid little attention to issues which were unimportant to the eyes of the Aleppo-born-and-raised Egyptian litterateur and civil servant that he was. Thus, with twelve folios (ibid., 133b–139), while obituaries take up nineteen folios (ibid., 139b–148b). However, much of the appointment reports are basically long biographical sketches, and the narrative of what could be construed as “political events” per se covers only four folios out of a total of thirty-one.

In the annal of the year 788, the account of the completion of Barquq’s Bayn al-Qasrayn madrasah complex contains no discernible signs of saj’ (“Dhayl Durrat al-Aslak,” MS Bodleian Marsh 319, fols. 220b–221a). The same cannot be said of the other non-biographical account, that relating the plague in Alexandria (fols. 222b–223a), which is replete with saj’; maybe its very topic, one that deals with such a great calamity, made it prone to such a stylistic treatment.

Regardless, a scientific edition of Durrat al-Aslak and its dhayl is needed before any conclusions about the modality of the use of saj’ by Zayn al-Din Tahir and his father can be formulated; see above, n. 9.

Ibid., fols. 228a–b, the account of the expedition sent by Barquq to the northern marches of Syria to deal with Mintaš’s rebellion and Tamerlane’s incursions in Anatolia.

Namely those dealing with appointments and obituaries. There are parts of reports concerning events of a political nature where Zayn al-Din Tahir did use saj’, but these are confined to akhbār prone to stylistic licence: for example, those dealing with a characteristic “villain” such as Yalbugha al-Naṣir in the annal of 791 (ibid., 237b–238a; 239a; etc.) or where the author utilized panegyrics to relate something about the sultan, such as his entry into Damascus in Ramadhān 793 (ibid., 268a–b), etc.

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

Appointment reports that contain a core of historical data but which are submerged by the usual stock formulae used by Zayn al-Din Tahir have not been included in the calculation. See for example the khabar concerning the appointment of Jamāl al-Din al-Qaṣar as chief Hanafi qadi in Cairo: ibid., fols. 264b–265a.

The obituaries written about him are replete with verses he composed on a variety of occasions; see Al-Manhal, 6:366–68, no. 1220; al-Sakhaawi, Al-Daw’ al-La’imi’ li-Ahl al-Qarn al-Taṣi’ (Beirut, 1992), 4:3–5 (hereafter cited as Al-Daw’).

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

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

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

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

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

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

75 Ibid., 268a.

76 Ibid., 268a–b.

77 Ibid., 269a–270a.

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

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

80 Such a network could have been established by members of his own family, namely his father and his uncle Sharaf al-Din Husayn, whose biographies mention their travels between Syria and Egypt during their lifetime; see Al-Durar, 2:29, no. 1534, and 4:104, no. 284, and "Dhayl Durrat al-Aslāk," MS Bodleian Marsh 319, fol. 132b.
among other things, for the correspondence of the sultan. It is also possible that he himself was part of Barquq’s expedition to Syria. Even though he made no mention of himself, he did note in his work that most men of the sword and of the pen accompanied the sultan at the end of Sha’bān 793 on his expedition to Syria, and that only a very few functionaries and amirs remained behind in Egypt in the service of Kumushbughā al-Ḥamawī, the nā’ib al-ghaybah. That he might have been part of the movement of the court to Syria is a possibility since he was probably still in the employ of the state in 793.

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

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

81 On those attributes of the dīwān al-inshā’, where Zayn al-Dīn Ṭahir is reported to have worked, which are relevant here, see Petry, Civilian Elite, 204–5, and Bernadette Martel-Thoumian, Les civils et l’administration dans l’État militaire mamлюk (IXe/XVe siècle) (Damascus, 1992), 40–1.
82 Dhayl Durrat al-Aslāk,” MS Bodleian Marsh 319, fols. 267a–b.
83 This would not have been the first visit he made to his homeland after his installation in Egypt at an unknown date: as late as 791, he recorded in his work that he was in the company of Yūnūs al-Nawrūzī, Barquq’s dawādār, when the latter, on his way to Egypt after his defeat at the hands of Yalbughā al-Nāṣirī, was killed in Syria in Rabī’ II 791 by the Arab tribal leader ‘Anqā’ Ibn Shaṭṭ; see ibid., fol. 239a, and the obituary of Yūnūs in Al-Nuṣūm, 11:320.
84 Even though it is impossible to ascertain Zayn al-Dīn Ṭahir’s presence in the chancellery in the year 793, it is probable that he was working in this office, because as late as 795 he is placed there by one of the sources: Ibn al-Furāt cited a written khabar from Ibn Duqmāq (an echo of which can be found in Al-Nafḥah, 269–70) where the latter reported hearing the information from Zayn al-Dīn Ṭahir, who is presented as one of the secretaries of the dast and the scribe of an Amir Qulumṭāy al-‘Uthmānī (Ṭārīkh al-Duwal, 9:2.247–48).
85 With the exception of one report whose wording is close to one found in Ibn al-Furāt’s Tārīkh al-Duwal; on this see below, and also n. 110.
86 These might have included written sources not available today; on this see below.
their way into the works of other historians. He did however have an impact on other historians as he is one of the most often-quoted sources in the obituaries section of contemporary and later chronicles. Ultimately, the originality of Dhayl Durrat al-Aslāk lies in the person of Zayn al-Dīn Ṭāhir, a man with a foot in both his homeland of Aleppo and his Cairene place of residence, a situation which greatly influenced him and his work. The whole purpose of Dhayl Durrat al-Aslāk appears to have been to inform the reader in a peculiar literary style, from a Syro-Egyptian perspective, about the civilian a’yān of the Mamluk Sultanate, while providing information about the military elite, without however dwelling upon the vicissitudes of political history.

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

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

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

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

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

and Barquq himself, had been appointed chief Maliki qadi in 786–87/1384–85, but had lost favor with al-Zahir after he had signed, in Rajab 791, a Mintâsh-inspired fatwâ requiring the execution of the sultan then in exile at al-Karak.

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

The reporting of the events of 793 starts with a long passage about the tribulations of the career of Kumushbugha al-Ḥamawî (d. 801/1399), an amir of Yalbugha al-‘Umarî, and his arrival to Cairo during the month of Sa‘far. This is then followed by a very similar report dealing this time with the summoning from Syria of yet another leading amir, Aytamish al-Bajâṣî (d. 802/1399). And whereas in other chronicles the news of the arrival of the emissary of the ruler of Tunis is covered in two to three lines, in Al-‘Ibar it occupies half a page and

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94Fischel, Ibn Khaldûn in Egypt, 34–36; see also Târîkh al-Duwal, 9:1:112.
95See for example Muh˝ammad Mustafá Ziya˝dah, who claimed that Ibn Khaldûn was the founder of a school of historical writing that blossomed in Egypt and attracted many thinkers such as al-Maqrızî: Al-Mu‘arrikhu˝n f˝i Mis˝r f˝i al-Qarn al-Kha˝mis ‘Ashar al-Mila˝d˝/al-Qarn al-Ta˝si’ al-Hijrî (Cairo, 1954), 6.
96Little, in his An Introduction, has shown that those parts of Al-‘Ibar that deal with the reign of Nâshir al-Dîn Muḥammad had simply been culled from other histories (75–76); see also his Historiography, 435.
97This is certainly the case with the sections of Al-‘Ibar dealing with the year 778.
98Al-‘Ibar, 5:499–503.
100Al-‘Ibar, 5:499–500.
101Ibid., 500. On Aytamish al-Bajâṣî, see Al-Manhal, 3:143–151, no. 588. The arrival of Aytamish and Kumushbughâ, noted Ibn Khaldûn, reflected Barquq’s renewed confidence and came as the result of the strengthening of his rule: Al-‘Ibar, 5:499, 500.
details the long links between the two rulers. The rest of the reports of the year deal with the political story of 793, Mintâsh’s on-going rebellion against the sultan, and contain, with the exception of details about the siege of Damascus, all its key events: the arrival of Mintâsh to Damascus; the departure of the sultan for Syria; news about the major battles outside of Damascus between Yalbughâ and his foes; the sultan’s arrival to Damascus and later to Aleppo; the events taking place in and around Aleppo leading to the arrest and execution of Yalbughâ al-Nâşirî; then the sultan’s return to Egypt. For these, Ibn Khaldûn relied both on Târîkh al-Duwal and on a source or sources depicting in some detail political and military events in Syria. Even though Ibn Khaldûn sometimes summarized and/or reworded Ibn al-Furât, the influence of the latter on the former can clearly be seen in the following passage:


In other passages, it is less blatant but still discernible in terms of the choice of items and their order of appearance. For example, contrary to Ibn al-Furât, Ibn Khaldûn did not describe the present sent to the sultan on his way to Aleppo by the Turcoman chief Süli Dülgâdir, but he did note, like the author of Târîkh

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103 Here Ibn Khaldûn showed his interest in things diplomatic and in matters pertaining to his region of origin, the Maghrib.

104 Al-‘Ibar, 5:501–2.

105 Ibid., 502–3.

106 I am not ruling out the possibility that both used a common source. As I noticed in the case of the year 778, Ibn Khaldûn’s accounts are so close to Ibn al-Furât’s, and the latter’s to Ibn Duqmâq’s, that it is difficult to establish with great certainty the indebtedness of Al-‘Ibar to either Nuzhah or Târîkh al-Duwal. In the absence of the Nuzhah annal for the year 793, it will be impossible to completely rule out a common source for Ibn Khaldûn and Ibn al-Furât.


108 Along with Sâlim al-Dükârî, Dülgâdir is frequently mentioned in the events of the year 793. On Süli and his family, see J. H. Mordtmann and V. L. Ménage, Encyclopédie de l’Islam, 2nd ed., 2:246–47, and Al-Manhal, 6:183–86, no. 1164. As to Sâlim al-Dükârî, apart from the obituary of a person, Dimâshq Khuja ibn Sâlim al-Dükârî, who appears to be his son (Al-Manhal, 5:324–25, no. 1028) and the scattered references throughout contemporary and later histories, I have not as of yet
al-Duwal, the arrival of a delegation from the tribe of ʿIsá and Muhanna pledging loyalty to Barquq. The wording is somewhat different, but the contents are the same.

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


For example, the verb tarajjala used by Zayn al-Dīn Tāhir and Ibn Khaldūn.

Qāqūn was located off the coast half way between Gaza and northern Palestine; see A Chronicle of Damascus, 245, n. 1481. In Al-ʿIbar, the name of this locality is given as Qānūn.

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

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

A region of the Jordan valley located south of Lake Tiberias; see A Chronicle of Damascus, 87, n. 511. All the locales mentioned here are part of one of the routes from Gaza to Damascus; see Popper, Egypt and Syria Under the Circassian Sultans, 1:48 and map. no. 13. This route includes a stop at Irbid, a city where, according to Ibn Duqmāq, the sultan stopped on his way to Damascus; see above, n. 56.
lift his siege of the Syrian capital; on the following day, al-Nāšīr’s forces would experience a crushing defeat at the hands of Nu’ayr at Dūmayr. Curiously, Ibn Khaldūn placed the desertion of Tumantamur after the battle of Dūmayr, contrary to what the Syrian sources maintain. What is to be made of all this? With regards to the report concerning the arrival of Barquq to Syria, because of the variety of locales, we might posit the following: either all the authors used a common source but played around with historical truth and thus made al-Nāšīr welcome the sultan to Syria in three different places, or we are in the presence of three different strains of akhbār, namely Ibn Khaldūn’s unknown source (Qāqūn), Ibn Ṣaṣrā’s own eyewitness and/or first-hand account (al-Ghwawr), and Zayn al-Dīn Ṣāhir’s (al-Lajju’m). This of course is pure conjecture: beyond establishing the existence of a Furāṭian and Syrian strain of akhbār in Al-‘Ibar, there is no way of ascertaining the identity of the latter group of reports.

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

However, Tārīkh al-Duwal contains none of the wealth of information found in the works of the Syrian authors about the nearly two months of fighting in and around Damascus between the Mintaṣarīs and Yalbughā al-Nāšīr. This aspect of the war in Syria was very well “covered” by Ibn Ṣaṣrā and Ibn Hijji, and one has to wait until Barquq’s departure from Cairo before the appearance in Tārīkh al-Duwal

115See below.
116In Al-‘Ibar, it is Yamażtamur (5:502).
117Maybe unknown Syrian source(s) or Ibn Duqmāq’s Nuzhah? See below.
118We could be dealing with four strains of akhbār if we include al-‘Aynī, who alone provided details not found elsewhere, namely the description of the horse on which Barquq made Yalbughā ride; see n. 110.
119See below the discussion about the possible nature and identity of this or these Syrian source(s).
120Save for Ibn Ṣaṣrā and possibly Ibn Hijji; see below.
121See above.
122Rajab and Sha‘bān; see above and below.
al-Duwal of akhbār from or about Bilād al-Shām, sometimes paralleling those of the two Syrian authors, especially his stay in Aleppo and the events surrounding it. Before Barquq’s arrival in Syria, Ibn al-Furat’s reports about this region lacked detail and were of a second-hand nature since they were brought to Cairo by post-riders or by representatives of both Syrian and Egyptian military office-holders shuttling between the two regions. The analysis of these reports in Tārīkh al-Duwal might help clarify the reasons behind certain inconsistencies between this chronicle on the one hand, and mainly Syrian sources on the other. There is a systematic difference between the way Ibn al-Furat’s reports from Syria via post-riders and messengers described what was going on in Syria, and the evidence presented by Ibn Ḥijji and Ibn Ṣaṣrā.

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

124Ibid., 266–71.
128A palace built by al-Ẓāhir Baybars outside of the city’s western wall; see A Chronicle of Damascus, 36, n. 216.
131Popper, Egypt and Syria Under the Circassian Sultans, 1:45.
132This building was probably located just west of the city’s walls in an area which included Yalbughā’s mosque, al-Maydān, and Qaṣr al-Ablaq, where the Mintāshīs were conducting their siege of the city.
133A similar inconsistency can be found in another report dated 5 Sha‘bān brought to Cairo by a mamlik of the viceroy of Ṣafad with news, yet again, of Mintāsh’s escape from Damascus and his pursuit by Yalbughā. Not only do the Syrian sources not mention any flight on the part of Mintāsh
no mention is made of the defeat at ‘Aqabat al-Tīnah on 6 Rajab, at the hands of Mintāshīs and Yamanī tribesmen, of a Barquq party from the Biqā‘ comprising Ibn al-Hānash, Tankizbughā (the Barquqī viceroy of Baalbek), and Qaysī tribesmen and others, on its way to help al-Nāṣirī.

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

134 Al-Durrah al-Muḍī‘ ah, 80–81; “Tārīkh Ibn Hiǧī,” fols. 96a–b; and TIQS, 1:374.
135 A spot probably located halfway between Baalbek and Damascus in the Anti-Lebanon range; see A Chronicle of Damascus, 112, n. 676.
136 This party was led by Shukr Āḥmad (a.k.a. Āḥmad Shukr; more on him below) and Ibn Hilaǧ al-Dawlah, a Yamanī leader from al-Zabadānī region west of Damascus; see ibid., 106, n. 632.
137 Son of Ibn al-Hānash, an important tribal chief from the Biqā‘ who had been viceroy of Baalbek and was executed by Mintāsh in 792; see ibid., 16, n. 106, and the sources cited therein.
138 On this battle, see below.
139 Tārīkh al-Duwal, 9:2:262.
140 Ibid.
141 A town in the Hawrān region of Syria; see A Chronicle of Damascus, 128, n. 759, and the references therein.
142 News about Mintāsh’s flight was again brought to Cairo on 6 Sha‘bān and 13 Ramaḍān, respectively: Tārīkh al-Duwal, 9:2:262–63 and 264.
143 Because of the betrayal of one of his right-hand men, Tumāntamur; see above.
144 A village south of Damascus; see A Chronicle of Damascus, 74, n. 453, and the references therein.
145 Al-Durrah al-Muḍī‘ ah, 93; Al-‘Ibar, 5:502; TIQS, 1:379.
battle, in which one of the sons of Manjak al-Yūsufi was killed reached Cairo, according to Ibn al-Furāt, only during the first third of Ramaḍān, at a time when Barquq was in Palestine on his way to Syria.

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

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

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

149 Tārīkh al-Duwal, 9:2:263.

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

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

152 Two neighborhoods located just outside the city’s southern walls.
times and had died in custody after Barquq had ordered him removed from office in 788. Contrary to the sons of Manjak al-Yuṣufī, that other viceroy of Damascus, who sided with Barquq during 791–93, Muḥammad Shāh ibn Bayḍamur (d. 793/1391) and the supporters of his household fought alongside Mintāsh even when the latter moved against Yalbughā al-Naṣīrī in Shābān 791. He was nominated atābak of Damascus by Mintāsh in Ramadān 791 and participated in numerous confrontations with the forces loyal to Barquq, until his capture in 792 and his execution in Cairo by Kumushbūgah al-Ḥamawī in 793. It was also Shukr Āḥmad, a former Bayḍamur amir, who led the raid into Damascus the day of his arrival with Mintāsh on 1 Rajab 793, and rode to his ustādh’s home where he was joined by another one of Bayḍamur’s sons, Āḥmad, whose execution by Barquq on 21 Dhū al-Ḥijjah was movingly described by Ibn Ṣaṣrā. Last but not least, the viceroy of Damascus Yalbughā al-Naṣīrī stands out as the official with the most reasons and with the capability to mislead the sultan and his court back in Egypt. He had often been at odds with Barquq when the latter was an “ʿUmarī” mamlūk, then atābak, and when he became sultan. It would not be surprising then that Yalbughā al-Naṣīrī would have used his powers as the head of the Syrian political apparatus to propagate false news in Egypt. In the sources rumors about his treachery abound. Eventually, when he reached Aleppo, Barquq became assured about his suspicions when Sālim al-Dūkārī, who allegedly had captured Mintāsh and had promised to release him into the custody of the sultan,
sent him a letter detailing the extent of the relations between al-Nāṣirī and Miṅṭāsh.\textsuperscript{164} This led to the execution of Yalbughā al-Nāṣirī on 27 Dhū al-Ḥijjah.\textsuperscript{165} The best summary of the situation described here can be found in the words of Mignanelli, who, we are told by Fischel, knew Barquq personally. Of the events in Syria, he remarked that

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

Here, as elsewhere, in light of the available sources, we are dealing with sheer conjecture. As a matter of fact, one of the reports brought to Cairo on 5 Sha‘bān by the mamluk of the viceroy of Ṣafad, announcing the escape of Miṅṭāsh from Damascus,\textsuperscript{167} might very well weaken the hypothesis advanced above. The viceroy of Ṣafad, Iyās al-Jirjāwī (d. 799/1396),\textsuperscript{168} was a supporter of Barquq throughout the period of 791–93,\textsuperscript{169} and it would be curious that he would have “fed” the court in Cairo information that did not correspond to the reality on the ground. Of course, there are ways with which one can circumscribe this issue: maybe al-Jirjāwī, who entered Damascus on 8 Rajab and participated in the fighting alongside al-Nāṣirī,\textsuperscript{170} felt he could not afford to inform Barquq about the inability of his forces to break the stalemate; maybe he considered the loss of the building of Bahādur on the part the Miṅṭāshīs as a major setback for the rebels, and a troop movement on their part as a retreat; maybe he was in on the conspiracy;
or maybe, even at the risk of pushing the conspiracy theory to its limits, the mamluk who brought the news to Cairo was "briefed" by Yalbugha’s men, etc. However, the fact remains that many of the akhbār reported in Tārīkh al-Duwal as having arrived between 27 Rajab and the first ten days of Ramadān, some through the sultan, who, while on his way to Damascus, was probably still getting his information from post-riders from Syria, simply do not correspond to what was going on according to sources "on the ground." Generally, the nature of the reports used by historians depends on such factors as the format of their work, their own intellectual aptitudes and interests, their geographical location, their sources, etc. In light of the discussion above, attention ought also to be paid to the channels through which information transited before it reached the historian, and more importantly to the agenda of those military figures, bureaucrats, and others who controlled its flow and content: a tall order indeed in view of the paucity of data that would allow for such an investigation.

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

172Ibid., 275, 282, 285.
173These were probably reduced in size by Ibn Duqmaq to fit Al-Nafḥah, which is a summary of Nuzhah.
174Words and sentences that are not italicized indicate similarities between the two texts. Punctuation mine.
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The similarities between the two texts is self-evident, and one might safely assume that it was Ibn al-Furat who borrowed from Ibn Duqmâq rather than the other way around, since Nuzzah would have probably provided a larger account than that of Al-Naftah.

Another possible source for Tarih al-Duwal is Zayn al-Dîn Tahir and his Dhayl Durrat al-Aslak, which is frequently quoted by Ibn al-Furat. Zayn al-Dîn noted in his narrative of the events leading to the siege of Damascus that as Yalbughâ al-Nâsir left the city to confront the rebels who were reported in Baalbek, Mintâsh headed to the Syrian capital so that they unknowingly crossed each other’s path. The words he used for that last bit of information, fa-takhâlaftu fi al-ṭariq wa-sabaqahu Mintâsh, are almost identical to those of Ibn al-Furat, fa-khalafahu fi al-ṭariq wa-atá ilá Dimashq. Even though the narratives of Ibn al-Furat and Zayn al-Dîn Tahir are clearly not identical, they do appear at more or less the same point in the narration in both Tarih al-Duwal and Dhayl Durrat al-Aslak. If one discounts the randomness of the appearance of this cluster of words, the issue of the direction of the borrowing, small as it may be, still has to be addressed, but it is more likely than not that it was Ibn al-Furat who borrowed from Zayn al-Dîn Tahir. Up until the arrival of the sultan in Damascus, the reports concerning Syria reported in Tarih al-Duwal arrived, as we noted above, with post-riders or with representatives of military office-holders. A notable exception is the khabar which appears under the heading “News about Mintâsh’s

175 In his obituary of the qadi al-Qurashi, where Ibn al-Furat quotes Ibn Duqmâq directly (9:2:275), the contents of the citation appear, edited, in two different reports in the main body of Tarih al-Duwal (253, 254). In another obituary (281–82), Ibn al-Furat quotes Ibn Duqmâq jointly with Wali al-Dîn Abû Zar’ah ibn al-’Irâqi (762–826/1360–1422), but since the latter is not known to have written a history that extended that late in the century, we are probably dealing here with material culled from a work of a biographical nature. Ibn al-’Irâqi’s Al-Dhayl ‘alâ al-’Ibar fi Khabar Man ‘Abar was edited by Sâlih Mahdî ‘Abbâs in three volumes (Beirut, 1989). On Ibn al-’Irâqi’s life and works, see this edition, 1:7–32; Al-Daw’, 1:336–44; Mohammad ben Cheneb and J. de Somogyi, “Al-Dhahabi,” The Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd ed., 2:214–16; and Caesar E. Farah, The Dhayl in Medieval Arabic Historiography (New Haven, 1967), 20–21.

176 Dhayl Durrat al-Aslak,” MS Bodleian Marsh 319, fol. 264a.

177 Tarih al-Duwal, 9:2:255. Similar wordings can be found in the works of other historians such as Ibn Khaldûn (’fa-khâlaftu Mintâsh ilá Dimashq, ’Al-’Ibar, 5:501), Ibn Hajar (’fa-khâlaftu Mintâsh ilá Dimashq, Inbâ’, 3:55), and Ibn Qâdi Shuhbah (’fa-tafwaftu fi al-ṭariq wa-jâ’a Mintâsh bi-’askarihi, TIQS, 1:373). The reliance of these three authors on Ibn al-Furat has already been established above; see also Reisman, “A Holograph MS.” As to the sense of the verb khâlafa in this particular context, which can be read as “preceded,” the meaning that was imparted to it here, namely the crossing of paths, is probably the right one since Ibn Qâdi Shuhbah used a synonym, the verb fâwata.
heading toward Bilād al-Shām, in which Ibn al-Furāt took a break from presenting dated reports one after the other, and offered the reader a long, unencumbered narrative dealing with the itinerary of Minṭāsh from northern Syria until his arrival in Damascus on 1 Rajab. Perhaps he used parts of Zayn al-Dīn Ṭāhir’s account along with that of Ibn Duqmāq to construct this particular paragraph. After all, as I have noticed in the case of the year 778, Ibn al-Furāt copied almost word for word a great deal of the reports in Nuzhah and used them as the foundation of his annal without ever citing Ibn Duqmāq. It is thus not impossible that he placed Zayn al-Dīn Ṭāhir’s sentence construction and other information in his text and added to it the data he gleaned from Nuzhah. Last but not least, no mention is made of Ibn al-Furāt in Dhayl Durrat al-Aslāk, whereas between 791 and 796 Zayn al-Dīn Ṭāhir is mentioned in the edited text of Ṭārīkh al-Duwal eleven times, including nine direct quotations in the obituaries section.179

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

Very little if anything is known about Ibn Ṣaṣrā, one of two Syrian historians who were contemporaries to the events of the year 793, since there is no mention of him or of his works in the available primary sources. All that can be ascertained about him is that he was part of a scholarly Damascene family with long academic and religious credentials, that he lived at the end of the eighth/fourteenth century and at the beginning of ninth/fifteenth century, and that he finished his Al-Durrāh al-Muḍī‘ah fī al-Dawlāh al-Ẓāhirīyah sometime between Sha‘bān 799 and Shawwāl 801.180 It is thus not the details of his biography that make him and, more precisely, his work so important: their significance lies elsewhere.

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

179See references in the index prepared by Zurayq and ‘Izz al-Dīn, 9:2:527.
180All of the data contained in this and the following paragraphs was taken from Brinner’s comments in his Preface to A Chronicle of Damascus, mainly x–xix.
181According to Brinner, Al-Durrāh al-Muḍī‘ah might have actually begun earlier with the accession of Barquq, but the only extant manuscript deals with the years mentioned here; ibid., xv.
level in the myriad references to the topography of Damascus, whether buildings, mosques, neighborhoods, etc., a mass of information about landmarks, some gone, others still extant, that does not appear to have been subjected to any analysis beyond the rich commentaries and information provided by Brinner in the footnotes of the English translation. This, when combined with the highly unconventional style and format of this work, makes it all the more important for our purposes here.

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

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182Ibid.

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

184Very little of the religious life of Damascus is reflected in *Al-Durrah al-Mudī‘ah*, as opposed to “Tārīkh Ibn Hija‘i,” which contains a fair number of biographies and reports about the learned class of the city; see below. Reference to religious figures or religious life was made by Ibn Ṣāṣrā only when it was part of his general narrative on political events (see below, the references to the role played by men of religion during the struggle for Damascus) or when it allowed him to sermonize; see, for example, ibid., 87–88. The only exception to this rule is when he reported a few appointments made by Barqūq upon his return to Damascus, notably that of al-Bā‘ūnī (d. 816/1413) as chief
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Presented in and as an integral part of a basically uninterrupted narrative. In many ways, this work reads like a historical novel whose reports have a "hot off the press" feel to them. But it is the details about the military engagements between Mintâsh and Yalbugha al-Nâsîr, their locale and what they tell us about Syrian society at the end of the eighth/fourteenth century, that make Al-Durrah al-Mudî'ah essential reading. Here one ought to mention the dramatic descriptions185 Ibn Šasrá gives of the battles which took place in and around Damascus and their consequences: trench187 and siege188 warfare, artillery exchanges,189 the strategic placing of artillery pieces,190 street fighting,191 the state of mind of the fighters and its impact on the prosecution of the war,192 etc.

Al-Durrah al-Mudî'ah also contains more specific information about the configuration of the groups involved in the unrest and in fighting one another, details that are conspicuously absent from most of the Egyptian sources. For example, in depicting Mintâsh’s flight from the city after the defection of Shafi'i qadi, a man obviously liked by Ibn Šasrá despite (or because of!) what he said about him concerning his mistreatment of his fellow jurists; ibid., 103.

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

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

187Al-Durrah al-Mudî'ah, 78.

188Ibid., 81.

189Ibid., 79.

190Ibid., 79–80.

191Ibid., 78, 84, 86.

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

193See above.
(the populace, Turcomans from Tripoli, tribesmen from Jubbat ‘Asāl, Turks and soldiers from Şafad, and others) who were involved in the looting that took place in al-Maydān and al-Şālihiyāh. More important still are the data concerning the various military forces on the ground during this period. Ibn Şaşrá talks, for example, about the defeat of ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Ibn al-Ḥanash, the leader of the Qaysīs, at the hands of Shukr Ahmad and a party of Yamanī tribesmen, on 6 Rajab, at ‘Aqabat al-Tīnah; he notes that one thousand of the fallāhūn who accompanied ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Ibn al-Ḥanash were killed, two hundred Qaysīs and eight soldiers (ostensibly Mamluks from the garrison of Baalbek) were captured, while the Yamanī ‘ushrān prevailed upon the Qaysī ‘ushrān. Are we dealing here with four (peasants, Qaysīs, Mamluks, and Qaysī ‘ushrān), three (peasants, Qaysīs=Qaysī ‘ushrān, and Mamluks) or two (Qaysīs=Qaysī ‘ushrān=peasants and Mamluks) categories of fighters in the loyalist camp? Any one of the three classifications can be read into the text. Any attempt at clearing the confusion would require pondering the term ‘ushrān, which has been rendered in English in a variety of ways: tribesmen, by Brinner; Druze tribesmen and/or clansmen living in the highlands of southern Lebanon and northern Palestine who sometimes divided along Qays and Yaman lines, by Popper; great agricultural tribes of Syria, by Poliak, etc. Generally, argues Irwin, the term “seem[s] to have been used to describe semi-nomadic or sedentarized tribal groups, in contradistinction

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194 A district in the Anti-Lebanon range; see A Chronicle of Damascus, 124, n. 735.
195 Son of Ibn al-Ḥanash, an important tribal chief from the Biqā’ who supported Barquq during the disturbances of 791–93 and was executed by Mintāš in Rabi’ II 792; see ibid., 16, n. 106 and the sources cited therein, and 83. ‘Alā’ al-Dīn would in his turn meet his maker on 16 Sha’bān at the battle of Dumayr; ibid., 80–81, 91–93. On the al-Ḥanash family, see Francis Hours and Kamal Salibi, “Muḥammad Ibn al-Ḥanash, muqaddam de la Biqā’, 1499–1518, un épisode peu connu de l’histoire libanaise,” Mélanges de l’Université Saint-Joseph, Beyrouth 43 (1968): 3–23, esp. 3–5 for the period studied here.
196 For a concise overview of the Qays and Yaman tribal mythology as it impinged on Syrian politics during the years 791 to 793, see Robert Irwin, “Tribal Feuding and Mamluk Factions in Medieval Syria,” in Texts, Documents and Artefacts: Islamic Studies in Honour of D. S. Richards, ed. Chase Robinson (Leiden, 2003), 253–54.
197 See above.
198 The viceroy of this city, Tankizbughā (in the text of Al-Durrah al-Mudī’ah, Dankizbughā) was accompanying Ibn al-Ḥanash with his men; see A Chronicle of Damascus, 112 and n. 675.
199 Al-Durrah al-Mudī’ah, 80–81.
201 This sentence, with the exception of the reference to Brinner, is a paraphrase of Irwin, “Tribal Feuding,” 255–56; see references in nn. 11–16 therein.
to more purely nomadic tribes, such as the Banū Faḍl.\textsuperscript{202} With this in mind, and with the help of Ibn Ḥījī’s \textit{Tārīkh}\textsuperscript{203} and Ṣāliḥ Ibn Yahyá’s\textsuperscript{204} \textit{Tārīkh Bayrūt}, we can argue the following: one group consisted of Ibn al-Ḥanash and his Qaysí followers who were either mounted or on foot,\textsuperscript{205} a distinction which would \textit{probably} correspond to a division between, respectively, more sedentarized (peasants) and less sedentarized nomadic (tribal chieftains) components within this group;\textsuperscript{206} according to Ṣāliḥ Ibn Yahyá’s history, the Druze feudal chiefs of the Lebanese mountains, his ancestors at least, were also involved in battles around Damascus including that of Դումայր\textsuperscript{207} and presumably that of ‘Aqabat al-Tinah, and they could correspond to the Qaysís mentioned by Ibn Ṣaṣrá in the text;\textsuperscript{208} finally, one finds the mamluks of the viceroy of Baalbek. Evidently, to echo Irwin’s comments, much still needs to be done before a clearer picture of what constituted the Syrian army at the end of the eighth/fourteenth century can

\textsuperscript{202}Ibid., 256.
\textsuperscript{203}\textit{Tārīkh Ibn Ḥījī}, fols. 96a–b. On Ibn Ḥījī, more below.
\textsuperscript{204}An early fifteenth-century historian from the mountains of Lebanon, his work is \textit{Akhbār al-Salaf min Dhurrīyat Buḥtūr ibn ‘Alī Amīr al-Gharb bi-Bayrūt}, a.k.a. \textit{Tārīkh Bayrūt}, ed. Kamal Salibi et al. (Beirut, 1969) (hereafter cited as \textit{Tārīkh Bayrūt}), a history of his Druze feudal family based in the vicinity of Beirut.
\textsuperscript{205}This distinction was made by Ibn Ḥījī: \"Tārīkh Ibn Ḥījī,\" fol. 96a.
\textsuperscript{206}This \textit{could} correspond to the  \textit{fallāḥūn} and to the Qaysí  \textit{‘ushrān} of the first classification of fighters. Hours and Salibi note, with reference, it is true, to Muhḥammad, an early tenth/sixteenth-century member of the Ibn al-Ḥanash family, that his leadership smacked more of that of a bedouin chief than that of a Lebanese mountain feudal (read sedentary) lord, because of the little concern he showed for building enduring symbols of attachment to the land, such as roads, bridges, and the like (\textquote{Muhḥammad Ibn al-Ḥanash, muqaddam de la Bīqā\textquote{"}}, 23). It is probable that in addition to his immediate mounted entourage of retainers, ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Ibn al-Ḥanash had armed peasant clients.
\textsuperscript{207}\textit{Tārīkh Bayrūt}, 209–12, 215–16. A member of his family died during this encounter; see 209–10.
\textsuperscript{208}The Qaysí Druze chieftains of Lebanon and ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Ibn al-Ḥanash might have commandeered the same pool of armed peasants of the southern Lebanese highlands, even though I have not come across any evidence for that.
be seen; *Al-Durrah al-Muḍīʿah* would be a strong starting point for such an endeavor.²⁰⁹

Reading *Al-Durrah al-Muḍīʿah* is not however without its problems. From a historical perspective, the dating of its events is dismal in many parts of the text at hand. Whether it is Ibn Ṣaṣāṛa’s fault or that of the copier of the manuscript, it is impossible to tell, but one still has to rely on both *Ṭārīkh Ibn Qadḍ Shuhbah* and *Ṭārīkh Ibn Ḥījj̣* in order to set straight the chronological unfolding of events.²¹⁰

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

²¹⁰For example, the last complete date that appears in the narrative before dating becomes erratic for a few pages is 12 Rajab (*Al-Durrah al-Muḍīʿah*, 80). The following date to appear in the narrative is the Monday that follows Friday 12 Rajab, which would be the fifteenth of the month (ibid., 81). The report that comes after, the one about the great fires that ravaged numerous neighborhoods and buildings west of the city, is simply introduced with the mention “wa-rakiba thāṇī yawm Iyās wa-al-Naṣīṛ . . . ,” which would have to correspond to 16 Rajab (ibid.). After the mention of an event taking place on “thālith yawm” (ibid., 81–82), the next two dated reports are from Thursday 15 Rajab (ibid., 83), yet another impossibility, and from the eighteenth of the same month (ibid.); only then did Ibn Ṣaṣāṛa date a khabar on Saturday 20 Rajab (ibid.), which does correspond to the actual calendar of the year 793. An even more blatant dating error is the story relating the alleged departure of Barquq̣ from Cairo to Syria in Rajab, while in fact he did not leave Cairo until 22 Shaʾbān (ibid., 84).
This shortcoming of *Al-Durrah al-Mudʾiʿ ah*, as well as those associated with the very style of the text,211 does not temper in any way its undeniable value for modern historians interested in the history of Damascus during this troubled period. But did his fundamental concern with his home-town influence the way Ibn Ṣaṣrā recounted some important events? The question is relevant on at least two levels. The first has to do with historical consistency. In a *khabar*212 dated from the first third of Rabiʿ II, Ibn Ṣaṣrā described the departure to Cairo of a party of amirs and other personalities who had been imprisoned in Damascus as a result of their involvement in anti-Barquṭ politics in Damascus during the siege of the city in 792. The leader of this party was one Alābughā al-ʿUthmānī213 (d. 793/1391) who, according to *Al-Durrah al-Mudʾiʿ ah*, accompanied the group to Gaza. Other contemporary historians claim, contrary to Ibn Ṣaṣrā, that Alābughā al-ʿUthmānī went all the way to Cairo with his prisoners; they also made much of the arrival, along with this group, of Aytamish al-Baṣṣār, whose return to Cairo and more-than-warm reception on the part of Barquṭ was dutifully highlighted.214 Does this mean that the “coverage” available to Ibn Ṣaṣrā in terms of his sources did not extend beyond Gaza? It is highly unlikely, since his work does contain reports, though few in number, of things Egyptian,215 but even then, one still cannot account for the absence of Aytamish from his report.216 The second level has to do with the sources Ibn Ṣaṣrā used for extra-Damascene events. Following the departure of the sultan from Damascus to northern Syria around 8 Shawwāl, only five *akhbār* dealing with Aleppo are reported: the news about the sultan’s arrival there, which reached Damascus via one of al-ʿNaṣīr’s mamluks,217 another about a military expedition to al-Bīrah218 which Barquṭ had

211 See *A Chronicle of Damascus*, xix–xxv.
212 *Al-Durrah al-Mudʾiʿ ah*, 74.
213 See his obituary in *Tārīkh al-Duwal*, 9:2:278.
214 Ibid., 250–51; *Al-Ibar*, 5:500.
215 See, for example, the news about the execution in Cairo of a number of amirs: *Al-Durrah al-Mudʾiʿ ah*, 74.
216 The same overall ignorance of events which occurred far from Damascus was noted by Popper with regards to other Syrian locales (*A Chronicle of Damascus*, xv). Maybe most revealing of Ibn Ṣaṣrā’s “world view” is a report in which he relates the appointments made by Barquṭ while in Aleppo: of all the detailed information concerning the appointments made by the sultan to Syrian viceroalties (Damascus, Aleppo, Hamāh, Tripoli, and Saffāḥ) after the execution of Yalbughā al-ʿNaṣīr, only the appointee to that of Damascus, Butā al-Ṭūlūtamur, is mentioned by name; on Butā (d. 794/1391) see *Al-Manhal*, 3:375–80, no. 671.
218 A town located slightly northeast of Aleppo; see *A Chronicle of Damascus*, 135, n. 797.
ordered early on in his stay, a report about the execution of Yalbughā al-Nāṣirī as it was communicated to him by "one of the prominent people;" and another about his arrest, brought to Damascus by a post messenger. All of these reports can be accounted for, save for the one relating the expedition to al-Bīrah which is of unknown origin, but which can be found, written differently, in Zayn al-Dīn Tāhir’s Dhayl Durrat al-Aslāk. Did the two historians use a common source or two different sources concerning the same event? So far, it is impossible to ascertain.

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

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


221 Al-Durrah al-Mud’ah, 100.

222 See below.

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

224 In doing this, I only follow Adnān Darwish’s characterization of this work; see TIQS, 2:27.

225 These annotations are sometimes absent from large numbers of folios. In the case of the annal of the year 804 which I have examined, out of a total of sixteen and a half folios, about a third are more or less systematically annotated; see Chester Beatty 4125, fols. 252b–261a. In the annal of the year 793, six folios out of fifteen are for all intents and purposes devoid of marginalia; Tārikh Ibn Ḥijjī, fols. 93b–100b.
well as passages taken from *Al-Muntaqá min Ṭārīkh Ibn al-Furat* \(^{226}\) and other sources\(^{227}\) into a second recension, i.e., *Al-Dhayl al-Muṭawwal*. \(^{228}\) This latter work was then summarized into a smaller one; it is this shorter work, about one third of the original, which was edited in four volumes by ʿAdnān Darwīsh as *Ṭārīkh Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah*. \(^{229}\)

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

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


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


\(^{230}\)MS Berlin Ahlwardt 9458 covers the years 796 to 815, minus 805 and 808.
Notes on the Contemporary Sources of the Year 793

Reisman’s research and my own cursory examination of the MS Chester Beatty 5527 indicate that it does contain a certain number of years from the second recension, but not the annal of 793. Köprülü 1027 on the other hand does contain an annal of the year 793.

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

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

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

233 Tārikh Ibn Ḥijjī, fols. 93b–100b.

234 The last report is dated 22 Sha‘ba‘n and is to be found at the bottom of fol. 99b.

235 Ibid., fols. 100a–b.

236 With regard to the last characteristic, one might assume one of two things: that Ibn Ḥijjī saw nothing in the first three months of 793 that needed to be recounted, or that Ibn Ḥaqī Shuhbah purposely decided, when doing his recension of this year, to bypass some of the data in “Tārikh Ibn Ḥijjī.” Either one of these possibilities might then explain the fact that for the months of Muḥarram, Ṣafar, and Rab‘ I all the reports in TIQS were culled from Ibn al-Furāt’s Tārikh al-Duwal (TIQS, 1:368–69). There is also the possibility that Ibn Ḥaqī Shuhbah in the admittedly smaller TIQS wanted to emphasize the reports dealing with or originating in Egypt by relying on Ibn al-Furāt, but the presence of a very large number of Syrian reports in the rest of the annal goes against such a view.
traceable to Ibn al-Furāṭ’s *Tārikh al-Duwal*, but contains either longer versions of Syrian reports found in *Tārikh Ibn Qaḍī Shuhbah* or, again, Syrian *akhbār* totally absent from the latter. “This, plus the presence of a number of *ḥawāshi* in the margins, lead me to conclude that the folios at hand are part of the first recension made by Ibn Qaḍī Shuhbah of his teacher’s history, and thus a fairly exact, although incomplete, reproduction of Ibn Ḥijji’s work.”

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237In both its edited and “Al-Muntaqā min Tārikh Ibn al-Furāṭ” forms.

238See, for example, the longer description made by Ibn Ḥijji of the aftermath of the battle of Dūmayr; “Tārikh Ibn Ḥijji,” fols. 99a–b; *TIQS*, 1:377.

239See, for example, the story of the capture by the Qaysis of a Yamanī grandee inside the city of Damascus during the struggle for the city; “Tārikh Ibn Ḥijji,” fol. 96b. On this report, see below.

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

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

242It is thus likely that the text at hand is from the first recension. However, in light of its peculiarities noted above and as a result of the collation I have undertaken of the text of the first recension and that of the original “Tārikh Ibn Ḥijji” for the year 804, it is more than possible that we are dealing with yet a different stage of the process of Ibn Qaḍī Shuhbah’s writing of his *Al-Dhayl al-Muṭawwal*. 
Even though its first “real” reports deal with the execution of a number of amirs in Egypt,\textsuperscript{243} Tārīkh Ibn Ḥījjī is a chronicle whose entire focus is on Syria, more precisely Damascus, very much like Ibn Ṣaṣrā’s Al-Durrah al-Mudīḥah with which it shares many characteristics. The concern for things Syrian can be seen at many levels. All the appointments, religious and political, mentioned in it deal specifically with Syria, and more particularly with Damascus. Ibn Ḥījjī for example notes in four different reports the whereabouts of Arghūn Shāh al-Ibrāhīmī (d. 801/1398),\textsuperscript{245} an amir whose claim to fame, during the early parts of the year 793, was his appointment to the hujūbiyah of Damascus at the end of Jumādā II.\textsuperscript{246} In the same vein, the only two religious appointments noted in this work are those of Syrian qadis, one to Tripoli and the other to Damascus.\textsuperscript{247} Interestingly, the attention paid to things religious by Ibn Ḥījjī, a member of the learned class of Damascus, intersects with the very large body of reports that deal with the battles that took place in his city throughout Rajab and Sha‘bān. On numerous occasions, he noted the role played by the qadis in the fighting,\textsuperscript{248} their role as moral authorities in the city,\textsuperscript{249} the use of zakāt money in the war effort,\textsuperscript{250} etc. But the war for Damascus was not only an occasion for Ibn Ḥījjī to talk about his peers: it occupies in its own right a pivotal position in his work.

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

\textsuperscript{243}This is if one disregards the first report, which is basically a list of military, administrative and religious officials in Egypt and Syria; “Tārīkh Ibn Ḥījjī,” fol. 93b.

\textsuperscript{244}Ibid., fol. 94a. Many of the Egyptian akhbār are of a political nature and deal with the execution of amirs and personalities who were identified with or worked for the Minṭāshī regime in both Syria and Egypt; see ibid., fols. 96b, 97a.

\textsuperscript{245}On him, see Al-Manhal, 2:223–24.

\textsuperscript{246}See “Tārīkh Ibn Ḥījjī,” fols. 94b, 96a, 96b–97a, 99a. The only other nomination of a member of the military class in this annal is that of a Qaraḥūṣ al-‘Alā’ī as shādd al-awqāf (ibid., fol. 94b).

\textsuperscript{247}Ibid., fols. 94a–b.

\textsuperscript{248}For example, as guardians of those gates located in the western wall of the city which were exposed to Minṭāshī attacks (ibid., fol. 95b; see also fol. 98b).

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

\textsuperscript{250}This, notes Ibn Ḥījjī, weakened the four madhāhib financially, especially since they had incurred many losses as a result of the destruction of awqāf which occurred as a result of the fighting; see ibid., fols. 97a–b.
the siege, troop movements and actual encounters with the protagonists, etc. However, in most of its reports concerning the war, this chronicle provides data that either complements or parallels that found in *Al-Durrah al-Mudī‘ah*, even though generally the latter is richer in details. All the important military engagements are recorded in both works and some even elicited similar responses on the part of the two authors. The crushing defeat of the loyalists at Dümayr prompted both Ibn Ṣaṣrā and Ibn Ḥijjī to muse, in admittedly different styles, about the humiliation, disarray, and physical destruction of Barqūq’s troops following this battle. Last but not least, *Ṭarīkh Ibn Ḥijjī*, here again like *Al-Durrah al-Mudī‘ah*, also presents glimpses of a social environment in the grips of a brutal war. Among other things, it sheds light on the crystallization of the population’s loyalties around one of the two warring camps and especially on the deep-rooted antagonisms between Qays and Yaman displayed during the conflict. The description of the degree of violence, often wholesale slaughter, that accompanied the encounter between the two camps is certainly not peculiar to Ibn Ḥijjī. Ibn Ṣaṣrā gives a much more vivid and dramatic description than Ibn

251Ibid., fol. 96a.
252For example, ibid., fol. 97a.
253For example, ibid., fols. 98a, 98b, 99a.
254For example, as was noted above, Ibn Ṣaṣrā gives a detailed description of the various groups involved in the looting of al-Maydān, following Minṭāsh’s precipitous departure from his encampment, whereas Ibn Ḥijjī simply says it was the populace who were responsible for this deed (ibid., fol. 99a; *Al-Durrah al-Mudī‘ah*, 90–91).
256"Ṭarīkh Ibn Ḥijjī," fols. 99a–b; *Al-Durrah al-Mudī‘ah*, 91–92. In this particular report, Ibn Ḥijjī includes a small, albeit interesting piece of information concerning warfare: the fact that the bedouins initiated combat by literally encircling the forces of Yalbughā al-Nāṣirī ("fa-dāra ‘alayhim al-'arab ḥalqah").
257Ibn Ṣaṣrā uses a measure of derision ("the troops returned and entered the city after having recovered somewhat from their condition, each two riding one donkey . . ." [A Chronicle of Damascus, 125]) but lets ‘Alī al-Dīn Aybak (d. 803/1400) speak through his verse; on this poet see references in ibid., 34, n. 207 and "Al-Manhal," fols. 496a–497a. Ibn Ḥijjī, on the other hand, devotes half a folio to describing the sorry state of the troops as they returned to the city in groups, through mountains, streams, and valleys, some ‘wounded or missing some limb . . .’, etc.; "Ṭarīkh Ibn Ḥijjī," fols. 99a–b.
258Ibn Ḥijjī refers specifically to the ‘aṣābiyyah that overtook the population of Damascus: the populace (the people of al-Shuwaykah and al-Shāghūr, and a few of the inhabitants of Maydān al-Ḥaṣā) supported Minṭāsh ["fa-ṣāra fī al-‘awām ‘aṣābiyyah ma’a Minṭāsh"], while the elite [‘jamūhurahum] supported al-Nāṣirī ("Ṭarīkh Ibn Ḥijjī," fol. 95b).
259See Irwin, "Tribal Feuding."
Hiijjî of the killing of Qaysîs from the Biqā‘ valley at the hands of Ibn Hilāl al-Dawlah and his Yamanîs at al-Maydān following the encounter at ‘Aqabat al-Tînah,260 but Ibn Hiijjî provides for the same incident a more tragic dimension: two of the Qaysîs who had managed to flee and sought refuge in a mosque were caught and killed inside the religious edifice. In another report,261 Ibn Hiijjî reports that when Qaysîs arrested a well-respected Yamanî dignitary at Sūq al-Muṭarrazîn,262 the population, presumably of that neighborhood, released him from custody. Ibn Hiijjî not only mentions this man´s name, Ibn ‘Abd al-Dā‘îm, but also notes that he lived within the city and that he was one of the grandees of Jubbat ‘Asāl, a rural area west of Damascus.263 What is of interest in this last account is that even though the distribution of groups, sects, and communities in the urban setting of Damascus is broadly known,264 this “living” geo-topographical detail and others found in this chronicle and Al-Durrarah al-Muḍī‘ah might provide us with further sociological data on the interaction of Damascus and its hinterland in terms of population movement and urban settlement. In the same vein, this report echoes, if only obliquely, a story by Ibn Ṣaṣrā that tribesmen from Jubbat ‘Asāl participated in the sack of al-Ṣāliḥiyah and al-Maydān following Miṅṭâsh’s hasty withdrawal therefrom.266

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

261 See “Ta‘rîkh Ibn Hiijjî,” fol. 96b.
262 There is one reference to this market in H. Sauvaire, “Description de Damas: La conclusion,” Journal Asiatique (November-December 1895): 433. Its location is probably somewhere in the northeastern quarter of the city; see Émilie E. Ouéchek, Index Général de la “Description de Damas” de Sauvaire (Damascus, 1954), 97.
263 See above, n. 194.
264 See, for example, Ira M. Lapidus, Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages (Cambridge, MA, 1967), 85–88, 90–91, 93–94.
265 See above, n. 194.
267 In this case, we are probably dealing with Qaysîs hailing from the same region.
through difficult times and wrote, as eyewitnesses, about the ordeal of their city, each in his own style and according to his personal concerns.

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

Ibn al-Furāt: “... wa-nazala qarib al-maghrib wa-kāna yawman mashhūdan...” (Tārīkh al-Duwal, 9:2:258–59)

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

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

267 See A Chronicle of Damascus, xv–xvi.
al-Muḍī‘ah, Brinner notes that the list of the nuwāb of Damascus presented by Ibn _SHAṣrā within the framework of the annal of 799\textsuperscript{269} is similar to that of Ibn TINGSūn (d. 953/1546) in his I’lām al-Warā bi-man Wuliyā Nā‘ībān min al-Aṭrāk bi-Dimashq al-Shām al-Kubrā.\textsuperscript{270} The section of the I’lām which dealt with the period between 658–863/1260–1458 is basically the recension of a work on the same topic, namely the viceroys of Damascus, written by a Shams al-Dīn al-Zamalkānī,\textsuperscript{271} to which Ibn TINGSūn added comments and corrections.\textsuperscript{272} Brinner hypothesizes that al-Zamalkānī’s “work, which has not otherwise been preserved, seems to have been based on the same source as that used by Ibn _SHAṣrā considerably earlier.”\textsuperscript{273} The point here is that there appears to have been in .Vertex a number of authors who were not particularly famous but whose historical works or oral reports were nevertheless used either by their contemporaries or by later historians.

One last question needs to be tackled. Beyond a Syrianness born out of circumstance, to what extent, if any, do the works of Ibn ḤIJJī and Ibn _SHAṣrā belong to such a thing as a Syrian school?\textsuperscript{274} For the sake of clarification, I shall quote David Reisman, who has managed to effectively and concisely summarize the whole question of the dichotomy between “Egyptian” and “Syrian” schools of historical writing:

\textsuperscript{269} A Chronicle of Damascus, 235–52.
\textsuperscript{270} See above, n. 153; see also Les Gouverneurs de Damas sous les Mamlouks et les premiers Ottomans, ed. and trans. Henri Laoust (Damascus, 1952) (hereafter cited as Gouverneurs).
\textsuperscript{271} The only thing known about al-Zamalkānī is that he died in or after 863/1458.
\textsuperscript{272} I’lām, 30.
\textsuperscript{273} A Chronicle of Damascus, xviii. Another historian is mentioned by Ibn TINGSūn in the first pages of I’lām, one ‘Alī al-Yaldānī (d. 814/1412), yet another Damascene who also wrote about the same topic. Ibn TINGSūn notes that he had not used that source even though the historian Taqī al-Dīn al-Asadī [Ibn Qaḍī Shuhbah?] notes its existence in his Tārīkh; see I’lām, 29–30; Gouverneurs, xvii. This al-Asadī was quoted four times in I’lām: in one instance it was his Dhayl (I’lām, 66, year 836), and in the rest his Tārīkh (ibid., 29, year 814; 60, lines 1 and 14, year 817). Is the historian Taqī al-Dīn no other than Ibn Qaḍī Shuhbah, one of whose nisab is al-Asadī? In light of what we know about him (see Darwish’s French introduction, 2:19–27), we might assume so, since Ibn Qaḍī Shuhbah did write histories covering the years noted above. One comment concerning the introduction to the French translation of the I’lām: Laoust was wrong in assuming that the Sayyid al-Husaynī whose Dhayl ‘alā ‘Ibar al-Dhahabī Ibn TINGSūn used to complement the data presented by al-Zamalkānī, was Hamzah Ibn Ahmad al-Dimashqī al-Husaynī (d. 874/1469) (see Al-Daw’, 3:163–64), since the Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn Hamzah al-Husaynī who actually wrote the Dhayl ‘alā ‘Ibar al-Dhahabī died in 765/1364; see Duhmān’s introduction to the I’lām, 13, and Darwish, 2:36.

\textsuperscript{274} See above, n. 7.
Broadly speaking, [Egyptian histories] are chiefly political histories while [Syrian histories] are intellectual histories. Such intellectual histories are by no mean concerned with the history of ideas (which is a distinctly modern concept); rather the primary intention of intellectual histories of the Mamluk period is to produce a record of events and people connected to the institutions and fields of religion, law and education. Moreover, the “Syrian school” of historians, as distinct from its Egyptian counterpart, produced works which, in terms of their structure, devote much more attention to biographies and specifically to biographies of people from the intellectual class. While the division of historical writing into ḥawādīth (report of events) and tarājim (biographies) is common to both genres, the differences that allow us to speak of the “Egyptian school” and the “Syrian school” are really those of emphasis. 275

Notwithstanding its fundamental Syrianness, the factors noted in the above quotation lead one to safely disregard Al-Durrah al-Muḍī‘ah as belonging to the “Syrian histories” category. Things are more problematic with regard to Tārīkh Ibn Ḥijji. The nagging uncertainty that obscures the true nature of this work276 prevents one from making too many sweeping statements regarding the respective importance in it of ḥawādīth and tarājim. However, if the contents of the existing text are any indication, out of its thirteen folios, only a little more than three consist of obituaries,277 compared to the thirty-one pages devoted by Ibn Qādī Shuhbah in his Tārīkh to obituaries out of a total of fifty-three. In terms of the parameters set out by modern-day scholars, the relatively smaller space Ibn Ḥijji devotes to obituaries places his work outside of the so-called “Syrian school.”

Perhaps the whole distinction between the two schools no longer holds with regard to the period at hand. After all, it was formulated with regard to histories written during more or less the first half of the fourteenth century by two important groups of scholars, one Egyptian and the other Syrian, with different career paths, ethnic, ideological, intellectual backgrounds, and working relationships.278

While it is true that Ibn Qādī Shuhbah’s Tārīkh, and, consequently, Al-Dhayl al-Muṭawwal, belong, from the point of view of Reisman’s citation, to the Syrian school, the categorization of the works of Ibn Ḥijji, Ibn Ṣaṣrā, and even Ţayn 275

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276 See above.
277 A cursory look at the “Tārīkh Ibn Ḥijji” annal for the year 804 in MS Chester Beatty 5527 reveals similar proportions.
al-Dīn Ṭāhir will probably have to follow different considerations which will take into account the entirety of Ibn Ḥijjī’s œuvre, notably the original extant annals of his Ṭārīkh, sources not yet published such as Ibn Khāṭīb al-Naṣirīyah’s (d. 843/1440) Durr al-Muntakhab fī Takmilat Ṭārīkh Ḥalab,279 and, most importantly, the clear decline of Syrian historical writing in later parts of the Burji period.