ABDUŞŞAMED DİYĂRBEKRİ
(b. end of 15th century; d. > May 19, 1542)

LIFE

Abduşşamed b. Seyyidi Ali b. Dâvûd ed-Diyârbeki’ş life is known to us through information he gives in his History of Egypt. With the exception of Kâtib Çelebi’s Kashfu z-צunûn, A.D. is not mentioned in any biographical or bibliographical dictionary. Kâtib Çelebi writes that A.D translated Ibn al-Ţûlûn’s Nuzha sanîya fi aḥbâr al-\-luafâ’ wa-l-mulûk al-Miṣrîya. C. Rieu and F. Babinger wrote biographical abstracts about him. The first comprehensive study on A.D.’s life is available in B. Lellouch’s PhD dissertation (1999).

A.D.’s birth date cannot be determined. The first datable information available about him is that he met İdrîs-i Bidlîsî in Tâ’if around Zilhicce 917/February-March 1512, when İdrîs was on a pilgrimage. Since A.D. could not have been very young at that time, he must have been born at the end of the 15th century. He was probably born in the region of Diyârbeke, although we have no proof of this other than his sobriquet “Diyârbeke”. Although a sobriquet is not always proof of a birth place, the fact that he wrote mainly in Turkish makes it plausible that he stemmed from a Turkish-speaking environment, and that he wasn’t born in the Hijaz or in Egypt. He also identifies himself as a “Turk” (Türk, Türk oğlan).

During his stay in the Hijaz, A.D. studied in the Qâyetbây madrasa in Mecca. It was probably there that he studied Hanefi jurisprudence. At the same time he led a life of mystical contemplation in Mecca as a Qalender dervish. He appears to have been in Egypt in Zilhicce 922/January 1517 as he claims to have witnessed the battle of Rûdânîyye (al-Raydânîya), which allowed the Ottomans to capture Cairo. However we know that in Rebi’ilevvel 923/April 1517 he was back in the Hijaz, since he witnessed the Portuguese attack on Cidde (Jidda). He returned to Cairo in Şaban 923/August 1517, carrying a letter from the Ottoman admiral (re’îs) Selman (d. 934/1527) which he then handed to the grand vizier Yûnus Paşa (d. 923/1517). One might say that he did not have the right connections in the Ottoman elite: a few days later Selman was called to Cairo by Sultan Selim I. (918-926/1512-1520) and arrested, and Yûnus was executed shortly after the sultan’s departure from Cairo (Şaban 923/August-September 1517).

At the beginning of the Ottoman presence in Cairo, A.D. lived here and enjoyed the company of lower-ranking characters. However in 931/1525 he was befriended by İskender Çelebi (d. 941/1535), the finance minister (baş defterdâr) of Rûmeli, who had come to Egypt with the Grand Vizier Ibrâhîm Paşa (d. 942/1536). İskender Çelebi provided A.D. with material help when the latter spent a year in Istanbul as an applicant for a teaching or a legal position (müllâzım), probably shortly after the end of...
İbrâhîm Paşa’s tenure in Egypt. It seems that ˣA.D. returned to Egypt without securing a position.

We do not know when or by whose aid he became the judge (qâdi) of Dâmiyet (Damietta). He held this position under Hüsrev Paşa (941-943/1535-1536), under the second governorship of Süleyman Paşa (943-945/1535-1538), and under Dâvûd Paşa (945-954/1538-1547). He was dismissed in 947/1540-41 and then reinstated. He was still in this position on 3 Safer 949/19 May 1542, a date which forms the terminus post quem of the composition of his History of Egypt. After this date there is no information available about ˣA.D. He was no longer the qâdi of Dâmiyet in 952/1545-46 or thereafter, as testified by the registers of the city’s court of justice.⁴

ˣA.D. was one of a number of Turkish-speaking immigrants to Mamluk lands on the eve of the Ottoman conquest. His career exemplifies the openings for social mobility available to a Hanefi Turkish-speaker: although he was not an Ottoman subject before 923/1517, he became part of the elite in Ottoman Egypt.

**WORKS**

³ Tercüme-i en-nüzhe es-senîyye fi zîkr el-ḥulefâ veʾl-müläk el-muşriyye (History of Egypt)

Presented to Dâvûd Paşa, this work is a Turkish-language adaptation, followed by an addendum (zeyl), of an Arabic-language chronicle entitled Nuzha sanîya written in 882/1477-1478 by the Cairene Hasan b. al-Ṭülüni (836-923/1432-1517). In his translation, ˣA.D. faithfully follows the structure of the Nuzha. He tells the history of the Prophet and the four rightly guided caliphs, and the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphs down to al-Mustanjid billâh (859-884/1453-1479). This first part of the work goes from foll. 2b to 39b. In the second part of the work, which extends from foll. 39b to 85b, he illustrates the history of Egypt from pre-Islamic times up to its rule by Muslim governors (viûtât) and kings (müläk). He organizes this section according to periods of reigns down to the Mamluk sultan Qâytbây (872-902/1468-1496). The Turkish adaptation is approximately eight times as long as the Arabic text. While Hasan b. al-Ṭülüni generally gives a very concise list of names and dates, ˣA.D., bearing in mind the moral significance of history, inserts anecdotes (at times autobiographical) and elaborates on some rulers, especially those of the second half of the 10th/15th century.

The addendum (zeyl) in the Turkish adaptation of the Nuzha, found on foll. 85b-364a, covers the history of Egypt between 901-949/1496-1542. The text is organized at first by the regnal years of the last Mamluk sultans and Selîm I, and then covers the governorship of Ḥâyr Beg (923-928/1517-1522). Few dates are given here. From 14 Ramazan 923/30 September 1517 onwards the narrative becomes more elaborate and is organized around events (veqâyi‘), for which precise dates are given. These veqâyi‘ are grouped by month and year. As S.M. es-Seyyid Mahmud and M. Winter pointed out, ˣA.D. offers a Turkish adaptation (without mentioning his source) of the Badâ‘i‘...
al-zuhūr, from this point on down to the end of 928/19 November 1522 (which is the end date of the known text of the Badā‘i‘). Written in Arabic by the Cairene Ibn Iyās (b. 852/1448; d. after the end of 930/28 October 1524), the Badā‘i‘ is a history of Egypt which, for the period contemporary to its original author, takes the shape of a “diary.” “A.D. adds a few original elements, the most remarkable of which is the long narrative, based on firsthand knowledge, of the Red Sea events of 923/1517 ( foll. 137a-162a). For the years 929-930/1522-1524, he uses the unfinished and lost twelfth book ( juz‘) of the Badā‘i‘. The narration is much shorter for 931/1524-1525 and, starting from the following year, very succinct, devoid of dates, and organized around various governorships. The section on the governorship of Dāvūd includes a section of praise for the paşa.

This work gives an outstanding narrative of the revolt of the Circassians (929/1523) and of Ahmed Paşa’s (930/1524) revolt, and sheds light on the work of Ibn Iyās. The author writes in an extremely beautiful and original style, with few borrowings from Arabic and Persian, and uses unique idiomatic expressions. The moral concerns of the author led him to insert a large number of otherwise unknown proverbs. However, his History of Egypt did not have any impact on later historiography.

Manuscripts: The London manuscript stands out by its literary and sometimes difficult style. It is obviously closer to the now lost autographed work than the other four extant manuscripts. The London manuscript bears no indication of date, location, or copyist. According to Rieu, it can be dated back to the 17th century. It belonged in 1180/1766-1767 to a certain Ahmedzade, financial officer in Baghdad. The Gotha manuscript, which was copied in 978/1570 and acquired in Cairo by U.J. Seetzen in 1808, is missing approximately fifteen folios. The Cairo manuscript ( Ta’rîh Qawala 42) was copied in 967/1559 or in 997/1588. It is part of the Cavalla waqf which Fu‘ad I (1917-1936) transferred to Cairo. Those two manuscripts are certainly the oldest ones. The Istanbul manuscript was owned by ‘Ali Emîrî (1857-1924).

Contents: The section headings are partially shortened. The section headings pertaining to months of the years from 924 to 931 are given in Arabic; the folio numbers are given here following the London manuscript ( Add. 7846):

This is a Turkish adaptation of the first book (juz’) of the Futūḥ al-Shām written at an unknown date. The original work in Arabic was wrongly attributed to al-Wāqidi (d. 207/822-3). The latter author composed a chronicle bearing this title, but this chronicle is lost. The known text of Futūḥ al-Shām was written after the death of al-Wāqidi by an unidentified author. The first volume of this pseudo-Wāqidi’s Futūḥ al-Shām, like its adaptation by Ɛ.A.D., relates the Arab conquests in Syria from Abū Bakr to the campaigns against Antioch in 16/637. In his adaptation of this work Ɛ.A.D. does not offer any information about himself or his own lifetime, and the text does not have any significant stylistic peculiarity. By adapting the pseudo-Wāqidi into Turkish, Ɛ.A.D. places himself in a well-attested tradition: we know of two other Turkish adaptations of this work from the Mamluk period, by Muافية Darî (d. ?, work completed 795/1393) and by Muhaemed b. Acâ (d. 881/1476-1477).

The Ankara manuscript is the sole manuscript of the Futūḥ-Şām Tercümesi. It is impossible to ascertain the date and place of this copy or the copyist’s identity.

In his History of Egypt, Ɛ.A.D. mentions that, by Selîm’s request in 923/1517, he adapted and translated into Turkish an Arabic chronicle about the Mamluk sultan Barsbây’s campaign against Āmid (Diyarbakır) in 836/1432-1433. The text is lost, and the identification of this Arabic chronicle is problematic. Ɛ.A.D. composed a treatise of Hanefi fiqh, the Nuḥbat al-mamlûk fi tahrîr tuḥfat al-mulûk, which he presented to Selîm in 923/1517. Manuscripts of this work are known to exist. He also mentions in his History of Egypt that he composed a commentary (ṣerîh) on the Ṣâḥîh of Buḥârî during his stay in the Hijaz.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1 Tercüme-i en-nüzhe es-seniyye fi zikr el-ḥulefâ ve’l-mulûk el-muṣriyye:


Editions: Two excerpts of the text were edited in transliteration and French translation by B. Lellouch in his PhD Dissertation (pp. 284-379; facsimile of the London manuscript p. XIII-LXVI). The first is the account of the end of the Mamluk rule and
the Ottoman conquest (foll. 101a-119b). The second is the account of the same events inserted as an anecdote in the entry for 17 Muharrem 925/19 January 1519 (foll. 185b-192b).

2 Fütühü’-Şâm Tercümesi

Manuscript: (1) Ankara, Milli Kütüphane, Yz. A. 29, 261 fol, 17 lines, nesih.
Editions: None.


4 A certain Seyfüddin functioned as judge in Sevval 952/December 1545-January 1546; cf. Dâr al-Waṭa‘iq al-Qawmîya (Cairo), Sijillât Dumyat, 1.

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