EGYPT AND SYRIA
IN THE FATIMID, AYYUBID
AND MAMLUK ERAS
IV
Proceedings of the 9th and 10th International Colloquium organized at
the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven in May 2000 and May 2001

U. VERMEULEN
and
J. VAN STEENBERGEN
(eds.)

UITGEVERIJ PEETERS
LEUVEN – DUDLEY, MA
2005
D. S. Richards has defined the period of change between 950 and 1150 A.D. in a conference volume as "the turning point of the history of the Islamic culture". In the same volume C. E. Bosworth labelled this period the "transition period in the Islamic history". Looking at the regional context, we might pose the question of the meaning of this transition for northern Syria and northern Mesopotamia. Urban development and economic conditions from the 'Abbāsid to the Zangīd-Ayyūbid period may be described as an initial period of gradual decline followed by a renaissance of the cities.

This was not the case in all the lands of the Islamic empire. During the transition period Egypt reached a cultural and economic peak under the rule of the Fāṭimid caliphs. Cairo, Fustāṭ and Alexandria were flourishing major urban centres connected by the Mediterranean and the Red Sea with the rest of the known world from the Chinese empire to the caliphate in Spain, to Byzantium and through Italy to the Holy Roman

---


Empire. This is well documented by the archaeological excavations in Fustāt, the Geniza documents and other literary sources and by the still impressive monumental Fāṭimid architecture. By contrast, during the 5th/11th century, Syria and northern Mesopotamia suffered a severe urban decline. Its reasons were manifold. From an archaeological and historical point of view, the 5th/11th century is regarded as a dark age in many respects.

The urban decline of this period is recognisable, even to a present day visitor to Syria. He will admire the great monuments of the Umayyad period, the congregational mosques in Damascus and Aleppo as well as the “desert castles”. For important ‘Abbāsid monuments he will travel to ar-Ra‘qqa on the Euphrates. He will also be impressed by the architecture of the Zangīs, the Ayyūbids and the Crusaders. But he looks in vain for traces from the period in between. We are indebted to Suhayl Zakkar and Thierry Bianquis for our insight into the political conditions of two major urban Syrian centers, Aleppo and Damascus at that time. Aleppo was a major trading city at the end of the silk-road and Damascus the Fāṭimid administration and garrison city for Syria. The economic conditions of these two cities were not, however, representative of the country as a whole, because they were able to mobilize external resources by commerce or by the transfer of funds from Egypt. What happened in the rest of the region remains obscure, although conditions in provincial towns and in the countryside determine much of the prosperity of the urban centres.

The case study here will focus on two medium sized cities in the Balīḥ valley, the Diyar Muḍar in northern Mesopotamia, namely ar-Ra‘qqa and Harrān. They appear paradigmatic for the urban development and economic conditions in the rest of the region. I will discuss two questions: - firstly, the methodological question concerning archaeology in the region during the so called “settlement gap (Siedlungslücke)” of the


6 I had the privilege of taking part as historian in the excavations in ar-Ra‘qqa of the German Archaeological Institute in 1991 and 1993 under the direction of Michael Meinecke. In the British Museum and the School of Oriental and African Studies I was allowed to study the material from the Harrān excavations of D. S. Rice from the 1950s. I am grateful to Geoffrey King and Venetia Porter for their invaluable help in locating the excavation material.

5th/11th century. A fallen wall in ar-Raqqā will exemplify this problem (see below).

— secondly, the role of the Bedouin principality of the Banū Numayr whose character can be defined with a combined archaeological and historical approach as a Bedouin-sedentary state or in the words of Michael Rowton as a “dimorphic state” at the fringes of the Fāṭimid empire. For Rowton “dimorphic state” means a state led by a nomadic ruler who is accommodating himself to urban forms of rulership but who keeps his power base within the pasture at the same time: a ruler who has to balance between the interests of the settled people and the nomads as well.8

Let me briefly bring the topography of ar-Raqqā to life (map). Ar-Raqqā is situated at the junction of the Ballh river with the Euphrates within the Diyār Muḍar, the western part of the Ḥazīra, northern Mesopotamia. The Byzantine emperor Justinian I (reigned 527–565 A.D.) reinforced the classical Hellenistic city of Kallinikos, the later ar-Raqqā, with a rectangular city wall. In the year 155/771-2, the ‘Abbāsid caliph al-Mansūr (reigned 136–158/754–775) ordered the “companion city” — ar-Rāfīqa — to be built on the western side for a Ḥurāsānian garrison. According to the sources Madīnat as-Salām, the newly built imperial palace-city, served as model for its layout: in the centre stood the congregational mosque and probably south of it a governmental palace (dār al-ʿimāra). A strong city wall was surrounding the entire urban area. Many features were influenced by other sources and designed to serve the needs of a garrison. For example the Hellenistic grid plan of the city was adopted in order to house a large military colony. Twenty-five years later the caliph Hārūn ar-Rasīd (reigned 170–193/786–809) began to enlarge ar-Raqqā/ar-Rāfīqa with a spacious palace area north of the twin-cities during the twelve years of his occupation. As a result, it became the most spacious urban complex in the Islamic empire, west of Baghdad.

In 1982, the German Archaeological Institute (DAI) started rescue excavations in the south-eastern section of the palace area. In cooperation with Murhaf al-Khalaf, the general director of the Syrian Antiquity

Authority in the Governorate ar-Raqqa, sondages were also undertaken within the congregational mosque. This courtyard mosque with a qibla-riwāq was erected in 155/772. It is the first example of a pillar-mosque in Islamic architecture and served probably as a model for later congregational mosques in Baghdad, Sāmarrā', Fuṣṭāṭ and Cairo. Only the foundations of the arcades and the exterior wall of this mosque remain visible. The minaret in the courtyard and the impressive row of arcades belong to a later Zangīd restoration-period in the 6th/12th century (ill. 2).

A FALLEN WALL DISCOVERED

In September 1991 when the north-eastern corner of the congregational mosque was excavated, a wall was found in situ, but fallen straight on its side (ill. 3). It was apparently erected after the 'Abbāsid foundation period. It had connected the northern wall with the second arcade pier and separated a room from the northern riwāq (ill. 4). Because the wall was not joined either to the northern wall or to the pier, it had fallen at an unknown time towards the east. The space between the eastern wall and the first arcade pier had been filled except for a small passage one metre wide. Between the first and second arcade pier all the baked bricks had been robbed. The fallen wall covered not only the collapsed roof, which had fallen down earlier, but also a good deal of other material. Among them were 30.8 kilogram of iron slag and — mainly under the collapsed roof — 6.2 kilograms of used and twisted iron nails (ill. 5). A group of small white limestone tiles were piled carefully by the northern wall and fifty-five more were found mixed among the debris of the roof. The debris was enriched by thousands of mouse-bones and bones from a wide variety of the regional fauna, wild and domestic.


10 The bones were carefully analyzed by C. BECKER, “Archäozoologische Ergebnisse aus ar-Raqqa — Von Schafen, Kamelen, Mäusen und Mauerseglern”, in V. DAIBER & S. HEIDEMANN (eds.), Raqqa V, Mainz (forthcoming). Her results present a vivid picture of the nourishment of the people in ar-Rāfiqa and the regional as well as the
There were pits in the pavement, which had originally been paved, and then plastered: they seem to be traces of heavy tripods which had obviously been reset several times. Traces of ash and furnaces were also recognisable. Five years earlier, when Michael Meinecke dug out the eastern wall at the north-eastern corner, he had found ceramic sherds and the broken glass of around 250 lamps at the stairs of the north-eastern tower. The findings suggest a workshop in which old and used materials were stored, some of which were probably recycled on the spot. The store then remained unused for a considerable time. This is suggested by thousands of mouse bones and other fauna found among the debris.

Andrea Becker noted the similarity of the ceramic sherds and the glass lamps to those found in the 'Abbasid palaces of ar-Raqqa and proposed a dating of the workshop to the 'Abbasid period, that is the 2nd-3rd/8th-9th centuries. On the other hand, Michael Meinecke pointed to the unusual location of the workshop within the layout of the mosque. A workshop of this kind does not belong to a mosque that is in actual use for worship under normal conditions. He therefore excluded the 'Abbasid period. From inscriptions it is known that Nūr ad-Dīn Mahmūd ibn Zangi commissioned some restoration work in the mosque between 541/1146 and 561/1165-1166. The facade of the qibla-rīwāq with its monumental inscription from the year 561/1165-1166 is still impressive (ill. 2). The minaret in the courtyard was probably erected during this same period of restoration. On the basis of the unusual position of the minaret, Meinecke suggested that Nūr ad-Dīn Mahmūd might have reduced the original size of the courtyard to the north, so that the workshop in the north-eastern corner was situated outside the restored imported fauna. Her final conclusion, however, that the mosque enclosure might have housed a market for victualia, seems questionable from a historical point of view. Markets for victualia are usually not at the most preferred location for shops in a city. This is the area close to the mosque. Also a metal workshop within or neighbouring a grocery is hardly imaginable for markets in an Islamic eastern mediterranean city. Cp. E. Wirth, Die orientalische Stadt, Mainz 2000, esp. p. 118-138. Furthermore the inherent hypothesis that a mosque enclosure can house a sūq with shops is not proven and needs parallel cases for comparison, cp. J. Pedersen, art. „Masjid“, El², VI, p. 644-677, esp. c. 655. It seems to the present author much more likely that the dilapidated north-eastern corner and the neglected store were used as a hidden deposit for domestic garbage which attracted mice and other rodents.
mosque proper. He dated the workshop to the period after the Zangīd restoration, a date 300 to 350 years later than the proposed 'Abbāsid date. Both opinions are founded on good reasoning, continuous.

The debris was sifted carefully. Not only iron slag, twisted nails, ceramic glass sherds and bones appeared but thirteen coins were also found. At least eight of them constitute a hoard of dirhams. Seven of them bear with certainty the inscription “(...) struck (...) in ar-Raqqā in the year 450 [1058-1059]” (ill. 6 and 7) — a time when the Diyar Murdār was under the sway of an Arab tribe, called Banū Numayr. They had migrated a hundred years earlier from the Arabian peninsula into the Ġazīrā being part of the second migration wave of Arab tribes from the Arabian peninsula after the Islamic conquest. The political domination of the Banū Numayr over the cities in the Balīḥ valley lasted from the end of the 4th/10th to the end of the 5th/11th century. The most important Numayrid chief is named on these coins: “al-'amīr Naqīb ad-Dawla 'Abū z-Zimām Manī’” ibn Šabīb ibn Wattāb. During the 5th/11th century the possession of ar-Raqqā on the Euphrates was much disputed between the Numayrīds in the Diyar Murdār and the rival Arab Bedouin clan of the Banū Mirdās from the tribe of Kilāb. The latter had their pasture grounds in northern Syria. Their roaming region went down the Euphrates valley to the fortress of ar-Rahba. They controlled Aleppo for quite some time. In the period in which the coins were minted, the Fatimid caliph of Cairo had growing ambitions to overthrow the Sunnī 'Abbāsid caliph in Baghdad. They encouraged and supported the pro-Fatimid rebellion of the Bu'yd General 'Arslān al-Basīmī in Iraq against Selğūq rule. During this rebellion Manī’ ibn Šabīb succeeded in regaining ar-Raqqā with the help of Fatimid diplomacy.

This is why the other side of the coin names the Fatimid caliph al-Mustanṣir billāh (reigned 427–487/1036–1084) as overlord. The existence of Numayrid coins was only known to a few specialists with the exception of four incidentally published specimens. This hoard of eight coins is significant in several respects.

15 For their history see ZAKKAR, The Emirate of Aleppo.
Firstly, they are the first Numayrid coins from an archaeological context. Secondly, this group is the first hoard of Numayrid coins. Thirdly, it constituted the second coin hoard from 5th/11th century from Syria and northern Mesopotamia. And finally, the coins note ar-Raqqa as the official name instead of ar-Räfiqa, which had served as its official 'Abbāsid name for many centuries. An earlier date for the official use of the name ar-Raqqa is found on a Fāṭimid dinār, minted in ar-Raqqa, in the year 401/1010-1011, which was discovered after the hoard was found.

The transfer of the name ar-Raqqa from the declining Hellenistic Kallinikos to the fortified 'Abbāsid companion-city ar-Räfiqa had been accomplished by this time. The dinār and the hoard are the earliest proof for this change, predating by 150 years the statement of the well-known scholar as-Sam’ānī (d. 562/1166), who spent one or two days in ar-Raqqa/ar-Räfiqa on his way to Aleppo:

[Ar-Räfiqa] — it is a big city (balda kabīra) on the Euphrates, which is called nowadays (as-sā'ā) ar-Raqqa. And ar-Raqqa was situated next by her and fell into ruins.

17 Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, Shamma collection. For this coin and the specific political situation of a Fāṭimid occupation of ar-Raqqa in this year see HEIDEMANN, Renaissance, p. 75-80. I am indebted to Lutz Ilisch, Tübingen, for bringing this coin to my attention.


19 as-Sam’ānī, 'Abū Sa’d 'Abd al-Karīm ibn Muhammad ibn Mansūr at-Tamīmī (d. 562/1166), Al-'Ansāb, ed. 'A. 'U. al-Bārūdī, 5 vols., Beirut 1408/1988, vol. III, p. 28 (ar-Rāfiqū) (hiya baldātun kabīratun 'ala l-Furāṭi yuqāla laha r-Raqqatutu s-sā’āta, wa r-Raqqatu kānat bi gānibihā fa ḥaribat). For a similar quotation cp. pp. 84 (ar-Raqqī). Ibn al-'Adīm, Buγya, II, p. 990, repeats this in the first half of the 9th/13th century with similar wording: “ar-Rāfiqū, that is a city on the bank of the Euphrates, which is now known as ar-Raqqa. Ar-Raqqa was situated next to her and fell in ruins ([...]) ar-Rāfiqatū wa hiya baldātun 'alā šāṭi l-Furāṭi tu’rafū bi r-Raqqatī s-sā’āta, wa r-Raqqatū kānat yāqānabuhā fa ḥaribat”). And finally the well known geographer Yāqūt al-Hamawī, 'Abdallāh Yāqūt ibn 'Abdallāh ar-Rūmī al-Baghdādī (d. 626/1229), Kitāb Mu’ğam al-balūdān, ed. F. WÜSTENFELD, Jacut’s geographisches Wörterbuch aus den Handschriften aus Berlin, St. Petersburg and Paris, 6 vols., Leipzig 1866–1870, vol. II, p. 735, relates: “However nowadays ar-Raqqa lies in ruins but its name gained superiority over ar-Rāfiqū. So the name of the city [ar-Rāfiqū] became ar-Raqqa (wa 'inna r-Raqqatū ḥaribat wa ǧalaba smuhā 'ala r-Rāfiqatī wa sā’īa smu l-madīnātī r-Raqqatī)”. See also Yāqūt, Kitāb al-Muṣṭarik wad’ān wa l-muṭṭarīq saq’ān, ed. F. WÜSTENFELD, Jacut’s Moschtarik, das ist: Lexikon geographischer Homonyme. Aus den Handschriften aus Wien und Leyden, Göttin gen 1846; reprint Baghdad s.d., p. 208, and ad-Dimašqī, Šams ad-Dīn 'Abū 'Abd Allāh Muhammad ibn 'Ībrāhīm ibn 'Abū Tālīb al-’Ansārī as-Sūfī (d. 727/1327), Nuḥbat ad-dahr fi ‘āqīb al-barr wal-bahr, ed. M. A. F. MEHREN, Cosmographie de Chems-ed-Din Abou Abdallah Mohammed ed-Dimichgui, St. Petersburg 1865–1866; reprint Osnabrück 1982, p. 191: ([...]) And the first [ar-Raqqa] fell in ruins, but both names remained for a single
The hoard provides the terminus post quem of the workshop in the north-eastern corner. The coins were struck in 450/1058. This lies midway between the suggested dates of Michael Meinecke and Andrea Becker. The different hypotheses about the dating, “early Islamic” on the one hand and “Zangid” on the other hand, point to a problem in Near Eastern archaeology which I will only mention in passing, without going into details. It is the problem that Karin Bartl calls “Siedlungslücke (lack of settlements or settlement gap)’”. The term refers to the almost complete lack of datable artifacts and architectural structures for the period of Bedouin domination between the early Islamic and the Zangid/Ayyübīd period, a problem which appeared most obviously during a survey undertaken under the direction of P. M. M. G. Akkermans and M. N. van Loon of the University of Amsterdam. Karin Bartl studied the Islamic material from the sites and summarizes her observation:

With regard to the repertoire of the ceramics two periods have become better known today: the early ‘Abbāsid period (mid/end 8th — end 9th/beginning 10th century) and the period of the Zangīds and Ayyūbīds (mid 12th/mid 13th century). From [...] the period between the 10th and the mid of the 12th century which was characterized politically by numerous local dynasties in northern Mesopotamia almost no material remains. [...] The seeming lack of finds in northern Syria between the 10th and the mid 12th century can only partly be attributed to the current state of research. The political conditions make a reduction of permanent settlements probable during this time. [...] The settlement pattern which can be deduced from the analysis of the ceramics points finally to a peak in the 9th century which is likely to have continued to the early 10th century. The following period of about 200–250 years is characterized by an apparent lack of settlements (Siedlungslücke), or extremely reduced settlement activities which included only some of the major places yet. They, as well as some other settlements, continued to be inhabited during the 12th and 13th century.
The period of the Banū Numayr was one of military conflict, a situation which normally yields much archaeological evidence, with the inhabitants of the settlements burying their wealth unable to retrieve it later. Apparently this did not happen in the case of the Bedouin dominated Diyār Muḍar or in northern Syria. The narrative sources provide part of the explanation. The ’amīrs of the Banū Numayr used to live in their camps outside the cities which were ruled in their names. Within the city military slaves, ǧulāms, served as administrators for their fiscal affairs. The Bedouin ’amīrs as a rule had no interest in urban life. Manṣ ibn Śabīb provides a remarkable exception among the leaders of the Banū Numayr. Ibn Ḥawqal describes the general situation in the valley as follows:

Tribes of the Rabī’a and the Muḍar live in it [the Ǧazīra, that is northern Mesopotamia]. They are breeders of horses, sheep and a few camels. Most of them are connected to the villages and their inhabitants. They are settled Bedouins (bādiya ǧādira). At this time groups (buṭṭān) of the Qays-’Aylān tribes, many of the Quṣayr, the ‘Uqayl, the Banū Numayr and the Banū Kilāb intruded upon them. They expelled them [the settled nomads and the other settled people] from some of their lands, indeed from most of them while appropriating some places (balad) and regions (’iqīlīm). Among these places such as Ḥarrān, Ǧisr Manbiği, al-Ǧābūr, al-Ǧānūqa, ‘Arabān, Qarqīṣiyā and


23 Area of the river al-Ǧābūr, which entered the Euphrates near ar-Raqqa; Yāqūt, Buldān, II, p. 383f.


ar-Rahba\textsuperscript{27} were in their hands. They decide over their protection and protection-money (\textit{hafā’iruḫā}\textsuperscript{28} \textit{wa-marāfiqūhā})\textsuperscript{29}.

Bedouins constantly threatened the routes between the villages and cities in the Diyār Muḍar amongst others\textsuperscript{30}. Agriculture based on irrigation prevailed in the Balīḥ valley south of Ḥarrān\textsuperscript{31}. In periods of weak urban rule, the Bedouin pastures expanded to the boundaries of the cities at the expense of the resources of settled population. But not only endangered living conditions contribute to the impression of the so called “settlement gap”, also some of the most common tools used for archaeological dating: ceramics and coins are due to it as well. Until recently, no stratigraphic sequence for the dating of ceramics for the Diyār Muḍar between the Umayyad and Ayyūbid periods had been firmly established. Cristina Tonghini has recently dated some splash-ware to the 5\textsuperscript{th}/11\textsuperscript{th} century\textsuperscript{32}. These new findings are bound to change our view of this period. Furthermore, coin evidence is usually missing from most archaeological strata of the period. This phenomenon is mainly linked to the coinage system and its legal regulations at the time. During the Umayyad and early 'Abbāsid period copper coins were not much valued and so frequently found their way into archaeological strata. The coinage system in the period under consideration is characterised by an almost complete lack of copper coinage


\textsuperscript{28} C. CAHEN, “Khafāra”, \textit{EI}, IV, p. 913.


and the use of a debased silver coinage. These highly alloyed silver coins, called black dirhams or dirham 'aswads, did not tend to be preferred objects for hoarding, because their silver content is too low. A single fragment of a gold coin could easily substitute for a larger group of them. At the same time they were not discarded like copper coins because of their, admittedly low, silver content. This monetary system is one decisive factor influencing the archaeological survival of coins.33

Let us now return to the dating of the workshop within the congregational mosque. The exceptional Numayrid hoard of eight much debased dirhams provides a terminus post quem of 450/1058-1059. The ceramic and glass sherds which are similar to the findings in the 'Abbāsid palace area, the twisted iron nails and the limestone tiles can now be regarded as a collection of used and broken material. The bones may be remains of deposited domestic garbage and rodents attracted by them. The homogeneity of the hoard and the lack of wear, together with features of the contemporary coinage system make it probable that the small hoard came into the workshop not much later than 450/1058-1059.

With these presuppositions in mind one is inclined to say — with Michael Meinecke — that the workshop and store must have been situated outside the sacred area of the mosque proper long before the Zangīd restoration phase. A division and reduction in size of the courtyard is, however, hard to imagine because the 'Abbāsid enclosure wall is still standing upright and marks out the whole area as belonging to the mosque (ill. 2). Although there are examples in the middle ages where a courtyard of mosques could get features of a market place — because it constitutes a public area for gathering — a glass and metal workshop for recycling used materials is hard to imagine in that situation and is not corroborated by any written sources.34

**FĀTIMID PROTECTION LEADS TO A “DIMORPHIC STATE”**

If one looks less for an architectural explanation than for a historical setting in which the existence of a workshop and store for used materials

might be conceivable, one finds one between the year 450/1058 and the beginning of 452/1060-1061. Without providing definite evidence for it, the hypothesis explains the archaeological situation according to the numismatic and archaeological findings as well as the literary sources. Definite proof would require further investigation of the building itself.

The amir of the Banū Numayr Manṭ ibn Šābib reached the zenith of his power during the pro-Fāṭimid rebellion of the Būyid general 'Abu l-Ḫārit 'Arslān al-Bāsāsīrī35 in Iraq between 447/1055 and 451/1059-1060. Fāṭimid strategy regarded northern Mesopotamia as the key to the conquest of Baghdad and the routes along the Euphrates as the supply-lines of the rebellion and military deployment zone. Manṭ ibn Šābib and the Banū Numayr were threatening this strategically important part of the Fāṭimid route into Iraq. There was a protracted and bitter feud between the Mirdāsids in Aleppo and the Numayrids in Harrān over the possession of ar-Raqqa and the supremacy over the fertile pasture surrounding it. Its origins went back to the year 431/1039-1040 when Šābib ibn Wattāb died without an adult heir. His sister as-Sayyida 'Alawīya was then residing in ar-Raqqa. She was formerly married to Naṣr ibn Šāliḥ ibn Mirdās, nomadic ruler of Aleppo. After the death of the latter in the aftermath of a battle against a Fāṭimid army in 429/1038 she fled with Naṣr’s brother Tamāl from Aleppo into the Gāzira. Later in ar-Raqqa she ousted the governor (gulām) of her brothers al-Muṭā’in and al-Qawām, both having succeeded Šābib after his death. In order to protect her dignity (hayba), as Ibn al-‘Adīm is telling us, she married Tamāl. He took over ar-Raqqa. The Banū Kilāb whose roaming area stretched as far as ar-Rahba now gained firm control over the pasture at the junction between the Balīḥ river and the Euphrates36. When the son of Šābib, the young Manṭ, reached adulthood, he took over the lead of the Banū Numayr sometime between 436/1044-1045 and 447/1055-105637. He regarded himself as the legitimate heir of

---

37 These dates were established on coin evidence from Harrān. The coin of 436/1044–1045 (NICOT, “Islamic Coinage”, no. 31; HEIDEMANN, Renaissance, p. 98f. no. 13) mentions Muṭā’in ibn Wattāb, the uncle of Manṭ, as amir and the next dated coin was struck in the year 447/1055-1056 in the name of Manṭ (HEIDEMANN, Renaissance, p. 105 no. 15a, b).
his father’s possessions\(^{38}\). Whereas Ṭamāl was a Fāṭimid vassal, Manī’ changed sides from the Fāṭimids to the Selğūq sultan Tuğrılbeğ (reigned 429–455/1038–1063)\(^{39}\). In Ramaḍān 447/December 1055 Tuğrılbeğ conquered Baghdad and expelled the Būyid general Arslān al-Ḥaḍīrī from the ‘Abbasid capital. Withdrawing from Iraq al-Ḥaḍīrī made ar-Rāḥba at the junction between the Ḥābūr and the Euphrates his centre of resistance and base for further military operations against the Selğūqs. In Ṣafar 448/April 1056 a war (\(ḥarb\)) broke out between Manī’ and Ṭamāl over the possession of ar-Raqqā.

At the beginning of Ṣafar war broke out between Manī’ ibn Šābīb ibn Wāṭṭāb an-Numayrī, the lord of Harrān, and Mu’izz ad-Dawla ’Abū ’Ulwān Ṭamāl ibn Šāliḥ ar-Ru’qulīya, the lord of Aleppo, about [the possession of] ar-Raqqā. It had belonged to Šābīb, the father of Manī’\(^{38}\). It so happened that he [probably Ṭamāl] betrayed the little Manī’. His mother married Ṭamāl and handed over ar-Raqqā to him. When her son grew up, the tribes joined him and he demanded [ar-Raqqā] back. And the [Selğūq sultan] Tuğrılbeğ wrote a decree and sent to him robes of honour. Then he [Manī’] sent a demand to Ṭamāl for ar-Raqqā. He refused [it] to him and then war broke out between both\(^{40}\).

The Egyptian Fāṭimids send al-Mu’ayyad fi d-Dīn aš-Širāzī\(^{41}\) as their envoy (\(dā’ī\)) into the region in order to stabilise the political situation

---


\(^{39}\) See citation below. According to the coin evidence Manī’ however regarded himself as a Fāṭimid vassal in Harrān at some time during the year 447/1055-1056; HEIDEMANN, Renaissance, p. 105 no. 15a and 15b.

\(^{40}\) Sibt ibn al-Ġawzī, Mirʿāt, Ms. Arabe 1506, fol. 13r; transl. YAZBECK, p. 44: (Wa fi ḡurrati ṣafarin kāna [sic!] bayna Manīʾi bni Šābībī bni Wāṭṭābī n-Numayrī šāhībi Harrānā wa bayna Muʿizzi d-Dawlati ’Abī ’Ulwānī Ṭamālī bni Šāliḥī bni r-Ru’qulīyāti šāhībī Ḥalaba ḥarbun ‘ala r-Raqqati wa kānati li-Šābībī wālīdī Manīʾīn wa ṭafqa qa ʿinmahū wa ḥāna Manīʾan ʿaṣgīran wa tazawwaqāt ʿummuḥā bi Ṭamāla wa sallamatī r-Raqqата ʿilayhi fa lamīna kabura walaḥahā wa nāḏīfat ʿilayhi l-qabāyūli wa starqāʾa wa kataba laḥā Tağrılbeği l-manṣūra wa baʿaṭa ʿilayhi l-ḥilaʾa ʿarsala ʿilā Ṭamāla bi ṭalābi r-Raqqati fa manaʾiʿa fa qāmati l-ḥarbū bayna hatsūnā).

and to ensure support for al-Basäsm in Safar 448/April–May 1056. Al-Mu’ayyad described Manf very unfavourably after their first encounter and advised the vizier in Cairo to establish closer ties with the more reliable ally Tamäl. However in Basäsm’s camp in ar-Rahba the leader of the Banû Mazyad, the amîr Dubays ibn ’Alî (408–474/1017–1082), convinced al-Mu’ayyad about the necessity of including Manf in the coalition against the Selçûqs. But Mu’ayyad’s efforts to mediate in this conflict were in vain. In spite of this it is mentioned that groups of the Banû Numayr took part in the razzias against the Selçûqs at this time. In advance of al-Basäsm’s military move along the Euphrates to Bälis, after Ša’bān 449/October 1057, Mu’ayyad met Manf and convinced him to gather his tribe and to join al-Basäsm’s cause.


\footnote{43 Mu’ayyad, \textit{Sîra}, p. 119–121.}

\footnote{44 C. E. Bosworth, \textit{“Mazyad"}, \textit{EF}, VI, p. 965f.}


\footnote{46 It is not said that they belong to that group of Banû Numayr lead by Manf. Ibn al-’Atîr, \textit{Kämîl}, IX, p. 432 (\textit{Gamā”a min Banî Numayr ‘ašhâb Harrân wa r-Raqqâ}).}

\footnote{47 Mu’ayyad, \textit{Sîra}, p. 170.}

This was part of a bigger shift in power, because Tamäl was compelled to hand over Aleppo as well to the Fāṭimids in Du 1-Qa‘da 449/January 1058. He was compensated with new fiefs (iqtā‘ät) in Palestine and had to leave Aleppo in Muharram 450/March 1058.49

In the following two years under Fāṭimid tutelage the Numayrids reached the peak of their power. It is probable that during this time substantial amounts of money were transferred not only — as the sources tell us — to al-BasäsM50, but also into the coffers of Manl‘în Šabîb. Fāṭimid money probably allowed Manl‘în Šabîb to represent himself — according to our sources — as the first and only Numayrid amir as an urban ruler. Manl‘în Šabîb built the citadel in his main city Harrän. He transformed the most impressive and largest building in Harrän, the former temple of the pagan Sābians, into a palace-citadel (ill. 1). The Sābians were a pagan group following a religion whose roots can be traced back to the ancient Mesopotamian astral religions, and as such were tolerated by the Muslim rulers. In the Islamic period their spiritual centre lay in Harrän and their intellectual centre was Baghdad. As far as we know the functioning temple (haykal) was destroyed during an uprising of rural

49 Sibt ibn al-Ǧawzî, Mir‘āt, Ms. Arabe 1506, fol. 44r–v; transl. YAZBECK, p. 109 (Muharram 450); Ibn al-‘Aḍīm, Zubda, I, p. 273f. (Du 1-Qa‘da 448); ‘Āzīmī, Tārīḥ, p. 343 (449 h.); Ibn al-‘Aṭīr, Kāmīl, IX, p. 163 (Du 1-Hiǧga 449); Maqrīzī, Ittī‘āz, II, p. 235 (End of Du 1-Qa‘da 449). ZAKKAR, Emirate, p. 148–154, esp. p. 150; FELIX, Byzanz, p. 122 (Du 1-Qa‘da 449); BIANQUIS, Damas II, p. 566 (Du 1-Qa‘da 448); Th. BIANQUIS, “Mirdās”, EF², VII, p. 119 (449 h.). Ibn al-‘Aḍīm notes the abdication of Tamäl for Du 1-Qa‘da 448. This is an obvious mistake for “449 h.”, because the latter date is not in accordance with other historical informations, such as the campaign of al-BasäsM towards Bālis.

population joined by the city-militia ('ahdāt) after a severe famine and epidemic diseases. This revolt may have had a Sīfite background. According to Yahyā al-'Antāqi it occurred in 423/1032. Al-'Azīmi reports the same event in 424/1033. The temple was turned into a fortified building (ma'qil). In the following year the city was handed over to the Numayrid amīr Šabīb ibn Wattāb. It seems that the Banū Numayr had lost control over the city since Wattāb's death in 410/1019-1020. The regaining of Harrān obviously strengthened the power of the


52 BIANQUIS, *Damas,* II, p. 489 reads ma'aqīl (?) and emends it to ma'taqal (prison). However during razzias captives were usually taken only in order to sell them as slaves. That makes a reading of ma'qil, fortified building, likely. For an account of the fortified building and the discussion about the location of the Sābian temple see S. LLOYD & W. BRICE, "Harran", *Anatolian Studies* 1 (1951), p. 77–111. esp. p. 96. Correct Form ma'qil in the recent translation by Micheau and Troupeau (see above).


Banū Numayr and their amīr as indicated by the succession of razzias against Byzantines and Marwānids reported during the following years\textsuperscript{55}. Manī' ibn Ṣabīb rebuilt the temple in Harrān after joining the rebellion of al-Basāsirī and the Fāṭimid cause. The architectural plan of his new residence has yet to be wholly reconstructed, but the magnificent entrance gate has been discovered (ill. 1). The inscription tells us about the restoration work of the year 451/1059-60\textsuperscript{56}.

One cannot exclude the possibility that Manī' also wished to represent himself as an urban ruler in the newly recaptured ar-Raqqa. There are three reasons for suggesting this. Firstly, he established a mint in ar-Raqqa, as proved by the aforementioned coins from the hoard. A mint serves the need of urban markets. Secondly, quite apart from any economic reasons, this is important as the naming of a ruler on coins (sikka) is regarded as a proof of actual rulership in medieval Islam. Thirdly, representative building activities of Manī' ibn Ṣabīb in ar-Raqqa are likely to have taken place in those years. The existence of both money and the will for representation of urban power is proven in the case of Harrān at least.

The workshop and store could be part of the beginning of restoration work in the most representative building in the old ar-Rāfiqa: the congregational mosque. Used materials from the palace area were collected in order to recycle them. Several areas of the mosque were restored over the time being, but a thorough documentation is still missing. So far no traces of a specific Numayrid restoration have yet been identified\textsuperscript{57}. In any case, if there were any restoration activity within the mosque under Manī' ibn Ṣabīb, it was not very far advanced when it was halted without any sign of violence. The store and workshop must have stood for quite a long time before the roof and wall finally collapsed. The building activities in Harrān and probably those in ar-Raqqa are proof that Manī' did not regard cities only as places for fiscal exploitation. He also wanted to present himself within the city as an urban ruler, while maintaining his powerbase, the Banū Numayr, in the pasture.

\textsuperscript{55} Heidemann, Renaissance, p. 93f.
THE DECLINE OF THE DIMORPHIC STATE AFTER THE END OF FĀTIMID INTEREST

'Abu l-Ḥārit ʿArslān al-Bāsāṣīrī took Baghdad in Du l-Qaʿda 450/January 1059 and the name of the Fātimid caliph was included in the Friday prayer (ḥuṭba) and the coin-protocol (sikkā). In spite of the obvious success of al-Bāsāṣīrī, Egyptian politics changed suddenly and turned against him. This became obvious when a messenger of al-Bāsāṣīrī returned empty-handed from Cairo in Ǧumādā II/July–August 1059.58 Any further support from Cairo was refused. As the failure of the whole scheme became apparent Manīʾ changed sides, probably because of this lack of support from Cairo. He had a valuable refugee in his custody, the three year old ʿAbbāsid heir apparent ʿUddat ad-Dīn 'Abu l-Qāsim al-Muqṭadī bi ʿAmrillāh. After Ṭuğrīlğeh’s entry into Baghdad in Du l-Qaʿda 451/December 1059 ʿUddat ad-Dīn was secretly brought to Manīʾ ibn Šabīb in Harrān. Manīʾ was at the peak of his prestige and power. He made use of the ʿAbbāsid heir and the power-vacuum for territorial gains in the Ḫabūr-area60. After the restoration of the ʿAbbāsid caliph to Baghdad with the support of the Selĵūqs, Manīʾ sent the caliph’s grandchild back to Baghdad with much honours, though not without creating his own marriage ties with the caliphal family. He married the child to one of his daughters before he returned him. The ʿAbbāsid heir reached Baghdad on Tuesday, 9 Ǧumādā I 452/13 June 106061. Manīʾ sent a letter to Ṭuğrīlğeh, at that time in Hamaḍān, in

58 Sibt ibn al-Ǧawzī, Mīrāt, ed. SEVIM, p. 52; transl. YAZBECK, p. 149.
order to inform him that he had stopped the *hutba* and *sikka* for the Fāṭimid caliph and had now included the Selğūq sultan’s and the *ʿAbbāsid caliph’s name in the protocol*.

There is no evidence in the literary sources to show that Manṭī gained anything by this move. On the contrary, once again he became involved in the tribal quarrels between rival factions of the Mirdāsid clan. He was compelled to defend his territories that he had enlarged considerably under Fāṭimid patronage against the claims of some members of the Banū Mirdās. On the night of Thursday, 23 Ġumādā II 454, that is the night between the 3 and 4 July 1062, Manṭī died of an epileptic fit (*aṣ-ṣar*’) without leaving any capable heir. Without him the Banū Numayr lost much of their importance and soon fell into oblivion.

The sudden change in the political situation could provide a reason for the end of the supposed Numayrid restoration efforts. Because the works were not continued, the mosque and the workshop deteriorated, and after a while the roof and wall tumbled down. During the restoration of Nūr ad-Dīn Mahmūd a hundred years later, the north-eastern corner was obviously not cleared up. So it was left to Michael Meinecke in 1991 to discover the workshop.

**CONCLUSION**

What can be learned from this far reaching analysis of a wall that crumbled in the middle ages? We have to go back to our starting point. Firstly, the methodological problems of the period of the “settlement gap (Siedlungslücke)” have become more evident. This period is best approached with the help of different disciplines. Secondly, it could be made likely that efforts for a restoration of the congregational mosque were undertaken. It is the second example to be found of datable construction work, apart from the citadel of Ḥarrān, in the whole of

---


63 Sibt ibn al-Ḡawzī, *Mirāṭ*, Ms. Arabe 1506, fol. 87v (exact date); Dahabi, *Ṭārīḥ* [vol. 441-460h.], ed. Tadmūrī, p. 373 (Ǧumādā II 454 and the cause of his death). Rice, “Medieval Harran”, p. 82 suggested on the basis of the Dahabi-manuscript (British Museum Ms. Or. 50, fol. 50r) Ġumādā I 455 as the month of Manṭī’s death. This is probably due to a reading error. In the edition of the text of Dahabi by Tadmūrī no varieties are mentioned.
Diyār Muḍar, during this century of Bedouin domination. And thirdly, the presumed building activity in ar-Raqqa in this period is indicative for the political and social history of the whole region. During the 4th/10th century the Banū Numayr moved into northern Mesopotamia as part of the second great migration of Arab tribes. The cultivated land of settled people diminished and the routes between the villages, towns and cities became endangered.

What can be learned from this new piece of information about the Bedouin state of the Numayrids at the fringe of the Fāṭimid state and their relation to settlements and their attitude towards urban life? During the period of Bedouin domination the seat of rulership was transferred from the city to the tribal camp (ḥilla). The interest of the Bedouins lay in the fiscal exploitation of the cities. The emirate of Manṭ ibn Ṣābib constitutes a brief interlude in the development of the Banū Numayr. Manṭ ibn Ṣābib remained an exception within Numayrid history. Al-Mu‘ayyad fi d-Dīn, the Egyptian-Fāṭimid envoy, characterized Manṭ in the beginning as a young savage: Manṭ’s character consisted of the “drunkenness of infatuation and the heat of youth (ṣakrat al-ġirra wa ġamrat aš-ṣabība)”⁶⁴. During the time of the rebellion of al-Basãsīrī in Iraq, the Fāṭimids integrated Manṭ into an alliance. By paying enormous subsidies and through skillful diplomacy, the Fāṭimids created political stability among the hostile tribes from northern Syria to the Euphrates valley. Then Manṭ ibn Ṣābib began to represent himself as an urban ruler: he built the citadel in Ḥarrān. As proof of rulership he had coins struck not only in Ḥarrān, as his predecessors had done, but established a mint in ar-Raqqa as well. The evidence marshalled here also suggests that he undertook the restoration of the most representative urban building in ar-Raqqa, the congregational mosque. He extended his territory into the Ḥabūr valley. The political will of Manṭ was probably more decisive in this process than the supposed rich subsidies from the Fāṭimids, because the Numayrids kept large amounts of portable wealth at other times, as we know from al-Qāḍī ar-Raṣīd’s records⁶⁵.

---

⁶⁴ Mu‘ayyad, Sīra, p. 120.
Šabīb’s rule corresponds to that type of nomadic authority which Michael Rowton calls a “dimorphic state”. This constitutes a state led by a nomadic ruler accommodating himself to urban forms of rulership, or at least to urban forms of projecting sovereignty but who simultaneously maintains his power base within the pasture: a ruler who has to balance between the interests of the settled people and the demands of the nomads. These favourable conditions for the revival of urban life in the Diyār Muḍar ended soon after the rebellion of al-Basāṣīr following the termination of Fāṭimid interests in the region in the year 451/1060. Or to put it another way a “dimorphic state” and growing power for rulers with a nomadic background could only be achieved in this transitional period, when the nomadic chief became a protegé of one of the regions’ great powers. This equally applies to the position of the Mirdāsids as protegés of the Fāṭimids as well as of the Byzantines, the dependence of the Banū ‘Uqayl on the Büyids, and the subordination of the Marwānids to the Byzantines and the Büyids. It took another ninety years, until the time of Nūr ad-Dīn Mahmūd ibn Zangi, before a more stable political environment emerged under a Selğūq regime which allowed the cities to be rebuilt again.

Stefan Heidemann
Freidrich-Schiller-Universität Jena

68 For the whole complex see Heidemann, Renaissance, p. 32f.
Ill. 1 Gate of the Numayrid Palace in Harran. (ex RICE, "Medieval Harran").

III. 3 Fallen wall of the north-eastern corner of the congregational mosque in ar-Rāfiqa (DAI, Damascus, no. 1991/954, A. Abdel Ghafour).
Ill. 4 Plan of the north-eastern corner of the congregational mosque in ar-Rāfiqa. (DAI, drawing Hala Attoura).

Ill. 5 Twisted nails from the north-eastern corner of the congregational mosque. (DAI, Damascus, no. 1991/889, A. Abdel Ghafour).
Ill. 6 Dirham 'aswad, ar-Raqqa, year 450 h. Museum ar-Raqqa (GrMo-8145). (DAI, Damascus, A. Abdel Ghafour).

Ill. 7 Dirham 'aswad, ar-Raqqa, year 450 h. Museum ar-Raqqa (GrMo-8146). (DAI, Damascus, A. Abdel Ghafour).
CONTENTS

CONTENTS ........................................ V
Preface .......................................... VII
Programme of the International Colloquia at the K.U.Leuven
  – Ninth Colloquium, May 11 & 12, 2000 ................ IX
  – Tenth Colloquium, May 9, 10 & 11, 2001 .............. X
ABBREVIATIONS ................................ XII

Fatimids
1. M. BRETT, “Population and Conversion to Islam in Egypt in the Mediaeval Period” .......................... 1
2. M. BRETT, “Al-Karāza al-Marqusīya. The Coptic Church in the Fatimid Empire” ......................... 33
5. S. HEIDEMANN, “Numayrid ar-Raqqa. Archaeological and Historical Evidence for a ‘Dimorphic State’ in the Bedouin Dominated Fringes of the Fāṭimid Empire” .................. 85

Ayyubids (& Salğuqs)
6. T. K. EL-AZHARI, “The Role of Salğuqid Women in Medieval Syria” ........................................ 111
7. T. K. EL-AZHARI, “The influence of Eunuchs in the Ayyubid Kingdom” ...................................... 127
9. Y. FRENKEL, “The Chain of Traditions, or Transmitting Knowledge in Medieval Damascus, based on Samāʾāt Ibn al-ʿAsākir” ...................................................... 165
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>H. Hanisch</td>
<td>“Die Zitadelle von Ḥarrān”</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>K. Hirschler</td>
<td>“Social Contexts of Medieval Arabic Historical Writing: Court Scholars versus Ideal/Withdrawn Scholars — Ibn Wāsil and ’Abū Ṣāma”</td>
<td>311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mamluks</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>D. A. Agius</td>
<td>“‘Leave your homeland in search of prosperity’: the ostrich egg in a burial site at Quseir al-Qadim in the Mamluk period”</td>
<td>355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>P.-V. Claverie</td>
<td>“L’ambassade au Caire de Philippe Mainebeuf (1291)”</td>
<td>381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>N. Coureas</td>
<td>“Controlled Contacts: The Papacy, the Latin Church of Cyprus and Mamluk Egypt, 1250-1350”</td>
<td>395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Y. Frenkel</td>
<td>“Women in Late Mamluk Damascus in the light of Audience Certificates (samāʿāt)”</td>
<td>409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>C. Morisot</td>
<td>“L’acte de Ğaqmaq au profit de la Mekke”</td>
<td>425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>D. S. Richards</td>
<td>“The Office of Wilāyat al-Qāhira in Mamluk Times”</td>
<td>441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>U. Vermeulen</td>
<td>“La Tenue Protocolaire à la Cour Mamlouke”</td>
<td>491</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>