

Dr Su'ud Muhammad al-Asfur  
Department of History  
Faculty of Arts  
University of Kuwait

THE POLITICAL ROLE OF THE ULAMA OF  
DAMASCUS AT THE TIME OF CIRCASSIAN  
MAMELUKS  
(784H/1382AD-923H/1517AD)

Political life in Damascus and other cities of al-Sham was in the hands of Circassian Mameluks who differed in race, origin, language, temperament, and qualities from the people of Damascus. The Circassian Mameluks kept aloof from their subjects due to an education system that confined them to military barracks and made them loyal only to their rulers (amirs) who trained them. They were also loyal to their brothers in arms.<sup>1</sup> Their main concern was focused on the organization of army and the exploitation of people. The high-ranking officers chose for themselves forces appropriate to their ranks and they directly trained, disciplined and used them. In addition to that, the representative of the sultanate in Damascus kept a big legislative organization<sup>2</sup> to which he appointed high

---

1 B.Lewis, *The Arabs in History*, pp.155-156, D.Ayalon, *Studies on the Structure of Mamluke Army -I,II,III* Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies (BsiAs) vols, xv.2, pp.203-228, xv.3, pp.448-476, xvl. 1, pp.57-90.

2 Naeib Al-Sultana in Damascus : He was named in official letters as “Kafel Al-Sultanah Al-Sharif a in Al-Sham Al-Mahrouss”, He used to represent the Sultan, reports used to be written at his behest, as with with the Nazer of Al-Omawi Mosque and Bimarestan Al-Nouri, he managed all Sultaanate affairs, using soldiers, arranging officials, he was also named Malek Al-Omaraa, Kabeer Al-Omaraa, he sits in Egypt next to the Sultan, his qualities should not be attributed to others, Naeib of Damascus has been held in the Mamluke era by seventy eight, some of them hold the position several times such as Baidmer Al-Khawarezmi who hold it six times, and Al-Amir Ali Al-Mardini, and Sheikh Al-Khaski three times, Qansou Al-Yehyawe, Bard Bek Al-Dhaheri, Norouz Al-Haf

military commanders in order to facilitate his military matters. The sultanate supported itself economically by imposing taxes on traders, farmers, and artisans and for that purpose it employed a great number of officials such as scribes, accountants and tax collectors. Since the ulama were appointed as judges and inspectors of public finances and markets, they were a category of the society that was closest to the ruling authorities.<sup>3</sup>

One must not overestimate the political role played by the ulama of Damascus as they were really powerless to prevent the grave acts of corruption which resulted in the destruction of the pillars of the Circassian Mameluk state.

It would seem to a researcher that the reason for that has to do with the ulama being obliged to perpetuate the governing regime as an indispensable thing for the unity of community on the one hand, and with the absence of a military power capable of making a change, on the other.

Since the Mameluks did not have influence on the masses of Damascus on account of their aloofness from them, the ulama became the link between the Mameluks and the masses as they appointed themselves the guardians of the masses of Damascus, defending their rights and rising to their support.<sup>4</sup>

---

ezi twice, see: Sobh Al-Aasha, vol.4, p.188, Aalam Al-Wara, pp.47, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 57, 58, 59, 63, 64, 85, 88, 92, 98, Neyabat Al-Sultana Fi Misr Zaman Salateen Al-Mamaleek (648-923H/1250-1517AD) for Muhammad Abd Al-Ghani Al-Ashqar, An M.A. Thesis, Faculty of Arts, History Department, Ain Shams University, 1993AD.

3 Boliak A.N., Al-Intifada Al-Shabiya Fi Al-Asr Al Mamluki Wa Asbaboha Al-Ijtemaiya, Islamic Studies Magazine, translated by Antoine Farah 1989AD, 8/551-573, Bauper-William, Misr Wa Sourya Tahta Hokm Salateen Al-Jarakessa, translated by Louis

Sayel, Beirut, 1988AD 15/60-65,16/9-21, Kahen-Claude, Tataworr Al-Iqtaa, 8/25-52, Al Harakat Wai Tanzeemat Al-Shaabiya Fi Modon Aasia Al-Islamiya Fi Al-Osour Al-Wosta 7/273-288, translated by Said Sayegh, Beirut, 1987AD, Ialoon-David, Al-Jarakessa Fi Mamlakat Al-Mamaleek, translated, Beirut, 1990 AD, 69/135-147, Kahen claude, Tareikh Al-Arab Wai Shooub Al-Islamiya, translated by Selim Rouhi, Beirut vol.1 p.646, Ibrahim Tarkhan, Dawlato Al-Maaleek Al-Jarakessa, p.251, Said Aashour,Al-Asr Al-Mamaleeki, p.308.

4 Poliak, A.N, Les Revoltes Populaires en Egypte Al, Epoque des Mamelouks ET Lews Causes Economiques, ABSTRACTA ISLAMICA, p.252

They did so because they came from among the sons of the oppressed people of Damascus. An example of this is the rebellion of the ulama of Damascus against Sultan al-Zahir Barquq<sup>5</sup> who encouraged the people of Damascus to demand his abdication.<sup>6</sup> This resulted in al-Zahir Barquq imprisoning some of them, such as judges Sadr al-Din Ibn Muflih,<sup>7</sup> who was beaten and jailed until his death in 789H./1387AD,<sup>8</sup> and Shihab al-Din Ibn al-Qurashi<sup>9</sup> who climbed on the highest walls of Damascus and called on its citizens at the top of his voice: "Fighting Barquq is more incumbent on you than praying the Friday prayer."<sup>10</sup> After he was imprisoned, he was beaten and tortured to death in 793/1390. Badr al-Din Ibn Khatib al-Hadithah<sup>11</sup> was imprisoned and beaten because he publicly

---

5 Barquq Ibn Ans or Anss Al-Othmani, Abu Said, Saif Al-Din, Al-Malek Al-Dhaher, the first Jarakessa king in Egypt, brought by one of the slave traders who gave him his name and sold him, he seized the Sultanate from Al-Saleh Amir Hajj, the last Qalawoons sultan, in 784H/1382AD, and was named Al-Malek Al-Dhaher, Al-Jarakessa State nourished during his era, ruling Egypt and Al-Sham, he died in 801H/1398AD, see: Anbaa Al-Ghamr, his bibliography, vol.4 pp.50-54, Al-Dawo Al-Lamei, vol.3 pp.10-12, Badaei Al-Zohour, vol.1 pp.258,290, Shatharat Al-Dhahab, vol.7 pp.6-7.

6 Ibn Hajji, Abra Al-Eissar, paper26.

7 Suliman Bin Youssef Bin Mefleh, Al-Demashqi, Al-Yassouffi, Al-Shafei, Sadr Al-Din, Faqih, Mohaddith, born in 739H/1338AD and died in 789H/1387AD, see: Al-Durar Al-Kamena, his bibliography, vol.2 p.166, Anbaa Al-Ghamr, vol.2 p265, Al-Nojoum Al-Zahera, vol.11 p.312, Shatharat Al-Dhahab, vol.6 p307.

8 See previous resources for his bibliography.

9 Ahmad Bin Omar Bin Muslim Al-Qorashi, Al-Demashqi, Al-Qabibati, Al-Malhi, Al-Shafei, Shehab Al-Din, known by Ibn Al-Qorashi, Qadi, Faqih, Mohaddith, died in 793H/1390AD see: Nozhato Al-Nofouss Wai Abdan, his bibliography, vol.1, p.339, Al-Durar Al-Kamena, vol. 1, p.232, Al-Daleel Al-Shafi, vol.1 p.266, Al-Nojoum Al-Zahera, vol.12, p.123, Anbaa Al-ghamr, vol.1 p.343, Tareikh Ibn Qadi Shahba, vol.1 p.391, Qodat Damashque, p.116.

10 Al-Sairafi, Nozhato Al-Nofouss Wai Abdan, vol.1 pp.324-325, Ibn Toloun, Naqd Al-Taleb, paper 46, Ibn Hajji, Abra Al-Eissar, paper 36.

11 Al-Hassan Bin Ali Bin Sorour, Al-Ramthawi, Al-Demashqi, Al-Shafei, Badr Al-Din, known as Ibn Khateib Al-Haditha, Faqih, Mohaddith, born in 736H/1335AD died in 800H/1397AD, see: Al-Durar Al-Kamena, his bibliography, vol.2 p.24, Anbaa Al-Ghamr, vol.3 p.403, Tabaqat Al-Shafeiyya for Ibn Qadi Shahba, vol.3 p.152, Shatharat Al-Dhahab, vol.6 p.364, Mogam Al-Beldan, vol.2 p.232.

criticized al-Zahir Barquq; he did not stop commanding the good and prohibiting the evil until he died in 800/1397.<sup>12</sup>

A Damascene alim Shihab al-Din al-Hasabani (d.815/1412)<sup>13</sup> challenged the injustice of Sultan Al-Zahir Barquq and those around him who controlled people's livelihoods and took away their freedom. He opposed them and exposed them. This brought him a lot of troubles as they disliked him, imprisoned him and tortured him until he nearly died.<sup>14</sup>

A Damascene alim Shihab al-Din al-Ba'uni (d.816/1413)<sup>15</sup> fiercely opposed Al-Zahir Barquq's greed, refusing to lend him money from the orphans' fund, and enticed ulama against him. Al-Zahir responded by removing and humiliating the alim and by throwing him into prison until Sultan al-Nasir Faraj<sup>16</sup> released and entrusted him with the judgeship of Damascus.<sup>17</sup>

---

12 Ibn Qadi Shahba, *Tabaqat Al-Shafeiya*, vol.3 p.152, Ibn Toloun Zakhair Al-Qasr, paper 76.

13 Ahmad Bin Ismail Bin Khalifa, Al-Nablsi, Al-Hassabani, Al-Demashqi, Al-Shafei, Shehab Al-Din, Mohaddith, Faqih, Osouli, Loghawi, born in 749H-1348AD, died in 815H-1412AD see: Al-Dawo Al-Lamei, his bibliography, vol.1 p.237, *Anbaa Al-Ghamr*, vol.7 p.78, *Lahz Al-Alhaz for Ibn Fahd*, p.244, *Thail Tathqera Al-Hoffaz for Al-Sayoti*, p.374, *Al-Nojoun Al-Zahera*, vol.1 p.224, *Al-Manhal Al-Safi*, vol.1 p.224, *Qudato Demashque*, p.131, *Qudato Al-Shafeiya for Ibn Qadi Shahba*, vol.4 pp.10-11, *Mojam Al-Moalef een*, vol.1 p.164.

14 Ibn Qadi Shahba, *Tabaqat Al-Sahfeiya*, vol.4 pp.10-11, Ibn Toloun, *Zakhair Al-Qasr*, paper 129, Ibn Hajji, *Abra Al-Eissar*, paper 115.

15 Ahmad Bin Nasser Bin Khalifa, Al-Nasseri, Al-Baouni, Al-Demashqi, Al-Shafei, Shehab Al-Din Abu Al-Abbass, Faqih, Mohaddith, Mof assir, Modarriss, born in 752H-1351AD, and died in 816H-1413AD, see: Al-Dawo Al-Lamei, his bibliography, vol.2 p.231, *Qudato Demashque*, pp.122-124, *Shatharat Al-Dhahab* vol.7 pp.118-119.

16 Faraj Bin Barqoq, Al-Malek Al-Nasser, one of the Jarakessa kings, he had a Baiaa for the Sultanate in 801H-1398AD He exaggerated in slaughtering his father's Mamaleeks till they hated him and killed him in 815H-1412AD, see: Al-Dawo Al-Lamei, his bibliography, vol.6 p.168, *Badaei Al-Zohour*, vol.1 pp.317, 350, 354-357, and *Shatharat Al-Dhahab*, vol.7 pll2.

17 Al-Sakhawe, *Al-Dawo Al-Lamei*, vol.3 p.12, Ibn Toloun, his letters, paper 16

In the year 795/1392 a Shafi'i judge in Damascus, Najm al-Din al-Hasabani,<sup>18</sup> opposed the Mameluk amirs and representatives and protected the people from their violence. He stopped al-*hajib al-kabir*<sup>19</sup> Tamarbugha al-Manjaki<sup>20</sup> who wanted to lay his hands upon the orphans' properties, exposed him and enticed people against him. Tamarbugha became angry and imprisoned Najm al-Din, but after a while he had to release him when the other judges intervened and threatened him with taking the matter to the governor of al-Sham, amir Sayf al-Din Tanbak al-Hasani.<sup>21</sup> He also opposed *dawadar*<sup>22</sup> Janbak<sup>23</sup> who was violent and unjust and Najm al-Din used to describe him in worst terms. When he heard that Najm al-Din criticized and disparaged him, Janbak imprisoned him and framed him for falsifying testimonies of witnesses and for taking bribe. He beat him severely and fined him a lot of money. Najm al-Din continued struggling against the unjust Mameluk emirs and representatives until he was killed in 830/1426.<sup>24</sup>

---

18 Omar Bin Haji Bin Moussa, Abu Al-Fotouh, Al-Saadi, Al-Hasbani, Al-Shafei, Najm Al-Din, born in 767H-1365AD Qadi, Faqih, dead in 830H-1426AD see: Tabaqat Al-Shafeiyya for Ibn Qadi Shahba, his bibliography, vol.4 pp.95-98, Anbaa Al-Ghamr, vol.8 pl29, Qudato Demashque, pl33, Shatharat Al-Dhahab, vol.7 p.193

19 Al-Hajeb Al-Kabeer : He is also named Hajeb Al-Hejab, his job was to mediate between the Omaraa and the Gonoud either by himself or by telling the Naeib, see: Sobh Al-Aasha, vol.4 p.19, vol.5 p.449, Mojam Al-Alfadh Al-Tareikhiya, Al-Asr Al-Mamluki p.59.

20 Tamarbugha Al-Manjaki, Saif Al-Din Al-Hajeb Al-Kabeer, ascribed to Al-Amir Manjak al-Youssuffi, Hajeb Demashque, Tamarbugha liked the scientists at the beginning then he hated and hurt them, he was killed in 798H-1395AD, see: Al-Durar Al-Kamena, his bibliography vol.1 pp 518-519.

21 Al-Amir Tanbak Al-Hassani, Saif Al-Din, Naeib Al-Sham. He was a sagacious, religious, courageous, flexible man, he had Niyabat Al-Sham in 795H-1392AD and was killed in Damascus Fort in 802H-1399AD see: Aalam Al-Wara, his bibliography, p.56, Al-Dawo Al-Lamei vol.3, pp.44-45.

22 Ibn Toloun, Naqd Al-Taleb, paper 113

23 Al-Amir Janbak, one of the Moqadems in Damascus, and its Dawadar, he was originally one of the Otaqaa of Al-Taghri Barmash Al-Tarkumani Naeib Halab, he was killed due to his tyranny in 873H-1468AD see: Al-Dawo Al-Lamei, his bibliography, vol.2 p.62

24 Ibn Qadi Shahba, Tabaqat Al-Shafeiyya, vol.4 pp.95-97, Al-Naeimi, Al-Onwan, paper 146.

These were some attitudes of the Damascene ulama who expressed sincere loyalty to their people and whole-hearted devotion in defending them from harm. Therefore it is not surprising that their words were heard, influencing feelings and behavior of the Damascene society of the time.

One of the proofs demonstrating how much influence the Damascene ulama exerted on the masses is an appeal by the deposed governor of al-Sham, emir Nawruz<sup>25</sup> - who refused obedience to Sultan al-Mu'ayyad Shaikh al-Mahmudi<sup>26</sup> - to the Damascene ulama in 817/1414 seeking their support in his uprising against Sultan al-Mu'ayyad Shaikh.<sup>27</sup> When his cause became stronger, some ulama accepted the appeal, but the rest of them rejected it. This led to a huge discord because a great number of soldiers and the common people joined Nawruz's army<sup>28</sup> following the

---

25 Norouz Al-Hafezi, ascribed to Al-Sultan Al-Dhaher Barqouq who was the first to promote him to a Khaski then Amir Khor, he was unjust, miser, who raised corruption in Al-Moayed Sheikh's time, killed in 817H-1414AD, see: Anbaa Al-Ghamr, his bibliography, vol.7 p.163, Al-Dawo Al-Lamei, vol.10 pp.204-205.

Al-Khaski, singular of Al-Khaskiya is who accompany the Sultan in his private time, leads his procession and prepares his Mawkeb, Al-Khaskiya at Al-Malek Al-Nasser Muhammad Bin Qalawoon's time were numbered as forty then more till they were around one thousand by Al-Malek Al-Ashraf Bersbai's time, see: Zobdato Kashf Al-Mamalek for Ibn Shaheen Al-Dhaheri, p.116, Al-Nojoum Al-Zahera, vol.7 pp.179-180.

Amir Akhor is in charge of the stables of the Sultan or the Amir, he is responsible for all the requirements of their horses, cattle and the like, the name is composed of two words: Amir and Akhor which means the one who takes care of the cattle, see: Sobh Al -Aasha, vol.5 p.461.

26 Sheikh Bin Abd Allah Al-Mahmaoudy Al-Dhahery Abu Al- Nassr, Al-Moayed, one of the Jarakessa kings who was a Khaski then Naeib for Tripoli then Damascus then Sultan, he was brave, generous and sagacious, he was dead in 824H-1421AD see: Anbaa Al-Ghamr, his bibliography, vol.7 pp. 435-437, Al-Dawo Al-Lamei, vol.3 pp.308-311, Badaei Al-Zohour, vol.2 p.2, Shatharat Al-Dhahab, vol.7 p.164, Al-Moqtafa, papers 18-28.

27 Ibn Toloun, Zakhair Al-Qasr, paper 122.

28 Al-Awam or Al-Aama: They divided in Mamluke age into two great parts, one known now as The middle-class which is divided into three sections : fine artists, traders, then craftsmen, the second part is divided into three sections

opinion of the ulama who accepted that appeal. Sultan al-Mua'yyad sent a message to amir Nawruz to appease him and seek reconciliation. But he rejected it and he fortified himself inside the Damascus citadel. Mu'ayyad's army besieged him. The ulama advised him to surrender, but he refused and so his army and the common people deserted him. When he sensed that defeat was near he sought safety and it was granted. But when he left the citadel, al-Mu'ayyad betrayed him, chained him and had him killed.<sup>29</sup>

The Tatar attacks led by Timurlank (Tamerlane)<sup>30</sup> against the Circassian Mameluk state put the Damascene ulama under a real test showing through it the extent of their loyalty and devotion to their people. In fact, the Tatar danger became clearer when Timurlank succeeded in conquering, with a surprising speed, Transoxiana making Samarqand<sup>31</sup>

---

which are villagers, city dwellers of the Ayareen, Fedaweya, Shottar, and Rea sects, Polyak describes the Aama as the farmers, Bedouins, Slaves, craftsmen and smaller trades men who suffered differentiation between classes resulting in social and economic relationships.

We do not contradict this definition but we add to it those who are intentionally or non-intentionally unemployed, like Al-Zoar, Al-Awaniya, Al-Belassiya, Al-Ghawghaa and the rest, we will refer to these sects in our study of the Social role of the scientists, see: Taarefat Al-Awam for Ahmad Ramadan in his book *Al-Mogtamaa Al-Islami Fi Belad Al-Sham Fi Asr Al-Horoub Al-Salibiya*, pp.100-101, and see: Poliak (A.n.) *Les Revoltes Populaires en Egypte AL* "Epoque des Mamelouks Et Leurs Causes-Economiques, ABSTRA ISLAMIC, Cinquieme serie (1932-34), p.251.

29 Ibn Hijr Al-Asqalani, *Anbaa Al-Ghamr*, vol.7, p.163, Ibn Iyass, *Badaei Al-Zhohour*, vol.2, pp.13-14, Ibn Kanan, *Al-Mawakeb Al-Islamiya Fil Mamalek Al-Shamiya*, Ibn Toloun, *Zakhaer Al-Qasr*, paper 123.

30 Taymor, wrongly pronounced Taimour, means melting iron, or melting kings, and "Lank" means the limp, and he was so called when he composed a gang to steal the cattle and was injured, his origin is of Jorkan tribe, that came from the Tartarian Berlas tribe, his grandfather is f Qarashor Noyan minister of Jaqtai, the second son of Jenkeez Khan, see: Agaeb Al-Maqdour, his bibliography, p.194, Sobh Al-Aasha, vol.7 p.307, Al-Nojoum Al-Zahera, vol.12 p.254, *Anbaa Al-Ghamr*, vol.1 p.15, *FakehatAl-Kholafaa*, p.291.

31 Samarqand : Lands beyond the river, it is said to be of Thi Al- Quarnain buildings, built upon Wadi Al-Safad, Al-Azhari mentioned that Shamar Abu

his capital. Shortly afterwards he occupied Khorasan,<sup>32</sup> Herat,<sup>33</sup> Tabaristan<sup>34</sup> and Gurgan<sup>35</sup> and then he turned towards the city of Tabriz,<sup>36</sup> placing it under his control and getting rid of its ruler Kara Muhammad al-Turkomani.<sup>37</sup> Then he turned towards Middle East conquering it in fast and surprising expeditions.<sup>38</sup> It became clearly visible that Timurlank was aiming to subjugate all the rulers on the earth and to show his terrible personality to the world's nations known at the time as the leader of an undefeatable army.<sup>39</sup> There is no doubt that the establishment of a

---

Karb built it, so it was called Shamar Kant, then Samaqand, it was also said that Alexander built it, and said that it was ascribed to Shamar Bin Afriquis Bin Abraha, see: Mogam Al-Beldan, vol.3 pp.246-250.

32 Khorassan: a spacious land, its first boundary after Iraq is Azathoir Qasabat Gouin and Baihaq, its last boundaries after India, Takharstan, Ghazna, Sagistan and Karaman, it includes big cities like Nissabour, Horat, Marou, Balakh, Taleqan, Abiord, Sarkhass and the cities of Gihoun river, researchers differed concerning its origin, saying that it is ascribed to Khorassan Bin Aalem Bin Salem Bin Nouh (PUH), others said that Khorassam is the sun in Farsi language and Wassan is the origin of a thing whereof it issues, others said that it means all that is plain, as Kharkal Wa San means plain, see: Moagam Al-Beldan, vol.2 pp.350-354.

33 Horat: one of the big cities of Khorassan, it includes big pastures, and fluxing waters, it is said to be built by Alexander, see : Mogam Al-Beldan, vol.5 pp.396-397.

34 Tabaristan: Tabari is ascribed to Tabar, while Stan means place or side, so it means the side of Tabar, it encompasses spacious countries like Dahistan, Gorgan, Estrabath, Aamel, Shallouss, see: Mogam Al-Beldan, vol.4, pp.13-16.

35 Gorgan: a great city amidst Tabaristan and Khorassan, some consider it part of each of them, it contains many mansions and waters, palms and snow spread in its land, see : Mogam Al-Beldan, vol.2 pp.119-122.

36 Tabreez: the most celebrated city of Athrabeegan, includes running rivers and great pastures, see : Mogam Al-Beldan, vol.2 p.13

37 Qara Muhammad Bin Beram Khaga Al-Turkumani, Hakem Tabreez and Al-Moussel, died in 791H-1388Ad, see: Al-Dawo Al-Lamei, vol.6 p.216, Badaei Al-Zohour, vol.1/2 p.392.

38 Ibn Hajji, Abra Al-Eissar, paper 58, 59, Sykes : A History of Persia, VII. P.P. 281-302.

39 Ibn Taghri Burdi, Al-Nojoum Al-Zahera, vol.12 p.43, Ibn Hajji, Abra Al-Eissar, paper 58-61, Malcolm, J: History of Persia, pp.482-483.



new Mameluk state such as the Circassian Mamluk state - which the neighboring states recognized and submitted to and with which they were connected through the links of friendship and alliance - simultaneously with Timurlank's aspirations to humiliate rulers of the conquered countries, represented an obstacle to his expansionist ambitions and hopes. Therefore he resolved to destroy them. Facing such a threat, Sultan Al-Zahir Barquq began preparing for it.<sup>40</sup> But the fate intervened because he died before the start of the Tatar invasion in 801/1398. He was succeeded by his son al-Nasir Faraj and this news made Timurlank happy.<sup>41</sup>

However, Timurlank marched against the cities of the Mameluk sultanate and the cities of al-Sham, such as Aleppo, Hama, Sidon, and Beirut, began falling one after the other into the Tatar hands where the conquerors committed terrible crimes of murder, plunder, rape and destruction.<sup>42</sup>

And the turn of Damascus came. Its ulama had an obvious influence in directing public opinion and mobilizing it for repelling Tatar attacks. The majority of Damascene ulama met with the notables among the amirs, merchants and the rich. All of them were more afraid of the possible losses from surrender than from dangers of resistance.<sup>43</sup> So they decided

---

40 Ibn Eyass, *Badaei Al-Zohour*, vol.1/L pp.369, 378, 386, 387, Ibn Toloun, his letters paper 19, Al-Naeimi, Al-Onwan, papers 59, 56, Ibn Hajji, *Abra Al-Eissar*, paper 53.

41 Ibn Taghri Burdi, *Al-Nojourn Al-Zahera*, vol.12 p.264, Ibn Hajji, *Abra Al-Eissar*, paper 63, Lamb, H. *La vie de Tamerlane*. Trad.de L'anglais par Robert. P.204.

42 Al-Maqrizi, *Al-Solouk*, vol.3 pp.1033-1034,1036, Ibn Al-Shahna, *Al-Rawda*, vol.2 pp.190-198, Al-Aini, *Oqd Al-Guman*, vol.27 paper 174-175, Ibn Arabshah, *Agaeib Al-Maqdour*, pp.130-138, Ibn Taghri Burdi, *Al-Nojourn Al-Zahera*, vol.12 pp.223-226, Al-Sairafi, *Nozhato Al-Nofouss*, vol.2 pp.74-77, Al-Salami, *Mokhtassar Al-Tawareikh*, paper 90, Ibn Eyass, *Badaei Al-Zohour Vi* pp.597,598,599., Mignaelli, *vita Tamerlani*, p.211, wiet : *L'Egypte, Arab*, p.526; Price, *Memoirs VIII*, p.330, Thoumin, *Histoire de Syrie*, p.245, Yazdi:*Zafanama VIII*, p.176, Hilda.H, *Tamburlaine*, pp. 226-229, Champdor. A, *Tamerlan*, pp.175-178.

43 Ibn-Elwan, *Al-Nasaeih Al-Mohemma* ( A transcription in Dhaheriyat Demashque, no.7357) paper 18, anonymous, *Tareikh Al-Ashraf Qaitbai* (a transcription in the National Library in Paris, no.5916) paper 23.

to distribute weapons and supplies in order to prepare the city for a siege.<sup>44</sup> They did all that out of fear from the bloodthirsty reputation of the invaders. The resistance of Damascus lasted for two whole days because of good fortification and the abundance of supplies and equipment. But some ulama, including judge Ibn Muflih al-Hanbali<sup>45</sup> (d. 803/1400) realized the gravity of situation and so they called for the surrender of the city of Damascus and putting it under the mercy of the invader.<sup>46</sup> Historian Ibn Taghriyy Bardi accused them of cowardice, treason and careerism.<sup>47</sup> But the matter cannot be interpreted in that way. However, it is possible that the reason for the eagerness of the Hanbali judge and his companions for the surrender was their fear for the safety and security of the citizens of Damascus, especially since, as we have said, the other cities of al-Sham had fallen into the hands of the invaders without displaying offering worthy resistance.

Finally the inevitable happened to Damascus. It was totally plundered and burned. The men were killed, women and children were raped bestially and hideously. The historians of that era recorded all that. The invaders were not just satisfied with destroying the city of Damascus and so when they left, they took away artisans, skillful craftsmen and some of the ulama who were plentiful in Damascus.<sup>48</sup>

---

44 Ibn Khaldoun, Al-Taarief, p.367, Ibn Taghri Burdi, Al-Nojourn Al-Zahera, vol.12, p.219, Ibn Toloun, Qudato Demashque, pp.288-289, Ibn Hajji, Abra Al-Eissar, papers 111-112, Fischel, Ibn Khaldoun and Tamerlane, pp.33-34.

45 Ibrahim Bin Muhammad Bin Mefleh, Al-Ramini, Al-Maqdissi, Al-Demashqi, Al-Hanbally, Taqio Al-Din, Faqih, Mohaddith, a well-cultured orator, who wrote : Fadlu Al-Salato Ala Al-Nabi (PBUH), Ketabu Al- Malaeka, see: Al-Qalaed Al-Jowhariya, his bibliography, vol.1 pp.161, 162, and Al-Daris, vol.2, pp.47-48, Sahatharat Al-Dhahab, vol.7, p 22, Kashf Al-Dhonoun, p.1097, Idah Al-Maknoon, vol.2, pp. 78,198,333.

46 Al-Maqrizi, Al-Solouk, vol.3, p.1046, Ibn Taghri Burdi, Al-Nojourn Al-Zahera, vol.12, p.240.

47 Ibn Taghri Burdi, Al-Nojourn AL-Zahera, vol.12 pp.236,237, 238,239,240.

48 Ibn Eyass, Badaei Al-Zohour, 1/2 pp.615-616, Mignanelli, op.cit.p.229, Hilda.H,op.cit 235; Champdor.A.op.cit. P.123;Hitti, Hist, of The Arabs. P.701; Schiltberger : The Bondage and Travels, p.23.

The ulama of Damascus were exposed to another real test exemplified by their attitude concerning the Mameluk-Ottoman<sup>49</sup> conflict and its outcome. In fact, the Mameluk-Ottoman relations passed through different stages. During the reign of Sultan Al-Malik al-Ashraf Qaytbay (872-951/1467-1496) those relations were close and smooth in the face of a mutual enemy Ismail al-Safawi.<sup>50</sup> During the reign of Sultan Qanswa al-Ghuri (906-922/1501-1516) the relations entered a stage of closeness mixed with caution and were mainly characterized by expressions of ex-

---

49 In 700H/1200AD Othmani State was founded in Al-Anadoul upon the wreckages remaining from Al-Mamaleek Al-Slajeqa on account of Byzantium Empire, it remained for two thirds of a century as a mere small Emirate on the borders, living in constant anticipation and fear of the coming danger of war, which sometimes did threaten, and always in motion preparing for it.

Brussia was its capital since 727H/1326AD, and in 768H/1366AD, this small Emirate developed into a kingdom on seizing a European land and making "Aderna" its capital, in 857H/1453AD Muhammad Al-Thani opened Qostantiniya announcing the start of a new era which is the empire age, this great man centered his forces of his empire on the Bosf or edges mastering both Asia and Europe wherefore he deserved to inherit the great empire of Byzantium, his successors managed to inherit the Mamaleeks and rule the remainders of the Arab countries, here follows Othmani Sultans in sequence: Othman Al-Awal, Orkhan Al-Awal, Murad Al-Awal, Bazied Al-Awal, Muhammad Galbi, Murad Al-Thani, Muhammad Al-Fateh, Bazid Al-Thani, Selim Al-Awal, Suliman Al-Qanouni, Selim Al-Thani, Murad Al-Thaleth, Muhammad Al-Thaleth, Ahmad Al-Awal, Mustafa Al-Awal, Othman Al-Thani, Murad Al-Rabei, Ibraheem Al-Awal, Muhammad Al-Rabei, Suliman Al-Thani, Ahmad Al-Thani, Mustafa Al-Thani, Ahmad Al-Thaleth, Mahmoud Al-Awal, Othman Al-Thaleth, Mostafa Al-Thaleth, Abd Al-Hamid Al-Awal, Selim Al-Thaleth, Mostafa Al-Rabei, Mahmoud Al-Thani, Abd Al-Meguid, Abd Al-Azia, Murad Al-Khamis, Abd Al-Hamid Al-Thani, Muhammad Rashad, see : Tariekh Al-Dawla Al-Aliya Al-Othmaniya, Muhammad Farid Bek, pp.8-9,10, Majmouat Monshaat Al-Salateen, Feridon Bek, paper 9, document 16/8.

50 Ismail Al-Safawi: Shah Faris (1499-1524AD), he founded the Saf awiya State, he resorted independence to the countries, made the Shite the official cult of Faris, he won his battles with the Osbakiya tribes, and started a long war series with the Turkish Othmanis on resisting the Turkish Sultan Selim Al-Awal's invasion to his country (1511Ad) see: Monshaat Al-Salateen (Mashoosh Halab) paper 329, Ibn Elwan, Nassamat Al-Asshaar, paper 78, Al-Nassaeh Al-Muhemma for the same author, paper 111.

treme sympathy of one side to the other. At the beginning of 922/1516<sup>52</sup> and as a result of the expansionist aspirations of the Ottoman Sultan Selim I, the two sides clashed in the battle of Marj Dabiq which ended in a sweeping Ottoman victory after which the Ottomans entered Aleppo and then turned towards Damascus ushering the beginning of a real test for its ulama. As soon as Selim I entered Damascus, its ulama welcomed him as the liberator considering him the saviour of the Damascene people from the oppression and despotism of Circassian Mameluks. The ulama instructed the Damascene masses to attack the army retreating before the Ottomans and declared their loyalty and recognition to the new authority after they realized that this would be to the benefit of the Damascene people whose guardians they appointed themselves.

There is no doubt that the ulama had no choice but to submit to the victors and accept them so they hurried to recognize the new ruling authority bestowing it with legality and insisting with the Damascene masses about the necessity of extending obedience to them.<sup>53</sup> The ideal way for achieving this was through their mosque sermons. For that reason their firm principle was deference to the conqueror and submission to him.<sup>54</sup>

---

<sup>51</sup> Quansou Bin Abdullah, Al-Sultan, Al-Ashraf, Abu Al-Nassr, Al-Jarakassi, known by Al-Ghori, one of the Mamaleek Al-Jarakessa, born around 850H-1446AD, succeeded to the Sultanate throne in 906H-1500AD, and managed to keep it for fifteen years then died in 922H-1516AD, see: Badaei Al-Zohour, his bibliography, vol.3 p58, Al-Badr Al-Talei, vol.2 p.55, and Shatharat Al-Dhahab, vol.8, pp.113-115.

<sup>52</sup> Ibn Eyass, Badaei Al-Zohour, vol.5 pp.148-150,171,174,176, Ibn Toloun, Mofakahat Al-Khellan, vol.2 p.60, Aalam Al-Wara, p.38, Ibn Zambal, Aakherat Al-Mamaleek, pp.131-136, Ahmad Fouad Metwalle, Al-Fath Al-Othmani Le Belad Al-Sham, p.85, Muhammad Mostafa, Ziyada, Nehayato Salateen Al-Mamaleek, Al-Jameiyya Al-Misriyya Magazine for Historical Studies, May Edition 1951 AD, pp.9,18, Das Tubinger Fragment der Chronic des Ibn Tulun, Hartmann, p.128; A.N. Poliak, Feudalism in Egypt, Syria, Palestine and Lebanon, p.59.

<sup>53</sup> Ibn Al-Shahna, Al-Durr Al-Montakhab, pp.203-206, Al-Aleemi, Thail Al-Anass Al-Galil, paper 117, Ibn Toloun, his letters paper 205-206.

<sup>54</sup> Rozental, Al-Fikr Al-Siyassi Fi Al-Islam, pp.3-27 (translated by Youssef Nazer, Syria 1988AD) H.Ragab, Baad Al-Eetebarat Hawla Nathariyat Al-Sonna Hawla Al-Khelaf a, 3/101-110 (translated by Gamil Cadouri, Syria 1987AD)

We cannot accept that the majority of ulama who were connected with the Circassian Mameluks as the ruling authority were honest to the masses in expressing their position of being guardians to them. A lot of these ulama offered their services to the Mameluks,<sup>55</sup> not out of concern for the welfare of the Damascene masses, but because of the shared mutual interests with the Mameluks. Some of the ulama put themselves in the service of prominent princes for the sake of winning their sympathy and out of ambition for high offices. In 894/1488 somebody threw a stone into the Dar al-Niyaba in Damascus with a letter saying that Shu'ayb,<sup>56</sup> deputy Shafi'i judge,<sup>56</sup> was unjust. Qanswah al-Yahyawi,<sup>57</sup> the sultanate's representative, conveyed it to the Shafi'i judge Shihab al-Din Ibn al-Farfur<sup>58</sup> who had no option but to sack him without checking the report.<sup>59</sup>

Furthermore some ulama did not hesitate to place themselves in the service of the enemies of Islam such as the judge of Damascus Shams al-Din al-Nabulsi<sup>60</sup> (d.805/1402), who backed the Tatar invaders and par-

---

L.Bandar, Nazariyato Al-Ghazali Hawla Al-Hokouma Al-Islamiya, p.99 (translated by Khaled Selim, Syria 1987AD).

55 Ibn Al-Furat, Tareikh Al-Dowal Wai Molouk, vol.9 pp.274-275, 290, Al-Maqrizi, Al-Solouk, vol.2 pp.115,127,173, vol.3 pp.21,43, 48, Ibn Taghri Burdi, Al-Nojoum Al-Zahera, vol.6 pp.253-254; Ibn Sasri, Al-Dura Al-Modiya, p.37.

56 No resources were found for his bibliography.

57 Qansou Al-Yehyawe, Al-Dhahery Jumqaq, Wali Neybat Alexandria, Tripoli, Halab, Damascus in 884H-1479 AD. He was badly reputed at the beginning of his work life that Damascus people stoned him in 898H-1492AD. But later he became virtuous in his life that they extremely desired to carry him upon their heads on his death in 903H-1497AD, see: Al-Dawo Al-Lamei, his bibliography, vol.6 p.199, Badaei Al-Zohour, vol.3, p.296, Aalam Al-Wara, pp.97-99.

58 Ahmad Bin Mahmoud Bin Abd Allah, Shehab Al-Din, Ibn Al-Farfur Al-Demashqi, Al-Shafei, Faqih, Adib, born in 825H-1448AD and died in 911H-1505AD, see Al-Qawaqeb Al-Saeira, vol.1 pp.141-145.

59 Al-Basrawi, his history, p.133, Ibn Toloun, Naqd Al-Taleb, paper 49, Fayet Caston, Thabata Be Maraseem Mamaleek Souriya, p.55 (translated by Antoine Farah, Beirut 1990AD.)

60 Muhammad Bin Muhammad Bin Ahmad, Al-Nablsi, Al-Demashqi, Al-Hanbali, Shams Al-Din, Faqih, Loghawi, Modarriss, he held Qadaa Al-Hanabela

icipated in taking people's property unjustly.<sup>61</sup> Some faint-hearted ulama partook in his misdeed. One such person was Muhy al-Din Ibn al-Kishk<sup>62</sup> (808/1405) whom the Tatars appointed a judge. He was named the Judge of the Tatar kingdom. He became involved with them in wrongdoings excessively maltreated the people of Damascus.<sup>63</sup>

Some ulama contributed to the imposition of additional taxes on the Damascene people and for an unauthorized spending of the property endowed for the orphans and different schools after they removed reasons for resistance to those taxes with invalid fatwas.<sup>64</sup> One of those ulama was the afore-mentioned Shams al-Din al-Nabulsi. Nobody was satisfied either with his testimony or with his rulings. Ibn Tulun said of him "Never in the history of Islam were endowments sold out as in his time, and rarely was any of it sold properly. In this way he opened the door which will never be closed."<sup>65</sup>

Cooperation between the Mameluks and the ulama required that the ulama enter different state bodies and so they were appointed judges, legal consultants, heads of state treasury,<sup>66</sup> and inspectors. Besides, all

---

in Damascus several times, died in Damascus in 805H-1402AD, see: Qudato Demashque, his bibliography, p.287, Shatharat Al-Dhahab, vol.7 pp.52-53.

61 Ibn Toloun, Qudato Demashque, p.287, Ibn Hajji, Abra Al-Eissar, paper 68.

62 Mahmoud Bin Ahmad Bin Ismail, Al-Demashqi, Al-Hanafi, Mohye Al-Din, known by Ibn Al-Kishk, Faqih, he held Qadaa Demashque in 800H-1397AD, he said Al-Khotba in Al-Omawi Mosque, died in 808H-1405AD, see : Al-Dawo Al-Lamei, his bibliography, vol.10 p.127, Qudato Demashque, p.202, Shatharat Al-Dhahab, vol.7 p.80.

63 Ibn Toloun, Qudato Demashque, pp.204,287, Zakhair Al-Qasr, paper 38-39, Ibn Hajji, Abra Al-Eissar, paper 76

64 Al-Younini, Thail Meraatu Al-Zaman, vol.2 pp.386-387, Al-Siqaii, Tali Kitab Al-Wafiyat, p.18, Ibn Toloun, Naqd Al-Taleb Le Zaghhal Al-Manasseb, paper 22, Muhammad Mostafa Zayada, Nehayato Salateen Al-Mamaleek, pp.38,39. Lapidus, Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages, p.4.

65 Ibn Toloun, Qudato Demashque, p.287, Al-Naeimi, Al-Onwan, paper 115.

66 Khazanato Bait Al-Mal: to which all finance of the kingdom is carried, it is managed by a distinguished Nazer, see : Sobh Al-Aasha, vol.4 p.31, Al-Wolat Wai Qudato, Al-Kindy, pp.70,112, 113, Al-Aalaq Al-Nafissa, p.16, Khotat Al-Maqreezi, vol.2 p.249,Al-Intessar, vo.4 pp.64-65.

the grand Sufi shaikhs,<sup>67</sup> chief reciters of the Qur'an,<sup>68</sup> lecturers, preachers and imams received official decrees of their appointments.<sup>69</sup>

The supreme judges benefited most among the category of ulama.<sup>70</sup> They enjoyed a lot of political participation by virtue of their proximity to the governing authority. Unfortunately in most cases their posts became corrupt and based on bribery, so that the buying positions in the judiciary became widespread in spite of the importance of these posts.<sup>71</sup> There are a lot of examples for this: a Hanafi judge in Damascus, Zayn al-Din Ibn al-Kafri<sup>72</sup> (d.809/1406), got his post through bribery. He did

---

67 They supervise men of Al-Toroq Al-Soufiya, see : Sobh Al-Aasha, vol.6 p.38, vol.11, pp.90,98.

68 Scientists who knew Ahkam Quraan reading, see: Sobh Al-Aasha, vol.7 p.323.

69 Ibn Al-Furat: Tareikh Al-Dowal Wai Molouk, vol.9 pp.12-13, Ibn Toloun, Omaraa Demashque, pp.84-85, 102, 117, Ibn Eyass, Badaei Al-Zohour, vol.2 p.258, Al-Naeimi, Al-Daress, vol.1 pp.9-10, 413, Supernheim-Mortz, Neqoush Arabiya Li Sourya Al-Shamaliya, Magazine of The Institute of France for Al-Aathar Al-Sharqiya, Cairo, 25/11 Becker, S.H., Hawla Neqoud Sourya Fi Al-Asr Al-Mamluki, pp.93-100 (translated by Louis Sayel, Beirut 1990AD), Straus-Eily, Al-Asaar Wai Rawateb Fi Al-Asr Al-Mamluki, Magazine of Al-Derassat Al-Islamiya Institute, Paris 5/86-87, Bauper-William, Misr Wa Souriya Tahta Hokm Salateen Al-Jarakessa, 16/118-123 (translated by Louis Sayel-Beirut 1988AD)

70 Qudat Al-Qudat: appointed by Al-Sultan Al-Mamluki who grants them Qadaa Khloaat, holds a celebration at their appointment, they used to judge different Qadaya , civil, criminal, legislative, they will be discussed in details in volume 4, see : Sobh Al-Aasha, vol.4 pp.36,41, Khotat Al-Maqrizi, vol.3 p.340, Al-Wolat Wai Qudat, p.589.

71 Ibn Al-Furat, Tareikh Al-Dowal Wai Molouk, vol.7 p.175, Soufageih, Marasseem Mamaleek Souriya (Al-Derassat Al-Sharqiya Institute Periodical, Beirut), 12/46, Al-Maqrizi, Al-Solouk, vol.2 p.126, Ibn Toloun, Mofakahat Al-Khellan, vol.1 pp.30, 37, 63, 77, 140, Ahmad Abd Al-Razeq, Al-Bathl Wai Barttala, p.97, Gibb and Bowen : Islamic Society and the west V.I.Pt.207, Russel, Voyage en Syrie et en Egypte Pendant Les Annees 1782-1885, V.II.P.93.

72 Abd Al-Rahman Bin Youssef, Bin Ahmad Ibn Al-Kafri, Al-Demashqi, Al-Hanafi, Zein Al-Din, Qadi, Faqih, Mohaddith, born in 750H-1349AD and died in 805H-1402AD, see: Al-Dawo Al-Lamei, his bibliography, vol.4 p.159, Qudato Demashque, pp.203,205.

not have good reputation and was ignorant of fiqh. He was selling books after changing their titles.<sup>73</sup> A Shafi'i judge in Damascus, Nasir al-Din b. Khatib Naqrin<sup>74</sup> (d.818/1415), also got his post through bribery, was ignorant of fiqh, engaged in selling posts, and was accused of stealing the people's endowments.<sup>75</sup> A Shafi'i judge in Damascus, Shihab al-Din al-Himsi<sup>76</sup> (825/1421), got his post through bribery and publicly took bribe.<sup>77</sup> A Maliki judge in Damascus, Shihab al-Din al-Umawi<sup>78</sup> (d.836/1432), also got his post through bribery, and Sultan Mua'yyad Shaikh despised him for that and called him a magician.<sup>79</sup> A Hanbali judge in Damascus, Izz al-Din al-Baghdadi<sup>80</sup> (d.846/1442), got his post through bribery had a bad reputation, took money from people for issuing fatwas.<sup>81</sup> Baha al-

---

73 Ibn Toloun, Qudato Demashque, p.205, Al-Naeimi, Al-Onwan, paper 118-119.

74 Muhammad Bin Muhammad Bin Muhammad Al-Hamawe, Al-Demashqi, Al-Shafei, Nasser Al-Din, known by Ibn Khateeb Naqreen, Faqih, held the Qadaa of Demashque, Halab and Tripoli, born in 790H-1388AD and died in 818H-1415AD, see: Anbaa Al-Ghamr, his bibliography, vol.7 pp.202-203, Al-Dawo Al-Lamei, vol.10 p.14, Qudato Demashque pp.129-130.

75 Ibn Toloun, Qudato Demashque, pp.129-130, Zakhair Al-Qasr, paper 211, Al-Bathl Wai Barttala, p.111

76 Ahmad Bin Muhammad Bin Muhammad Al-Hamsi, Al-Salhi, Al-Demashqi, Al-Shafei, Shehab Al-Din, Faqih, held Qadaa of Al-Shafeiya in Damascus in 806H-1403AD and was deposed in 808H-1405AD, see Qudato Demashque, his bibliography, p.130.

77 Ibn Toloun, Qudato Demashque, p.130, Thakhaeir al-Qasr, paper 216.

78 Ahmad Bin Abd Allah Bin Muhammad Al-Omawi, Al-Demashqi, Al-Malki, Shehab Al-Din, Wali Qadaa Demashque and Tarablus, Faqih, Mohaddith, died in 836H-1432AD, see Al-Dawo Al-Lamei, vol.1 pp.369-370, Qudato Demashque, pp.254,255.

79 Ibn Toloun, Qudato Demashque, p.255, Al-Naeimi, Al-Onwan, paper 119.

80 Abd Al-Aziz Bin AH Bin Abd Al-Aziz, Al-Baghdadi, Al-Maqdissi, Al-Bakri, Al-Hanballi, Ezz Al-Din, Abu Al-Barakat, Mofassir, Faqih, Osouli, Moqrei, Mohaddith, Nahawi, Bayani, born in 770H-1368AD and died in 846H-1442AD, see: Qudato Demashque, his bibliography, p.294, Al-Anas Al-Galil, pp.597-598, Al-Dariss, vol.2 p.53, Shatharat Al-Dhahab, vol.7 p.259, Kashf Al-Dhonoun, 1292, Hadiyato Al-Aaref een, vol.1 pp.582,583.

81 Ibn Toloun, Qudato Demashque, pp.299-300, Thakhaeir Al-Qasr, paper 225.



Din Ibn Hajji<sup>82</sup> (d.850/1446) got his post of a Shafi'i judge in Damascus for 5,000 dinars paid as bribe.<sup>83</sup> Najm al-Din b. Qadi<sup>84</sup> (d.850/1446) got his post of the Hanafi judge in Damascus through bribery after he criticized others for doing the same.<sup>85</sup> Muhibb al-Din b. Al-Qasif<sup>86</sup> (d.909/1503) paid 3,000 dinars as a bribe to get the post of Hanafi judge in Damascus. Also Shihab al-Din Ibn al-Farfur (d.911/1505) paid the amount of 32,000 dinars as a bribe to get the post of Shafi'i judge in Damascus, so he beat his rival Salah al-Din al-Adawi<sup>87</sup> (d.908/1502) who could not collect more than 10,000.<sup>88</sup>

The supreme judges were directly responsible for organizing the issues of judiciary and jurist schools, and for maintaining other schools. But they left these duties to their deputies. These kinds of appointments were also corrupted. The examples of these are: in 856/1452 Shafi'i judge Shihab al-Din Ibn al-Farfur entrusted Shafi'i judgeship of Damascus to a person from Hama who was a gate-keeper at the Madrasa al-Badra'iyya in exchange for a bribe.<sup>89</sup>

---

82 Muhammad Bin Omar Bin Hajji, Al-Saadi, Al-Hasbani then Al-Demashqi, Al-Shafei, Bahaa Al-Din, Wali Qadaa Al-Shaf'iyah in Demashque in 830H-1426AD, he was a Faqih, Mohaddith who died in 850H-1446AD, see: Al-Dawo Al-Lamei, his bibliography, vol.8 pp.242-243, Qudato Demashque, pp.156-159.

83 Ibn Toloun, Qudato Demashque, p.156, his letters, paper 275.

84 Omar Bin Ahmad Al-Nomani then Al-Demashqi, Al-Hanafi, Najm Al-Din Al-Baghdadi, Faqih, held Qadaa Demashque then Niyabat Al-Sirr, Al-Hisba, Wakalat Beit Al-Mal, died in 850H/1446AD see: Anbaa Al-Ghamr, his bibliography, vol.9 p.250, Qudato Demashque, p.219,220, 221.

85 Ibn Toloun, Qudato Demashque, p.220, Al-Naiemi, Al-Onwan, paper 96.

86 Muhammad Bin Ahmad Bin Hilal Al-Demashqi, Al-Hanafi, known by Ibn Al-Qassiff, Moheb Al-Din, Faqih, Mohaddith, held Damascus Qadaa several times, born in 843H/1439AD, and died in 909H-1503AD, see: Qudato Demashque, his bibliography, pp.236,237, Al-Kawakeb Al-Saeira, vol.1 p.57, Shatharat Al-Dhahab, vol.8 p.44, Idah Al-Maknoon, vol.1 p.545.

87 Muhammad Bin Abdullah Bin Abd Al-Salam, Al-Adawi, Al-Demashqi, Al-Shafei, Salah Al-Din, Wali Qadaa Al-Shaf'iyah in Damascus and Wakeel Al-Sultan and Nazer Al-Jeish, died in 908H-1502AD, see: Qudato Demashque, his bibliography, p.179, Al-Dawo Al-Lamei, vol.8 p.98.

88 Al-Sakhawi, Al-Dawo Al-Lamei, vol.8 p.98, Ibn Toloun, Mof akahat Al-Khellan, vol.1 pp.36-37

In 885/1480 Radi al-Din al-Ghazzi<sup>90</sup> asked judge Qutb al-Din al-Khaydari<sup>91</sup> to be appointed deputy judge of Damascus in exchange for 900 dinars in gold. He paid a part of it and for the rest he wrote in an IOU.<sup>92</sup> In 902/1496 a Maliki judge, Shams al-Din al-Andalusi,<sup>93</sup> entrusted his deputy ignorant of legal rulings, Shihab al-Din, the nephew of judge Shu'ayb,<sup>94</sup> with Maliki judgeship in Damascus because the judge owed him some money and they agreed on writing off this debt in exchange for the appointment. Out of fear of people's talk they also agreed that Shihab al-Din should bring *nazir al-jawali*,<sup>95</sup>

---

89 Ibn Toloun, Mofakahat Al-Khellan, vol.1 p.50, Al-Naeimi, Al-Onwan, paper 115,116,118

- Al-Badraeiya School: Of Al-Shafeiya schools in Damascus, was built by Al-Qadi Najm Al-Din Abu Muhammad Abd Allah Al-Badraei, died in 654H-1256AD, it was built where the Amir Usama Al-Jabali's house was, he was one of Salah Al-Din Al-Ayoubi's Amirs, it was for the Asqofiya Al-Romaniya, it still exists as a center for Al-Fath Al-Islami Institute, see: Al-Bedaya Wal-Nehaya vol.13 p.196, Al-Daress, vol.1 p.205.

90 Muhammad Bin Ahmad Bin Abd Allah Al-Aameri, Al-Ghazzi, Al-Demashqi, Al-Shafei, Radio Al-Din, born in 811H-1408AD, Faqih, he studied and gave Fatawa, worked in a book he called "Bahgato Al-Nazereen Ela Taragem Al-Motaakhereen Men Al-Shafeiya Al-Motabareen", died in 885H-1480AD, see: Al-Dawo Al-Lamei, his bibliography, vol.6 p.324.

91 Muhammad Bin Muhammad Bin Abd Allah, Bin Khaider, Al-Zobaidi, Al-Balqawi, Al-Demashqi, Al-Shafei, known by Al-Khaidari, Qotb Al-Din, Mohaddith, Osouli, Faqih, Moarekh, Nassabah, born in 821H-1418AD and died in 894H-1488AD, see:

Al-Dawo Al-Lamei, his bibliography, vol.9 pp.117-124, Nozom Al-Eqyan, p.162, Qudato Demashque, pp.177-179, Al-Daress, vol.1 pp.7, 8, Al-Badr Al-Talei, vol.2 p.245, Idah Al-Maknoon, vol.1 p.231, vol.2 p.67, Hadiyato Al-Aarefeen, vol.2 pp.215-216.

92 Ibn Toloun, Mofakahat Al-Khellan, vol.1 p.31, his letters, paper 148.

93 Muhammad Bin Yousseff Al-Andalussi, Al-Demashqi, Al-Malki, Shams Al-Din, he held Qadaa Al-Malekiya in Damascus in 900H-1494AD and was deposed twice, he gave Fatwa, and taught, died in 920H-1514AD, see: Qudato Demashque, his bibliography, p.268.

94 No bibliography was found.

95 Nazzar Al-Gawali: who supervises the Gezya taken from Ahl Al-Zemma of Gezya each year, see: Sobh Al-Aasha, vol.3 pp.462-463.

Barsaby the Mad,<sup>96</sup> who was known for his absent-mindedness and vanity, to intercede on his behalf with a judge so that the judge could say of anyone who objected to that appointment that he was forced to do so.<sup>97</sup>

In the year 916/1510 the Shafi'i judge in Damascus Shihab al-Din Ibn al-Farfur sacked his deputy Abd al-Qadir al-Nu'aymi because he did not borrow him money.<sup>98</sup> He also entrusted Badr al-Din al-Mu'tamid with the Shafi'i judgeship in Damascus in exchange for a bribe of 200 dinars. He also appointed others for 40 sacks of barley.<sup>99</sup>

In the year 921/1515 Shafi'i judge in Damascus Waliy al-Din Ibn al-Farfur demanded from Shiab al-Din al-Ramli<sup>100</sup> 1,000 dinars,<sup>101</sup> but he refused, then he asked second time but the latter came up with 500. When Shihab al-Din demanded that this debt be written on paper, Ibn Farfur became angry, sacked him and appointed Taqiy al-Din al-Qari',<sup>103</sup> who also promised him a large amount for this post<sup>104</sup> of deputy imam at the Umayyad Mosque.<sup>102</sup>

---

96 Bersbai Al-Majnoun, he was appointed as Hajib Thani in Damascus in 899H-1493AD, then as Nazzer Al-Gawali in 907H-1501AD see: Mofakahat Al-Khellan, vol.1 pp.156, 171,232,244, 257.

97 Ibn Toloun, Mofakahat Al-Khellan, vol.1 p.171, Qudato Demashque, p.265.

98 Ibn Toloun, Naqd Al-Taleb, paper 35.

99 Ibn Toloun, Mofakahat Al-Khellan, vol.1, p.354.

100 Muhammad Ahmad Bin Mahmoud, Al-Demashqi, Al-Shafei, Walio Al-Din, known by Ibn Al-Farfour, Qadi Halab then Damascus, Faqih, Mohaddith, dead in 937H-1530AD, see: Qudato Demashque, his bibliography, pp.182-183, Al-Kawakeb Al-Saeira, vol.2 pp.22-23.

101 Ahmad Bin Muhammad Bin Ali Al-Ramli, Al-Demashqi, Al-Shafei, Shehab Al-Din, known by Ibn Al-Mallah, Faqih, Naeib in Imam Al-Omawi Mosque, Mashyakhat Al-Iqraa in Al-Sibaiya School, born in 859H/1454AD, died in 923H/1517AD, see: Al-Kawakeb Al-Saeira, his bibliography, vol.1 pp.127-128, Shatharat Al-Thahab, vol.8 p.123.

102 Al-Omawi Mosque: also called Gamei Demashque, Gamei Bani Omayya, Al-Gamei Al-Kabeer, in the Arameyeen era, it was a great statue named upon "Hadad" their god, then the Greeks used it as a temple for their gods in Al-Helnesti epoque, so did the Romans who took it for "Jupiter", then in Rome's Caesar Theodos' era, some of its walls have been fallen, he built it wonderfully, turned it to a church named "Mario Hanna Al-Meimdan", then the Arab Mus-

Since the appointment of some deputy judges was completed in these manners, it was not surprising that some ignorant and sinners reached ruling positions, so the people of Damascus avoided them.<sup>105</sup> This made them leave their posts or courts or even leave Damascus itself. Shihab al-Din al-Ramli, deputy to the Shafi'i judge Waliy al-Din Ibn al-Farfur, chose to join his son<sup>106</sup> in Egypt "when he realized that he was not accepted in Damascus".<sup>107</sup> Also the Shafi'i judge Sharaf al-Din al-Zanklawi<sup>108</sup> moved

---

lims opened Damascus and turned the eastern part of the temple or the church into a mosque, when Al-Waleed Ibn Abd Al-Malek came, he took the western part to complete the mosque, Ibn Asaker and other Moarekheen have mentioned that Al-Waleed have given Christians four churches in return, when Omar Abd Al-aziz ruled, they tried to take back Mario Hanna church, he offered to give them even more than what Al-Waleed has given them, offering them all Al-Ghota churches, and wrote certificates for them proving their ownership and approval, building Al-Gamei Al-Omawi started in effect in 87H-705AD, whereupon Al-Waleed wrote: "Our God the Greatest has willed us to build this mosque and subvert the church that was within, this has duly been done by Abd Allah Al-Waleed Amir Al-Momeneen, in Al-Hijja, year Eighty Seventh of Al-Hijra." Its building was completely finished in 96H-714AD see: Mokhtassar Tareikh Demashque, vol.1 p.295, Al-Daress, vol.2 p.371, Al-Rawdato Al-Ghanaa, pp.105,106, Morouj Al-Thahab, vol.3 p.167, Ahsan Al-Taqasseem, p.158.

103 Abu Bakr Bin Muhammad Bin Yousseff, Al-Qarei, Al-Demashqi, Al-Shafei, Taqio Al-Din, Faqih, Moqrei, Nahawi, Osouli, Shaeir, died in 945H-1542AD, see: Al-Kawakeb Al-Saeira, vol.2 p.89-90, Shatharat Al-Dhahab, vol.8 pp.260-261.

104 Ibn Toloun, Mofakahat Al-Khellan, vol.1 .386, Ibn Elwan, Al-Nassaeh Al-Mohemma, paper 53.

105 Ibn Toloun, his letters, paper 218, Ahmad Abd Al-Razeq, Al-Bathl Wai Bartala, p.138.

106 His name was not found.

107 When he found that he was not liked amongst people. (108) No bibliography was found for him.

107 Maidan Al-Hasa: in Damascus near Al-Qedam Mosque, starts by Bab Al-Mosalla to Al-Gizmatiya, see: Kotat Demashque, p.443,

Al-Solouk, vol.1 p.824, vol.2 p.99.

108 Bab Al-Jabiya: one of Damascus city gates, it is in the west, ascribed to Al-Gabiya village, see: Nozhato Al-Anam, p.25, Khotat Demashque, p.434.

from Maydan al-Hasa<sup>109</sup> to Bab al-Jariya<sup>110</sup> because he was not accepted by the citizens of Maydan. Ibn Tulun described him as “supporting himself through extortion.”<sup>111</sup>

This means that people in Damascus were not forced to turn to courts whose judges’ honesty they doubted, that is to say, they could take their cases to any judge in the city, and such an example we have not seen before or since.

The Circassian Mameluks richly rewarded the ulama linked to them and participated with them in administering Damascus. They even appointed them to positions outside of religious affairs such as the posts of vizier,<sup>112</sup> secretary<sup>113</sup> and army inspector.<sup>114</sup> There is nothing strange here, because at that time there was no separation between religion and state which is, unfortunately, the contemporary view. But in essence these can-

---

109 Ibn Toloun, *Mofakahat Al-Kellan*, vol.1 p.121.

110 Al-Wazeer: his is the highest supreme job which was once donated to men of swords and the other to men of letters, in both it was once elevated to full employment in which the Wazeer has the authority to tell his opinion in all country affairs, thus equalizing Naeib Al-Sultana or echoes his authorities, see: Sobh Al-Aasha, vol.3 pp.478-479, vol.10 p.91, Khotat Al-Maqrizi vol.2 p.305, Al-Hadara Al-Islamiya Fil Osour Al-Wosta for Ahmad Abd Al-Razeq p.53-57.

111 Katib Al-Sirr: Katem Al-Sirr in slang language, he keeps the secrets of the king and signs the Qassass in Dar Al-Adl and others, sits on the Sultan’s left at Dar Al-Adl to solve the complaints, the Sultan depends upon him in Tashareef, he reads messages to the Sultan, receives news of the Kingdoms and informs them to the Sultan, he answers the letters sent for him, he informs deputies of their duties, he looks up the Bareed, Nijaba and their affairs, he does not employ in his office except qualified people, see: Sobh Al-Aasha vol.1 p.104, vol.4 p.29,44,53, vol.11 p92-93.

114 Nazer Al-Jaish: he is responsible for registering soldiers’ names, their numbers and expenses, see: Sobh Al-Aasha, vol.11 pp.323-325, Khotat Al-Maqrizi, vol.1 p.141, Naqdu Al-Tableb, paper 25.

- Of who held the position of Wazeer, Katib Al-Sirr, and Nazer Al-Jaish in Al-Jarakessa time, see: Al-Siqaii, *Tali Waf iyat Al-Aayan*, pp.4, 33, 58, 59, 78, 84,86, Al-Sakhawi, *Al-Dawo Al-Lamei*, vol.11 p.6, Al-Sayyoti, *Nozom Al-Oqyan*, pp.26-27,162, 168, Ibn Al-Furat, *Tareikh Al-Dowal Wai Molouk*, vol.9 p.357, Shimil Annie Mary, *Al-Kholafaa Wai Qudat* pp.44-53,99-100 (translated by Goerge Sobh, Beirut 1992AD)

not be separated. Among those who were richly rewarded by the Mameluks was Sadr al-Din al-Adami<sup>115</sup> (d.815/1412), who, in addition to being deputy Hanafi judge, was a secretary, and an army and market inspector in Damascus. Afterwards he was appointed the supreme Hanafi judge in Damascus, and then in Cairo. Before he took up these posts he was a pauper. After being dismissed from them he became rich on account of handsome rewards the Mameluk representatives gave him.<sup>116</sup> Another one of those ulama was Shams al-Din al-Ikhna'i<sup>117</sup> (d.816/1413) who changed posts so he was a judge in al-Rakb,<sup>118</sup> Zar'a,<sup>119</sup> Gazza, and was deputy judge in Damascus and in the army.<sup>120</sup> He was also in charge of the treasury<sup>121</sup> and was an army inspector and judge at the court of Aleppo. Then he was appointed supreme Shafi'i judge in Damascus. The Mameluks showered him money and favours.<sup>122</sup> Another one of them is

---

115 Ali Bin Muhammad Bin Muhammad Al-Demashqi, Sadr Al-Din Al-Aadami, Al-Hanafi, born in 770H/1368AD, worked in Fiqh and Adab, died in 815H/1412AD, see: Qudato Demashque, his bibliography, pp.206-207, Al-Dawo Al-Lamei vol.6 p.8.

116 Ibn Toloun, Qudato Demashque, pp.206-207, Zakhair Al-Qasr for the same author, paper86.

117 Muhammad Bin Muhammad Bin Othman Al-Ikhnaei, Al-Shaf ei, Shams Al-Din, Faqih, Muhaddith, born in 757H/1356AD, dead in 816H/1413AD, see: Qudato Demashque, his bibliography, p.126, Al-Dawo Al-Lamei, vol.9 p.136, Anbaa Al-Ghamr, vol.7 p.14.

118 Qadi Al-Rakb: he is the judge who approves Rakb Al-Hojjaj, signs it in Diwan Al-Inshaa, knows Ahkam Al-Hajj, Al-Hokm in Mahzorat Al-Ihram, see: Sobh Al-Aasha, vol.11 p.442, Naqdu Al-Taleb, paper 65.

119 Zaraa: one of Horan villages, see: Taqweem Al-Beldan, p.259.

120 Qadi Al-Askar: He holds Qadaa Al-Askar and judges their cases like Ghanaeim, Shareka, Qisma, Mabeiat, Al-Rad Bel Aib, he solves problems in Al-Askar realm to avoid them during war battles, Qudat Al-Askar represented Malekiya, and Hanbaliya in Al-Saham and represented Al-Hanafiya and Al-Shafeiya in Egypt, see: Sobh Al-Aasha, vol.4 pp.36,192, vol.11 p.96.

121 Wakalato Beit Al-Mal: a great job, who held it used to talk of all that is concerned with properties sold or bought by Beit Al-Mal, it was not held except by those of high status of Sheikhs Al-Adl, he used to sell whenever he found it essential and good for Beit Al-Mal, see: Sobh Al-Aasha, vol.3 pp.483-484, vol.4 pp.36-37.

122 Ibn Toloun, Qudato Demashque, pp.126-127, Al-Naimi, Al-Onwan, paper 128.

Najm al-Din Ibn Hajji (d.830/1426) who was in charge of fatwas at Dar al-Adl,<sup>123</sup> and of the Shaikh Umar Shah Khaniqah,<sup>124</sup> and judgeship of Hama and Tripoli twice each, and Shafi'i judgeship of Damascus. Sultan al-Ashraf Barsaba'i<sup>125</sup> favoured him and rewarded him richly.<sup>126</sup> He could influence the sultan who was receptive to his word. Shihab al-Dina Ibn al-Kishk<sup>127</sup> (d.837/1433) who was in charge of Hanafi judgeship several times in Damascus was also entrusted with inspecting the army. He used to visit and flatter sultans and representatives a lot. For that reason his word was influential with them and his requests were regularly met.<sup>128</sup>

As for the ulama who were not connected to the Mameluks and who opposed their views, they did not enjoy the reward. On the contrary, they were chased because of their political ideas and were beaten, imprisoned and demoted from their positions of giving Friday sermons, leading prayers, teaching, judging, etc. They made difficult for them to earn living. One of those was muhaddith and faqih of Damascus Shihab al-Din al-Milhi (d.793/1390) who openly opposed Sultan al-Zahir Barquq and supported those representatives who refused obedience to him. When he was arrested and brought in front of al-Zahir Barquq, the first thing he

---

123 If taa Dar A-Adi: in Egypt, this position was held by four, each of whom used to represent one of the four Mathaheb, they were two in Al-Sham, one Shafei and the other Hanafi, the Naeib used to sign their Walaya, see: Sobh Al-Aasha, vol.4 pp.36,198, Naqdu Al-Taleb, paper 16

124 It is also called Al-Khanqah Al-Nahriya.

125 Bersbai Al-Daqmaqi Al-Khaheri, Abu Al-Nassr, Al-Sultan Al-Malek Al-Ashraf, one of Al-Salateen Al-Jarakessa, he succeeded to the throne of the Sultanate in 824H/1421AD, he invaded Cyprus and imprisoned its king, he erected many schools in Egypt, was an august king, pious to the Sharia, loved by its scientists, died in 841H/1438 AD, see: Al-Dawo Al-Lamei, vol.3 p.8, Badaei Al-Zohour, vol.2 p.15, Tareikh Al-Kaaba for Ba Salama, p.141.

126 Ibn Toloun, Qudato Demashque, pp.146-147.

127 Ahmad Bin Mahmoud Bin Ahmad, Al-Demashqi, Al-Hanafi, known by Ibn Al-Kishk, Shehab Al-Din, held Qadaa Demashque for many years, and was also Nazer Al-Jaish for many times, died in 837 H/1433 AD, see: Anbaa Al-Ghamr, vol.8 p.308, Al-Nojoum Al-Zahera, vol.15 pp.185-186, Shatharat Al-Dhahab, vol.7 p.219.

128 Ibn Toloun, Qudato Demashque, pp.212-214, Al-Naeimi, Al-Onwan, paper 132.

told him was: “Allah made you rule over us even if we are wrong-doers.” The Sultan ordered his imprisonment and beating and so he was beaten badly and left in prison till he died.<sup>129</sup> Ala al-Din al-Sabki<sup>130</sup> (d.809/1406) was the faqih of Damascus who opposed the oppression of Sultan al-Zahir Barquq and openly opposed his son al-Nasir Faraj and. Nasir had him arrested, accused him on trumpeted charges of taking money from endowments illegally and banned him from teaching at the madrasas of Damascus. Ala al-Din ran away from him and died in hiding.<sup>131</sup> Shihab al-Din al-Bauni (d.816/1413), the famous faqih and khatib of Damascus, was falsely accused of bribery because he was supporting the truth and its promoters. He was appointed the supreme Shafi’i judge of Damascus and he performed honorably and honestly. In 796/1393 sultan al-Zahir Barquq demanded to borrow money from the orphans funds but he refused and so the sultan sacked him and banned him from giving Friday sermons at the Umayyad Mosque.<sup>132</sup>

Nevertheless, the ulama of Damascus exercised great influence as active factors in the society and as helpers of the ruling regime. On the one hand, they were the elite among the cultured and unchallenged interpreters of the heavenly law who also managed commercial, educational and legal issues of the people. They were not a separate class, but part of the people who belonged to different social levels. On the other hand, the ulama of Damascus relied on cooperation with the Circassian Mameluks as the ruling class. They succeeded in utilizing state assets and the assets of the Mameluks themselves for establishing various educational institu-

---

129 Ibn Toloun, his letters, paper 216, Zakhair Al-Qasr, paper 175, Ibn Hajji, Abra Al-Eissar, paper 103.

130 Ali Bin Muhammad Bin Abd Al-Barr Al-Answari, Al-Khazragi, Al-Sobki, Al-Demashqi, Al-Shafei, Alaa Al-Din, born in 757 H/1356 AD, he held Qadaa Al-Shaf eiya in Damascus twice in Al-Sultan Al-Dhaher Barqoq’s era, twice in his son, Nasser Al-Faraj’s era, Faqih, Mohaddith, died in 809H/1406AD, see: Al-Dawo Al-Lamei, his bibliography, vol.5 p.308, Qudato Demashque, pp.124-125.

131 Al-Naeimi, Al-Onwan, paper 186, Ibn Toloun, Zakhair Al-Qasr, paper 126, Ibn Hajji, Abra Al-Eissar, paper 105.

132 Ibn Toloun, his letters, papers 112,113,116-117, Qudato Demashque, pp.122-124, Al-Naeimi, Al-Onwan, paper 73, Fridon Bek, Majmouat Monshaat Al-Salateen, papers 169,170.



tions. The best examples for this are numerous endowment deeds which contain the names of Mameluk representatives and amirs of Damascus who provided generous grants to the city's educational institutions.<sup>133</sup>

In any case, as we have already mentioned, we should not overestimate the political role played by the Damascene ulama. What we have written is but a sample of methods of presentation, not a research into the ulama's influence.

---

133 See: Hojjato Waqf Al-Amir Jumqaf Naeiyb Al-Sham 824H/1421AD, was written as: "Awqaf for his school in Damascus, put sixteen people in it, for each fifteen Dirhams, for each pupil forty five, for the Sheikh five hundred per month", (Waqf Al-Amir Jumqaf, Awqaf, Hojja no.618, Dhaheriyat Demashque), Hojjato Waqf Al-Amir Seif Al-Din Shathi Bek Dawadar Naeib Al-Sham in 857H/1453H, for his school named Al-Shathbakiya, was written as /'forty five Dirham for the Imam, sixty for the doorman, fifteen for each reader, five hundred for orphans' clothes, fifty for ink and pens, thirty per month for the Waqf Mohassel"(Waqf Al-Amir Shathi Bek, Awqaf, Hojja no.621, Dhaheriyat Demashque). Hojjat Waqf Al-Amir Qajmass Al-Ishaqi Naeib Al-Sham in 891H/1486AD, for his school named Al-Qajmassiya, was written as : " forty five Dirhams for the Imam, ten Dirhams for the students, sweets in Mowsem Rajab Wa Nisf Shaaban,.."(Waqf Al-Amir Qajmass Al-Ishaqi, Naeib Al-Sham, Awqaf 2 Mokarrar, Hojjat no.817, Dhaheriyat Demashque) It would have been more profitable if I included these Hojjaj in my research, and added my personal comment, but unfortunately they were unavailable for copying as they are in a bad need for sustenance

## Politička uloga uleme Damaska u doba čerkeskih mameluka

U članku naslovljenom “Politička uloga uleme Damaska u doba čerkeskih mameluka (784H/1382n.e-923/1517n.e.)” autora dr. Su’uda Muhammeda el-Ufura, sa Odsjeka za historiju na Filozofskom fakultetu Kuvajtskog univerziteta, razmatra se mjesto uleme u odnosima vladajućih mameluka i njihovih podanika u Damasku.

Zaokupljeni održavanjem svoje vojne, političke i ekonomske prevlasti u Siriji, mameluci su se držali podalje od podanika od kojih su se razlikovali ne samo društvenim položajem već i jezikom i etničkim porijeklom. Pošto su pripadnici uleme bili uključeni u javnu upravu, prije svega kao sudije i inspektori javnih fondova, tržnica i vojske, zatim kao sekretari, pa čak i veziri, ulema postaje značajna spona između vladara i naroda. Dok je dio uleme vezao svoj interes za održavanje mamelučke vlasti radi ostvarivanja ili zadržavanja vlastitog probitka, drugi njen dio nije ostajao ravnodušan na slučajeve tlačenja naroda iz kojeg je većina uleme i potjecala.

Tako se kroz historiju mamelučke vlasti u Damasku i Siriji smjenjuju primjeri podaništva i otpora vladajućim mamelucima. Kada je ulema potakla mase na pobunu protiv sultana Zahira Berkuka, vladar ih je dao uhapsiti, mučiti a neke, poput kadije Sadruddina ibn Mufliha (umro 789/1387), i pogubiti. Ista sudbina zadesila je i Šihabuddina ibn el-Kurešija (umro u zatvoru 800/1397) i alima Šihabuddina el-Hasbanija (umro 815/1412). Zato ne čudi da je takva ulema, žrtvujući se za dobro naroda Damaska, postala utjecajan društveni faktor a njihova riječ uvažavana. Međutim bilo je i onih koji su pokazivali odsustvo svih obzira svojom spremnošću da izdaju fetve koje su odgovarale vlastima, uzurpiranjem vakufske imovine i aminovanjem velikih nameta na narod. Tako je, naprimjer, Zejnuddin el-Kafri (umro 809/1406) dobio položaj hanefijskog sudije Damaska davanjem mita. Nasiruddin b. Hatib Nakrin (umro 818/1415) je stekao mjesto šafijskog kadije Damaska mitom, nije poznao fikih, prodavao je funkcije drugima, a optužen je i da je otuđio vakuf.

Odnos uleme prema vlasti posebno je došla na kušnju pojavom Timurlenka, koji je za kratko vrijeme pokorio više sirijskih gradova pod

mamelučkom vlašću. Iako je ulema pozvala na opći otpor naroda kojem je podijeljeno i oružje, Damask je poslije samo dva dana opsade osvojen i opljačkan, mnogi stanovnici su pobijeni, a dio zanatlija i dio uleme odveden. Neki su i saradivali, poput Muhjuddina el-Kiška (umro 808/1405), kojeg su Tataari bili postavili za kadiju.

Drugi takav test došao je s težnjama Osmanskog carstva da se proširi na Siriju. Odnosi samih mameluka i Osmanlija prošli su kroz nekoliko faza. U vrijeme mamelučkog sultana Melika el-Ešrefa Kajtbeja (872-951/1467-1496) obilježeni su bliskošću saveznika ujedinjenih neprijateljstvom prema perzijskom šahu Ismailu el-Safaviju. Ali kada je osmanlijski sultan Selim I iskazao otvorene pretenzije prema mamelučkim posjedima u Siriji, dolazi do sukoba i bitke na Mardž Dabiku, koja završava potpunim mamelučkim porazom. Osmanlije osvajaju Alep, a ubrzo potom i Damask. Gradska ulema je dočekala osvajače kao oslobodioce od mamelučkog despotizma, izjavljujući svoje priznavanje i odanost novoj vlasti.

Politička uloga uleme Damaska u vrijeme mameluka je svakako bila važna, ali je ne bi trebalo preuveličavati. Budući da je dolazili iz različitih slojeva naroda, ulemu se ne može posmatrati kao izdvojenu društvenu skupinu koja je uvijek nastupala jedinstveno, a među njom zabilježeni su primjeri kako onih koji su se zauzimali za opće dobro tako i onih drugih koji su učestvovali u nepravednim i protuzakornim radotama.

