

STUDIES ON THE JAZĪRA II: DUNAYSIR AND ITS HISTORY*

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This paper looks at the history of the small Islamic town of Dunaysir in the Diyār Rabī'a region of Upper Mesopotamia, which flourished especially in the 12th and 13th centuries A.D. as an agricultural centre and market town, with a lively intellectual and cultural life. A local physician and scholar, Abū Ḥafṣ 'Umar b. al-Khiḍr al-Turkī (d. ca. 1242–1243) wrote a history of the town's notable scholars and literary men. It is important for being the only known history of the town, for its rich biographical information and for being the sole authority for a large amount of Arabic verse by Jaziran poets. Biographical notes on these notables are given, and some illustrative sections of the history translated.

Key words: Dunaysir; Upper Mesopotamia; Islamic towns; Islamic local histories; Abū Ḥafṣ 'Umar b. al-Khiḍr al-Turkī.

I. The town of Dunaysir

The mediaeval Islamic town of Dunaysir/Dunaysar in Upper Mesopotamia seems to have been something of a mushroom growth, enjoying some two centuries of prosperity and then decaying and disappearing. It appears to have had no pre-Islamic antecedents, being unmentioned in cuneiform texts of the Assyrian period or in the earliest Christian times.¹ Nor is there any sure information on its existence in earlier Christian times. Dussaud identified the site of what presumably became Dunaysir with a (?) modern Tell Ermen, which he suggested was the Minnocerta of the Roman map, the *Tabula Peuteringiana*, and with the Dausaron of Procopius. It is not, however, till after the turn of the millennium that we have firm information on Dunaysir

* This study complements that of Bosworth (2005).

¹ Information from my former colleague Mr M. E. J. Richardson.

from both Eastern Christian and Islamic sources. Dr Sebastian Brock has kindly drawn my attention to the Syriac source of Michael the Syrian's *Chronicle*, in which *D.w.n.s.y.r* is mentioned in connection with a famine of 1184–1185, and to the fact that Fiey noted that the early 13th-century writer Isho'yahb bar Malkon came from Dunaysir (which accordingly apparently had a significant Christian population then).²

At all events, by Zangid and Artuqid times (i.e. the 6th–7th/12th–13th centuries) Dunaysir was quite an important settlement of the Jazira in what had been in earlier Islamic times *Diyār Rabī'a*. It lay in the hot plain, on some of the headwaters of the Greater Khābūr river, some two or three or four farsakhs to the south-southeast of the rock fortress of Mārdīn and towards Dāra and Naṣībīn; whether the actual site is to be identified with Dussaud's Tell Armen or, as Claude Cahen subsequently suggested, to be identified rather with the ruins of the Turkish village of Kizil Tepe (Cahen 1934, p. 127), it was most probably just within what are the southern boundaries of the modern Turkish *il* or province of Diyarbakir. There were several bridges across these various headwaters of the Khābūr that received their flows from the Ṭūr 'Ābdīn to the north and from the Anatolian highlands in general; such bridges were necessitated by the fact that the trade routes all ran east–west, and Elisséeff noted that the remains of a five-arched stone bridge are still visible to the northwest of where Dunaysir must have stood. Certainly, Dunaysir was already in the time of the Atabeg Nūr al-Dīn b. Zangī (i.e. the middle decades of the 6th/12th century) a stage for caravan traffic going between northern Syria and Iraq, with bustling markets and baths; when Yāqūt stated that by *ca.* 623/1225 it had become a substantial regional centre (a *miṣr*), with many markets, whereas it had been in his youth (he was born in 574 or 575/1178–1180) of a modest size only (a mere *qarya*), he must have been exaggerating the contrast.³

The Maghribī pilgrim Ibn Jubayr spent a night at Dunaysir (which he spells thus, with *ṣād*), that of Thursday, 3 Rabī' I 580/ 22 June 1184 en route eastwards to Ra's al-'Ayn. He noted that it came within the territories of the Amir Quṭb al-Dīn, who also controlled Mārdīn, Dāra and Ra's al-'Ayn in what struck him as a region of fragmented political authority, such that he was reminded of the *mulūk al-ṭawā'if* "party kings" of al-Andalus. This ruler must have been the Artuqid ruler of Mārdīn and Mayyāfāriqīn Quṭb al-Dīn II-Ghāzī b. Alpī b. Temürtāsh (r. 572–580/1176–1184) (Bosworth 1996, p. 194, n. 96). The surrounding region was rather desert-like (*mā'ilat al-ṭab' ilā 'l-bādiya*). At this time, Ibn Jubayr goes on to say, Dunaysir had no walls and its agricultural lands were irrigated through norias or waterwheels (*sawāqī*) with water brought from the river, and it was important enough to have a newly-constructed, well-frequented madrasa of stone just outside the town (this must be the Shihābiyya one, frequently mentioned by Abū Ḥafṣ 'Umar⁴), where there was

² Dr Brock gives the references of Chabot (1899–1924, text IV, p. 738, tr. III, p. 412) and Fiey (1977, p. 105).

³ See Yāqūt (1374–1376/1955–1957, II, p. 478); Strange (1905, p. 96); Cahen (1940, pp. 36–37); Elisséeff (1967, I, p. 122); useful map in Canard (1951, opposite p. 241).

⁴ The founder was presumably a magnate with the honorific of Shihāb al-Dīn, but precisely who this was is not explicit; one might surmise that he was a member or connection of the Zangid or Artuqid families.

also a *ḥammām*. The folk of his caravan lingered there in order to take advantage of the lively market which was held each week from Thursday to Sunday and was much frequented by merchants, whilst he himself was happy to stay for the Friday congregational worship.⁵

II. The author Abū Ḥafṣ ‘Umar

Clearly, Dunaysir was in the later years of the 6th/12th century and the first half of the 7th/13th century a not insignificant place, one flourishing enough to share in the general cultural and intellectual trends which produced several significant local histories for the towns of northern Syria and Jazira: Ḥarrān, Raqqa, Mayyāfāriqīn, Mawṣil, Irbil and, above all, Aleppo, with its towering figure of the historian and biographer Ibn al-‘Adīm. As part of this movement, the physician and historian Abū Ḥafṣ ‘Umar b. al-Khiḍr al-Turkī (whose dates correspond *grosso modo* to this period of Dunaysir’s florescence, see below) wrote a history of Dunaysir, the *Kitāb Ḥilyat al-sariyyīn min khawāṣṣ al-dunaysiriyyīn*, a work known to and used by Ibn al-‘Adīm for scholars who had come from Dunaysir to Aleppo or had been in some way connected with his home city (see below, p. 6). This was noticed by earlier scholars concerned with the historiography of this region, since it exists in a unique Berlin manuscript (Ahlwardt 9851, new no. 1099) (see *GAL*, I², p. 406; Cahen 1940, pp. 36–37; Eddé 1994, pp. 305–306) but had to wait till 1986 for the Syrian scholar Ibrāhīm Ṣāliḥ to produce an edited, printed text (in the series, Publications of the Arabic Language Academy at Damascus).

Abū Ḥafṣ ‘Umar was, from the names of his grandfather and great-grandfather (see on these names, below) as well as explicitly from his gentilic, of Turkish origin. Information on his life is meagre, but he secured notices in later works of a bibliographical orientation, such as al-Sakhāwī in his *al-I‘lān bi ‘l-tawbīkh*⁶ and Ḥājji Khalīfa and his continuator Ismā‘īl al-Baghdādī (this last mentions another Dunaysirī scholar of some fame, ‘Imād al-Dīn, d. 615/1218–1219), on account of his authorship of the sole known history of Dunaysir. The oldest known information on him comes from two Jaziran younger contemporaries, al-Mubārak b. Abī Bakr b. Ḥamdān al-Mawṣilī, called Ibn al-Sha‘‘ār or al-Shi‘ār (d. 654/1256), in his work on the biographies of poets *‘Uqūd al-jumān fī shu‘arā’ al-zamān* (Rosenthal 1968, p. 423; cf. *GAL*, S III, p. 1217); and Abu ‘l-Barakāt al-Mubārak b. Aḥmad, called Ibn al-Mustawfī (d. 637/1239), vizier to the local ruler of Irbil al-Malik al-Muẓaffar, in his *Ta’rīkh Irbil* containing biographies of statesmen and literary figures connected with that northern Iraqi town (Rosenthal 1968, p. 458; cf. *GAL*, S I, p. 496). This latter author records that Abū Ḥafṣ ‘Umar b. al-Khiḍr came to Irbil in 602/1205–1206 in order to meet and to hear traditions from Abū Ḥafṣ ‘Umar b. Muḥammad b. Ṭabarzad and that he was a poet of some competence, giving seven lines of his verse. A cen-

⁵ *Rihla*, ed. W. Wright, 2nd ed. revised by de Goeje (1907, pp. 241–242), French tr. Gaudenfroy-Demombynes (1949, pp. 277–278), Eng. tr. Broadhurst (1952, pp. 254–255).

⁶ English tr. in Rosenthal (1968, p. 469); cf. also Brockelmann (p. 406).

tury later, al-Şafadī provided a notice which is slightly longer and more explicit, and giving Abū Ḥafṣ ‘Umar’s full name as: Kamāl al-Dīn Abū Ḥafṣ ‘Umar b. al-Khiḍr b. ‘l.l.m.sh b. ‘l.d.z.m.sh b. Isrā’īl al-Turkī al-Dunaysirī al-Shāfi‘ī, born in 574/1178–1179 and died *ca.* 640/1242–1243 (Şafadī 1988, p. 458).⁷ In addition to training as a physician, hence his designation *al-mutaṭabbib*, he had heard traditions from Ibn al-Jawzī and others at Baghdad. He is not known to have written any other works except for his History. The florid title of his local history appears in al-Sakhāwī and Ḥājji Khalīfa and in the colophon of the manuscript itself.

The Shihābiyya madrasa in Dunaysir obviously played a leading role in Abū Ḥafṣ ‘Umar’s early formation. Thus he mentions being taught there *ḥadīth* by various of its instructors: by Abu ‘l-Karam Muḥammad b. ‘Abdallāh b. Muḥammad al-‘Akkāf al-Mawṣilī al-Shāfi‘ī (d. Dhu ‘l-Ḥijja 590/November 1194; see below, p. 6); by the Qāḍī Abū ‘Imrān Mūsā b. Muḥammad b. Mūsā b. Ḥammād al-Mākisī al-Shāfi‘ī, whom Abū Ḥafṣ ‘Umar accompanied on the Pilgrimage in 595/1199 (d. 607/1210–1211) (*TD*, pp. 123–124, no. 32); and by the Qāḍī Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad b. ‘Abdallāh b. Muḥammad b. Hibatallāh al-Shāfi‘ī, who came to Dunaysir in 599/1202–1203 (*TD*, pp. 126–128, no. 34). One concludes from such mentions as these that Abū Ḥafṣ ‘Umar was himself an adherent of the Shāfi‘ī *madh’hab* and that the Shihābiyya was most probably a Shāfi‘ī foundation; the great majority of the scholars and literary men whose *madh’hab* is specifically mentioned by the author are Shāfi‘īs. Abū Ḥafṣ ‘Umar’s other interests included *adab* and, in particular, poetry, in which, on the evidence of Ibn al-Mustawfī (see above, p. 3), he himself indulged; the sheer quantity of verse cited in the History (see below) in any case demonstrates this love of his. He mentions hearing poetry directly from various Jaziran poets or via his father or other intermediaries, such as the verse of the traditionist mentioned above, Abu ‘l-Karam Muḥammad al-‘Akkāf; the mysterious ‘Umar ... (lacuna here in the text, see below p. 6); by Abu ‘l-Ḥasan ‘Alī al-Şaffār (see below, p. 7); and by Abu ‘l-Bahā’ Thābit b. Aḥmad al-Ḥarrānī, a friend of Abū Ḥafṣ ‘Umar’s father (see below, p. 7). He may have had some interest at least in Sufism, and a considerable proportion of the poetry that he cites is on the theme of *zuhd*, asceticism, admittedly a favourite one of the age. It is only with regard to his medical knowledge that we lack specific mention of his teachers.

III. The history

The editor Ibrāhīm Şāliḥ has signalled the importance of the History as being first, that it is the only known work devoted to the history of Dunaysir; second, as containing over 500 verses cited from Jaziran poets and unknown in any other source; and

⁷ The non-Arabic names of Abū Ḥafṣ ‘Umar’s grandfather and great-grandfather are obviously Turkish, and could be El-almish, meaning something like “he took control of the land”, and El-düzmiş “he brought order to the land” respectively. These names are attested in Turkish onomastic; see Baski (1986, p. 48 col. 3, p. 49 col. 2).

third, as having a plethora of biographical information on Qur'anic scholars, traditionists, jurists and other religious scholars, on physicians, and on poets, secretaries, stylists and other literary men (*TD*, Introduction, pp. 3–10). Thus it covers other sectors of knowledge beyond the religious sciences, although these last inevitably predominate (as *bābs* 1–5 of the History, see below), and it shows that, up to the mid-7th/13th century at least, the time when the Mongols arrived in Iraq and Jazira, the agricultural and commercial prosperity of Dunaysir had its counterpart in the cultural and intellectual spheres.

The History contains a total of sixty biographies (pp. 23–196), spread amongst the following chapters:

- bāb* 1. On those famed [lacuna here] for their intellectual achievements and their lofty characters (*'ilm* and *hilm*) (pp. 23–33, the section being in practice concerned with specialists in the readings, *qirā'āt*, of the Qur'ān).
- bāb* 2. On the traditionists, senior scholars, narrators of traditions, etc., who were natives of Dunaysir or who passed through it (pp. 35–105).
- bāb* 3. On the jurists (*fuqahā'*) who were natives of the town, who came to settle there or who passed through it (pp. 107–134).
- bāb* 4. A selection of the ascetics (*zuhhād*) who dwelt in the town or who passed through it (pp. 135–138).
- bāb* 5. A selection of the preachers and homilists (*ahl al-wa'z wa 'l-tadhkīr*) who passed through it (pp. 139–143).
- bāb* 6. Some of the literary practitioners (*ahl al-adab*) who were natives of the town, who came to settle there or who passed through it, with a *faṣl* 1 which is a selection of those concerned with linguistic questions and prose style writing (*ahl al-lughā wa 'l-inshā'*) who came to settle there; a *faṣl* 2 which is a selection of specialists in grammar (*naḥw*) [lacuna here] who were natives of the town, came to settle there or passed through it; and a *faṣl* 3 which is a selection of the poets who were natives of the town, came to settle there or passed through it (pp. 145–172, the third of these sections taking up over two-thirds of the whole *bāb*).
- bāb* 7. A selection of the physicians who were natives of the town, who came to settle there or who passed through it, with a *faṣl* 1 on those who used analogical reasoning (*qiyās*) in their diagnoses and treatments, and a *faṣl* 2 on these who were essentially pragmatists and practical men (*ahl al-tajārib fi 'l-ṭibb*) (pp. 173–181).
- bāb* 8. On a group of scholars who showed every sign of success but of whom it is not clear what became of them (*jamā'a lam yatabayyan mā ya'ūlu amruhum ilayhi mimman lāḥat 'alayhim amārāt al-falāḥ*) (pp. 183–196, dealing with various religious and legal scholars and literary and medical men).

Now that a printed edition of the History is available, it is unnecessary to go into detail on its contents, and what follows is first (section IV), information on a small selection of entries concerning what seem to the present writer to be persons of

interest; and second (section V), translations of four short extracts from the History which give something of its flavour and which, as noted above, p. 3, were cited by Ibn al-ʿAdīm in his *Bughyat al-ṭalab fī taʾrīkh Ḥalab*. These extracts were included by the late Iḥsān ʿAbbās in his *Shadharāt min kutub mafqūda fī ʿl-taʾrīkh wa ʿl-adab* (Beirut 1408/1988), using the manuscripts of what was at that time the still unpublished text of the *Bughya*.⁸ The translations have been based primarily on the text of ʿAbbās; the two texts are in general very close in their wording. Although the book of ʿAbbās (at that time resident in ʿAmmān) was published two years after Ṣāliḥ's edition of the History appeared in adjacent Syria, ʿAbbās makes no mention of it; it may be that he had put together the *Shadharāt* before the printed edition of the History appeared, perhaps after some delay.

IV. Biographical notes on selected entries from the history

1. *TD*, pp. 112–113, no. 28. Abu ʿl-Karam Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh b. Muḥammad al-ʿAkkāf al-Mawṣilī al-Shāfiʿī taught many students at the Shihābiyya madrasa in Dunaysir, including Abū Ḥafṣ ʿUmar himself. He recited to the author and his companions some of his verses, but the historian had forgotten them by the time he came to put together his book. Abu ʿl-Karam died on the night of ʿArafa, i.e. 8–9 Dhu ʿl-Ḥijja/24–25 November 1194 and was buried separately from the main cemetery in the garden adjoining the madrasa.

2. *TD*, pp. 124–126, no. 33. Abu ʿl-Khayr Salāma b. Ṣadaqa b. Salāma al-Ḥarrānī al-Ḥanbalī was a jurist who came to Dunaysir and stayed there teaching; he was an expert on the *farāʿid*, division of inheritances, and on mathematics and algebra. He is notable as being one of the few scholars mentioned by the author as specifically not a Shāfiʿī.

3. *TD*, pp. 139–143, no. 40. Abū ʿAbdallāh ʿUmar b. Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh al-Bakrī al-Suhrawardī was at one stage of his career in Baghdad and had frequented the mystical sessions of his uncle, the Sufi shaykh Abu ʿl-Najīb ʿAbd al-Qāhir b. ʿAbdallāh al-Bakrī (who had taught in his own madrasa in Baghdad and had been finally buried within it in 563/1168). He came to Dunaysir as an envoy from the Caliph al-Nāṣir (hence after 575/1180) to the Ayyubid al-Malik al-ʿĀdil Sayf al-Dīn Abū Bakr Muḥammad or Aḥmad b. Ayyūb (presumably when the latter was reigning in Aleppo, 579–582/1183–1186), and transmitted *ḥadīths* and delivered homilies and sermons in the Western Nāṣirī mosque of the town.

4. *TD*, pp. 160–166, no. 45. ʿUmar (lacuna here, so that the rest of the name is unknown; of persons who might fit here, the editor Ṣāliḥ could find only Abū Ḥafṣ ʿUmar b. Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. Abī Naṣr al-Mawṣilī, called Ibn al-Shiḥna, mentioned in al-Suyūṭī's *Bughyat al-wuʾāt*, citing the *Taʾrīkh Irbil*), a prolific poet; the author cites here an elegy in the *madīd* metre on the ruler of Āmid, Quṭb al-Dīn Suk-

⁸ Ibn al-ʿAdīm's work was shortly afterwards published by Suhayl Zakkār, Damascus 1408–1409/1988–1989, 10 vols.

mān b. [Muḥammad b.] Qara Arslān (ruled in Āmid and Ḥiṣn Kayfā 581–597/1185–1201) which had been related to him by Abu 'l-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Yūsuf al-Ḥājjī, who had it from the poet.

5. *TD*, pp. 166–172, no. 46. Abu 'l-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Yūsuf b. Muḥammad b. 'Ubaydallāh al-Ṣaffār al-Āmidī al-aṣl al-Dunaysirī, known as al-Ḥājjī, was by profession *mutawallī* or overseer and administrator of the ruler's financial resources (*al-a'māl al-sultāniyya*) at Dunaysir. He transmitted his poetry directly to the author, who cites here three verses from a poem bidding farewell to the Vizier Ḍiyā' al-Dīn al-Salāmī, who is known from the entry on al-Salāmiyya, a large village of the Mawṣil region, in Yāqūt's *Mu'jam al-buldān*, Beirut 1374–1376/1955–1957, III, p. 234: this person, so Yāqūt says, was born in 545 or 546/1150–1152, became vizier in Āmid to Quṭb al-Dīn Sulaymān (read: Sukmān b. Muḥammad) b. Qara Arslān but later fell into disfavour with him, and was still alive in 621/1224.

6. *TD*, pp. 175–177, no. 49. Abu 'l-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Aḥmad b. H.b.l al-Baghdādī was a physician (classified by the author as one of those who used *qiyās*) who resided in Mawṣil and was known there as al-Khilāfī. He is further known from biographical entries in Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a's *Uyūn al-anbā'*, al-Qiftī's *Ta'rīkh al-Ḥukamā'*, Ibn al-'Imād's *Shadharāt al-dhahab*, etc., to have had the honorific of Muḥaddhib al-Dīn and to have died in 610/1213–1214. He resided in Dunaysir when acting as physician to the Artuqid lord of Mārdīn and Mayyāfāriqīn Quṭb al-Dīn Il Ghāzī (see above, p. 2).

7. *TD*, pp. 177–178, no. 50. Abu 'l-Bahā' Thābit b. Aḥmad al-Ḥarrānī, who went to live in Dārā, of whom nothing is recorded in later biographical literature but who visited Dunaysir and was a friend of the author's father. He was a prolific poet, especially on the theme of *zuhd*, and Abū Ḥaṣṣ 'Umar cites here fourteen of Abu 'l-Bahā' Thābit's verses recited by the author to his father.

8. *TD*, pp. 183–186, no. 53. Abu 'l-Mufaḍḍal Yaḥyā, called al-Mufaḍḍal b. al-As'ad b. Yaḥyā b. Mūsā b. Hibbān, was a specialist on the Qur'ān, originally from Syria, who was the son of a well-known poet, the Qāḍī Abu 'l-Ma'ālī As'ad b. Yaḥyā (who is listed by the author at *TD*, pp. 155–158, no. 43). The author cites much of his poetry.

9. *TD*, pp. 194–195, no. 60. Abu 'l-Durr Yāqūt b. 'Abdallāh al-Mawṣilī, was a physician who came to Dunaysir in Ramaḍān 595/June–July 1199 and resided outside the town in the service of the Zangid Atabeg of Mawṣil, Nūr al-Dīn [Arslān Shāh b. Mas'ūd, r. 589–607/1193–1211]. The biography of him in Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān*, ed. Iḥsān 'Abbās, Beirut 1968–1972, VI, pp. 119–122, Eng. tr. Baron McGuckin de Slane, *Ibn Khallikan's biographical dictionary*, Paris 1842–1871, IV, pp. 2–4, gives him the honorific of Amīn al-Milla and the *nisba* of al-Malikī (from a connection of his with one of the later Seljuq sultans of Iraq, Malik Shāh b. Saljūq (? read Maḥmūd) b. Muḥammad b. Malik Shāh), expatiates on his fame as a calligrapher and states that he died at Mawṣil in 618/1221.

V. Translated extracts as given by Ibn al-ʿAdīm

1. [Shadharāt, pp. 163–164 = TD, pp. 188–189, no. 55]

Ishāq b. Ismāʿīl b. Qīnīq (Abū Ḥafṣ ʿUmar: Qabīq, which seems less likely) b. Ishāq, Abū Yūsuf al-Turkī, born in al-Manbij but resident in Dunaysir. He was a Shāfiʿī jurist. The beginning of his concern with *fiqh* was at the Shihābiyya madrasa in Dunaysir in 589 [/1193]. He studied law there under our Shaykh Abu ʿl-Karam b. al-Akkāf al-Mawṣilī and the Qāḍī Abū Bakr al-Ḥalabī and Abū ʿImrān al-Mākisī⁹ and others. He read through a considerable number of books on the [Shāfiʿī] law school. He was much concerned with discussion and disputation and very fond of arguing polemically. He also studied medicine. He continued to give lectures to law students in the madrasa after the Qāḍī Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā left it in 607 [/1210–1211].

2. [Shadharāt, p. 164 = TD, pp. 110–112, no. 27]

Abu ʿl-ʿAbbās [Aḥmad b. Masʿūd b. Muḥammad] al-Khazrajī al-Anṣārī al-Maghribī al-Qurṭubī al-Shāfiʿī (Abū Ḥafṣ ʿUmar adds: Ḥujjat al-Dīn). He was the first person to teach in the Shihābiyya madrasa in Dunaysir. He was an excellent and versatile jurist, knowledgeable about many of the sciences of the basic principles of law (*uṣūl*), law itself, grammar and other aspects of *adab*, to which a great number of scholars testify. Abū Muḥammad b. ʿArbad the grammarian told me: “Abu ʿl-ʿAbbās, may God have mercy on him, was perspicacious in his views, right-thinking, content with remarkably little, unconventional in his ways, deeply versed in the sciences, having an imaginative insight into both prose and poetical literature, with a lively and attractive personality, excessively pure-minded, with a pleasant disposition and an unusual imaginative faculty.” I have never seen anyone amongst the scholars of the age and his generation with a more enquiring mind and keener insight. He composed works in many different fields and much poetry. He was never known, so far as we know, to repeat a tradition on the basis of a single transmission, but on the contrary, he used to repeat traditions to us on the basis of many chains of transmitters. He also recited to me a great deal of his own poetry. (Abū Ḥafṣ ʿUmar states that he had unfortunately forgotten the exact wording of this, but manages to give five verses by him according to the *riwāyāt* of two other persons who heard poetry directly from Abu ʿl-ʿAbbās Aḥmad.)

He passed away, may God Most High have mercy on him, in 601 [/1204–1205] at Dunaysir and was buried in the southern cemetery (*al-maqbara al-qibliyya*) there.

⁹ I.e. from Mākisīn in Diyār Rabīʿa, a small town on the Greater Khābūr river to the north of where it joins the Euphrates at Qarqisiyā. See Le Strange (1905, p. 97); Canard (1951, p. 102); and on its scholars, al-Samʿānī (1382–1402/1962–1982, XII, p. 43).

3. [Shadharāt, pp. 164–165 = TD, pp. 174–175, no. 48]

Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Salām b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Abd al-Sātir al-Maqdisī al-Māridīnī. His father was *qāḍī* of Mārdīn and his grandfather, Fakhr al-Dīn b. al-Mashhadī, *qāḍī* of Dunaysir. He was the outstanding scholar of his age in the sciences of philosophy and medicine and regarded as the great authority on them. He studied medicine under Hibatallāh b. Ṣā‘id b. al-Tilmīdh¹⁰ at Baghdad. I heard that when Ibn al-Tilmīdh perceived how firm his understanding was of the philosophical sciences, he directed him towards the study of medicine in order to get rid of him as quickly as possible and because of people’s urgent need of his skill. He became extremely eminent in it, until monarchs from all the regions and lands would summon him. When he was at an advanced age, he used to re-read lengthy tomes. Al-Shihāb al-Suhrawardī studied a certain amount of philosophy under him. Despite his grasp of knowledge, his firm mastery of it and his expertise in handling it, I have not heard that he composed any book, except that he wrote a commentary on the verses of the Master, Shaykh Abū ‘Alī Ibn Sīnā, which begin: “It descended upon you from the most lofty place (i.e. Heaven), a dove of noble status and unfettered.”¹¹

He remained in Dunaysir with Abū Muḥammad al-Qasim b. Hibatallāh (Abū Ḥafṣ ‘Umar: ‘Abdallāh) al-Ḥarīrī, but I had no contact with him. He passed away on Saturday, 11 Dhu ‘l-Ḥijja 594 [14 October 1198] (Abū Ḥafṣ ‘Umar adds: at Āmid). Abu ‘l-Khayr al-Masīḥī Ibn al-‘Aṭṭār al-Baghdādī said, at the time when I was involved studying medicine under him at Baghdad, “You have resident with you the person who is the great authority on this topic and others.” He mentioned to me Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Salām, whose achievements he used to hold in high esteem and whose status he used to extol, so I told him about his death, may God have mercy on him.

4. [Shadharāt, p. 166 = TD, p. 33, no. 7]

Abu ‘l-Ma‘ālī Ibn Abi ‘l-Jaysh b. Abi ‘l-Ma‘ālī al-Dunaysirī al-Ḥuṣrī, expert on the Qur’ān readings and ascetic. He studied the Qur’ān at Damascus under ‘Alī b. Ja‘far al-Qurṭubī and also studied with other scholars. He was an ascetic person who liked to cut himself off from contact with others and liked to live in obscurity, devoting himself extensively to reading and reciting the Qur’ān. He used to dislike high society and the company of (Abū Ḥafṣ ‘Umar: deriving his sustenance from) rulers, including attending their presence and that of their followers. If any occasion of that sort presented itself to him, he shunned it, and he even refused to act as Imām at the

¹⁰ I.e. the celebrated Christian Arab physician of Baghdad, d. 560/1165. See *El*² art. “Ibn al-Tilmīdh” (M. Meyerhof).

¹¹ This is the opening line of the famous, much-cited *qaṣīda ‘ayniyya* of Ibn Sīnā, in which he speaks of the human soul as having been part of the divine essence, coming down reluctantly to earth like a dove for a while and then returning thither after death. See e.g. Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a‘yān*, II, p. 160, Eng. tr. I, p. 443, in his biography of the great scientist.

Western Congregational Mosque in Dunaysir because it was an appointment of the ruler's (*wilāya sultāniyya*).

Abbreviations

GAL = Brockelmann (1937–1949).

TD = *Ta'rīkh Dunaysir*.

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