Twitter Thread by Tweeting Historians

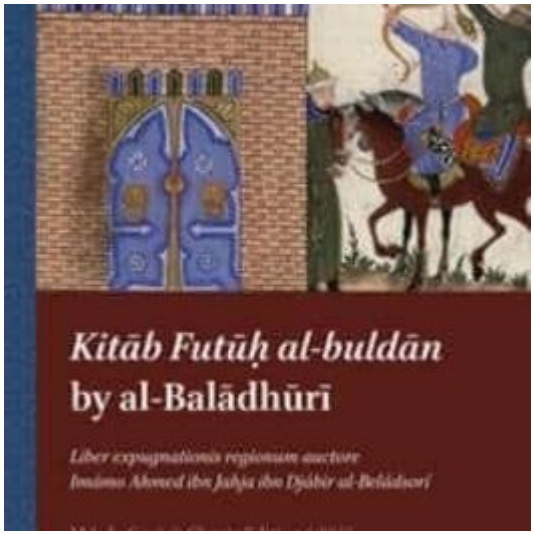


Tweeting Historians
@Tweetistorian

1 So, today we turn to early Islamic Beirut. what do we know of the earliest times of #Beirut under early Islamic rule, starting with the #conquest. How and when did Beirut enter the emerging Muslim empire? -rm

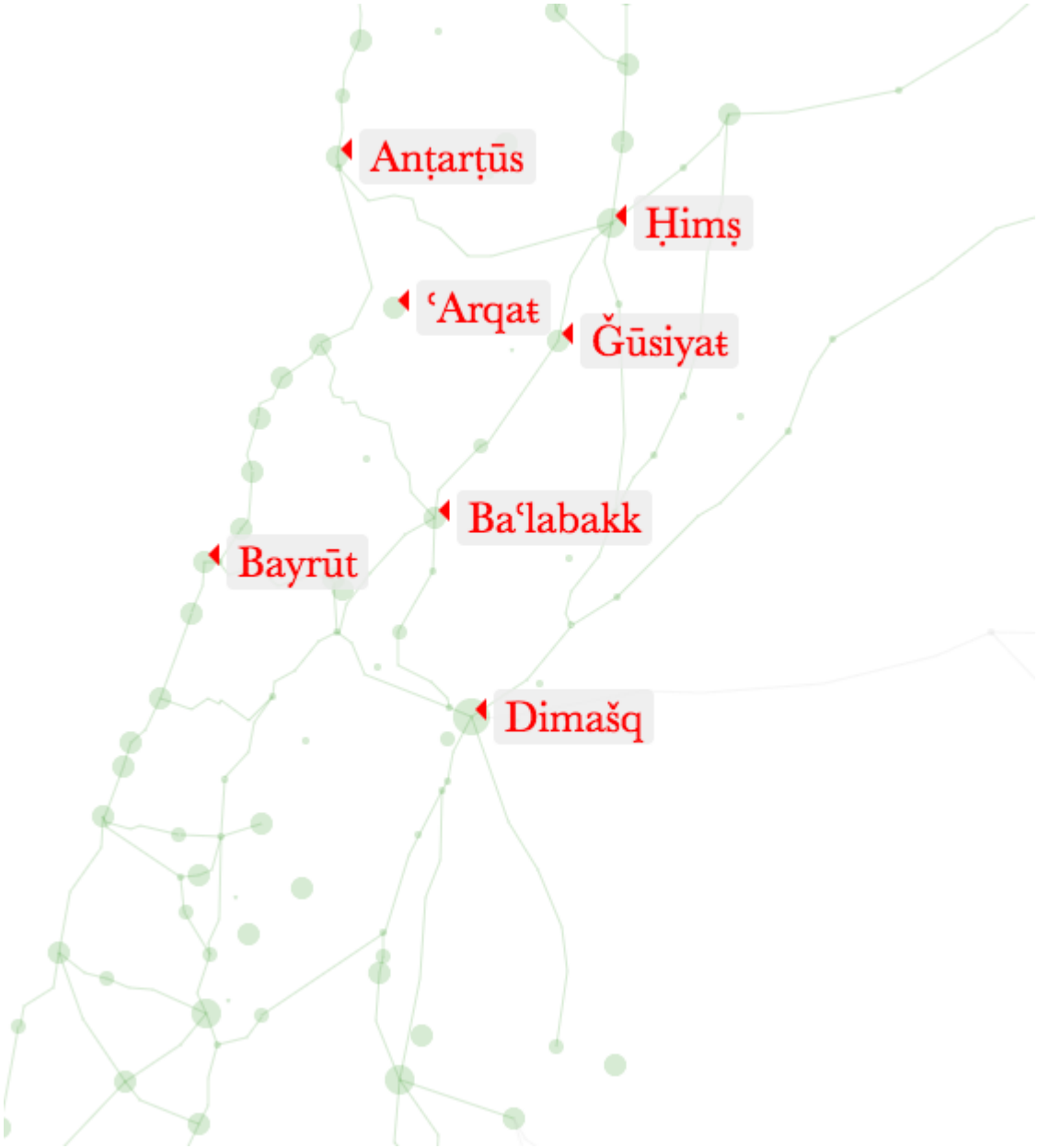


2 Let's start with traditional sources for the early Islamic period. Of those, only al-Bal■dhur■ (d. ca. 892), the Abbasid scholar, is informative. Other Muslim and non-Muslim sources including al-■abar■'s T■r■kh are silent on the matter.-rm



3 In his small tome, Fut■■ al-Buld■n, al-Bal■dhur■ tells his readers: “After the conquest of Damascus, Yaz■d came to Sidon, ■Arqa, Byblos, and Beirut which lie on the sea coast with his brother Mu■■wiya leading the van of the army.”-rm

4 Hence, the men who conquered Beirut were Yaz■d b. Ab■ Sufy■n (d. 639) and his half-brother and future caliph Mu‘■wiya (r. 661-680). The date of the conquest of the coast falls between 636 and 639 at the latest, the date of the death of Yaz■d in the plague of Emmaus. -rm



5 Yaz■d and the Muslim army likely took the coastal road to Beirut, a path taken by numerous armies before. They would have either swung from Damascus to Baalbek through the Hims gap to ‘Arqa, then Byblos, crossed the Dog River, and arrived at the eastern side of Beirut.



6 The other alternative was for them to have taken a southern route conquering Sidon first and swinging north marching through the Byzantine settlement of Khan Khalde (ancient Heldua) and arrived at the southern gate of Beirut



5. Ortophotography of a winery after its partial uncovering in the 2017 season / Ortofotografia winiarni po częściowym odsłonięciu w sezonie 2017 (S. Rzeźnik)

7 According to Bal■dhur■, the conquest of the coast was easy (fat■an yas■ran) and did not involve any major fighting. Al-Bal■dhur■ reports that many of the inhabitants fled. Archaeological investigation, as expected, did not turn up any evidence for the Muslim conquest -rm

8 The inhabitants of Beirut who lived through the Sasanian-Byzantine wars would have expected an agreement to guarantee their safety and the conquerors would have sought one to consolidate their victory. If an agreement took place what would it have involved?

9 It would parallel agreements made with other Syrian towns in its brevity and basic exchange of security for submission and taxes.

its occupants offered him a ladder to climb to the city wall, to the effect that their *kharâj* be reduced. The condition was enforced by abu-'Ubaidah.

The terms with Ba'labakk. When abu-'Ubaidah was done with Damascus, he advanced to Ḥimṣ. On his way, he passed through Ba'labakk whose inhabitants sought to secure safety and capitulate. Abu-'Ubaidah made terms guaranteeing the safety of their lives, possessions and churches. To that end he wrote the following statement: 130

"In the name of Allah, the compassionate, the merciful. This is a statement of security to so and so, son of so and so, and to the inhabitants of Ba'labakk—Greeks, Persians and Arabs—for their lives, possessions, churches and houses, inside and outside the city and also for their mills. The Greeks are entitled to give pasture to their cattle within a space of 15 miles, yet are not to abide in any inhabited town. After Rabî' and Jumâda I shall have passed, they are at

[1] Ar. *mujadhdhamîn*, see *Kâmûs*, *Tâj al-'Arûs* and *Nihâya* [illegible]

10 The Muslim hold over Beirut was precarious. Caesarea to the South and Tripoli to the North resisted the Muslims, helped by their fortifications and reinforcements by the Byzantine navy. The Byzantines took possession of the coast at the end of the caliphate of 'Umar (644)-rm

11 In response, Mu'awiya, now governor of Syria, reconquered the coast (645?) and partially as a result invested in a Muslim navy and launched campaigns against the islands. Beirut and the Syrian coast turned into a maritime frontier

