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The object of this paper as the title implies, is to consider the evolution of al-Ğabarti’s historical thinking as reflected in his works the Muẓhir 1 and the ‘Âĝâ‘îb 2. The plan is to establish the chronological and psychological stages in the development of the author’s ideas, at the same time providing a detailed and critical comparison between the Muẓhir and the corresponding part in the ‘Âĝâ‘îb. This comparison brings out the striking differences between al-Ğabarti of the former work and al-Ğabarti of the latter, elucidating the change in his historical thinking.

The evolution of al-Ğabarti’s historical thinking can be divided into three stages; the first is from 1190/1776-7 till the advent of the

1. It is in the form of a diary in which al-Ğabarti recorded daily happenings. He started it when the French landed at Alexandria in 1213/1798, and completed it when they left Egypt in 1216/1801. He entitled it Muẓhir al-ṭaqdīs bi ḍāḥāb dawlat al-Faransîs and dedicated it to the Grand Vizier Yûṣûf Bâṣâ who commanded the Ottoman army in the final expulsion of the French from Egypt. It was published very recently under the title Yawmiyya al-Ğabarti, in 2 vols. (Cairo: Dâr al-Ma‘rif, n.d.), ed. by Muḥammad ʿÂṭâ. It was probably published after 1956, because an article published in that year is quoted in the preface by the editor. It is hereinafter cited as Yawmiyya. There is another edition by Ḍâmâd Zakî ʿÂṭîyya, ʿÂbd al-Munʿîm ʿÂmir and Muḥammad Faḥmî (Cairo: Wazârat al-tarbiyat wa-l-taʿlim, 1961), but it is also not a critical edition. Regarding the MSS of this book see the article, Reputed autographs of ʿAbd al-Rahmân al-Ǧabartî and related problems, BSOAS (1965), pp. 524-40, by S. Moreh. The unique MS of ʿAbd al-Rahmân al-Faransîs bi Miṣr, in the library of the University of Leiden (as described by Moreh, op. cit., p. 532) which is incomplete could be the autograph and a part of the actual diary. The Muẓhir is not explored by any Western scholar. It is analyzed here and compared with the ʿÂĝâ‘îb. So, this article presents considerations to some of the questions raised by D. Ayalon in his article, The historian al-Ǧabartî and his background, BSOAS (1960), pp. 217-49.

French, the second starts with the French occupation of Egypt 1213/1798 and lasts until the accession of Muhammad 'Ali to power in 1220/1805, the third and final stage begins thereafter.

The first stage. — The Syrian historian al-Murādī, author of the biographical dictionary of famous people of the twelfth century of the Hijra (Silk al-durar fī a‘yān al-qarn al-tanthi‘ asar), had asked for the cooperation of al-Murtada al-Zabidi in its compilation. Al-Zabidi in turn asked for the cooperation of his student al-Ġabarti. So it is known that the latter was collecting biographical material pertaining to the twelfth century of the Hijra. Al-Zabidi died in 1205/1791. A year later, al-Murādī too died. In this situation, al-Ġabarti says, his zeal subsided and he threw the leaves of his work into the corner of neglect for a long time until they were almost scattered and lost 1.

In the preface to the ‘Ağā‘ib, al-Ġabarti writes that he had made a draft of the events as well as biographies of famous scholars and princes of the turn of the twelfth and beginning of the thirteenth centuries of the Hijra. He then decided to arrange them in chronological order 2. In this preface he mentions his sources and reports about his method saying that, when he decided to write on the

1. In the biography of al-Murādī in the ‘Ağā‘ib he states;

2. Ayalon has taken this explanation of the author as the second version of how al-Ġabarti went about compiling the ‘Ağā‘ib, see AYALON, op. cit., pp. 222-3.

Ayallon considers this statement as the third short version.