

MARMARA UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

**DAMASCENE SCHOLARS IN THE MAMLUK–OTTOMAN
TRANSITION: HISTORY OF THREE GENERATIONS OF THE GHAZZĪ
FAMILY
(1450–1650)**

Ph.D. Dissertation

BY
GÜRZAT KAMİ

Istanbul, 2023

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Advisor: ABDURRAHMAN ATÇIL

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Kabul ve Onay Sayfası

T.C.
MARMARA ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ

TEZ ONAY BELGESİ

TARİH Anabilim Dalı TARİH (İNGİLİZCE) Bilim Dalı Doktora öğrencisi GÜRZAT KAMİ'nin DAMASCENE SCHOLARS IN THE MAMLUK-OTTOMAN TRANSITION: HISTORY OF THREE GENERATIONS OF THE GHAZZİ FAMILY (1450-1650) adlı tez çalışması, Enstitümüz Yönetim Kurulunun 11.01.2023 tarih ve 2023-2/11 sayılı kararıyla oluşturulan jüri tarafından oy birliği ile Doktora Tezi olarak kabul edilmiştir.

Tez Savunma Tarihi 14/02/2023

Öğretim üyesi Adı Soyadı

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Anabilim Dalı	: Tarih
Programı	: Tarih (İngilizce)
Tez Danışmanı	: Doç. Dr. Abdurrahman Atçıl
Tez Türü ve Tarihi	: Doktora –2023
Anahtar Kelimeler	: Memlük, Osmanlı, Dımaşk, Suriye, ulema

ÖZET

MEMLÜK–OSMANLI GEÇİŞ DÖNEMİNDE DIMAŞK ULEMASI: GAZZİ AİLESİNİN ÜÇ KUŞAĞININ TARİHİ (1450–1650)

Bu tez, Memlük idaresinden Osmanlı idaresine geçiş bağlamında 1450–1650 yılları arasında Dımaşk (Şâm) ulemasının sosyopolitik tarihini incelemektedir. Tez, sözkonusu “geçiş”e Osmanlı ordusunun 1516 yılında Dımaşk’ı ele geçirmesinden daha geniş bir anlam yükleyerek bu tarihten sonra gerçekleşen adli ve idari bütünleşme, kültürlerin karşılaşması ve çatışması ve imparatorluk çapında ilişki ağlarının örülmesi gibi konuları da içeren geniş bir perspektifle yaklaşmaktadır. Bu geniş bağlam içinde, Geç Memlük Dımaşk’ındaki ulemanın Osmanlı idaresi altındaki ilk yüz elli yıllık serüvenine ışık tutmaktadır.

Bu tez, Dımaşk ulemasının serüvenini, üyeleri 1450–1650 yılları arasında Dımaşk’ta müderris, kâdı, müfti, vâkıf, müellif, sufi vb. birçok rol üstlenmiş yerel bir Şâfiî aile olan Gazzî ailesi üzerinden takip etmektedir. Bu aileye mensup üç âlimin –sırasıyla Radiyüddin el-Gazzi (1458–1529), onun oğlu Bedreddin (1499–1577) ve torunu Necmeddin (1570–1651)– içiçe geçen hayat hikâyeleri üzerinden ailenin üç kuşaklık sosyopolitik tarihini yazmaktadır. Tezin tartıştığı meseleler arasında Dımaşk ulemasının içindeki alt-gruplar ve alt-kimlikler, Dımaşk ulemasının 1516 sonrasında merkezden kopan meslekî kariyerleri ve bunun akabinde artan pozisyon rekabeti, ulema ailelerinin nesiller boyu sürekliliğini sağlayan araçlar ve mekanizmalar, on altıncı yüzyıl sonundan itibaren Osmanlı imparatorluk ilişki ağında Dımaşk ulemasının konumu ve gücü gibi muhtelif başlıklar yer almaktadır.

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Keywords : Mamluk, Ottoman, Damascus, Syria, scholars

ABSTRACT

DAMASCENE SCHOLARS IN THE MAMLUK–OTTOMAN TRANSITION: HISTORY OF THREE GENERATIONS OF THE GHAZZĪ FAMILY (1450–1650)

This thesis examines the scholars in Damascus during the period 1450–1650 asking how the transition from Mamluk to Ottoman rule affected their socio-political life. It employs a broad understanding of transition, one that considers several developments after the military takeover of Damascus in 1516, including the judicial and economic integration, cultural encounter, and imperial entanglement. In this broad framework, it traces several elements of the scholarly society in late Mamluk Damascus during the first 150 years of Ottoman rule.

To understand Damascene scholarly society, this thesis focuses on the Ghazzī family, a local Shāfi‘ī family whose members assumed various positions and roles in Damascus between 1450 and 1650, serving as professors, jurists, judges, endowers, authors, and mystically inclined scholars. By writing the connected life stories of three Ghazzīs—namely, Radiyy al-Dīn al-Ghazzī (d. 1529), his son Badr al-Dīn (d. 1577), and his grandson Najm al-Dīn (d. 1651)—this study reconstructs the history of three generations of an eminent local family and their relations with socio-political and scholarly life in Damascus, Syria, and the Mamluk and Ottoman capitals.

This thesis explores several aspects of the Mamluk–Ottoman transition as experienced by Damascene scholars, including the sub-groups and cliques that formed among them, the peripheralization of their professional career after 1516, their struggles for position both within and beyond Damascus, the means and mechanisms whereby they secured their scholarly continuity across generations, and their increasing entanglement within the network of the Ottoman imperial elite from the late sixteenth century onward.



To
6 April 2014



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Al-Hamdu li-llāh.

During the researching and writing of this dissertation, I benefited from the support, guidance, mentorship, and knowledge of many people and institutions.

Special gratitude is to my teacher and advisor Abdurrahman Atçıl, who has been both a guide and friend, since I met him first at the backyard of ISAM in 2013. During the past ten years, he has left a lasting impact on my academic development through his teaching, supervision, and most importantly his exemplary model of academic integrity and excellence. His insights and directions were always mind opening, and his sincere friendship was matchless and priceless.

I would like to thank my committee members, Professors Ş. Tufan Buzpınar and Yunus Uğur, for their suggestions about my project from the beginning to the end of this dissertation. Their invaluable comments and criticisms led me to think of the various aspects of the issues discussed in this study, and saved me from many embarrassing mistakes. I am also grateful to Professors Derin Terzioğlu and Cengiz Tomar for agreeing to join my defense committee and allowing me to benefit from their vast knowledge on the Ottoman and Mamluk histories.

Many people at Istanbul Şehir University deserve long pages of thanks. I will always consider myself lucky to have been a part of the rich intellectual environment they created during my graduate years at Şehir from 2012 to 2020. I would like to thank them all and to name some of them. Professor Engin Deniz Akarlı and late Mehmet Genç provided a perfect model of scholarship that I will continue to try to emulate during my lifetime. Professors Akarlı and Genç as well as Abdurrahman Atçıl, Abdülhamit Kırmızı, Yunus Uğur, Coşkun Çakır, Irvin Cemil Schick, Hatice Aynur, Tufan Buzpınar, Berat Açıl, Ayşe Başaran, and Turgay Şafak introduced me to the intricacies of history-writing and Ottoman sources by their erudition, experience, patience, and generosity. Abdurrahman Atçıl's TÜBİTAK-funded project "Professional and Intellectual Network and Groupings of High Ottoman Scholars 1470–1650" supported me financially and opened my eyes to the potentials of social network analysis as well as digital trends in history, in 2017–20. The mind-opening conversations and scholarly discussions I had with Salih Günaydın and Abdullah Karaarslan during this project were a lesson in themselves, and I learned many things from them that guided me during my

dissertation project. Last but not least, many thanks go to the friendly personnel of the Şehir Library, who provided a peaceful environment to read and research, and benefit from the rich collections.

The Marmara University became a new home after Şehir for both my graduate friends and me. We owe particular thanks to Professor Erol Özvar, the Rector of the Marmara University in 2020, whose understanding and support made us experience a smooth transition to our new institution.

I would like to express my appreciation to many people at the Centre for Islamic Studies (İSAM), which supported me financially and educationally during my graduate years from 2013 to 2021 within the framework of the Academic Assistance Program (AYP). I owe special thanks to Professor Hasan Tuncay Başoğlu, who supported my academic development at every step in the AYP, from language learning to academic writing. He guided me to learn Arabic and improve my Persian, as well as encouraged my language education abroad. Through the support of the AYP, I received funding for language education in Qasid Arabic Institute (Amman, 2014) and Shahid Behesti University (Tehran, 2016). İbrahim Köse was always a sincere friend, whose assistance enabled me and other AYP researchers to enjoy a peaceful research environment at İSAM. Professors Eyyub Said Kaya, İbrahim Halil Üçer, Harun Kuşlu, Şükrü Özen and İshak Arslan's AYP seminars in research methodology, theory of science, classical logic, Arabic language and Islamic thought opened new horizons for me. The international workshop on critical editions of manuscripts organized by İSAM in 2017 introduced me to the world of manuscripts. The Ulama Database Project at İSAM (2019–2023) changed my perspective to biographical dictionaries as historical sources and taught me how to transform biographical information to useful data for analysis.

I have also benefited from Professors Ali Akyıldız, Feridun Emecen, and Kenan Yıldız's graduate seminars at Istanbul 29 Mayıs University. Professor Akyıldız guided me to a variety of documents including *fermans* from the late Ottoman period in the Ottoman archive. Professor Emecen introduced me to the *mühimme* records and early Ottoman chronicles. Professor Yıldız taught me how to read and examine Ottoman court records.

I also received intellectual and financial support from the OTTOLEGAL (The Making of Ottoman Law: The Agency and Interaction of Diverse Groups in Lawmaking, 1450–1650) project funded by European Research Council (ERC)'s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement ID: 866319), carried out by Professor Atçıl at the Sabancı University, as a PhD candidate researcher. Teamwork and fruitful scholarly exchange in this project from 2020 increased my familiarity with *mühimme* records, Ottoman law codes and fatwas as sources of Ottoman legal history. I also received financial aid to conduct research in the Centre for Documents, Manuscripts and Bilad al-Sham Studies located at the University of Jordan in the summer of 2022.

Scholarly discussions that took place in the monthly meetings of the Mamluk Intellectual History Reading Group, presided by Professor Büşra Sıdıka Kaya, taught me a lot about Mamluk history and scholarly life. The Mamluk Intellectual History Workshop, organized by İlmi Etüdler Derneği (İLEM) in March 2021, provided me with a good opportunity to present some of the early findings of this dissertation. Likewise, the Moving Biography Summer School, organized by American University of Beirut and Orient-Institute Beirut in June 2022, enabled me to discuss my approach to biography in this dissertation with both expert and novice biographers from different parts of the world and receive their feedback.

I would like to thank several friends who were generous with their time and energy in helping my research. Ma'n Ali al-Sarafandi was a great teacher with his expertise on Arabic language, and he patiently answered my never-ending questions about grammar and vocabulary. His humor, friendship, and *fusha* made me enjoy Arabic language even more. Nour M. A. Alhila and Münzir Şeyhhasan also helped me to decipher and understand many Arabic scripts and phrases in the sources. Yusuf Ünal acquired some manuscript copies from the Princeton Library for me, and Ahmet Tahir Nur helped me to benefit from the Yale Library. Professor Baki Tezcan shared with me an unpublished version of his article. The friendly personnel in the Juma alMajid Center for Culture and Heritage in Dubai also helped me to acquire some manuscript copies.

I also wish to express my gratitude to my friends, namely İmam Rabbani Çelik, İrem Gündüz-Polat, Salih Günaydın, Hugh Jefferson Turner, Abdülmecid Ekşici, Muhammed Enes Midilli, Ahmet Tahir Nur and Şeyma Nur Temel who critically read, commented, and edited several chapters of this dissertation. Their valuable criticisms and suggestions improved my project and saved me from many mistakes. İmam Rabbani

Çelik and Abdülmecid Ekşici's good company despite the distances was a source of joy and energy. I also benefited from their expertise in Islamic legal theory.

I would like to thank my parents Celal and Güllü Kami for their invaluable support and efforts throughout my life. Any gratitude would remain short in comparison to their love and care. I also owed much to my sister Güldem, who always shared my excitement and supported me since my childhood.

Finally, I would like to thank my wife Tabarak, who always encouraged me with her unwavering support and limitless love, and my daughter Büşra Reyhan, who was a constant source of joy for me and always cheered me up. My warmest thanks go to them, and to them I dedicate this dissertation.



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BOA	Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı Osmanlı Arşivi)
IJMES	<i>International Journal of Middle East Studies</i>
MSR	<i>Mamluk Studies Review</i>
TALİD	<i>Türkiye Araştırmaları Literatür Dergisi</i>
TDV İSAM	Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Araştırmaları Merkezi
DİA	<i>Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi</i>
e.n.	Entry number (for biographical entries)

A NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

This dissertation renders personal names in Ottoman Turkish context with their modern Turkish equivalents. For example, Taşköprizade instead of Tashkoprizāda. In certain cases, it employs macrons to avoid confusions. For example, Āli vs. Ali.

It employs a modified version of the transliteration guidelines recommended by the *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* for names in Arabic or Persian contexts, without dots. The same applies to texts and titles in any context.

For terms with some circulation in English, the convention is followed. For example, mufti, madrasa, pasha. Otherwise, the common modern Turkish version of terms is usually preferred. For example, şeyhülislam instead of shaykh al-Islām. Some less circulated words are rendered with simplified transliteration. For example, *mujaddid* and *mujtahid*.

Place names appear in Anglicized version whenever possible. The dates in lunar calendar are converted to Common Era.

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INTRODUCTION

Egypt and Syria (or Greater Syria, known as *bilād al-Shām*) came under Muslim rule around the mid-seventh century and rapidly grew into new centers for the further advancement of Muslim armies and the spread of Islam. Inhabited by several companions of the Prophet and their followers, major cities in the region eventually emerged as centers of Islamic knowledge by the late seventh century. The subsequent five centuries witnessed an upsurge in the number of learned figures and the flourishing of intellectual activity in the region under Muslim regimes. Investments of Fātimid (909–1171), Zangid (1127–1233), and Ayyūbid (1171–circa the 1250s in most of Syria) rulers in the construction of educational foundations from the tenth to thirteenth centuries not only delivered social, political, and financial support for scholars but also added an institutional dimension to scholarly life. Meanwhile, the Crusaders' presence in the Levant (1096–1291) resulted in the concentration of scholarly activity in a few neighboring cities under Muslim rule such as Aleppo, Damascus, and Cairo. In the mid-thirteenth century, the Mongols invaded the eastern half of Islamdom and destroyed the Abbasid Caliphate centered in Bagdad; and Christian armies intensified their attacks against Muslims in the Iberian Reconquista. Consequently, the abovementioned cities became home for numerous Muslim scholars fleeing from the destabilized regions. The Mamluk rulers (1250–1517) were no less generous patrons than their Ayyūbid predecessors had been, nor were they less dependent on scholars' collaboration to attain a legitimate and durable government. They founded many educational institutions and fostered an environment that sustained and further developed scholarly activity in the region. Ultimately, Egypt and Syria appeared as two major scholarly centers with unmatched diversity and plurality in Islamdom in the early sixteenth century.

After defeating the Mamluks, the Ottomans ruled the central Arab lands (Egypt, Syria, and Hijaz) from 1516–17 onward. How did the scholars in Egypt and Syria experience the transition from Mamluk to Ottoman rule? In other words, what sort of tensions, conflicts, encounters, entanglements, adaptation, or integration did they go through during this sudden change in political authority and consequent administrative, social, economic, and cultural developments? This question relates to a series of bureaucratic, legal, ideological, and cultural transformations in the Ottoman Empire during the long

sixteenth century, 1453–1600.¹ For example, some researchers have considered the encounter of Ottoman scholar-bureaucrats (scholars professionalized in government service) with scholars in the Arab provinces as an important stage in the consolidation of the Ottoman learned hierarchy.² Others have emphasized the incorporation of the central Arab lands with deeply rooted Islamic traditions into the Ottoman Empire as a major development for the rise of Ottoman Sunni ideology.³ Recent scholarship has reframed Ottoman Sunni orthodoxy within the broader paradigm of confessionalization, but it still acknowledges the fundamental role of the Ottoman expansion to the central Arab lands in the development of Ottoman sunnization.⁴ Some researchers have argued that Ottoman Hanafism as a distinct branch within the Hanafi madhhab crystallized partially due to the interaction between Ottoman scholar-bureaucrats and Hanafi scholars of the Arab provinces.⁵ Still others have credited the maturation of Ottoman high culture through the end of the sixteenth century to this scholarly encounter and interaction in elite salons.⁶

This large body of literature attaches importance to the Ottoman takeover of scholarly centers in the central Arab lands. Its focus is on the Ottoman center, however. That is, it focuses largely on the impacts that the conversion of Mamluk-based scholars to Ottoman subjects had on diverse facets of the Ottoman central government (i.e., the administrative body comprising the Ottoman sultan and ruling elite, such as the

¹ For a brief review of the related recent literature, see Kaya Şahin, “The Ottoman Empire in the Long Sixteenth Century,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 70, no. 1 (2017): 220–34.

² Abdurrahman Atçıl, *Scholars and Sultans in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 83–134.

³ Madeline C. Zilfi, “Sultan Süleyman and the Ottoman Religious Establishment,” in *Süleymân the Second and His Time*, ed. Halil İnalçık and Cemal Kafadar (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 1993), 109–10; Gilles Veinstein, “Religious Institutions, Policies and Lives,” in *The Cambridge History of Turkey: The Ottoman Empire as a World Power 1453–1603*, vol. 2, ed. Suraiya Faroqhi and Kate Fleet (2013), 348–52.

⁴ Tijana Krstić, “Historicizing the Study of Sunni Islam in the Ottoman Empire, c. 1450–c. 1750,” in *Historicizing Sunni Islam in the Ottoman Empire, c. 1450–c. 1750*, ed. Tijana Krstić and Derin Terzioğlu (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2020), 6–7; Helen Pfeifer, “A New Hadith Culture? Arab Scholars and Ottoman Sunnization in the Sixteenth Century,” in *Historicizing Sunni Islam*, 31–61. For an attempt to reframe Ottoman sunnization, see Derin Terzioğlu, “How to Conceptualize Ottoman Sunnization: A Historiographical Discussion,” *Turcica* 44 (2012): 301–38.

⁵ Rudolph Peters, “What Does It Mean to Be an Official Madhhab? Hanafism and the Ottoman Empire,” in *The Islamic School of Law: Evolution, Devolution, and Progress*, ed. P. Bearmann, R. Peters, and F. E. Vogel (Harvard University Press, 2005), 147–75; Guy Burak, *The Second Formation of Islamic Law: The Hanafi School in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

⁶ Helen Pfeifer, “To Gather Together: Cultural Encounters in Sixteenth Century Ottoman Literary Salons” (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2014); Pfeifer, “Encounter after the Conquest: Scholarly Gatherings in 16th-Century Ottoman Damascus,” *IJMES* 47, no. 2 (2015): 219–39; Pfeifer, *Empire of Salons: Conquest and Community in Early Modern Ottoman Lands* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2022).

empire's scholar-bureaucrats) as exemplified above, including the further bureaucratization of its learned hierarchy, transformation of its ideology, and consolidation of its high culture. In general, these studies present continuous narratives of the history of the Ottoman polity, where the Syro-Egyptian scholars join in the early sixteenth century and either trigger or accelerate a transformation. Few works have thoroughly examined these developments the other way around—a continuous history of Syro-Egyptian scholars from the Mamluk to the Ottoman period.⁷ As an attempt in this direction, this dissertation scrutinizes the biographies of three scholars from three successive generations of the Ghazzī family in Damascus within the context of the Mamluk–Ottoman transition in Greater Syria. These scholars are respectively Radiyy al-Dīn al-Ghazzī (1458–1529), his son Badr al-Dīn (1499–1577), and his grandson Najm al-Dīn (1570–1651). The objective of the study is to observe the effects of the change of political rule in the central Arab lands and the consequent socio-political, economic, and cultural transformations on scholars and scholarly life in Greater Syria, with special reference to the experience of the members of the Ghazzī family.

A few questions should be answered at this point. First, why am I focusing on scholars in Damascus—and not in another city instead—in order to study the transition in Syria? Second, what is the use of concentrating on a family in order to study Damascene scholars? Finally, why the examination of the Ghazzīs instead of another contemporary Damascene family in the transition?

Damascus was the center of Mamluk Syria and enjoyed a status comparable to that of a second capital city. Its governor (*na'ib al-Shām*) was the most potent amir in Syria and a powerful candidate for the throne in Cairo during the fourteenth century.⁸ The province maintained its political significance in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.⁹ As a center of education, Cairo superseded Damascus only after the late fourteenth century.¹⁰ The city continued to host the greatest number of scholars and educational institutions in Syria

⁷ For some recent examples, see Stephan Conermann and Gül Şen, ed., *The Mamluk-Ottoman Transition: Continuity and Change in Egypt and Bilād al-Shām in the Sixteenth Century* (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2016); *ibid.*, vol. 2 (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2022).

⁸ Nicola A. Ziadeh, “Study of Urban Life in Syria, 1200-1400” (PhD diss., SOAS University of London, 1950), 1–80; Şehabeddin Tekindağ, *Berkuk Devrin 'de Memlük Sultanlığı* (Istanbul Edebiyat Fakültesi Matbaası, 1961), 136–37; Jo van Steenberg, “The Political Role of Damascus in the Mamluk Empire: Three Events in the Period 741/1341–750/1349, Imperative for the Change of Power in Cairo,” *Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica*, 30 (1999): 113–128; Cengiz Tomar, “Şam,” in *DİA* (Online, 2010).

⁹ Taha Thalji Tarawneh, “The Province of Damascus during the Second Mamluk Period (784/1382–922/1516)” (PhD diss., Indiana University, 1987), 6–86.

¹⁰ For Cairo's rise as a new center of scholarly attraction, see Muhammet Enes Midilli, “Ulemânın Memlük Coğrafyasına Yönelmesi ve Memlükler Döneminde Kahire İlim Kurumları,” *İslam Tetkikleri Dergisi* 10, no. 1 (2020): 389–412. Miura compares the level of urbanization in Cairo and Damascus during the Mamluk era with reference to the number of constructions in both cities. Based on the data extracted from Michael Meinecke's work, Miura gives the distribution of 2,279 buildings constructed in Syro-Egypt

afterward.¹¹ It became a provincial center in the Ottoman era but not an ordinary one. It preserved its role as a religious center, where thousands of pilgrims gathered annually to travel to Mecca for pilgrimage in official ceremonies. Accordingly, it hosted numerous resident and itinerant scholars from all around the Muslim world, let alone other Syrian urban centers.¹² It outperformed many Anatolian and Balkan cities in enhancing the tax capacity of the empire, thanks to its substantial tax revenues, throughout the sixteenth century;¹³ and became one of the few provincial centers that witnessed huge imperial construction projects during this period.¹⁴ Military expeditions to Iran, Yemen and Cyprus added to Syria's geopolitical significance from the late sixteenth century, and Damascus came to the fore as an important provincial center with its resources.¹⁵ Although it remained secondary to Aleppo as a center of international trade from the late sixteenth century onward, Damascus maintained its position as the religious and scholarly center of Syria during the Ottoman era.¹⁶ Thus, tracing the trajectory of Damascus as a scholarly center in the Mamluk–Ottoman transition appears significant.

Studies on scholarly life in the Mamluk era particularly underline the role of familial structures. In his seminal study, Michael Chamberlain suggests that examining households instead of formal educational

during the Mamluk era. Of these buildings, 40 percent located in Cairo, whereas only 11 percent were in Damascus. Nevertheless, Damascus, with this percentage, had the biggest share among Syrian cities. See Graph 1-1 in Toru Miura, *Dynamism in the Urban Society of Damascus: The Sālihiyya Quarter from the Twelfth to the Twentieth Centuries* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 15.

¹¹ Jon E. Mandaville, “The Muslim Judiciary of Damascus in the Late Mamluk Period” (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1969); Tarawneh, “The Province of Damascus,” 215–41; Miura, *Dynamism in the Urban Society of Damascus*.

¹² Abdullah Ankawī, “The Pilgrimage to Mecca in Mamluk Times,” *Arabian Studies* 1 (1974): 146–70; Suraiya Faroqhi, *Pilgrims and Sultans: The Hajj under the Ottomans 1517-1683* (I. B. Tauris, 1994); Nir Shafir, “In an Ottoman Holy Land: The Hajj and the Road from Damascus, 1500–1800,” *History of Religions* 60, no. 1 (2020): 1–36.

¹³ See Figure 8 and 13 in Yunus Uğur, “Mapping Ottoman Cities: Socio-Spatial Definitions and Groupings (1450–1700),” *The Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, 18/3 (2018): 16–65.

¹⁴ Çiğdem Kafescioğlu, “‘In the Image of Rūm’: Ottoman Architectural Patronage in Sixteenth-Century Aleppo and Damascus,” *Muqarnas* 16, no. 1 (1999): 70–96; Abdullah Manaz, *Suriye'nin Başkenti Şam'da Türk Dönemi Eserleri* (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1992).

¹⁵ M. Adnan Bakhit, *The Ottoman Province of Damascus in the Sixteenth Century* (Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1982), 101–7, 191; Linda Darling, “Fiscal Administration of the Arab Provinces after the Ottoman Conquest of 1516,” in *The Mamluk-Ottoman Transition*, ed. Conermann and Şen, 147–76, especially 165–73.

¹⁶ H. Edhem Eldem, Daniel Goffman, and Bruce Masters, *The Ottoman City between East and West: Aleppo, Izmir, and Istanbul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 17–48; Thomas Philipp, “The Economic Impact of the Ottoman Conquest on Bilad al-Sham,” in *Syria and Bilad al-Sham under Ottoman Rule: Essays in Honour of Abdul Karim Rafeq*, ed. Peter Sluglett and Stefan Weber (Brill, 2010), 101–14.

institutions can yield better results about social and scholarly life in high medieval Damascus, 1190–1350.¹⁷ Similar to Mamluk amirs' competition for *iqṭā'* lands, the learned elite competed for scholarly positions as a source of income and social survival. Endowment deeds that showed their alliances with the military elite guaranteed them a source of wealth and social status for generations thanks to specific stipulations. Thus, researchers have devoted much attention to certain scholarly families as a means of analyzing cultural and scholarly life and bureaucratic developments in Mamluk Syria.¹⁸ The significant role scholarly families played in Syrian scholarly and socio-political life has drawn researchers' attention in the Ottoman era, too.¹⁹

In his study of the judiciary in late Mamluk Damascus, Jon E. Mandaville scrutinizes rivalry between two multi-family groups for the office of the Shāfi'ī chief judgeship, the highest and most lucrative scholarly post in the Mamluk era, during the last thirty years of the Mamluk Sultanate.²⁰ He mentions these two groups had a strong hold in the judicial system in Damascus—one-third of the thirty deputy judges (*nuwwāb*, singular *nā'ib*) during the period were affiliated with them. Biographical sources enable us to trace the history of some of these leading Shāfi'ī families through their members' life stories in early Ottoman Damascus.²¹ However, few of them, if any, were as successful as the Ghazzīs in maintaining their position until the twentieth century. The Ghazzīs were well-known family represented by a handful of influential scholarly figures each century. Radiyy al-Dīn al-Ghazzī (1458–1529), whom Mandaville mentions as a

¹⁷ Michael Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus, 1190-1350* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 69–151.

¹⁸ For example, see Kamal S. Salibi, "The Banū Jamā'a: A Dynasty of Shāfi'ite Jurists in the Mamluk Period," *Studia Islamica*, no. 9 (1958): 97–109; Mandaville, "The Muslim Judiciary of Damascus," 12–23, 26–34; Irmeli Perho, "Climbing the Ladder: Social Mobility in the Mamluk Period," *MSR* 15 (2011): 19–35; Mehmet Fatih Yalçın, "Bahri Memlüklerde Dımaşk Kadıkdutluğı" (PhD diss., Istanbul, Marmara University, 2016); Yalçın, "Memlükler Döneminde Bir Ulemâ Ailesi: İhnâî Örneği," *The Journal of International Social Research / Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi* 9, no. 44 (2016): 579–88.

¹⁹ For example, see Ferdinand Wüstenfeld, *Die Gelehrten-Familie Muhibbi in Damascus und Ihre Zeitgenossen im XI. (XVII.) Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Dieterische Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1884); Linda Schatkowski Schilcher, *Families in Politics: Damascene Factions and Estates of the 18th and 19th Centuries* (Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 1985); Basil Salem, "Beneath Biography: Attitudes toward Self, Society, and Empire among the Scholars of Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Damascus" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2016).

²⁰ Mandaville, "The Muslim Judiciary of Damascus," 26–34.

²¹ For Banū Jamā'a, see Elizabeth Sirriyeh, "Whatever Happened to the Banū Jamā'a? The Tail of a Scholarly Family in Ottoman Syria," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 28, no. 1 (2001): 55–65. For the family of Ibn al-Farfūr, see Michael Winter, "The Judiciary of Late Mamluk and Early Ottoman Damascus: The Administrative, Social and Cultural Transformation of the System," in *History and Society during the Mamluk Period (1250–1517)*, ed. Stephan Conermann, vol. 5 (Bonn University Press, 2014), 193–220. For the family of Ibn al-Farfūr, also see Toru Miura, "Transition of the 'Ulama' Families in Sixteenth Century Damascus," in *The Mamluk-Ottoman Transition*, ed. Conermann and Şen, 207–220. Miura also gives information about the experience of two Hanbali families, namely, the Muflih and Qudama, in the transition period.

Shāfi‘ī deputy judge affiliated with one of the abovementioned family alliances, occupied this office for decades.²² He was in his late fifties at the time of the Ottoman conquest. He established close relationships with the new regime and served it as a Shāfi‘ī deputy judge. His son Badr al-Dīn (1499–1577) witnessed the Ottoman conquest of Damascus as a seventeen-year-old man. He later traveled to Istanbul and was engaged in closer interaction with the highest level of the Ottoman bureaucracy. In the mid-century, he became an influential Shāfi‘ī jurist and professor in Damascus. His son Najm al-Dīn (1570–1651) also became a respected Shāfi‘ī jurist and professor in the first decades of the seventeenth century. The family became more influential in the subsequent centuries. In his centennial biographical dictionary for the leading scholars of the twelfth hijrī century (approximately the eighteenth century C.E.), al-Murādī (d. 1791) devotes a separate entry to each of more than fourteen Ghazzīs.²³ Schilcher’s study demonstrates that the family was quite influential in local and regional politics in Damascus during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Al-Ghazzīs monopolized the position of the Shāfi‘ī jurist (*iftā’*) during the entire period concerned. They made alliances with other prominent families through marriages, and finally even managed to assume the post of *naqīb al-ashraf* (government post representing the descendants of the Prophet) for a while, despite the fact that they were not descendants of the Prophet.²⁴ *The Encyclopedia of Damascene Families* mentions more than forty scholars from the family who lived from the second half of the fourteenth century to the twentieth century.²⁵ The Ghazzī family seems to have been a continuous component of Damascene educated society throughout the Mamluk and Ottoman periods. Thus, an examination of its history in 1450–1650, that is, between almost the last Mamluk and first Ottoman centuries in Damascus, can enlighten various aspects of the scholarly life in Syria during the transition.

There is no monograph dedicated to the Ghazzī family in the Mamluk–Ottoman transition, nor a full-length biographical examination of any of the abovementioned three Ghazzīs—Radiyy al-Dīn, Badr al-Dīn, and Najm al-Dīn. The literature provides scattered information about their lives, usually depending on a few well-known primary sources such as Badr al-Dīn’s Istanbul travelogue and Najm al-Dīn’s centennial biographical dictionary. This dissertation aims to look at Damascene scholarly community through a close

²² Mandaville, “The Muslim Judiciary of Damascus,” 26–34.

²³ Abū al-Fadl al-Murādī, *Silk al-Durar fī A’yān al-Qarn al-Thāni Ashar*, 4 vols. (Cairo: Bulaq, 1301). For the pages of the biographies devoted to the Ghazzīs, see Schilcher, *Families in Politics*, 169.

²⁴ Schilcher, *Families in Politics*, 169–74.

²⁵ Muhammad Sharīf Adnān al-Sawwāf, *Mawsū‘a al-Usar al-Dimashqiyya: Tārihuhā, Ansābuhā, A’lāmuhā* [The Encyclopedia of Damascene Families: History, Ancestry, Characteristics], vol. 3 (Damascus: Bayt al-Hikma, 2010), 15–28.

examination of the history of the Ghazzī family by putting the life stories of these three prominent Ghazzīs and their often-cited works in their socio-political context in 1450–1650.

This study seeks answers to several questions: How did the Ghazzī family, as an established Damascene scholarly family in 1516, continue to rise under Ottoman rule and hold significant posts through generations? What kind of means and mechanisms did they use to achieve this? Why did Badr al-Dīn and Najm al-Dīn prefer to become Shāfi‘ī muftis and not assume judgeship as Radiyy al-Dīn had? Could this be related to the divergence in their relationship with the ruling elites in the two successive regimes? How was their relationship with their contemporary Syrian scholars and Ottoman scholar-bureaucrats? What sort of economic, social, and cultural capital did they inherit from their fathers each generation, and how did they utilize it? How did they contextualize their lives in particular and their family in general within the broader context of the history of Damascene society, the Ottoman Empire, and contemporary Islamdom? What was their opinion about the Mamluk and Ottoman governments, and how, if ever, were they involved in policymaking processes in the two regimes? What are the ruptures and continuities within the family in each generation in terms of scholarly interests and professional tendencies?

In sum, this study examines Syrian scholars’ experience of the Mamluk-Ottoman transition through the history of the Ghazzī family. It utilizes family as a meso-level social structure and builds the history of the Ghazzī family through the life stories of three Ghazzīs from three successive generations of the family. To this end, it uses biographical narratives of various literary and archival sources (e.g., biographical dictionaries, travelogues, annals, and endowment deeds) to provide socio-political contextualization of three interrelated life stories. The socio-political context of each of the three Ghazzīs illuminates the transition experience of many of their contemporaries, peers, and acquaintances and thus provides a synchronic view of the urban, regional, and imperial networks of Damascene scholars in the Mamluk and Ottoman eras. Three Ghazzīs’ connected life stories within the framework of a family help to follow continuities and ruptures at a supra-individual level and thus provide a diachronic view of a part Damascene learned society in relation to several political, social, economic and cultural transformations in 1450–1650.

Literature Overview: Syrian Scholars in Transition

An individual’s life is multifaceted and can be understood through innumerable micro and macro events, but not all in a single text with a coherent narrative. Therefore, this dissertation prioritizes some themes related to the questions above over others. It engages in dialogue with the body of work around three interrelated themes: judicial integration and lawmaking, scholarly mobility and networks, and imperial endowments and patronage. The main framework in which it maintains this dialogue is the Mamluk–

Ottoman transition in Syria. Traditional scholarship, whose concern was largely limited to either the history of the Mamluk Empire (1250–1517) or the history of Ottoman rule in Arab lands (1516–17 onward), has usually failed to achieve a fruitful dialogue between two periods.²⁶ Recently, there is a rising interest in tracing continuities and changes in the central Arab lands from the Mamluk to the Ottoman period.²⁷ This dissertation aims to contribute to this recent literature. For a fruitful dialogue with the abovementioned themes, it handles them at the urban (Damascus), regional (Syria), and imperial (Mamluk or Ottoman) levels.

Jon E. Mandaville and Michael Winter have highlighted the significant role leading families played in the judicial system in late Mamluk Damascus.²⁸ Yet few studies have followed up on this familial aspect of the judicial system in the Ottoman era.²⁹ Focusing on the history of the Ghazzī family, whose members filled the judicial cadres in Damascus since the late fourteenth century, the present dissertation aims to remedy this lack.

The transformation of the judicial system in the Ottoman period has attracted more attention in the literature. Several studies have examined the abolition of the four chief judgeships from the four madhhabs and the establishment of a new system presided over by a Hanafī judge and subordinate deputy judges.³⁰ Timothy J. Fitzgerald’s study has shown that the process was not smooth in the case of Aleppo.³¹ His examination of the murder of Kara Qādī, the Ottoman official appointed to inspect and register endowments and private properties in Aleppo, at the hands of Aleppines illustrates different phases of judicial integration in Syria. Abdurrahman Atçıl has studied judicial integration of Cairo in 1517–1525, dividing the period into five sub-periods and coming up with similar results: the judicial system of Cairo did not adapt to the Ottoman system immediately or easily but rather through long negotiations between local powers and the central government

²⁶ For more on this discussion, see Stephan Conermann and Gül Şen, “Introduction: A Transitional Point of View,” in *The Mamluk-Ottoman Transition*, ed. Conermann and Şen, 13–25.

²⁷ See Conermann and Şen, ed., *The Mamluk-Ottoman Transition*, 2 vols.

²⁸ Mandaville, “The Muslim Judiciary of Damascus”; Winter, “The Judiciary of Late Mamluk and Early Ottoman Damascus.”

²⁹ Salibī, “The Banū Jamā’a”; Michael Winter, “Ottoman Qadis in Damascus during the 16th–18th Centuries,” in *Law, Custom, and Statute in the Muslim World*, ed. Ron Shaham (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 87–109; Sirriyeh, “Whatever Happened to the Banū Jamā’a?”; Miura, “Transition of the ‘Ulama’ Families in Sixteenth Century Damascus.”

³⁰ For one of the first studies on the subject, see Bakhit, *The Ottoman Province of Damascus*.

³¹ Timothy J. Fitzgerald, “Ottoman Methods of Conquest: Legal Imperialism and the City of Aleppo, 1480–1570” (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2009).

around several crises.³² The findings of these studies are helpful in interpreting the trajectory of the judicial system in early Ottoman Damascus because similar clashes and conflicts occurred in Damascus, too. Inspired by them, the present dissertation examines the administrative and judicial integrations into the Ottoman Empire separately, and through various phases and turning points, highlighting the multiple roles of local scholars in each step.

As for lawmaking, it has been generally studied together with the judicial system. Inspired by İnalçık's "Ottoman methods of conquest,"³³ Fitzgerald has utilized the concept of legal imperialism. For him, this concept means more than the appointment of a Hanafî judge to the top of the Aleppine judicial system. It includes the registration of population, taxes, and religious endowments through cadastral surveys (*tahrîr*), as well as the subsequent promulgation of provincial law codes. Whereas Ottomanization and Islamization were synonyms in the Balkans, in the Arab provinces, the process of Ottomanization manifested itself as the ideological and institutional precedence of Hanafî law because deep-rooted Islamic traditions and Muslim populations already existed in these lands. Ottoman Hanafism in Aleppo, according to Fitzgerald, had three dimensions: the precedence of Hanafî methodology in lawmaking, the precedence of the Ottoman Hanafî judge in the judicial hierarchy, and the use of Hanafism as an integral part of the dominant discourse.³⁴

Some of these ideas were previously put forward by Rudolph Peters.³⁵ According to him, the Ottomans enjoyed a Hanafî monopoly in the Balkans. In the central Arab lands, on the other hand, they had a Hanafî hegemony. That is, they enforced a Hanafî inter-madhhab law of conflict in the Arab provinces in order to regulate the position of non-Hanafî madhhabs in judicial activity. Accordingly, non-Hanafî judges were appointed but they could not issue verdicts contradicting Ottoman Hanafism, that is, the body of law largely based on the joint interpretation of Shari'a by the state and appointed Hanafî jurists. Guy Burak has further dealt with this "Ottoman Hanafism" as an official madhhab. He has highlighted the role of state-appointed muftis in major Arab provincial centers in a number of studies.³⁶ He has also examined how and why the

³² Abdurrahman Atçıl, "Memlûkler'den Osmanlılar'a Geçişte Mısır'da Adli Teşkilât ve Hukuk (922–931/1517–1525)," *İslam Araştırmaları Dergisi*, no. 38 (2017): 89–121.

³³ Halil İnalçık, "Ottoman Methods of Conquest," *Studia Islamica* 2 (1954): 103–29.

³⁴ Fitzgerald, "Legal Imperialism and the City of Aleppo."

³⁵ Peters, "What Does It Mean to Be an Official Madhhab?"

³⁶ Burak, *The Second Formation of Islamic Law*; Burak, "According to His Exalted Kânûn: Contending Visions of the Muftiship in the Ottoman Province of Damascus (Sixteenth–Eighteenth Centuries)," in *Society, Law, and Culture in the Middle East*:

Syrian, Egyptian, and Ottoman authors of Hanafī biographical dictionaries differed in their Hanafī genealogies. Kenneth M. Cuno has scrutinized how the views of Syrian Hanafī jurists in property relations differed from the views of their counterparts in Egypt and the Ottoman center.³⁷ Similarly, Samy A. Ayoub has questioned the place of sultanic laws (*qānūn*) in the juridical activity of the Hanafī jurists in central Arab lands.³⁸

These researchers, however, focus on lawmaking largely through fatwas and official decrees rather than court records, which give clues about the practical aspects of law. Thus, Ahmed Fekry Ibrahim’s study adds to this picture a new dimension by highlighting the implementation of laws in Cairene courts during the seventeenth century. According to him, the court evidence in the records in Egypt suggests that Ottoman endeavors for legal homogenization died out in the seventeenth century and the courts of non-Hanafī judges were utilized for pragmatic reasons.³⁹ Based on the testimony on similar court practices in the first half of the sixteenth century, Atçıl has argued that the precedence of the Ottoman Hanafī judge over the judicial system did not necessarily mean the superiority of the Hanafī madhhab during the period.⁴⁰

This body of literature about lawmaking helps clarify the legal agenda of the contemporary scholars while contextualizing the life stories and scholarly production of muftis and judges from the Ghazzī family. As will be mentioned in the section on methodology, this dissertation focuses on the social aspects of lawmaking, that is, the role(s) and influence of jurists in daily life and practice, with special reference to the Ghazzīs. Suffice it to say here that since the Ghazzīs were Shāfi‘ī scholars and operated as non-government-appointed jurists, the examination of their legal activity and participation in lawmaking processes opens room for alternatives to the abovementioned largely Hanafi-centered narratives of Ottoman legal history.

This dissertation is also related to scholarly mobility and networks between the imperial centers (Cairo and then Istanbul) and Syria. Carl Petry’s prosopographical research on the Cairene elite has demonstrated that a considerable number of Syrian scholars traveled to the Mamluk capital for educational and employment

“Modernities” in the Making, ed. Dror Ze’evi and Ehud R. Toledano (De Gruyter, 2015); Burak, “Dynasty, Law, and the Imperial Provincial Madrasa: The Case of al-Madrasa al-Uthmaniyya in Ottoman Jerusalem,” *IJMES* 45, no. 1 (2013): 111–25.

³⁷ Kenneth M. Cuno, “Was the Land of Ottoman Syria Miri or Milk? An Examination of Juridical Differences within the Hanafī School,” *Studia Islamica*, no. 81 (1995): 121–52.

³⁸ Samy A. Ayoub, *Law, Empire and the Sultan: Ottoman Imperial Authority and Late Hanafī Jurisprudence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020).

³⁹ Ahmed Fekry Ibrahim, *Pragmatism in Islamic Law: A Social and Intellectual History* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2015), 129–66.

⁴⁰ Atçıl, “Memlûkler’den Osmanlılar’a Geçişte Mısır’da Adli Teşkilât ve Hukuk (922–931/1517–1525).”

opportunities during the late Mamluk era.⁴¹ Ertuğrul Ökten has given clues about scholarly mobility between Greater Syria and the lands of Rûm (Anatolia-Balkans complex) in the same period, with statistics based on available biographical data.⁴² Atçıl, in an article on the rise of the lands of Rûm as a scholarly center, evaluates some of the parameters affecting this scholarly mobility from the fifteenth century.⁴³ Pfeifer's recent book has argued that Mamluk elite were less interested in Rûmî language and culture due to their confidence in their scholarly and cultural superiority in Islamdom in the decades before 1516, whereas the Ottomans were receptive to both Arab and Persian influences thanks to the itinerant elite traveling to and from these domains. Accordingly, scholarly and cultural exchanges between Ottoman and Mamluk-based scholars (e.g., interest of both sides in books respectively in Turkish and Arabic, and travel patterns to and from Anatolia and central Arab lands) were asymmetrical.⁴⁴

The scholarly mobility between Syria and Istanbul no doubt increased after the latter replaced Cairo as the new imperial center in 1516–17. Here two interrelated bodies of scholarship emerge.⁴⁵ Several researchers have examined travelogues, which offer perspectives and information about the individual experience of Syrian scholars and their networks in the new imperial capital. These scholars usually came to Istanbul for patronage and new appointments.⁴⁶ Some researchers, on the other hand, have studied the interaction of Ottoman scholar-bureaucrats with local scholars and elite in Greater Syria to shed light on the other side of the coin. Ottoman scholars in Syria were usually officials, and they were obliged to carry out incessant

⁴¹ Carl F. Petry, *The Civilian Elite of Cairo in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981).

⁴² Ertuğrul Ökten, "Scholars and Mobility: A Preliminary Assessment from the Perspective of al-Shaqāyiq al-Nu'māniyya," *Osmanlı Araştırmaları*, no 41 (2013): 55–70.

⁴³ Abdurrahman Atçıl, "Mobility of Scholars and Formation of a Self-Sustaining Scholarly System in the Lands of Rûm during the Fifteenth Century," in *Islamic Literature and Intellectual Life in Fourteenth- and Fifteenth-Century Anatolia*, ed. A. C. S. Peacock and Sara Nur Yıldız (Ergon-Verlag, 2016), 315–32.

⁴⁴ Pfeifer, *Empire of Salons*, 24–56.

⁴⁵ For a recent study that puts these two bodies of work into a fruitful dialogue, see *ibid.*

⁴⁶ For example, see Yehoshua Frenkel, "The Ottomans and the Mamluks through the Eyes of Arab Travelers (in 16th–17th Centuries)," in *The Mamluk-Ottoman Transition*, ed. Conermann and Şen; Pfeifer, "To Gather Together," 77–97; Abdulsattar Elhajhamed, "Kadı Muhibbüddin el-Hamevî'nin Bevâdi'd-Dumû'il-'Andemiyye bi-Vâdi'd-Diyâr'ir-Rûmiyye Adlı Seyahatnamesi Üzerine Bir İnceleme," *Nüsha Şarkiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi* 19, no. 48 (2019): 203–26.

negotiations with local power holders, including scholars.⁴⁷ They and local scholars were entangled in networks of diverse relationships ranging from patronage to teaching, and from friendship to enmity.⁴⁸

The abovementioned works have emphasized the multi-layered relationship between two sides, Ottoman scholars and local ones. However, they have usually tended to portray these two sides as monolithic groups and overlooked their sub-components,⁴⁹ such as Syrian Hanafī scholar-bureaucrats, who, though few, were intriguing figures forming an intermediate category of scholars—originally local scholars but mostly integrated into the Ottoman learned hierarchy as town judges. Ajamī Sunni scholars, who fled to Damascus from Iran after the Safavids took control, constituted another sub-group among Damascene scholars—newcomers to Damascus who differed from the scholars belonging to the city’s longstanding families in terms of their social network and cultural capital. Moreover, researchers have usually treated Damascene scholars in the early decades of Ottoman rule without distinguishing between their successive generations. This treatment has gone hand in hand with the notion (which I question throughout this study) that the younger generation of Damascene scholars enjoyed the same advantageous position that their fathers had in bargaining with the new empire.⁵⁰ To overcome such problems, the present dissertation tries to give a more nuanced picture of the generations, cliques, and sub-groups among Damascene scholars. For example, as will be seen in the sixth chapter, while Najm al-Din al-Ghazzī was a Shāfi‘ī scholar from a renowned local family in Damascus his teachers Muhibb al-Dīn al-Hamawī and Monla Esed were respectively a Syrian Hanafī scholar-bureaucrat who resided in Damascus after his retirement from town judgeship and an Ajamī Shāfi‘ī scholar who immigrated from Iran. Moreover, the latter two belonged to the earliest post-Mamluk generations of scholars in Damascus. That is, they differed from the previous generations of scholars who had witnessed the Mamluk rule in the city in their political experience. This study highlights the diversity of the scholars living in Damascus based on their generational, ethnic, professional, and legal affiliations

⁴⁷ For example, see Pfeifer, “Encounter after the Conquest”; Toru Miura, “The Sālihiyya Quarter of Damascus at the Beginning of Ottoman Rule: The Ambiguous Relations between Religious Institutions and Waqf Properties,” in *Syria and Bilad al-Sham under Ottoman Rule*, ed. Sluglett and Weber, 269–91.

⁴⁸ Astrid Meier, “Perceptions of a New Era? Historical Writing in Early Ottoman Damascus,” *Arabica* 51, no. 4 (2004): 419–34; Winter, “Ottoman Qadis in Damascus”; Pfeifer, “A New Hadith Culture?”

⁴⁹ For example, see the “Arabs versus Rumis” dichotomy in Pfeifer, *Empire of Salons*.

⁵⁰ For example, Pfeifer describes the meeting of Badr al-Dīn (an unknown 30-year-old scholar) and Abd al-Rahīm al-Abbāsī (a respected 67-year-old scholar) in Istanbul in 1530 as the meeting of “two old friends,” as if they enjoyed the same scholarly, social, and cultural capital. This consideration leads to odd conclusion that “Badr al-Dīn al-Ghazzī entered Istanbul like Julius Caesar: he came, he taught, he conquered.” See Pfeifer, “To Gather Together,” 77–83, 203.

while simultaneously tracing their story under Ottoman rule by employing the overarching category of “Damascene scholars” in reference to their common urban identity.

Michael Winter has argued that after the conquest, scholars in Damascus encountered an increasingly consolidating Ottoman learned hierarchy, which made them realize the difficulty of their employment in the core imperial lands (Anatolia-Balkans complex). To overcome this, local scholars changed their madhhab to the Hanafī School, which was the official madhhab.⁵¹ Rafeq has also discussed this madhhab conversion in Ottoman Syria in an earlier article.⁵² Yet the emphasis on the role of madhhab should not overlook the fact that the language barrier was another reason for their not being employed in the core lands of the empire. More importantly, Ottoman scholar-bureaucrats enjoyed mechanisms such as the system of novitiate status (*mülāzemet*) to control entrances to the Ottoman learned hierarchy.⁵³ Thus, the majority of scholars from the Arab provinces, Hanafī and non- Hanafī alike, remained outside the scholarly-bureaucratic hierarchy throughout the sixteenth century. In that sense, the full integration of the judgeship of Damascus into the Ottoman hierarchy of positions and the appointment of the judges of Damascus from among the Ottoman scholar-bureaucrats after the mid-sixteenth century appears as an important development that allowed Damascene scholars to enter into imperial relationship networks—one of the themes this dissertation scrutinizes in several chapters.

This dissertation is also connected to studies on endowments and imperial patronage. Toru Miura has highlighted the richness of Damascene endowments in the late Mamluk and early Ottoman eras.⁵⁴ Richard van Leeuwen has demonstrated the multiple roles endowments assumed in the social, legal, and economic life of Ottoman Damascus.⁵⁵ Among these endowments, madrasas had a special place. Few studies, however, have traced the history of madrasas as educational institutions from Mamluk to Ottoman periods.⁵⁶

⁵¹ Winter, “The Judiciary of Late Mamluk and Early Ottoman Damascus.”

⁵² Abdul-Karim Rafeq, “Relations between the Syrian ‘Ulamā’ and the Ottoman State in the Eighteenth Century,” *Oriente Moderno* 18 (79), no. 1 (1999): 67–95.

⁵³ Mehmet İpşirli, “Osmanlı İlmiye Teşkilatında Mülazemet Sisteminin Önemi ve Rumeli Kadıaskeri Mehmed Efendi Zamanına Ait Mülazemet Kayıtları,” *Güney-Doğu Avrupa Araştırmaları Dergisi* (1982): 221–31; Atçıl, *Scholars and Sultans*, 83–134.

⁵⁴ Miura, “The Sālihiyya Quarter of Damascus at the Beginning of Ottoman Rule”; idem, *Dynamism in the Urban Society of Damascus*, 174–204.

⁵⁵ Richard van Leeuwen, *Waqfs and Urban Structures: The Case of Ottoman Damascus* (London: Brill, 1999).

⁵⁶ For example, see Burak, “Dynasty, Law, and the Imperial Provincial Madrasa”; Şerife Eroğlu Memiş, “Kudüs’te Bir Tenkiziyye Medresesi: Osmanlı Tatbikinde Hayrî Bir Vakıf Eserin Akara Tebdili Mümkün Müdür?” *Osmanlı Medeniyeti Araştırmaları Dergisi* 6, no. 10 (2020): 64–82. For an example from Cairo, see Irfana Hashmi, “Patronage, Legal Practice, and Space in al-Azhar, 1500–1650” (PhD diss., New York University, 2014).

On the other hand, imperial investments and construction projects in the three major cities of Ottoman Syria—Damascus, Aleppo, and Jerusalem—are relatively more studied. The existing literature on these three cities underlines the different trajectories of urbanization under Ottoman rule.⁵⁷ Yunus Uğur’s archival research on approximately fifty cities from the Balkans, Anatolia, and the Arab provinces presents comparative analyses of these three cities during the Ottoman period, both with each other and with other cities of the empire, based on various socio-spatial attributes including demography, revenue sources, and built environment (the number of madrasas, dervish lodges, and mosques).⁵⁸ Çiğdem Kafescioğlu has examined the imperial constructions in Damascus and Aleppo throughout the sixteenth century.⁵⁹ She has argued that Ottoman imperial complexes in Syria differed in their target such as commercial, religious, or military purposes. Nevertheless, they usually included components offering posts for local and imperial scholars. Thus, the imperial endowments in Damascus created new spaces of interaction between Damascene scholars and imperial authorities. Imperial elites occasionally stipulated that the teaching posts in their endowments would go to local scholars and their descendants. Moreover, the increasing number of scholarly posts in these huge endowments channeled the competition of the local scholars with new parameters and variables. This dissertation adds to Kafescioğlu’s eye-opening examination of the architectural trajectory of Damascus, a vivid description of the various processes of individual patronage, by examining the networks of relationship between people in and outside institutions through the life stories of scholars who were patrons and protégés themselves.

Sources

This dissertation builds on different types of primary sources, literary and archival, some of which, to the best of my knowledge, have never been utilized before. These sources include biographical dictionaries, histories, annals, travelogues, scholarly certificates (*ijāza*), fatwas, and endowment registers that shed light on the life stories of members of the Ghazzī family or of their contemporaries during the period under

⁵⁷ Kafescioğlu, “In the Image of Rūm”; Eldem, Goffman, and Masters, *The Ottoman City between East and West*; Amy Singer, *Palestinian Peasants and Ottoman Officials: Rural Administration around Sixteenth-Century Jerusalem* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Singer, *Constructing Ottoman Beneficence: An Imperial Soup Kitchen in Jerusalem* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002); Dror Ze’evi, *An Ottoman Century: The District of Jerusalem in the 1600s* (SUNY Press, 2012); Heghnar Zeitlian Watenpaugh, *The Image of an Ottoman City: Imperial Architecture and Urban Experience in Aleppo in the 16th and 17th Centuries* (Leiden: Brill, 2004); Robert Hillenbrand, *The Architecture of Ottoman Jerusalem: An Introduction* (London: Altajir World of Islam Trust, 2002).

⁵⁸ Uğur, “Mapping Ottoman Cities: Socio-Spatial Definitions and Groupings (1450–1700).”

⁵⁹ Kafescioğlu, “In the Image of Rūm.”

examination. Some of these sources, belonging to the three Ghazzīs, provide autobiographical and biographical information and contain clues reflecting the Ghazzīs' perspectives on the world around them. Since some of these accounts, assessments, and criticisms are potentially partial, biased, one-sided, and incomplete, it is necessary to utilize the works of contemporary authors to check and balance the information they provide.

Radiyy al-Dīn Abū al-Barakāt (d. 1459), the father of Radiyy al-Dīn al-Ghazzī (d. 1529), penned a biographical dictionary containing the lives of Shāfi'ī scholars, mainly from Syria and Egypt, who died in the first half of the fifteenth century.⁶⁰ This work contains several autobiographical accounts and a long biographical entry devoted to author's father, Ahmad (d. 1421).⁶¹ It also provides a rich picture of the network of regional and interregional relationships that these two Ghazzīs had. It thus helps to shed light on the history of the early generations of the Ghazzī family in Damascus.

Najm al-Dīn al-Ghazzī (d. 1651) also has two biographical dictionaries: *al-Kawākib al-sā'irā fī a'yān al-mi'a al-āshira* [The Wandering Stars among the Notables of the Tenth Century];⁶² and its continuation, *Lutf al-samar wa qatf al-thamar min tarājim a'yān al-tabaqa al-ulā min al-qarn al-hādī ashar* [The Pleasure of Evening Conversation and the Gathering of Fruit from the Biographies of Notables of the First Layer of the Eleventh Century].⁶³ These two works are among the main sources of the present study. *Al-Kawākib* is an ambitious project that covers the biographies of more than 1,500 individuals. It follows the centennial biographical-dictionary-writing tradition in Syro-Egypt.⁶⁴ The biographees in *al-Kawākib* are the Muslim elite who died during the tenth hijrī century (circa. 1495–1592), mainly in Syria, Egypt, Anatolia and the Balkans. In that sense, the work provides a Damascene perspective on the Ottoman imperial elite as well as

⁶⁰ Radiyy al-Dīn Abū al-Barakāt Muhammad al-Ghazzī, *Bahja al-Nāzirīn ilā Tarājim al-Mutaakhhirīn min al-Shāfi'īyya al-Bāri'īn* (Beirut: Dār ibn Hazm, 1421).

⁶¹ Al-Ghazzī, 120–31.

⁶² Najm al-Dīn Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib al-Sai'ra bi-A'yān al-Mi'a al-Āshira*, ed. Khalīl al-Mansūr (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, 1997). This edition of the work has a number for each biographical entry. Throughout the dissertation, I have given reference to these entry numbers instead of the page number whenever I have used *al-Kawākib*.

⁶³ Idem, *Lutf al-Samar wa Qatf al-Thamar min Tarājim A'yān al-Tabaqa al-Ūlā min al-Qarn al-Hādī Ashar*, ed. Mahmūd al-Shaykh (Damascus: Wizāra al-Thaqāfa wa al-Irshād al-Qawmī, 1981). This edition of the work has a number for each biographical entry. Throughout the dissertation, I have given reference to these entry numbers instead of the page number whenever I have used *Lutf al-Samar*.

⁶⁴ Two previous representatives of this tradition are Ibn Hajar (d. 1449) and al-Sakhāwī (d. 1497), who wrote the biographies of individuals from respectively the eighth and the ninth hijrī centuries. Ibn Hajar al-Asqalānī, *Al-Durar al-Kāmina fī A'yān al-Mi'a al-Thāmina*, ed. Muhammad A. Khan (India, 1392); Shams al-Dīn Muhammad b. Abd al-Rahmān al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Daw' al-Lāmi' li-Ahl al-Qarn al-Tāsi'*, (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1992).

a retrospective look at the transition and integration experience of Syria in the sixteenth century. In *al-Kawākib*, Najm al-Dīn gives detailed entries for the biographies of his grandfather and father as well as several other members of the Ghazzī family. In this regard, *al-Kawākib* is an attempt to reconstruct the family past from the eyes of its author in the early seventeenth century.

Najm al-Dīn's second biographical dictionary, *Lutf al-samar*, an addendum (*dhayl*) of *al-Kawākib*, is less ambitious in scope. It only covers the first third of the eleventh hijrī century (circa 1592–1623), and contains little less than three hundred biographical entries, which are devoted mostly to contemporary Damascene scholars. It thus vividly illustrates Najm al-Dīn's personal network of relations in his hometown. *Lutf al-samar* also contains detailed autobiographical information about its author's scholarly and personal life. Unlike *al-Kawākib*, which has a retrospective look at the past century and generations, *Lutf al-samar* provides an individual perspective on the author's own age and contemporaries, which thus made it occasionally more tendentious. This work also contains information about some members of the Ghazzī family, including Najm al-Dīn's brothers and sons. Being aware of the traps of taking Najm al-Dīn's accounts of his family members and his personal relations at face value, this dissertation reads Najm al-Dīn's works critically by comparing the information provided by Najm al-Dīn with available contemporary sources whenever possible.

Hitherto, some researchers have utilized Najm al-Dīn's biographical dictionaries as primary sources for the biographies of scholars from the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.⁶⁵ No study has used them to write a history of the Ghazzī family in the sixteenth century, however. Mahmūd al-Shaykh, the editor of *Lutf al-samar*, has written a detailed bio-bibliographical survey of Najm al-Dīn's life and works mainly relying on *al-Kawākib* and *Lutf al-samar*.⁶⁶ Tarek Abuhusayn has also examined the scope and structure of *al-Kawākib* in his master's thesis along with the biographical works of five other historians from Damascus and Aleppo to compare the historiographical traditions of the two cities in the early Ottoman period.⁶⁷

Apart from biographical dictionaries, both Badr al-Dīn and Najm al-Dīn wrote a travelogue of their visit to Istanbul. Badr al-Dīn gives a detailed account of his travel to the lands of Rūm and his almost year-long stay in Istanbul in 1530–31 in his *al-Matāli' al-badriyya fī al-manāzil al-rūmiyya* [The Rising of the Full Moon on the Stations of the Lands of Rūm]. He was obliged to visit the new imperial center to renew the

⁶⁵ For a prosopography based on both works, see Rafeq, "Relations between the Syrian 'Ulamā' and the Ottoman State."

⁶⁶ See editor's introduction in al-Ghazzī, *Lutf*.

⁶⁷ Tarek Abu-Husayn, "Historian and Historical Thought in an Ottoman World: Biographical Writing in 16th and 17th Century Syria / Bilad al-Sham" (MA Thesis, Istanbul, Sabancı University, 2010).

appointment diplomas (*berāts*) for the posts he occupied in Damascus. His travelogue gives clues about Damascene scholars' perception of the new era in early Ottoman Damascus. It also contains autobiographical information about Badr al-Dīn's early life and scholarly career. Several studies have examined *al-Matāli* ' in different contexts.⁶⁸ For instance, using it as a source, Pfeifer has analyzed Badr al-Dīn's relations with the Ottoman elite in Damascus and Istanbul within the context of the encounter of Ottoman scholars and their counterparts in the Arab provinces in elite salons (*majālis*). She has described *al-Matāli* ' as an act of provincial integration at the social level.⁶⁹

Najm al-Dīn's journey to Istanbul, on the other hand, took place in 1623. His reasons for traveling to Istanbul were similar to that of his father. He needed to issue a *berāt* for a local madrasa that had recently been taken from him by another Shāfi'ī scholar in Damascus. Najm al-Dīn's travelogue, *al-Iqd al-manzūm fī al-rihla ilā al-Rūm* [The Arranged Necklace in the Travel to the Lands of Rūm], was hitherto believed to be lost. Mahmūd al-Sheikh claims that the work had been lost (*mafqūd*).⁷⁰ Michael Winter states that "a copy of this travelogue [...] is believed to be located in Köprülü Library (Istanbul), ms. no. 1390,"⁷¹ but, according to my research, his reference leads to a manuscript copy of *al-Matāli* ', Badr al-Dīn's aforementioned travelogue, not Najm al-Dīn's work.

During my research, I discovered an extant copy of Najm al-Dīn's travelogue, *al-Rihla*, located in the collection of the Waqfiyya Manuscript Library in Aleppo.⁷² Although it is inaccessible due to the war in Syria, a microfilm version of same copy is fortunately available in the Juma Almajid Center for Culture and

⁶⁸ For example, Ekrem Kâmil, "Gazzi-Mekki Seyahatnamesi: Hicri Onuncu-Milâdi On Altıncı Asırda Yurdumuzu Dolaşan Arab Seyyahlarından Muḥammad Ibn Aḥmad al-Nahrawālī ve Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn Muḥammad al-Ghazzī," *Tarih Semineri Dergisi* 2, no. 1 (1937): 3–90; Mustafa S. Küçüktaşçı, "İki Arap Âliminin Gözünden XVI. Yüzyılda İstanbul," in *I. Uluslararası Osmanlı İstanbulu Sempozyumu Bildirileri, 29 Mayıs-1 Haziran 2013*, ed. Feridun M. Emecen and Emrah Safa Gürkan (Istanbul: İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi, 2013): 71–86; Ralf Elger, "Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Ghazzī," in *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography, 1350-1850*, ed. Joseph Lowry and Devin Stewart (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz Verlag, 2009), 98–106; Elger, *Glaube, Skepsis, Poesie: Arabische Istanbul-Reisende im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert* (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2011); Abdul-Rahim Abu-Husayn and Tarek Abu-Husayn, *Bedreddin el-Ghazzī'nin İstanbul Seyahatnamesi* (Istanbul: İstanbul Ticaret Odası, 2015); Abu Husayn and Abu Hussein, "On the Road to the Abode of Felicity: Observations of a Damascene Scholar in Anatolia and Istanbul in 1530," *Ostour* 3, no. 6 (July 2017): 33–44.

⁶⁹ Pfeifer, "To Gather Together," 62–101. Also, see Pfeifer, *Empire of Salons*, ch. 2.

⁷⁰ Al-Ghazzī, *Lutf*, 107.

⁷¹ Michael Winter, "Al-Gazzi," in *Historians of the Ottoman Empire* (Online: University of Chicago, 2007), <https://ottomanhistorians.uchicago.edu/en/historian/al-gazzi>.

⁷² Waqfiyya Library, ms. 180.

Heritage in Dubai.⁷³ This copy consists of 181 folios, and its colophon page states that the author completed it in Dhu al-Hijja 1034 (October 1625), that is, two years after his return from Istanbul to Damascus. The work contains detailed new information about Najm al-Dīn's experience in Ottoman lands and his network of relations with the imperial elite in Istanbul. It also sheds light on the local politics and internal strife in the Ottoman capital in a chaotic period of Ottoman history—the years between the regicide of Osman II (r. 1618–1622) and the enthronement of Murad IV (r. 1623–40). A comparative reading of the travel accounts of Badr al-Dīn and his son Najm al-Dīn enables us to observe the expansion of the network of Damascene scholars in the imperial center and their changing perceptions and expectations over a century of Ottoman rule.

Apart from the abovementioned works, there are more than twenty published and more than fifty unpublished works belonging to the three Ghazzīs.⁷⁴ These are primarily writings in Islamic religious disciplines. Yet some of them are related to non-religious fields, including agriculture, poetry, and linguistics. Some researchers have examined these works. For example, Aleksandar Shopov has studied Radiyy al-Dīn's book on agricultural techniques and plantation, *Jāmi' farā'id al-milāha fī jawāmi' fawā'id al-filāha* [Complete Rules for Elegance in all the Uses of Farming].⁷⁵ Ahmad Sharkas has examined Badr al-Dīn's *al-Durr al-nadīd fī ādāb al-mufīd wa-l-mustafīd* [The Arranged Pearls on the Manners of the Teacher and the Student], a guidebook for Islamic education.⁷⁶ Badr al-Dīn also penned several small treatises on a wide range of topics such as the limbs of the human body and etiquette. Pfeifer has examined his *Risāla ādāb al-mu'ākala* [Treatise on Table Manners] to analyze elite dining culture in the early modern Ottoman Empire.⁷⁷ Badr al-Dīn also wrote *al-Durr al-thamīn fī munāqasha bayn Abī Hayyān wa-l-Samīn* [The Valuable Pearl on a Discussion between Abū Hayyān and al-Samīn] following a scholarly debate with Kınalızāde Ali Efendī, the Ottoman judge of Damascus, around the correct pronunciation (*i'rāb*) of some

⁷³ The Juma Almajid Center for Culture and Heritage, material number: 238096, <https://www.almajidcenter.org/>

⁷⁴ For a list of Badr al-Dīn's works, see Elger, "Badr Al-Dīn Muhammad al-Ghazzī," in *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography, 1350–1850*, ed. Lowry and Stewart, 98–99. I have relied mostly on Elger's translations for the titles of Badr al-Dīn's works. For Najm al-Dīn's works, see the introduction in al-Ghazzī, *Lutf*.

⁷⁵ Aleksandar Shopov, "Between the Pen and the Fields: Books on Farming, Changing Land Regimes, and Urban Agriculture in the Ottoman Eastern Mediterranean ca. 1500–1700" (PhD diss., Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University, 2016).

⁷⁶ Ahmad Hikmat Sharkas, "Badr al-Dīn al-Ghazzī (904/1499–984/1577) and His Manual on Islamic Scholarship and Education, *al-Durr al-Nadīd*," (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1976); Badr al-Dīn al-Ghazzī, *Al-Durr al-Nadīd fī Ādāb al-Mufīd wa al-Mustafīd*, ed. Abū Yaqub Nashat Ibn Kamāl al-Misrī (al-Jizah: Maktaba al-Taw'iyya al-Islāmiyya, 2009).

⁷⁷ Helen Pfeifer, "The Gulper and the Slurper: A Lexicon of Mistakes to Avoid While Eating with Ottoman Gentlemen," *Journal of Early Modern History* 24, no. 1 (2020): 41–62.

Quranic words.⁷⁸ Pfeifer has contextualized this debate within the framework of scholarly encounters between local and Ottoman scholars in Damascene gatherings.⁷⁹

This dissertation also utilizes scholarly certificates (*ijāza*) and endowment registers. The aforementioned biographical dictionaries and travelogues contain copies of certificates issued by the Ghazzīs to others or vice versa.⁸⁰ Pfeifer has studied the certificate Badr al-Dīn issued to Çivizade Mehmed Efendi (d. 1587), the Ottoman judge of Damascus, to authorize him in hadith transmission.⁸¹

An Ottoman endowment register gives information about Radiyy al-Dīn's family endowment in Damascus dated 1528/9.⁸² This record gives information about the stipulations, estates, and revenue generators of his endowment. It sheds light on the private property of a Shāfi'ī judge in early Ottoman Damascus. This source together with Radiyy al-Dīn's abovementioned treatise on agriculture illuminates his economic concerns as a judge.

This dissertation also benefits from contemporary histories and biographical dictionaries.⁸³ To name a few, al-Busrawī's (d. 1500) annals give an account of events in Damascus in 1467–1499.⁸⁴ Ibn Tawq's (d. 1509) annals deals with the period 1480–1500.⁸⁵ Ibn Tūlūn (d. 1546) covers the events taking place in Damascus in the period 1480–1546.⁸⁶ He also provides biographical information for the judges of Damascus in the late

⁷⁸ For example, see Mehmet Eren, "Kınalızâde Ali Efendi ile Bedreddin el-Gazzî Arasında İlmî Bir Tartışma," in *International Symposium on Kınalızade Family* (Istanbul, June 31, 2012).

⁷⁹ Pfeifer, "Encounter after the Conquest."

⁸⁰ Badr al-Dīn al-Ghazzī, *Al-Matāli' al-Badriyya fī al-Manāzil al-Rūmiyya*, ed. al-Mahdī Īd al-Rawādiyya (Amman: Dār al-Fāris, 2004), 201–9.

⁸¹ This certificate is located in the Kastamonu Public Library, ms. 970, 231b–240b. See Pfeifer, "A New Hadith Culture?"

⁸² BOA.TT.d-393/87.

⁸³ For a detailed survey of these sources, see Fatih Yahya Ayaz, *Memlûkler'de Tarih ve Tarihçiler* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2020).

⁸⁴ Alae al-Dīn Alī b. Yūsuf b. Ahmad al-Busrawī, *Tārikh al-Busrawī: Safahāt Majhūla min Tārikh Dimashq fī Asr al-Mamālik*, ed. Akram Hasan al-'Ulabī (Damascus-Beirut: Dār al-Ma'mūn li al-Turāth, 1988).

⁸⁵ Shahāb al-Dīn Ahmad Ibn Tawq, *Al-Ta'līq: Yawmiyyāt Shahāb al-Dīn Ahmad b. Tawq*, ed. Ja'far Muhājir (Damascus: Institut Français d'Etudes Arabes de Damas, 2000).

⁸⁶ Shams al-Dīn Ibn Tūlūn, *Mufākaha al-Khillān fī Hawādith al-Zamān*, ed. Khalil Mansur (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, 1998); Ibn Tūlūn, *Hawādith Dimashq al-Yawmiyya: Ghadāt al-ghazu' al-'Uthmānī li-al-Shām 926–951 hijrī*, (A Daily Chronicle of Damascus Just After the Ottoman Conquest, A.D. 1520–1544, Unknown Extracts from Ibn Tolun's Chronicle *Mufakahat al-Khillan*) ed. Ahmad N. Ibesch (Damascus, 2002). This last work was reproduced under the title *Tārikh al-Shām fī Matla' al-Ahd al-Uthmānī: 929–951 h. / 1520–1544 m.* (Abu Dhabi: Dār al-Kutub al-Wataniyya, 2009).

Mamluk era in another work.⁸⁷ Ibn Ayyūb (d. 1592) writes biographies of Damascenes who died between 1344 and 1590.⁸⁸ Al-Būrīnī's (d. 1614) work contains the biographies of his contemporaries in Damascus.⁸⁹ Ibn al-Hanbalī's (d. 1562) biographical dictionary provides an Aleppine perspective on the sixteenth-century Syrian educated elite.⁹⁰ With these sources in hand, it is possible to pursue the scholarly community's daily agenda in Damascus under late Mamluk and early Ottoman rule. They also present many details about the Ghazzīs' lives and their contemporaries' opinions about them.

Conceptual and Methodological Framework

This study is about the biographies of three scholars from a Damascene scholarly family in the Mamluk–Ottoman transition. Here, I will first give a sense of my conceptual framework by clarifying my use of “transition,” my understanding of “scholarly family,” and my utilization of some concepts borrowed from social network analysis. Then, I will present my methodological framework by explaining my approach to “biography” and “lawmaking.”

Transition

“Transition” in this dissertation refers to the political, social, economic, cultural, and other processes in Syro-Egypt that started with and related directly to the Ottoman takeover of Mamluk territories. It answers the fundamental question of what the Ottoman conquest brought to the previously Mamluk lands without overlooking the fact that the region had already hosted a complex society and state. In this regard, the transitional approach to Syro-Egypt seeks to examine continuities and changes between two periods, the Mamluk and Ottoman, putting the diverse bodies of literature and sources in dialogue. The transition started in 1516 in Syria and in 1517 in Egypt after Ottoman victories over the Mamluk armies and the final demise of the Mamluk Sultanate. On the other hand, it is hard to determine a fixed point as the end of this transition. Can we study, for instance, a topic in the eighteenth-century Damascus within the context of the transition

⁸⁷ Ibn Tūlūn, *Qudā Dimashq: Al-Thughr al-Bassām fi Dhikr man Wulliya Qadā al-Shām*, ed. Salāh al-Dīn al-Munajjid (Damascus: al-Majma' al-Ilmi al-Arabī, 1956).

⁸⁸ Sharaf al-Dīn Mūsā Ibn Ayyūb, *Al-Rawd al-Ātir fi mā Tayassara min Akhbār Ahl al-Qarn al-Sābi' ilā Khitām al-Qarn al-Āshir* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, 2020).

⁸⁹ Hasan al-Būrīnī, *Tarājim al-A'yān min Abna'i al-Zamān*, ed. Salāh al-Dīn al-Munajjid, (al-Majma al-Ilmi al-Arabī, 1959).

⁹⁰ Muhammad Ibn al-Hanbalī, *Durr al-Habab fi Tārikh A'yān Halab*, ed. Mahmūd Fākhūrī and Yahyā Zakariyyā Abbāra (Damascus: Wizāra al-Thaqāfa, 1972).

from Mamluk rule to Ottoman rule? Here, differences between the short-term, medium-term, and long-term effects of the transition appear.⁹¹

Ottomans made efforts to establish a stable government in new provinces after the conquest. Meanwhile, the Ottoman imperial bureaucracy, ideology, and culture underwent significant transformations partly in response to and because of these efforts and related encounters. The interaction between the Ottoman government and its new Arab provinces and the changing domestic and international contexts had short-, medium-, and long-term impacts on both sides. For example, in the political map, Aleppo evolved into an administrative center independent from Damascus around the mid-sixteenth century⁹²—a topic which can be contextualized within the framework of the Mamluk–Ottoman transition. Economically, however, its integration to the Pax-Ottomanica bore fruits fully only from the seventeenth century onward,⁹³ or demographically, its previous ethno-religious composition transformed significantly only in the second half of the seventeenth century by a substantial increase in the proportion of non-Muslim population⁹⁴—two other topics which could be handled in the same framework. That is, the transition experiences from Mamluk to Ottoman rule were diverse in different regions and fields. Thus, as mentioned before, this dissertation follows the transition through certain areas such as judicial system and scholarly networks.

This study focuses on the transition's effects on Damascene scholars. The Damascene scholarly community was a tight-knit community but not a monolithic one. It consisted of non-bureaucratic, bureaucratic, and immigrant individuals and groups, whose transition experiences seem to be different. Moreover, the transition experience of successive generations differed as well. Radiyy al-Dīn and his peers were elderly generation of scholars in 1516, whereas Badr al-Dīn and his peers were younger ones. Their careers, social statuses, and networks of relations were dissimilar, which made their position vis-à-vis the new regime different. Reading their life stories comparatively enables a synchronic examination of Damascene scholarly community in the first decade of Ottoman rule. On the other hand, Najm al-Dīn and his peers were representatives of the post-Mamluk generations in Damascus. They never witnessed Mamluk rule. Thus,

⁹¹ For a similar emphasis on this subject, see Conermann and Şen, "Introduction: A Transitional Point of View," 18.

⁹² Aleppo, which was a sub-province (*sancak*) in the province of Şam, became an independent province (*beylerbeyi*) during Süleyman's Safavid campaign in 1549. See Enver Çakar, "XVI. Yüzyılda Şam Beylerbeyiliğinin İdarî Taksimatı," *Fırat Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 13, no. 1 (2003): 351–74.

⁹³ Eldem, Goffman, and Masters, *The Ottoman City between East and West: Aleppo, Izmir, and Istanbul*, 29–40.

⁹⁴ To follow transformations in ethno-religious composition of Aleppo during 1500–1700, see figures 5, 10, 15, 20, and 25 in Uğur, "Mapping Ottoman Cities: Socio-Spatial Definitions and Groupings (1450–1700)."

their life experience in comparison with the lives of their fathers allows a diachronic examination of Damascene learned society in transition.

Scholarly family

Countless studies on individual scholars and scholarly life in the early modern period have underlined the significance of family background and network for individual success in scholarship. Accordingly, those enjoying kinship with educated people usually had a better chance of receiving the proper education required to become future scholars. Once they became scholars, they simultaneously became eligible for numerous positions available and reserved for them in endowments and state services, such as professorship and judgeship. Such lucrative positions guaranteed them prestige and networks in the social and political realms, as well as income. Accordingly, their children could access the necessary means of knowledge and scholarship relatively earlier and easier. Once they were adults, their fathers' social prestige and political networks allowed them to undertake similar roles and to replace their fathers in their positions or equivalent ones. This pathway of success became an established custom in time, creating eminent families remembered in society for their previous generations of brilliant scholars.

Despite the explanations above, the term “scholarly family,” which is commonly used in the literature, remains ambiguous. Several questions make the picture more complicated: When does a standard family evolve into a scholarly one? How many scholars or generations of scholars do we need to call a group of people enjoying kinship a “scholarly family”? Do we have a standard definition of “scholar” upon which to base the notion of the scholarly family?

Leading researchers in the field, such as Lapidus,⁹⁵ Gilbert,⁹⁶ and Berkey,⁹⁷ have utilized the term “scholarly family” without providing detailed descriptions of its content and boundaries. Recent scholarship on Damascus continues to employ the term without problematizing it.⁹⁸ Lapidus's student Chamberlain,

⁹⁵ Lapidus uses the phrase “ulama families.” See Ira M. Lapidus, *Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 109, and 110.

⁹⁶ See the chapter 5 “Scholarly Families of Damascus,” in Joan E. Gilbert, “The Ulama of Medieval Damascus and the International World of Islamic Scholarship” (PhD diss., Berkeley, University of California, 1977), 152–95; Gilbert, “Institutionalization of Muslim Scholarship and Professionalization of the Ulema in Medieval Damascus,” *Studia Islamica* 52 (1980): 108.

⁹⁷ Jonathan Berkey, *The Transmission of Knowledge in Medieval Cairo: A Social History of Islamic Education* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 150, 164.

⁹⁸ For example, see Basil, “Beneath Biography: Attitudes toward Self, Society, and Empire among the Scholars of Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Damascus,” 66, 126, 128, 137, 152, 178. Also, see Miura, “Transition of the ‘Ulama’ Families in Sixteenth Century Damascus.”

however, avoids using the term, preferring instead the term “civilian elite (*a’yān*) household,” though without defining that either.⁹⁹ He uses “household” as an equivalent of the Arabic word *bayt* (literally “house”), and states that Damascene society consisted of three main bodies: military households, civilian households, and others (primarily common people). In other words, he uses “civilian household” to denote a large component of Damascene society, namely, non-military but influential groups. Throughout the book, however, he often employs this term to denote what previous scholarship called the “scholarly family.” Thus, the content of the “civilian elite household” does not seem to differ much from that of “scholarly family” while referring to the same actors.

Ottomanists slightly differ from Chamberlain in their usage of the term “household,” which they usually take as the equivalent of the Turkish word *kapı* (literally “door” or “gate”).¹⁰⁰ Several studies have utilized “household” as a social structure to examine Ottoman socio-political history through the lens of the households of sultans, viziers, provincial governors, and local dignitaries.¹⁰¹ Recently, Michael Nizri has used the concept to analyze the Ottoman learned establishment for the first time in his study of the household of Şeyhülislam Feyzullah Efendi (d. 1703).¹⁰²

Despite its ambiguities, I prefer to use “scholarly family” instead of “household” as an analytic tool in this study for several reasons. Firstly, the former refers to a social structure more modest in size and capacity; it thus provides a more suitable framework to connect the lives of the three Ghazzīs. Although Hathaway points out that households of different types and sizes could exist in various settings, the dominant perception in the literature is that a household contained several slaves, protégés, clients, recruited guards, significant financial resources, and a mansion or palace.¹⁰³ Al-Ghazzīs did not have much of these in the period under examination.

⁹⁹ Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice*, 1–26.

¹⁰⁰ For a brief history of the concept “household” in Islamic history in both the Arab and the Turkish context, see Jane Hathaway, “Household,” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ed. Kate Fleet et al., 2016. For a review of the usage of the term by Mamluk and Ottoman historians, see Hathaway, *The Politics of Households in Ottoman Egypt the Rise of the Qazdaghs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 17–21. For a more recent review of the usage of the term in the literature, see Michael Nizri, *Ottoman High Politics and the Ulema Household* (Springer, 2014).

¹⁰¹ For exemplary studies that utilize household as a social structure, see Rifaat Ali Abou-El-Haj, “The Ottoman Vezir and Paşa Households 1683–1703: A Preliminary Report,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 1974, 438–47; Metin Kunt, *The Sultan’s Servants: The Transformation of Ottoman Provincial Government, 1550–1650* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

¹⁰² Nizri, *Ottoman High Politics*.

¹⁰³ For example, Şeyhülislam Feyzullah Efendi’s household with many protégés resembled the vizier and pasha households in size. See Nizri, 9.

Secondly, the concept of “household” is overburdened with political implications. Hathaway writes, “The prototype of the Ottoman elite household was, naturally, the household of the sultan himself.”¹⁰⁴ The Ghazzī family, however, was not so political in the narrow meaning of politics. They were not, for example, bureaucratic scholars who participated in the governance of the empire; nor were they influential elites in the capital city. Instead, they were powerful actors in Damascene society, largely because of their social, cultural, and scholarly capital.

The present dissertation does not attempt to come up with a comprehensive definition of the concept “scholarly family.” Yet it considers family in Damascus learned society as a social unit based on blood ties as the minimum requirement, along with an unavoidable historical togetherness in sharing a cumulative and alterable non-material family heritage that usually finds its simplest articulation in one’s full name by an extraction (*nisba*). A scholar thus had diachronic ties with scholarly figures from his ancestors in shouldering the latter’s heritage—fame, prestige, achievements, failures, religiosity, and any other deeds still present in societal memory. This heritage did not have a strict and solid nature but was subject to change and interpretation in each generation of scholars from the family according to their needs and capacity. As the history of Ghazzī family illustrates, several thresholds and tools enabled this process to start and continue operating across generations, and finally created scholarly families. For example, stipulating an endowed teaching post to a scholar and his descendants not only guaranteed the transmission of wealth across generations of this family but also encouraged its future members to endeavor to become competent scholars to succeed their fathers as professors in this post. In other words, this endowment provided the descendants of a certain scholar with both the incentives to follow the example of him as a scholar and the financial resources that facilitated and reproduced this action. One crucial way to follow his example was the effective assumption and transmission of his academic production through various means such as explaining his works in commentaries, versifying them, writing continuations to them, and teaching them by scholarly certificates. Another important threshold in building a family identity and history was writing biographies of past scholarly figures from the family. By connecting their life stories to each other, a cohesive narrative of the family’s academic heritage could be created. This redefined identity and reconstructed history was no less important than individual life experience in the formation of one’s self.

¹⁰⁴ Hathaway, *The Politics of Households in Ottoman Egypt*, 18. Nizri writes that Feyzullah Efendi placed his protégés in strategic posts, controlled the appointments of the Ottoman dignitary scholars, and even intervened in the military and administrative appointments made by the grand vizier. Nizri, *Ottoman High Politics*.

This study considers the Ghazzī family as a historical construction rather than an independently acting entity with inherent characteristics. Its history is conceived as more than the sum of the individual life stories of its members, though these were a significant component. The members of the Ghazzī family, to illustrate, were known with the same *nisba* (*al-Ghazzī*) even though they all lived in Damascus for centuries and had no notable physical connection to the city of Gaza. This *nisba* carried with the individual names of each family member tied them to the residential reality of their ancestors, though they themselves lived in Damascus. They continued to be referred to as “the Ghazzīs” in biographical works written in Damascus for centuries. Outside Damascus, however, another *nisba*, *al-Dimashqī*, was usually mentioned next to *al-Ghazzī*, because the latter alone was not sufficient to describe the cumulative heritage of the family in the present time.¹⁰⁵

This study accepts the fact that the history of the Ghazzī family is irreducible to the interrelated life stories of three scholars from this family. In fact, the nuclear Ghazzī family in the sixteenth century included several male members who lacked a scholarly background, as well as female members we know nothing about except their names (see Appendix A). Yet what earns the Ghazzī family the adjective “scholarly” in this study is directly related to those Ghazzīs who achieved fame in scholarship. Thus, it does not appear unfair to build the scholarly history of the Ghazzī family with special reference to the life stories of three of the most celebrated scholarly members of the family. In a single family lineage based on father-son relationship, Radiyy al-Dīn, Badr al-Dīn, and Najm al-Dīn contributed to the scholarly identity of one another by material and non-material family heritage and its assumption and re-interpretation in three successive generations. Thus, while labeling the Ghazzīs as scholarly family, this thesis refers to this particular line in the family.

Social Network Concepts

While analyzing the conflicts and encounters in *al-Ghazzīs*’ lives, I have used the tools and concepts of social network analysis (SNA). SNA aims at exploring relational aspects of social structures dealing with relational data through a set of methods developed for this purpose. It envisages social structure as the composition of individual actors and their relations, and develops concepts and computation and

¹⁰⁵ For example, see the introductory sentences of Badr al-Dīn’s biography in Ibn al-Hanbalī, *Durr al-Habab*, vol. 2, 436–37.

visualization techniques to capture this structure.¹⁰⁶ It is a rising trend to apply SNA in historical studies.¹⁰⁷ Though not many, there are examples of application of SNA in Ottoman studies, too.¹⁰⁸

This dissertation mostly applies qualitative analysis of primary sources regarding the lives of three Ghazzīs and their contemporaries. The absence of reliable big data providing a holistic view of the contemporary scholarly society in Damascus and al-Ghazzīs' place in it has restricted my application of SNA methods. Still, UCINET, an open-source network-analysis and visualization software package, helped me visualize the network of Badr al-Dīn's conflicts with his contemporaries in Chapter V.¹⁰⁹

I have also benefited from conceptual richness in SNA. Explaining al-Ghazzīs' attitudes, decisions, and actions, I have given reference to several inspiring relational concepts such as geodesic distance, homogenous connection, homophily, propinquity, and betweenness centrality. Geodesic distance is the shortest path(s) (least number of step[s]) from an actor to another in a network. Actors tend to reach targeted actors following the geodesic path as long as the connection is homogeneous, that is, provided the relationship between the two is at a similar weight/value on both sides. For example, an individual in society may not prefer to use the geodesic path to another individual if both do not enjoy the same status. Instead, that individual searches for a powerful connection to the targeted actor, even if it requires more steps. Homophily assumes that people sharing similar characteristics tend to be connected, whereas propinquity supposes that people sharing the same place/geography tends to be connected.¹¹⁰ Lastly, betweenness centrality considers how many actors an actor connects to in the fewest steps, and regards the actor that ties

¹⁰⁶ John Scott, *Social Network Analysis*, (London: Sage Publications, 2013); Charles Kadushin, *Understanding Social Networks: Theories, Concepts, and Findings* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

¹⁰⁷ See *The Journal of Historical Network Research*, <https://jhnr.uni.lu/index.php/jhnr/index>.

¹⁰⁸ Karen Barkey, *Empire of Difference: The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); N. Alkan Günay and N. Abacı, "Dağın İki Yüzü: Bursa'nın Dağ Yöresi Köyleri İle Göçmen Köylerine Yönelik Sosyal Ağ Analizi" (Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey [TÜBİTAK], 2010–12); Zeynep Dörtok Abacı, "Batmayacak Kadar Bağlantılı ya da Güçlü Olmak: Osmanlı Toplumunda Sosyal Ağlar ve Aktörler (1695-1700)" (Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TÜBİTAK), 2012-15); Abdurrahman Atçıl, "Professional and Intellectual Networks and Groupings of High Ottoman Scholars (1470–1650)" (Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey [TÜBİTAK], 2017–20); Abdurrahman Atçıl and Gürzat Kami, "Studying Professional Careers as Hierarchical Networks: A Case Study on the Careers of Chief Judges in the Ottoman Empire (1516–1622)," *The Journal of Historical Network Research*, vol. 7, no. 1 (2022). For more examples and an assessment of some of these studies, see Fatma Aladağ, "Dijital Beşerî Bilimler ve Türkiye Araştırmaları: Bir Literatür Değerlendirmesi," *TALİD* 18, no. 36 (2020): 773–96.

¹⁰⁹ S.P. Borgatti, M.G. Everett, and L.C. Freeman, *Ucinet 6 for Windows: Software for Social Network Analysis* (Harvard, MA: Analytic Technologies, 2002). S. P. Borgatti, *Network Netdraw Visualization* (Harvard, MA: Analytic Technologies, 2002).

¹¹⁰ Kadushin, *Understanding Social Networks*, 13–27.

two or more components of a network as the most central actor. Thus, an actor with a high betweenness degree appears as a key player in a network.¹¹¹

The explanatory power of these concepts has facilitated me in tackling the dynamic and complex picture of the networks of my biographees in a period of two centuries. To give an example, in Chapter IV, I have aimed at an analytical explanation of Badr al-Dīn's connections in Istanbul when he visited the city in 1530, about a decade after the Ottoman conquest of Damascus. To this end, I have utilized the concepts of homophily and homogeneous connectivity, which helps me to evaluate Badr al-Dīn's strategic use of his father's ego-network in the new imperial capital in his favor.

I have used the concept of geodesic distance in order to give an idea about the changing size of the Ghazzīs' political networks in each generation. For example, Radiyy al-Dīn could reach the Mamluk sultan in only two steps from Mamluk Damascus—he had connections to some people in Cairo who were in the immediate circle of the sultan. Whereas his son Badr al-Dīn needed four steps for a robust access to the chief judge of Anatolia from early Ottoman Damascus—he had weak connections even with the new imperial elite, let alone the Ottoman sultan.

I have also utilized the concept of betweenness centrality while explaining the logic of transmission of knowledge via scholarly certificates (*ijāzas*) in the context of Badr al-Dīn's early education in Chapter II. In this part, I have evaluated Radiyy al-Dīn's strategy for collecting certificates issued by leading scholars to his infant son. I have argued that such certificates obtained during one's childhood allowed him to enjoy a central place in the network of a new generation of students and living teachers in a discipline

Biography

The biographical turn in the social sciences aims at examining society from the individual upwards instead of from the social structure downwards. For example, “biographical sociology” as a subfield deals with individual life stories by employing sociological frameworks to understand social structures and processes.¹¹² In fact, my approach in this study resembles biographical sociology in that my ultimate aim is to shed light on Damascene scholarly community through the biographies of individuals. Yet my purpose is not limited to the examination of meso- and macro-level structures. As a historian, I value individual life experiences because they add to our knowledge about the past. Cemal Kafadar suggests that historians

¹¹¹ Scott, *Social Network Analysis*, 83–98; Kadushin, *Understanding Social Networks*, 27–42.

¹¹² Michael Rustin, “Reflections on the Biographical Turn in Social Science,” in *The Turn to Biographical Methods in Social Science: Comparative Issues and Examples*, ed. Prue Chamberlayne et al. (London: Routledge, 2000), 33–53.

should not prioritize structure and process over the individual, otherwise they will cross the boundaries of history into sociology. He also underlines the utility of a perspective that mentions systems, structures, processes without breaking its connection with the individual and personal.¹¹³ Thus, I share the conviction that “the fundamental question of biographical research is (...) neither that of the individual nor society, but rather of the individual *in* society.”¹¹⁴

Writing a biography allows the historian to establish a dialogue between individual actors and their culture. This dialogue resembles the reciprocal interaction of text and context during reading. Thus, writing biography is a dialogic process in which one also can hear the voice of the author.¹¹⁵ In other words, an author’s expectations, interests, limitations, and perspectives as the biographer would be decisive in the biography. As a rather popular approach among researchers in Ottoman History, “imperial biography writing” is an outcome of such tendencies of historians. It is an escape from institutional history and the grand narrative of imperial structures without losing sincere interest in understanding them as the final goal. It focuses on individual lives that reflect political and bureaucratic developments at micro human levels. For that reason, historians of imperial biography generally study imperial figures who enjoyed high geographical mobility in the service of the state in various bureaucratic and judicial cadres.¹¹⁶ Ottomanist scholarship has produced several good examples of imperial biography.¹¹⁷

My approach resembles imperial biography in some respects. I observe the effects of developments and transformations at the imperial level on individual lives. However, my study differs on the ground that my

¹¹³ Cemal Kafadar, *Kim Var İmiş Biz Burada Yoğ İken: Dört Osmanlı: Yeniçeri, Tüccar, Derviş ve Hatun* (Istanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2009), 13–27.

¹¹⁴ Simone Lässig, “Introduction: Biography in Modern History—Modern Historiography in Biography,” in *Biography between Structure and Agency: Central European Lives in International Historiography*, ed. Volker R. Berghahn and Simone Lässig (New York-Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2008), 1–26.

¹¹⁵ Lois W. Banner, “Biography as History,” *The American Historical Review* 114, no. 3 (2009): 579–86.

¹¹⁶ Malte Rolf and Benedict Tondera, “Imperial Biographies Revisited,” *Jahrbücher Für Geschichte Osteuropas* 68, no. 2 (2020): 270–81.

¹¹⁷ Cornell H. Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: The Historian Mustafa Āli (1541–1600)*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986); Kaya Şahin, *Empire and Power in the Reign of Süleyman: Narrating the Sixteenth-Century Ottoman World* (Cambridge University Press, 2013); Abdulhamit Kırmızı, *Avlonyalı Ferid Paşa: Bir Ömür Devlet* (Istanbul: Klasik Yayınları, 2014); Muhammet Zahit Atçıl, “State and Government in the Mid-Sixteenth Century Ottoman Empire: The Grand Vizierates of Rüstem Pasha (1544–1561)” (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2015); Christopher Markiewicz, *The Crisis of Kingship in Late Medieval Islam: Persian Emigres and the Making of Ottoman Sovereignty* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019); Fikriye Karaman, “Mehmed Memduh Pasha: An Imperial Biography from Tanzimat to Republic” (PhD diss., Istanbul Şehir University, 2020); Mehmet Yılmaz Akbulut, *Hekimoğlu Ali Paşa* (Istanbul: Timaş Akademi, 2022).

biographees are not transnational imperial officers with life-long careers and high geographical mobility but local scholars who lived and died in Damascus. Thus, the angle from which they perceived the imperial government and the empire had little to do with the angle of, say, the Ottoman scholar-bureaucrats. Unlike the latter, my biographees were not affiliated with the official madhhab of the Ottoman Empire, nor did they enter into the Ottoman bureaucratic hierarchy. Still, they were influential Shāfi‘ī professors and muftis whom the regional and imperial actors took seriously, and they served the empire as judges in local judicial administration.

In sum, my approach to biography carries some similarities and differences with two trends in biography, namely, biographical sociology and imperial biography writing. As a top-down approach, I utilize biography to observe the repercussions of political, social, economic, and cultural transformations that took place in the central Arab lands in the long sixteenth century, all in the context of the individual life experiences of three non-bureaucratic, local Shāfi‘ī scholars in Damascus. As a bottom-up approach, I employ biography to connect these three lives to each other in order to have a single continuous history of a renowned local family that operated in the region for centuries.

Lawmaking

The Ottoman ruling elite exalted *shari‘a* and Muslim scholars, and considered this as augmenting the legitimacy of their government.¹¹⁸ The Ghazzīs examined in this dissertation were scholarly figures: Shāfi‘ī judges, professors, and muftis who produced scholarship in both Islamic legal theory (*usūl*) and its practical implications (*furū‘*) according to their own madhhab. Thus, they were active participants in lawmaking processes in the Ottoman Arab provinces.

This thesis is not an intellectual history of the Ghazzīs, however. It rather aims to offer a socio-political history of the family. My approach to lawmaking thus differs from the literature that largely focuses on religio-legal opinions (*fatāwā*) of legal scholars.¹¹⁹ Instead, I give special attention to al-Ghazzīs’ daily interaction with the Mamluk and Ottoman governments through teaching, networking, questioning, criticizing, polemicizing, ignoring, delegating, etc. For example, in Chapter III, I treat Radiyy al-Dīn al-Ghazzī’s service as a judge under Ottoman rule as an example of active participation in the process of the

¹¹⁸ Engin Deniz Akarlı, “The Ruler and Law Making in the Ottoman Empire,” in *Law and Empire: Ideas, Practices, Actors*, ed. Jeroen Duindam et al. (Brill, 2013), 87–109.

¹¹⁹ For example, see Baber Johansen, *The Islamic Law on Land Tax and Rent: The Peasants’ Loss of Property Rights as Interpreted in the Hanafite Legal Literature of the Mamluk and Ottoman Periods* (London: Croom Helm, 1988); Cuno, “Was the Land of Ottoman Syria Miri or Milk?”; Ayoub, *Law, Empire and the Sultan*.

establishment of Ottoman judicial system in Damascus. In Chapter V, I consider Badr al-Dīn's polemic with the Ottoman judge Kınalızade Ali as an obvious challenge to the Ottoman authorities representing law and order in the city. Likewise, in Chapter VI, I emphasize the significance of the consensus and approval of the Damascene learned community for the same Ottoman authorities as reflected in a case of heresy in Damascus.

As for the Ghazzīs' scholarly works in Islamic disciplines, I dig into the social underpinnings of their texts rather than examine their content. In other words, I re-construct the lives of my biographees to understand the broader context in which their scholarship in Islamic law came into existence and was disseminated. For example, in Chapter V, while dealing with Badr al-Dīn's Quranic exegesis in verse, I discuss the authorial motivations behind such an undertaking and its reception in scholarly and political circles rather than its academic contribution to the discipline of exegesis.

In short, I try to comprehend the multiple ways of al-Ghazzīs' interaction with the socio-political body for the sake of maintaining a focus on their influence on the lawmaking processes. Since this usually appears in conflicts and encounters, I adapt a conflict-centered approach to lawmaking and trace such conflicts in al-Ghazzīs' lives.

Chapter Outlines

This dissertation consists of an introduction, eight chapters, and a conclusion. The first chapter details the early generations of the Ghazzī family in Damascus, mainly through the life stories of Ahmad al-Ghazzī (d. 1421) and his son Radiyy al-Dīn Abū al-Barakāt (d. 1459). It focuses on the formation and transmission of material and non-material family heritage that the later generations of the family received and utilized. It scrutinizes the permanent settlement of the family in Damascus and the rise of Ahmad al-Ghazzī as a scholar after Timur's invasion of Syria. It also discusses Radiyy al-Dīn Abū al-Barakāt's interregional network stretching from Damascene to Cairene scholarly milieus within the framework of Syria's re-integration into the Sultanate of Cairo from 1430 onward.

The following chapters cover the biographies of three Ghazzīs: Radiyy al-Dīn al-Ghazzī (d. 1529) (Chapters II and III), his son Badr al-Dīn (d. 1577) (Chapters IV and V) and his grandson Najm al-Dīn (d. 1651) (Chapters VI, VII, and VIII). I have connected the three biographies together around a single history of the Ghazzī family in 1450–1650, highlighting continuities and ruptures around certain themes that are traceable through the titles of chapters and subsections. For example, Chapter IV, “A Young Damascene Scholar in the New Imperial Capital (1530–31),” and Chapter VII, “In the Imperial Capital a Century Later (1623),”

allow comparisons between the experiences of two Ghazzīs in the Ottoman center over a century. Likewise, the subsections “Mamluk Sultan Two-Steps Away” in the second chapter, “Ottoman Chief Judge Four-Steps Away” in the fourth chapter, and “Ottoman Chief Jurist One-Step Away” in the seventh chapter are designed to give an idea about the ego-networks of individual Ghazzīs under examination in different periods. In a similar vein, the subsections “An Orphan in a Qādirī Dervish Lodge” in the second chapter, and “Early Education as an Orphan” in the sixth chapter enable to follow continuities and discontinuities in various aspects of the early education of Radiyy al-Dīn in the Mamluk era and that of his grandson in the Ottoman period. By such interconnected chapters and subsections, I have aimed at ascending above the individual level where three life stories meet in several points to constitute a continuous family history.

The second chapter deals with Radiyy al-Dīn’s life from his birth until 1515, i.e. the eve of the Ottoman takeover of the Mamluk territories; and centers on two main questions. The first question is how Radiyy al-Dīn was able to assume his family heritage and become successful in his scholarly career even though he lost his father at the age of two and continued his life as an orphan. In search for an answer to this question, the chapter highlights the significance of established mechanisms that guaranteed Damascene families’ continuity in the social and scholarly realms, such as handing down (*nuzūl*), custody (*wasāya*), and deputyship (*niyāba*). It also portrays the scholarly and Sufī network that Radiyy al-Dīn was born into, which helped him to utilize these mechanisms while succeeding his father in some of his scholarly posts later on. The second main question is how Radiyy al-Dīn, as a young deputy judge in Damascus, managed to access Sultan Qayitbay in his mid-age, attend the sultan’s gatherings, and even pen poems and prose for him. In search for an answer, the chapter first examines Damascene scholars’ multiple channels to the Mamluk capital and Mamluk sultan by focusing on Damascus–Cairo relationships and the Mamluk Sultanate’s sui generis system of kingship. It then studies how Radiyy al-Dīn engaged, through his writings, in Qayitbay’s foreign policy of maintaining the status-quo against rising regional powers and in his domestic policy of building up an image of himself as a pious sultan. After discussing these two main questions, the second chapter finally narrates Radiyy al-Dīn’s role in shaping his son Badr al-Dīn’s education, and discusses the multiple ways through which Radiyy al-Dīn attempted to build his heir’s future scholarly career.

The third chapter narrates Radiyy al-Dīn’s life from the Ottoman takeover of Damascus to his death in 1529. The focus of the chapter is on three issues: (1) successive governments in Damascus during the first decade of Ottoman rule, (2) Radiyy al-Dīn’s relationship with these governments, and (3) Radiyy al-Dīn’s economic concerns and family endowment as a retired judge. This chapter argues that the transition in the first decade of Ottoman rule was not smooth in Damascus but took place through a series of trial-and-error policies under successive governments. On the other hand, Radiyy al-Dīn and his peers enjoyed the cultural and

social capital that made them indispensable for the newcomers. They had bargaining power before the Ottoman governments thanks to their bridging role as intermediaries between the new regime and the local people. Radiyy al-Dīn rapidly adapted to the Ottoman regime in Damascus and served it as a Shāfi‘ī deputy judge. However, not his relationship with Ottoman officials but the internal dynamics of Damascene learned society soon caused his dismissal from judgeship. Lastly, this chapter investigates Radiyy al-Dīn’s economic interest, motives, and survival strategies through an examination of his writings on agricultural productivity, contemporary anecdotes about his entrepreneurship, and an archival document providing detailed information about his family endowment in Damascus. It also explores how this endowment contributed to the Ghazzī family’s scholarly continuity in coming decades by providing financial support for orphaned family members to receive proper education. This support helped ensure that the family’s academic legacy would continue through future generation.

The fourth chapter narrates the formative years of Badr al-Dīn’s scholarly identity and compares his experience of the transition in the early decades of Ottoman rule with that of his father. It covers the period 1516–31, with a special focus on Badr al-Dīn’s travel to the still-mysterious Rumī lands in 1530, and his one-year presence in the Ottoman capital. Badr al-Dīn was an inexperienced teenage scholar at the time of the Ottoman conquest and lacked any considerable social capital and scholarly prestige. During the first decade of Ottoman rule in Damascus, he lived in relative peace thanks to his father’s protection and the central government’s abortive attempts for administrative and judicial integration of the new Arab provinces. After Radiyy al-Dīn’s death, however, he had to travel to the new imperial center to preserve his positions in his hometown—a new experience which his father had not gone through. This chapter handles three questions related to Badr al-Dīn’s travel in the Ottoman central lands: (1) What was his impression in his first encounter with the people and the culture of the core Ottoman lands? (2) How did he utilize his weak network in Istanbul to achieve his goal? (3) Why did he pen a travelogue to narrate his journey after his return to Damascus?

The fifth chapter deals with Badr al-Dīn’s life from his return to Damascus in 1531 to his death in 1577, in parallel with significant administrative and bureaucratic developments taking place in Syria. This chapter argues that the integration of the judgeship of Damascus into the Ottoman scholarly-bureaucratic hierarchy was one of the most crucial developments for the local scholars’ integration into the empire because it multiplied the opportunities of interaction between Damascene scholars and the high-ranking Ottoman scholars from the mid-sixteenth century onward and finally embedded the former in a dense imperial network. Within this broad context, this chapter questions why Badr al-Dīn did not prefer to serve the Ottoman Empire as a judge, as his father had done, and instead earned his livelihood by teaching in semi-

independent Damascene madrasas and issuing religio-legal opinions as an independent Shāfi‘ī mufti. In this regard, this chapter problematizes the role of non-official Shāfi‘ī muftis in Damascus. Adopting a conflict-centered approach to lawmaking, it focuses on various means through which Badr al-Dīn as a legal scholar engaged in dialogue with the political authority and scholarly milieus in and outside Damascus. Four conflict areas are discussed under separate subtitles: (1) Badr al-Dīn’s Quranic exegesis in verse and its reception by his contemporaries (scholarly production), (2) his support for a criticized new Sufi community in Damascus (Sufi tendencies), (3) his scholarly polemics around linguistic themes (scholarly challenges), and (4) his struggles for appointment to some teaching posts in Damascus (position rivalry). The chapter argues that Badr al-Dīn utilized his seclusion in the Umayyad Mosque, the cultural and scholarly hub of the city, for various purposes: (1) As an act of civil disobedience against the political authorities in Damascus, (2) to enjoy a relatively protected life space as an independent scholar with less possible governmental intervention, and (3) to build his scholarly charisma. In addition, Badr al-Dīn’s struggles for appointment to two professorships in the face of competition from his young Damascene colleagues give a clue about the increasing rivalry among Damascene scholars, who were largely excluded from the scholarly-bureaucratic cadres in the core lands of the empire, from the mid-sixteenth century.

The sixth chapter narrates Najm al-Dīn’s life from childhood to professorship (1570–1622), in relation to the socio-political transformations taking place in Syria from the late sixteenth century. Unlike his father and grandfather, Najm al-Dīn was born in Ottoman Damascus without ever experiencing Mamluk rule. Yet the Damascus of his era was different from that of the previous generations in several respects. This chapter focuses on three issues. Firstly, it examines the increasing rivalry of Damascene scholars in the second half of the sixteenth century and Najm al-Dīn’s endeavors to survive as a teenage scholar among competing local cliques of scholars. Secondly, it illuminates Najm al-Dīn’s effort to connect himself to his father’s scholarly heritage in various ways in his twenties: (1) by writing Badr al-Dīn’s life, (2) by teaching his works, and (3) by residing in his cell. Thirdly, it highlights important steps that made Najm al-Dīn an eminent scholarly figure in his hometown in his forties: (1) his assuming a critical role in suppressing heresy in Damascus, and (2) his representing Damascenes before the imperial government in a delegation sent to Aleppo in 1616. This chapter aims to offer a nuanced and vivid picture of the entanglements of Damascene scholars with regional and imperial networks and politics by shining light on scholarly cliques, rivalries, and collaborations.

The seventh chapter handles Najm al-Dīn’s visit to Istanbul in 1623, almost a century after his father’s trip discussed in the fourth chapter. This chapter utilizes a manuscript copy of Najm al-Dīn’s hitherto unexamined travelogue as its main source to analyze his experience in the imperial city in a chaotic period

of Ottoman history, namely the period between the regicide of Osman II (r. 1618–1622) and the enthronement of Murad IV (r. 1623–40). The chapter has three goals: (1) It introduces some content of Najm al-Dīn's travelogue as a new source for Ottomanists. (2) It attempts to compare the experiences of Badr al-Dīn and Najm al-Dīn, one century apart, in the central imperial lands. (3) It tries to draw a vivid portrayal of the entanglement of Damascene scholars in the imperial networks despite their physical distance from the capital city. The chapter argues that Najm al-Dīn and his peers enjoyed close relations with the imperial elite largely thanks to the administrative and judicial integration of Syria into the empire during the sixteenth century, to the extent that political factionalism in the imperial capital had immediate repercussions on their lives in distant Syria. Thanks to the multidimensional network of relationships between Syria and Istanbul, Najm al-Dīn could access the Ottoman *şeyhülislam*, the top of the Ottoman learned establishment from the late sixteenth century, in only one step without needing an intermediary actor—a situation quite contrary to Badr al-Dīn's situation in 1530–31. It also argues that domestic power struggles in the Ottoman capital directly affected the result of Najm al-Dīn's struggle for a teaching post in Damascus by showing how Najm al-Dīn successively lost and regained his professorship in al-Shāmiyya Madrasa after his patron's faction in Istanbul respectively lost and regained power.

The eighth chapter scrutinizes the last decades of Najm al-Dīn's life, that is, from his return to Damascus in 1623 until his death in 1651. During the last decades of his life, upon the successive deaths of more senior scholars, Najm al-Dīn increasingly appeared as an influential scholarly authority in Damascus. This chapter focuses on two issues. First, it narrates Najm al-Dīn's delegation to Baalbak as a Shāfi'ī mufti in Damascus in 1623 after a regional armed conflict between the Ottoman authorities and local amirs in Syria. It compares the mission of this journey with that of Najm al-Dīn's previous delegation to Aleppo in 1616, and it underlines the multiple roles Damascene scholars played in conflicts among local people, regional power holders, and the Ottoman provincial government. It argues that Najm al-Dīn, like other leading scholarly figures in Damascus, was capable of coming up with flexible policies towards political authorities in Syria. In this regard, he assumed the role of representative of the Damascene people before the Ottoman government in his delegation to Aleppo, whereas, in Baalbak, he collaborated with the Ottoman authorities against the regional power holders.

Second, this chapter dwells on Najm al-Dīn's history writing by an examination of his famous biographical dictionary *al-Kawākib*, which he composed during the same years, in scope, organization, and content to understand: (1) Najm al-Dīn's vision of the imperial government, Muslim ummah, and Mamluk past, and (2) his reimagination of the history of the Ghazzī family through the biographies of his father and grandfather. Unlike his father and grandfather, Najm al-Dīn never witnessed Mamluk rule. Yet he wrote the

biographies of Muslim elite in the sixteenth century and re-constructed the history of the Mamluk-Ottoman transition in individual biographies retrospectively. This section argues that Najm al-Dīn's approach to the imperial elite was much more inclusive than the approach of the contemporary Ottoman biographers in Istanbul, such as Atayi (d. 1635). It also argues that Najm al-Dīn not only used Taşköprizade's (d. 1561) *al-Shaqā'iq* as a source in his *al-Kawākib* but also deconstructed it to replace its narrowly Ottoman perspective with his own broader Muslim-ummah perspective, which could keep Syria relevant and integrated within the imperial framework. As for the biographies of the Ghazzīs in *al-Kawākib*, it argues that Najm al-Dīn, utilizing history, re-shaped the scholarly image of his family in the seventeenth century.

Finally, the conclusion summarizes the general findings and suggestions of the dissertation. It outlines the story of Damascene scholars in the face of a number of macro socio-political transformations taking place in Syro-Egypt and the Balkan-Anatolia complex in 1450–1650 by discussing some prominent themes handled in this study. It also highlights some parallels and possible dialogues with existing research on scholars in the center and provinces in both the Mamluk and Ottoman eras.

CHAPTER I: EARLY GENERATIONS OF THE GHAZZĪ FAMILY IN DAMASCUS (1400–1460)

This chapter aims to create a context for the first two generations of the Ghazzī family in Damascus with reference to contemporary political rule, society, and scholarly life in Syria. As their *nisba* indicates, the family originates from the city of Gaza. In the late fourteenth century, Ahmad al-Ghazzī (d. 1419), a young student, traveled to Damascus for education and settled in the city, and became a respected scholar in his later life. His son Radiyy al-Dīn Abū al-Barakāt (d. 1459), born and raised in Damascus, succeeded his father in some of his positions. His grandson Radiyy al-Dīn Abū al-Fadl (d. 1529) and great grandson Badr al-Dīn (d. 1577), too, achieved fame in scholarship and held scholarly positions in the city. Badr al-Dīn's descendants were no less successful as influential scholarly figures in Damascus. Eventually, Ahmad and his early descendants retrospectively appeared as representatives of successive generations in a particular lineage of a Damascene family known as the Ghazzīs, which emerged as one of the most prominent scholarly families in the city from the late sixteenth century onward (see Appendix A).

Being aware of the hazards of handling the lives of Ahmad and his son Radiyy al-Dīn Abū al-Barakāt within the framework of a particular not-yet fully formed family identity, this chapter investigates the material and non-material gains of the first generations of the Ghazzī family in Damascus. It examines Ahmad's rise as a scholar from a non-scholarly family within the framework of the socio-political crises in Syria in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. It also studies Radiyy al-Dīn Abū al-Barakāt's interregional scholarly network with reference to the political re-integration of Syria into the Cairo-centered Mamluk government after the 1430s. The chapter argues that the first two generations of the Ghazzīs in Damascus left to their descendants a scholarly and Sufi network connecting them to Damascus, Cairo and Mecca as well as some scholarly posts in Damascene endowments as a sort of inheritable property.

1.1. Rulers and Scholars in Mamluk Syria

Mamluk political regime, usually portrayed as a military aristocracy based on one-generation nobility of slave soldiers (*mamlūks*), was rooted in the mamluk phenomenon that had been prevalent since the early

centuries of Muslim rule.¹²⁰ The realities and ideological challenges of the post-Mongol era transformed this phenomenon and evolved it into a sui generis political form in Egypt from the mid-thirteenth century onward, when slave soldiers of the Ayyūbid ruler Sālih (d. 1249) took power after him. This regime did not only recruit slave warriors but also guaranteed them a life-long military career as manumitted commanders of ascending military ranks, who recruited their own troops, and even could hope to ascend to the throne someday, quite contrary to the contemporary understandings of sovereignty.¹²¹

Military slave sultans of Cairo captured in few decades most of Greater Syria, which until then had been under the control of Ayyūbids and Crusader principalities. As independent rulers lacking a dynastic lineage, they struggled against their Ayyūbid masters for legitimacy. A greater challenge came from the Mongol rulers, who did not treat them as rightful sultans according to the Mongol understanding of sovereignty, which bestowed the right to rule the world on the Chinggisid lineage. Eventually, *jihād* (simply, fighting for God's cause against the infidels) became increasingly appealing as a source of legitimacy. They aspired to create the image of the ruler who saved Syro-Egypt and the Holy Lands from infidel attacks, and re-established the caliphate in Cairo after its dissolution in Baghdad.¹²²

When this new government in Cairo seized Damascus, there were 90 madrasas in the city.¹²³ Adding other religious-educational institutions, there were at least 400 teaching posts reserved for the learned elite.¹²⁴ The

¹²⁰ Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization The Classical Age of Islam*, vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1977), 280–89, 473–95; Linda Northrup, “The Bahri Mamluk Sultanate, 1250–1390,” in *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 242–89; Süleyman Kızıltoprak, “Memlük,” in *DİA* (Online: TDV İSAM, 2004).

¹²¹ Nasser Rabbat, “The Changing Concept of Mamluk in the Mamluk Sultanate in Egypt and Syria,” in *Mamluk History through Architecture: Monuments, Culture and Politics in Medieval Egypt and Syria* (I.B. Tauris, 2010), 3–11. For a study on contemporary understanding of sovereignty, see Halil İnalçık, “Osmanlılar’da Saltanat Verâseti Usûlü ve Türk Hakimiyet Telâkkisiyle İlgisi,” *Ankara Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Dergisi*, XVI/1 (1959): 69–94.

¹²² Reuven Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks: The Mamluk–İlkhānid War, 1260–1281* (Cambridge University Press, 1995); Anne F. Broadbridge, “Mamluk Legitimacy and the Mongols: The Reigns of Baybars and Qalāwūn,” *MSR* 5 (2001): 91–118. Northrup, “The Bahri Mamluk Sultanate, 1250–1390,” 273–86; Anne-Marie Eddé, “Bilād Al-Shām, from the Fātimid Conquest to the Fall of the Ayyūbids (359–658/970–1260),” in *The New Cambridge History of Islam*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 161–201.

¹²³ Eddé, “Bilād Al-Shām, from the Fātimid Conquest to the Fall of the Ayyūbids.” For another statistic on Damascene madrasas (along with other endowments such as mosques and dervish lodges) based on the topographical data extracted from contemporary sources, see Table 1-1 in Miura, *Dynamism in the Urban Society of Damascus*, 12.

¹²⁴ Gilbert, “Institutionalization of Muslim Scholarship,” 118.

city was a real hub for the scholars from all corners of Islamdom.¹²⁵ The intellectual activity and financial survival of these scholars largely depended on the facilities of the endowments in the city.¹²⁶ Thus, they were truly concerned for protecting the Muslim community and preserving these resources available to and reserved for them in the region. This made them eager to support any Muslim government powerful enough to assure Syrians of security, stability, and the status quo in the face of Crusaders and Mongols.¹²⁷ For instance, the consent of Ibn Jamā'a (d. 1333), a respected scholar and judge of the period, to the usurpation of caliphal authority by the sultan, and his preferring tyranny over anarchy substantially stemmed from this concern shared by many of his colleagues.¹²⁸

Scholars in Syria, as in many other parts of Islamdom, did not constitute a distinct class. That is, individuals from any social stratum could join them by acquiring religious knowledge. This allowed them to enjoy familial, economic, and ideological relationships with almost every segment of society. They supervised a wide spectrum of individual and societal activities such as marriage, partition of inheritance, commercial transactions, education, daily religious duties, and so forth. This social penetration, influence, roles and responsibilities made them indispensable for the Mamluk rulers. A handful of commanders and their troops hardly could have achieved a stable government without the support of scholars, merely depending on military force and levying taxes.¹²⁹

In short, mutual concerns and needs with different visions, backgrounds and priorities under unprecedented conditions of political crises in Islamic west Asia (the Nile-to-Oxus and Bosphorus-to-Indus complex) forced

¹²⁵ Gilbert conducts a prosopographical research on more than a thousand scholars, who lived in Damascus between the eleventh and the thirteenth centuries. He concludes that nearly half of the scholars in the city were immigrants in this period. They came to Damascus not solely to escape warfare, invasion or famine in their homelands but also to be integrated into the network of Muslim scholarship in Damascus. Gilbert, "The Ulama of Medieval Damascus," 58–85. See also Gilbert, "Institutionalization of Muslim Scholarship and Professionalization of the Ulema."

¹²⁶ Gilbert, "The Ulama of Medieval Damascus," 58–85; Gilbert, "Institutionalization of Muslim Scholarship"; Harun Yılmaz, *Zengi ve Eyyubi Dımaşk'ında Ulema ve Medrese (1154-1260)* (Istanbul: Klasik Yayınları, 2017), 73–114, 185–208, 291–307.

¹²⁷ Lapidus, *Muslim Cities*, 131; Yaacov Lev, "Symbiotic Relations: Ulama and the Mamluk Sultans," *MSR* XIII, no. 1 (2009): 1–26.

¹²⁸ Northrup, "The Bahri Mamluk Sultanate, 1250–1390," 254, 256; Özgür Kavak, "Memlükler Dönemi Siyaset Düşüncesine Giriş: Ahkâm-ı Sultâniye Geleneğinin İhyası ve Meşruiyet Problemini Aşma Çabaları," *İslam Tetkikleri Dergisi* 10, no. 1 (2020): 190–94.

¹²⁹ Lapidus, *Muslim Cities*, 116–17, 130–42.

the Mamluk ruling elite and scholarly groups to develop a symbiotic relationship in Syria.¹³⁰ The former tried to legitimize its rule over indigenous people by constructing religious buildings and commercial centers, and by organizing festivals and celebrations on various events including military victories, pilgrimage, and religious days.¹³¹ The latter continued unceasing negotiations to preserve their rights in endowments and their scholarly independence, while serving the Mamluk regime in judicial capacity.¹³² Each of the four madhhabs had its own government-appointed chief judge (*qādi al-quḍā*) in major cities, and the latter had several deputy judges assisting them.¹³³

New parameters entered the picture from the fourteenth century onward. Transformations in domestic, regional and international politics and economy had repercussions in Mamluk society and policymaking, and consequently, reconfigured the position of the sultan, military households, and scholars in society relative to each other. For instance, the Ilkhānid state collapsed in the mid-fourteenth century, and a number of principalities including the Karamanids, Jalāyirids, and Muzaffarids appeared as regional powers. Mamluk rulers no longer legitimized their rule with reference to the de facto Mongol threat. Mamluk foreign policy adjusted its attention from resistance against a single strong enemy to dominance over several relatively weaker regional powers. Mamluk rulers' investments in armament declined and mamlukization (recruitment of slave warriors) decreased. The reforms in the *iqta* ' system increased the reigning sultan's share from agricultural revenues at the expense of other high-ranking military commanders' share, and consequently changed the power balance in the Mamluk army.¹³⁴ The Black Death in the mid-fourteenth

¹³⁰ Lapidus, 142; Lev, "Symbiotic Relations."

¹³¹ Yehoshua Frenkel, "Public Projection of Power in Mamluk Bilad al-Sham," *MSR* XI, no. 1 (2007): 39–53; Ira M. Lapidus, "Mamluk Patronage and the Arts in Egypt: Concluding Remarks," *Muqarnas* 2 (1984): 173–81.

¹³² For example, they almost unanimously refused when the Mamluk sultan asked several times for a fatwa permitting appropriation of the annual surplus income of the Syrian endowments. Muhammad M. Amin, *The Waqfs and Social Life in Egypt, 1250-1517 A.D* (Cairo: Dār al-Nahla, 1980), 322–38.

¹³³ Joseph H. Escovitz, "The Establishment of Four Chief Judgeships in the Mamluk Empire," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 102, no. 3 (1982): 529–31; idem, *The Office of Qādī al-Qudāt in Cairo under the Bahrī Mamlūks* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1984); Sherman A. Jackson, "The Primacy of Domestic Politics: Ibn Bint al-A'azz and the Establishment of Four Chief Judgeships in Mamlūk Egypt," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 1995, 52–65; Jørgen S. Nielsen, "Sultan al-Zāhir Baybars and the Appointment of Four Chief Qādis, 663/1265," *Studia Islamica*, 1984, 167–76; B. Jokisch, "Socio-Political Factors of Qadā' in Eighth/Fourteenth Century Syria," *al-Qantara* 20, no. 2 (1999): 503–30; Yalçın, "Bahri Memlüklerde Dimaşk Kadılıkudatlığı".

¹³⁴ Northrup, "The Bahri Mamluk Sultanate, 1250–1390"; Amalia Levanoni, "The Mamlūks in Egypt and Syria: The Turkish Mamlūk Sultanate (648–784/1250–1382) and the Circassian Mamlūk Sultanate (784–923/1382–1517)," in *The New Cambridge History of Islam*, vol. 2, 237–84.

century and successive epidemics decimated the population and changed the demographics of cities.¹³⁵ Sons of early slave soldiers gradually arose as a new stratum in society. Unlike their fathers, born and raised free in Mamluk lands, they were fluent in Arabic and familiar with the local dynamics; thus, enjoyed greater penetration into local scholarly groups.¹³⁶ The Qalāwūnid family (r. 1279–1389 with several interruptions, and puppet sultans) faded from the political scene, despite its partial success to build a dynasty in line with the dominant understandings of sovereignty of the period.¹³⁷ Circassian mamluks ascended the throne in Cairo in the last decade of the century, and the ethnic balance in ruling elite changed afterward.¹³⁸ Finally, Timur’s invasion at the dawn of the fifteenth century inflicted a heavy blow on economic and scholarly life in Greater Syria.¹³⁹ The following decades witnessed fierce competitions among the high-ranking military commanders to take control of Syria and rule independently from the Sultanate of Cairo.

Such fitnas (a term carrying several negative meanings ranging from disorder to civil war) eliminated many power holders from the political scene in Syro-Egypt and raised new actors in their place. The ever-changing balance of power among the contending military households and their civil partners during the abovementioned crises brought constant formation and breaking up of informal inter- and intra- group alliances between scholars and power holders in Syria. This created opportunities for many young scholars seeking patronage of and collaboration with the ruling-military elite.¹⁴⁰ A prosopography on Damascene judges supports this claim by demonstrating that, unlike the previous periods, many scholars from non-

¹³⁵ Esra Atmaca, *Kara Veba: Memlûkler’de Salgın ve Toplum (749/1348–49)* (Sakarya: Sakarya Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2021): 138–48.

¹³⁶ Ulrich Haarmann, “Arabic in Speech, Turkish in Lineage: Mamluks and Their Sons in the Intellectual Life of Fourteenth-Century Egypt and Syria,” *Journal of Semitic Studies* 33, 1 (Spring 1988): 81–114; Cengiz Tomar, “Kılıçtan Kaleme Memlûkler ve Entelektüel Hayat,” *Türklük Araştırmaları Dergisi* 12 (2002): 249–59.

¹³⁷ Amalia Levanoni, *A Turning Point in Mamluk History: The Third Reign of al-Nāşir Muḥammad Ibn Qalāwūn (1310–1341)* (Leiden: Brill, 1995); Ali Aktan, “Bahri Memlûklerden Sultan Kalavun ve Hânedanı,” *Belleten* 59, no. 226 (1995); Howayda al-Harithy, “The Patronage of Al-Nasir Muhammad Ibn Qalawun, 1310-1341,” *MSR*, no. IV (2000): 219–44.

¹³⁸ Tekindağ, *Berkuk Devrinde Memlûk Sultanlığı*; Jean-Claude Garcin, “The Regime of the Circassian Mamluks,” *The Cambridge History of Egypt* 1 (1998): 290–317.

¹³⁹ Garcin, “The Regime of the Circassian Mamluks”; Asri Çubukcu, “Ferec,” in *DİA* (Online: TDV İSAM, 1995); Beatrice Forbes Manz, *The Rise and Rule of Tamerlane* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 66–73.

¹⁴⁰ For an examination of the logic of fitna in Damascene society and its practical implications, see Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice*, 91–108 .

scholarly families achieved successful judicial careers during the period 1382–1422.¹⁴¹ One of such rising scholars with a non-scholarly family background was Ahmad al-Ghazzī (1359–1419).

1.2. A Rising Family in Damascus

1.2.1. Relations with the Ruling Elite in Syria

Ahmad was born in Gaza.¹⁴² Apparently, neither his father nor his grandfather was scholarly figures (or not eminent ones, in any case) because contemporary biographical dictionaries allot no entry to them, nor did their descendants mention them as such.¹⁴³ He first studied in Gaza, then moved to Jerusalem, and finally entered Damascus in 1378/9 as a young student. Until the end of the century, he held some professorships and trusteeships in Damascus and settled in the city as a promising scholar.¹⁴⁴

Syria was largely liberated from the domination of the Cairene government in the early fifteenth century due to the struggles of the contending Mamluk amirs against centralization. Shaykh Mahmūdī, the governor of Damascus, even marched to Cairo in order to dethrone the incumbent sultan in 1405. He failed in his attempt and returned to Damascus, where he was involved in a military conflict with Amir Nawrūz, the new governor of the city appointed by the sultan in Cairo.¹⁴⁵ It was not merely the fight of two contending military commanders but rather a process of reassignment of available resources wherein several military and elite households struggled to increase their share. To strengthen themselves, contending factions tried to attract new supporters by various appealing means such as posts and privileges. Powerful actors, on the

¹⁴¹ Mandaville, “The Muslim Judiciary of Damascus,” 12–23.

¹⁴² For Ahmad’s biographies, see al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Daw’*, 1: 356–58; Ibn Hajar, *Inbā’ al-Ghumr Bi-Abnā’ al-Umr*, ed. Hasan Habashī, (Cairo: Lajna Ihyā’ al-Turās al-Arabiyya, 1969), 3: 203–4; Taqiyy al-Dīn Ibn Qādī Shuhba, *Tabaqāt al-Shāfi’īyya*, ed. Hāfiz Abd al-Alīm Khān, (Beirut: Alam al-Kutub, 1987), 4:78; Taqiyy al-Dīn Muhammad b. Ahmad al-Fāsī, *Al-Iqd al-Thāmin fī Tārikh al-Balad al-Amīn*, ed. Fu’ad Sayyid, (Cairo: Mu’assasa al-Risāla, 1964), 3: 55; al-Ghazzī, *Bahja al-Nāzirīn*, 120–31. Also, see Akgündüz, “Gazzī, Ahmed b. Abdullah.”

¹⁴³ For example, see Ibn Hajar’s universal biographical dictionary that covers almost five thousand biographies from the period 1302-1398. Ibn Hajar, *al-Durar al-Kāmina*.

¹⁴⁴ Hijjī, *Tarikh Ibn Hijjī*, 2003, 1:147, 307; al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Daw’*, 1: 356.

¹⁴⁵ Çubukcu, “Ferec.”

other hand, were carefully watching the direction of the fight so as not to be late in giving their support to the prospective winner.¹⁴⁶

Ahmad was already an outstanding scholarly figure in Damascus during this period of chaos. Thus, both of the abovementioned governors of Damascus sought his support. They reportedly offered him the Shāfi‘ī chief judgeship several times.¹⁴⁷ Finally, he accepted the position of the mufti of the *dār al-adl* (literally, house of justice).

Dār al-adls were buildings where *mazālim* sessions took place. *Mazālim* ([the righting of] wrongs) is an old practice in the history of Islam. The first caliphs openly heard people’s grievances about the appointed governors in *mazālim* sessions. In the mid-eleventh century, al-Māwardī (d. 1058), a Shāfi‘ī jurist holding positions in the Abbasid court, wrote about the details of *mazālim* jurisdiction and integrated it into Islamic political theory describing it as an essential responsibility of a Muslim ruler. Existential crises in the Muslim world after the Mongol invasion and the Crusader attacks added a new dimension to *mazālim* sessions. Nūr al-Dīn Zangī (d. 1174) established the first *dār al-adl*, an open forum for *mazālim* sessions, in Damascus in 1163, and *dār al-adl* buildings spread in other major urban centers in the region afterward.¹⁴⁸

Mazālim sessions in the *dār al-adl* of Damascus were presided by the governor of the city. The four chief judges along with a Shāfi‘ī mufti appointed by the governor were essential attendees.¹⁴⁹ They heard cases related to the violations in endowment deeds, heresy, and purchase and sale of private estates. At other times, it functioned as an appellate court.¹⁵⁰ The litigants usually resorted to the opinions of the mufti of the session and other jurists in the city to defend their cases, whenever they felt helpless before the verdicts of

¹⁴⁶ For example, when Shaykh Mahmūdī defeated Nawrūz, a wealthy local merchant backed him in Damascus. This merchant helped Shaykh receive financial support of the merchant community in the city and reinforce his government in return for commercial privileges for his own household. See Patrick Wing, “The Syrian Commercial Elite and Mamluk State-Building in the Fifteenth Century,” in *Trajectories of State Formation across Fifteenth-Century Islamic West-Asia*, ed. Jo van Steenbergen (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2020), 311.

¹⁴⁷ Al-Ghazzī, *Bahja al-Nāzirīn*, 127.

¹⁴⁸ Celal Yeniçeri, “Mezālim,” in *DĀ* (Online: TDV İSAM, 2004); Nasser Rabbat, “The Ideological Significance of the Dar Al-‘Adl in the Medieval Islamic Orient,” in *Mamluk History through Architecture*, 146–65.

¹⁴⁹ For these and other officials in *dār al-adl*, see Jørgen S. Nielsen, *Secular Justice in an Islamic State: Mazālim under the Bahrī Mamlūks, 662/1264–789/1387* (Istanbul: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut, 1985), 79–92; Leonor Fernandes, “Between Qadis and Muftis: To Whom Does the Mamluk Sultan Listen?,” *MSR* 6 (2002): 95–108.

¹⁵⁰ Yalçın, “Bahri Memlûklerde Dimaşk Kadılıkudatlığı,” 163–72. For summaries of nearly ninety cases held in *dār al-adls* of Damascus and Cairo during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, see Nielsen, *Secular Justice*, 140–158.

the chief judges.¹⁵¹ Apparently, Ahmad's relationship with the ruling elite was close because he held the post of the Shāfi'ī mufti of the *dār al-adl* for decades.

Ahmad spent most of his life within the triangle of Damascus–Gaza–Mecca. Apart from his service in the *dār al-adl*, he held professorships in endowments in Damascus. He sometimes paid visits to his parents in Gaza, and traveled to Mecca for pilgrimage at least three times. He usually spent long months in pious residence (*mujāwara*) in Mecca following pilgrimage.¹⁵² He died during one of these pious residences in 1419, and was buried in Mecca.

1.2.2. Relations with the Scholarly Milieus of the Mamluk Capital

In the fourteenth century, the revenues of agriculture in Egypt decreased due to irrigation problems, famine, plague, and Bedouin attacks in rural areas. Decreasing *iqta'* revenues made international trade more appealing for Mamluk rulers.¹⁵³ Barsbāy (r. 1422–1438) tried to establish his monopoly in the Red Sea and the eastern coasts to maximize his own profits from international trade. He organized two campaigns to Cyprus against Crusaders in 1424–26 in order to secure his trade in the Mediterranean, and another campaign to Āmid against the Aqqoyunlus in 1433 for domination in the region and control over the trade routes.¹⁵⁴ This last one was a massive campaign, which also aimed at suppressing the rebellious mamluk amirs in Syria and returning it to the trajectory of the Sultanate of Cairo after its semi-autonomous political state since Timur's invasion. Ibn Hajar (d. 1449), the renowned hadith scholar and the incumbent Shāfi'ī chief judge of Cairo, also accompanied Barsbāy to Damascus, and spent some time in the city. He played a key role in the formation of patron-client networks between the Damascene learned community and the Cairene ruling elite.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵¹ Fernandes, "Between Qadis and Muftis."

¹⁵² One of his visits to Gaza took place in 1396. Hijji, *Tarikh Ibn Hijji*, 2003, 1:183. For the dates of his pilgrimages and pious residences in the Holy Lands, see his biography in al-Ghazzī, *Bahja al-Nāzirīn*, 120–31.

¹⁵³ Garcin, "The Regime of the Circassian Mamluks."

¹⁵⁴ Garcin; John L. Meloy, "Economic Intervention and the Political Economy of the Mamluk State under Al-Ashraf Barsbāy," *MSR* IX, no. 2 (2005): 85–103; Northrup, "The Bahri Mamluk Sultanate, 1250–1390"; Levanoni, "The Mamlūks in Egypt and Syria," 266–67. Fatih Yahya Ayaz, *Memlūk-Kıbrıs İlişkileri: Kıbrıs'ta İlk Türk Hâkimiyeti* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2016): 42–50.

¹⁵⁵ Jo van Steenberg et al., "Fifteenth-Century Arabic Historiography: Introducing a New Research Agenda for Authors, Texts and Contexts," *MSR* 23 (2020): 55–56.

Ahmad's son Radiyy al-Dīn Abū al-Barakāt (1409–1460) was in his mid-twenties during the Āmid campaign.¹⁵⁶ He was teaching in the Kallāsa madrasa, whose professorship was transferred to him after his father.¹⁵⁷ He met Ibn Hajar in Damascus and entered his circle like many other Damascene scholars.¹⁵⁸ Later, he traveled to Cairo and studied under Ibn Hajar.¹⁵⁹ Cairo had already started moving ahead of Damascus as a center of scholarship in Syro-Egypt since the mid-fourteenth century.¹⁶⁰ Timur's invasion and subsequent turmoils in Damascus and Mamluk patronage in Cairo had accelerated this process.¹⁶¹ Radiyy al-Dīn found opportunity to access the Cairene elite thanks to his teacher Ibn Hajar. He developed relations with the Shāfi'ī scholarly community in the city, particularly the famous Bulqīnī household, whose members and clients had occupied the highest and most lucrative scholarly posts in the Mamluk capital for the last seventy years.¹⁶²

After his return to Damascus, he embarked on a book project in 1435–39, a biographical dictionary of Shāfi'ī scholars, who died during the first decades of the ninth hijrī century (which corresponds to the first decades

¹⁵⁶ For his biography see al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Daw'* VI: 324; There are numerous autobiographical accounts about his life in his *al-Bahja*. See al-Ghazzī, *Bahja Al-Nāzirīn*, 120–31.

¹⁵⁷ Abū al-Mafākhīr Muhyī al-Dīn Abd al-Qādir b. Muhammad b. Umar al-Nu'aymī, *Al-Dāris fī Tārikh al-Madāris*, ed. Ja'far al-Hasanī (Cairo: Matba'a al-Majma' al-Ilmiyy al-Arabī, 1948), I: 342–43. A detailed explanation of the mechanisms of inheritance of scholarly posts will follow in the next chapter.

¹⁵⁸ Al-Ghazzī, *Bahja al-Nāzirīn*, 135. For a similar example, see Damascus-based Ibn Arabshāh's relationship with Ibn Hajar during the latter's presence in Damascus during the Āmid campaign, and his professional mobility afterward, in Mustafa Banister, "Professional Mobility in Ibn 'Arabshāh's Fifteenth-Century Panegyric Dedicated to Sultan Al-Zāhir Jaqmaq," *MSR*, 23 (2020): 133–63.

¹⁵⁹ Al-Ghazzī, *Bahja Al-Nāzirīn*, 238.

¹⁶⁰ Between 1350 and 1447, thirty-two new madrasas were built in Cairo, whereas this number was only fourteen in Damascus. See Table 1-2 in Mirua, *Dynamism in the Urban Society of Damascus*, 22. The growing number of madrasas in the Mamluk capital seems to have gone parallel with the increasing scholarship in the city. A recent prosopography on the legal scholars of Syro-Egyptian lands gives the number of scholars, who produced a work in Islamic law, as 38 in Damascus and 21 in Cairo during the thirteenth century, and as 56 versus 73 in the fourteenth century. Seemingly, Cairo came to the fore in scholarship since the late fourteenth century, at least in the field of Islamic law. Tuncay Başoğlu, "Eyyübiler ve Memlükler Dönemi Fıkıh Yazımı," *İslam Tetkikleri Dergisi* 10, no. 1 (2020): 229–332.

¹⁶¹ Amin, *The Waqfs and Social Life in Egypt*, 70–108, 237–73; Petry, *The Civilian Elite of Cairo*, 15–36; Muhammet Enes Midilli, "Ulemânın Memlük Coğrafyasına Yönelmesi."

¹⁶² For this family, see Büşra Sıdıka Kaya, "Şehâvî'nin ed-Dav'ü'l-Lâmi' Adlı Eseri Bağlamında IX./XV. Asır Kahire'sinde Bilgi Ve Toplum" (PhD diss., Istanbul University, 2017), 149–61; Also see Özkan, *Memlüklerin Son Asrında Hadis*, 104–7; and Petry, *The Civilian Elite of Cairo*, 232–40.

of the fifteenth century) in Syro-Egypt.¹⁶³ Kevin Jacques argues that the mass death of scholars in the Black Death and military conflicts of the late fourteenth century made legal scholars more concerned about recording their scholarly genealogies in the form of biographical dictionaries.¹⁶⁴ Radiyy al-Dīn then seems to have followed the trend.

Yet he apparently had an alternative agenda as well. In the preamble of his work, he informs his readers that he organized the biographies in his work alphabetically with the exception that *Muhammads* and *Ahmads* come first. Then, he adds that he violated this rule for only one person, namely Sirāj al-Dīn al-Bulqīnī (1324–1403), to whom he allotted the first biographical entry. Radiyy al-Dīn introduced Sirāj al-Dīn to his readers as “*Imām Shāfi‘ī of the age*” and “*the mujaddid [renovator] of the eighth century.*”¹⁶⁵ Sirāj al-Dīn was the founding father of the abovementioned Bulqīnī family. It seems Radiyy al-Dīn utilized his project to praise his patrons in Cairo. Most probably thanks to the latter’s support, he later received an appointment to Shāfi‘ī deputy judgeship in Damascus.

In the following years, he composed a separate work for the biography of Sultan Jaqmaq (r. 1438–1453). Since the work is no longer extant today and the sources are silent about its content, we cannot guess Radiyy al-Dīn’s agenda in his second project. Nevertheless, we know he presented his work to his teacher Ibn Hajar, one of his channels to Cairo, with the probable goal of gaining access to the Mamluk sultan through him.¹⁶⁶

1.2.3. A Sufi Identity and an Interregional Sufi Network

Mystically inclined Muslims who pursued an ascetic life with world-denying tendencies existed since the early decades of Islam. Institutionalized Sufism, however, is a later phenomenon. From the twelfth century onward, Sufi communities following certain “paths” or “methods” (*tarīqs* or *tarīqas*) rapidly spread in Islamdom, distinguished by their special devotional practices such as dhikr, seclusion (*khalwa*) and whirling dance (*sama*’). These communities had two distinct features. Diachronically, they connected their members

¹⁶³ See the colophon page in al-Ghazzī, *Bahja al-Nāzirīn*, 254. The history of writing the biographies of scholars affiliated with particular madhhabs goes back to the tenth century. See Wadad al-Qadi, “Biographical Dictionaries as the Scholars’ Alternative History of the Muslim Community,” *Organizing Knowledge*, 2006, 23–75.

¹⁶⁴ Jaques, 17–22 See figures 1.1, 1.2., and 1.3. A recent study on the Black Death identifies forty-one scholars from the cities of Cairo and Damascus who died of the plague in the hijrī year 749 (1348/49), see Atmaca, *Kara Veba*, 141.

¹⁶⁵ Al-Ghazzī, *Bahja al-Nāzirīn*, 27, 38–39.

¹⁶⁶ Al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Daw’*, 6: 324.

to some authoritative figures from early Islamic history such as Alī, the Prophet's nephew and son-in-law, by documented sequences called *silsila*. Synchronically, they substituted the teacher-student relationship of traditional education for a more hierarchical relationship between the guide and disciple (*murshid* and *murīd*).¹⁶⁷

Sufism in both institutionalized and other forms became a common phenomenon in Syro-Egypt during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.¹⁶⁸ The Crusaders' attacks, Mongol invasion, famine, plague, poverty, constant warfare, massive death and migration made Muslim peoples take refuge in devotional Sufi practices and communities. Ayyūbid and Mamluk rulers patronized Sufis for various reasons such as to support Sunni ideology against the Shī'ī-Isma'īlī Fatimid legacy in the region, to have an alternative human resource against their rebelling soldiers, and simply to gain God's acceptance.¹⁶⁹ In the fifteenth century, many scholars in the region were affiliated with one or more Sufi paths as either a follower or sympathizer. There were influential Sufi sheikhs, who enjoyed close relationships with the ruling elite and the top religious officials; and thus constituted an alternative channel for social mobility of his followers.¹⁷⁰ Sometimes rivalry between religious scholars manifested itself in the form of sympathy for or antipathy against renowned Sufi figures such as Ibn al-Arabī (d. 1240) and Ibn al-Fārid (d. 1235).¹⁷¹ Some endowments stipulated scholars employed as professors to have affiliation with a Sufi path.¹⁷²

In this context, Ahmad al-Ghazzī also formed relationships with Sufi figures in Damascus. He was close to Abū al-Safā al-Azrā'ī (d. 1412), a highly esteemed Sufi in the city, who was often entrusted with conveying alms from Damascus to Mecca.¹⁷³ This Sufi network in Damascus then connected him to non-Damascene

¹⁶⁷ Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, 1:201–17; Ahmet T. Karamustafa, *Sufism: The Formative Period* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007) 1–37, 114–42.

¹⁶⁸ Ahmet T. Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends: Dervish Groups in the Islamic Middle Period 1200-1550* (Oneworld Publications, 2006), 52–56; idem, *Sufism: The Formative Period*, 125, 149–50.

¹⁶⁹ Emil T. Homerin, "Sufis and Their Detractors in Mamluk Egypt: A Survey of Protagonists and Institutional Settings," in *Islamic Mysticism Contested: Thirteen Centuries of Controversies & Polemics*, ed. I.J.F. de Jong and Bernd Radtke, 1999, 225–48; Homerin, "Saving Muslim Souls: The Khānqāh and the Sufi Duty in Mamluk Lands," *MSR* 3 (1999): 59–82.

¹⁷⁰ See Adam Sabra, "From Artisan to Courtier: Sufism and Social Mobility in Fifteenth-Century Egypt," in *Histories of the Middle East*, ed. Margariti Eleni Roxani et al., 2011, 213–32.

¹⁷¹ Homerin, "Sufis and Their Detractors in Mamluk Egypt."

¹⁷² Amin, *The Waqfs and Social Life in Egypt*, 208.

¹⁷³ For al-Azrā'ī's biography see al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Daw'*, III: 199.

actors. When Ahmad and Abū Safa were in Mecca for pilgrimage in 1406, the latter introduced him to Sheikh Jamāl al-Dīn b. Abdullah al-Yāfi‘ī’s writings and encouraged him to copy them.¹⁷⁴ Jamāl al-Dīn’s father Abdullah (d. 1367) had been a well-known Sufi in Yemen. He served several Sufi sheikhs as a disciple, whom later would be associated with distinct Sufi orders such as the Qādirī, Akbārī, Suhrawardī, Shādhālī, and Rifā‘ī. After his death, Abdullah’s followers considered him as the founder of the Yāfi‘ī branch within the Qādirī order.¹⁷⁵ Yāfi‘ī followers were widespread especially in Hijaz and Yemen. Leading scholars in the region were associated with his Sufi path. For example Jamāl al-Dīn ibn Zahira (d. 1414), a friend of Ahmad and the judge of Mecca, was a student of Sheikh Abdullah. It seems that being part of the Yāfi‘ī-Qādirī network brought Ahmad strong connections and support in Damascus and Mecca.

Radiyy al-Dīn was born into his father’s Yāfi‘ī-Qādirī network. He then married the daughter of Sheikh Ahmad al-Aqbā‘ī (1379–1450), a Qādirī oriented Sufi leader, who trained his followers in his own convent outside the city walls of Damascus.¹⁷⁶ Both al-Aqbā‘ī and the aforementioned Abū al-Safā were disciples of the same guide, Sheikh Abū Bakr al-Mawsilī. Radiyy al-Dīn seems to have broadened his father’s Qādirī Sufi network in Damascus and finally occupied a significant position in this network thanks to his connection with a central figure by marriage.

1.3. Conclusion

This chapter has dealt with the history of the first two generations of the Ghazzī family in Damascus. Ahmad al-Ghazzī was the first member of the family, who emigrated from Gaza to Damascus and settled in the city. He lived in a period when Greater Syria enjoyed relative independence from the Sultanate of Cairo due to Timur’s invasion and subsequent power struggles between rival Syrian governors, who aspired to establish their autonomous rule. The unceasing military struggles brought negotiations, clashes, alliances, and oppositions among diverse power groups including scholars, who constituted the legal and ideological basis of any possible government in Syria. This situation created opportunities for the younger generation of scholars seeking patronage and promotions. Thus, despite his non-scholarly family background, Ahmad rapidly ascended in his career, and held several professorships and the office of the mufti of the *dār al-adl*

¹⁷⁴ Al-Ghazzī, *Bahja al-Nāzirīn*, 125–26.

¹⁷⁵ Derya Baş, “Yāfi‘ī,” in *DĪA* (Online: TDV İSAM, 2013).

¹⁷⁶ Al-Ghazzī, *Al-Kawākib*, e.n. 257, 653. For al-Aqbā‘ī’s biography, see al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Daw’*, II: 255.

in Damascus. He also formed Sufi connections in Syria and the Hijaz, mainly with the Qādirī Sufis of Damascus and Mecca.

The Mamluk sultans achieved increasing integration of Greater Syria into the Sultanate of Cairo after Barbays's Āmid campaign in the 1430s. Moreover, Cairo emerged as an unrivaled cosmopolitan center for scholarship and scholarly activities in Islamdom during this period. This context enabled Ahmad's son Radiyy al-Dīn to broaden the network he inherited from his father. Radiyy al-Dīn established close relations with the Cairene scholarly community and ruling elite, and sought their patronage. He also developed his father's Sufi ties by marrying the daughter of a Qādirī sheikh in Damascus.

In sum, the Ghazzīs first rose in Damascus as regional actors thanks to the socio-political atmosphere in Syria. Then, they became closer to Mamluk Cairo because of evolving political realities, and aspired to become imperial actors by entering the Cairene scholarly milieu and gaining access to the Mamluk sultan. The third generation of the family in Damascus would be born into this interregional network of Shāfi'ī scholars and Qādirī Sufis.

CHAPTER II: RADIYY AL-DĪN AL-GHAZZĪ: FROM A DERVISH LODGE IN DAMASCUS TO THE MAMLUK COURT IN CAIRO (1458–1516)

Radiyy al-Dīn Abū al-Fadl (1458–1529) witnessed the reigns of four sultans in Syria, respectively Qāyitbāy (r. 1468–1496), al-Ghawrī (r. 1501–1516), Selim I (r. 1512–1520), and Süleyman I (r. 1520–1566). He spent almost sixty years of his life under Mamluk rule, and, in the remaining thirteen years, he saw the Ottoman government.

This chapter deals with Radiyy al-Dīn's life before 1516. Radiyy al-Dīn spent his childhood in his maternal grandfather's dervish lodge in Damascus as an orphan because his father had died when he was less than two years old. Still, in the following years, he managed to become a scholar and successfully took some of his father's teaching positions. He became one of the deputies of the Shāfi'ī chief judge in Damascus before his mid-twenties and occupied this post for decades. In his thirties, he was composing panegyrics for Qāyitbāy in Cairo, and even penned a separate work devoted to the Mamluk sultan.

How did Radiyy al-Dīn achieve all this despite his start in life as an orphan? Did the familial network he was born into, play a role in his journey from a dervish lodge in Damascus to the Mamluk court in Cairo? Were there other social and scholarly mechanisms that paved the way for him to become a scholar like his father and grandfather? The previous chapter has scrutinized the material and non-material gains of the latter two. The present chapter will examine how Radiyy al-Dīn assumed and utilized these gains in order to answer the questions above.

2.1. An Orphan in a Qādirī Dervish Lodge

Radiyy al-Dīn was born in Damascus on 19 September 1458. He lost his father Radiyy al-Dīn Abū al-Barakāt the following year, and his relatives named him after his father by his name Muhammad and his nickname Radiyy al-Dīn. His mother took him and his elder brother Ibrāhīm to her father Sheikh Ahmad

al-Aqbā'ī's (1379–1450) Qādirī dervish lodge (*zāwiya*) outside the city walls.¹⁷⁷ The incumbent sheikh of the lodge was Ahmad al-Aqbā'ī's son Ibrāhīm (d. 1482/83). Radiyy al-Dīn and his brother grew up under the protection of their maternal uncle.

Buildings of various sizes and capacities, hosting Sufis and Sufi practices, flourished in Syria and Egypt since the Ayyūbid rule. Salāh al-Dīn al-Ayyūbī (d. 1193) established the first *khānqāh* in Egypt, and state-sponsored *khānqāhs* rapidly spread in the region during the Mamluk period for various reasons such as keeping the Sufis under control and empowerment of Sunni ideology.¹⁷⁸ As for dervish lodges, they differed from *khānqāhs* mainly in size and focus rather than their mission. Dervish lodges, often associated with the tomb of a mystic figure, were rather small-capacity private enterprises and hosted not only Sufis searching for a place for seclusion and *dhikr* but also scholars and people in need.¹⁷⁹

There were many dervish lodges and *khānqāhs* in Mamluk territories. Al-Maqrīzī (d. 1444) counts twenty-five dervish lodges and twenty-two *khānqāhs* in Cairo in his era.¹⁸⁰ Nu'aymī (d. 1521) gave information about twenty six dervish lodges and twenty-nine *khānqāhs* in Damascus in the early sixteenth century.¹⁸¹ Unfortunately, Nu'aymī's work lacks an entry for Aqbā'ī's lodge but *al-Kawākib* informs us that it was still active in the first decades of the sixteenth century.¹⁸²

Dervish lodges in Damascus were affiliated with various Sufi orders including Qādirī, Rifā'ī, and Qalandarī.¹⁸³ It seems that they were an integral part of life in Damascus by connecting people with various backgrounds but similar Sufi tendencies. One thus expects that Radiyy al-Dīn did not spend his childhood in total isolation in his grandfather's lodge, despite its location in the surroundings of the city. He started

¹⁷⁷ The sources imply that Radiyy al-Dīn Abū al-Barakat had a third son named Shahāb al-Dīn but I could not find his biography in contemporary sources. See al-Ghazzī, *Bahja al-Nāzirīn*, 164, and 254; al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 554. For al-Aqbā'ī's biography, see al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Daw'*, II: 255.

¹⁷⁸ See Leonor Fernandes, *The Evolution of a Sufi Institution in Mamluk Egypt: The Khanqah* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1988), 2; Emil Homerin, "Sufis and Their Detractors in Mamluk Egypt"; Homerin, "Saving Muslim Souls."

¹⁷⁹ Emil Homerin, "Sufis and Their Detractors in Mamluk Egypt"; Homerin, "Saving Muslim Souls"; Fernandes, *The Evolution of a Sufi Institution*, 13–16.

¹⁸⁰ İsmail Yiğit, "Ribāt," in *DĪA* (Online: TDV İSAM, 2008).

¹⁸¹ Al-Nu'aymī, *al-Dāris*, 1948.

¹⁸² Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 257. For a contemporary dervish lodge owned by a Qādirī sheikh but not mentioned by Nu'aymī, see *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 112.

¹⁸³ Al-Nu'aymī, *al-Dāris*, II: 196–222.

his education under the supervision of his maternal uncle in this lodge, which hosted not only Sufis but also scholarly figures.¹⁸⁴ More importantly, he assumed there a Qādirī identity, which, as will be seen in the following sections, he would benefit from throughout his life.

2.2. Becoming a Shāfi‘ī Professor

2.2.1. Mechanisms and Tools for Securing Scholarly Continuity in Families

Scholars in Mamluk lands were competing for lucrative posts in endowments. The holders of posts usually sought ways to transmit them to their sons or relatives to assure that the financial resources would remain in the hands of their family. The families that managed to transfer lucrative positions to their descendants grew into renowned scholarly families in time.¹⁸⁵ Handing down (*nuzūl*), custody (*wasāya*), deputyship (*niyāba*), and certification to teach and issue religio-legal opinions (*ijāza al-tadrīs wa-l-iftā*) were essential mechanisms and tools that developed in the region throughout centuries. They assured local families scholarly continuity by facilitating them transmission of scholarly positions across their generations.

Nuzūl

As numerous examples from the Mamluk era indicate, professors of madrasas could leave their teaching posts to others, usually in return for an amount of payment.¹⁸⁶ Superintendents (*nāzir*) and holders of other endowed positions such as preachers (*khatīb*) could also resign from their posts in favor of their sons and others.¹⁸⁷ Mamluk rulers occasionally attempted to prohibit such transfers¹⁸⁸ because there were extreme

¹⁸⁴ For example, Shahāb al-Dīn Ahmad al-Himsī, an expert in Islamic law of inheritance (*farā'id*), lived in Aqbā'ī's lodge for a while. See al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Daw'*, 2: 256.

¹⁸⁵ To give an example, see Ibn Jamā'a family, who held the positions of prayer leader and preacher in the al-Aqsā Mosque in Jerusalem for three centuries. Salibī, "The Banū Jamā'a."

¹⁸⁶ The common verb used in sources to denote the practice is *nazala an*. For examples of *nuzūl* in Damascus, see al-Nu'aymī, *al-Dāris*, 1948, 1:144, 149, 155, 165, 175, 201, 224, 253, 265, 311. For other examples from Cairo, see Berkey, *The Transmission of Knowledge*, 109–10.

¹⁸⁷ For example, see al-Nu'aymī, *al-Dāris*, 1:137, 155, 300.

¹⁸⁸ For instance, Sultan Barsbāy (1422–1438) made an abortive attempt to prevent disqualified people from holding posts in endowments. See Amin, *The Waqfs and Social Life in Egypt*, 127.

cases such as where the holder of the position on his deathbed handed it down to his preadolescent or even infant son.¹⁸⁹

Chamberlain argues, “The *nuzūl* was not recognized in law, but depended on the prestige of the lecturer, on the expectation more generally that sons should inherit their fathers’ positions.”¹⁹⁰ Yet we see it was legalized by the fatwas of Taqīyy al-Dīn al-Subkī (d. 1355), the eminent Syro-Egyptian Shāfi‘ī jurist. Al-Subkī clearly puts, “(...) when an intern legal scholar in a madrasa, a preacher, a mosque prayer leader, a professor, an assistant professor, or those others occupying an endowed post (*wazā’if*) hands down his position for a person, the superintendent has no right to interfere and to give the related position to another individual. Because this would be the nullification of the first person’s right (*isqāt li-haqqihī*) over the position.”¹⁹¹ This religio-legal opinion of al-Subkī was not marginal. On the contrary, it seems to have provided a strong legal basis for the practice of handing down in Mamluk territories. We encounter cases where contemporary scholars give references to this and similar fatwas while defending their rights in endowed positions handed down to them.¹⁹²

Wasāya

An elderly scholar, who aspired to transmit his position to his underage son before his death, was not usually content with the practice of *nuzūl* in favor of the latter, but resorted to other means to guarantee the actual transmission of the position.

¹⁸⁹ See al-Nu‘aymī, *al-Dāris*, 1948, 1:255, 290–91, 295.

¹⁹⁰ Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice*, 95.

¹⁹¹ Taqīyy al-Dīn Alī b. Abd al-Kāfi al-Subkī, *Fatāwā Al-Subkī* (Beirut: Dār al-Ma‘rifā), II: 224.

مسألة في النزول عن الوظائف (..) فقلت هذا يدل على أن كل من له حق فتركه لشخص معين يصح و يكون ذلك الشخص أحق به و ليس للناظر أن يعطيه لغيره (...). كذلك الفقيه الطالب في مدرسة أو الخطيب أو إمام المسجد أو المدرّس أو المعبد أو غيرهم ممن بيده وظيفة إذا نزل لشخص معين عنها لم يكن للناظر أن ينزل أن ذلك إسقاط لحقه بالكلية

¹⁹² For example, a teacher of Radiyy al-Dīn Abū al-Barakāt claimed that Radiyy al-Dīn had a lawful right to his father Ahmad’s positions according to well-known fatwas of al-Subki. See al-Ghazzī, *Bahja al-Nāzirīn*, 213.

و أفنى في إجازته لي أبي أستحق و يضاف إليّ من جميع الجهات ما كان يستحقه شيخ الإسلام الوالد تبعاً لما أفنى به و اختاره الإمام تقي الدين السبكي و المسألة معروفة ليس هذا موضعها

Nuzūl practice provided a legal recognition of his son's right over the related post by the superintendent and judge, even when his son was not fully qualified for the post. However, it could not guarantee his actual assumption of the position in the future. In other words, the transmission of the legal rights on a position and the actual transmission of the position were different things. A person's legal rights on a position could easily be overlooked, ignored, denied, or forgotten, if he did not struggle enough to actually take them over. There were many qualified scholars with strong connections, who coveted such vacant positions; and an underage unqualified orphan, who was dreaming to replace his father in his positions but devoid of the means and capacity to struggle against his contenders, would be an easy rival in any respect.

Thus, the father usually assigned to his underaged son a custodian (*wasī*) from among his colleagues, who would become legally responsible for his possessions and defend his rights on particular positions until he was old enough. Of course, the custodian was expected to be a trustful person who would secure the related position for the child without deposing of it. A deceitful custodian could take advantage of the inabilities of the child and dispossess him of the positions left to him by his father, in return for money or his own benefit. According to Islamic law, if the father died without appointing a custodian, in the absence of a grandfather, the incumbent judge of the city automatically became the custodian of the orphan.¹⁹³ The logic of this automatic appointment seems to be based on the expectation that the judge is the most experienced and capable legal person to secure the child's rights on his father's inheritance.

Niyāba

Deputyship was another widespread practice in Mamluk lands. Scholars could appoint deputies (*nā'ibs*) to their posts in endowments. The appointed deputy fulfilled the requirements of the assigned post and benefited from it until its legal owner took the post back. It enabled outstanding scholarly figures to keep financial resources at their disposal by occupying several lucrative endowed positions concurrently, and appointing their protégés to each as a deputy.¹⁹⁴

Deputyship also functioned as a useful mechanism for robust transmission of positions from the deceased father to his underage orphans. Since a child, who was legally authorized to replace his father in his posts after handing down (*nuzūl*), proved unqualified in several respects to fulfill the assigned duties of the post

¹⁹³ Ali Bardakoğlu, "Vesâyet," in *DİA* (Online: TDV İSAM, 2013).

¹⁹⁴ Berkey, *The Transmission of Knowledge*, 107–19.

in person, he needed another individual, who would occupy the post and shoulder its daily responsibilities prescribed in the endowment deed on his behalf. In that case, either the custodian (*wasī*) himself or another person appointed by the custodian occupied the post as the child's deputy. He occupied the post until the child grew up and assumed the post himself or decided to leave it to another scholar by handing down.

Ijāza al-tadrīs wa-l-iftā

Nuzūl, *wasāya*, and *niyāba* were significant legal and social mechanisms assuring a father that his son could replace him in his posts in endowments. The child legally became the new owner of the post by *nuzūl*. His *wasī* legally defended his rights on the related post against powerful rivals from the learned community. His *wasī* or another scholar appointed by him temporarily performed the duties of the related post as the child's *nā'ib*. These, however, were not fully enough for actual transmission of the post within a family, from older family members to younger ones. The latter had to meet the criteria stipulated in the endowment deed of the related post and actually be qualified for the post, if he wanted to assume it personally. How should he prove his competence, however? Here, a scholarly tool, the certificate to teach and issue legal opinions, was in operation. It was a special certificate different from other more common types of certificates (*ijāzas*).¹⁹⁵ It showed one's competence to certain posts in endowments, especially teaching ones.

The certificate to teach and issue legal opinions in contemporary Syro-Egypt was a degree attained only after years of study in Islamic law and a final examination under the supervision of a scholar, who himself had once been awarded by this certificate and usually held a professorship. This certificate, as a generally recognized indicator of the level of scholarship of the young scholar, provided him with career opportunities by proving his qualification for various scholarly posts such as assistant professorship, professorship, deputy professorship, judgeship, and deputy judgeship.¹⁹⁶

The following section traces how these mechanisms and tools functioned in the case of a professorship held by the members of the Ghazzī family for decades and finally occupied by Radiyy al-Dīn.

¹⁹⁵ For different types of certificate see Cemil Akpınar, "İcâzet," in *DİA* (Online: TDV İSAM, 2000). For example, the certificate of transmission (*ijāza al-riwāya*) was more common and did not require tight conditions. The following part of this chapter will discuss it in detail.

¹⁹⁶ Devin Stewart, "The Doctorate of Islamic Law in Mamluk Egypt and Syria," in *Law and Education in Medieval Islam: Studies in Memory of George Makdisi*, ed. Joseph Lowry et al. (Chippenham: EJW Gibb Memorial Trust, 2004), 45–90.

2.2.2. An Inherited Teaching Position: The Kallāsa Madrasa

Ahmad al-Ghazzī, Radiyy al-Dīn's grandfather, successfully passed a traditional forty-question exam (*arba 'in mas'ala*) at the Shāmiyya Barrāniyya Madrasa in Damascus in 1389, and received a certificate to issue legal opinions and teach from the professor of this madrasa. He then started working as an assistant professor in several Damascene educational institutions.¹⁹⁷ Eventually, he occupied one-third of the professorship in the Kallāsa Madrasa in 1395.¹⁹⁸

Though named a madrasa, the Kallāsa had no separate building. It was an endowed corner inside the Umayyad Mosque. The Umayyad Mosque hosted seven similar corners each with its own endowment deed; thus called a madrasa.¹⁹⁹ As for the division of a teaching position and its income among several scholars, this was a widespread phenomenon in contemporary Damascus.²⁰⁰

Starting from one-third of the professorship, Ahmad took on the rest of the teaching post in the Kallāsa Madrasa later on. He taught there for years in addition to his aforementioned Shāfi'ī jurist position in the *dār al-adl* of Damascus and other teaching posts in the city.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, when Ahmad died in 1421, his son Radiyy al-Dīn Abū al-Barakāt was twelve years old. He was unqualified to replace his father in his positions immediately. Sources do not inform whether his father appointed a *wasī* for him. Yet we learn that Ahmad had transferred his positions to him before his death in Mecca. According to Radiyy al-Dīn Abū al-Barakāt's own account, upon his father's death, "corrupted judges (*al-quḍā al-mufsidūn*)" deprived him of the positions that had been handed down to him from his father (*wazā'ifī al-manzūla lī anḥā minhu*).²⁰¹ Nevertheless, he was not completely helpless because some of his father's friends supported him. For example, one of them gave him a written document, which affirmed that he had the legal right to replace his father in handed down posts according

¹⁹⁷ Ibn Qādī Shuhba, *Tabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyya*, 1987, 4:78; al-Ghazzī, *Bahja al-Nāzirin*, 123.

¹⁹⁸ Hijjī, *Tārikh Ibn Hijjī*, 2003, 1:147.

¹⁹⁹ For example, one of them was the Ghazzāliya madrasa named after the celebrated Muslim scholar Imam Ghazālī (d. 1111) who studied there for a while. For further information on the Kallāsa madrasa and these madrasas, see al-Nu'aymī, *al-Dāris*, 1948, 1:413, 447, 2:412. Also see Hatim Mahamid, "Mosques as Higher Educational Institutions in Mamluk Syria," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 20, no. 2 (2009): 201–2.

²⁰⁰ For divisibility of posts, see Makdisi, *The Rise of Colleges*, 168–70. For examples of the partition of professorships in Damascene madrasas, see al-Nu'aymī, *al-Dāris*, 1948, 1:54, 143, 144, 175, 224, 264, 265, 274, 286, 287, 295, 309, 314, 355.

²⁰¹ Al-Ghazzī, *Bahja al-Nāzirin*, 130.

to Takiyy al-Dīn al-Subkī's fatwas.²⁰² Moreover, the incumbent Shāfi'ī chief judge of Damascus acted as his custodian, and, probably under the pressure of his protectors, agreed that Radiyy al-Dīn Abū al-Barakāt's maternal uncle would become his deputy in the professorship of the Kallāsa Madrasa.²⁰³ The chief judge also appointed another scholar to the Shāfi'ī jurist position in the *dār al-adl* as Radiyy al-Dīn's deputy.²⁰⁴ Ahmad's remaining posts, however, were no longer in Radiyy al-Dīn's possession. It seems that, for unknown reasons, Radiyy al-Dīn later resigned from his rights on the position of jurist of the *dār al-adl* and this position passed into the hands of other scholars. The Kallāsa professorship, however, remained in his hands.

Radiyy al-Dīn Abū al-Barakāt attained his first certificate to teach and issue legal opinion at the age of twenty-three in 1432.²⁰⁵ Now, he was qualified to assume a professorship. In the same year, he began to teach in the Kallāsa instead of his deputy.²⁰⁶ He taught in the madrasa until his death in 1459. At his deathbed, he left his two little sons, Radiyy al-Dīn and Ibrāhīm, under the custody of Zayn al-Dīn Khattāb al-Umarī (d. 1474). Zayn al-Dīn was his peer and classmate during his education, and occupied a post in the Umayyad Mosque, where the Kallāsa Madrasa was located.²⁰⁷ Zayn al-Dīn played his role as the custodian of the two little children. He assisted them in their education and assumed the professorship of the Kallāsa Madrasa as their deputy for a while.

Ibrāhīm's age is unknown. In his obituary dated 30 November 1476, Damascene historian al-Busrawī states that he had memorized the Quran, and was performing daily prayers regularly among the congregation in the Umayyad Mosque.²⁰⁸ Al-Sakhāwī also allots to him a brief entry underlying that he assumed his father's positions as a partner to his brother (*istaqarra fī cihāt abihī sharīkatan li-akhīhī*) and underwent mystical experience (*hāla junūn*).²⁰⁹ Further information about him is unavailable.

²⁰² Al-Ghazzī, 212–14.

²⁰³ See al-Nu'aymī, *al-Dāris*, 2:341; Ibn Tūlūn, *al-Thughr al-Bassām*, 152.

²⁰⁴ Al-Ghazzī, *Bahja al-Nāzirīn*, 86.

²⁰⁵ Al-Ghazzī, 238.

²⁰⁶ Al-Nu'aymī, *al-Dāris*, 1948, 1:342–43.

²⁰⁷ For Zayn al-Dīn al-Khattāb's biography, see al-Sakhāwī, *al-Daw'*, 3:181–82.

²⁰⁸ Al-Busrawī, *Tārikh al-Busrawī*, 78.

²⁰⁹ Al-Sakhāwī, *al-Daw'*, 1:126–27.

As for Radiyy al-Dīn, he continued his education under his custodian Zayn al-Dīn. The latter taught him Islamic law and guided him to classes of the leading Damascene scholars. In 1470, Zayn al-Dīn received the professorship of the prestigious Shāmiyya Barrāniyya Madrasa, whose endowment deed disallowed its professor to teach in another madrasa concurrently.²¹⁰ Therefore, he was obliged to appoint another scholar to the Kallāsa Madrasa as the deputy of Radiyy al-Dīn, who was only twelve years old. This new deputy occupied the professorship for the next twenty years.²¹¹ After years of study in Islamic disciplines and being authorized to teach and issue legal opinions, Radiyy al-Dīn finally replaced his deputy and started teaching in the Kallāsa in person in 1490.²¹²

In short, the professorship of the Kallāsa Madrasa could be transmitted within the Ghazzī family across three generations. The remaining posts, on the other hand, seem to have gone out of their possession in time. Ahmad occupied the professorship of the Kallāsa in 1395–1421, i.e. for twenty-six years. His son Radiyy al-Dīn Abū al-Barakāt took the post in 1432, after an interval period of eleven years, during which his maternal uncle acted as his deputy in the post. He held it for twenty-seven years, and handed it down to his two sons, Radiyy al-Dīn and Ibrāhīm. When the latter died, Radiyy al-Dīn became the sole owner of the post. Nevertheless, he had to wait a period of thirty-one years, during which two other scholars (the custodian appointed by his father before his death, and then, another scholar appointed by this custodian) occupied the post on his behalf as his deputies. He eventually started teaching in the Kallasa in 1490.

The Kallāsa professorship was a sort of inheritable post for the Ghazzīs. They controlled it for almost a century, from 1395 to 1490, either by themselves or through appointed deputy professors. This became possible thanks to the aforementioned mechanisms, namely handing down, custody, and deputyship. They could teach in the madrasa in person only after documenting their proficiency in teaching by scholarly certificates issued after years of education.

²¹⁰ Yılmaz, *Ulema ve Medrese (1154-1260)*, 79–80.

²¹¹ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 84.

²¹² For his acquisition of a certificate to teach and issue legal opinions, see Ibn Tūlūn, *Thayl al-Tamattu' bi-l-Iqrān al-Musemmā Dhakhā'ir al-Qasr fī Tarājim Nubalā al-Asr*, ed. Abū al-Hasan Abdullah b. Abd al-Azīz al-Shabrāvī (Cairo: Dār al-Risāla, 2021), 470. For the date of his first class in the Kallāsa madrasa, see Ibn Tūlūn, *Mufākaha*, 99.

2.3. Becoming a Shāfi‘ī Judge

2.3.1. Marriages and Familial Alliances

Sources imply that Radiyy al-Dīn was already married in his early twenties.²¹³ Unfortunately, we have no information about his wife and her family. Yet we learn that he had at least a daughter from this marriage in 1480.

According to Ibn Tūlūn’s annals, he gave this little daughter (*bint saghīra*) to Bahā al-Dīn al-Bā‘ūnī (d. 1511), a young Damascene scholar and Radiyy al-Dīn’s friend, in marriage, and in return, married Bahā al-Dīn’s little daughter. The marriage contract took place in 30 April 1480. Apparently, these were not actual marriages –because their daughters were underage– but rather contracts (*‘aqd*) that most probably aimed at building familial bonds and alliance.²¹⁴ In fact, Ibn Tūlūn’s expression that they did this “for a secret reason” (*li-amrin baynahumā*) implies such an intention on both sides.²¹⁵

The Bā‘ūnīs were a Shāfi‘ī scholarly family in Greater Syria. Bahā al-Dīn’s grandfather was a contemporary of Radiyy al-Dīn’s grandfather Ahmad, and served as the Shāfi‘ī chief judge in Damascus.²¹⁶ His two sons Ibrāhīm (d. 1464) and Muhammad (d. 1466) were regional scholars occupying positions of preacher and deputy judge in Damascus and Jerusalem. They were also historians and talented poets, who enjoyed patronage of the ruling elite.²¹⁷ The family consolidated its reputation in Egypt and Syria thanks to their younger brother Jamāl al-Dīn Yūsuf (d. 1475), who held the position of confidential secretary (*kātib al-sirr*) in Safad, and the Shāfi‘ī chief judgeships in major Syrian cities including Damascus.²¹⁸ Yūsuf had many children, the most renowned of whom were no doubt Ā’isha (d. 1516), a celebrated Sufi-poet held in high

²¹³ Limited examples of contemporary marriages suggest that men did not delay getting married after puberty and usually had children before their twenties. See Boaz Shoshan, *Damascus Life 1480-1500: A Report of a Local Notary* (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 32, 87.

²¹⁴ The interval between the act of signing the marriage contract (*‘aqd*) and the actual marriage ceremony (*‘urs*) followed by *dukhul* (literally sexual penetration) extended to days, weeks, and even a couple of years. See Shoshan, *Damascus Life 1480-1500*, 149, and footnote 10.

²¹⁵ Ibn Tūlūn, *Mufākaha*, 15.

²¹⁶ Al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Daw’*, 2:231–33.

²¹⁷ Al-Sakhāwī, 1:26–29; 7:114; Daisuke Igarashi, “Madrasahs, Their Shaykhs, and the Civilian Founder The Bāsīṭiyah Madrasahs in the Mamlūk Era,” *Orient* 48 (2013): 79–94.

²¹⁸ Al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Daw’*, 10:298–99.

esteem by Syrian and Egyptian educated society and ruling elite.²¹⁹ Bahā al-Dīn was Yūsuf's son and Ā'isha's brother.²²⁰

Radiyy al-Dīn and Bahā al-Dīn had several things in common. They studied from the same teachers. Radiyy al-Dīn's grandfather Ahmad was among the teachers of Bahā al-Dīn's father Yūsuf. Bahā al-Dīn's uncle was Radiyy al-Dīn's teacher. Both families had affiliations with Qādirī Sufis in Damascus. Their members occupied positions in the Nūrī hospital, one of the richest endowments in the city. It seems Radiyy al-Dīn and Bahā al-Dīn wanted to strengthen their connections through marriage. In fact, such interfamily alliances through marriage were a widespread phenomenon among the educated elite of the period, especially among those holding judicial offices.²²¹ Being a scholar was a career open to all segments of society but individual scholarship and merit alone was not sufficient to bring success in holding lucrative teaching and judgeship positions. A wide network of relationships and lineage mattered more, and marriage was an essential mechanism to build such a network.²²²

Actually, parallels in the subsequent careers of Radiyy al-Dīn and Bahā al-Dīn imply the existence of an alliance between them. Radiyy al-Dīn managed to become Shāfi'ī deputy judge in Damascus in less than a year after this marriage.²²³ After six months, Bahā al-Dīn too received an appointment as the Shāfi'ī deputy judge in the city.²²⁴ They both composed panegyrics for Sultan Qāyitbāy, and both penned works devoted to the life story and achievements of the Mamluk sultan.²²⁵ As Shāfi'ī judges, they backed each other against common rivals,²²⁶ and also got involved in disagreements on issues related to the Nūrī hospital and its

²¹⁹ Emil T. Homerin, "Living Love: The Mystical Writings of 'A'ishah al-Bā'ūniyah (d. 922/1516)," *MSR* VII, no. 1 (2003): 211–34.

²²⁰ For his biography, see al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 117.

²²¹ Mandaville gives several examples, and underlines familial ties among the holders of the judgeship positions from four Schools of Law in the period concerned. Mandaville, "The Muslim Judiciary of Damascus," 26–34.

²²² See Perho, "Climbing the Ladder: Social Mobility in the Mamluk Period."

²²³ Ibn Tūlūn, *Mufākaha*, 30.

²²⁴ Ibn Tūlūn, 43.

²²⁵ For Radiyy al-Dīn's panegyrics and composition, which the following section will deal with, see Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 595. Bahā al-Dīn undertook a similar project. See his biography in al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Daw'*, 10:89. Petry gives the full name of Bahā al-Dīn's work in Carl F. Petry, *Twilight of Majesty: The Reigns of the Mamluk Sultans al-Ashraf Qayitbay and Qansuh al-Ghawri in Egypt* (Seattle-London: University of Washington Press, 1993), 14.

²²⁶ Ibn Tūlūn, *Mufākaha*, 111.

administration as an endowment.²²⁷ Apparently, however, this alliance based on the abovementioned marriage contract remained on paper and failed to endure longer. We see Najm al-Dīn Ghazzī giving no reference to such a marriage bonding his grandfather and Bahā al-Dīn to each other in the biographical entries allotted to them in his *al-Kawātib*.²²⁸

Three months after his marriage pact with Bahā al-Dīn, Radiyy al-Dīn married for the third time. This last one was an ordinary marriage. His custodian and teacher Zayn al-Dīn Khattāb had died in 1474 without leaving a male heir.²²⁹ Radiyy al-Dīn married one of his daughters in August 1480.²³⁰ Limited data in sources do not allow us to speculate what this last marriage brought to him. He was twenty-two years old, and soon would have two sons named Muhammad and Ahmad from this marriage.²³¹

2.3.2. Connections in Cairo and Deputy Judgeship in Damascus

Radiyy al-Dīn was in Cairo in early 1481. The Mamluk capital was a center of attraction for Muslim elite for the last two centuries. More than twenty percent of the civilian elite in Cairo during the fifteenth century were immigrants from outside Egypt. Among them, immigrants of Greater Syria constituted thirty percent.²³² Scholars were travelling to Cairo for various purposes ranging from escape from the Reconquista to pilgrimage, education and patronage.²³³ Radiyy al-Dīn came to Cairo to visit his relative Qutb al-Dīn al-Khaydirī (d. 1489).²³⁴ Qutb al-Dīn was the Shāfi‘ī chief judge and confidential secretary (*kātib al-sirr*) in Damascus. He had been living in Cairo since 1476 as one of the intimate clients of Sultan Qāyitbāy (r. 1468–1496).

Clientelism was about services by “the sultan’s trusted men” who, with their special talent and expertise, served their sovereign in various fields ranging from official tasks such as collection of taxes to unofficial tasks such as spying and embezzlement. Clients usually came from humble origins and were devoid of the

²²⁷ Ibn Tūlūn, 74.

²²⁸ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawātib*, e.n. 117, 653.

²²⁹ Al-Busrawī, *Tārikh al-Busrawī*, 61.

²³⁰ Ibn Tūlūn, *Mufākaha*, 22, 29.

²³¹ See Ibn Tawq, *al-Ta‘līq*, 1506 and 1510.

²³² Petry, *The Civilian Elite of Cairo*, 51–61. See also the Map III-A on page 96–97.

²³³ For the percentages of the civilian elite coming from outside the Mamluk lands see Petry, 61–81.

²³⁴ Ibn Tūlūn, *Mufākaha*, 30.

influential and powerful social ties. Yet they had a recognized talent in accounting and special knowledge in law to carry out duties their patron expected from them. They assumed significant roles in the governance and policymaking of the Mamluk state, sometimes beyond the usual bureaucratic positions. The source of their power and influence was the sultan himself. They had no military force as the Mamluk amirs nor social influence as the civil servants from powerful local households. Thus, they were aware of the fact that their success depended on their patron's success, and vice versa—a situation, which brought the two parties into a sort of symbiotic relationship. In this relation, even the religion was secondary in importance. What mattered more was loyalty of the client to his patron.²³⁵

Qāyitbāy tried to create a client network around him to consolidate his rule. Qutb al-Dīn managed to attract the sultan's attention as a capable agent when he was a judge in Damascus, and gradually became closer to him. Qāyitbāy eventually appointed him as his confidential secretary and kept him in Cairo near his court. He then appointed Qutb al-Dīn's twenty-year-old son Najm al-Dīn to his father's place in Damascus as the Shāfi'ī chief judge and confidential secretary in late 1476.²³⁶ The Shāfi'ī chief judgeship was the highest judicial post in Damascus. The Shāfi'ī chief judge enjoyed ceremonial precedence over the non-Shāfi'ī chief judges. He was also authorized to appoint and dismiss Shāfi'ī deputy judges serving in Damascus and neighboring towns. He was responsible for the administration of the wealthiest endowments in the city. Apart from the judgeship, the Shāfi'ī chief judges held the professorship of a number of prestigious madrasas known as the madrasas of the judgeship (*madāris al-qadā*) as their ex-officio rights.²³⁷ The confidential secretary in Damascus, on the other hand, was the president of the bureau of documents, and performed official correspondence between the city and other administrative centers including the capital. The confidential secretary of Damascus was appointed by the Mamluk sultan and was responsible to him, not to the governor of Damascus. In other words, he was working as the sultan's independent agent in the province.²³⁸

²³⁵ Carl F. Petry, *Protectors or Praetorians?: The Last Mamluk Sultans and Egypt's Waning as a Great Power* (SUNY Press, 1994), 132–51.

²³⁶ For Najm al-Dīn's biography, see al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Daw'*, 2:184. For the date of Najm al-Dīn's appointment as the Shāfi'ī chief judge and *kātib al-sirr* in Damascus, see al-Busrawī, *Tārikh al-Busrawī*, 78–79.

²³⁷ Amin, *The Waqfs and Social Life in Egypt*, 108–22; Winter, "The Judiciary of Late Mamluk and Early Ottoman Damascus"; Yalçın, "Bahri Memlüklerde Dimaşk Kadilkudatlığı," chap. III.

²³⁸ Mandaville, "The Muslim Judiciary of Damascus," 91–93.

Even though Damascene learned elite criticized young Najm al-Dīn's appointment to such critical positions, Qāyitbāy did not step back. Clearly, Qutb al-Dīn's loyalty to the sultan promised his son's faithful service as well. Thus, Qāyitbāy aspired to prepare Najm al-Dīn as his father's successor. Later on, he married Qutb al-Dīn to one of the daughters of the Abbasid caliph in order to honor Qutb al-Dīn and further strengthen his social and political standing in the face of criticisms levelled against him and his son.²³⁹

Indeed, Qutb al-Dīn and his son's increasing prestige and influence in Cairo and Damascus were to Radiyy al-Dīn's advantage because they were his relatives. Radiyy al-Dīn's grandmother and Qutb al-Dīn's mother were sisters.²⁴⁰ That is, Radiyy al-Dīn's father and Qutb al-Dīn were cousins. Thus, Radiyy al-Dīn had no difficulty in reaching a deal with Qutb al-Dīn for an office. He agreed with him on 900 dinars in return for his appointment as deputy judge in Damascus, and paid a certain amount in advance.²⁴¹

Modern researchers refer to this practice as sale of offices, and usually tend to consider the payment rendered as venality or bribery.²⁴² It was a widespread phenomenon especially during the reigns of the last Mamluk sultans, Qāyitbāy and al-Ghawrī. The chief judges and their deputies had to pay different amounts of money according to the rank of the targeted position, its anticipated revenue, and the number of applicants and the amount the latter offered for the office.²⁴³ The practice was not restricted to the top judicial offices. Appointment to the top religious functions such as the office of market inspector, and the administrative offices of the wealthiest endowments also required payment. There are many examples of similar payments for bureaucratic and military posts as well.²⁴⁴

²³⁹ Al-Sakhāwī, *al-Daw'*, 9:122.

²⁴⁰ They were daughters of a Damascene merchant named Alī al-Harīrī (d. 1410). For these marriage bonds, see Hijjī, *Tarikh Ibn Hijjī*, 1:45; al-Sakhāwī, *al-Daw'*, 9:117. For al-Harīrī's biography, see al-Sakhāwī, *al-Daw'*, 5: 328.

²⁴¹ Ibn Tūlūn, *Mufākaha*, 30; Ibn Tawq, *al-Ta'līq*, 33.

²⁴² Toru Miura, "Urban Society in Damascus as the Mamluk Era Was Ending," *MSR* 10, no. 1 (2006): 157–93; Miura, *Dynamism in the Urban Society of Damascus*, 115–120; Martel-Thoumian Bernadette, "The Sale of Office and Its Economic Consequences during the Rule of the Last Circassians (872–922/1468–1516)," *MSR*, 49–83, IX, no. 2 (2005); Michael Winter, "The Judiciary of Late Mamluk and Early Ottoman Damascus: The Administrative, Social and Cultural Transformation of the System," ed. Stephan Conermann (History and Society during the Mamluk Era (1250–1517), Bonn University: Annemarie Schimmel Kolleg, 2012); Winter, "The Judiciary of Late Mamluk and Early Ottoman Damascus."

²⁴³ Mandaville, "The Muslim Judiciary of Damascus," 47–61; Winter, "The Judiciary of Late Mamluk and Early Ottoman Damascus."

²⁴⁴ Bernadette identifies nineteen military, seventy-five religious, and thirty-two administrative appointments that occurred following a monetary exchange during the reigns of the last two Mamluk sultans. See Bernadette, "The Sale of Office."

The office of judgeship was a desired post because, as mentioned earlier, it brought financial opportunities to its holder such as court fees and ex-officio rights in several endowments, which made it rather profitable in the long run.²⁴⁵ Yet payment was not enough to be eligible for this post. The conventional academic qualifications for judicial posts were a prerequisite for bargaining the amount of payment, at least nominally.²⁴⁶ Thus, despite the general tendency in the literature, one should not hasten to label such payments as bribery. In fact, Miura, who also labels them as bribery, states, “The terms *rishwa*, *bartala*, and *badhl* that refer to bribery appear very rarely in narrative sources. Rather, we are told simply that somebody obtained an office for the sum of 1,000 dinars etc.”²⁴⁷ He further explains “the system” of payments for religious and bureaucratic offices by stating that the practice should be considered as a financial policy of the state.²⁴⁸ It seems that it was not an arbitrarily but rather a systematically applied practice in Mamluk lands. Mandaville likens it to a form of indirect taxation that the late Mamluk governments resorted to as a measure in the face of financial crises.²⁴⁹

Though with reservations, one may compare it to the Ottoman revenue farming (*iltizam*), where the government left its taxation rights in a *muqāta‘a* for a certain period of time to the highest bidder (known as *multazim*) in an auction in return for a fixed amount of money usually paid in advance by the latter. It was a sort of private enterprise, in which the bidder hoped to compensate his financial losses in the near future and make profit.²⁵⁰ Miura, too, highlights this resemblance saying “Bribery in the Mamluk period and tax farming were similar in that both bartered administrative rights for cash money.”²⁵¹

In any case, Radiyy al-Dīn became a Shāfi‘ī deputy judge at the age of twenty-three. After a few months, the abovementioned Bahā al-Dīn (Radiyy al-Dīn’s father-in-law and son-in-law simultaneously) also received an appointment to the same post at the age of twenty-six. Mandaville calculates the average age of

²⁴⁵ Winter, “The Judiciary of Late Mamluk and Early Ottoman Damascus.”

²⁴⁶ Mandaville, “The Muslim Judiciary of Damascus,” 48–49.

²⁴⁷ Miura, *Dynamism in the Urban Society of Damascus*, 115.

²⁴⁸ Miura, 120.

²⁴⁹ Mandaville, “The Muslim Judiciary of Damascus,” 55.

²⁵⁰ For the details of the Ottoman system of tax farming, see Mehmet Genç, “İltizam,” in *DİA* (Online: TDV İSAM, 2000).

²⁵¹ Miura, *Dynamism in the Urban Society of Damascus*, 134.

the chief judges of the period as forty-eight, and of their deputies as forty.²⁵² Thus, considering the ages of their colleagues, Radiyy al-Dīn and Bahā al-Dīn were exceptionally young for the office. It seems their marriage strategies and network of relationships bore fruit quickly.

Radiyy al-Dīn's kinship ties, marriage relations, and payment seem to have played a significant role in his assumption of the Shāfi'ī deputy judgeship in Damascus, despite his young age. In the following years, he would aspire to enjoy close relations with the Mamluk sultan as his relative Qutb al-Dīn did.

2.4. Becoming a “Sultan’s Man”

2.4.1. The Mamluk Sultan Two-Steps Away: In Qāyitbāy’s Court

Radiyy al-Dīn assumed the office of Shāfi'ī deputy judge in Damascus in early 1481. He visited Cairo in the subsequent years for various reasons.²⁵³ During these visits, he found the opportunity to meet Sultan Qāyitbāy, and attended his assemblies.

Radiyy al-Dīn's grandson Najm al-Dīn describes the intimate relationship between his grandfather and the Mamluk sultan in the biographical entry allotted to the latter.²⁵⁴ According to him, there was a real harmony and intimacy (*ghāya al-ittihād*) between Sultan Qāyitbāy and Radiyy al-Dīn, and they had poetic dialogues (*mutārahāt*) with each other. Najm al-Dīn quotes some verses allegedly composed by Sultan Qāyitbāy, where he complains to Radiyy al-Dīn about his impatience for divine love, and other verses belonging to his grandfather, where he replies to the sultan's complaints with similar mystical depth. Najm al-Dīn's account suggests the two met several times on different occasions.

However, Najm al-Dīn's portrayal of the two as close friends must largely be a projection of his own historical imagination and an outcome of his efforts to adorn his family past. When he was composing his biographical dictionary in the early seventeenth century, Qāyitbāy had already been elevated to the level of sainthood in collective memory, and appeared as the most pious sultan in an increasingly forgotten Mamluk history. Najm al-Dīn seems to be pleased with the idea that the saint sultan and saint grandfather were close peers exchanging mystical poems with secret meanings. The reality, however, looks different. When

²⁵² Mandaville, “The Muslim Judiciary of Damascus,” 40.

²⁵³ For example, see al-Busrawī, *Tārikh al-Busrawī*, 122, 123, 142, 160.

²⁵⁴ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 595.

Qāyitbāy ascended to the throne in 1468, Radiyy al-Dīn was a ten-year old child in Damascus. There was a thirty-five years age gap between the two. In other words, the alleged friends were separated by at least a generation. Of course, this does not falsify the essence of Najm al-Dīn’s account, i.e. Radiyy al-Dīn was – or endeavored to be– among the attendants of Sultan Qāyitbāy’s court. Probably, the quoted verses were recited in such court meetings in the presence of the sultan.

The early Mamluk sultans usually lacked competency and good knowledge in the Arabic language and literature because they had received a predominantly martial education in their isolated barracks behind the closed walls of the citadel before seizing the throne as young military commanders.²⁵⁵ From the early fifteenth century, however, this began to change for several reasons. The Circassian sultans were older than their predecessors had been, when they ascended to the throne—Jaqmaq (r. 1438–1453) was sixty-six, Īnāl (r. 1453–1461) seventy-two, Khūshqadam (r. 1461–1467) about fifty, and Qāyitbāy (r. 1468–1496) mid-forty. They passed a long military and administrative career in several cities prior to their sultanate, which had brought them into interaction with the local culture and people. This long career added to their life experience, knowledge in language, and taste in literature and art.²⁵⁶ Consequently, unlike the early Mamluk sultans, they had multidimensional relations with the educated elite. They could compose poetry in Arabic, and discuss religious and scientific topics in their courts.²⁵⁷ According to the contemporary historians, Qāyitbāy knew Turkish and Arabic, and composed poetry in both.²⁵⁸ Thus, it is plausible to imagine that Radiyy al-Dīn was reciting poetry to praise the Mamluk sultan in his court, and the latter was sharing his own verses in Arabic before his guests. Yet most likely, the patron-protégé relationship between them never evolved into the companionship (*gāya al-ittihād*) described by Najm al-Dīn.

²⁵⁵ Nasser Rabbat, “Representing the Mamluks in Mamluk Historical Writing,” in *The Historiography of Islamic Egypt (c. 950-1800)*, ed. Hugh Kennedy (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 59–75.

²⁵⁶ Amalia Levanoni, “The Sultan’s Laqab - a Sign of a New Order in Mamlūk Factionalism?,” in *The Mamluks in Egyptian and Syrian Politics and Society*, ed. Michael Winter and Amalia Levanoni (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2004); Garcin, “The Regime of the Circassian Mamluks.”

²⁵⁷ Annemarie Schimmel, “Some Glimpses of the Religious Life in Egypt During the Later Mamlūk Period,” *Islamic Studies* 4, no. 4 (1965): 353–92; Jonathan P. Berkey, “The Mamluks as Muslims: The Military Elite and the Construction of Islam in Medieval Egypt,” in *The Mamluks in Egyptian Politics and Society*, ed. Thomas Philipp and Ulrich Haarmann (Cambridge University Press Cambridge, 1998), 163–73; Robert Irwin, “Mamluk Literature,” *MSR* 7, no. 1 (2003): 1–29.

²⁵⁸ Irwin, “Mamluk Literature.”

Radiyy al-Dīn most probably utilized his relative Qutb al-Dīn as a bridge to access the Mamluk sultan. As mentioned earlier, Qutb al-Dīn was an influential political figure in Cairo and the Mamluk sultan's companion until his death in 1489. He made a great fortune to the extent that he established a family endowment and constructed a tomb for himself. Qāyitbāy appointed him as the Shāfi'ī chief judge of Cairo, the highest and most lucrative judicial post in all Mamluk lands, a few years before his death.²⁵⁹ We know Radiyy al-Dīn was in contact with Qutb al-Dīn, and, in fact, the latter helped him to receive the position of deputy judge in Damascus. Radiyy al-Dīn may have benefited from Qutb al-Dīn's increasing popularity in the Mamluk court to present his poems to the sultan.

An alternative channel to Qutb al-Dīn could be a Sufi network, which connected Qāyitbāy and Radiyy al-Dīn to each other in a few steps. Qāyitbāy was famous for his mystical tendencies and generous patronage for Sufis.²⁶⁰ Radiyy al-Dīn, on the other hand, was at the center of a Sufi network thanks to his Qādirī connections. He had close relations with several Sufi sheikhs including Muhammad al-Maghribī (d. 1505),²⁶¹ Ahmad al-Ghamarī (d. 1499),²⁶² and Abd al-Qādir al-Dashtūtī (d. 1518),²⁶³ whom Sultan Qāyitbāy personally visited, asked for prayer, and considered as saints. Considering these common Sufi acquaintances and the mystical content of the aforementioned poetic dialogues quoted in *al-Kawākib*, his Sufi network appears as an alternative or subsidiary channel that enabled Radiyy al-Dīn to enjoy access to the Mamluk sultan.

In short, thanks to his diverse connections (kinship and Sufi ties), Radiyy al-Dīn, who was a young Shāfi'ī deputy judge in Damascus, seems to have reached the reigning Mamluk sultan in Cairo in only two-steps, through his relative Qutb al-Dīn or alternatively through one of the Sufi sheikhs in his network. In the following years, he would endeavor to become closer to the sultan.

²⁵⁹ See his biography in al-Sakhāwī, *al-Daw'*, 9:117–25.

²⁶⁰ Helena Hallenberg, "The Sultan Who Loved Sufis: How Qaytbay Endowed a Shrine Complex in Dasuq," *MSR* 4 (2000): 147–66.

²⁶¹ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 126.

²⁶² Al-Ghazzī e.n. 296.

²⁶³ Al-Ghazzī e.n. 493, 595.

2.4.2. Serving Qāyitbāy's Image-Building Policies

Radiyy al-Dīn left Damascus for Mecca to perform pilgrimage in November 1484. He stayed in Mecca as a pious resident (*mujāwir*) following the pilgrimage. He returned to Damascus after more than a year, in February 1486, and started serving as the eleventh deputy judge of the incumbent Shāfi'ī chief judge in the city.²⁶⁴

We learn from *al-Kawākib* that Radiyy al-Dīn started penning a book during his stay in Mecca.²⁶⁵ It was a work devoted to the *manāqibs* of Sultan Qāyitbāy, entitled *al-Durra al-mudiyya fī al-ma'āthir al-Ashrafīyya*. Qāyitbāy was known as al-Ashrafī in reference to the regnal title (*laqab*) of his master Sultan Barsbāy (r. 1422–1438), who bought him as a slave soldier for the first time.²⁶⁶ Unfortunately, there is no extant manuscript of this work, thus its content is not directly available to us.

However, Najm al-Dīn Ghazzī, the author of *al-Kawākib* and Radiyy al-Dīn's grandson, apparently possessed a copy of the work because he gives detailed information about its content in Qāyitbāy's biography. According to his account, the book was a compilation of Radiyy al-Dīn's verses and prose (*dīwān latīf min nazmihī wa inshā'ihī*) about Qāyitbāy's miraculous and pious deeds (*fī manāqibihī wa ma'āthirihī*). In the book, Radiyy al-Dīn informed his readers that he met a saint (*ba'd awliyā Allah*) near the Black Stone (*Hajar Ismā'īl*) in the Kaaba in Mecca at dawn, and the latter revealed to him Qāyitbāy's rank [of sainthood] and instructed him to have faith in him (*fa-arrāfahū bi-maqāmihī wa amarahū bi-i'tiqādhī*). Upon this meeting, he composed a panegyric (*qasīda*) for Qāyitbāy's pious deeds and buildings (*fī ma'āthirihī wa 'amā'irihī*).

Based on Najm al-Dīn's account, we know Radiyy al-Dīn quoted this panegyric in his book. He also praised in his work Qāyitbāy's pious endowments such as “a fortress and a nearby madrasa in Alexandria, another fortress in Damietta, and several other fortresses and a magnificent madrasa adjacent to al-Haram in Mecca.” Radiyy al-Dīn also praised him for restoration of the Khayf Mosque in Mecca and construction of aqueducts bringing water from Arafat to Mina and Muhassab (a location between Mecca and Mina known as al-

²⁶⁴ Al-Busrawī, *Tārikh al-Busrawī*, 98, 110.

²⁶⁵ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 595.

²⁶⁶ For the development and meanings of the regnal titles of the Mamluk sultans, see Levanoni, “The Sultan's Laqab.”

Abtah).²⁶⁷ In the following sentences, Najm al-Dīn counts several other architectural constructions and improvements financed by Qāyitbāy in Mecca, Madina, Jerusalem, Damascus, Gaza, and Egypt, most of which were undertaken before or during Radiyy al-Dīn's composition of his work.

Najm al-Dīn is silent about whether Radiyy al-Dīn was able to present his work to the sultan. As the Shāfi'ī deputy judge, Radiyy al-Dīn continued to make regular visits to Cairo after his pilgrimage. For instance, one of his visits occurred in late 1487, another in late 1493 with his family, and another in mid-1495 upon an issue related to the Nūrī Hospital in Damascus.²⁶⁸ Thus, he might have found an opportunity to present his work to the sultan.

What is more intriguing, however, is the question why he penned such a work. Patronage was most probably the ultimate motivation but why in a form recalling the genre of hagiography (*manāqibnāme*)? It is difficult to answer this question in light of the available content of the book. Writing hagiography-like works for statesmen and sultans was not something uncommon,²⁶⁹ but, in the case of Mamluk sultans, we see the authors had a tendency to produce for them *sīras* rather than *manāqib* works.

Sīra as a genre in Islamic literature is a separate biography devoted to a single individual, whose life is generally considered exemplary for others. Many authors composed *sīras* of the Prophet and his leading companions as well as of brave commanders and warriors since the early centuries of Islam.²⁷⁰ The genre flourished in Syro-Egypt later on, and authors composed *sīras* of the warrior sultans, who were fighting against the Crusaders and Mongols, such as Nur al-Din al-Zangi (d. 1174) and Baybars (d. 1277).²⁷¹ As

²⁶⁷ For more information about the region, see Salim Ögüt, "el-Ebtah," *DĪA* (TDVIA: Online, 1994).

²⁶⁸ Al-Busrawī, *Tārīkh al-Busrawī*, 122; Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Umar al-Ansārī Ibn al-Himsī, *Hawādith Al-Zamān wa Wafayāt al-Shuyukh wa al-Aqrān*, ed. Abd al-Aziz Fayyād Harfush, vol. I–II (Beirut: Dār al-Nafā'is, 2000.), 242–43, 278.

²⁶⁹ For example, there is a *manāqibname* about Mehmed II's vizier Mahmud Pasha, a contemporary of Qāyitbāy, which portrays him as a *walī* with miraculous deeds. See Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Kültür Tarihi Kaynağı Olarak Menâkıbnâmeler (Methodolojik bir Yaklaşım)* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2010), 25. Another example is the Ottoman sultan Selim I, whose *manāqibs* were transmitted by his companion Hasan Can. For miraculous deeds attributed to Selim, see Feridun M. Emecen, *Yavuz Sultan Selim* (Istanbul: Yitik Hazine, 2010), 363–370.

²⁷⁰ Dwight F. Reynolds, ed., *Interpreting the Self: Autobiography in the Arabic Literary Tradition*, First edition (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 39–41.

²⁷¹ Amina Elbendary, "The Sultan, The Tyrant, and the Hero: Changing Medieval Perceptions of al-Zahir Baybars," *MSR* 5 (2001).

mentioned earlier, Radiyy al-Dīn's father also penned a *sīra* for Sultan Jaqmaq, who organized military campaigns against Crusaders in Cyprus.²⁷²

This begs the question. Why did Radiyy al-Dīn not imitate the more common tradition of *sīra* writing in his work? Why did he prioritize Qāyitbāy's miraculous and pious deeds (*fī manāqibihī wa ma'āthirihī*) instead of, say, his fight for God's cause (*jihād*)? Two important factors seem to have played a role in Radiyy al-Dīn's choice: (1) his Sufi identity and connections, (2) the dominant image of Sultan Qāyitbāy created for and by him during his reign. A brief survey of the major socio-political and economic developments of Qāyitbāy's reign and his political agenda assist to understand these two factors and contextualize Radiyy al-Dīn's work in a wider framework.

Qāyitbāy's Endowment Policy, Building Projects, and Royal Image

When Qāyitbāy ascended to the throne in 1468, he took an empty treasury from his predecessor. He needed money to create a loyal army consisting of his own purchased slave warriors. However, agricultural revenues, the major source of income for the Mamluk treasury, were insufficient because most of Egyptian lands had been either alienated from the treasury as endowed properties or allotted to the Mamluk amirs as *iqta*'s. Thus, Qāyitbāy firstly coveted the income of rich endowments. He tried to appropriate surplus income from endowments at least two times, in 1468 and 1472, but his attempts were unsuccessful largely because of scholars' reaction and resistance.²⁷³

The politico-economic situation of the following years of his reign was more severe. Since the mid-fifteenth century, Islamic west Asia witnessed the advent of competing novel superpowers that openly challenged Mamluk supremacy. The status quo the latter endeavored to preserve in the region was about to collapse. The Ottomans increasingly pretended to be the heir of the Roman Empire after their conquest of Constantinople, and did no longer conceal their aspiration for the hegemony and leadership in Islamdom. The Aqqoyunlu Confederation, on the other hand, struggled to seize some of the territories of eastern Anatolian principalities such as Dhu al-Qadirids, whom the Mamluk government considered its own

²⁷² His work was entitled *Sīra Sultan Jaqmaq* [The Exemplary Life Story of Sultan Jaqmaq]. See al-Sakhawī, *al-Daw'*, 6:324.

²⁷³ Amin, *The Waqfs and Social Life in Egypt*, 326–28.

satellite.²⁷⁴ Qāyitbāy faced a monetary crisis, when fighting against the Aqqoyunlus in 1478.²⁷⁵ He was reluctant to be involved in warfare against the Ottomans, but was also eager to maintain Mamluk supremacy. He followed a policy of balance in the affair of Jem Sultan, the “rebellious” Ottoman prince, when the latter sought asylum in his country in 1481. However, after Jem’s departure, he remained destitute of a diplomatic weapon that would possibly assist him in repelling increasingly aggressive Ottomans for a while. Not surprisingly, an Ottoman-Mamluk war broke out in 1485, which brought more severe financial crises to Qāyitbāy’s government.²⁷⁶

Such crises forced Qāyitbāy to create new financial sources. Considering his abovementioned abortive attempts to appropriate surplus income of the endowments, he adopted a new endowment policy compatible with Islamic law, which allowed establishing new endowments from the state treasury and making modifications in already existing endowments through various legal techniques such as selling out (*bay’*), alienation (*tamlīk*), substitution (*istibdāl*), and reassignment (*intiḳāl*).

His first policy was to alienate several public lands, which would supposedly be allotted as *iqṭā’*s, in order to establish an *irsādī waqf*. He then stipulated himself as the superintendent (*nāzır*) of this new endowment. By this, he killed two birds with one stone: (1) he saved a part of fertile public lands from rivalling Mamluk amirs, who aspired to take them as *iqṭā’* lands, and (2) he had the surplus income of the endowment, which usually constituted a large percentage of the total revenues of the endowment, at his disposal as the superintendent.

His second policy was to endow estates from his private treasury or the public treasury to the existing grand or middle-sized endowments. Afterward, by various legal techniques, he seized control of the endowment as its new founder. The surplus revenues again remained under his control.

His third policy was to force superintendents of the wealthy endowments to *istibdāl* (literally exchange, referring to the practice of selling out unprofitable estates of an endowment in order to replace it with more

²⁷⁴ Cihan Yüksel Muslu, *The Ottomans and Mamluks: Imperial Diplomacy and Warfare in the Islamic World*. (London: I. B. Tauris, 2014), 109–33; Gülru Necipoglu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapi Palace in the 15th and 16th Centuries* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991); Petry, *Protectors or Praetorians?*, 29–71.

²⁷⁵ Garcin, “The Regime of the Circassian Mamluks,” 301–2; Petry, *Twilight of Majesty*, 82–88.

²⁷⁶ Halil İnalçık, “A Case Study in Renaissance Diplomacy: The Agreement between Innocent VIII and Bayezid II on Djem Sultan,” in *Ottoman Diplomacy* (Springer, 2004), 66–88; Ralph S. Hattox, “Qaytbay’s Diplomatic Dilemma Concerning the Flight of Cem Sultan (1481–82),” *MSR* 6 (2002): 177–90; Petry, *Twilight of Majesty*, 90–93.

lucrative ones in favor of the endowment), and to sell out valuable estates of the endowment as if they were no longer profitable. When the superintendents gave their consent to *istibdāl*, he purchased the related estates cheaper, and benefited from the income coming from these estates as his own private property in the end.²⁷⁷

These endowment policies were not Qāyitbāy's invention. The previous Mamluk sultans had also resorted to such policies to various degrees. Some of them coveted the lands of the existing endowments to enlarge their construction projects, and some others aspired to return some endowed lands to the public treasury after its alienation from the treasury in order to increase state revenues. Their actions drew reactions from scholars, who produced fatwas and treatises to either legalize or illegalize their policies concerning endowed properties.²⁷⁸ Qāyitbāy, however, seems to have exceeded his predecessors by resorting to different combinations of these policies. For example, he endowed a large complex near the shrine of Ibrāhīm al-Dasūqī (d. 1299), a Sufi saint, in the countryside of Egypt in 1481. Najm al-Dīn refers to this complex in his aforementioned biographical entry for Qāyitbāy as *turba bi-sahrā' Mīsr*, most probably citing from his grandfather's work. The shrine already had an endowment. Qāyitbāy endowed new houses and lands to the existing endowment, and legally incorporated it to his new endowment. The endowment deed of this new endowment stipulated the superintendence (*nazāra*) to one of Qāyitbāy's manumitted slaves and the guardianship (*walāya*) to Qāyitbāy himself. Thus, the control of the endowment, and the surplus revenues, was at their disposal.²⁷⁹ Likewise, the properties of his complex in Madina (referred by Najm al-Dīn as *madrasa wa ribāt bi-Madina*) were acquired by means of an *istibdāl* transaction from lucrative estates of other endowments. The endowment deed dated to 1485 gave the office of superintendent to Qāyitbāy, and after him, to succeeding sultans.²⁸⁰

²⁷⁷ Petry, *Protectors or Praetorians?*, 196–210; Amin, *The Waqfs and Social Life in Egypt*, 72–82, 302.

²⁷⁸ For a rich discussion on the religio-legal opinions of the Mamluk-based Hanafī jurists regarding the practice of *istibdāl* before Qāyitbāy's rule, and their relationship with the reigning sultans, who resorted to *istibdāl*, see Hatice Kübra Kahya, "İstibdal Uygulamaları Işığında Osmanlı Vakıf Hukukunun Dönüşümü," (PhD diss., Istanbul University, 2021): 23–48.

²⁷⁹ Hallenberg, "The Sultan Who Loved Sufis."

²⁸⁰ Doris Behrens-Abouseif, "Qaytbay's Foundation in Medina, the Madrasah, the Ribat and the Dashishah," *MSR*, no. 2 (1998): 61–71.

Qāyitbāy's wife also resorted to similar techniques to acquire lucrative estates. She also founded several endowments during his husband's reign.²⁸¹ Qāyitbāy made fourteen endowments during his life. Petry studies eight of them, and points out that the salaries of the personnel and other expenditures as stipulated in their endowment deeds constitute only seven percent of the total revenues. In other words, ninety-three percent of the revenues constituted surplus income, which was under direct control of the superintendents, i.e. either Qāyitbāy himself or his men.²⁸²

Of course, financial concerns were not the sole motive behind Qāyitbāy's construction projects. He had ideological and military goals as well. The Mamluks were facing challenges from the contemporary superpowers in their supremacy and ideological leadership in Islamdom for decades. Uzun Hasan, the Aqqoyunlu leader, sent a mantle (*kiswa*) for the Kaaba in 1472 challenging the Mamluk sultans' privilege in mantling the Kaaba.²⁸³ The Ottomans' choice of vocabulary in official letters became different from previous diplomatic correspondence. They highlighted their own commitments to Islam and their fight against the infidels in the Balkans, while underscoring the Mamluks' glorious past and their triumphs against the Hospitallers in the Mediterranean.²⁸⁴ Mehmed II complained to the Mamluk authorities about insecure pilgrimage roads to Jerusalem and Mecca, implying the Mamluk government's incapability in providing the security of Muslim pilgrims.²⁸⁵ The Ottoman sultans were Muslim by birth and descendant of a long-lived dynasty; thus different from Mamluk rulers, who had a slave origin and pagan past. Thus, they believed that they deserved to rule the Holy Lands, not the Mamluks. After the conquest of Constantinople, they no longer hesitated to speak such considerations loudly. In an envoy sent to Qāyitbāy's court, they openly articulated their superiority over the Mamluk sultans.²⁸⁶

²⁸¹ Carl F. Petry, "The Estate of Al-Khuwand Fatima Al-Khassakiyya: Royal Spouse, Autonomous Investor," in *The Mamluks in Egyptian and Syrian Politics and Society*, ed. Winter and Levanoni, 277–94.

²⁸² Petry, *Protectors or Praetorians?*, 196–210; Carl F. Petry, "A Geniza for Mamluk Studies? Charitable Trust (Waqf) Documents as a Source for Economic and Social History," *MSR*, no. II (1998): 51–60; Amin states that, according to the extant endowment deeds, the total revenue of Qayitbay's endowments reached to 27 million dinar, while that of Barsbāy's endowments was only two million. Amin, *The Waqfs and Social Life in Egypt*, 91.

²⁸³ Schimmel, "Some Glimpses of the Religious Life in Egypt," 365; Petry, *Protectors or Praetorians?*, 47.

²⁸⁴ Muslu, *The Ottomans and Mamluks*, 109–24.

²⁸⁵ Muslu, 126–27.

²⁸⁶ Muslu, 135–36.

Qāyitbāy undertook several construction projects in Jerusalem, Mecca, and Madina to restore Mamluk ideological supremacy and to portray himself as a pious sultan serving the Muslim people. As praised by Radiyy al-Dīn, he financed the construction and restoration of mosques, madrasas, Sufi facilities, public soup kitchens, and public baths in these cities. He also constructed water channels to bring water to the pilgrimage centers, for which Radiyy al-Dīn praised him in a panegyric.²⁸⁷ He became the sole Circassian sultan who performed pilgrimage. He took trips to Aleppo, Jerusalem, and Madina to supervise his construction projects in these cities.²⁸⁸

Qāyitbāy the Saint

The Ottoman-Mamluk war in 1485 put Qāyitbāy's government in new financial and administrative crises. He was sitting on a shaky throne since the early 1480s, and even expressed his intention to abdicate in 1489.²⁸⁹ When Radiyy al-Dīn penned his compilation on Qāyitbāy's life and works, the Mamluk-Ottoman war was ongoing. The sultan was preoccupied with building projects, which brought to him financial resources he needed to cover the expenses of the war and helped him to build the royal image he needed to counter the ideological challenges of rivalling Muslim rulers.

It seems Radiyy al-Dīn was well aware of Qāyitbāy's needs and wanted to serve the sultan's policies through his work. In a panegyric Najm al-Dīn quoted in Qāyitbāy's biographical entry (most probably borrowed from Radiyy al-Dīn's work), Radiyy al-Dīn introduced Qāyitbāy as "the leader of the people in his era (*imām al-nās fī al-asr*) and God's friend in secret (*waliyy Allah fī al-sirr*)." He then prayed for Qāyitbāy's throne and his victory over his enemies (*zaffīrhū bi-man 'ādāhū*). Most probably, the enemy referred to in these verses was the Ottomans.²⁹⁰

Qāyitbāy endeavoured to advertise his endowments in the Mamluk lands and empower his pious image, and Radiyy al-Dīn, an interregional scholar with Sufi ties, was best fit to serve this goal. He authored Qāyitbāy's

²⁸⁷ Doris Behrens-Abouseif, "Qaytbay's Madrasahs in the Holy Cities and the Evolution of Haram Architecture," *MSR* 3 (1999): 129–49; Behrens-Abouseif, "Qaytbay's Foundation in Medina, the Madrasah, the Ribat and the Dashishah."

²⁸⁸ See for example Donald P. Little, "The Governance of Jerusalem under Qaytbay," in *The Mamluks in Egyptian and Syrian Politics and Society*.

²⁸⁹ Petry, *Protectors or Praetorians?*, 91–92; Garcin, "The Regime of the Circassian Mamluks," 296.

²⁹⁰ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 595.

manāqib, not his *sīra*, and, as mentioned before, he stated in his work that Qāyitbāy's exalted rank as a saint was revealed to him at the Kaaba during his pilgrimage.

Najm al-Dīn gives clues about Radiyy al-Dīn's representation of the Mamluk sultan in his work. He says that "the grandfather was attributing to him *walāya* (*kāna al-jadd yaqta'u lahū bi-l-walāya*). *Walī* and *walāya* are originally Quranic concepts known since the early centuries of Islam, but they evolved into Sunni-Sufi terminology in a series of works on Sufism written from the ninth century onward. These works described a *walī* as an individual who always abided by the Sharī'a and disciplined his desires through extra worship. This worship eventually elevated him to a high level of spirituality, which enabled him to manifest some miraculous deeds (*karāma*). This portrayal of a *walī*, though criticized at first, gained increasing acceptance in scholarly milieus since Gazzālī (d. 1111), and became an indispensable part of Sufism in Syro-Egypt under the influence of Ibn Arabī (d. 1241).²⁹¹

Karāma anecdotes are an integral part of the *manāqib* literature but Najm al-Dīn does not mention any miraculous deed attributed to the Mamluk sultan. Yet he, probably quoting from his grandfather's work, mentions the close relationship between Qāyitbāy and the eminent Sufi Abd al-Qādir al-Dashtūtī. He says that the latter carried the responsibility of Qāyitbāy's mystical training (*tawallā tarbiyatahū wa irshādahū*). Accordingly, al-Dashtūtī showed him how to speak with flies and to order them. Understanding the language of animals, speaking with them and ordering them are common *karāma* motifs in *manāqib* works.²⁹²

To sum up, Radiyy al-Dīn composed his aforementioned panegyrics and work in a period, when Qāyitbāy had to face the challenges to Mamluk ideological leadership in Islamdom, and when his throne was shaky because of the financial and military crises. Qāyitbāy developed a systematic endowment and construction policy as an answer to the financial and ideological needs of his sultanate. In this regard, Radiyy al-Dīn aimed at supporting Qāyitbāy's government by his work. He tried to consolidate Qāyitbāy's image as a pious ruler and the servant of Islam. He adorned this image by anecdotes implying Qāyitbāy's sainthood, and even openly articulated it. He employed the vocabulary of hagiographies in his work and resorted to common themes in this genre. No doubt, his Sufi connections and Qādirī identity made his work more influential and powerful.

²⁹¹ Ocak, *Menākubnāmeler (Methodolojik bir Yaklaşım)*, 1–6.

²⁹² For this motif and other themes in *manāqib* works, see Ocak, 77.

In fact, Radiyy al-Dīn was not alone in his project. His aforementioned friend (also father-in-law) Bahā al-Dīn al-Ba‘ūnī also composed panegyrics for Qāyitbāy and penned a similar compilation entitled *al-Lamha al-ashrafiyya wa-l-bahja al-saniyya* (The Noble Glow, the Sublime Resplendence) for him.²⁹³ Such works were supplementary projects for building Qāyitbāy’s royal image. It seems they were successful to the extent that Najm al-Dīn, writing more than a century later, finishes the biography allotted to Qāyitbāy stating that “it is said that he was the renovator from among the sultans in the tenth century (*qīl innahu al-mujaddid min al-muluk ‘alā ra’s al-qarn al-‘āshir*).”

2.5. After the Beloved Sultan

As mentioned earlier, in February 1490, Radiyy al-Dīn started teaching in the Kallāsa Madrasa, which he inherited from his father.²⁹⁴ He held the Kallāsa professorship and the Shāfi‘ī deputy judgeship in Damascus for years, and was often traveling back and forth to Cairo. In August 1496, Sultan Qāyitbāy died, and a factional struggle emerged in the Mamluk capital. Rivaling cliques in the Mamluk army struggled to enthrone their own candidate during the following five years. Four amirs ascended to the Mamluk throne for short periods of reign between 1496 and 1501. The inter-factional tensions did not cease until Sultan al-Ghawrī al-Ashrafī (r. 1501–1516) was enthroned as the joint-candidate of the contending parties, at that point, exhausted by incessant power struggle.

A while after Qāyitbāy’s death, Radiyy al-Dīn traveled to Cairo. It is unknown whether this was a regular visit or an extraordinary one with a specific goal such as to secure his positions during the reallocation of resources at a time of governmental reshuffling. In any case, when he was still there, a plague outbreak ravaged Damascus, and his two sons, sixteen year-old Ahmad and his elder brother Muhammad, died in the summer of 1497.²⁹⁵

Radiyy al-Dīn was in his late thirties, and remained without a male heir. He spent some time in Cairo waiting for the breakup of the plague in Damascus, which would actually last three more years.²⁹⁶ During his stay

²⁹³ Petry, *Twilight of Majesty*, 12; al-Sakhāwī, *al-Daw’*, 10:89.

²⁹⁴ Ibn Tūlūn, *Mufākaha*, 99.

²⁹⁵ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 31.

²⁹⁶ Ibn Tawq, a contemporary notary (*shāhid*) in Damascus, gives a detailed account of this plague and its victims in his diary. See Shoshan, *Damascus Life, 1480–1500*, 39 and footnote 7.

at the capital city, he visited some Sufi figures living there to ask for their prayers for a son. On his way to Damascus, he visited Sufi sheikhs in Jerusalem and asked for their prayers as well. According to Najm al-Dīn's account in *al-Kawākib*, Radiyy al-Dīn received good news from these sheikhs. They told him that he was going to have a son, who would be both a scholar and a saint (*ālim wa walī*). Two years later, on 23 June 1499, his wife gave birth to a son, whom he named Muhammad and nicknamed as Badr al-Dīn (literally the full moon of the religion, Islam).²⁹⁷

Radiyy al-Dīn was one of the deputies of Shahāb al-Dīn al-Farfūr (d. 1505), the Shāfi'ī chief judge of Damascus since 1481 with short periods of dismissals. When Sultan al-Ghawrī ascended to the throne Shahāb al-Dīn established good relations with the new sultan to the extent that, in mid-1504, al-Ghawrī appointed him as the Shāfi'ī chief judge of both Damascus and Cairo, and invited him to reside in Cairo near his court. He also allowed Shahāb al-Dīn to appoint his deputy for the position of the Shāfi'ī chief judgeship of Damascus, and the latter appointed his sixteen-year-old son, Waliyy al-Dīn, to the post.²⁹⁸ Radiyy al-Dīn served as a deputy judge during Shahāb al-Dīn and his son's offices in Damascus for years. However, there is no information suggesting that he ever tried to get closer to the new sultan, or attended his court in Cairo.

2.6. Building His Heir's Career: Badr al-Dīn's Early Education

Radiyy al-Dīn was a polymath, who penned introductory works in a wide array of disciplines including mysticism (*tasawwuf*), Islamic legal theory (*usūl*), linguistics (*lughā*), astronomy (*hay'a*), calligraphy, logic, rhetoric, theology (*aqā'id*), hadith, and even in medicine (*tibb*) and agriculture (*fallāha*).²⁹⁹ His scholarly background as well as the mentality of the era played an important role in shaping his son Badr al-Dīn's early education. Radiyy al-Dīn equipped his son, starting from infancy, with the necessary qualifications he would need to become an eminent scholar in the future. The following sections examine Radiyy al-Dīn's strategies for his heir's education in 1499–1516.

²⁹⁷ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 31, 1205.

²⁹⁸ Winter, "The Judiciary of Late Mamluk and Early Ottoman Damascus: The Administrative, Social and Cultural Transformation of the System," 6; Mandaville, "The Muslim Judiciary of Damascus," 129–30. For Shahāb al-Dīn's biography and judgeship, see Ibn Tūlūn, *al-Thughr al-Bassām*, 180–81. Chapter IV will provide a detailed account of Waliyy al-Dīn's life story.

²⁹⁹ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 653, 1540.

2.6.1. The Logic of Transmission of Knowledge

The contemporary scholarship targeted not only reading, memorizing, and learning religious knowledge but also its transmission across generations. This transmission must have occurred through the channel of people, who had been previously authorized through certificates of transmission (*ijāza al-riwāya*) by either the source of the knowledge, or someone having a similar certificate. In other words, the conduits of the flow of knowledge (i.e. chains of transmission) were an indispensable element of knowledge and determined its reliability. As a result, those who possessed shorter transmission chains in a discipline were revered by their contemporaries, even if they had little expertise in the discipline concerned. “The certificate is one’s capital” (*al-ijāza ra’s al-māl*) was a well-known maxim. This maxim resembled education, in some aspects, to the trade activity of a merchant, who enlarged his financial capital through various investments. Likewise, a student had to enhance his scholarly capital by obtaining certificates from several scholars in various disciplines, sometimes at rather early ages.³⁰⁰ There were several types of certificates, and according to some contemporary scholars, even an unborn child could be granted a certificate.³⁰¹

Accordingly, the process through which a child evolved into a scholar did not start by his achieving literacy that would enable him to read certain texts. It usually started long before this point, by the acquisition of certificates that would guarantee him a place in the chain of transmission. A child, who possessed a certificate of transmission from an elderly reputed scholar, would represent in the future the last chain of transmission. Thus, the younger generations would aspire to study with him in order to have a connection to reliable knowledge through his documented and relatively shorter channel.³⁰²

Mohammad Gharaibeh borrows the term “brokerage” from social network analysis to elaborate this phenomenon. A broker is simply a third party that mediates between actors A and B to have a connection. This mediation can appear in different forms such as merely carrying information and resources between A and B (transfer brokerage), and introducing A and B to each other to have a direct tie (matchmaking brokerage). Gharaibeh states that some fathers in the Mamluk era prepared their children from early childhood for future scholarly life through child certificates (*ijāza al-tifl*) by way of matchmaking brokerage.

³⁰⁰ Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice*, 108–52; Berkey, *The Transmission of Knowledge*, 21–44.

³⁰¹ See Zayn al-Dīn al-Irāqī’s (d. 1404) classification of certificates in Cemil Akpınar, “İcâzet,” in *DİA*.

³⁰² Berkey, *The Transmission of Knowledge*, 21–44. Also, see Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice*, 69–91.

That is, they introduced their underage children to respected scholars of their era, and asked them for a certificate for the former. This certificate documented the scholarly acquaintance and bond between the related scholar and the little child. This connection ultimately would reserve for the child a respectable place among future scholars. As mentioned by Gharaibeh in the case of Ibn Hajar’s early education, a child lacking such brokerage would not necessarily fail to become a respected scholar, but he usually had to compensate this disadvantage with other academic achievements and harder work.³⁰³

I think, here, the concept of betweenness centrality, another social network analysis concept, proves helpful to understand the popularity of some scholars in each generation as transmitters of knowledge. Betweenness centrality examines the shortest paths between each pair of actors in a network, and calculates for each actor a score according to how many times it stands on the shortest paths between other pairs of actors. In other words, the more people depend on an actor A to make connections with others in the network, the more power the actor A enjoys.

Let us imagine the network of hadith transmitters (*rāwī*). This network consists of the Prophet (the source of knowledge) and those who have narrated hadith from him across generations throughout Islamic history. Some of the actors would narrate the hadith directly from the Prophet, while others would access the Prophet only through the channel of other actors in various steps—e.g. A narrating from B, B narrating from C, and C narrating from the Prophet. Some of the transmitters in the network would be inactive (dead), while others are still active (alive). In this network, all new actors joining the network recently (i.e. new students of hadith) would seek for the shortest path to the Prophet, the source of knowledge, through the active hadith transmitters. Consequently, an active hadith scholar with the shortest channel to the Prophet would have the greatest number of students eager to take hadith from him, because he would constitute the shortest bridge between the source of knowledge in the past and the seekers of knowledge in the present—a situation called *uluww al-isnād* (or *ālī isnād*).³⁰⁴ That is, he would become the most central actor with the highest betweenness score among the active hadith transmitters.

³⁰³ Mohammad Gharaibeh, “Brokerage and Interpersonal Relationships in Scholarly Networks. Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani and His Early Academic Career” in *Everything is on the Move: The “Mamluk Empire as a Node in (Trans-) Regional Networks*, ed. Stephan Conermann (Bonn: Bonn University Press, 2014): 223-266.

³⁰⁴ For different types of *isnād*, see Raşit Küçük, “İsnad,” in *DİA* (Online: TDV İSAM, 2001).

One of the ways to become such a central figure is no doubt longevity, i.e. emerging as the oldest active actor in the network of the related discipline. In fact, this explains why most scholars in the Mamluk era and before achieved fame in their final years.³⁰⁵ However, how could a scholar guarantee that he would live a long life to enjoy fame and authority in scholarship? A factor that diminished the risk of a short life was to start the related discipline as early as possible. Let us assume a child, who joins into the network of hadith transmitters and becomes one of the students of the most central active scholar in the discipline. This child and other students who are older than him would have the same distance to the Prophet after their education; thus, they would enjoy the same scholarly authority in hadith transmission. Even if the latter are much older than he is, people would consider them “scholarly peers.” Most probably, he would outlive his older colleagues; and maybe in his mid-life, he would appear as the sole shortest path between the source of knowledge and its seekers. Since his betweenness centrality degree is unmatched (that is, nobody among his actual peers could challenge him in his transmission authority), he would achieve fame and attract students while he was still a middle-aged scholar.

This logic of transmission was not limited to the discipline of hadith. Legal texts of madhhabs, poetry, and even interesting stories and anecdotes were transmitted in a similar vein. Scholars, who attained a place in the shortest transmission channels in an early age and outlived their scholarly peers, would become central figures for the younger generation of students and enjoy unrivaled popularity in the related discipline at early ages. This centrality appears in the form of certain clichéd expressions in the contemporary biographical dictionaries such as that “he became the peerless of his age (*farīd asrihī*)” or that “he assumed the leadership in his madhhab (*riyāsa madhhabihī*) after his peers passed away.”³⁰⁶

2.6.2. Certificates of Transmission and Mentoring a Prospective Scholar

Radiyy al-Dīn was well aware of the abovementioned rules of scholarly life and of the significance of his role in his son’s future career. He thus made preparatory investments in Badr al-Dīn’s education from an early age. He brought his infant son to one of his teachers Sheikh Abū al-Fath Muhammad al-Awfī (d. 1501), and the latter introduced him to the Sufī path by granting him a certificate. Also known as Ibn Atiyya, Sheikh Abū al-Fath was a Shāfi‘ī polymath. He had authored an encyclopedia covering various subjects

³⁰⁵ For a study underlying the significance of longevity for the success in scholarly life during the Mamluk era, see Perho, “Climbing the Ladder: Social Mobility in the Mamluk Period.”

³⁰⁶ For instance, see al-Sakhāwī, *al-Daw’*, 7:93, 227; 10:130; 1:168.

from botany and medicine to philosophy, poetry, and biography. When Ibn Atiyya settled in Damascus in 1496, Damascenes gathered around him to take certificates. For example, the renowned historian Ibn Tūlūn wore the robe (*khirqā*) of the Raslāniya Order from his hands.³⁰⁷ Apparently, Radiyy al-Dīn also availed himself of his presence in the city, and requested his former teacher to enrobe his two-year-old son (*khirqā tasawwuf*) as well as to grant him a certificate of transmission for his own certificated traditions (*marwiyyāt*).³⁰⁸

Ibn Atiyya passed away months later. Yet his certificate connected two-year old Badr al-Dīn to the Sufi authorities of the fourteenth century in only two-steps, through Ibn Atiyya. As seen in the previous chapter, Sufi connections provided an individual with a higher social status and a broader network of relations.³⁰⁹ Moreover, students were usually expected to have an experience in Sufism to become a “true” scholar. For example, Zakariyya al-Ansārī (d. 1520), the well-known contemporary Shāfi‘ī scholar and chief judge of Cairo, had worn Sufi *khirqas* from several skeikhs during his education.³¹⁰ He reportedly said, “A *faqih* without Sufism is like a slice of dry bread without anything added to enrich it.”³¹¹

Badr al-Dīn seems to have benefited from his certificate of transmission for Ibn Atiyya’s traditions in his later life. In his biographical work, his son Najm al-Dīn shares an anecdote (*riwāya*) about the number of tombs of the Prophets located on the Mount Qasyūn in Damascus. He highlights that people had access to this *riwāya* through Badr al-Dīn’s channel to Ibn Atiyya.³¹²

During his presence in Cairo, Radiyy al-Dīn tried to obtain similar certificates from Cairene scholars as well. One of these certificates, perhaps the most significant for Badr al-Dīn’s later career, was issued by Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūtī (d. 1505). Al-Suyūtī was famous for his expertise in several disciplines, especially

³⁰⁷ Süleyman Derin, “Şeyh Arslân,” in *DİA* (Online: TDV İSAM, 2019).

³⁰⁸ Mehmet Akif Kireççi, “Ibn Atiyye El-Avfi,” in *DİA* (Online: TDV İSAM, 2016); For Ibn Atiyya’s biography in *al-Kawākib*, see al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 8.

³⁰⁹ See the section entitled “A Sufi Identity and an Interregional Sufi Network” in Chapter I. Also see Doris Behrens-Abouseif, “Craftsmen, Upstarts and Sufis in the Late Mamluk Period,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, vol. 74, no. 3 (2011): 375–95.

³¹⁰ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 421.

³¹¹ Michael Winter, *Society and Religion in Early Ottoman Egypt: Studies in the Writings of ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sha‘rānī* (Transaction Books, 1982), 230.

³¹² Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 8.

in hadith studies, and people aspired to receive certificates from him to their children.³¹³ Thanks to his certificate from the renowned Cairene scholar Ibn Hajar (d. 1447), al-Suyūṭī enjoyed a relatively short chain of transmission to the Prophetic knowledge. Most probably, Radiyy al-Dīn himself also had a connection to Ibn Hajar (d. 1447) through al-Suyūṭī's channel or maybe through the channel of his father Radiyy al-Dīn Abū al-Barakāt (d. 1459), who had been a student of Ibn Hajar as previously noted. In either case, his channels to Ibn Hajar –thus to the Prophetic knowledge– was one-step longer than al-Suyūṭī's channel. Thus, a certificate he himself could issue to his son would not benefit the latter as much as a certificate issued by al-Suyūṭī. Al-Suyūṭī's certificate would elevate Badr al-Dīn to the level of his father's generation in hadith transmission, and make them scholarly peers.

Several anecdotes suggest Badr al-Dīn really benefited from his ties to al-Suyūṭī in his later career. For instance, in his Istanbul travelogue, he mentions al-Suyūṭī as his master (*shaykhunā*), and quotes from his verses.³¹⁴ In another part, he praises al-Suyūṭī as the *mujaddid* of the ninth hijrī century in some verses, and then swore that he had been his master.³¹⁵ Al-Suyūṭī evolved into a scholarly authority at an imperial level after his death, and some of his works were included in the curriculum of the Ottoman imperial madrasas during Badr al-Dīn's life.³¹⁶ The Ottoman learned elite's respect for al-Suyūṭī was in Badr al-Dīn's favor. Çivizade Mehmed Efendi (d. 1587), Ottoman judge of Damascus in 1568, requested to attend Badr al-Dīn's classes and obtained from him a certificate in hadith transmission. This certificate linked him to the Prophet through Badr al-Dīn and al-Suyūṭī.³¹⁷

In sum, when Badr al-Dīn was only six years old, he had enjoyed significant scholarly connections that would benefit him in his future career thanks to Radiyy al-Dīn's career building strategy.

Despite its significance, however, the certificates of transmission were usually insufficient to make a child a prominent scholar in the future. The child had to receive necessary education in various disciplines and

³¹³ For example, one of those whose father acquired for him a certificate from al-Suyūṭī in his childhood, was famous Sufi sheikh Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sha'rānī (d. 1565). See Winter, *Society and Religion in Early Ottoman Egypt*, 56.

³¹⁴ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Matāli'*, 67.

³¹⁵ Al-Ghazzī, 176–77.

³¹⁶ Shahab Ahmed and Nenad Filipovic, "The Sultan's Syllabus: A Curriculum for the Ottoman Imperial Medreses Prescribed in a Fermān of Qānūnī I Süleymān, Dated 973 (1565)," *Studia Islamica* 98, no. 99 (2004): 183–218.

³¹⁷ Pfeifer, "A New Hadith Culture?"

become qualified. The certificates he had at his hand in his early life resembled financial capital waiting for further investment to accumulate a real fortune. Radiyy al-Dīn was well aware of this fact.

The year al-Suyūtī died, Radiyy al-Dīn's wife gave birth to a daughter, whom they named Zaynab.³¹⁸ That is, Badr al-Dīn gradually appeared as his sole scholarly heir in time. This made him more attentive to his son's education. He took young Badr al-Dīn to Cairo in 1510 after his first education in Damascus. Sources imply that Radiyy al-Dīn was retired from his office of deputy judgeship during these years. He guided Badr al-Dīn to attend the classes of leading Cairene scholars such as Zayn al-Dīn al-Ansārī (d. 1520) and Burhān al-Dīn Ibn Abī Sharīf (d. 1517) and to accompany Sufi sheikhs such as Abd al-Qādir al-Dashtūtī (d. 1524). Badr al-Dīn spent five long years in the Mamluk capital with his father, and obtained certificates to teach and issue legal opinions (*ijāza al-tadrīs wa-l-iftā*) from several scholars. As Gharaibeh rightly states, whereas a child certificate (*ijāza al-tfīl*) was an outcome of brokerage (i.e. needed the bridge role of a third party (usually the father) between the child and the scholarly authority issuing the certificate), certificate to teach and issue legal opinions was the outcome of a long education, and the personal diligence and intelligence of an individual.³¹⁹ Thus, it was an essential step to become an independent scholar as well as a prerequisite for several posts in educational institutions.³²⁰

Radiyy al-Dīn built a powerful career for Badr al-Dīn in the early decades of his life, which is rather noticeable in several anecdotes in *al-Kawākib*. For example, once, his friends suggested Radiyy al-Dīn to encourage his teenage son to study under Kamāl al-Dīn al-Husaynī (d. 1527), an esteemed Damascene scholar. However, Radiyy al-Dīn refused claiming that Kamāl al-Dīn was a peer of Badr al-Dīn (*min aqrāni*). Of course, by this, Radiyy al-Dīn did not mean Kamāl al-Dīn and Badr al-Dīn were of the same age—in fact Kamāl al-Dīn was about fifty years older than Badr al-Dīn. He was implying that Kamāl al-Dīn and Badr al-Dīn belonged to the same generation of scholars (*tabaqa*), that is, they were “scholarly peers.” The following part of the same biographical entry further supports this idea. It writes that Badr al-Dīn did not read from Kamāl al-Dīn because he was contented with his own masters (*li-istighnā'ihī anhū*

³¹⁸ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 1424.

³¹⁹ Gharaibeh, “Brokerage and Interpersonal Relationships in Scholarly Networks.”

³²⁰ Stewart, “The Doctorate of Islamic Law in Mamluk Egypt and Syria”; Amin, *The Waqfs and Social Life in Egypt*, 243. For the endowment deed of Sultan Hasan madrasa that stipulated the position of sheikh al-mi'ād to a scholar who was authorized to issue legal opinions by a certificate, see Fernandes, “Between Qadis and Muftis.”

bi-shuyūkhīhī).³²¹ Likewise, in the biography of Taqīyy al-Dīn ibn Qādī al-Ajlūn (d. 1522), a renowned Damascene scholar, Radiyy al-Dīn, Badr al-Dīn, and Kamāl al-Dīn are mentioned as his students, as if they were from the same generation of scholars.³²²

In sum, thanks to Radiyy al-Dīn's mentorship, Badr al-Dīn emerged as one of the promising Shāfi'ī scholars in his mid-life. He was well connected to scholarly traditions and the previous generations of scholars by several certificates, and this soon reserved for him a central place in Damascene scholarly society as will be seen in Chapter IV.

2.7. Relations with Sultan al-Ghawrī

When Sultan al-Ghawrī (r. 1501–1516) ascended to the Mamluk throne, the international landscape was no better than Qāyitbāy's period.³²³ The Ottomans had grown more powerful and daring after Jem's death in 1495. Months after his enthronement, Aqqoyunlu territories were captured by Tabriz-centered Safavids, which grew stronger in the region. Safavids were a Messianic expansionist state but their immediate target was to win over the Turcoman Shiite-oriented groups living in Anatolia; thus, they constituted a secondary threat for the Mamluks. Still, the two states came to the brink of war in 1507 when the Safavids intruded on the southeastern Anatolian lands under Mamluk mandate.³²⁴

Moreover, European sea powers threatened the security of the Holy lands and Mamluk revenues from maritime trade in the Mediterranean. The Portuguese began settling at the Indian coasts in 1502 and seizing control of the trade route from India to the Red Sea. Their plan was to capture Egypt in the long run in order to benefit from trade roads crossing Egypt instead of burdensome sea routes in the Indian Ocean.³²⁵ Mamluk

³²¹ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 66.

³²² Al-Ghazzī, e.n. 224.

³²³ For a well-thought summary of the challenges Sultan al-Ghawrī faced during his reign, see Albrecht Fuess, "Three's Crowd. The Downfall of the Mamluks in the Near Eastern Power Struggle, 1500–1517," in *The Mamluk Sultanate from the Perspective of Regional and World History: Economic, Social and Cultural Development in an Era of Increasing International Interaction and Competition*, ed. Reuven Amitai and Stephan Conermann, (Mamluk Studies, vol. 17. Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2019), 431–450.

³²⁴ Adel Allouche, *The Origins and Development of the Ottoman-Safavid Conflict: (906-962/1500-1555)* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1983); Muslu, *The Ottomans and Mamluks*, 156–76.

³²⁵ Giancarlo Casale, *The Ottoman Age of Exploration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 33.

sultan received cries for help from distant eastern corners of Islamdom due to Portuguese assaults. As the guardian of religion and Muslims, he was expected to take necessary actions to save his co-religionists.³²⁶

These developments shifted the attention of Mamluk foreign policy from regional politics (such as Karamanids and Dhu al-Qadrids in Anatolia or suzerainty over the Holy Lands) to international politics (the threats of Ottomans, Safavids, and the Portuguese). Forced to make major changes in Qāyitbāy's aforementioned policy of preserving the international status quo, al-Ghawrī adopted new policies to encounter the challenges of his powerful rivals, and initiated military, economic and cultural reforms to renovate his sultanate. For example, he aspired to introduce to the Mamluk army firearms, a recent military technology skillfully adopted by the Ottomans.³²⁷ He also attempted to establish a permanent Mamluk navy to encounter Portuguese fleets in the Red Sea and Indian Ocean.³²⁸ Moreover, he tried to modernize his sultanate's image by adopting a princely image modelled after the ones known in Timurid, Ottoman and Safavid courts. For instance, he employed Iranian musicians and poets in his court, and ordered the translation of *Shahnāma* from Persian to Turkish. He invited to his court Idris-i Bidlisi (d. 1520), the great Persian scholar-historian and poet, who had been at the Ottoman court for the last ten years, on his way to pilgrimage, and patronized him.³²⁹ He commissioned a European artist to paint his personal portrait. He organized public ceremonies, where he showed off on a platform made up of stone instead of the traditional yellow tent symbolizing Mamluk rule. He brought elephants from Africa to use them in official ceremonies as a symbol of power, imitating Timurid court. He also planned to reestablish the city of Alexandria with a royal road adorned with magnificent architecture. He even claimed that he was originally an Arab, and thus could assume the caliphate himself.³³⁰

³²⁶ Casale, 13–33; Petry, *Protectors or Praetorians?*, 29–72.

³²⁷ Carl F. Petry, "The Military Institution and Innovation in the Late Mamlūk Period," in *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 462–89. Robert Irvin, "Gunpowder and Firearms in the Mamluk Sultanate Reconsidered," in *The Mamluks in Egyptian and Syrian Politics and Society*, ed. Winter and Levanoni, 117–42; Petry, *Protectors or Praetorians?*, 191–96.

³²⁸ Fuess, "The Naval Policy of the Mamluks."

³²⁹ Markiewicz, *The Crisis of Kingship in Late Medieval Islam*, 106–10.

³³⁰ Doris Behrens-Abouseif, "Sultan Al-Ghawri and the Arts," *MSR* 6 (2002): 69–75; Berkey, "The Mamluks as Muslims"; Robert Irvin, "The Political Thinking of the 'Virtuous Ruler,' Qānshūh al-Ghawrī," *MSR* XXII, no. 1 (2008): 37–49; Barbara Flemming, "Literary Activities in Mamluk Halls and Barracks," in *Essays on Turkish Literature and History* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2018), 105–17; Christian Mauder, *In the Sultan's Salon: Learning, Religion, and Rulership at the Mamluk Court of Qānīshawh al-Ghawrī (r. 1501–1516)* (Brill: Leiden-Boston, 2021), 317–999.

Religious scholars do not seem to have a central role in al-Ghawrī's image-building policies as they do in Qāyitbāy's rule. Probably because of this, sources inform about widespread discontent of contemporary scholars from al-Ghawrī's rule. For instance, Cairene historian Ibn Iyās (d. 1524) described him as an "unjust, stingy, and greedy despot" and his reign as almost a period of darkness.³³¹ This discontent is a repeated theme throughout *al-Kawākib* as well. The author of *al-Kawākib* mentions anecdotes denigrating al-Ghawrī's image such as his imprisonment of innocent people,³³² scholars' fear of meeting him,³³³ Sufi figures' critiques of his abandonment of jihād,³³⁴ his confiscation of property of statesmen and his tortures for confiscation,³³⁵ his abandonment of the Friday prayer and his indifference toward oppression of his subjects.³³⁶ Of course, al-Ghawrī's disrepute partly stemmed from later generations' anachronistic projections shaped by the fact that the Mamluk Sultanate was demolished at his hand. Yet his unprecedented image-building policies financed by large-scale confiscation, which seemingly failed to attract many scholars, must have added to his disrepute as well. Scholars had welcomed Qāyitbāy's expenditures on religious architecture and endowment policies mentioned above because they were the main beneficiaries. Al-Ghawrī, on the other hand, spent his treasury for "adventurous" naval campaigns, "unnecessary" military investments, secular arts, and public ceremonies according to them.³³⁷

Unlike his relation with Qāyitbāy, Radiyy al-Dīn does not seem to have enjoyed an intimate relationship with al-Ghawrī. This might have been connected to al-Ghawrī's abovementioned policies and tendencies. Still, Badr al-Din provides an interesting piece of information in the obituary he composed after his father:

Sultan Qāyitbāy offered him the chief judgeship of Damascus many times, and Sultan al-Ghawrī offered him the chief judgeship of Cairo three times, and Sultan Selim offered him the judgeship of Damascus. However, he did not accept these offers even though al-Ghawrī

³³¹ Michael Winter, "The Ottoman Occupation," in *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, ed. Carl F. Petry, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 494.

³³² Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 42.

³³³ Al-Ghazzī, e.n. 129.

³³⁴ Al-Ghazzī, e.n. 151.

³³⁵ Al-Ghazzī, e.n. 371.

³³⁶ Al-Ghazzī, e.n. 593.

³³⁷ Petry, *Protectors or Praetorians?*, 209–10.

forced him to accept and threatened him. The majority of Egyptian notables (*ghālib fudalā' Mīsr*) know this.³³⁸

If we are to believe Badr al-Din, we must accept that Radiyy al-Dīn received great respect from both Qāyitbāy and al-Ghawrī, as well as the Ottoman sultan Selim I. Yet it is hard to believe that Radiyy al-Dīn, who had struggled and paid a huge amount of money for an appointment to deputy judgeship as mentioned in previous sections, refused his appointment to the post of chief judge during the reigns of the last Mamluk sultans. As for the Ottoman sultan, unlike Badr al-Dīn's claim, none of our sources including *al-Kawākib* has the slightest implication that Selim ever met Radiyy al-Dīn and wanted him to assume the office of chief judgeship in Damascus. Thus, Badr al-Dīn's claims seem to be a figment of his own imagination when he looks backward in time years after the death of the abovementioned three sultans and his father. Although Radiyy al-Dīn spent a long time in Cairo in 1510–15 for his son's education, there is no anecdote, other than the abovementioned one, suggesting that he ever got closer to the Mamluk court.

2.8. Becoming a Sufi Master?

Radiyy al-Dīn was in his mid-fifties, when he was in Cairo. Some anecdotes in *al-Kawākib* suggest that his Qādirī-Sufi identity came to the fore during these years. One anecdote is worth quoting here to show the complexity of the network, to which he was connected thanks to his Sufi identity. This anecdote is from the biography of Abū al-Hasan al-Bakrī (d. 1545/46), one of the founding fathers of the famous Bakrī family.³³⁹ It narrates how Abū al-Hasan learned the path of *tasawwuf* from Radiyy al-Dīn in Cairo.

[...] Sultan al-Ghawrī had lost a huge amount of money because of Qādī Jalāl a-Dīn [Abū al-Hasan's father] and wanted to punish him. Miserable Jalāl al-Dīn visited Sheikh Abd al-Qādir al-Dashtūtī and complained about the sultan. The latter told him he could save him

³³⁸ Ibn Tūlūn, *Dhakhā'ir al-Qasr*, 471. Ibn Tūlūn narrates this passage from the obituary Badr al-Dīn penned after his father Radiyy al-Dīn's death.

³³⁹ The Bakrī family was a quite famous Cairene family in the early seventeenth century. They were one of the few families from the Arab provinces Atayī, the seventeenth-century Ottoman biographer, found worth mentioning in his biographical dictionary. Atayī describes them as an old virtuous dynasty (*hanedan-ı kadīm-i fazl u kemal*). See Nev'izade Atayī, *Hadā'iku'l-Hakā'ik fī Tekmiletī 'ş-Şakā'ik: Nev'izāde Atāyi'nin Şakā'ik Zeyli* (Istanbul: Türkiye Yazma Eserler Kurumu, 2017), 1864. For more on Bakrī family, see Schilcher, *Families in Politics*, 156–60; Winter, "Ottoman Egypt 1525-1609."

from the sultan's rage on the condition that he would give his son to his service. Upon this, his father sent Abū al-Hasan to al-Dashtūtī.

Abū al-Hasan was a virtuous young man, who was reading from leading scholars, at that time. Al-Dashtūtī said to him "O Abū al-Hasan! Do not read from anyone and leave learning until your sheikh will come from al-Shām." [...] Whenever Abū al-Hasan asked al-Dashtūtī for his permission to attend the classes of scholars in Cairo, the latter accepted this wish adding "until your sheikh will come from al-Shām." Eventually, my grandfather Radiyy al-Dīn al-Ghazzī al-Qādirī came to Cairo in 917 [C.E. 1511–12], and visited al-Dashtūtī because there was an old acquaintance and friendship (*muhabba wa suhba*) between them. Al-Dashtūtī said to Abū al-Hasan "Stand Abū al-Hasan! This is your sheikh! He came from al-Shām." Then, al-Dashtūtī handed Abū al-Hasan over to Radiyy al-Dīn, and said to Radiyy al-Dīn "O master (*saydī*), teach him *al-kīmyā*."

Abū al-Hasan accompanied Radiyy al-Dīn in his house day and night. He and my father [Badr al-Dīn] were reading from Sheikh Radiyy al-Dīn and from other Cairene scholars by Radiyy al-Dīn's order. [...] Whenever Abū al-Hasan wanted Radiyy al-Dīn to teach him *al-kīmyā*, for which al-Dashtūtī had sent him to Radiyy al-Dīn, the latter advised him be patient. Radiyy al-Dīn was disciplining Abū al-Hasan, beautifying his personality, and teaching him *adab*. [...]

One day, Radiyy al-Dīn felt maturity in him, and said to him "O Abū al-Hasan! I want you to get on your horse and ride from this house to al-Azhar Mosque. You will carry a bread in one hand, and an onion in the other. You will eat these two all the way until the mosque. And then, you will return home." When Abū al-Hasan did as he was told, Radiyy al-Dīn said to him "O Abū al-Hasan! After this, Egypt is no longer large enough for us both together." Then, Sheikh Radiyy al-Dīn returned to al-Shām, and Abū al-Hasan al-Bakrī became famous in Egypt because he had completed his training (*qad tammam futuhātū*).³⁴⁰

Of course, Najm al-Dīn, the author of *al-Kawākib*, tends to portray his grandfather, a century after his death, as a mystical figure guiding his disciples. He adorns his narrative with precious details such as that Radiyy

³⁴⁰ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 1082.

al-Dīn knows *al-kīmyā*, here a generic name for esoteric knowledge, or that Radiyy al-Dīn trains his disciple by giving him humiliating tasks, which finally erase his arrogance and purify him.

In another anecdote in *Lutf al-samar*, Najm al-Dīn even mentions that his grandfather had relations with Jins, and even a female fairy (*jinniyya*) fell into love with him and traveled in his company to Cairo, asking for marriage. When Radiyy al-Dīn told her such a marriage was prohibited in Islam, she asked for permission to serve him. Upon Radiyy al-Dīn's permission, she remained in Cairo for years in his accompany appearing in the form of servants.³⁴¹

To what extent should we take Najm al-Dīn's descriptions of his grandfather seriously? Although it is difficult to give a definite answer, reports of some of Radiyy al-Dīn's own contemporaries highlight his Sufi image, which, most probably, became stronger in the last decades of his life. For example, Ibn Tūlūn names a number of influential Sufis (*awliyā' Allāh, dhī al-karamāt al-mashhūra*), who liked Radiyy al-Dīn very much (*kāna lahum fīhī muhabba zā'ida wa mayl kathīr*).³⁴² Thus, it is plausible to consider Radiyy al-Dīn as a member of the abovementioned Sufi network, who taught others the Sufi path and transmitted to them his own Qādirī tradition, while being cautious about Najm al-Dīn's embellished imaginations of his grandfather.

2.9. Conclusion

Radiyy al-Dīn's father and grandfather were two respected scholars in Damascus. He never saw his grandfather Ahmad, and lost his father Radiyy al-Dīn Abū al-Barakāt at the age of two. Although he started his life as an orphan, he managed to survive and become a scholar, and finally assumed some inherited posts of his family. He owned this success to three things: (1) the network of relationships he was born into, (2) his attempts to broaden this network, and (3) the established practices of transmission of scholarly posts within families in Syria.

³⁴¹ *Lutf*, I: 210–11.

و اجتمع بشيخ الاسلام والدي و سأله عن نكاح الجنية فقال له الأصح أنه لا يجوز ثم حدثه أن والده الشيخ رضي الدين اعتقدته جنية و طلبت منه التزوج فقال إنه غير جائز فاستأذنته في الخدمة فكانت تخدمه حتى سافرت معه الى مصر فكانت تظهر في زي عكام أو خدام تساعد الجماعة في الشيل و الحط

³⁴² Ibn Tūlūn, *Dhakhā'ir al-Qasr*, 469.

Radiyy al-Dīn opened his eyes into a network of multifaceted relations thanks to his father. He enjoyed close relations with Sufis and the Shāfi‘ī scholarly community in and outside Damascus. His maternal uncle was the sheikh of a Qādirī dervish lodge in Damascus, and his relatives were influential interregional scholars serving the Mamluk sultan in Cairo. Radiyy al-Dīn further broadened this network of relationships through marriage alliances during the early years of his adult life. His connections facilitated him to travel to the Mamluk capital in his early twenties and to receive an appointment to the lucrative office of Shāfi‘ī deputy judgehip in Damascus. Moreover, institutionalized and legally recognized practices such as handing down, custody and deputyship assured him successful transmission of the professorship of the Kallāsa Madrasa, where his father and grandfather had taught for decades.

Radiyy al-Dīn gained access to Sultan Qāyitbāy in his mid-age, attended his assemblies, composed panegyrics to praise him, and contributed to his image-building policies by penning a work for him. His access to Qāyitbāy as a young deputy judge from Damascus became possible because of two things: (1) Qāyitbāy’s penetration to the local society and culture, and (2) his need of the support of scholars in his policies.

Mamluk sultans, who lacked a dynastic lineage, were accessible figures by their subjects due to their military careers starting from slave soldiery to high-ranking military posts in different provinces of the sultanate. Thus, Qāyitbāy, unlike the Ottoman princes, never underwent a period of prince-ship that prepared him for a prospective throne. When he was unexpectedly enthroned by the support of his peer comrades, he was *primus inter pares* among them. His long military career allowed him to penetrate into the different strata of society in Mamluk territories, and to establish diverse relationships with scholars and Sufis, some of whom were in Radiyy al-Dīn’s ego-network. This enabled the latter to access the Mamluk sultan only in a few steps.

Facing military and ideological challenges of the novel superpowers in Islamic west Asia, Qāyitbāy tried to preserve the previous status quo by empowering his government and royal image. Simultaneously, his military campaigns against the Aqqoyunlus and Ottomans required new financial sources, which eventually led him to create a clandestine economy partly based on the manipulation of the revenues of endowments. His construction projects also supported his image as the guardian of Muslim people and the Holy Lands. Radiyy al-Dīn praised Qāyitbāy for these pious constructions, claimed his sainthood, and prayed for his victory over his enemies. The latter included both domestic rivals, who increasingly dared to challenge the

ageing Qāyitbāy in Cairo, and the Ottomans, with whom he was fighting in southeastern Anatolia since a while.

After the turn of the century, Radiyy al-Dīn was occupied with building the career of his sole male heir, Badr al-Dīn. He collected certificates of transmission from elderly eminent scholar of Damascus and Cairo for his infant son, which would possibly make him a central figure in the future. When Badr al-Dīn grew up, he took his son to Cairo, the unrivaled center of scholarship and patronage in Syro-Egypt from the late fourteenth century. He helped Badr al-Dīn to acquire the necessary competence in religious disciplines and certificates to teach and issue legal opinions in Cairo. It seems that Radiyy al-Dīn did not enjoy close relationships with al-Ghawrī, who implemented a different image-building policy than Qāyitbāy. During his five-year-long residence in the Mamluk capital, his Sufi identity came to the fore.

Radiyy al-Dīn returned to Damascus with his sixteen-year-old son in 1515. The next year, the Ottomans defeated the Mamluk army on the battlefield and entered Syria—an unexpected development which opened a new period in Radiyy al-Dīn's life.

CHAPTER III: RADIYY AL-DĪN AL-GHAZZĪ: AN EXPERIENCED SHĀFI'Ī JUDGE IN THE SERVICE OF THE OTTOMAN GOVERNMENT IN DAMASCUS (1516–29)

This chapter handles Radiyy al-Dīn's life under Ottoman rule, i.e. the last thirteen years of his life. When the Ottomans captured Damascus, he was an elderly esteemed scholar, who had a decades-long career of professorship and judgeship in the city, and had enjoyed close relationships with the scholarly and Sufi circles as well as the ruling elite and high-ranking bureaucrats.

The first decades of the Ottoman rule in Syria witnessed successive attempts by the Ottomans to find out the most effective way of governance in the region. Selim's direct rule in the immediate aftermath of the conquest, his re-appointment of Jānbirdī as the Ottoman governor of Syria, Jānbirdī's insurrection and subsequent administrative-bureaucratic reforms, the grand vizier İbrahim Pasha's visit to Syria, and transformation of the centuries-old judicial system of four judgeships were significant events of the history of Damascus in this period.

Did Radiyy al-Dīn adapt to the vicissitudes of the new regime in Syria? Did he utilize his social and cultural capital in his relations with the successive governments in his hometown? Did he enjoy financial means to survive? How was his relationship with his Damascene colleagues and Ottoman scholars?

3.1. Ottoman Conquest

Al-Gawrī learned about Selim I's departure from Istanbul for his second eastern campaign in 1516. He was on edge and mobilized his forces to Syrian borders, but he still hoped that Selim would wage a war against the Safavids, to whom he had stricken a serious blow the previous year in Çaldıran. Traffic of envoys between al-Gawrī and Selim yielded no result, and even accelerated the tension, which finally evolved an unexpected war in Marj al-Dābiq on 11 July 1516. The Mamluk army dispersed in hours, and al-Ghawrī

became the first Mamluk sultan killed on the battlefield. The Ottoman army advanced to capture the Mamluk territories.³⁴³

Most probably, the Ottomans had not imagined that they would kill the Mamluk sultan on the battlefield in a sudden military encounter and seize the central Arab lands. Selim entered Aleppo at the end of August. Mamluk soldiers first retreated to Damascus, but when they heard about Ottoman advance toward the south, they left the city for Cairo. Damascus stayed without a government for a week, and proletarian groups (*zu'ār*) terrorized the city by plundering. The state of anarchy became unbearable to the extent that the leading notables and scholars of the city as well as the four chief judges reached a consensus to surrender the city to the Ottoman army. Selim entered Damascus in early October, and Ottoman forces seized full control of Greater Syria by the end of the year. Then, they proceeded to Cairo in early 1517 but the tension and fights between the Ottoman forces and the Cairene government lasted until Tomanbay's execution in the spring of 1517.³⁴⁴

3.2. The Parameters of the Relationship between Syrian Scholars and the New Regime in the Immediate Aftermath of the Conquest

The conquest of the Mamluk lands doubled the size of the Ottoman Empire. The Ottomans hitherto governed territories with a Christian past in Anatolia and the Balkans, where Muslim people usually constituted a minority in society. For the first time, they would administer such a vast territory with deeply rooted Islamic traditions and a huge Muslim population. Major Syrian cities such as Damascus and Aleppo were genuine scholarly centers with old libraries, hundreds of educational institutions and a large number of scholars from the four Sunni madhhabs and even from the Shia.³⁴⁵

Yet the Ottomans were largely ignorant of the dynamics, resources, and capacities of the region and its population. As a result, despite their decisive victory over the powerful Mamluk army on the battlefield,

³⁴³ Winter, "The Ottoman Occupation"; Emecen, *Yavuz Sultan Selim*, 205–29.

³⁴⁴ Bakhit, *The Ottoman Province of Damascus*, 1–15; Winter, "The Ottoman Occupation"; Emecen, *Yavuz Sultan Selim*, 229–98.

³⁴⁵ To give an example, al-Nu'aymī (d. 1521) counts approximately one hundred thirty madrasas in Damascus at the dawn of the Ottoman conquest, apart from numerous endowed teaching posts in mosques and other institutions al-Nu'aymī, *Al-Dāris*, 2:828–32. The author of *al-Kawākib* mentions hundreds of scholars and Sufis who witnessed the Ottoman conquest of Damascus, see al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*. For the richness of scholarly life in Aleppo, see Esra Atmaca, *Halep'te İlmî Hayat: Memlûkler Döneminde (1250–1517)*, (Istanbul: Ensar, 2016).

they could not establish their government in the cities easily. The circumstances forced them to be careful not to stir up public anger against their rule on some sensitive issues, which could easily evolve into a popular uprising. For example, when they had to remove some old graves in the Salihyya neighborhood of Damascus in order to expand the construction area of the Selim-sponsored Ibn Arabi Complex, they did it during the night in dread of people's opposition (*fa' alū dhālika laylan khawfan min kalām al-nās*).³⁴⁶

Scholars constituted one of the influential local groups the Ottomans had to take seriously from the very beginning of their rule in Syria. A legitimate, stable and durable government could only be possible with their cooperation. Ottoman officials had to avoid open criticism of the respected scholarly authorities in the region to earn legitimacy for their rule in the eyes of local people. However, one should not portray their relationship with local scholars as one based on insincere respect and shaped under forcing conditions of the period. The Ottomans, as Muslim rulers, shared the ideals of Islamic high culture, thus, they were revering knowledge and its transmitters.³⁴⁷

As for local scholars, they had enough reasons to collaborate with the new administration. A stable Muslim government supporting scholars and securing their financial resources was definitely preferable over anarchy. For example, in Damascus, they had witnessed a weeklong anarchy before the Ottoman capture of the city. The city stayed without a government when defeated Mamluk forces departed for Cairo. During this period, plunderer proletarian groups known as *zu'ār* targeted notables and scholars of the city due to their wealth and social status.³⁴⁸ For example, they tried to set fire to the house of the Hanafī chief judge. They threatened the Shāfi'ī chief judge with death, and forced him to pay a huge amount of money to their leaders to save his life. They stole the clothes of a Hanafī deputy judge and injured his horse. They were about to harm the Samaritan community, a local Jewish group generally employed in the bureaucracy, by setting their district on fire. A Jewish merchant paid them a great deal of money as ransom and saved his

³⁴⁶ Ibn Tūlūn, *Mufākhaha*, 373.

³⁴⁷ For an inspiring analysis of Ottoman lawmaking as Muslim rulers and the role of scholars in it, see Akarlı, "The Ruler and Law Making in the Ottoman Empire."

³⁴⁸ Miura uses the word *zu'ar* (literally means "thin-haired" and "lacking wealth and virtue," plural *az'ar*) to denote the outlaws. *Zu'ar* seems to be gang-like groups made up of common people, who engaged in activities ranging from murder and plundering in times of political-socio-economic crises to fighting as militia for the rebels or infantrymen for the official army in warfare. See Miura, *Dynamism in the Urban Society of Damascus*, 153–66.

coreligionists.³⁴⁹ This chaos must have been the last thing scholars wanted to live through because they themselves represented the law and the legal system in Damascus and owed their existence, social status and wealth to this stability. The majority of them were tightly connected to the city and its people through their private properties, financial investments, and kinship and marriage ties.³⁵⁰ Moreover, the collective memory of how far the terror of such looting groups could reach was still fresh. The recent history of Damascus had examples of similar anarchies.³⁵¹ Thus, exhausted by the anarchy and plunder, some leading scholars and Sufi leaders gathered to accelerate the process of surrender of the city to the Ottomans. They withdrew their support to the Mamluk commander of the citadel of Damascus, who planned to resist the Ottoman troops, and tried to persuade him to surrender.³⁵²

Mutual needs of the two sides made collaboration between the leading local scholars and the new government in Syria possible. However, this collaboration had its limits. First, the Ottoman administration did not necessarily need local scholars outside Syro-Egypt because it already co-opted enough qualified scholars in its capital city. The investments of the Ottoman sultans in educational institutions yielded fruits since the late fifteenth century, and there emerged a self-sustaining scholarly system that was producing educated personnel needed for bureaucratic and judicial services in the core lands of the empire.³⁵³ Moreover, since the late fifteenth century, thanks to Mehmed II's reforms, a bureaucratic-scholarly career track had been in operation. Students of the imperial madrasas in Ottoman capital cities followed a life-long career in the service of the empire. They started from low paying teaching and judicial positions, and with regular promotions, ascended to high-ranking lucrative professorships and judgeships, in which they enjoyed many guaranteed rights and privileges—a process that created in time a distinct group of scholars, whom Atçıl rightly calls “scholar-bureaucrats.” At the time of the Ottoman takeover of the Mamluk territories, the number of Ottoman scholar-bureaucrats was more than enough to occupy the available top positions in the Ottoman capital and major cities. They were Turkish speaking Hanafî scholars. Thus, they enjoyed a clear advantage over their Arabic speaking non-Hanafî counterparts in the Arab provinces in

³⁴⁹ Bakhit, *The Ottoman Province of Damascus*, 5–6.

³⁵⁰ Mandaville, “The Muslim Judiciary of Damascus,” 12–66.

³⁵¹ For some examples of the criminal activities of the *zu'r* during the times of social and political crises in late Mamluk Damascus, see Shoshan, *Damascus Life 1480–1500*, 63–66, 183–84; Miura, *Dynamism in the Urban Society of Damascus*, 168–73.

³⁵² Bakhit, *The Ottoman Province of Damascus*, 6–8.

³⁵³ Atçıl, “Mobility of Scholars and Formation of a Self-Sustaining Scholarly System.”

finding employment in the core lands of the empire, where the majority of the Muslim population was speaking Turkish and affiliated with the Hanafī madhhab.³⁵⁴

Yet the Ottoman scholar-bureaucrats were not yet as advantageous as local scholars were in the Arab cities due to their lack of competency in local dialects, and unfamiliarity with the local dynamics and non-Hanafī traditions. This situation eventually made local scholars more indispensable for the Ottoman governments in Syria.

To sum up, Syrian scholars enjoyed employment opportunity in Cairo (the imperial center), and Damascus (almost the second capital in prestige and significance) during the Mamluk era. As seen in the previous chapter, for instance, Damascene scholars could secure appointment to the Shāfi‘ī chief judgeship of Cairo, the peak of the Mamluk judicial hierarchy in the capital city, and then arranged the appointments of their colleagues, students, relatives, protégés etc. to posts in the center and provinces. The best examples are previously mentioned Qutb al-Dīn al-Khaydirī, who backed his relative Radiyy al-Dīn to receive a judgeship in Damascus after himself receiving the Shāfi‘ī chief judgeship of Cairo; and Shahāb al-Dīn al-Farfūr, who once became the Shāfi‘ī chief judge of Cairo arranged the appointment of his teenage son to the Shāfi‘ī chief judgeship of Damascus. In the early years of the transition, however, they found their career prospects largely restricted to Syria and Egypt, i.e. two provinces distant from the new imperial center. Occupying the chief judgeships of Anatolia and Rumelia, two top positions in the Ottoman judicial hierarchy, was no longer possible for them because they lacked novice status (*mülazemet*) to enter into the Ottoman scholarly-bureaucratic career track and were considered not qualified to serve in a Turkish-speaking-Ottoman cultural domain. They were unable to serve in the top scholarly-bureaucratic bodies of Istanbul, and, even more, needed the appointment diplomas received from these bodies to serve in the offices and endowed posts in their own cities. We can thus consider that scholars in Syria, in terms of their professional career, experienced the transition from Mamluk to Ottoman rule as a process of “peripheralization,” a term denoting disconnection from the center while simultaneously becoming dependent on it. This peripheralization was not necessarily related to the provincialization of Damascus (i.e. its change from a significant center close to the Mamluk capital to a distant Ottoman provincial center) but rather, as pointed out above, was a direct

³⁵⁴ Atçıl, *Scholars and Sultans*, 59–116.

outcome of the bureaucratic mechanisms and customs of the new empire and its socio-cultural realities in its main lands.

3.3. Support for the Interim Government in Damascus (1516–18)

The conquest of the central Arab lands was unexpected even by the Ottomans themselves. Selim seems to have been content, at least at the beginning, with Tomanbay's semi-independent government in Cairo on the condition that he pledged loyalty to the Ottoman sultan.³⁵⁵ In Damascus, he appointed an Ottoman pasha as the governor of the city, and started correspondence with the new Mamluk government in Cairo. When this correspondence yielded no result, he marched to Egypt with his army. In the aftermath of the conquest of Egypt, he appointed Khayir Bay (d. 1522), a collaborationist Mamluk commander, as the governor of Egypt. He spent the period of September 1516–February 1518 in his new provinces. I prefer to call the governments in Greater Syria and Egypt during this period interim governments because they were not yet fully established provincial administrative bodies vis-à-vis the central government but rather transient governments under direct intervention of the Ottoman sultan who was normally supposed to give orders from the capital city. These governments under the eyes of the Ottoman sultan sought the most effective administration in the new lands through trial-and-error by implementing many radical reforms in a short time.³⁵⁶ For example, they abolished the Mamluk system of four chief judgeships soon after capturing Damascus. Instead, they appointed an Ottoman scholar as the Hanafī chief judge who would chose four scholars from the four madhhabs as his deputies.³⁵⁷

At the time of the Ottoman conquest, Radiyy al-Dīn was a retired Shāfi'ī judge in his late fifties, and he was eager to support the new regime in Damascus. In fact, he was not alone in this. Waliyy al-Dīn ibn al-Farfūr, the Shāfi'ī chief judge, did not hesitate to give his support to the newcomers, and praised the Ottoman sultan who prayed his first Friday prayer after entering Damascus as the servant of the Holy lands in his sermon. This was despite the fact that the Arabian Peninsula was still under the suzerainty of the Mamluk

³⁵⁵ Bakhit, *The Ottoman Province of Damascus*, 1–15; Winter, “The Ottoman Occupation”; Emecen, *Yavuz Sultan Selim*, 308–21.

³⁵⁶ For the radical measures of interim governments in Cairo, Aleppo and Damascus, see respectively Atçıl, “Memlükler'den Osmanlılar'a Geçişte Mısır'da Adli Teşkilât ve Hukuk (922-931/1517-1525)”; Fitzgerald, “Legal Imperialism and the City of Aleppo,” 180–85; Torsten Wollina, “Sultan Selīm in Damascus: The Ottoman Appropriation of a Mamluk Metropolis (922–924/1516–1518)” in *The Mamluk-Ottoman Transition*, ed. Conermann and Şen, 221–46.

³⁵⁷ Ibn Tūlūn, *Mufākaha*, 347–48.

government in Cairo. Reportedly, he changed his madhhab from Shāfi‘ī to Hanafī, which was almost the official madhhab of the Ottoman government, and performed the abovementioned Friday prayer according to the Hanafī rituals.³⁵⁸ Likewise, a number of leading scholars endeavored to visit the Ottoman sultan in his tent as soon as he arrived at the gates of the city.³⁵⁹ Among them was the Damascene scholar and historian Ibn Tūlūn (d. 1546), who would later be appointed as the prayer leader (*imām*) in Selim’s foundation at the tomb of Ibn Arabī. Another Mālikī scholar composed a history book, in which he described Selim as the renovator (*mujaddid*) of the age, and presented this work to the Ottoman sultan before his departure from the city.³⁶⁰

Radiyy al-Dīn tried to establish good relations with the Ottomans as well. We encounter in *al-Kawākib* a few verses he sent to Zeynelabidin el-Fenari (d. 1520), the Ottoman chief judge of Damascus, who held the post for about one and a half year from the late-1516 until February 1518. In these verses, Radiyy al-Dīn expresses his love for Rūmī dignitaries (*al-sāda al-arwām*) because of their commitment to the Islamic law, and praises Zeynelabidin as the most pious one among them.³⁶¹ These verses were an obvious support for the interim government represented by the Ottoman judge, who had been facing difficulties in his post since his appointment.

The Ottoman government in Damascus needed registers of *iqta’* lands and previous surveys drawn by the Samaritan scribes in order to have information about taxable estates in the city. They also had to survey the endowments of Damascus to update the previous records. Such surveys were a general imperial policy for

³⁵⁸ Winter, “The Judiciary of Late Mamluk and Early Ottoman Damascus”; Bakhit, *The Ottoman Province of Damascus*, 10.

³⁵⁹ Bakhit, *The Ottoman Province of Damascus*, 8-9.

³⁶⁰ Ibn Tūlūn, *Mufākaha*, 339, 341. This scholar was Alī b. Muhammad al-Lahmī al-Ishbīlī al-Dimashqī (d. 1517) and his work's title was *al-Durr al-Musān fī Sirāt al-Muzaffar Salīm Khān*, see Stephan Conermann, “Ibn Tūlūn (d. 955/1548): Life and Works,” *MSR* 8 (2004): 115–39, 128.

³⁶¹ Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 24.

أحب السادة الأروام لما
أقاموا الشرع و اتخذوه ديننا
و إن تسأل عن العباد منهم
فقاضي الشام زين العابديننا

the integration of the newly conquered lands, and were conducted in other Syrian regions as well.³⁶² The task was not easy, however. In Damascus, it was assigned to the incumbent Ottoman treasurer (*defterdar*) in the immediate aftermath of the conquest. However, he was dismissed in weeks following the great discontent among local people. A certain Hüseyin Pasha took the office and managed to appease Damascenes temporarily by restoring the old practices regarding the endowments and private lands. Months later, Defterdar Nuh Efendi replaced him to continue the incomplete survey.³⁶³

The Ottoman judge Zeynelabidin Efendi had to assist the new treasurer in registration of the endowments. However, he faced objections and protests of superintendents of the endowments from the very first day. He then sought the cooperation of renowned local scholars. He sent a letter to al-Nu‘aymī (d. 1521), a Damascene Shāfi‘ī scholar known by his research and deep knowledge about the endowments of Damascus, and requested a copy of his work, *al-Dāris fī tārikh al-madāris*. This work was about the architectural topography of Damascus and contained detailed information about the endowed buildings in the city, and their history, property and endowment deeds. Al-Nu‘aymī hesitated to cooperate with the Ottoman judge because his real intention in the registration of the endowments was still unknown to many. However, when felt obliged, he found a quasi-solution by copying the names of the endowments in a separate list and sending it to the Ottoman judge, instead of his whole work with all other detailed information.³⁶⁴ If al-Nu‘aymī had totally refrained from assisting the interim Ottoman government, the Ottomans would certainly have faced a great difficulty to fully establish their rule. The example of Cairo is instructive in this respect. The Ottoman government in Cairo could promulgate the Land Law only after obtaining the Mamluk land registers hidden by the members of a local family, who had served Mamluk bureaucracy for generations, decades after the conquest.³⁶⁵

Facing resistance of the local people and their harsh criticism, the abovementioned Nuh Efendi also failed to complete the survey, and was eventually dismissed in mid-November 1517. Such abortive attempts of

³⁶² For the case of Aleppo, see Fitzgerald, “Legal Imperialism and the City of Aleppo,” 199, 204–6, 232–38.

³⁶³ Bakhit, *The Ottoman Province of Damascus*, 143.

³⁶⁴ Miura, “The Sālihiyya Quarter of Damascus at the Beginning of Ottoman Rule.” Also see Ibn Tūlūn, *Mufākaha*, 374.

³⁶⁵ Kumakura Wakako, “Who Handed over Mamluk Land Registers to the Ottomans? A Study on the Administrators of Land Records in the Late Mamluk Period,” *MSR* 18 (2014): 279.

the interim government soon persuaded the Ottoman authorities to leave the administration of the city to Jānbirdī, a previous Mamluk governor who knew the city and its dynamics better.³⁶⁶

In short, neither Zeynelabidin nor other Ottoman officials seem to have been completely successful in their offices during the period. Apart from the official surveys, there was widespread discontent in Damascene society because of the introduction of unprecedented fees (*yasaq*) such as the fee on marriage contracts. Zeynelabidin received severe criticisms from the leading local scholars, who considered such taxes legally unfounded.³⁶⁷

In such an atmosphere, praising Ottomans (*al-sāda al-arwām*) for their commitment to the religious law, and the Ottoman judge for his piety, must have been a clear support for the Ottomans officials, who urgently needed it. What was Radiyy al-Dīn expecting in return for this support? Maybe, he was expecting to be appointed as one of the Shāfi‘ī deputies of the Ottoman judge, who had been authorized to choose his deputies from among local scholars. In fact, one of Radiyy al-Dīn’s closest friends (*min akhass ashābihī*) recently managed to receive an appointment from Zeynelabidin to deputy judgeship.³⁶⁸ That is, good relations with Ottoman officials could soon yield rewarding results.

Zeynelabidin’s office as the judge of Damascus did not last long, however. He was dismissed from the office before Selim’s departure from Syria, and Radiyy al-Dīn did not assume an official task during these years.

3.4. Jānbirdī as an Ottoman Governor (1518–20)

During his stay in Damascus, Selim constructed his Ibn Arabī Complex in the Salihyya neighborhood, which created an Ottoman locus in Damascus away from the dominant architecture of the Umayyad Mosque and the Mamluk-Ayyubid buildings around it.³⁶⁹ He inaugurated his complex, made appointments to certain posts, and distributed alms to his new subjects to win their hearts. He had already been convinced that he would administer the new lands more effectively only through its former officers. Thus, before his departure

³⁶⁶ Bakhit, *The Ottoman Province of Damascus*, 143–44.

³⁶⁷ Ibn Tūlūn, *Mufākaha*, 377, 386, 387; al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 1080.

³⁶⁸ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 285.

³⁶⁹ Kafescioğlu, “In the Image of Rūm”; Wollina, “Sultan Selīm in Damascus.”

from Damascus, like in Egypt, he appointed Jānbirdī al-Ghazālī, a former high-ranking Mamluk commander, as the new governor of the province of Damascus.

The reservations and hesitations of the Ottomans were not restricted to the administrative field. The judicial system also witnessed several experiments in short periods. As mentioned above, Selim first abolished the system of four chief judgeship and appointed Ottoman Hanafī judges as the head of the judicial system in the main cities of the new provinces. However, the latter were soon replaced by Arab judges from among local scholars, and the system of four chief judgeships continued to operate *de facto*, if not officially.³⁷⁰ Before Selim's departure from Damascus to Istanbul, the aforementioned Zeynelabidin was replaced by Waliyy al-Dīn ibn al-Farfūr (d. 1531), the former Shāfi'ī chief judge, in judgeship.³⁷¹

According to the (most probably retrospective) accounts, Jānbirdī pretended to be a loyal servant to the Ottoman government during Selim I's reign, while simultaneously consolidating his own government in Damascus for a future insurrection. He increased his popularity among local people through various policies such as appeasing proletarian groups (*zu'ār*), ensuring security of pilgrimage roads, suspending some taxes and novel practices imposed by the abovementioned Ottoman interim government but not fully embraced by the local people. He seized any opportunity to eliminate his rivals in the city and region, to accumulate wealth and to create the image of a pious leader. He gained popular approval by attending congregational daily Ramadan prayers regularly and by welcoming the pilgrims returning to Damascus in person. He was popular among the Damascene people in the Mamluk era, and his popularity increased in the Ottoman period.³⁷²

Reportedly, Waliyy al-Dīn ibn al-Farfūr realized Jānbirdī's secret plans and tried to inform the central government of them. He wrote letters of complaint about him to Istanbul. However, Jānbirdī found out his correspondence, and Ibn al-Farfūr had to escape to Aleppo to save his life.

³⁷⁰ Atçıl, "Memlûkler'den Osmanlılar'a Geçişte Mısır'da Adli Teşkilât ve Hukuk (922-931/1517-1525)"; Winter, "The Judiciary of Late Mamluk and Early Ottoman Damascus."

³⁷¹ For Ibn al-Farfūr's biography, see al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 682.

³⁷² Bakhit, *The Ottoman Province of Damascus*, 19–27. For Janbirdi's biography, see al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 356.

3.5. Jānbirdī's Independent Government (1520–21)

Upon Selim's death, Jānbirdī renounced his loyalty to the Ottoman central government and ventured to establish his own independent rule in Greater Syria in September 1520. His independent rule, which was the third government in Syria since the Ottoman takeover of the region, would continue for only four months until February 1521.

Jānbirdī abolished Ottoman taxes to gain popular support for his rule. He appointed a local scholar, who acknowledged his sultanate in Syria and pledged support to his rule, as the new chief judge. Finally, he honored himself as the new sultan with the royal nickname al-Ashraf. Al-Ashraf was the royal nickname of Sultan Qāyitbāy, who had bought him as a slave soldier for the first time. Apparently, he tried to utilize the positive collective memory about Qāyitbāy as a pious sultan.³⁷³

He probably aspired to re-establish Mamluk rule. For this purpose, he corresponded even with Egyptian governor Khayir Bay (d. 1522), who had been a former Mamluk official like him. However, the latter refused to collaborate with him from the very outset, and Jānbirdī's movement rapidly evolved into a provincial insurrection limited to Syria.³⁷⁴

Süleyman, the new Ottoman sultan, had enough reason to worry for his empire due to Jānbirdī's actions. He was still struggling against rival factions of Selim's era to take full control of the imperial government in Istanbul; thus, he needed more time to establish his throne in Istanbul. On the other hand, if he did not take immediate action against Jānbirdī, the revolt could trigger successive movements in other Arab provincial centers. Eventually, backed by the experienced viziers of his deceased father, he hastened to launch a campaign against Jānbirdī.³⁷⁵

At the end of the day, Janbardi's revolt opened a new phase in Syria's integration into the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman army sent under Ferhad Pasha's command to suppress the insurrection was better equipped than Selim's army in Marj al-Dābiq³⁷⁶—which gives an idea about the imperial agenda to tighten its control over the new Arab provinces. The Damascene historian Ibn Tūlūn likens this army's entrance to Damascus

³⁷³ For Qāyitbāy's sultanic image, see the "Serving Qāyitbāy's Image-Building Policies" in the previous chapter.

³⁷⁴ Bakhit, *The Ottoman Province of Damascus*, 27–34; al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 356.

³⁷⁵ Şahin, *Empire and Power in the Reign of Süleyman*, 34–36.

³⁷⁶ Bakhit, *The Ottoman Province of Damascus*, 33.

to Timur's invasion of the city (*mithl kā'in al-Lank*) and even to the Day of Judgement (*bal ka-yawm al-qiya*). He maintains this latter metaphor utilizing some Quranic descriptions of the Last Day. He writes that he heard that some pregnant women suffered miscarriage and some others left their babies in the cradle in dread of death in Damascus during these days.³⁷⁷ Ibn Tūlūn seems to have exaggerated the scene but still his descriptions imply the Ottomans were rather decisive in the suppression of Jānbirdī's independent government and the re-conquest of Syria.

Jānbirdī's rebellion taught the Ottomans a great lesson, which left its mark on Ottoman historical memory. Ottoman historians of the sixteenth century mentioned the rebellious governor usually highlighting his origin as "a mindless Circassian among the devilish Circassians (*Çerākese-i ebāliseden bir Çerkes-i nākes*)" who caused civil war (*fitna*) in the holy lands of Syria (*arāzī-i mukaddese-i Şām*).³⁷⁸ Thus, after Jānbirdī's execution in February 1521, the Ottomans did not choose to appoint a former Mamluk commander in his place as the new governor. They started appointing Syrian governors from among the Ottoman pashas in the center (the *kuls* of the Ottoman sultan) to tighten the relations between Syria and the Ottoman central government. Moreover, they rearranged administrative divisions of the Syrian province in order to lessen its governor's power. Jerusalem, Safad, and Gaza, which were under direct suzerainty of the Syrian governor in Damascus during Jānbirdī's period, became independent sub-provinces (*sanjaq*) after him. In the mid-century, the Syrian province would be divided into two, and an independent Aleppo-centered province (*Halep Beylerbeyliği*) would be created in addition to the Damascus-centered Syrian province (*Şam Beylerbeyliği*). Each of these was a step for effective administrative integration of Greater Syria into the Ottoman Empire.³⁷⁹

3.6. Serving the New Regime (1521–25) as a Shāfi'ī Judge

In the post-Jānbirdī period, the Ottomans also tried to re-organize the judicial system of Damascus through the appointment of an Ottoman judge from the imperial center as the chief judge of the city. The incumbent

³⁷⁷ Ibn Tūlūn, *Tāriḫ al-Shām*, 126.

³⁷⁸ Gül Şen, "Ottoman Servant, Mamluk Rebel? Narrative Strategies in Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Historiography – the Example of Jānbirdī al-Ghazālī's Downfall," in *The Mamluk-Ottoman Transition*, ed. Conermann and Şen, 327–342.

³⁷⁹ Bakhit, *The Ottoman Province of Damascus*, 33–4; Enver Çakar, "XVI. Yüzyılda Şam Beylerbeyliğinin İdarî Taksimatı"; Ibn Tūlūn, *Tāriḫ al-Shām*, 130.

judge, who had been appointed by Jānbirdī, was arrested and his deputies were punished by confiscation of their horses.³⁸⁰ Ibn al-Farfūr, who had returned to Damascus with the victorious Ottoman army, was expecting to take back his previous office of judgeship. However, Ferhad Pasha did not appoint him. The Ottomans seem to have decided to try one more time to appoint an Ottoman judge as they did during the interim period before Jānbirdī's governorship. Mustafa b. Ali, an Ottoman scholar, became the judge of Damascus. His first action was to restore and increase court fees (*yasaq*) and marriage fee (*yasaq al-tazwīj*), which were abolished by Jānbirdī's government.³⁸¹

Radiyy al-Dīn, as many other scholars in the city, had kept distant from venturing with Jānbirdī against the Ottoman rule. After Jānbirdī's execution, he tried to get closer to Ottoman officials of the post-Jānbirdī period as he had done for the Ottoman judge Zeynelabidin during the interim government. He composed some verses to praise Ayas Pasha, the new governor who took over the city's administration from Ferhad Pasha on 25 March 1521.³⁸² In these verses, Radiyy al-Dīn was openly asking for the pasha's bestowals (*in'ām*) saying that "my God is generous to bestow refreshment (*inti'āsh*) upon the poor [seemingly referring to himself] through Ayas Pasha, the highest vizier of the king."³⁸³

Radiyy al-Dīn apparently became closer to Ayas Pasha than he had been to Zeynelabidin, and the pasha assisted him into becoming a Shāfi'ī deputy judge. Accordingly, Radiyy al-Dīn assumed the office of Shāfi'ī judgeship again, after years of retirement, on 11 April 1521.³⁸⁴ When Ayas Pasha's tenure ended and he was

³⁸⁰ Ibn Tūlūn, *Tārikh al-Shām*, 128.

³⁸¹ Ibn Tūlūn, 127.

³⁸² Ibn Tūlūn, 130.

³⁸³ See Ayas Pasha's biography in al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 919.

[...]

ربي تدارك بلطفٍ

يعطي الفقير انتعاشا

و ذا بأعلى وزير

للملك آياس باشا

³⁸⁴ Ibn Tūlūn, *Tārikh al-Shām*, 131; al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 653.

called to Istanbul at the end of the year,³⁸⁵ Radiyy al-Dīn hosted at his home Ayas Pasha's concubine, who could not travel with the pasha due to her pregnancy. She gave birth to a daughter named Fatima after months, and Radiyy al-Dīn sent them to the Ottoman center later on.³⁸⁶

3.6.1. The Ottomans' Abortive Attempts for Judicial Integration

The same year Radiyy al-Dīn received the deputy judgeship, the dismissed judge Ibn al-Farfūr also tried to receive an appointment by pleasing high-ranking Ottoman officials in Damascus. After Jānbirdī's execution, he organized a great banquet (*diyāfa azīma*) in his house. Among his guest were the abovementioned Ferhad Pasha, the commander-in-chief of the Ottoman army, and the new Ottoman judge Mustafa as well as a certain Kamāl al-Dīn, who was the *qādī al-askar*. Ibn al-Farfūr's banquet was well planned to the extent that the main dish and desserts were served according to the Ottoman customs, i.e. first the desserts then the main dish. The host also brought a skilled singer (*munshid*) to please his guests.³⁸⁷ Some time after this banquet, Ibn al-Farfūr invited and hosted the Ottoman treasurer (*defterdar*) Kulaksız Mehmed at one of his houses in Damascus.³⁸⁸

As will be explained in detail in the next chapter, Ibn al-Farfūr was an active entrepreneur-like figure in his early thirties. Despite his young age, he had enough experience to meet high officials thanks to his previous service as Shāfi'ī chief judge during the Mamluk era.³⁸⁹ His efforts to establish a good relationship with the new government did not go wasted. He managed to replace the abovementioned Ottoman judge Mustafa in the judgeship in early March 1521.³⁹⁰ However, he was dismissed again in May 1521.

The Ottoman central government appointed in Ibn al-Farfūr's place an Ottoman scholar-bureaucrat, namely Yusuf b. Sinan al-Bursavi (d. 1538), who served as the judge of Amasya previously.³⁹¹ Yusuf, or as known in the Ottoman milieu Yeganzade Molla Sinan, was the son of a well-known Ottoman scholar, Alaeddin Ali

³⁸⁵ Ibn Tūlūn, *Tārikh al-Shām*, 140.

³⁸⁶ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 919.

³⁸⁷ Ibn Tūlūn, *Tārikh al-Shām*, 128. This singer was Muhammad al-Ju'aydī (d. 1557/58). For his biography, see Ghazzī, e.n. 802.

³⁸⁸ Ibn Tūlūn, *Tārikh al-Shām*, 129.

³⁸⁹ For Ibn al-Farfūr's and his father's biographies, see al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 682, 287.

³⁹⁰ Ibn Tūlūn, *Tārikh al-Shām*, 130–31.

³⁹¹ Ibn Tūlūn, 136.

Yegani (d.1503).³⁹² Yeganzade's career reflects characteristics of the less strict careers of the early scholar-bureaucrats: he had taught in the Bursa Bayezid Han Madrasa, then became the judge of Amasya, and finally served as the *hazine defterdari* at the Ottoman court before becoming the judge of Damascus. Such switches between scholarly and financial career paths were still acceptable in the early decades of the sixteenth century. Moreover, the place of the judgeship of Damascus in the Ottoman scholarly-bureaucratic hierarchy was still unclear. Such appointments would create a pattern in the career track in time. For example, aforementioned Yeganzade received a professorship in Bursa after his judgeship in Damascus.

In December 1521, Yeganzade was replaced by another Ottoman scholar-bureaucrat, namely Ahmed b. Yusuf, or as known in Istanbul, Kireççizade Ahmed Efendi (d. 1529). Kireçzade was an Istanbul-born Ottoman scholar, who had served in the Bursa Sultaniya Madrasa before his appointment to the judgeship of Damascus.³⁹³

As previous Ottoman judges, Kireççizade also faced criticisms from local scholars for Ottoman fees (*yasaq*). An anecdote sheds light on the ongoing tension around the issue. Reportedly, a Damascene scholar questioned the legal foundations of the *yasaq* asking Kireçzade which one from *kitāb*, *sunna*, *ijmā'* and *qiyās* constituted the legal basis of *yasaq*. Kireççizade's response was allegedly that none of them but the custom of Ottoman *mevālī* was its legal basis. Upon this, the questioner harshly criticized him saying that ignorance does not set an example (*al-jahlu laysa bi-qudwa*). Then, Kireççizade's little son, who was present in the assembly, suddenly intervened and said that his father needed the income coming from *yasaq*. Upon this, the questioner went further adding that the chief treasury (*beytülmal*) could meet the judge's needs. Days after this assembly, Kireççizade felt obliged to provide a persuasive answer to the questioner, and wrote a brief treatise entitled *al-Fusūl al-Imādiyya*. His treatise, however, failed to convince the questioner fully.³⁹⁴

This anecdote suggests that the Ottoman judges in Damascus sometimes felt the need to gain the acceptance of local scholars. As seen in the case of Kireççizade, they even penned works to persuade them about the

³⁹² Both Yusuf and his father has a biographical entry in Taşköprizade's *al-Shaqā'iq*. See Ahmed Efendi Taşköprülüzade, *Eş-Şaka'iku'n-Nu'maniyye fī Ulemai'd-Devleti'l-Osmaniyye* (Istanbul: Türkiye Yazma Eserler Kurumu Başkanlığı, 2019), 449, 639–41. For their biographies in al-Kawākib, see al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 560, 1200.

³⁹³ Ibn Tūlūn, *Tārikh al-Shām*, 139–40. For Kireççizade's biography, see Taşköprülüzade, *Eş-Şaka'ik*, 729; al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 891.

³⁹⁴ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 891.

legal basis of their actions. They were careful enough not to lose the legitimacy of their office and actions in the eyes of the leading local scholarly figures. Thus, the collaboration of eminent scholars like Radiyy al-Dīn was vital for them. Kireççizade's tenure in the office lasted more than two years, and Radiyy al-Dīn continued to serve as his Shāfi'ī deputy during this period.³⁹⁵

Witnessing successive appointments of Ottoman scholars to the judgeship of Damascus, Ibn al-Farfūr lost his hopes to receive his previous post. He eventually traveled to Istanbul in order to ask for an appointment to either the chief judgeship of Egypt or the office of *qādī al-askar* in the Arab provinces. He brought precious gifts to the Ottoman imperial officials such as Hadith collections of al-Bukhārī and Muslim in one volume, and a genealogy of the Prophet (*al-shajara al-nabawiyya*). Among his gifts, there were also three dresses adorned with gold (*thalātha thiyāb mansūja bi-l-dhahab*)—two for the Ottoman sultan Süleyman and the last one for his Grand Vizier Piri Pasha (d. 1532), the most powerful authority after the Ottoman sultan since Selim's last years on the throne.³⁹⁶ Ibn al-Farfūr failed to achieve the abovementioned goals of his journey, but his efforts were not in total vain. He managed to receive an appointment to the judgeship of Damascus in late March 1524.³⁹⁷ That is, the attempts of the central government to appoint the judges of the city from among the Ottoman scholars were interrupted for a second time.

In late April 1524, Kireççizade learned his dismissal from the office, and the appointment of Ibn Farfūr, the former judge (*qādīhā al-asbaq*), to his place.³⁹⁸ On 1 June, Ibn al-Farfūr arrived at Damascus to assume his post. The dismissed judge had already left the city for the Ottoman center. However, on his way, he learned his assignment to the inspection of the Damascene endowments, and returned to the city.³⁹⁹ Meanwhile, Nuh Efendi, the aforementioned Ottoman *defterdar*, who had failed to complete a cadastral survey during the interim government, was re-assigned to the same task. He would receive similar criticisms in his second office as well, especially when he registered the lands in some neighboring towns of Damascus as *ushrī* and *kharājī*.⁴⁰⁰

³⁹⁵ Ibn Tūlūn, *Tārikh al-Shām*, 161.

³⁹⁶ Ibn Tūlūn, 149.

³⁹⁷ Ibn Tūlūn, 167.

³⁹⁸ Ibn Tūlūn, 167.

³⁹⁹ Ibn Tūlūn, 170.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibn Tūlūn, 169.

Radiyy al-Dīn kept serving as the Shāfi'ī deputy judge during the office of Ibn Farfūr in judgeship. He seems to have been devoted to the Ottoman cause in these years. For example, he eagerly helped the officials sent from the Ottoman center for the inspection of endowments.⁴⁰¹ The latter indeed needed such help. The Kara Kadı Affair, which took place in Aleppo few years later, is instructive in understanding the magnitude of social pressure on the shoulders of these Ottoman officials. An Ottoman judge, known as Kara Kadı, was assigned to the task of surveying the endowments and private properties in Aleppo in 1527. During his survey, he took unprecedented steps for taxation such as recording some private and endowed properties in the city as subject to the tax of *ushr*, which, eventually, created a widespread discontent among Aleppines. The latter were dissatisfied with following legal interpretations of the appointed Ottoman mufti, who tried to legitimize Kara Kadı's unprecedented taxation. Eventually, an angry mob attacked Kara Kadı at the Umayyad Mosque of Aleppo after prayer and lynched him.⁴⁰²

Thanks to collaborative figures such as Radiyy al-Dīn, who acted as an intermediary between the new regime and the local people, similar communal attacks on Ottoman officials did not happen in Damascus. However, as will be seen in the following pages, keeping the balance between the newcomers and the local people was not always an easy task.

3.7. Dismissal upon the Opposition of Damascene Scholars

Meanwhile, the young Ottoman sultan Süleyman was still busy to strengthen his throne and eliminate his father's viziers, who were still enjoying great weight in the imperial government. Following the suppression of Jānbirdī's insurrection in 1521, he launched a series of successful campaigns, which increased his self-confidence and earned his throne public support and legitimacy. In 1521, he conquered Belgrade, which even Mehmed II had failed to conquer. The next year, he captured Rhodes from Hospitallers, which neither Mehmed II nor several Mamluk sultans could capture. These campaigns surfaced the struggle between the faction of the grand vizier Piri Pasha and that of the vizier Ahmad Pasha, who aspired to replace Piri Pasha in grand vizierate. Eventually, Süleyman dismissed Piri Pasha in mid-1523. Ahmad Pasha was expecting a promotion to the vacant post but the young sultan had planned to get rid of the old factions completely. He appointed İbrahim Pasha, one of his closest friends and servants, as the new grand vizier, quite contrary to

⁴⁰¹ Ibn Tūlūn, 176.

⁴⁰² Fitzgerald, "Legal Imperialism and the City of Aleppo," 204–5, 210, 234–35.

the established imperial customs of the appointment of the grand vizier. He then appointed Ahmad Pasha as the governor of Egypt and sent him away from the imperial capital.

Ahmad Pasha was disappointed by the sultan's decision. Eventually, he gained the support of discontented local power groups in Egypt and announced his independence in his province in January 1524. Süleyman sent an army to suppress the insurrection in Egypt, and authorized his new grand vizier İbrahim as commander-in-chief. İbrahim presided a large board of imperial officers, including the Rumeli defterdarı and Ulufeciler Ağası. İbrahim and his entourage departed Istanbul on 30 September 1524. They would use a sea route from Chios to Rhodos, and then to Egypt. This plan, however, failed due to deteriorating weather conditions, and they eventually traveled overland toward Syria. After the Ottoman military campaign against Jānbirdī in 1521, the Egypt campaign would be another step for the integration of Damascus.⁴⁰³

İbrahim Pasha received complaints from the inhabitants in each city on his route. He also appointed, dismissed and punished several officials in these cities.⁴⁰⁴ His voyage had already become an imperial image building enterprise when he arrived in Damascus in early February 1525. He stayed in the city for a month, until April 6, and listened to the complaints about Ottoman officials. According to Celalzade, İbrahim Pasha inspected Hürrem Pasha, the incumbent governor of the province of Damascus, and dismissed him.⁴⁰⁵ According to Ibn Tūlūn, Hürrem Pasha had already been dismissed in late 1524, and left the city, but upon İbrahim Pasha's order, he returned to Damascus for investigation.⁴⁰⁶ In any case, the one-month presence of the highest imperial authority in Damascus after Selim I's presence in the city some seven years ago impressed the local people. Announcements were made for those who sought justice against the dismissed Ottoman governor and oppressive officials, to come before the grand vizier. Reportedly, a non-Damascene merchant, whose goods had been seized by the greedy officials, litigated against Hürrem Pasha, and eventually received his property back.⁴⁰⁷

⁴⁰³ Şahin, *Empire and Power in the Reign of Süleyman*, 33–48.

⁴⁰⁴ Şahin, 55.

⁴⁰⁵ Funda Demirtaş, “Celâl-Zâde Mustafa Çelebi, Tabakâtü'l-Memâlik ve Derecâtü'l-Mesâlik [Transcription and Facsimile Copy]” (PhD diss., Kayseri, Erciyes Üniversitesi, 2019), 165.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibn Tūlūn, *Tārīkh al-Shām*, 177.

⁴⁰⁷ Demirtaş, “Tabakâtü'l-Memâlik ve Derecâtü'l-Mesâlik,” 166.

On April 6, İbrahim Pasha left Damascus for Egypt, where he would stay approximately two months. Ahmad Pasha's insurrection in Egypt had already been suppressed. İbrahim took significant steps for Egypt's administrative integration in the empire. He punished corrupt officers, re-organized the judicial system, and gained popular support. He appeased the Bedouin leaders and other power holders, who had their own demands from the provincial government, and negotiated with them. Taking the local dynamics, existing legal practices and customs into consideration, he issued a new code of law for Egypt, which was immediately sent to the Ottoman sultan in Istanbul and promulgated upon his approval. The Law Code of Egypt was the first significant ideological and legal undertaking of Süleyman's reign. It was the increasingly consolidating Ottoman Empire's response to the ideological challenges of the early sixteenth century.⁴⁰⁸

İbrahim Pasha arrived at Damascus on 6 June 1525, on his way back to Istanbul.⁴⁰⁹ Celalzade does not provide information about the grand vizier's second presence in Damascus.⁴¹⁰ Ibn Tülün, on the other hand, mentions some anecdotes suggesting the existence of factionalism among local scholars, as well as informing about their relationships with the the new government in Damascus.⁴¹¹ This time, İbrahim Pasha could not stay long in the city because the Ottoman sultan had urgently called him back to the imperial capital upon an insurrection of the Janissaries in Istanbul. Upon his arrival at Damascus, Damascene elite hastened to pay visits to him to convey their demands and requests. On June 7, a committee consisting of a group of Damascene scholars tried to make an appointment to meet the vizier. Among them were Kamāl al-Dīn b. Hamza (d. 1527),⁴¹² a seventy-eight-year old renowned Shāfi'ī scholar, who had served previously as the mufti of *dār al-adl* in the Mamluk era, and Shams al-Dīn al-Kafarsūsī (d. 1526),⁴¹³ another eminent Shāfi'ī mufti and professor.

⁴⁰⁸ Snjezana Buzov, "The Lawgiver and His Lawmakers: The Role of Legal Discourse in the Change of Ottoman Imperial Culture," (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2005), 19–45; Şahin, *Empire and Power in the Reign of Süleyman*, 56–59; Wakako, "Who Handed over Mamluk Land Registers to the Ottomans?"; Atçıl, "Memlükler'den Osmanlılar'a Geçişte Mısır'da Adli Teşkilât ve Hukuk (922-931/1517-1525)."

⁴⁰⁹ Ibn Tülün, *Tārīkh al-Shām*, 179.

⁴¹⁰ Demirtaş, "Tabakâtü'l-Memâlik ve Derecâtü'l-Mesâlik," 172.

⁴¹¹ Ibn Tülün, *Tārīkh al-Shām*, 180.

⁴¹² For Kamāl al-Dīn b. Hamza's biography, see al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 66.

⁴¹³ For al-Kafarsūsī's biography, see al-Ghazzī e.n. 84.

The committee had several complaints about Ottoman officials and their practices, such as that the Ottoman soldiers (*al-arwām*) stole the precious turbans (*al-'amā'im al-kibār*). For example, the turban of a local scholar, which was valued at about thirty dinar, had been stolen last night. Apparently, the leading scholars and wealthy notables of the city expected more respect and security from the new government. Moreover, Abdulgani Efendi, the Ottoman officer authorized for the inspection of the endowments in the city, had allegedly annulled their rights in endowments. The committee would request the grand vizier to dismiss Abdulgani.

The demands of the committee were not limited to their own benefits. They were representing the Damascene people before the Ottoman authorities. One common complaint of the local people in Damascus (as in other Syrian cities) was the Ottoman marriage contract fee (*yasaq al-tazwīj*). The committee members previously witnessed that some poor people, who somehow divorced their wives and then decided to reunite, continued to live with them without renewing the marriage contract to avoid paying the mandatory fee. This, however, was an illegal practice according to Islamic law; thus, was unacceptable in the eyes of scholars, who represented the law. Another issue was that the Ottoman messengers forcefully took people's horses, which created a widespread discontent among the inhabitants of the city.⁴¹⁴ The committee planned to discuss these issues with the grand vizier as well.

Ibn Tūlūn writes that, upon hearing the committee's plan to complain the grand vizier about Abdūlgani Efendi, Radiyy al-Dīn immediately informed the latter, and Abdūlgani made necessary arrangements to prevent the committee's meeting with the vizier. Accordingly, the committee arrived at the tent of the grand vizier but the servants refused them, and directed them to chief treasurer (*baṣdeftardar*) İskender Efendi's tent, where Abdūlgani was waiting for them with a number of officials. Abdūlgani and others severely rebuked the abovementioned leaders of the committee and humiliated them. The latter resentfully left the tent, and immediately met the chief judge Ibn al-Farfūr to express their disappointment and annoyance. After propitiating them, Ibn al-Farfūr pledged to them that he would inform the grand vizier of what had happened to them.⁴¹⁵

⁴¹⁴ Ibn Tūlūn, *Tārīkh al-Shām*, 180.

⁴¹⁵ Ibn Tūlūn, 180.

Ibn Tūlūn's anecdote above suggests that Radiyy al-Dīn chose to be at the side of the new regime and Ottoman officials instead of siding with his Damascene colleagues. This attitude, of course, created discontent among the learned community in the city. Even the chief judge Ibn al-Farfūr became annoyed about the mistreatment the leading Damascene scholars received from the Ottoman officials. He accompanied the grand vizier on his way out of Damascus, and informed him of the committee's disappointment. To win back their hearts, İbrahim Pasha issued a decree, in which he assigned some of the members of the committee daily salaries from the provincial treasury.

After his return to Damascus, Ibn al-Farfūr did not cease to pursue the details of the affair. He met the aforementioned Abdulgani to question him about the alleged claims about his ill-treatment of the leaders of the committee, but the latter blamed Radiyy al-Dīn for his own misbehavior against Damascenes. As the matter grew worse, Ibn al-Farfūr dismissed Radiyy al-Dīn from the office of deputy judge, and appointed another scholar in his place.⁴¹⁶

Interestingly, the author of *al-Kawākib*, Radiyy al-Dīn's grandson Najm al-Dīn, did not give any detail about this affair. He only writes that İbrahim Pasha assigned Kamāl al-Dīn b. Hamza, one of the leaders of the aforementioned committee, thirty *osmanī* from the provincial treasury. More interestingly, he adds, "[it is because] he rarely opposed the governors to defend the benefit of common people" (*kāna qalīl al-i'tirād 'alā al-hukkām fī amr al-'amma*).⁴¹⁷ Apparently, Najm al-Dīn tries to distort Ibn Tūlūn's abovementioned anecdote by decontextualizing it. To manipulate his readers, he clips the anecdote by ignoring his grandfather Radiyy al-Dīn's role in the assignment of the related salary, and adds new (maybe personal) interpretations about Kamāl al-Dīn's personality.

In any case, Radiyy al-Dīn was dismissed from judgeship on 8 June 1525. He had served Ottoman governments during the post-Jānbirdī period for four years. This was his last office as the Shāfi'ī deputy judge in Damascus. He would not assume the post again until his death.⁴¹⁸ Since the conquest, he seems to have enjoyed good relationships with the leading Ottoman officials, and he finally benefited from these relations by receiving a judgeship position. However, he exaggerated his loyalty to the new regime at the

⁴¹⁶ Ibn Tūlūn, 181.

⁴¹⁷ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, 1: 42.

⁴¹⁸ We do not encounter Radiyy al-Dīn among the deputies of the chief judge of the city in the following years until his death. See Ibn Tūlūn, *Tārikh al-Shām*, 185, 199, 209, 218.

expense of making enemies from among his local peers. Unfortunately, not much is known about his relations with the latter group in the subsequent years. Some clues in *al-Kawākib* suggest that his relationship with the aforementioned Kamāl al-Dīn did not recover. As mentioned earlier, when his friends advised him encourage his son to study under Kamāl al-Dīn, who was a popular scholar with many students, Radiyy al-Dīn did not give heed to these advices claiming that Kamāl al-Dīn and his son were scholarly peers thanks to their scholarly certificates and common teachers.⁴¹⁹

3.8. Economic Concerns and a Family Endowment

Some scholars in Damascus were real entrepreneurs. A well-known example is no doubt the aforementioned Waliyy al-Dīn al-Farfūr. Apart from judgeship and several ex-officio posts, he had shops in Damascus to rent out in the Mamluk period. He had buildings, gardens and water systems in the city and the surrounding region during the Ottoman era.⁴²⁰ Ibn al-Farfūr's wealth is obvious from the gifts he presented to the imperial elite in his aforementioned visit to Istanbul in 1523–24.⁴²¹ Ibn Tawq, a contemporary court notary, was also involved in business and had good relations with some merchants. He was also interested in cultivation of wheat fields and selling what he planted in his own orchard.⁴²² Mandaville gives a list of endowed properties of the Damascene judges in the late Mamluk period, and this list shows that many judges owned private lands and buildings such as mills, shops, and public baths.⁴²³ Winter, who has studied endowment registers in both the late Mamluk and early Ottoman periods, writes that reports about Syrian judges' economic enterprises abound in the archives.⁴²⁴ A register dated 1535 supports Winter's claim listing many familial endowments founded by judges in Damascus and the surrounding districts.⁴²⁵

⁴¹⁹ See the discussion on this anecdote under the subtitle "Building his Heir's Career" in Chapter II.

⁴²⁰ Winter, "The Judiciary of Late Mamluk and Early Ottoman Damascus: The Administrative, Social and Cultural Transformation of the System." Also see Ibn Tūlūn, *Tārikh al-Shām*, 194, 198.

⁴²¹ Ibn Tūlūn, *Tārikh al-Shām*, 167.

⁴²² Shoshan, *Damascus Life 1480–1500*, 23–24; Shopov, "Between the Pen and the Fields," 76.

⁴²³ Mandaville, "The Muslim Judiciary of Damascus," 108–15.

⁴²⁴ Winter, "The Judiciary of Late Mamluk and Early Ottoman Damascus: The Administrative, Social and Cultural Transformation of the System," 6.

⁴²⁵ Ahmet Özkılınç, Ali Coşkun, and Abdullah Sivridağ, ed., *401 Numaralı Şam Livâsi Mufasssal Tahrîr Defteri (942 / 1535)* (Ankara, 2011), 44–58.

Apparently, Radiyy al-Dīn was no exception. During his office in the Shāfi‘ī deputy judgehip in Damascus in the Mamluk period, he was interested in agriculture. He even wrote a separate work on farming, entitled *Jāmi‘ farā’id al-milāha fī jawāmi‘ fawā’id al-filāha* (Complete Rules for Elegance in All the Uses of Farming). According to the extant autograph, Radiyy al-Dīn completed it in 1510/11 in Cairo.⁴²⁶ The content of the work gives an idea about Radiyy al-Dīn’s deep knowledge and interest in agriculture. The work consisted of an introduction and eight chapters, which dealt with a variety of topics related to farming such as soil types, irrigation techniques, planting and its types, fruits, seeds, ways to prevent insects and birds, seasons and their peculiarities, and the responsibilities of the farmer. Radiyy al-Dīn gave references to several authors, some of whom penned works on agriculture in past centuries such as Ibn al-Awwām (d. 12th century) and Abū al-Khayr al-Ishbīlī (d. 11th century).⁴²⁷

Serving as a judge in a country whose economy depended on agricultural activity, Radiyy al-Dīn’s knowledge and interest in agriculture must not be surprising. The Mamluk government distributed the agricultural lands of Egypt and Syria as *iqta*’s to the military officials; and the endowments depended on agricultural revenues. People thus sought the most effective techniques that could increase agricultural revenues. For example, according to Ibn Iyas’s account, some Cairenes brought plants from Syria in 1506/7 to plant them in their own lands. The Cairene elite were also interested in learning plantation techniques of the neighboring regions. In fact, interest in plantation was not limited to the Mamluk sultanate. It was the main concern of the contemporary empires, whose economy depended on agriculture. This explains why the Mamluk envoy to the Ottoman court brought some seeds as a diplomatic gift to the Ottoman sultan in 1503/4.⁴²⁸

Radiyy al-Dīn was certainly hearing in his court various cases related to agricultural production, inheritance of lands, irrigation problems, endowment of agricultural lands, and so forth. Thus, his work can be considered a response to contemporary needs. Moreover, his interest in farming was not only theoretical. As will be seen below, he had agricultural lands in and outside Damascus. He must have aspired to increase his own revenues for these lands. He also had estates inside the city. For example, his father Radiyy al-Dīn

⁴²⁶ Shopov, “Between the Pen and the Fields,” 73–74.

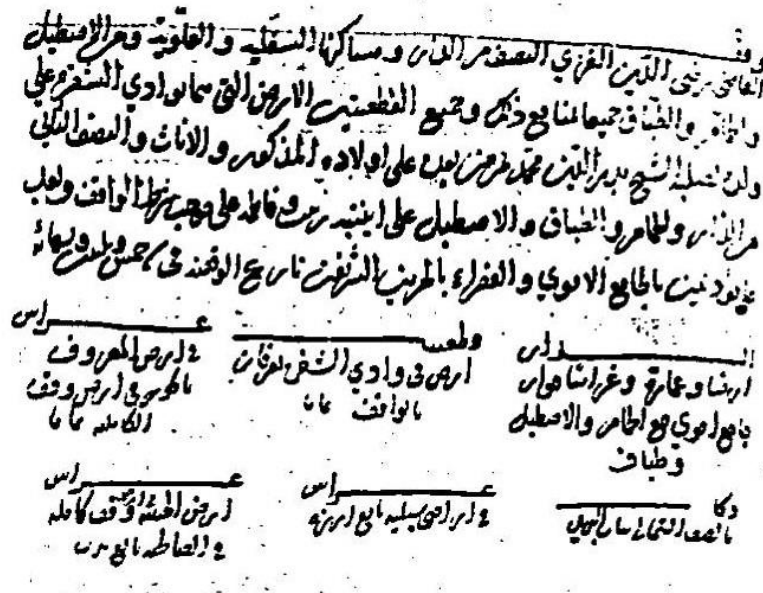
⁴²⁷ For existing manuscripts and content of Radiyy al-Dīn’s work, see its page on al-Filaha project’s website “The Filāha Texts Project,” accessed July 11, 2021, http://www.filaha.org/author_al_ghazi_al_amiri.html.

⁴²⁸ Shopov, “Between the Pen and the Fields,” 79.

Abū al-Barakāt (d. 1459) had a house nearby the Umayyad Mosque,⁴²⁹ and, most probably, Radiyy al-Dīn inherited this house from his father. Ibn Tūlūn informs that Radiyy al-Dīn later separated the bathroom of his house nearby the Umayyad Mosque, and turned it into a public bath for foreigners (*al-rijāl al-ajānib*) visiting the city. He then adds that the daily charge of this public bath was rather cheap (*latīfun acruhū*), only ten dirhams.⁴³⁰

Apparently, Radiyy al-Dīn depended on the income coming from his abovementioned properties after his dismissal from judgeship in June 1525, until his death in 1529. The year he died, he made a family endowment of his private estates. The following document is from an official endowment registration dated 973/1566, which is located in the Ottoman archive in Istanbul.⁴³¹ It is the record of Radiyy al-Dīn’s family endowment in Damascus.

Figure 1: An Official Record of Radiyy al-Dīn al-Ghazzī’s Endowment



⁴²⁹ The colophon of his biographical dictionary informed that he completed his work in his new house nearby the Umayyad mosque in February 1439, al-Ghazzī, *Bahja al-Nāzīrīn*, 254.

⁴³⁰ Ibn Tūlūn, *Tārikh al-Shām*, 122.

...حمام القاضي رضي الدين الغزي شمالي التربة الكاملية لصق الجامع الأموي للرجال الأجانب و كان قبل ذلك مخصوصا بيته و هو لطيف أجره كل يوم بعشرة دراهم...

⁴³¹ Mandaville gives a list of the endowments of Damascene judges in the late Mamluk period. In this list, he gives reference to the archival document recording Radiyy al-Dīn’s endowment as well. See Mandaville, “The Muslim Judiciary of Damascus,” 111. Thanks to Mandaville’s reference, I found out the quoted document in Tapu Tahrir Defterleri, Defter nu. 393, p. 87. TT.d-393/87.

وقف

القاضي رضي الدين الغزي النصف من الدار و مساكنها السفلية و العلوية و من الاصطبل و الحمام و الطباق جميعا لمنافع ذري و جميع القطعتين الأرض التي هما بوادي الشقرة على ولده من صلبه الشيخ بدر الدين محمد... من بعده على أولاده الذكور و الإناث و النصف الثاني من الدار و الحمام و الطباق و الاصطبل على ابنتيه زينب و فاطمة على موجب شرط الواقف و بعده على بالجامع الأموي و الفقراء بالحرمين الشريفين تاريخ الوقفية في سنة خمس و ثلاثين و تسعمائة

الدار أرضا و عمارة و غراسا بجوار جامع أموي مع الحمام و الاصطبل و طباق	قطعتين أرض في وادي الشقرة بعرفات للواقف تماما	غراس في أرض المعروف بال... في أرض وقف الكاملة تماما
دكان بالنصف الشمالي باب بريد	غراس في أراضي	غراس أرض ال..... وقف كاملة في الصالحية

The document informs that Radiyy al-Dīn made his endowment for familial purposes (*li-manāfi' dhurrī*) in the year 935 (1528/9), without giving the exact date of the confirmation of the endowment deed. Radiyy al-Dīn was in his early seventies at this time, and months later, he died. Seemingly, as a retired elderly judge, he wanted to guarantee his family members an enduring income.

He stipulated half of the revenues of his endowment for his son Badr al-Dīn and his progeny, both male and female. Badr al-Dīn was Radiyy al-Dīn's sole male heir. He was a young scholar in his early thirties at that

time. He had completed his education and started teaching and issuing religious opinions. He had been married for about ten years, and he had at least two children, a seven-year old daughter and a four-year old son. According to the endowment deed, Badr al-Dīn was going to be the first authorized beneficiary of half of the revenues of Radiyy al-Dīn's endowment, and after his death (*wa min ba'dihī*), his sons and daughters would benefit.

Radiyy al-Dīn assigned the other half of the revenues to his two daughters, Zaynab and Fātima. Zaynab (d. 1572/73) was about five years younger than Badr al-Dīn. Fātima, who has no biographical information in sources, must be the youngest one among the three. It seems that Radiyy al-Dīn imitated inheritance law among his children, giving the male the share of two females. However, unlike Badr al-Dīn's progeny, Zaynab and Fātima's progenies are unmentioned among the beneficiaries of the endowment. According to the document above, the share of Radiyy al-Dīn's two daughters were to evolve into a pious (*khayrī*) endowment after their deaths immediately. This latter endowment would be for the services in the Umayyad Mosque and pious in the Holy lands. As for the share of Badr al-Dīn and his progeny, though not put clearly, the same pious purpose must be in operation on the condition of their extinction (*inqirād*) as in the case of many contemporary endowments.

The document gives us an idea about Radiyy al-Dīn's wealth in and outside Damascus in the last years of his life. The endowed property consists of a variety of assets: a house (*dār*), barn (*istabl*), public bath (*hammām*), barracks (*tibāq*), and lands (*ard*). Some of these lands are in Sālihiyya, a neighboring district of Damascus, and some of them are in Wādī al-Shaqra in Arafat, the Hijaz. This latter could be a family inheritance. We know that Radiyy al-Dīn's grandfather Ahmad (d. 1421) traveled for pilgrimage several times and stayed in the Holy Lands as a pious resident several times, and finally died in Mecca.⁴³² Thus, one can speculate that Ahmad might have bought these lands in Mecca, and bequeathed them to his progeny.

Radiyy al-Dīn passed away on 21 June 1529 at the age of seventy-three (according to the lunar calendar), and was buried in the Sheikh Raslān cemetery in Damascus.⁴³³ His children continued to benefit from his endowment. We are unable to follow the life story of Fatima due to dearth of information in sources. However, at the time of the Ottoman registration of endowments in 973/1566, both Zaynab and Badr al-Dīn

⁴³² He visited Hijaz in 1386, 1406, and 1419. See al-Ghazzī, *Bahja al-Nāzirīn*, 125, 127–28.

⁴³³ For the exact date of his death, see Ibn Tūlūn, *Dhakhā'ir al-Qasr*, 465.

were alive.⁴³⁴ Zaynab, who studied from his father and brother, was a scholarly figure in Damascus. She was composing poetry and copying scholarly works. Her biography does not inform us about whether she had any children at her death in 1572/73. In any case, according to the information provided in the above-cited document, her share must have been directed to pious services in favor of the Umayyad Mosque and the Holy lands following her death.

As for Badr al-Dīn, he and his children benefited from half of the revenues. *Lutf al-samar* informs that Badr al-Dīn's son Ahmad predeceased his father, and left a baby after him. When Badr al-Dīn passed away a few months later, his orphan grandson legally became a beneficiary of the endowment. Ahmad's widow wife provided for her family with the income assigned to her son.⁴³⁵ In his autobiography, Badr al-Dīn's son Najm al-Dīn informs us that he and his brothers also survived after Badr al-Dīn's death thanks to the income coming from Radiyy al-Dīn's endowment. Najm al-Dīn and his brother were children, and their widow mother could raise them with their share from the endowment without being obliged to marry again.⁴³⁶ In short, Badr al-Dīn himself, his orphan children (Najm al-Dīn and his brothers) as well as his orphan grandchild (deceased Ahmad's son) benefited from Radiyy al-Dīn's endowment. In other words, Radiyy al-Dīn's undertaking could promote his family members even half a century after his death.

Knowing the fate of Radiyy al-Dīn's endowment requires examination of later archival sources, which is beyond the scope of the present study. Yet it seems that the endowment survived until the mid-seventeenth century. The seventeenth century biographer al-Muhibbī mentions that Najm al-Dīn (d. 1651) visited gardens belonging to his grandfather Radiyy al-Dīn's endowment (*basātīn awqāf jaddihī*) a few days before his death and asked for pardon from the farmers working there.⁴³⁷

3.9. Conclusion

The Ottomans tried to create the most effective governance in the Arab provinces in the first decade of their rule. Feedback (in various forms such as criticisms, insurrections, and rejections of sultanic orders) coming

⁴³⁴ For their biographies, see al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 1424, 1205.

⁴³⁵ Al-Ghazzī, *Lutf*, e.n. 102.

⁴³⁶ Muhammad b. Abd al-Bāqī al-Hanbalī, *Mashikha Abī al-Mawāhib al-Hanbalī*, ed. Muhammad Mutī' al-Hāfiz (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr al-Mu'āsir, 1990), 66.

⁴³⁷ Al-Muhibbī, *Khulāsa al-Athar*, 4:200.

from the indigenous population and local power holders affected their vision of rule and increased their firsthand knowledge about the internal dynamics of the new provinces. It was rather a period of trial-and-error based on successive Ottoman policies sometimes contradicting each other. As a result, as in other urban centers in the Arab provinces, the transition in Damascus was not smooth. Selim's direct rule and radical measures (September 1516–February 1518), Ottoman government under the leadership of Jānbirdī and re-establishment of some of the previous practices (February 1518–September 1520), Jānbirdī's independent government and total overthrow of Ottoman rule (September 1520–February 1521), and post-Jānbirdī governments and re-establishment of the Ottoman regime were successive steps of encounter and integration in the case of Damascus.

Certain parameters determined the relationship between Damascene scholars and the new rulers. The former needed stability and order to preserve their resources, status, and scholarly continuity. The latter needed information, experience and local connections to build an effective administration. Consequently, Radiyy al-Dīn and his peers, who enjoyed penetration to the society through multiplex connections (as teacher, sheikh, relative, friend etc.), played the role of bridge between Ottoman officials and local people. They shared their knowledge about the endowments, helped Ottoman officials in cadastral surveys, and assumed various roles in the judicial administration. Yet certain practices of the new regime such as unprecedented taxes created widespread discontent among local people. Thus, a sort of negotiation was always ongoing between the two sides. These negotiations sometimes brought dismissal of an Ottoman official and sometimes ended up with reprimand or even imprisonment of a local scholar.

Radiyy al-Dīn served the new regime as an experienced Shāfi'ī judge. However, the new regime peripheralized him and his peers' careers. That is, their career prospect was largely restricted to the Arab provinces in the early Ottoman Damascus. The new regime did not need their employment in Istanbul for various reasons ranging from the available educated human resource in the core Ottoman lands, to their affiliation with non-Hanafī madhhabs and their incompetency in Turkish language. In Syro-Egypt, on the other hand, they were indispensable partners with their knowledge of local dialects and practices as well as with their legal expertise in non-Hanafī law. Thus, Radiyy al-Dīn could develop good relationship with the highest Ottoman authorities in Damascus rather easily. He supported, hosted and praised many officials including the Ottoman judge, treasurer, and even the governor. However, he never could meet the Ottoman sultan as he had met the Mamluk sultan decades ago. This partly stemmed from the fact that the Ottoman

sultan, as the member of a ruling dynasty, was categorically different from the Mamluk sultan with slave origin, a fact that made him less accessible to his subjects.

Radiyy al-Dīn collaborated with the new regime in Damascus and sincerely served the Ottoman cause as a deputy judge. His colleagues disliked his loyalty to the new ruling elite and total integration into the new government because it was impairing their bargaining power before the new regime. Seemingly, Radiyy al-Dīn broke the balance between the newcomers and local elites. This eventually brought his dismissal from the office of deputy judge after a four-year service.

As many of his colleagues, Radiyy al-Dīn also had financial enterprises. He examined the most effective methods to increase agricultural productivity in his lands. Apart from lands, he had shops and a public bath. The location of his private estates connected him geographically to Damascus, its surroundings and even to the Hijaz. In the last years of his life, he endowed these estates for familial purposes to guarantee financial survival of his family.

The governments of the post-Jānbirdī period in Damascus witnessed an increasing determination of the Ottoman central government to integrate Syria in the empire. After Jānbirdī's insurrection, the office of the governorship of Damascus was given to the Ottoman pashas sent from the center. The judgeship of the city was occupied by the Ottoman scholar-bureaucrats with clearer career records in the service of the empire. Still, due to local dynamics and his personal efforts, Ibn al-Farfūr managed to re-take the judgeship of Damascus, and held the post for the next few years. His trial and death in 1531, as will be seen in the next chapter, would open a new phase in the judicial integration of the province.

CHAPTER IV: BADR AL-DĪN AL-GHAZZĪ: A YOUNG DAMASCENE SCHOLAR IN THE NEW IMPERIAL CAPITAL (1530–31)

Badr al-Dīn (1499–1577) was Radiyy al-Dīn’s sole male heir. He received his education in Cairo and attained certificates to teach and issue legal opinions. Yet when he returned to Damascus, his father considered him still young to issue his legal opinions and directed him to eminent Damascene scholars to continue his education. When the Ottomans took Damascus, he was a seventeen-year-old promising scholar.

Badr al-Dīn and most of his peers did not enjoy the social and cultural capital that their fathers had in Damascus. They had no comparable scholarly career as judges, professors, or muftis. They were rather at the very beginning of their careers; thus, were inexperienced and unknown. Their social penetration into Damascene society and their influence on it were not as powerful as their fathers’ were. Accordingly, the Ottoman regime needed their cooperation less than Radiyy al-Dīn and his peers’ cooperation.

How did this affect Badr al-Dīn’s life? Taking refuge under the wings of his father, vicissitudes of the first decade of Ottoman rule in Damascus seems to have affected him relatively less. Nevertheless, he had to struggle to survive after his father’s death in 1529.

4.1. Early Years of Transition: Relative Peace in a Turbulent Period

Jānbirdī’s insurrection showed that Selim’s decision to govern his new provinces through the remnant actors of the previous regime, who pledged loyalty to the Ottoman sultan, was wrong, or at least, hazardous and consequently costly. In the post-Jānbirdī period, the central government appointed Ottoman pashas to the governorship of Syria, and re-organized administrative division of the province. It usually did not permit their office to exceed few years—which hampered their building powerful relations with the local power holders. Six Ottoman pashas served as the governor of the province of Syria in Damascus in 1520–29.⁴³⁸ Yet the province did not attract much attention from the imperial ruling elite. For instance, none of these

⁴³⁸ Çakar, “XVI. Yüzyılda Şam Beylerbeyliğinin İdarî Taksimatı.”

pashas involved in construction projects in Damascus or any other neighboring center. Ibn Arabī Complex built by Selim in the aftermath of the conquest remained as the sole imperial locus in the city during this period.⁴³⁹

As for judicial integration, successive attempts of the central government to integrate the judgeship of Damascus into the scholarly-bureaucratic career track of the Ottoman scholars were largely abortive in these years. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Ibn Farfūr, the Shāfi‘ī chief judge of pre-Ottoman and Jānbirdī periods, took the office again after a number of Ottoman judges sent from the capital.

In sum, both the actors of the old regime and that of the new one had a say during this period. Badr al-Dīn was under the wings of his father, who enjoyed good relations with Ottoman officials in Damascus and even served the new government as a deputy judge. Thus, he seems to have experienced a relatively peaceful transition to Ottoman rule.

He married the daughter of Shahāb al-Dīn Ahmad al-Halabī, a professor and superintendent in Damascene endowments, in early 1520s.⁴⁴⁰ His wife gave birth a girl few years later, whom they named Khadija.⁴⁴¹ In 1522, his father-in-law traveled to Rūmī lands, to visit the Ottoman capital most probably for an issue related to his posts in Damascus. However, bandits killed him on way. In the summer of 1525, Badr al-Dīn’s first son was born. He named him Shahāb al-Dīn Ahmad after his father-in-law. It was also his great grandfather’s name.⁴⁴²

Badr al-Dīn continued to study under Damascene scholars such as Taqiyy al-Dīn ibn Qādī Ajlūn (d. 1522), a prestigious Shāfi‘ī mufti and the professor of the Shāmiyya Barrāniyya Madrasa.⁴⁴³ He also started teaching. His father had prevented him from issuing religious opinions as a sign of respect for his elderly teachers. After the abovementioned Taqiyy al-Dīn passed away in mid-1522, some of Radiyy al-Dīn’s friends intervened and obtained permission for Badr al-Dīn to issue fatwas. Badr al-Dīn issued his first fatwa

⁴³⁹ Kafescioğlu, “In the Image of Rūm.”

⁴⁴⁰ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 261.

⁴⁴¹ See the certificate issued by Abd al-Rahīm al-Abbāsī to Badr al-Dīn in the latter's Istanbul travelogue, al-Ghazzī, *al-Matāli‘*, 196–99.

⁴⁴² Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 1345.

⁴⁴³ See Taqiyy al-Dīn’s biography, al-Ghazzī e.n. 224.

in the feast of sacrifice through the end of 1522.⁴⁴⁴ He would keep teaching and issuing religious opinions until his death, and earn a reputation as a distinguished Shāfi‘ī mufti in Syria after his mid-age.

Badr al-Dīn did not plan to follow a judgeship career, even though his father and grandfather served as judges. Whether his choice was an outcome of Ottoman rule and subsequent transformations in Damascus or stemmed from Badr al-Dīn’s own interests and dispositions is open to speculation. Radiyy al-Dīn had assumed the office of Shāfi‘ī deputy judgeship in Damascus at the age of twenty-three. Badr al-Dīn, on the other hand, concentrated on learning, writing, and teaching in the same ages. His early writings suggest that he planned a career as a Shāfi‘ī jurist from his youth. For instance, in 1525, he completed one of his first works, *al-Durr al-nadīd fī ādāb al-mufīd wa-l-mustafīd* [The Arranged Pearls on the Manners of the Teacher and the Student], a work on the rules of relationship between teachers and their students as well as the requirements for jurists and seekers of legal opinions.⁴⁴⁵ In the same years, he also penned treatises on various legal issues such as sexual relationship with a woman in her menstrual period.⁴⁴⁶ According to a certificate he issued in 1528,⁴⁴⁷ he had composed a commentary on al-Nawawī’s *al-Minhāj al-tālibīn*, a work on Shāfi‘ī law,⁴⁴⁸ and another critical commentary on al-Nawawī’s *Rawda al-tālibīn*, a manual for Shāfi‘ī law.⁴⁴⁹ He also versified one of his father’s works on the sources and methodology of Shāfi‘ī law.⁴⁵⁰ Badr al-Dīn was a prolific writer, and produced many other works in prose and verse during this period.⁴⁵¹ According to his own record in his travelogue, he produced approximately seventy works in large and small

⁴⁴⁴ Al-Ghazzī, e.n. 285.

⁴⁴⁵ This work was an abridgement of the introduction of Muhyi al-Dīn al-Nawawī’s (d. 1277) *Sharh al-muhadhdhab*. Al-Ghazzī, *al-Durr al-Nadīd*, 34, 498.

⁴⁴⁶ This work was titled *al-Burhān al-nāhid fī niyya istibāha al-wat’ li-al-hā’id* [The Pertinent Argument about the Question whether Sexual Intercourse is Allowed for Menstruating Women]. On his way to the Rūmī lands in 1530, Badr al-Dīn met a friend in Aleppo, who borrowed from Badr al-Dīn a copy of this work. This shows that this work was written before 1530. Al-Ghazzī, *al-Matāli’*, 192.

⁴⁴⁷ For this certificate in verse, see al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 1322.

⁴⁴⁸ The full title of his work is *Intihāj al-muhtāj bi-ittihāj al-Minhāj* [Pursuing the Needed, Commentary on the Minhāj]. Elger, “Badr Al-Dīn Muhammad al-Ghazzī,” 98.

⁴⁴⁹ The full title of his work is *Fath al-mughlaq fī tashīh mā fī al-Rawda min al-khilāf al-mutlaq* [The Opening of the Closed in the Correction of the Open Deviations in the Rawza] Elger, 98.

⁴⁵⁰ The full title of this work is *al-Iqd al-jāmi’ fī sharh al-Durar al-lawāmi’* [The Gathering Necklace in the Commentary of the Durar al-lawāmi]. It was a versified version of Radiyy al-Dīn’s *Jam’ al-jawāmi fī al-usūl*. Elger, 98.

⁴⁵¹ For examples, see al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 870.

size until his early thirties.⁴⁵² During his father's life, he started teaching Shāfi'ī law and hadith, and issued certificates to his students for several works in these disciplines including his own works.⁴⁵³

Badr al-Dīn lost his father, who was his greatest protector, in 1529. This marked a new period in his life, in which he found himself in a series of struggles to prove his independent scholarly identity both before Damascene scholarly community and before the Ottoman government.

4.2. An Undesired Journey to the Mysterious Rūmī Center

Radiyy al-Dīn's death forced Badr al-Dīn to move out of his comfort zone. In less than a year, he traveled to the Ottoman capital to renew his *berāts* for a number of posts. He spent about a year in Istanbul, and returned to Damascus in August 1531. He compiled his travel notes and penned a travelogue in July 1534.⁴⁵⁴

Although this work narrates Badr al-Dīn's individual experience in Rūmī lands and the new imperial capital, it is, in many respects, reflective for the perception of his local peers regarding the newly discovered Ottoman geography and culture. We can consider Badr al-Dīn's travelogue and similar contemporary works as significant steps for cultural and scholarly integration of the Arab provinces into the empire.

Badr al-Dīn does not clarify the reason for his travel in the preamble of his work. He only writes that he decided to travel to Constantinople "for a reason that required this [journey]" (*li-amr iqtadā dhālik*).⁴⁵⁵ Pages later, while mentioning his meeting with Kadiri Çelebi (also known as Abdülkadir Hamidi) (d. 1548), the Ottoman chief judge of Anatolia, he informs that he presented to the chief judge a petition regarding "the renewal of the appointment diplomas for his posts in endowments" (*barāt bi-tajdīd mā bi-yadī min al-jihāt*) and "other issues" (*shu'ūn ukhrā*).⁴⁵⁶ This "other issues" remain unexplained, however. He later informs that he managed to return some of his posts taken from his hands by enmity and tricks (*bi-l-udwān wa-l-tadlīs*) and even received new positions.⁴⁵⁷

⁴⁵² Al-Ghazzī, *al-Matāli'*, 192.

⁴⁵³ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 723, 804, 870, 1262, 1322.

⁴⁵⁴ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Matāli'*, 323.

⁴⁵⁵ Al-Ghazzī, 22.

⁴⁵⁶ Al-Ghazzī, 267.

⁴⁵⁷ Al-Ghazzī, 278.

Badr al-Dīn also writes that, during the same days, he received letters from Damascus, which informed him that the Ottoman judge of Damascus started correspondence with the imperial center to assign Badr al-Dīn's posts to others. In this part of the travelogue, Badr al-Dīn complains about his enemies, who encouraged the Ottoman judge to do this, and expresses his resentment about his friends, who failed to defend his posts in Damascus.⁴⁵⁸

Apparently, Badr al-Dīn had some posts in Damascene endowments during his father's life. Since Radiyy al-Dīn enjoyed good relations with the imperial elite as an eminent figure in Damascus, nobody could dare to interfere in Badr al-Dīn's posts. Following his death, however, Badr al-Dīn remained as a thirty-year-old inexperienced scholar without any protector and eventually lost these posts. His mood is rather apparent in the long elegy he composed after his father, in which he requested from his father's spirit to continue encompassing him with abundance as before.⁴⁵⁹ His words at the preamble of his travelogue also articulate his deep melancholy after his father. He writes that upon his father's death, "water on earth withered away, and those whom he had trust in betrayed. His friends dispersed, and dogs [i.e. his enemies] turned into lions."⁴⁶⁰ His situation in Damascus must have been so troubled that he could not wait until the end of Ramadan to spend the feast with his family. He left Damascus on 16 May 1530 with a group of travelers.⁴⁶¹ They arrived at Aleppo in few days and decided to spend the last days of Ramadan there. Among the travelers was Waliyy al-Dīn ibn Farfūr, the dismissed judge of the city.

4.2.1. The End of an Era: Ibn al-Farfūr's Trial and Imprisonment (1530–31)

Waliyy al-Dīn was a member of the famous Ibn Farfūr family, which left its mark on the late Mamluk judiciary and politics. The family was as old as the Ghazzī family in Syria.⁴⁶² As mentioned in Chapter II, Waliyy al-Dīn's father received the Shāfi'ī chief judgeship of Damascus in his thirty-three, and occupied

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁹ He named this elegy *Nafath al-sadr al-masdūr wa bath al-qalb al-mahrūr* [Exhale of the Wounded Chest and Sorrow of the Fevered Heart], see al-Ghazzī, 160–73.

⁴⁶⁰ Al-Ghazzī, 22–23.

⁴⁶¹ His biography in *DĪA* says Badr al-Dīn's son Ahmad traveled to Istanbul with his father, but there is no clue in *al-Matāli'* that indicates Ahmad's presence along the journey. Moreover, Ahmad was only a five-year old child, who could not endure such a tiring journey in the absence of his mother, and we are sure his mother remained in Damascus. Fatih Çollak and Cemil Akpınar, "Gazzī, Bedreddīn," in *DĪA* (Online: TDV İSAM, 1996).

⁴⁶² For the family tree of Ibn Farfūr family, see Miura, "Transition of the 'Ulama' Families in Sixteenth Century Damascus."

this position for decades. He then became the chief judge of Cairo and left his former position to his teenage son Waliyy al-Dīn, who occupied it until the Ottoman conquest with few dismissal periods. As mentioned in Chapter III, Waliyy al-Dīn managed to hold the office of chief judge, which underwent a transformation following the dissolution of the system of four judgeships in 1516, during the early Ottoman Damascus as well.

This was Ibn al-Farfūr's second journey to Istanbul. For the first time, he traveled to the new imperial capital after Jānbirdī affair, in 1521/22, to ask for an appointment to the chief judgeship of Egypt. He brought with himself precious gifts for the Ottoman sultan and his grand vizier Piri Pasha.⁴⁶³ He eventually returned to Damascus in June 1524 as the chief judge.⁴⁶⁴ During his office, he undertook construction projects increasing his wealth such as a bazaar (*'imāra sūq*) and a water basin (*jarn li-al-sabīl*) as well as a pavilion in his gardens.⁴⁶⁵ In April 1530, the central government dismissed him and appointed to his place an Ottoman judge sent from Istanbul.⁴⁶⁶ After his dismissal, he immediately prepared for his second journey to Istanbul, and left Damascus next month without waiting for the arrival of the new judge. Ibn al-Farfūr seems to have known the reason for his dismissal and heard the grievances about his judgeship; thus, planned to visit the imperial center -as he did before- to persuade Ottoman officials into his innocence and re-appointment to the judgeship. According to Badr al-Dīn's testimony, since their departure from Damascus, he was in hurry to arrive at the Ottoman capital as soon as possible.⁴⁶⁷

However, when they were still in Aleppo, an imperial edict for Ibn al-Farfūr's investigation arrived at Damascus. İsa Pasha, the governor of Damascus, sent messengers after the dismissed judge to bring him back to the city. İsrāfilzade, the new chief judge of Damascus, who was assigned to Ibn Farfūr's investigation, was on his way to Damascus. Without waiting the arrivals of the new judge and Ibn Farfūr,

⁴⁶³ Ibn Tūlūn, *Tārikh al-Shām*, 149. Also, see the subtitle "The Ottomans' Abortive Attempts for Judicial Integration" in Chapter III.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibn Tūlūn, 167, 170.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibn Tūlūn, 192, 196, 231. Badr al-Dīn's account of the trial also gives an idea about Waliyy al-Dīn's wealth. See al-Ghazzī, *al-Matāli'*, 71.

⁴⁶⁶ Ibn Tūlūn, *Tārikh al-Shām*, 232.

⁴⁶⁷ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Matāli'*, 49–50.

İsa Pasha started investigating Ibn al-Farfūr's men (*jamā'atuhū*) serving in the judicial body in Damascus, and eventually imprisoned some of them.⁴⁶⁸

İsa Pasha was an experienced Ottoman official thanks to his previous office as the governor of Aleppo. Some three years ago, he witnessed the aforementioned Kara Kadı affair in Aleppo, in which an Ottoman judge, who was surveying the endowments in the city, was killed at the hands of an angry mob. Afterward, İsa Pasha ran an interrogation about this communal reaction against the Ottoman authority and interrogated many leading figures in the city. Among the latter was a group of scholars, who were brought to the citadel in chains. The interrogation ended up with the execution of twenty people and the deportation of many others to Rhodes.⁴⁶⁹

After few days, İsa Pasha's men arrived at Aleppo and took Ibn al-Farfūr back to Damascus by force. Ibn al-Farfūr entered Damascus in mid-June, few days after the new judge İsrafilzade's arrival, and the investigation started.⁴⁷⁰ Ibn al-Farfūr was to be charged with injustices (*mazālim*) he committed during his judgeship. Both Badr al-Dīn and his son inform that there was a personal enmity of İsa Pasha towards him.⁴⁷¹ Probably knowing his treatment of the Aleppine scholars in the abovementioned Kara Kadı affair, Damascenes expected that Ibn al-Farfūr would be brought to the city in chains.⁴⁷²

Contrary to the rumors, Ibn al-Farfūr entered the city honorably. This did not last long, however. He was soon detained in the citadel. Simultaneously, the officers made announcements inviting those whoever had been oppressed in his money, house or gardens by the dismissed judge and his men to complain at the governor's court. The next day, Ibn al-Farfūr was brought before the inspection committee consisting of the Ottoman ruling elite such as the judge İsrafilzade, the governor İsa Pasha, and the military commander of the citadel, and the treasurer (*defterdār*) Ali Beg.⁴⁷³ This was a *mazālim* session taking place in the *dār al-*

⁴⁶⁸ Al-Ghazzī, 70–71; Ibn Tūlūn, *Tārikh al-Shām*, 233–34.

⁴⁶⁹ Fitzgerald, "Legal Imperialism and the City of Aleppo," 204–5.

⁴⁷⁰ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Matāli'*, 70–71; Ibn Tūlūn, *Tārikh al-Shām*, 233–34.

⁴⁷¹ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Matāli'*, 70; al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 682.

⁴⁷² Ibn Tūlūn, *Tārikh al-Shām*, 235.

⁴⁷³ Ibn Tūlūn, 235.

sa'āda, an adjacent building to the *dār al-adl* of Damascus. Jamāl al-Dīn ibn Tūlūn, who was the mufti of *dār al-adl* during the late Mamluk period, was also among the participants invited to hear the sessions.⁴⁷⁴

The investigation and trial did not end in one session. Apparently, Damascene people were initially hesitant to complain about the powerful judge, whom they had known for decades, before the officials of the new government. Moreover, Ibn al-Farfūr was from a prestigious family, wealthy, and had powerful relations in and outside Syria. Thus, none of the locals would dare to make an enemy of him. Nevertheless, probably under the insistence of the abovementioned Ottoman officials, few people brought complaints about the dismissed judge, which eventually encouraged the rest.

The committee gathered in fifteen sessions to hear people's complaints. After each session, Ibn al-Farfūr had to pay financial compensation to the complainers. Apparently, neither Īsa Pasha nor other members of the committee were merciful towards the charged judge, and those who gained their cases against the latter encouraged others to rise their own cases. Consequently, according to Ibn Tūlūn's account, people started coming up with weird accusations hard to believe but won their cases against Ibn Farfūr. Eventually, the latter had to sell his assets, books, clothes, and horses to pay compensation.⁴⁷⁵ After losing most of his wealth, Ibn al-Farfūr was imprisoned in the citadel, where he would die after seven months in mid-February 1531.

Ibn al-Farfūr's imprisonment and death marked a new period in the judicial integration of Damascus into the empire. The author of *al-Kawākib* introduced him as the last judge from among the Arab judges in Aleppo (*ākhir qādin tawallā Halab min qudā awlād al-'Arab*).⁴⁷⁶ He became the last chief judge from among local scholars in Damascus, too. After him, the judges of Damascus were appointed from among the Turkish-speaking Ottoman scholar-bureaucrats coming from Istanbul.

During Ibn al-Farfūr's office, the place of the judgeship of Damascus in the Ottoman scholarly-bureaucratic hierarchy of positions was unclear. Mustafa b. Ali, the first Ottoman judge in the post-Jānbirdī period, most probably was a low-level professor prior to his judgeship in Damascus because *al-Shaqā'iq* does not contain a biographical entry for him. Yeganzade Sinan, his successor, followed the career line: the judge of Amasya,

⁴⁷⁴ Ibn Tūlūn, 235. For the location and significance of *dār al-adl* of Damascus see Rabbat, "The Ideological Significance of the Dar Al-'Adl in the Medieval Islamic Orient."

⁴⁷⁵ Ibn Tūlūn, *Tārikh al-Shām*, 235.

⁴⁷⁶ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 682.

then the treasurer, then the judge of Damascus, and afterwards the professor of the Bursa Muradiya Madrasa.⁴⁷⁷ His successor Kireççizade taught in the Bursa Sultaniye Madrasa, then occupied the judgeship of Damascus, and afterward continued his career as a professor in one of the Sahn madrasas.⁴⁷⁸ Apparently, the judgeship of Damascus did not constitute a clear step in the Ottoman hierarchy of positions during this period—there is no clear pattern of appointment before or after the judgeship of Damascus. This partly stemmed from the fact that the Ottoman learned establishment had not been fully consolidated yet during this period. That is, the rules of moving from professorships to judgeships, and vice versa in diverse steps of the hierarchy were not strictly regulated yet. For example, both Yeganzade and Kireççizade taught in the Sahn madrasas, the highest imperial madrasas of the period, not prior to their office in the judgeship of Damascus but afterward, which is quite contrary to the established appointment patterns in the mid-sixteenth century onward.⁴⁷⁹ In this atmosphere, Ibn al-Farfūr managed to occupy the post one more time following Kireççizade’s office, as mentioned earlier.

In the post-Ibn al-Farfūr period, on the other hand, the rules of promotion to the judgeship of Damascus and its place in the hierarchy of positions gradually became clearer. Ibn al-Farfūr’s successor İsrafilzade Efendi (d. 1536) was a below-Sahn-level scholar-bureaucrat, who was promoted from the professorship of the Bursa Sultaniya Madrasa to the judgeship of Damascus.⁴⁸⁰ After his office, however, Gulam Şemseddin Efendi (d. 1535), a Sahn professor, took the office.⁴⁸¹ Following him, the central government started appointing the judges of Damascus from among the high-ranking Ottoman scholar-bureaucrats, who had already taught in the Sahn madrasas: İshak Çelebi (d. 1536), Ebulleys Efendi (d. 1537), and Merhaba Çelebi (d. 1544).⁴⁸²

In sum, the judgeship of Damascus gradually became a step—usually coming after a professorship in the Sahn madrasa or after the judgeship of Aleppo—in the Ottoman hierarchy of positions in the post-Ibn al-Farfūr period. As will be seen in the following chapters, the judicial integration of the judgeship of

⁴⁷⁷ For Yeganzade’s biography, see Taşköprülüzade, *eş-Şaka’ik*, 639–41; al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 1200.

⁴⁷⁸ For Kireççizade’s biography see Taşköprülüzade, 729; al-Ghazzī, e.n. 891.

⁴⁷⁹ For this pattern, see Atçıl and Kami, “Studying Professional Careers as Hierarchical Networks.”

⁴⁸⁰ For İsrafilzade’s biography, see Taşköprülüzade, *eş-Şaka’ik*, 749.

⁴⁸¹ For the biography of Gulam Şemseddin Efendi, see Taşköprülüzade, 749–51; al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 877.

⁴⁸² For example, see their biographies in Taşköprülüzade, 743, 767–69, 763–65. Also, see Atçıl, *Scholars and Sultans*, 200–211.

Damascus into the career track of high-ranking Ottoman scholar-bureaucrats would play a vital role in the social and cultural integration of local scholars into the empire in the subsequent decades.

Badr al-Dīn did not witness Ibn al-Farfūr's trial. He was still in Istanbul when the latter died imprisoned. Yet he presents in his travelogue a vivid depiction of the sessions of his trial implying the dismissed judge deserved this treatment.⁴⁸³ On the other hand, Ibn Tūlūn, another contemporary historian, who was present in the city at the time of the trial, describes the investigation as unfair and considers some of the allegations against the dismissed judge as unfounded.⁴⁸⁴ Writing after decades, Ibn Ayyūb names several Damascenes, who composed elegies after Ibn Farfūr. He also shares an interesting anecdote about the prison life of the dismissed judge. Accordingly, Ibn al-Farfūr asks a Sufi sheikh for his pray during his imprisonment and the sheikh heralds him his appointment to the judgeship of Cairo. Then, it happens as the sheikh tells. Few days after Ibn al-Farfūr's death in jail, a sultanic decree for his appointment to the judgeship of Cairo arrives at Damascus.⁴⁸⁵ Ibn Ayyūb seems to try to convince his readers that the accused judge was finally acquitted from the allegations, and even received a promotion from the central Ottoman government. Writing after a century, the author of *al-Kawākib* connects Ibn al-Farfūr's trial to İsa Pasha's personal hatred and enmity towards him, and quoted a long elegy composed after him.⁴⁸⁶ In the same years, Al-Būrīnī describes Ibn al-Farfūr as “the noble of two states and the leader of two madhhabs (*'azīz al-dawlatayn and ra'īs al-madhhabayn*)” and claims that he died poisoned.⁴⁸⁷

These reports suggests Damascene scholarly community in general had accepted Ibn al-Farfūr's faults but considered the Ottoman center's response a bit exaggeration. Nevertheless, despite the harsh treatment Ibn Farfūr received, the Ottoman government did not subdue the Ibn Farfūr family in the following years. This suggests Ibn Farfūr's trial may have not been a part of a planned Ottoman policy against some powerful local actors or families in Damascus but rather a result of Ibn Farfūr's personal faults and his opponents' enmity. Ibn Farfūr's properties, including endowed property, seem to have been confiscated by the Ottoman

⁴⁸³ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Matāli'*, 70–72.

⁴⁸⁴ Ibn Tūlūn, *Tārikh al-Shām*, 235.

⁴⁸⁵ Ibn Ayyūb, *al-Rawd al-Ātir*, 868–69.

⁴⁸⁶ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 682.

⁴⁸⁷ Al-Būrīnī, *Tarājim al-a'yān*, II: 311.

authorities because available sources had no mention of them.⁴⁸⁸ Other members of the Farfūr family, on the other hand, left both endowed and private properties. Of Ibn Farfūr's two sons, Zayn al-Dīn (d. 1585), served as a judge in a small Syrian town. One of his grandsons occupied a professorship in a Damascene madrasa. The later generations of the family served as judges and jurists in Damascus. Although they lacked the political influence their ancestors enjoyed during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, Ibn Farfūr family survived to the post-Ottoman era.⁴⁸⁹

4.2.2. Departure from Aleppo

Badr al-Dīn had friends in Aleppo. He stayed at the dervish lodge of Sheikh Husayn al-Bīrī. Sheikh's son was Badr al-Dīn's student in Damascus some three years ago.⁴⁹⁰ He arranged for his young teacher and his companions three rooms at the lodge, and they spent a week there as guests.⁴⁹¹

Badr al-Dīn was worried after Ibn al-Farfūr's forced departure. Following day, he came across Jānim Hamzāwī (d. 1538), who was also traveling to Istanbul. Jānim was a former Mamluk official who entered the service of the Ottoman sultan. He was the nephew of Khayir Bay (d. 1522), the first governor of Ottoman Egypt. Jānim served in suppression of Ahmad Pasha, the rebellious governor of Egypt, and was rewarded with the office of *amīr al-hajj*, a lucrative post related to pilgrimage. Then, he was appointed as the *nāzır al-amwāl* in Egypt and Hijaz, which was the office collecting taxes and submitting them to the imperial treasury of Istanbul. Jānim's status was the governor of sub-province (*sancakbeyi*) in Egypt. However, since timar system was not applied in Egypt, his governorship carried no territorial meaning.⁴⁹² He was a generous patron of scholars in the Arab provinces and made pious endowments in both Cairo and Damascus.⁴⁹³ Jānim

⁴⁸⁸ Miura, "Transition of the 'Ulama' Families in Sixteenth Century Damascus," 212–13.

⁴⁸⁹ Miura, 214.

⁴⁹⁰ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 870; al-Ghazzī, *al-Matāli'*, 60–61.

⁴⁹¹ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Matāli'*, 60.

⁴⁹² P. M. Holt, "A Notable in an Age of Transition: Jānim Bey al-Ḥamzāwī (d. 944/1538)," in *Studies in Ottoman History In Honor of Professor V.L. Ménage*, ed. Colin Heywood and Colin Imber (Gorgias Press, 2010); Michael Winter, "Ottoman Egypt 1525-1609," in *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, 1–33; Bilgin Aydın and Rıfat Günalan, "XVI. Yüzyılda Osmanlı Eyalet Defterdarlıklarının Ortaya Çıkışı ve Gelişimi," *Osmanlı Araştırmaları*, 57-73, no. 30 (2007).

⁴⁹³ Holt, "A Notable in an Age of Transition," 113. One of his protégés was famous Sufi sheikh Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sha'rānī (d. 1565). See Winter, *Society and Religion in Early Ottoman Egypt*, 62–63.

and Badr al-Dīn had met before in Damascus, and knew each other. Thus, Badr al-Dīn did not hesitate to join into Jānim's convoy to continue his journey securely.

While Damascenes were occupied with Ibn Farfūr's trial, Badr al-Dīn was in the roads of Rūmī lands. Ibn Tūlūn would write in his annals that after Ibn al-Farfūr's return from Aleppo, Damascenes heard that Badr al-Dīn "ibn al-Qadi Radiyy al-Dīn ibn al-Ghazzī departed [from Aleppo] for Rūmī lands securely and honorably (*fī amn wa 'iz*)."⁴⁹⁴

4.2.3. First Encounter with the Ottoman *Mevālī*

Badr al-Dīn knew a few people in Istanbul. They were either former Mamluk scholars, who had been taken to the Ottoman capital following the conquest, or Ottoman officials, who had served in Damascus and had had acquaintance with his father Radiyy al-Dīn. His loneliness in Istanbul is rather obvious in the pages of *al-Matāli'*, in which he mentions his first night in the Fatih Complex. His words in this section demonstrate his anxiety to meet Ottoman elite:

When I settled in the complex of Sultan Mehmed (...) I felt homesick (...) and could not find a close friend (...). My sorrow got worse and worse (...) because of my separation from the mother, children, and family (...) and because of my involvement in such a serious undertaking, which I have not been used to (...). I have heard that those Rūmīs (*hā'ulā' al-arwām*) do not appreciate anyone (*lā ya 'rifūn miqdār ahad*) (...) and this idea has filled my heart with doubts and anxiety (*aksabanī waswāsan wa qalaqan*).⁴⁹⁵

Considering his young age and above-stated feelings, Badr al-Dīn's image of himself throughout *al-Matāli'* as an independent scholar respected by all seems to be a bit exaggeration. Badr al-Dīn portrays scholars in both Aleppo and Istanbul as eager to meet him, learn from him and ask him for scholarly certificates. In reality, however, he was very miserable as a young scholar devoid of powerful connections, especially in the Ottoman capital. His previous education in Islamic sciences in Cairo and his command of Arabic, which was his mother tongue, might have made him culturally superior to his Turkish-speaking Ottoman peers in Istanbul, but, as a thirty-year-old unknown Shāfi'ī professor, he was devoid of the necessary social capital in the imperial city.

⁴⁹⁴ Ibn Tūlūn, *Tārīkh al-Shām*, 235.

⁴⁹⁵ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Matāli'*, 134–35.

After the takeover of Mamluk lands, a group of scholars and high-ranking bureaucrats, including the Abbasid caliph, were brought to the Ottoman capital. This created in Istanbul a community of former Mamluk scholars who spoke the same language and shared the same culture. Following Selim's death, some members of this community managed to return to their homelands, sometimes by bribing Ottoman authorities. Süleyman initiated an investigation in 1523 to register those who had returned to the Arab provinces, and those who were still in Istanbul. In this investigation, Piri Pasha (d. 1532) was accused of having allowed some Arab families to return to their homelands in return for money, and eventually dismissed from the grand vizierate.⁴⁹⁶ We encounter biographies of some of those individuals, who returned to Arab provinces after their forced settlement in Istanbul,⁴⁹⁷ as well as several others, who could not return and eventually died in the Ottoman capital.⁴⁹⁸

When Badr al-Dīn entered Istanbul, the abovementioned community of Arab scholars in the city was not as large as it had been in the early years of the conquest. Yet, Badr al-Dīn availed himself of their presence. Abd al-Rahīm al-Abbāsī (d. 1556), an Egyptian scholar and friend of Badr al-Dīn's father, was a central figure in this community. Badr al-Dīn became his guest and spent most of his time with him. Another figure was Ibrāhīm al-Halabī (d. 1549), an Aleppian scholar, who traveled to Istanbul before the takeover of Mamluk lands and served as the prayer leader and preacher of the Fatih Mosque for years. Badr al-Dīn benefited from the library of the Fatih Mosque by al-Halabī's help. Apart from these two, Badr al-Dīn mentions six other individuals originally from Arab lands whom he met in Istanbul. They together constitute almost half of the scholars, whom he mentions in the pages devoted to Istanbul in his travelogue.

Was Badr al-Dīn actively involved in the daily life of the imperial capital or did he spend most of his time in a narrow circle of acquaintances? He arrived at the city on 28 June 1530. We know the imperial officials were preoccupied with the preparations of circumcision festival of the Ottoman princes these days. Preparations continued until the end of July.⁴⁹⁹ The festival took place in the Hippodrome with the participation of city dwellers. To entertain the guests and people of the city, magicians performed their shows and riders competed in horserace. On July 6, professors, their novices, sheikhs, and endowment

⁴⁹⁶ Şahin, *Empire and Power in the Reign of Süleyman*, 45.

⁴⁹⁷ For an example, see al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 1069.

⁴⁹⁸ Al-Ghazzī e.n. 165, 167, 317.

⁴⁹⁹ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Matāli'*; 129, 134; Şahin, *Empire and Power in the Reign of Süleyman*, 80–81.

officers met in a large banquet.⁵⁰⁰ Badr al-Dīn's host al-Abbāsī was among the participants; and he even penned a book on the festival and presented it to the court library later on.⁵⁰¹ In his travel account, Badr al-Dīn mentions preoccupation of the imperial officials with the circumcision festival when he arrived at the city but he gives no reference to any of the abovementioned events—that suggests he most probably did not participate in the festival.

In a similar vein, Badr al-Dīn is silent about the activities in the imperial capital during the feast of sacrifice in the following month. He had spent the feast of Ramadan in Aleppo in late May. In the related section of the travelogue, he informs his readers about the banquets he was invited to in Aleppo.⁵⁰² In Istanbul, however, he gives no information about the feast of sacrifice nor mentions any banquet he was invited to. He stayed in the imperial city until June 1531. That is, he spent a whole Ramadan and the subsequent feast in April-May 1531 in Istanbul. Yet he again writes nothing about these events. In December 1530, the Habsburg Empire sieged Budin, and ambassadors visited the Ottoman center with gifts and diplomatic envoys.⁵⁰³ Badr al-Dīn is silent about the political agenda of the city as well.

All these suggest that Badr al-Dīn was not involved actively in the daily and political life of the imperial city.⁵⁰⁴ He most probably remained aloof from blending with the imperial elite or could not managed this due to language barrier or cultural and professional differentiation, although he wanted us to believe the opposite in his travelogue.

Of course, this does not mean that he never met the Ottoman elite during his stay at Istanbul—any scholar who performed his prayers at the Fatih Mosque regularly most probably could acquaint at least several high-ranking Ottoman professors teaching in the surrounding Sahn madrasas. In fact, of the Ottoman *mevālī*, Badr al-Dīn mentions Muhyiddin Fenari (the chief judge of Rumelia), Kadiri Çelebi (the chief judge of Anatolia), Sadi Çelebi (the judge of Istanbul), Ebussuud Efendi (a Sahn professor), and a certain Şemsi

⁵⁰⁰ M. Tayyib Gökbilgin, *Kanuni Sultan Süleyman* (Kronik Kitap, 2020), 46–48.

⁵⁰¹ Pfeifer, “To Gather Together,” 60.

⁵⁰² Al-Ghazzī, *al-Matāli*’, 69.

⁵⁰³ Şahin, *Empire and Power in the Reign of Süleyman*, 81.

⁵⁰⁴ For an opposite interpretation, see Pfeifer, *Empire of Salons*, 78–96.

Efendi (a Sahn professor) in his travelogue.⁵⁰⁵ Yet, for instance, he mentions the chief judge of Rumelia only by his name, without mentioning any detail of the meeting. Most probably, he greeted him in a gathering but did not enjoy any considerable exchange with him. As for the chief judge of Anatolia, he met him more than once but these visits seem to be merely to submit his petition and ask its result. As for the abovementioned Sahn professors, he seems to have enjoyed opportunity to sit longer. For example, in a gathering, he discussed the explanation of some Quranic verses with Ebussuud Efendi.⁵⁰⁶

Badr al-Dīn spent most of his time in the Ottoman capital with his abovementioned host al-Abbāsī. For example, he stayed for one and a half months at a house near to al-Abbāsī's house, and then moved to al-Abbāsī's own mansion.⁵⁰⁷ The two escaped plague in Istanbul and spent two months together in surrounding towns.⁵⁰⁸ In fact, a considerable part of the section devoted to Istanbul and surrounding regions in the travelogue (about 130 pages from about 170 pages in the printed version of the book, i.e. approximately 75 %) is about Badr al-Dīn's scholarly and poetic exchange with his host al-Abbāsī.⁵⁰⁹ In contrast, the part devoted to the abovementioned Ottoman *mevālī* constitutes only a few pages.⁵¹⁰

Then, how did Badr al-Dīn achieve his goal as a stranger in the Ottoman capital? As will be seen below, the way he utilized his father's connections in Istanbul brought him success.

4.2.4. Ottoman Chief Judge Four-Steps Away

Badr al-Dīn mentions approximately sixty people in his travelogue. We can group them into two main categories according to his acquaintance with them: 1) those whom he had previously known, and 2) those whom he met for the first time during his journey. The first group largely consists of people from Syro-Egypt or people with a cultural or historical connection to this geography whereas the second group contains mostly Ottomans living in the core Ottoman lands, especially in Istanbul. The first group constitutes Badr

⁵⁰⁵ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Matāli'*, 264–73. See their biographies in Taşköprülüzade, *eş-Şaka'ik*, 607–9, 699–701, 701–3; Atayi, *Hadā'ik*, 639–50.

⁵⁰⁶ Al-Ghazzī, 268.

⁵⁰⁷ Al-Ghazzī, 137.

⁵⁰⁸ Al-Ghazzī, 210–54.

⁵⁰⁹ See al-Ghazzī, 134–263. In these pages, Badr al-Dīn quotes his and al-Abbāsī's verses, al-Abbāsī's legal questions and his answers to them, al-Abbāsī's long certificate for his children, etc.

⁵¹⁰ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Matāli'*, 264–69.

al-Dīn's ego-network before his travel, while both together constitute his ego-network after his travel. In this regard, we can say that his Istanbul travel was a network-building experience that eventually enlarged Badr al-Dīn's network of relationships in size and geographical scope. That is, at the end of his journey, Badr al-Dīn knew many new people, most of whom were from the distant capital city.

Badr al-Dīn had to utilize his relationship with the abovementioned first group to achieve his goal in the imperial capital. He had connections with three figures from this group, who could help him: (1) Abd al-Rahīm al-Abbāsī, a leading scholar from Arab provinces, (2) Abdurrahim Müeyyedzade, a respected Ottoman scholar-Sufi, and (3) Ayas Pasha, previously the governor of Damascus and recently the Ottoman vizier. Badr al-Dīn had previous acquaintance with these individuals because his father Radiyy al-Dīn had met them in Damascus and introduced his son Badr al-Dīn to them. Thus, Badr al-Dīn was hoping to receive their support in his struggle for position in Istanbul.

As mentioned earlier, Badr al-Dīn's problem was about his appointment diplomas in Damascene endowments, and renewal of these diplomas was under the authority of Kadiri Çelebi (d. 1548), the chief judge of Anatolia. The chief judgeships of Anatolia and Rumelia were two bodies mainly responsible for the judicial administration of the empire. The scholars occupying these offices were principal members of the Imperial Council (*Divān-ı Hümayun*). As a part of the aforementioned trial-and-error policies in the newly conquered Arab provinces, the Ottomans established a third chief judgeship after the conquest of the Mamluk lands, which was to administer judicial affairs of the Arab provinces and the eastern and southeastern Anatolia. However, this post was abolished in few years, and the provinces under its jurisdiction were transferred to the chief judgeship of Anatolia.⁵¹¹ Thus, when Badr al-Dīn was in Istanbul, the appointments to judicial and endowed positions in Damascus had been made by the latter office for a while.

Unfortunately, Badr al-Dīn had no direct connection to the chief judge of Anatolia. If he went to the chief judge in person, his request would possibly be ignored or rejected. As a young scholar, he had no bargaining power against the imperial elite even in Damascus, let alone in the imperial capital. Otherwise, he would have solved his problem in Damascus without bearing his long and tiring journey to this foreign geography.

⁵¹¹ İ. Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devletinin İlimiye Teşkilâtı*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2014), 155–56.

Badr al-Dīn had to access to the chief judge of Anatolia through a proper channel. He decided to utilize his connections to the abovementioned three individuals in Istanbul. The most powerful actor among them was the Vizier Ayas Pasha. Thus, Badr al-Dīn decided to resort Ayas Pasha's help and brought with him several gifts for the vizier from his hometown. Yet Badr al-Dīn knew well that his access to Ayas Pasha would not be easy, too, because the latter represented one of the highest authorities in the Ottoman capital. Although Ayas Pasha was in his ego-network, the relationship between Ayas Pasha and Badr al-Dīn was not homogeneous—their relationship was not at similar weight in both sides. In other words, Ayas Pasha, as a significant imperial official, was a central figure in Badr al-Dīn's personal network whereas the opposite was not true—Badr al-Dīn was one of the local scholars in the eyes of the Ottoman vizier. Thus, the shortest path from Badr al-Dīn to Ayas Pasha would not be the best path to follow. Badr al-Dīn realized that he needed a stronger, even if longer, channel leading him to the vizier. Consequently, he decided to utilize his relationships with Abd al-Rahīm al-Abbāsī and Abdurrahim Müeyyedzade to reach him.

Abd al-Rahīm al-Abbāsī was one of the few individuals, who were close to Badr al-Dīn culturally, in Istanbul. He was a Cairene scholar and a peer of Radiyy al-Dīn. He was a well-known scholar even outside the Mamluk lands. He visited Sultan Bayezid II (r.1481–1512) as an ambassador of the Mamluk Sultan in 1490s, and the Ottoman sultan offered him posts to stay in the Ottoman lands, but he declined this offer and preferred to return to Egypt.⁵¹² After the conquest of Egypt, he was taken to the Ottoman capital.⁵¹³ Al-Abbāsī was assigned a salary in Istanbul instead of being appointed to a post. He was a respected scholar but not an Ottoman scholar-bureaucrat occupying positions in Ottoman hierarchy.

When Badr al-Dīn came to Istanbul, al-Abbāsī had been there for more than a decade. This long stay in the capital city helped him to establish contacts with the imperial elite. In Badr al-Dīn's travelogue, we see that he was corresponding verses to some Ottoman scholars to praise them. For example, he sent some verses to congratulate Sadi Çelebi, the judge of Istanbul, when the latter moved to his new mansion in the day of Nawrūz.⁵¹⁴ Al-Abbāsī enjoyed good connections to other Ottoman elite as well.⁵¹⁵

⁵¹² Pfeifer, "To Gather Together," 45–55. For his biography, see al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib* e.n. 1018; Taşköprülüzade, *eş-Şaka'ik*, 649.

⁵¹³ Ibn Tūlūn writes that he came with Selim I from Cairo to Damascus wearing Rūmī clothes on his way to Rūmī lands and became Radiyy al-Dīn's guest in Damascus. Ibn Tūlūn, *Mufākaha*, 374.

⁵¹⁴ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Matāli'*, 147–48. For another poetry al-Abbāsī composed for Sadi Çelebi, see al-Ghazzī, 156–60.

⁵¹⁵ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Matāli'*, 156–60; Pfeifer, "To Gather Together," 60–61.

Badr al-Dīn informed al-Abbāsī about the reason for his travel, most probably by a letter, when he was still in Damascus. Al-Abbāsī welcomed his travel, hosted him and facilitated his access to the imperial elite. Few days after his arrival at Istanbul, al-Abbāsī sent him to Abdurrahim Müeyyedzade, who represented a different person type in several respects. Unlike al-Abbāsī, Müeyyedzade received his education from the Ottoman scholars in Istanbul and grew up in Ottoman scholarly and Sufi circles. He was first in Ottoman scholarly-bureaucratic career track but then left it; and, in time, appeared as a respected scholar-Sufi figure. He was close to the imperial officials due to his propinquity and familial connections. Müeyyedzade Abdurrahman (d. 1516), the deceased chief judge of Bayezid and Süleyman's reigns, was his brother. Ebussuud Efendi (a Sahn professor at that time) was the husband of his nephew. Ebussuud's father Muhyiddin İskilibi (d. 1514/15) was one of his sheikhs. In short, Müeyyedzade was much more connected to the imperial elite than al-Abbāsī thanks to his cultural and social ties.

Abdurrahim Müeyyedzade and al-Abbāsī met for the first time in Aleppo and their relationship became closer during al-Abbāsī's long stay in Istanbul during the last ten years.⁵¹⁶ Badr al-Dīn's father Radiyy al-Dīn also met Müeyyedzade in Damascus when the latter was returning from pilgrimage.⁵¹⁷ Müeyyedzade carried a stronger Ottoman identity than al-Abbāsī had. Thus, he was a bit more distant from Badr al-Dīn culturally. This led Badr al-Dīn to visit him after al-Abbāsī, most probably by the al-Abbāsī's permission and help.

Müeyyedzade welcomed Badr al-Dīn at his house. After a brief meeting, he sent a respected person (*min akābir al-Rūm*) to Ayas Pasha and arranged a meeting with him for Badr al-Dīn.⁵¹⁸ Acting as an intermediary between a person of a low-rank and a person of a high rank was usual according to the contemporary imperial culture. Despite the increasing bureaucratization of the empire during the sixteenth century, the Ottoman governance, as the governance of other early modern empires, substantially depended on informal human interaction and gatherings. In other words, "formal mechanisms of rule were inextricably intertwined with, and indeed relied upon, a more informal substrate of Ottoman salons."⁵¹⁹ The unspoken but established

⁵¹⁶ Pfeifer, "To Gather Together," 53.

⁵¹⁷ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 1019.

⁵¹⁸ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Matāli'*, 129.

⁵¹⁹ Pfeifer, *Empire of Salons*, 23.

rules of elite gatherings required Badr al-Dīn to seek intermediaries whose mediation could make the Vizier Ayas Pasha take Badr al-Dīn more seriously.

When Badr al-Dīn met the Ottoman vizier, the latter was preoccupied with the preparations of the abovementioned circumcision festival. The meeting took place in the garden of the vizier's mansion in Galata in a Friday morning.⁵²⁰ Apparently, this was a short meeting. The vizier, who was the governor of Damascus some six years ago, asked his guest about the city and Damascenes. Then, the latter informed the vizier about the reason of his travel. After a while, Badr al-Dīn visited Ayas Pasha one more time. This time, he found the opportunity to present his gifts (a Quran, a *Burda* [the well-known panegyric for the Prophet] a rosary etc.) to the vizier.

Although Ayas Pasha knew Radiyy al-Dīn well, he had not much idea about Badr al-Dīn and his scholarly capacity. Ayas Pasha was originally a *devşirme*, who was conscripted in his childhood, and educated in a broad spectrum of fields including basic Islamic sciences and Arabic in the Ottoman Palace. Of course, this familiarity with Islamic culture and scholarship increased in time thanks to his long military-bureaucratic career.⁵²¹ That is, the vizier had enough background to involve in an educated conversation with his guest and assess his level of scholarship. Accordingly, he asked Badr al-Dīn the meaning of some Arabic verses from the Quran and *al-Burda* he presented as gifts, as if he wanted to test the young scholar. He then wanted him to compose a commentary on some Quranic verses and another commentary on *al-Burda*. He also pledged Badr al-Dīn for help but made an apology because of his preoccupation with the circumcision festival.

Badr al-Dīn started penning the commentaries Ayas Pasha ordered after leaving the vizier's mansion. The books he had to resort for his research were available in the library of the Fatih Mosque. He visited Ibrāhīm al-Halabī, the prayer leader and preacher of the mosque, and borrowed the books he needed from the library of the mosque by the latter's permission.⁵²² After a while, he completed his works and presented them to the vizier. Ayas Pasha was finally persuaded by Badr al-Dīn's scholarly competence. He then introduced him to the chief judge of Anatolia and Vizier Kasım Pasha, two top officials in the imperial capital. These

⁵²⁰ Al-Ghazzī, 129.

⁵²¹ For Ayas Pasha's biography, see Bekir Kütükoğlu, "Ayas Paşa," in *DİA* (Online: TDV İSAM, 1991). For the school of *Enderun*, where Ayas Paşa received his education, see Mehmet İpşirli, "Enderun," *DİA* (Online: TDV İSAM, 1995).

⁵²² Al-Ghazzī, 269.

meetings were significant for Badr al-Dīn because he was enlarging his network in the imperial capital. Neither the Anatolian chief judge nor the third vizier was in his ego-network at the beginning of his journey, but now he knew them personally. In their eyes, Badr al-Dīn was not Radiyy al-Dīn's son but a promising young Damascene scholar.

In sum, Badr al-Dīn utilized his weak network in Istanbul strategically, moving from individuals in his first-zone (i.e. culturally and positionally closest figures) to individuals in his second-zone (i.e. figures carrying an Ottoman identity). His robust access to the chief judge of Anatolia became possible only in four-steps: He first met with al-Abbāsī, then, by his help, he met with Müeyyedzade. Müeyyedzade arranged his meeting with Ayas Pasha, and the latter introduced him to the chief judge. Badr al-Dīn could have directly sought Ayas Pasha's help because he knew the vizier from Damascus through his father. Yet he did not prefer this option because he saw well that his relationship with the Ayas Pasha was not that of equals. Thus, eventually, he followed a longer but safer path to the chief judge.

4.2.5. A Year in Istanbul

After the circumcision festival, the imperial council started meeting again in late July. Upon Ayas Pasha's instruction, Badr al-Dīn presented his petition to the chief judge of Anatolia. However, the sultan traveled to Bursa afterward. The Grand Vizier İbrahim Pasha traveled with him, and the imperial council could not consider Badr al-Dīn's petition.⁵²³

At the end of August, a plague spread in the imperial capital, and Badr al-Dīn and his host al-Abbāsī escaped to Izmit, a small town near Istanbul. During the sixteenth century, Istanbul became a real magnet for plague and endemics due to its location on the trade routes of the Black Sea, Asia Minor, and Mediterranean.⁵²⁴ Al-Abbāsī and Badr al-Dīn spend two months in Izmit waiting the plague to end. They could return to Istanbul in early November. Badr al-Dīn's second stay in the imperial capital would continue seven and a half months.

⁵²³ Al-Ghazzī, 134.

⁵²⁴ Nükhet Varlık, *Plague and Empire in the Early Modern Mediterranean World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 160–85.

During this time, he visited important buildings in the city such as Ayasofya and Küçük Ayasofya, as well as some gardens and bazaars. However, he spent most of his time by reading and writing. He studied al-Abbāsī's two works in rhetoric and literature.⁵²⁵ He also abbreviated one of al-Abbāsī's works related to rhetoric and literature in late January 1531.⁵²⁶ Meanwhile, he abridged another book in grammar.⁵²⁷ He presented people his prayer against the plague,⁵²⁸ some poems he was authorized to transmit,⁵²⁹ his versified commentaries on the book of *al-Alfiyya*,⁵³⁰ and the aforementioned commentaries he composed upon Ayas Pasha's request in Istanbul.⁵³¹ In addition, he granted certificates to some people and their sons.⁵³² He also attained a certificate from al-Abbāsī for himself and his children, including his future children.⁵³³

Although Badr al-Dīn waited months in Istanbul, he could not receive an affirmative result from the imperial council. Apparently, the latter was corresponding with the authorities in Damascus to have more information about Badr al-Dīn's case. Damascenes, on the other hand, were preoccupied with Ibn al-Farfūr's trial, who would die in mid-February 1531 in prison. In the spring, Badr al-Dīn received letters from his family and friends in Damascus, who informed him about the Judge İsrāfilzade's attempts to appoint others to Badr al-Dīn's positions in endowments. Yet, these attempts yielded no results, and Badr al-Dīn eventually managed to receive new *berāts* for his posts.

Badr al-Dīn left Istanbul for Damascus on 8 June 1531— after one-year residence. When he arrived at Aleppo on July 9, he was sick, and spent there nearly a month to recover. He welcomed his Aleppine friends who visited him in his bed in the dervish lodge of Husayn al-Bīrī and shared with them his experiences in the Ottoman capital as well as his success story there.

⁵²⁵ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Matāli'*, 138.

⁵²⁶ Al-Ghazzī, 138; Çollak and Akpınar, "GAZZÎ, Bedreddin."

⁵²⁷ Al-Ghazzī, 192.

⁵²⁸ Al-Ghazzī, 263.

⁵²⁹ Al-Ghazzī, 268–69.

⁵³⁰ Al-Ghazzī, 271.

⁵³¹ Al-Ghazzī, 263, 271. Also see Badr al-Dīn al-Ghazzī, *Al-Zubda fī Sharh al-Burda*, ed. Umar Mūsā Bāshā (Algeria: Wizāra al-Thaqāfa, 2007).

⁵³² Al-Ghazzī, *al-Matāli'*, 196, 271.

⁵³³ Al-Ghazzī, 199–209.

4.2.6. *Al-Matāli‘ al-Badriyya: A Guidebook for the Lands of Rūm and a Young Provincial Scholar’s Success Story*

Badr al-Dīn arrived at Damascus on August 11. During the subsequent two years, he organized his travel notes and finished his travelogue on 8 July 1534.⁵³⁴ He named it *al-Matāli‘ al-badriyya fī al-manāzil al-rūmiyya* [The Rising of the Full Moon on the Stations of the Lands of Rūm]. In contemporary Ottoman usage, the term Rūmī was usually used alongside the terms Ajam and Arab. Rūmī did not denote an ethnic or political-administrative category, but rather a cultural category related to language and cultural geography mainly formed in the Balkan-Anatolia complex. Poets in major cities of Anatolia had already adopted Rūmī identity to distinguish themselves from their counterparts in Arab and Ajam lands in the early sixteenth century.⁵³⁵ Ottoman soldiers, who were sent to Yemen and India before the conquest of the Mamluk lands, were known as Rūmīs or Rūmlu (meaning from the lands of Rūm) in these lands. This designation did not only appear in Arabic and Persian speaking geographies when Badr al-Dīn visited Istanbul in 1530s but also in European languages such as Portuguese.⁵³⁶

The title of his travelogue, which was al-Abbāsī’s suggestion, implies young Badr al-Dīn’s rise in the lands of Rūm as a full moon. In accordance with this title, Badr al-Dīn seems to have two main goals in his work. First, he wanted his travelogue to be a guidebook for the lands of Rūm, which were still mysterious for the majority of the Arab readers in many respects. Muslims from the central Arab lands traveled to the lands of Rūm since the earliest dates of Islam. Yet the region did not become a center of attraction for the Muslim scholars for centuries, except for those who came to buy books and learn astronomy.⁵³⁷ The ruler of Muslim Anatolian principalities including the Ottomans constructed many educational institutions in the region and patronized scholars generously from the thirteenth century. Finally, the region emerged as a nascent scholarly center appealing the attention of itinerant scholars. Many scholars from Syro-Egypt traveled to the lands of Rūm to serve as judges, professors, scribes, and builders of the political discourse by their

⁵³⁴ Al-Ghazzī, 323.

⁵³⁵ Cemal Kafadar, “A Rome of One’s Own: Reflections on Cultural Geography and Identity in the Lands of Rūm,” ed. Gülrü Necipoğlu and Sibel Bozdoğan, *Muqarnas* XXIV (2007): 7–25; Selim S. Kuru, “The Literature of Rūm: The Making of a Literary Tradition (1450–1600),” in *The Cambridge History of Turkey 1453-1603* (Cambridge University Press Cambridge, 2013).

⁵³⁶ Salih Özbaran, “Ottoman as ‘Rumes’ in Portuguese Sources in the Sixteenth Century,” *Portuguese Studies* 17 (2001): 64–74.

⁵³⁷ See Koray Durak, “From Byzantium to Istanbul: 8000 Years of a Capital,” in *Through an Eastern Window: Muslims in Constantinople and Constantinople in Early Islamic Sources*, ed. Koray Durak (Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2010), 102–11.

works.⁵³⁸ Yet for the majority, Cairo was still the undisputed scholarly center with its unmatched prestige, wealth, and established scholarly traditions. The lifestories of those who traveled from Mamluk domains to the lands of Rūm as mature scholars suggest that they, even in the early sixteenth century, did not consider it more than a promising center of patronage one could try his chance if he failed to establish himself in one of the Mamluk centers such as Cairo or Damascus.⁵³⁹ The majority of the Mamluk-based scholars lacked the interest in learning Turkish, collecting books produced in this language, or pursuing their education in Rūmī lands.⁵⁴⁰ Thus, they had no significant personal experience about the Rūmī region, its people and their culture in the wake of the Ottoman conquest. After 1516–17, however, they had to visit the Ottoman capital for various reasons, ranging from requesting appointment to local positions to seeking patronage. Thus, they needed to know the stations in this new geography, the culture of its inhabitants as well as possible dangers and difficulties that await them. Some of the earlier travelers, including Badr al-Dīn’s father-in-law, were killed in the routes of Rūm.⁵⁴¹ Even Badr al-Dīn himself encountered thieves trying to rob them during his journey.⁵⁴² Badr al-Dīn and his peers urgently needed to know more about the core lands of the empire. Thus, Badr al-Dīn designed his work to meet this urgent need.

Badr al-Dīn calls his book a diary (*ta’līq*) at its preamble. Accordingly, he presents daily accounts of his journey until his arrival at Istanbul. His journey from Damascus to Istanbul took him about forty days (16 May–28 June 1530) adding his one-week stay at Aleppo. His chronological narrative in these parts makes his readers feel as if they were accompanying Badr al-Dīn on his journey. He mentions more than forty

⁵³⁸ Ökten, “Scholars and Mobility”; Sara Nur Yıldız, “From Cairo to Ayasuluk: Hacı Paşa and the Transmission of Islamic Learning to Western Anatolia in the Late Fourteenth Century,” *Journal of Islamic Studies* 25, no. 3 (2014): 263–97; Atçıl, “Mobility of Scholars and Formation of a Self-Sustaining Scholarly System”; Taha Yasin Arslan, “A Fifteenth-Century Mamluk Astronomer in the Ottoman Realm: ‘Umar al-Dimashqī and His ‘ilm al-Mīqat Corpus the Hamidiye 1453,” *Nazariyat Journal for the History of Islamic Philosophy and Sciences* 4, no. 2 (2018): 119–40. Cihan Yüksel Muslu, “Patterns of Mobility between Ottoman and Mamluk Lands,” in *The Mamluk Sultanate from the Perspective of Regional and World History: Economic, Social and Cultural Development in an Era of Increasing International Interaction and Competition*, ed. Reuven Amitai and Stephan Conermann, (Mamluk Studies, vol. 17. Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2019), 391–431.

⁵³⁹ For instance, Molla Gürani came to the Ottoman lands after losing Mamluk Sultan’s favor and being excluded from the Cairene scholarly milieu and resided in Aleppo. See Muslu, “Patterns of Mobility between Ottoman and Mamluk Lands.” Another example is Abd al-Rahīm al-Abbāsī, who visited Istanbul around the turn of the sixteenth century upon being forced to leave Damascus because of his involvement in Mamluk politics. Despite Bayezid II’s generous patronage, al-Abbāsī did not stay at the Ottoman capital long and returned to Cairo. For al-Abbāsī’s adventure in the Ottoman lands, see Pfeifer, *Empire of Salons*, 24–56.

⁵⁴⁰ Pfeifer, *Empire of Salons*, 41–45.

⁵⁴¹ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 261.

⁵⁴² Al-Ghazzī, *al-Matāli*, 48–49.

stations (*manzil*) starting from the surroundings of Damascus until his entrance to Istanbul. Of about 300 pages of the published copy of the travelogue, about 125 pages (41 %) are devoted to these stations on round trip. In each station, he tries to provide his readers with as much information as possible about the topography, climate, and local population. For example, in Kartal, a district in today's Istanbul, he writes,

“Al-Qartal is a nice village by the sea, so the sea water sometimes gets inside the houses. Its inhabitants are humiliated Christians, whose faces have turned pale because of the winds coming from the sea. Fish is abundant in Kartal, and there is an inn there, which has been endowed to the travelers for God's sake. There is a stream near this inn and agricultural lands and gardens outside it.”⁵⁴³

Badr al-Dīn also mentions the exact date of the arrival of his caravan at each station and its departure from it, not only by day but also by daily time. Thus, his readers can easily calculate how many hours it takes between two destinations. For example, Badr al-Dīn was in Gebze at midday (*dahwa al-nahār*) on 26 June, and it was rainy and the ground was muddy. He continued the journey until he arrived at Kartal the same day at afternoon (*waqt al-asīl*), and the rain a bit eased.⁵⁴⁴ Such vivid descriptions of the stations were of course very helpful for inexperienced future travelers, who could make better preparations for their journey by taking lessons from Badr al-Dīn's experiences. For example, as will be mentioned in Chapter VII, when Badr al-Dīn's son Najm al-Dīn traveled to Istanbul after about a century, he apparently brought a copy of *al-Matāli'* with himself, and was reading his father's observations about the routes of Rūm at each station he arrived at.

For Badr al-Dīn and his contemporaries, Mamluk past was still a living memory.⁵⁴⁵ Thus, he writes at the Cilician Gates (Gülek Pass), “this is the last territory under Circassian suzerainty, and after it, Karaman lands start.”⁵⁴⁶ He undertakes the mission of introducing these distant lands to his readers, but his introduction is not always neutral. In contrast, he usually adds his own interpretations and judgements about several cultural practices and beliefs. In Konya, for example, he criticized the human statues on the city

⁵⁴³ Al-Ghazzī, 258.

⁵⁴⁴ Al-Ghazzī, 255-58.

⁵⁴⁵ For the traces of the Mamluk rule in the collective memory in reference to the writings of the contemporary travelers see Frenkel, “The Ottomans and the Mamluks through the Eyes of Arab Travelers (in 16th–17th Centuries).”

⁵⁴⁶ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Matāli'*, 99.

walls underlying that Sharī ‘a has prohibited such things.⁵⁴⁷ Coming from an old Islamic center, Badr al-Dīn may have not been accustomed to see such statues. Rūmī lands, on the other hand, were still a heterogeneous life space for different religions and belief systems at the first decades of the sixteenth century.



In the city of Konya, Badr al-Dīn writes, “(...) at some of its gates, there are human images whose feet are connected to the stones of the building (*wa ‘alā ba‘d abwābihā sūra insān muttasila aqdāmuhū bi-ba‘d hijāra al-bunyān*).”

Badr al-Dīn must have seen one of the Roman statues in the adjacent drawing of the city walls of Konya drawn by Léon de Laborde (1807–1869), French traveler, who visited Anatolia in the nineteenth century. (taken from Suzan Yalman, “Ala al-Din Kayqubad Illuminated: A Rum Seljuq Sultan as Cosmic Ruler,” *Muqarnas*, 29, 151–86. Original source: Léon de Laborde, *Voyage de l’Asie Mineure* (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1838), 133, pl. LXIII.)

Figure 2: The City Walls of Konya in a Nineteenth-Century Drawing

Badr al-Dīn heard for the first time about Nasr al-Dīn Khāwaja (d. 1284?) after few days in Akşehir, whom he introduced to his readers as “Juhā of the lands of Rūm.”⁵⁴⁸ Juhā is a semi-fictional hero famous by his fine stories among Arabs. Apparently, by such resemblances, Badr al-Dīn was not only introducing the relatively novel Rūmī culture to his Arabic-speaking readers but also translating it into their culture. A part of this translation was the names of individuals. Badr al-Dīn usually introduced Ottomans to his readers not with their exact names in Turkish form but in an Arabicized version. For example, he introduces Kassabzade Mehmed Efendi, an Ottoman notable in İzmit, as Muhammad al-İznikmīdī ibn al-Qassāb. Of course, the latter version would make more sense and be memorable for his readers. In other words, finding such similarities and equivalents between the Arab and Rūmī cultures was a significant phase of the process of interaction between the Ottoman Empire and its Arab provinces.⁵⁴⁹ As a matter of fact, Taşköprizade Ahmed

⁵⁴⁷ Al-Ghazzī, 102.

⁵⁴⁸ Al-Ghazzī, 105.

⁵⁴⁹ Pfeifer, “To Gather Together,” 95.

Efendi (d. 1561), who would compose his *al-Shaqā'iq* in Arabic two decades later, adopted a similar approach. He preferred to arabicize Ottoman names of his biographies in order to make his work more accessible for Arab readers. For example, he introduced Yazıcıoğlu Mehmed Efendi as al-Sheikh Muhammad al-shahīr bi-Ibn al-Kātib by word-by-word translation.⁵⁵⁰

Of course, Arabic speaking subjects of the empire wanted to know more about the new ruling elite. At the time of Badr al-Dīn's travel, there were many biographical dictionaries introducing Syro-Egyptian elite but there was no single separate biographical work devoted to the Ottoman-Rūmī notables. Badr al-Dīn himself, as quoted before, confesses his lack of information about Rūmī elite saying that he only heard that Rūmīs did hardly appreciate anyone. In the absence of such biographical works about the Ottoman elite, readers in the Arab provinces would resort to the travel accounts of Badr al-Dīn and similar travelers. Thus, Badr al-Dīn shared his personal relationship with the high-ranking Ottoman scholars he met in Istanbul. He tried to make them accessible to his readers not only by arabicizing their names as exemplified above but also by evaluating their level of scholarship according to the conventions of the *tabāqāt* genre. For example, while introducing the Ottomans, he utilizes pattern expressions such as *al-shaykh*, *al-imām*, *al-allāma*, *al-quḍwa*, *al-umda*, *al-fahhāma*, *al-muhaqqiq*, *al-mudaqqiq*, etc. according to the related individual's rank and competence in scholarship.⁵⁵¹ Badr al-Dīn seems to have become successful in incorporating the Ottoman elite into Arabic biography tradition—writing after a century, the author of *al-Kawākib* gives numerous references to Badr al-Dīn's travelogue in the biographical entries devoted to the Rūmī elite.⁵⁵² *Al-Matāli'* circulated in and outside Damascus in the subsequent two centuries to the extent that a nice and collated copy written in the mid-seventeenth century finally reached to the library of Köprülü family in Istanbul, most probably as a gift.⁵⁵³

Al-Matāli' was one of the first travelogues penned by Arab scholars traveling between the Arab provinces and the core Ottoman lands after the takeover of Mamluk lands. As Elger states, Badr al-Dīn's travelogue

⁵⁵⁰ Taşköprülüzade, *eş-Şaka'ik*, 191.

⁵⁵¹ For examples, see al-Ghazzī, *al-Matāli'*, 263–66.

⁵⁵² Pfeifer, “To Gather Together,” 92–97.

⁵⁵³ Nir Shafir, “The Road from Damascus: Circulation and the Redefinition of Islam in the Ottoman Empire, 1620-1720” (PhD diss., Los Angeles, University of California, 2016), 247.

set an example for the huge literature of travelogues to Istanbul afterward.⁵⁵⁴ The information Badr al-Dīn provided about the lands after the Taurus Mountains, the previous border between the Circassians and Ottomans, was largely new for his readers. However, *al-Matāli‘* had a second agenda as well. It is an autobiographical account that gives the details of one and a half year in Badr al-Dīn’s life. Thus, as Frenkel states, *al-Matāli‘* “is more than a travelogue, rather an intellectual itinerary. It seems that the author aspired to construct a self-image of religiosity and scholarship.”⁵⁵⁵

Badr al-Dīn designs his work as a success story in the new imperial capital. He mentions the imperial elite in the context of friendship and mutual respect. His narration of them makes his readers think that Badr al-Dīn’s scholarly competence received total acceptance of the high-ranking Ottoman scholars and Sufis. For example, while introducing aforementioned Müeyyedzade Abdurrahim, he writes,

(...) He presented to me his brief written life story (*ba’d tarjamatihi*) and conveyed his sympathy, brotherhood, and affection (*muhabba, wa ukhuwwa wa mawadda*). I achieved his full acceptance (*qabūl tāmm*) and I was precious to him (*kuntu indahū bi-makām sām*). He was addressing me as the scrutinizing scholar and examining knower (*al-ālim al-mudaqqiq wa al-ārīf al-muhaqqiq*). I benefited from him, and he benefited from me. I learned from him, and he learned from me.”⁵⁵⁶

As observed in this paragraph, Badr al-Dīn tries to give his readers the message that the Ottoman scholars not only embraced him with respect but also benefited from his knowledge. To empower this image, he sometimes gives information about the content of the scholarly exchange that took place between himself and the Ottoman scholars. For example, he discussed with the Sahn professor Ebussuud Efendi the meaning of a Quranic word,⁵⁵⁷ and reported the Sahn professor Şemsi Efendi some verses about gray hair, which he quoted in the related pages of the travelogue, as a gesture to white-haired Şemsi Efendi.⁵⁵⁸ Badr al-Dīn’s narrative strategy in such passages is generally to praise himself between the lines. For example, after

⁵⁵⁴ See Ralf Elger, “Istanbul in Early Modern Muslim Arabic Literature,” in *Büyük İstanbul Tarihi* (Online); Frenkel, “The Ottomans and the Mamluks through the Eyes of Arab Travelers (in 16th–17th Centuries).”

⁵⁵⁵ Frenkel, “The Ottomans and the Mamluks through the Eyes of Arab Travelers (in 16th–17th Centuries),” 279.

⁵⁵⁶ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Matāli‘*, 263.

⁵⁵⁷ Al-Ghazzī, 268.

⁵⁵⁸ Al-Ghazzī, 268–69.

mentioning the content of his abovementioned discussion with Ebussuud Efendi, he adds, “he shows great respect to me (*yata’addabu ma’ī kathīran*), and venerates me too much (*yujallinī ijlālan kabīran*).”

As mentioned earlier, a considerable part of the travelogue (nearly half of the total work) is about Badr al-Dīn’s scholarly exchange with his host al-Abbāsī, which was facilitated by a strong sense of homophily between them. Thus, despite the few praises put in the mouth of the abovementioned Ottoman scholars, the backbone of the narrative in the travelogue is about how al-Abbāsī accompanied Badr al-Dīn, taught him, appreciated his scholarly competence and issued to him and his children certificates.⁵⁵⁹ Badr al-Dīn eagerly quotes al-Abbāsī’s verses, in which he praises Badr al-Dīn.⁵⁶⁰ Al-Abbāsī was an eminent hadith scholar highly praised in Damascus.⁵⁶¹ Badr al-Dīn’s readers no doubt knew him much more than the yet-anonymous Ottoman elite. Thus, al-Abbāsī’s praises for young Badr al-Dīn were no less valuable than the praises of the abovementioned Ottoman scholars. Badr al-Dīn tried to prove his Damascene colleagues that he became one of the close students and friends of al-Abbāsī despite his young age.

In sum, Badr al-Dīn designed his work to show the coming generations in Damascus his struggle and success story at the new imperial capital. As the title of his work implies, this travel account was the evidence for Badr al-Dīn’s rise in the lands of Rūm.

4.3. Conclusion

Badr al-Dīn’s experience of the Mamluk-Ottoman transition was different from his father’s experience. Unlike the latter, he was young and inexperienced, consequently less advantageous in bargaining before the new regime. Thus, after losing his father’s protection, he involved in a struggle to preserve his positions in Damascus and to prove himself as an independent scholar in both Damascus and Istanbul. Unlike his father who encountered the new regime only in his hometown, Badr al-Dīn traveled to the new imperial capital and met the high-ranking Ottoman scholars at their home.

⁵⁵⁹ See al-Ghazzī, 138, 148, 151, 181, 192, 194, 195, 196–209.

⁵⁶⁰ For example, see al-Ghazzī, 148.

⁵⁶¹ For example, Ā’isha al-Bā’ūniya, the well-known Damascene Sufi-poet, praised al-Abbāsī several times. For her praises, see al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 584.

At the time of his travel, the core lands of the empire and the Ottoman imperial elite were still unknown to many scholars in Arab provinces. Badr al-Dīn knew that most of his individual experience would be interesting, new and informative for his colleagues. Thus, he penned a travelogue, in which he described the routes leading to the new capital in detail and introduced the people of Rūm and their culture. He also introduced the Ottoman ruling elite to his readers by utilizing common cultural and scholarly categories addressing the world and mentality of his readers. His work was one of the first travelogues after 1516. Such works were conduits for information flow between the Ottoman core lands and the Arab provinces. They made significant steps for cultural integration of the new provinces into the empire and vice versa.

Badr al-Dīn was culturally and socially in an alien environment in Istanbul despite his cultural advantage as an Arabic-speaking scholar who was born into an eminent scholarly family, and received his education in old Islamic scholarly centers. He knew a few people in the imperial capital. They were mostly scholars who originated in the Mamluk lands but resided in Istanbul after the conquest of Mamluk lands. Badr al-Dīn utilized his weak connections in Istanbul strategically and managed to access to the chief judge of Anatolia in four steps.

Badr al-Dīn spent in Istanbul more than a year. This helped him to broaden the network of relationships he inherited from his father. Although there are few clues in his travelogue showing his active participation in daily elite life of the imperial city, his travel was a network-building activity. At the end of his journey, he knew imperial figures whom his father had never met in Damascus.

Upon his return to Damascus, he collected his travel notes and penned his travelogue. As the title of his work implies, this journey was the success story of a young scholar. It helped Badr al-Dīn to build his image among his Damascene colleagues as an independent interregional scholar revered even by the Ottoman scholars in the distant capital.

CHAPTER V: BADR AL-DĪN AL-GHAZZĪ: A RISING SHĀFI'Ī PROFESSOR-JURIST IN AN INTEGRATING PROVINCE (1531–77)

At the provenance pages of a manuscript copy of Badr al-Dīn's travelogue to Istanbul, a certain Abd al-Latīf al-Shāmī, a seventeenth-century Damascene scholar, introduces the author in two pages.⁵⁶² This short biography gives us an idea about Badr al-Dīn's image in Damascus half a century after his death. Abd al-Latīf describes Badr al-Dīn as the most knowledgeable of the Shāfi'ī scholars in Damascus (*a 'lam 'ulamā' al-Shāfi'īyya li-madīna Dimashq*), and highlights that he saw al-Suyūṭī (d. 1505) and received from him hadith. Then, he mentions Badr al-Dīn's Quranic exegesis in verse and criticisms he received from his contemporaries for this work. Afterward, he dwells upon Badr al-Dīn's relationship with the Ottoman judge Kınalızade Ali (d. 1572), and quoted some verses they sent to each other. The final part of the narrative covers references to Badr al-Dīn's heirs, his two sons, Najm al-Dīn and Abū al-Tayyib, whom Abd al-Latīf describes as eminent scholars and gifted poets.

Abd al-Latīf's account underlines five important themes about Badr al-Dīn's life: (1) his place in transmission of knowledge as al-Suyūṭī's student, (2) his being a Shāfi'ī scholarly authority in Damascus in his middle age, (3) his contentious tafsir and debates around it, (4) his scholarly exchanges with his contemporaries including the Ottoman scholars, and (5) his descendants whose writings and scholarly success added to and shaped Badr al-Dīn's image after his death. Chapter II has discussed the first point while mentioning Radiyy al-Dīn's mentoring of Badr al-Dīn's education until his twenties. This chapter will dwell on the following three points within the broad context of political transition in Greater Syria, leaving the last one largely to the later chapters, which deal with Najm al-Dīn's life story.

Badr al-Dīn's life (1499–1577) corresponds to the reigns of five – one Mamluk and four Ottoman – sultans: al-Ghawrī (r. 1501–16), Selim I (r. 1512–20), Süleyman (r. 1520–66), Selim II (r. 1566–74), and Murad III (1574–1595). However, his active life – from his becoming a Shāfi'ī professor in his early twenties to his earning a regional and even an imperial reputation as a Shāfi'ī mufti – largely corresponds to Süleyman and

⁵⁶² Fazıl Ahmed Paşa, ms. no. 1390.

Selim II's periods. This era witnessed acceleration of the integration of the Arab provinces into the Ottoman Empire in many respects. It also witnessed increasing bureaucratization of the imperial government in the center and provinces, and the consolidation of imperial ideology and culture. In the mid-sixteenth century, Süleyman largely abandoned his claims for universal sovereignty, and devoted his energy to the development of an imperial bureaucracy and predictable rule of law. Syria was no more a distant province. It rather became an important station and military base in the campaigns against the rising European sea powers in the Indian Ocean and the neighboring Safavids. Imperial investments to the region proliferated, and this connected local scholars and the imperial elite to each other with multidimensional relationships. Badr al-Dīn's mature life took shape in this new context and followed a trajectory different from his father's life trajectory.

The previous chapter has dealt with Badr al-Dīn's encounter with the Ottoman dignitary scholars (*mevali*) in Istanbul. This chapter, on the other hand, scrutinizes his encounter with the latter in Damascus, at his hometown. The integration of the judgeship of Damascus into the Ottoman scholarly-bureaucratic hierarchy in about mid-sixteenth century made this post an ordinary station in the career track of the Ottoman dignitary scholars. As a result, many high-ranking Ottoman scholars as well as their novices (*mülazım*) started residing in Damascus for more than a year.⁵⁶³ When Badr al-Dīn met the Ottoman scholars in Istanbul, he was a thirty-year old young scholar. When he met them in Damascus, on the other hand, he was a respected Shāfi'ī professor-mufti in the city. With reference to Badr al-Dīn's story, this chapter also investigates the reactions of Damascene scholars to their non-inclusion to the Ottoman learned hierarchy as well as the place and role(s) of the non-official Shāfi'ī muftis in Ottoman lawmaking processes.

⁵⁶³ Baki Tezcan calculates the average tenure of the Ottoman judges in Damascus during the period 1550–1602 as a year and 75 days. It was a year, 3 months, and 5 days in Aleppo, and a year and about 4 months in Cairo. See Appendices I-III in Baki Tezcan, "A Prosopographical Study on the Chief Judges of Aleppo, Cairo, and Damascus, 1550–1655." This article will appear in the forthcoming edited book of conference proceedings for "1516: The Year that Changed the Middle East and the World" organized by the American University of Beirut and Yunus Emre Institute on December 7–9, 2016. I would like to express my gratitude to Baki Tezcan for sharing his article with me before its publication.

5.1. Becoming a Shāfi‘ī Professor

A month after the completion of *al-Matāli‘*, Muhammad al-Ramlī, a Damascene scholar, passed away in September 1534.⁵⁶⁴ He had been occupying the Shāfi‘ī cubicle (*maqsūra*) prayer leader position in the Umayyad Mosque together with Taqiyy al-Dīn Qārī (d. 1538). A *maqsūra* was a separate hall endowed for teaching and prayer. There were a number of *maqsūras* in the Umayyad Mosque. Each was endowed for education in a certain madhhab and had its own *imām*, who performed five daily prayers at this place according to his madhhab. Apart from the Shāfi‘īs, the Hanbalīs and the Hanafīs also had a *maqsūra*.⁵⁶⁵

Four days after al-Ramlī’s death, a letter from Ali Beg, the treasurer (*defterdar*) in Aleppo, arrived at the city informing Badr al-Dīn’s appointment to the vacant post.⁵⁶⁶ Treasury (*defterdarlık*) in Aleppo was known as the Arab-Acem Defterdarlığı. It was first established in Damascus in 1517, and, after a while, moved to Aleppo. In 1530s, it was the third largest imperial treasury after the treasuries of Anatolia and Rumelia.⁵⁶⁷ Ali Beg held this office first in Damascus. As mentioned in the previous chapter, he was a member of the committee presided by the Ottoman judge İbrahimzade, which investigated Ibn al-Farfūr in 1530.⁵⁶⁸ It seems that Ali Beg and Badr al-Dīn knew each other since Ali Beg’s office in Damascus as the *defterdar* of Arab-Acem. He was the highest financial official in the region, with various responsibilities including collection of taxes in the region, inspection of the provincial treasury and its expenditures, and sending annual surplus revenues to the imperial treasury in Istanbul. He was also responsible for the registration of the personnel in the endowments and inspection of the financial records (*muhasabe defteri*) of endowments.⁵⁶⁹ Thanks to Ali Beg’s intervention, Badr al-Dīn received half of the Shāfi‘ī *maqsūra*. He

⁵⁶⁴ For al-Ramlī’s biography, see al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 684.

⁵⁶⁵ Mahamid, “Mosques as Higher Educational Institutions in Mamluk Syria.”

⁵⁶⁶ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 684.

⁵⁶⁷ Aydın and Günalan, “XVI. Yüzyılda Osmanlı Eyalet Defterdarlıkları,” 63–64; Yasuhisa Shimizu, “16. Yüzyılın İkinci Yarısında Halep Defterdarlığı,” *Osmanlı Araştırmaları*, no. LI (2018): 29–61.

⁵⁶⁸ Ibn Tūlūn, *Tārīkh al-Shām*, 235.

⁵⁶⁹ For duties and responsibilities of the office of Arab-Acem *defterdarlığı*, see Shimizu, “16. Yüzyılın İkinci Yarısında Halep Defterdarlığı,” 39–40.

then appointed one of his close students as his deputy in the post,⁵⁷⁰ because he was preoccupied with teaching in some Damascene madrasas.⁵⁷¹

As seen in the previous chapters, holding multiple endowed positions concurrently and partition of an endowed position among several scholars were old practices in Damascus. It seems that the Ottoman authorities, such as the abovementioned *defterdar*, did not oppose these practices. For example, Badr al-Dīn's partner in the Shāfi'ī *maqsūra*, the abovementioned Taqiyy al-Dīn al-Qārī, were also teaching in the Shāmiyya Barrāniyya Madrasa, one of the oldest and most prestigious Damascene madrasas. Taqiyy al-Dīn died in August 1538, and Badr al-Dīn replaced him in the vacant professorship with the approval of the incumbent Ottoman judge.⁵⁷²

5.1.1. A Teaching Career outside the Ottoman Learned Hierarchy

Unlike his father, who had served Mamluk and Ottoman governments as a Shāfi'ī judge, Badr al-Dīn chose a teaching career. Moreover, as a professor, he did not endeavor to enter the Ottoman scholarly-bureaucratic hierarchy but apparently was content with available teaching posts in Damascus. There were structural and personal reasons for Badr al-Dīn's career choice.

The Ottoman learned hierarchy was consolidating from the early sixteenth century. Ottoman scholar-bureaucrats gradually gained self-consciousness as a privileged group, and this led them to come up with regulations for entrances to the hierarchy. For example, novice mechanism (*mülâzemet*) was applied with increasing rigidity. According to the novice system, a graduate student had to accompany an Ottoman dignitary scholar-bureaucrat (*mevālī*) for several years before entering the system from his quota. Afterward, he was required to perform additional services for the chief judges of Anatolia and Rumelia in the capital city for a further period in order to receive his first appointment as either a professor or a judge. Following years, he advanced in his career with regular promotions; yet he usually had to repeat his service in the chief judgeships during each interval period between two offices.⁵⁷³

⁵⁷⁰ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 722. For how the system of deputyship worked, see Chapter II.

⁵⁷¹ The chronology of his life suggests that Badr al-Dīn taught in the Ādiliyya and Fārisiyye madrasas before 1538.

⁵⁷² Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 830; Ibn Tūlūn, *Tārikh al-Shām*, 320.

⁵⁷³ Atçıl, *Scholars and Sultans*, 96–116; Beyazıt, *Osmanlı İlmîye Mesleğinde İstihdam (XVI. Yüzyıl)*, 27–37, 107–42; Mehmet İpşirli, “Mülâzemet,” in *DİA* (Online: TDV İSAM, 2020).

The novice system created acquired status-homophily among a privileged group of scholars, who were qualified to fill the highest judicial posts in the empire—they shared the same madhhab (Hanafi), language (Turkish), and educational-professional experience and imperial culture. Badr al-Dīn and his peers in Damascus, on the other hand, largely lacked these. Badr al-Dīn must have realized this difference between the two groups when he first met the high-ranking Ottoman scholars in Istanbul in 1530–31. As a non-Hanafi and non-Turkish speaking scholar, who already received a traditional education in the Mamluk capital some years ago, Badr al-Dīn most probably could not hope to achieve professional success in the new imperial capital. It was also discouraging that none of the eminent Arab scholars whom he met in Istanbul, including al-Abbāsī (d. 1556) and Ibrāhīm al-Halabī (d. 1549), were members of the Ottoman learned hierarchy. When Badr al-Dīn met them in Istanbul, they had been residing in the Ottoman capital for decades now but they could not receive an appointment to teaching and judicial positions in the Ottoman hierarchy of positions. Instead, for instance, al-Abbāsī was granted a monthly salary as a sort of retirement, and Ibrāhīm al-Halabī was serving as a preacher in the Fatih Mosque.⁵⁷⁴

If we are to believe Badr al-Dīn’s account of his father, Radiyy al-Dīn was about to assume the post of Shāfi‘ī chief judge of Cairo, the Mamluk capital, during the days of al-Ghawrī.⁵⁷⁵ Badr al-Dīn, on the other hand, could not even hope to occupy a similar high office in the Ottoman capital. His career options outside Syro-Egypt were largely limited because of the abovementioned bureaucratic and cultural barriers.

Then, why did he not serve as a Shāfi‘ī deputy judge in Damascus, as his father and grandfather did. The office of deputy judge would require him no novice license nor enable him to enter the Ottoman learned hierarchy. Here, personal experience, interests and tendencies seem to have played a role. Badr al-Dīn was aware of the difficulties of the judgeship in Damascus. As mentioned earlier, his father failed to preserve the delicate balance between local scholars and the Ottoman authorities, and this failure brought about his dismissal from the judgeship. The fate of his peer Ibn Farfūr was a great lesson in itself. The local people were critical of the practices of the new regime and of its agents implementing them. All these must have been dissuading Badr al-Dīn from state service.

⁵⁷⁴ For their biographies, see Taşköprülüzade, *eş-Şaka’ik*, 649, 777–79. For a detailed account of al-Halabī’s adventures in Aleppo and Cairo, and his final settlement in Istanbul, see Kasım Kopuz, “Reproduction of the Ottoman Legal Knowledge: The Case of Ibrahim al-Halabi’s *Multaqa al-Abhur* and Defining the Concept of Baghy in Commentarial Writings on it (16th to 18th Centuries)” (PhD Diss., Binghamton University, 2019), Chapter 2 and 3.

⁵⁷⁵ See the subtitle “Becoming a Sufi Master?” in Chapter II.

Badr al-Dīn's keeping aloof from the Ottoman scholarly-bureaucratic career track seems to be a conscious decision. Actually, he did not encourage his son Shahāb al-Dīn to enter this path by converting to Hanafism or receiving novice status. He did not utilize his contacts in the capital city to send his son there. Instead, as will be seen in the following pages, he directed his son to study under Damascene scholars. He then took him to Cairo to continue his studies in Cairene scholarly circles. Both Badr al-Dīn and his son were content enough with the endowed posts in Damascus.

5.1.2. The Shāmiyya Barrāniyya: A Non-Imperial Madrasa

When the Ottomans entered Damascus in 1516, they found a self-sufficient system of endowments supporting support scholars living in the city with the resources of the region. An Ottoman register dated 1535 counts more than sixty madrasas in Damascus and its surrounding districts, alongside with numerous dār al-hadiths, small mosques, Friday mosques, hospitals, dervish lodges, *khānqāhs*, and other pious and familial endowments.⁵⁷⁶ Many of these endowments were funded by the endowed assets in Syria.⁵⁷⁷ As Muslim rulers, the Ottomans embraced these endowments and acknowledged their legal status—which eventually guaranteed Damascene scholars the financial resources to survive. Even the descendants of Mamluks continued to benefit from their ancestor's endowments in Ottoman Damascus.⁵⁷⁸

The endowment system provided Damascene scholars, especially the Shāfi'ī ones, with a legally inviolable space outside the Ottoman learned hierarchy as well as financial means to survive. Many positions in Damascene endowments were stipulated to Shāfi'ī scholars; thus, appointment of a Hanafī-Rūmī scholar to these positions would be unlawful. Moreover, Damascene scholars traditionally held several positions concurrently—a practice that enabled them to multiply their source of income from the endowments. Many scholars had additional income from their familial endowments as Badr al-Dīn, who benefited from his father's endowment. Additionally, some Damascene scholars were involved in trade, and created another channel of income to survive independently from the central government.⁵⁷⁹

⁵⁷⁶ Özkılınç, Coşkun, and Sivridağ, *401 Numaralı Şam Livâsi Mufassal Tahrîr Defteri (942 / 1535)*, 44–58.

⁵⁷⁷ See Miura, “The Sâlihiyya Quarter of Damascus at the Beginning of Ottoman Rule.”

⁵⁷⁸ Reinfandt, “Religious Endowments and Succession to Rule”; Michael Winter, “Mamluks and Their Households in Late Mamluk Damascus: A Waqf Study,” in *The Mamluks in Egyptian and Syrian Politics and Society*, ed. Amalia Levanoni and Michael Winter (Brill, 2004).

⁵⁷⁹ For example, see al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 248, 1210, 1212, 1283, 1423.

Ottomans acknowledged legal status of all pre-Ottoman madrasas in Syria but still attempted to integrate some of the Hanafī madrasas (i.e. madrasas stipulated to Hanafī scholars) in the region into the Ottoman madrasa hierarchy, and finally the professors of these madrasas were appointed from among the Ottoman scholar-bureaucrats in the center.⁵⁸⁰ The Shāmiyya Barrāniyya Madrasa, on the other hand, was an educational institution endowed for Shāfi‘ī scholars to teach. Thus, it stayed outside the Ottoman madrasa hierarchy. When a vacancy occurred in its professorship, the Ottoman judge of Damascus received the applications of the local Shāfi‘ī scholars for it. Then, he chose one of them and sent a petition to the chief judge of Anatolia in Istanbul to appoint the selected candidate. The professor held the professorship with the imperial permission but did not become a member of the Ottoman learned hierarchy. That is, he would not receive promotions to higher professorships or judgeships in the hierarchy of positions but taught in this madrasa as long as another qualified scholar challenged him in this position.

The Shāmiyya Madrasa was an Ayyūbid madrasa, endowed by a female member of the Ayyūbid dynasty.⁵⁸¹ It was one of the wealthiest madrasas in the city at the time of its foundation. Its professorship was stipulated to the most knowledgeable Shāfi‘ī legal scholar in Damascus. Later, Ayyūbids and Mamluks built new madrasas that surpassed the Shāmiyya Madrasa in prestige and resources and attracted the most accomplished Shāfi‘ī scholars. In fact, this was what enabled Badr al-Dīn, a relatively young scholar, to occupy its professorship when he was only about forty years old. The endowment deed of the madrasa disallowed its professors to teach in another madrasa concurrently.⁵⁸² Thus, Badr al-Dīn must have left teaching in his previous madrasas in Damascus.

Badr al-Dīn had been teaching *Jam‘ al-Jawāmi‘*, a work on Shāfi‘ī legal theory, before his appointment to the Shāmiyya Madrasa. Upon his appointment as its professor, he continued his classes there and finished the book. In Damascus, it was a tradition to organize a banquet once a professor finished teaching a book. To do so, Badr al-Dīn organized a gathering where leading Damascene scholars were invited to eat and talk.

⁵⁸⁰ See TSMA.D.8823.I in Ercan Alan and Abdurrahman Atçıl, *XVI. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Ulema Defterleri* (Ankara: Türkiye Bilimler Akademisi, 2018), 177–78. Also see Burak, “Dynasty, Law, and the Imperial Provincial Madrasa.”

⁵⁸¹ She was Sitt al-Shām Zumurrud Khātun (d. 1220), the sister of renowned Ayyūbid ruler Salāh al-Dīn. See R. Stephen Humphreys, “Women as Patrons of Religious Architecture in Ayyūbid Damascus,” *Muqarnas* 11 (1994): 47–48.

⁵⁸² For its endowment stipulations, see Yılmaz, *Ulema ve Medrese (1154-1260)*, 79–80.

He was now an eminent Shāfi‘ī scholar teaching in an old prestigious institution. One person from the audience composed a poetry in honor of the day, and Badr al-Dīn granted certificates to the attendants.⁵⁸³

In short, although their career prospective was largely limited to the Arab provinces, many Damascene scholars enjoyed abundant resources in the local endowments as professors, at least during the early decades of Ottoman rule. Badr al-Dīn was one of them. As a non-bureaucratic local scholar, he taught in the Damascene madrasas only by the permission and under the supervision of the Ottoman authorities in Damascus and Istanbul. The madrasas he taught in were non-imperial madrasas built in the pre-Ottoman-periods and provided teaching posts usually exclusively reserved for Shāfi‘ī scholars. As will be seen in the following pages, this provided Badr al-Dīn with a semi-autonomous financial status and scholarly space to act free from the direct intervention of the political authorities.

5.2. Becoming a Shāfi‘ī Jurist

Badr al-Dīn was a prolific author. In 1537, he penned a versified commentary on Ibn Mālik’s (d. 1274) *Alfiyya*,⁵⁸⁴ a work about Arabic syntax made up of nearly three thousand verses. Students in the Arab provinces were reading and memorizing it during their early education in both the Mamluk and Ottoman eras.⁵⁸⁵ Badr al-Dīn also taught this book and his commentary on it to his students.⁵⁸⁶ In January 1538, he completed another middle-sized treatise entitled *al-Murāh fī al-mizāh* [Jollity in Joking], where he put the rules of humor.⁵⁸⁷ According to his account at the preamble, when some people asked him about Sharī‘a’s prohibitions and permissions for joking, and requested him to explain his proofs in detail, he composed this work.⁵⁸⁸ If it is not a customary justification for writing a book,⁵⁸⁹ we can consider that Badr al-Dīn started attracting Damascenes’ attention as a young Shāfi‘ī mufti during these years.

⁵⁸³ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 841.

⁵⁸⁴ Çollak and Akpınar, “Gazzî, Bedreddîn”; Elger, “Badr Al-Dīn Muhammad al-Ghazzî,” 98.

⁵⁸⁵ For example, see al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 35, 83, 461, 483, 682, 804, 941.

⁵⁸⁶ Al-Ghazzī e.n. 804, 967, 1315, 1322.

⁵⁸⁷ Badr al-Dīn Ghazzī, *Al-Murāh fī al-Mizāh* (Cairo: Maktaba al-Thaqāfa al-Dīniyya, 2001), 55.

⁵⁸⁸ Al-Ghazzī, 7.

⁵⁸⁹ For justifications of writing in the early modern Ottoman Empire, see Christoph K. Neumann, “Üç Tarz-ı Mütalaa: Yeniçağ Osmanlı Dünyası’nda Kitap Yazmak ve Okumak,” *Tarih ve Toplum: Yeni Yaklaşımlar*, 51-76, 241, no. 1 (2005): 70–71.

As mentioned earlier, Badr al-Dīn was authorized to issue religio-legal opinions at the end of his education in Cairo in about 1515, and issued his first fatwa in Damascus in the feast of sacrifice through the end of 1522—at the age of twenty-three.⁵⁹⁰ He kept issuing fatwas in the following decades and became an eminent Shāfi‘ī mufti in Damascus in the mid-century. Once asked about the reason for his reluctance to become a judge, he said that his father had served the Muslim community as a judge and he was serving it as a jurist.⁵⁹¹

5.2.1. The Non-official Provincial Shāfi‘ī Muftiship in the Mid-Sixteenth Century Damascus

Theoretically, their legal expertise in Islamic sources (the Prophetic tradition and the Qur’ān) allows any Muslim (male or female, free or slave) to issue religio-legal opinions (*fatwā*), i.e. to act as a jurist (mufti). Since the early centuries of Islam, legal scholars gave their opinions concerning legal issues brought before them by common people or state officials. Their opinions were not legally binding but still instructive and supportive in building a legitimate government. Thus, both the judges, who were hearing cases in courts as the representatives of the Muslim rulers, and individuals, who were involved in lawsuits as Muslim (and even non-Muslim) subjects, took these fatwas seriously.⁵⁹²

In time, the general expectation from muftis to come up with independent *ijtihāds* solving legal problems decreased. Instead, it was strongly advised to follow the *ijtihāds* of the founding authorities of madhhabs as much as possible. The framework provided by madhhabs to solve legal problems and the imitation (*taqlīd*) of certain scholarly authorities created a more predictable and stable legal system.⁵⁹³ Meanwhile, Muslim scholarly groups felt the need to discredit those who lacked the necessary qualifications to issue fatwas. They eventually developed some non-official but widely recognized means to restrict the ability and authority to give *fatwā* to a group of legal scholars who could transfer this scholarly competence and authority to their students. The certificate to issue religio-legal opinions (*ijāza al-ifta*) was such a mean. A student of Islamic law was expected to attain this certificate from a scholar, who had already been authorized

⁵⁹⁰ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawātib*, e.n. 285.

⁵⁹¹ Al-Būrīnī, *Tarājim al-a'yān* e.n. 93.

⁵⁹² Fahrettin Atar, “Fetva,” in *DĪA* (Online, TDV İSAM, 1995).

⁵⁹³ Yossef Rapoport, “Legal Diversity in the Age of Taqlīd: The Four Chief Qādīs under the Mamluks.” *Islamic Law and Society* (2003): 210–228.

to issue his legal opinions by a similar certificate, in order to be able to issue his fatwas, which were, though non-binding, considered reliable by the Muslim community.⁵⁹⁴

The Ottomans added new dimensions to the institution of *iftā*. Mehmed II reformed the Ottoman bureaucracy and ordered the judgeships in the empire hierarchically. The judgeships of Anatolia and Rumelia were at the peak of this hierarchy, and the scholars occupying these two posts were permanent members of the Imperial Council (*Divān-ı Humāyūn*). That is, together with other imperial officials, they administered the empire. They were particularly responsible for the administration of the imperial judicial system by appointments, promotions and dismissals of Ottoman scholars serving as judges. The office of jurist was not part of this system at the beginning. As time went on, however, the Ottoman government introduced two novelties. First, it appointed Hanafī muftis from among the Ottoman scholars to the major cities of the empire. This eventually created a difference among jurists in these cities as official versus non-official muftis. “The state-appointed mufti” (with the exception of the mufti of *dār al-adl*, which was almost an extinct institution in the mid-sixteenth century) was a new phenomenon in the Islamic history. Second, the Ottomans put these official muftis in a loose hierarchy. This hierarchy, though never comparable with the strict and clear ranking among the judges, was still observable in the distinction between the mufti of Istanbul (also known as *Şeyhülislam*) and other state-appointed jurists in provinces (*kenar müftileri*). Nevertheless, despite all his prestige and influence in Istanbul, the Ottoman *şeyhülislam* never became a member of the Imperial Council.⁵⁹⁵

According to Guy Burak, the office of the state-appointed Hanafī mufti was an outcome of the Ottoman dynasty’s growing interest in regulating the content of Hanafī jurisprudence (i.e. the Hanafī legal texts taught by appointed professors in the imperial madrasas and the Hanafī law implemented by appointed judges in Ottoman courts) from the late fifteenth century. Thus, they appointed scholars in Ottoman learned hierarchy as Hanafī muftis to major provincial centers in Balkans, Anatolia, and Arab lands. These muftis were graduates of the imperial madrasas in Istanbul, received their education according to the Hanafī legal texts included in the imperial curriculum, and shared the Ottoman-Hanafī elite culture in the core lands of the

⁵⁹⁴ Devin Stewart, “The Doctorate of Islamic Law in Mamluk Egypt and Syria.”

⁵⁹⁵ R. C. Repp, *The Mufti of Istanbul: A Study in the Development of the Ottoman Learned Hierarchy*, (London: Ithaca Press, 1986); Colin Imber, *Ebu’s-Su`ud: The Islamic Legal Tradition* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997); Engin Deniz Akarlı, “The Ruler and Law Making in the Ottoman Empire.”

empire. Accordingly, their ruling helped forming a more standardized legal corpus of Ottoman-Hanafī law applied in the whole empire, which paved the way for the formation of an “Ottoman” Hanafism in time. These muftis were given the professorship of a prestigious imperial madrasa usually founded by a member of the Ottoman dynasty or the top ruling elite in provincial centers. This teaching post consolidated their connection with the Ottoman dynasty while providing them with the income to survive—because, unlike many muftis, they were not earning money through their fatwas. For example, the professorship of Süleymaniye madrasa in Damascus, Hüsreviye madrasa in Aleppo, and Osmaniya madrasa in Jerusalem were usual teaching posts of the state-appointed Hanafī muftis in Syria in the mid-sixteenth century.⁵⁹⁶

Of course, the existence of state-appointed Hanafī muftis in major Arab cities did not mean that the non-official Hanafī muftis lost their influence in lawmaking. Some local Hanafī muftis among Badr al-Dīn’s contemporaries such as Ibn Nujaym (d. 1561) in Egypt triggered rich legal debates among official and non-official muftis by their fatwas related to significant issues including the Ottoman land law. In other words, they influenced the imperial government’s lawmaking processes.⁵⁹⁷

If this was the situation of official and non-official Hanafī muftis, how was the situation of non-official non-Hanafī muftis in Syria? Badr al-Dīn, as a Shāfi‘ī jurist, belonged to this second group. Three questions are worth asking to understand Badr al-Dīn’s muftiship in the mid-sixteenth century: (1) Did he really feel a difference between official and non-official muftiship in Damascus during his life? (2) Was he “the Shāfi‘ī mufti of Damascus” or “a Shāfi‘ī mufti in Damascus”? (3) How was his influence as a Shāfi‘ī mufti in and outside Damascus?

When Badr al-Dīn started rising as a Shāfi‘ī jurist around the mid-sixteenth century, the institution of state-appointed muftiship apparently was not fully introduced into Damascus yet. In his work devoted to the biographies of official Hanafī muftis of Damascus, al-Murādī (d. 1791), the eighteenth-century Damascene historian and scholar, states that Selim I appointed four jurists from the four madhhabs as his madhhab’s mufti (*takhsīs fatwa kulli madhhab bi-rajul wāhid min ‘ulamā’ al-madhhab*) in Damascus. However, al-

⁵⁹⁶ Guy Burak, “Dynasty, Law, and the Imperial Provincial Madrasa: The Case of al-Madrasa al-Uthmaniyya in Ottoman Jerusalem”; Burak, “According to His Exalted Kānūn: Contending Visions of the Muftiship in the Ottoman Province of Damascus (Sixteenth-Eighteenth Centuries)”; Burak, *The Second Formation of Islamic Law*, 163-220.

⁵⁹⁷ Johansen, *The Islamic Law on Land Tax and Rent: The Peasants’ Loss of Property Rights as Interpreted in the Hanafite Legal Literature of the Mamluk and Ottoman Periods*; Cuno, “Was the Land of Ottoman Syria Miri or Milk?”; Ayoub, *Law, Empire and the Sultan*.

Murādī seems to read the history of the office of the state-appointed mufti retrospectively by projecting the realities of his day on the early Ottoman Damascus. The contemporary sources such as Ibn Tulun, on the other hand, do not give any clue about the existence of state-appointed muftis in Damascus in the early decades of Ottoman rule.

Al-Murādī counts seven Hanafī scholars who occupied the post of the state-appointed Hanafī mufti from 1516 until Badr al-Dīn's death in 1577.⁵⁹⁸ First three of these scholars served before the construction of the Süleymaniye Madrasa in Damascus (i.e. before 1567),⁵⁹⁹ and they were local Hanafī scholars, not the Ottoman scholar-bureaucrats appointed from Istanbul. That is, even if we rely on al-Murādī's retrospective look at the office of state-appointed mufti and accept the creation of the office in the immediate aftermath of the conquest by Selim I, we can think that Badr al-Dīn did not witness state-appointed "Ottoman" Hanafī muftis in Damascus until the last decade of his life. After the construction of the Süleymaniye madrasa of Damascus, Ottoman scholars appointed by the central government occupied the professorship of this madrasa and served as the official Hanafī mufti of Damascus. Four such Ottoman Hanafī muftis resided in Damascus from the construction of the Süleymaniye madrasa until Badr al-Dīn's death. That is, for Badr al-Dīn, in the mid-sixteenth century (i.e. before the Süleymaniye Madrasa), there was no clear distinction between the official and non-official Hanafī muftis regarding their Damasceness.

As for the Shāfi'ī jurists, the post of the Shāfi'ī jurist did not require an official appointment but rather tacit consent and recognition of the Damascene Shāfi'ī learned elite.⁶⁰⁰ That is, there could be more than one Shāfi'ī mufti in Damascus simultaneously. Yet their number was not many because any legal expert, who enjoyed authorization to issue religious opinions in Shāfi'ī madhhab, was not expected to issue his fatwas. The social and scholarly norms required them not to issue their opinions out of respect for a few eminent

⁵⁹⁸ Al-Murādī, *Arf al-bashām*, 1–2, 28–35.

⁵⁹⁹ For the construction date of the madrasa, see M. Baha Tanman, "Süleymaniye Külliyesi," *DİA*, (Online: İSAM, 2010).

⁶⁰⁰ Hathaway writes, "because a *mufti* was a giver of legal opinions, rather than an enforcer, many provincial *muftis* had no official appointments but were simply acknowledged by their communities as sources of juridical authority." See Hathaway, *The Arab Lands Under the Ottoman Rule*, 121. Bakhit writes "In Damascus, there was more than one Shāfi'ī mufti at the same time (...). There is no evidence to show that confirmation from the chief judge or the Hanafī mufti was asked or given." See Bakhit, *The Ottoman Province of Damascus*, 133.

elderly Shāfi‘ī muftis in the city. A Shāfi‘ī legal scholar was expected to issue fatwas only after ascending to the level of presidency in his madhhab (*riyāsa al-Shāfi‘īyya*) by outliving his peers.⁶⁰¹

Al-Kawākib mentions about twenty scholars, who resided in Damascus and issued fatwa during the sixteenth century. Eight of them were Shāfi‘ī scholars. Considering the fact that there was no doubt many Shāfi‘ī scholars, who had a certificate to issue fatwas, this small number across a century indicates that only a few of them enjoyed the support and consent of his colleagues and eventually dared to issue his legal opinions. In fact, there are many historical anecdotes implying that the Shāfi‘ī scholarly community in Damascus deliberately tried to minimize the number of active Shāfi‘ī muftis in the city despite the existence of many scholars authorized to issue fatwa by certificates. For instance, Radiyy al-Dīn forbade his son Badr al-Dīn from giving fatwas during his teachers’ life out of respect for them. Badr al-Dīn could issue his first fatwa only after Radiyy al-Dīn’s close friends intervened and persuaded him to give permission to his son.⁶⁰² Likewise, Badr al-Dīn did not permit his son Shahāb al-Dīn, who had a certificate to issue legal opinions, to issue his fatwas until the latter reached his fifties. Badr al-Dīn gave his consent to him only when he realized that he would die soon and Shahab al-Dīn might replace him as a Shāfi‘ī mufti.⁶⁰³ On the contrary, Ismā‘īl al-Nābulusī (d. 1585), a younger Shāfi‘ī legal scholar, issued his opinions during Badr al-Dīn’s life, and both Badr al-Dīn and his contemporaries disapproved his action.⁶⁰⁴ According to al-Būrīnī (d. 1614), no legal expert other than al-Nābulusī gave fatwas during Badr al-Dīn’s life out of respect for his scholarly authority. After him, however, a group of his students rivaled each other as Shāfi‘ī muftis. For instance, al-Nābulusī and al-‘Īthāwī (d. 1617) involved in a legal debate around the construction of a minaret in a local mosque, which was converted from an old church, in the early 1580s. By giving opposite fatwas regarding the construction, both muftis tried to establish his superiority as the not state-appointed but widely recognized Shāfi‘ī mufti of the city.⁶⁰⁵

Was a Shāfi‘ī mufti really a powerful actor in Damascus? Did the Ottoman authorities take him seriously? Considering the fact that the majority of the Muslim population in Damascus were affiliated with the Shāfi‘ī

⁶⁰¹ For example, see al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, 737, 814, and 906.

⁶⁰² Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 285.

⁶⁰³ Al-Ghazzī e.n. 1345.

⁶⁰⁴ Al-Būrīnī, *Tarājim al-a'yān*, II: 68.

⁶⁰⁵ For the details of this debate and other power groups involved in it, see al-Ghazzī, *Lutf*, e.n. 114.

madhhab and that the courts of Shāfi‘ī judges were still active in the city, one expects Shāfi‘ī jurists to have enjoyed considerable influence on the local population thanks to their rulings in the madhhab. For example, Badr al-Dīn accepted legal questions in the Umayyad Mosque, and gave his opinions free of charge. One of his students, who died in 1552/52, compiled Badr al-Dīn’s fatwas. Unfortunately, there is no copy of this compilation. Yet *al-Kawākib* informs that it was a three-volume compilation (*thalātha mujaladdāt*).⁶⁰⁶ This suggests that Badr al-Dīn, as a Shāfi‘ī mufti, already engaged in an intense *iftā* activity until his early fifties. One reasonably expects this intensity increased during the coming three decades of his life because he outlived most of his peers until his death in 1577, and ascended to the level of presidency in his madhhab (*riyāsa al-Shāfi‘īyya*).

The Shāfi‘ī muftis were no doubt significant figures in the eyes of local Ottoman authorities as well. The abovementioned debate between al-Nābulusī and al-‘Īthāwī is instructive in this regard. It shows not only the significance of the fatwas of Shāfi‘ī muftis but also Shāfi‘ī jurists’ complex relationships with the powerful groups and individuals in Damascus. The anecdote goes:

They [al-Nābulusī and al-‘Īthāwī] had a disagreement in the construction of the white minaret (*al-mināra al-baydā’*) on the Christian church in Damascus. Sheikh Ismā‘īl [al-Nābulusī] issued his fatwa as following: “this minaret should not be built on the ground that the Christians, who will hear the daily call to prayer from the minaret, may curse Islam (*sabab li-sab al-Nasāra li-dīn al-Islām*).” He brought evidence from the Quranic verse “Do not insult those who call upon besides Allah [lest they insult Allah out of hostility and ignorance] (*wa lā tasabbū al-ladhīna yad‘ūna min dūn Allah*). Our sheikh [al-‘Īthāwī], on the other hand, issued a fatwa in favor of the construction of the minaret. The endower of the minaret Khawājā Alā’ al-Dīn b. al-Hajīj and the Judge Bostanzade Mustafa Efendi tended to our sheikh’s opinion whereas the Governor of Damascus Vizier Hasan Pasha b. Mehmed Pasha tended to Sheikh Ismā‘īl’s fatwa. Then, the minaret was built by the Judge’s order, although the Christians had paid to Hasan Pasha (*badhalat al-Nasāra mālan li-al-*

⁶⁰⁶ Al-Ghazzi, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 967.

Pasha) [to prevent the construction]. Moreover, our sheikh penned a beautiful treatise (*risāla latīfa*) concerning the construction of the minaret. This was before 990 (1582/83).⁶⁰⁷

This anecdote mentions an inter-religious issue (construction of a minaret on a mosque converted from an old church) that concerned two local communities (namely Muslims and Christians) few years after Badr al-Dīn's death. Individual actors mentioned in the anecdote are the Ottoman judge, the Ottoman governor, and a local merchant, who wanted to undertake the financial burdens of the project. Apparently, the Christian community, who opposed the rise of a minaret on their previous church, sought the governor's help and reportedly even paid the latter to prevent the construction. Whereas the prospective endower managed to receive the support of the incumbent Ottoman judge for his project. The most interesting part, however, is that nobody among the opposing parties went to the state-appointed Hanafī mufti of Damascus, at least as far as described in the anecdote. As mentioned above, the post of the state-appointed Hanafī mufti was already established in Damascus after the construction of the Süleymaniye Madrasa in 1567. Despite this, the abovementioned actors asked the leading Shāfi'ī muftis, namely al-Nābulusī and al-'Īthāwī, their legal opinions concerning the construction project.

Secondly, although the Shāfi'ī muftis issued two opposing opinions on the issue, the Ottoman judge took one of them and gave the official permission for the construction. Apparently, the Ottoman judge was free to choose any of the two opposing fatwas but not free enough to be indifferent to the opinions of the Shāfi'ī muftis. He could not act without the legal basis their fatwas provided in such a controversial issue, nor could behave on a legal basis their fatwas already undermined. Thus, he gave the official permission for the construction of the minaret only after a respected Shāfi'ī mufti legalized the project through his fatwas despite the existence of opposing fatwas. In other words, despite their authority, Ottoman officials in Damascus had to resort to the fatwas of the local Shāfi'ī muftis in order to justify their decisions and actions in some critical issues related to the local population and dynamics.

In sum, the post of Shāfi'ī mufti of Damascus was not an official post, at least during Badr al-Dīn's life. In fact, even the office of the state-appointed Hanafī mufti was not fully established in most of Badr al-Dīn's life. The absence of an official Shāfi'ī mufti, however, did not mean that there was an anarchy of contradicting fatwas of non-official local muftis. The Shāfi'ī scholarly community imposed an informal

⁶⁰⁷ Al-Ghazzī, *Lutf*, 319–20.

hierarchy among Shāfi‘ī *faqīhs* (legal scholars who had a scholarly certificate to issue legal opinions), and only a few of them, if not only one, could issue fatwas. The rest kept aloof from issuing their own opinions during the former’s lifetime out of respect for him, and avoiding the criticisms from their colleagues. This was an informal but widely established rule in the Damascene Shāfi‘ī scholarly community. As one of the few Shāfi‘ī muftis in Damascus, Badr al-Dīn must have a considerable influence not only on local people but also on the Ottoman authorities, at least in the issues regarding the communal life in the city, where the majority of the population was affiliated with the Shāfi‘ī madhhab.

5.3. Cairo: An Unmatched Scholarly Center

As his father once did, Badr al-Dīn took his son, who was in his twenty, to Cairo to study in Cairene scholarly circles. In 1545, Badr al-Dīn and his son Shahāb al-Dīn left Damascus for pilgrimage taking the road to Jerusalem, then to Cairo before Mecca. They arrived in Cairo in mid-July 1545, and spent about six months in the old Mamluk capital. Shahāb al-Dīn took certificates from Cairene scholars,⁶⁰⁸ and Badr al-Dīn taught his works.⁶⁰⁹ For contemporary Damascenes, Istanbul was the new imperial center where they had to travel to for appointment diplomas and patronage since 1516, whereas Cairo still enjoyed its previous status as the most attractive learning center in Syro-Egypt.

A certificate in verse written by Badr al-Dīn indicates that they were still in Cairo in mid-January 1546.⁶¹⁰ Next month (Dhū al-hijja) was the last month of the year to perform pilgrimage. Thus, they must have left Cairo for Mecca in late January, and performed pilgrimage in February in Mecca. Badr al-Dīn attached great importance to investing in Shahāb al-Dīn’s education in these cities. For example, Shahāb al-Dīn took a certificate to teach and issue legal opinions from Ibn Hajar al-Haytamī (d. 1567), the eminent Shāfi‘ī mufti of Mecca.⁶¹¹ Later, they moved to Madina, where Badr al-Dīn assisted his son to meet other scholars as well.⁶¹²

⁶⁰⁸ Al-Ghazzī e.n. 945, 1128.

⁶⁰⁹ Al-Ghazzī e.n. 349; al-Būrīnī, *Tarājim al-a’yān*, 100 e.n. 93.

⁶¹⁰ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 1351; al-Ghazzī, *Lutf*, e.n. 224.

⁶¹¹ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 1351.

⁶¹² Al-Ghazzī e.n. 975, 1188.

Badr al-Dīn followed a traditional education for his son, whom he considered his heir, outside the Ottoman scholarly-bureaucratic career path. Shahāb al-Dīn, as his father, chose to stay in Damascus, and received his education in Arab lands within the triangle of Damascus-Cairo-Mecca/Madina. This triangle shows an old pattern regarding education of Damascene scholars in both Mamluk and Ottoman periods. As seen in the previous chapters, Radiyy al-Dīn and his father Radiyy al-Dīn Abū al-Barakāt also visited the same cities during their education, and established student-teacher relationships with the scholars living there. Yet there appeared a second avenue of education in the Ottoman Damascus as well—as will be seen in the following chapters, some students in Damascus (and in other Syrian cities) traveled to Istanbul to complete their education by entering the service of the Ottoman *mevali*. Yet their number never exceeded the number of those receiving their education in the scholarly centers of Arab lands. One of the reasons for this was no doubt the abovementioned novice system in the Ottoman capital. Another was the established quality proven education in the abovementioned provincial centers in Syro-Egypt and the Hijaz. Lastly, one should consider the fact that the educational institutions of Istanbul was providing a Hanafī-centered education but a considerable portion of the students in Syria (and in other Arab provinces) was from non-Hanafī madhhabs. As a result, Shahab al-Dīn also planned a career as a mufti and professor in his homeland. When they returned to Damascus after a while (most probably in the spring of 1546), Badr al-Dīn continued teaching in the Shāmiyya Barrāniyya Madrasa, and Shahāb al-Dīn started teaching in the Shāmiyya Jawwāniyya Madrasa, another local endowment reserved for Shāfi‘ī scholars by clear endowment stipulations.⁶¹³

5.4. Apocalyptic Expectations of a Generation, or A Scholar’s Polemical Retreat?

The sixteenth century was a special period in the Islamic history because it approximately corresponded to the last century of the first millennium in Muslim lunar calendar (i.e. 1494–1591). Hijrī year of 1000 (the end of 1591) was expected to be the end of the world in some Muslim milieus. Such millenarism was not peculiar to the Muslim world. The conquest of Constantinople, the reconquista of Iberia and expulsion of Muslims from Christendom in Europe were considered as signs of the approaching end of the world even in Christian milieus. The changing international system in the course of the century promoted these expectations—The Uzbek dynasty eliminated Timurids; the messianic Safavids replaced the Aqqoyunlus;

⁶¹³ Al-Ghazzī e.n. 1345. For the stipulations of the endowment of the Shāmiyya Jawwāniyya Madrasa, see Yılmaz, *Ulema ve Medrese (1154-1260)*, 86–88.

the Ottomans destroyed the Mamluk Sultanate and took control of the Holy lands; and new regional powers emerged in the Christendom.⁶¹⁴

The messianic movements rallied since the dawn of the sixteenth century. Messiah-Mahdī was among the several signs of the approaching judgement day in three mainstream religious traditions, namely Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The Safavid state established by the leadership of Shah Ismā‘īl (r. 1501–1524) adopted a Messianic-expansionist foreign policy and Ismā‘īl’s successive military victories over his rivals in Iran consolidated his messianic claims. During the same years, Uzbek khan claimed to be a descendant of Chingis Khān (d. 1227) as well as the renovator of the religion. Renovation did not mean directly the approaching end of the world but it was closely related to messianic beliefs. In general, the last renovator was expected to be the Messiah himself.

The contemporary Ottoman rulers were part of this trend. After his triumph over the Safavid army in Çaldıran, Selim was called the Mahdī of the Last Day (*mahdī-yi ākhir zamān*), and he was invited to the conquest of the Central Asia by some contemporary scholars. After his death, the literature around his life and reign popularized Messianic themes and claims even more. His son Süleyman utilized similar Messianist-universalist claims during his rivalry against the Habsburgs and Safavids.⁶¹⁵

The Messianist expectations and millenarism seems to be widespread in the sixteenth century Syria, too. Ibn Tūlūn writes in April 1532 that reportedly some people witnessed in the surroundings of Damascus the split of the moon, which is considered a sign of the impending Apocalypse.⁶¹⁶ A Damascene scholar reportedly prophesized to Malulzade Efendi, the Ottoman judge of Damascus in 1567–69, that his son would

⁶¹⁴ Cornell H. Fleischer, “The Lawgiver as Messiah: The Making of the Imperial Image in the Reign of Süleyman,” in *Soliman La Magnifique et Son Temps*, ed. G. Veinstein (Paris: La Documentation Française, 1990), 159–77; Feridun M. Emecen, “Lanetli Şehir Düştü: İstanbul’un Fethi ve Kıyamet Senaryoları,” *Osmanlı Araştırmaları*, no. XXII (2003): 191–205; Kaya Şahin, “Constantinople and the End Time: The Ottoman Conquest as a Portent of the Last Hour,” *Journal of Early Modern History* 14, no. 4 (2010): 317–54.

⁶¹⁵ Gülru Necipoğlu, “Süleyman the Magnificent and the Representation of Power in the Context of Ottoman-Hapsburg-Papal Rivalry,” *The Art Bulletin* 71, no. 3 (1989): 401–27; Fleischer, “The Lawgiver as Messiah”; Hüseyin Yılmaz, *Caliphate Redefined: The Mystical Turn in Ottoman Political Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018), 251–76.

⁶¹⁶ Ibn Tūlūn, *Tārikh al-Shām*, 253–54.

be the Mahdī.⁶¹⁷ In the mid-century, a Sufi group in Baalbek, a neighboring district of Damascus, was expecting that a man called Hamīd al-Hindī would soon appear as the vanguard of Mahdī.⁶¹⁸

Badr al-Dīn too seems to have a vision of the approaching last day. In his Istanbul travelogue, he quotes one of his poetic compositions, which gives an idea about this vision.⁶¹⁹ In twenty-one verses, Badr al-Dīn names the renovators (*mujaddid*) of each century, starting from the Caliph Umar (d. 644) through Imam Shāfi‘ī (d. 820) to the leading scholars of his own era. One notices three significant points in his verses. First, most of the renovators Badr al-Dīn mentions are affiliated with the Shāfi‘ī School, which implies that Badr al-Dīn’s madhhab identity has shaped his vision of the centennial renovation.

Second, Badr al-Dīn mentions fifteen renovators in the course of ten centuries because there are disputes on the renovator-ness of some names. For example, for the eighth hijrī century, he mentions three renovators, saying “al-Bulqīnī [Sirāj al-Dīn al-Bulqīnī (d. 805/1403)], or my grandfather Ahmad al-Ghazzī or Hāfiz al-asr al-Īrāqī [Zayn al-Dīn al-Īrāqī (d. 806/1404)].” These verses suggest Badr al-Dīn re-evaluates his family past and re-contextualizes the life stories of his ancestors by inserting a family member into the list of the renovators of the past centuries. Although Ahmad is praised by his son Radiyy al-Dīn as “the last one of the mujtahids (*ākhir al-mujtahidīn*)” or “the most knowledgeable of the world (*ālim al-dunyā alā al-ittlāq*),”⁶²⁰ he has not been labelled as the renovator of his period neither by his contemporaries nor by his grandson. Although *mujtahid* is also a high-ranking level, *mujaddid* is above it in religious hierarchy, and it seems to have been ascribed to Ahmad for the first time in Badr al-Dīn’s imagination a century later. By naming his great grandfather among the renovators, Badr al-Dīn elevates his family and highlights his own position as the descendant of a scholar of a unique status. He further consolidates this status in the following verses, in which he names al-Suyūṭī as the undisputed renovator of the ninth century without any doubt and mentions his association with him as a student.

Lastly, the following verses give clues about Badr al-Dīn’s vision of the future. For the tenth hijrī century, in which he lives, Badr al-Dīn clearly puts his expectation for the end of the world. He writes that the last renovator would be either Mahdī or the Christ (*azunn anna al-āshir al-Mahdī aw ‘Īsā*). To support his claim

⁶¹⁷ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 1225.

⁶¹⁸ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib* II: 134, e.n. 939.

⁶¹⁹ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Matāli‘*, 176–78.

⁶²⁰ Al-Ghazzī, *Bahja al-nāzirīn*, 120.

about the fate of the world, he comes up with evidence as the signs of the approaching day of judgement such as spread of lie, evil and insecurity.

Whether Badr al-Dīn's expressions about the approaching last day in the abovementioned poetry is an outcome of a widespread literary motif or reflection of the mentality of the period and his personal expectations is open to speculations. Astrid Meier claims that one perceives a widespread despair and melancholy in the writings of Damascene scholars in the early sixteenth century.⁶²¹ Badr al-Dīn seems to be no exception. Maybe because of such apocalyptic expectations and melancholy, he was to retreat in the following years.

Badr al-Dīn returned to Damascus with his son in the spring of 1546. He was now in his mid-forties. Next year, he underwent a long illness. He could not leave his house for months, and his friends visited him supposing him to die.⁶²² Following his recovery, Badr al-Dīn started spending most of his time in a cell in the Umayyad Mosque devoting his days to praying, teaching, and issuing religio-legal opinions.⁶²³ He continued to live in this seclusion until his death, i.e. during the last thirty years of his life.

This was not a total isolation, however. During these years, he married, had children, and met his friends in banquets. Thus, in some respects, his seclusion resembled a political stance and civil disobedience, which guaranteed him a relative independence as a Shāfi'ī mufti. For example, on the pretext of his seclusion, he usually did not visit the high-ranking Ottoman officials coming to the city, and even refused to meet them. For example, –if we believe his son's account– Mustafa Pasha, the governor of Damascus, requested him to write to the imperial center an affirmative report about his tenure of office as the governor. However, Badr al-Dīn declined the pasha's request making an apology that he had been in retreat in his cell and knew nothing about him.⁶²⁴ The author of *al-Kawākib* introduces Mustafa Pasha as a tyrant (*ghashūm*) and shedder of blood (*saffāk al-dam*).⁶²⁵ It seems that Badr al-Dīn was keeping aloof from the Ottoman Pasha, whom he could not openly criticize, by taking refuge in his cell. When the latter asked him for an affirmative report,

⁶²¹ Meier, "Perceptions of a New Era?"

⁶²² Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 862.

⁶²³ The Ottoman judge of Damascus visited Badr al-Dīn in his cell in 1551. Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 1399.

⁶²⁴ Al-Ghazzī e.n. 1217.

⁶²⁵ Al-Ghazzī e.n. 1525.

he used his seclusion as an excuse. Likewise, he did not visit and welcome several Ottoman judges when they first came to Damascus on the pretext of his seclusion.⁶²⁶

Badr al-Dīn spent most of his remaining life in this cell called Halabiyya. He was one of the few Damascene jurists who issued religious opinions for free. The questioners were sending their questions to him through his Ethiopian concubine and child slave without meeting him face-to-face—a measure Badr al-Dīn resorted in order to not to be influenced by the questioner’s status and authority.⁶²⁷ In some nights, he was hosting Qādirī Sufis in his cell and performed *dhikr* with them.⁶²⁸

In sum, Badr al-Dīn sought retreat in his late-forties. His decision might partly stem from the widespread millenarian expectations and the common melancholy observed among his contemporaries. His expectation of death following his long illness in 1546 must have further strengthened this decision. If we believe the sources, this isolation and retreat dressed up to the form of a kind of civil disobedience towards the Ottoman authorities in time. This helped Badr al-Dīn to enjoy an independent space as a Shāfi‘ī legal scholar and added to his prominence and scholarly charisma.

5.5. Conflicts of a Shāfi‘ī Mufti

Al-Kawākib and *Lutf al-samar* gives reference to Badr al-Dīn in about three hundred biographies (about one-sixth of the total number of biographies). Some of these biographies include anecdotes about details of Badr al-Dīn’s personal life; some others give details of his relationship with his contemporaries, including scholarly polemics and rivalry for positions. Two contemporary biographical works, Al-Būrīnī’s (d. 1615) *Tarājim al-a’yān* and Radiyy al-Dīn al-Hanbalī’s (d. 1563) *Durr al-habab* provide further details about the anecdotes mentioned in the aforementioned two biographical dictionaries.⁶²⁹

According to this biographical data, four conflict areas came forward in Badr al-Dīn’s life: (1) His scholarly production (more specifically, his Quranic exegesis in verse and debates around this work). (2) His Sufi connections (more specifically, his support for a criticized novel Sufi community known as *al-Mahyā*). (3)

⁶²⁶ Al-Ghazzī e.n. 1484.

⁶²⁷ Ibn Ayyūb, *al-Rawd al-Ātir*, 916 e.n. 277; al-Būrīnī, *Tarājim al-a’yān* e.n. 93.

⁶²⁸ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 1217.

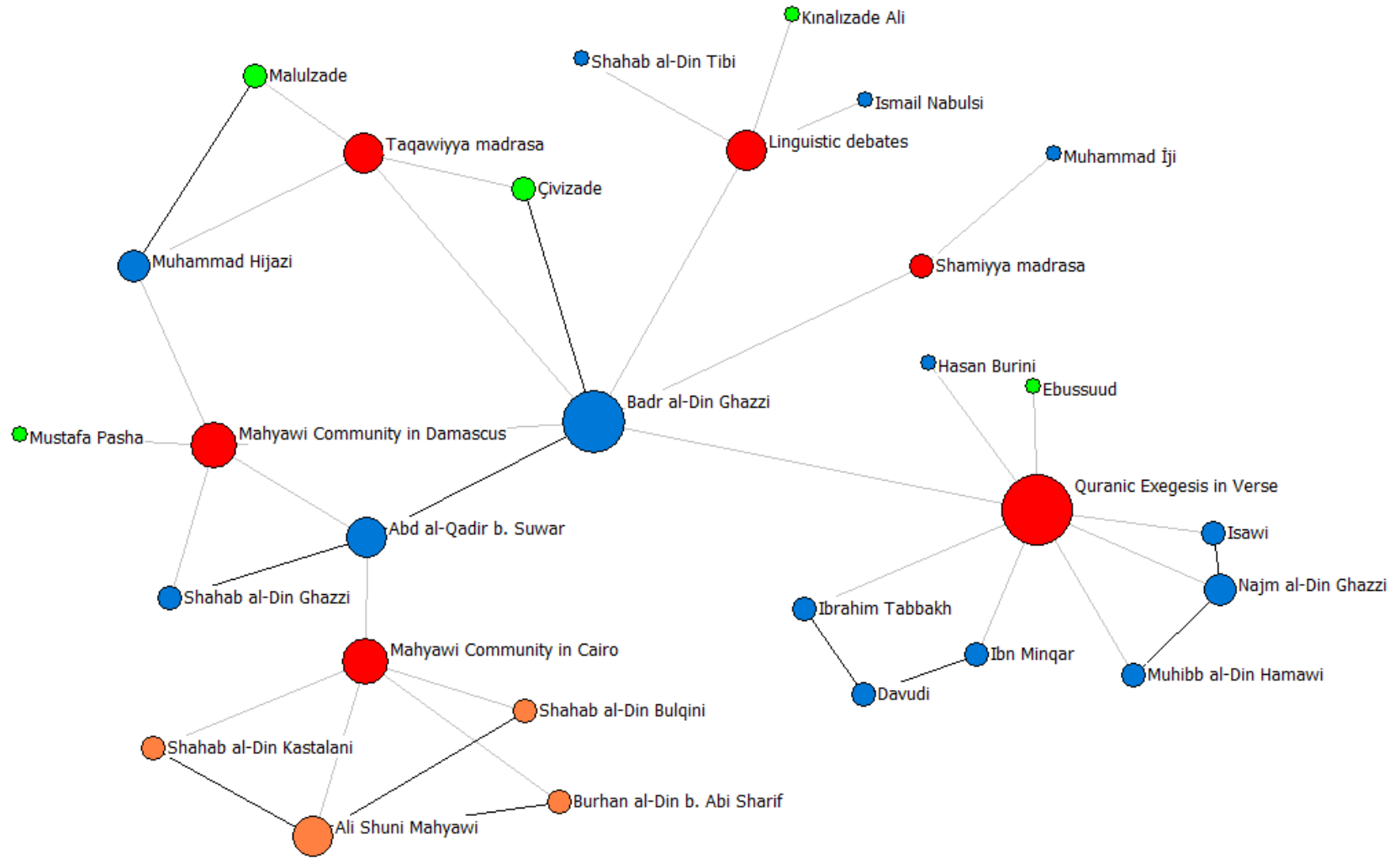
⁶²⁹ Al-Būrīnī, *Tarājim al-A’yān*; Ibn al-Hanbalī, *Durr Al-Habab*.

His scholarly debates with local and Ottoman scholars (more specifically, his polemics around linguistic themes). (4) His scholarly posts (more specifically, his competitions for the professorships of al-Shāmiyya al-Barrāniyya and Taqawiyya madrasas in Damascus). The graph below visualizes these conflict areas in Badr al-Dīn's life and the significant people (actors) involved in the related conflict.

The node color is attribute-based: Damascene actors are blue, Cairene actors orange, Ottoman officials green, and four-conflict areas red. The relationships are two types. Light lines between actors and conflict areas refer to the direct involvement of the related actor into the related conflict. For example, Muhammad al-Hijāzī is connected to the conflict "Maḥyawī community" as a critic of the community and to the conflict "Taqawiyya Madrasa" as a candidate professor. Bold lines between actors, on the other hand, refer to "support in the relevant conflict." For example, in the abovementioned "Taqawiyya Madrasa" conflict, al-Hijāzī received the support of Malulzade Efendi, the chief judge of Anatolia, thus, there is a bold line between al-Hijāzī and Malulzade. The node size is arranged according to the degree centrality score, i.e. the more a node is connected to other nodes the larger its size. For example, the node representing the conflict "Quranic Exegesis in Verse" is bigger than the nodes that represent other conflicts because there are many people directly involved in the conflict. Finally, the layout of the graph is arranged manually so that relevant actors, cliques, and conflicts can be seen together.

This graph is not based on exhaustive biographical data extracted from the abovementioned biographical dictionaries, and does not aim to visualize all individuals involved in the abovementioned four conflicts. It is rather drawn to help the readers to follow the discussions taking place around several human and non-human actors in the following sections, which will elaborate these four conflicts from different angles.

Figure 3: Badr al-Din al-Ghazzi's Conflict Network



5.5.1. *Taysīr fī al-tafsīr*: A Hotly Debated Quranic Exegesis in Verse

Badr al-Dīn composed his first poetry (*shi‘r*) after he completed his education in Cairo at the age of sixteen.⁶³⁰ Composing poetry was an important step in one’s education, showing his knowledge of language and taste in literature apart from talent. In his *al-Durr al-nadīd*, a guidebook for Islamic education, Badr al-Dīn divides poetry into three categories. Accordingly, lyrics (*ghazal*) and epics (*batāla*) of moderns (*muwalladūn*) are reprehensible (*makrūh*) by religion. The poetry that does not encourage evil or prevent from good is permissible (*mubāh*). Lastly, the poetry of *al-Arab al-āriba* (those Arabs who are progeny of the Prophet Ismā‘īl) is part of linguistic disciplines and *fard al-kifāya*, i.e. a must for some scholars if not for all Muslim community.⁶³¹

For scholars, poetry was not an area of expertise of its own but an auxiliary discipline—being versed in poetry with little knowledge of religious disciplines was not something to praise. Here, one should not overlook the distinction between poetry (*shi‘r*) and poetic composition (*nazm*). Although both were subject to similar rules of rhymes (*qāfiya*) and prosody (*wazn*), poetic composition was less lyrical and serving more practical and didactic purposes. Scholars studied the discipline of poetic meters (*‘ilm al-‘arūd*), and those who were competent in this discipline were praised.⁶³² Scholars utilized their knowledge in this discipline to versify important educational works for their students to memorize. They also penned commentaries in verse on various works, usually introductory ones. They also asked each other riddles in verses.

Badr al-Dīn composed many works of different lengths in verse during his life. His travel book *al-Matāli‘* contains hundreds of examples of his verses both as poetry and poetic composition. As mentioned previously, he versified several educational text, and penned commentaries in verse on many others. He also wrote certificates in verse as well as few eulogies and elegies. In general, poetic composition was a useful tool for him to communicate religious knowledge. However, during his seclusion at his cell in the Umayyad Mosque, he was engaged in an unprecedented undertaking. He started composing a Quranic exegesis in verse, entitled *Taysīr fī al-tafsīr* [Simplification of the Quranic Exegesis]. His exegesis consisted of more

⁶³⁰ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, , III: 4-5.

⁶³¹ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Durr al-Nadīd*, 115.

⁶³² For example, Badr al-Dīn al-Ghazzī praises his father as the one who “surpassed al-Khalīl in the discipline of poetic meters (*qad fāqā fī ‘ilm al-‘arūd khalīlahū*)” in the elegy he composed after his father. See al-Ghazzī, *al-Matāli‘*, 169. Al-Khalil b. Ahmad (d. 791) is accepted as the founder of the discipline of *‘arūd*. See Nihād M. Çetin, “Arūz,” *DİA* (Online: TDV İSAM, 1991).

than sixty thousand verses. Later, he made additions to his work, and the number of verses increased to one hundred thousand in this second version. None of the Muslim scholars hitherto had written a Quranic exegesis in verse out of respect for God's words, which were considered above and beyond poetry. Moreover, the Quran itself emphasized that the Quranic verses were not poetry and the Prophet was not a poet. Thus, Badr al-Dīn's work was an innovation (*bid'a*) in the eyes of many of his contemporaries.

As Pfeifer vividly describes, the elite salons in Damascus in the early modern period were informal forums, where educated community accessed newly completed works sooner than often imagined.⁶³³ Thus, it did not take long for Badr al-Dīn's work to meet Damascene scholarly community in such meetings. However, it received harsh criticism from leading scholarly figures in the city (see Figure 3). Even his close students could not accept their teacher's work legitimate. Al-Būrīnī, who studied under Badr al-Dīn for years, writes in the biography of his teacher that if Badr al-Dīn's work had been in prose or if he had composed a super-commentary on al-Baydāwī's tafsir instead, these works would have been praised and held in high esteem by all scholars.⁶³⁴ Al-Būrīnī adds that his contemporaries accused Badr al-Dīn for versifying the Quran and distorting Quranic verses for the sake of prosody.

Upon the criticisms from his colleagues, Badr al-Dīn composed another Quranic exegesis in twelve volumes, entitled *al-Taysīr al-bayān fī tafsīr al-Qur'ān* [Simplified Account on the Quranic Exegesis], which he completed in June 1555.⁶³⁵ In this last work, he transformed the previous Quranic exegesis partly into prose and responded his critics. This was not a step back in his project, however. On the contrary, he was still defending his exegesis in verse. Reportedly, an Ottoman judge, who took a glance at Badr al-Dīn's work, expressed his astonishment saying how one could dare to transform the words of Quran into verse (*idkhāl al-alfāz al-Qur'āniya fī al-nazm*). Badr al-Dīn responded in anger defending himself that he did not transform the Quran into poetry but only presented it in the form of poetic composition (*innamā awradtuhū fī al-nazm*). Few, however, could see what Badr al-Dīn really meant. Even al-Būrīnī, his student, does not seem to have been persuaded by his teacher's explanations. He writes in Badr al-Dīn's biography "he turned God's words into a kind of poetry (*annahū ja'ala kalām Allah Ta'āla ba'dan min al-shi'r*)."⁶³⁶

⁶³³ Pfeifer, *Empire of Salons*, 166–199.

⁶³⁴ Al-Būrīnī, *Tarājim al-a'yān* e.n. 93.

⁶³⁵ Çollak and Akpınar, "GAZZĪ, Bedreddīn."

⁶³⁶ Al-Būrīnī, *Tarājim al-a'yān*, 95.

Badr al-Dīn's work received criticisms even from outside Damascus. According to al-Būrīnī, Ottoman Şeyhülislam Ebussuud Efendi, the highest scholarly authority in the Ottoman center, also heard about the work. Ebussuud's first reaction was to reject the book entirely. However, after seeing its content, his mind changed and his objection abated.⁶³⁷ Pfeifer's explanation for the circulation of the exegesis in the imperial level is quite plausible. She writes that Qutb al-Dīn al-Nahrawālī (d. 1582), a Cairene scholar-historian and Badr al-Dīn's friend, met Badr al-Dīn in Damascus on his way to Rūm and possibly took a copy of his Quranic exegesis to the imperial capital, where scholars including Ebussuud found the opportunity to examine it.⁶³⁸

In fact, Ebussuud and Badr al-Dīn knew each other. As mentioned earlier, Badr al-Dīn met him in his Istanbul travel in 1530–31. Badr al-Dīn even mentions in his travelogue that there took place a scholarly conversation between them about the meaning of some Quranic vocabulary.⁶³⁹ Badr al-Dīn was at the age of thirty at that time, and Ebussuud, who had been a Sahn professor, was eight years older. Ebussuud climbed in the Ottoman scholarly-bureaucratic hierarchy in the following years and became the chief judge of Rumelia a decade after their first meeting. He was appointed to the office of the chief jurist in 1545, when Badr al-Dīn was a rising Shāfi'ī mufti in Damascus.⁶⁴⁰ Ebussuud was also penning a Quranic exegesis, which he started writing during his office of chief jurist in mid-1546, and continued to write for the next twenty years until early 1566.⁶⁴¹ It appears that Badr al-Dīn and the Ottoman Şeyhülislam started composing their exegeses the same years. Thus, it is possible that Ebussuud wanted to examine Badr al-Dīn's work, while he was still working on his own project.

Ottoman şeyhülislam's consent –if we believe the abovementioned report– was a critical threshold for the legitimate circulation of Badr al-Dīn's work in imperial territories.⁶⁴² However, debates around it did not

⁶³⁷ Al-Būrīnī, 104.

⁶³⁸ Pfeifer, "Encounter After the Conquest"; also see al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 1240.

⁶³⁹ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Matāli'*, 268.

⁶⁴⁰ Atayi, *Hadâ'ik*, 2017, 1:639–50.

⁶⁴¹ Adem Yesinde, "Ebussuûd Efendi'nin İrşâdü'l-Akli's-Selîm ilâ Mezâya'l-Kitâbi'l-Kerîm'i," *TALİD* 9, no. 18 (2011): 337–63.

⁶⁴² For the significance of Şeyhülislam's consent see Burak, *The Second Formation of Islamic Law*, 122–63.

cease in the subsequent decades. According to al-Būrīnī, it was almost impossible to find a second copy of the work after Badr al-Dīn's death because nobody liked it.⁶⁴³

Yet there was a minority group of people in Damascus, mostly Badr al-Dīn's close friends and students, who did not consider an exegesis in verse as disrespect for the Quran. One of the critical names in this group was Badr al-Dīn's son Najm al-Dīn, who, as will be seen in the next chapter, struggled much to put his father's exegesis in circulation in scholarly milieus again and to transmit it to later generations after Badr al-Dīn's death. Najm al-Dīn taught the work in the Umayyad Mosque in 1590s, which naturally aroused indignation among the contemporary Damascene scholars. His persistence eventually created two camps among local scholars, who penned a series of refutations to each other regarding the legitimacy of Badr al-Dīn's exegesis (see Figure 3). For example, Ibn al-Tabbākh (d. 1598) protested young Najm al-Dīn when he was teaching his father's work in the Umayyad Mosque. He accused the deceased Badr al-Dīn of distorting God's revelation in his book. Upon this, Najm al-Dīn's teacher Muhibb al-Dīn Hamawi (d. 1608), a Hanafī scholar, composed a treatise entitled *al-Sahm al-mu'tarid fī qalb al-mu'tarid* [Intercepting Arrow to the Heart of the Protester] to defend his student and Badr al-Dīn's work against Ibn al-Tabbākh. The latter responded him with another treatise, where he clarified his stand against the debated work. Annoyed with Ibn al-Tabbākh's treatise, Muhibb al-Dīn composed a satire for him as well as a second treatise entitled *al-Radd 'alā man fajara nabaha an-Najm bi-ilqa'ihī al-hajar* [Response to the One who Behaved Impudently and Barked on the Star (i.e. Najm al-Dīn) by Throwing him Stone]. Then, he invited Damascene notables to a banquet, where he made one of his students –aforementioned al-Būrīnī– to read his treatise loudly before the guests.⁶⁴⁴ Later, Najm al-Dīn's second teacher and father-in-law also got involved into this debate by penning a treatise entitled *al-Samsama al-mutasaddiya li-radd ta'ifa al-muta'addiya* [Resisting Persistence on Response to the Assailant Party].

It seems that Damascene learned community, including both Hanafī and Shafī'ī scholars, hotly debated Badr al-Dīn's Quranic exegesis in verse at the late sixteenth century. Najm al-Dīn's persistent struggle for teaching the work in the corners of the Umayyad Mosque, the religious and educational heart of the city, and his teachers' continuous support for him against the critics of the exegesis seems to have yielded its fruits in the coming decades. We see that the work received gradual acceptance since the early seventeenth

⁶⁴³ Al-Būrīnī, *Tarājim al-a'yān*, 105.

⁶⁴⁴ Al-Ghazzī, *Lutf*, e.n. 36, 68.

century. Nevzade Atayi (d. 1635), the Ottoman biographer writing in the first half of the seventeenth century in Istanbul, introduces Badr al-Dīn in one sentence only by a reference to his Quranic exegesis in verse. He merely says that “*ve fāzıl-ı Gazzī kī manzūm tefsīr yazmışdur meşhūr-ı Arab ū Acem’dir.*”⁶⁴⁵ In fact, Atayi’s introduction implies two things. First, Badr al-Dīn was the most famous Ghazzī among his family members in the imperial capital at the early seventeenth century so that it was enough to name him as “al-Ghazzī” without further elaboration. Second, he was famous specifically for his exegesis in verse in the imperial capital so that it was enough to introduce him as the author of this exegesis. The fact that Atayi neither praises nor denigrates the work might be an indicator of the relative acceptance Badr al-Dīn’s exegesis received in the scholarly circles.

Actually, later documents suggest that the work achieved wider acceptance in time. A court record that copied the endowment deed of Ahmad III’s library built in Istanbul in 1704 counts among the endowed books of the library a copy of Badr al-Dīn’s exegesis in three volumes, alongside the Quranic exegeses of Ebussuud and Kemalpaşazade, two eminent Ottoman chief jurists who played significant roles in the consolidation of Ottoman state and ideology.⁶⁴⁶ This makes one think that Badr al-Dīn’s hotly debated work finally achieved a sort of recognition even in the circles of the imperial capital. Nevertheless, nobody has attempted to undertake a similar project afterward, nor it became a canonized exegesis in local or imperial scholarly milieus and entered the curriculums of the imperial madrasas.

In *Badr al-tāli’*, a biographical dictionary devoted to the *mujtahids*, the author al-Shawkānī (d. 1834) introduces Badr al-Dīn as the author of the unusual exegesis [*sāhib al-tafsīr al-‘ajīb*], and devotes a long page to a distorted version of the abovementioned imperial reaction to Badr al-Dīn’s work. According to al-Shawkānī’s account, Badr al-Dīn personally presented his Quranic exegesis in verse to Sultan Süleyman, who then ordered scholars of Rūm a scholarly examination of the work. The latter examined it letter-by-letter but could not find even a single mistake. Upon this, the Ottoman sultan bestowed Badr al-Dīn a huge amount of money, and he returned to Damascus by this reward.⁶⁴⁷ In fact, Badr al-Dīn visited the imperial

⁶⁴⁵ Atayi, *Hadā’iku’l-hakā’ik*, 1864.

⁶⁴⁶ Rumeli Sadāreti Mahkemesi 161 Numaralı Sicil (H.1115-1116 / M. 1704), 19b-1.

Online access: <http://www.kadisicilleri.org/madde.php?klme=gazzi&trch=hkm&-find=+ARA+> For more information about Ahmed III’s libraries, see İsmail E. Erünsal, *Osmanlılarda Kütüphaneler ve Kütüphanecilik*, (Istanbul: Timaş, 2020) 215–41.

⁶⁴⁷ Muhammad b. Ali al-Shawkānī, *al-Badr al-tāli’ bi-mahāsin man ba’da al-qarn al-sābi’* (Cairo: Dār al-Kitāb al-Islāmiya), II: 252.

capital only once, and this journey was decades before the composition of his exegesis, in 1530–31. Thus, al-Shawkānī’s account failed to reflect the reality in several respects. Still, it gives an idea about how Badr al-Dīn’s debated exegesis was perceived in the first half of the eighteenth century—an unusual but flawless exegesis that gained the imperial recognition following the examination and the consent of the Ottoman scholars in the imperial capital.

5.5.2. *Al-Mahyā*: A Nascent Sufi Community in Damascus

Badr al-Dīn spent most of his time in his Halabiyya cell in the Umayyad Mosque since the mid-century. This cell was at the eastern porticoes (*riwāq*, pl. *arwiqa*) of the Umayyad Mosque. It was known as Ibn Sinān cubicle (*maqsūra*) during the time of the Ayyūbids. When Tāj al-Dīn al-Kindī (d. 1216), a famous hadith scholar, taught there and endowed there more than seven hundred books, it came to be known as Tājīyya after his name. The cell was called Halabiyya during the sixteenth century.⁶⁴⁸ Such cells known as *khalwas* (lit. seclusion), where scholars could accommodate and teach, were not peculiar to the Umayyad Mosque or Damascus. For example, there were similar scholarly circles and cells in the porticoes of the contemporary Azhar Mosque in Cairo as well.⁶⁴⁹

Badr al-Dīn owned the Halabiyya cell until his death. As mentioned above, he was teaching his students, accepting religious questions of common people, and hosting his guests in this cell. In mid-1563, he was involved in a fierce controversy around a new Sufi community in Damascus, which was known as the Lantern Community (*jamā‘a al-Mahyā*) (see Figure 3).

According to Najm al-Dīn al-Ghazzī, the Mahyā tradition was first established by Alī al-Shūnī (d. 1537), a contemporary Sufi figure known as Alī al-Mahyāwi in Cairo.⁶⁵⁰ Yet Michael Winter informs that the practice was known even in the fourteenth century.⁶⁵¹ Alī al-Shūnī first joined to the Badawiya order, and resided in the dervish convent of Ahmad al-Badawī (d. 1276) in the surroundings of Cairo, where he came

⁶⁴⁸ For Tājīyya madrasa see al-Nu‘aymī, *al-Dāris*, 1948 e.n. 93; Mahamid, “Mosques as Higher Educational Institutions in Mamluk Syria,” 202.

⁶⁴⁹ Hashmi, “Patronage, Legal Practice, and Space in al-Azhar, 1500-1650,” 128–32.

⁶⁵⁰ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 1105.

⁶⁵¹ Winter, *Society and Religion in Early Ottoman Egypt*, 47.

up with the Mahyā practice—burning as many candles as possible while performing dhikr and sending blessings for the Prophet.

After a twenty-year abstinence, Alī al-Shūnī resided in Cairo in 1491/92 and gathered his followers in the Azhar Mosque. He gained the support of Qāyitbāy’s soldiers but some Cairenes accused him of innovation (*bid‘a*) in religion. Some people asked leading Cairene jurists’ legal opinions about the Mahyā practice. The latter, however, were hesitant. Reportedly, when Burhān al-Dīn b. Abī al-Sharīf (d. 1517), an eminent Shāfi‘ī mufti in Cairo, was asked about the Mahyā practice, he tore the paper the question was written on. Later, his attention was drawn to the resemblance between Mahyā practice and Zoroastrian ritual of kindling fire during prayers, but he rejected such similarities between the two. He also added that as long as the light became intenser inside the mosque it is not extravagance to kindle a new lantern during Mahyā meetings. Shahāb al-Dīn al-Kastallānī (d. 1517), another leading Cairene scholar, penned a treatise to support Alī al-Shūnī and his Mahyā practice.⁶⁵²

Apparently, Alī al-Shūnī and his followers were about to create a new Sufi tradition. Their choice of mosques in Cairo as the platform to perform Mahyā stemmed from a reason. During the Mamluk era, especially in Cairo, mosques were forum-like spaces, where, alongside daily prayer, scholarly and Sufi gatherings took place. In fact, madrasas, mosques, and khanqahs had many things in common in terms of function and form in Syro-Egypt during the Mamluk period. For example, *hudūr* (lit. attendance), a Sufi practice, was sometimes performed in mosques and madrasas. Sufi sheikhs were appointed to madrasas as officers, and endowers of madrasas stipulated to them to perform the practice of *hudur* in their madrasas. Especially the late Mamluk imperial constructions such as the Qāyitbāy Complex and al-Ghawrī Complex in Cairo reflect the convergence of different institutional forms together.⁶⁵³ In this respect, Alī al-Shūnī and his followers’ performances in the al-Azhar and other mosques of the imperial capital were not arbitrary but rather aimed at gaining general acceptance for their novel community. However, they faced harassment and attacks of the opposing circles in the Cairene mosques.⁶⁵⁴

⁶⁵² Nebi Bozkurt, “Mahyā,” in *DĪA* (Online: TDV İSAM, 2003); al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 1105.

⁶⁵³ Doris Behrens-Abouseif, “Change in Function and Form of Mamluk Religious Institutions,” *Annales Islamologiques* 21 (1985): 73–93; Behrens-Abouseif, “Qaytbay’s Foundation in Medina, the Madrasah, the Ribat and the Dashishah”; Behrens-Abouseif, “Qaytbay’s Madrasahs in the Holy Cities and the Evolution of Haram Architecture.”

⁶⁵⁴ One of the followers of the Mahyā sessions in Cairo was the famous Sufi Sheikh al-Sha‘rānī. For the difficulties he faced because his affiliation with the Mahyā community, see Winter, *Society and Religion in Early Ottoman Egypt*, 46–48.

The support of the abovementioned leading Cairene scholars paved the way of Alī al-Shūnī, who then attempted to guarantee the future of his community by appointing successors. Reportedly, one day, a Damascene sufi-merchant called Abd al-Qādir joined in dhikr of the Mahyā community in the Azhar Mosque. He liked the practice and obtained permission to perform the Mahyā in Damascus.⁶⁵⁵

Abd al-Qādir started Mahyā first in a small mosque of Damascus, most probably not to attract the attention and criticisms of the notables in the city. Badr al-Dīn's son Shahāb al-Dīn encountered the Mahyā practice one day in this small mosque and enjoyed it. Both Badr al-Dīn and Shahāb al-Dīn had known about the practice from their residence in Cairo some two decades ago. Shahāb al-Dīn started participating in the dhikr sessions of the Damascene Mahyā community. After a while, Abd al-Qādir, the leader of the community in Damascus, planned to perform the Mahyā practice in the Umayyad Mosque, the oldest and greatest religious complex of the city. However, his friends discouraged him warning him about the reaction of the Damascene notables (*rijāl al-Shām*).⁶⁵⁶ Considering the fact that Damascus was less a cosmopolitan city than Cairo, the Mahyā gathering in the Umayyad Mosque could arouse anger in the scholarly circles. Thus, Abd al-Qādir first needed the consent of the leading scholarly figures for the Mahyā practice to empower his position.

Abd al-Qādir eventually gained access to Badr al-Dīn through his son Shahāb al-Dīn and asked for his support for the Mahyā community. Badr al-Dīn's relations with Sufi groups in Damascus were strong thanks to his familial connections with the Qādirī community. He had friends from Qādirī Sufis.⁶⁵⁷ During his youth, he was attending dhikr sessions of a Qādirī community known as Samādiyya, which performed their dkihr in accompany of timbrel and drum. As a Shāfi'ī jurist, he was once asked about the permissibility of performing dhikr with timbrel and drum, and he issued a detailed religio-legal opinion accepting it permissible.⁶⁵⁸ Later, he even enrobed some people with Qādirī robe and introduced them to the order.⁶⁵⁹ Some of the certificates he issued were in Sufi tradition.⁶⁶⁰

⁶⁵⁵ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 1105.

⁶⁵⁶ Al-Ghazzī, 3: 58.

⁶⁵⁷ Al-Ghazzī, e.n. 1053.

⁶⁵⁸ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 703; al-Ghazzī, *Lutf*, e.n. 239; Ibn Ayyūb, *Al-Rawd al-Ātir*, 964.

⁶⁵⁹ Al-Ghazzī, *Lutf*, e.n. 108.

⁶⁶⁰ For instance, he issued two certificates for Dāvūd al-Yamanī, one a certificate to teach and issue religious opinions, and the second in Sufism (*tasawwuf*). See al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 1415.

Badr al-Dīn did not hesitate to give the Mahyā community his support, although he knew well that the Mahyā practice in the Umayyad Mosque would receive fierce criticism from his colleagues. Nevertheless, the abovementioned Burhān al-Dīn b. Abī al-Sharīf and Shahāb al-Dīn al-Kastallānī were his teachers from Cairo, and their support for the Mahyā community in Cairo some decades ago must have been encouraging Badr al-Dīn.

The first Mahyā session in the Umayyad Mosque took place in August 1563.⁶⁶¹ Following gatherings took place in Monday nights. Both Badr al-Dīn and his son Shahāb al-Dīn were regular attendants of these dkihr sessions. Shahāb al-Dīn even composed verses prasing the community, saying “mortification of my ardent desires by reading [Gazzali’s work] al-Ihyā, and resurrection [ihyā] of my heart by watching Mahyā.”⁶⁶²

However, soon several Damascene scholars objected the Mahyā practice. They visited Mustafa Pasha, the governor of Damascus, to complain about the Mahyā community and their unusual dhikr practices. The Pasha abolished dhikr sessions of the Mahyā community in the Umayyad Mosque. Abd al-Qādir, the sheikh of the community in Damascus, came to Badr al-Dīn in despair to give him the bad news. However, according to the biographical account in *al-Kawākib*, Badr al-Dīn did not give up supporting Mahyā followers. He offered Abd al-Qādir to gather his followers near his Halabiyya cell in the Umayyad Mosque and promised him that he himself would also participate in the dhikr. The Mahyā gathering hosted by Badr al-Dīn that night and nothing happened. Badr al-Dīn’s persistence and continuous support for this novel Sufi community eventually forced the officials and notables to ignore them. Nobody since then interfered in the practices of the Mahyā Sufis in the Umayyad Mosque.⁶⁶³ As will be explained in the next chapter, the Umayyad Mosque, like the Azhar Mosque in Cairo, was the heart of the scholarly and social life in Damascus. Thus, the continuation of the Mahyā gatherings in the Umayyad Mosque was a critical step for the general recognition of the community in Damascene society.

Badr al-Dīn contributed to the substance of the Mahyā practice as well. The congregation was performing dhikr by *sūra al-Kawthar*, which addressed the Prophet, to praise him. Badr al-Dīn one day proposed to perform dkihr by *sūra al-Inshirāh* on the ground that it also addressed the Prophet. He even proposed the repetition of the *sūra al-Inshirāh* to be eleven times on the ground that the surah addressed the Prophet

⁶⁶¹ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 1266; al-Ghazzī, *Lutf*, e.n. 200.

⁶⁶² Al-Būrīnī, *Tarājim al-a'yān*, 29.

⁶⁶³ Al-Ghazzī, *Lutf*, e.n. 200.

eleven times through pronouns. Abd al-Qādir, the leader of the community, pleased with Badr al-Dīn's offer and explanation, and they added *sūra al-Inshirāh* to their dhikrs in the Umayyad Mosque.

5.5.3. Scholarly Challenges through Linguistic Debates

The linguistic disciplines (e.g. grammar, rhetoric, prosody etc.) have been generally labelled as auxiliary (*alāt*) or preparatory (*muqaddimāt*) sciences in classification of Islamic sciences. That is, they are pre-requirements for religious sciences such as theology and law.⁶⁶⁴ Thus, one could not be a competent scholar without a good command of Arabic. Many historical anecdotes indicate that scholars in the sixteenth-century Damascus (as in other parts of the Muslim world) attached great significance to competency in Arabic language. Biographical sources mention some of Badr al-Dīn's discussions with his contemporaries including the Ottoman scholar-bureaucrats and his local colleagues, around issues related to Arabic language. The language was ostensibly at the center of these discussions. For example, inflection (*i'rāb*) and meaning of a certain vocabulary were common themes around which discussions took place and even treatises were produced. Yet behind the curtain of language, there were usually challenges to scholarly authorities or attempts to establish superiority over peer scholars.

Although modern readers may tend to consider them ordinary, such linguistic debates must have been important in the eyes of the contemporary historians because they filled their biographical entries with long anecdotes sometimes giving very specific details of such debates. For instance, in Badr al-Dīn's biography, al-Būrīnī allots several pages to anecdotes where Badr al-Dīn and his contemporaries were engaged in discussions related to the usage and meaning of certain Arabic vocabulary.⁶⁶⁵ When we analyze Badr al-Dīn's polemics around language, we see that he utilized them for various purposes such as to highlight his cultural superiority over his Ottoman colleagues or to attract attention of his Damascene peers to his scholarly competence (see Figure 3).

Organization of banquets called *majālis al-khatm* (closing sessions) by professors after finishing teaching a class was a common practice in Damascus in both Mamluk and Ottoman era. In such occasions, the professor invited leading scholars and notables of the city, generously hosted them, and sometimes issued

⁶⁶⁴ See Ömer Türker, "İslam Düşüncesinde İlimler Tasnifi," *Sosyoloji Dergisi* 3, no. 22 (2011): 533–56.

⁶⁶⁵ Al-Būrīnī, *Tarājim al-a'yān*, 93–105.

certificates for students participating in the banquet.⁶⁶⁶ Sources inform us about Badr al-Dīn's banquets since his early career as a Shāfi'ī professor.⁶⁶⁷ However, one of them, which took place during Kınalızade Ali's office of judgeship of Damascus (mid-1563–late 1566), is particularly highlighted in the sources.⁶⁶⁸

Kınalızade (d. 1572) was a professor in the Süleymaniye madrasas, the highest teaching post in the imperial madrasa hierarchy during the second half of the sixteenth century.⁶⁶⁹ He then switched into judgeship career and received the judgeship of Damascus in his early fifties. When Kınalızade entered Damascus, two significant scholars did not visit him, one was at the deathbed, and the other was Badr al-Dīn, who apologized on the pretext of his seclusion in his Halabiyya cell. Though not officially appointed, Badr al-Dīn was the eminent Shāfi'ī mufti of the city. He was now in his mid-sixties, outlived several leading Shāfi'ī jurists from his peers, and earned the title of “the Shāfi'ī mufti of Damascus” by the consensus of the Damascene Shāfi'ī scholarly community that disapproved young Shāfi'ī jurist to issue their fatwas during his life. Thus, Kınalızade showed kindness to visit Badr al-Dīn personally, and they met at the porticoes of the Umayyad Mosque for the first time.⁶⁷⁰

Kınalızade, as the Ottoman judge, represented one of the highest administrative authorities in the city. This political advantage, however, did not go together with the social and cultural superiority. For the first time, he was serving the empire outside the Rūmī lands and he lacked a strong network in Damascus. He had received his education in Hanafī madhhab in the Ottoman madrasas in Istanbul, where the majority of Muslim population was speaking Turkish and affiliated with Hanafī madhhab. In Damascus, on the other hand, the majority was speaking Arabic, and had affiliation with the non-Hanafī madhhabs. There were also influential local scholars both from Hanafīs and from non-Hanafīs. As the judge of the city, Kınalızade was the representative of the Ottoman sultan in Damascus. That is, he played the role of bridge between the central government and local scholars. The latter, on the other hand, enjoyed a broader and stronger network in the region as well as cultural ties with the local population. That is, they played the role of bridge between

⁶⁶⁶ For the significance of gatherings in such banquets in terms of scholarly exchange and transmission of knowledge and culture, see Pfeifer, *Empire of Salons*, 97–132, 166–199.

⁶⁶⁷ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 841; Ibn Tūlūn, *Tārīkh al-Shām*, 275, 322.

⁶⁶⁸ For instance, see al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 1484.

⁶⁶⁹ For Kınalızade Ali's biography see Atayi, *Hadâ'ik*, 2017, 1:597–606; al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 1484.

⁶⁷⁰ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 1484.

the Ottoman judge and the local people sometimes officially by serving as his deputies and other times non-officially by helping him to build his image and authority in the city. Thanks to their expertise in Islamic sciences and social status, local scholars could exert their own scholarly authority in any way, and limit the Ottoman judge's manoeuvre in judicial administration and ruling. Therefore, Kınalızade's visit to Badr al-Dīn was not redundant. He must have learned about the socio-political dynamics of the city as well as the leading figures living there from his predecessors in the office of the judgeship of Damascus while he was still in Istanbul. He was going to spend in Damascus at least two years before receiving a promotion to another judgeship. Thus, he needed the support, or at least the consent, of such respected local figures as Badr al-Dīn.

The imbalance in political, social, and cultural capitals of the two groups –Ottoman judges and Damascene scholars– manifested itself in various ways since the Ottoman presence in Damascus. One of the areas of tension was clearly the language. Many local scholars, who spoke Arabic as their mother tongue and enjoyed enough self-confidence as the inhabitants of an old scholarly center, tended to assess the scholarly level of the new Ottoman judges usually looking at his competence in Arabic.⁶⁷¹ Though often veiled under the mask of scholarship, such assessments were in fact expression of local challenges to the authority of the Ottoman judge.

Such a challenge to Kınalızade's authority as a scholar and Ottoman judge came in one of the banquets organized by Badr al-Dīn in honor of his last class on his abovementioned Quranic exegesis in verse. According to the biographical anecdotes, Kınalızade and Badr al-Dīn started exchanging ideas around various scholarly topics in this gathering in the presence of several eminent scholars and graduate students. Eventually, they were involved in a discussion on the inflection of a word in Badr al-Dīn's exegesis. Both scholar attempted to defend his position by giving references to canonic works of authority scholars from the past. When Badr al-Dīn mentioned some arguments of Abū Hayyān al-Andalusī (d. 1344), a renowned expert on language, the direction of the debate changed. Kınalızade stated that Abū Hayyān's arguments were disproved by his student Samīn al-Halabī (d. 1355), another authority in linguistic disciplines. Badr al-Dīn, however, claimed that Samīn's refutations of his teacher's arguments were unfounded. Finally, the meeting ended with Badr al-Dīn's relative superiority over his guest without a concrete result.

⁶⁷¹ Pfeifer, "To Gather Together," Chapter 3; Pfeifer, "Encounter After the Conquest."

Later, Kınalızade discovered that Ibn Hajar (d. 1449), the famous Cairene hadith scholar, had sided with Samin in his objections against his teacher. Kınalızade immediately sent a letter to Badr al-Dīn and informed him about Ibn Hajar's position in their debate. This letter started the second round in his polemic with the leading Shāfi'ī mufti of Damascus. Ibn Hajar was an authority scholar, whose view Badr al-Dīn could not easily ignore or underestimate. Thus, he felt obliged to pen a short treatise to explain why he considered Samīn's arguments baseless, and send it to the Ottoman judge. The latter, however, did not intend to step back. In response to Badr al-Dīn's work, he composed a longer treatise to prove his counter-arguments, and sent it to Badr al-Dīn. It seems the second round of the debate ended in equilibrium because neither Badr al-Dīn nor Kınalızade would pen another work on the issue.⁶⁷²

The reception of two treatises in local and imperial levels is not objectively traceable. The author of *al-Kawākib*, Badr al-Dīn's son Najm al-Dīn, writes both scholars penned a treatise upon the aforementioned gathering. He then gives brief information about the content of his father's treatise while overlooking Kınalızade's work and the reaction of Damascene scholarly circles to these treatises.⁶⁷³ Writing in the core lands of the empire, his contemporary Atayi does not mention Badr al-Dīn-Kınalızade debate at all let alone the reception of their treatises.⁶⁷⁴ In his biographical dictionary of Hanafī scholars, Taqiyy al-Dīn al-Tamīmī (d. 1601) writes that Syrian scholars (*'ulamā' al-bilād al-Shāmiyya*) favored Kınalızade's work over Badr al-Dīn's treatise.⁶⁷⁵ Katib Çelebi (d. 1657) quotes from al-Tamīmī and repeats the same.⁶⁷⁶

Of course, one should not consider the relationship between Badr al-Dīn and Kınalızade as an unceasing rivalry and tension. The imbalance in their roles (as an independent scholar versus an imperial official) made them involved in such a debate to prove their scholarly competence to each other. However, this imbalance also made them to accept their difference and relative superiorities in time. For example, as pointed out earlier, Badr al-Dīn had a powerful chain of transmission in hadith discipline thanks to his certificates from leading hadith experts including al-Suyūtī (d. 1505). Kınalızade availed himself of his acquaintance with

⁶⁷² Pfeifer, "Encounter After the Conquest"; Eren, "Kınalızâde Ali Efendi ile Bedreddin El-Gazzi Arasında İlmî Bir Tartışma."

⁶⁷³ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 1484.

⁶⁷⁴ Atayi, *Hadâ'ik*, 2017, 1:597–606.

⁶⁷⁵ Süleymaniye Library, Ragib Pasha 1029, 205a–b.

⁶⁷⁶ Katib Çelebi, *Kasf al-zunūn an asma' al-kutub wa al-funūn*, ed. Shahāb al-Dīn al-Najafī (Beirut: Dār al-Ihyā al-Turāth al-Arabī), I: 122-23, 730-31.

Badr al-Dīn to take a hadith certificate from him.⁶⁷⁷ Badr al-Dīn's matchless chain of transmission attracted attention of the subsequent Ottoman judges as well. Çivizade Efendi (d. 1587) and Bostanzade Mehmed Efendi (d. 1598), two judges of Damascus after Kınalızade's office respectively in 1569 and 1573–75, also took certificates from Badr al-Dīn in hadith and other fields.⁶⁷⁸ Such certificates facilitated the integration of the Ottoman judges into the deep-rooted scholarly traditions of the region while simultaneously putting them ahead of their colleagues in the imperial center in terms of scholarly capital.⁶⁷⁹

In Badr al-Dīn's biography, al-Būrīnī mentions two similar anecdotes about linguistic debates. Accordingly, Badr al-Dīn organizes another banquet for the closing session of one of his classes, and invites Ottoman Hanafī mufti of Damascus Muidzade Efendi (d. 1576),⁶⁸⁰ and several eminent local scholars including the rising figures from among the post-Mamluk generation of scholars such as Ismā'īl al-Nābulusī (d. 1585). Al-Būrīnī gives a vivid description of the gathering by giving the names of several attendants and their hierarchical seating in front of Badr al-Dīn during the gathering. When narrating a hadith during the session, Badr al-Dīn pronounces the word *sarariyy* (meaning female slave) with doubling its end (*tashdīd*), and the abovementioned Ismā'īl interrupts Badr al-Dīn saying the correct pronunciation in the narration must be *sarariy* with phonetic ease (*takhfīf*).

Ismā'īl was about thirty years younger than Badr al-Dīn but he was a rising Shāfi'ī professor in the prestigious Shāmiyya Barrāniyya Madrasa at that time. His ties with the ruling elite in Damascus and Istanbul were strong. Ismā'īl was one of the few candidates who was expected to replace Badr al-Dīn as the Shāfi'ī mufti in the subsequent years because he had already come forward among his peer Shāfi'ī jurists by his personality, knowledge, works, and connections.⁶⁸¹ Al-Būrīnī writes in Ismā'īl's biography that he started issuing religious opinions despite Badr al-Dīn's existence in Damascus, thus, Badr al-Dīn had a grudge against him [*yaghudd minhu li-dhālik*].⁶⁸² Despite the criticisms he received from the Shāfi'ī scholarly community for his lack of respect for Badr al-Dīn, Ismā'īl kept issuing his fatwas during Badr al-

⁶⁷⁷ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 1484.

⁶⁷⁸ Al-Ghazzī e.n. 1205, 1223; *Lutf*, e.n. 31.

⁶⁷⁹ Pfeifer, "A New Hadith Culture?"

⁶⁸⁰ For Muidzade's biography see Atayī, *Hadā'ik*, 2017, 1:751–53.

⁶⁸¹ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 1386.

⁶⁸² Al-Būrīnī, *Tarājim al-a'yān*, II: 68.

Dīn's life. Yet he had to wait until Badr al-Dīn's death to assume the leadership in his madhhab (*riyāsa madhhabihi*) as the Shāfi'ī mufti of Damascus by the tacit consent of his colleagues.

According to al-Būrīnī's description of the aforementioned gathering, Badr al-Dīn does not give heed to Ismā'īl's correction first. However, the latter repeats his correction each time Badr al-Dīn narrates the hadith with the same pronunciation. Eventually, Badr al-Dīn becomes angry, strikes the ground with his hand, and says, "Did you really spend your nights for such nonsense [*turrahāt*]". Then, he gives a reference to a past scholarly authority to support his pronunciation of the controversial word. Then, one of the participants intervenes by claiming both versions are correct according to another scholar, in order to calm down the gathering.⁶⁸³

In the second anecdote, al-Būrīnī mentions another banquet organized by Badr al-Dīn, where he invites his Damascene colleagues and Ottoman officials including the judge Çivizade Efendi and state-appointed Ottoman Hanafī mufti of Damascus Fevzi Efendi. Accordingly, during discussions (*mabāhith*), Badr al-Dīn claims that al-Firūzābādī (d. 1415), the author of *al-Qāmūs al-muhīt*, makes mistakes in the meaning of seven words in his famous lexicon. Those who are present get surprised and disapprove (*istahjanū*) this claim. A silence prevails the gathering, people start looking at each other's face but nobody dares to accept or reject Badr al-Dīn's claim. According to al-Būrīnī, the participants of the gathering does not know what to say because neither the author of *Qāmūs* is expected to make such a mistake nor is Badr al-Dīn expected to say something baseless. After a prevailing silence, Badr al-Dīn starts explaining the correct meaning of the seven words. The participants of the gathering take a sigh of relief after his explanations. Only one of them, Shahāb al-Dīn al-Tībī, dares to make some rejections on the meanings of certain words explained by Badr al-Dīn. Then, Badr al-Dīn makes further clarification for his claim and next day composes few verses to send the unconvinced al-Tībī.⁶⁸⁴

These issues might seem trivial looking from today. However, the contemporaries must have perceived it differently. Al-Būrīnī allots to the abovementioned anecdotes two long pages decades after Badr al-Dīn's death. It seems such discussions were merely the tip of the iceberg, that is, the tensions and conflicts between

⁶⁸³ Al-Būrīnī, 96.

⁶⁸⁴ Al-Būrīnī, 97–98.

scholarly and political authorities were hidden under the veil of discussions around pronunciation of certain words or their exact meaning.

In sum, Badr al-Dīn had a good command of Arabic. He composed Quranic exegeses in verse and thematic lexicons in various topics such as the rules of eating in gatherings and the parts of human body.⁶⁸⁵ He utilized this proficiency for different purposes: (1) as a reaction to the Ottoman scholar-bureaucrats, who, though culturally disadvantageous in several respect, enjoyed political authority as judges over their counterparts in Damascus, (2) as a mean to establish his authority over the new generation of Damascene scholars who already started challenging his scholarly authority and competing him in scholarly posts, (3) as a legitimate way to questioning and challenging the authority of the past scholars, as seen in the example of alleged mistakes of al-Firūzābādī in his celebrated dictionary.

5.5.4. The Shāmiyya Barrāniyya Madrasa and Rivalry with Immigrant Ajamī-Shāfi‘ī Scholars

Badr al-Dīn received the professorship of the Shāmiyya Barrāniyya Madrasa in mid-1538. He was still teaching there in 1548.⁶⁸⁶ After a while, however, the Shāmiyya Madrasa was given to Muhammad al-Ījī, another Shāfi‘ī scholar in Damascus (see Figure 3).

Al-Ījī was originally from al-Īj, a small town in Iran. He fled his lands after Safavids’ ascension to power as many other Sunni scholars, and resided in the Sālihiyya district of Damascus as a young scholar few years before the Ottoman conquest.⁶⁸⁷ Then, he met Muhammad al-Irāqī (d. 1526), who was a Shāziliī sheikh living in Sālihiyya, and famous in all Syria and even in the Rūmī lands. He accompanied al-Irāqī for years.⁶⁸⁸ After al-Irāqī’s death, he accompanied Qutb al-Dīn ‘Īsā al-Safawī al-Ījī, another itinerant Sufi-scholar originally from al-Īj, and studied from him.⁶⁸⁹ After a while, Qutb al-Dīn left Damascus for Istanbul, where he was welcomed with great respect and appointed fifty aspers salary from Egyptian treasury. He then

⁶⁸⁵ Badr al-Dīn al-Ghazzī, *Risāla ādāb al-mu’ākala*, ed. Umar Mūsā Bāshā (Damascus-Beirut: Dār Ibn Kathir, 1987); Badr al-Dīn al-Ghazzī, *Dhikr a’za’i al-insān*, ed. Hatim Sālih al-Zamin (Damascus: Dār al-Bashā’ir, 2003).

⁶⁸⁶ Ahmad al-Haskafī, who was present in Damascus in 954–958 [1547/48–1551], studied from Badr al-Dīn in al-Shāmiyya. Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 1348.

⁶⁸⁷ For similar scholars, see Markiewicz, *The Crisis of Kingship in Late Medieval Islam*, 70–72; For al-Ījī’s biography, see al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 1233.

⁶⁸⁸ For al-Irāqī’s biography, see al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 100.

⁶⁸⁹ For Qutb al-Dīn’s biography, see al-Ghazzī e.n. 1128.

returned to Aleppo, where al-Ījī visited him and invited him to Damascus in 1542/43. Qutb al-Dīn resided in Sālihiyya few years, and a group of Ajamī sufi-scholarly figures gathered around him. When Qutb al-Dīn left for Egypt after a while, al-Ījī became the leader of this Sufi community in Sālihiyya. They were gathering in a dervish lodge known as Khawarizmiyya in the surroundings of Damascus.⁶⁹⁰

Damascus and Aleppo were at the intersection of the pilgrimage and trade roads. After Syria's integration into the pax-Ottomanica, the mobility of scholars increased in these cities. Figures like the abovementioned al-Irāqī, who was originally from Egypt, visited the region on their way to Mecca and core Ottoman lands. Figures like al-Ījī and Qutb al-Dīn, who were originally from Iran, visited the region on their way to the Ottoman center, Mecca, and Egypt. During these travels, they sometimes spent long time in major Syrian cities including Damascus and established there their own communities consisting of friends, students and disciples.

Indeed, what enabled al-Ījī to become the leader of a local community largely consisting of immigrant sufi-scholars in Damascus in a short time was this network of scholars and Sufis. This leadership granted al-Ījī bargaining power before the imperial authorities in the city. He even visited the Ottoman capital and tried his fortune there. He justified his travel on the pretext that he felt obliged to warn the Ottoman sultan and officials against the threat of a Damascene Jew, who allegedly defamed the Prophet in his sermons in Damascus. Al-Ījī reportedly said Ottoman officials in Istanbul how he could bear the insults of a Jew on the Prophet himself while he had left his homeland because of the Safavid insults on Prophet's companions.⁶⁹¹ Al-Ījī had a powerful network among the high-ranking scholar-bureaucrats in Istanbul thanks to the ties of his sheikhs such as the abovementioned al-Irāqī.⁶⁹² Thus, he eventually returned to Damascus bestowed with many gifts and new positions including the professorship of al-Shāmiyya al-Barrāniyya.

As seen in the case of Radiyy al-Dīn in the previous chapters, during the Mamluk era, many Damascene scholars enjoyed multiple channels to the Mamluk capital, where they could find additional career opportunities and patronage. In the early Ottoman Damascus, however, they had much lesser career opportunities in the Ottoman capital. Thus, the increasing number of Damascene scholars since the early

⁶⁹⁰ Ibn al-Hanbalī, *Durr al-habab*, II: 394-99.

⁶⁹¹ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 1233.

⁶⁹² See the biographies of Ibn al-Irāq and his sheikh Alī b. Maymūn in Taşköprülüzade, *eş-Şaka'ik*, 561-63, 563-65; al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 1128.

sixteenth century gradually increased the demand for limited number of cadres in Damascus. As mentioned earlier, the Ottomans did not invest in new construction projects in Damascus until the mid-century, which could have balanced this increase in demand by creating new endowed positions for local scholars.⁶⁹³ Moreover, as observed in the case of al-Ījī and the abovementioned Qutb al-Dīn, several Ajamī scholars also resided in Damascus and added to this demand.⁶⁹⁴

Al-Ījī seems to have tried his fortune in Istanbul first but finally had to be content with a teaching post outside the Ottoman madrasa hierarchy in Damascus. When he returned to Damascus with his *berāt* to the Shāmiyya Barrāniyya professorship, this disturbed Badr al-Dīn's comfort in his hometown. The Shāmiyya Barrāniyya professorship was stipulated to Shāfi'ī scholars in Damascus. In other words, it was legally secured from the intervention of the Hanafī scholars appointed by the central government. In this regard, the Ajamī Shāfi'ī scholars such as al-Ījī became more real rivals for Badr al-Dīn and his peer Shāfi'ī colleagues in Damascus than the Ottoman Hanafī scholar-bureaucrats. Eventually, Badr al-Dīn, who was from a well-known local family in Damascus, lost the Shāmiyya to an immigrant Shāfi'ī scholar coming from Iran, not to an Ottoman Hanafī scholar coming from Istanbul.

Dismissed from al-Shāmiyya, Badr al-Dīn struggled for another teaching post in Damascus, and finally took the Muqaddamiyya (Jawwāniyya) madrasa, another wealthy institution dated back to Ayyūbid period.⁶⁹⁵ However, he would get involved in another struggle for position in the coming decades, due to the increasing competition among Damascene scholars. (See Figure 3).

5.5.5. The Taqawiyya Madrasa and Entanglements in the Imperial Network

Badr al-Dīn received the professorship of the Muqaddamiyya Madrasa before 1556, and taught there until 1563, for at least seven years. In November 1563, Alā' al-Dīn b. Imād al-Dīn, the professor of the Takawiyya madrasa and Badr al-Dīn's neighbor, died.⁶⁹⁶ Badr al-Dīn married his widow wife after him and replaced

⁶⁹³ See Kafescioğlu, "In the Image of Rūm."

⁶⁹⁴ For other examples of Ajamī scholars see al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 328, 619, 668, 1100, 1141, 1157, 1164, 1178, 1383.

⁶⁹⁵ *Rihla ila Rūm*, 108a. For this madrasa, see Yılmaz, *Ulema ve Medrese (1154-1260)*, 95. Yılmaz mentions this madrasa among the Hanafī madrasas of Damascus during the Ayyūbid era. Thus, one can speculate that either the endowment deed was violated or an additional Shāfi'ī professorship was created in the same madrasa in time so that Badr al-Dīn could teach in this madrasa in the mid-sixteenth century.

⁶⁹⁶ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 1383.

him in the professorship of the Taqawiyya Madrasa, where he taught more than a decade.⁶⁹⁷ The Taqawiyya was not an imperial madrasa, thus its professor did not receive rotational appointments. That is, he could teach unless another scholar rivaled him in the post. In November 1575, Muhammed al-Hijāzī, a rising Shāfi‘ī scholar in Damascus, challenged Badr al-Dīn in the professorship of the Taqawiyya Madrasa and replaced him. Badr al-Dīn, in his mid-seventies now, was the respected Shāfi‘ī mufti of the city. Thus, his dismissal from the professorship for a local scholar who was thirty years younger than him was scandalous. Al-Būrīnī writes that Damascenes were dazzled when they heard the news of al-Hijāzī’s appointment to Badr al-Dīn’s place in the Taqawiyya. They did not believe the news at first because it was almost impossible [*min qabīl al-mustahīl*].⁶⁹⁸

Al-Hijāzī was born in 1531 in Damascus. He completed his education in Egypt, where he studied religious disciplines as well as medicine and occult sciences including alchemy/chemistry (*kimyā*) and jifr. Then, he returned to Damascus and tried to show up before the Damascene learned society. He was one of the powerful opponents of the Mahyā community, which Badr al-Dīn embraced and supported. When Malulzade Efendi became the judge of Damascus in 1567, al-Hijāzī entered his circle and became closer to him. Reportedly, relying on his education on occult sciences, he informed the Ottoman judge that his wife was pregnant and would give birth to a son. Upon the realization of this prophecy, Malulzade Efendi started believing in him. Al-Hijāzī continued his prophecies adding that his son would be the Mahdī. Under the common expectations of the approaching last day, Malulzade seems to have tended to believe in al-Hijāzī’s words so that as advised by the latter, he named his son “Muhammad.”⁶⁹⁹

Unlike al-Hijāzī, Badr al-Dīn did not have good relations with the new judge, however. Reportedly, when the latter entered Damascus as the Ottoman judge for the first time, Badr al-Dīn, as usual, did not pay a visit to him on the pretext of his seclusion in his Halabiyya cell. The Ottoman judge took this as a sign of disrespect and annoyed from Badr al-Dīn’s behavior. His annoyance augmented when his daughter died after a while, and Badr al-Dīn, who performed the funeral prayer in the Umayyad Mosque, did not accompany the congregation carrying the coffin to the cemetery.

⁶⁹⁷ Ibn Ayyūb, *al-Rawd al-ātir*, 919.

⁶⁹⁸ Al-Būrīnī, *Tarājim al-a’yān*, 99.

⁶⁹⁹ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 1225.

The cold relations between the eminent Shāfi‘ī mufti of Damascus and the Ottoman judge would bear fruits in the coming years. After two-year service in Damascus, Malulzade received a promotion to the judgeship of Cairo in mid-1569 and left Damascus. Then, he ascended to the judgeships of Bursa and Edirne respectively. Finally, he became the chief judge of Anatolia in May 1573—only five years after his office in the judgeship of Damascus.

Few months later, in June 1573, the incumbent professor of the abovementioned Shāmiyya Barrāniyya Madrasa died. Al-Hijāzī, now in his early forties, wanted to take the professorship. Bostanzade Mehmed Efendi, the incumbent Ottoman judge, supported him, and sent a letter to the imperial capital for his appointment to the vacant position. The Shāmiyya professorship was a prestigious position originally stipulated to the most knowledgeable Shāfi‘ī scholar in the city. Thus, al-Hijāzī had rivals among his local Shāfi‘ī colleagues.

The most powerful candidate for the post was abovementioned Ismā‘īl al-Nābulusī, a peer and classmate of al-Hijāzī.⁷⁰⁰ Al-Nābulusī had a broad network in the imperial capital, most probably thanks to his contacts through previous Ottoman judges, who served in Damascus. Hearing about Bostanzade’s letter to Istanbul, Ismā‘īl hastened to send one of his men with an amount of money to the Ottoman capital. His man lobbied for him there and managed to issue a *berāt* for his appointment to the professorship of the Shāmiyya before the Ottoman authorities approved al-Hijāzī’s appointment.

Both al-Hijāzī and al-Nābulusī were Shāfi‘ī scholars in Damascus. They were not included in the Ottoman learned hierarchy. Thus, they were not competing for the offices in the imperial capital but rather for the posts in Damascus. However, both needed the support of the Ottoman elite in Damascus and Istanbul to achieve success in this competition. Al-Hijāzī received the support of the Ottoman judge of Damascus, and had acquaintance with the chief judge of Anatolia (the abovementioned Malulzade Efendi) in Istanbul. Al-Nābulusī’s relations, however, seem to have been stronger than al-Hijāzī’s.

Al-Hijāzī felt disappointment when he lost the Shāmiyya professorship to al-Nābulusī. He decided to visit his old protector Malulzade Efendi in Istanbul and left Damascus in May 1575. Malulzade had been the chief judge of Anatolia for the last two years when al-Hijāzī visited him in his office in Istanbul. He was waiting for a promotion to the chief judgeship of Rumelia. The incumbent chief judge of Rumelia was

⁷⁰⁰ See his biography in al-Ghazzī e.n. 1386.

Abdurrahman b. Seydi, who had been at his deathbed for a while. Al-Hijāzī noticed his old protector's career plans and tried to catch his attention through new prophecies. He told him that he would become the chief judge of Rumelia soon. However, when Abdurrahman died in mid-June, his post was given to another Ottoman dignitary scholar instead of Malulzade.⁷⁰¹ Malulzade was disappointed, yet he appointed al-Hijāzī to the professorship of the Takawiyya Madrasa held by Badr al-Dīn. Al-Hijāzī returned to Damascus as the new professor of the Taqawiyya Madrasa on 1 November 1575.⁷⁰²

As mentioned at the beginning, when Damascenes heard of al-Hijāzī's appointment to Badr al-Dīn's madrasa, they were stunned but could not do anything. However, few days later, the news of Malulzade's dismissal from the chief judgeship of Anatolia arrived at Damascus. According to the news, Malulzade had been replaced by Çivizade Efendi in 30 October, two days before al-Hijāzī's arrival at Damascus. This was a very pleasing news for Badr al-Dīn because he knew Çivizade Efendi from the days of his judgeship in Damascus, in 1569–70. During his service as the judge of Damascus, Çivizade had attended Badr al-Dīn's classes in hadith, tafsir, and Islamic law, and even received a certificate in hadith from him. Their relationship was good to the extent that Badr al-Dīn had also composed few verses to praise him.⁷⁰³

Badr al-Dīn seems to have corresponded with Çivizade after learning his appointment to the chief judgeship. The latter re-appointed him to the Taqawiyya Madrasa after a while, and increased his daily salary to eighty aspers as a sign of his respect for the eminent Shāfi'ī mufti of Damascus and as an apology for his predecessor Malulzade's mistreatment of him. None of the local professors in the Arab provinces had this amount of daily salary during this period.⁷⁰⁴ On 11 January 1576, Badr al-Dīn's appointment diploma for the professorship of the Taqawiyya Madrasa arrived at Damascus, and Badr al-Dīn re-assumed his post after a short period of interval that lasted about two and a half months.

In sum, the rivalry between al-Hijāzī and Badr al-Dīn ended by the intervention of different parties from the Ottoman ruling elite. Al-Hijāzī managed to receive the Taqawiyya professorship thanks to the support of his protector Malulzade, the chief judge of Anatolia. However, Malulzade's sudden dismissal affected the result. Çivizade, Badr al-Dīn's friend and student, took the office of chief judgeship of Anatolia in Istanbul,

⁷⁰¹ Elhajhamed, "Kadı Muhibbuddin El-Hamevî'nin Seyahatnamesi," 213.

⁷⁰² Al-Ghazzī, *Lutf*, e.n. 4; al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 1368.

⁷⁰³ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 1223; al-Būrīnī, *Tarājim al-a'yān*, 99; Pfeifer, "A New Hadith Culture?"

⁷⁰⁴ Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 1223, 1211.

and helped Badr al-Dīn to re-assume his post in Damascus with a promotion in his salary. It seems that Damascene scholars and their Ottoman partners were entangled in a complex web of relations in the mid-sixteenth century.

Further examination of the individual careers of the abovementioned names illustrates different dimensions of this entanglement. In fact, Çivizade and Malulzade were kins. The former was married with the sister of the latter. They had studied from the same teachers in the imperial center and apparently, there was a competition between them from their madrasa years. Each seems to have had their own protégés in Damascus, where they served as the Ottoman judge for some years. Thus, Badr al-Dīn was not the sole one, whose career was negatively affected during Malulzade's office in the chief judgeship of Anatolia. Muhibb al-Dīn al-Hamawī (d. 1608), a Syrian Hanafī scholar-bureaucrat, who accompanied Çivizade Efendi for years for novice license (*mülāzemet*) and finally become a town judge in the Arab provinces by Çivizade's support, also lost his position during the same years. Muhibb al-Dīn traveled to Istanbul and asked Malulzade for an appointment to another town judgeship in Syro-Egypt. He even praised him in several panegyrics for this purpose. However, despite his stay at the Ottoman capital for more than a year, he achieved no result because Malulzade disregarded his requests. Muhibb al-Dīn could not receive a judgeship until his patron Çivizade replaced Malulzade in the office of the chief judge of Anatolia.⁷⁰⁵ It seems there were two small cliques formed around two competing Ottoman scholars, Çivizade and Malulzade. Their careers directly affected the career of their friends and protégés in Damascus, and probably in other provincial centers.

5.6. Last Years

Badr al-Dīn was teaching in his Halabiyya cell in the Umayyad Mosque and in the Taqawiyya Madrasa on every Friday during his last years.⁷⁰⁶ In other weekdays, he was issuing religious opinions and writing scholarly works. His salary in the Taqawiyya was eighty aspers since 1576. During his life, only one of his

⁷⁰⁵ Elhajhamed, "Kadı Muhibbüddin El-Hamevî'nin Seyahatnamesi."

⁷⁰⁶ Al-Būrīnī, *Tarājim al-a'yān*, 98, 103.

Damascene peers, namely Nūr al-Dīn al-Bahnasī, the Hanafī jurist of Damascus, could reach to this amount in teaching.⁷⁰⁷

Badr al-Dīn was a highly esteemed Shāfi‘ī scholar. His contemporaries believed that he was the most prominent scholar of the tenth century after Zakariyyā al-Ansārī, al-Suyūṭī and Ibn Qādī Ajlūn.⁷⁰⁸ Some of his students dared to compose poetry, in which they put their praises for Badr al-Dīn in the mouth of founding fathers of the four legal madhhabs. Among the younger generation of Shāfi‘ī scholars in Damascus, only a few issued legal opinions during his life out of respect for him.⁷⁰⁹ Badr al-Dīn was famous outside Damascus as well. He issued certificates for seekers of knowledge from different geographies including the Hijaz⁷¹⁰ and the core Ottoman lands (such as aforementioned Çivizade), and some of these certificates were in Sufi tradition.⁷¹¹

During his seclusion in the Umayyad Mosque, he usually avoided to blend with people, especially Ottoman officials. Yet this was not a total seclusion. As mentioned above, he got married again in 1563 at the age of sixty-four. In the following fourteen years, he had four sons from this marriage: namely Abū al-Tayyib, Najm al-Dīn, Kamāl al-Dīn, and Zakariyyā. He had two sons from his previous marriages: namely Shahāb al-Dīn and Ibrāhīm.

As mentioned before, Badr al-Dīn was considering his eldest son Shahāb al-Dīn as his scholarly successor. Badr al-Dīn had a grandson from Shahāb al-Dīn in October 1575. This was not his first grandson because Shahāb al-Dīn had had children before but all died in early ages. Badr al-Dīn named this last grandson “Muhammad” and gave him “Abū al-Ma‘ālī” as the nickname (*kunya*), and “Waliyy al-Dīn” as the sobriquet (*laqab*). Through the end of his life, he increasingly believed that Shahāb al-Dīn, in his fifties now, was ready to replace him as the Shāfi‘ī mufti of Damascus.

Shahāb al-Dīn was currently holding the post of prayer in the Umayyad Mosque and the professorship of the Shāmiyya Jawwāniyya Madrasa. Although he had certificates to issue legal opinions, he had not issued

⁷⁰⁷ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 1212.

⁷⁰⁸ Ibn Ayyūb, *al-Rawd al-ātir*, 961.

⁷⁰⁹ See Badr al-Dīn’s biography in Ibn Ayyūb, *al-Rawd al-ātir* e.n. 278.

⁷¹⁰ For example, see al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 1455.

⁷¹¹ For instance, he issued two certificates for Dāvūd al-Yamanī, one a certificate to teach and issue religious opinions, and the second in Sufism (*tasawwuf*). Al-Ghazzī e.n. 1415.

so far any legal opinion out of respect for his father. Badr al-Dīn invited Shahāb al-Dīn to his Halabiyya cell on 2 March 1576, Friday, to test him. He gave about twenty questions submitted to him to Shahāb al-Dīn and ordered him to write his legal opinions. It was a kind of written exam for his son. Afterward, he checked Shahāb al-Dīn's answers and became content with his proficiency.⁷¹²

Unfortunately, Shahāb al-Dīn could not replace his father in the Shāfi'ī jurisdiction because he predeceased Badr al-Dīn for few months. After Shahāb al-Dīn's death, his prayer position in the Umayyad Mosque was given to his younger brother Ibrāhīm, who would hold it for more than half a century. The professorship of the Jawwāniyya Madrasa, on the other hand, was transferred to Badr al-Dīn. At the last months of his life, Badr al-Dīn occupied the professorships of the Taqawiyya and Shāmiyya Jawwāniyya madrasas concurrently.

Badr al-Dīn changed the name and sobriquet of his abovementioned grandson, who was only four-months old. He named him Shahāb al-Dīn Ahmad after his deceased father. Badr al-Dīn's last wife was pregnant during these days. Few months after Shahāb al-Dīn's death, she gave birth to a son. Maybe, inspired by the Prophet Zakariyyā's story, who was granted by a male heir at his final years, Badr al-Dīn named his last son Zakariyyā.

Badr al-Dīn became sick on 23 December 1576, and his illness continued about three weeks. He passed away on 16 January 1577, at the age of seventy-eight (or at the age of eighty according to lunar calendar). His funeral prayer was performed in the Umayyad Mosque, and he was buried in the Sheikh Raslān cemetery near to the graves of his father Radiyy al-Dīn and his son Shahāb al-Dīn.

5.7. Conclusion

Following Ibn al-Farfūr's trial and death, the judgeship of Damascus gradually became an ordinary step in the career of the high-ranking Ottoman scholar-bureaucrats (*mevālī*). Integration of the judgeship of Damascus into the Ottoman scholarly-bureaucratic career track was a turning point for Damascene scholars' social and cultural integration. This structural change triggered many developments, which eventually brought about Damascene scholars' increasing entanglement within the imperial elite network in the second half of the sixteenth century.

⁷¹² Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 1345.

Radiyy al-Dīn encountered mostly the low-ranking Ottoman scholars in Damascus whereas Badr al-Dīn traveled to Istanbul and met the high-ranking Ottoman scholars (*mevālī*) there in 1530–31. After his return, he witnessed the increasing administrative and judicial integration of Syria into the Ottoman Empire. These developments embedded Badr al-Dīn and his peers in an unprecedented network of multiplex relations with the high-ranking Ottoman scholars in the second half of the sixteenth century. They were each other's teachers and protégés, and students and protectors simultaneously. Moreover, the presence of Ottoman *mevālī* in Damascus facilitated young local scholars to accompany them to enter the Ottoman learned establishment by receiving novice licence. As will be examined in the next chapter, this interaction would end up with the emergence of a new group of distinguished scholars: the Syrian Hanafī scholar-bureaucrats.

The relations between Damascene scholars and Ottoman judges in the city first started in Damascus (local level) then continued in Istanbul (imperial level). Many high-ranking Ottoman scholars serving as the judge of Damascus climbed to the chief judgeships, the peak of the hierarchy, in the Ottoman capital in less than a decade. When Badr al-Dīn was in Istanbul in 1530–31, he could access to the chief judge of Anatolia in four-steps, through the channels of several intermediaries. In the mid-century, on the other hand, the chief judges in the imperial capital such as Çivizade Efendi were his friends. That is, the top imperial bureaucracy was accessible for him only in one-step. This made Damascene learned community and the Ottoman imperial elite unprecedentedly close to each other. The close relationships with the Ottoman judges of Damascus could promise opportunities in the medium-term because the latter could ascend in the Ottoman learned hierarchy in few years. Those Ottoman scholar-bureaucrats who managed to ascend to the top posts in Istanbul could affect the careers of their protégés, friends and enemies in the Arab provinces. In other words, a change in the career of an Ottoman dignitary scholar-bureaucrat in Istanbul usually had repercussions on the careers of his Damascene colleagues, as clearly seen in the cases of Malulzade and al-Hijāzī or Çivizade and Badr al-Dīn.

Teaching posts were one of the conflict areas, where different dimensions of the abovementioned entanglement became observable. Increasing demand of the post-Mamluk generation of scholars for limited career opportunities in Damascus forced them to challenge elderly generation of scholars in the city. Eventually, Badr al-Dīn was involved in two position struggles, and had to resort to his connections in the imperial capital to return the madrasas taken from him. He was not obliged to travel to the Ottoman capital this time, however. Thanks to the multiplication of the ways of access to the imperial elite in the capital in

the course of three decades, he could utilize his relationships in the Ottoman center without taking the burden of travel.

Thanks to the teaching posts in Damascene endowments, Badr al-Dīn enjoyed a relatively independent space from the governmental intervention. In time, he appeared as the eminent Shāfi‘ī mufti of Damascus. He also utilized his seclusion in the Halabiyya cell to distance himself from the Ottoman authorities in the city, while simultaneously involving in the daily life and scholarly polemics. In an increasingly integrating province, he was trying to preserve his immunity as a Shāfi‘ī jurist while, at the same time, trying to prove his scholarly competence in every opportunity. His unprecedented Quranic exegesis and continuous support for a nascent Sufi community in Damascus put him at the center of debate not only among his peers but also among the next generation of scholars. These debates largely added to his image as the fearless Shāfi‘ī jurist of the city. Despite this image, however, the younger generation of scholars (such as al-Hijāzī) as well as immigrant scholars (such as al-Ījī) did not hesitate to challenge him in some teaching posts in Damascus because their career prospects outside Damascus, especially in the Ottoman capital, were mostly restricted.

In sum, if one describes Radiyy al-Dīn’s relationship with the new regime in Damascus as symbiotic in several respects, Badr al-Dīn’s relationship with it was multi-dimensional—he was intertwined with the Ottoman elite through cooperation, rivalry, tension, and an unceasing struggle for scholarly authority and posts.

CHAPTER VI: NAJM AL-DĪN AL-GHAZZĪ: A YOUNG GHAZZĪ AND THE POST-MAMLUK GENERATIONS OF SCHOLARS IN OTTOMAN DAMASCUS (1570–1622)

Najm al-Dīn's (1570–1651) active life as a scholar corresponds to the reigns of seven Ottoman sultans from Murad III (r. 1574–1595) to İbrahim (r. 1640–1648). Unlike his father and grandfather, he never witnessed the Mamluk rule in Damascus. At his birth, Syria was already integrated to the Ottoman Empire politically, judicially, and economically. Thus, he was thoroughly an Ottoman subject.

The increasing bureaucratization in the Ottoman state apparatus, and the consolidation and canonization of the imperial ideology and the Ottoman high culture marked the second half of the sixteenth century.⁷¹³ Syria both affected and was affected by these processes.

Najm al-Dīn endeavored to replace his father as a scholar and assume the family heritage in this atmosphere. This chapter deals with first fifty years of Najm al-Dīn's life, i.e. from his birth in 1570 to his visit of the imperial capital in 1623, and scrutinizes three important issues. First, Najm al-Dīn started his education as an orphan as his grandfather Radiyy al-Dīn had done in Mamluk Damascus. Did Najm al-Dīn's life experience have resemblances with the life of his grandfather in this period of his life? Were the previously discussed mechanisms securing scholarly continuity of families in the Mamluk era such as *nuzūl*, still working in Ottoman Damascus? Second, as mentioned through Badr al-Dīn's position struggles in the previous chapter, there was an increasing rivalry among Damascene scholars from the mid-sixteenth century. How did this rivalry evolve through the end of the century and how did Najm al-Dīn manage to survive in this competitive atmosphere? Third, the previous chapter mentioned entanglement of Damascene scholars with the imperial scholarly-bureaucratic network in and outside Damascus. Which roles did this entanglement assign to Damascene scholars in the face of socio-political developments of the contemporary Syria?

⁷¹³ Necipoğlu, "Süleyman the Magnificent and the Representation of Power"; Fleischer, "The Lawgiver as Messiah"; Halil İnalcik, "State, Sovereignty and Law During the Reign of Süleyman," in *Süleymân the Second and His Time*; Casale, *The Ottoman Age of Exploration*, 84–152; Şahin, *Empire and Power in the Reign of Süleyman*, 88–157; Kuru, "The Literature of Rûm"; Pfeifer, "To Gather Together," 140–75; Atçıl, *Scholars and Sultans*, 119–33.

6.1. An Overview of Syria in the Late Sixteenth Century

Incorporation of Syrian cities into the Ottoman Empire significantly improved the economic capacity of the empire. Aleppo and Damascus outperformed all Anatolian and Balkan cities in terms of tax capacity, with an exception of Istanbul and Bursa, in both the first and second half of the sixteenth century.⁷¹⁴

Syria appeared as both a military and religious base in the second half of the century. Aleppo and Damascus served as military bases during the Iranian campaigns (1553, 1578, and 1582) as well as Yemen (1567) and Cyprus (1570) campaigns. Syrian people were directly affected by these imperial expeditions, which utilized human source from the region to empower the Ottoman army and extracted financial sources through extraordinary taxes (*avārız*).⁷¹⁵

Ottomans implemented *timar* system in Syria contrary to Egypt where, due to the centuries-old agricultural practices based on Nile River, *salyāne* system was adopted.⁷¹⁶ Accordingly, tax revenues of Syrian agricultural lands were assigned to Ottoman officials in lieu of salaries. This increased the population of the Turkish-speaking military and bureaucratic households in Syrian urban centers in time. Local people called them the men of the gate (*rijāl al-bâb*) in reference to the Ottoman central government.⁷¹⁷ For example, the renowned Ottoman bureaucrat-historian Mustafa Āli (d. 1600) had fiefs (*timar*) in Aleppo, and spent long years in Syria.⁷¹⁸ The *timar* system created new opportunities of interaction between local people and the imperial ruling elite in the long run.

During the Mamluk era, Cairene government showed up in Damascus with its top bureaucracy to send off the pilgrim caravan from the city.⁷¹⁹ This huge expedition repeated each year immensely contributed to the economic welfare of the region.⁷²⁰ Pilgrim caravan maintained its religious, ideological, and economic

⁷¹⁴ See Figure 8 and 13 in Uğur, “Mapping Ottoman Cities: Socio-Spatial Definitions and Groupings (1450–1700).”

⁷¹⁵ Bakhit, *The Ottoman Province of Damascus*, 101–7, 191. Darling, “Fiscal Administration of the Arab Provinces after the Ottoman Conquest of 1516,” 165–68.

⁷¹⁶ Winter, “Ottoman Egypt 1525-1609.”

⁷¹⁷ Eldem, Goffman, and Masters, *The Ottoman City between East and West: Aleppo, Izmir, and Istanbul*, 24.

⁷¹⁸ Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual*, 82–85.

⁷¹⁹ Ankawī mentions two dozen high-ranking officials in Cairo and Damascus appointed to various services in the pilgrim caravan setting off from these cities. Ankawī, “The Pilgrimage to Mecca in Mamluk Times.”

⁷²⁰ Ankawī, 148–51.

significance during the Ottoman period. It was a tremendous operation, in which the imperial government, local ruling elite, inhabitants of Syria, and pilgrims from all around Islamdom were entangled. Syrian cities, particularly Damascus, were important centers on pilgrimage routes. Thousands of pilgrims gathered in Damascus every year to travel to Mecca by official ceremonies. Mecca was the center of the network of Muslim cities, and Damascus represented the hub for the eastern part of this network. The Ottoman sultans invested much to guarantee pilgrims a secure and comfortable travel from Damascus to Mecca. This, in turn, increased the number of pilgrims visiting Damascus.⁷²¹

The Ottoman ruling elite undertook huge construction projects in Syria during the sixteenth century. Hüsrev Pasha Complex built in 1546 initiated an era of successive imperial constructions in Aleppo. Three other complexes were built until the end of the century.⁷²² In Damascus, the Süleymaniye Complex was built in 1554–59, and six other construction projects were completed until the end of the century.⁷²³ Imperial investments in Jerusalem were generally restoration-oriented. Süleyman repaired aqueducts in 1532–1541, and the bazaar and the fortresses of the city in 1537–1541. In the mid-century, the population of the city became three fold. Accordingly, the Ottoman investments increased, and Süleyman’s wife endowed a large soup house.⁷²⁴

Major Syrian cities’ urbanization followed different trajectories under Ottoman rule. Aleppo was a regional commercial center during the Mamluk era but its integration to Pax-Ottomanica in 1516 and its access to Indian goods after the Ottoman conquest of Baghdad in 1534 heightened trade activity in the city. After the Battle of Lepanto in 1571, neither Ottomans nor Catholics would dare to encounter each other in a sea fight again. The absence of a dominant sea power in Levant allowed new naval powers including English, Dutch, and French companies to establish themselves in the Mediterranean as trading partners. They gained privileges in the form of capitulations guaranteed by the Ottoman state, which, in turn, enabled them to show up in the Levant region more often. Consequently, Aleppo gained prominence as a commercial center at the intersection of trade routes of Anatolia, Syria, and Iraq. Thus, the Ottoman construction projects in

⁷²¹ Faroqhi, *Pilgrims and Sultans*; Şafır, “In an Ottoman Holy Land.”

⁷²² Watenpaugh, *Imperial Architecture and Urban Experience in Aleppo*.

⁷²³ Kafescioğlu, “In the Image of Rüm”; Tomar, “Şam”; Abdüsselam Uluçam, “Şam (Mimari),” in *DİA* (TDV İSAM, 2010), Manaz, *Şam’da Türk Dönemi Eserleri*.

⁷²⁴ Hillenbrand, *The Architecture of Ottoman Jerusalem*; Singer, *Constructing Ottoman Beneficence*.

Aleppo had commercial goals such as expanding the market and providing additional services to merchants.⁷²⁵

Saida, a seaport connecting Damascus to the Mediterranean, grew richer thanks to international trade, and attracted Ottoman attention. Sokollu's construction project expanded the city in trans-regional level.⁷²⁶ Nevertheless, Damascus never evolved into a commercial center as Aleppo. It was a religious and scholarly center with its deeply rooted Islamic traditions, its old institutions such as the Umayyad Mosque, and its important shrines such as the tombs of Sufi figures and of companions of the Prophet. Moreover, every year about twenty–thirty thousand pilgrims were gathering in Damascus on their way to Mecca. Construction projects undertaken by imperial elite adorned the route of pilgrim caravan in Damascus. Murad Pasha (gov. 1568–70), Dervish Pasha (gov. 1571–73), Sinan Pasha (gov. 1586–87, 88), each made endowments not only serving the pilgrims but also providing the local people with employment opportunities.⁷²⁷ These investments created networks of diverse relationship and brought about new economic and social variables, which had been absent during Radiyy al-Dīn and Badr al-Dīn's periods.

These new realities led the Ottoman government to seek ways to increase efficiency in the administration of Syria. The province of Shām (*Şam Beylerbeyliği*) centered by Damascus was divided into two sub-provinces in 1549 and a new province with Aleppo as its center was established. In 1567, Damascene and Aleppine treasuries were already divided into two separate financial bureaus. In 1579, Tripoli became a separate province in the region.⁷²⁸

From the 1570s, the place of the judgeship of Damascus in the career track of high-ranking Ottoman scholar-bureaucrats became more clearly defined, occupying a position between the judgeships of Aleppo and Cairo.⁷²⁹ In other words, the Ottoman judges of Damascus usually had a previous service in Aleppo, and

⁷²⁵ Daniel Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 131–98; Eldem, Goffman, and Masters, *The Ottoman City between East and West: Aleppo, Izmir, and Istanbul*; Watenpaugh, *Imperial Architecture and Urban Experience in Aleppo*.

⁷²⁶ Stefan Weber, "The Making of an Ottoman Harbour Town: Sidon/Saida from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Centuries," *Syria and Bilad Al-Sham under Ottoman Rule: Essays in Honour of Abdul-Karim Rafeq*, 2010, 179–240.

⁷²⁷ Kafescioğlu, "In the Image of Rūm"; Şafır, "In an Ottoman Holy Land."

⁷²⁸ Çakar, "XVI. Yüzyılda Şam Beylerbeyliğinin İdarî Taksimatı"; Bakhit, *The Ottoman Province of Damascus*, 145; Aydın and Günalan, "XVI. Yüzyılda Osmanlı Eyalet Defterdarlıkları"; Shimizu, "16. Yüzyılın İkinci Yarısında Halep Defterdarlığı."

⁷²⁹ See Figure 3 and 4 in Atçıl and Kami, "Studying Professional Careers as Hierarchical Networks."

they were expecting a promotion to the judgeship of Cairo. Those who were successful afterwards climbed the career ladder until the top of the hierarchy, i.e. chief judgeships of Anatolia and Rumelia, usually in less than a decade. As mentioned in previous chapter, the relationships established by local scholars with Ottoman judges in Aleppo and Damascus, whether positive or negative, had the potential to influence their standing with the central government within a few years, especially when these judges eventually became members of the Imperial Council as chief judges. Moreover, from the mid-sixteenth century, the scholarly-bureaucratic hierarchy gradually gained the character of a closed system of scholarly aristocracy regarding the highest scholarly-bureaucratic posts when the sons of high-ranking scholars dominated the top positions at the expense of scholars with modest backgrounds.⁷³⁰ That is, the judgeships of Aleppo, Damascus, and Cairo (i.e. three prerequisite posts to the top of the hierarchy) were more often occupied by scholar-bureaucrats from the families who already had a say in the top imperial bureaucracy. For example, 35 scholars served as the judge of Damascus during the period 1550–1602, and of them, 27 (77 %) had blood tie to the imperial elite including the high-ranking scholar-bureaucrats. The ratio was 92 % (36 out of 39 judges) in Aleppo.⁷³¹ Indeed, this was to the advantage of those Damascene and Aleppine scholars who built patronage relationship with the judge of their city. They did not have to wait for the success of their patron in the career track to benefit from their patronage because their patron could already intervene in decision-making processes of the top imperial bureaucracy through the channel of his influential relatives at the center.

Following pages scrutinize the venture of Damascene scholars in the abovementioned transformations with special reference to Najm al-Dīn's life story.

6.2. The Family after Badr al-Dīn

When Najm al-Dīn was born in January 1570, his father Badr al-Dīn was in his seventies.⁷³² Badr al-Dīn sent him and his brother Kamāl al-Dīn to Yahyā al-Imādī (d. 989/1582), an elementary teacher, who taught

⁷³⁰ Abdurrahman Atçıl, "The Route to the Top in the Ottoman İlmiye Hierarchy of the Sixteenth Century," *Bulletin of SOAS*, 72/3 (2009): 489–512.

⁷³¹ Tezcan, "The Ottoman Imperial Judiciary in the Former Mamluk Lands."

⁷³² The editor of *Lutf al-Samar* records Najm al-Dīn's birth date as 13 Shāban in reference to Najm al-Dīn's *Minbar al-tawhīd* whereas Abū al-Mawāhib al-Hanbalī (d. 1714) writes it as 21 Shāban in reference to Najm al-Dīn's *Bulgha al-Wājid*. What is common in both account is the month of Shāban. Al-Hanbalī, *Mashīkha Abī al-Mawāhib al-Hanbalī*, 10; al-Ghazzī, *Lutf*, 22.

them reading and writing as well as a few Quranic verses.⁷³³ Najm al-Dīn memorized these verses and read them to his father before the latter died in 1577. This was one of the scarce childhood memories Najm al-Dīn had with his father, which he would record in detail in his autobiography decades later.⁷³⁴

Najm al-Dīn lost his father at the age of seven. He had four brothers: Ibrāhīm, Abū al-Tayyib, Kamāl al-Dīn, and Zakariyyā.⁷³⁵ Ibrāhīm was the eldest among them. He occupied the post of Shāfi‘ī prayer leader in the Umayyad Mosque after their deceased brother Shahāb al-Dīn in 1576, and held this post for decades.⁷³⁶ Abū al-Tayyib became a scholar-poet, to whom contemporary biographers allotted entries in their works.⁷³⁷ Kamāl al-Dīn and Zakariyyā followed a scholarly career. The sources inform that Kamāl al-Dīn was still alive in 1032/1622, whereas Zakariyyā passed away in 1035/1625.⁷³⁸

Najm al-Dīn, his younger brothers, and their widowed mother survived with Badr al-Dīn’s inheritance and the income coming from their share in their grandfather Radiyy al-Dīn’s endowment, whose endowment deed was examined in Chapter III. Najm al-Dīn’s mother did not marry again and devoted her life to her children. Her brother, who was a merchant, assisted her to bring up Najm al-Dīn and his younger brothers.⁷³⁹

6.3. An Orphan Studying under Damascene Scholars of Diverse Backgrounds

Damascene scholars had diverse attributes but they constituted a tight-knit community with multiplex relationships. That is, although they differed in ethnic origin, madhhab affiliation, and professional

⁷³³ For Yahyā al-Imādī’s biography, see al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 1545.

⁷³⁴ Al-Hanbalī, *Mashīkha Abī al-Mawāhib al-Hanbalī*, 10.

⁷³⁵ The editor of *Lutf al-samar* mentions two other brothers named Bahā al-Dīn and Radiyy al-Dīn but he seems to be mistaken. The only source he gives reference to for the existence of Bahā al-Dīn is *Qudā Dimashq*, in which Ibn Tūlūn writes that “during his [Ottoman judge Karaçelebizade’s] judgeship, both Badr al-Dīn and his son Bahā al-Dīn passed away.” Seemingly, there is a misspelling in the latter’s name in the manuscript used for edition because the deceased son was Badr al-Dīn’s son Shahāb al-Dīn. Therefore, there must be no other son named Bahā al-Dīn—he and Shahāb al-Dīn are the same person. As for Radiyy al-Dīn, the editor of *Lutf al-samar* gives reference to a biographical entry in *Lutf al-samar*, where Najm al-Dīn says “my brother Radiyy al-Dīn.” However, I think it is also a misunderstanding because al-Būrīnī, a contemporary biographer, informs us in his biographical dictionary that Abū al-Tayyib’s nickname was Radiyy al-Dīn. Thus, there is no another brother named Radiyy al-Dīn—he and Abū al-Tayyib is the same person. See Ibn Tūlūn, *al-Thughhr al-bassām*, 332; al-Ghazzī, *Lutf*, e.n. 47; al-Būrīnī, *Tarājīm al-a’yān*, I: 268.

⁷³⁶ Al-Ghazzī, *Lutf*, e.n. 266.

⁷³⁷ Al-Būrīnī, *Tarājīm al-a’yān*, I: 266-74; al-Muhibbī, *Khulāsa al-athar*, I: 135-39.

⁷³⁸ Al-Savvâf, *Mawsû‘at usar al-Dimaskiyya*, III: 16. Also see *al-Rihla ilā al-Rūm*, 5a.

⁷³⁹ Al-Hanbalī, *Mashīkha Abī al-Mawāhib al-Hanbalī*, 10.

tendencies, they had a wide range of relationships connecting them to each other such as educational and kinship ties. This has made some modern researchers consider them as a kind of monolithic group usually referred to as the Arab or Arabic-speaking scholars.⁷⁴⁰ In fact, they were more diverse than usually assumed. The bureaucratic, legal, ethnic and professional background of Najm al-Dīn's teachers in his youth gives us an idea about the richness and diversity of local scholarly community in Damascus in the second half of the sixteenth century.

Najm al-Dīn started his life as an orphan but he received the support of several local scholars in his early education. Among his teachers were a state-appointed Hanafī mufti (Zayn al-Dīn Umar), an immigrant Ajamī Shāfi'ī scholar (Monla Esed), a resident Shāfi'ī scholar (al-'Īthāwī), and a Syrian Hanafī scholar-bureaucrat (Muhibb al-Dīn).

Najm al-Dīn's first teacher was Zayn al-Dīn Umar (d. 1589), the official Hanafī mufti of Damascus.⁷⁴¹ As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Ottomans appointed Hanafī muftis to the major cities in Anatolia, the Balkans, and Arab lands from among the Ottoman scholar-bureaucrats. Al-Murādī, the biographer of the state-appointed Hanafī muftis of Damascus, wants his readers believe that the office in Damascus was created in the immediate aftermath of the Ottoman conquest. Yet it seems the first Ottoman state-appointed Hanafī mufti in Damascus (at least, from among the Ottoman scholars) was appointed only after the construction of the Süleymaniye Madrasa of Damascus in 1567. The four professors who taught in the Süleymaniye Madrasa in 1567–77 were appointed by the central government from among the Ottoman scholars in Istanbul, and they served as the official Hanafī mufti of Damascus. Afterward, however, the professorship of the Süleymaniye Madrasa and the office of state-appointed Hanafī mufti of Damascus must have been separated because, relying on al-Murādī's account, the subsequent two official Hanafī muftis of Damascus did not teach in the Süleymaniye Madrasa. Moreover, they were influential local Hanafī scholars, not Ottoman scholar-bureaucrats sent from Istanbul. The first one was Nūr al-Dīn al-Bahnasī (d. 1578/79), a local Hanafī scholar teaching in the Qassā'iyya Madrasa in Damascus with a salary of eighty aspers, the highest teaching salary in the Arab provinces during the period. After al-Bahnasī, the abovementioned Zayn al-Dīn 'Umar took the office, and occupied it until his death in 1588/89.⁷⁴²

⁷⁴⁰ For instance, see Pfeifer, *Empire of Salons*.

⁷⁴¹ For Zayn al-Dīn b. Umar's biography see al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 1500.

⁷⁴² Al-Murādī, *Arf al-Bashām fī man waliya fatwā Dimashq al-Shām*, 28–38. For al-Bahnasī's biography, see *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 1212.

Why Najm al-Dīn preferred to read from a Hanafī scholar at the beginning of his education, and chose the Hanafī mufti of Damascus as his first teacher is a question worth asking—though it is difficult to provide a persuasive answer. First, it was not unusual for a student to read from a scholar affiliated with a madhhab other than his own madhhab. There are many examples of such cases among the contemporaries of Najm al-Dīn and his father.⁷⁴³ Damascus was a complex center of education for seekers of knowledge from various legal schools so that their interaction was not extraordinary. Still, we encounter cases, in which a student affiliated with non-Hanafī madhhabs in Syria studied with Hanafī professors to have expertise in Hanafī law, and then converted to Hanafism. The latter madhhab was more promising for young scholars, who dreamt a scholarly career in the imperial service. Rafeq’s study shows that the proportion of Hanafī scholars in Palestine learned society increased from the late sixteenth century partly due to this tendency of the young generations of scholars.⁷⁴⁴ We encounter some scholars in Damascus as well, who converted to Hanafī madhhab in the early years of their education.⁷⁴⁵

Is it possible then that Najm al-Dīn, as an orphan without the protection of his father, considered this as a chance for his future career and started to accompany the Hanafī mufti in Damascus? The available biographical data does not allow us to speculate on this. Nevertheless, Najm al-Dīn also seems to have felt that this question was worth asking because he tries to justify his choice with a dream in the biography allotted to his teacher Zayn al-Dīn. Accordingly, Najm al-Dīn dreams his father Badr al-Dīn and the latter directs him to the Hanafī mufti to receive his education.⁷⁴⁶ By this dream, Najm al-Dīn does not only depict his career under the guidance of his deceased father but also relinquishes the responsibility for his choice. One can think that he might have thought to change his madhhab to Hanafism in his youth but this did not happen for unknown reasons. Eventually, he justified his choice in reference to the abovementioned dream and the guidance of his father’s spirituality.

Najm al-Dīn received the support of his father’s students during his education years. For example, Monla Esed sent young Najm al-Dīn few verses, in which he praised Badr al-Dīn as the unique scholar of the era

⁷⁴³ For example, see al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 1363; al-Ghazzī, *Lutf*, e.n. 36, 54, 60, and 184.

⁷⁴⁴ Rafeq, “Relations between the Syrian “‘Ulamā” and the Ottoman State.”

⁷⁴⁵ For instance, al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 1363.

⁷⁴⁶ Al-Ghazzī, e.n. 1500.

and advised Najm al-Dīn to take his father as an example.⁷⁴⁷ Monla Esed was originally from the city of Shiraz in Iran. He resided in Damascus as a young student, most probably escaping the Safavid rule in his country. He studied from Badr al-Dīn in al-Shāmiyya al-Barrāniyya Madrasa. He spent his youth in poverty but later received patronage of Amir Ibrāhīm b. Munjak, a local notable who was a descendant of the renowned Mamluk Amir Munjak.⁷⁴⁸ Monla Esed, despite his Ajam origin, was competent in Arabic to the extent that he composed panegyrics for Amir Ibrāhīm, who eventually endowed him a house to live. Thanks to Amir's patronage and his friends help, Monla Esed survive in Damascus as an immigrant young scholar.

The same years, Najm al-Dīn started reading from Ahmad al-'Īthāwī (1535–1617), a student of Najm al-Dīn's deceased brother Shahāb al-Dīn and his father Badr al-Dīn.⁷⁴⁹ Al-'Īthāwī was the imam who performed Badr al-Dīn's funeral prayer in the Umayyad Mosque.⁷⁵⁰ He was in his fifties and serving as the Shāfi'ī prayer leader in the Umayyad Mosque. He was also a rising Shāfi'ī mufti in Damascus upon the successive deaths of Badr al-Dīn and his peers. Najm al-Dīn sought refuge in al-'Īthāwī's protection. He became one of his favorite students and read from him several books.⁷⁵¹

Muhibb al-Dīn al-Hamawī (d. 1608), another student of Badr al-Dīn, also supported Najm al-Dīn. Muhibb al-Dīn was born in the city of Hama in Syria, and then resided in Damascus, where he took classes from Badr al-Dīn. He was a Shāfi'ī scholar at first but later converted to Hanafism. He married the daughter of Ismā'īl al-Nābulusī, who was mentioned in the previous chapter as a rising mufti among the post-Mamluk generation of Shāfi'ī scholars in Damascus. Then, he traveled to Istanbul, where he met the high-ranking Ottoman scholars, and learned Turkish and Persian. He accompanied Çivizade Efendi, the Ottoman judge of Damascus, for years. Finally, he managed to enter the Ottoman learned hierarchy by attaining novice status from Çivizade. He served in the Arab provinces as a town judge for years until his father-in-law Ismā'īl died in 1585. Then, he returned to Damascus, where he became rich by Ismā'īl's inheritance and replaced him in some of his posts in endowments. Muhibb al-Dīn's relationship with the local community

⁷⁴⁷ Al-Ghazzī, e.n. 1383.

⁷⁴⁸ For Amir Ibrāhīm's biography, see al-Ghazzī, e.n. 1321.

⁷⁴⁹ For al-'Īthāwī's biography, see al-Ghazzī, e.n. 114.

⁷⁵⁰ Al-Ghazzī, e.n. 1205.

⁷⁵¹ Al-Ghazzī, e.n. 114.

and the Ottoman authorities in the city were strong. This made him one of the leading Hanafī figures in Damascus during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century.⁷⁵²

Al-‘Īthāwī, who had a number of daughters but had no son, considered Najm al-Dīn as his male heir. When Najm al-Dīn was only fifteen years old, he left him as his deputy (*nā’ib*) in his post of prayer leader (*imām*) in the Umayyad Mosque. Few years later, he gave one of his daughters to his young student in marriage. Najm al-Dīn had a son on 30 September 1587, at the age of eighteen. He named his first son Muhammad and nicknamed him Badr al-Dīn.⁷⁵³ However, his wife died in less than a year. Al-‘Īthāwī married his second daughter with Najm al-Dīn to secure his baby grandson. After two years, Najm al-Dīn had his second son, Su‘ūdī (1590–1661), from this marriage.

6.4. Scholarly Cliques in Damascus and Najm al-Dīn’s Efforts to Prove Himself

Badr al-Dīn al-Ghazzī, the respected Shāfi‘ī mufti of Damascus, died in 1577. Nur al-Dīn al-Bahnasī, the Hanafī mufti of Damascus, died in 1578/79. These two had been the leading figures of the last generation of the scholars, who, in their youth, witnessed the Mamluk rule in Syria. After them, a group of younger Shāfi‘ī and Hanafī scholars rivaled each other for the leadership in their respective communities. They also involved in inter- and intra-madhhab competitions for the limited number of positions in Damascene endowments. Some of them were students of the aforementioned two names. Some of them managed to enter the Ottoman scholarly-bureaucratic career path at first, but with little career prospects, eventually became disappointed and returned to Damascus.⁷⁵⁴ Still, some of them were immigrant scholars with Ajam

⁷⁵² Al-Ghazzī, *Lutf*, e.n. 36; Pfeifer, “To Gather Together,” 175–97; Elhajhamed, “Kadı Muhibbüddin El-Hamevî’nin Seyahatnamesi.” Also see Pfeifer, *Empire of Salons*, 200–233.

⁷⁵³ Al-Ghazzī, *Lutf*, e.n. 1.

⁷⁵⁴ According to a prosopography, the scholar-bureaucrats originally from the Arab provinces constituted a tiny number in the Ottoman learned establishment, less than 1 per cent in the second half of the sixteenth century. See Beyazıt, *Osmanlı İlimiye Mesleğinde İstihdam (XVI. Yüzyıl)*, 97–105. Note that this prosopography is based on the *ruznamçe* registers of some chief judges of Rumelia, and not registers of chief judges of Anatolia, who were responsible for the judicial administration of the Arab provinces. See *ibid.*, 18. In any case, the available data on the scholar-bureaucrats from the Arab provinces suggests that they had usually limited career prospects. See Baki Tezcan, “The Law School of Mehmed II in the Last Quarter of the Sixteenth Century: A Glass Ceiling for the Less Connected Ottoman Ulema,” in *Ottoman War and Peace*, ed. Frank Castiglione, Ethan Menchinger, and Veysel Şimşek (Brill, 2019), 237–82.

origin as seen above. Najm al-Dīn struggled to appear as an independent scholar in this learned community. His struggles give a vivid picture of the groupings among Damascene scholars in the late sixteenth century. Al-‘Īthāwī underwent an illness in 1589 and appointed his twenty-year old son-in-law Najm al-Dīn as his deputy in the post of Shāfi‘ī prayer leader in the Umayyad Mosque. Such appointments were usually the last step before handing down (*nuzūl*) the related post to the related deputy.⁷⁵⁵ The most powerful objection to Najm al-Dīn’s assumption of the post came from Ibn al-Minqār (d. 1597), an eminent Hanafī scholar. Ibn al-Minqār had replaced aforementioned al-Bahnasī in the professorship of the Qassā‘iyya madrasa. He also held the post of prayer leader in the Süleymaniya Mosque, the most prestigious imperial building in the city, as well as a teaching post in the Umayyad Mosque. Opposing Najm al-Dīn’s deputyship, Ibn al-Minqār was in fact challenging Najm al-Dīn’s aforementioned teachers and their clique.

Najm al-Dīn’s teacher Muhibb al-Dīn was son-in-law of Ismā‘īl al-Nābulusī, who was a classmate of Ibn al-Minqār.⁷⁵⁶ As mentioned earlier, Ismā‘īl was a rising Shāfi‘ī mufti since the last days of Badr al-Dīn. He was originally from the Banū Jamā‘a family, one of the oldest scholarly families in Syria.⁷⁵⁷ He assumed the professorship of the Shāmiyya Barrāniyya Madrasa in 1573. He knew Turkish and Persian, and was close to the Ottoman ruling elite. When Dervish Pasha, the governor of Damascus, built his mosque in 1574, he stipulated the Shāfi‘ī professorship in the mosque to Ismā‘īl and his descendants.⁷⁵⁸ Later, Dervish Pasha helped him to get the professorship of the Ādiliyya Kubrā Madrasa in Damascus. By this, Ismā‘īl held three lucrative teaching posts in the mid-1570s. Although the endowment of the Shāmiyya Madrasa disallowed its professor from holding another teaching post concurrently, only a few local scholars dared to resist Ismā‘īl’s violation in Shāmiyya’s endowment deed by his multi-professorship.⁷⁵⁹

Ismā‘īl and Ibn al-Minqār were rivalling each other, and preventing each other’s protégés from holding lucrative posts in Damascus. An anecdote in *Lutf al-samar* informs us that Mahmud al-Sālihī, a Hanbali protégé of Ibn al-Minqār, could assume a lucrative post in Damascus only after al-Nābulusī’s death, despite Ibn al-Minqār’s continuous efforts. According to this anecdote, Ismā‘īl was frankly saying in gatherings

⁷⁵⁵ For the mechanism of *nuzūl* in transmission of scholarly posts, see Chapter II.

⁷⁵⁶ For Ismā‘īl al-Nābulusī’s biography, see al-Būrīnī, *Tarājim al-a’yān*, II: 61-80.

⁷⁵⁷ Sirriyeh, “Whatever Happened to the Banū Jamā‘a?”

⁷⁵⁸ For Dervish Pasha’s biography, see al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 1417.

⁷⁵⁹ For such a resistance, see al-Ghazzī, *Lutf*, e.n. 5.

“[Ibn al-Minqār] has to get Ibn Abd al-Hamīd [the abovementioned Mahmūd al-Sālihī] employed, thus we have to endeavor for his dismissal (*‘alā al-Sheikh Shams al-Dīn an yuwallī Ibn Abd al-Hamīd wa ‘alaynā an na‘zilahū*).” Accordingly, he was speaking ill of Mahmūd in the presence of the Ottoman judges to dissuade them from any possible appointment.⁷⁶⁰ In another anecdote, we learn that once an Ottoman judge had Ibn al-Minqār sit ahead of Ismā‘īl in a gathering and this annoyed Ismā‘īl and his followers (*shaqqa ‘alā al-Sheikh Ismā‘īl wa ‘alā jamā‘atihī*).⁷⁶¹

In late 1585, Ismā‘īl died and an authority vacuum emerged. Contemporary biographical works mentions this authority vacuum rather clearly. For example, in the biography of Ibn al-Tabbākh, a Syrian scholar-bureaucrat, who retired from a forty-level madrasa in the Ottoman madrasa system, al-Būrīnī writes that Ibn al-Tabbākh visited Damascus in 1586, and found the city devoid of the leading scholars (*min akābir ‘ulamā’ khāliya*), thus decided to settle in the city [most probably hoping to become a leading scholar there].⁷⁶² As another example, Najm al-Dīn al-Ghazzī writes in Ibn al-Mansūr’s biography that the latter became a judge despite his ignorance during the same years because of the absence of the notable scholars in the city (*mawt al-a’yān*).⁷⁶³

After Ismā‘īl, a number of new scholarly figures from his clique replaced him in Damascus. One of them was aforementioned Monla Esed, who took the professorship of the Shāmiyya Barrāniyya Madrasa. According to *Lutf al-samar*, the relationship between Monla Esed and Ibn al-Minqār was not good, because the former had married the latter’s divorced wife and had children from her. Another rising figure was aforementioned Muhibb al-Dīn al-Hamawī, Ismā‘īl’s son-in-law and Najm al-Dīn’s teacher. According to Najm al-Dīn’s account, there was a competition between Muhibb al-Dīn and Ibn al-Minqār, who was allegedly jealous of Muhibb al-Dīn. As mentioned earlier, Muhibb al-Dīn became rich by his father-in-law’s inheritance in his middle age. When Monla Esed died in 1590, he could take the professorship of al-Shāmiyya Madrasa, which was a Shāfi‘ī madrasa, despite his being a Hanafī scholar. Nobody could oppose

⁷⁶⁰ Al-Ghazzī, *Lutf*, II: 640-41.

⁷⁶¹ Al-Ghazzī, II: 557-58.

⁷⁶² Al-Būrīnī, *Tarājim al-a’yān*, 300.

⁷⁶³ Al-Ghazzī, *Lutf*, I: 157.

him due to his powerful imperial network and prestige in Damascene society.⁷⁶⁴ This was another violation in the endowment deed of al-Shāmiyya Madrasa, after Ismā‘īl’s abovementioned first violation.

As will be seen in the following subtitles, the scholarly network Najm al-Dīn was embedded in (al-‘Īthāwī, Monla Esed, and Muhibb al-Dīn) supported him as an orphan to become a young scholar. However, it also determined his possible opponents (Ibn al-Minqār and other names from his clique) because his connections had already located him in the middle of the rivalry of a group of scholars in Damascus. His teachers would support Najm al-Dīn in his early career, whereas the opponent clique would harshly criticize him.

6.4.1. Teaching in the Umayyad Mosque

Al-‘Īthāwī’s illness started in July 1589 and continued eight months. Despite Ibn al-Minqār’s criticisms, Najm al-Dīn continued to serve as the deputy of his father-in-law during this period. After his recovery, al-‘Īthāwī helped young Najm al-Dīn to have a teaching circle inside the Umayyad Mosque and Najm al-Dīn started dictating (*imlā’*) al-Gazzālī’s *Ihyā* in the Umayyad Mosque in 1590.⁷⁶⁵ Ibn al-Minqār, who was a relative of the deputy superintendent of the Umayyad Mosque, opposed this teaching circle as well.⁷⁶⁶ His friend Shams al-Dīn al-Dāwūdī, a Shāfi‘ī scholar who had replaced Najm al-Dīn’s father in a hadith teaching circle in the Umayyad Mosque, also disapproved Najm al-Dīn’s teaching in the Umayyad Mosque on the pretext of his young age.⁷⁶⁷

Najm al-Dīn’s struggle to teach in the Umayyad Mosque was a significant step in his life. There were hundreds of other mosques in Damascus but none was comparable to the Umayyad Mosque in terms of centrality in the urban life of the city. The Ottoman ruling elite constructed several great buildings in Damascus from the mid-sixteenth century but the Umayyad Mosque was still unrivaled in its size, capacity, wealthy endowments, historical significance, and key role in scholarly life of the city. Although it was not one of the three sacred sanctuaries in Islamic tradition (namely the Masjid al-Haram, Masjid al-Nabī, and Masjid al-Aqsā), it was almost considered sacred. It was the greatest Friday mosque of the city, in which Damascenes gathered in daily and weekly prayers and important days. During the Mamluk era, the sultanic

⁷⁶⁴ Al-Ghazzī, *Lutf*, e.n. 36.

⁷⁶⁵ Al-Ghazzī, e.n. 2.

⁷⁶⁶ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 1334.

⁷⁶⁷ Ibn Ayyūb, *al-Rawd al-ātir*, 922. Also see al-Ghazzī, *Lutf*, e.n. 2.

decree (*taqlīd*) for the appointment of chief judges was usually announced in the Ādiliyya Madrasa, nearby the Umayyad Mosque, and the judges generally operated their courts in the madrasas around the mosque.⁷⁶⁸ Thus, the Umayyad Mosque and surrounding institutions provided an urban space, where Damascene common identity appeared. The notables of the city discussed and took decisions regarding critical issues and problems of the urban life and society either in the Umayyad Mosque or around it.⁷⁶⁹ After the Ottoman conquest, the Umayyad Mosque preserved its importance as the center of scholarly life. According to an early and incomplete survey dated 1526, there were more than fifty madrasas in Damascus and nearly half of them located in around the Umayyad Mosque.⁷⁷⁰ Ibn Arabī complex, the first Ottoman construction in the city (and the sole one until the mid-century) did not aim to replace the Umayyad Mosque in prestige and function. It was in the Sālihiyya district outside the city walls, creating there an Ottoman locus. The subsequent Ottoman constructions, on the other hand, gave priority to the imperial image on the pilgrimage route, not at the city center. In the late sixteenth century, the Umayyad Mosque with its about six hundred salaried personnel was still the largest educational-religious complex in Damascus.⁷⁷¹ The funeral prayers of the Damascene notables and the distant funeral prayers (*ghiyābī* -without having the dead body present-) of the respected people including the Ottoman sultans were performed in the Umayyad Mosque.⁷⁷²

What did it mean to have a teaching circle in the Umayyad Mosque? Functionally, it was no different from teaching in a madrasa. Those who wanted to endow a madrasa had two options: either to construct or buy a building and endowed it, or to endow a teaching circle inside the mosques. As mentioned in the previous chapters, there were a number of circles called madrasa inside the Umayyad Mosque, where the professor received salary and students received stipend, during the Mamluk era.⁷⁷³ For example, al-Nu‘aymī mentions

⁷⁶⁸ Yalçın, “Bahri Memlûklerde Dımaşk Kadılkudatlığı,” 115, 148.

⁷⁶⁹ Doris Behrens-Abouseif, “The Fire of 884/1479 at the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus and an Account of Its Restoration,” *MSR* 8, no. 1 (2004): 279–97.

⁷⁷⁰ Mandaville, “The Muslim Judiciary of Damascus,” 113. This record is located in BOA, TT.d. 127 under the title “*Şam’daki cami, mescid, türbe, dârüşşifa evkaflarını havi evkaflar defteri*.” A summary of the document is available in Özkılınç, Coşkun, and Sivridağ, *401 Numaralı Şam Livâsi Mufassal Tahrîr Defteri (942 / 1535)*, 39–43.

⁷⁷¹ Kafescioğlu, “In the Image of Rûm.”

⁷⁷² For example, see absence funeral prayers for Selim I, Süleyman, and Selim II as well as Ottoman scholars Kemalpaşazade and Sadi Çelebi in al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 424, 1426, 1425, 875, 1130.

⁷⁷³ Al-Nu‘aymī, *al-Dāris* I: 413, 447; II: 412. Also see Hatim Mahamid, “Mosques as Higher Educational Institutions in Mamluk Syria,” *Journal of Islamic Studies* 20, no. 2 (2009): 188–212.

the Ghazzālī Madrasa inside the Umayyad Mosque, named after the eminent scholar al-Ghazzālī (d. 1111). The latter taught in this corner during his visit of Damascus. After his departure, the sultan of the era endowed villages to this corner and transformed it to a madrasa.⁷⁷⁴ The Ottoman ruling elite also made such endowments. For example, Vizier Mustafa Pasha endowed a mill and other properties for Qur’ān reciters in the Umayyad Mosque.⁷⁷⁵ Such reciters were paid salaries, and there were officials controlling them according to the stipulations of the endowment.⁷⁷⁶

The central role of the Umayyad Mosque in the daily and scholarly life in Damascus enabled an individual or community that had a place in it to achieve tacit recognition of the public. For example, the aforementioned Mahyā community struggled much to perform their dhikr in the Umayyad Mosque to gain legitimacy for their new Sufi order.⁷⁷⁷ Some Sufi-heretic groups received little attention from the urban notables in Damascus until they gathered in the Umayyad Mosque, which created a genuine crisis to be solved.⁷⁷⁸ In other words, apart from being a center of scholarship, the Umayyad Mosque was a platform to attain public recognition for individuals and groups. Thus, Najm al-Dīn’s efforts to have a teaching circle there were meaningful.

6.4.3. “At the Eclipse of the Sun Appeared the Star”

In Ramadan of the year 1590, a new development that affected Najm al-Dīn’s struggle in the Umayyad Mosque took place. An eclipse of sun occurred in Ramadan 28. Al-‘Īthāwī, the Shāfi‘ī prayer leader in the Umayyad Mosque, performed the prayer of eclipse (*kusūf*) with the congregation. Ibn al-Minqār, who was present in the mosque, repeated his criticisms of al-‘Īthāwī and Najm al-Dīn following the prayer. According to Najm al-Dīn’s account, the congregation was in al-‘Īthāwī’s side. They opposed Ibn al-Minqār, and forced him to leave the mosque. Dismayed Ibn al-Minqār visited Bostanzade Mustafa, the Ottoman judge, to complain about al-‘Īthāwī and Najm al-Dīn, who allegedly provoked the congregation against him.⁷⁷⁹

⁷⁷⁴ Mahamid, “Mosques as Higher Educational Institutions in Mamluk Syria,” 202.

⁷⁷⁵ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 1296.

⁷⁷⁶ For one of such officials, see al-Ghazzī e.n. 1486.

⁷⁷⁷ Another community was the Samādī community, which performed their dhikrs in accompaniment of drums. See al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 703.

⁷⁷⁸ For example, see al-Karakī and his community, al-Ghazzī, *Lutf*, e.n. 277.

⁷⁷⁹ Al-Ghazzī e.n. 47.

It was Bostanzade's third office in Damascus as the chief judge of the city. He had occupied the office in mid-1580–mid-1581 for the first time. Then, he received the judgeship of Aleppo, and then served as the judge of Damascus again in 1584–86. After his second dismissal, he became the judge of Damascus again in late 1587.⁷⁸⁰ Thanks to his previous services in the city, Bostanzade knew the competition among different scholarly cliques and the delicate balance between them. Moreover, his elder brother Mehmed Efendi also had served as the judge of Damascus in 1573–1575, and had ties with the local notables.⁷⁸¹ For example, he met Najm al-Dīn's father Badr al-Dīn, attended his classes, and even took certificates in hadith and other disciplines from him. Although Mustafa's first office in Damascus was after Badr al-Dīn's death, he must have heard about the respected Shāfi'ī mufti through his elder brother's channel. Mustafa's relation with Muhibb al-Dīn al-Hamawī, Najm al-Dīn's teacher, was also good. Likewise, Najm al-Dīn had met him during his early judgeships in the city and praised him in a panegyric, to which Mustafa responded by praising him as the true heir of his father Badr al-Dīn.⁷⁸²

Upon Ibn al-Minqār's grievances, Bostanzade Mustafa organized a gathering where he invited Ibn al-Minqār and Najm al-Dīn. He also invited the leading Damascene scholars including Najm al-Dīn's abovementioned teachers. The purpose of the Ottoman judge was to test Najm al-Dīn's proficiency to teach before the Damascene learned community. In his *Lutf al-samar*, Najm al-Dīn describes several vivid scenes from this gathering.

Accordingly, Mustafa asked Najm al-Dīn several questions from al-Baydāwī's Quranic exegesis. Al-Baydāwī's work was one of the few Quranic exegeses taught as part of the Ottoman madrasa curriculum in the main lands of the empire.⁷⁸³ *Al-Shaqā'iq* and its continuation *al-Hadā'iq* mention many Ottoman scholars, who composed commentaries on al-Baydāwī's work.⁷⁸⁴ Bostanzade Mustafa had most probably read the book during his own education. The book was celebrated among the scholars of the Arab provinces

⁷⁸⁰ Atayi, *Hadā'ik*, 2:1333–34; al-Ghazzī, *Lutf*, e.n. 261.

⁷⁸¹ Atayi, *Hadā'ik*, 2:1116–23; al-Ghazzī, *Lutf*, e.n. 31.

⁷⁸² Al-Ghazzī, *Lutf*, e.n. 31.

⁷⁸³ Ahmed and Filipovic, "The Sultan's Syllabus."

⁷⁸⁴ To give a few examples, Taşköprülüzade, *eş-Şaka'ik*, 445, 701–3; Atayi, *Hadā'ik*, 1:301–6, 751–53, 865–67.

as well.⁷⁸⁵ There were endowed circles in the Umayyad Mosque to teach al-Baydāwī's exegesis.⁷⁸⁶ Najm al-Dīn's father Badr al-Dīn also taught the work during his life.⁷⁸⁷ Moreover, Ibn al-Minqār also had a circle to teach *al-Baydāwī*.⁷⁸⁸ As a result, al-Baydāwī's work was a common ground, where the scholars of Ottoman realm and of the Arab domains equally met and exchanged scholarship. Apparently, the Ottoman judge preferred to do his examination through a book both he and his guests knew very well.

According to his own account, Najm al-Dīn successfully answered to Ottoman judge's questions and proved his scholarly proficiency in front of the invited guests in the gathering. The Ottoman judge appreciated Najm al-Dīn's knowledge and even Ibn al-Minqār, who was opposing Najm al-Dīn's having a teaching circle in the Umayyad Mosque, could not deny his scholarly competence.⁷⁸⁹ Thus, when there emerged a vacancy in the Shāfi'ī professorship of the Qassā'iyya Madrasa in the following weeks, the Judge Mustafa Efendi appointed young Najm al-Dīn to this madrasa as the new professor.⁷⁹⁰

The day of the eclipse of the sun and the subsequent gathering were turning points in Najm al-Dīn's teaching career. Some people, who witnessed these events, said, "At the eclipse of the sun appeared the star [*inda kusūf al-shams qad zahara al-najm*]," an inimitable facility (*sahl-i mumtani*), which soon became famous in Damascene gatherings. It was referring to Najm al-Dīn's (referred as star/najm) victory over Shams al-Dīn ibn al-Minqār (referred to as sun/shams) in front of Damascene scholars after their conflict in the day of the eclipse of the sun. It also was implying that an unworldly power (or God himself) supported Najm al-Dīn against his opponents in his rightful cause.⁷⁹¹ Najm al-Dīn further mentioned this event in a poem and narrated his success story by quoting the aforementioned phrase. It was not only Najm al-Dīn's individual success but also the success of his clique. His father-in-law al-Īthāwī also composed a treatise, in which he

⁷⁸⁵ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 281, 381, 421, 672, 892, 914, 1092; al-Ghazzī, *Lutf*, e.n. 36, 169. Also, see Ibn Tūlūn, *Tārīkh al-Shām*, 311.

⁷⁸⁶ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 1092.

⁷⁸⁷ Al-Ghazzī, e.n. 1328.

⁷⁸⁸ Al-Ghazzī, *Lutf*, I:146-47.

⁷⁸⁹ Al-Ghazzī, e.n. 47.

⁷⁹⁰ Al-Ghazzī e.n. 261.

⁷⁹¹ Such interpretations of celestial events were widespread during the period. For example, a traveling comet observed in Istanbul about a decade ago was taken as a sign of victory over Safavids. Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual*, 76.

mentioned what happened in the day of the eclipse of the sun and at the following gathering of the Ottoman judge.

6.4.3. Narrating His Father's Life: Badr al-Dīn's Biography

Badr al-Dīn died without leaving a true scholarly heir to replace him as a mufti. Thus, Najm al-Dīn endeavored to keep his father's memory alive and to become a true heir of him since his early ages. After composing his first verses in his fifteen, he started versifying some of his father's works and penned commentaries in verse on them. For example, in early 1588, he finished a commentary on one of Badr al-Dīn's poetic compositions.⁷⁹² Next year, he finished another commentary in verse on his father's work in Arabic grammar.⁷⁹³

Once he had a teaching circle in the Umayyad Mosque, Najm al-Dīn embarked on a new project. In 1590/91, he started penning his father's biography as a separate work entitled *Bulgha al-wājid fī tarjama sheikh al-Islām al-wālid* [Adequacy of the Grieved in the Biography of Sheikh al-Islām Father]. We have no extant copy of this work but later sources inform about its content and even contain long quotations from it. In this work, Najm al-Dīn mentioned his father's lineage, teachers, students, scholarly works, virtues, and scholarly genealogy in hadith.⁷⁹⁴ He also made a compilation from his father's poetry and quoted exemplary verses from elegies written after him.⁷⁹⁵

Why did Najm al-Dīn pen such a work for his father's lifestory? Did not most of his readers know Badr al-Dīn personally, and some of them, who spent with him long years as students, know him better than Najm al-Dīn? The term *tarjama* (often translated into English as biographical notice) carries a number of meanings such as "translation," "interpretation," and "giving a book or chapter a title (*wa tarjamtuhū bi-*)."⁷⁹⁶ Reynolds's explanation about the etymology of the term and its practical uses in Islamic biography writing tradition is inspiring to understand Najm al-Dīn's project:

⁷⁹² Najm al-Dīn al-Ghazzī, *Tuhfa al-Tullāb fī al-mustathnayāt*, ed. Abd al-Ra'ūf b. Muhammad al-Kamali (Beirut: Sharika al-Bashā'ir al-Islāmiyya, 2004), 67–68.

⁷⁹³ Al-Ghazzī, *Lutf*, 113.

⁷⁹⁴ Al-Ghazzī, I:107.

⁷⁹⁵ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 1205.

⁷⁹⁶ Reynolds, *Interpreting the Self: Autobiography in the Arabic Literary Tradition*, 42.

“The term *tarjama* thus contains three central and interrelated ideas, that of explanation or interpretation, that of transformation into a different medium, and that of clarification by means of division into sections and labeling. The *tarjama* as biographical notice may be taken to be a representation of a person, to be distinguished from the physical being; it is an inexact, imperfect copy of a life, just as a commentary cannot represent the original text, or a translation represent the Qur’ān. But it is a key to the person, a clarification, an attempt to label and explain his or her actions and accomplishments”⁷⁹⁷

Thus, Najm al-Dīn’s project aimed at more than introducing his father. He re-contextualized his father’s life to open a space for himself in the scholarly community. In fact, in the following five years, he expanded the *tarjama* of his father by adding his autobiography at its end. In this appendix, he mentioned his few childhood memories with his father. He narrated how he and his brothers survived as orphans after Badr al-Dīn’s death thanks to their mother’s self-sacrifice. He also recorded his own teachers and early works and, more importantly, his struggles against some of the leading scholarly figures during his early scholarly career.

Contrary to the widespread belief, writing about the self was not alien to the Muslim societies in the pre-modern era.⁷⁹⁸ Autobiographies of scholars in Syro-Egypt were many. Scholars including Ibn Khaldūn (d. 1406), Ibn Hajar (d. 1449), al-Suyūṭī (d. 1505) and Ibn Tūlūn (d. 1546) penned autobiographies following certain standards in the genre.⁷⁹⁹ Ego-documents such as travelogues (including Badr al-Dīn’s *al-Matāli‘*) and daily reports (such as Ibn Tawq’s *Ta’līq*) were also in circulation in Damascus.⁸⁰⁰ Thus, Najm al-Dīn was familiar with autobiography as a genre. He was well aware of the fact that writing an autobiography was a process of establishing and historicizing the self.⁸⁰¹

⁷⁹⁷ Ibid, 42.

⁷⁹⁸ See Mary Evans, *Missing Persons: The Impossibility of Auto/Biography* (London: Routledge, 1999).

⁷⁹⁹ Conermann, “Ibn Tūlūn (d. 955/1548).” Also see Reynold, *Interpreting the Self: Autobiography in the Arabic Literary Tradition*, 79–89.

⁸⁰⁰ See Wollina Torsten, “Ibn Tawq’s *Ta’līq*. An Ego-Document for Mamlūk Studies,” in *Ubi sumus? Quo vademus?* ed. Stephan Conermann (Bonn: Bonn University Press, 2013): 337–62.

⁸⁰¹ Reynolds, *Interpreting the Self*. 73–74.

Yet there was a great difference between autobiographers above and Najm al-Dīn. The former were re-contextualizing their career and life story at almost its end, re-telling the entire story retrospectively. As a result, al-Suyūṭī, for example, entitled his autobiography *al-Tahadduth bi-ni‘mat Allāh* [Speaking of God’s Graces] as a grateful assessment of his life. Although a similar retrospective look was unavoidable in Najm al-Dīn’s autobiography too, Najm al-Dīn was at the early years of his professional life. He had only few achievements to write down hitherto. He had no acknowledged scholarship, no respected works, and no appreciated scholarly career. Thus, apparently, his work served another purpose—to connect his father’s life and his own life in a linear continuity implying that Badr al-Dīn’s true heir was Najm al-Dīn. Najm al-Dīn would struggle much to realize this claim in the following years.

6.4.4. Shouldering His Father’s Heritage: Badr al-Dīn’s Quranic Exegesis in Verse

Najm al-Dīn’s effort to shoulder his father’s scholarly heritage was not limited to the latter’s biography. He started teaching his father’s hotly debated Quranic exegesis in verse in the Umayyad Mosque. As mentioned before, this work received harsh criticisms from Badr al-Dīn’s contemporaries in and out Damascus. According to al-Būrīnī, the exegesis was almost erased from memories after Badr al-Dīn’s death—finding a second copy of the work was nearly impossible.⁸⁰² Apparently, Najm al-Dīn wanted to survive his father’s forgotten work and decided to put it in circulation in Damascene scholarly circles. This attempt would not only save his father’s work for the coming generations but also make him his father’s scholarly successor.

Once again, Najm al-Dīn received harsh criticisms from elderly authorities. According to a contemporary eyewitness, Ibn al-Tabbākh, a Hanafī scholar, loudly denigrated Badr al-Dīn’s work in the Umayyad Mosque accusing the author of versifying God’s words in prosody of *rajz*.⁸⁰³ Ibn al-Tabbākh was a retired Damascene scholar-bureaucrat. He became a protégé of the Ottoman judge Malulzade Efendi and managed to enter scholarly-bureaucratic career track by receiving novice status. After Malulzade’s dismissal from the chief judgeship of Anatolia, Ibn al-Tabbākh lost his hopes to advance further in his career and retired as a forty asper-level professor. He eventually returned to Damascus in mid-1580s. Ibn al-Minqār and and Sham al-Dīn al-Dāwūdī stood with Ibn al-Tabbākh opposing Najm al-Dīn’s classes on his father’s work in the

⁸⁰² Al-Būrīnī, *Tarājim al-a’yān*, 105.

⁸⁰³ Al-Būrīnī, 301.

Umayyad Mosque.⁸⁰⁴ The increasing opposition against the young Najm al-Dīn even discouraged his teachers. Al-‘Īthāwī tried to dissuade his son-in-law from maintaining his classes.

Narrating these events years later, Najm al-Dīn builds up a success story by adding into this story certain divine elements. He writes that he dreamt of the Prophet during these days, and the latter encouraged him to continue teaching his father’s work despite the criticisms he was facing.⁸⁰⁵ It seems Najm al-Dīn tends to describe his situation as a struggle between the truth and falsehood. He apparently wants his readers believe that even the Prophet supported his father’s exegesis and his teaching of it.

Dreams were an integral part of human life in the pre-modern periods. Dreaming was not considered as an outcome of individual psychological processes. They were rather divine interventions into human life. Thus, dreams were real events taking place in one’s life chronology—cause and effect mechanism of tangible world was operative for dreams, too. People were seeking guiding dreams whenever they faced difficulties in their daily lives, and taking important decisions according to the interpretations of their dreams. In the dreams, prophets or sheikhs were playing the role of notary, who gave consent to a particular behavior or decision, and guaranteed a sound communication between past, present and future.⁸⁰⁶ As a result, Najm al-Dīn’s claim that the Prophet encouraged him to teach his father’s work was a sufficient justification on its own before his contemporaries.

Najm al-Dīn continued teaching his father’s debated exegesis, and his two teachers, al-‘Īthāwī and Muhibb al-Dīn, supported him. As mentioned before, Muhibb al-Dīn composed a treatise and defended Badr al-Dīn’s work. Ibn al-Tabbākh responded him with another treatise. Then, Muhibb al-Dīn satirized Ibn al-Tabbākh in some verses, in which he connected Ibn al-Tabbākh’s brunette face to God’s curse, and called him a liar. Not confined with this satire, he composed a second treatise and presented his work to the

⁸⁰⁴ Al-Ghazzī, *Lutf*, e.n. 36, 68.

⁸⁰⁵ Al-Ghazzī, e.n. 68.

⁸⁰⁶ Reynolds, *Interpreting the Self*; Judith E. Tucker, “Biography as History: The Exemplary Life of Khayr al-Dīn al-Ramli,” in *Auto/Biography and the Construction of Identity and Community in the Middle East*, ed. Mary Ann Fay (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 9–17; Aslı Niyazioğlu, *Dreams and Lives in Ottoman Istanbul: A Seventeenth-Century Biographer’s Perspective* (Taylor and Francis, 2016), 1–19; “Müteredit Bir Mutasavvıf: Üsküplü Asiye Hatunun Rüya Defteri 1641-1643” in Kafadar, *Kim Var İmiş Biz Burada Yoğ İken*, 123–91.

Damascene notables in a banquet. By this, he wanted to gain public support for Najm al-Dīn's cause. Najm al-Dīn's father-in-law al-Īthāwī also penned a treatise to defend Badr al-Dīn's Quranic exegesis in verse.⁸⁰⁷

Thanks to the incessant efforts of his teachers, Damascene learned community finally gave their consent on Najm al-Dīn's teaching. This was another significant step in Najm al-Dīn's early career. For the second time, he proved his scholarly competence against his critics and gained the consent of the learned elite in the city. Moreover, it was a turning point for Badr al-Dīn's Quranic exegesis. Thanks to Najm al-Dīn's struggle, the younger generation of scholars in Damascus started reading the debated exegesis in the Umayyad Mosque, the greatest educational center of the city. Had it not been, Atayi might not have introduced Badr al-Dīn by his Quranic exegesis in the early seventeenth century saying “*ve fāzıl-ı Gazzī kī manzūm tefsīr yazmışdur meşhūr-ı Arab ū Acem'dir.*”⁸⁰⁸ In other words, Najm al-Dīn did not only save his father's work from the curse of the subsequent generations but also put it in circulation again.

6.4.5. Residing in His Father's Cell: Badr al-Dīn's Symbolic Heritage

Najm al-Dīn was teaching at the Qassā'iyya Shāfī'iyya Madrasa and holding half-preacher post in the Tabriziyye Mosque, which his father-in-law al-Īthāwī had handed down to him. He took the professorship of the Kallāsa Madrasa in September 1590.⁸⁰⁹ As mentioned in Chapter II, the Kallāsa professorship was at the hand of the Ghazzīs for a long time. Ahmad al-Ghazzī, his son Radiyy al-Dīn Abū al-Barakāt and his grandson Radiyy al-Dīn Abū al-Fadl occupied this teaching post throughout the fifteenth century. Unfortunately, the sources do not inform whether the latter managed to transfer the professorship of Kallāsa to his son Badr al-Dīn. There is no historical record indicating Badr al-Dīn ever taught in this madrasa. Still, Najm al-Dīn's professorship in the Kallāsa symbolically connected him to a long family past. As a member of the Ghazzī family in the fifth generation in Damascus, he was the fourth Ghazzī teaching there, even if we pass over Badr al-Dīn's possible professorship through appointed deputies.

Najm al-Dīn was now in his mid-twenties and the closest one among his brothers to replace his father as a scholar. He decided to settle in the Halabiyya cell, the cell identified with his father in the Umayyad Mosque. As mentioned earlier, Badr al-Dīn resided in the Halabiyya in isolation for decades occupied with teaching,

⁸⁰⁷ For the names of these treatises, and other details see the title “A Hotly Debated Quranic Exegesis in Verse” in Chapter V.

⁸⁰⁸ Atayi, *Hadā'ik*, 1864.

⁸⁰⁹ Al-Ghazzī, *Lutf*, e.n. 261.

issuing religious opinions, and writing scholarly works. After Badr al-Dīn's death, however, the cell was transferred to Ahmad b. Muhammed Akram, who stayed there until 1585.⁸¹⁰ Afterward, Abdülmuhit Efendi, an Ottoman scholar, who visited Damascus, took the cell and lived there in seclusion. Before his death in 1597/98, he transferred it to his two sons.⁸¹¹ After Abdülmuhit's death, Najm al-Dīn tried to take the cell back to Ghazzī family's possession. Yet the cell was under the supervision of Çorbacı Hasan, a previous Janissary commander in Damascus, who now served as the superintendent of the Umayyad Mosque.⁸¹²

Janissary corps showed presence in Damascus for the first time during the reign of Selim I, who stationed them in the city citadel in the immediate aftermath of the conquest. Following the suppression of Jānbirdī's insurrection, their presence in the city became more palpable. In around the mid-sixteenth century, they fulfilled a variety of tasks such as joining the campaigns against Safavids, garrisoning fortresses located in the province, collecting taxes, safeguarding the pilgrims against bandits, and securing the order in the city. Despite the measures of the Ottoman central government for their rotation, most of these Janissaries settled down in Damascus, bought houses in the city, got married from locals, and were involved in Syrian economy. They eventually emerged as influential actors in socio-economic life of Syrian provinces the late sixteenth century onward.⁸¹³

According to the biographical information given by Najm al-Dīn, Çorbacı Hasan was an ordinary Janissary at his early career in Damascus. He ascended to the rank of *kethüda* in time but was later dismissed from this office after killing another Janissary soldier. He then managed to become a timar-holder in Damascus. After being promoted to the office of the *sultan çavuşu*, he appeared as a powerful figure who was acting as intercessor for the locals asking various favors from the central government. He took custody (*wasaya*)

⁸¹⁰ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 1341.

⁸¹¹ Al-Ghazzī, *Lutf*, e.n. 210.

⁸¹² Al-Ghazzī, e.n. 145.

⁸¹³ Bakhit, *The Ottoman Province of Damascus*, 91–115, 147; Linda T. Darling, *The Janissaries of Damascus in the Sixteenth Century, or, How Conquering a Province Changed the Ottoman Empire* (Otto Spies Memorial Lecture, vol 6, ed. Stephan Conermann and Gül Şen), (EBVerlag, 2019). The situation of Janissaries in other Arab provinces were no different, see Jane Hathaway, *The Arab Lands Under the Ottoman Rule, 1516-1800* (London: Routledge, 2008), 67–69; Andre Raymond, *Yeniçerilerin Kahiresi: Abdurrahman Kethüda Zamanında Bir Osmanlı Kentinin Yükselişi.*, trans. Alp Tümertekin (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1999).

of many orphans in the city and occupied the position of superintendent in several large Damascene endowments including the Nuri Hospital and the Umayyad Mosque.⁸¹⁴

Najm al-Dīn had to ask Çorbacı Hasan's permission to use the Halabiyya cell because he was the authorized body in the Umayyad endowment. Najm al-Dīn visited Çorbacı and offered him an amount for the use of the cell. Çorbacı agreed with his offer on the condition that apart from the payment, Najm al-Dīn would assume the custody of Abdūlmuhit's two orphans, who were legal inheritors of the cell. Najm al-Dīn accepted this offer, and, eventually, Badr al-Dīn's Halabiyya became Najm al-Dīn's cell.⁸¹⁵

By residing in the Halabiyya, Najm al-Dīn tried to benefit from his father's symbolic capital—the scholarly honor and prestige, and social recognition that his father had enjoyed once in this cell. This place was full of his father's memories. Damascenes were asking Badr al-Dīn religio-legal opinions in this cell everyday, and Najm al-Dīn's teachers had studied under Badr al-Dīn there.

6.5. Local and Regional Crises: Najm al-Dīn's Efforts to Join the Leading Ulama

The first decade of the second Muslim millennium (1591–1601) witnessed important developments in Najm al-Dīn's life. In June 1597, Ibn al-Minqār, one of the most critical figures of Najm al-Dīn and his father-in-law al-Īthāwī, suddenly died. Hasan al-Būrīnī, al-Īthāwī's brother-in-law, filled the vacancy in the post of Süleymaniye preacher after Ibn al-Minqār. Next year, in March 1598, Ibn al-Tabbākh, another opponent scholar, passed away. Ibn al-Tabbākh's unexpected death pleased some people. According to al-Būrīnī's (most probably partial) account, Yahya Efendi, the incumbent Ottoman judge of Damascus, was pleased with getting rid of Ibn al-Tabbākh's fierce criticisms and harsh tongue.⁸¹⁶ Najm al-Dīn writes in his biography that Ibn al-Tabbākh suffered from an illness after opposing his father's exegesis and his teaching (*'aqab ta'arrudihī li-tafsīr Sheikh al-Islām al-wālid wa lanā*) and died from this illness.⁸¹⁷

The same day Ibn al-Tabbākh passed away, his close friend Shams al-Dīn al-Dāwūdī, who opposed Najm al-Dīn's teaching in the Umayyad Mosque, died at his home after his return from Ibn al-Tabbākh's funeral.

⁸¹⁴ Al-Ghazzī, *Lutf*, e.n. 145.

⁸¹⁵ Al-Ghazzī, e.n. 210.

⁸¹⁶ Al-Būrīnī, *Tarājim al-a'yān*, e.n. 67.

⁸¹⁷ Al-Ghazzī, *Lutf*, I: 221.

Al-Dāwūdī was holding the post of Shāfi‘ī preacher in the Umayyad Mosque as well as a circle to teach al-Bukhārī’s hadith collection during the three holy months in the same mosque. Al-‘Īthāwī took the first post, and Shams al-Dīn al-Maydānī, another peer Shāfi‘ī scholar, filled the second post.⁸¹⁸

These three scholars, who died successively, were the leading figures of the scholarly clique opposing Najm al-Dīn and his teachers. Najm al-Dīn seems to have felt relieved by their successive deaths. A new period in his life started. His struggle to survive in Damascene learned community had ended. Now, he had to struggle to become one of the Damascene leading scholars.

Najm al-Dīn decided to perform pilgrimage in the following year. In mid-1599, he was in Mecca for pilgrimage. This was his second pilgrimage. The first one was in 1593, which he performed with his six-year-old son Muhammad. In this second pilgrimage, he spent a month in Mecca as a pious resident and met his acquaintances in the city.⁸¹⁹ One of them was the abovementioned Bostanzade Mustafa Efendi, the previous Ottoman judge of Damascus, who had supported him against his critics few years ago. Mustafa was now serving as the judge of Mecca.⁸²⁰ The rotational appointment of the Ottoman scholar-bureaucrats to the judgeships of the major cities in the Arab provinces apparently enlarged the network of Damascene scholars not only in the Ottoman capital but also in other cities as well.

Najm al-Dīn performed another pilgrimage next year. In 1602 and 1603, he made two other pilgrimages. Performing pilgrimage was not an easy undertaking. It required months, physical effort, patience, and money. Why Najm al-Dīn performed so many successive pilgrimages is a difficult question to answer by the available biographical data. Religiosity is a possible answer. Yet another reason could be the endowed lands of his grandfather in the region. As mentioned earlier, Radiyy al-Dīn had agricultural lands in Arafat and endowed them for familial purposes. As one of the beneficiaries of this family endowment, Najm al-Dīn possibly inspected these lands in Hijaz and periodically collected its revenues for Radiyy al-Dīn’s endowment.

⁸¹⁸ Ibn Ayyūb, *al-Rawd al-ātir*, 922.

⁸¹⁹ Al-Ghazzī, *Lutf*, e.n. 273.

⁸²⁰ Al-Ghazzī, e.n. 261.

Najm al-Dīn seems to have possessed enough financial sources that enabled him to afford costly pilgrimage travels many times. In fact, he was occupying several posts in Damascene endowments concurrently and receiving his share from his grandfather's endowment.

Najm al-Dīn's successive pilgrimage journeys owed much to the Ottoman policies in the region. Pilgrimage became more secure thanks to the increasing Ottoman investments in the pilgrimage routes from the second half of the sixteenth century. Süleyman built a fortress on the way to Mecca in 1531 to secure the pilgrims from Bedouin attacks. He constructed four other fortresses in 1559. These fortresses contained military personnel to secure the roads. Additionally, the Ottomans preserved the *darak* system applied by the Mamluks—they allotted fiefs to the Bedouin leaders and bestowed on them privileges such as tax exemption in return for providing security of the pilgrim caravans on their way to and from Mecca.⁸²¹ This increasing security of the roads to Mecca must have encouraged Najm al-Dīn to perform pilgrimage many times.

In May 1609, Diyā' al-Dīn, Najm al-Dīn's young son, died due to the plague in Damascus. Six months later, his elder son Badr al-Dīn Muhammad died due to diarrhea at the age of twenty-two. The sudden and successive deaths of his two sons traumatized Najm al-Dīn. After his son Badr al-Dīn's funeral, he organized a prayer gathering in the Umayyad Mosque, and read an elegy. Later, he expressed his feelings in another elegy for his deceased sons and resembled them to the Prophet's two grandchildren by calling them as "two *rayhans*."⁸²² In the following years, Najm al-Dīn would focus on the education of his second son Su'ūdī, whom he considered his successor.

When Najm al-Dīn lost his two sons, he was in his early forties. The leading scholars in Damascus were passing away one after another. After aforementioned Ibn al-Minqār, Ibn al-Tabbākh, and al-Dāwūdī, his teacher Muhibb al-Dīn also died in 1608. Najm al-Dīn, as a middle age rising scholar, was ready to fill the authority vacuum in Damascene learned society.

As mentioned earlier, the position of the Shāfi'ī mufti in the city did not require official appointment, at least during the period under study. A Shāfi'ī legal scholar had to be patient enough to outlive most of his teachers, if not all, to issue his own legal opinions without receiving criticism from Shāfi'ī scholarly

⁸²¹ Faroqhi, *Pilgrims and Sultans*, 54–73; Shafir, "The Road from Damascus."

⁸²² Al-Ghazzī, *Lutf*, e.n. 1.

community in Damascus.⁸²³ Najm al-Dīn already attained several certificates to issue fatwas from his youth. Thus, he was a prospective Shāfi‘ī mufti. Yet he was not issuing fatwas out of respect for his father-in-law.⁸²⁴ This, however, does not mean that he could not assume leadership in Damascene scholarly community. In fact, an event he mentions from his own perspective in *Lutf al-samar* implies that he aspired to assume significant roles in some local socio-political crises.

6.5.1. A Case of Heresy in Damascus

In January 1610, a Sufi named Yahyā b. ‘Isā al-Karakī came to Damascus. It was said he had studied in Egypt, and then went to Karak in exile due to his heretical claims. He was a mystic Sufi, who cursed Ahmad b. Hanbal (d. 855), the respected leader of the Hanbalī madhhab, and advocated the idea of divine immanence.⁸²⁵ Najm al-Dīn writes that al-Karakī was a classmate of Shams al-Dīn al-Maydānī, a Damascene Shāfi‘ī scholar who spent nearly a decade in al-Azhar during his early education. Reportedly, al-Karakī had sent letters to al-Maydānī, and informed him about his heretical beliefs before visiting Damascus personally.⁸²⁶ (Here, a caveat is in order. Najm al-Dīn wrote this event after years. During this period, he was involved in a struggle for a teaching position against al-Maydānī, as will be seen in the following chapter. Thus, Najm al-Dīn possibly tries to impose the responsibility of al-Karakī’s case on the shoulders of his rival Shams al-Dīn al-Maydānī.)

Many people gathered around al-Karakī after he came to the city. On 29 January, he gathered his followers in the Umayyad Mosque, a central platform for new groups to earn legitimacy and popular support in Damascus. Al-Karakī’s gathering in the Umayyad Mosque was scandalous and received reactions from the scholars immediately. The latter felt anxious because the number of al-Karakī’s followers from the common people rapidly increased and their control would be difficult soon.

The first reaction to al-Karakī’s activities in Damascus came from Şerif Mehmed Efendi, the Ottoman judge of the city. Mehmed Efendi ordered to hospitalize al-Karakī in the Nūrī hospital, probably to gain time to consider his case more. Al-Karakī’s stay at the hospital would give the message that he was a lunatic and

⁸²³ For more on this discussion, see the title “Being a Non-Official Provincial Shāfi‘ī Mufti” in Chapter V.

⁸²⁴ Al-Ghazzī, e.n. 114.

⁸²⁵ Khaled El-Rouayheb, “Heresy and Sufism in the Arabic-Islamic World, 1550–1750: Some Preliminary Observations,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 73, no. 3 (2010): 357–80.

⁸²⁶ See al-Maydānī’s biography in al-Ghazzī, *Lutf*, e.n. 55.

prevent counter-reaction of his supporters. Mehmed Efendi also needed to learn Damascene scholars' opinion about al-Karakī before taking any tangible measure against him. He seems to be hesitant to take an irreversible action, which could eventually cost him the support of Damascene scholarly community against al-Karakī's outraged followers.

According to Najm al-Dīn's partial narrative, when al-Karakī was at hospital, al-Maydānī sent examples of al-Karakī's writings to al-ʿĪthāwī, who then showed them to his son-in-law Najm al-Dīn. They both were convinced that al-Karakī's ideas were heretical and he was a disbeliever (*mulhid*). Four days after al-Karakī's gathering in the Umayyad Mosque, Damascene scholars met in a funeral and discussed the issue. Same day, they organized another meeting to discuss the issue further. Among the participants were Hasan al-Būrīnī, al-ʿĪthāwī, al-Maydānī, and Najm al-Dīn. Najm al-Dīn read exemplary passages from al-Karakī's writings before them and –according to Najm al-Dīn's account– persuaded hesitant al-Maydānī about al-Karakī's heresy. Reportedly, Najm al-Dīn had spent the previous night sleepless because of his anxiety about the harm al-Karakī's claims could bring to the Muslim community. He had even composed a poetry, in which he attracted the attention of Damascene scholarly community to al-Karakī's threat and warned them not to underestimate his heretical ideas. Consequently, those who were present in the gathering were convinced on al-Karakī's disbelief. They went to the Ottoman judge Mehmed Efendi, who welcomed them and articulated his surprise on their long silence on al-Karakī's infidelity. He also added that if they had given him their support previously he would have already executed al-Karakī, but he hesitated because of his concern for a possible fitna that al-Karakī's followers could ignite in Damascus.

Mehmed Efendi invited the leading scholars of the city to his court. Ottoman Hanafī mufti of Damascus, a local Hanafī mufti, several professors, and chief physician in the Nūrī hospital came to the court. Then, he ordered his men to bring al-Karakī in chains for trial. Seemingly, Mehmed Efendi was encouraged by the determination and consensus of his Damascene colleagues. He did not hesitate anymore about al-Karakī's trial in his court.

Al-Karakī was brought to Mehmed Efendi's court in chains. The local scholars presented his writings to the Ottoman judge as an evidence for his disbelief. Without his written words, he could have been considered a lunatic, who came up with ecstatic utterances, thus be forgiven.⁸²⁷ Thus, al-Karakī's letters were read

⁸²⁷ El-Rouayheb, "Heresy and Sufism in the Arabic-Islamic World," 380.

loudly. The scholars present in the gathering expressed their opinion about his heresy, and the Ottoman judge issued his verdict for his execution. He immediately sent his verdict to the governor of the city for official approval. According to Najm al-Dīn's narrative, Mehmed Efendi worried when the governor's response was late, thinking that the governor might forgive al-Karakī. When he expressed about his worry in the gathering, Najm al-Dīn intervened to calm down him, and informed him about the report that whoever cursed Ahmad ibn Hanbel could never prosper. Then, the judge's man returned with the confirmation of the verdict. He also informed the gathering that the governor firstly hesitated about the execution but then randomly opened the Qur'ān and encountered verses about disbelievers, which eventually persuaded him about al-Karakī's disbelief. The Ottoman judge, who was worried about the reaction of al-Karakī's followers, ordered his immediate execution at the court's courtyard. It was 2 February 1610.⁸²⁸

Chamberlain conceptualizes "higher education" and "suppression of heresy" as two areas of fitna, which created opportunities for the redistribution of the revenue sources among the *a'yān*.⁸²⁹ Accordingly, Najm al-Dīn seems to have turned the crisis of al-Karakī into an opportunity to show up before the Damascene learned community as a mature scholar. He was one of the few local scholars invited to al-Karakī's abovementioned trial.

Yet it seems Najm al-Dīn overemphasizes his role in his narration of al-Karakī's case. In fact, he was writing after a decade upon al-Karakī's execution, and elderly attenders of the trial had already passed away. Thus, Najm al-Dīn apparently re-contextualizes the process by highlighting his own role, and builds a narrative from his own angle retrospectively. In this narrative, he appears as the central figure, who actually released the Muslim community from the dangers of al-Karakī's heretical ideas. His encouragement of elderly scholars against al-Karakī's activities; his verses warning Damascene scholarly community against al-Karakī's heresy; and his support for the Ottoman judge for his execution make Najm al-Dīn the key actor during the whole process.

However, when we read al-Karakī's biography in *Khulāsa al-athar*, we find another picture for the same trial.⁸³⁰ Al-Muhibbī provides a vivid description of al-Karakī's case, and repeats several details Najm al-Dīn has omitted. In al-Muhibbī's account, al-'Īthāwī's role is more significant than Najm al-Dīn. The latter's

⁸²⁸ Al-Ghazzī, *Lutf*, e.n. 277.

⁸²⁹ Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice*, 8–9.

⁸³⁰ Al-Muhibbī, *Khulāsa al-athar*, IV: 478-80.

name only appears among the attendants of the trial and as the author of few verses dating al-Karakī's execution at the end of the biographical entry. Moreover, al-Muhibbī does not mention the abovementioned delay of the confirmation of the judge's verdict by the Ottoman governor nor mentions Najm al-Dīn's following intervention to calm the anxious judge down. Thus, al-Muhibbī's account also supports the idea that Najm al-Dīn consciously overstates his role in al-Karakī affair.

In fact, unlike al-Muhibbī, Najm al-Dīn never lets al-Karakī to defend himself before the allegations against his beliefs in his narration of the trial. Najm al-Dīn's readers do not encounter any words al-Karakī utters during the entire trial narrative. His ideas are left unmentioned but labelled as heretical. Najm al-Dīn's focus seems to be on the process leading to al-Karakī's execution and his own central role in this process rather than what al-Karakī actually thinks. He depicts himself as one of the leading Damascene scholars fighting against heresy for the good of the Muslim community and creates for himself the image of a wise person who guides both local scholars and the Ottoman judge.

Leaving Najm al-Dīn partial narrative aside, al-Karakī apparently endeavored to preside a new Sufi community in Damascus. His movement, however, threatened the existing order in Damascene society by its "heterodox" nature of thinking and shattered the strong position of the scholars. However, the Ottoman government (represented by the judge) needed the support of the local legitimizers in order to suppress al-Karakī and his followers. Thus, Najm al-Dīn's and his colleagues' support for the Ottoman judge's action against al-Karakī was essential. In other words, the Ottoman judge could possibly have failed to execute al-Karakī without unanimous consent of the leading Damascene scholars. As a matter of fact, the first reaction of the Ottoman judge was to hospitalize al-Karakī, not to put him in trial.

Although Najm al-Dīn most probably had no such a critical role in al-Karakī's execution as he describes in the related biographical entry, he found an opportunity to gather together with the leading scholars of the city to discuss a vital issue concerning the Muslim community. He most probably owed his attendance in such an important gathering to his father-in-law al-ʿĪthāwī, who was one of the few Shāfīʿī muftis in Damascus. Nevertheless, it was a significant step for him to join to the gatherings of the leading scholarly figures in his early forties.

6.5.2. In a Delegation Committee to Aleppo: Representing Damascenes before the Ottoman Government

In the early seventeenth century, Jānbulāt Husayn and Fakhr al-Dīn Ma'n struggled against the Ottoman central government politically and militarily. These two were not professional Ottoman officials but local self-made leaders. They soon realized their cooperation would increase their power against the central government and supported each other.⁸³¹

Jānbulāt Husayn was son of Jānbulāt Kasım Beg, who had been raised up in the Ottoman palace, and then granted Kilis sub-province as *ocaklık*. Husayn replaced his father in the same post in 1572. He came to the fore by his victories over the rebellious groups in Syria, and was appointed as the governor of Aleppo. Ibn Ma'n family, on the other hand, was a powerful local family in Lebanon, whose leader was given the status of the governor of sub-province (*sancakbeyi*) by the Ottoman central government. Later, Fakhr al-Dīn ibn Ma'n became the leader of his family, and managed to receive the governorship of sub-province of Safad. He was in close contact with the aforementioned Jānbulāt Husayn in 1570s. Since the Ottoman government was preoccupied with military campaigns against Safavids and Habsburgs, they empowered their army by increasing their sakban troops (military troops consisting of mercenary soldiers) at the end of the century.

Both Jānbulāt and Fakhr al-Dīn acted reluctant to deploy their troops for the Ottoman campaign against the Safavids in 1604. Eventually, the Ottoman commander-in-chief took them responsible for his defeat and executed Husayn. Fakhr al-Dīn, on the other hand, escaped to Safad. Husayn's troops then returned to Aleppo and entered into the service of his nephew Ali, who swore to take Husayn's revenge. Ali availed himself of Ottoman preoccupation with successive campaigns in the west and east, and built a fully equipped army consisting of cavalry and infantry. He then defeated the governor of Tripoli and captured Aleppo and eventually declared his independence.

The Ottoman central government took Ali's rebellion seriously. It had been the first serious attempt for independence since Jānbirdī's rebellion almost a century ago. Kuyucu Murad Pasha was appointed as the grand vizier and authorized as the commander-in-chief of the Ottoman army sent against Jānbulāt Ali in December 1606. In October 1607, Murad Pasha fought against the joint forces of Jānbulāt Ali and Fakhr al-

⁸³¹ Bruce Masters, *The Arabs of the Ottoman Empire, 1516–1918: A Social and Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 37–42; Hathaway, *The Arab Lands Under the Ottoman Rule*, 70–72.

Dīn in Antioch. Finally, Fakhr al-Dīn ran away, and Jānbulāt retreated to Aleppo, then escaped to Istanbul in order to appeal for mercy before the Ottoman sultan.⁸³²

Murad Pasha, on the other hand, entered Aleppo and spent the winter there. When he was still in Aleppo, a committee of Damascene notables visited him to complain about activities of the regional leaders in their city. They also requested abolishment of heavy taxes imposed on Damascenes. Al-‘Īthāwī and his brother-in-law Hasan al-Būrīnī were also in the committee.⁸³³ Najm al-Dīn, on the other hand, was not a member of the committee, perhaps due to his young age—he was only thirty years old. Apparently, he was not qualified yet to play the role of the representative of the Damascene people. Biographical sources do not provide much information about the committee and its success.

Escaping Murad Pasha, Fakhr al-Dīn developed diplomatic relations with Italian dukes in the subsequent years. He was under the pressure of the Ottoman governors, however. Finally, he was obliged to leave the leadership of his emirate to his son ‘Alī and his nephew Yūnus, and fled to Italy to save his life in 1613. He would spend in Italy five years.⁸³⁴

During these years, Syria witnessed a relative peace domestically. The Ottoman campaigns against the Safavids continued, however. Such campaigns were financed by the extraordinary taxes (*avārız*) imposed on the population in the region.⁸³⁵ *Avārız* was a fixed tax—equivalent to 300 aspers (*akçes*) during the period—collected from every “*avārız* household” whose size differed from one city to another. In financially prosperous Aleppo, for example, there were 5903 households (*khāne*) during the first half of the seventeenth century, and every 1.7 households constituted an *avārız* household, that is, there were 3576 *avārız* households each paying 300 aspers. In financially less affluent cities, however, this proportion was higher, (e.g. 3.9 households in Bursa, 14 in Karaman, and about 50 in Amasya), that is, the burden of the abovementioned 300 aspers was distributed among many poorer households. Damascus, along with Aleppo, Edirne, and Bursa, was one of the few provincial cities in the empire that had more than 1000 *avārız*

⁸³² Abdul-Rahim Abu-Husayn, *Provincial Leaderships in Syria, 1575–1650*, (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1985), 80–87.

⁸³³ Al-Būrīnī, *Tarājīm al-a'yān*, II: 291.

⁸³⁴ Abu-Husayn, *Provincial Leaderships in Syria, 1575–1650*, 87–95; Massoud Daher, “The Lebanese Leadership at the Beginning of the Ottoman Period: A Case Study of the Ma‘n Family,” in *Syria and Bilad al-Sham under Ottoman Rule: Essays in Honour of Abdul Karim Rafeq*, 323–45.

⁸³⁵ Linda T. Darling states that the extraordinary taxes, despite its name, became to be collected once every four or five years during the period. See Darling “Fiscal Administration of the Arab Provinces after the Ottoman Conquest of 1516,” 159.

households in the first half of the seventeenth century. Considering it had no less than 6000 households, one can expect that *avārız* burden of Damascene households must have been only slightly better than that of Aleppines, if any.⁸³⁶

In 1615, the Ottoman army was deployed in Aleppo before marching to the Iranian border for another campaign, and Damascene people suffered from the burden of extraordinary tax imposed on them again. Eventually, they decided to endorse a committee to Mehmed Pasha, the Ottoman commander-in-chief of the campaign. The delegation would request vizier to lessen the tax burden on Damascenes. This time, Najm al-Dīn, a forty year-old professor, accompanied his father-in-law al-‘Īthāwī, who was a significant member of the committee as the Shāfi‘ī mufti of Damascus. It seems that al-‘Īthāwī, who was now in his eighties, needed someone to accompany him in this exhausting journey and wanted his son-in-law to come with him to help him and gain experience. Participation in such delegations must have been prestigious. The committee left Damascus on 10 March 1616, and returned on 3 April. Their journey took about three weeks, during which they visited the vizier and persuaded him to reduce extraordinary taxes on Damascene people.⁸³⁷

Apparently, Najm al-Dīn did not play a major role in the delegation because, unlike his custom, he does not mention any detail about the meetings in Aleppo in his *Lutf al-samar* except few dates. He was most probably not present in the gatherings in Aleppo, where al-‘Īthāwī and other Damascene notables met the Ottoman vizier. Nevertheless, it was a turning point in his scholarly career because for the first time he delegated Damascenes before the central government outside his city.

6.5.3. The Shāmiyya Barrāniyya Madrasa and Rivalry with Syrian Hanafī Scholars

The Shāmiyya Barrāniyya professorship was stipulated to the Shāfi‘ī scholars, and, according to its endowment deed, its professor should not hold another teaching post concurrently. Yet as mentioned before, when Molla Esed, the Shāfi‘ī professor of the madrasa, died in 1590, Muhibb al-Dīn al-Hamawī, a Syrian Hanafī scholar-bureaucrat, replaced him. According to Najm al-Dīn’s account, no one dared to oppose his professorship despite the violation of the endowment deed of the madrasa.

⁸³⁶ For these numbers and more on *avārız* taxes in the Ottoman cities in 1600–1650, see Uğur, “Mapping Ottoman Cities: Socio-Spatial Definitions and Groupings (1450–1700),” esp. 44–50.

⁸³⁷ Al-Ghazzī, *Lutf*, e.n. 114.

Muhibb al-Dīn's appointment as the professor of the Shāmiyya Madrasa suggests a non-Shāfi'ī scholar in Damascus could violate legally guaranteed rights of his Shāfi'ī colleagues as long as he enjoyed enough power and support of the Ottoman authorities. In fact, the Shāmiyya was not an exception. *Al-Kawākib* records that Muhammad Abū al-Fath, a Mālikī scholar immigrated to Damascus in his youth, occupied the professorship of Dār al-Hadith al-Ashrafiyya, another teaching post endowed for Shāfi'ī scholars, in the second half of the sixteenth century thanks to his close relations with the Ottoman ruling elite.⁸³⁸

When Muhibb al-Dīn died in 1608, the professorship of the Shāmiyya Barrāniyya Madrasa was transferred to his son Abd al-Latīf (d. 1614), who received the support of the incumbent Ottoman judge. Similar to his father, Abd al-Latīf had accompanied Ottoman dignitary scholars, received novice status, and entered the Ottoman scholarly-bureaucratic career track. He had served as the judge of Hama during his father's life. Then, he returned to Damascus and was involved in trade by running a coffee shop as many of the contemporary entrepreneurs did—which eventually multiplied his wealth.⁸³⁹ He enjoyed close relationships with the Ottoman judges of Damascus thanks to his professional experience in the Ottoman learned hierarchy, and his father's connections.

Abd al-Latīf was a Hanafī scholar, as his father. Thus, his appointment to the Shāmiyya Barrāniyya Madrasa was a violation of the madrasa endowment. Moreover, Abd al-Latīf kept occupying the professorship of the Zāhiriyya Madrasa concurrently, thus violated another condition in the endowment of the Shāmiyya Madrasa as well. Yet again, almost none of Damascene scholars dared to oppose him due to his social status and powerful connections. His father Muhibb al-Dīn held the professorship of the Shāmiyya for eighteen years. Abd al-Latīf held it for six years. When Abd al-Latīf died in 1614, Hasan al-Būrīnī, al-'Īthāwī's brother-in-law, occupied the post. He was a respected sixty-year old Shāfi'ī scholar. By his appointment, the professorship of al-Shāmiyya returned to a Shāfi'ī scholar after more than two decades.⁸⁴⁰

Al-Būrīnī could not teach at al-Shāmiyya long. Before his death in mid-1615, he handed down from the professorship in favor of his brother-in-law al-'Īthāwī. He even left a written testament signed by witnesses at his deathbed for his wish that his brother-in-law would replace him in al-Shāmiyya. Çivizade Mehmed

⁸³⁸ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 1219.

⁸³⁹ See Hathaway, *Ottoman Egypt the Rise of the Qazdaghs*; Nelly Hanna, *Making Big Money in 1600: The Life and Times of Isma'il Abū Taqiyya, Egyptian Merchant* (Syracuse University Press, 1998); Raymond, *Yeniçerilerin Kahiresi*.

⁸⁴⁰ Al-Ghazzī, *Lutf*, e.n. 141, 208 .

Efendi, the incumbent Ottoman judge of the city, however, was unwilling to deliver the post to al-‘Īthāwī because he had come to an agreement with Abdülhay b. Molla Yūsuf, another local scholar who reportedly paid him in advance for the vacant post.⁸⁴¹ Abdülhay was a student of al-‘Īthāwī. He later changed his madhhab to Hanafism and received patronage of the Ottoman governors and judges in Damascus. Hafız Ahmad Pasha, the Ottoman governor of Damascus, helped him to receive a number of judgeships in the Arab provinces. Later, he retired and returned to Damascus, where people sought his intercession before the imperial authorities.

Çivizade Efendi appointed Abdülhay to the Shāmiyya professorship as he promised. To appease al-‘Īthāwī, he gave him the Süleymaniye preacher post, which became vacant after al-Būrīnī’s death. Al-‘Īthāwī, however, was displeased with the decision of the Ottoman judge. Thus, he immediately corresponded with Hoczade Esad Efendi, who was on his way to Rūm after performing pilgrimage in Mecca. Esad Efendi was from a leading scholarly family in the imperial center. His father Hoca Sadeddin (d. 1599) was the teacher of Murad III. He had served as the chief judge of Rumelia previously. Then, he was dismissed and performed pilgrimage. He resided in Damascus on his way to the holy lands.⁸⁴² On his way back to Rūm, he received the news about his appointment to the office of chief jurist in the place of his brother Hoczade Mehmed Efendi. The chief mufti was the peak of the Ottoman scholarly-bureaucratic hierarchy since the late sixteenth century. The appointments of the Ottoman scholar-bureaucrats to teaching and judicial posts above the level of forty aspers were made with the permission of the chief jurist.⁸⁴³

After receiving al-‘Īthāwī’s request for the professorship of the Shāmiyya Madrasa, Esad Efendi met Mehmed Pasha, the Ottoman commander-in-chief for the Safavid campaign and issued an appointment diploma for al-‘Īthāwī. When al-‘Īthāwī submitted this document to the Ottoman judge of Damascus, however, the latter refused to accept it.⁸⁴⁴ Apparently, there was a disagreement among Ottoman officials. Esad Efendi and Çivizade had different candidates for the related vacancy. Çivizade Efendi might not be willing to accept an appointment coming from the Ottoman commander-in-chief in Aleppo through the

⁸⁴¹ For Çivizade’s biography see Mehmed Efendi Şeyhi, *Vekâyi’u’l-Fuzalâ: Şeyhî’nin Şakâ’ik Zeyli* (Istanbul: Türkiye Yazma Eserler Kurumu Başkanlığı, 2018), I: 657-59. For Abdülhay’s biography, see al-Ghazzî, *Lutf*, e.n. 184.

⁸⁴² Al-Ghazzî, *Lutf*, e.n. 170.

⁸⁴³ Atçıl, *Scholars and Sultans*, 138.

⁸⁴⁴ Al-Ghazzî, *Lutf*, e.n. 184.

submission of the new chief jurist, who had not taken his office in the imperial capital yet. Thus, when Esad Efendi arrived at the Istanbul and assumed the office of chief jurist, he issued a new *berāt* sealed this time by the Ottoman sultan informing al-‘Īthāwī’s appointment to the Shāmiyya Madrasa. Two months after al-‘Īthāwī and Najm al-Dīn’s arrival at Damascus in the aforementioned delegation committee from Aleppo, Esad Efendi’s letter came to the city in May 1616. This time, Çivizade Efendi had no choice but to give the professorship to al-‘Īthāwī.

6.5.4. Najm al-Din as Professor of the Shāmiyya Barrāniyya Madrasa

The Shāmiyya was a prestigious and rich Shāfi‘ī madrasa in Damascus. After decades, it returned to a Shāfi‘ī scholar as stipulated in its endowment deed. Al-‘Īthāwī was in his eighties when he assumed the professorship at al-Shāmiyya. In fact, his struggle for this teaching post was not for his own benefit. He knew that he would not teach there long. His aim was to leave to his scholarly heir Najm al-Dīn significant posts. Thus, from the very first day in his classes at al-Shāmiyya, he invited Najm al-Dīn to his classes as the reader (*qārī*). They were teaching jointly on Monday and Thursday every week.

Al-‘Īthāwī could hold the Shāmiyya professorship only six months. He got sick in August 1616, and passed away at the end of the year. Few days before his death, he handed down the professorship to his son-in-law. The Ottoman judge recognized al-‘Īthāwī’s decision and Najm al-Dīn assumed the post without facing any opposition from local scholars. His father Badr al-Dīn had started teaching in the Shāmiyya Madrasa in 1538. After nearly eighty years, the post was at Najm al-Dīn’s hand.

Najm al-Dīn also started issuing his fatwas following the death of his father-in-law. He was now among the few leading Shāfi‘ī muftis in Damascus, and taught in one of the oldest and most prestigious madrasas of the city.

6.6. Conclusion

Najm al-Dīn’s life differs from the lives of his father and grandfather in certain respects. Unlike the latter two, Najm al-Dīn opened his eyes into Ottoman Damascus. In other words, he was a member of the post-Mamluk generations of scholars in Damascus—those scholars who did not witness the Mamluk rule in Syria but handled it as a historical phenomenon of the recent past. This generation of scholars in Syria witnessed the integration of the region into the empire with an unprecedented degree, through multiple channels such as the numerous imperial construction projects in major urban centers, and several military campaigns using

Syria as a base and utilizing its financial and human sources. Thus, these generations of scholars were more embedded in the complex network of relationships in the imperial level.

Despite all changes, some of the mechanisms securing scholarly continuity of families during the Mamluk era such as familial endowments, and *nuzūl* and *niyāba* practices, were still working in the Ottoman Damascus. For example, Najm al-Dīn and his brothers financially survived thanks to their share from their grandfather's family endowment. Najm al-Dīn became the deputy of his father-in-law in some posts in Damascene endowments. The latter later handed down to him some teaching posts as well. Of course, none of these position transfers was flawless. As in the Mamluk period, the sides had to involve in struggle against the rivalling scholars and the governmental authorities who had their own candidates for the related posts. Those scholars who enjoyed good connections to the ruling elite and had a powerful clique usually were successful in their struggles.

Apart from utilizing the abovementioned mechanisms, Najm al-Dīn resorted to additional means to become a true successor to his father. He upheld his father's scholarly and symbolic heritage. He wrote commentaries on his father's works; taught his father's debated exegesis in the Umayyad Mosque; penned a separate biography for his father and supplemented it with his own life story; took the professorship of the Kallāsa Madrasa inherited across generations of the Ghazzī family; and finally resided in the Halabiyya cell identified with his father's scholarly persona. By these actions, he did not only shape his father's image in the minds of the new generations in Damascus but also appeared as the leading figure in his family.

This chapter has focused on the course of the rivalry among local scholars in Damascus as observed in Badr al-Dīn's struggles for two local professorships in Chapter V. It has also scrutinized the affect of this rivalry on the power and role of Damascene scholars in urban and regional politics.

Damascene scholars did not constitute a monolithic group. They differed in (1) professional, legal, and ethnic experience and affiliations, (2) scholarly cliques to which they belonged. The first point is evident in the diverse combinations of the attributes (official/state-appointed vs. non-official, Ajamī vs. Damascene, Hanafī vs. Shāfi'ī, bureaucratic vs. non-bureaucratic etc.) of Najm al-Dīn's teachers. The second point, on the other hand, is observable in the scholarly competition of two groups of local scholars supporting and opposing Najm al-Dīn during his early career.

Najm al-Dīn lost his father in an early age and started his education as an orphan. His teachers with different backgrounds backed him to become a scholar. Once embedded into their network, he became the target of

an opposing scholarly clique represented by some leading local scholars. His teachers acted as his protectors and defended his cause against the opposing party. Some favored him to replace him in his scholarly posts, some backed him to receive new posts, and some others composed polemical treatises against his critics. Finally, in the first decade of the seventeenth century, Najm al-Dīn emerged as a promising Shāfi‘ī scholar, who was expected to replace his father in scholarly prestige and posts soon.

Najm al-Dīn’s early career struggles suggest that the rivalry among the scholars in Damascus intensified after Badr al-Dīn. The latter had faced the rivalry of peer Shāfi‘ī scholars emigrated from Iran and settled in Damascus. The post-Mamluk generations of Shāfi‘ī scholars, on the other hand, witnessed the competition of the Syrian Hanafī scholars, who challenged them in endowed positions in Damascus, sometimes by violating legally binding endowment deeds that reserved the relevant position to the Shāfi‘ī scholars.

Despite this increasing competition among them, local scholars still maintained their influence in Damascus and Syria. The affair of al-Karakī’s trial and execution in 1610 shows how the Ottoman authorities in Damascus still needed the support of the leading local scholars to preserve the order and legitimacy of their rulings in the city. Moreover, the two delegations to Aleppo in 1608 and 1616 show that Damascene scholars were representing the people of the city before the Ottoman central government in the face of the socio-political developments taking place in Syria from the late sixteenth century.

CHAPTER VII: NAJM AL-DĪN AL-GHAZZĪ: IN THE IMPERIAL CAPITAL A CENTURY LATER (1623)

Najm al-Dīn taught in the Shāmiyya Barrāniyya Madrasa for six years. The professorship of this madrasa was granted to another Damascene scholar in 1623. This initiated an unprecedented and unexpected development in Najm al-Dīn's life—he had to travel to the imperial center in order to take his post back. This travel resembled his father's travel to Istanbul in 1530, approximately a century ago. Both journey stemmed from a position struggle in Damascus. Yet there were differences between their experiences in the Ottoman center because of the socio-political transformations that took place in a century.

Najm al-Dīn's travelogue has been considered lost. This dissertation, to the best of my knowledge, will be the first modern study that has utilized it as a source.⁸⁴⁵ In the following pages, I will provide an authorial context for Najm al-Dīn's travelogue. Then, I will examine Najm al-Dīn's network of relations in the imperial capital as reflected in his travelogue and his personal experience in Istanbul in a chaotic period, i.e. aftermath of Osman II's regicide.

7.1. Najm al-Dīn's Travelogue: In Badr al-Dīn's Footsteps in the Lands of Rūm

Shams al-Dīn al-Maydānī was a peer of Najm al-Dīn's teachers. After losing his beloved son in 1619, he resentfully left Damascus for Mecca for pious residence there. After a year, he came back to Damascus. His peers including aforementioned Monla Esed, Ibn al-Minqār, Muhibb al-Dīn al-Hamawī, and al-'Īthāwī had already passed away. As one of the few leading Shāfi'ī jurists in Damascus, he was eager to teach in the Shāmiyya Barrāniyya Madrasa, whose endowment deed stipulated the professorship of the madrasa to the most knowledgeable Shāfi'ī legal scholar in Damascus. Al-Maydānī utilized his connections in Istanbul and finally received an appointment to al-Shāmiyya.⁸⁴⁶

⁸⁴⁵ See the title "Sources" in Introduction.

⁸⁴⁶ Al-Ghazzī, *Lutf*, e.n. 55.

Najm al-Dīn writes that he was satisfied with the Shāfi‘ī jurist position and his professorship in the Shāmiyya Madrasa and that he never thought to leave his hometown except for pilgrimage in Mecca or visiting Jerusalem.⁸⁴⁷ However, al-Maydānī’s challenge forced him to travel Istanbul. His travel lasted shorter than his father’s travel—he returned in four and a half months. Yet he wrote a travelogue to record his experience and observations as his father once did. He entitled this travelogue *al-Iqd al-manzūm fī al-rihla ilā al-Rūm* [The Arranged Necklace in the Travel to the Lands of Rūm].⁸⁴⁸

Najm al-Dīn’s travelogue resembles his father’s *al-Matāli‘* in organization and content. Both works are at similar length. Najm al-Dīn too presents his readers numerous examples from his own poetry to the extent that one can consider the work a personal poetical collection (*dīwān*). In addition, the travelogue contains several quotations from Najm al-Dīn’s religio-legal opinions.⁸⁴⁹ Najm al-Dīn gives several references to his father’s travelogue throughout the book.⁸⁵⁰ Most probably, he was carrying a copy of *al-Matāli‘* with him and reading his father’s notes comparatively in each city on his way. He sometimes calculates how many years, months, and days passed after his father’s presence in certain stations.⁸⁵¹ He sometimes quotes from his father’s poetry as well.⁸⁵²

Najm al-Dīn appears to have considered this journey a process of internalizing and personalizing his father’s experience. His references to *al-Matāli‘* updated Badr al-Dīn’s memory a century later and allowed Najm al-Dīn to merge his personal experience and his father’s experience, as if they were fellow travelers. In fact, he clearly put this tendency in some pages. For example, he resembles himself to his father in his struggle for his teaching post.⁸⁵³ Still, in other pages, he writes, “my father has told the child is the mark of his father, and as such [in my example] the child meets his father even in the journey.”⁸⁵⁴

⁸⁴⁷ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Rihla*, 1b.

⁸⁴⁸ The Waqfiyya Library, 180. The Juma Almajid Center for Culture and Heritage, material number: 238096, <https://www.almajidcenter.org/>

⁸⁴⁹ For instance, see *al-Rihla*, 29ba, 40b, 156a.

⁸⁵⁰ For instance, see *al-Rihla*, 27b.

⁸⁵¹ For an example see *al-Rihla*, 51b, where Najm al-Dīn writes that his father was there 95 years 7 months and 19 days ago.

⁸⁵² For instance, see *al-Rihla*, 127b–128a.

⁸⁵³ *Al-Rihla*, 47b.

⁸⁵⁴ *Al-Rihla*, 52a.

Despite many parallels, Najm al-Dīn's travelogue differs from *al-Matāli'* in authorial and historical context. Badr al-Dīn was a thirty-year old inexperienced scholar during his travel. His travel was a struggle for survival as an independent scholar in a not-yet-fully integrated province. Najm al-Dīn, on the other hand, was in his mid-fifties at the time of his travel. He had already entered among the Damascene learned elite and even delegated the Damascene people in Aleppo few years ago. He had taught in a prestigious Shāfi'ī madrasa for the last six years. Badr al-Dīn had nobody from his family to accompany him to Istanbul; his children were underage. Najm al-Dīn, on the other hand, took his son Su'ūdī, who was now in his thirties, with himself, maybe awaiting an opportunity to introduce him to the imperial elite.⁸⁵⁵

Moreover, there was nearly a century between the two journeys. During Badr al-Dīn's era, the core Ottoman lands were still mysterious for the Arab travelers in many respects. Badr al-Dīn and his peers were the first Arab scholars traveling to the new imperial capital after the Ottoman conquest. During Najm al-Dīn's era, on the other hand, traveling between Damascus and Istanbul became usual for many scholars and officials. The Ottoman scholar-bureaucrats visited the region as appointed judges and muftis. The Syrian scholar-bureaucrats and local scholars visited Istanbul for appointments and patronage. Passing decades increased Damascenes' acquaintance of the lands of Rūm and its culture. Thus, Najm al-Dīn's travelogue did not aim to be a guidebook for his colleagues.

Najm al-Dīn's patron in Istanbul was Zekeriyazade Yahya Efendi, the Ottoman şeyhülislam, whom he praised in a long panegyric in their first meeting in his mansion. Yahya Efendi seems to have been interested in travel accounts. Two subsequent travelers in the first half of the seventeenth century, Kibrit (d. 1660, travel in 1630–31) and Fadl Allāh Muhibbī (d. 1671, travel in 1641–42), devoted their travelogues to Yahya Efendi.⁸⁵⁶ Therefore, one might speculate that Najm al-Dīn was planning to devote his work to his patron. Yet in my reading of the extinct manuscript of his travelogue, I have not encountered such a reference or clue. This might be a result of Najm al-Dīn's disappointment with Yahya Efendi's support for his cause in Istanbul. In fact, Najm al-Dīn eventually returned to Damascus brokenhearted. Alternatively, we can think that Najm al-Dīn did not plan to devote his travelogue to anyone at all. He was most probably considering

لقد كان يعلم رحمه الله أن الولد من عمل الوالد الذي يبقى بعد وفاته فإنه نعمة منه و حسنة من حسناته سبحانه من قدر ذلك كذلك ألحق الولد بالوالد حتى في الرحلة.

⁸⁵⁵ Al-Muhibbī, *Khulāsa al-athar*, II: 209. Also, see *al-Rihla*, 94b.

⁸⁵⁶ Shafir, 243, 255–56, 269; al-Muhibbī, *Khulāsa al-athar*, III: 278, 286; Şeyhi, *Vekâyi'u'l-Fuzalâ*, I: 440-55.

it an opportunity to personalize his father's travel experience as Badr al-Dīn's exclusive scholarly successor among his brothers.

7.2. Relations with the Ottoman *Mevali*: Ottoman Chief Jurist One-Step Away

Najm al-Dīn departed Damascus on 4 March 1623,⁸⁵⁷ and after fifty days, arrived at Üsküdar.⁸⁵⁸ It was a difficult journey because it was cold and still snowy.⁸⁵⁹ He eventually stayed at Valide Complex in Üsküdar and spent the night there. Next day, he sent a request (*tadhkira*) to Şeyhülislam Zekeriyazade Yahya Efendi (d. 1644).⁸⁶⁰ Najm al-Dīn knew the incumbent chief jurist from his judgeship years in Damascus. Yahya Efendi had served as the judge of Damascus in 1597–98, when Najm al-Dīn was a young scholar in his twenties.⁸⁶¹ Yahya Efendi was a part of the network in Damascus, in which Najm al-Dīn's teachers al-‘Īthāwī and Muhibb al-Dīn had a central role.⁸⁶²

Najm al-Dīn received chief jurist's acceptance letter soon, and entered the imperial capital. He directly visited Yahya Efendi's mansion. In this first meeting, Najm al-Dīn presented Yahya Efendi a panegyric praising him and read it aloud in his presence. Then, he informed the Şeyhülislam about his struggle for the Shāmiyya Madrasa and received Yahya Efendi's promise for support.

Although it was his first visit to Istanbul, Najm al-Dīn was not alien to the ruling elite and culture in the capital city. He knew many Ottoman notables including a certain Katib Ali Efendi, whom he met once in Mecca;⁸⁶³ the professor of the Sultan Ahmad Dār al-Hadith Madrasa Sadreddinzade Mehmed Efendi (d. 1627), who served as the judge of Aleppo in 1615–16;⁸⁶⁴ the retired chief jurist Esad Efendi's son Ebu Said Mehmed Efendi (d. 1662), who served as the judge of Damascus in 1621–23;⁸⁶⁵ Azmizade Mustafa Haleti

⁸⁵⁷ *Al-Rihla*, 4b.

⁸⁵⁸ He started his journey in 2 Jumādā I and arrived at Üsküdar in 22 Jumādā II. See *al-Rihla*, 4b, 77b–79a.

⁸⁵⁹ *Al-Rihla*, 7b, 14b, 23b, 63a.

⁸⁶⁰ *Al-Rihla*, 79a.

⁸⁶¹ For Yahya Efendi's biography, see Şeyhi, *Vekâyi 'u'l-Fuzalâ*, I: 440–55.

⁸⁶² Al-Ghazzī, *Lutf*, e.n. 2, 141, 183, 283.

⁸⁶³ *Al-Rihla*, 81b

⁸⁶⁴ *Al-Rihla*, 87a. See the biography of Sadreddinzade Mehmed Efendi in Atayi, *Hadâ'ik*, 1748–50.

⁸⁶⁵ *Al-Rihla*, 89a. See the biography of Ebussaid Mehmed Efendi in Şeyhi, *Vekâyi 'u'l-Fuzalâ* 850–55.

Efendi (d. 1631), who served as the judge of Damascus in 1602–4;⁸⁶⁶ and the chief judge of Anatolia Bostanzade Yahya Efendi (d. 1639), who served as the judge of Aleppo in 1601–3.⁸⁶⁷

Najm al-Dīn's acquaintances in Istanbul were not limited to the Ottoman scholar-bureaucrats or officials who once were present in Damascus or other major Syrian cities. He met people who was born and raised in the Arab provinces but immigrated to the imperial capital. For example, he met a certain Ibrāhīm al-Qudsī, a Sufi sheikh who knew both his father Badr al-Dīn and his brother Shahāb al-Dīn personally, in the Süleymaniye Mosque. He also met Husayn b. Abd al-Nabī, the preacher of the Süleymaniye Mosque, who came from Damascus and settled in Istanbul.⁸⁶⁸

Najm al-Dīn's network in the imperial capital was incomparably broader than his father's network a century ago. He knew the top officials either directly or through his teachers' channel. The inclusion of the judgeships of the major Syrian urban centers into the Ottoman scholarly-bureaucratic hierarchy from the second half of the sixteenth century enabled Damascene scholars to develop diverse relationships with the high-ranking Ottoman scholars, who were prospective chief judges or jurists in Istanbul. Syrian scholar-bureaucrats and the Ottoman governors and bureaucrats in Syria created subsidiary channels of interaction, which entangled Najm al-Dīn and his peers in a multifaceted web of relations.

One of the top officials Najm al-Dīn visited in Istanbul was Ahizade Hüseyin Efendi (d. 1634), the chief judge of Rumelia. Ahizade never served outside the Ottoman capital cities (*bilad-ı selase*) before, let alone in the Arab provinces.⁸⁶⁹ Still, Najm al-Dīn accessed him easily thanks to his full-embeddedness in the imperial network of scholars. After his aforementioned visit of Şeyhülislam Yahya Efendi, he visited Ahizade's neighboring mansion, who, according to Najm al-Dīn's account, welcomed him warmly.⁸⁷⁰

Likewise, Najm al-Dīn met Bostanzade Yahya Efendi (d. 1639), the incumbent chief judge of Anatolia, for the first time in Istanbul. Yet they had much in common. There was teacher-student relationship between

⁸⁶⁶ *Al-Rihla*, 91b, 101b. See the biography of Azmizade Mustafa in Atayi, *Hadā'ik*, 1810–19.

⁸⁶⁷ *Al-Rihla*, 101a. See the biography of Bostanzade Yahya Efendi in Şeyhi, *Vekāyi'u'l-Fuzalâ* 286–87.

⁸⁶⁸ *Al-Rihla*, 87a. For Husayn b. Abd al-Nabī, also see *Lutf*, e.n. 141.

⁸⁶⁹ See the biography of Ahizade Hüseyin Efendi in Atayi, *Hadā'ik*, 1847–51.

⁸⁷⁰ *Al-Rihla*, 81a.

their fathers—when Yahya’s father was serving as judge of Damascus, he studied from Badr al-Dīn.⁸⁷¹ Najm al-Dīn also met Yahya’s father on his way to pilgrimage decades ago and composed for him a panegyric.⁸⁷² Najm al-Dīn also knew well Yahya’s uncle, another judge of Damascus few decades ago.⁸⁷³ Thus, Najm al-Dīn and Yahya had multidimensional relations even before they actually met face-to-face.

Another important point worth mentioning is that Najm al-Dīn prioritized his visit to the Ottoman chief jurist and requested his re-appointment to the Shāmiyya Madrasa from him. Whereas Badr al-Dīn presented his petition to the chief judge of Anatolia in 1530. Actually, Badr al-Dīn never mentions Kemalpaşazade (d. 1534), the Ottoman chief jurist in 1526–34, in his travelogue. This difference between the two stems from an important transformation in the Ottoman scholarly-bureaucratic hierarchy that took place largely during the almost thirty yearlong office of Şeyhülislam Ebussuud (jurist in 1545–74). Thanks to Ebussuud’s central role in Ottoman lawmaking and bureaucratization, the office of chief jurist gained prominence over the chief judges from the mid-sixteenth century onward.⁸⁷⁴ His influential successors in the office added to this central role in the subsequent decades. Thus, unlike his father, Najm al-Dīn’s target was the Ottoman chief jurist, not the chief judges. He made his first visit to the former, and for him, he composed a panegyric. He knew that his re-appointment to the Shāmiyya Madrasa could be possible only by his help.

7.3. Factionalism in the Imperial Capital

At the time of Najm al-Dīn’s visit, Istanbul was in disorder because of factional struggles. About ten months ago, Osman II (r. 1618–22) was dethroned and brutally executed. This was the first regicide in Ottoman history.

Osman’s execution was an outcome of successive developments that took place in the second half of the sixteenth century. The rule of the dynasty was originally based on appanage system—every member of the dynasty enjoyed equal right to rule. Yet Ottomans preferred a system of unigeniture—a single heir for each

⁸⁷¹ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 1205.

⁸⁷² Al-Ghazzī, *Lutf*, e.n. 31.

⁸⁷³ Al-Ghazzī, e.n. 261.

⁸⁷⁴ Repp, *The Müfti of Istanbul*, 197–304; Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devletinin İlmîye Teşkilâtı*, 185; Beyazıt, *Osmanlı İlmîye Mesleğinde İstihdam (XVI. Yüzyıl)*, 107–8; Atçıl, *Scholars and Sultans*, 138–39; For Ebussuud’s key role in Ottoman lawmaking and ideology see Colin Imber, *Ebu’s-Su`ud: The Islamic Legal Tradition* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997).

succession. Consequently, fratricide became an established practice, especially after Mehmed II's codifications.⁸⁷⁵ Murad III killed his five brothers in 1574, and Mehmed III killed his nineteen brothers in 1595. When Mehmed III died in 1603, he left two underage princes for the throne. Contrary to the established practice, they had not served in sub-provinces during their father's rule because of the widespread Jalali revolts in Anatolia. Ahmad, the elder prince, was enthroned in 1603 without prior experience of governorship in any sub-province. Although Ahmad intended to kill his brother in order to strengthen his own throne, leading officials prevented him because he had had no offspring yet. By this, another established practice –the execution of the rightful heirs of the Ottoman throne– was de facto abolished.⁸⁷⁶

Since Sultan Ahmad was still a teenager, various political and military factions became involved in power struggles to have a share in the imperial government. Leslie Pierce calls the century starting by Süleyman's death (1566–1656) "the age of the queen mother." During this period, Nurbanu Sultan (the mother of Murad III), Safiye Sultan (the mother of Mehmed III), and Kösem Sultan (the mother of Murad IV and İbrahim) enjoyed considerable power and influence in the Ottoman politics and administration.⁸⁷⁷ In parallel, Baki Tezcan claims that Murad III (1574–95) tried to balance the power of the grand viziers after Sokollu's death in 1579 by creating new powerful figures in the palace. Accordingly, he empowered the offices of the chief black eunuch (*darüssaade ağası* or *kızlar ağası*) and the chief white eunuch (*babüssaade ağası* or *kapu ağası*) as a balancing power factor from his own court.⁸⁷⁸ For example, Gazanfer Ağa (d. 1603) gained considerable power as the white chief eunuch. Consequently, in the first decades of the seventeenth century, the inexperienced sultans, their mothers, viziers, white and black eunuchs, and high-ranking scholar-bureaucrats were involved in power struggles against each other in dynamic contending factions. Tezcan conceptualizes these fractions in two main groups as absolutists versus constitutionalists. The former party

⁸⁷⁵ Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State* (University of California Press, 1995), 136–37; Dimitris Kastritsis, *The Sons of Bayezid: Empire Building and Representation in the Ottoman Civil War of 1402-13* (Brill, 2007).

⁸⁷⁶ Peirce, *The Imperial Harem*, 91–103; Günhan Börekçi, "İnkırazın Eşiğinde Bir Hanedan: III. Mehmed, I. Ahmed, I. Mustafa, ve 17.Yüzyıl Osmanlı Siyasî Krizi," *Dîvân Disiplinlerarası Çalışmalar Dergisi*, 14/26 (2009): 45-96; Baki Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World* (New York: Cambridge University, 2010), 46–63.

⁸⁷⁷ Peirce, *The Imperial Harem*, 91–113.

⁸⁷⁸ Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire*, 100–101.

supported centralization of power at the hand of the Ottoman sultan, whereas the latter aimed at limiting the sultan's authority.⁸⁷⁹

Following Ahmed I's death in 1617, the aforementioned parties were involved in a conflict. Şeyhülislam Esad Efendi (office in 1615–22), leader of the constitutionalists, gave his support to Ahmed's brother Mustafa instead of Ahmad's son Osman, and the former was enthroned—contrary to the established practices of succession. For the first time, instead of the prince of a deceased sultan, his elder brother was enthroned. Esad Efendi's preference received harsh criticisms from the absolutist party. Eventually, the latter dethroned Mustafa on the pretext of deterioration of his mental health and enthroned Osman. Unlike Mustafa, who was supported by the chief jurist and grand vizier, Osman's supporters were the court itself, including the queen mother and chief eunuchs.⁸⁸⁰

Osman aspired to return the empire to its old days of *gaza* spirit and conquest. In order to strengthen his throne, he married the daughter of Şeyhülislam Esad Efendi, who was unwilling to support his enthronement. This was the most radical marriage in Ottoman history until then. Hitherto, Ottoman sultans did not marry high-class Muslim women but reproduced through slave concubines. Osman's marriage with the daughter of the incumbent chief jurist and his selection of Aziz Mahmud Hüdayi (d. 1628), the popular Jalwafī sheikh, as his witness intended to revive the memory of Osman Beg's marriage with the daughter of Sheikh Edebali.⁸⁸¹

Of course, Esad Efendi, whose daughter was now the sultan's wife, benefited from this situation. He was the first scholar since Edebali, who enjoyed marital relationship with the Ottoman dynasty. His and his family members' influence on the Ottoman administration and politics multiplied. For example, according to Najm al-Dīn's account, Esad Efendi's son Ebu Said was a highly respected figure during his judgeship of Damascus thanks to his father's position. When his sister married the sultan the same year, he became an unequal authority in the city.⁸⁸²

⁸⁷⁹ Tezcan, 117.

⁸⁸⁰ Tezcan, 110–14.

⁸⁸¹ Peirce, *The Imperial Harem*, 106.

⁸⁸² *Al-Rihla*, 89a.

Osman's reign, however, did not last long. His aspiration to establish an absolutist state did not yield results. Janissaries, an important power holder in the imperial city, were not content with the role assigned to them in the new system. They were part of the market economy expanding since the sixteenth century. At the end of the century, they were more a socio-political corporation utilizing their military privileges than warriors.⁸⁸³ Osman planned to establish a powerful mercenary army (*sakbān*) to get rid of Janissaries. Janissaries, on the other hand, considered Osman's absolutist regime as a threat to their existence and privileges. The increasing tension between the two parties reached its peak when rumors about Osman's plan to gather *sakbān* in Anatolia in order to annihilate Janissaries spread. Eventually, Janissaries rioted in Istanbul and their riot ended up with an unprecedented incident in Ottoman history—regicide of the reigning sultan by his own soldiers.⁸⁸⁴

After Osman's regicide, Janissaries enthroned his uncle Mustafa again in May 1622, and forced Şeyhülislam Esad Efendi, Osman's father-in-law, to retire. When Najm al-Dīn arrived at Istanbul, Esad Efendi was living in isolation at his mansion since a year. Najm al-Dīn knew him through his father-in-law al-Īthāwī's channel, and through his son Ebu Said. When Najm al-Dīn visited him, the retired chief jurist felt uncomfortable most probably thinking it might attract the attention of his opponents, who were seemingly keeping a close eye on his possible lobbying activity. He immediately said that he was living in seclusion without intervening in any issue in the capital city—implying that he could provide no help for his guest. According to Najm al-Dīn's account, Ebu Said was also very nervous. Najm al-Dīn likened their mansion to ruins without any visitors.⁸⁸⁵

7.4. Ottoman Partners in Rivalry

After Esad Efendi, Zekeriyazade Yahya Efendi occupied the office of the chief jurist. As mentioned above, he knew Najm al-Dīn from his judgeship in Damascus in 1597. Yahya Efendi pledged Najm al-Dīn for support. Najm al-Dīn hoped he would receive an appointment to the Shāmiyya Barrāniyya Madrasa in few days, and then return to Damascus. However, the chief jurist did not send for him for days and weeks.

⁸⁸³ Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire*, 191–245. Also see Raymond, *Yeniçerilerin Kahiresi*; Kafadar, *Kim Var İmiş Biz Burada Yoğ İken*, 29–37.

⁸⁸⁴ Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire*, 153–91; Feridun M. Emecen, "Osman II," in *DİA* (Online: TDV İSAM, 2007).

⁸⁸⁵ *Al-Rihla*, 88b–89b.

Disconcerted by waiting more, Najm al-Dīn visited the chief jurist's mansion, where he learned that he changed his mind. Şeyhülislam Yahya Efendi offered Najm al-Dīn to renounce the professorship of the Shāmiyya to al-Maydānī and to receive two professorships in Damascus instead. Najm al-Dīn had no choice but to give his consent to this offer. Yahya Efendi informed him his appointment to the Nāsiriyya and Muqaddamiyya madrasas in Damascus.

Najm al-Dīn was actually disappointed about Yahya Efendi's unexpected offer and change of mind. He scrutinized the reason for this development among his friends in the gatherings of the imperial city. He eventually learned that his rival al-Maydānī, who was currently teaching in the Shāmiyya, also corresponded with his friends in Istanbul in order to preserve his post. One of al-Maydānī's friends was Şerif Efendi (d. 1631), the retired chief judge of Anatolia.⁸⁸⁶ Şerif Efendi served in Damascus more than a decade ago. He was the judge who issued the verdict for execution of the aforementioned Yahya al-Karakī, the "heretic" Sufi leader, in 1610. As mentioned earlier, al-Maydānī had played a significant role in al-Karakī's execution by providing the Ottoman judge with evidence from al-Karakī's correspondence with him. It seems Şerif Efendi took al-Maydānī more seriously, contrary to what Najm al-Dīn wants us to believe in his account of al-Karakī's trial. In any case, Najm al-Dīn learned in Istanbul that al-Maydānī sent successive letters to the retired chief judge of Anatolia and requested his support against Najm al-Dīn. Eventually, Şerif Efendi visited the chief jurist and requested al-Maydānī's stay at the Shāmiyya professorship.

Şerif Efendi was an influential figure in the daily politics of the imperial capital. He had been forced to retirement shortly before Osman II's Poland campaign in mid-1621, most probably due to his opposition to the Ottoman sultan's absolutist tendencies. Osman II was trying to suppress the opposition of – in Tezcan's conceptualization – constitutionalist party largely represented by scholars and Janissaries. Indeed, his marriage with Esad Efendi's daughter following his Poland campaign was connected to this policy. Since the enthronement of Mustafa I in May 1622, Şerif Efendi endeavored to receive an appointment to the chief judgeship of Rumelia. However, Şeyhülislam Zekeriyazade Yahya Efendi was working in harmony with the incumbent chief judges (aforementioned Ahizade Hüseyin and Bostanzade Yahya), thus, he was reluctant to Şerif Efendi's promotion. Nevertheless, he did not want to make Şerif Efendi an enemy of himself because his position in the nascent government necessitated a delicate balance between different

⁸⁸⁶ See the biography of Şerif Mehmed Efendi in Atayi, *Hadâ'ik*, 1821–24.

power holders and factions, which could be easily spoiled with Şerif Efendi's enmity towards him. As a result, he could not refuse Şerif Efendi's request for al-Maydānī's appointment.⁸⁸⁷

Najm al-Dīn failed in his struggle for the Shāmiyya Madrasa not because of the rivalry in Damascus but because of the factionalism in the imperial capital. He had strong ties with the top ruling elite and even was backed by the chief jurist at the beginning. His connections in Istanbul seem to be relatively stronger than his rival al-Maydānī. However, the delicate balance of power in Istanbul was so fragmented and fragile that al-Maydānī easily got an edge over Najm al-Dīn thanks to his patrons. Yahya Efendi, who pledged Najm al-Dīn for his appointment at the outset, was eventually obliged to step back to preserve his own position in the new Ottoman government under Mustafa I. To please both sides, he left al-Maydānī at the Shāmiyya and gave Najm al-Dīn two other teaching posts, namely Muqaddamiyya and Nāsiriyya madrasas.

Najm al-Dīn traveled all the way to the Ottoman capital, and now, he was returning disappointed without achieving his goal. Nevertheless, he tried to console himself and considered his appointment to two madrasas as an achievement in itself. In the related pages of his travelogue, he resembles his career to his father's. He writes that both of them received the Muqaddamiyya Madrasa after their dismissal from the Shāmiyya Madrasa. Yet as a consolation, he adds that he additionally took the professorship of the Nāsiriyya, which made his struggle a double victory.⁸⁸⁸

Najm al-Dīn received his appointment diploma for his new madrasas from Bostanzade Yahya, the chief judge of Anatolia, in few days, and departed Istanbul in early June.⁸⁸⁹ His entire stay at the imperial capital was one and a half month. Yet the daily politics and inner factionalism in Istanbul would keep affecting his life even after his return to Damascus.

7.5. Repercussions of the Imperial Factionalism in Damascus

Najm al-Dīn received news of new troubles (*fitna*) from Damascus and Istanbul few days after departing Istanbul. According to the news, the governor of Damascus appointed one of his men as military commander (*subaşı*) in Damascus. The Janissary Ağa opposed this appointment, and the tension finally erupted in a

⁸⁸⁷ *Al-Rihla*, 108a.

⁸⁸⁸ *Al-Rihla*, 107b.

⁸⁸⁹ *Al-Rihla*, 115b.

clash between the governor's men and Janissaries. Damascenes sent a collective petition (*mahzar*) to Istanbul seeking help from the central government.⁸⁹⁰

In Istanbul, the clash was more severe. The sources refer to this clash as the affair of the mosque gathering (*cem'iyet-i cāmi vak'ası*).⁸⁹¹ Hüseyin Pasha, the grand vizier, had a judge beaten in his council. Then, scholars organized to protest the grand vizier in the courtyard of the Fatih Mosque, where the retired chief judges, the judge of Istanbul, and high-ranking professors of the imperial madrasas gathered. Later, the chief jurist Zekeriyazade Yahya Efendi also joined them. They were demanding Hüseyin Pasha's dismissal. Hüseyin Pasha sent to the protestors some scholars for mediation but he yielded no results. Then, he marched with the recruit soldiers (*acemioğlan*) until the Şehzade Mosque in order to frighten the protestors. Then, suddenly a chaos arose between two groups and nineteen people were killed.⁸⁹²

Since Najm al-Dīn apparently was not able to investigate the news on his way to Damascus, he provides some contradictory information about the event. According to his account, after Hüseyin Pasha's punishment of a judge, a group of scholars presided by the chief jurist visited Sultan Mustafa I and asked for the vizier's dismissal, and the sultan accepted their request. The next day, the dismissed vizier's enraged soldiers terrorized Istanbul and some people died.⁸⁹³

Najm al-Dīn considers himself fortunate that he did not witness the abovementioned fitnas. He connects this to God's mercy on him.⁸⁹⁴ He was worried about his family anyway. Fortunately, few days later, he received news informing his family's wellbeing, and took a sigh of relief.⁸⁹⁵ All the way to Damascus, he learned new details about both events from the traveling messengers.⁸⁹⁶

When Najm al-Dīn arrived at Damascus in mid-Ramadan/mid-July, something unexpected happened. He learned that a new berāt for his appointment to the Shāmiyya Barrāniyya Madrasa arrived at the city a few

⁸⁹⁰ *Al-Rihla*, 123b.

⁸⁹¹ Atayi, *Hadā'ik*, 1823.

⁸⁹² Fikret Sarıcaoğlu, "Hüseyin Paşa, Mere," in *DİA* (Online: TDV İSAM, 1999); Feridun M. Emecen, "Mustafa I," in *DİA* (Online: TDV İSAM, 2020).

⁸⁹³ *Al-Rihla*, 121a–123b

⁸⁹⁴ *Al-Rihla*, 121b.

⁸⁹⁵ *Al-Rihla*, 131b.

⁸⁹⁶ *Al-Rihla*, 142b.

days ago. Najm al-Dīn was not expecting this appointment because he had thought that his entire travel was in vain. Moreover, this new *berāt* for the Shāmiyya professorship was for life teaching (*qayd al-hayāt*).

It seems the aforementioned clash in Istanbul and the subsequent developments immediately affected Najm al-Dīn's life. According to Atayi, the contemporary Ottoman biographer, following the abovementioned clash of scholars and the vizier's soldiers in the courtyard of the Fatih Mosque, aforementioned Şerif Efendi, the retired chief judge of Anatolia, was sent to Bursa in exile and further punished by dismissal from his *arपालik* judgeship in Rodosçuk.⁸⁹⁷ Apparently, after the clashes following Najm al-Dīn departure in Istanbul, the clique of his friends gained power and they wanted to realize Najm al-Dīn's request. However, since they knew well the continuous power struggle and ever-changing balances in Istanbul, which could eliminate them in few months, they wanted to ensure Najm al-Dīn's professorship in the Shāmiyya by a life-long *berāt*.

Najm al-Dīn was tired of his long journey. He remained sick at home for few days. Then, he visited Çavuşzade İbrahim Efendi, the judge of Damascus, and presented him his new *berāts*. However, the news of Çavuşzade's dismissal arrived at the city few days later, and Najm al-Dīn could start teaching in the Shāmiyya only after few months by the confirmation of the new Ottoman judge.

The chaos in the imperial city did not cease in the coming decades. Syria was no more the distant province of Badr al-Dīn's period. On the contrary, any development in the imperial capital had immediate repercussions in Damascus thanks to the complex network of relations connecting the province to the center. In the following months, some powerful parties endeavored for the enthronement of Murad IV in place of his uncle Mustafa. Aforementioned Hüseyin Pasha was dismissed and Kemankeş Ali Pasha became the new grand vizier. On 10 September 1623, the party including the grand vizier and the chief jurist dethroned Sultan Mustafa. Afterward, however, they fell into disagreement among themselves. The Ottoman biographer Şeyhi writes that the new sultan dismissed Zekeriyazade Yahya Efendi (Najm al-Dīn's most powerful connection in Istanbul) from the office of the chief jurist by the grand vizier's complaints in September/October 1623.⁸⁹⁸ Atayi writes that soon after Murad's enthronement, Şerif Efendi (Al-Maydānī's

⁸⁹⁷ Atayi, *Hadā'ik*, 1823.

⁸⁹⁸ Şeyhi, *Vekāyi 'u'l-Fuzalā*, 442.

patron in Istanbul), who had been in exile in Bursa for the last three months, was forgiven, and his *arṣalik* judgeships returned to him.⁸⁹⁹

It seems the balance of power in the imperial capital changed again—this time in al-Maydānī's favor. In fact, in mid-October, a new appointment diploma for al-Maydānī's appointment to the Shāmiyya Madrasa arrived at Damascus. When the Ottoman judge of Damascus informed Najm al-Dīn his dismissal from the professorship of al-Shāmiyya, Najm al-Dīn refused it on the ground that his *berāt* guaranteed him a life-long teaching in the madrasa. He argued that according to the Hanafī law, a life-long appointment diploma could not be annulled unless the sultan who issued it annulled his decree. That is, Najm al-Dīn, the Shāfi'ī mufti of Damascus, tried to persuade the Ottoman judge arguing on the basis of the principles of the Hanafī madhhab. The judge was in between Najm al-Dīn, who came up with legal proofs for his cause, and al-Maydānī, who came up with his appointment diploma. Helplessly, he parted the professorship into two and gave each a half to please him.⁹⁰⁰

Al-Maydānī died after a year, and his half from the professorship was added to Najm al-Dīn's share. By this, Najm al-Dīn became the only professor of al-Shāmiyya Madrasa again after an exhausting struggle, in which scholars in Damascus and the imperial authorities in Istanbul were entangled around daily politics of the empire. Al-Maydānī was also teaching the hadith collection of al-Bukhārī in the Umayyad Mosque during the three holy months. This teaching circle was also transferred to Najm al-Dīn, who would teach there next seventeen years.⁹⁰¹

7.6. Conclusion

When he lost his teaching position to another Damascene scholar, Najm al-Dīn was obliged to travel to Istanbul. He turned his journey to an opportunity to personalize his father's travel experience a century ago, and similar to his father, he composed a travelogue. There were great differences between the travel accounts of father and son, however.

⁸⁹⁹ Atayi, *Hadā'ik*, 1823.

⁹⁰⁰ *Al-Rihla*, 180a; al-Ghazzī, *Lutf*, e.n. 55.

⁹⁰¹ Ibn Ayyūb, *al-Rawd al-ātir*, 922; al-Muhibbī, *Khulāsa al-athar*, IV: 198.

Thanks to the changes in socio-political context from the mid-sixteenth century onward, the network of relations between the ruling elite and Damascenes became denser. One could assume multiple roles in this network such as student vs. teacher, protégé vs. patron, friend vs. enemy, collaborator vs. rival, and official vs. deputy or novice. This was largely related to the integration of the judgeships of major Syrian cities into the Ottoman scholarly-bureaucratic career track. Professors of the high-ranking madrasas in Istanbul were continuously promoted to the judgeship of Aleppo, then to that of Damascus, and then to the judgeship of Bursa, Edirne and Istanbul. Finally, they sought a promotion to the chief judgeships of Anatolia and Rumelia. As a result, Najm al-Dīn and his peers' connections to the imperial capital were much stronger and diverse than their fathers' connections. When Badr al-Dīn traveled to Istanbul, bridging members of his ego-network (i.e. those who connected him to the Ottoman top bureaucracy) were largely the Arab scholars with Mamluk past (e.g. al-Abbāsī, Ibrāhīm al-Halabī). Najm al-Dīn, on the other hand, did not need a bridge to the Ottoman top bureaucracy because he personally knew the top imperial officials including the Ottoman Şeyhülislam and chief judges. Badr al-Dīn could reach to the chief judge of Anatolia in four steps, whereas Najm al-Dīn was only one-step away from the top officials in Istanbul.

Another significant detail is about the transformation in the Ottoman learned hierarchy in the course of a century. Badr al-Dīn visited the Ottoman chief judge of Anatolia and sought his help. Since the mid-sixteenth century, however, the Ottoman chief jurist appeared as the top of the Ottoman learned hierarchy. Najm al-Dīn thus sought the help of the Ottoman jurist in his position struggle.

Najm al-Dīn and his peers did not consider the lands of Rūm a mysterious geography, nor did they see Istanbul as the distant unknown capital. Likewise, for the imperial elite in Istanbul, Damascus was no more a distant city but a well-known provincial center with well-connected scholarly community. Thus, Najm al-Dīn and his colleagues were directly affected by the political developments in the Ottoman capital.

Najm al-Dīn, despite his strong connections to the Ottoman top bureaucracy, could not attain his goal in Istanbul because his patron withdrew his support to Najm al-Dīn to preserve the delicate balance between competing parties of the imperial capital. Yet he received a re-appointment to his beloved madrasa after his return to Damascus because the imperial faction he was connected with outmaneuvered its rivals in Istanbul. In other words, the political factionalism and power struggles in the imperial capital had immediate repercussions in the lives of Damascene scholars in the early seventeenth century.

CHAPTER VIII: NAJM AL-DĪN AL-GHAZZĪ: A SHĀFI'Ī MUFTI IN REGIONAL POLITICS AND HIS VIEW OF THE EMPIRE AND THE MUSLIM ELITE (1623–51)

This chapter deals with the last three decades of Najm al-Dīn's life, from his return from Istanbul until his death in 1651. It problematizes two main issues.

First, it further scrutinizes the question (previously asked in Chapter VI) what kind of roles Damascene scholars played in Damascus and Syria in the face of the socio-political transformations that took place in the Ottoman center and its Arab provinces in the early seventeenth century. With special reference to Najm al-Dīn's life experience, this chapter seeks an answer to this question mainly in two areas: (1) Najm al-Dīn's role as a provincial Shāfi'ī mufti within the triangle of Damascene people, Ottoman authorities, and Syrian provincial leaders. (2) Najm al-Dīn's role as a local historian composing a centennial universal biographical dictionary, namely *al-Kawākib*, which presents the biographies of the Damascene notables and the Ottoman elite side-by-side. Relying on these two, this chapter argues that the scholars in Damascus, though labelled as peripheral because of their restricted professional prospects, were capable of assuming multi-socio-political roles in Syria and had an encompassing vision of the Ottoman Empire and Islamdom in the first half of the seventeenth century.

Second, this chapter raises the question (previously discussed in Chapters II and VI) what means Damascene scholarly families utilized to guarantee their scholarly continuity across generations. In this regard, the previous chapters have discussed the significance of some legal mechanisms (such as handing down and deputyship), and family endowments as well as symbolic and scholarly inheritance transmitted in families. This chapter, on the other hand, handles another mean, namely history writing. With special reference to the abovementioned *al-Kawākib*, this chapter tries to demonstrate how Najm al-Dīn re-constructed the lives of his family members in powerful images. It argues that Najm al-Dīn's undertaking inevitably shaped the later generations' vision of the Ghazzī family affirmatively.

8.1. In a Delegation Committee to Baalbek: Representing the Ottoman Government before the Provincial Leaders

When Najm al-Dīn returned from Istanbul, he was in his mid-fifties. The authority scholars of the previous generation including his teachers and their rivals were almost extinct in Damascus. He soon appeared as one of the few leading Shāfi‘ī jurists to fill the scholarly authority vacuum in the city.

Few months after his Istanbul travel, Najm al-Dīn assumed a new mission outside Damascus. He joined the committee of notables sent to Baalbek in the autumn of 1623. This was his second delegation. As mentioned in Chapter VI, he had joined in a delegation committee to Aleppo in accompany of his father-in-law al-‘Īthāwī in March 1616. They had met the commander-in-chief for the Safavid campaign to request reduction in the extraordinary taxes imposed on Damascene people for the expenses of the Ottoman army.

The period 1616–23 witnessed new developments in Syria. The factional strife in Istanbul and recent developments (Mustafa’s dethronement (1618), Osman II’s regicide (1622), and Murad IV’s enthronement (September 1623)) precluded the Ottomans to develop effective policies against the centrifugal power groups in the provinces.⁹⁰² Fakr al-Dīn Ma‘n (d. 1635), who was forced to flee to Italy in 1613 under the pressure of the Ottoman central government, returned to his emirate in Syria in 1618. He availed himself of the opportunity of internal strife in the imperial capital and tried to establish his semi-autonomous regional rule in Lebanon. After gaining enough power, he eliminated his rivals in the region and seized Tripoli, Akkar and several other *muqāta‘a* lands in Beirut and Saida in 1620.⁹⁰³ He was carefully observing the attitude of the central government towards his acts through his close connections in the imperial capital. First, he created the perception that his military activities in Syria were campaigns against the rebellious Bedouins so as not to attract the attention of the central government. Later, however, he became more

⁹⁰² Suraiya Faroqhi, “Crisis and Change, 1590-1699,” in *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*, ed. Halil Inalcik and Donald Quataert (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 411–32; Suraiya Faroqhi, “The Ottoman Empire: The Age of ‘Political Households’ (Eleventh-Twelfth/Seventeenth-Eighteenth Centuries),” in *The New Cambridge History of Islam*, ed. Maribel Fierro, vol. III (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 360–410.

⁹⁰³ Daher, “The Lebanese Leadership at the Beginning of the Ottoman Period.”

powerful and did not hesitate to challenge the Ottoman authorities in the region. Among the latter was Mustafa Pasha, the Ottoman governor of the province of Damascus.⁹⁰⁴

Fakr al-Dīn Maʿn and other local amirs were in fact tax farmers (*mültezim*) in Lebanon, who had to make periodic payments to the central treasury in return for their right to collect taxes of particular territorial units called *muqātaʿa* in Lebanon. They had the status of the governor of sub-province (*sancakbeyi*). Accordingly, they had their own troops made up of their tribal members and mercenary soldiers. They were rivaling each other to expand their territories in the region. To achieve this, they used various means such as involving in armed conflicts in Lebanon, lobbying through their connections in Istanbul, and offering additional payments to the central treasury for their appointment. There was a competition between Fakr al-Dīn Maʿn and Yunūs al-Harfūsh, another tribal leader in the region. When the latter promised an increase in the revenues of the subprovince of Safad and received its governorship by the support of the Ottoman authorities in Damascus, Fakr al-Dīn Maʿn became outraged and finally fell out with the Mustafa Pasha, the governor of Damascus. The successive correspondings increased the tension between the two, and they were finally involved in a military confrontation in the early November 1623.⁹⁰⁵

Fakr al-Dīn Maʿn achieved a definite victory over the Ottoman governor of Damascus and took him captive. He then marched with his troops and the captive governor to Baalbek, the power center of the abovementioned Harfūsh tribe, and plundered the city.⁹⁰⁶

Upon these developments, Ottoman officials and notables in Damascus took initiative to rescue the captive Ottoman governor. Bülbülzade Abdullah Efendi (d. 1644), the judge of Damascus, formed a committee in order to visit Fakr al-Dīn Maʿn in Baalbek. The mission of the committee was to request from Fakhr al-Dīn to leave the captive governor to return to Damascus. Najm al-Dīn, as an influential Shāfiʿī jurist and professor in Damascus, was also invited to the committee by the Ottoman judge.

The committee was in Baalbek before mid-November, and stayed there for about two weeks. During these days, they conducted tight negotiations with Fakhr al-Dīn, Mustafa Pasha, and Hajj Kīwān, a Damascene

⁹⁰⁴ Hathaway, *The Arab Lands Under the Ottoman Rule*, 70–72; Feridun M. Emecen, “Fahredden, Ma’noğlu,” in *DİA* (Online: TDV İSAM, 1995).

⁹⁰⁵ For the details of the tension leading to the armed conflict, see Abu-Husayn, *Provincial Leaderships in Syria 1575–1650*, 110–121.

⁹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, 119–120.

Janissary leader, who collaborated with Fahr al-Dīn (*nuraddidu fīmā nahnu lahū, tāratan ilā al-wazīr wa tāratan ilā al-amīr wa tāratan ilā Kīwān ra's al-ashīr*).⁹⁰⁷ Fahr al-Dīn had many conditions to free the Ottoman pasha. He asked the subprovince of Safad to be returned to him and his sons to be appointed to new subprovinces in the region. He also demanded his collaborators among the Janissaries of Damascus be pardoned and even receive promotions to higher ranks. He also wanted some of his mercenary soldiers to stay in the service of Mustafa Pasha, when the latter would return to Damascus.⁹⁰⁸ When Mustafa Pasha eventually accepted Fakhr al-Dīn's conditions, the committee left Baalbek with him. They arrived at Damascus on November 21.⁹⁰⁹

Scholars in Syria, as in other part of Islamdom, traditionally assumed roles to preserve the welfare of the Muslim community in times of crises.⁹¹⁰ As seen in Najm al-Dīn's delegation to Aleppo in 1616 in Chapter VI, Damascene scholars functioned as representative of the local people in front of the central government and defended the rights and benefits of the inhabitants of the city. The committee that visited Baalbek, on the other hand, differed from the former delegation in mission. This second delegation largely functioned as the spokesman of the Ottoman government in front of the provincial leaders in Syria. The goal of the delegation was to free the captive Ottoman pasha, the agent of the central government in the province. The committee was presided by the Ottoman judge of Damascus but it contained several local scholars and notables from Damascus. The latter willingly collaborated with the imperial authorities in Damascus and played the role of mediators between Ottoman officials and regional tribal leaders. In fact, their support was vital for the Ottoman governors, whose rule was shaky throughout the first half of the seventeenth century due to the instability in the Ottoman capital and aggressive policies of the local tribal leaders.⁹¹¹

In short, Najm al-Dīn represented Damascenes before the central government few years ago, when he joined the delegation committee to Aleppo that requested the Ottoman vizier to reduce the extraordinary taxes imposed on Damascenes. Now, he represented the central government before the local power holders, who were challenging Ottoman rule in the region. He seems to have been well aware of the significance of this

⁹⁰⁷ Al-Ghazzī, *Lutf*, II: 621.

⁹⁰⁸ Al-Ghazzī, 120–121.

⁹⁰⁹ Al-Ghazzī, e.n. 66, 250.

⁹¹⁰ Lapidus, "Mamluk Patronage and the Arts in Egypt," 130–41.

⁹¹¹ See, Ş. Tufan Buzpınar, "Şam (Osmanlı dönemi)," *DİA* (Online, 2010).

latter delegation. After the committee returned to Damascus, he penned a travelogue detailing their venture in Baalbek.⁹¹²

8.2. A New Book Project: *Al-Kawākib*

Several members of the Ghazzī family dealt with in this study were interested in history writing. Ahmad al-Ghazzī (d. 1419) abbreviated Ibn Khallikān's biographical dictionary, *Wafayāt al-a'yān*, and prepared another biographical work about the hadith transmitters mentioned in al-Bukhārī's compilation. His son Radiyy al-Dīn Abū al-Barakāt (d. 1459) wrote a biographical dictionary for the contemporary Shāfi'ī scholars, and composed a separate work for Sultan Jaqmaq's biography. His son Radiyy al-Dīn (d. 1529) composed a separate biography for Sultan Qāyitbāy, which I have contextualized in the second chapter. A number of references in *al-Kawākib* indicate that Radiyy al-Dīn was also working on a biographical dictionary of Sufī saints he met during his life.⁹¹³ *Al-Kawākib* gives similar references to Badr al-Dīn (d. 1577), who kept detailed records for his teachers and students.⁹¹⁴ Badr al-Dīn also penned a travelogue for his Istanbul journey, which I have examined in the fourth chapter.

Najm al-Dīn no doubt was the most interested Ghazzī in history and biography. As mentioned earlier, he composed a separate work for his father's life story in his early twenties. Then, he expanded this work, and supplemented it with his own autobiography. He also wrote three travelogues for his travels to Istanbul, Baalbek, and (mostly probably in one of his last pilgrimages) to Mecca. Yet Najm al-Dīn's most famous work is his biographical dictionary, *al-Kawākib*, covering the life stories of the elite of the tenth hijrī century (about 1494–1591). Its supplement, *Lutf al-samar*, covering mostly the biographies of the Damascene elite of the first one-third of the eleventh hijrī century (about 1592–1624) is much less known.

Some clues in *al-Kawākib* enable us to guess Najm al-Dīn's writing calendar. Najm al-Dīn seems to have started writing *al-Kawākib* in the early seventeenth century and continued decades. In some biographies, the reader notices that his father-in-law al-‘Īthāwī (d. 1616) was still alive.⁹¹⁵ In other biographies, on the

⁹¹² Al-Ghazzī, *Lutf*, e.n. 250. Unfortunately, it seems there is no extant copy of this travelogue.

⁹¹³ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 126, 158, 241, 430.

⁹¹⁴ Al-Ghazzī, e.n. 185, 205, 676, 870, 876, 958, 1068.

⁹¹⁵ Al-Ghazzī, e.n. 747, 1362.

other hand, Najm al-Dīn mentions him as deceased.⁹¹⁶ The following two sections make an in-depth analysis of *al-Kawākib*. The first section tries to understand Najm al-Dīn's perception of the Ottoman elite and, for this purpose, compares his biographical dictionary with a contemporary Ottoman biographer's work. The second section tries to show how Najm al-Dīn utilized his work as a mean assuring scholarly continuity of his family in the seventeenth century.

8.2.1. A Local Shāfi'ī Jurist's Embracing Look at the Imperial Elite

As a scholar and historian, Najm al-Dīn had three levels of identity: local, imperial, and global.⁹¹⁷ Locally, he was a Shāfi'ī scholar from an eminent family. He had to assume his familial heritage and struggle against his Shāfi'ī and non-Shāfi'ī colleagues for local positions. In the imperial level, he was a non-bureaucratic scholar, i.e. teaching and issuing fatwas outside the Ottoman learned establishment. His educational processes, career prospects, and financial resources were different from his peers in the imperial capital. In the global level, however, he was a Muslim scholar, whose vision extended beyond the boundaries of the Ottoman Empire no matter how large they were, by sharing common values, common language, and common standards of scholarship in contemporary Islamdom. In other words, his distinguishing local and imperial identities did not put him in isolation from his colleagues outside his hometown, in Syria, Istanbul or other Islamic scholarly centers. *Al-Kawākib* was one of his works in which one can observe Najm al-Dīn's Muslim identity rather clearly.

Najm al-Dīn was not the first author who composed a centennial biographical dictionary. Ibn Hajar (d. 1449) and al-Sakhāwī (d. 1497) penned centennial biographical works covering the life stories of individuals with diverse backgrounds from different geographies, respectively for the eight (1301–1397) and ninth (1398–1491) hijrī centuries. Najm al-Dīn introduced a novelty to the genre, however. He divided a single century into three equal sub-periods called *tabaqa* (literally layers or classes), each approximately thirty-three years, corresponding to respectively 901–933, 934–966, and 967–1000 in Muslim calendar.

The word *tabaqa* was used in the first biographical dictionaries to distinguish between companions of the Prophet according to seniority in Islam. Later, it was used to distinguish between hadith transmitters of

⁹¹⁶ Al-Ghazzī e.n. 1466.

⁹¹⁷ See Steve Tamari, "Biography, Autobiography, and Identity in Early Modern Damascus," in *Auto/Biography and the Construction of Identity and Community in the Middle East*, ed. Mary Ann Fay (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 37–49.

different ranks in carrying Prophetic tradition (hadith) from his companions to the rest of the Muslim community. It finally referred to the successive generations in Muslim community, especially among scholars, highlighting teacher-student hierarchy.⁹¹⁸ Najm al-Dīn seems to have been influenced by the Prophetic hadith informing that each thirty-three years constitutes a generation.⁹¹⁹ He puts his biographees in related *tabaqa* according to their date of death. For example, if a biographee died in between hijrī 901 and 933, his biography is located in the first *tabaqa*.

Najm al-Dīn organized the biographies in each *tabaqa* alphabetically. As an exception to alphabetical order, however, he put those whose name was Muhammad at the beginning of each *tabaqa*. Violation of the alphabetical order for the name “Muhammad” was considered a sign of respect for the Prophet, and had been an old practice in the genre of biography writing. For example, Safadī (d. 1363), the fourteenth century Damascene historian and biographer, followed the same organization in his *al-Wāfi*.⁹²⁰

When Najm al-Dīn was compiling *al-Kawākib* in the early seventeenth century, an Ottoman biography writing tradition had already been consolidated in the central lands of the empire—a tradition largely represented by *al-Shaqā’iq* (in Arabic) and its supplements (both in Arabic and Turkish), as well as dictionaries of poets (*tadhkira al-shu‘arā’*) (in Turkish).⁹²¹ Taşköprizade’s *al-Shaqā’iq* was a largely politically oriented project aiming at highlighting the common past of the scholars in the Balkan-Anatolia complex and the Ottoman political enterprise. Its author divided his work into *tabaqas* not according to seniority in scholarship or generations but according to the reigns of the Ottoman sultans—a rather political criterion. Its translators and supplementers (including Aşık Çelebi (d. 1572), Ali b. Bali (d. 1584), Mecdi (d. 1591), Atayi (1635), and Şeyhi (d. 1731)) imitated the same organization of biographies in their works. As for the dictionaries of poets, they were largely limited to Turkish speaking Rūmī lands in terms of cultural and geographical scope.

⁹¹⁸ Wadad al-Qadi, “Biographical Dictionaries as the Scholars’ Alternative History of the Muslim Community.”

⁹¹⁹ Winter, “Al-Gazzi.”

⁹²⁰ Wadad al-Qadi, “Biographical Dictionaries: Inner Structure and Cultural Significance,” in *The Book in the Islamic World: The Written Word and Communication in the Middle East*, ed. George Nicholas Atiyeh (New York: SUNY Press, 1995), 93–122.

⁹²¹ Behçet Gönül, “İstanbul Kütüphanelerinde al-Şakaik al-Nu‘maniya Tercüme ve Zeyilleri,” *Türkiyat Mecmuası*, no. 7–8 (1945): 136–68; Kuru, “The Literature of Rūm”; Pfeifer, “To Gather Together,” 140–223.

Najm al-Dīn's *al-Kawākib* differs from its counterparts in the Ottoman center in two main respects. It had a global perspective with an ambition to cover the biographies of all Muslim elite in any geography. In the preamble of the work, Najm al-Dīn puts his methodology as to include the biography of any Muslim notable from any geography as long as enough information about his life was available to him. Thus, *al-Kawākib* contains biographies of Ottoman Sultan Selim and Safavid Shāh Ismā'īl, Maktul İbrahim Pasha and Hain Ahmed Pasha side by side. Although the majority of biographees are from the Arab provinces, the work contains names from the central Ottoman lands, Iran, and Maghreb as well.⁹²²

This global perspective was in fact deeply rooted in Damascene historiographical tradition and was not novel at all.⁹²³ Yet Najm al-Dīn's organization of biographies was peculiar to him. This is evident in his use of *al-Shaqā'iq* as a source. As he mentioned in the introduction of his work, Najm al-Dīn had a copy of *al-Shaqā'iq* and employed it as his main source for the biographies of Ottoman elite who died in the hijrī tenth century. Accordingly, he borrowed more than one hundred biographies from *al-Shaqā'iq*. He re-wrote most of these biographies although he did not add much to the information.

As mentioned above, the concept of "*tabaqa*" denotes different things in *al-Shaqā'iq* and *al-Kawākib*. For the author of *al-Shaqā'iq*, a *tabaqa* refers to the reign of an Ottoman sultan—a political reality. Consequently, each *tabaqa* has a different duration. In Najm al-Dīn's approach, on the other hand, *tabaqas* are thirty-three-year-long, and each denotes a generation of Muslim ummah—a social reality. While utilizing it a source of the life stories of the Ottoman elite, Najm al-Dīn deconstructed *al-Shaqā'iq* by alienating their biographies from the related politically oriented *tabaqas* and context. That is, he extracted the biographies from the *tabaqas* of *al-Shaqā'iq*, and re-organized them according to alphabetical order in his own *tabaqa* system.

In *al-Kawākib*, I have counted 119 biographical entries quoted from *al-Shaqā'iq*. These 119 entries are respectively from the seventh (11 entries), eighth (35 entries), ninth (36 entries), and tenth (37 entries) *tabaqas* of *al-Shaqā'iq*, and correspond respectively to the reigns of Mehmed II (r. 1451–81), Bayezid II (r. 1481–12), Selim I (r. 1512–20), and Süleyman (r. 1520–66). Najm al-Dīn re-organized these biographies

⁹²² For example, see al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 253, 292, 437, 839, 875, 1387.

⁹²³ According to Humphreys, Ibn Khallikān (d. 1282) introduced universal biography writing in Damascus and his work constituted a model for later Damascene biographers. R. Stephen Humphreys, *Islamic History: A Framework for Inquiry* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 140–41.

according to his own *tabaqa* system: in the first *tabaqa* (65 entries) and the second *tabaqa* (54 entries). For example, Taşköprizade gives the biography of Şeyhülislam Kemalpaşazade (d. 1534) as the first biography of his ninth *tabaqa*, which he opens by saying “about the scholars of the reigns of Sultan Selim (*fī ‘ulamā’ dawla al-Sultān Selīm Khān*).⁹²⁴ Although Kemalpaşazade ascended to the office of şeyhülislam after Selim (in 1526) and died in the second decade of Süleyman’s reign, Taşköprizade prefers to categorize him as the first scholar of Selim’s reign. Najm al-Dīn, on the other hand, alienates Kemalpaşazade’s biography from this special place and puts it in the middle of his second *tabaqa* covering the period 933–966 hijrī years (1526/7–1558/9), merely relying on the fact that his full name is Ahmed b. Süleyman b. Kemal Pasha and he died in 940/1534.⁹²⁵ In Najm al-Dīn’s organization, the readers do not notice any connection between Kemalpaşazade and the Ottoman political enterprise or Sultan Selim I’s reign. On the contrary, they find the eminent Ottoman şeyhülislam’s life story among the life stories of Syro-Egyptian elite. The biographical entry preceding Kemalpaşazade’s biography in *al-Kawākib* belongs to a Sufi sheikh in Egypt, whereas the biographical entry that comes after his biography belongs to a superintendent of the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus.

The following graph shows the distribution of the abovementioned 119 biographies borrowed from *al-Shaqā’iq*’s four *tabaqas* (7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th *tabaqas*, on the left) in Najm al-Dīn’s three *tabaqas* (1st and 2nd *tabaqas*, on the right).

⁹²⁴ Taşköprülüzade, *eş-Şekâik*, 599.

⁹²⁵ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 876.

Figure 4: Distribution of the biographies of *al-Shaqā'iq* in *al-Kawākib*



As exemplified in Kemalpaşazade’s case above, Najm al-Dīn did not only change the logic of tabaqa system in *al-Shaqā'iq* but also dispersed the biographies of the Ottoman notables among the Muslim elite of diverse geographies with different backgrounds. For example, in the first tabaqa of *al-Kawākib*, the life stories of 65 Ottoman scholars quoted from *al-Shaqā'iq* were blended with the life stories of 587 other Muslim notables from different geographies including Syria, Egypt, Hijaz, Iran, and Maghreb.

This way, Najm al-Dīn included the significant part of *al-Shaqā'iq* covering the hijrī tenth century in his work without allowing it to dominate over his work with its politically-oriented structure and “Ottoman” discourse. As a result, there is no structural difference between the biographies of Ottoman scholar-bureaucrats and Damascene scholars, or between the biographies of Ottoman ruling elite and Syrian local leaders in *al-Kawākib*. Najm al-Dīn preserved their unique life experiences but gathered them together organically under an overarching identity—they constituted the Muslim elite of the recent past.

Najm al-Dīn’s *tabaqa* does not refer to a political phenomenon as *al-Shaqā'iq*’s *tabaqa* does but rather refers to generations of the Muslim elite. In that sense, Najm al-Dīn pays less attention to the transition of the political authority in Syria in 1516. He does not distinguish between the Mamluk and Ottoman periods, nor between the Mamluk and Ottoman elites. For example, the biography of a Shāfi‘ī chief judge of Cairo during the Mamluk era and the biography of the Ottoman chief judge of Anatolia are presented side-by-side if they died in the same *tabaqa* and their names follow the alphabetic order. Thus, for Najm al-Dīn’s

approach, there is a continuous history of Muslim ummah, where local and even imperial identities merge into a single Islamic identity. In his historiography, neither 1516 nor the reigns of specific Mamluk or Ottoman sultans constitute a rupture in the continuous history of the Muslim scholars. In other words, he writes in *al-Kawākib* his alternative history to the largely political and exclusionist imperial histories of his period.⁹²⁶ Najm al-Dīn's approach does not seem to be unique. According to Frenkel, who has studied some of Najm al-Dīn's contemporaries' travelogues to Istanbul, the contemporary Arab scholars did not consider Ottoman's takeover of the Mamluk lands as the conquest of an alien power. They rather envisaged a linear history and continuous scholarly life from Mamluk to Ottoman rule.⁹²⁷

8.2.2. Biography as a Tool for Scholarly Continuity of Families

In his seminal study, Michael Chamberlain asks two important questions about the means of continuity for Damascene elite: "What were their strategies for reproducing the conditions of their elite status?" and "By what institutions, codes and practices did they struggle for power, wealth, and prestige among themselves and against others?"⁹²⁸ After few pages, as an answer to his questions, he emphasizes the social utilization of the biographical dictionaries in Damascene society and writes "To the *a'yān*, these accounts constituted useful past, a past that was intended to secure their futures."⁹²⁹ In other words, biographical works kept past memories alive and transmitted them to later generations, thus guaranteed continuity in elite families.

Representation of the Ghazzī family members and numerous references to them in *al-Kawākib* makes one think that Najm al-Dīn had a secondary agenda in his project as well. He aspired to create a powerful image for his family. In fact, one notices that such a secondary agenda in biography writing was not peculiar to Najm al-Dīn. Previous biographers also advertised their teachers, family members, patrons by locating their life stories within the broader network of biographies of others.⁹³⁰ In Najm al-Dīn's case, an in-depth analysis of his biographical works suggests that he attempted to re-contextualize history of his family

⁹²⁶ See al-Qadi, "Biographical Dictionaries as the Scholars' Alternative History of the Muslim Community."

⁹²⁷ Frenkel, "The Ottomans and the Mamluks through the Eyes of Arab Travelers (in 16th–17th Centuries)."

⁹²⁸ Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice*, 12.

⁹²⁹ Chamberlain, 19.

⁹³⁰ For an example, see Jaques, *Authority, Conflict, and the Transmission of Diversity in Medieval Islamic Law*, chap. VIII. Highlighting Ibn Qadi Shuhbe's personal agenda in writing his biographical work, Jacques claims that the author attempted to underline his own lineage within the Shāfi'ī law school as well as to prove the uniqueness of his own scholarship in the madhhab.

retrospectively from his own perspective and depicted himself as the chief rightful successor of his father and transmitter of the family inheritance. He did this by (1) the organization of the book, (2) references to his family members, and (3) the anecdotes portraying for the latter powerful mystic-scholarly images.

As mentioned above, Najm al-Dīn organized the biographical entries in his work alphabetically but he violated this rule only for Muhammads (*Muhammadūn*). Grouping biographies in three successive *tabaqa*s and giving Muhammads priority in each *tabaqa* enabled Najm al-Dīn to start the second and third volumes of his work with the biographies of his grandfather and father, whose first names were Muhammad, and who died respectively in hijrī 935, and 984.

Najm al-Dīn seems to be conscious in locating the biographies of his family members at the beginning of each volume. To achieve this, he does not observe the alphabetical order strictly. For example, the second volume of *al-Kawākib* starts with the biography of his grandfather Radiyy al-Dīn. Radiyy al-Dīn's full name is Muhammad b. Muhammad b. Ahmad, whereas the succeeding biographee's full name is Muhammad b. Muhammad b. Muhammad. A strict observation of his rule (priority of *Muhammadūn*) would have required his grandfather's name to come the second. Here, Najm al-Dīn seems to justify his choice on the ground that his grandfather died earlier—by a chronological order. In the third volume, on the other hand, his choice is opposite. He puts his father Badr al-Dīn's biography at the very beginning of the third volume. Badr al-Dīn's full name is Muhammad b. Muhammed b. Muhammed b. Abdullah, whereas the succeeding biographee's full name is Muhammad b. Muhammad b. Muhammad b. Ali. Here, Najm al-Dīn seems to adhere to the alphabetical order of his biographees despite the fact that his father died later, that is, chronological order requires his biography to be the second biography of the second volume. In short, Najm al-Dīn apparently kills two birds with one stone by the organization of biographies in his biographical dictionary. He follows a well-known practice in the genre while simultaneously promoting his family members as the first members of the second and third generations of the notables of the tenth hijrī century.

The biographical entries devoted to Radiyy al-Dīn and Badr al-Dīn are of the longest entries in *al-Kawākib*. Apart from these long biographies, Najm al-Dīn gives numerous references to them throughout his work. Of the 1552 biographical entries in *al-Kawākib*, 212 (14%) contains a reference to Najm al-Dīn's father Badr al-Dīn, and 57 entry (4%) contains a reference to his grandfather Radiyy a-Dīn. These references take place in various contexts, including (1) references as teacher (such as “Badr al-Dīn was the teacher of the

biographee”),⁹³¹ (2) references as student (such as “Badr al-Dīn was the student of the biographee”),⁹³² (3) references as a source of information (such as “Badr al-Dīn reported about the biographee...”),⁹³³ (4) references as the author of a quotation (such as Badr al-Dīn’s fatwa or verses),⁹³⁴ (5) references as an actor in an event (such as Badr al-Dīn’s struggle for a teaching post),⁹³⁵ (6) references as other side of a relation (such as “the biographee was a friend of Badr al-Dīn”).⁹³⁶

As mentioned in Chapter II, Najm al-Dīn draws saintly image for his grandfather Radiyy al-Dīn a throughout *al-Kawākib*. In fact, his father Badr al-Dīn started constructing this image before him. Badr al-Dīn says in the elegy he composed after Radiyy al-Dīn that his father prophesized the Ottoman conquest before they actually took over the Mamluk territories, and he had many similar saintly visions (*karāmāt*).⁹³⁷ Najm al-Dīn added to this image by several anecdotes. For example, in Radiyy al-Dīn’s biography, he describes Badr al-Dīn’s visit to Radiyy al-Dīn’s grave, where some beggars ask him for alms. Badr al-Dīn, who has left his pocket at home, takes refuge in the spirituality of his father, and then finds out some pennies on his grave to give alms.⁹³⁸ Such postmortem saintly visions were a common element of *manāqib* literature.⁹³⁹

Najm al-Dīn portrays his father as the most knowledgeable legal scholar of his era in *al-Kawākib*.⁹⁴⁰ He puts his words in the mouth of his biographee who says that *fiqh* is at Radiyy al-Dīn Ghazzī’s house.⁹⁴¹ There are several anecdotes for Badr al-Dīn’s saintly deeds as well. For example, the dismissal of Malulzade,

⁹³¹ For example, see al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 29, 56, 185.

⁹³² For example, see al-Ghazzī, e.n. 54, 195.

⁹³³ For example, see al-Ghazzī, e.n. 37, 117, 421.

⁹³⁴ For example, see al-Ghazzī, e.n. 449, 682, 694 .

⁹³⁵ For example, see al-Ghazzī, e.n. 285, 667, 703, 1223 .

⁹³⁶ For example, see al-Ghazzī, e.n. 339, 1276 .

⁹³⁷ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Matāli’*, 164–65.

⁹³⁸ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 653.

⁹³⁹ For example, see Ocağ, *Menākibnâmeler (Metodolojik Bir Yaklaşım)*, 81.

⁹⁴⁰ Al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, e.n. 224.

⁹⁴¹ Al-Ghazzī, e.n. 1527.

..أني أقول ما رأيت و لا أظن أني أرى أفقه من شيخ الاسلام والدي..

كان يقول حط الفقه رواقه في بيت الشيخ رضي الدين الغزي

Ottoman chief judge of Anatolia, from his post is connected to his enmity towards Badr al-Dīn. Accordingly, Malulzade goes crazy (*junna*) in the Imperial Council a week after dismissing Badr al-Dīn from his madrasa in Damascus.⁹⁴² In a dream account, a deceased person is asked about his situation in the Hereafter and he replies he is good thanks to his closeness to Badr al-Dīn during his life.⁹⁴³ At the end of Badr al-Dīn's biography, Najm al-Dīn gives a detailed description of his funeral. Accordingly, the angels descend from the sky in the form of green birds, the clouds shadow Badr al-Dīn's coffin and it rains as a sign of God's mercy and blessing.⁹⁴⁴

In sum, Najm al-Dīn utilized his *al-Kawākib* to advertise his family members, especially his father and grandfather, as two authority scholarly figures of the previous century. He did this by putting their biographies as the first biographies of the second and third volumes of his work, giving numerous references to them in other biographical entries, and re-constructing their scholarly image through dream and *karāma* anecdotes. His undertaking shaped the image of the family for the coming generations in Damascus.

8.3. Last Years

Not much is known about the last years of Najm al-Dīn's life. He seems to become the respected Shāfi'ī mufti of Damascus and engaged in teaching, issuing fatwas, and scholarship during this period. He lost his brother Zakariyyā in 1625/26. Zakariyyā was born in 1576, few months before their father Badr al-Dīn's death. He received education in Islamic disciplines and served as the Shāfi'ī prayer leader in the Umayyad Mosque. After his death, his post was given to his teenage son Zayn al-Ābidīn (d. 1651/52), who had studied from his uncle Najm al-Dīn. Zayn al-Abidin took the post until his death and inherited it to his own descendants within the Ghazzī family.⁹⁴⁵

In 1635/36, Najm al-Dīn lost his other brother Abū al-Tayyib.⁹⁴⁶ He was the most famous Ghazzī among Badr al-Dīn's sons after Najm al-Dīn. He recorded a successful scholarly career from his early ages. He

⁹⁴² Al-Ghazzī, e.n. 1223.

⁹⁴³ Al-Ghazzī, e.n. 1366.

⁹⁴⁴ Al-Ghazzī, e.n. 1205.

⁹⁴⁵ For the biography of Zayn al-Ābidīn b. Zakariyyā b. Badr al-Dīn al-Ghazzī, see al-Muhibbī, *Khulāsa al-athar*, II: 193.

⁹⁴⁶ Al-Muhibbī, I: 135.

traveled to Cairo in 1591/92 to complete his education there. He returned to Damascus after years and assumed the Shāfi‘ī professorship in the Qassā‘iyya Madrasa. As mentioned before, this position had been given to Najm al-Dīn in his early career. Most probably, Najm al-Dīn took other posts later on and handed down his professorship in the Qassā‘iyya to his brother.

Abū al-Tayyib was talented in poetry. The biographer al-Muhibbī quotes several examples from his poems and praises his talent. Then, he adds that Abū al-Tayyib became mentally sick in 1606/7. Then, he divorced his wife, abandoned scholarship and devoted his time to poetry. He never fully recovered and died in 1632.⁹⁴⁷ After Abū al-Tayyib’s illness, Najm al-Dīn appeared as Badr al-Dīn’s sole scholarly successor as a Shāfi‘ī jurist in Damascus and became the leader of the Ghazzī family in his era.

Najm al-Dīn was preparing his son Su‘ūdī (d. 1661) as his scholarly successor since his elder son Muhammad’s death. They traveled to Mecca for pilgrimage in 1606. Su‘ūdī married in 1615 and had a son named ‘Alī, who was most probably Najm al-Dīn’s first grandson. When Najm al-Dīn visited Istanbul in 1623, he took Su‘ūdī with him to benefit from his company as well as to introduce him to the imperial elite. Then, when he traveled to Mecca to perform pilgrimage in 1638, he left Su‘ūdī at his post as the Shāfi‘ī mufti in Damascus. Su‘ūdī would replace him in the office of the Shāfi‘ī jurist, and in the professorships of the Shāmiyya Barrānniyya Madrasa and al-Bukhārī teaching circle inside the Umayyad Mosque after his death in 1651.⁹⁴⁸

Najm al-Dīn was the eminent Shāfi‘ī mufti of Damascus from 1630s onward. In the mid-1640s, he had a stroke, thus could speak with difficulty. Al-Muhibbī gives a detailed description of his last pilgrimage in 1649, where a huge crowd of people surrounded him to request from him certificates in hadith. People in Hijaz were calling him hadith scholar of the era (*hāfīz al-asr*), hadith scholar of Shām (*hāfīz al-Shām*) and even muhaddith of the world (*muhaddith al-dunyā*). During these days of pilgrimage, he issued certificates to numerous people in the holy cities. Although he could not speak easily, people admired his knowledge and scholarly charisma.

⁹⁴⁷ Al-Muhibbī, I: 138-39.

⁹⁴⁸ Al-Muhibbī, II: 309.

After his return to Damascus, Najm al-Dīn sought seclusion in his father's Halabiyya cell. He died on 8 June 1651 at the age of eighty-one (or eighty-four according to the lunar calendar), and was buried near to his family members in the Sheikh Raslān cemetery in Damascus.⁹⁴⁹

8.4. Conclusion

Najm al-Dīn was a scholar-historian, who belonged to the first post-Mamluk generations of notables in sixteenth-century Damascus. Although his professional career as a professor and mufti was largely restricted to Damascus, he was an influential regional scholar in Syrian politics as well as a Muslim historian with a global perspective extending the boundaries of the Mamluk and Ottoman empires.

Najm al-Dīn was well aware of the significance of his roles and undertakings in Damascus and Syria. For the future generations, he recorded his delegation for the Ottoman government to the Syrian tribal leaders in his Baalbek travelogue. His political experience is instructive in terms of understanding how a Damascene scholar could play multiple roles in regional politics in the first half of the seventeenth century.

As an alternative to the exclusive historiographical approach of the Ottoman scholars in the capital, Najm al-Dīn came up with an inclusive and encompassing approach to the biographies of the Muslim elite of his era. He utilized *al-Shaqā'iq* as a source in his *al-Kawāḳib* carefully by deconstructing it to overcome its politically-oriented perspective. In other words, he tried to transgress the local and imperial identities by focusing on unifying and continuous Islamic identity. Therefore, the structure of his work and organization of the biographies in it carried no political reference or implication, neither to the Mamluks nor to the Ottomans. For him, there was an Islamic identity unifying all Muslim elite in Islamdom, an identity beyond the affiliations with contemporary political enterprises.

Moreover, Najm al-Dīn reconstructed his family past looking retrospectively from the seventeenth century. He put the biographies of his father and grandfather forward throughout his *al-Kawāḳib*, and adorned their images with various narrations. In this regard, he utilized history as a mean to immortalize the Ghazzī family. In fact, what we know about the Ghazzīs today has largely depended on and been shaped by Najm al-Dīn's historiography.

⁹⁴⁹ Al-Muhibbī, IV: 199-200.



CONCLUSION

This dissertation has tried to understand the experience of the scholars living in Damascus in the transition from Mamluk to Ottoman rule during the long sixteenth century (1450–1650) with special reference to three generations of the Ghazzī family whose members had various roles, identities, and affiliations including a Shāfi‘ī professorship, muftiship, judgeship, and Sufi links. It has offered a socio-political-economic reading of the history of the family focusing on themes such as the judicial system, lawmaking, professional mobility, geographical mobility, patronage, and the endowment system. To achieve this, it has used various sources, some of which were previously unknown and unused, such as Najm al-Dīn al-Ghazzī’s Istanbul travelogue. It has approached these sources through the explanatory concepts of social network analysis and the lens of biographical narrative. In doing so, it has arrived at several conclusions.

While speaking about the scholars living in Damascus, both Mamlukists and Ottomanists tend to employ umbrella terms such as “Arab scholars,” “Damascene scholars,” “Arabic-speaking scholars,” and “Mamluk-based scholars.” While acknowledging the analytic utility and narrative practicality of these terms (terms, which this dissertation, too, has employed in different contexts) and recognizing the dangers of historical particularism, this study draws attention to the tendency of such terms to distract from the significant particularities and diversity of scholars in Damascus. The leading scholars in Damascus, at least during the period under examination, were a heterogeneous group differing in ethnic origin, madhhab affiliation, professional tendency, and more. In this regard, they were not comparable to the contemporary Ottoman scholar-bureaucrats, who had many common characteristics in madhhab, language, education, career, geographical mobility, scholarship, literary taste, and so forth. Scholars in Damascus maintained their diversity during the Ottoman era, largely because they lacked the structured-bureaucratic mechanisms and means, such as a career system based on *mülāzemet* and positional hierarchy, to which the Ottoman scholar-bureaucrats owed their acquired status-homophily. In order to highlight this diversity, this study has come up with new concepts, such as Syrian Hanafī scholar-bureaucrats and Damascene Ajamī-Shāfi‘ī scholars, reflecting the nuances among the scholars in Damascus.

Even amid this diversity, however, it is possible to infer some generalizations about the experience of scholars during the Mamluk–Ottoman political transition. To this end, this study has focused on three generations of a single family, the Ghazzīs. Despite the overall heterogeneity of Damascene learned society, the experience of the Ghazzī family shows that the scholarly community of Damascus was marked by

shared identities and features that gathered many individuals in more homogenous and intersecting sub-groups. For instance, Badr al-Dīn al-Ghazzī and Muhammad al-Ījī were originally respectively an Arab and an Ajamī scholar, but they were affiliated with the same madhhab. Their shared Shāfi‘ī identity allowed them to benefit equally from local endowments marked off for Shāfi‘ī scholars which made them rivals in competition for the same teaching posts in Damascus. In this regard, Badr al-Dīn’s experience with Damascene endowments legally reserved for Shāfi‘ī scholars can also apply to al-Ījī. In fact, the Ghazzīs examined in this study had several attributes (such as being a Shāfi‘ī, judge, a non-bureaucratic scholar, an unofficial mufti, Qādirī, Damascus-born, etc.) that made them members of various loosely defined or more concrete, intersecting sub-groups in Damascene scholarly society. As a result, many of their experiences were not unique to them but rather were shared by a considerable number of their colleagues in Damascus.

This study has explored the parallels between the historical trajectory of Damascus as a city and the experiences of Damascene scholars as urban elite. It claims that scholars in Damascus experienced a peripheralization in their professional careers following the Ottoman takeover of the Mamluk lands. That is, their career expectations and opportunities in the imperial capital differed significantly between the Mamluk and Ottoman periods, with greater chances for advancement in the former and greater limitations and discouragement in the latter. However, one should avoid geographical determinism while envisaging this transformation. This peripheralization was not necessarily an outcome of the provincialization of Damascus, i.e. its transformation from a center near the capital city to a distant province in 1517. If not for the political, socio-cultural and bureaucratic realities of the new empire, Damascene scholars most probably could have continued to compete for the top scholarly-bureaucratic posts in Istanbul, as they had done in Cairo before, despite the increasing geographical distance between Damascus and the imperial capital after 1517. Yet Istanbul as a part of the Rumī domain and the center of the increasingly consolidating Ottoman Empire differed from Cairo in many respects such as daily language, dominant madhhab, elite background, administrative-bureaucratic customs, and political culture. Not the geographical distance and administrative divisions but these factors brought about peripheralization in the professional career of Damascene scholars. Their career prospects became disconnected from the center while continued largely being dependent on and shaped by the actors at the center. For example, a scholar in Damascus who successfully utilized his relations could become a chief judge in Mamluk Cairo, whereas he could not even hope to hold a similar post in Istanbul during the Ottoman period due to the restrictions imposed by bureaucratic rules and regulations. Moreover, his achievement in holding lucrative teaching and judgeship positions in his hometown depended on the strength of his network of relations with the officials in Istanbul.

Likewise, being a judge in Damascus offered a scholar close access to the Mamluk sultan via no more than a few steps in his network of relationships. On the other hand, being a judge in Ottoman Damascus, as seen in the example of Radiyy al-Dīn, no longer allowed a local scholar to access the sultan. This stemmed partly from the structural difference between the Mamluk and Ottoman regimes. The Circassian sultans usually had slave-warrior origins; they served in various cadres and cities as they ascended the military hierarchy, which brought them into closer interaction with local scholars. In contrast, the Ottoman sultans, as members of a recognized dynasty by birth, were from their princship onward largely isolated from their subjects.

Of course, professional peripheralization of Damascene scholars does not mean that they never enjoyed channels to Istanbul. As portrayed in several sections of this study, from the mid-sixteenth century, even an ordinary professor teaching in Damascene madrasas had strong connections to the top Ottoman ruling elite in Istanbul. Moreover, despite their limited career prospects, scholars in Damascus continued to enjoy influence as scholars in urban, regional, and even imperial levels. For example, after the conquest, the Ottomans were able to establish their rule in Damascus (and in other major cities of Syria and Egypt) only after several abortive attempts and failed governments. They needed the collaboration of local scholars like Radiyy al-Dīn to establish a durable, legitimate, and efficient rule at the city level. As clearly observed in the case of al-Karakī's execution in the early seventeenth century, the Ottoman authorities' need for support and approval of leading local scholars in issues of public concern never ceased. At the regional level, as seen in delegations sent to Aleppo and Baalbek in the early seventeenth century, Damascene scholars were capable of assuming multi-political roles and missions in Greater Syria, balancing among different parties such as the local people, Ottoman authorities, and Syrian provincial-tribal leaders. At the imperial level, as seen in the example of Badr al-Dīn's exegesis, their writings could not only trigger rich discussions in Damascus but also, within a few decades, circulate in scholarly circles of Istanbul and elicit responses from Ottoman scholars.

Thanks in part to their local and regional influence, most Damascene scholars were content with their traditional ways of scholarship. The majority of them, especially non-Hanafī ones, continued to receive their education within the triangle of Syria, Egypt, and the Hijaz. Instead of acquiring novice status from the high-ranking Ottoman scholars in Istanbul, they continued to collect as many traditional certificates as possible from leading regional scholars in Damascus, Cairo, and Mecca and Medina. After this traditional education, most of them followed a scholarly career as non-bureaucratic professors and non-official jurists serving in local institutions outside the Ottoman scholarly-bureaucratic hierarchy.

Despite preserving their scholarly authority in urban, regional, and even imperial levels, the increasing demand for the limited number of positions in Damascus created a fierce competition among Damascene scholars after the mid-sixteenth century. Their restricted career prospects due to the consolidation of the Ottoman learned hierarchy in Istanbul added to this competition. For example, the abovementioned al-Ījī, an Ajam-born scholar who visited Istanbul to try his fortune there, was obliged to return to Damascus and became involved in a struggle against the Damascus-born Badr al-Dīn for a prestigious local professorship. This competition intensified through the end of the century to the extent that the local Shāfi‘ī scholars were challenged by their Syrian Hanafī colleagues in local madrasas, whose endowment deeds were marked off exclusively for Shāfi‘ī scholars.

These struggles for position and accompanying travels to Istanbul present a rich picture of the entanglement of Damascene scholars and the Ottoman imperial elite during the long sixteenth century. In that sense, this dissertation contributes to the literature on the increasing interregional and inter-confessional entanglements of the elite in early modern Eurasia. It has focused on the transformations in the interregional networks of the Ghazzīs during the Mamluk and Ottoman periods in Greater Syria, Egypt, the Hijaz, and the main Ottoman lands. Based on the Ghazzīs’ competitions for local teaching posts in Damascus and their ventures in Istanbul, this study has vividly portrayed the scholarly cliques among local scholars in Damascus as well as their increasing entanglement with the imperial authorities through the end of the sixteenth century.

Indeed, encounter, communication, entanglement, adaptation, and integration of the elite multiplied in early modern Eurasia, and the elites of the Ottoman center and its Arab provinces were no different. Yet this dissertation has attempted to go beyond merely describing the complexity of entanglement among the elites of Damascus and Istanbul scrutinizing the structural mechanisms that made this degree of entanglement possible. In this regard, it has underlined the significance of the gradual integration of the judgeship of Damascus into the Ottoman hierarchy of positions. It has shed light on important phases of this integration that took place over several decades, including Ibn Farfūr’s elimination as a remnant of the Mamluk era, the regular appointments of Ottoman scholars to the position of judge of Damascus, the incorporation of the judgeship of Damascus into the career track of the Ottoman scholar-bureaucrats, and finally the clarification and consolidation of the place of the judgeship of Damascus in the Ottoman hierarchy of positions reserved for the Ottoman *mevāli*. When the integration was fully achieved in the second half of the sixteenth century, Damascene scholars started hosting a high-ranking Ottoman scholar as the judge of their city every one to three years; this scholar, usually in the next few years, could ascend to the highest offices in Istanbul such

as the offices of the chief judges and chief jurist. This allowed them to have relationships, good or bad, with the top imperial bureaucracy in the Ottoman capital usually without ever visiting it personally.

This dissertation has not only scrutinized the structural changes behind this entanglement but also highlighted its different dimensions for different groups in Damascene educated society. It has argued that Damascene scholars were embedded into the imperial elite network in ways that differed both quantitatively and qualitatively. For example, the multi-faceted relationship between al-Hamawī and the Ottoman judge Çivizade Efendi was shaped largely within the framework of patronage and *mülazemet*, whereas the relationship between the latter and Badr al-Dīn was shaped in a student-teacher context and through scholarly certificates. In other words, both al-Hamawī and Badr al-Dīn had strong connections to the Ottoman judge but their connections were outcomes of different processes and were weighted differently. Moreover, the high level of entanglement in the imperial elite network did not always work to the Damascene scholars' good and advantage. For example, al-Hamawī's close ties with the abovementioned Çivizade Efendi resulted in his dismissal from his office as town judge when an Ottoman scholar rivaling Çivizade ascended to the office of chief judge in Istanbul. Likewise, as vividly observed in Najm al-Dīn's struggle for the professorship of al-Shāmiyya Madrasa, the high level of entanglement within the imperial elite network exposed Damascene scholars' careers to the vicissitudes of domestic developments and power struggles within the Ottoman capital.

This dissertation has examined the question of how scholarly families in Damascus were able to survive during the Mamluk–Ottoman transition. Radiyy al-Dīn lost his father at the age of two in Mamluk Damascus, and Najm al-Dīn lost his father at the age of seven in Ottoman Damascus. Despite orphaned as children, they both managed to become scholarly successors to their fathers in their respective periods. This study sheds light on several mechanisms and means that made this scholarly continuity in a local family possible.

The first of these was no doubt the local endowments, which supported scholars socially and financially in both the Mamluk and the Ottoman period. Many of these local endowments offered posts to local scholars according to madhhab-based criteria. These posts provided many scholars in Ottoman Damascus, especially non-Hanafī ones, spaces of considerable autonomy where they could pursue their scholarly activities without rigid state intervention or competition from the Hanafī scholars in and outside Damascus. For example, both Badr al-Dīn and Najm al-Dīn were semi-independent Shāfi'ī muftis who issued their fatwas

free of charge and earned their livelihoods through teaching in the Shāfi‘ī madrasas of the pre-Ottoman period.

The Ottomans were Muslim rulers; thus, they not only recognized the legal status of the existing endowments in Damascus but also allowed the establishment of new ones. This legal basis enabled many local scholars, including Radiyy al-Dīn, to establish family endowments, which guaranteed the financial survival of their family members and descendants.

Moreover, Damascene learned society benefited from some established practices and legally recognized means which assured the transmission of endowed teaching positions within families across generations during the Mamluk era. *Nuzūl*, *wasāya*, and *niyāba*, as well as *ijāza al-tadrīs wa al-iftā*, were the main mechanisms allowing this transmission, as seen in the example of the professorship of the Kallāsa Madrasa transmitted across generations of the Ghazzī family. These mechanisms were still active in Ottoman Damascus, as seen in the example of several other madrasas mentioned throughout this study. Yet increasing competition among local scholars and the intervention of Ottoman judges, who usually had their own candidates for particular positions, sometimes, if not often, prevented these mechanisms from bringing about the desired results. The Ottoman judge sometimes did not recognize that a scholar handed down his post to another scholar. He sometimes ignored the violation of endowment deeds or split a position into two halves. However, such instances should not be interpreted as the acts of a despotic government agent but rather as the efforts to patronize a local scholar or a partner in a local clique—in other words, as the use of the judgeship’s authority to determine the outcome of position struggles.

Another means of securing the continuity of scholarly families was the accumulation of scholarly knowledge within the family and its transmission and re-interpretation across generations. Al-Ghazzīs studied their fathers’ works, penned commentaries on them, and taught them. As seen in the case of Badr al-Dīn’s exegesis and Najm al-Dīn’s efforts to promote that work, they transmitted their fathers’ scholarly production to later generations by circulating it in scholarly gatherings, sometimes despite fierce criticisms. Moreover, they re-constructed and re-contextualized the lives of their fathers through history writing. They created powerful images of their family members and created a narrative of intergenerational scholarly continuity in their family.

Despite all these means and mechanisms, some local families failed to maintain their previous political power, social influence, and wealth in the transition from Mamluk to Ottoman rule. For example, unlike the Ghazzīs, the Farfūr family lost much of its previous influence after the trial of Ibn Farfūr and the confiscation

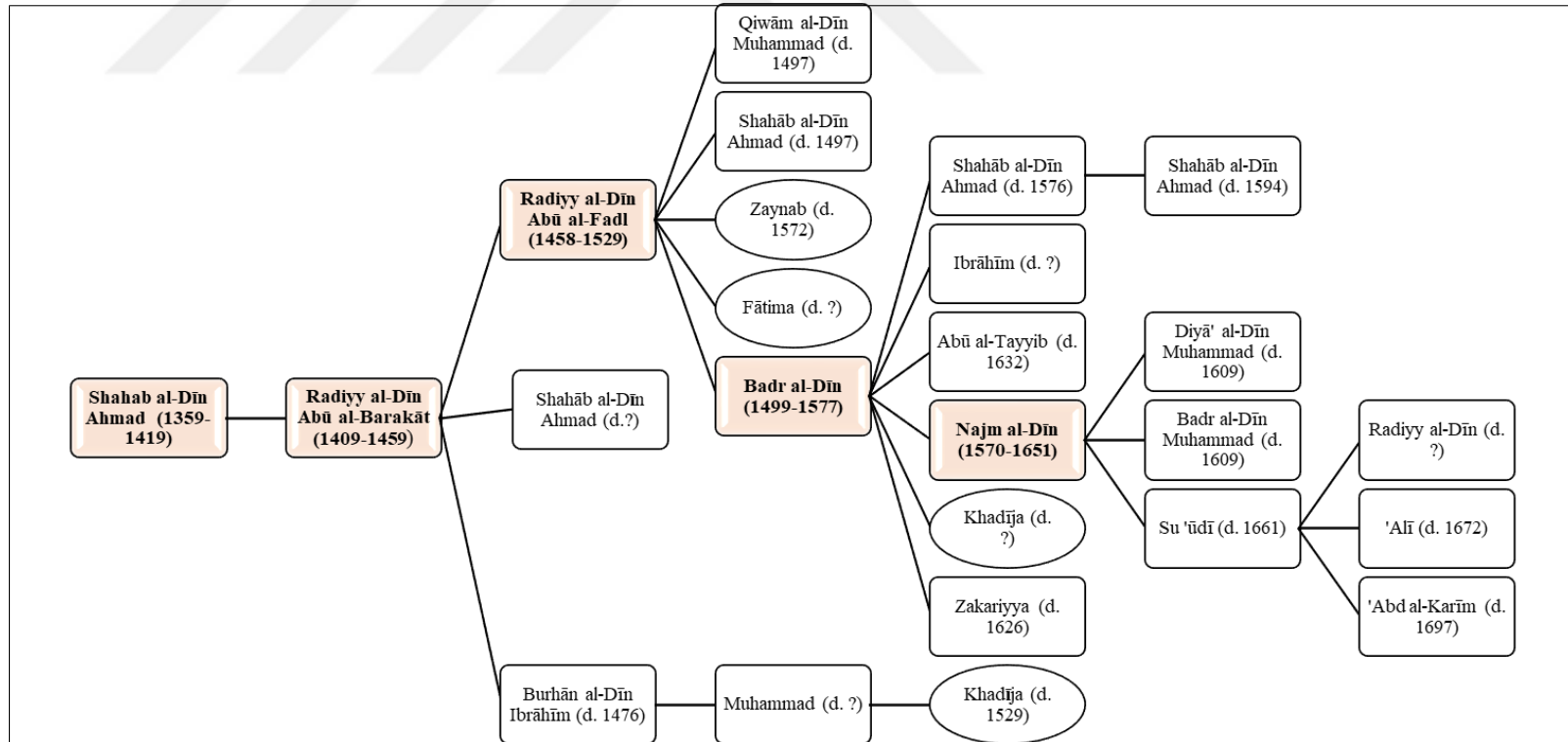
of his properties. After his death, none of his family members again rose a position as high as the one he had enjoyed, at least during the period under examination.

This dissertation has outlined many macro transformations that took place in early modern Islamic West Asia through a meso-level social structure—namely, the family—in Syria. As a biographical study, rather than attempt to paint an abstract picture, it has described the details and nuances of a particular segment of the contemporary learned society. Nevertheless, in portraying these individual life stories in all their complexity, it has also identified broader patterns and structures, and outlined continuities and ruptures. This study is thus also a history of scholars in a major Syrian city and the many socio-political transformations underwent between 1450 and 1650, one that has highlighted the positions, Sufi trends and orders, travels, professional roles, scholarly production, networks and many other aspects of their experiences during the period.

Many of the abovementioned conclusions of this dissertation could be read in parallel and comparatively with existing research on the Mamluk Sultanate, and on the Ottoman Empire and its Arab provinces during the early modern era. For example, studies on the judicial and bureaucratic administration of early Ottoman Aleppo and Cairo are parallel with this dissertation's findings concerning the establishment of the Ottoman regime in Damascus: both underlines the multi-staged nature of the process and the many abortive attempts and negotiations that took place between the newcomers and locals. Likewise, this dissertation's findings regarding the roles and status of non-official Shāfi'ī jurists can be compared with existing research on state-appointed and non-official Hanafī muftis in Ottoman Arab and non-Arab provinces. Last but not least, this study offers an important complement, even corrective, to the historiography of scholarly life in the early modern Ottoman Empire, which is dominated by an Istanbul-centric approach to the Ottoman learned hierarchy. Focusing on the scholars in a distant but well-connected province, most of whom were non-bureaucratic scholars but nevertheless entangled with the bureaucratic elite, this dissertation adds to our knowledge to draw a more complete picture of Ottoman scholarly life in the period.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: A FAMILY TREE OF THE GHAZZĪ FAMILY (14TH–17TH CENTURIES)



APPENDIX B: A CHRONOLOGY OF THE THREE GENERATIONS OF THE GHAZZĪ FAMILY (1458–1651)

Date (C.E.)	Date (Hijrī)	RADIYY AL-DĪN AL-GHAZZĪ	Source
September 19, 1458	Dhū al-qa'da 10, 862	born in Damascus	<i>Al-Kawākib</i> , entry nu: 653.
December 26, 1459	Rabī' al-awwal 1, 864	His father died Zayn al-Dīn Khattāb b. Umar (d. 1474) became his wasī and starting teaching in the Kallāsa Madrasa as his deputy.	<i>Daw' al-lāmi'</i> , VI, 324. <i>Al-Kawākib</i> , entry nu: 653.
ca. 1470	ca. 874	His wasī and deputy in the Kallāsa Madrasa appointed Muhammad al-Kafarsūsī (d. 1525) as Radiyy al-Dīn's deputy	<i>Al-Dāris</i> , 198– 99. <i>Al-Kawākib</i> , entry nu: 84.
November 30, 1476	Shāban 12, 881	His elder brother Burhan al-Dīn Ibrāhīm died	<i>Tārikh al- Busrawī</i> , 78. <i>Daw' al-lāmi'</i> , I, 126–27.
Pre-1480	pre-885	married	<i>Mufākaha</i> , 15.
April 30, 1480	Safar 19, 885	gave his little daughter to Bahā al-Dīn al- Bauni (d. 1511) in marriage, and married Bahā al-Dīn's little daughter in return for a secret reason (<i>li-amrin baynahumā</i>)	<i>Mufākaha</i> , 15.
August 8, 1480	Jumādā II 1, 885	married the daughter of his deceased wasī and deputy Zayn al-Dīn Khattāb	<i>Mufākaha</i> , 22, 29.
ca. 1480s	ca. 885s	his sons Muhammad and Ahmad were born	<i>Al-Kawākib</i> , entry nu. 31.

February 1, 1481	Dhū al-hijja 1, 885	was in Cairo and received the post of Shāfi'ī deputy judge of Damascus.	<i>Muḥākaha</i> , 30.
November 7, 1484	Shawwal 17, 889	left Damascus for pilgrimage	<i>Tārikh al-Busrawī</i> , 98.
February 5, 1486	Muharram 30, 891	returned to Damascus after pious residence in the Holy cities and was appointed as the eleventh deputy judge of the Shāfi'ī chief judge of Damascus	<i>Tārikh al-Busrawī</i> , 110.
Late 1480s	Late 880s onward	attended Sultan Qāyitbāy's assemblies, composed panegyrics to praise the sultan, penned a biography of Sultan Qāyitbāy	<i>Al-Kawākib</i> , entry nu: 653.
November 12, 1487	Dhū al-qa'da 25, 892	traveled to Cairo for a court case	<i>Tārikh al-Busrawī</i> , 122.
May 18, 1488	Jumādā II 6, 893	returned from Cairo to Damascus in accompany of Shāfi'ī deputy judge Bahā al-Dīn al-Bā'ūnī (d. 1511)	<i>Tārikh al-Busrawī</i> , 127.
February 8, 1490	Rabī' al-awwal 17, 895	took the professorship of the Kallāsa Madrasa from his deputy Muhammad al-Kafarsūsī (d. 1525) and starting teaching there	<i>Muḥākaha</i> , 99.
August 25, 1490	Shawwāl 8, 895	was called to Cairo by a sultanic order regarding his accusations about the embezzlement of a deputy judge in Damascus	<i>Tārikh al-Busrawī</i> , 142. <i>Muḥākaha</i> , 108, 111.
January 8, 1494	Rabī' al-awwal 30, 899	returned to Damascus from Cairo with his family accompanied by the Shāfi'ī deputy judge Bahā al-Dīn Bā'ūnī (d. 1511). They were stuck on the road due to snow for two weeks before entering Damascus	<i>Hawādith</i> , 242–43.
May 26, 1495	Ramadān 1, 900	was called to Cairo by an official order	<i>Tārikh al-Busrawī</i> , 160.
June 1, 1495	Ramadān 6, 900	returned to Damascus before arriving Cairo with new orders regarding the Nūrī Hospital	<i>Tārikh al-Busrawī</i> , 160.
July 12, 1497	Dhū al-qa'da 12, 902	lost his sixteen year-old son Ahmad in plague in Damascus, when he was in Cairo	<i>Al-Kawākib</i> , e.n. 31.

August 3, 1497	Dhū al-hijja 4, 902	lost his elder son Muhammad in plague in Damascus, when he was still in Cairo	BADR AL-DĪN GHAZZĪ	<i>Al-Kawāḳib</i> , e.n. 31.
June 23, 1499	Dhū al-qa‘da 14, 904	His son Badr al-Dīn Ghazzī was born	born in Damascus	<i>Al-Kawāḳib</i> , e.n. 1205.
1481–1516	886–921	served as a Shāfi‘ī deputy judge in Damascus for years during the chief judgeships of Qutb al-Dīn al-Khaydirī, Shahāb al-Dīn b. al-Farfūr and his son Waliyy al-Dīn, who dismissed him before the Ottoman conquest.		<i>Al-Kawāḳib</i> , entry nu: 653. <i>Mufākaha</i> , 30. <i>Al-Tamattu‘</i> , 771–72.
ca.1500	ca.905		received <i>tasawwuf</i> from Shaikh Abū al-Fath al-Awfi when he was less than two years old.	<i>Al-Kawāḳib</i> , entry nu 1205.
April/May 1505	Dhū al-qa‘da, 910	his daughter Zaynab was born		<i>Al-Kawāḳib</i> , e.n. 1424.
Pre-1505	Pre-911		His father took a certificate from al-Suyūṭī for him when he was in his 3 or 4.	<i>Al-Kawāḳib</i> , e.n. 1205.
1510/11 September 1515	– 916 – Rajab 921	stayed in Cairo with his family for five years, taught students and guided people	received his education in Cairo for five years, and attained certificates to teach and issue legal opinions, composed his first poetry.	<i>Al-Kawāḳib</i> , e.n. 653, 1205, 1082.
1510/11	916	completed a work on agriculture and plantation in Cairo		See Shopov, “Between the Pen and the Fields,” 73–74 (referred to the colophon in the manuscript from Dar al-Kutub, Cairo, Ziraah Taymur, no: 42)
September 1515	Rajab 921	returned from Cairo to Damascus	returned from Cairo to Damascus with his father	<i>Al-Kawāḳib</i> , entry nu 653.
1520s	925s		married	<i>Al-Kawāḳib</i> , e.n. 261.
February 1521–1522	Rabī‘ al-awwal 927–928	praised Ayas Pasha in some verses	attended the classes of Taqiyy al-Dīn b. Qādī Ajlūn (d. 1522) in the Shāmiyya Barrāniyya madrasa in Damascus	<i>Al-Kawāḳib</i> , e.n. 653, 919.

April 11, 1521	Jumādā I 3, 927	appointed as the Shāfi'ī deputy judge in Ottoman Damascus	<i>Tārīkh al-Shām</i> , 131.
ca.1522	ca.928	His daughter Khadīja was born	<i>Al-Matāli'</i> , 29, 198–199.
October/November 1522	Dhū al-hijja 928	issued his first religio-legal opinion	<i>Al-Kawākib</i> , e.n. 285.
June 8, 1525	Shawwāl 16, 931	dismissed from judgeship	<i>Tārīkh al-Shām</i> 181.
July–August 1525	Shawwāl 931	His son Shahāb al-Dīn Ahmad was born	<i>Al-Kawākib</i> , e.n. 1345.
May 12, 1526	Rajab 30, 932	completed his <i>al-Durr al-nadīd fī adab al-muḥīd wa al-mustafīd</i>	<i>Al-Durr al-nadīd</i> , 497.
1528/29	935	founded a familial endowment in Damascus	BOA, T.d 393, p. 87.
March/April 1529	Rajab 935	received a share from the inheritance of the granddaughter of his uncle Ibrāhīm	<i>Al-Kawākib</i> , e.n. 961.
1527–1529	932–935	was teaching <i>al-Hawī</i> and <i>Mughni al-labīb</i> , and issuing certificates to his students	<i>Al-Kawākib</i> , e.n. 679, 704, 723, 804, 870, 1262.
June 1529	Shawwāl 935	died	<i>Al-Kawākib</i> , e.n. 653.
Pre-1530	Pre-936	completed a number of works: <i>al-Lamha fī khasā'is yawm al-Jum'a</i> , <i>al-Burhān al-nahīd fī istibāha wat al-ha'id</i> , a supercommentary on <i>al-Minhāj</i> , <i>Fath al-Mughlaq</i> etc.	<i>Al-Kawākib</i> , e.n. 870. A certificate Badr al-Dīn Ghazzī issued in September 29, 1528 in <i>al-Kawākib</i> , e.n. 1322.
May 16, 1530	Ramadān 18, 936	traveled to Istanbul to renew his appointment diplomas for some posts in Damascus	<i>A-Matāli'</i> , 60, 192. <i>Al-Matāli'</i> , 23.

June 28, 1530	Dhū al-Qa'da 2, 936	entered Istanbul after a month-long journey	<i>Al-Matāli'</i> , 119.
September 5, 1530	Muharram 12, 937	left Istanbul after two and a half months due to plague in the city and stayed in neighboring Iznikmid	<i>Al-Matāli'</i> , 211.
November 3, 1530	Rabī' al-awwal 12, 937	returned to Istanbul after two months in Iznidmid	<i>Al-Matāli'</i> , 260.
November 3, 1530 – June 8, 1531	Rabī' al-awwal 12 – Shawwāl 22, 937	spent seven months and two weeks in Istanbul	<i>Al-Matāli'</i> , 260, 283.
August 11, 1531	Dhū al-hijja 27, 937	returned to Damascus	<i>Al-Matāli'</i> , 322.
June 8, 1534	Dhū al-hijja 26, 940	completed his travel book, <i>al-Matāli'</i>	<i>Al-Matāli'</i> , 323.
September 25, 1534	Rabī' al-awwal 16, 941	held the half of the prayer leadership in the Umayyad Mosque	<i>Al-Kawākib</i> , e.n. 684.
1537/38	944	completed a commentary in verse on <i>Alfiyya Imām Mālik</i>	DĪA, "Bedreddin el-Gazzi"
Pre-1538	Pre-944	was teaching in Ādiliyya and Fārisiyya madrasas in Damascus	<i>Al-Kawākib</i> , e.n. 1205.
Early January 1538	Early Shāban, 944	completed a book on joking entitled <i>al-Murāh fī al-mizāh</i>	<i>Al-Murāh fī al-mizāh</i> , 55.
August 1538	Rabī' al-awwal, 945	received the professorship of the Shāmiyya Barrāniyya Madrasa	<i>Al-Kawākib</i> , e.n. 830.
July 14, 1545	Jumādā I 4, 952	entered Cairo while travelling for pilgrimage with his son Shahāb al-Dīn Ahmad	<i>Al-Kawākib</i> , e.n. 1345, 1128.
January 17, 1546	Dhū al-qa'da 14, 952	was still in Cairo with his son who was studying from the Cairene scholars	See the certificate issued by Badr al-Dīn in <i>Luṭf al-samar</i> , e.n. 224.
Spring 1546	Spring 953	returned to Damascus with his son after pilgrimage, and continued teaching in the Shāmiyya Barrāniyya Madrasa	<i>Al-Kawākib</i> , e.n. 1348

1548/49	955		suffered a long illness	<i>Al-Kawākib</i> , e.n. 862.
Late 1540s	Mid-950s		resided in the Halabiyya cell in the Umayyad Mosque for seclusion	<i>Al-Kawākib</i> , e.n. 1205, 1399 <i>Tarājim al-a'yān</i> , e.n.93.
Early 1550s	Late-950s		completed his Quranic exegesis in verse, <i>al-Taysīr fī al-tafsīr</i>	DĪA, "Bedreddin Gazzi"
June 4, 1555	Rajab, 12, 962		completed another Quranic exegesis in verse and prose, <i>Taysīr al-bayān fī tafsīr al-Qur'an</i>	DĪA, "Bedreddin Gazzi"
Pre-1563/64	Pre-971		started teaching in the Muqaddamiyya Madrasa	<i>Al-Kawākib</i> , entry nu, 1205, 1233. Najm al-Dīn al-Ghazzī, <i>al-Rihla</i> , 108a.
1563/64	971		involved in a scholarly polemic with Kmalzade Ali, the Ottoman judge of Damascus.	<i>Al-Kawākib</i> , e.n. 1484 DĪA, "Bedreddin Gazzi"
December 1563	Rabī' al-akhir, 971		started teaching in the Taqawiyya Madrasa	<i>Al-Rawd al-ātir</i> , e.n. 277. <i>Al-Kawākib</i> , e.n. 1483.
Mid-1564	Late 971	NAJM AL-DĪN AL-GHAZZĪ	married	<i>Al-Rawd al-ātir</i> , e.n. 277 <i>Al-Kawākib</i> , e.n. 261, 1368.
January 21, 1570	Shāban 13, 977	born	had a son from his last marriage	<i>Lutf al-samar</i> , 22.
March 31, 1572	Dhū al-qa'da 16, 979		completed a short work about human body and organs, entitled <i>Dhikr a'dā'i al-insān</i> , and issued a certificate to his son Shahāb al-Dīn Ahmad for this work.	Colophon in <i>Dhikr a'dā'i al-insān</i> , 156.

1572/73	980		His sister Zaynab died.	<i>Al-Kawākib</i> , e.n. 1424.
October 28, 1575	Rajab 23, 983		His grandson (the son of Shahāb al-Dīn al-Ghazzī) was born	<i>Lutf al-samar</i> , e.n. 102.
November 1, 1575	Rajab 27, 983		Muhammad al-Hijāzī took the professorship of the Taqawiyya Madrasa from his hand.	<i>Lutf al-samar</i> , e.n.4
January 11, 1576	Shawwāl 9, 983		took the professorship of the Taqawiyya Madrasa back	<i>Al-Kawākib</i> , e.n. 1225, 1386 <i>Lutf al-samar</i> , e.n. 4
March 3, 1576	Dhū al-hijja 2, 983		lost his son Shahāb al-Dīn Ahmad	<i>Al-Kawākib</i> , e.n. 1345
			His other son Ibrāhīm took the half of the position of the first prayer leadership (<i>imāma al-ūlā</i>) in the Umayyad Mosque, which became vacant after Shahāb al-Dīn's death	<i>Lutf al-samar</i> , e.n. 266
1576 spring	late 983		took the professorship of the Shāmiyya Jawwāniyya Madrasa after Shahāb al-Dīn's death	<i>Al-Kawākib</i> , entry nu 1205, 1345.
Late 1576	Mid-984		His last son Zakariyya (d. 1626) was born	<i>Al-Usar al-Dimashqiyya</i> , III, 16.
December 23, 1576 – January 16, 1577	Shawwāl 2–26, 984		was in his deathbed	<i>Al-Kawākib</i> , e.n. 1205.
January 16, 1577	Shawwāl 26, 984		died	<i>Al-Kawākib</i> , e.n. 1205.
Late 1570s – early 1580s	Late 980s		started his education was supported financially by his grandfather's family endowment	<i>Kitāb mashīkha Abī al-Mawāhib al-Hanbalī</i> , 10.
Early 1580s	Early 990s		married the daughter of his teacher al-‘Īthāwī started composing poetry	<i>Lutf al-samar</i> , e.n. 114.

September 30, 1587	Shawwāl 27, 995	His son Badr al-Dīn was born	<i>Lutf al-samar</i> , e.n. 1.
Late 1587	Early 996	completed his <i>Tuhfa al-tullāb</i> , a commentary on his father's <i>Naqd al-tālib</i> .	Colophon of <i>Tuhfa al-tullāb</i> , 67.
1587/88	996	lost his wife and married again	<i>Lutf al-samar</i> , e.n. 114.
1589/90	998	His son Su'ūdī was born	<i>Khulāsa al-athar</i> , II, 309.
July/August, 1589	Ramadān 997	His teacher and father-in-law al-'Īthāwī suffered illness for eight months, and appointed him as his deputy in his positions	<i>Lutf al-samar</i> , e.n. 114. <i>Al-Rawd al-ātir</i> , e.n. 56.
1589/90	998	started teaching in the Umayyad Mosque, and received criticisms from senior scholars.	<i>Lutf al-samar</i> , e.n. 2.
July 31, 1590	Ramadān 28, 998	faced harsh criticism from Ibn al-Minqār (d. 1597)	<i>Lutf al-samar</i> , e.n. 47.
August, 1590	Shawwāl, 998	examined before the leading Damascene scholars by the Ottoman judge, and proved his competence as a scholar, and received the professorship of the Qassā'iyya Shāfi'iyya Madrasa later on.	<i>Lutf al-samar</i> , e.n. 47, 261.
Pre-September 1590	Pre-Dhū al-qa'da 998	took the professorship of the Kallāsa Madrasa	<i>Lutf al-samar</i> , e.n. 261.
November 2, 1590	Muharram 4, 999	wrote his father's biography, entitled <i>al-Durr al-lāmi' bi-anwār al-badr al-sāti'</i>	<i>Lutf al-samar</i> , p.107.
Ca.1591/92	Ca. 1000	started teaching his father's Quranic exegesis in verse, and received criticisms	<i>Tarājim al-a'yān</i> , e.n.301. <i>Lutf al-samar</i> , e.n. 68.
August/September 1593	Dhū al-hijja 1001	was in Mecca and performed pilgrimage with his son Badr al-Dīn	<i>Lutf al-samar</i> , entry u.1.
June 1, 1594	Ramadān 12, 1002	His grandson (son of his son Shahāb al-Dīn) died in plague at the age of nineteen	<i>Lutf al-samar</i> , e.n. 102.

1595/96	1004	completed an extended version of his work on his father's biography, and called it <i>Bulgha al-wācid fī tarjama Shaikh al-Islām al-Wālid</i>	<i>Lutf al-samar</i> , p.107.
June 1597 – March 1598	Shawwāl 1005 – Shāban 1006	His teacher al-‘Īthāwī and his relative al-Būrīnī took some of the vacant positions after Ibn al-Minqār and al-Dāwūdī passed away	<i>Lutf al-samar</i> , e.n. 2, 47, 68, 114.
1597/98	1006	took the Halabiyya cell in the Umayyad Mosque, where his father Badr al-Dīn lived in seclusion.	<i>Lutf al-samar</i> , e.n. 145, 210.
June/July 1599	Dhū al-hijja 1007	was in Mecca for pilgrimage	<i>Lutf al-samar</i> , e.n. 273.
May/June 1602	Dhū al-hijja, 1010	was in Mecca to perform pilgrimage with his son Badr al-Dīn	<i>Lutf al-samar</i> , e.n. 158.
April/May 1606	Dhū al-hijja, 1014	was in Mecca for pilgrimage with his son Su‘ūdī	<i>Khulāsa al-athar</i> , II, 309.
May 13, 1609	Safar 8, 1018	lost his son Diya’ al-Dīn in plague	<i>Lutf al-samar</i> , e.n. 1.
November 26, 1609	Shāban 28, 1018	lost his son Badr al-Dīn from diarrhea at the age of twenty two.	<i>Lutf al-samar</i> , e.n. 1.
February 2, 1610	Dhū al-qa‘da 8, 1018	played a role in al-Karakī’s execution	<i>Lutf al-samar</i> , e.n. 277.
1615/16	1024	His grandson (son of Su‘ūdī) Ali was born	<i>Al-Usar al-Dimashqiyya</i> , III, 17.
March 10, 1616	Safar 21, 1025	traveled to Aleppo in a delegation committee to meet the Ottoman vizier	<i>Lutf al-samar</i> , e.n. 114, 13, 39.
April 3, 1616	Rabī‘ al-awwal 16, 1025	returned to Damascus from Aleppo	<i>Lutf al-samar</i> , e.n. 114.
May 1616	Jumādā I 1025	His teacher and father-in-law al-‘Īthāwī took the professorship of the Shāmiyya Barrāniyya Madrasa after a struggle for two months	<i>Lutf al-samar</i> , e.n. 114, 184.
December 1616 / January 1617	Dhū al-hijja 1025	lost his teacher and father-in-law al-‘Īthāwī replaced al-‘Īthāwī in the professorship of the Shāmiyya al-Barrāniyya Madrasa	<i>Lutf al-samar</i> , e.n. 114.

1622/23	1032	His professorship in the Shāmiyya Barrāniyya Madrasa was given to Shams al-Dīn al-Maydānī	<i>Lutf al-samar</i> , e.n. 55.
March 4, 1623	Jumādā I 2, 1032	left Damascus for Istanbul to take back his professorship in the Shāmiyya Barrāniyya Madrasa	<i>Najm al-Dīn al-Ghazzī, al-Rihla</i> , 5a.
April 26, 1623	Jumādā II, 25 1032	entered Istanbul, and visited Şeyhülislam Yahya Efendi	<i>Najm al-Dīn al-Ghazzī, al-Rihla</i> , 82b.
June 2, 1623	Shāban 3, 1032	left Istanbul for Damascus after receiving the professorships of Muqaddamiya and Nāsiriyya madrasas	<i>Najm al-Dīn al-Ghazzī, al-Rihla</i> , 108a.
July 16, 1623	Ramadān 18, 1032	entered Damascus	<i>Najm al-Dīn al-Ghazzī, al-Rihla</i> , 180a.
Mid-July 1623	Mid-Ramadān, 1032	learned his appointment to the professorship of the Shāmiyya Barrāniyya Madrasa	<i>Najm al-Dīn al-Ghazzī, al-Rihla</i> , 178a.
Mid-October 1623	Mid-Dhū al-hijja 1032	learned the appointment of Shams al-Dīn al-Maydānī to the professorship of the Shāmiyya Barrāniyya Madrasa	<i>Najm al-Dīn al-Ghazzī, al-Rihla</i> , 180b
Late October 1623	Early Muharram 1033	was in Baalbek in a delegation committee of Damascene notables to visit Fakhr al-Dīn Maʿn	<i>Lutf al-samar</i> , e.n. 55. <i>Lutf al-samar</i> , e.n. 66, 250.
November 21, 1623	Muharram 28, 1033	returned to Damascus	<i>Lutf al-samar</i> , e.n. 250.
September/October 1624	Dhū al-hijja 1033	took the second half of the professorship of the Shāmiyya Barrāniyya Madrasa as well as the professorship of an endowed corner in the Umayyad Mosque after al-Maydānī's death	<i>Lutf al-samar</i> , e.n. 55. <i>Al-Rawd al-ātir</i> , p. 922
September 1624	Late 1033	completed <i>Lutf al-samar</i>	<i>Khulāsa al-athar</i> , IV, 198. <i>Lutf al-samar</i> , preamble
1625/26	1035	His brother Zakariyyā died	<i>Al-Usar al-Dimashqiyya</i>

September/October 1632	Rabī' al-awwal 1042	His brother Abū al-Tayyib died	<i>Khulāsa al-Athar</i> , I, 138–39.
April/May 1638	Dhū al-hijja 1047	left his son Su'ūdī as his deputy in Shāfi'ī jurisdiction in Damascus and left for Mecca to perform pilgrimage	<i>Khulāsa al-athar</i> , II, 309.
1640/41	1050	His grandson (son of Su'ūdī) Abd al-Karīm was born	<i>Al-Usar al-Dimashqiyya</i> , III, 17.
ca.1645	Mid-1050s	suffered a stroke and had trouble in speaking until his death	<i>Khulāsa al-athar</i> , IV, 199.
June 8, 1651	Jumādā II 18, 1061	died in Damascus	<i>Khulāsa al-athar</i> , IV, 200.

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