

How the Mamluk Historians Welcomed the Ottomans

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Abstract: This study examines the attitudes of Arab Historians in Bilad Al-Sham and Egypt toward the Ottoman arrival to the Arab region in the beginnings of the sixteenth century and is trying to detect the historic speech, types of expressions, judgments and attitudes taken by Arab historians in Al-Sham and Egypt when they dealt with the Ottomans, the study also observes several models of historical writings and contemporary sources or sources written within the period in which the Ottomans gained control over the Arab region.

Key words: Ottomans . Mamluks . historical writing, historical discourse

INTRODUCTION

Arab Muslim historians in the early centuries observed the flow of time, taking into consideration its constant changes and variations; yet, as Claude Cahen noted [1] their historical writings are characterized by apologetical, (because writing in history was regarded as calumny). However, that characteristic did not continue, as can be seen through modern historical models of historical writings that start at the point of transition between the Mamluk and Ottoman periods and continues through it. Examples are: Ibn al-Himsi's *Hawadith al-Aqran* [2] Ibn Kannan al-Salihi's *Diaries*, [3] the Introduction of al-Jabarti in his *The Wonders of Monuments*, [4] Muhammad Khalil al-Muradi's *Silk al-Durar* and many more [5]. The approach of those authors to writing history was based on understanding and awareness and went beyond the usual medieval approach that was confined to narrating past events [6].

This study examines the work of a number of Arab historians in Egypt, the Levant and the Hijaz, who experienced the transition between the Mamluk and Ottoman regimes. Those historians belong to the "Mamluk School" in writing history. This trend of historical writing continued throughout the Ottoman period. Those historians are:

- Ibn Alwan, 'Ali ibn 'Atiyah ibn al-Hasan al-Hamawi (died 936/1530)
- Ibn al-Himsi, Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn 'Umar (died 934/1527)
- Muhammad ibn Tulun (died 935/1546)
- Ibn Iyas, Muhammad ibn Ahmad (d: 930/1524)
- Ibn Zunbul, Ahmad ibn 'Ali al-Rammal (died after 980/1572).

Seeking sultanic justice: The Sufi shaykh Ibn Alwan in his letter Shaykh Ibn Alwan's Advice to Sultan Salim ibn 'Uthman documents the moment of the Mamluk-Ottoman transition. His letter stresses the importance of justice as a basis for the continuity of any regime. Ibn Alwan called for just jurisdiction that was absent throughout the reign of the Mamluks.

The content of his letter can be seen in its title, which indicates that its aim is to give Honorable Advices and Witty Sermons for the Caliph and Sultan Ibn 'Uthman. The Sufi Shaykh 'Ali ibn 'Atiya ibn al-Husayn, who established the Alwan family in Hamah, was born in 873/1468 and died in 936/1530. Throughout his letter he affirmed the importance of asking God to watch over the Ottoman sultan and quoted the Quran and the Prophetic Sunnah to emphasize that the sultan should be just and fair towards his people. As he stated, "The sultan is God's shadow on earth, in which he raises righteousness, establishes religion, fights prejudice and obliterates rebellions [7].

After a brief quote from the Quran and Sunnah, Ibn Alwan wrote about the stability and continuity of the state, that is determined by prayer and paying zakah, in word and deed, and the promotion of virtue and prevention of vice. Ibn Alwan started his juridical letter by reminding Sultan Salim of his responsibilities toward his people and stressing the importance of knowing how the Prophet-peace be upon him- took care of his nation. Ibn Alwan also devoted a chapter to the promotion of virtue and prevention of vice, which reveals his indignation at the evil, injustice and killings that had prevailed. At the very beginning of the letter, Ibn Alwan reminded the reader that the most odious person to God is an "unjust Imam (leader)". Ibn Alwan devoted a chapter to the promotion of virtue and

prevention of vice and called for Islamic law (Shari'ah) to never be violated, because this act involves "heresy and straying from Islam".

In his desire to achieve justice and the Shari'ah, Ibn Alwan identified the various illegal vices that were widespread in his era, such as "murder, or taking a human life which is prohibited by God Almighty", [7] adultery and infidelity. He criticized the legalization of indecencies through special taxes known as a "prostitution tax (Mahr al baghiy)

The Shaykh also asked Sultan Salim to forbid fraud, scams and taking money from people illegitimately. He also asked that the envoys of the sultan and the governors stop their unfair and violent actions against the Muslims in the cities and countryside, such as intentional thrashing, cursing and taking their animals against their will. Ibn Alwan does not seem to have been a partisan of the new Ottoman Empire. He witnessed the transition between the Mamluk and the Ottoman Empires and criticized both of them. It was said that he wrote a poem criticizing the Mamluk Empire and how unjust it was, especially during the time of the last sultan, al-Ghuri. Based on the reality that Ibn Alwan presented in his letter, he asked the new Ottoman Sultan to "end injustice and despotism and to take good care of his people" [7]. It is clear that Ibn Alwan did not change his position on the injustice and tyranny of governors after the transition of power and the Ottoman entry into Aleppo. As a result, he disapproved of the new statesmen and condemned the violence and brutality that they used against the people who were affected physically and psychologically. Ibn Alwan also criticized the cruel actions of the soldiers, who used to "unjustly take money from the villagers and peasants" that was called "himaya" or "protection", giving it the name of "mal al-tawliyah" or "money of governance", knowing that it was never mentioned in the Shari'ah. Ibn Alwan used poetry to criticize the oppression of the new administration and the Ottoman soldiers in the Levant. He expanded his description of these oppressive acts in one chapter of his letter, in which he urged the sultan to put an end to such vices as depriving people of their rights and illegally extorting their money. Ibn Alwan also wrote about the various vices that he experienced, such as Muslims being subjected to humiliation and violence as they were being taken to prison, the proliferation of adultery and the collection of fees on liquor stores known as "mal al-bughya" [7].

In his letter, Ibn Alwan called for immediate action against the illicit conduct of the Ottoman soldiers who used to attack the people in their houses and "violate their rights of hospitality". Thus, Ibn Alwan implicitly stated in his letter the major reasons for the downfall of

the Mamluk state. He constantly urged justice, talked about the righteous imam and the oppressive imam and the importance of following the Shari'ah. Such requests reflect his aspiration to achieve a new virtuous and lawful empire permeated by Islamic laws and the Shari'ah. After writing his introduction on the importance of committing to God's laws, Ibn Alwan used his first chapter to advise the Ottoman sultan to apply Islamic law and the Shari'ah throughout the Empire, to commit to religion and the Shari'ah and to refrain from tyranny and oppression. Regarding good governance, Ibn Alwan advocated the promotion of virtue and prevention of vice and reminded the sultan that previous nations collapsed and vanished due to disobeying the Islamic laws and committing vices. He also asked the sultan to stop such actions that would "invoke God's wrath and punishment" and invoked God to make the Ottoman sultan stop harming the Muslims and being unjust towards them [7].

Ibn Alwan's letters did not stop at listing "the vices of his time" but he also asked the sultan to promulgate his "honorable decrees" to stop the corruption and cruelty of the Ottoman soldiers in Aleppo. Those soldiers broke into the houses of the people and caused immense harm to them. Such oppression was caused by the increasing demands of the sultan for money from the governors. In each village the soldiers sympathized with the powerful and abused and oppressed the powerless, making them pay excessive taxes, indifferent to their suffering. Ibn Alwan criticized such actions and called the Ottoman soldiers "the unfair gang". The collapse of the Mamluk state in the Levant was first seen through Ibn Alwan's book which discusses Sultan's Jurisprudence and Advice. This collapse was mainly due to religious reasons, such as the absence of justice and widespread corruption. In Ibn Alwan's view, in order to survive on this earth, people are obliged to pray to God and pay zakah. He connected the continuity of the state and the regime with having righteous leaders who defend their religion, observe its precepts, pay zakah and urge the promotion of virtue and prevention of vice [7].

The Ottomans: first image: The first stage of the Ottoman takeover in the Levant was presented by an underrated historian from Damascus, Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn 'Umar al-Ansari, known as Ibn al-Himsi (841-934/1437-1527). He was one of four historians who wrote about the Ottoman conquest in Egypt and the Levant. The other three were Muhammad ibn Tulun al-Salihi [8] Muhammad ibn Iyas and Ibn Zunbul al-Rammal in Egypt. Those historians lived through the Mamluk and Ottoman transition period. Even though Ibn Zunbul and Ibn al-Himsi experienced

the downfall of the Mamluk dynasty and kept an eye on the war between Sultan Salim's army and the Mamluks, they have not received due attention from modern historians. Ibn al-Himsi is known for his precisely dated events; but what distinguishes him from Ibn Zunbul is his remarkable understanding and awareness of historical writing; the reader can see this in his introduction "... Thereafter, history has been acknowledged with great importance, immense dangers..."[2]. Ibn al-Himsi wrote about the interactions between the Ottoman and the Mamluk Sultanates, the correspondence that the two sultans exchanged and their reconciliation. Then he mentioned the events of the month of Rabi' al-Thani when the Mamluk soldiers arrived in Damascus. Ibn al-Himsi started his account of the Battle of Marj Dabiq by explaining that the reason for Sultan Qansuh al-Ghuri's trip to Damascus and then to Aleppo was to resolve the dispute between Sultan Salim and Sultan Ismail al-Safawi of Iran [2].

While investigating the news of Sultan al-Ghuri's trip, Ibn al-Himsi mentioned the sultan's decree, stating that "The Roman (Ottoman) sultan has wronged us. He explicitly mentioned the battle between the two armies at Marj Dabiq near Aleppo and, without going into details, he gave the names of the Mamluk commanders who had been killed at the battle, before Sultan al-Ghuri himself was killed. Then he described how the Egyptian soldiers fled to Aleppo in a miserable state. The attitude of the population in Aleppo towards these soldiers is worth mentioning: "They did not allow them into the city and they killed some of them... The soldiers continued their flight, most of them on foot, almost naked and bare-foot. Many of them died on the road from hunger and thirst. They reached Damascus on Saturday, the second day of the month of Sha'ban, in the worst condition possible" [2].

Ibn al-Himsi briefly wrote about the change of power. He quickly described the transitions after the battle of Marj Dabiq. He wrote about how Sultan Salim "entered Aleppo, the country and took over the castle." Then he went to Damascus on Saturday, the first day of Ramadan 922/28 September 1516. On Friday the seventh of Ramadan he prayed at the Umayyad mosque and then gave two thousand dirhams to the orator/preacher, the chief judge Wali al-Din ibn Farfur, distributed money to the people and slaughtered sheep and cattle. Then on the eleventh of Ramadan he attended Friday prayers in the Umayyad Mosque and the people prayed for his benevolence and goodwill.

Ibn al-Himsi summarily wrote about the Battle of Ridaniyah, describing the soldiers and the retreat of the Egyptian forces that were led by Tuman Bay. That was unlike Ibn Zunbul al-Rammal, who described this historical event in a very detailed manner [2]. In

his book *Entertaining Friends with the Events of Our Time*, Ibn Tulun, who was born in Damascus in 1476/880, showed his interest in the transition period between the Mamluks and the Ottomans and how critical it was for the Mamluks. His writing style focused mainly on a year-by-year chronicle of events, a style that started in the early Islamic period and continued through the Mamluk dynasty [9]. Similar to Ibn al-Himsi, Ibn Tulun started writing about the events of 1479/884. However, such a description of history breaks the continuity of events and eliminates the connections between them. Ibn Tulun described the year-by-year events until Tuesday 18 Dhu al-Qa'dah 926/ 30 October 1520 and starting from Rabi' al-Akhir 922/ May 1516 he wrote about the negotiations between the Mamluk Sultan Qansuh al-Ghuri and the Ottoman Sultan Salim and mentioned how the Sultan's nephew and his mother fled to Damascus [8]. Unlike Ibn al-Himsi, who described Sultan al-Ghuri's trip to Aleppo in detail, Ibn Tulun quickly turned to the confrontation between Sultan Salim and Sultan Qansuh al-Ghuri. He described it as a critical event and predicted that the Mamluk sultan would be defeated by the Ottoman army. Ibn Tulun related the defeat to the lunar eclipse on Monday 14 Jumada al-Akhirah 922/14 July 1516, saying "While the moon was centered in the sky, the eclipse started." Ibn Tulun referred to the astronomers in Damascus who predicted the defeat of the Mamluk sultan by the Ottoman Sultan Salim, due to the eclipse [8].

Ibn Tulun's reference to astrology, which is not something new in Islamic history, shows the immense impact of astrology on history and historians. Such impact was discussed by various Muslim historians in the Classic period [10].

Ibn Tulun wrote his description of the battle between the Mamluks and the Ottomans in an apologetic manner. The Mamluk sultan suddenly realized the importance of the 'ulama and asked them to pray for his triumph. However, in Damascus the prominent 'ulama of Damascus did not attend this prayer and Ibn Tulun stated that the people prayed for whoever intended the good for the Muslims, whether it was Sultan Salim or Sultan Qansuh al-Ghuri [8].

Ibn Tulun briefly described the confrontation between the Mamluks and the Ottomans at Marj Dabiq. The battle ended with the beheading of Sultan al-Ghuri. His head was sent to Istanbul, while a large part of his army fled and chaos broke out in Damascus once the population learned that Sultan Salim had taken over Aleppo and conquered its castle.

Sultan Salim sent his deputy Yunis Basha from Aleppo, who easily entered Damascus and attended the Friday prayers, where the preachers mentioned the

name of Sultan Salim, "The Roman King", in their prayers, in order to express their devotion and loyalty to his regime [8]. Sultan Salim entered Damascus with his entourage on 13 Ramadan 922/9 October 1516. That marked the end of the Mamluk dynasty for Ibn Tulun, who mentions sporadic events in a way that reflects his lack of historic instinct. He wrote about Sultan Salim who came as an invader to this country. He mentioned his battles and wrote about the chase after Sultan Tuman Bay in Egypt and described the reign of Sultan Salim in Egypt as "being seized by extortion" Ibn Tulun continued to describe the struggle between both sides until he said that Damascus celebrated Sultan Salim's triumph, who then tightened his grip over Egypt [8].

An ottoman invasion or conquest: The Ottoman invasion of Egypt and the Levant troubled the historians. While Ibn Alwan al-Hamawi considered the arrival of the Ottomans in Aleppo to be "the will of God the Almighty to put an end to the reign of the Mamluks", [7] the arrival of the Ottomans in Egypt was viewed differently. The Ottoman historian Shaykh Ahmad ibn 'Ali, also known as Ibn Zunbul or al-Rammal (died after 980/1572) viewed the Ottomans in Egypt as invaders, but he soon changed that view. On the other hand, Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Iyas (died 930/1524) [11] and 'Ali ibn Muhammad al-Lakhmi al-Ishbili (one of the 'ulama of the 10th century/16th century) [12] viewed it as a conquest and triumph. Ibn Iyas described the Mamluk-Ottoman transition in detail and traced the accomplishments of the Ottoman Sultan Salim, without mentioning his references. The Ottoman arrival in Egypt is the last event in his book, but he continues to report events until the end of 928/1522.

Ibn Iyas recorded the last moments of Sultan Tuman Bay's struggle against the Ottoman army and how he fled and turned to Hasan ibn Mar'i, his old friend and the leader of the Buhayrah Tribes, seeking protection. Nevertheless, Hasan had no choice but to betray him and hand him to Sultan Salim [11].

Ibn Iyas considered the public hanging of Tuman Bay on Bab Zuwaylah in Cairo to be a happy ending for Sultan Salim. This outstanding incident was unprecedented in the history of Cairo, since Tuman Bay was the first sultan to be hanged [11]. Ibn Iyas sympathized with the unfortunate end of Tuman Bay and wrote about his achievements. However, he stated that the Mamluks in Cairo saw the Ottoman conquest coming and he wrote about some Mamluk commanders who fled to Istanbul and about the oppression of the army officers in Cairo. Ibn Iyas considered the victory of the Ottoman Sultan Salim over the Mamluk Sultan Qansuh al-Ghuri at Marj Dabiq (24 August 1516) to be a devastating event, writing "On Saturday, the most

shattering and heinous news came out..." Ibn Iyas continued to describe the Ottoman arrival in Egypt and the confrontation between the Ottoman Sultan Salim and Sultan Tuman Bay in the Battle of Ridaniyah in Giza on 6 April 1517. He called Sultan Salim "al fatih", i.e. "the conqueror", saying "The conqueror victoriously commanded the execution of Tuman Bay..." Even though Ibn Iyas considered the Ottoman sultan to be a conqueror, he wrote indifferently about his oppression and subjection of the people and how he forced the scholars and craftsmen of Cairo to accompany him to Istanbul and how he took over Cairo's treasures [11].

It is clear from al-Ishbili's writings that he admired the Ottoman Sultan Salim and considered his arrival to be an end to the suppression and injustice of the Mamluks. He described him as the greatest king, "chaired, meritoriously as a caliph (successor of the prophet) and an establisher of the institutes of knowledge and faith." Moreover, al-Ishbili wrote that the arrival of Sultan Salim fulfilled the saying of the Prophet Muhammad: "Every hundred years, God sends a defender of this religion..." [12].

Ibn Zunbul's position is somewhat puzzling. Even though he was an eyewitness to the Battle of Marj Dabiq and Tuman Bay's resistance to the Ottoman invasion and was close to the son of Sultan al-Ghuri, he afterwards joined the Ottomans and became an employee of the Ottoman army administration (diwan), which is thought to be the reason for his change of position in his writings about the arrival of the Ottomans in Egypt.

In his writings, Ibn Zunbul used a narrative style to describe the Ottoman arrival in Egypt. In the beginning, he pictured the Ottoman military as invaders. At one point, the picture changed and Ibn Zunbul started viewing Salim, the Ottoman Sultan, as the King of the Arabs and 'Ajam (non-Arabs) and the successor of God on Earth. Ibn Zunbul used a narrative form of historical writing and tended to be extremely detailed. History seemed to him to be a political event that resulting from the confrontation of two rival sultans. He mentioned as well the reasons for the Mamluk-Ottoman enmity and quoted the Qur'an as a justification: "Indeed, the earth belongs to Allah. He causes to inherit it whom He wills of His servants. And the [best] outcome is for the righteous."

Ibn Zunbul wrote his condensed records on a daily basis. He wrote about the princes of the state and shaykhs of the Bedouin. Ibn Zunbul's writing is characterized by daily observations. He seemed to have inherited the Arabian traditions of writing history, by mainly illustrating the reasons for the downfall of the state and writing about the constant tension and

injustice in the country. Ibn Zunbul continued his traditional style of narration by listing the reasons for the Ottoman-Mamluk struggle, such as when the Mamluks refused to help the Sultan Salim in his war against Shah Ismail al-Safawi [13].

Ibn Zunbul documented the relations between the Mamluk and Ottoman Sultanates, connecting them to the Ottoman-Safavid relations as well. He used this connection as a preamble to mention the battle of Marj Dabiq between the Ottomans and the Mamluks: "The battle began on Sunday 23 Rajab 921/14 August 1515." This shows his ability to connect events and to follow up the relations between the Ottomans and their enemies: the Safawis and the Mamluks,

The Mamluk army lost against the Ottomans in Marj Dabiq. In Ibn Zunbul's view, the Egyptian army lost due to "lack of discipline and the quarrels between officers who were stubborn, which led to their own perdition" [13].

While Sultan Tuman Bay was exchanging letters with Sultan Salim [14]. He showed his refusal to surrender and his determination to fight the Ottomans, saying to the Egyptian people "I see that we have no choice but to fight for our country, women (harim) and land, or else be killed..."[13].

The fight over Egypt, as Ibn Zunbul saw it, was a clash between the Rum and the Arabs. It was a clash of identities where each one fought to thrive: "When the Arabs saw what the Rum did to them, their hearts were filled with vengeance and said to each other: 'Wait and be ready for these infidels'.

The Mamluks used to call the Ottomans degrading and humiliating names, as Ibn Zunbul recorded in his, such as "you infidel Rum, you pagans, you vulgar idolaters". Ibn Zunbul did not neglect the details of the Ottoman-Mamluk transition in Egypt, he actually took them to an intense level. During the Mamluks' fight led by Tuman Bay, the Arabs and nomads who accompanied him realized that the sultanate was close to an end. Therefore, they preferred to minimize their losses against the Ottomans and so took the Ottomans' side and eventually handed Tuman Bay over to Sultan Salim.

All those events led to the inevitable result of replacing the unjust Mamluk state with a more righteous one. Ibn Zunbul, indirectly, tried to convey this message to his readers and make them understand how the country had moved from an age of darkness to enlightenment.

The tragic end of Tuman Bay has been justified through a vision that repeatedly appears in history with the downfall of major states. Such an end was foreseen by Tuman Bay, even though he courageously fought for his land and nation. Tuman Bay tried to promote the

spirit of his soldiers through motivational speeches to keep them fighting, although he knew that the Ottomans were going to take over.

Through his speech to his soldiers, Tuman Bay alluded to the vision that anticipated the loss against the Ottomans. As many previous Arab leaders had done, Tuman Bay gave a motivational speech to his soldiers, even though defeat was inevitable.

The second vision that Tuman Bay saw came after his supporters had left him. Thus the Egyptian resistance to the Ottoman army came to an end. Ibn Zunbul noted the conversation between Tuman Bay and Sultan Salim. After being arrested, Tuman Bay was brought to Sultan Salim. Tuman Bay saluted Salim as a king and was himself saluted like a king.

Ibn Zunbul continued to describe the incongruous confrontation of the two rivals, stating the positive attitude of Sultan Salim towards Tuman Bay: "He looked at Tuman Bay with physiognomy and found that he was a man of courage, chivalry and perfection of mind..." [13].

In the conversation between the two sultans, Salim justified invading Egypt for two reasons. The first was the attitude of the Mamluks towards him during his war against the Safavids. He said that he came to them upon the "fatwa" (legal opinion) of the 'ulama of the different countries, where he had to fight the Safawis who were supported by the Mamluks." The other reason was that Tuman Bay refused to write (decrees) in the name of Sultan Salim or to mention Sultan Salim's name during the Friday prayers. Ibn Zunbul recorded Tuman Bay's response to Sultan Salim, who was impressed by his reply: "Those who were raised on splendor refuse humiliation. Have you heard of a lion submitting to a wolf? You are not more audacious or courageous than us..." Sultan Salim replied to this stirring response by saying: "I swear to God that such a man should not be killed. Thus, put him aside to look in his matter." However, Sultan Salim quickly issued his command to execute Tuman Bay by hanging him on Bab Zuwaylah. Ibn Zunbul described this day as the most ominous day for the people of the Mamluk Kingdom in Egypt [13]. Nevertheless, his pessimistic tone quickly changed. This shows that he was a simple and traditional historian who did not belong to the same class as other more professional historians who experienced the Mamluk-Ottoman conflict.

Ibn Zunbul wrote history as a hobby. He was the first historian who wrote about the Ottoman army. Unlike most historians, Ibn Zunbul did not write an introduction to his book, nor did he mention his method in writing history, or the importance of history and its influence on people. Many historians of the army who came after him imitated his style by not introducing

their books, but he was distinguished by having used an objective methodology in writing history. He focused on three topics:

First: The battle of Marj Dabiq and what led to it.

Second: The role of Tuman Bay in resisting the Ottomans in the Battle of Ridaniyah and the efforts that followed it to chase the remainders of the the symbols of the Mamluk regime.

Third: The Egyptian Pashas appointed by the Ottomans from 1517 to 1553.

Even though his historical writing was not always consistent, Ibn Zunbul clarified the nature of the fighting in his time; but his style of narration was not very precise, which made it interesting for the people and hence was read in the coffee shops of Cairo.

We note the following about Ibn Zunbul's method of writing history of that period:

First: He wrote a concise chronicle for more than a third of a century.

Second: He did not give the precise dates of historical events, which has led researchers to refer to other sources to fill the gaps.

Third: He did not mention the cultural destruction that was caused by Salim I while he was in Egypt or how he forced the Abbasid Caliph, al-Mutawakkil, to leave Cairo for Istanbul, as if such matters were trivial and not worth mentioning.

CONCLUSION

Some Mamluk historians such as Ibn al-Himsi and Ibn Tulun al-Salihi were clearly brief when writing about the Ottoman arrival in the Levant and Egypt. On the other hand, others such as Ibn Iyas and Ibn Zunbul wrote about the Ottoman arrival in an informative and detailed manner. Perhaps the difference is linked to the fact that Egypt was the home of the Mamluk Sultanate, while Damascus was a subsidiary state of Egypt. Therefore, the Egyptian historians chronicled the event precisely and were committed to the obligations imposed on them by Cairo; the capital of the Mamluk Sultanate.

The historians realized the importance of the continuity of the state. The Mamluk-Ottoman transition was viewed as a political moment, when the secular political system must be renewed and one system must end for various reasons, mainly injustice and oppression. However, it was also viewed as a religious moment that required renew in allegiance to the new sultan and preaching in his name during Friday prayers. This was quickly achieved for Sultan Salim in the mosques of Aleppo, Damascus and later Cairo.

The historians noticed the connection between the different nations, regardless of time and people. Thus,

they chronicled various remarkable and critical incidents that occurred throughout history.

Observing the attitude of the historians shows that they tended to narrate the sequence of events during the transition with no historical unity. The transition was broken down into news related to people's lives and their economic and social status. Moreover, we have noticed that during the Mamluk-Ottoman transition, the historians justified the defeat of the Mamluks through superstitions and visions. Such justification defied logic and common sense, yet these practices were commonly used to explain defeats, the collapse of states and major incidents.

The Arab historians who wrote about the Mamluk-Ottoman transition could not ignore natural or cosmic events like earthquakes and eclipses that occurred at that time. Such events were not related to the victory or loss of any nation in any way, but the historians used them to explain the defeat of the Mamluks. Some events were mentioned only in order to document them and not to present them as the cause of important incidents.

Thus, the insistence of Arab historians of that period to record daily events, such as the prices of goods, floods of the Nile, the revolt of the military, the flight of the princes and the triumph of the armies, is evidence of the scattered events and the lack of unity. Hence, this expresses the hesitation of the historians had through keeping their distance from realizing the importance of the political transformation that was happening, as if they did not realize the advent of a new era in this region.

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8. It is noteworthy that Muhammad ibn Tulun al-Salihi uses the term "Our Sultan" for Qansuh al-Ghuri and "The Roman King or Khinkar" to refer to Sultan Salim. However, he rushed to point to the meeting of the shaykhs of Damascus in the mosque of al-Hasa square "and the Shaykhs agreed to hand over the country... then on Friday 26 Sha'ban, Ibn Farfur preached at the Umayyad Mosque in the name of the Roman king, along with all the other mosques... In early Ramadan the Roman King Salim Khan ibn Bayzid arrived, with a great army never seen before, to the matabah (terrace) near the upper steelyard, preceded by thirty carriages. The people of Damascus thought it was an apocalypse. No one came to meet the sultan. However, when the four judges met the judge of the army, he took them to the "Khinkar" where the Shafi, then al-Hanafi, then al-Maliki, then al-Hanbali judges kissed his hand..." Ibn Tulun, Shams al-Din Muhammad, 1964 Mafakahat al-Khillan fi Hawadith al-Zaman, Edited by Muhammad Mustafa, Cairo, 2: 24-124.
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14. Tuman Bay was the last Circassian Mamluk sultan in Egypt. He took over Egypt on behalf of Qansuh al-Ghuri and led the Egyptian forces against the Ottomans at the Battle of Ridaniyah. He was arrested eventually and was the only sultan who was executed on Bab Zuwayla on Friday 21 Rabi' al-Awwal 923/13 April 1517. Some historians consider him a brave leader and martyr. See Imad Badr al-Din Abu Ghazi, 1999, Tuman Bay: The Martyr Sultan. Alfkr Press, Cairo, pp: 17- 111.