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Bilād al-Shām.

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Biographies by Looking at Groups of
Governors Sharing Some Common
Features. Bayt al-^ʿAẓm as an Example

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The Governors of Ottoman Bilād al-Shām. The Reconstruction of Individual Biographies by Looking at Groups of Governors Sharing Some Common Features. Bayt al-‘Azm as an Example¹

Thomas Philipp

Over the last twenty years or so we have seen an enormous development of scholarly studies of Bilād al-Shām under Ottoman rule. This has not always been like this. The reasons for the long negligence from which the historiography of this epoch suffered are various. Arab national historiography considered the period for a long time the worst of all in Arab history – better forgotten than studied. The demonizing of the Ottomans as the oppressors of the Arabs since 1517 found its first major but already fully developed expression in 1916 in *al-Hilal*.² This was not the reflection of a long experience and a developing mood but an abrupt change in attitude thanks to the rise of nationalism. Later Turkish historians were much more concerned with the study of the central lands of the Empire and what seemed from a centre point of view to be on the periphery remained peripheral

1 Editor's note: Thomas Philipp was in the process of revising this paper in early 2015. While his argument stood, he wished to include more source material, especially Ottoman. His untimely death on 11 June 2015 prevented him from completing his work. The draft is given here as it stood with only minimal interventions.

2 “Al-Dawla al-‘Uthmāniyya fī Lubnān wa Sūriyya. Ḥukm arba‘a qurūn.” *Al-Hilāl* 15 (1916-1917), serialized between Dec. 1916 and July 1917.

with the exception of the Balkan region. German Orientalists, with rare exceptions, denied at that time that there was any historical development in the Middle East after the classical age of Islam, and even those who studied the Ottoman Empire, dealt with its centre or its western periphery but never with the Arab provinces.

Eventually a rethinking of concepts such as the “continuity of history,” “centre – periphery relations,” “empire,” “modernity,” “European penetration” and especially the shift away from political history to social and economic history helped to stir a new interest in Bilād al-Shām under Ottoman rule. It led to a multitude of monographs on the subject, with a special interest in urban and social history, but also in economic and intellectual history.

Striking is the lack of a critically researched listing of all Ottoman governors who ruled the provinces of Bilād al-Shām. Considering the vast extension of the empire and the permanent possibility of centrifugal forces on the periphery, the governors, representing the imperial center in the provinces, were the hinges, the most important link between the imperial center and its periphery. They reflected the strength of the linkage, its flexibility and its weaknesses. Many local chroniclers, who rose to prominence in the 18th century, understood the importance of the governors' role. They began their accounts of each year with mentioning the present governor of the province. Every change of governor was also recorded.³ It is only to be expected that over 400 years of Ottoman presence in the Levant considerable shifts and changes occurred in this linkage.

A chronological listing of all governors would help to structure and confirm the general time frame for the history of the region. Knowledge about the governors and the times and sequences of their rule will not only assist us to reconstruct the political history of the region or the policies of the imperial centre in this provincial region but it would also be beneficial for research in the above mentioned branches of urban, economic and intellectual history. Developing the sequences of governors in all the administrative provinces of Bilād al-Shām we also can trace how power spread horizontally; either in the fashion that a governor would be in rapid sequence appointed to Aleppo, Damascus, Tripoli or Sidon or how a governor could succeed in having his relatives or members of his “Household,” *bayt*, be appointed to further governorships or other supportive political positions.

3 See, for instance: Aḥmad, al-Ḥallāq al-Budayrī, *Ḥawādiṭh Dimashq al-yawmiyya*. Damascus: Dār Sa’d al-Dīn, 1997; Mikhā’il Burayk, *Tārīkh al-Shām 1720-1782*. New edition: ed. Aḥmad Ghasān Sibābū, *Silsilat Dirāsāt wa-wathā’iq tārikh Dimashq* (3), Damascus: Dār Qutayba, 1982, pp. 38-39.

The sources for the biographies of the governors

When gathering biographical information on governors in Bilād al-Shām we are dealing with much more than simply fixing precise dates of their governorship. From the biographical information we learn about the origin of governors, their training, their family relations, their social environment, the careers of governors. Over time, we can trace how these components change in the careers of governors and with it the relations between center and periphery.

For this purpose it is important to reconstruct the biographies of governors as completely as possible. Different sources offer themselves for this purpose. Two studies should be mentioned first, because they help to establish at least a rough sequential order over time of individuals holding the governorships in Aleppo, Damascus and the other provinces:

The first and until now only systematic attempt in Arabic to establish such a chronology was made by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid, with a compilation called *Wulāt Dimashq fī l-'ahd al-'Uthmānī*.⁴ He juxtaposed two different listings of governors, one by Muḥammad b. Jum'ā al-Maqqār in the 18th century the other by Muḥammad Raslān b. Yaḥyā al-Qārī in the 19th century. Munajjid al-Dīn has little information on the authors and at no point does he try to analyze the contradictions between the two listings

An older Ottoman work, Mehmed Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmani*,⁵ is a helpful work with almost two thousand biographies of higher Ottoman officials throughout the centuries. Typically these are compiled from the archives in Istanbul, follow a certain pattern, are short and put an emphasis on the career of the official. Here we also find for the governors the dates of their career steps and their background. The only personal aspects usually mentioned are the immediate family relations through marriages. Other collections have also to be consulted.⁶ General histories of the Ottoman Empire might also be of help.⁷ Most important is the use of the Turkish Archives.⁸ There the *mühimme defterleri*, firmans with appointments of governors and correspondence at time of relevant crises will be of decisive importance. Another document of importance is the *Salname Vilayet-i Suriye*, Defa 25,

4 Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid (ed.), *Wulāt Dimashq fī l-'ahd al-'Uthmānī*. Damascus: s. n., 1949.

5 Mehmed Süreyya, *Sicill-i osmani yahud tezkere-i meşahir-i osmaniyye*. 4 vols. Istanbul: Matbaa-i amire, 1308-1311. Latinized edition by Akbayar, Nuri and Seyit Ali Kahraman, *Sicill-i Osmani*. 6 vols., Istanbul: Tarih Vakfi, 1996.

6 See the more recent work by Yılmaz Öztuna, *Devleter ve Hanedanlar*. Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 1989.

7 Such as Ahmed Cevdet Paşa: *Tarih-i Cevdet*. 12 vols. Tertib-i cedid. Istanbul: Matbaa-yi osmaniyye, 1309 and Ataullah Mehmed Şanizade, *Tarih*. 4 vols Istanbul, 1284.

8 Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi.

1310, which apparently has a complete list of Governors in Syria. The *salnames* can be very reliable documents as they were compiled by Ottoman officials, using Ottoman archival materials. Other provincial *salnames* such as those of Aleppo will have to be consulted, too.⁹

As far as Bilād al-Shām is concerned Süreyya's biographies of governors remain rather sketchy until the middle of the 17th century. Up to then the imperial government had left the running of the provinces more or less to the local elites. It is only then, that local registries for the various provinces are established.¹⁰ For the time before, we are often better off to look at Arabic chronicles or the traditional genre of Arabic literature, the bio-bibliographical dictionaries, *ṭabaqāt*, which continued to be popular. The latter dealt with men of learning and not with political power brokers. But incidental information on governors can be found, providing personal impressions of them, their relations to the local urban elites and, sometimes, their learnedness.¹¹ Needless to say, neither the chronicles nor the *ṭabaqāt* literature constituted a systematic treatment of our topic.

Beginning from the first half of the 18th century the volume of information grows significantly. Three major causes can be identified for this development: First, the already mentioned direct appointments of governors – and other officials – coming from Istanbul, which resulted in a continuous flow of reports by the local Ottoman officials and a new dimension of knowledge about the provinces.

The second cause was the rise of a new genre of Arabic “contemporary chronicles,” written by lay people, i.e. people who did not belong to the “learned classes” and, though literate, were not really

9 The *salnames* are now also to be found online: <http://isamveri.org/salname/> (accessed 14 March 2016).

10 Qāsim al-Ṣamad, “Niẓām al-iltizām fī wilaya Ṭarābulus fī 'l-qarn al-18 min khalāl wathā'iq maḥkamat al-shar'īyya.” In: *al-Mu'tamar al-Awwal li-tārīkh wilayat Ṭarābulus ibān al-ḥiqba al-'Uthmāniyya*. Tripolis: The Lebanese University, 1995, pp. 59-95, here p. 60.

11 'Abd al-Razzāq Al-Baytār, *Ḥilyat al-bashar fī tārīkh al-qarn al-thālith 'ashar*, 3 vols., Damascus, 1961-1963; Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad al-Būrīnī, *Tarājim al-a'yān min abnā' al-zamān*. 2 vols., Damascus, 1959; Najm al-Dīn al-Ghazzī, *Al-Kawākib al-sā'ira bi-a'yān al-mi'a al-'āshira*. 3 vols., Beirut, 1979; Raḍī al-Dīn Ibn Ḥanbalī, Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Yūsuf al-Ḥalabī, *Durr al-ḥabab fī tārīkh a'yān Ḥalab*. 2 parts (4 vols.), Damascus, 1972; Ibn Ṭūlūn, Henri Laoust, *Les Gouverneurs de Damas sous les Mamlouks et les premiers Ottomans 1260-1744, Traduction des Annales d'Ibn Tulun et d'Ibn Gum'a*, Damas: IFEAD, 1952; Muḥammad al-Ṣāliḥī al-Dimashqī, *A'lām al-warā bi-man wulyā nā'iban min al-Atrāk bi-Dimashq*. Damascus, 1964; Muḥammad al-Muḥibbī, *Tārīkh khulāṣa al-athar fī a'yān al-qarn al-'ashar*. Ed. Muṣṭafā Wabhī. 4 vols., Cairo: al-Maṭba'a al-Wahbiyya, 1284/1868; Muḥammad Rāghib ibn Maḥmūd al-Ṭabbākh, *A'lām al-nubalā' bi-tārīkh Ḥalab al-shuḥabā'*. 7 vols. [plus index], Aleppo, 1923; Muḥammad Khalīl ibn 'Alī al-Murādī, *Silk al-durar fī a'yān al-qarn al-thānī 'ashar*. 4 vols., Beirut, 1997, Dār al-Kutub al-'ilmi; and many others.

supposed to write. They took their authority to write not from any scholarly learnedness, as the *ʿu-lama* did, but from their own eyewitness testimony.¹² The causes for this literary development are still debated. Suffice it to say that these authors were close to the daily events in their mainly urban environment, gave detailed descriptions of them and expressed their opinions about governors, whenever they deemed it necessary.¹³ Their reporting on the governors, too, cannot be considered a systematic effort. Whenever they dealt with the topic, however, their dating is very reliable and they provide the local context, in which the governors had to operate.

Finally, we can observe in the 18th century an ever increasing European presence in the Levant, first by the French, later also by the British and others. The French were particularly interested in the import of raw silk and silk thread from the Levantine coast, which was soon superseded by their desperate need for cotton with the beginning industrialization of the textile production in France. French trade had been reorganized by the Colbert at the end of the 17th century. Marseilles Mediterranean trade monopoly was confirmed and the French traders in the various ports were reorganized in a corporation, a *nation*, led by a *consul* or *vice consul*. They reported to the Chamber of Commerce in Marseille and to the French government, later to the French ambassador in Istanbul. For the consuls dealing with the governors and writing reports about it became a routine affair.¹⁴ For a long time British presence and diplomatic contacts in the Ottoman Empire were managed by the English Levant Company, not to be confused with its much more powerful rival the East India Company.¹⁵ The establishment of European consuls in various cities began by the middle of the 18th century, they would write regular reports to their ambassadors in Istanbul from the provinces. This helps greatly to establish precise dates for the rule of each governor.

With European consuls came also European tourists in increasing numbers. Travel literature was most avidly read in Europe combining entertainment with information about non-European worlds.

12 Dana Sajdi, *The Barber of Damascus*. Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 2013, p. 140.

13 For instance: Naʿūm Bakhkhāsh, *Akhbār Ḥalab*. 3 vols., Aleppo, 1985; Ibn Kannān (al-Ṣāliḥī al-Dimashqī), Muḥammad b. ʿĪsā, *Yawmiyyāt Shāmiyya (al-Ḥawādith al-yawmiyya)*. Ed. Akram Aḥmad al-ʿUlābī, Damascus: Dar al-Ṭabāʿ, 1994; ʿAbbūd al-Ṣabbāgh, *Al-Rawḍ al-zāhir fī tārikh al-Zāhir*. Ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Karīm Maḥāfaẓa, Irbid, 1999; Sharaf al-Dīn Mūsā ibn Yūsuf al-Anṣārī, *Nuzha al-khātir fī bahja al-nāzir*. 2 vols., Damascus, 1991.

14 CADN, Centre des Archives diplomatiques de Nantes: Ambassade de France à Constantinople Serie D (correspondance consulaire): Alep 1733-1914. 108 vols., Damas 1795 - 1894 vols. 0-7.

15 National Archives Kew Garden. See FO 195,196 following; FO 226,81 following; FO, 618,1 following; FO 861 following.

Here, too, it depended much upon the preferences and likings of the traveler, about what he would report and which reading public he intended to address.

Consuls, travelers, local authors and Ottoman administrators expressed, according to their tasks or interests, different opinions about the governors, whose biographies became more complex, colorful but also more contradictory than ever before. This development, however should not let us overlook the fact that none of these authors intended to write systematic and comprehensive biographies of governors or a general history of governorships. The particular perspective would always depend on the motives of each author to write and readers he wanted or had to address. The authors of the new “contemporary chronicles” were mainly interested in how governors dealt with economical issues, specially with prices and taxation and with the general issue of justice toward the population. Consuls wanted to find out about the malleability of governors to serve European interests. Travelers would write in great detail if they happened to gain access to a governor and stayed for some time in the same city as the governor. Administrators were much more interested in the relation governors had to the political powers in Istanbul. Some governors stayed relatively long in their position, other moved on very quickly. Some governors were communicative, some kept a certain distance in general and from the Europeans in particular. In other words, whether we find much information about a governor depends on many varying factors: motives of authors, access to governors and readers addressed.

There will be governors about whom we probably will never know much more than their actual presence in their appointed position. On the other hand there exists a vast amount of biographical information on some other governors. Though all information we collect might be pertinent to a general study of the functions and powers of Ottoman governors in the Levant, this imbalance of information on individuals and the often incidental and even haphazard character of this information constitutes a problem.

Reconstruction of sources

It seems to me that, in addition to compiling biographical information on individuals, there exists another method to generate information on governors. Wherever we can find families, clans, Ottoman “households” or other groups with some common characteristics, which have produced a number of governors they should be considered as an entity. We can then generate a composite picture within a historical context, even if we do not have much biographical information on individuals, Investiga-

tion can lead us to understand their interaction and cooperation as well as their competition with other similar groups. At the same time we also can learn about the reactions of the Ottoman government, which always was very sensitive to the issue of governors gaining too much power at the periphery of the empire. Local groups and networks must have worried the central government even more, than individual governors sent from Istanbul.

In the Province of Shām the period between 1724 and 1822 crystallized as a very remarkable and statistically different century from the periods before and after. Most obvious is the average duration of appointments: two to three times as long as in the periods before and after. But perhaps most striking are the qualifications governors brought with them to the job: in the century 1629-1724 13 governors had been trained in the Internal Palace Service (IPS), or a fifth of all whose biography we know at this point; in the century there after at least twelve governors belonged to the ʿAz̄m household, or more than one third; What is more remarkable is the extraordinary long time that some of them held the position of governor of Damascus. In the half century between 1823 to 1877 13 governors had been ministers in the central government, or half of all. None were from Bayt al-ʿAz̄m. Whether the 18th century was also a century of great weakness or a period in which the central government looked for new ways to control the provinces is still being debated. Certain is that in the Province of Damascus it was a time were local dynasties flourished. One local clan in Bilād al-Shām, Bayt al-ʿAz̄m looms large in the statistics and the reports from those times.¹⁶

The origin of the ʿAz̄ms

Claims for their Turkish, Arab and Kurdish origin abound. When such claims are discussed with some intensity it reflects the importance attached today to ethnicity in general or implies the retrospective belief that the development toward local autonomy in the 18th century signifies the beginnings of national movements toward independence.¹⁷ Already in the 18th century the Ottoman government had an interest to depict the ʿAz̄ms not as a local group but as one, whose roots lay elsewhere in the empire. Local roots of a governor – not to mention a whole dynasty of governors – was considered a threat to the unity of the empire. There are two major claims to the origins of the family. Süreyya gives the following explanation:

16 See Appendix 2: al-ʿAz̄m genealogy.

17 Karl Barbir, *Ottoman Rule in Damascus 1708-1758*. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1980, pp. 56-60.

“In Konya there are two persons of the “‘Azm” tribe’s beys with the name Ibrahim and Kasim. Of these two Ebû Keth Kasim Bey got famous for his braveness and died without children. Ibrahim Bey on the other hand was in his youth, in the period of Murad IV. (1623-40), in Baghdad and attained fame and left after his death his sons Ismail Bey and Süleyman Bey behind. Ismail Bey was being promoted and became *mutasarrif* and *mirimiran* of Hama and in Jumada I 1136/Feb.1724¹⁸ he became vizier and governor of Tripoli. In Rabi‘a I 1137 /Nov. - Dec. 1724 he became governor of Damascus and he died in 1144/06.07.1731. He was smart, prudent and strong.”¹⁹

The chronology is just possible, about the reasons of the move to Hama we hear nothing except that it was a promotion.

The Arab consensus is that the family originated in Ma‘arrat al-Nu‘mān, midway between Hama and Aleppo.²⁰ One author added even the social origins of the family: “He [Ismā‘īl Pasha] was a peasant from Ma‘arrat al-Nu‘mān.”²¹ People from that town enjoyed the trust of the al-‘Azms, such as Mūsā Agha, *kahya* and *mutasallim* first of Ismā‘īl, then of Sulaymān and finally of As‘ad Pasha.²² Important is that they were local people in the sense that they had lived in Ma‘arrat and in Hama, later acquiring Hama as their *malikane*. Before they rose to power they had no contact with Istanbul such as a training in the palace school, or at the administrative level. They had no family connections and no patron in the center of the empire. Presumably they had local ambitions and interests, such as they perceived them.

The family worked its way systematically to the south as the career of Ismā‘īl Pasha shows: he had become a *mutasarrif* of the *sanjaq* of Hama, which at the time belonged to the province of Tripolis. Upon the recommendation of the governor of Aleppo²³ he was promoted and appointed governor

18 For an explanation of how to read the dates see Appendix 2: Reading dates.

19 Süreyya, vol. 3, p. 381.

20 Muḥammad Rāghib al-Ṭabbākh al-Ḥalabī, *I‘lām al-Nubalā’ bi-tāriḫ Ḥalab al-Shuḥabā’*. 7 vols., Aleppo: Dār al-Qalamī al-‘Arabī, 1925. Here vol 3, pp. 266, 270 and passim.

21 Raslān bin Yahyā al-Qārī, “Al-wuzarā’ ḥakamū Dimashq.” pp. 71-89, p. 77, in: Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid, *Wulāt Dimashq fī ‘ahd al-‘uthmānī*. Damascus: s.n., 1949.

22 Mikhā‘īl Burayk, *Tāriḫ al-Shām 1720-1782*. New edition: ed. Aḥmad Ghasān Sibānū, *Silsilat Dirāsāt wa-wathā’iq tāriḫ Dimashq* (3), Damascus: Dār Qutayba, 1982. The ‘Azms were Arabs and “they originated from Ma‘arrat Ḥalab” i.e. Ma‘arrat al-Nu‘mān. See also Shimon Shamir “As‘ad Pasha al-‘Azm and Ottoman Rule in Damascus”, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 26.1 (1963), pp. 1-28; here p. 1 n. 2. Mūsā Agha came from the same place and was also called al-Ma‘arrāwī. Ibid, p. 49-50. For Mūsā see also al-Budayrī, pp. 208, 238, 245, 247 and passim.

23 There are three governors which could have possibly at that time interfered on Ismā‘īl’s behalf: Rājib Pasha, ‘Arīfī Aḥmad Pasha and ‘Alī Pasha Ḥakīmzādeh. But we have no information that any of them actually did so. It also could have been an earlier Pasha of Aleppo, who had a specific interest in promoting Ismā‘īl. Shamir, p. 3 suggests a certain “Bekir Pasha” of Mecca as an early patron. Ḥasan Yahyā, “Ahammiyyat wilāyat Ṭarābulus al-idāriyya wa’l-siyāsiyya fi ‘l-naṣf al

of Tripoli in 1723. Thus he became the first ‘Aẓm to be raised to the rank of Pasha. Two years later he was appointed governor of the Damascus province, where he ruled until his death in 1144/09.07.1731.²⁴

The rise of Bayt al-‘Aẓm²⁵ was disrupted for a short moment when on 24 VII 1143/ 25.10.1730 a popular rebellion broke out. The people of Latakiyya revolted against Yāsīn. He asked for 200 Janissaries from his father to be sent to him, which led to unrest and revolt in Tripolis.²⁶ Some people were killed and the governor, Ibrāhīm b. Ismā‘īl al-‘Aẓm, was besieged in his residence. The crowd rained stones on it and shot at it using even a cannon to shoot a breach in the wall of his palace. The guards all fled and the governor, being left alone, also tried to flee, but was caught. Initially the crowd wanted to kill him, then to lock him up – until a notable came and calmed them down. Ibrāhīm al-‘Aẓm, was unable to control the situation. The people had complained about the rapacious ways in which al-‘Aẓms enriched themselves and impoverished the civil population. They voted to have a new governor. In the meantime the Janissaries took care of security and safety in the town.²⁷ The government reacted by sending a new governor, ‘Uthmān Pasha from Istanbul.²⁸

Then the government ordered the arrest and imprisonment of all al-‘Aẓm governors and functionaries. Their estates and wealth were confiscated. All submitted to the orders of the government.

awwal min al-qarn al-thāmin ‘ashar min khalāl al-wathā’iq al-‘uthmāniyya wa-ghayrihā min al-wathā’iq” in: *al-Mu’tamar al-awwal li-tārīkh wilayat Ṭarābulus ibān al-ḥiqba al-‘uthmāniyya 25-59*. Tripoli [?]: The Lebanese University, 1995, p. 41 “Through mediation by the governor of Aleppo he became governor of Tripoli in 1723/23 II 1135.” Al-Ṭabbākh lists two Bekir Pashas who were governors of Aleppo; the first in 1093/10.01.1682; the second in 1174/13.08.1760. See also al-Ṭabbāḥ, p. 271. As‘ad appeals to the same governor al-wazīr al-kabīr Bakr bāshā, wālī Jidda sābiqan 1153/29.03.1740 when he tries to gain possession of the *malikane* of Hama. He has not yet been identified.

24 Süreyya, vol, 3, p. 381. Shamir, p. 12 mentions fleetingly that the Mulla Khalīl Efendi Şidiqī helped Ismā‘īl Pasha to obtain in 1725 the governorship of Damascus. But neither al-Mürūdī, vol. 2, p. 82 nor al-Muḥibbī, vol. 2, p. 133 mention this. Though it is not impossible that this happened. Al-Budayrī, p. 144 describes how Khalīl Efendi Sidiqī was instrumental in Istanbul to help As‘ad Pasha to get rid of his nemesis Fathī Efendi ibn al-Qalānisī. Khalīl Efendi Şidiqī came from a Damascene family of scholars and judges, and spent long periods of time in Istanbul where he developed extensive contacts and networks, shifting loyalties and convictions whenever necessary in order to promote his own career and if it suited him the interests of Damascus. He has to be considered as one of the representatives of Bayt al-‘Aẓm in Istanbul.

25 For an explanation of the term vide supra.

26 Burayk, ed. by Sibānū, appendix 3, p.133.

27 Yūzif Labakī, “Ṭarābulus min khilāl Arshif al-Ābā’ al-Kabūshi‘in,” in: *al-Mu’tamar al-awwal li-tārīkh wilayat Ṭarābulus ibān al-ḥiqba al-‘uthmāniyya*. Tripoli [?]: The Lebanese University, 1995, pp. 315-338; here p. 325.

28 Yahyā, p. 41.

The measures, however, were quickly rescinded and all were reinstated in their positions. Only Ismā'īl was sent to Crete. He took his son Ibrāhīm with him.

It was not completely unusual for the government to respond to complaints by the population about a governor by replacing him with another one. The deposed governor was typically sent to a lesser post. The wholesale notion to dismiss all, but also the short duration of this move, makes one wonder. Was the central government worried about too large a power centre at the periphery? Most likely it were the events in Istanbul which influenced the extraordinary events in the province of Damascus. The revolt of a Janissary, Patrona, in Istanbul forced eventually Sultan Ahmed III to abdicate in September 1730. Mahmud I succeeded him on October 1. Patrona continued to control the streets and it took Mahmud I a whole year to put the rebellion out and gain power. Time and occasion enough for the representatives of the al-ʿAẓms in the capital to loose their influence and regain it again.²⁹

Sulaymān, the brother of Ismā'īl himself and his sons Asʿad, Muṣṭafā and Saʿd al-Dīn, Ibrāhīm and further members of the clan all started out as governors in Tripoli or Sidon.³⁰ Not all became governors of Damascus but most famously Sulaymān and Asʿad ruled it for ten, respectively for more than twelve years. Damascus was the largest urban center in southern Syria and by far the most important one. The al-ʿAẓms considered the city their power base and it is here that they built their most glamorous palaces, khans, public baths and *madrasas*. They had come to stay. When Saʿd al-Dīn, governor of Tripoli was appointed governor of Aleppo, he first went to Damascus to leave his women folks there, before taking on his new appointment.³¹ Yet the ʿAẓms also never gave up their hold on Hama, where they had huge agricultural domains. Asʿad Pasha in fact was quite dexterous in providing grain from there, when the grain from the Hawran did not reach Damascus and famine drove prices up drastically.³² In addition to governorships ʿAẓms often occupied controlling positions in Homs, Latakiyya, Rakka but also in Ghaza, Ramla, and Jerusalem. Beyond this, members of the family or its entourage would occasionally be appointed to governorships as far flung as Jidda, Diyar Bakir and Adana, about which more later.

29 The leaders of it were invited to a dinner of reconciliation on November 24, 1731 and killed. Shaw, Stanford J., *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*. Vol 1: Empire of the Gazis: The Rise and Decline of the Ottoman Empire, 1280-1808. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1976, p. 240.

30 For the appointment of ʿAẓm governors when and where see Appendix 3: ʿAẓm Pashas' chronological and geographical distribution.

31 Al-Budayrī, p. 204.

32 Al-Budayrī, p. 208.

The Institution of the Bayt

Bayt al-‘Aẓm, literally “the house of al-‘Aẓm,” describes the institutionalized structure and functions of specific, mainly local, power centers in the Ottoman Empire and is similar to the “houses,” *buyūt* pl. of *bayt*, of the Mamluks in Egypt before and after the Ottoman conquest. The difference was that the Mamluk “house” consisted – in theory – exclusively of imported slaves, typically from a Circassian or Georgian background, some of whom would eventually become masters of the “house”, even though there were repeatedly attempts to introduce in the second generation the own sons as successors to power. In Syria during Ottoman times, on the other hand, the *bayt* included local families at the core, controlling and leading such a *bayt*. Bayt al-‘Aẓm was a strongly integrated “house.” We do hear of disputes between family members, such as the disagreement between Sa‘d al-Dīn and his brother As‘ad over how to approach the chief of the Druze, shaykh Milhim. The former had developed a friendly and conciliatory attitude toward the shaykh, while As‘ad considered him his personal arch-enemy. That did not mean that the two brothers did not cooperate on other issues very successfully, such as the organization of the annual pilgrimage. In addition there existed an entourage of sundry employees and of Mamluks, who served in various functions and enhanced the power of the family.

Marriages between Mamluks of the ‘Aẓms and ‘Aẓm daughters were, as anywhere else, accompanied by strategies of politics, loyalty, maintenance of wealth and social status. This in itself was not unusual in the Mamluk households.³³ Where such marriages in Bayt al-‘Aẓm differed from Mamluk bayt in Egypt was that the names of the daughters were never mentioned while their sons' genealogy was firmly embedded in the ‘Aẓm family, noting that the grandfather on the mothers side was an ‘Aẓm. Marriage as a means of upward social mobility was apparently widely spread in Syria at the time. The most common pattern was that of a wealthy man of humble origin, little education and no manners to a daughter from a distinguished or noble family. This of course was also the case elsewhere: in Europe novels dealing with the topic fill whole shelves. The price for such arrangements in Bilād al-Shām was that, in recognition of the higher social status of the women, the name of the maternal lineage was given to the children.³⁴

33 Afaf Lutfi al-Sayyid Marsot, “Marriage in Late Eighteenth Century Egypt,” in: Thomas Philipp and Ulrich Haarmann (eds.), *The Mamluks in Egyptian Society and Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp. 283-289.

34 Margaret L. Meriwether, *The Kin who Count: Family and Society in Ottoman Aleppo 1770-1840*. Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1999, p. 61.

Two important branches of the family developed in this fashion. In one case the situation was very similar to that of Mamluks in Egypt. ʿUthmān al-Šādiq was a Mamluk of Georgian extraction. He served Asʿad Pasha as his *kahya* and *mutasallim* in Hama and elsewhere and was his general representative, *wakīl*. He married his master's daughter. Later he was promoted by the government in Istanbul to the rank of Pasha and his career as governor was very similar to that of some ʿAzm Pashas, including a stint of twelve years as governor of Damascus. The second case, the marriage of a daughter of Ismāʿīl Pasha to an outsider, is somewhat odd. The name of her husband, Muṣṭafā Farīd ibn Ibrāhīm, is never mentioned except by al-Murādī, who makes no further comment about him.³⁵ This leaves us completely in the dark about the husband's background. Nevertheless, the offspring from this marriage was considered fully part of al-ʿAzm family and provided in the following three generations six Pashas.

Another category of people, accepted and trusted by the ʿAzms, were people sharing the same geographic origin, e. g. Maʿarrat Nuʿmān such as Mūsā who had served Sulaymān b. Ibrāhīm and Asʿad b. Ismāʿīl as *kethūda*. He was appointed in early VII 1147/23.07.1746 as ruler of Sidon. Ten years later he obtained two *tughs* the rank of Pasha and the task of *amir al-ḥajj*.

Then there were men, who attached themselves to Bayt al-ʿAzm for a time and considered this just as a further career step. Their loyalty and trustworthiness was in the best case dubious. Uzun Ibrāhīm Pasha and Kanj Yusuf Pasha belong to that group. Both worked for some time for the ʿAzms as *deli bash*, as commanders of the *deli* irregulars. ʿAzm governors, just like other governors, needed to back up their authority with some military force.

A different category altogether were employees, the scribes and administrators needed for the management of Bayt al-ʿAzm. These tasks were filled by members of the al-Yāzījī family.

Patronage could be given for services for the Bayt. If a Mamluk or servant pleased his master and was intelligent he could rise quickly in the hierarchy. Ultimately he was set free outside the household, where he might be useful to his master but was also more independent. Patronage could also be given for heavy payments (bribes).³⁶

35 Al-Murādī, vol. 4, pp. 111.

36 Herbert L. Bodman, *Political Factions in Aleppo, 1760-1826*. Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1963, p. 56.

Bayt al-‘Aẓm in politics

The Bayt al-‘Aẓm obviously did not operate in free space. Other powerful local families and rivals had to be taken care of; the urban population had to be dealt with; the central government and its orders had to be considered, in which context also the relations with neighboring governors from Mossul to Egypt and Jeddah needed some attention.

Three local families – and there may be more – have been identified, which provided governors and were contemporaries or almost-contemporaries of Bayt ‘Aẓm. There is Şāliḥ Pasha ‘Arab, apparently from Nablus. He obtained the important position of *amīr al-ḥajj* in conjunction with being *mutasarrif* of Tripolis. Eventually he was made governor of Damascus (1197/1686) and later of Belgrade. His son, Aḥmad Pasha held minor positions in Jerusalem and Nablus and finally was given, like his father, the position of Commander of the Pilgrimage and *mutasarrif* of Tripoli.³⁷ Both died before the turn of the century and before the rise of Bayt al-‘Aẓm. Another example is Ibrāhīm Pasha Qatar Aghasi from Aleppo. After a stint with the Ottoman Army moving against the French in 1798 he became twice governor of Aleppo and in early 1804 he was made governor of Damascus. There he arrested relatives of the chief Janissary commander to reduce the Janissaries power. His son Muḥammad Pasha succeeded him as governor of Aleppo. When the local Janissaries heard what had happened to their comrades in Damascus and fearing the son might do the same in Aleppo, they rose in rebellion against him. In early July 1804 he was forced to move out of the city. Two months later representatives from Istanbul arrived and negotiated a compromise with the Ashraf of Aleppo, supporters of Muḥammad Pasha, and the Janissaries. Muḥammad Pasha was allowed to return as governor to the city but only with 500 men of his own troops. He lived in the *serai* with his mother, two brothers their wives and a sister. But he had lost all authority and the family fell into penury, even though they had been one of the most important families of Aleppo and had married only into their own kind.³⁸

The only local family, which seriously challenged the power of Bayt al-‘Aẓm, was that of Ḥusayn Pasha Makkīzādeh from Ghaza. His grandfather had been one of the wealthy merchants of Ghaza.

37 Süreyya, vol. 1, p. 197 and vol. 5, p. 1473.

38 See Süreyya, vol. 2, p. 598 and vol. 3, p. 783; Ulrich Jasper Seetzen, Tagebuch des Aufenthalts in Aleppo 1803-1805, in: id., *Tagebücher*, vol. 2, ed. by Mamoun Fansa & Michael Braune. Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 2011, pp.125, 129, 194, 197, 198, 202, 204, 242, 265 and passim; Al-Shidyāq, *Ṭanūs Kitāb akhbār al-‘ayān fī Jabal Lubnān*, 2 vols., ed. Fouad E. Boustany, Beirut: Librairie Orientale, 1970 [first publ. 1859], here vol. 2, p. 383; CADN Serie D (correspondance consulaire): Alep 1733-1914. IX, 1809.

his father cultivated contacts to the governors of Damascus. Eventually he received Ghaza as a *malikana*. As'ad Pasha al-'Aẓm made him his *kahya* in Damascus and appointed his son Ḥusayn ruler, *hākim*, of Ghaza. With this move As'ad had annulled the *malikane* status of Ghaza and brought it under his control. Later the government in Istanbul gave Ḥusayn the rank of vizier and made him governor of Sidon. After having led the pilgrimage for 14 times very successfully, As'ad was dismissed from his position as governor of Damascus in Jan. 1757 and replaced by Ḥusayn Pasha. As'ad in the meantime was appointed governor of Aleppo. When Ḥusayn Pasha set out in July 1757 to lead the pilgrimage it ended in utter disaster. Bedouins attacked the caravan, killed many of the pilgrims and robbed the others of all their belongings down to the last shirt. The caravan dissolved and everybody fled for his life, including Ḥusayn Pasha. Blame for this catastrophe was quickly distributed to various parties. The government dismissed Ḥusayn from his governorship for his utter failure and sent him back to Ghaza. Some blamed him for his greed and not giving the Bedouins their annual payments for letting the pilgrimage pass and protect it. He blamed others for instigating the Bedouins against him. His ignorance and lack of management was cited. The government may have finally believed the version that As'ad Pasha had conspired to provoke this disaster as Ḥusayn Pasha claimed and had As'ad executed.³⁹

Rivalries were not necessarily carried out over governorships. The position of *defterdar*, controller of finances, of the province of Damascus and directly answerable to Istanbul, could be easily exploited as an instrument to enhance the influence and expand the power of its occupant. A striking example in the present context is Faṭḥī Efendi ibn al-Qalānisī, al-Daftardār.⁴⁰ He was a contemporary of Sulaymān Pasha al-'Aẓm and his nephew As'ad Pasha. He also was the overseer of Sulaymān Pasha's awqāf, some of the largest in Bilād al-Shām. Al-Murādī⁴¹ provides us with a rather scholarly and restrained biography, establishing on the first page, often in rhymed prose, Faṭḥī as a man of culture, friend of poets and scholars of religion, generously financing the construction of schools, minarets etc. This is followed by six pages of poetry by Faṭḥī and by those responding to it. The biography ends with one and a half pages of an apologetic discussion, conceding that Faṭḥī was too am-

39 This according to Quṣṭanṭīn Pasha's interpretation in his edition of Mikhā'il al-Ṣabbāgh, *Tārīkh al-shaykh Zāhir al-'Umar al-Zaydānī hākim 'Akkā wa-bilād Ṣafad*. ed. by Quṣṭanṭīn al-Bāshā al-Mukhallasī. Harisa: Matba'at al-Qadīs Būlus, 1935, p. 76. Though the execution of As'ad may have had quite different reasons as we will see later. For details of the various interpretation see especially al-Budayrī, p. 251, n. 1.

40 Al-Qalānisī seems to be a corruption of al-Fālaqnīsī, as al-Murādī, vol. 4, p. 7 has it. See al-Buraydī, p. 93, n. 3.

41 Al-Murādī, vol. 4, pp. 7-15.

bitious for his own good and fell in with the wrong people, corrupted and corrupting criminals; meant are here elements of the local Janissaries.

More than likely al-Murādi had access to the chronicle of al-Budayrī. But the person Faṭḥī presented by al-Budayrī, chronicler and eyewitness in Damascus, differs considerably from al-Murādi's description. When Sulaymān Pasha died on 07.08.743/16 VI 1156 Faṭḥī Efendi began immediately to do the accounts of Sulaymān's wealth and possessions, which had to be delivered to Istanbul. It was not the impious haste, with which he assumed this task, which shocked al-Budayrī, but the way he treated the entourage and especially the women of Sulaymān. He arrested several high ranking officials of Sulaymān. His whole harem was disgraced, brought out into the public, the women's cloth and pockets were search for jewellery and gold coins they might be hiding. All were threatened with torture in order to reveal hidden treasures. Sometimes torture was applied. The wealth found in this manner was unimaginable.

On October 3, 1743 it was announced that As'ad Pasha al-'Aẓm, the nephew of Sulaymān Pasha and ruler of the *malikane* of Hama was appointed governor of Damascus and commander of the Pilgrimage. He arrived ten days later in Damascus and left again almost immediately for the *dawra*, in preparation for the pilgrimage. While he was on the *dawra*, Faṭḥī Pasha negotiated a peace between As'ad and Zāhir al-'Umar, ruler of Acre. The latter sent 40 loads of rice, sugar and textiles, which he considered as his own. "He was the Sultan in al-Shām".⁴²

When As'ad returned from the *dawra* the notables of Damascus complained to him about Faṭḥī, but he did not take any action against him. His inaction earned him eventually the nickname "the Sa'adiyya woman", implying fear and cowardice. In fact, he was planning his revenge already and proceeded cautiously. He secured his position in the city first by fighting the local Janissaries in Maydān, secondly, when a famine threatened in Damascus he ordered grain to be brought from his *malikane* in Hama.⁴³

The power struggle between him and Faṭḥī Efendi continued for almost three years. At one point the notables of Damascus send a letter of complaints about Faṭḥī to the government but it so happened that Faṭḥī was at that time in Istanbul and his patron Bashīr Agha, the powerful head of the imperial harem, intercepted the letter and passed it on to Faṭḥī. Upon his return to Damascus the latter went revengefully after all those who had signed the letter. As'ad prepared the case against

42 Al-Budayrī, p. 120.

43 The *sanjaqs* of Homs and Hama, originally belonging to the province of Aleppo, were attached to Damascus to help pay for the expenditures of the pilgrimage. Qāsim al-Ṣamad, p. 61.

Fathī with a lot of documentation concerning his malfeasance. He made his plans together with the notables of Damascus, who signed the report in great numbers.⁴⁴

He had the good sense to promise a bequest of a thousand kise (500,000 qurursh) to the government and the good luck that the Grand Vizier, Ḥasan Pasha, was an enemy of Fathī, whose patron, Bashīr Agha, had suddenly died.⁴⁵ Finally As‘ad obtained from Istanbul, what he wanted: orders to execute Fathī. This he carried out personally, making some of Fathī’s closest collaborators share his fate.⁴⁶ The power of the Qalānīsī clan and its network had been crushed. But the incidence also shows how expensive lobbying in Istanbul was and how unpredictable the outcome could be.

The ‘Aẓm clan’s rise to power corresponded with a period when tendencies toward local autonomy at the imperial periphery proliferated. In Egypt the Mamluks came close to independence, the Arab Greek Catholics in Bilād al-Shām separated from the officially recognized Greek Orthodox church, and in Acre a completely new centre of economic and political power came into existence.

Legitimation of power

Locally Bayt al-‘Aẓm tried to legitimate its power by setting up pious foundations to pay salaries to scholars or for the maintenance of religious schools, madrasas and by initiating public construction activities of different sorts: building or repairing roads, building mosques, fountains and schools, rebuilding canals, erecting palaces. Hama and Damascus were the greatest beneficiaries of these activities, though some can be also observed in Homs and Tripoli. The most important initiators were Sulaymān and As‘ad. Sulaymān’s program was so extensive that the chronicler claimed “Nothing like it had ever happened since Tamerlane”⁴⁷

Muḥammad b. bint Ismā‘īl Pasha was another great donor. He was considered to be very pious, he had studied and he cultivated his relations with religious scholars, learned men and poets. In addition to his building activities, “benefiting the Muslims,” he gave considerable sums for the salaries of scholars, stipends for students and support of the poor.⁴⁸

These benevolent activities were fully appreciated by the observers. After all, they contributed in important ways to the improvement of the infrastructure and raised the quality of life for many.

44 Barbir, p. 88.

45 Al-Murādī, vol. 4, p. 15; al-Budayrī, p. 144.

46 Al-Budayrī, p. 142.

47 Al-Budayrī, p. 133.

48 Al-Murādī, vol. 4, p. 115.

However, they were not always unselfish gifts from the donor. Frequently a surtax was imposed on the neighborhood or individuals to help pay for such measures. In other cases brutal force was used to confiscate building materials. As'ad Pasha had buildings be torn down for materials, tiles used in houses were confiscated and a whole market was taken apart for using its stones in his projects. Our chronicler felt the need to point out, when this did not happen: As'ad had a road built in the Maydān and "He oppressed nobody for that and did not take a thing from anybody."⁴⁹

Investing in benevolent acts by donations or investments in public construction, certainly was one way to legitimize the political power of Bayt al-'Azm. Wealth alone could never do that but wealth could consolidate their position and enhance their influence in Syria as well as in Istanbul.

For the Ottoman government the securing of the annual pilgrimage from Damascus to Mecca became the central issue for its politics in Bilād al-Shām. It was part of legitimating Ottoman rule in general. The sultan, together with his representatives and administration, derived their legitimacy for political authority and power from their ability to prevent enemies from abroad to attack the empire and to maintain within the empire at least a semblance of law and order. The ability of the ruler to guarantee to the faithful the possibility to fulfill one of his duties Islam demanded from him, the pilgrimage to Mecca, constituted the religious source of his legitimate right to political authority and rule.

After the conquest of Bilād al-Shām the Ottoman government had left the Mamluk administrative order more or less in tact. Only in the last quarter of the 16th century Sultan Murad III decided to re-organize all the administrative units in the empire into *eyalets* (*iyalāt*) or *pasāliks* (*bāshawiyāt*), consisting of sub district such as *sanjaqs*.⁵⁰ From then on until the beginning of the 18th century the government had left these matters to the local emirs. But that led to much infighting, disturbances and endless local power struggles between clans, which had nothing to do with the overall strategic interests of the Ottoman government. It first tried to first employ the aghas of the Janissaries for managing the pilgrimage, then the government experimented with sending high officials to solve the problem and finally gave the task to the governors of Bilād al-Shām.⁵¹ In the century between 1724 and 1812 the government in Istanbul relied mainly on local leaders for governors.

49 Al-Budayrī, pp. 195, 215.

50 Qāsim al-Šamad, "Niẓām al-iltizām fī wilāyat Ṭarābulus fī 'l-qarn al-18 min khalāl wathā'iq maḥkamatihā al-shar'iyya." in *al-Mu'tamar li-tārīkh wilayat Ṭarābulus ibān al-ḥiqba al-Uthmāniyya*. Tripoli [?]: The Lebanese University, 1995, pp. 59-95, here p. 61.

51 Ḥasan Yahyā, pp. 43-44.

The legitimacy of the dominant position of Bayt al-ʿAẓm in Syria was closely connected to that of Ottoman rule. The link was the annual pilgrimage to Mecca. Damascus was its starting point, drawing thousands of pilgrims from Anatolia and the Caucasus via Aleppo and, depending on wars, politics and security, from Persia via Mossul. The religious legitimation was crucial for the general order of the empire, where the province of Damascus played a significant role and gave its governor a particular importance. Members of Bayt al-ʿAẓm were for a long time able to provide this function successfully and, as long as they did, they enjoyed considerable length of tenure and leeway to run the province as they saw fit.

Against that stood the permanent worry of the political elite in Istanbul that local power centers could develop especially on the periphery, whose leaders might be tempted to break out of the empire. Recently it has been argued, quite correctly, that a wrong image has been given by historiography of the governor of Damascus as uniting in his person also the function of commander of the pilgrimage and commander of the military escort. Precisely in order to prevent the accumulation of excessive power in the hands of the governor the central government had made it its business to appoint also the *amīr al-ḥajj* and the *amīr al-jirda*. Furthermore, the governor was never appointed for more than one year and had to be reappointed by new orders from Istanbul. This happened usually just before the return of the pilgrimage caravan from Mecca. If the governor had led the pilgrimage he had to wait outside of Damascus for his reappointment, before he could enter the city. The order could be waiting for him already or he had to wait for its arrival, which could be delayed up to five months.⁵² He also could be ordered to move as governor directly to another province. In addition, the authorities in Istanbul had established also the independent position of the accountant of the finances of the province, the *defterdar*, who was directly reporting to Istanbul. In Aleppo he had the title *muḥaṣṣil* and had also the task to collect the taxes.

In theory this was a very reasonable attempt to keep a balance of power in the provinces, which could prevent the accumulation of too much power in one position or person. In practice this approach worked only with governors sent by Istanbul. Typically they were trained in the central administration of the empire and shared its vision of the empire. Having reached an upper level administrative and political career, they were exposed to quick geographic changes of their position and the tasks they were facing. In other words they were never able to strike roots in any provincial environment, enabling them to built up a power base of their own. This scenario remained a cause for

52 Asʿad in 1754, Budayrī, p. 225.

worry and fear among the imperial political elite down to Abdülhamid II. Only the Tanzimat reformers tried to solve the issue of holding the empire together in a very different form.⁵³

In praxis this approach failed. This was particular true where local clans built up *buyūt* or other sorts of networks. Such associations or groups were, of course, aware of the government's policy to keep a balance of power in the provinces, of which the government would remain the arbiter. The local forces could also manipulate the system by placing other members of their network into those positions that were actually meant to counteract their power. In the 17th century and before the government had simply handed over power to local clans, which could be understood in a wider sense than family and approaching sometimes the seize of tribes. Those clans quickly lost the interests of the empire from their sight und concentrated mainly on their local feuds with other clans.

Families in a narrower sense than clans also tried to build their power bases. Ḥusayn of Ghaza, Qaṭṭaraghasi in Aleppo are examples for such attempts. but usually these were affairs of two or three generations restricted to a father-son enterprise. The most successful form was certainly the *bayt*, where control remained in the family while the network could be expanded through a clientele of Mamluks, who became close and loyal members of the family.

The success of Bayt al-ʿAẓm

The most successful of these bodies in its spread as well as in its endurance in Bilād al-Shām was certainly the Bayt al-ʿAẓm. Its success had to do with their policy of an informal in-house-training for the job of sons, nephews and Mamluks by appointing them as their *mutasallims* or having them appointed as rulers to the lesser governorships of Tripoli and/or Sidon with the lower rank of *mirmiran* or similar ranks.⁵⁴ Either of these two positions was usually also combined with that of the *amīr al-jirda*. Only then would some be given by the government the rank of pasha or vizier and would be appointed governors of Damascus or of another province. Ismāʿīl Pasha started out as *mutasarrif* and *mirmiran* of Hama, before becoming vizier and governor of Tripoli and later Damascus. When he

53 See Jens Hanssen, "Practices of Integration: Center - Periphery Relations in the Ottoman Empire." In: *The Empire in the City. Arab Provincial Capitals in the Late Ottoman Empire*. Eds. Jens Hanssen, Thomas Philipp, Stefan Weber. Würzburg: Ergon, 2002 (Beiruter Texte und Studies 88).

54 For this consult Appendix 3. The Problem with the "lesser provinces" of Tripoli and Sidon is that often the beginnings of a career are mentioned but not when a dismissal or promotion occurred. In other cases only a summarily remark is made before somebody is promoted to Damascus or any other larger province: "after having been governor of Sidon he was made governor of Aleppo at such and such a date."

was appointed to Crete he took his son Ibrāhīm with him.⁵⁵ The latter had made his own son, Yāsīn Bey, ruler of Latakiyya. Asa'd Pasha served as *mutasallim* and *mutasarrif* for his father Ismā'īl in Hama and Ma'arrat Nu'mān. When his father became governor of Damascus he would take As'ad frequently with him on the pilgrimage. Later As'ad was raised to the rank to *amīr rumeli* with two *tughs* and appointed *amīr al-jirda* and governor of Tripoli, before becoming vizier and being appointed governor of Damascus. Muḥammad al-ʿAẓm b. bint Ismā'īl Pasha attached himself to his uncle Sa'd al-Dīn, while the latter was governor in Aleppo. ʿAbdallāh Pasha's first appointment was Tripoli with the rank of *mirmiran*.

The Mamluks of the ʿAẓms regularly started their career as *mutasallims* for their patrons. Later they would often enter a career similar to that of their masters. Almost all members of the Bayt al-ʿAẓm who went into politics followed the path from Hama to Tripoli and/or Sidon, later to governorships in Damascus or other provinces.

Another aspect of ʿAẓm success was their ruthless accumulation of wealth. This they did in order to consolidate not only their position in Damascus but also in Istanbul. The political situation in Istanbul, as Shamir has pointed out, had shifted dramatically. His main thesis is that the politics of the imperial elite had become factionalized.⁵⁶ Different parties fought each other and the government's voice did not reflect anymore a united authority. Factions in Istanbul looked also to the provinces for a clientele which they could support and use.

In reverse, this meant that provincial rivals would be prepared to pay huge sums to factions or individuals in Istanbul to represent their competing interests in the political decision making processes, which thrived on a great lack of transparency and a dense web of intrigues. The highest bidder would usually obtain his wishes. But luck or misfortune also played a role in these murky activities. If for instance, the patron in Istanbul died or in some way was disgraced his clientele, even in the provinces, fell into disgrace likewise and the whole patron-client relationship could collapse suddenly. The ʿAẓms were like anybody else in need to have an efficient representation of their interests in Istanbul, and that was costly. Actually it was their Achilles heel, since none of them had spent any length of time in Istanbul, be it with the *ʿulama*, be it with the administration, in order to build a strong network of patrons.

55 Süreyya, vol. 3, pp. 831.

56 Shamir, p. 14.

After all the infighting of the various parties in Istanbul we can observe that the Istanbul government still had considerable clout to manipulate politics in the provinces, once an official order was issued and arrived in the provinces.⁵⁷ Governors, commanders of the pilgrimage, commanders of the military escort and other officials followed such orders without questioning. They obeyed the orders of promotion, transfer and dismissals, though they must have known that the latter occasionally had end up fatally. This obedience is not surprising in officials sent by the central administration since they must have considered this as part of their career. But local officials with local power bases – such as the ‘Azms – followed these orders just as unequivocally. Aḥmad Pasha al-Jazzār, governor of Sidon but residing in Acre, was for a time the most powerful ruler in the region with the best army in the region and a fortified city in which he successfully resisted the siege of the French army in 1798.⁵⁸ He, too, obeyed immediately when, returning from the pilgrimage in early December 1796, he was dismissed as governor of Damascus and commander of the pilgrimage.

The question arises on what this authority of the Ottoman government was based. Probably part of the answer lies in the unreflected tradition of Ottoman authority. But behind that loomed the larger question of legitimacy. Leaving formally the framework of the Ottoman Empire would have left any separatist without it. Even Ibrāhīm Pasha, son of Muḥammad ‘Alī Pasha of Egypt, while conquering 1831 Bilād al-Shām and eventually penetrating deep into Anatolia declared himself always as the obedient servant of the Sultan. Most of the nascent Arab national movement could not envision a separation from the Ottoman Empire until 1916.⁵⁹

This brings us to the disastrous pilgrimage of 1757 and the end As‘ad Pasha al-‘Az̄m, the most famous member of Bayt al-‘Az̄m. For this it will be necessary to first establish a time line of events: The Chronicler al-Budayrī introduces the period with ominous events in Istanbul. On 15 III 1167/29.01.1754 official news came that Mahmud I had died and his brother Sultan Osman III had succeed

57 Yaḥyā pp. 52-53 points out that the appointment of qadis still was in the control of the central government and local muftis had to collaborate with them. Which gave the government considerable clout in local affairs, even in the 18th century.

58 Though it must be said that the best defence was the incredible bad shape of the highways or the total lack of them. The fortification consisted of repaired medieval walls with some additions which would not have withstood the impact of modern canons. But the French had lost their canons off the coast of Palestine and the British navy, anchored before Acre, held the French at bay with its naval artillery.

59 See chapter on Tanzimat reforms etc. Philipp, Thomas, “Participation and Critique: Arab Intellectuals Respond to the Young Turk Revolution.” In: *Arabic Thought Beyond the Liberal Age, 1780s-1940s: Towards an Intellectual History of the Nahda*. Eds. Jens Hanssen and Max Weiss. (Forthcoming).

him “The people of Damascus were deeply affected and became doubtful about the stability.” Budayrī clearly linked the following events in Damascus to this situation.⁶⁰

On 29 IV 1169/01.02.1756 As‘ad was confirmed as governor of Damascus – extending anew a never-heard-of long tenure in this position. He left, as *amīr al-ḥajj*, with the caravan on 3 XII 1169/01.07.1756. On the same day his brother Sa‘ad was dismissed as governor of Tripoli but stayed as commander of the military escort. He also was appointed as governor of Egypt. During the same time Muṣṭafā Pasha, another brother of As‘ad was dismissed as governor of Sidon. Clearly this was a weakening of the position of As‘ad by weakening those of his brothers. The returning pilgrimage had suffered losses of life as well as merchandize. In the middle of IV 1170/ Jan.1757 Rāghib Pasha of Aleppo was transferred to Damascus and in return As‘ad was appointed to Aleppo. Rāghib never reached Damascus, because he became the grand vizier. Instead of him Ḥusayn al-Makkī of Ghaza was appointed as governor of Damascus, which he entered on 5 VI 1170/25.02.1757. It might again have been a moment when Bayt al-‘Aẓm had lost the support of its lobbyists in Istanbul. As‘ad arrived on 15 VI 1170/ 07.03.1757 in Aleppo, where he was enthusiastically received. A first rumor had it that he would stay for ten years, a second claimed that his transfer to Egypt was imminent. As‘ad sent a message to the French consul to have the ambassador intervene on his behalf at the Ottoman court. The consul supported As‘ad’s stay in Aleppo strongly, “he is good for French trade.” The people of Aleppo demonstrated in front of the *serai*, shouting that they would not let As‘ad go. The Mufti was forced to write a letter to Istanbul to stop As‘ad’s transfer to Egypt. On 24 VIII 1170/ 14.05.1757 As‘ad was confirmed as governor of Aleppo. The population of Aleppo was jubilant. According to the French consul they had been prepared, in case of a negative response from Istanbul, to massacre all the dignitaries of the city. With As‘ad’s appointment came also orders for the transfer of Sa‘d al-Dīn to Marash and for Muṣṭafā to assume the governorship of Mossul. Shamir mentions that Sa‘d al-Dīn, on his way to Marash, visited his brother As‘ad in Aleppo. Supposedly he suggested a revolt of the united Bayt al-‘Aẓm against the Istanbul. If there existed such a proposal As‘ad did not accept it. But the meeting itself must have looked suspicious to the central government.⁶¹

In July of the same year, 1 X 1170/ 07.07.1757 Ḥusayn al-Makkī Pasha left with the pilgrimage from Damascus. In the middle of September news reach Damascus that the returning pilgrimage caravan had been attacked at Qatrana station east of Ma‘an by Bedouins who stripped them of all be-

60 Budayrī, p. 225. Osman III ruled only for three years, 1754-1757. Shaw calls his rule “inconsequential” It was followed by another brother Muṣṭafā III; Shaw, p. 246.

61 Shamir, p. 22.

longings including the clothes they were wearing. Even the *maḥmal* became part of their booty. Many pilgrims were killed or starved and died of dehydration. Ḥusayn al-Makkī hid in a small village before making his way back to Ghaza. Others tried to make their way back to Damascus. Al-Bu-dayrī gives a detailed description of this catastrophe and the harrowing experience of the pilgrims. The gravity of the events was made worse because the sister of the Sultan and high Istanbul officials were part of the pilgrims and perished there.

Speculation about the causes and the attribution of blame abounded. Two major interpretations crystallized in the writings of contemporaries and later historians. According to one interpretation, Ḥusayn al-Makkī was incompetent and greedy. He did not pay the Bedouins the usual protection money but kept that for himself. The alternative interpretation blamed Asʿad for wanting to take revenge on Ḥusayn al-Makkī and to regain his position in Damascus. For this purpose he had instigated the Bedouins and paid them to plunder the caravan, while creating unrest and rebellion in Damascus. It was this interpretation that the Ottoman government made its own.

Asʿad himself was transferred in October 1757 as governor to Sivas. On the way there he was redirected to Ankara, where he was executed by order of the government in March 1758. His execution has always been taken by the contemporaries and later historians as proof of his devious role in creating this disaster or, at least, that the government believed he was responsible for what happened to the pilgrimage.

It seems, though, that there might have been more important reasons for his execution. When he was dismissed as governor of Damascus he tarried for a while in Damascus and installed his *kahya* Mūsā as his *mutasallim*. Obviously he wanted to be informed by a reliable source about events Damascus and probably wanted to prepare his return to Damascus. Once in Aleppo he resisted the attempt by the government to transfer him to Egypt. He asked the French consul to make his ambassador interfere on his, Asʿad's, behalf at the court in Istanbul. He also mobilized the dignitaries in Aleppo including the Mufti, to write letters to Istanbul. Finally he obtained confirmation of his appointment in Aleppo.

In view of the above described authority, which the Ottoman government could still apply and the absolute obedience with which orders of appointments, transfers and dismissals were followed, Asʿad's actions were truly rebellious. The fact that the population of Aleppo, either on its own initiative or instigated by Asʿad, protested in demonstration loudly and threateningly against his depar-

ture from Aleppo, made things even worse. More than his possible involvement in the disaster that befell the pilgrimage caravan this was a challenge that could not go unanswered.

Periodizations

The year of 1757 witnessed without doubt a disastrous pilgrimage. But it is difficult to follow the argument of some scholars to consider it a major turning point in Ottoman policies. Bodman writes, for instance, “[...] it was the practice of the Ottoman government to pay for the protection of the *walāya* [of Aleppo] from the Bedouins. ...[it] may be one of the many indications of the decline of the central government, for we find that in the year 1757 the *wālī* of Aleppo became the recipient of the money. The responsibility for the caravan and village security devolved solely upon him.”⁶² This seems to me to be only another attempt to find an efficient way to deal with the Bedouins, who could not be defeated with a regular army.

Shimon Shamir speaks of the ‘Aẓm period as “an integral part of the historical study of *inhiṭat*, the general decline of the Arab speaking countries under the Mamluks and Ottomans.”⁶³ This wholesale judgment is still indebted to the Arab nationalist ideology after World War I, perceiving the Ottoman rule as the oppression by a barbaric and cruel people (the Turks) of a nation with a rich civilization (the Arabs). Karl Babir takes it already for granted: “between 1708 and 1758 [...] the Ottoman state tried to revitalize its administration in the province of Damascus in three distinct but interrelated areas: the governorship of the province; the containment of local groups; and the reorganization of the annual pilgrimage to the Holy Cities.”⁶⁴ Meriwether without further explanation declares that “[t]he century from 1750-1850 was a time of upheaval and transition in the Ottoman Empire. Two key processes reshaped the Empire (1) the integration of the empire into world economy with European expansionism, (2) decentralisation, followed by more or less recentralization with the reforms of the Tanzimat.”⁶⁵

Between 1724 and 1805 seven different ‘Aẓm governors held the position of governor of Damascus; for 31 years before 1757 and for 39 years afterwards. In addition, they controlled Hama and most of the time Sidon and Tripoli. Hama had become a *malikane* of the ‘Aẓms while Sidon and Tripoli were clearly lesser provinces and often under the influence of the governor of Damascus. The two

62 Bodman, p. 10.

63 Shamir, pp. 2, 26.

64 Bodman, pp. 8-10 and pp. 72-73.

65 Meriwether, p.18. One can hardly speak of the preceding period as lacking “upheavals.”

provinces could be run by lower ranked officials without *tugh*s. Typically sons and relatives of the ʿAẓm governors of Damascus used these positions to collect experience and prepare themselves for further career steps. The task of ruling either of the two provinces came usually together with the task of commander of the military escort for the pilgrimage, *amīr al-jirda*.

Bayt al-ʿAẓm provided at least a dozen governors with the rank of Pasha and many others who ruled as *mutasarrif*, *wakīl* or *muhafiz* over lesser provinces. Bayt al-ʿAẓm provided rather rarely a governor for Aleppo. After 1757 we can observe a wider spread from Egypt and Jeddah to Diyar Bakir and Adana, where ʿAẓm governors served. This might have been a deliberate attempt to disperse Bayt al-ʿAẓm from its original power base. But it also was a subtle attempt to integrate the ʿAẓms into the imperial administrative elite. Though it is noticeable that geographically they never came closer to the imperial center than Konya, while other governors were routinely transferred from the Balkans to Eastern Anatolia and back.

The notion that in 1757 or close to it Bayt al-ʿAẓm had lost its power and the government gave up its attempt to collaborate with local forces is unfounded. The patterns of failures as well as the successes of the past continued to manifest themselves. The most important failure of the government and the ʿAẓm governors was their inability to establish peace between the various military factions within the city. The government lost control – and here the weakness of the imperial center was particularly obvious – over troops only recently sent to Damascus. They were called the *qapuqul* Janissaries and though not being under the command of the governor, they usually cooperated with him. In addition there were the “local” Janissaries, known as the *yerliya*. These were settled in the quarters of the city and had become in large part an economic mafia, demanding protection money from shop owners and artisans and even taking over such business completely. Both sides could start a war with each other at the slightest perceived insult from an opponent. Both sides also always looked for support from some factions of the general population. In addition, the governor had his own troops, paid by him personally, which could range from a few hundred men reaching up to 5,000 men. They consisted of peoples called Arnauts [Albanians], Turkmens, Kurds, Levends, Delis and were generally unemployed soldiers. This private army was another sign of the weakness of the central government, which worried about strong provincial lords. It was not prepared, therefore, to pay for the means to establish the authority of the governors. These circumstances destabilized the situation even further.

When the governor was transferred to another position he dismissed his troops which now were unemployed and without sustenance. They would try to join other forces, begin to plunder the countryside or would become highway robbers. This pattern did not change before 1757 or afterwards.

In a moment of crisis the governor or the notables or the *'ulama* could convoke a *divan* together with the chiefs of the various troops to broker an armistice. But these were informal ad hoc *divans*, lacking legitimacy, executive power and hence authority. Notables often worked against each other and only for their individual advantage. Military commanders had a long tradition of being at loggerheads with each other. Any agreement could not be enforced and would routinely collapse. Shamir quotes a symptomatic scene:

On Friday 2 VII 1161/ 28.06.1748 As'ad convoked a *diwan* assembling the *'ulama* and the notables of Damascus. He said to them: "I am about to depart tonight for the Dawrah. Take charge of the town and do not allow any one to assault another." They answered: Ya Efendina we are common people, some of us are *'ulama* some are poor and some are *mudarrisun*. Our occupation is the study and reading of books." He said to them: is this your acknowledgement? How can it be since you are the notables?" They said: God forbid! The notables are only the *qapuqul*." Then he said to them: "So this is your acknowledgement, you have realized that its [the city's] notables and its guardians are the *qapuqul*. Upon this he summoned the leaders of the *qapuqul* and delivered the town to them."⁶⁶

Half a century later the situation of the *'ayan* had not changed much. Soon after the French invasion of Egypt Napoleon tried in July 1798 to organize a "ruling *diwan*" made up of Egyptian *'ulama* and very few Mamluks of old "houses." He had declared the Mamluks the real enemies of Egypt, but the *'ulama* had explained to him that "the Cairo mob did not fear anybody but the Turks." Later, when Napoleon asked why the "ruling *diwan*" did not take care of safety and peace in the city and restrain the rabble and mob he was answered that "this is the responsibility of the rulers." They may have meant by this either the Turks or the French.⁶⁷

A faint echo of this attitude reaches us more than hundred years later when some among the new secular intelligentsia of the Arab *Nahḍa* ignored the continuing Turkification of the Young Turk Revolution, which in Arabic was always called to "Ottoman Revolution." After the revolution most of them wanted to maintain the political frame of the Ottoman Empire. Some voices among them referred – now in an enlightened, rational and positive way – to the Turks in the following way,

⁶⁶ Shamir, p. 15.

⁶⁷ *Abd al-Rahman al-Jabarti's History of Egypt*. 5 vols. Ed. Thomas Philipp & Moshe Perlman. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1994, here vol 4, pp. 17-18.

“There is no disagreement that Turkish elite is better equipped than ours [the Arabs] for administration and government.”⁶⁸

Throughout the history of the Levant/ Bilād al-Shām two political patterns repeated themselves: The region was split into many city states consisting of the city and territory around it, all being controlled by a monarch ruling over the whole as one entity. The “city state” is therefore somewhat of a misnomer because in itself the city was never a sovereign entity. Secondly, the region could be part of an empire and functionaries were sent from the center to rule over the cities. What was missing was the option for the development of an urban ruling class to develop. If the monarch or the imperial official did not have the means to enforce their political will, the result would be chaos.

The success of the Ottoman Empire and the Bayt al-‘Aẓm until the turn of the century consisted of the continued control over the pilgrimage. This reasserted the legitimate authority of both and motivated the central government to let individual ‘Aẓm governors stay in their position for long periods, ‘Uthmān al-Ṣādiq and Muḥammad b. bint Ismā‘īl each for some ten years. This is comparable to the ten years of governorship of Sulaymān b. Ibrāhīm and the more than a dozen years of As‘ad b. Ismā‘īl in the first half of the century. The length of these four governorships is extremely untypical for the appointments of governors during the time of Bilād al-Shām under Ottoman rule.⁶⁹ But it enabled the governors to improve the administration and reduce civil strife at least in comparison to what was happening to Aleppo during the same period.

It has been said that with ‘Abdallāh Pasha's last dismissal from the governorship of Damascus in 1807 Bayt al-‘Aẓm ceased to play a political role in Ottoman politics. This is *grosso modo* correct. Sidon had been lost to the al-‘Aẓms since 1776 when the whole coast came under the control of Aḥmad Pasha al-Jazzār who ruled over it from his residence in Acre. After him one of his Mamluks, Sulaymān Pasha, controlled the whole coast from Ghaza to Latakiyya – with the exception of Beirut – between 1806 and 1819, occasionally being appointed governor of Damascus in addition. The Ottoman government continued experimenting with various approaches. Neither ‘Abdallāh Pasha nor his successor Kanj Yūsuf were able to deal with the issue of the invading Wahhabis. Only the troops of the semi-independent Muḥammad ‘Alī in Egypt were able to solve the problem for the Ottoman government. ‘Abdallāh still ruled the *sanjaq* of Hamid in 1812.

68 Thomas Philipp, *Jurji Zaydan and the Foundations of Arab Nationalism*. Part Two: Anthology. Syracuse N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2014, p. 406.

69 See Appendix 3.

In Bilād al-Shām we can observe a definite trend to rely again more – but not exclusively – on administrators from Istanbul, but serious structural changes had to wait until the Egyptian conquest of the area in 1832 and until the Tanzimat reforms in the 1840s. But this alone does not explain the total disappearance of Bayt al-ʿAẓm from the Ottoman political scene and the answer has to be looked for on two levels.

On the first level we have to do with the typical course of family histories. The ʿAẓms had a remarkable run on the power politics in the southern part of Bilād al-Shām for 80 years. There are only a few families, apart from nobility, who survived for several centuries such as the Du Ponts⁷⁰ or the Rothschilds. The saying “From shirtsleeves to shirtsleeves in three generations” describes much better the typical rise and fall of families in business or politics. In that sense the longevity of the al-ʿAẓm family is indeed remarkable. After three to four generations – they often overlap – dealing intensely with political power, younger descendents lost their interests. Political power had helped accumulating wealth which was there to be enjoyed. ʿAlī Bey b. Muḥammad is a good example for the path taken. He was a very private man, staying out of public view and tended to his considerable wealth invested in agricultural land and cattle. When Aḥmad Pasha al-Jazzār wanted to share his wealth, he refused. He was killed for his refusal. Khalīl, son of ʿAbdallāh, apparently held a position of governor and *amīr al-jirda* with the rank of *mirimiran* in Tripoli for only a brief time in 1796. The same is true for Ḥasan Pasha b. ʿUthmān al-Ṣādiq Pasha in 1783. Neither was promoted to more important positions. Yūsuf Pasha b. Muḥammad Pasha appears to have had in the beginning a strong political career but then began to take awkward measures as for instance by appointing himself in a moment of crisis as governor of Aleppo “until somebody else is appointed.” He was later demoted, than given back his rank and appointed governor of Tripoli in 1190/ 25.05.1800 but the people did not let him enter the city. As the editor of al-Budayrī’s work remarked: “He had no fortune in his governing.”⁷¹ ʿAbdallāh himself, though belonging to an earlier generation, might have been already part of the problem of political fatigue. He was born around 1725. We read that with the rank *mirimiran* he was made governor of Tripoli and *amīr al-jirda* at some point. In 1784 when he was almost 60 years old, he was appointed governor of Sivas with the rank of vizier. What had he done up to then? We simply don’t know yet. After Sivas he was appointed governor in more provinces than any other al-ʿAẓm but always for one year. As governor in Aleppo he left politics to Ibrāhīm al-

70 The Du Ponts arrived in 1800 in the US, founded a gun powder manufacture, developed it into one of the largest chemical company and are until today active in the politics of Delaware.

71 Al-Budayrī, p. 51.

Qaṭṭaraghasi, the local strongman.⁷² The French found him rather ineffective. The government could not quite make up its mind about him and appointed him three times as governor of Damascus until dismissing him finally for his inability to deal with the Wahhabis. The political role the al-ʿAẓms had played in the 18th century had come to an end.

From the mid-nineteenth century until the middle of the twentieth century we can observe the ʿAẓm family resurging. It was now much enlarged in numbers.⁷³ There developed differentiations between rich and poor branches of the family and even the social status was not the same for all anymore. Its members chose often careers outside politics. They participated as individuals in the Arab intellectual resurgence, the *Nahḍa*; they worked as administrators; many were attracted to the free professions. A new political interest focused on the politics of the city of Damascus and eventually of the new state of Syria in which some ʿAẓms participated. The last was Khālīd al-ʿAẓm, who in the forties and fifties of the last century pursued an intensive political career as member of the Syrian parliament, minister and repeatedly as prime minister.

On the second level we have to look at the important changes in Bilād al-Shām during the 19th century and the fate of the institution of the *bayt*. When Ibrāhīm Pasha had conquered all of Bilād al-Shām he unified the various Ottoman provinces and made Damascus the seat of the central government. He attached to this government various councils, which changed the political structure profoundly. Here notables met and had to work out their conflicting interests. The reformers of the Tanzimat period reestablished first the old provinces. But they introduced consultative councils for each province and finally for each sub-district. The *bayt* as the institutionalized seat of power and the bundling of the interests of one family and its followers had lost its role.

⁷² Bodman, p. 117.

⁷³ See Linda Schatkowski Schilcher, *Families in Politics. Damascene Factions and Estates of the 18th and 19th Centuries*. Stuttgart – Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1985.

Appendix 1: Reading Dates

All dates are given in both calendars: AD and AH. The date before the slash indicates the date given in the text. The date behind the slash indicates the calculated date in the other calendar. The sequence is always dd mm yyyy. The months of the Islamic calendar are indicated by Roman numerals.

1) A precise date is given in the text and calculated for the other calendar:

29 IV 1169/ 01.02.1756

07.03.1757/ 1170 VI, 15.

2) Month and year are given: the equivalent appears in the other calendar

V 1170/ Jan.1758

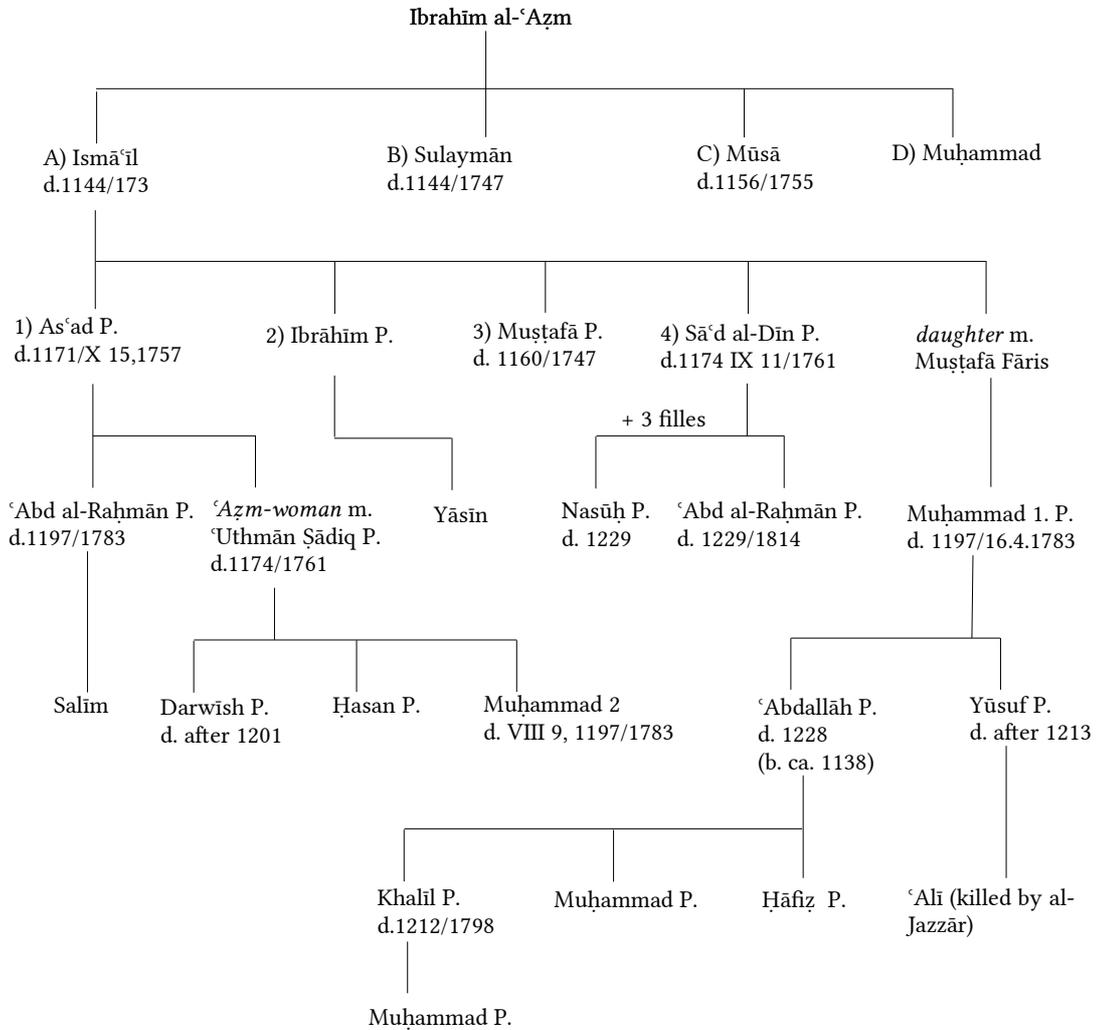
09.1748/ IX 1161

3) Only the year is given. The day of the beginning of this year in the other calendar is indicated.

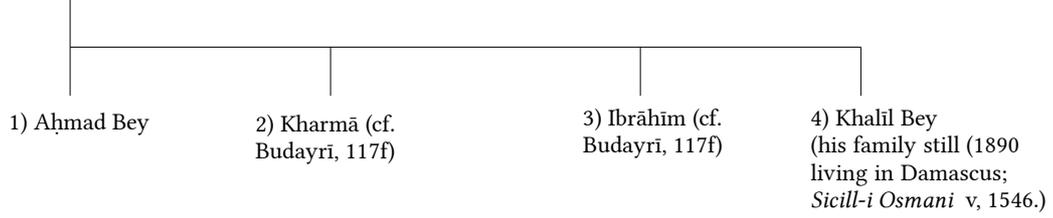
1163/11.12.1749

1775/28 X 1188

Appendix 2: al-ʿAzm genealogy. Al-ʿAzm Family Tree

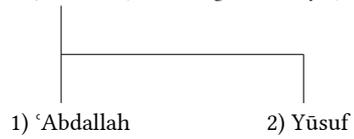


B) Sulaymān Pasha (according to Budayrī)
d.1144/1747



C) Mūsā ibn Ibrāhīm al-ʿAẓm and brother
of Ismāʿīl Pasha, d.1156/1755

D) Muḥammad (according to Budayrī)



Appendix 3: ‘Azm Pashas’ chronological and geographical distribution

Places Years (hijri/AD)	Hama	Sidon	Tripoli	Damascus	Aleppo	Egypt	Jeddah	Marash	Konya	Rakka	Sivas	Diyarbekir	Adana	Icel sanjaq	Urfa	
1136/1723			Is ¹													
1137/1724			Sulaymān ²	Ismā‘īl ³												
1138/1725																
1139/1726																
1140/1727		Sulaymān								Su ⁴						
1141/1728			Ibrāhīm													
1142/1729																
1143/1730			Sulaymān													
1144/1731																
1145/1732	As‘ad	As ⁵	Sulaymān													
1146/1733				Sulaymān												
1147/1734																
1148/1735																
1149/1737																
1150/1738																
1151/1739																
1152/1739-40						Su ⁶										
1153/1740-41																
1154/1741				Sulaymān												
1155/1742																
1156/1743																
1157/1744				As‘ad												
1158/1745																
1159/1746		M ⁷	Sa‘d al-Dīn ⁸													
1160/1747		M ⁹														
1161/1748				As‘ad												
1162/1749																
1163/1750																
1164/1751					Sa ¹⁰											

Places Years (hijri/AD)	Hama	Sidon	Tripoli	Damascus	Aleppo	Egypt	Jeddah	Marash	Konya	Rakka	Sivas	Diyarbakir	Adana	Icel sanjaq	Urfa			
1165/1752			Sa'd al-Din															
1166/1753																		
1167/1754																		
1168/1755		M ¹¹																
1169/1756																		
1170/1757					As ¹²	Sa ¹³					As ¹⁴		M ¹⁵					
1171/1758		Sa ¹⁶	Ab ¹⁷								As ¹⁸							
1172/1759	U ¹⁹		U. S. ²⁰	Uthman Sa'diq ²²			Sa ²¹											
1173/1760																		
1174/176			Muhammad 2 ²³						Sa ²⁴									
1175/1762										Sa	Sa ²⁵							
1176/1763		M ²⁶																
1177/1764																		
1178/1765		Mhd 1 ²⁷																
1179/1766																		
1180/1767																		
1181/1768																		
1182/1769																		
1183/1770																		
1184/1771		D ²⁸								Mhd 1 ?								
1185/1771				Muhammad 1 ²⁹					U ³⁰									
1186/1772																		
1186/1773																		
1187/1773																		
1188/1774																		
1189/1775			M ³¹			M ³²						M ³³				M ³⁴		
1190/1776																		
1191/1777						Ib ³⁵		I2 ³⁶										
1192/1778																		
1193/1779			Y ³⁷										M ³⁸		M ³⁹			
1194/1780																		
1195/1781					Y ⁴⁰					M ⁴¹			M ⁴²					
1196/1782			A ⁴³		I2 ⁴⁴													

Places Years (hijri/AD)	Hama	Sidon	Tripoli	Damascus	Aleppo	Egypt	Jeddah	Marash	Konya	Rakka	Sivas	Diyarbakir	Adana	Icel sanjaq	Urfa
1197/1783			D ⁴⁵								A ⁴⁶		N ⁴⁷		
1198/1784				D ⁴⁸											
1199/1785														Darwish ⁴⁹	
1200/1786												A ⁵⁰			
1201/1787													A ⁵¹		
1202/1788				IU ⁵²					A ⁵³				Y ⁵⁴		Y
1203/1789			H ⁵⁵												
1204/1790															
1205/1790-91															IU
1206/1791-92		A ⁵⁶													
1207/1792-93													IU ⁵⁷		
1208/1793-94			A ⁵⁸		A ⁵⁹										
1209/1794-95				Abdallāh											
1210/1795-96															
1211/1796-97			K ⁶⁰												
1212/1797-98								A ⁶¹							
1213/1798-99			Y ⁶²			A ⁶³						A ⁶⁴			
1214/1799-00			A ⁶⁵	Abdallāh		N ⁶⁶									
1215/1800-01			Y ⁶⁷			N ⁶⁸									
1216/1801-02															
1217/1802															
1218/1803															
1219/1804				Abdallāh											
1220/1805															
1221/1806	Y ⁶⁹														
1222/1807				K ⁷⁰											
1223/1808			K							A ⁷¹					
1224/1809				K											
1225/1810															
1226/1811															
1227/1812	A ⁷²														

- 1 Ismā'īl, Feb. 1724 vizier. Was before 1723 *mutasarrif* and *mirmiran* of sanjaq Hama.
- 2 1137/20.09.1724 *mirmiran*, *amīr al-jirda*, *mutasarrif*.
- 3 Ismā'īl, d. 1144/ 06.09.1731.
- 4 Sulaymān.
- 5 As'ad.
- 6 Sulaymān, 1152/10.04.1739.
- 7 Mūsā, freed Mamluk of As'ad. Early VII 1159/23.07.1746 appointed as ruler of Sidon. On 10 III 1170/23.11.56 obtained 2 *tugh*, app. in the same year *amīr al-ḥajj*. On 27 XII 1170/12.09.1757 he suffered the attack by tribes on the pilgrimage at Qatrana and died a few days later. Was he all the time ruler then governor of Sidon?
- 8 VII 1159/July 1746 *mirmiran*, controlled the *malikane* of the *sanjaq* of Tripoli.
- 9 Muṣṭafā al-Qawwās, b. Ismā'īl. Middle of V 1160/end May 1747 his brother As'ad, governor of Damascus, obtained for him governorship of Sidon as *bey*. In 1167/Aug. 1754 gets 1 *tugh* and shares with brother Sa'd al-Dīn the task of *amīr al-ḥajj*.
- 10 Sa'd al-Dīn, I 1164/July 1750 vizier, *amīr al-ḥajj*.
- 11 Muṣṭafā al-Qawwās, b. Ismā'īl. Middle of V 1168/27.02.1755 his confirmation as governor of Sidon. Early 1170/27.09.1756 deposed and transferred to Adana, but redirected to Mossul; both doubtful that he went. He retired to Hama and died there in 1169.
- 12 As'ad.
- 13 Sa'd al-Dīn.
- 14 As'ad.
- 15 Muṣṭafā Pasha, soon after moved to Mossul.
- 16 Sa'd al-Dīn.
- 17 'Abd al-Raḥmān Pasha b. As'ad, Governor of Tripoli and *amīr al-jirda*.
- 18 As'ad, on way there executed VIII 1171/April 1758.
- 19 'Uthmān, before *mutasallim* of As'ad, then his *wakīl*.
- 20 'Uthmān Ṣādiq, V 1172/Jan 1759 *beylerbey*. IX 1172/April 1759 vizier with 3 *tugh*.
- 21 Sa'd al-Dīn.
- 22 'Uthmān Ṣādiq, IX 1172/April 1759 vizier, *amīr al-ḥajj*, 3 *tughs*, returns 3 V 1174/11.12. 1760 to Damascus. Dismissed in 1185.
- 23 Muḥammad 2 b. 'Uthmān as *beylerbey*.
- 24 Sa'd al-Dīn.
- 25 Sa'd al-Dīn, died I 1176/July 1762.
- 26 Muḥammad 1, 1176/23.07.1762, first *mimiran* then Pasha with 2 *tughs* and governor.
- 27 Soon transferred from Urfa to Adana. He proceeded via Aleppo where he arrived I 1179/July.1765 and was redirected to Sidon, where he arrived early II 1179/July.1765.
- 28 Darwish b. al-Ṣādiq 'Uthmān, *mutasarrif* of Tripolis in 1771/14 IX 1184.
- 29 Muḥammad 1, died on 11 V 1197/14.04.1783 aged 54. His successor Muḥammad 2 died after only 29 days.
- 30 'Uthmān, died 4 IV 1186/24.03.1773.
- 31 Muḥammad 2.
- 32 Muḥammad 2.
- 33 Muḥammad 2, after short stay in Aleppo. In III 1190/ May1776 he was arrested and stripped of his vizier rank.
- 34 Muḥammad 2, after short stay in Aleppo.
- 35 Ibrāhīm.
- 36 Ibrāhīm 2.
- 37 Yūsuf Pasha b. Muhammad 1, with the title *mimiran*. He became *mutasarrif* an and *amīr al-jirda* before 1195/1781.
- 38 Muḥammad 2; 1193/19.01.1779: His rank of vizier was given back to him. 1194/08.01.1780 second time.
- 39 Muḥammad 2, briefly.
- 40 Yūsuf b. Muḥammad 1. On 15 VI 1195/08.06.1781 arrived in Aleppo as vizier and governor. On 9 X 1195/14.09.1781 he left Aleppo.
- 41 Muḥammad 2, 1195/28.12.1780 *amīr al-ḥajj*.
- 42 Muḥammad 2, 1196/17.12.1781.
- 43 'Abdallāh, with the title of *mirmiran* he became *amīr al-jirda* and governor of Tripoli.
- 44 Ibrāhīm 2.
- 45 Darwish in 1197 *mutasarrif* of Sidon after both Muḥammads' deaths, he is raised to vizier position and made governor of Damascus. Deposed in IV 1199/12.01.1785.
- 46 'Abdallah b. Muhammad, 1198/16.11.1783. Before this, he was as *mirmiran* and *amīr al-jirda* ruler of Tripoli.
- 47 Nasūḥ
- 48 Darwish.
- 49 After his dismissal dies in Damascus.

- 50 ‘Abdallāh b. Muḥammad. As vizier he became governor in IX 1200/July1786. After he was deposed he was brought to Rhodos.
- 51 ‘Abdallāh b. Muḥammad, XI 1201/Aug. 1787. Afterwards in Konya.
- 52 Ibrāhīm Uzun.
- 53 ‘Abdallāh b. Muḥammad. Date not clear.
- 54 Yūsuf Bey.
- 55 Ḥasan.
- 56 ‘Abdallāh b. Muḥammad, appointed V 1206/Jan1792.
- 57 Ibrāhīm Uzun.
- 58 ‘Abdallāh b. Muḥammad.
- 59 ‘Abdallāh b. Muḥammad, appointed 1208/09.08.1793 for a very short time.
- 60 Khalīl b. ‘Abdallāh. In IV 1211/Oct.1796 after being *mirmiran* he became governor and *amīr al-ḥajj*. He died a couple years later. His elder brother Ḥusayn became *qapucu bashi*.
- 61 ‘Abdallāh.
- 62 Yūsuf.
- 63 ‘Abdallāh.
- 64 ‘Abdallāh b. Muḥammad, 1113/15.06.98, Diyarbekir briefly in addition to governorship of Egypt.
- 65 ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Bey b. Sa‘d al-Dīn. He died 1229/24.12.1813.
- 66 Nasūh.
- 67 Yūsuf b. Muhammad, 1215/25.05.1800, appointed governor of Tripoli. The people refused to let him enter. After a few days of fighting he withdrew to Latakiyya.
- 68 Nasūh.
- 69 Yahyā Bey al-‘Azm, *mutasallim*.
- 70 Kanj Yūsuf.
- 71 ‘Abdallāh b. Muḥammad, III 1223/May 1808.
- 72 ‘Abdallāh b. Muḥammad, 1227 *mutasarrif* of *sanjaq* Hamid. He died in Hama in 1228.