

ABDUL-AZIZ KHOWAITER

BAIBARS THE FIRST

HIS ENDEAVOURS AND
ACHIEVEMENTS



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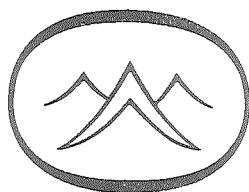
BAIBARS THE FIRST:
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by

ABDUL-AZIZ KHOWAITER

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FOREWORD

by Dr Abdullah Wohaibi PhD, formerly Secretary-General of the University of Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, now Assistant Professor in the University's College of Literature.

Those of us who had the privilege of serving under Dr Abdul-Aziz Khowaiter during the 11 years he was Vice-Rector of the University of Riyadh felt a mixture of distress and pleasure when he was appointed Auditor-General of the Kingdom and so left his students and staff for matters of State. The distress was of course for ourselves; the pleasure was for him, in that he now entered a broader, more important world.

Some may have wondered what scholarship had to do with accounts or, for that matter, with medical affairs: he was thereafter Minister of Health from 1973 till 1975. These were doubtless relieved when he took up his present post as Minister of Education in 1975. But we who had been close to Dr Khowaiter knew that there had been no inconsistency, no transfers of interests: here was the good, old-fashioned, solid and enduring sense of it—the ideal of the fully rounded man for high office.

Nevertheless we are relieved that he has finally given way to pressure from his admirers and friends, and permitted publication of the present scholarly and intensive piece of Arabian history. With it he has, at least for one moment, drawn his political and administrative cloak aside and revealed the academic beneath.

*Riyadh
15 January 1978*

Abdullah Wohaibi

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

PREFACE

The following pages give some account of the life of Baibars, his endeavours, and his political, military and social achievements. Here, for a preliminary understanding, I would encapsulate the history into which he so proudly stepped.

The expansion of the Caliphate continued through the Rashidi and the Umayyad Caliphates and the early part of the 'Abbasid. Then, due principally to internal difficulties met by the 'Abbasid Caliphs, expansion came to a halt. Moreover, governors of some of the provinces felt secure enough to act independently of Baghdad, the centre of government. This showed the weakness of the Caliphate and encouraged some of its enemies to attempt annexation of its remoter lands.

When the first crusade came to the East, the 'Abbasid Caliph could provide no serious resistance. The Crusaders, therefore, were initially successful and laid their hands on some of the most important strongholds in Syria. They also made clear their intention of extending their power to take in both Egypt and North Africa.

Although Baghdad was in no condition to make a real stand against the successive waves of Crusades, Muslim feeling was at its peak. 'Imād al-Dīn Zanki, one of the provincial governors, understood this and, using it, tried to bring the advancing armies to a halt. In spite of the fact that his power was limited, he—and his son, Nūr al-Dīn, after him—restored confidence to the Muslims and provided a rallying point for the Muslim army. In time this developed into the organisation of a *Jihad* equal to that of the Christians' *Crusade*.

After Nūr al-Dīn the task of Jihad became the responsibility of his able general, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn. The build-up of the

Muslim army was completed during Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's time, and Syria witnessed the fiercest of struggles between his forces and the Crusaders.

It did not, however, last long, for on Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's death came disputes among his potential successors: each began, independently, to rule part of his kingdom. This disunited front naturally weakened the 'Ayyubids in face of the Crusaders, who managed to annex to themselves some of the 'Ayyubid strongholds in Syria.

A further danger still was added to their difficulties, when they were confronted by Mongol armies advancing on them from Central Asia. Soon Baghdad and most of Syria were overrun by the Mongols. Their rapid advance and their cruelty—together with their alliance with some of the Crusaders—caused panic in Syria, from where a great number of people fled to Egypt.

It was at this juncture that Baibars al-Bunduqdar appeared on the scene of bitter fighting between Muslims and the armies of Crusader and Mongol. His military training, his natural courage and sense of strategy, combined with his seriousness of purpose, vigilance and gift for swift moves, enabled him to wage successful war on two fronts: he not only stood firm against the Mongols and drove them from Syria, but also won back from the Crusaders most of the Muslim strongholds in Syria.

Nevertheless he was a great deal more than a successful general. The ensuing pages should make it clear that he was in addition an administrator and diplomatist of no mean order.

A-A K

PART ONE:

BAIBARS'S EARLY LIFE

I THE BAHRĪ REGIMENT

During the Ayyūbī period the army of a *sultan* would normally be composed of his own *mamlūks* [slaves], the *mamlūks* of his predecessors and perhaps of other deceased princes, and freelance officers with their own levies. A ruler could not be certain of the loyalty of any but his own *mamlūks*, as the other elements in his army might at any time seek their fortune with some other ruler, the *sultan* thereby becoming a prisoner of his own troops who had taken service under one of his rivals. As soon as al-Šāliḥ, who had seen how this could happen, became Crown Prince,¹ he decided to build up a special force consisting of carefully chosen Turkish slaves who would be loyal solely to him. He began the execution of this plan as early as 627/1229-30 while he was deputising in Egypt during the absence of his father in Syria.² As Crown Prince he would be in a position to put the project into effect.

However, his stepmother, concerned only for the welfare of her own son al-ʿĀdil, hastened to inform the Sultan and warn him of al-Šāliḥ's intentions, alleging that al-Šāliḥ was planning to overthrow his father and that his acquisition of

¹He was invested with this office in 625/1227-S. *Šulūk*, Vol. I, p.225

²*Ibid.*, p.240.

these *mamlūks* was part of the scheme.³ This resulted in the hurried return to Egypt of al-Kāmil and his removal of al-Šāliḥ from the office of Crown Prince. Al-Šāliḥ was no longer able to purchase slaves for his purpose, since he now lacked both the financial means and the confidence of his father. When, at a later date and in the eastern region,⁴ he realised his need for a stronger army, and thought to recruit the Khwārizmīs who had recently quarrelled with Ghiyāth al-Dīn, the Saljūq Sultan of al-Rūm,⁵ he was careful to seek his father's permission. When his father died his own *mamlūks* numbered less than eighty⁶ and it was some time before he could afford once more to start buying slaves for his private army.

During his struggle for power al-Šāliḥ had suffered a great deal from the disloyalty of the Kurdish *amīrs* in his service, and only his own *mamlūks* had remained faithful during his imprisonment by al-Nāṣir Dāwūd.⁷ Appreciating the loyalty of his *mamlūks* and conscious of his need for a stable force on which he could depend, he therefore began to build up his army from *mamlūks* alone.

The condition of the slave markets in Syria, Egypt and Iraq at this period favoured al-Šāliḥ in his search for suitable material. The westward advance of the Mongols had driven the Qipchaq tribes from their territories; a flourishing market had grown up in prisoners captured from these tribes and the markets in Muslim lands were flooded with slaves of this race. The prosperity of Egypt, a result of her key position on the spice route between Europe and India and the Far East, supplied al-Šāliḥ with the finances necessary to carry out his project. He was thus offered a wide choice among the large number of slaves brought to the markets of the Islamic lands and at the same time possessed the means to take advantage of the opportunity.

Once purchased, the slaves were educated, given military training and equipped to replace the officers of his army. As soon as a recruit reached the standard necessary to qualify

³*Sulūk*, Vol. I, p.240.

⁴After the removal of al-Šāliḥ from the office of Crown Prince, his father gave him Ḥiṣn Kaifā, intending by this to keep him away from the centre of government. (*Sulūk*, Vol. I, p.244).

⁵*Ibid*, p.255.

⁶*Mawā'iz*, Vol. II, p.236.

⁷*Sulūk*, Vol. I, pp.300 and 340.

him for military office, he was appointed in the place of one of the officers with whom al-Ṣāliḥ was displeased; and from the year 638/1240-1 al-Ṣāliḥ began to arrest the disruptive elements in his service, imprisoning a number of the *Ashrafi amīrs*,⁸ confiscating their property and sometimes executing them.⁹ This process developed into a systematic campaign, the fief of the discredited officer being transferred to one of the newly promoted *amīrs* until finally the *amīrs* personally selected by al-Ṣāliḥ formed the majority of the officers in his forces. For their residence he chose a site on the island of al-Raḍa, where he built the "Citadel of the Nile" (Qal'at Baḥr al-Nīl) from which their name was taken.¹⁰

While he was forming this corps d'elite, al-Ṣāliḥ began to cast about for some foreign power with whom he could ally himself and thereby ensure victory in his struggle against the other members of his family. The *Khawārizmīs*, once a part of the army with which Jalāl al-Dīn fought the Mongols, had been scattered throughout the Near East after their ruler's defeat and large numbers of them had migrated to Syria, where they were at that time causing serious trouble in the Antioch-Aleppo region.¹¹ The rulers of Syria, including al-Nāṣir, the ruler of Damascus, had taken up arms against them. As al-Nāṣir was al-Ṣāliḥ's chief rival, the latter naturally sought an alliance with the *Khawārizmīs* against him;¹² the *Khawārizmīs* for their part hoped that when al-Ṣāliḥ took Damascus he would give them the fiefs they sought.¹³ When al-Ṣāliḥ did eventually take Damascus and failed to give the *Khawārizmīs* what they had expected, they turned against him and joined his enemies, al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ Ismā'īl and al-Nāṣir Dāwūd. That was in 643/1245-6.¹⁴

The Sultan's involvement in these wars gave the Baḥrī Regiment the battle experience it needed. Its numbers gradually increased and its military ability came to be recognised. Wherever there was trouble, and whether it was to fight against foreign armies or to suppress domestic

⁸The *mamlūks* of the late Ayyūbī prince, al-Ashraf.

⁹*Mawā'iz*, Vol. II, p.236.

¹¹*Sulūk*, Vol. I, p.303.

¹²*Ibid*, p.315.

¹⁴*Al-Mukhtaṣar*, Vol. III, p.132 and *Sulūk*, Vol. I, p.322.

¹⁰*Sulūk*, Vol. I, p.340.

¹³*Ibid*, p.316.

disturbances, there al-Ṣāliḥ would send his Baḥrīs. The high point in the regiment's achievements was reached in 647/1250, when, at the famous battle of al-Manṣūra,¹⁵ it defeated the Franks who had landed in Damietta. It was the Baḥrī Regiment which decided the issue and secured victory for the Muslims. Baibars in particular distinguished himself for his courage and leadership in the course of this engagement, and thereafter acquired an importance in the regiment greater than anyone except Fāris al-Dīn Aqṭāy, its leader.

II HIS CHILDHOOD AND ENSLAVEMENT

Al-Malik al-Zāhir Rukn al-Dīn Baibars al-Bunduq-dārī al-Ṣāliḥi can be considered the true founder of the Mamlūk State.¹⁶ He was the first *mamlūk* to assume power in his own name, and eventually succeeded in establishing his rule throughout most of the Muslim lands. He introduced fundamental changes into the administration, established new relations with the surrounding states and undertook systematic campaigns against Egypt's most dangerous enemies.

Little is known about Baibars's early life. It is said¹⁷ that his tribe was in the Qipchaq territories about the year 625/1227-8 when the Mongols launched their first attack on those regions, and that in 639/1241-2, fearing a second Mongol attack, the Qipchaq tribes sought refuge with Anas Khān, the ruler of the Aulāq (or al-Burghāl). In 640/1242-3 they crossed the river Saudāq and took up residence in the nearby valleys, where Anas launched a treacherous attack on them, killing or capturing the great majority. Amongst those

¹⁵5th Qa'da (9th February A.D. 1250). *Sulūk*, Vol. I, p.349.

¹⁶Before Baibars there came first the short rule of Shajar al-Durr; then Aibak, a Turk (*Sulūk*, Vol. I, p.368) whose rule was interrupted by the installation of al-Ashraf Mūsā the Ayyubī. Aibak was reduced to the rank of Atābeg (see below, p.11). Aibak's reign was short and his control did not extend to Syria. Although his son succeeded him, he was a minor who was soon deposed by Quṭuz (see below, p.16). Quṭuz, although a *mamlūk*, was similarly murdered after a short time. In contrast, Baibars's rule lasted about seventeen years and his dominion included Egypt, Syria, and the Ḥijāz.

¹⁷This is given by 'Izz al-Dīn 'Umar ibn Shaddād on the authority of one of Baibars's *amīrs* by the name of Badr al-Dīn Saisarī al-Shamsī. The latter was captured by the Mongols with Baibars as a young man. *Nujūm*, Vol. VII, p.95.

taken prisoner was Baibars, then a boy about 14 years old.¹⁸

He must have been sold by his captor to a slave dealer, for he was subsequently brought to Syria where, with another slave (probably Baisarī), he was offered for sale to al-Malik al-Manṣūr. In the event, the mother of al-Manṣūr persuaded him not to buy Baibars, in whose eyes, she remarked, "evil is apparent".¹⁹ An *amīr* of al-Ṣāliḥ called Rukn al-Dīn al-Bunduq-dārī, who had been detained in Ḥamāh on account of an offence he had committed, heard of the two slaves and eventually bought them.

III IN THE SERVICE OF AL-ṢĀLIḤ

Baibars remained with his new master in Syria until his release, and then accompanied him to Egypt.²⁰ There Baibars must have attracted the attention of al-Ṣāliḥ by some indication of his future qualities, for he was soon taken by al-Ṣāliḥ and put into the Baḥrī Regiment, the core of the latter's army. This was an opportunity for him to show and develop his natural military gifts, and he rapidly climbed the ladder of promotion in the service of Sultan al-Ṣāliḥ.

The first office we hear of him occupying was that of Jam-dār.²¹ Baibars must have displayed great qualities which won him the admiration of both al-Ṣāliḥ and the chief officers in his service, for on the death of al-Ṣāliḥ Baibars was temporarily installed in command, while Aqṭāy, the leader of the Baḥrī Regiment, was absent on his mission to fetch the Crown Prince.

IV THE DEATH OF AL-ṢĀLIḤ

Al-Ṣāliḥ had died²² during the occupation of Damietta by the Franks and before the battle of al-Manṣūra. The desper-

¹⁸*Nujūm*, Vol. VII.

¹⁹*Mufarrij*, Vol. II, f. 405.

²⁰*Ibid.*

²¹*Biography*, B.M. f. 3 a.

²²On the night of Sunday, 15th Sha'bān, 647 A.H. (23rd of Nov. A.D.1249).

ate situation in which the Muslims found themselves compelled the court to conceal his death for fear of the effect such news might have on the morale of the troops at a time when all their strength was needed to resist the Franks. At the head of the government was the late Sultan's widow, Shajar al-Durr, an able woman of strong character. With the assistance of a few officials, Shajar al-Durr managed the affairs of the state while waiting to be relieved by al-Ṣāliḥ's only son, Tūrān-Shāh, who was in the fortress of Kaifā.²³

It was at this juncture that the Franks pressed the fight against the Muslims, and entered al-Manṣūra itself. So far the Franks had been victorious,²⁴ but now the Baḥrī Regiment came out against them and drove them back from al-Manṣūra with heavy losses. The victory was followed up, and the Franks were later forced to surrender²⁵ and evacuate Damietta;²⁶ their leader, King Louis IX of France, was captured.

²³ *Sulūk*, Vol. I, pp.339 and 343.

²⁴ *Ibid.* p.347.

²⁵ The final defeat of the Franks was on Wednesday 3rd Muḥarram 648 A.H. (7th April A.D. 1250). *Ibid.*, p.355.

²⁶ On Friday 3rd of Ṣafar 648 A.H. (7th May A.D. 1250). *Ibid.* p.363.

PART TWO:

THE STRUGGLE FOR POWER

I AGAINST TŪRĀN-SHĀH

TŭrĀn-Shāh arrived in Egypt about ten days after the first victory over the Franks and was installed as *sultan* immediately. It is said¹ that on his way to Egypt he promised Aqṭāy, the leader of the Baḥrīs, the rank of Amīr, but later decided not to fulfil his promise. Aqṭāy was angry at this, and thereafter relations between the new Sultan and the Baḥrīs became strained.

The Baḥrīs had expected TŭrĀn-Shāh to acknowledge their service in the Battle of al-Manṣura by some notable gift, as the victory had been due to their outstanding courage. They were proud of what they had done and perhaps felt that the new Sultan was indebted to them for saving his throne and guarding his interests during the period between his father's death and his own arrival in Egypt. This view was apparently not shared by TŭrĀn-Shāh, who was probably alarmed by the growing strength and influence of the Baḥrīs and may well have felt that they were more of a menace than a support to his throne. They had provided security for his father because they were his own *mamlūks*, but their loyalty to himself was doubtful; certainly it was less than they had given to his father. In addition, TŭrĀn-Shāh, had his own *mamlūks* who

¹*Sulūk*, Vol. I, p.358.

held the same relationship to him as the Baḥrīs had done to his father, and it may have been this which prompted the plan that he now began to execute—the replacement of the Baḥrīs by his own court circle.²

When the Baḥrīs realised that their position was being undermined, the leaders of the regiment began to think of measures to protect themselves. Not only were they disappointed by Tūrān-Shāh's ingratitude; they also objected to what they considered his lack of discrimination in choosing officials from a class below the normal standard.³

Gradually the Baḥrīs came to suspect that Tūrān-Shah was planning to dissolve their organisation and break their power with a view to building a similar force of his own. The only practical step they could take to prevent the new Sultan from limiting their powers still further was to remove him: they resolved to do this and to assassinate him at the earliest opportunity and before he had time to consolidate his position⁴ and perhaps gain the support of some of the *amīrs*. On a Monday, two days before the end of Muḥarram 648 A.H. (2nd of May A.D. 1250), a party of the Baḥrīs attacked him, with Baibars as usual delivering the first blow.⁵ Tūrān-Shāh was killed and Baibars once again earned the respect and admiration of his comrades. The Baḥrīs were now restored to their former position and, under their leader Fāris al-Dīn Aqṭāy and his second-in-command Baibars, their importance grew.

II AGAINST AIBAK

After the death of the Sultan, the *amīrs* of the state decided to install as his successor Shajar al-Durr, still a person of importance as the widow of al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb to whose memory the Baḥrīs were still loyal.⁶ Better than anyone else she knew the positions of the army officers and the govern-

²*Biography*, B.M. f. 3 a and *Sulūk*, Vol. I, p.359.

³*Biography*, B.M. f. 3 a.

⁴*Ibid*, B.M. f. 4 b.

⁵*Al-Mukhtaṣar*, Vol. III, p.190 and *Biography*, B.M. f. 4 b.

⁶*Sulūk*, Vol. I, p.361.

ment officials.⁷ She was accepted as Head of State, although being a woman her power was called to question.

On the 10th of Ṣafar 648 A.H. (14th of May, A.D. 1250) the *amīrs* elected 'Izz al-Dīn Aibak the Jāshankīr al-Ṣāliḥī (known as the Türkmen) as the Atābeg of the army.⁸ He was a Turkish slave who had been owned early in his life by one of the sons of a man called "the Türkmen", whose descendants were called the Banū Rasūl and later ruled the Yaman. Later he had been transferred to the army of al-Ṣāliḥ Najm al-Dīn Ayyūb, in whose service he reached the rank of a Jāshankīr.⁹

A certain amount of criticism was raised against the rule of a woman, and the Caliph in Baghdād reproached the *amīrs* for failing to find a man for the throne.¹⁰ But if Shajar al-Durr were to be set aside, itself likely to be a task of some difficulty, it would be even harder to find someone to take her place. Although suitable men could be found for the position, the rivalry between the various possible candidates would have been so great that civil war would have been an almost certain consequence. Her removal was, in fact, carried out by degrees, the first step being her marriage to Aibak.¹¹ Aibak was then declared Sultan.

On reflection, and early in Jumādā the First of the year 648 A.H. (August, A.D. 1250), the *amīrs* decided to install as Sultan one of the Ayyūbī family, either because they regretted having given such power to Aibak or because they felt they needed more solid legal grounds on which to stand against the Ayyūbī rivalry in Syria. Their choice fell on Mūsā ibn Yūsuf, a great-grandson of al-Kāmil, the son of al-ʿĀdil. He was then installed as Sultan with the title of al-Malik al-Ashraf and Aibak was appointed his Atābeg.¹²

Aibak was anxious to occupy the throne himself, but knew that the *amīrs* would not let him realise his ambition. At the head of those whom he considered as standing between him

⁷Biography, B.M. f.5 b and *Sulūk*, Vol. I, p.361.

⁸*Al-Mukhtaṣar*, Vol. III, p.190.

⁹*Sulūk*, Vol. I, p.368.

¹⁰The Caliph sent to Egypt saying: "If you cannot find a man amongst you, inform me, so that I can send you one". *Ibid*, p.368.

¹¹On the 19th Rabi' the Second 648 A.H. (21st July A.D.1250) *Sulūk*, Vol. I, p.368.

¹²*Ibid*, p.363.

and the Sultanate was the Commander of the Baḥrī Regiment. The Baḥrīs, in fact, were the principal obstacle in his way, for to them he was only a peer among peers: so long as they were not engaged in the military activities for which they were organised, their presence made itself felt at his court and reduced his effective power. Aibak was ambitious to take Syria and at this point he was attacked by the Syrian rulers, so that for a time the Baḥrīs served their primary purpose;¹³ but after the intervention of the Caliph, who had arranged a peace between Aibak and his opponents in Syria,¹⁴ they had little to do, apart from putting down some Arab revolts in Egypt.¹⁵ Without an outlet for their energies, they turned to molesting the civilian population and threatening the government,¹⁶ and Aibak, as Atābeg of the army, found that he had no real control over Egypt as long as the Baḥrīs, who obeyed only their own leaders with Aqṭāy at their head, retained their status.

After the battle of al-Manṣūra and the suppression of the revolt in Upper Egypt, the prestige of Aqṭāy was high and he began to demand powers which Aibak regarded as his own prerogatives as an Atābeg of the Sultan.¹⁷ Aqṭāy was aware of the strength of the regiment he was commanding and could rely on them and on his popularity amongst the military¹⁸ officials for success in case of any conflict. The time soon came when Aibak began to suspect, probably with justification, that the Commander of the Baḥrīs was seeking the throne for himself. His fears were strengthened by Aqṭāy's request to reside with his new wife, an Ayyūbī princess, in the Citadel¹⁹—that is, on the same premises as Aibak himself. Aibak realised that he was being driven into a position which allowed of only one of two developments: he could either accede to Aqṭāy's request and welcome him to the Citadel, thus inviting the lion into his own house; or he could refuse

¹³*Sulūk*, Vol. I, p.370.

¹⁴*Sulūk*, Vol. I, p.385.

¹⁵*Ibid*, p.386.

¹⁶*Ibid*, pp.384 and 390.

¹⁷For instance, Aqṭāy, when he rode out, always did so in full procession. *Ibid*, p.389 and *Mufarrij*, Vol. II, f. III b.

¹⁸*Biography*, B.M. f. 5 b; and *Mufarrij*, Vol. II, f. 112 a.

¹⁹*Sulūk*, Vol. I, p.388.

the request, revealing his feelings towards the Baḥrī leader and probably precipitating the conflict he was trying to avoid.²⁰

Aibak was now convinced of the importance of disposing of Aqṭāy as quickly as possible. He was well aware of the power of the Baḥrīs and knew he could not defeat them in an open struggle: the only possible course was to cut down Aqṭāy and to follow this by the seizure of his senior officers. Left without its commander and leading officers, the Regiment could be overcome.

Aibak arranged with some of his own *mamlūks* to kill Aqṭāy when he came to the Citadel; but when Aqṭāy went up into the Citadel he was accompanied by Baibars, who did not trust Aibak and was expecting some form of hostile action against Aqṭāy. The *mamlūks* of Aibak were afraid of Baibars and the plan was abandoned; but after Aibak had reproached his *mamlūks* for holding back, he sent after Aqṭāy to ask him to return on an urgent matter.²¹ Although advised by Baibars not to do so, Aqṭāy was so confident of his power and prestige that he went back to the Citadel: there he was immediately attacked and killed by Aibak's *mamlūks* led by Quṭuz.²²

III BAIBARS IN EXILE

When Aqṭāy failed to return, his brother-officers began to suspect foul play and hastened to the Citadel, where his head was thrown down to them. Baibars and the other commanders held a council, but were unable to decide on a sound plan which would ensure their safety, and at nightfall Baibars and some of the other Baḥrī officers fled to Syria under cover of darkness. On the following morning Aibak took action against the remaining Baḥrīs and their power in Egypt was broken.²³

Having dealt with the Baḥrīs and freed himself from the limitations on his power, Aibak was now able to depose al-

²⁰Yūnīnī, *Dhail*, Vol. I, pp.58-9.

²¹The murder of Aqṭāy took place on the third of Sha'bān, 652 A.H. (18th September A.D. 1254). *Sulūk*, Vol. I, p.390.

²²*Biography*, B.M. f. 6 a.

²³*Biography*, B.M. f. 6 b.

Malik al-Ashraf Mūsā and proclaim himself a Sultan in his own right. The year was 652/1254-5.²⁴

There remained certain dangerous elements. First there were those Bahrī officers who for various reasons disagreed with Aibak's policy but whom Aibak had not thought fit to eliminate; some of these had stayed on in Egypt and formed a core of discontent. Then there were those who felt they had an equal right to the throne of Aibak, and those who thought the measures he had taken against his rivals had been over-severe and therefore felt sympathy for the expelled Bahrīs. His wife, Shajar al-Durr, saw her little authority slipping away from her, and as she had regarded the Bahrīs as the mainspring of her own power,²⁵ she doubtless felt isolated by their elimination and in the face of the growing ambition of Aibak. A measure of the reduction of her powers is provided by the fact that Aibak began to think of marrying a princess from al-Mauṣil. Although Shajar al-Durr's anger—which led eventually to the death of Aibak—is traditionally attributed to her jealousy of the prospective bride, it seems likely that the fact that she felt she was being reduced to a lower position was at least an equally strong motive for her action.

Whatever her reasons were, she decided to remove her husband and to install someone with whom she could assume her former position. She was already estranged from Aibak, but pretended to seek a reconciliation, and when Aibak came to her residence he was murdered as he was entering his bath. This took place on 24th Rabi' the First, 655 A.H. (11th April, A.D. 1257).²⁶

In taking this step Shajar al-Durr may well have relied on winning the approval and support of other discontented elements, already sympathetic towards her, both within the court circle and beyond. If so, her calculations proved incorrect, for the *mamlūks* of Aibak were stronger than she had imagined and insisted on avenging their master: had it not been for the Ṣāliḥī *mamlūks* who protected her, she would have been murdered by Qutuz and his associates immediately

²⁴ *Al-Mukhataṣar*, Vol. III.

²⁵ *Sulūk*, Vol. I, p.402.

²⁶ *Ibid*, p.403.

Aibak's death became generally known.²⁷

Aibak had a son by the name of Nūr al-Dīn 'Alī ibn Aibak, and whose title was al-Malik al-Manṣūr, who was at that time 15 years old. The *amīrs* agreed to elect him as a successor to his father, while Aibak's *mamlūks* managed to secure the important offices of state for those they thought would be favourably disposed towards their schemes and were able to remove those they felt to be obstacles in their way. They began by getting rid of Shajar al-Durr: on the 27th Rabi' the Second 655 A.H. (14th May, A.D. 1257) she was killed by the maids of the other wife of Aibak, the mother of the ruling monarch.²⁸

IV SAIF AL-DĪN QUṬUZ

Quṭuz was one of Aibak's *mamlūks*: it is related that his name was originally Maḥmūd Ibn Maudūd and that his father was a cousin and his mother a sister of Jālāl-al-Dīn Khwārizm Shāh.²⁹ After the defeat of Khwārizm, he was captured by the Mongols and sold to a certain Ibn al-Za'im; this was probably in Damascus, from where he was transferred to Cairo. He became the leading *amīr* among Aibak's *mamlūks* and was his right-hand man throughout his struggle with the Baḥrī *mamlūks* and his subsequent reign in Egypt, as well as occupying an important position in the court circle under Aibak's successor, al-Malik al-Manṣūr.³⁰ Although not himself the Atābeg of the new Sultan, he was one of the principal figures responsible for the appointment of Atābeg Fāris al-Dīn Aqṭay, known as al-Musta'ribī, and the role he played in the government led him to regard himself as more worthy of the throne than was the boy Sultan, since he had the advantages of maturity and of experience in military affairs.³¹

It was to Quṭuz and his fellow-officers that Egypt owed its independence when it was attacked by al-Mughith of al-Karak;³² nor was this the only danger threatening them from

²⁷ *Sulūk*, Vol. I, p. 403.

²⁹ *Ibid*, p. 435.

³¹ *Mufarrij*, Vol. II, p. 392; and *al-Sulūk*, Vol. I, p. 417.

³² *Biography*, B.M. f. 9 b.

²⁸ *Ibid*, p. 404.

³⁰ *Sulūk*, Vol. I, p. 405.

the east, for it was about this time that the menace of the Mongols began to increase. Qutuz, who was conscious of the danger, considered that a military force such as the Mongols were capable of putting into the field could scarcely be met by a state led by a minor. He awaited his opportunity to seize power, but it was not easy for him to carry out such a plan while so many important *amīrs* were present in the city. In the month of Qa'ada 657 A.H. (October-November, A.D. 1259), however, when many of them left for *bunduq* shooting, Qutuz deposed the Sultan and proclaimed himself in his place. When the chief *amīrs* returned from their sport, they were arrested.³³

V BAIBARS'S ACTIVITIES IN SYRIA

After leaving Egypt in 652/1254-5, Baibars and some other *mamlūk* officers had gone to Syria and had been welcomed by the ruler of Damascus, al-Malik al-Nāṣir Salāḥ al-Dīn, who had been ambitious to occupy Egypt. They tried to induce him to attack Aibak, but the only result of their efforts was a campaign which ended in the defeat of al-Nāṣir, and his subsequent reconciliation with Aibak through the mediation of the Caliph of Baghdād.³⁴ The new relations between the two rulers of Egypt and Syria brought no peace of mind to Baibars and his fellow Bahṛīs, and Aibak is thought to have approached al-Nāṣir and warned him against having Baibars at his court.³⁵ Baibars and his Bahṛī colleagues began to notice a change of attitude in al-Nāṣir:³⁶ fearing that he might be seized, Baibars fled to al-Karak where the ruler, al-Malik al-Mughīth, was no less ambitious than al-Nāṣir to occupy the Nile valley.

Soon after his arrival at al-Karak, Baibars led a force of seven hundred of his own followers against the territory of Egypt, but was beaten back.³⁷ Determined to harry his enemies in Cairo, and perhaps also with the thought of

³³*Mufarrij*, Vol. II, p.392; and *al-Suluk*, Vol. I, p.417.

³⁴*Biography*, B.M. f. 7 b.

³⁵*Suluk*, Vol. I, p.393; and *Biography*, B.M. f. 8 a.

³⁶*Biography*, B.M. f. 7 b.

³⁷*Biography*, B.M. f. 7 b.

keeping his followers active and his new patron hopeful, he again set out against Egypt³⁸ and this time led his men as far as Gaza, where he induced al-Mugḥḥith to come and inspect them. However, although joined by a number of troops who had deserted from the Egyptian army, he was once more defeated, this time by Quṭuz.³⁹

With his defeat Baibars lost the confidence of al-Mugḥḥith and met with a cool reception on his return from battle.⁴⁰ His plans for a new campaign were not well received.

Baibars was the leader of a military body which only action would hold together, but having been twice defeated by the troops of Quṭuz they could no longer, under their present patron, attempt any further military engagement with Egypt. In their present financial, military and political position they could not even attack the Franks. The only raiding they could undertake was against the territory of their former patron and present enemy, al-Nāṣir of Damascus, who was negotiating an alliance with the ruler of Egypt.

They therefore raided his territory in 657/1258-9⁴¹, penetrating as far as the outskirts of Damascus and even overcoming a force numerically far superior. By this success they regained part of the prestige they had lost as a result of their repeated defeats in the Egyptian expeditions and succeeded in startling al-Nāṣir into taking serious measures to meet the new danger, including his appearance in the field in person against them. Al-Nāṣir's relations with al-Mugḥḥith were naturally strained by this activity of the Baḥrīs.

At this juncture, the danger of a Mongol invasion of Syria became imminent and as a result of the general alarm some sort of agreement between the contending elements became possible. An understanding between al-Nāṣir and al-Mugḥḥith was reached, the former pardoning Baibars and the latter agreeing to hand over some of the Baḥrīs who were with him.⁴²

³⁸Reinforced by various exiled Baḥrīs gathered together to fill the gaps left by the previous campaign.

³⁹*Biography*, B.M. f. 9 b.

⁴⁰*Ibid*, B.M. f. 10 a.

⁴¹*Biography*, B.M. f. 10 a.

⁴²*Ibid*, B.M. f. 11 a.

VI RECONCILIATION WITH QUTUZ

Syria was stricken with panic at the approach of the Mongols, and both al-Nāṣir and al-Mughith negotiated to secure the favour of Hūlāgū. Baibars, at this time at the court of al-Nāṣir, was never in favour of making peace with the Mongols and had once even suggested that al-Nāṣir should provide him with an army to lead against the enemy stationed at Bālis, but without success:⁴³ either al-Nāṣir was hoping to reach a settlement with the Mongols without having to resort to arms or he was not confident that Baibars, after his recent defeat by the Egyptians, could be successful with so small a force. He may also have been afraid of the consequences and the possible danger to his own throne in the event of Baibars winning the battle. Baibars realised that al-Nāṣir was undecided and that no positive action against the Mongols could be expected from him.⁴⁴

The Mongols were at this time advancing against Aleppo, and once this town had fallen the way to Southern Syria and to Damascus would be open. Al-Nāṣir fled from Damascus to Barza at the end of the year 657/1259, and with him went a large number of soldiers and civilians. Baibars, with others of al-Nāṣir's *mamlūks*, realised that no stand was to be expected from al-Nāṣir and consequently decided to remove him and to raise to the throne someone capable of leading the army against the Mongols. News of this intention reached al-Nāṣir: he fled to the citadel of Damascus,⁴⁵ but was persuaded by some *amīrs* to return, whereupon Baibars went off to Gaza, where he was met and welcomed by the *Shahrazūrīs*.⁴⁶ Abū'l-Fidā refers to a further attempt by Baibars and the other

⁴³*Biography*, B.M. f. 10 b.

⁴⁴*Biography*, B.M. f. 11 a.

⁴⁵*Al-Mughtaşar*, Vol. III, p.209; cf *Sulūk*, Vol. I, p.419.

⁴⁶*Sulūk*, Vol. I, p.419. The *Shahrazūrīs* are from *Shahrazūr* in *Ḳurdistān*. Accompanied by their families, a group of 3,000 of them fled westward at the advance of the Mongols and arrived at Damascus about 656 A.H. The *Shahrazūrīs* were welcomed by al-Nāṣir, its ruler. He had hoped to benefit from their strength, but they proved too troublesome. However, in hope of better fortune, they left him for al-Mughith of al-Karak. (*Sulūk*, Vol. I, p.412).

See also *Enc. Isl. art. Shahrazūrīs*. (1st. ed.).

mamlūks who had left al-Nāṣir to save the situation and states that they installed al-Nāṣir's brother, al-Malik al-Ẓāhir Ghāzī, as a Sultan in the district of Gaza in the year 657/1258-9.⁴⁷

All this time al-Nāṣir had been hoping to come to an agreement with the Mongols and even opened negotiations offering to rule Syria in their name. At the same time he could not trust them, nor could he trust the Egyptian *mamlūk* Quṭuz. The Mamlūks had laid their hand on Egypt and were ambitious to add Syria to it. Therefore when al-Nāṣir, at the advance of the Mongols, left Damascus southwards, he dared not go to Egypt, and spent his time wandering in the desert south of Palestine. After the fall of Damascus into the hands of the Mongols he was forced to join them. When he did, he was taken to the court of Hulāgu, the Ilkhān of Persia.⁴⁸

Having lost all faith in the Syrian rulers, Baibars now began to look round for someone else with whom he could work to avert the Mongol danger. Egypt was the only one of the Muslim states which had made preparations to resist the invaders, it still had its army intact and its ruler had made it clear that he would entertain no reconciliation with the Mongols, despite all their threats.⁴⁹ To Egypt, therefore, went many military men who could have taken the field against Hulāgu's army. Baibars's relations with the ruler of Egypt were poor indeed: Quṭuz was the man who had murdered Aqṭāy, Baibars's fellow-officer, and for years Baibars had been inciting the Syrian rulers against the government of Egypt and had more than once led armies against it. Nevertheless, the Mongols were a common enemy and their victory would mean the destruction of both parties, so it is no matter for surprise that Baibars put out suggestions

⁴⁷ *Al-Mukhtaṣar*, Vol. III, p.209.

⁴⁸ Al-Nāṣir remained there, until the defeat of the Mongols at 'Ain Jālūl (see below, p.22), when Hulāgu accused al-Nāṣir of having deceived him regarding the strength of the Egyptian army and made him responsible for this defeat. Al-Nāṣir, with a number of his family, was then executed.

⁴⁹ To destroy any hope of coming to an agreement, Quṭuz killed their envoys (*Sulūk*, Vol. I, pp.427-9). This was a blow to their prestige which they were to remember and for which they were to reproach Baibars later in his reign. See *Biography*, f. 126 b.

for a reconciliation with Quṭuz and a common front against the Mongols. These overtures were accepted by the Sultan of Egypt, who consented to forget for a while their old dispute in the face of the new danger.⁵⁰

The result of the negotiations brought Baibars to Egypt on Saturday, 22nd of Rabi' the First 658 A.H. (7th March, A.D. 1260). He was met by Quṭuz himself, who gave him as a fief, perhaps as a token of the sincerity of his friendship, the district of Qalyūb.⁵¹ Quṭuz was having no little difficulty with his *amīrs*, who not unnaturally were hesitant about taking the field against the Mongols in view of their enormous military prestige and their recent actions in northern Syria.⁵² Perhaps they were discouraged, too, by recent arrivals from Syria who had brought exaggerated accounts of the military strength and techniques of the Mongols. Quṭuz, eager to stand against them, must have been glad to draw to his side so enthusiastic a commander as Baibars, and it was only with the latter's aid that he was able eventually to complete his preparations and to set out from Cairo on the 15th of Sha'ban of the year 658 A.H. (26th of July, A.D. 1260).⁵³

VII BATTLE OF 'AIN JĀLŪT (SPRING OF GOLIATH).

The Mongols had now conquered Aleppo and Damascus without ever having lost a battle,⁵⁴ and were on the point of descending on Egypt, when Hūlāgū, their leader, had to return to the East on account of the death of the Mongol Khāqān Mangū.⁵⁵ The Mongol force in Syria was then left under the command of Kitbughā, who, on hearing of Quṭuz's march from Egypt, collected his forces and made ready to confront him.⁵⁶

⁵⁰Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Ibar*, Vol. V, p.380.

⁵¹*Suluk*, Vol. I, p.426.

⁵³*Biography*, B.M. f. 12 a.

⁵⁵*Suluk*, Vol. I, p.427.

⁵⁶*Ibid*, p.430.

⁵²*Suluk*, Vol. I, p.426.

⁵⁴*Al-Mukhtaṣar*, Vol. III, p.214.

Quṭuz left Cairo about the middle of Sha‘bān 658 A.H. (end of July, A.D. 1260)⁵⁷ and sent Baibars as scout with a contingent to Gaza. On hearing of his approach, the Mongols, who were encamped there, moved to a place in al-Ghaur, presumably considering that their position at Gaza was not favourable for a battle. Baibars at once occupied Gaza and was soon joined by Quṭuz with the main army.⁵⁸ Before Quṭuz could engage the Mongols, he had to make sure the Franks would not take the opportunity to attack him while he was thus occupied. But the Franks had seen some of the deeds of the Mongols and they were not happy at the prospect of these formidable new neighbours.⁵⁹ They not only promised the neutrality that Quṭuz demanded, but offered to help him with troops. He declined the offer, however, probably out of mistrust.⁶⁰

The exact position of the Mongols was not known to the Muslim army,⁶¹ so Quṭuz despatched Baibars with the vanguard to locate the enemy.⁶² Baibars left the region of Acre, riding continuously until he came upon the Mongols' vanguard which he attacked and defeated.⁶³ Then, finding the main Mongol army at ‘Ain Jālūt, he sent word to Quṭuz. During the night while waiting for Quṭuz to join him with the rest of the Muslim troops, he took up a position on the mountain overlooking the plain where the Mongol camp was, and kept watch, coming down during the day to engage in skirmishes.⁶⁴ Quṭuz with the main army soon joined him. Early in the morning of Friday, 25th of Ramaḍān, 658 A.H. (3rd of September, A.D. 1260), the two armies were drawn up in order of battle on the plain facing one another, the Mongols having positioned themselves at the foot of the mountain.⁶⁵ A fierce battle began, and soon the left wing of

⁵⁷Biography, B.M. f. 12 a.

⁵⁸Sulūk, Vol. I, p.429; Cf. Rashīd al -Dīn, *Jāmi‘ al-Tawārikh*, Vol. III, p.74.

⁵⁹See Runciman, *A History of The Crusades*, Vol. III, pp.308 and 311; and Stevenson, *The Crusaders In The East*, p.333.

⁶⁰Sulūk, Vol. I, p.429.

⁶²Shāfi‘, *op.cit.*, f. 5; Sulūk, Vol. I, p.429.

⁶⁴Biography, f. 1; Sulūk, Vol. I, p.429.

⁶¹Biography, f. 1.

⁶³Sulūk, Vol. I, p.430.

⁶⁵Sulūk, Vol. I, p.430.

the Muslim army began to lose formation. Qutūz noticed this, encouraged and drove on his troops, and himself fought desperately. In the end he was able to rally them and restore their order.⁶⁶ The biographer of Baibars singles out the courage displayed by Baibars on this occasion: his bravery and determination inspired the troops to press forward against the enemy. The Muslims finally won the day: the Mongols were heavily defeated and forced to flee, hotly pursued by the Muslims headed by Baibars.⁶⁷

The Mongols attempted to regain victory at Baisān, where they rallied their forces. There another battle was fought, described by Maqrīzī as being yet fiercer than the preceding one.

On this occasion the formation of the Muslim troops also broke under Mongol pressure, but again Qutūz's effort to restore it was successful and brought victory to the Muslims for the second time.⁶⁸ Further defeat, it is said, befell the Mongols in the north at the hands of Baibars, who found they had rallied at Afāmiya. His pursuit extended as far as Ḥārim.⁶⁹

There were probably two factors which helped to bring about the Muslim victory at 'Ain Jālūt. The first was the Muslim army's superiority in numbers: this made up for its low morale, which was the effect of the Mongols' reputation for invincibility. The second was the participation of the Baḥrīs, for whom the Battle of 'Ain Jālūt was in fact their first engagement against Mongols. The Baḥrīs' tactics and excellent training must have surprised the Mongols, whose experience with the Muslims in North Syria would have given them the wrong impression of the strength of the Egyptian army.

That the Muslims were aware of the importance of 'Ain Jālūt and appreciated their victory is probably best illustrated by Baibars's decision to commemorate it by setting up a monument on the site of battle.⁷⁰

This victory over the Mongols brought a certain amount of confidence to the Muslims, and their rulers were perhaps

⁶⁶*Sulūk*, Vol. I, p.430; Yūnīnī, *Dhail*, Vol. II, p.35; Cf. *Jāmi' al-Tawārikh*, Vol. III, p.74.

⁶⁷*Biography*, f. 2; *Sulūk*, Vol. I, p.430.

⁶⁸*Sulūk*, Vol. I, p.431.

⁶⁹*Biography*, f. 2.

⁷⁰*Ibid*, f. 11 b.

convinced that, given unity, a better organisation and improved techniques, their armies could at least hold the Mongols in any future battle. Baibars in particular, ambitious as he had always been, must have felt confident that a Muslim force equipped and trained in accordance with his own ideas could restore their lost territories to the Muslims. The victory brought renewed assurance also to the inhabitants of the Muslim lands, especially to Syria, where people now began to return to their homes.

The battle of 'Ain Jālūt was by no means the end of the struggle against the Mongols, but it lifted the despair which had up till then hung over the Muslims. The Mongols soon tried to avenge themselves with a larger force, and the Muslims, with individual and with collective forces, met them from different quarters.⁷¹

⁷¹*Biography*, f. 14.

PART THREE:

BAIBARS AS SULTAN

I THE ATTAINMENT OF SOVEREIGNTY

Having beaten the Mongols, Quṭuz became the ruler of both Egypt and Syria, and went to Damascus to arrange the affairs of the latter.¹ Among the appointments he made was that of governor for Aleppo, and this brought to the surface the old feud between himself and Baibars; for Quṭuz, it is said, had promised Baibars the governorship of Aleppo and its subordinate districts before the battle of 'Ain Jalūt. He may perhaps have done this in a moment of despair or he may have hoped that the battle would rid him of Baibars; but if he were to keep his promise he would provide Baibars with a stronghold far removed from Cairo—a dangerous gift should Baibars wish to oppose him. He therefore broke his word and, instead of giving the town to Baibars, appointed as Governor 'Alā al-Dīn, the former ruler of al-Mauṣil.² This so enraged Baibars that he resolved at once to take up arms against Quṭuz, but the latter learned of this and, instead of proceeding to the north of Syria on further administrative matters as he had planned, hurried back to Egypt³ with Baibars in train.

It is difficult to believe that this appointment was the main reason behind Baibars's decision to break with Quṭuz, though

¹*Sulūk*, Vol. I, p.432.

³*Mawā'iz*, Vol. II, p.301.

²*Nujūm*, Vol. VII, p.82.

it was probably the turning point in their relationship after their reconciliation, and the first time they had completely lost confidence in one another. But reasons of longer standing made the break inevitable, particularly the fact that both men were ambitious to reach the highest office and would allow no opposition to stand in their way. Now that the motive for their reconciliation had been removed, neither was in need of the other's support, and the old enmity between them, strong and deeply rooted, showed itself again over the governorship of Aleppo.

The Bahrīs could not forget that their leader Aqṭāy had been murdered by Quṭuz,⁴ nor could they feel sure that Quṭuz might not strike again. Knowing the Bahrīs and their feeling towards him, Quṭuz realised that sooner or later he would have to deal with renewed opposition from them. The first time their leader had been Aqṭāy; now it was Baibars, an even more dangerous enemy, and the news which reached Quṭuz⁵ of his discontent and of his intentions made the latter all the more determined to act quickly.

Syria was not well suited for action against his enemy, since, after the various appointments he had made, Quṭuz could not be certain of the loyalty of the *amīrs*. Even the loyalty of his personal *amīrs* who resided with him in the citadel in Cairo was in some doubt,⁶ but Cairo remained the most suitable place for the murder of Baibars. Quṭuz therefore returned to Egypt.

Baibars was informed of Quṭuz's intentions towards him, took his precautions, and watched for an opportunity to kill Quṭuz when he left with him for Egypt,⁷ probably believing that his best opportunity would come before Quṭuz entered Cairo. Whether he made the necessary arrangements before leaving Damascus or after he had set out with the Sultan, is not clear.

Quṭuz was accompanied by his troops when he left for Egypt and no attempt could be made on his life. But an

⁴*Ibn Khaldūn*, Vol. V, p.380.

⁵*Mawā'iz*, Vol. II, p.301.

⁶Those who conspired with Baibars against Quṭuz included the latter's Silāḥdār. *Shāfi'*, *op.cit.*, f. 8.

⁷*Mawā'iz*, Vol. II, p.301.

opportunity was presented when, on the 15th of Qa'da 658 A.H. (22nd of October, A.D. 1260),⁸ Qutuz and his *amīrs* left the main road on a hunting expedition⁹ after passing through al-Ghawālī in the neighbourhood of al-Ṣālīhiya. Whether or not the conspirators had a hand in his decision to go hunting, they wasted no time in executing their plan. They released a hare they had been concealing, allowed Qutuz (who thought it was a wild one) to pursue it,¹⁰ went after him and attacked and killed him on the way back.¹¹

The problem of succession was now raised once again, and no time was lost in taking the necessary steps for the election of a new Sultan. The main part of the army was absent, as apparently were those *amīrs* who had gone with Qutuz;¹² when Baibars and his companions reached the camp which had been set up at the next stage ready to receive the Sultan, the remainder of the *amīrs* met to elect a new ruler. Amongst those present was one al-Rashīdī, who had been imprisoned in Alexandria by Aibak, but later released by Qutuz before his expedition against the Mongols.¹³ Al-Rashīdī was one of the oldest and more respected of the *amīrs* and would have been elected Sultan had not Fāris al-Dīn Aqṭāy, the Atabeg,¹⁴ who had been delayed in another tent until that moment, burst into the assembly and persuaded it to install

⁸*Sulūk*, Vol. I, p.435; Cf. *al-Mukhtaṣar*, where it is stated that he was killed on the 17th. Vol. III, p.216 and Yūnīnī, *Dhail*, Vol. II, p.30, who gives the 16th as the day of his death.

⁹*Sulūk*, Vol. I, p.435.

¹⁰Shāfi', *op.cit.*, f. 8.

¹¹The sources give different accounts of the details of this murder. For instance, Muḥyi al-Dīn insists that Baibars alone carried out the killing of Qutuz and that he did it in the midst of the army: (*Biography*, B.M. f. 14 b) Shāfi', (f.8) refutes this and states that it was Qutuz's *Silāh-dār* who delivered the first blow and that Baibars, on seeing it was ineffective, completed the deed. Taghribirdī claims that all the conspirators joined in the killing, each with different weapons. (*Nujūm*, Vol. VII, p.83). Regarding Muḥyi al-Dīn's views and Shāfi''s opinion of them, see p.64.

¹²This is indicated by a passage in the *Biography* where the Atabeg advises Baibars not to wait for the rest of the armies, but to leave for Egypt immediately and assure himself of the possession of the citadel leaving the *ḥalqa* thinking that Qutuz was riding with the *amīrs* and the latter thinking that he was with the *ḥalqa*. *Biography*, f. 4 a.

¹³Shāfi', *op.cit.*, f. 9.

¹⁴Known as "al-Musta'ribī", a name given to him perhaps to distinguish him from Aqṭāy, the head of the Baḥrī Regiment.

Baibars as Sultan instead.¹⁵ Fāris al-Dīn's reasoning was that Baibars had confirmed he had carried out the murder himself, and the law of the Turks stipulated that he who killed the ruler should take his place.¹⁶

Certain of the *amīrs* present had been in prison with al-Rashīdī and had shared with him a variety of misfortunes; so when Baibars asked them to take the oath of allegiance to himself, the Atābeg, perhaps fearing their refusal, hastened to suggest that Baibars should promise to settle their grievances, probably meaning that he should enfeoff them, pay their debts, etc. as soon as possible. This Baibars agreed to do and thus secured the oath of allegiance from the *amīrs* and troops present. When Baibars showed concern about the oath of those *amīrs* who had not yet reached the camp, the Atābeg again suggested that he should not wait but should proceed directly to the citadel in Cairo, the possession of which was of greater importance.¹⁷ This was done and the citadel surrendered to Baibars's representatives, after which the remainder of the *amīrs* gave their oath of allegiance when they arrived in Cairo.¹⁸

II INTERNAL POLICY AND METHODS

Baibars's accession to the throne was by no means accepted unanimously. In Egypt the populace showed no open opposition, but were not pleased at the return to power of the Baḥrīs, at whose hands they had suffered so much¹⁹ after the death of al-Ṣālīḥ Ayyūb.

¹⁵Shāfi', *op.cit.*, f. 9.

¹⁷The Citadel of the Hill (Qal'at al-Jabal) had always been the place of residence of the Sultan and his *mamlūks* and provided him with security against sudden risings, or attacks by other rival *amīrs*. When away from Cairo, the ruling Sultan entrusted it to a faithful *amīr*, who was provided with a strong garrison. Since the real authority of the Sultanate lay with the person who held the citadel, the Sultan took every precaution to bring within its walls only those he trusted. When Aqṭay, for instance, sought to reside with Aibak in the citadel, he was refused by Aibak, who did not trust him and who thought his request was a step towards taking it over. See above, pp. 12-13.

¹⁸*Biography*, f. 4 a.

¹⁹*Sulūk*, Vol. I, pp. 380, 437; *Nujūm*, Vol. VII, p. 9; and *Mihāva*, Vol. XXIX, f. 2.

(i) MEASURES AGAINST AL-ḤALABĪ

In Damascus and in the region of Aleppo there was considerable open opposition to Baibars, since the distance from Cairo made it possible to voice dissatisfaction with the Government without the danger of immediate reprisals. In this opposition a most important factor was the attitude of 'Alam al-Dīn al-Ḥalabī, who had been appointed Governor of Damascus by the late Sultan before Quṭuz's final departure for Egypt. Al-Ḥalabī was one of the most influential *amīrs* at the court, and his previous position as Atābeg to al-Malik al-Manṣūr had made him a serious rival to Quṭuz.²⁰ When Quṭuz took the throne, therefore, he had not felt at ease until he had found a suitably high position for al-Ḥalabī. Such an office as that of Governor of Damascus²¹ was ideally suited for him, since it not only satisfied his ambition as an *amīr* but also took him away from Cairo, and thus enabled Quṭuz to conduct affairs of state without the interference which might have resulted from al-Ḥalabī's presence in the capital. The accession of Baibars might have served to remind al-Ḥalabī that when al-Malik al-Manṣūr was removed from the throne because of the Mongol threat, Quṭuz had promised to leave the eventual settlement of the succession to the Sultanate in the hands of the *amīrs*, for them to choose whatever Sultan they liked after the defeat of the enemy.²² Now that Quṭuz was dead and the Mongols had been defeated, al-Ḥalabī could reasonably claim what he had once looked for, more especially since he was not sure of his position *vis-à-vis* Baibars and whether he would be retained in office.

For a short time in Ḥijja, 658 A.H. (November-December, A.D. 1260),²³ miscalculating that Baibars's Sultanate would not last, he claimed the Sultanate for himself; but he did not press his claim and wavered between recognising the new Sultanate and ruling Damascus independently. Meanwhile Baibars, who was not yet in a position to resort to armed

²⁰Mufarrij, Vol. II, pp. 121, 122 (B. N. Arabe 1703).

²¹Biography, f. 12 b.

²²Sulūk, Vol. I, p. 418.

²³Biography, f. 13 a; Sulūk, Vol. I, p. 438.

intervention, used threats and promises to win over al-Ḥalabī, but this was in vain; and he was finally obliged to use force.

The Amīr 'Alā al-Dīn Aidigīn, who was in the service of Baibars and was residing in Damascus, proclaimed his allegiance to Baibars with the support of a number of *amīrs* and then left Damascus. Al-Ḥalabī sent a force in pursuit but it was defeated.²⁴ Al-Ḥalabī himself led another force, which was also defeated and was driven back to Damascus, in whose citadel al-Ḥalabī took refuge. Baibars had been paying money and despatching robes of honour to the *amīrs* in Damascus in order to win them over to his side.²⁵ This, together with the two defeats and the consequent loss of faith among his sympathisers, destroyed al-Ḥalabī's prestige and made his stay in Damascus dangerous. He therefore fled to the citadel of Ba'l-abakk, where he was arrested and sent to Baibars in Egypt.²⁶ He was imprisoned for a time, and then released and appointed to a suitable office.²⁷

(ii) MEASURES AGAINST THE 'AZİZĪS AND NĀŞİRĪS

The *mamlūks* of the former ruler of Damascus, al-Nāşir, and their associates—usually known as the 'Azizīs and the Nāşirīs—were left to decide their own fate on the retreat of the Mongols and the demise of their masters. On assuming power, Baibars treated them with great caution, as they had already shown signs of independence when they had deposed al-Malik al-Sa'īd, who had been appointed Governor of Aleppo by Quṭuz, and chosen in his place one of themselves by the name of Ḥusām al-Dīn al-Jaukan-dār al-'Azizī.²⁸ As long as he had to face the hostility of al-Ḥalabī, Baibars took no measures against them and recognised their new leader; but the capture of Damascus changed the situation and left Baibars in a position to draw up his plans for pacifying the rest of Syria.

²⁴*Biography*, f. 13 a.

²⁵*Suluk*, Vol. I, p. 444.

²⁶*Biography*, f. 13 a.

²⁷He was appointed governor of Aleppo, *Ibid*, f. 14 b. Cf. Yūnīnī, *Dhail*, Vol. II, p. 92.

²⁸*Biography*, f. 14 a.

Before his departure from Syria, Qutuz had appointed al-Barlī as Governor of Gaza and the Syrian coast. Baibars not only confirmed this *amīr* in office, but bestowed further favours on him by enlarging his fief²⁹ and ordering him to join Aidigīn's expedition against al-Ḥalabī. With the defeat of al-Ḥalabī, Baibars thought it time to take steps against the unruly *amīrs* of Syria and he therefore instructed Aidigīn, his temporary governor in Damascus, to seize Bahā' al-Dīn al-Bughdī, Shams al-Dīn Aqūsh al-Barlī and other 'Azīzī and Naṣīrī *amīrs*.³⁰ Aidigīn lost no time in carrying out his orders and arrested al-Bughdī. This seems to have alarmed some of the other *amīrs* and they joined al-Barlī and left Damascus at night for the Marj. Aidigīn, fearing a large scale revolt in Syria, sent a message to al-Barlī assuring him of his good intentions, but al-Barlī refused to accept his assurance and made for Ḥimṣ, with the intention of winning to his cause its ruler, al-Ashraf Mūsā Ibn Shīrkūh. Failing in this enterprise, he then proceeded to Ḥamah and tried to convince its ruler al-Malik al-Manṣūr, who was an Ayyūbī, that no one else of the Ayyūbī House was left and that al-Manṣūr should claim the Sultanate with the help of al-Barlī and his followers.³¹ When this proposal was rejected, al-Barlī ravaged the country about Ḥamah and later seized supplies at Aleppo. He began enrolling both Arabs and Türkmens for the purpose of fighting the Egyptian army which was on its way to North Syria.³²

Baibars realised the danger of these activities and the necessity of stamping out al-Barlī's opposition as soon as possible so as to have a free hand to meet the expected Mongol attack. A force was sent out under the leadership of the Amīr Jamāl al-Dīn al-Muḥammadi, and this was joined on the way by another force under the command of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Ḥimṣī and yet a third force under al-Ḥalabī, recently pardoned by Baibars. This army caused al-Barlī to withdraw from Aleppo to Eastern Syria, where he occupied al-Bīra, the frontier stronghold on the Euphrates; but realising that he

²⁹ *Biography*, f. 14 b.

³⁰ *Al-Mukhtaṣar*, Vol. III, p.219.

³¹ Yūnīnī, *Dhail*, Vol. II, p.121.

³² *Al-Mukhtaṣar*, Vol. III, p.220.

was no match for the Mongols and that he could not for long resist the forces of Baibars, he submitted and was received by Baibars in Cairo on the 2nd of H̱ijja 660 A.H. (18th of October, A.D. 1262).³³

Throughout this time, Baibars was busy arranging his internal affairs, overhauling various government departments, introducing new offices and appointing new officials.³⁴ He paid special attention to the *barīd*³⁵ and made the system an object of special concern. He also abolished some of the taxes imposed by Quṭuz before he had set out against the Mongols.

(iii) MEASURES AGAINST AL-MALIK AL-MUGHĪTH

Al-Mughīth was the ruler of al-Karak and al-Shaubak, two important fortresses in the south of Palestine. He was the only Ayyūbī Prince who had not yet submitted to Baibars. Unlike the other Ayyūbī Princes, he had built up no goodwill with Baibars to make an agreement possible.³⁶ Indeed, he could expect trouble from Baibars, whom he had enraged early on when he handed over the Baḥrīs in al-Karak to al-Nāṣir in 675/1258-9³⁷, and who still held this action against him. Added to this was al-Mughīth's treatment of Baibars's wife³⁸ during her stay in al-Karak.

But although these might have provided sufficient motives for Baibars to attack him, there were essential strategic reasons for removing him which were far more important. Baibars had ahead of him a long, hard struggle with the Franks and the Mongols which needed all his concentration. The proximity of al-Mughīth's territory to both fields of

³³ *Al-Mukhtaṣar*, Vol. III, p.223; *Biography*, f. 23.

³⁴ *Biography*, ff. 13-14.

³⁵ *Ibid*, f. 13.

³⁶ There was no hope of the two coming to terms, because Baibars could never feel safe while al-Mughīth lived freely. Al-Mughīth's membership of the Ayyūbī family was a great advantage for him over Baibars the usurper; but the latter would remember how one of his opponents, al-Barlī, used the argument that the Ayyūbīs were the legitimate ruling House in order to persuade al Malik al-Manṣūr, the ruler of Ḥamāh, to rise in rebellion. Baibars did not have the same fear of the other Ayyūbī princes because their territories were not in such an important strategic situation as al-Mughīth's. (See next paragraph).

³⁷ *Mufarrij*, Vol. II, p.391; *Sulūk*, Vol. I, p.420.

³⁸ *Al-Mukhtaṣar*, Vol. III, p.220.

operations, and at the same time to the heart of Baibars's kingdom, and the possession of those two strong fortresses, were points that Baibars must have pondered. He must also have remembered al-Mugḥḥith's success in inducing a number of Shahrazūrīs to break away from him.³⁹ It would have been unwise for Baibars to engage in military activities against the Franks in Syria, or against any enemy on his more distant frontiers, with such a formidable enemy to his rear.

There had been some correspondence between Baibars and al-Mugḥḥith.⁴⁰ The purpose of this was probably to keep the latter from taking any action while Baibars was busy arranging his own affairs. But al-Mugḥḥith was soon accused by Baibars of secretly inducing the aforementioned Shahrazūrīs to go over to his side. This was a dangerous matter, for Baibars was then in the first period of his reign and could not afford to lose a single soldier in his kingdom, let alone allow part of his army to go over to a dangerous rival.

The gathering storm now broke. After al-Mugḥḥith had persuaded the Shahrazūrīs to desert,⁴¹ Baibars countered by attacking and taking his fortress of al-Shaubak. Baibars, who must have sent an army against it before he left Syria, arrived in Egypt about the 17th of Ḥijja 659 A.H. (12th of November, A.D. 1261), while al-Shaubak fell sometime before the 26th of the same month (21st of November⁴²). Baibars went so far as to send an army to besiege al-Karak, where al-Mugḥḥith was residing, but had to withdraw his troops because he needed to send them against al-Barlī in the North.⁴³ Later, while he was preparing to send another army, the Caliph intervened and operations were suspended for the time being.⁴⁴ When Baibars had concluded treaties with the

³⁹Yūnīnī, *Dhail*, Vol. II, p.107.

⁴⁰*Biography*, f. 23 a.

⁴¹*Biography*, f. 38.

⁴²*Ibid*, f. 23; *Mufarrij*, Vol. II, f. 400.

⁴³*Biography*, ff. 15 a and 23 a.

⁴⁴*Ibid*, f. 23. Knowing how little influence the Caliph had on Baibars, one is inclined to believe that this intervention was designed to be of advantage to the latter, who probably did not intend to send an army but put the news in circulation to frighten al-Mugḥḥith. Alternatively, Baibars may have been sincere about the expedition, but a fresh danger which had risen somewhere else may have compelled him to divert his activity.

Franks in Syria and returned to Egypt, he might have thought it the moment to force al-Mugḥḥith to come to terms with him for the time being. During this truce al-Mugḥḥith's position would gradually be weakened and he would become an easy prey for Baibars. The idea was that the revenue of al-Karak was limited; since al-Mugḥḥith could not send the Shahrazurīs on raiding expeditions, he would either maintain them for a time until his treasury was empty, or else hold back their pay and thus oblige them to leave him, almost certainly for Baibars.⁴⁵ Al-Mugḥḥith had earlier sent his son al-'Azīz to Hūlāgū to conduct negotiations with him. On his way back al-'Azīz passed through Damascus and was there seized and sent to Cairo, where he was detained. Baibars used al-'Azīz as a hostage to persuade al-Mugḥḥith to come to terms with him.⁴⁶

Although Baibars had made peace with al-Mugḥḥith, he was waiting for a chance to eliminate him completely. This chance came in the beginning of the year 661/1263, when Baibars was temporarily free from other military engagements. Al-Mugḥḥith was at this time in a very weak position, since a large number of his followers had defected to Baibars and his treasury could no longer supply the wants of those remaining. He could be tempted to come yet a stage closer to his destruction.

Whilst on a hunting expedition, Baibars, probably by a pre-arrangement, met al-Mugḥḥith's mother at Gaza. She conducted negotiations with the Sultān on her son's behalf, and was able to secure his oath that no harm should befall al-Mugḥḥith.⁴⁷ But Baibars, who gave his solemn oath and assurance, never intended to keep his promise. In fact he had already arranged the reasons (or rather the pretexts) for arresting al-Mugḥḥith, and he summoned the members of the council that was to hear the accusation and consequently accept the condemnation. On his arrival at Baisān, al-Mugḥḥith was cordially welcomed by Baibars, who nevertheless had him arrested when they reached the camp at al-Ṭūr, and charged

⁴⁵The state in which Baibars found the treasuries of al-Karak on its surrender proved that Baibars was right in his calculations. (*Biography*, B.M. f. 61 a). See also Yūnīnī, *Dhail*, Vol. II, p.299.

⁴⁶*Biography*, f. 40 a.

⁴⁷*Biography*, B. M. f. 34 b.

with conspiring with the Mongols against the Muslims. It was alleged that al-Mugḥḥith had been corresponding with Hūlāgū⁴⁸ and that the latter, in one of his replies, promised to grant al-Mugḥḥith the territories stretching from Buṣrā to Gaza and an army of twenty thousand horsemen to enable him to take Egypt.⁴⁹ Al-Mugḥḥith was sent to Egypt, where he was imprisoned.⁵⁰

Although this took place late in Jumādā the First, 661 A.H. (April, A.D. 1263), Baibars having some business with the Franks to which he wanted to attend, he did not proceed to take al-Karak until the 23rd of Jumādā the Second (4th of May 1263). He successfully concealed his destination until he reached the fortress itself, where the son of al-Mugḥḥith was in charge during his father's absence. The sudden appearance of Baibars in the region alarmed its government, who, with al-'Azīz at their head, realised that they were no match for Baibars. They hastened to surrender.⁵¹

(iv) THE 'ABBĀSĪ CALIPHATE IN EGYPT

The recognition of a ruler by the Caliph had usually been thought desirable as a form of legal confirmation, and Aibak had sought this recognition from Baghdād in 654/1256-7, as a further security against the ambitions of certain *amirs*. On Baibars's accession, however, there was no Caliph to grant him recognition, although the manner of his seizure of power made him more than usually in need of such confirmation.⁵²

When the Mongols had captured Baghdād and abolished the Caliphate, a member of 'Abbāsī family by the name of Aḥmad ibn al-Zāhir had escaped and settled with some of the Arab tribes on the Western border of Iraq.⁵³ He may have thought that with the help of the Arab tribes in these regions

⁴⁸*Biography*, f. 52.

⁴⁹*Mufarrij*, Vol. II, f. 414.

⁵⁰*Biography*, B.M. f. 53.

⁵¹*Biography*, B.M. ff. 60-61.

⁵²Once before a Caliph had been needed for the same purpose: when Quṭuz had learned of the arrival in Syria of a member of the 'Abbāsī family, he had looked forward to installing him Caliph on his return to Egypt. *Mufaḍḍal*, Vol. I, p.435.

See also Yūnīnī, *Dhail*, Vol. I, p.485.

⁵³*Sulūk*, Vol. I, p.448.

he might gain some military success against the Mongols or at least cause annoyance to their government in Baghdād, but the re-establishment of order in Syria and Egypt under a strong government drew him towards the west. With fifty men of the tribe of Khafāja he arrived in Syria where he was met and later identified by Baibars's governor, who recommended that he should be treated well. He was allowed to proceed to Egypt and arrived there on the 9th of Rajab 659 A.H. (9th of June, A.D. 1261).⁵⁴ The restoration of the 'Abbāsī Caliphate would add to Baibars's prestige in the Muslim countries and be a correspondingly hard knock for the Mongols. In return he could expect to be recognised by the Caliph. When Baibars heard of the arrival of Aḥmad ibn al-Zāir, therefore, he was prompt to welcome him to Egypt and to proclaim him Caliph; and it was decided that the Caliph should go at the head of a force against the Mongols to recover Baghdād.⁵⁵

Baibars had originally planned to send a large expedition headed by the Caliph: if successful, this would show that Baibars was the champion of Islam, responsible for installing the Caliph on his ancestors' throne, and would provide in Baghdād a base for further activities against the Mongols. Moreover, Baibars was probably not anxious that a figure of the Caliph's importance should remain in Egypt, where he might overshadow the importance of the Sultan.⁵⁶

Baibars had left Egypt to bid the Caliph farewell on his expedition when, it was alleged, his attention was drawn to the dangers of installing the Caliph on his hereditary throne: he might then turn against Baibars and attempt to drive him out of Egypt.⁵⁷ This was the reason which was given by Maqrīzī to explain why he eventually sent only a small detachment of troops⁵⁸ with the Caliph, instead of the intended ten thousand horsemen. The Mongols inflicted a crushing defeat

⁵⁴*Biography*, f. 15.

⁵⁵*Sulūk*, Vol. I, p. 42.

⁵⁶Later, when another 'Abbāsī Caliph was installed and had to reside in Egypt, Baibars ensured that not only his power was limited but also his appearances in public. Shāfi', *op.cit.*, f. 31.

⁵⁷*Sulūk*, Vol. I, p. 462.

⁵⁸Three hundred horsemen. *Ibid.*

upon the Caliph's forces and after the battle the Caliph had disappeared.⁵⁹

It is difficult to think that Baibars had to be enlightened as to the possible consequences of the recapture of Baghdād by the Caliph; and if it is assumed that Baibars had come into possession of some fresh information, it seems improbable that he could devise no better solution than to send the Caliph away to his fate. He could have thought of various ways of rendering the Caliph harmless without endangering the prestige which the Muslims had for so long awaited, and which they had regained in the battle of 'Ain Jalūt. Considering the ability with which Baibars normally conducted his military affairs, one is inclined to prefer the account of Muḥyī al-Dīn, who accuses the Caliph⁶⁰ of neglecting to summon the troops which Baibars had sent northwards to guard the northern border of Iraq against any surprise attack by the Mongols or their allies.

If Baibars had really wanted to rid himself of the Caliph, he would not have hastened to install another 'Abbāsī as soon as he heard of the latter's existence.⁶¹ And this in spite of the fact that he had already secured Caliphal recognition, and so was no longer in urgent need of a Caliph for that purpose.

(v) ASPECTS OF BAIBARS'S METHOD OF CONTROL

As Baibars himself was a soldier and a member of such a strong military organisation as the Bahrī Regiment,⁶² he appreciated its ability and the possible part it could play in future engagements. He knew how its value could be increased, and endeavoured to bring it to a state of readiness in equipment and training which would enable it to be at least the equal of the enemy.

In view of Baibars's military upbringing, the attentions and interest he paid to the army was expected; the degree of enthusiasm he was able to arouse was prompted by the presence of the enemy along the border. The more formida-

⁵⁹The battle took place in Muḥarram 660 A.H. (Nov.-Dec. A.D. 1261). *Sulūk*, Vol. I, p.427 and Yūnīnī, *Dhail*, Vol. II, p.111.

⁶⁰*Biography*, f. 18 b.

⁶¹Al-Ḥākim, the second Abbāsī Caliph in Egypt, arrived there on Rabi' the second of the year 660 A.H. (February-March A.D. 1262). *Mufaḍḍal*, Vol. I, p.434.

⁶²See above, p.3.

ble this danger, the more energy Baibars showed in his efforts to overcome it. Certainly this constant threat helped Baibars to cope with social and financial conditions at home, although it is true that, on certain occasions, his military campaigns brought him insufficient booty to cover the cost of financing them. They did, however, justify the taxes it was necessary to raise to enable Baibars to continue his expeditions.

The circumstances of the times may be credited only with having provided Baibars with a fertile field in which to demonstrate his natural ability and the fruit of his experience. The *Biography* gives many examples of Baibars's clear understanding of those times and of his ability to deal with potentially difficult situations which threatened the safety of his kingdom. Although individually some of the measures may seem familiar, taken together they constitute a unique pattern, and their application during one man's reign is remarkable indeed.

Both his character and method of control contributed to Baibars's military and political success. It is possible to throw some light on them in this context.

1. SERIOUSNESS

Baibars's natural tendency towards seriousness was perhaps accentuated by the troubled period through which the country was passing. Al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ, Baibars's master, was himself of a grave disposition, and his choice of Baibars to be among his slaves might have been influenced by his appreciation of this quality in him. Baibars recognised al-Ṣāliḥ's own good qualities and chose to follow the same lines.⁶³ Having chosen his course, Baibars demanded that his officers should do likewise.

2. SEVERITY

Baibars's outlook was complemented by his strictness: his commands had to be carried out promptly and accurately, and his punishments always tended towards severity with no hope of exceptional treatment. Many of the severe punishments he inflicted on his *amīrs* were due to their indifference to his

⁶³*Biography*, f. 5 a and B.M. f. 2 b.

orders, as some of them, especially in the early stages of his reign before he had fully established his authority, felt themselves to have as much right as himself to issue commands, and frequently gave their followers orders which contradicted those of the Sultan. Baibars was not unappreciative of the value of these *amīrs* in their proper capacities, but had nevertheless to think of the welfare of the state. In order to exercise his full power he was obliged to secure the unquestioning obedience and respect of his subordinates. The action he took against al-Barlī, al-Dumyāṭī and al-Rashīdī are but examples of his attempts to do this.⁶⁴

3. SECRECY

If reigns are to be distinguished by a single, striking and unique characteristic, that of Baibars's reign was certainly secrecy, and to this, as much as to anything else, he owed his success. He made full use of espionage, and his system of obtaining information crippled his enemies both within and without his realm. The number of ambitious *amīrs* in his service, the number of individuals he had suppressed, the many different elements he had offended for one reason or another, and indeed the methods he had followed in seizing the throne—all provided sufficient reasons for him to be constantly on his guard.

His own espionage activities seem to have been directed to two ends, for purposes of inspection and for purely military ends. The result of those undertaken for inspection was that no *amīr* dared to organise opposition against him, for Baibars's highly-organised system of travelling in secret meant that he could well be present when he was thought to be far away. For military purposes secrecy was an integral part of almost every operation carried out by Baibars. The easy access of Frankish agents to information regarding the movements of the Muslim troops demanded an adequate system to counter their activities, and special precautions were therefore maintained to keep military movements as secret as possible. The destination of a raiding or besieging force was concealed sometimes even from the commander of

⁶⁴*Biography*, B.M. f. 65 a.

the force himself, who would receive his instructions for the next stage of his journey at a given place *en route* from the hands of another officer. The same operation might be repeated, and eventually the commander would find his final instructions in a sealed letter which he was to open only at a certain moment.⁶⁵ Such sealed letters seem to have been widely used by Baibars, and he would frequently give the commander of an army a sealed letter which he was not supposed to open until he was ready to begin the march.⁶⁶

These secret movements were successful in confusing his enemies, especially the Franks, as they had to be constantly on their guard and often came to the wrong conclusions in their interpretation of his movements. Occupying a territory so extensive in comparison with their numbers, their fortresses were undermanned and their uncertainty as to the direction of Baibars's attack would force them to leave each garrison defending its fortress without support. They were unable to concentrate their troops at the point they thought was to be attacked because the clues to this may well have been devised to mislead them.⁶⁷

The most common of the means which Baibars employed to conceal his real military intentions were hunting expeditions, their nature and the preparations that were necessary for them being ideal to cover up their real purpose. Indeed, they often served to bring him to the vicinity of his objective before any sort of alarm was sounded.

4. ESPIONAGE

Espionage was one of the features of Baibars's reign and was demanded for internal and external reasons alike. The urgent need prompted Baibars to organise an adequate service under an independent department, and the role played by his agents was important enough to be considered one of the causes of his success. His relations with his *amirs*, often built on mistrust, were the object of a great part of this department's activities, and the reports submitted to him on

⁶⁵*Biography*, f. 101.

⁶⁷*Ibid.*, ff. 71, 79 and 109.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, f. 81.

their words and activities were extensive and gave Baibars a full picture of happenings in their circles. He would then reveal to his *amīrs* some of the information he knew about them and thus make them distrust their companions and suspect every one, even the members of their own family. The result was that no *amīr* dared to suggest combined action against Baibars lest his confederates be spies. It was a common thing for Baibars to engage someone to watch the activities of another who was engaged in spying against one of the *amīrs*.⁶⁸

The system of obtaining information against the men in his own service resulted in their being diligent and careful in carrying out their duties. The night rounds which Baibars was in the habit of making in disguise also helped to prevent them from doing anything of which he might disapprove. One of these rounds of inspection in disguise was said to have taken place one night in 663/1264-5,⁶⁹ when Baibars saw what he considered to be improper conduct by one of the men in the service of his government. He ordered severe measures to be taken against the man and his colleagues, including the cutting off of hands in his own presence.

This department's activities outside his realm were also considerable. Appreciating the danger to which his agents were exposed, Baibars showered large sums of money on those who supplied him with information about the enemy.⁷⁰ He had agents in all the lands of his enemies, and they seem to have penetrated even as far as the court of the *Ilkhāns*.⁷² When *Hulāgū* sent two spies to Baibars's country, the latter's agent informed him of this and gave a description of *Hulāgū*'s spies, and the network of agents along the route kept him informed of their movements until they reached Damietta and were arrested.⁷³ In these activities Baibars benefited considerably from the Arabs of *Khafāja* living on the western border of Iraq, where their position enabled them to penetrate deep into this region without being suspected by the

⁶⁸Ibn Shaddād, *op.cit.*, f. 70 b.

⁶⁹*Mihavā*, Vol. XXIX, f. 27-9 and *Sulūk*, Vol. I, p.540.

⁷⁰*Biography*, f. 29.

⁷²Howarth, *op.cit.*, Vol. II, p.226.

⁷³*Biography*, f. 48.

authorities. Besides gathering information they also served as a link between Syria and Baibars's agents in Persia. It was a group of 'Arabs from Khafāja whom Baibars employed in communicating with the ruler of Šīrāz in Persia.⁷⁴

In addition to paid agents, Baibars found no lack of willing volunteers to supply him with useful information on his enemies. They were chiefly to be found among the Muslims living in the regions occupied by his adversaries, but an important role was also played by merchants, of whom there were many in an important trading centre such as Egypt. Visiting on business the Mediterranean ports or the market towns in the Mongol countries, they would bring back the news of any recent development or happening of interest.⁷⁵

As among the most important enemy territories were those occupied by the Franks, Baibars needed to know as much as possible about them if his military actions against them were to be successful. The large numbers of Muslims living in these regions made it easy for him to obtain as many agents as he required, and, in addition to gathering information on local events, they were no doubt able to give some indication of the preparations being made in Europe.⁷⁶

It sometimes happened that the activities of these agents went beyond the task of supplying information and they were given a direct role in actions against important individuals in the service of Baibars's enemies. Baibars might write to someone he wished to eliminate, giving the impression that his letter was one of a series and that he had some form of secret agreement with the person in question. The letter would then be left by Baibars's agent in a place where it was certain to be discovered and brought to the notice of the authorities, thus at the very least throwing a strong doubt on the man's loyalty to his superiors. The use of such a planted letter was believed to have been successful against the governor for the Mongols in Baghād, a Christian Catholicus who had been accused of treating his Muslim subjects unjustly.⁷⁷ A similar trick forced an important *amīr* in the

⁷⁴*Biography*, f. 48.

⁷⁵*Biography*, ff. 145 a and 149.

⁷⁷*Biography*, ff. 169 b and 170 a.

⁷⁶*Ibid.*

service of the Ilkhān of Persia to yield to Baibars's demands that he should desert the Mongols and join his own forces.⁷⁸

5. THE *BARĪD*⁷⁹

Egypt, as the centre of Baibars's realm, was his normal place of residence; and while at peace part of his time was spent there. On the other hand Syria, another part of his realm, with its proximity to his enemies together with its wide territories, saw a great deal of him during wartime. To ensure complete control over Syria while in Egypt, and to make certain of resisting any external danger that might threaten it, an adequate means of fast communications had to be established. With his appreciation of excellent administration, he gave his immediate attention to the *barīd*.⁸⁰ His postal reform covered every part of this service: extra relay stations were provided on the route, with fresh horses amounting to ten horses a day; salaries were paid to the men and largesse showered on them.⁸¹ Whenever a dispatch arrived, Baibars would attend to it in person immediately, even if it meant sometimes that he should interrupt his meal or his sleep, whether the dispatch was important or not. On one occasion at least, Baibars, who was then in his bath, came out and received the mail naked.⁸² The reply to a dispatch was delayed no longer than it took to write it.⁸³

The result of the great attention he paid to this service was that it became so efficient and swift that a courier would complete the journey to Cairo from Damascus in four days, from Aleppo in six and from 'Ain Tāb in ten.⁸⁴ More urgent dispatches, however, were sent by carrier pigeon, a service which reached a very high efficiency and became an important and rapid means of communication.

The secret journeys the Sultan made on its horses had in a way helped to improve the *barīd*. For, knowing that the

⁷⁸*Nihāyā*, Vol. XXIX, f. 126.

⁷⁹For information of *barīd* in earlier periods see Ibn Khurdadhbīh, Qudāma ibn Ja'far and the *Enc. Isl.* (1st and 2nd ed.).

⁸⁰*Biography*, f. 35.

⁸¹Ibn Shaddād, *op.cit.*, Vol. II, f. 223.

⁸²*Biography*, f. 140 and Ibn Shaddād, *op.cit.*, Vol. II, f. 222.

⁸³*Biography*, f. 13 b, and Ibn Waṣīl, *Mufarrij*, Vol. II, f. 423 (Arabe 1702).

⁸⁴Ibn Shaddād, *op.cit.*, Vol. II, 3. 223.

Sultan might at any time be riding the post-horses, the officials did their best to keep them in constant readiness. Moreover, in travelling on them and pausing at the different stages on the route, Baibars would have made a point of observing their condition and seeing to their needs, and introduced whatever might contribute to their development.

The excellent state of the *barīd* during his reign made it possible for Baibars to manage the affairs of Syria while in Egypt. The *barīd* was quick to bring warning of external attacks or internal disturbance in remote regions of his kingdom, and to carry back instructions for meeting them. Knowing such dangers in time and taking prompt steps to deal with them had on more than one occasion helped Baibars to overcome difficulties whose consequences would otherwise have been grave. Part of his success against his enemies is due to this well-organised service.

III EXTERNAL POLICY AND METHOD

(i) HIS RELATIONS WITH THE RULERS OF THE GOLDEN HORDE

The Muslims by Quṭuz's victory at 'Ain Jālūt, and by the victory of the Azīzīs and Nāṣirīs in Northern Syria, had already struck two blows against the military prestige of the Mongols. Baibars then decided to undermine the Mongol power still further by causing discord between the two most powerful Mongol rulers in the West. If he won Bereke's friendship he could rely on Bereke to contain Hūlāgū when necessary. The alliance would mean a constant threat from two sides to the Mongol power in Iraq, for Baibars would be in a position to advance on the territories of Hūlāgū from the West while Bereke moved against the Ilkhān approximately from the North East.⁸⁵

1. HOSTILITY BETWEEN BEREKE AND THE ILKHĀN OF PERSIA

At the time Baibars thought of approaching Bereke in the

⁸⁵*Biography*, f. 159 a.

hope of winning his friendship, Hūlāgū and Bereke were already on bad terms. Although relations between the ruler of the Golden Horde and Hūlāgū were strained long before Mangū Khān died,⁸⁶ the open clash took place only after Mangū's death. The precise cause of this enmity is not certain, but there were factors that might explain it. The very founding of the Ilkhanate of Persia might have caused the House of Juchi some alarm at the possibility of rivalry from the new state. It already worked to the disadvantage of this House when Mangū assigned to Hūlāgū the two provinces of Arrān and Azerbāijān, which had belonged to the Juchis. Another possible reason given for the hostility was that Bereke, as a Muslim, resented the way Hūlāgū treated the Caliph and the Muslims at the fall of Baghdād.⁸⁸

At the time of the death of Mangū Khān, Hūlāgū was conducting a campaign in Syria, where he left Kitbughā and Baidarā in charge of the newly conquered territory. He himself returned to the East, where the election of the new Great Khān of the Mongols was being decided.⁸⁹ The hostility which had broken out between him and Bereke, whatever its reason, had resulted in clashes between their armies, and these prevented Hūlāgū from devoting his maximum attention to his conquests in the West. Baibars took full advantage of Hūlāgū's position to further his own aims. He strove moreover to prolong the hostility between Bereke and Hūlāgū and, in emphasising their religious differences, sought to bring about a deeper enmity.

2. BAIBARS'S FIRST CONTACT WITH BEREKE

It seems that the only important information Baibars had about Bereke, was that the latter had embraced Islam,⁹⁰ which to Baibars was sufficient opening for him to try to widen the gulf between the two Mongol rulers. So in

⁸⁶His death took place on the 11th of August A.D. 1295. Grousset, *Histoire des Croisades*, Vol. III, p.592.

⁸⁷Howorth, *History of the Mongols*, Part II, p.114.

⁸⁸Howorth, Part, II, p.114. Bereke, in one of his letters to Baibars, had in fact mentioned his disapproval of Hūlāgū's action on this occasion and said that he had resorted to arms to avenge the Caliph and the Muslims. (*Biography*, f. 35 b-36 a).

⁸⁹*Sulūk*, Vol. I, p.427.

⁹⁰*Biography*, f.10.

659/1260-1⁹¹ he wrote a letter to Bereke in which he strove to incite him against Hūlāgū. In it he argued that, as a Muslim, Bereke should follow the example of the Prophet who, for the sake of furthering Islam, fought his nearest kinsmen. To drive home this point, Baibars drew Bereke's attention to Hūlāgū's policy of favouring the Christian religion of his wife rather than Islam, and remarked that the seat of the Caliph in Baghdād was given over to a Christian "infidel", Katholikos. The letter concluded with a detailed description of the Sultan's military activities against the enemies of Islam. This first letter, which was an attempt by Baibars to test Bereke's reaction to the idea of working against Hūlāgū, was delivered by some reliable 'Allān merchants.⁹²

3. BEREKE'S FIRST REACTION

The despatch of this letter by Baibars was a successful move, since it seems to have arrived just before the crisis in the relations between Bereke and Hūlāgū. So when the two Mongol rulers really came into collision, Baibars had already won himself favour in the eyes of Bereke. The latter's duty towards the Mongol Empire had obliged him to send contingents to participate in Hūlāgū's drive westwards. But, when he broke with Hūlāgū, Bereke gave orders to these troops to withdraw to his own territory, or, if this should prove difficult, to go over to Baibars.⁹³ This trust which Bereke put in Baibars was greatly welcomed by the latter,⁹⁴ who learnt from the troops more about Bereke, his dwelling and his court, and the route to them.⁹⁵

4. BAIBARS'S FIRST DIPLOMATIC MISSION

Baibars's, armed with this new knowledge, made his next move with more confidence as to its result. This time he sent a mission accompanied by a *faqīh* and headed by a noble Turk, who spoke the languages in use in that part of the world. The

⁹¹*Sulūk*, Vol. I, p.465.

⁹²*Biography*, f. 10.

⁹³*Biography*, f. 30.

⁹⁴The first contingent numbered over 200. They actually reached Cairo at the end of Hījja 660 A.H. (Nov. A.D. 1262). *Ibid.*

⁹⁵*Ibid.*

mission was provided with two of Bereke's newly-arrived soldiers, who knew the route. Before they set out a carefully composed letter was read out twice, the first time presumably⁹⁶ to Baibars, the second time to the assembled *amīrs*. In it Baibars again urged Bereke to take up the Holy War against Hūlāgū and also gave him an account of his own military strength. The letter also included the news of the arrival of Bereke's troops at Baibars's court, where they were welcomed for Bereke's sake. This time Baibars had something important to add about his own prestige—the installation of a Caliph at Cairo. Baibars was determined to exploit this resurrected Caliphate to the utmost.⁹⁷ The envoys were charged also with an oral message which was similar to that in the letter. In this oral message, and probably in the letter too, Baibars assured Bereke of his friendship and his solidarity with him against the common enemy. The general nature of these assurances suggests that the alliance was still in its early stages. Baibars probably thought his written message would be more impressive when reinforced out of the mouths of people he had treated well.

The envoys left Egypt during Muḥarram 661 A.H. (Nov.-Dec., A.D. 1262). Their route ran through the territory of the Emperor Michael, who sent them on to Bereke.⁹⁸

5. BEREKE'S FIRST MISSION

So far, it was Baibars who had been making approaches to Bereke. Bereke's acceptance of Baibars's offer of friendship can only be assumed from the order he gave his troops serving under Hūlāgū to proceed to Baibars's territories. The first envoys Bereke sent to Baibars arrived in Egypt while Baibars was engaged in reducing al-Karak, towards the end of Jumādā the Second, 661 A.H. (4th May, A.D. 1263). The embassy consisted of two envoys, each carrying a letter. The two letters conveyed Bereke's greetings and his thanks to Baibars,

⁹⁶*The Biography*, mentions only a "second" reading. f. 31 a.

⁹⁷Baibars even sent to Bereke the Caliph's genealogical tree together with the document signed by the chief Qādī, which recognised him as Caliph. *Biography*, f. 31 a.

⁹⁸At Michael's court they met the envoys Bereke had sent to him; it was in their company that they proceeded to Bereke.

his request for help against Hūlāgū, who had massacred people without consulting the other Mongol leaders and in violation of Chingiz Khan's law, and then news that he, together with his four brothers, had risen against Hūlāgū to restore the rights of Islam.⁹⁹ Bereke further suggested that Baibars should advance towards Iraq while he himself advanced against Hūlāgū from his side to deliver a simultaneous attack. As a result Hūlāgū would be driven from the Muslim land, which would then be handed over to Baibars.¹⁰⁰ Finally, since 'Izz al-Dīn of Anatolia was also opposed to Hūlāgū, a recommendation on his behalf was made to Baibars in this letter.¹⁰¹

6. SOLIDARITY OF FRIENDSHIP

Baibars was delighted with the letters and received Bereke's mission lavishly, it being shown every honour that Baibars could offer. The members were feasted, invested by the Caliph with *Futuwwa* garments, brought to listen to his plea for a Holy War at Friday ceremony, and taken to visit places of worship. The inclusion of Bereke's name in the Friday prayers at Mecca and Medina underlined Baibars's pleasure at the development in his relationship with Bereke.¹⁰²

On their return to their own country,¹⁰³ the mission was accompanied by envoys from Baibars carrying a lengthy letter to Bereke. The letter called for a Holy War, listed the places of worship in Baibars's country, confessed the latter's inclination towards Bereke and his dislike of Hūlāgū and finally described the Egyptian armies which were to lead Islam to victory.¹⁰⁴

The degree of friendliness now reached in the relations between Baibars and Bereke was indicated by the large and costly presents that accompanied the letter.¹⁰⁵ It was not

⁹⁹*Biography*, ff. 35 b-36 a.

¹⁰⁰*Mufaḍḍal*, f. 1, p.452; and *Biography*, f. 36 a; Yūnīnī, *Dhail*, Vol. I, p.534, cf. *Biography*, f. 159, where a similar suggestion was claimed to have been made by Mangutimur.

¹⁰¹*Biography*, f. 36 a.

¹⁰²*Biography*, ff. 36-7.

¹⁰³They left Egypt on the 17th of Ramadān, 661 A.H. (25th July, A.D. 1263).

¹⁰⁴*Biography*, f. 36.

¹⁰⁵*Ibid.*

surprising, then, that Baibars was enraged on hearing that the envoys had been delayed by Michael, the Greek Emperor, and that most of the animals sent as gifts had perished. The main purpose of Baibars's mission, to urge Bereke to attack Hūlāgū and to assure him of Baibars's full support, was in danger of being frustrated by this act of Michael. Moreover, Baibars was presented with an awkward problem. He was anxious that nothing should happen to jeopardise his relations with Bereke; on the other hand he considered that it was in his long-term interest to preserve good relations with Michael. So he had to swallow his indignation and try to restore good relations between Bereke and Michael.

Michael, who in his turn was trying to maintain good relations with both Hūlāgū and Baibars, found himself in a similar difficulty when Baibars's envoys to Bereke entered his territory. He was at this time entertaining at his court an envoy from Hūlāgū, and, not wishing Hūlāgū to learn of the presence of Baibars's envoys, he found it necessary to keep them waiting for more than a year. On hearing of this, Bereke sent an army against Constantinople and only withdrew it when Baibars's chief envoy reminded him that Michael was an ally of Baibars.¹⁰⁶

In the end Michael was obliged to give his consent for the envoys to leave. Bereke received them well and obtained from them information about their countries. On their return home, these envoys provided Baibars with news about Bereke's camp and his customs, his officers and family. They must have also provided him with that information regarding Bereke's relations with Hūlāgū which Baibars was anxious to obtain. When Baibars's mission left Bereke's court,¹⁰⁷ it was accompanied by Bereke's envoys to Baibars and arrived in Egypt on the 10th of Qa'da 662 A.H. (3rd of September, A.D. 1264), where they were received with due honours.

¹⁰⁶ *Biography*, f. 52 b-53 a. Mufaḍḍal's account differs somewhat from that of Muḥyī al-dīn. The former states that Bereke's troops were withdrawn after a false written statement had been given by the head of the embassy, assuring Bereke that they were not obliged to stay there but were delayed on their own account. Mufaḍḍal, Vol. I, p.456. For further information on this see the section on Bereke's relations with Michael, p.271.

¹⁰⁷ The news of their departure reached Baibars during Shawwāl, 662 A.H. (July-Aug. A.D. 1264).

7. FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH BEREKE'S SUCCESSOR

For the next two years Bereke, occupied with his campaigns against Hūlagū and the latter's son, Abaghā, had little contact with Baibars. The correspondence was renewed on Bereke's death¹⁰⁸ when Baibars sent a mission in the month of Šafar 666 A.H. (Oct.-Nov., A.D. 1267) to express his sympathy to his nephew and successor, Mangūtimur. He took this opportunity, according to Mufaḍḍal,¹¹⁰ to incite Mangūtimur against Abaghā,¹⁰⁹ who had succeeded his father on Hūlagū's death.¹¹¹

In 667/1268-9, Baibars returned to Mangūtimur a mission originally sent to him by Bereke, giving it a letter covering the points of mutual interest. This letter assured Mangūtimur of Baibars's continuing hostility towards the House of Hūlagū and sent him information on his own domains and his troops. Finally, he furnished Mangūtimur with news of his recent agreement with the Greek Emperor Michael, and took the opportunity to intercede with Mangūtimur on Michael's behalf.¹¹² The envoys of Mangūtimur, like those of his predecessor, were given presents to take back to their ruler.¹¹³

8. CONTACT WITH OTHER OFFICIALS OF THE GOLDEN HORDE

It is recorded that Mangūtimur was a sky-worshipper and not a Muslim like his predecessor.¹¹⁴ This was not to the advantage of Baibars, who had made Islam the pivot of his argument in inciting Bereke against the Ilkhāns. So, instead, he began to seek out the important Muslim officials in the service of the new ruler of the Golden Horde and addressed his Islamic appeal to them. The most prominent Muslim was Baisū-Nūghay, a relative of Bereke, and the commander of his troops against the Ilkhāns. His importance is indicated not only by his having troops of his own, but also by the fact that

¹⁰⁸This is reported to have taken place in 665/1266-7p *Sulūk*, Vol. I, p.561.

¹⁰⁹*Biography*, f. 99 b.

¹¹⁰*Sulūk*, Vol. I, p.489.

¹¹¹In 665/1266-7.

¹¹²For the deterioration in the relations between them see below, p.131.

¹¹³*Biography*, f. 124 b.

¹¹⁴Vernadsky, p.165.

after the death of Mangūtimur, some time later, he became a co-ruler with the successor. Baibars presumably knew of the importance of Baisū-Nūghāy and was particularly anxious to learn about his creed. He therefore questioned one Arubghā, probably the leading member of the last delegation sent by Bereke. The result was the arrival, early in 669/1270,¹¹⁵ of a letter sent by Baisū-Nūghāy. This letter, after thanking Baibars and returning his greeting, expressed the writer's pleasure at the enquiry as to who among Bereke's relatives had become Muslim. The enquiry was taken by Baisū-Nūghāy as evidence of Baibars's faithfulness to his pledges to the late ruler of the Golden Horde. In reply, Baisū-Nūghāy confirmed his followers' acceptance of Islam and their maintenance of Bereke's policy. He ended with an assurance of full agreement with, and support for, Baibars.¹¹⁶

Baibars was delighted to receive such a letter, and replied acknowledging its receipt and expressing his pleasure at its contents. He strove further to incite Baisū-Nūghāy against Abaghā and concluded his letter by hinting that his own efforts in the Holy War in the West were equal to theirs in the East.¹¹⁷

9. FURTHER CONTACT WITH MANGŪTIMUR

Meanwhile the correspondence between Baibars and Mangūtimur was continued. The last delegation seems to have been the one sent by Mangūtimur in 670/1271-3 through the territory of the Emperor Michael.¹¹⁸ This delegation was delayed on the way owing to an incident which took place some time during the month of Qa'da of that year. It happened that, while sailing to Egypt, they were seized by a ship from Marseilles and brought to Acre. Baibars, afraid that the Franks might send them to Abaghā, demanded their immediate release, which was brought about after some negotiation. Baibars then took severe measures against the Marseillais merchants in Alexandria and other Egyptian

¹¹⁵*Biography*, f. 143 b.

¹¹⁶*Ibid.*, f. 144 a.

¹¹⁷*Ibid.*

¹¹⁸The two biographers of Baibars and the later chief historians of the period do not record any further one.

ports, preventing them from trading or from leaving the country until they had repaid what their compatriots had taken from the envoys.¹¹⁹

It appears that this delegation carried more than one letter. It is probable that a number of Mangūtimur chief *amīrs* also wrote offering their friendship towards Baibars and their sympathy towards the Muslim countries under the domination of the House of Hūlāgū. They further urged Baibars to help destroy Abaghā.¹²⁰

On their return home in Sha'bān, 671 A.H. (Feb.-March, A.D. 1273),¹²¹ the emissaries were accompanied by Baibars's own mission to Mangūtimur. In his letter, Baibars informed¹²² the Khān of the Golden Horde about an embassy sent to himself by Abaghā¹²³ and of the latter's attack on al-Bīra, ending in his defeat at the Euphrates.¹²⁴

Mangutimur's reply to these letters is not known; although his relations with the Ilkhān of Persia had improved,¹²⁵ he seems to have remained friendly with Baibars. The improved relationship between the two Mongol princes must have distressed Baibars and caused him to set about finding an alternative ally sufficiently powerful to check Abaghā. Baibars's decision to turn his attention to destroying the Mongol power in Asia Minor might well have been a result of this unwelcome accord between the Mongols.¹²⁶

(ii) HIS RELATIONS WITH THE ILKHĀNS OF PERSIA

Baibars's position as ruler of Egypt and Syria was particularly delicate at the time of his succession. The Mongols, his main enemy, occupied Iraq, with vassals in Armenia and Asia Minor; moreover, they had just been defeated by the Muslims and were only waiting for an opportunity for revenge. The Franks, another dangerous enemy, occupied the coastal

¹¹⁹*Biography*, f. 159; and Mufaddal, Vol. I, p.549.

¹²⁰*Biography*, f. 159; and Ibn Shaddād, *Tārīkh al-Malik al-Zāhir*, Vol. II, p.5.

¹²¹Ibn Shaddād, *op.cit.*, f.19.

¹²²*Biography*, f. 164 b.

¹²³See sections on Baibars's relations with the Ilkhāns, below, pp.51-77.

¹²⁴See below, p.65.

¹²⁵See sections on Baibars's relations with the Ilkhāns, below, pp.51-77.

¹²⁶See below, pp.62-3.

territory of Syria. They, should the Mongols decide to attack the Muslims, would seize the opportunity to extend their territory in Syria and might threaten Egypt. But, apart from this threat, the Franks, should they receive fresh reinforcements of crusaders from Europe, might prove to be just as dangerous as the Mongols. Baibars had therefore to ensure that he was not caught between simultaneous attacks from both his enemies, and therefore applied himself to campaigns, diplomatic and military, to avert this danger.

1. PREOCCUPATIONS OF THE ILKHĀN OF PERSIA

On the death of Mangū Khān in 658/1259-60, Hūlāgū was forced to leave Syria for the East, where the succession to the great Khān's throne was being decided. Soon after his departure his troops were defeated at 'Ain Jālūt, but he was unable to avenge this defeat as he had become involved in the struggle between the two candidates for the Mongol throne, Kubilai and Arig-Bughā. His desire to give support, both moral and military, to Kubilai, and his eagerness to be near the centre of events, kept him in the East.

These preoccupations of Hūlāgū gave Baibars time to set his house in order. He spent part of the year 658/1260 and almost the whole of the following year in establishing his power and consolidating his position.¹²⁷

About a year and a half after the battle of 'Ain Jālūt, Hūlāgū was ready to march westward against the territory of Baibars, but events forced him to march north against Bereke, the Khān of the Golden Horde. The hostility between Bereke and Hūlāgū which had been growing throughout Mangū Khān's reign had now resulted in open conflict. Subsequently the military action that Hūlāgū now found it necessary to undertake, prevented him from concentrating his activity against Baibars.¹²⁸

2. MONGOL ATTACK ON SYRIA

The eastern and north-eastern borders of Syria had not remained peaceful during this period, being seldom free from

¹²⁷See above, p.27 seq.

¹²⁸Michael Prawdin, *The Mongol Empire*, pp. 365 and seq.

disturbances or the threat of disturbances from the Mongol troops stationed in adjoining countries. The first military action after the battle of 'Ain Jālūt was probably that which occurred at the end of 658/1260.¹²⁹ Baibars had not then established his power throughout Syria, so that when the Mongols crossed the Euphrates they were met by a force sent in haste by the ruler of Aleppo. The Muslim force was defeated and the Mongols were encouraged by this victory to advance towards Aleppo, which they finally occupied. On advancing towards Hims, however, they were met by combined Muslim forces which defeated them and forced them back to Aleppo, where they remained until Jumādā the First of the following year (April-May, A.D. 1261). They withdrew from Aleppo, it is said, on hearing of the approach of a force sent by Baibars early in the month of Rabi' the First (Feb.-March).¹³⁰ Another Mongol attack was successfully launched in 660 A.H. (A.D. 1261-2),¹³¹ this time against al-Mauṣil. The town was reduced before the force sent by Baibars for its relief could arrive.¹³²

All these events took place while Baibars was preoccupied with his internal affairs. In a number of these encounters with the Mongols he took no part at all and in others he was too late to do so. These attacks, however, were not on the scale Baibars had been expecting from the Mongols after their defeat at 'Ain Jālūt. But when in 660/1260-1 news was received of preparations for a large scale expedition to an unknown destination, Baibars was greatly concerned and took every measure to ensure his success against Hūlāgū when the attack came.¹³³

3. BAIBARS'S ACTIVITIES IN IRAQ AND PERSIA

While Hūlāgū was still engaged in his quarrel with Bereke,¹³⁴ Baibars made the most of the respite allowed him. In 661/1262-3, in addition to the steps he had taken to

¹²⁹Nuwairī, *Nihāyat al-Arab*, Vol. XXIX, f. 8 b.

¹³⁰*Nihāya*, Vol. XXIX, f. 8 b. According to Nuwairī, the force Baibars sent against the Mongols was observed at Gaza by the Franks, who hastened to give warning to the Mongols. *Nihāya*, f. 9. See also Yūnīnī, *Dhail*, Vol. I, p.440, Vol. II, p.93.

¹³¹*Sulūk*, Vol. I, p.475.

¹³²*Biography*, f. 19 b.

¹³³*Ibid*, f. 29.

¹³⁴Howorth, *op.cit.*, Part III, pp.115-6.

strengthen his armies, Baibars prepared to undermine the Mongol power in Iraq. Among the Arab tribes dwelling on the border of Iraq was the powerful tribe of Khafāja, some of whose number had become subject to the Mongols,¹³⁵ while others, pasturing on the western bank of the Euphrates, were counted as being with Baibars. Owing to the nomadic character of the tribes and the ease with which they could cross the Euphrates, it was difficult for the Mongols to be certain who was with them and who was against them. Baibars knew this, and made full use of the ability of these nomads to penetrate into Iraq without arousing suspicions, sending some of the Khafāji amīrs to win over the others and to harass the country as much as they could. Baibars did not confine his efforts to Iraq, but in his attempt to win friends within the Mongol dominions he went as far afield as Shīrāz, whose ruler he roused against the Mongols.¹³⁶ His attempts seem to have been successful, since in the following year, 662/1263-4, a deputation of Khafāji amīrs arrived at Baibars's court with the news that they had been conducting raids against the Mongols and had penetrated as far as the gates of Baghdād and Baṣra. They also brought news that the ruler of Shīrāz had just defeated a Mongol force. Baibars did not omit to write and encourage him.¹³⁷

Baibars's precautions against attack included the fortifying of his strongholds on the eastern frontier of Syria, particularly the important frontier town of al-Bīra. This town, apart from its function in guarding the Syrian flank, was used as a base for raids against Mongol outposts. Such raids were launched from al-Bīra in 662/1263-4 against the district stretching to Qal'at al-Rūm.¹³⁸

4. THE MONGOL REACTION

Baibars's activities in and against Iraq were bound to provoke a reaction from the Mongol authorities there. It came in 663/1264-5, when, about the beginning of Rabī' the

¹³⁵At various times they had taken an active part in the wars between Baibars and the Mongols: see for instance *Biography*, f. 172 a.

¹³⁶*Biography*, f. 41.

¹³⁷*Ibid*, f. 48.

¹³⁸*Biography*, f. 52 a.

First (Dec.-Jan.), the Mongols besieged al-Bīra with seventeen siege engines.¹³⁹

The timing of this attack by the Mongols is said to have been made on the advice of the Franks, who had told them that the Egyptian troops could not be mobilized during the grazing season, since their forces were dispersed. Judging by the duration of the siege, about two months,¹⁴⁰ and by the difficulty Baibars's troops had with their camels, the Franks were not altogether wrong. However, Baibars was able to collect the force he needed and he himself took station with another army in the proximity of the Franks. The Mongols withdrew in haste on sighting the relieving force.¹⁴¹

The size of the force which Baibars despatched to relieve al-Bīra,¹⁴² and the number of the troops he himself commanded, are indications of the seriousness with which he viewed the situation. The advice the Franks had given to the Mongols about the best time for launching an attack had alarmed him, and he must have suspected a coalition between his two enemies. This would explain his action in stationing himself and the troops under his command in the neighbourhood of the Franks instead of marching with his troops to al-Bīra. His vengeance on the Franks came later, when his troops had driven out the Mongols and he was sure of not having to fight two enemies at once. But before dealing with the Franks,¹⁴³ he had relieved al-Bīra and fortified it so strongly that it could resist for a long time any possible attack by the Mongols. It was supplied with ammunition and provisions sufficient to last for ten years.¹⁴⁴

5. ABAGHĀ'S SUCCESSION

Hūlagū died on the 19th of Rabī' the second, 663 A.H. (8th

¹³⁹*Biography*, f. 63.

¹⁴⁰According to a statement describing the resistance of one of the towers, which stood up to the bombardment for two months. *Ibid*, f. 65 b.

¹⁴¹*Ibid*, f. 64.

¹⁴²Eight thousand horsemen were sent, apart from the force al-Malik al-Mansūr brought with him from Aleppo.

¹⁴³See below, his relation with the Franks, p.83.

¹⁴⁴*Biography*, ff. 65-6.

Feb., A.D 1265)¹⁴⁵ and was succeeded by his son Abaghā,¹⁴⁶ who inherited his father's hostility towards the Golden Horde. Like his father, Abaghā was unable to free himself from commitments in the East to turn his whole attention against Baibars who was thus given a respite from the major threat which the Mongols constituted. This he used in order to advance his plans against his other enemies.

6. FRESH MONGOL DANGER

It was not until about Jumādā the First 666 A.H. (Jan.-Feb., A.D. 1268) that the Mongols were reported to be planning an attack on the region of Aleppo, this probably being a task the Mongol troops in the south of Asia Minor were charged to carry out while Baibars was in Egypt. The attack did not materialise, either because it had been a fabrication by Baibars to disguise the real purpose of his expedition against some of the Frankish possessions in Syria,¹⁴⁷ or because the Mongols heard of the extensive preparations being made and chose not to meet him.¹⁴⁸

7. FURTHER STRUGGLE FOR ABAGHĀ

The position of Abaghā and his relations with Mangūtimur had undergone some changes during this year, 666/1267-8. The triumph of Kubilai over his younger brother, Arig-Bughā, had now brought to the throne the man whose claims Hūlagū and his son had supported. Realising the harm the civil war had brought to the Ilkhāns of Persia, Kubilai was anxious to make peace between the two princes:¹⁴⁹ his task was probably facilitated by the fact that Mangūtimur was not a Muslim. Although the final settlement was not brought about until 668/1269-70,¹⁵⁰ it would seem that the tension had begun to relax as early as 666/1267-8. But if this year had brought to the Ilkhān a sign of peace and the possibility of his

¹⁴⁵Rashīd al-Dīn, *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*, Vol. III, p.94; Cf. *Sulūk*, Vol. I, p.541, and Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, *al-Hawādith al-Jāmi'a*, p.353.

¹⁴⁶Abaghā was installed on the throne on the 3rd of Ramaḍān 663 A.H. (19th June A.D. 1265). Rashīd al-Dīn, *op.cit.*, Vol. III, p.95. Cf. Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, *op.cit.*, p.353.

¹⁴⁷See his relations with the Franks, p.96.

¹⁴⁸*Biography*, f. 101 b.

¹⁴⁹For the agreement between the quarrelling Mongol princes see Abaghā's letter to Baibars. *Biography*, ff. 126-7.

¹⁵⁰Vernadsky, *The Mongols and Russia*, p.165.

being free to take up once more his military campaigns against Syria, it brought with it indications of a new cause of friction in that Buragh, the ruler of the Jaghatay Horde, was now threatening Abaghā's eastern frontier.¹⁵¹ Abaghā was therefore obliged to turn his attention away from attacking Syria, and Baibars was once more left free to further his interests against his enemies on different frontiers.

8. NEGOTIATIONS FOR PEACE

Baibars had now become a formidable ruler, with Abaghā being in no position to curb his power. The Emperor Michael, who was an ally of Abaghā and had a treaty of friendship with Baibars, tried to negotiate a settlement between the two rulers. It would be of benefit to Michael if a treaty could be negotiated at the moment when Abaghā was involved elsewhere and more likely to welcome the idea. Michael therefore took the opportunity, in 667/1268-9, of writing to Baibars and suggesting a peace between him and Abaghā; but Baibars, who doubtless appreciated the difficulties of Abaghā's position, refused to come to terms with the Ilkhan.¹⁵²

Michael was not the only one among Abaghā's allies or vassals who would have benefited from peace between Baibars and Abaghā. Haithūm, the ruler of Sis, was in urgent need of such a peace, for he was a vassal of the Mongols and expected to participate in any military activity undertaken by Abaghā. After his defeat by Baibars at the end of the year 665/1267, Haithūm, to obtain the release of his son, had been obliged to sign a humiliating truce, surrendering a number of strong fortresses, undertaking not to build or repair fortifications and agreeing to pay an annual tribute to Baibars.¹⁵³ Weakened as he now was, Haithūm could not afford to help the Mongols against such a foe as Baibars, nor was he able to turn down a Mongol proposal for him to attack Baibars's country or to participate in such an attack. This dilemma would be solved if Baibars and Abaghā were brought

¹⁵¹Howorth, *op.cit.*, Part III, pp.228-9; Yūnīnī, Dhail, Vol. II, p.411 and pp.434-436, and Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, *op.cit.*, p.357.

¹⁵²*Biography*, f. 124.

¹⁵³*Ibid.*, f. 174.

together. Haithūm's enthusiasm, however, was not apparently shared by either Baibars or Abaghā, which made his task more difficult. Failing to persuade Baibars to entrust him with the task of mediation, he took the matter into his own hands and put forward to Abaghā a request, apparently on behalf of Baibars, that he, Haithūm, should act as mediator.¹⁵⁴ Baibars later denied responsibility for this, and these fabrications of Haithūm did not help the negotiations between Baibars and Abaghā.

The result of Haithūm's efforts was that Abaghā sent an envoy to Baibars in the company of the ruler of Sis, who was at that time returning from Abaghā's court. The envoy carried a letter written from Baghdād and dated 20th of Rabi' the Second 667 A.H. (27th December, A.D. 1268).¹⁵⁵ The meaning of this letter is in places obscure, probably because the copyist may have been misled by the Mongol words and disjointed construction in an inadequate translation of the original. The following summary is therefore largely conjectural:

Abaghā understood, presumably from the ruler of Sis, that it was Qutuz who had killed the Mongol envoys sent to him in 658/1259 to demand the submission of the Egyptian Sultan. The impression is given that the Mongols did not wish to accuse Baibars unjustly of this crime.¹⁵⁶ Abaghā knew that Baibars wanted the release of certain Muslims who were detained in the *ordu*. Then follows a reference to a dispute which prevented Abaghā from marching against Baibars. This was presumably the dispute between Kubilai and Arig-Bughā after Mangū-Khān's death.¹⁵⁷ It seems that the Mongols had been

¹⁵⁴The negotiations and exchange of letters between Abaghā and Baibars reveal that Haithūm had taken the liberty of presenting Baibars's wishes to Abaghā. *Biography*, f. 126.

¹⁵⁵*Ibid.*, f. 126.

¹⁵⁶Regarding this portion of Abaghā's letter, Shāfi' states that Abaghā reviled Baibars for having killed Qutuz. To this Baibars replied: "*innama qataltu Qutuz li mulki fa inna'l-mulka li bi'l-ijmā'*." (I only killed Qutuz for my throne, and the throne was mine by general consent.) (ff. 123.4). This equivocal reply throws doubt on the authenticity of Shāfi's version. This somewhat obscure passage about Qutuz and Baibars may be a misinterpretation and the weak justification of Baibars's action was probably introduced at a later date.

¹⁵⁷See above, p.52.

led to understand that Baibars was ready to submit to Abaghā.¹⁵⁸ It was suggested that Baibars should send one of his children or one of his leading officials to negotiate a settlement with the Mongols. Notwithstanding this invitation, a phrase in the letter suggests that the Ilkhān was not sure whether Baibars would keep the promises he had previously made. Abaghā ends with boasts of having conquered the whole world.

There is one further point mentioned by Maqrīzī and claimed by him to be included in the letter. According to Maqrīzī this text runs as follows: "When King Abaghā left the East he conquered the whole world; anyone who disobeyed him was killed. Therefore, whether you ascend to the sky or come down to earth you cannot escape him, so it is better that a truce should be concluded between us."¹⁵⁹ Maqrīzī goes on to say that the envoys delivered the following oral message: "You are a slave who was sold in Siwās, so how can you dispute the authority of the kings of the earth?" The envoys may have been charged to deliver this oral message in case the rather mild tone of Abaghā's letter was not appreciated.

Baibars's reply is reported as follows:

The ruler of Sīs was charged to deliver *only* the reply to the message brought by Sunqur al-Ashqar, who was in the camp of the Mongols and whose release was part of the treaty Baibars had signed with Haithūm. If Qutuz had killed the Mongol envoys, Baibars on the other hand had sent back safely those who came to negotiate with him. Yet Baibars had received nothing of what he had requested.¹⁶⁰ He wondered how there could be such an agreement, probably meaning an agreement based on his submission to the Mongols, when he himself ruled a vast realm. Replying to Abaghā's boasts of having conquered the whole world, Baibars enquired sarcastically about the fate of Kitbughā, the commander of the Mongol troops who was killed at their defeat at the

¹⁵⁸The text here is particularly obscure and this point has been deduced from Baibars's reply. See Baibars's letter, *Biography*, f. 26-7.

¹⁵⁹*Sulūk*, Vol. I, p. 574.

¹⁶⁰What Baibars had requested is not mentioned, but it may be assumed that he was referring to the Muslims still held by the Mongols and whom he wished to be released.

battle of 'Ain Jālūt. Finally Abaghā was told that if he had sent one of his relatives to negotiate, Baibars would have done the same.¹⁶¹

To the oral message, Baibars's reply was that he wanted all the territories the Mongols had occupied in Iraq, The Jazīra, Anatolia and Syria.¹⁶²

The insincere way in which these negotiations were conducted made their failure inevitable, for soon both Abaghā and Baibars found that neither was interested in peace. The delegations that went to and fro were only part of the formalities that had to be observed once the procedure had begun.

9. A MONGOL HOSTILE ACTION

The hostility between Baibars and the Mongols does not seem to have been lessened by this temporising. The Mongol authorities in Iraq were reported to have arranged for a party of Mongols, guided by Arab nomads, to reconnoitre the route to the Ḥijāz. This may have been one of the reasons behind Baibars's journey to the Ḥijāz to perform the Pilgrimage in this year (667/1269). The Mongols were said to have changed their plans on hearing that Baibars was on the move.¹⁶³

10. MONGOL COALITION WITH THE FRANKS

The next move by the Mongols was an attack which they launched about the month of Rabi' the First 668 A.H. (October-November, A.D. 1269), against the district of Aleppo. This particular attack disturbed Baibars considerably, for he had learned that the Mongols had arranged for the Franks to deliver an attack at the same time.¹⁶⁴ The Frankish negotiators of this agreement had been sent to the Mongols through Sis by the king of Aragon. Some of the Christian king's followers had already arrived in Acre.¹⁶⁵ The Mongols who had attacked Aleppo withdrew on hearing of Baibars's arrival in Syria. For the remainder of the year Baibars directed his activity against the Franks and the

¹⁶¹*Biography*, f. 127 b.

¹⁶³*Biography*, f. 136.

¹⁶⁵*Ibid*, f. 139 a.

¹⁶²*Nujūm*, Vol. VII, p.144.

¹⁶⁴*Ibid*, f. 138 b.

Ismā'īlīs.¹⁶⁶ The Mongols attempted no more attacks that year.¹⁶⁷

Abaghā was too busy himself to deal with Baibars, who was growing more powerful all the time, and negotiations alone would not secure the expansion he desired. It is not surprising, therefore, that he should have turned for help to Baibars's bitter enemies, the Franks. Abaghā sent an embassy to the Pope, who in his turn sent them on to England, France and Spain. The result of this embassy was the crusade headed by Louis IX, King of France, which was eventually diverted against Tunis.¹⁶⁸ Baibars was thus spared the combined attack that Abaghā had sought to bring upon him.¹⁶⁹

11. BAIBARS'S REACTION

The conclusion of peace between Abaghā and Mangūtimur had deprived Baibars of an important lever in the diversion of Abaghā from his attack on Syria. Noticing Abaghā's diplomatic activities with the Franks, Baibars accordingly sought to revive the enmity between Abaghā and the influential officers in the service of Mangūtimur. He concentrated on the question of religion, as he had done earlier in his incitement of Bereke against the Ilkhāns. Baisū Nūghāy, the commander of the troops of the Golden Horde, was a Muslim, and Baibars took steps to make contact with him¹⁷⁰ for this purpose.

12. MONGOL ATTACK

Prince Edward of England had joined the Crusade in Tunis but had been too late to take part. He therefore proceeded to Syria where he hoped for some success against the Muslims. The Franks had been overjoyed at the news of the formation of the crusade in Europe, but their disappointment at its failure was all the greater. They realized their dangerous

¹⁶⁶See Baibars's relation with the Franks, pp.107-108.

¹⁶⁷The proposal that the Mongols and the Franks should combine against their common enemy, the Mamlūk Sultan, was probably initiated by Abaghā.

¹⁶⁸See Baibars's relations with the Franks, pp.107-108.

¹⁶⁹M. Prawdin, *The Mongol Empire*, p.370.

¹⁷⁰See Baibars's relation with the Khans of the Golden Horde, p.49.

position with Baibars, and turned towards the Ilkhān of Persia for help. In answer to their request, Abaghā instructed his commander in Asia Minor to attack Baibars's territory.¹⁷¹ Baibars was in Syria at the beginning of the year 670/1271 and decided to remain there to meet this attack on his territory.¹⁷² It was eventually delivered on the 15th of Rabi' the First 670 A.H. (21st October, A.D. 1271) against 'Ain tab and Ḥārim. This move by the Mongols is said to have been taken in collusion with the Franks who attacked Qāqūn in Rabi' the Second 670 A.H. (November-December, A.D. 1271).¹⁷³ Baibars immediately despatched the necessary force against the Mongols at Ḥārim, himself taking up position in the district of Aleppo close to the Franks. Baibars's prompt action in having the necessary force ready probably prevented a major attack by the Mongol commander in Asia Minor.¹⁷⁴

Bad weather in Syria forced Baibars to postpone his plan to attack the Franks in retaliation for their raid against Qāqūn, and so he proceeded to Egypt, arriving on the 23rd of Jumādā the First (27th December, A.D. 1271). The Mongols, encouraged by his withdrawal from Syria, advanced as far as Ḥarrān, the news of their arrival reaching Baibars in Rajab (February-March, A.D. 1272).

On the 3rd of Sha'bān (5th March) he was ready to leave Cairo for Syria.¹⁷⁵ The Mongols realized that they would be unable to hold Ḥarrān, so before retreating, some time in Ramaḍān (April), they destroyed it.¹⁷⁶ While this was taking place, Baibars had arrived in Syria, and had begun peace negotiations with the Franks.¹⁷⁷

13. NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE MONGOLS

It was probably about this time, when he was alarmed by the degree of alliance against him between the Mongols and the Franks, that Baibars began to approach influential officials among the Saljūqs in Asia Minor. Samghar, the

¹⁷¹Howorth, *op.cit.*, Part III, pp.242-3.

¹⁷²*Biography*, f. 156 a.

¹⁷³*Ibid.*, f. 157 a.

¹⁷⁴*Nihāya*, Vol. XXIX, f. 48.

¹⁷⁶Ibn Shaddād, *op.cit.*, f. 3.

¹⁷⁵*Biography*, f. 158 a.

¹⁷⁷*Biography*, f. 158 a.

Mongol commander in Asia Minor, and the Perwāneh were not on good terms. The friction was probably caused by Samghar's close supervision of the Perwāneh and his demands for contributions to the Mongol cause. Baibars, with his active espionage system, could not have failed to learn of this. The Perwāneh, who had come to resent the Mongol rule, may well have been in contact with Baibars and perhaps have suggested that Baibars approach Samghar for a settlement.¹⁷⁸

This would give Baibars an opportunity to prepare his attack on the Franks, which, if successful, would give him equal standing with the Mongols and so bring nearer his ambition of delivering Asia Minor from them. It was suggested that when Baibars had sent envoys, the Perwāneh would help to convince the Mongol commander of the value of peace, since Abaghā was busy in the East. On the 7th of Shawwāl, 670 A.H. (7th May, A.D.1272¹⁷⁹), after the conclusion of a treaty with the Franks, an embassy from Samghar and the Perwāneh brought the reply to Baibars's letter.¹⁸⁰ In his letter Samghar suggested peace,¹⁸¹ and directed his envoys to point out to Baibars that since Samghar's arrival in Asia Minor he had never been approached by Baibars, whose wishes he would have granted. He further advised Baibars that it would be in the interests of both himself and Abaghā to send an embassy to Abaghā indicating Baibars's wishes; Samghar would then help to see that these suggestions were accepted.¹⁸²

The proposal seems to have appealed to Baibars and he treated the envoys honourably, sending them back with his own envoys to Samghar and Abaghā. Baibars's envoys to Abaghā were then escorted by the Perwāneh to the *ordu*. Baibars's envoys told Abaghā that Samghar had informed Baibars of Abaghā's wish that Baibars should send an envoy to him. Baibars's terms for peace were that Abaghā should surrender the Muslim territories he had captured. Abaghā

¹⁷⁸The present which Baibars's envoys handed over secretly to the Perwāneh on their arrival is proof of some understanding between them. *Biography*, f. 159 a.

¹⁷⁹Ibn Shaddād, *op.cit.*, f. 4 a.

¹⁸⁰*Biography*, f. 158 b.

¹⁸¹*Ibid.*

¹⁸²Ibn Shaddād, *op.cit.*, f. 4 and Yūnīnī, *Dhail*, Vol. II, pp.471-2.

explained that this was impossible and that a more acceptable ground for agreement was that each should keep what he now held.¹⁸³

It is obvious from the harsh terms he suggested that Baibars was not really anxious to reach an agreement with Abaghā; perhaps he believed that such an agreement would give Abaghā a much-needed respite, but would not guarantee a lasting peace. Moreover peace with Abaghā would probably harm the good relations Baibars had begun to build up both with Baisū Nūghāy, and hence with Mangūtimur, and with the Perwāneh in Asia Minor. His relations with the Perwāneh were to prove particularly important during the following year, in his dealing with the Ilkhān. The last hope of agreement with Abaghā was destroyed by Baibars's envoys when they informed Abaghā of Mangūtimur's repeated suggestion to Baibars that each should advance from his own side against the Ilkhān and retain what he captured.¹⁸⁴ As frequently happened in negotiations of this kind, no agreement was reached.

14. HOSTILITY RESUMED

Realizing that there was no hope of a settlement, Abaghā began to prepare for an attack on Baibars's territory. Baibars soon learned of these preparations, and, while at Damascus about the 5th of Muḥarram 671 A.H. (2nd August, A.D.1272), confided to his *amīrs* his suspicions of the Mongols' intentions. The long stay of his envoys at Abaghā's court increased his anxiety, as he feared they might have been delayed in order to persuade him to relax his watchfulness and allow the Mongols to complete their preparations. He was afraid that they might attack before his troops and stores were ready, and so he left for Egypt on the 6th of Muḥarram, returning to Syria on the 3rd of Ṣafar after having arranged for troops to follow him.¹⁸⁵

Baibars's envoys returned from Abaghā on the 15th of Ṣafar 671 A.H. (12th September, A.D.1272¹⁸⁶), probably

¹⁸³Ibn Shaddād, *op.cit.*, f. 4 b and Yūnīnī, *Dhail*, Vol. II, p.472.

¹⁸⁴*Biography*, f. 159.

¹⁸⁶Ibn Shaddād, *op.cit.*, f. 4 b.

¹⁸⁵*Biography*, f. 160 b.

accompanied by a delegation from Abaghā which arrived during the same month. In spite of the harsh demands Baibars had put forward to Abaghā, the latter's envoys first conveyed that his wish was to conclude a peace, to be negotiated by Sunqur al-Ashqar. Their attitude later changed and Baibars was made to understand that he himself or one of the *amīrs* next to him in rank should negotiate the peace.¹⁸⁷

It was obvious from these moves that Abaghā was trying to gain time and did not expect his embassy to make any progress in the negotiations. In fact, Abaghā's troops had already been mobilised while the embassy was at Baibars's court.¹⁸⁸

The Mongols advanced against al-Bīra and al-Raḥba, but hearing of Baibars's approach they raised the siege at al-Raḥba. When he reached the Euphrates, Baibars found that the Mongols, 5,000 in number, had fortified themselves on the eastern bank of the river.¹⁸⁹ On the next day, Sunday the 18th of Jumādā the First 671 A.H. (11th December, A.D.1272¹⁹⁶), Baibars crossed the river with his armies and a fierce battle ensued, ending in the defeat of the Mongols and the capture and execution of their commander, Junqur the Elder.¹⁹¹ On returning to the western shore the following day, Baibars was informed of the hasty withdrawal of Darbāy, the Mongol commander who had been besieging al-Bīra. The inhabitants of al-Bīra came out and seized the Mongol baggage.¹⁹²

15. FURTHER MONGOL ACTIVITIES

For the rest of this year Baibars had no further trouble with the Mongols. It was not until Muḥarram of the following year, 672 A.H. (July-Aug., A.D.1273), that he received news of further Mongol activities. He immediately left Egypt for Syria with some of his closest *amīrs*,¹⁹³ learning on the way that Abaghā himself was in Baghdad. This alarmed Baibars, who

¹⁸⁷*Biography*, f. 161 a.

¹⁸⁸The envoys left Syria in Rabī' the First, and the news of the Mongol attack reached Baibars on the 6th of the same month. *Biography*, f. 161 a.

¹⁸⁹*Ibid.*, f. 161 b.

¹⁹¹*Biography*, f. 161 b.

¹⁹³*Biography*, f. 168 b.

¹⁹⁰Mufaḍḍal, p.380.

¹⁹²*Ibid.*

as a result arranged for the Egyptian army, together with the Arab auxiliaries of Egypt, to set out for Syria. Some of them reached Syria on the 9th of Rabi' the First (23rd of Sept.),¹⁹⁴ but bad weather prevented them from advancing more than two stages beyond Jaffa. They were then ordered by Baibars to return to Egypt, which they reached on the 9th of Jumādā the Second (21st of Dec.).¹⁹⁵

A possible explanation for Abaghā's presence in Baghdad was that, being concerned about the repeated defeats of his troops in Iraq, he had decided to investigate the situation. But Baibars was so alarmed that he ordered every man in his realm who owned a horse to join him, and every village in Syria to provide horsemen, each village according to its means.¹⁹⁶ This was the first time he had ever employed such severe measures and it was an indication of his anxiety. He soon sent the Egyptian troops home, however, probably because he had learned of Abaghā's real object and realised that there was no immediate danger. Certainly, no further news of military activity was reported,¹⁹⁷ and Baibars therefore saw no justification for the exposure of his troops to the bad weather in Syria and for the financial difficulties their upkeep would have entailed.¹⁹⁸ In this bad weather the Mongols were not likely to attack, but, if they were tempted to do so on hearing that the Egyptian troops had turned back, Baibars was confident the Syrian troops would be capable of dealing with the situation.

There was a report of some minor Mongol military activity some time later, but Baibars dealt with it adequately by ordering the Arabs of Syria to raid the territory of Iraq. The raid penetrated to al-Anbār, where a company of the Mongols were stationed. Baibars's exact whereabouts were not known, and, when the Arabs appeared, the Mongols took them for Baibars and his troops, and withdrew to the eastern bank of the Euphrates. The Arabs sent by Baibars were met

¹⁹⁴Ibn Shaddād, *op.cit.*, f. 29.

¹⁹⁵*Ibid*, f. 30.

¹⁹⁶*Biography*, f. 169.

¹⁹⁷*Ibid*, f. 169 b.

¹⁹⁸A tax was imposed and its collection begun on the 15th of Sha'bān, 672 A.H. (25th of Feb. A.D. 1274), but, owing to the hardship or rather the discontent it caused, it was abolished on the 7th of Qa'da (25th of May). Ibn Shaddād, *op.cit.*, Vol. II, ff. 31-2.

by Arabs of Khafāja, supporters of the Mongols. It is likely that this encounter occurred on the western bank of the river. These activities took place about the middle of Sha‘ban (end of Feb., A.D.1274).¹⁹⁹

Muḥyī al-Dīn²⁰⁰ places great importance on this event, claiming that it forced Abaghā, who was probably inspecting the Mongol possessions in Iraq, to withdraw. The author does not indicate the place where Abaghā was staying at the time of the incident, nor does he say where Abaghā withdrew. However, if this is true it must be because Abaghā had miscalculated the number of Baibars’s troops. One can only speculate that he may have thought that Baibars was trying to force him to take the field, and that if he did not do so it would reveal to Baibars that he had only a small force available.

16. NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE PERWĀNEH AND BAIBARS

Baibars’s activities in Asia Minor and his negotiations with the Perwāneh, at least two years before, had not been without their consequences. The enmity between the Perwāneh and Abaghā’s other representative, Ajāy, had led the former to take steps to have Ajāy recalled to the *ordu*. The Perwāneh had later regretted this, and because of his fear of Ajāy he hastened to approach Baibars in 672/1273-4, and to offer his submission if protection was given.²⁰¹ Although Baibars accepted this conditionally, he explained that he could not lead an expedition to Anatolia until the next year.

17. ATTACK ON CILICIA

Before Baibars could invade Anatolia, the territories on the route had to be subdued, and Cilicia was therefore ransacked during the following year. Baibars entered this country about the end of Ramaḍān 673 A.H. (March, A.D.1275) and laid it waste, so as to render it harmless for the passage of his troops in the following year.²⁰² Immediately after Baibars’s return to Syria from this campaign, Abaghā,

¹⁹⁹*Biography*, f. 172 a.

²⁰¹Ibn Shaddād, *op.cit.*, f. 34.

²⁰⁰*Ibid*, f. 172 a.

²⁰²Ibn Shaddād, *op.cit.*, f. 57.

who was then at Azerbaijān, summoned the Perwāneh and the Mongol representative in Asia Minor. They left on their journey to Abaghā in Hījja 673 A.H. (May-June, A.D. 1275).²⁰³

Among the topics dealt with at this meeting was undoubtedly the quarrel between Ajay and the Perwāneh, but Baibars's activities, too, could not have been left undiscussed. Soon after the Perwāneh and Abaghā's representative had returned to Anatolia they received orders from Abaghā to march against al-Bīra.

18. MONGOL SIEGE OF AL-BĪRA

Al-Bīra was besieged on the 8th of Jumādā the Second 674 A.H. (29th Nov., A.D.1275) with 30,000 troops, 15,000 of whom were Mongols.²⁰⁴ The siege did not last long and it was raised on Saturday the 17th of Jumādā the Second (8th Dec.).²⁰⁵ This sudden withdrawal from al-Bīra should be seen in the light of relevant strategical and political circumstances.

The Mongols could not have planned a long siege against al-Bīra, for they had learned from their previous attacks on Baibars's territory that he was capable of sending relief in a very short time. If, therefore, it was hoped to reduce a well-fortified place such as al-Bīra, this should be accomplished in the shortest possible time and would require a huge army. For such an army large supplies would be necessary, but the Mongols wished to travel light in case they had to withdraw in haste. Apart from Baibars's proximity, therefore, the taking of al-Bīra was probably found to need more time than they calculated,²⁰⁶ and more supplies than they could provide.²⁰⁷ Furthermore, there was the discovery of treachery on the part of the Perwāneh, who was leading the Saljūq contingent in the Mongol army. He was accused of corresponding with Baibars and of having promised to attack the Mongol army on his own side as soon as he saw Baibars's troops. This alone

²⁰³ Ibn Shaddād, *op.cit.*, f. 70 b.

²⁰⁴ Ibn Shaddād, *op.cit.*, f. 72.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, f. 74.

²⁰⁶ Ibn Shaddād, *op.cit.*, f. 74.

²⁰⁷ *Nihāya*, Vol. XXIX, f. 56 b.

would have been sufficient to cause the Mongols to raise the siege.

Baibars had already begun his march when he received the news of the Mongol withdrawal. He returned to Damascus.²⁰⁸

19. FURTHER NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN BAIBARS AND THE PERWĀNEH

The position of the Perwāneh after the withdrawal from al-Bīra was dangerous, for he could no longer trust the Mongols, who by now had strong suspicions of his intrigue with Baibars. In fact, Abaghā soon recalled him to his court; partly, no doubt, because he wished to clear up this matter.²⁰⁹ The Perwāneh saw that his safety lay in speeding up the negotiations with Baibars, from whom he hoped to obtain a force which would help him to drive the Mongols from Anatolia and remain there as a garrison. He also required Baibars to confirm both the Saljūq Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn and himself in their present positions, in return for which they would pay Baibars the tribute they had been paying to the Mongols. It was probably to persuade Baibars to accept this suggestion that the Perwāneh hastened to secure the oath of some of the Saljūq *amīrs* and to send a copy of their promises to Baibars.²¹⁰

Baibars was very careful in his approach to this matter. He had no wish to risk a venture, attractive though it might appear, which might bring disaster to the prestige he had been careful to build up. Strategically, it was impossible to send into Anatolia an army which would be at the mercy of the Armenians in its rear; while in Anatolia itself some of the Saljūq *amīrs* did not share the opinions of the Perwāneh. Economically, Baibars would be at a disadvantage in maintaining a standing army without being able to guarantee its pay. The time of the year was inappropriate for sending troops to such a remote region. Finally, Baibars probably had little faith in the Perwāneh and his intentions, and time was later to prove him right. Baibars therefore thanked the

²⁰⁸Ibn Shaddād, *op.cit.*, f. 74 a.

²¹⁰Ibn Shaddād, *op.cit.*, f. 75.

²⁰⁹*Ibid.*, f. 95 a.

Perwāneh for his proposal, but pointed out that, owing to the scarcity of water in the wells *en route*, he would not be able to come to Anatolia before the following year.²¹¹

Realising that Baibars would not come to Anatolia that year, the Perwāneh was obliged to comply with Abaghā's repeated demands for him to go to his court. He went on the 11th of Hija 674 A.H. (27th May, A.D.1276).

20. SALJŪQ AMĪRS CORRESPONDENCE AND RISING

As soon as he could do so, Baibars reopened the question of Anatolia, and, as early as Muḥarram 675 A.H. (June-July, A.D.1276),²¹² he wrote letters to the Saljūq *amīrs* to establish communication with them individually. Some of them were over-enthusiastic and rose against the Mongols stationed there in the middle of Šafar, 675 A.H. (about the end of July, A.D.1276), before the time desired by Baibars. This divided and weakened the Saljūq striking force and internal disagreement became inevitable. It seems that those *amīrs* who had risen had done so on their own initiative, without consultation with Baibars. When, therefore, they eventually informed Baibars of what they had done and demanded his help, he only reproached them, referring to his arrangement with the Perwāneh. He reminded them of the impossibility of his coming to Anatolia when his troops were in Egypt and he had only a small force with him in Syria.²¹³

The full contents of Baibars's letters to the Saljūq *amīrs* are not known, but it is unlikely that he had misled them into doing what they did. The fact that the Perwāneh, who seems to have disagreed with some of them, was away at Abaghā's court, but would shortly return, may have caused the *amīrs* to advance the time of the revolt. They possibly considered that if they rose successfully without the Perwāneh, they would win all the credit with Baibars for themselves. Moreover, the return of the Perwāneh usually meant the arrival of Mongol high officials with large forces of Mongol troops.

Baibars, who was expected to be sympathetic towards action against the Mongols, was not to be moved by the

²¹¹Ibn Shaddād, *op.cit.*, f. 75.

²¹²Ibn Shaddād, *op.cit.*, ff. 95 b and 98.

²¹³*Ibid*, f. 101.

difficulties in which the rebels found themselves. When they asked him for troops to facilitate their quitting of Anatolia, all he offered them at that juncture was his advice to barricade themselves in their forts until winter, when the water in the wells on the route would be plentiful.²¹⁴ It was only after they had pleaded with him that, on the 25th of Şafar 675 A.H. (8th of Aug., A.D. 1276), he sent a force towards Anatolia as an escort for the Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn and the *amīrs*. This force turned back on reaching al-Ḥadath al-Ḥamrā, where they heard of the arrival in Rabi' the Second (Sept.-Oct.)²¹⁵ of the Perwāneh, together with a brother of Abaghā at the head of a Mongol force of 30,000 horsemen.²¹⁶

The arrival of these Mongols made it impossible for Baibars to do anything to help the Saljūq *amīrs* there. In fact he himself did not feel too secure in Aleppo, since the force with him was small and might tempt the Mongols to attack him.²¹⁷ He therefore left for Damascus.

21. THE PERWĀNEH'S POSITION AT THIS JUNCTURE

In spite of this revolt in Anatolia, the Mongols did not find sufficient ground to justify their punishment of the Perwāneh, who had always managed to convince the Mongol authorities of his innocence. Even this time he was able to maintain his position, thanks to the wise decision of his son Muhadhdhab al-Dīn, who had not joined the insurgents. Muhadhdhab al-Dīn's decision was even praised by Baibars when he reproached the Saljūq *amīrs*.²¹⁸ But as a result of the confession of some *amīrs* under torture, the Mongols now had full proof of what they had earlier suspected, and the Perwāneh was regarded with great mistrust, though not openly accused. As was to be expected, severe measures were taken by the Mongols against those who had sided with Baibars.²¹⁹

22. BAIBARS'S ANATOLIAN EXPEDITION

IMMEDIATE REASONS

The arrival of a large force of Mongols in Anatolia was

²¹⁴Ibn Shaddād, *op.cit.*, f. 100.

²¹⁶*Ibid.*, f. 101.

²¹⁸*Ibid.*, f. 100.

²¹⁵*Ibid.*, f. 102.

²¹⁷Ibn Shaddād, *op.cit.*, f. 101.

²¹⁹*Ibid.*, f. 102.

naturally a cause of alarm to Baibars. He realised the danger which might descend on his country from the north, but expected the Mongols to be busy for a time with their investigations and consequent punishments. This, he calculated, would be followed by retaliation against the Aleppo region. He therefore took the opportunity of going to Egypt to collect all his troops, leaving his son with only 5,000 horsemen. He probably intended to march against the Mongols and surprise them in Anatolia while they were scattered over the area. He left Cairo on the 20th of Ramaḍān 675 A.H. (25th Feb., A.D. 1277)²²⁰ and proceeded to Aleppo on his way to Anatolia.

PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES

Before leaving Syria, Baibars had also considered the possibility that the Mongols might attack from the north of Iraq. He therefore sent a force, probably of Arabs, towards al-Sājūr to take up positions on the Euphrates and guard its fords against any Mongol crossing. This small force may have been expected to serve a further purpose than warding off possible attack: it may have been meant to divert the attention of the Mongols from Baibars's main expedition. The Mongols duly heard of this diversionary force and sent against it a company of the Arabs of Khafāja. Baibars's force defeated them.²²¹

BAIBARS LEAVES SYRIA

Baibars left Hailān, north of Aleppo, on the 3rd of Qa'da (8th April, A.D. 1277) and began his march towards Anatolia. The first encounter he had with the Mongol troops was on the 9th of Qa'da (14th April), when he sent ahead of him the Amīr Sunqur al-Ashqar with a company. This *amīr* came upon a Mongol force of 3,000 horsemen; the Mongols are said to have been routed.²²² The Mongols were by now fully warned of Baibar's advance and had collected their forces in Anatolia on ground of their own choosing. Baibars was informed of their whereabouts, and, when he emerged

²²⁰Ibn Shaddād, *op.cit.*, f. 103.

²²¹*Ibid.*, f. 109.

²²²Ibn Shaddād, *op.cit.*, f. 109.

from the mountain passes into the Abulustain desert, he found that the Mongols had arranged their troops in a formation of twelve columns, each column consisting of about a thousand horsemen.²²³ The Mongol army included a Saljūq force and a Georgian force. These were drawn up in two individual columns separate from the main Mongol army. The Mongols made this arrangement in case the Saljūqs intended treachery.

THE BATTLE OF ABULUSTAIN

Baibars arranged his troops in order of battle. When the fight began the left wing of the Mongol army rounded on Baibars's flank and charged his standard-bearers, penetrating his right wing. Observing this, Baibars himself called up reinforcements to support the right wing and enable it to withstand the onslaught of the Mongols. Soon the Mongol right wing pressed the fight against Baibars's left, which began to break formation. Baibars promptly despatched a strong company to its aid, then led his whole army in a charge against the Mongols. At this the Mongols chose to dismount and fight on foot, but without improving their position. The fight was fierce and, although the Mongols displayed courage and great endurance, the day was won by Baibars.²²⁴ The Mongols suffered heavy loss, and among the dead and the prisoners were some of their commanders of a thousand.²²⁵

BAIBARS'S ADVANCE TOWARDS KAYSERI

After the defeat, the Perwāneh withdrew in haste to Kayseri, where he warned Ghiyāth al-Dīn, the Saljūq Sultan, of the retreating Mongols who could be expected to vent their wrath on the Muslims there. The Perwāneh and the Saljūq Sultan then fled to Tokat, a four-day journey from Kayseri.²²⁶

Baibars now advanced towards Kayseri, clearing the route of Mongols as he went. He began his journey on the 11th of Qa'da (16th April, A.D. 1277) and reached

²²³Ibn Shaddād, *op.cit.*, f. 109 and *Biography*, f. 186.

²²⁴Ibn Shaddād, *op.cit.*, f. 110 and cf. *Biography*, f. 186 b.

²²⁵*Biography*, ff. 187-8.

²²⁶Ibn Shaddād, *op.cit.*, f. 111 and *Biography*, f. 188.

Kayseri on the 17th of the same month (22nd April). There he seated himself on the throne of the Saljūq, and the honours normally given in their ceremonies were accorded to him. In his name the Friday *khutba* was pronounced and the coins struck and the treasures of the Saljūq Sultanate brought before him.²²⁷

THE RELATIONS BETWEEN BAIBARS AND THE PERWĀNEH

The Perwāneh is said to have sent his congratulations to Baibars on his success in occupying the Saljūq throne,²²⁸ but, when Baibars asked him to come in person, requested a fortnight's delay. The object of the summons was to enable Baibars, now acting as suzerain over the Saljūq Sultan, to confirm the Perwāneh as the latter's regent. This is said to have been a trick by the Perwāneh, who had sent word urging Abaghā to come before Baibars had time to leave Anatolia. Baibars was warned of the real purpose of the Perwāneh's asking for a delay, and this partly occasioned his early departure.²²⁹

The attitude of the Perwāneh, who had prepared plans for Baibars to help him against the Mongols, yet failed to take the opportunity when it came, is not easy to explain. However, we might perhaps be justified in thinking that the important thing to the Perwāneh was not Baibars's welfare but that of the Saljūq Sultanate, as the Perwāneh was officially second in precedence only to the Sultan. He was conscious that his position under Mongol rule was precarious; this and the heavy demands they made drove him towards Baibars, whom in the beginning he considered to be less dangerous. He hoped Baibars might help him drive the Mongols away and leave him with a free hand in Anatolia, but he was not completely convinced and wavered more than once. He seemed prepared to risk coming closer to Baibars whenever he was in difficulty with the Mongols, as when he wished Ajāy to leave Asia Minor because he felt he

²²⁷Ibn Shaddād, *op.cit.*, f. 112 and *Biography*, ff. 190-91.

²²⁸*Biography*, f. 191 b.

²²⁹Ibn Shaddād, *op.cit.*, f. 113 and *Biography*, f. 191 a.

had no power so long as that man was there. Once Ajāy had been recalled to Abaghā's court, the Perwāneh was less anxious to press the alliance with Baibars,

Besides, the conditions Baibars had put forward to him in return for supplying a standing army in Asia Minor were not what the Perwāneh had expected. Baibars insisted that the Perwāneh must pay to maintain the garrison. Furthermore, he was to guarantee its maintenance by allocating it certain fiefs. When Baibars led this last expedition against the Mongols in Anatolia other factors emerged. Baibars was certainly stronger than the Perwāneh had anticipated, and the knowledge of the affairs of Anatolia which the Egyptian might gain from other Saljūq *amīrs* would make him more dangerous than the Mongols. If the Perwāneh opposed the Mongols and submitted to Baibars, he had no guarantee that things would go as he wished. Baibars might replace him by some other *amīr*. Baibars also, judging by the light equipment of his army, would not stay long in Anatolia, and on his return the Perwāneh would be left to face the Mongol retaliation alone. He therefore preferred to remain on the Mongol side, and to show his loyalty he advised Abaghā to come speedily.²³⁰

WITHDRAWAL FROM ANATOLIA

There were several reasons why Baibars could not stay long in Anatolia. His huge army needed more provisions than it could transport,²³¹ and he would run short of food if he did not soon start back. News of the Mongol defeat had reached Abaghā, who might come with fresh troops to give him further difficulties and lessen the glory of his early success in the Abulustain desert. The Mongols, now aware of his absence in Anatolia, might attack his own country from the border of Iraq. No less important was it that five thousand troops were left in Egypt with his son al-Malik al-Sa'īd, who was surrounded by ambitious *amīrs*: they might be tempted by Baibars's long absence to stir up trouble for him.

²³⁰Ibn Shaddād, *op.cit.*, f. 116 b.

²³¹*Biography*, f. 191 a and Ibn Shaddād, *op.cit.*, f. 113.

Baibars therefore had no wish to be involved in any further activities or delay in Asia Minor. He sent word to this effect to the Perwāneh, at the same time reproaching him and some of the other Saljūq *amīrs* for not fulfilling their earlier promises. On this occasion Baibars told him that he did not intend to hold the Saljūq throne, and that what he had done had been to show them that nothing was difficult for him.²³² Baibars left Kayseri on his way back to his country on the 22nd of Qa'da, 675 A.H. (27th of April, A.D. 1277),²³³ reaching Ḥarim on the 7th of Ḥijja (12th May).²³⁴

His decision to withdraw as quickly as possible was justified by the arrival in Anatolia of Abaghā, who decided to send an army against Baibars, hoping to catch him before he re-entered his own territory. After some investigation and the discovery that Baibars had by that time crossed the border, he recalled his troops.²³⁵ The force Abaghā had sent was lightly equipped and might have had some success against Baibars if he had been on the march; but there was no hope of success if he had already reached the camps within his own border, where he would have his heavy baggage and probably find fresh troops resting there. Abaghā's troops would by then have been exhausted after their long march and there is an account of the death of some of the Mongol horses, almost certainly through fatigue.²³⁶ Baibars learned of the force Abaghā had sent and made preparation for it, but soon relaxed when he heard it had been withdrawn.²³⁷

Abaghā scattered his troops over Anatolia and killed a large number of people in vengeance. He suspected that the Perwāneh had failed to inform him of the size of Baibars's army and would not accept the Perwāneh's claim that he himself had not known. This time the Perwāneh could not escape, and at last met his end when he went back with Abaghā to the Mongol court.²³⁸

²³²Ibn Shaddād, *op.cit.*, f. 114 and *Biography*, f. 191 b.

²³³*Biography*, f. 191.

²³⁴Ibn Shaddād, *op.cit.*, f. 114.

²³⁵Ibn Shaddād, *op.cit.*, f. 117 b.

²³⁶*Ibid*, f. 117 a.

²³⁷*Ibid*, f. 117 b.

²³⁸Ibn Shaddād, *op.cit.*, ff. 117 and seq.

Shortly after his return to Syria from this expedition, Baibars died. This had been his last major military campaign.

(iii) HIS RELATIONS WITH THE FRANKS

The hostility which Baibars, as a Muslim, felt towards the Franks grew stronger during his service under al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb, against whom the Franks on more than one occasion had allied themselves with other Ayyūbī princes. The impression this left on Baibars remained with him and he was later to reproach the Franks for their previous policy.²³⁹ King Louis's crusade, for the failure of which Baibars was one of the causes, increased this feeling and made Baibars realise the ambitions and the dangerous aims of the Franks in seeking to lay their hands on the very core of the Muslim state. The Franks alone, not only when allied with the Mongols, were a danger which Baibars must have strongly wished to see removed. As the head of the state and responsible for its safety, Baibars seems to have been anxious to see the end of Frankish power, for, during his reign in particular, the danger presented by the Franks grew greater and more evident with the insistent threat of the Mongols.

It was clear to him from the moment of his succession that the Franks were alien to Syria and that the security of the Muslim kingdom could be ensured only if they were driven out. Baibars executed his plan with a vigour and a violence which marked a turning point in the crusading campaigns, and, if he sometimes appeared to relax on his rigid plan against the Franks, it was only because he thought that this would contribute to their final defeat. To this end he sometimes concluded treaties with his adversaries when he thought it would serve his purpose. The tension in Syria, which often led to open clashes, could always provide him with reasons for terminating any such treaty if he wished to do so.

The main thing was that the presence of the Franks was undesirable and that any course of action which would help to

²³⁹ *Biography*, f. 56 b.

drive them out of Syria was therefore justifiable in his opinion. This may help to explain the cruelty and the lack of integrity of which Baibars is often accused and the fact that certain of his actions were on a level with those of the early Crusaders who had been accused of pointless cruelty and bloodshed. Baibars, who is said to have been a lover of history, might have been influenced by the actions of the earlier Crusaders and been inspired to retaliate in similar terms.²⁴⁰ However, on examining the instances in which he appears to have been unjust, we find that they did at least achieve his general aim. There is no indication that he enjoyed this kind of behaviour for itself, and the assumption is that it was part of his policy of exterminating the Franks in Syria. It is only when he is compared in this connection with Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn that he is revealed as a rather harsh and unmerciful character; against the background of his time he may deserve to be painted in more sympathetic colours than he has been heretofore.

1. EARLY MILITARY MEASURES AND TREATIES

Baibars's first contact with the Franks on a large scale after his succession was during the journey which he made to Syria with the Caliph in Shawwāl, 659 A.H. (Aug.-Sept., A.D. 1261). Although most of his time had been spent in arranging various internal affairs, his relations with the Franks required his immediate attention. He had already been in contact with some of them and had come to an agreement with the Count of Jaffa,²⁴¹ who was now able, on the arrival of the Sultan in Syria, to secure a truce with Baibars.²⁴²

2. FURTHER RAIDS AND TREATIES

Baibars began to conduct raids against some of the Frankish territories,²⁴³ with the object of making the Franks

²⁴⁰It is related that he considered that listening to historical narratives was more important than first-hand experience: (*samā'u'l-tārīkhi a'zamu min al-tajārib*) *Nujum*, Vol. VII, p.182.

²⁴¹Before leaving Egypt, Baibars and some other *amīrs* had sent quantities of barley and flour by sea from Damietta to Jaffa. *Biography*, f. 21.

²⁴²*Ibid*, f. 21 a.

²⁴³*Ibid*, f. 22 b.

think he was planning a major attack. The purpose of these raids was served when the Franks hastened to negotiate with the Sultan and to ask for the withdrawal of the troops who were raiding the region of Ba'labakk.²⁴⁴ Baibars felt strong enough to dictate terms to the Franks, but they were rejected, perhaps because they were too harsh and the Franks thought it would be humiliating to accept them. His recent military activities, however, had caused some alarm in Syria. The interruption of the import of provisions from the Frankish territories had caused a rise in prices, and Baibars was forced to withdraw his demands. A truce was concluded with conditions similar to those imposed by the treaty in force at the end of the reign of al-Malik al-Nāṣir,²⁴⁵ with the added clause that prisoners on both sides were to be released. A similar truce was signed with the ruler of Beirut.

Another reason why Baibars did not press his demands may have been his desire to return to Egypt as soon as possible. He still had some urgent matters to attend to there, one of which was his dispute with al-Malik al-Mughīth, the ruler of al-Karak and the only Ayyūbī Prince who had not yet submitted.²⁴⁶ It would hardly have been wise for Baibars to have engaged in major military activities against the Franks in Syria with such an enemy in his rear. Treaties would serve a useful purpose for the time being, and his fundamental attitude to them would make it easy for him to terminate them at any time in the future when he might consider it to his advantage to do so.²⁴⁷

3. ATTACK ON BOHEMOND'S TERRITORY

The negotiations conducted by Baibars in Syria during the year 659/1261 do not seem to have included the Lord of Tripoli. For him Baibars had a different policy in store, while the conclusion of treaties with the other Franks was part of his plan to deal with such as Bohemond. As early as about the

²⁴⁴*Biography*, f. 21 b.

²⁴⁵This treaty, which was signed in Muḥarram 652 A.H. (Feb.-March, A.D. 1254) recognised the Franks' right over the territory to the western bank of the River Jordan. *Sulūk*, Vol. I, p.393.

²⁴⁶See above, p.31.

²⁴⁷See above, p.77.

middle of 660/1262 Baibars gave orders for a major raid on the Antioch region, causing a great deal of damage to its port al-Suwaïdā.²⁴⁸

4. THE PLAN FOR THE YEAR 661/1262-3.

Since the conclusion of the treaties with the Franks in the year 659/1261, Baibars had been too busy at home to undertake any fresh operations in Syria, although various complaints and explanations were exchanged between the two parties. These complaints did not seem sufficiently urgent to warrant his immediate attention, but were useful for his future plans, providing the pretext to justify his attacks on those with whom he had treaties.

5. ATTACK ON ACRE

Baibars left Egypt in Rabī' the First 661 A.H. (Jan.-Feb. A.D. 1263) with a large army which he doubtless thought he could turn against the Franks if he did not have to use it against al-Karak. In the event, he found it unnecessary to resort to arms to deal with al-Malik al-Mughith and he was left with a free hand to take steps against the Franks. Excuses for taking the offensive were easy to find, and he had a host of points ready to justify his actions.²⁴⁹

Baibars pointed out that the treaty he had signed with them earlier specified that they should neither renew the fortifications nor erect fresh ones, both of which it was now claimed they had done. Although explanations were put forward by the Franks to justify their action, they were not accepted by Baibars, who also accused them of withholding supplies from their territories to Syria to the detriment of his troops. Furthermore he accused them of refusing to give their oath on the copy of the treaty which he had prepared and of doing so on their own copy. He also reminded them of the question of the prisoners as stipulated by the treaty. He claimed that he, Baibars, had collected the prisoners on his side and had sent a note to the Franks to this effect. But the Franks had failed to

²⁴⁸*Biography*, f. 27 b.

²⁴⁹There is an interesting account of how Qalāwūn sought reasons for breaking the treaty with Acre when he wished to besiege it. See *Shafi'*, *op.cit.*, f. 120.

take similar steps, each Order referring him to the other, with no result. The plight of some Muslim merchants who had been seized in the territory of the Franks provided another cause for complaint, and Baibars held the Franks responsible for this too. They were also held responsible for advising Baibars's envoys to the Emperor Michael to go through Cyprus, where they had been seized by the authorities. He further reminded them that during the reign of al-Šāliḥ Ismā'īl they had received Šafad and al-Šaqīf in order to help him against al-Šāliḥ Ayyūb, Baibars's master; now that this kingdom had vanished and Baibars himself was in no need of their help, they should return all these possessions.

This last demand astonished the Franks, but they tried to win Baibars's favour by assuring him of their intention to maintain the truce, made good the complaints of his governors in Syria and set their prisoners free. However, Baibars had a plan in mind and he was determined to carry it out. He argued that before he had set out for Syria it had been they who had wished to terminate the treaty and, as he had taken the trouble to bring his troops to Syria in the severity of winter, with all the expenses it involved, he was not prepared to accept their explanations.²⁵⁰

It is clear that Baibars, who had gone to great expense in equipping a large army, was unlikely to lose the opportunity of delivering a blow at his enemy and it seems that he intended to make Acre his first target. He knew how strong it was and that it would not be easily reduced.²⁵¹ But repeated attacks at every opportunity and the devastation of the surrounding country would ensure its progressive weakening and be the first step towards its capture. His first action was the destruction of the church of Nazareth, hoping that the Franks of Acre would come out to its defence and could then be attacked.²⁵² But the Franks thought it wiser to refrain, to the disappointment of Baibars. This move was followed by raids on Acre itself and on the 4th of Jumādā the Second 661 A.H. (15th April, A.D. 1263) Baibars in person, with a

²⁵⁰*Biography*, ff. 55-6.

²⁵¹He had inspected Acre about two years before, when he passed by it with Quṭuz on his way to meet the Mongols. See *Biography*, B.M. f. 12 a.

²⁵²*Ibid*, B.M. f. 57 a.

picked company of troops, conducted raids which are said to have penetrated as far as the gates of Acre and to have devastated the surrounding country.²⁵³

With this Baibars seems to have felt satisfied, as he still had to think of al-Karak. This might give trouble if an attempt were made to take it, although its lord had been captured.²⁵⁴

6. SYRIAN AFFAIRS FOR THE REST OF THE YEAR

Baibars returned to Cairo from this expedition on the 17th of Rajab, 661 A.H. (27th May, A.D. 1263) and for the rest of that year and the next he remained in Egypt. Although most of his time there was devoted to internal affairs, preparations for further military campaigns against his enemies were not neglected and attention was given to the build-up of arms on a large scale and thorough training for the troops.²⁵⁵

In Syria, in addition to the engagement of Baibars's representatives in the north against Haithūm the ruler of Armenia,²⁵⁶ raids continued on the Antioch and Acre regions.²⁵⁷ But other areas, probably those in the neighbourhood of Caesarea, enjoyed a respite.

7. A SHORT TRUCE

As early as Ṣafar, 662 A.H. (Dec., A.D. 1263), the authority there had suggested a truce so that they could till their farms, the truce to last until the harvest had been concluded. In a somewhat apologetic tone Muḥyī al-Dīn enumerates the grounds on which Baibars was induced to grant the Franks this request,²⁵⁸ one of them was that: "When it [the crop] was ripe the swords of Islam would reap their heads before it was harvested".²⁵⁹ This might indicate that Baibars had no intention of keeping his word. Nevertheless, when the Franks laid their hand on some Muslims and some cattle, Baibars's representative argued that this action

²⁵³*Biography*, B.M. f. 58.

²⁵⁴*Ibid.*

²⁵⁵*Biography*, f. 51 a.

²⁵⁶*Ibid.* ff. 47 and 49.

²⁵⁷*Ibid.*, f. 49.

²⁵⁸cf. *Biography*, f. 178 where the reasons for the truce with Armenia are given in a verse by Muḥyī al-Dīn.

²⁵⁹*Ibid.*, f. 43 b.

had taken place during the truce and that he was therefore justified in detaining the Frankish representative who had come from Caesarea. It was alleged that the captives were then released.²⁶⁰

8. RAIDS ON 'ATHLĪTH AND CAESAREA

Baibars kept strict watch over the activities of the Franks, and was suspicious of all troop movements which might indicate that they intended to rally their forces for use against parts of his territory. He was constantly on the lookout for such indications and when, during Ramaḍān of this year (June-July) and probably after the expiry of the temporary truce, his representative informed him that the Franks had massed in secret at Jaffa with the intention of raiding the adjoining region,²⁶¹ he was already aware of it and gave orders for an attack on both 'Athlīth and Caesarea. The Muslim attack caused the Franks at Jaffa to disperse, each party returning to defend its position.²⁶²

9. THE FIRST MAJOR CAMPAIGN

The year 663/1264-5 witnessed the first major military operations against the strongholds of the Franks in Syria. During the earlier years of his reign Baibars spent most of his time putting the affairs of his state in order, all the activities he had undertaken so far having been either of a defensive nature or comparatively minor raids.

For the formidable plan of repulsing the Mongols and driving the Franks out of Syria, Baibars needed time to complete his armies and to perfect their training. The orders he had previously given his troops regarding the perfection of their military skill²⁶³ formed but a part of the preparations for the great task they were about to perform.

Whether Baibars planned to begin his major attacks against the Franks that year or at a later date is not clear. However, immediately he heard of the Mongol attack on al-Bīra he was forced to lead his troops to Syria, prompted by the news of a pact between his enemies. He was not prepared to tolerate

²⁶⁰*Biography*, f. 51. 51 b—*sec.*

²⁶²*Biography*, f. 51 b.

²⁶¹Shāfi', *op. cit.*, f. 53 b.

²⁶³*Biography*, f. 51 a.

any aggression by the Franks alone, much less their mounting a joint attack with the Mongols, and seems to have lent great importance to the fact that the Franks had helped the Mongols by indicating the most suitable time for an attack on him.²⁶⁴ While his troops were relieving al-Bīra he maintained his position in Syria, ready to meet any danger the Franks might cause, and as soon as his troops were ensured of success over the Mongols his wrath was poured on to the Franks in Syria. He had with him in Syria an army he had been forced to collect at the wrong time of year in expectation of an attack by the Franks. It had not materialised, but Baibars was not the man to retire without making use of the forces at his disposal. He made full use of this army, and with it reduced at least two important possessions of the Franks and raided others, thus beginning a chain of conquests.

CAPTURE OF CAESAREA

Although Muḥyī al-Dīn generalises when he explains the motive behind Baibars's decision to attack the Franks, the reason he gives shows that it was a retaliatory action.²⁶⁵ The Franks' most recent offence was their revelation to the Mongols of Baibars's military handicap during the grazing season. This was possibly what Muḥyī al-Dīn was referring to, although another possible reference is to the Franks' earlier action in 662/1264, when those of them who were in Caesarea captured men and animals during the truce. This was important enough to Baibars for him to make a point of it when he sent a message to the king of Cyprus through the Castellan of Jaffa.²⁶⁶

Moreover, there was an important strategic reason for the choice of Caesarea as the target for this attack. If surprised and conquered, its conquest would deprive the Franks of one of their most important strongholds in the Eastern Mediterranean. Its conquest would also facilitate the capture of Arsūf, since the Franks would then be unable to use Caesarea as a base.

Although the success of Baibars was due largely to his superiority over his opponents in numbers and supplies,

²⁶⁴ *Biography*, f. 63 b, and *Shāfi'*, *op.cit.*, f. 63 b.

²⁶⁵ *Biography*, f. 67 b.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid*, f. 75.

the planning of his campaign must receive a considerable share of the credit. Again, the secrecy with which he always carried out his plans ensured his success here, as on many other occasions. When he decided to move against Caesarea, he revealed his plans to no one, but merely announced his intention of going to hunt in the forest of Arsūf, which he said he proposed to clear of beasts of prey. With this pretext he was able to reach the vicinity of his objective without raising any suspicion. This gave him an opportunity to reconnoitre Caesarea and Arsūf and to make appropriate preparations for their siege. At midnight on Wednesday the 8th of Jumādā the First 663 A.H. (27th Feb., A.D. 1265), he gave orders for his troops to take up their arms and just before dawn on the 9th he moved his camp from the neighbourhood of 'Uyūn al-Asāwir and laid siege to Caesarea. It was said that the garrison was taken by surprise.²⁶⁷

To ensure that he was not interrupted by any bold attempt by the Franks in the hope of relieving Caesarea, he despatched a force of Arabs and Türkmens against the country of Acre. This raid extended to the gates of Acre and succeeded in diverting the attention of the Franks and preventing sorties.²⁶⁸

On the first day of the siege, Caesarea was taken by assault and its inhabitants fled to the citadel, which was well fortified with flint stones embedded in its walls, making breaching difficult. What made it exceptionally strong was the fact that the sea surrounded it and filled its moat. However, the breaching of the walls was begun and the siege-engines of different kinds were put into operation. The attack was pressed by both land and sea, Baibars himself being among the assailants. The Muslims finally scaled the walls and burned the gates, capturing the citadel on the night of Wednesday 15th of Jumādā the First (5th March).

According to Muḥyī al-Dīn,²⁶⁹ the garrison fled at the last moment. But Nuwairī states that they presented

²⁶⁷ *Biography*, f. 68.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, f. 69.

²⁶⁹ *Biography*, f. 69 a and *Shāfi'*, *op.cit.*, f. 64 b.

themselves before the Sultan and surrendered the citadel and its contents.²⁷⁰ This seems unlikely, judging by the measures taken against the citadel, but the fate of a garrison at the capture of a fortress is very frequently the subject of contradictory accounts.²⁷¹ The similarity of the final stages in most of the conquests of the Frankish strongholds may well have confused later historians, and accounts given by contemporaries are more likely to be accurate, having been recorded at the time the event took place or quoted from the reports of eyewitnesses.

Baibars gave orders for Caesarea to be razed to the ground. This was the policy he had adopted towards some of the Frankish strongholds captured, especially those along the Mediterranean coast, so as to prevent their being of use to the Franks if a new crusade should reach the east.

CAPTURE OF HAIFA

Having taken Caesarea, Baibars intended to march south against Arsūf. Before doing so, however, he planned to take action against the neighbouring castles to the north, whose garrisons might have felt confident enough to try to come to its rescue. Acre's people had been alarmed by the earlier raid and, thinking that the Sultan's next major move would be against themselves, began to make preparations within Acre itself. Against Haifa, which lay to the south of Acre, Baibars sent three of his leading *amīrs* on the 26th of Jumādā the First (16th March), who within one day captured and destroyed it. Part of the garrison fled and the rest were brought back to the Sultan as prisoners.²⁷²

ATTACK AGAINST 'ATHLĪTH

'Athlīth, which was a possession of the Templars and lay to the south of Haifa and the north of Arsūf, was probably not intended to be captured at this time, as it perhaps required more attention than Baibars could

²⁷⁰ *Nihāya*, Vol. XXIX, f. 68 a.

²⁷¹ See, for instance, the account of Mufaḍḍal (*op.cit.*, p.307), where the garrison of al Shaqīf is said to have been sent to Tyre, whereas Muḥyī al-Dīn says they were taken prisoners. (*Biography*, f. 105 a). The fact that in this case Baibars allowed the women and children to go to Tyre may have caused Mufaḍḍal to fall into error.

²⁷² *Biography*, f. 70.

afford at this juncture, but military action of some kind against it was necessary to afford a diversion while the other Muslim troops were occupied with Haifa. Moreover, action against it would lead the garrison of Arsuf to believe that they were not intended as the immediate target and that the tide of hostility was flooding to the north. On the 26th of June Jumādā the First (16th March), Baibars marched with light cavalry against 'Athlith and devastated the surrounding country. The biographer states that Baibars considered its conquest to be unimportant and wished to leave it to a later date. He then returned to his camp at Caesarea, then in the process of being destroyed.²⁷³

CAPTURE OF ARSUF

Concealing his destination in accordance with his custom, Baibars marched against Arsuf, which belonged to the Hospitallers, on the 29th of Jumādā the First of that year (19th March, A.D. 1265). On the 1st of Jumādā the Second (21st March) he laid siege to it. He had planned to occupy the system of trenches—and, despite the activity of the defenders he was finally able to do so. The walls of the city were soon breached and the signal for a general assault was given at the fourth hour of Monday 8th of Rajab (26th April). The city fell on the same day and the bastion was captured at the fourth hour of the following Thursday.

Muḥyī al-Dīn states that the Franks asked to be spared death and Baibars consented to this, sending a standard as a token of his promise. The Franks were bound and divided into groups, each group under the charge of an *amīr*.²⁷⁴

Baibars again carried out his policy of destroying the coastal castles, and Arsuf was divided among the *amīrs* who were then charged with its destruction. The prisoners were used as labour on this task. When it was

²⁷³*Biography*, f. 70.

²⁷⁴*Shāfi'*, *op. cit.*, states at the beginning that although the Franks sought quarter, it was not granted. He later indicates that about a thousand of the more prominent Franks who had been wounded were sent to Jaffa. (f. 66.)

complete, Baibars left for Egypt on the 13th of Rajab (1st May).²⁷⁵

A BATTLE WITH BOHEMOND

Early in 664/1265 there were some clashes between Bohemond and Baibars's officials in the north of Syria. The Prince of Tripoli, who is said to have sought the help of the Templars and the Hospitallers, hoped to surprise Ḥimṣ, but its governor heard of his intention and was ready for him. The result of the encounter was the defeat of Bohemond on the 8th of Ṣafar of that year (19th Nov., A.D. 1265).²⁷⁶

These were Baibars's main actions in Syria during that year: the second major operation was to come the following year when he decided to return to Syria and follow the plan of conquest begun a year before.

10. THE SECOND MAJOR CAMPAIGN

Baibars had gained great success the previous year when he had attacked some of the possessions of the Franks, and now had a chance of repeating his success. The Ilkhān of Persia was busy repulsing the attacks of Bereke's troops and no danger was to be expected from that quarter: Baibars was thus left free to deal with the Franks in the way he desired, his troops having now had sufficient rest after their last campaign.

FALL OF ṢAFAD AND OTHER RAIDS

On the 3rd of Sha'bān 664 A.H. (10th of May, A.D. 1266) Baibars left on his way to Syria.²⁷⁷ The previous year his military successes had brought his frontier to the vicinity of Acre in the south, but he was well aware of the strength of Acre and could not have thought of attempting to capture it this year. The line of conquest would be diverted to an easier, yet equally important, stronghold—Ṣafad, one of the most forward of the Franks' strongholds in Muslim territory. In the words of Baibars's biographer: "It was an obstruction to the

²⁷⁵ *Sulūk*, Vol. I, p. 534.

²⁷⁶ *Biography*, f. 76.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid*, f. 79 a.

nearer part of Syria and an obstacle to the success of Islam.”²⁷⁸

Şafad had been a cause of concern to Baibars for a considerable time. The first sign of his desire to capture it was given in the year 661/1263 when he reminded the Franks that it had been given to them by al-Şāliḥ Ismā‘īl in return for their help against al-Şāliḥ Ayyūb. Baibars argued that he himself was now in no need of their help and that they should therefore hand it back. The time had now come for him to press his argument with force.²⁷⁹

To prepare the ground for the conquest of Şafad, Baibars despatched troops to various quarters to conduct raids and to seize small castles of strategic value, making sure to attack the sources from which aid might come to Şafad when it was besieged. One division of his army was sent against Tripoli and its district, where the castles of Ḥalbā, ‘Arqā and Qulai‘āt were captured and razed to the ground. A part of the second division was despatched against the district of Tyre, and the other part attacked Şaidā. A third marched against ‘Athlith, and the Sultan himself proceeded with the fourth division against Acre, where he captured a castle in the vicinity. Thus the raid covered a large area, stretching from Tripoli in the north down to the neighbourhood of Arsūf in the south.²⁸⁰

Baibars had earlier sent an army to contain Şafad, and this was followed by the despatch of his Royal Tents. Şafad then became the rallying point of all his raiding troops in the coastal area. When the besieging force was sent against it, it marched in secret so that the garrison would be surprised and prevented from sending for reinforcements. His raids in the coastal area helped to make the siege effective, his troops ravaging the regions which were expected to give help to Şafad and making it impossible for them to come to its immediate relief. An attack could be expected to come from Acre against his

²⁷⁸*Biography*, f. 81 a.

²⁷⁹*Ibid*, f. 56.

²⁸⁰*Biography*, ff. 79-80.

troops returning from Ṣaidā to join the siege of Ṣafad: Baibars took no chance of this and waited before Acre until the raiding troops had reached a point within the region of Ṣafad. It was not until the 8th of Ramaḍān (13th June) that Baibars himself proceeded to Ṣafad to join his troops there.

Although the siege of Ṣafad had begun earlier, Baibars's instructions to the besieging army were that they should only contain it and should not attack. It was not until the arrival of Baibars that the attack began, not until the 21st of Ramaḍān (26th June, A.D. 1266) that the catapults arrived and not until the 26th (1st of July) that they began bombardment. On the 2nd of Shāwwāl (7th July) Baibars decided to close in on the fortress and on the 8th of this month (13th July) the walls were effectively penetrated by sapping. The fight was pressed hard on the 13th (18th July) and as a result of this the Franks set fire to the screens of the Bastion in order to prevent the Muslims from scaling it. This served no purpose and it was taken by the Muslims on the 15th of that month (20th July). The Franks then withdrew to the citadel, the walls of which the Muslims began to sap immediately.²⁸¹ The besieged then lost hope and sought to surrender on the assurance that their lives would be spared. Baibars gave this assurance on condition that they should come out with neither arms nor money, and that they should do no damage to the citadel.

Ṣafad, with its fortifications and large garrison, had proved a difficult task for Baibars, who had aimed to reduce it within the shortest period and with the least possible damage. To aid his military measures he therefore resorted to ruses and stratagems, trying to sow sedition amongst its garrison, giving promises of safe-conduct, sending scarves as tokens. The first envoys from the Franks were loaded with presents and robes of honour. These measures may have had their effect on some of the people within, for the authorities found it necessary to put an end to them and to send back the robes of honour and the presents, presumably together

²⁸¹ *Biography*, ff. 82-4.

with a refusal of the conditions. However, Baibars continued his attempts to win over members of the garrison, and gave orders to his troops to shoot only the Templars, who were probably showing more resistance than the others. Muḥyī al-Dīn talks about an arrangement with some of the defenders of the citadel to open the gate, which caused great alarm and threw doubts on the loyalty of some of the notables inside the citadel. Suspicion grew fast and undermined the morale of the garrison, and for the second time they sought quarter, but without success. Thereupon they came out on the assurance of the Atābeg, whose word, we are led to believe, might have been respected by Baibars had the Franks not brought with them the articles prohibited by the conditions imposed earlier. They were also accused of bringing out with them Muslim prisoners whom they claimed to be Christians. For this they were beheaded.²⁸²

As is often the case, different versions of the capitulation are given by other, and mostly later, historians; the similarity of the way in which these castles met their ends being a likely cause of the confusion. In this particular case Mufaḍḍal states that Baibars did not himself take an oath to spare the lives of the Franks, but seated a man named as Karmūn Aghā in his place and had his *amīrs* attend him: it was thus Karmūn who actually took the oath. Baibars accused the garrison of bringing out articles in the categories he had forbidden, for which Mufaḍḍal put the blame on their vizier who, although a Christian, had betrayed them.²⁸³

ŞAFAD AS A MUSLIM BASE

Before leaving for Damascus, Baibars had ammunition and stores transferred to Şafad, which he thereafter maintained as a base in those regions and to provide a forward point against the sorties of the Franks as well as a base for reprisals. When a force from Acre made an attack on Tin Shihā, for instance, Baibars instructed his troops at Şafad to ravage the regions west of Şafad in retaliation; and when the Regent Hugh, who had

²⁸²*Biography*, ff. 84-5.

²⁸³*op.cit.*, p.492.

recently arrived in Acre from Cyprus, led a raid in Muḥarram 665 A.H. (Oct., A.D. 1266) through the country of Ṭabariya, it was the garrison of Ṣafad who opposed him, advancing towards Acre. In a valley near 'Athlith they encountered the Franks, who numbered about eleven hundred horsemen, and a fierce battle ended in the defeat of the Franks. When Hugh had made an earlier advance against the Muslim territory, he appears to have been joined by the knights of the Orders and the French regiment in Acre. Muḥyī al-Dīn claims that among those who perished in the fight were a number of Frankish nobles whose death was later mourned in Acre.²⁸⁴

EXPEDITION AGAINST SĪS

On the 27th of Shawwāl of that year (664 A.H. = 1st Aug., A.D. 1266), Baibars left Ṣafad for Damascus, intending to devote some two months to Syrian affairs. His military plans in Syria as far as this journey was concerned appeared to have been accomplished by the conquest of Ṣafad and by the other raids which were conducted on this expedition. But he had almost the whole of his army with him and it was not in accordance with his policy to allow so large a number of troops to remain inactive. They would be in danger of becoming stale, would require more provisions and extra pay, and do considerable damage to the region. A raiding expedition would engage their time and ensure them booty, and Baibars therefore issued orders, immediately after leaving Ṣafad for Damascus, that the troops were not to enter the city but were to be ready to march against Sīs.

The various clashes between Baibars and the ruler of Sīs had so far always been initiated by the latter, who naturally took care to choose the time most suitable to himself. Baibars now considered it appropriate for himself to choose the season. No serious danger was expected from the Franks, who were either tied up by a truce or not in a position to offer any serious threat, and Baibars must have made quite sure that there was no

²⁸⁴*Biography*, f. 89. See also Runciman, *op.cit.*, Vol. III, pp.321-2.

threat from the Mongol side. He appointed al-Malik al-Manṣūr, the ruler of Ḥamāh, to be the head of the army which set out against Sīs; on the 5th of Qa'da (8th Aug.) they reached Darbasāk and entered the mountain passes.

Haithūm, who later abdicated in favour of his son Leo, had fortified the passes by building towers on the peaks of the mountains, but Baibars's army marched unimpeded until it was met, apparently at a place called Murri, by Leo in command of the Armenian forces. The Armenian troops suffered a crushing defeat and the battle resulted in the capture of Leo himself, together with his cousin, a son of the Constable who had withdrawn in defeat. The ruler of Ḥammūs also withdrew. Leo's brother and a paternal uncle were among the slain.

The commander of the Muslim army, al-Malik al-Manṣūr, stationed himself in the town of Sīs and sent two of Baibars's most able generals to ravage the countryside. The devastation was extensive and the damage so great that Armenia never completely recovered her former prosperity.²⁸⁵ The camp of al-Malik al-Manṣūr at Sīs became the rallying point for the raiding troops.

Having accomplished their aim, the troops began their return journey loaded with booty, and Baibars, who had received the news of this success, went north to welcome his victorious army. He joined them about the middle of Ḥijja (September) to the north of Afāmiya and then returned to Damascus. He left Damascus for Egypt on the 2nd of Muḥarram 665 A.H. (3rd Oct., A.D. 1266), but did not arrive until the 13th of Ṣafar (13th of Nov.). Baibars had been delayed partly by turning aside to look into the affairs of al-Karak and partly by a personal injury sustained by a fall from his horse.

11. BAIBARS'S ACTIVITIES IN SYRIA IN 665/1266-7

Baibars does not seem to have planned any major attack

²⁸⁵Runciman, *op.cit.*, Vol. III, p.323.

against the Franks in Syria during that year, but rather devoted his attention to such matters as the reconstruction of Şafad and the negotiation of treaties with certain leaders of the Franks. His policy was to dismantle each stronghold captured from the Franks in the coastal area, and so to prevent their use should a new crusade reach the East. Şafad, however, was inland, dominating the country of Galilee, and, if it were fortified and provided with a strong garrison, it could safeguard the south-eastern flank of Syria from aggression from Acre and the neighbouring country.

The extent of the work planned at Şafad demanded Baibars's presence. During his stay there he would also be able to negotiate with the Franks, his physical presence—and the threat of force it implied—not being without its effect. On the one occasion when Baibars did in fact resort to force during his stay at Şafad it was probably because he wanted to make his presence felt.

He arrived at Şafad on the 24th of Rajab (20th of April) and received the envoys of the Franks. They accepted his proposal for the division of Şaidā and the destruction of al-Shaqīf, but the negotiations broke down owing to disagreement on other points. It was at this juncture that Baibars resorted to force, attacking the neighbourhood of Acre while the envoys were in his camp. In addition to the damage done to Acre, this raid had the effect of alarming other Franks who had been conducting negotiations with Baibars and who might have been encouraged by the example set by those who had failed to reach agreement with him.

The second attack on Acre, delivered on the 21st of Sha'ban 665 A.H. (17th May, A.D. 1267), was not described by Muḥyī al-Dīn as a retaliatory attack, as was the previous one which also probably took place early in that month.²⁸⁶

Negotiations with the other Franks had better results. In Ramaḍān, envoys from Tyre agreed to pay blood-money for al-Sābiq Shāhīn, a Muslim who had been killed by them. They also recognised Baibars's claim to Hūnīn and Tabnīn, together with the surrounding districts. A ten-year truce was then signed and the authority of Tyre was recognised over ninety-nine villages.²⁸⁷

²⁸⁶ *Biography*, f. 97 a.

²⁸⁷ *Biography*, f. 97.

A ten-year treaty which the Hospitallers had been negotiating with Baibars was also signed after the Hospitallers had agreed to renounce their right to receive tribute from the *Ismā'īlīs* and from *Ḥamāh*. An additional clause gave Baibars the right to terminate the treaty.²⁸⁸

The ruler of Cyprus, a close relation of the ruler of Beirut, had seized a merchant-ship and its cargo belonging to the *Atābeg*, after giving his word not to interfere with it. The matter was raised with the envoys from Beirut and the ruler of Beirut promised to secure the release of the merchants and to refund the cost of the vessel and its cargo. It was not until *Shā'bān* 666 A.H. (April-May, 1268) that these merchants reached Muslim territory.²⁸⁹

The struggle for supremacy between the Genoese and the Venetians flared up from time to time. The Venetians, who were the chief beneficiary of the fourth Crusade, had gained a firm foothold in the Levant.

The Genoese, determined to have their share in the prosperous trade of those regions, did not hesitate to take up arms whenever the opportunity presented itself. Their most successful move was their co-operation with the Greek Emperor Michael, whom they helped to recover Constantinople. Their reward was the grant of vast trade concessions in his territory, which meant the reduction of Venetian power in the adjoining waters.²⁹⁰ This sharpened Venetian hostility against the Genoese and made the Venetians determined to drive the latter from Tyre; an effort to do this was made in A.D. 1263.²⁹¹ The Genoese retaliated, one of their attacks being directed, in August 1267, against Acre, a centre of Venetian power; but they were heavily defeated.²⁹²

The dissension between these two sea powers greatly damaged the power of the Franks. Besides upsetting the economy of their territories, it affected the political strength of the Franks who became involved in the struggle, each

²⁸⁸*Biography*, f. 97 b.

²⁸⁹*Ibid*, f. 98 a.

²⁹⁰Hussey, *The Byzantine World*, p.75; Runciman, *A History of the Crusades*, Vol. III, pp. 286-7.

²⁹¹Stevenson, *The Crusaders In The East*, p. 337.

²⁹²Runciman, *op.cit.*, pp. 323-4.

giving support to one of the two quarrelling parties.²⁹³ The hostility which grew stronger with the passage of time presented a new danger to the Franks in that, if one side became too powerful, the other, as in one instance did the Genoese, might be ready to co-operate with the Sultan against the Franks.²⁹⁴

By the year 665/1266-7 the enmity had caused severe harm and was now at one of its worst points. It was with this problem in their midst that the authorities at Acre turned to deal with the pending threat from outside.

12. THE THIRD MAJOR CAMPAIGN

The following year, 666/1267-8, Baibars followed a different policy towards the Franks and the reduction of their possessions in Syria. When he left Egypt on the 2nd Jumādā the Second (18th February), it was believed to be with the aim of attacking the Mongols, whose intentions towards the district of Aleppo had been reported to him. As pointed out earlier,²⁹⁵ the attack on the Mongols did not materialize and the extensive preparations made by Baibars and the steps he had taken might suggest that the Mongol threat had been invented by Baibars in order to permit him to mobilize his troops without alarming the Franks, against whom his intentions were really directed. On the other hand, Baibars may well have received news of such an attack, but also have received information of the subsequent Mongol withdrawal. The orders Baibars gave to his generals regarding their destination were kept secret.

Again, if the Mongols had really withdrawn after attacking Aleppo, Baibars must have been encouraged by this and have been able to launch his attack against the Franks in the confidence that he would not be troubled by the Mongols, who must have been withdrawn for some important reason, known to him.

FALL OF JAFFA

Jaffa, to the south of Acre, was one of two important Frankish possessions not yet captured by Baibars, the

²⁹³Stevenson, *op.cit.*, p. 332.

²⁹⁵See above, p. 56.

²⁹⁴*Biography*, ff. 81-2.

other being 'Athlith. Jaffa belonged to John of Ibelin, who had gained Baibars's friendship at an early date,²⁹⁶ and had a treaty with Baibars which remained in force throughout his life. After his death it seemed unlikely that Baibars would leave Jaffa alone for long, and his complaints against its late lord, which Baibars subsequently brought against his son and successor, were soon serious enough to justify his violation of the truce. John was alleged to have sent a force disguised as fishermen against Qatya, a Muslim possession. When Baibars was approached by the Castellan of Jaffa, on behalf of its new lord, to seek a renewal of the truce, he refused, and made ready to advance against Jaffa. As further justification, Baibars's biographer charges the people of Jaffa with having carried provisions to Acre, presumably forbidden under the terms of the truce, and of having opened a tavern with Muslim women to serve there. In fact, it seems clear that, even while he was rebuilding Şafad, Baibars had set his mind on capturing Jaffa.

On Baibars's advancing towards Syria, the Castellan of Jaffa and the leading men of the town came to negotiate with him, and were detained until the various allegations were investigated. This led to negotiations for the surrender of Jaffa, although apparently the Muslim troops had surrounded the stronghold even before the negotiations were completed. It fell into their hands on the same day, the 20th of Jumādā the Second 666 A.H. (7th March), and the garrison was escorted to Acre. Like all the other coastal castles Baibars captured from the Franks, Jaffa was razed to the ground.²⁹⁷

CAPTURE OF SHAQĪF ARNŪN

The strategic importance of Shaqīf Arnūn, the Templars' castle, was probably similar to that of Şafad, in that its situation put it in control of its whole surrounding district, al-Şubaiba, which was a Muslim possession. Its importance for the Franks, apart from its being a threat to this Muslim region, lay in the fact that it served as a link between the strongholds of the north, such as Sidon,

²⁹⁶ *Biography*, f. 21 a.

²⁹⁷ *Biography*, f. 102.

and those of the south, like Acre.

Muḥyī al-Dīn states that Baibars began to think about the capture of this castle as soon as Ṣafad had fallen into his hands. On his departure from Egypt he gave instructions for the Syrian troops to move secretly to its siege and to contain it, but without engaging in any action.²⁹⁸ Later, after the fall of Jaffa, he despatched a part of the Egyptian army against it and then went himself with the rest of his troops.²⁹⁹

No relief could be expected from the neighbouring castles: the Sidon area was already being raided by Baibars's troops and the town of Sidon was preparing to defend itself should the Sultan attack;³⁰⁰ Tyre had a treaty with Baibars and was anxious to preserve it. If Acre attempted to give relief, the garrison of Ṣafad would cut them off. Nevertheless help from Acre seems to have been sought by the garrison of al-Shaqīf, and Baibars is claimed to have intercepted the replies sent by the authorities in Acre and to have forged replies to his own advantage.³⁰¹ Although Shaqīf itself was well fortified and manned, it was weakened by the departure for Acre of a company of its garrison.³⁰²

Baibars joined his besieging armies on the 19th of Rajab (4th of April) and bombardment by catapult began. The Franks in the castle, which contained two citadels, realised that their numbers were insufficient to defend both, and on the night of the 25th of Rajab 666 A.H. (10th April 1268) they burned their stores in the new citadel and moved to the old one. The Muslims thereupon occupied the new citadel and from there directed their operations. The Franks soon realised that they could no longer withstand the pressure, and sought to surrender on terms. Baibars's standards were flown over the castle on Sunday the last day of Rajab (15th of April). The women and children were escorted safely to Tyre.³⁰³

²⁹⁸ *Biography*, f. 101 b.

²⁹⁹ *Biography*, f. 103 b.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*, f. 104.

³⁰³ *Biography*, f. 104-5.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, f. 101 b.

³⁰² *Ibid.*, f. 101 b.

The easy and swift surrender of both Jaffa and al-Shaqif gave Baibars a chance to further his activities against the Franks. Next on the list was Bohemond, the Prince of Tripoli.³⁰⁴ He seems to have aroused the same hostility with which Baibars viewed both the ruler of Sis and the king of Acre. Bohemond had enthusiastically supported the Mongols in their advance against Syria and had taken the opportunity in the chaos that followed to annex to his territories as many fortresses as he could. Bohemond's strategic position and his bold spirit had led him early in Baibars's reign to attack the neighbourhood of Hims.

Baibars had delivered blows against both Acre and Sis and it was time now to attack Bohemond. Tripoli was his main possession, but, like Acre, it could be expected to put up a strong resistance. Antioch, the second most important stronghold, was more suitable for the attack and more likely to be captured. Baibars chose not to launch a direct attack, which would alarm its lord, who would do his best to relieve it, but undertook a diversionary move. About the middle of *Sha'bān* 666 A.H. (beginning of May), Baibars led a major raid against Tripoli itself, causing great damage, and left on the 29th of the same month (14th of May). The time he had spent there must have given Bohemond the impression that Baibars was satisfied, at least for the time being, with the damage he had inflicted, and that no further attack would be made against his other territories.

On leaving the country of Tripoli, Baibars gave no impression that he would soon be attacking Antioch, but instead went to Hims where he undertook some administrative work. He then left for Aleppo, where he divided his troops into three companies with himself at the head of one. One of these companies was sent to raid the country of Antioch, perhaps to help to conceal the real

³⁰⁴Tripoli, like Acre, had been made the target for a series of raids which it was hoped would weaken it.

intention of the attack or to guard the routes to the north should an army be sent to Antioch. The second contingent was sent against al-Suwaitiyya (Saint Simeon), the port of Antioch, through which reinforcements might come. Antioch itself was the rendezvous for these companies and Baibars arrived there on the 1st day of Ramaḍān 666 A.H. (15th of May, A.D.1268). The baggage arrived on the 3rd of that month (17th of May).

Baibars's vanguard, sent probably to contain the town, had been met by a company led by the Constable of Antioch, who must have thought that the Muslim troops were merely a raiding force and could be repulsed. The Frankish force was defeated and the Constable was taken prisoner.³⁰⁵ After securing the Constable's son as hostage, Baibars sent him to Antioch to persuade the garrison to surrender. When this failed, Baibars, on the 4th of Ramaḍān (18th of May), assaulted the town. The wall, which stretched for a considerable distance and which could not have been adequately manned, was soon scaled by the Muslims and the town fell.

The fall of Antioch was followed by a massacre of the population. The garrison, eight thousand in number, together with a number of the citizens, fortified themselves in the citadel, which proved too small and insufficiently provided with food and water. On the next day they sought to surrender and to be taken prisoner.³⁰⁶ The request was granted and the citadel was evacuated.

After the town had been plundered, Baibars gave orders for the citadel to be burned down. This was in case the Franks should try to regain it.

RESULT OF ANTIOCH'S FALL

The immediate result of this conquest was that the

³⁰⁵After the capture of Antioch he was set free and chose to go to Sis. *Biography*, f. 113.

³⁰⁶Muḥyī al-Dīn relates that two of the town's leading men fled during the night. The discovery of this may have dismayed the garrison. *Biography*, f. 110.

castles of Dairakūsh, Shaqīf Kafr Dabīn and Shaqīf Balmīs were isolated and forced to surrender. These castles were the same castles which Baibars had accused the Prince of seizing illegally when the Mongols advanced against Syria. In a sarcastic letter to the Prince, giving the news of the surrender of Antioch, Baibars emphasised that point. This might indicate the importance he gave to them, and perhaps how far they may have affected the shaping and planning of this campaign. Muḥyī al-Dīn points out the way they affected Baibars before their capture in the sentence: "These castles were a choking in his throat and a grief in his heart."³⁰⁷

The garrison of Baghrās, the Templars' formidable fortress to the north of Antioch, found itself in an extremely isolated and dangerous position after the fall of Antioch. It could no longer expect help from Sīs, for the ruler of Sīs was seeking to establish good relations with Baibars in the hope of continuing their friendship. Realising this, the garrison of Baghrās, evacuated the fortress and left it an easy prey for Baibars.³⁰⁸

A further result of the conquest of Antioch was the position of Bohemond, whose morale seems to have been greatly undermined. The weakness of the other Franks and his despair of receiving any help from the Mongols at this juncture revealed his position to him. He had earlier hoped that, with the king of Sīs, the Franks in Syria and the Mongols on the eastern border of Syria, he might have a good chance of a victory against his Muslim neighbours, and even lead an attack against Baibars's territories. But the blow which the ruler of Sīs had suffered in the capture of his son, together with the engagement of the Mongols in the East, had left the Franks alone and weak. For the first time, perhaps, Bohemond was almost prepared to negotiate a peace with Baibars.

³⁰⁷ *Biography*, f. 118 b.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid*, f. 119 a.

13. NEGOTIATIONS WITH HUGH III

Hugh II, King of Cyprus, died in Rabi' the Second 666 A.H. (December, A.D.1267) at the age of 14. His Regent was Hugh de Lusignan, who succeeded him on the throne and was crowned as Hugh III on the 27th of Rabi' the Second 668 A.H. (24th December, A.D.1269).³⁰⁹ While Baibars was making his raids in Syria, Hugh III was busy arranging for his coming coronation, but despite this he had time to attend to his relations with Baibars. According to Muḥyī al-Dīn, Hugh III, who appreciated the friendly relations between the Lord of Tyre and Baibars, now approached the former to seek his good offices in bringing about peace between himself and Baibars. On his return from the conquest of Antioch Baibars received Hugh's envoys, and the basis of an agreement was drawn up by Baibars, who then sent his own mission to Hugh to secure its confirmation. The points put before King Hugh included Baibars's recognition of Acre and its dependencies, numbering thirty-one estates, as belonging to the Franks. Baibars similarly recognized Haifa and three of its estates, half the country of al-Karmal, 'Athlith and five of its villages, ten villages of al-Qurain and the plain of Sidon. The Sultan was to take half of the rest of the country of Haifa, half the country of 'Athlith, the remainder of the territory of al-Qurain and the mountainous regions of the country of Sidon. The truce was to last ten years and was not to be broken by any outsider, such as a monarch from overseas. It also stipulated the release of hostages. Finally, Cyprus and the territory of the Ismā'īlīs were to be included in the truce.³¹⁰

The draft of this treaty was put before Hugh by Baibars's envoys about the 24th of Shawwāl 666 A.H. (7th of July, A.D.1268). He disagreed on certain points and in particular he wished to have a separate treaty for Cyprus, which would have meant a further concession from Baibars, who would have had to renounce his claim to certain possessions he was hoping to secure. Hugh also wished to exclude the Ismā'īlīs from the treaty, probably for the same purpose. Since Hugh insisted on these conditions, and objected to points in the

³⁰⁹*Biography*, f. 122 b and Runciman, *op.cit.*, Vol. III, p. 329.

³¹⁰*Biography*, f. 123.

draft which seemed to be fundamental, the treaty was not signed.³¹¹

14. ACTIVITIES DURING 667/1268-9

The following year, 667/1268-9, saw fewer activities on the part of Baibars against the Franks. He departed for Syria on the 12th of Jumādā the Second (16th of February, A.D.1269). The main reason for the journey was probably the arrival of the Mongol envoy; Baibars no doubt preferred to see him in Syria in order to reduce the number of people the envoy would have had to see and the distance he would have had to cover if he had come to Egypt. This step was taken by Baibars to prevent the envoy from meeting *amīrs* who might have been won to the side of the Mongols. Also he wished to reduce the chance of the discontented officials bargaining with the Mongols for an action against Baibars. It would also be useful for Baibars to be in Syria if the Mongols were preparing an attack under cover of the despatch of their mission.

The light order in which Baibars travelled indicates that he intended no major attack on the Franks. He probably meant to give his troops a rest that year and to allow them to complete their training.³¹²

However, certain military actions were undertaken and although minor in scope their importance was to be revealed later. They throw some light on Baibars's future intentions.

When Baibars departed for Syria he left the bulk of his army in Egypt, but took with him some of the important *amīrs*, either because he was likely to need their advice there or, which is more likely, because he dare not leave them behind with the troops in Egypt. Even with these important officers with him in Syria, Baibars felt that he ought to find out what the others he had left behind in Egypt were doing and he therefore decided to leave his camp secretly and make a surprise visit to Egypt. He pretended to have fallen ill and on

³¹¹*Biography*, f. 123.

³¹²Early in Muḥarram (September, A.D. 1268) for instance, Baibars gave orders for practice with the bow and the spear. This was followed by a hunting expedition. *Biography*, f. 126.

the 16th of Sha'ban (20th of April) he set out for Egypt with five other officers. They arrived on the 19th (23rd of April) and remained there until the 24th (28th of April), when they left again for Syria.³¹³

The news of Baibars's illness must have given the Franks cause for rejoicing, and indeed the mystery which surrounded his private chamber in the camp may well have given the Franks the idea that he was dead.³¹⁴ The Franks spread the rumour of his death, and Baibars must have been displeased to hear of this, for, being further aggravated by other incidents, he resolved to attack the Frankish territory. The Franks of Acre had been accused of giving shelter to four of Baibars's slaves, and, when Baibars demanded their return, the Franks asked for certain concessions. Their request was refused and they thereupon baptised the slaves. Baibars retaliated by imprisoning their envoys and raiding the country.³¹⁵

Tyre also had its share of trouble. Baibars's annoyance with Tyre had its origin in an earlier refusal of its lord to give his oath on the draft of a treaty which Baibars had prepared. Instead he had sworn on another draft containing only some of Baibars's conditions. Fresh causes for complaint were now added to the already difficult situation. A woman complained to Baibars that she and her daughter had been captives at Tyre and had ransomed themselves and been allowed to leave; when they had reached the neighbourhood of Şafad, however, the Franks had forced the girl to return to Tyre, and there she had been baptised. Baibars was also informed of the arrest by the lord of Tyre of a number of men from his territory. Two of them had been killed and the rest imprisoned. When Baibars demanded the release of the girl, the Franks excused themselves on the grounds that she had become a Christian and when they refused also to hand over the men, Baibars ordered raids to be conducted against them. He later ordered some of his troops to interrupt their supplies

³¹³*Biography*, ff. 129-30.

³¹⁴The symptoms of his illness were described to the physicians, who then prescribed treatment without being allowed to see the Sultan. Before Baibars left the camp the *amirs* were allowed to enter and observe the Sultan's feigned agonies. *Ibid*, f. 128 a.

³¹⁵*Ibid*, f. 130.

and to seize the produce of the surrounding country.³¹⁶

15. FRESH FRANKISH DANGER

KING OF ARAGON'S FOLLOWERS IN SYRIA

Baibars spent part of the following year, 668/1269-70, in military activities against both the Franks and the Ismā'īlīs. The situation in Syria and the sweeping success of the Sultan were having their effect in Europe. King James I of Aragon decided to sail for the East and on the 2nd of Muḥarram (1st September) he left Barcelona with a large army. His fleet encountered a storm and the king had to turn back, together with the greater part of his army. A small part of the army was able to continue the journey and to reach Acre; it was commanded by the King's two illegitimate sons, Fernando Sanchez and Pedro Fernandez.³¹⁷

During the month of Rabī' the First (October-November), and while he was in Egypt, Baibars learnt of the arrival at Acre of the troops forming part of the King of Aragon's army. The information also indicated that simultaneous attacks by the Franks and the Mongols were to be launched against his territory.³¹⁸ At the time Baibars received this news the Mongols had in fact already attacked al-Sūjūr in the neighbourhood of Aleppo where they had seized cattle from the Arabs of those regions.³¹⁹

Baibars immediately left for Syria, taking some of his troops and arranging for others to be despatched to the border of Syria and Egypt if the need should arise. He reached Damascus on the 7th of Rabī' the Second (4th of December, A.D. 1269).

The arrival of even so small a number of Crusaders seems to have raised the morale of the Franks in Acre. Apart from being a practical addition to their strength, they were able to raise the Franks' hopes with the news of the King of Aragon's expedition. Muḥyī al-Dīn

³¹⁶*Biography*, f. 130 b.

³¹⁷*Biography*, f. 139 and Runciman, *op.cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 330-1.

³¹⁸*Biography*, f. 138 b.

³¹⁹*Ibid*, and Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Ibar*, Vol V, p. 390.

describes their joy as being so great that, together with the new arrivals, they came out of Acre and pitched their camp outside the town. They had heard of Baibars's arrival in Syria, but they could not believe that he would attack them with such a small company. Muḥyī al-Dīn's account may have been true; but on the other hand the Franks in Acre might have been impelled by the general feeling of celebration to abandon their habitual caution, the fruit of experience, and to go out and display their joy.

The Frankish authorities in Syria, knowing the strength of the enemy and the weakness of their own position, were often put in a difficult position by new arrivals. If they were to abandon their own tactics, knowing them to be sound, for those of the new Crusaders, fresh and full of spirit as they were, they could be certain that disaster would inevitably follow. On the other hand, if they were to resist all new ideas and to insist on following their normal practices, they were likely to be accused of laxness and lack of purpose. The new Crusaders then might take matters into their own hands, with results which would probably be worse. This may have been the case with the Franks of Acre on this occasion, on which the people's spirits ran too high for the authorities to do anything but submit to the general feeling. At worst, however, they might hope to serve as a brake on the zeal of the new Crusaders, although when they saw disaster coming on this occasion they could not preserve them from it.

BATTLE WITH THE FRANKS

Baibars, now arrived in Syria, pretended to be going on a hunting expedition to Marj Barghūth, but in fact he was planning an attack on the Franks. The preparations were completed by the 21st of Rabi' the Second (18th of December, A.D. 1269) and he advanced against them, arranging for a section of his troops to lie in ambush for those of the Franks who were thought to have gone on a raid against Baibars's lands. This Frankish force was the French Regiment commanded by Oliver of Termers and the Seneschal, Robert of Creseques. On their return

they observed the force which Baibars had deliberately put in their way in order to lead them into the ambush, and into it they duly fell.

Muḥyī al-Dīn points out that Oliver also had laid an ambush, but found himself encircled by the Muslim army. The fight was fierce and hand-to-hand and ended in the complete defeat of the Franks. Oliver's brother was killed and a nephew of the King of Aragon and a number of other important knights were taken prisoner. The number of prisoners was so high that it is claimed that it had only been equalled in the battle of al-Manṣūra.³²⁰

This was a significant battle, for it put an end to any further activities by the newly-arrived Crusaders. It also assured Baibars that, if he wished to carry out any further actions in Syria against the Franks, he could do so with little fear of being attacked from other quarters. He intended to attack al-Marqab, and waited at Ḥamāh for suitable weather, but this did not come and twice the rainy weather forced him to return. He therefore used the time in skirmishes against Ḥiṣn al-Akrād (Krak des Chevaliers), the prime purpose of these being probably to reconnoitre with a view to future investment. To the same end the Muslim horses were grazed on the pasturage of Ḥiṣn.

KING LOUIS' CRUSADE

For a while Baibars's relations with the Ismā'īlīs occupied his energy, but soon disturbing news reached him of a Crusade with an unknown destination, led by Louis IX, King of France. Baibars suspected that Egypt might be the goal of this Crusade and, at the end of Rajab, 668 A.H. (25th of March, A.D. 1270), he left Syria for Egypt. Great care was taken to ensure the strength of the Egyptian sea ports and the remnants of the strong wall of Ascalon which Louis had made use of on a previous occasion were completely destroyed.³²¹

During this time, Abaghā had been occupied in the East and had given Baibars the opportunity to build up

³²⁰*Biography*, f. 139 and Runciman, *op.cit.*, Vol. III, p. 331.

³²¹*Biography*, f. 143 b. For further precautionary measures see Nujūm, Vol. VII, p. 149.

his power to an extent which now alarmed him. Probably trying to apply against Baibars the diplomatic measures which the latter had applied with Bereke against the Ilkhāns, Abaghā now sent a mission to the Pope to propose an alliance against the Mamlūk Sultan. The Pope in turn sent the envoys to France, England and Spain. The Crusade of which Baibars had just heard was the result of this approach by Abaghā.³²²

The Crusade was originally intended to be against the Mamlūk Sultan, but Charles of Anjou, the brother of King Louis, was a friend of Baibars and is thought to have endeavoured to divert the Crusade to suit his own interests. His relations with the ruler of Tunis had been hostile since Charles had accused him in A.D. 1267 of having given shelter and assistance to the rebels in Sicily, and the capture of Tunis was hoped to serve as a first step towards the taking of Egypt.³²³ There is also an incident which Charles of Anjou may have used to realise his aim in diverting the Crusade to Tunis. This was that a number of Frankish merchants, ordered to pay some dues on their merchandise, minted false Tunisian coins which they mixed with the money paid. When the forgery was discovered, the Genoese, who were the richest among the Frankish merchants, were arrested and their property was confiscated. The Genoese then sought the help of King Louis against the ruler of Tunis for the action taken against them.³²⁴

For a period of almost six months Baibars was on the alert for the appearance of this Crusade, and brought all his activities in Syria to a halt for the time being. In Muḥarram 669 A.H. (August-September, A.D. 1270), he finally received information that Louis had landed in Tunis and defeated the ruler. While Baibars was taking measures to help the ruler of Tunis he heard with great relief of the death of the King of France,³²⁵ and of the withdrawal of his troops.³²⁶

³²²M. Prawdin, *The Mongol Empire*, p. 370.

³²³Powicke, *King Henry III, And The Lord Edward*, Vol. II, p. 598.

³²⁴Yūnīnī, *Dhail*, Vol. II, p. 455.

³²⁵He died on the 25th of August, A.D. 1270, Joinville, pp. 216-7.

³²⁶*Biography*, f. 145.

16. FOURTH MAJOR CAMPAIGN AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

ATTACK ON TRIPOLI

Baibars could now prepare to complete the work against the Franks which had been interrupted by the arrival of the news of the Crusade. On the 10th of Jumādā the Second (24th of January) he left Egypt, and on reaching Syria, he organised raids against the district of Tripoli, probably for the double purpose of weakening it and deluding its lord into thinking that he was planning a major attack on him, thus forcing him to think more of the fate of his own town than of helping to relieve Ḥiṣn al-Akrād, Baibars's main objective.

CAPTURE OF ṢĀFĪTHĀ

The Templars' castle of Ṣāfīthā, an important strategic stronghold from which Tripoli could be harassed, was now besieged by Baibars's troops. The garrison of 700 put up some resistance, but finally agreed, on the recommendation of the Grand Master, to hand over the castle. The garrison was then escorted to safety.

FALL OF ḤIṢN AL-AKRĀD

The main purpose of Baibars's journey remained that of reducing Ḥiṣn al-Akrād, the Hospitallers' renowned castle. After first ravaging the district of Tripoli, he laid siege to it on the 9th of Rajab (21st of February) and on the 20th of the month (4th of March) he captured the outskirts. By the end of Rajab (14th of March) a number of catapults had been erected and on the 7th of Sha'bān (21st of March 1271) the bastion fell. The attack was then directed against the citadel, and one of its towers was breached on the 16th of Sha'bān. The Franks then took refuge in the keep, and the Muslim troops captured the towers. The attack was then directed against the keep, and the Franks surrendered. They came out on Tuesday 24th Sha'bān (7th April) and were given safe conduct to Frankish territory.

The capture of Ḥiṣn al-Akrād increased Baibars's prestige enormously, for this castle had resisted previous attacks by other monarchs, including that of Salāḥ al-Dīn. Moreover, he had destroyed the headquarters of the Hospitallers and he now possessed a new castle from

which Tripoli could be isolated and harassed. His next move would be to acquire more castles to the further embarrassment of Tripoli.

AGREEMENT WITH THE TEMPLARS AND THE HOSPITALLERS

While Baibars was in this area, he conducted negotiations with the Templars of Anṭarsūs and the Hospitallers of al-Marqab, resulting in a treaty by which Baibars recognised the rights of the Templars over Anṭarsūs and those of the Hospitallers over al-Marqab. The Franks in exchange were to surrender Balda and its dependencies and all territories taken by the two Orders during the reign of al-Malik al-Nāṣir. They were also to renounce their shares in the revenue of those lands which were divided between themselves and the Muslims. The treaty further stipulated that al-Marqab should not be fortified.³²⁷

Severe though it might seem, the treaty was probably signed with some relief by the Franks, who must have been fearful of what Baibars was intending to do with his present huge army. The gains which the Franks had allowed to Baibars, great as they were, were less than the damage Baibars might have inflicted had the negotiations failed.

CONQUEST OF ḤIṢN 'AKKĀR

Having conquered Ḥiṣn al-Akrād, and while still flushed with victory, Baibars resolved to follow up his success by taking Ḥiṣn 'Akkār. This castle was well fortified and its location high in the mountain added to its strength. Muḥyī al-Dīn points out that it was a source of great trouble to Baibars's territory, for skirmishers would come down and attack the Muslims and then withdraw to their inaccessible castle when pursued. On the 17th of Ramaḍān (29th April), Baibars besieged the castle and on the last day of the month (12th May) it capitulated and its garrison was sent away.³²⁸

PEACE WITH BOHEMOND

Whenever possible Baibars had kept up his raids against Tripoli and its country, the purpose being always

³²⁷*Biography*, f. 147 b.

³²⁸*Biography*, f. 148.

to weaken Bohemond's power and to prepare the way for the capture of the town. It seems that Baibars was now ready to deliver a major attack on Tripoli and to attempt to take it. The morale of the Franks was expected to be low after the many blows which Baibars has struck against their authority, while that of Baibars was very high, for in addition to his many recent successes, he had received in Sha'bān (March-April) the encouraging news that the Crusaders in Tunis had returned home.³²⁹ Bohemond's morale was bound to have been undermined by Baibars's agreement with the Templars and the Hospitallers about Anṭarsūs and al-Marqab, which assured him of less interference in that region if he attacked Tripoli.

On the 4th of Shawwāl (16th May) Baibars left his camp at al-Arazūna, where he deposited the heavy baggage. He proceeded towards Tripoli in light order, probably hoping to surprise and contain it before bringing up the rest of the army against it. However, his plans were interrupted by the news of the arrival at Acre of Prince Edward of England. This was at the end of Ramaḍān (12th May).³³⁰

PRINCE EDWARDS'S CRUSADE

Edward had joined the Crusade in Tunis too late to take part in it and had therefore proceeded to the East to fulfil his vow.³³¹ In the event, the mere fact of his arrival probably saved Tripoli from the end Baibars was planning for it. Baibars's terms for peace were too humiliating for Bohemond to accept,³³² and Baibars, disturbed by the news of Edward's arrival, reduced his demands. Bohemond realised the effect on Baibars of Edward's arrival and might have been hoping for even better terms, but to disillusion him Baibars threatened to ravage his country, a threat which might well have been carried out.

It is difficult to assess the feelings of Bohemond towards the arrival of Edward and the hopes of assis-

³²⁹ *Biography*, f. 149 b.

³³¹ Powicke, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 599

³³² Mufaḍḍal, *Al-Nahj Al-Sadīd*, Vol. I, p. 535.

³³⁰ *Ibid*, f. 150 a.

tance he might have entertained. It may be that he welcomed the last offer by Baibars because he could not be certain of what gains he might expect from co-operation with Edward. The fresh crusaders had often in the past brought trouble to the Franks, who were already established and who had to remain and fight after the others had gone. In any case, Baibars and Bohemond signed a treaty for ten years and Baibars was left free to check any military activities which Edward might undertake. He would also be able to acquire some of the other castles he had wished to take as part of his original plan.³³³

CAPTURE OF AL-QURAIN

Al-Qurain (Montfort) was the only castle in the coastal territory belonging to the knights of the Teutonic Order. It was one of the most heavily fortified castles in those regions and it was a great menace to Şafad. Baibars therefore decided to besiege it. On the 1st of Qa'da (11th June) the outer town was captured and on the 2nd the bastion fell. This soon brought the capitulation of the garrison, who were then sent away to safety.³³⁴

ATTEMPT TO ATTACK CYPRUS

Baibars was now ready to return to Egypt. He had considered the possibility of an attack on his troops on their return by the Franks at Acre, and had therefore given orders for a Muslim fleet of 17 ships to sail against Cyprus, which he expected might give some help to Edward in Acre. An attack on Cyprus by his fleet would also divert the attention of the Franks in Acre from operations on land and his troops would not only be able to pass safely through the country of Acre but might perhaps gain some success against Acre itself, where Prince Edward was staying. However, Baibars's fleet was wrecked in the anchorage of Limassol in Cyprus and only six ships managed to return safely.³³⁵

³³³*Biography*, f. 150 and Mufaḍḍal, *op.cit.*, I, pp. 534 *seq.*

³³⁴*Biography*, f. 151.

³³⁵*Ibid.*, and Mufaḍḍal, *op.cit.*, I, p. 541.

Before his return to Egypt and while he was still in the neighbourhood of Tyre, Baibars negotiated a treaty with the Lord of Tyre. It was soon signed, and stipulated that the Franks would retain ten villages in the country of Tyre while Baibars would choose five villages for himself; the rest of the country would be divided equally between the two parties. Again the presence of Prince Edward might have contributed to the speed with which this treaty was concluded. Baibars was probably seeking to eliminate any source of help which Edward might seek. The Lord of Tyre, like the Lord of Tripoli, might have been quite pleased at being able to secure such a treaty, which not only offered rather favourable terms,³³⁶ but also provided an excuse for not helping Edward should such help be sought.³³⁷

17. BAIBARS'S RETURN TO EGYPT

Baibars reached Egypt on the 12th of Ḥijja (22nd July), but, on the 10th of Ḥijja (20th July) and as soon as Baibars had left Syria, the Franks of Acre took the opportunity to raid the districts of al-Shāghur and al-Ba'na, where they seized grain and burned crops.³³⁸

18. DEPARTURE FOR SYRIA

Early in the following year 670/1271 Baibars decided to leave for Syria. There seem to have been at least four reasons for this decision. The first was the aggression by the Franks of Acre against his territories;³³⁹ the second was the news of the intention of certain Arab tribes to desert him for the Mongols because he had detained some of their children as hostages; the third was the news of the reported Mongol military preparations; the fourth was that Baibars had some unfinished business with the Ismā'īlīs.³⁴⁰ With all these matters to resolve, Baibars's presence was essential and he left Egypt on the 27th of Muḥarram 670 A.H. (4th September, A.D. 1271).

³³⁶This is in comparison with those which Baibars usually dictated in different circumstances.

³³⁷*Biography*, f. 153.

³³⁹*Ibid.*, f. 153 b.

³³⁸*Ibid.*, f. 153.

³⁴⁰*Ibid.*, f. 156 a.

He was delayed on the way by administrative affairs and arrived in Damascus on the 13th of Şafar (20th of September). The matter of the deserting Arab tribes was his first concern and this was followed by his negotiations with the Ismā'īlīs.³⁴¹

19. MONGOL ATTACK

Prince Edward had realised as soon as he arrived that the only way to gain any success against the Sultan was to secure the co-operation of the Mongols, and he therefore sent a mission to seek the help of Abaghā. At the time, Abaghā was busy fighting against other Mongols in the East, but he promised to send troops against Baibars as soon as he could.³⁴² The information which had reached Baibars regarding the Mongol military preparations related, in fact, to the troops Abaghā had promised Prince Edward. Their attack came on the 15th of Rabi' the First (21st October) and they penetrated as far as Ḥārim.³⁴³ Baibars immediately took the necessary measures to despatch an army to repel the invaders, and as the Mongols had sent only a raiding force, not strong enough to stand against a Muslim army, they were soon obliged to withdraw.³⁴⁴

20. FRANKISH ATTACK

As soon as the Franks heard of the Mongol attack against the northern territory of Baibars and saw the major preparations Baibars had made to repel it, Prince Edward attacked the fortress of Qāqūn. He seems to have gained some success at the beginning, for Baibars lost his Ustādh-dār and two of his *amīrs* were wounded, but the troops of Qāqūn seem to have gained control of the situation and, aided by the troops of 'Ain Jālūt, they drove the Franks back. They were hotly pursued and the Franks lost some Türkmens whom they had captured earlier.³⁴⁵

The news of the Frankish attack on Qāqūn reached Baibars at the end of Rabi' the Second (4th December) and he immediately moved south to Damascus in secret, hoping to

³⁴¹ *Biography*, f. 155.

³⁴³ *Biography*, f. 156 b.

³⁴⁵ *Biography*, f. 157 a.

³⁴² Powicke, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 601-2.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid*, ff. 156-7.

surprise the Franks of Acre. The heavy rain impeded him, and he decided to despatch his armies to their respective posts while he returned to Egypt. He reached his citadel on the 23rd of Jumādā the First (26th January A.D. 1272).³⁴⁶

21. THE REACTION OF BAIBARS

On the 3rd of Sha'ban 670 A.H. (5th March) Baibars was again prompted by the Mongol danger to set out for Syria, pitching his camp in the meadows between Caesarea and Arsuf.³⁴⁷ From there he mounted raids against the countryside of Acre³⁴⁸ in retaliation for their raids against Qāqun earlier in the year.

22. PEACE WITH ACRE

The withdrawal of the Mongols had left the Franks alone and exposed to Baibars's wrath, but Baibars may have thought that the mere presence of Edward in Acre would make the Mongol attacks more dangerous, for he would then be fighting on two fronts. Acre was the only Frankish town now left which had no treaty with him and, if such a treaty could be secured, Baibars would be able to concentrate his power against the Mongols. With this in mind, negotiations with the Franks in Acre were made somewhat easier, and in the end it was agreed that Baibars would recognise the authority of the Franks over eight estates in addition to twelve others (granted earlier). He also recognised their jurisdiction over Shafra'am, half of Alexandretta and half of an estate belonging to it. The final agreement was reached on 21st of Ramaḍān (21st April), the treaty being for ten years, ten months, ten days and ten hours. Baibars gave his oath to the King of Acre and gave separate oaths to the Grand Masters of the different Orders.³⁴⁹

23. ATTEMPT TO ASSASSINATE PRINCE EDWARD

Muḥyī al-Dīn states that Prince Edward was not happy to see the Franks conclude a treaty with Baibars. This disagree-

³⁴⁶ *Biography*, f. 158 a.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, f. 158 a.

³⁴⁸ Ibn Shaddād *Tārīkh al-Malik al-Zāhir*, f. 3 a.

³⁴⁹ *Biography*, f. 158 a.

ment had, in fact, led Baibars to attempt to eliminate him because of the trouble he might cause. Baibars had instructed his representative in the region of al-Ramla to arrange to assassinate Edward, and when this was attempted, on the 16th of June, the assassin wounded him in five places. Edward recovered and, as soon as he was well enough, left the East. That was on the 15th of Safar (22nd September, A.D. 1271).³⁵⁰

24. THE CAPTURE OF AL-QUṢAIR

Baibars carried out no further major activities against the Franks during the remainder of his life. The only capture he made during this period was that of al-Quṣair.

The relations of Baibars with the Lord of al-Quṣair have been described earlier. Now Baibars determined to take al-Quṣair, which because of its location was a threat to the region of al-Fau'a. The reason for its capture given by Muḥyī al-Dīn was that the authorities there had cheated in dividing the produce of the country of al-Quṣair, half of which had been granted to Baibars by the treaty signed earlier.³⁵¹ They were also accused of having sold wine to Baibars's troops when they marched against Sīs, despite Baibars's express prohibition. Finally, the inhabitants were alleged to have celebrated on the castle ramparts the arrival of the Mongols at Ḥārim and to have served as guides for the Mongols. The Governor of al-Quṣair was seized by a trick on the 15th of Shawwāl 673 A.H. (13th April, A.D. 1275), and the siege was pressed against the castle. It surrendered only when its stores were exhausted on the 23rd of Jumādā the First 674 A.H. (14th November, A.D. 1275).³⁵²

25. DISPUTE OVER AL-LĀDHĪQĪYA AND BEIRUT

Baibars's relations with the Franks during this period

³⁵⁰*Biography*, f. 159 b and Powicke, *op.cit.*, II, p. 603. Other works point out that Edward doubtless realised that he could not contribute much to the Christian cause by military means and that a treaty would at least preserve the Franks for a little longer. The reason for the attempted assassination was that he was known to have intended to return to the East with a larger army. If he were eliminated, there would be an end to this danger. See Runciman, *op.cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 337-8.

³⁵¹See above, p. 79.

³⁵²*Biography*, ff. 180-1.

involved two other matters—al-Lādhiqiya and Beirut. The more recently a castle had been captured from the Muslims by the Franks, the greater was Baibars's determination to recover it. Al-Lādhiqiya had been captured by Bohemond during the absence of the Governor of Aleppo,³⁵³ during the Mongol invasion of Syria in al-Nāṣir's reign.³⁵⁴ Baibars did not regard it as being included in his treaty with Bohemond, and in the year 673 A.H. (A.D. 1275) demanded that his son, Bohemond VII, should surrender it.³⁵⁵ Shafi' gives a clearer picture when he states that Baibars, after the conclusion of the treaty with Bohemond, discovered that al-Lādhiqiya was captured during the Mongol advance against Syria.³⁵⁶ Bohemond himself had died on the 9th of Ramaḍān (8th March).³⁵⁷ This demand startled the government of al-Lādhiqiya, which thereupon took precautions and strengthened the fortifications of the castle. The matter was finally settled through the mediation of King Hugh III of Cyprus. No further claim was made on the town until it was captured later, after Baibars's death.³⁵⁸

Regarding Beirut, Princess Isabella, the daughter of John of Ibelin and heiress to Beirut, had married in October, A.D. 1272, Hamo l'Estrange one of Prince Edward's barons. Hamo distrusted King Hugh and before he died³⁵⁹ put his wife and her fief under the protection of Baibars.³⁶⁰ Hearing that she had been taken to Cyprus, Baibars now drew the attention of King Hugh to the fact that she had been put under his protection and that whenever she wished to go away she used to leave her country in his care. Since she had not informed him of her intention to leave, he was suspicious and demanded her immediate return to Beirut, where his representative could have an audience with her. If this was not done Baibars emphasised that he had the right to lay his hand on her fief.

³⁵³*Biography*, f. 181 b.

³⁵⁴Shafi', *op.cit.*, f. 138.

³⁵⁶Shafi', *op.cit.*, f. 138.

³⁵⁷*Ibid.* Nuwairi states that Baibars approached Bohemond himself, before he died. *Nihāya*, f. 89.

³⁵⁸Shafi', *op.cit.*, f. 138.

³⁵⁹In Muḥyi al-Dīn's account Hamo died overseas, i.e. not in Syria.

³⁶⁰Powicke, *op.cit.*, II, pp. 605-6.

³⁵⁵*Biography*, f. 181 b.

This claim surprised Hugh, who was probably anxious to maintain good relations with Baibars, and he accused the Templars of helping Baibars against him.³⁶¹ Hugh had taken Isabella away because of the debt her husband owed,³⁶² and when Hugh pointed out that Beirut was included in his treaty with Baibars, the latter insisted that he himself had a treaty with Beirut. The dispute was later referred by Baibars to the Papal Legate at Acre for the Christian opinion on the matter, but no agreement had yet been reached when Beirut was conquered during the reign of Khalīl ibn Qalāwūn.³⁶³

Apart from these minor matters, Baibars had little cause for dispute with the Franks during the remaining years of his life. Events in the Frankish regions were taking place to his advantage. After the death of King Hugh II of Cyprus, Maria of Antioch disputed the right of succession of Hugh III and claimed the crown of Jerusalem for herself. Failing to win the argument in Syria, she left for Europe where she received the sympathy of Pope Gregory X and the full support of Charles of Anjou. Arrangements were later made for Maria to sell her claim to the throne of Jerusalem to Charles, who immediately assumed the title.³⁶⁴ As his representative in Syria Charles sent Roger of San Severino, Count of Marsico, with a military force, and Roger was soon able to establish the authority of his master in Acre.³⁶⁵ The new rule suited Baibars, for now he could trust the representative of his friend, Charles of Anjou.

With the treaties Baibars had signed, the situation to which he had reduced the enemies along his frontiers, and the relationships he had established with great persons abroad, Baibars was now free to turn his attention wholly against the Mongols. He was more confident than ever in his military strength and his strategy.

(iv) HIS RELATIONS WITH THE ISMĀ'ĪLĪS

Baibars's actions against the Ismā'īlīs might suggest that he

³⁶¹*Biography*, f. 182.

³⁶²*Shafī'*, *op.cit.*, f. 138.

³⁶³*Ibid*, cf. Runciman, *op.cit.*, Vol. III, p.342, where Hugh was stated to have been "obliged to send Isabella back to Beirut, where a Mamluk guard was installed to protect her".

³⁶⁴Runciman, *op.cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 382-9.

³⁶⁵*Ibid*, pp. 345-6.

was anxious to win for himself the position of champion of the Sunnīs, but the nature and the real object of his actions against them imply no such desire. His interests seem to have been partly strategic and partly economic, and as soon as these interests were secured, his measures against the Ismā'īlīs were halted.

Baibars's borders were threatened by two formidable enemies, the Mongols and the Franks. The Ismā'īlīs constituted a source of danger inside his territory and their activities might have proved fatal to him if he had fallen into difficulty with his enemies.³⁶⁶ Although they were not likely to co-operate with the Mongols because of the latter's actions against them in Persia, they might well do so with the Franks, in spite of the latter's support for the Mongols on their arrival in Syria, an action which had enraged the Ismā'īlīs.

Baibars took no chances and acted to secure his own interests. He realised that being tributary to the Franks, the Ismā'īlīs, if subjugated, would not only provide him with new territory and fresh strongholds, but provide him with a victory which would be a blow both to the prestige and to the economy of the Hospitallers. The Ismā'īlīs were important not only for the tribute they could pay, but also for what their territory produced. Furthermore, the military supplies and the trade route to Baibars's territory might be interrupted, if they were allowed to retain their power.

Had Baibars's main purpose been to flatter the Sunnīs by mastering the Ismā'īlīs, he would have made a demonstration by destroying the sect and persecuting its adherents, as massacring them would perhaps have been the best way to win the admiration of the Sunnīs.³⁶⁷ Baibars attempted nothing of the kind; in fact, it seems that he gave offence to the Shāfi'īs, the largest group of adherents of the Sunnī rite in Egypt at this time. The Shāfi'īs had risen considerably in importance after the fall of the Fātimīs, and the Chief Qādī appointing deputies to represent him in different parts of

³⁶⁶Bohemond is said to have engaged members of the Ismā'īlīs to assassinate the Sultan. *Biography*, f. 146 b.

³⁶⁷This would not have been unprecedented, for the Ismā'īlīs had suffered such a fate before, during the reign of earlier monarchs. See, for instance, Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, Vol. IX, p. 195; Vol. X, pp. 116, 119 and 250.

Egypt was a Shāfi'ī. At the time of Baibars's succession, this Shāfi'ī privilege seems to have been well established and widely accepted, and Baibars would have gained favour if he had encouraged it. Instead of doing this, he reduced its prestige by appointing four chief Qāḍīs in Egypt corresponding to the four Sunnī rites, the Shāfi'ī being one of the four.³⁶⁸ The Shāfi'īs regarded this as an unjust action on Baibars's part.³⁶⁹

Baibars might have thought, however, that the reduction of the Ismā'īlīs would add to his military prestige, since this would be to achieve what previous rulers had failed in. This seems more likely to be the case when we bear in mind that his biographer often compared his achievements with those of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn. Baibars's alleged fondness for listening to historical narratives might justify the belief that he hoped to succeed where Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn had failed. This would be purely a matter of military success against the Ismā'īlīs, and nothing to do with their beliefs.

Baibars's religious feeling as a Sunnī against the Ismā'īlīs does not seem to have shown itself at all. This would be either because the military and the economic aspects were the dominant factors in his dealing with them, or because such feeling never existed.³⁷⁰

Unlike some other Muslim rulers before him, Baibars does not seem ever to have sought direct military assistance from a non-Muslim soldier. His military actions had always had a flavour of the *jihād* about them. His demand for Ismā'īlī regiments in his armies and his employment of Assassins in his service are clear proofs of his complete lack of Sunnī feeling concerning Ismā'īlī beliefs.

1. THEIR POSITION AT THE TIME OF BAIBARS'S SUCCESSION

In 654/1256 the Mongols captured Alamūt in Persia and all

³⁶⁸Shāfi', *op.cit.*, f. 79 a.

³⁶⁹See below, p. 164.

³⁷⁰The points in the biography touching Ismā'īlī beliefs may be attributed to the sentiments of the author himself rather than to those of Baibars.

its castles, the centre of Ismā'īlī power.³⁷¹ The Grand Master, Rukn al-Dīn Khūrshāh, was executed and their power there was crushed. The effect of this on the Ismā'īlīs of Syria was tremendous, and their alarm increased with the speedy advance westward of the Mongols. It is quite understandable that, in these circumstances, the Ismā'īlīs should have felt well-disposed towards Baibars; for he had taken a considerable part in the defeat of the Mongols at 'Ain Jālūt and had shown a hostile attitude towards the Franks, whose friendliness towards the Mongols had enraged the Ismā'īlīs. At this early stage Baibars showed no sign of being a threat to their interests, and his ambitions to lay hands on their territory could not have been predicted.

2. FIRST CONTACT WITH THEM

During the first year of his succession, Baibars seems to have had little to do with the Ismā'īlīs. For his part, he was too busy disposing his internal affairs; for their part, they were probably waiting to see what his chances of survival would be, for with the difficulties he was facing his reign might not last long, and it might not be worth establishing any definite relationship with him. But as soon as the Ismā'īlīs realised that he was firmly in control, they took the opportunity of his arrival in Syria in 661/1263 to send a mission, including the two sons of the Ismā'īlī chiefs with a gift, as a token of their friendship. They were treated honourably and returned home.³⁷²

3. HIS CLASH WITH THEM

This stage of indifference towards the Ismā'īlīs was short. Baibars had now established his rule, and it was obvious that it was going to last long enough for the Ismā'īlīs to have to decide on their relations with him. Some years had now passed since the defeat of the Mongols, and the threat they had presented seemed to be fading away. Instead of being reminded of the Mongol danger, the Ismā'īlīs were reminded of their own interest in the Muslim countries. Baibars was approached by their two chiefs, al-Riḍā Abū'l-Ma'arif and

³⁷¹Rashīd al-Dīn, *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*, Vol. III, pp. 30-seq.; R. Grosset, *Histoire de Croisades*, Vol. III, p. 567 and *A History of the Crusades*, Vol. I, p. 130. (Edit. K. M. Setton.)

³⁷²*Biography*, B.M. f. 57.

Najm al-Dīn al-Shaʿrānī, who demanded his recognition of their custom dues (*rusūm*) and his surrender of the fiefs which they had held during the reign of al-Nāṣir. It is said their demands were accompanied by threats.³⁷³

The text of the letter containing this threat is not given by Ibn Shaddād, although he mentions the subject. The relevant part of the biography by Muḥyī al-Dīn, which might throw some light on the subject, is missing; there is a gap in the MS of the biography and the next surviving portion, part of a letter sent on behalf of Baibars to the Ismāʿīlīs, indicates that Baibars was replying to their threat. The writer of the letter refers to the past power of the Ismāʿīlīs and how trifling it now is when compared with that of Baibars, whose swords are sharper than their knives.³⁷⁴ This part of the reply indicates to some extent the points at issue and the tone in which the threat was delivered, since the writer refutes what appears to be the point of view of the Ismāʿīlīs.³⁷⁵

Baibars's detestation of the Mongols occupied his whole mind, and, judging by his anger with the Franks, who had displayed their friendship towards the Mongols, it was to be expected that he would offer his own friendship to the Ismāʿīlīs, who had made their opposition to the Mongols public. All the circumstances indicated that the Ismāʿīlīs were in a position to hope to establish a firm alliance with Baibars: instead, they provoked him by demands and threats to which a man like Baibars could not possibly submit. It was probably at this juncture that his relations with them took a definite turn towards open opposition. There is no doubt that his intention from an earlier date was to capture their castles, but this present action hastened the move. He now began to fit them to the general pattern of his conquests and to regard

³⁷³Ibn Shaddād, *op.cit.*, f. 191 a; Mufaḍḍal, *op.cit.*, Vol. I, p. 433 and Yūnīnī, *op.cit.*, Vol. I, p. 458 and Vol. II, p. 114.

On the other hand, this hostile attitude on the part of the Ismāʿīlīs may have been prompted by another reason, which is equally probable and justifiable. Baibars had in 659/1261 assigned their territory to one of his governors as a fief. If this had then come to their knowledge, it would be sufficient motive for turning against him. See *Biography*, f. 21.

³⁷⁴*Biography*, f. 75 b.

³⁷⁵The style of the letter resembles closely that of Muḥyī al-Dīn and it was probably his own composition.

them as a potential source of danger.

4. EARLY MEASURES AGAINST THEM

It appears to have been at this stage that Baibars reproached the Ismā'īlīs for not clarifying their position in relation to the Franks. The biography of Baibars gives as their reply their inability to declare their enmity towards the Franks in view of their proximity to Frankish territory and their own inferior power. Had Baibars's troops, they claim, been in the neighbourhood, they would have attacked the Franks.³⁷⁶

Baibars began to move against the Ismā'īlīs, gradually preparing the ground for their final defeat. We are told of a ruse which he played on them and which resulted in some friction.³⁷⁷ He also began to show them that he considered them neither important nor dangerous. When, as was usual, gifts were sent to them from various rulers,³⁷⁸ and had to pass through Baibars's territory, Baibars gave instructions that the normal dues should be imposed.

His attitude towards them gradually became more aggressive, and when, in the year 664/1266 and while he was besieging Ṣafad, their envoys came to him, he reproached them for having helped the Franks by looking after their cattle when he had been attacking Tripoli, forgetting what they had told him earlier about attacking the Franks. He also reproached them for paying to the Franks the tribute they should have paid to the Muslims. On this occasion he demanded of them that they participate in the Holy War, providing either a regiment or the money to raise one.³⁷⁹ This, it was said, was followed by threats that he would bury them in their castles.³⁸⁰

³⁷⁶*Biography*, f. 82 a.

³⁷⁷A certain Jamāl al-Dīn Ḥasan ibn Thābit, the messenger sent by the two chiefs with their threats and demands, was appointed governor in the place of al-Riḍā, who Baibars said had died. When ibn Thābit returned to Syria to take up his appointment, he found al-Riḍā still alive. Ten days later al-Riḍā died and ibn Thābit succeeded him, but the Isma'īlīs did not accept him and soon killed him. Ibn Shaddād, *op.cit.*, f. 191 and Mufaḍḍal, *op.cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 433-4; and also Yunini, *op.cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 458 and Vol. II, pp. 162-3.

³⁷⁸On this occasion from the emperor Alfonso of Seville and the ruler of the Yaman. Shafi' *op.cit.*, f. 80.

³⁷⁹*Biography*, f. 82 a.

³⁸⁰Shafi', *op.cit.*, f. 87.

The circumstances in which this demand was made added to the alarm of the Ismā'īlīs, for Baibars was then besieging Ṣafad, one of the greatest strongholds of the Franks in Syria, and his huge army could do them a great deal of harm. Their appreciation of the seriousness of the situation was shown by the prompt visit to Baibars's camp of Jamāl al-Dīn himself. Determined to go further in humiliating them, Baibars refused to accept a gift the chief had brought with him on the grounds that it was too paltry. Jamāl al-Dīn left the camp, promising to provide a more acceptable gift.³⁸¹

5. PAYMENT OF TRIBUTE TO BAIBARS

The result of this firm stand by Baibars was that in 665/1267 the Ismā'īlīs began to pay Baibars the tribute they had until then been paying to the Hospitallers.³⁸² The payments they had previously made to him might have been regarded as gifts and the customary signs of courtesy to the stronger power, but this was now something different in nature, a yearly tribute which indicated not only their recognition of him as overlord, but the acknowledgement that Baibars was the most powerful monarch in those regions and that the Hospitallers, as a power to be feared by the Ismā'īlīs, had lost their prime place.

Baibars was now waiting for the opportunity to reduce the Ismā'īlī castles. He might have thought the moment opportune in 668/1270 while he was in Syria, but the news of the Crusade of St. Louis probably made deferment necessary. Nevertheless, Baibars was able to take some steps to reduce the power of the Ismā'īlīs. When Baibars encamped in their neighbourhood, during this year, Najm al-Dīn ibn al-Sha'rānī not only neglected to pay him a visit, but, it was alleged, sent to request a reduction of the annual payment imposed on him by Baibars. Baibars had recently been reconciled with the other Ismā'īlī chief Ṣarīm al-Dīn ibn al-Riḍā, and had decided with him, Ṣarīm al-Dīn, on the surrender of Maṣyaf and its territories as a private domain for the Sultan. Ṣarīm al-Dīn had brought the annual payment and, in exchange for the surrender of this castle, had been appointed Baibars's gover-

³⁸¹ *Biography*, f. 82 a.

³⁸² *Biography*, f. 93 a and *Shāfi'*. *op.cit.*, f. 96.

nor over al-Kahf, al-Khawābī, al-Munaiqa, al-‘Ullaiqa, al-Qadmūs and al-Ruṣāfa. A royal decree was issued to this effect.³⁸³

Najm al-Dīn was thus theoretically dismissed, for Baibars had little authority, if any, to ensure that this appointment was made, since he was not yet in possession of their castles. Being the suzerain seems to have counted for a great deal, for Najm al-Dīn was horrified to learn of Ṣārim al-Dīn’s visit to Baibars and of the easy surrender of Maṣyaf, one of the centres of their power in Syria. He therefore came to Baibars’s court and, because of his advanced age (he was then 90 years old), Baibars took pity on him, forgave him his past faults and appointed him a partner with Ṣārim al-Dīn. These events also resulted in the exaction of 120,000 *dirhams* a year from Najm al-Dīn and 2,000 *dīnārs* a year from Ṣārim al-Dīn.³⁸⁴

6. FINAL REDUCTION OF THEIR CASTLES

Baibars was determined to pursue his success against them and to ensure that they did not become an obstacle in his path. He therefore kept Shams al-Dīn, the son of Najm al-Dīn, at his court as a kind of hostage. This son was soon accused of corresponding with the Franks and was imprisoned in Egypt.³⁸⁵ Najm al-Dīn is said to have apologised for his son’s offence, while Baibars was besieging Ḥiṣn al-Akrād, and Baibars seized the opportunity offered by the Isma‘īlīs’ obvious sense of guilt to increase the price of his forgiveness. Negotiations resulted in an agreement for the surrender of their castles and the departure of both the father and the son for Egypt, where Shams al-Dīn was to be given a fief entailing the upkeep of 40 horsemen.³⁸⁶ Najm al-Dīn was then kept at the court of Baibars while his son left to see to the affairs of the castle of al-Kahf. He was to return within 20 days.

Ṣārim al-Dīn ibn al-Riḍā, the other chief, seems to have fallen into disgrace, for Baibars imprisoned him in Egypt. This was the first step towards the capture of his castles, and al-‘Ullaiqa fell to Baibars on the 11th of Shawwāl 669 A.H.

³⁸³ *Sulūk*, Vol. I. p. 587.

³⁸⁵ *Ibid*, f. 150 b and f. 155 a.

³⁸⁴ *Biography*, f. 141 a.

³⁸⁶ *Biography*, f. 155.

(23rd of May, A.D.1262).³⁸⁷ Al-Ruṣāfa was taken by Baibars's representatives during this same month.³⁸⁸

Shams al-Dīn seems to have felt himself in a stronger position when he reached the Ismā'īlī castles, for he wrote to demand more territorial privileges in return for which he would surrender the castles. His demands were accepted by the Sultan, but when the latter's representatives were sent to receive the surrender of al-Kahf, they were met with strong opposition from the people within its walls. This stand was thought to have been planned secretly by Shams al-Dīn, and in order to clear himself of this allegation he came to the Sultan on the 26th of Ṣafar 670 A.H. (3rd of October, A.D. 1271). He was well received, but later arrested and sent as a prisoner to Egypt. This occurred when he informed Baibars of some Assassins the authorities of al-Kahf had sent against some of Baibars's *amīrs*. Shams al-Dīn might have hoped by doing this to win special favour, or perhaps to undermine the morale of the *amīrs* to a degree that would force Baibars into a more generous policy with the Ismā'īlīs.³⁸⁹

The leaders of the Ismā'īlīs were now his prisoners and their remaining castles were in the hands of their governors. Through threats, promises or harassing tactics, Baibars was soon able to lay his hands on the rest. Al-Khawābī and al-Qulai'a surrendered in 670 A.H. (A.D. 1271); al-Munaiqa on the 3rd of Qa'da (22nd May); al-Qadmūs on the 8th of this month (27th); and al-Kahf on 22nd of Ḥijja 671 A.H. (10th July, A.D. 1273).

By the capture of the Ismā'īlī castles and the elimination of their power in Syria, Baibars had completed what the Mongols had begun in Persia. The Ismā'īlīs became Baibars's subjects, and he made use of the Assassins amongst them against his own enemies.³⁹⁰ Prince Edward, for instance, was attacked by one of them who had been sent by one of Baibars's governors on the instructions of Baibars himself.³⁹¹

³⁸⁷ *Nihāya*, Vol. XXIX, f. 63 and *Biography*, f. 150.

³⁸⁸ *Biography*, f. 153.

³⁸⁹ *Biography*, f. 155.

³⁹⁰ Ibn Shaddād, *op.cit.*, f. 222 b. See also *Biography*, f. 156 b.

³⁹¹ *Biography*, f. 159 b.

(v) HIS RELATIONS WITH MICHAEL VIII PALAEOLOGUS

1. MICHAEL'S SUCCESSION TO THE THRONE

Michael recovered Constantinople from the Latins in July, A.D. 1261³⁹² and thereafter controlled an Empire, part of which was in Asia Minor and the rest in Europe. The recovery of the lost territory, which meant the expansion in Asia Minor of the Lascarid principality of Nicaea, increased the number of its enemies, represented now by the Serbs and the Bulgars on the northern borders, and by the Latins who had been defeated and driven out of possessions which they had held for some 57 years. The Pope also was involved, through the interest of the Latin Church in the Dominions of the Greek Empire; and Manfred of Sicily and, later, Charles of Anjou were two more powerful opponents of the Greek Empire. Charles in particular was one of the most ambitious princes in Europe and had never ceased to be dominated by the hope of recapturing Constantinople. The Saljūqs in Asia Minor, a traditional enemy, were not likely to leave Nicaea in peace now that its Emperor had left it for more distant and more important regions. His military engagements in the north would have strengthened the hopes of the Saljūqs had it not been for other factors which were to affect the situation.

In addition to the political difficulties presented by these different powers, economic factors played an important role in helping, or hindering, the new Empire. Venice had been the chief beneficiary of the fourth Crusade and had since gained great privileges in the Latin states of the Levant. This was to the disadvantage and the great annoyance of Genoa. This was realised by Michael, who, to recover Constantinople, needed a great sea power as an ally against the Latins supported by Venice. This provided the opportunity for Genoa, which agreed to help Michael in return for important trade concessions in his territory. An agreement to this effect was signed in March, A.D. 1261.³⁹³ The favour shown by

³⁹²Vasiliev, *History of the Byzantine Empire*, p. 538 (Oxford, 1952).

³⁹³Hussey, *The Byzantine World*, p. 75 (London, 1957); Runciman, *A History of the Crusades*, Vol. III, pp. 286-7 (Cambridge, 1955) and Vasiliev, *op.cit.*, p. 537.

Michael to the Genoese was bound to affect the Venetians who had no alternative but to resist this new development in the world of trade. The Venetians therefore joined the list of Michael's enemies.

2. MUTUAL INTEREST

Michael's recovery of Constantinople coincided with the succession of Baibars to the throne of Egypt and Syria, and the situations of both these newly crowned princes were similar in that each was surrounded by powerful enemies, and each held possessions which he had but recently acquired, and was determined both to maintain and to expand. Diplomacy was the instrument to which both resorted and both were eventually to gain full benefit from its use, their mutual interest bringing them together in a relationship which varied in its warmth according to outside circumstances.

The Crusaders in the Levant were the natural enemies of both Baibars and Michael, and the aim of both was the reduction of these enemies as a contribution to the maintenance of their own power. By providing a constant threat to the Frankish possessions in Syria, Baibars could prevent the Franks from turning their attention against Michael, while the latter stood as an obstacle in the path of any Crusade which might be sent from Europe against the Sultan. With Michael co-operating with Baibars, no Crusade could pass through Greek territory. Also it seems that, early in their reigns, they both thought they would have to resist the Mongols together, for the Asiatic territory of the Greek Empire was exposed to the danger of the Mongols on their march against the principalities of Asia Minor.

Michael held an important link in Baibars's communications with his main ally, the Ruler of the Golden Horde, who constituted a permanent threat to the Ilkhāns of Persia, who were among Baibars's most formidable enemies, and it was through Michael's territory that Baibars's representatives came and went on their mission to the Ruler of the Golden Horde.³⁹⁴ This was not without benefit to Michael, for whom

³⁹⁴See, for instance, *Biography*, ff. 26 and 124.

the friendship of the Golden Horde was essential, for they were still Mongols and in search of new lands to conquer.

3. EARLY CONTACTS

Baibars and Michael perceived their respective positions among hostile neighbours and both realised their need for an alliance. No time was lost, therefore, in taking steps to establish friendly relations between the two countries. Michael seems to have taken the initiative in 660/1261-2, sending to Baibars with an offer of such help as was in his power.³⁹⁵ Accompanying this offer was a request to Baibars to send a patriarch for the Melkite Christians under his rule.³⁹⁶ Baibars, no doubt delighted by the offer, and pleased to be able to oblige the Emperor, hastened to send his acknowledgements, and to despatch a mission to Michael accompanied by a patriarch and by many presents; these included a giraffe, which seems to have won the admiration of the Emperor.³⁹⁷ Michael, for his part, showed great honour to Baibars's envoys and, as a further step in strengthening the ties between their two countries, showed the envoys a mosque which he had preserved for the sake of the Sultan. Baibars, it was said, regarded this as a particular honour, since the privilege had earlier been denied to Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn.³⁹⁸

These friendly relations were maintained by both sides for about two years, when new developments introduced certain difficulties and brought them to the point of breakdown.

4. RELATIONS STRAINED

By the end of 661/1263 the relationship between the various states had changed and different arrangements had to be undertaken by those concerned. Hūlāgū, the Ilkhān of Persia, had entered into a fierce struggle with his cousin Bereke, the Ruler of the Golden Horde, which had diverted his attention

³⁹⁵*Biography*, f. 10.

³⁹⁶*Ibid*, f. 26.

³⁹⁷Michael was one of the princes whose provinces in Asia Minor were in danger of Mongol attack. The Mongols were his enemies at that time and as a gesture of friendliness the presents sent by Baibars included some Tatar prisoners with their war equipment and horses. (*Ibid*, ff. 10 and 24).

³⁹⁸*Ibid*, f. 26.

from his plan to drive westward in his conquest of new territories. This meant that the Mongol danger to the lands of the Greek Empire in Asia Minor was no longer so great. The struggle between Bereke and Hūlāgū provided Baibars with the opportunity of building up his power. To lessen this power, therefore, the Ilkhān tried to improve relations with both the enemy of Baibars, in this case the Franks, and his ally, Michael. An additional concern of the Ilkhān was the danger provided by the Türkmens of Asia Minor.³⁹⁹ They had not been wholly subjugated by the Mongols and, besides the threat they constituted in themselves, they could be a considerable danger if their help were sought by the Saljūqs, whose disloyalty to the Mongols was scarcely in doubt. If Michael were to be won over, the danger from the Türkmens would be reduced, for not only would he then refrain from instigating them against the Mongols, but would provide a threat at their rear.

The idea of an alliance must have appealed to Michael, probably because he was not certain that the struggle between Hūlāgū and Bereke would last indefinitely. If the war were brought to an end, he would regret having declined this approach by the Ilkhān. Besides, the Ilkhān's activity in establishing strong relations with the Franks was a cause of alarm to Michael, who might be caught in a pincer-movement between the two allies. His alliance with the Ilkhān would not only assure him that no combined action by the Mongols and the Franks would be directed against him, but would also make the Franks hesitate before taking action against the friend of their ally.

It is not clear, however, which of the two rulers took the initiative in suggesting the alliance. The first contact we hear of in this respect was a mission sent by Hūlāgū to Michael some time during the second half of 661/1262-3.⁴⁰⁰

The alliance between Michael and Hūlāgū was bound to offend other parties: since it was to the advantage of the Ilkhān of Persia, it was naturally against the interests of the latter's

³⁹⁹Runciman, *op.cit.*, p. 319.

⁴⁰⁰*Biography*, f. 52; Mufaḍḍal, *op.cit.*, p. 454 and Yūnīnī, *Dhail, Mir'at al-Zamān*, Vol. I, pp. 537-8 (Hyderabad-Deccan, 1954).

enemies, Baibars and the ruler of the Golden Horde. If they did not object immediately, a clash in interests was bound to come and would make it difficult for Michael to maintain his alliance with both sides. In fact, this clash soon came when Baibars's envoys to Bereke arrived in Constantinople at a time when Michael was entertaining the Ilkhān's mission and did not wish them to learn of Baibars's envoys and their object. Michael himself was fighting in the north and had to keep Baibars's envoys in Constantinople for a considerable time, over a year and a half according to one report.⁴⁰¹

The detention of the envoys enraged both Baibars and Bereke and both of them proceeded to take steps against the Emperor for his action. Bereke sent an army against Constantinople, only withdrawn after the head of Baibars's mission, Farīs al-Dīn, had assured him that he was delayed at his own wish and had further reminded him that Baibars had an alliance with Michael which obliged Bereke to maintain peace with the Greek Emperor.⁴⁰² The intervention of Farīs al-Dīn seems to have saved Michael further trouble from his powerful neighbour, although not without some sacrifice, as Michael was obliged to make an annual payment of three hundred robes of Chinese silk.

‘Izz al-Dīn, the former Saljūq ruler of part of Asia Minor, had been defeated by his brother Rukn al-Dīn and taken refuge with Michael. Michael later put him in prison, giving as the reason the fact that he suspected him of intrigue.⁴⁰³ From other evidence⁴⁰⁴ and from events that had taken place, it would seem that Michael promised to give refuge to ‘Izz al-Dīn, because both were the enemies of the Mongols of Asia Minor, but that, after Michael had come to an agreement with the Mongols, ‘Izz al-Dīn's freedom in his country threatened to jeopardize this new friendship. Furthermore, if ‘Izz al-Dīn were imprisoned, the Ilkhān would no longer have to worry about the possibility of his collecting an army and attacking his brother, Rukn al-Dīn, who was under the suzerainty of the Mongols. Bereke remained a bitter enemy of Hūlāgū and

⁴⁰¹Yūnīnī, *op.cit.*, pp. 537-8; and Mufaḍḍal, *op.cit.*, pp. 454-6.

⁴⁰²Yūnīnī, *op.cit.*, p. 538.

⁴⁰³Ibn Shaddād, *op.cit.*, f. 33-4.

⁴⁰⁴Yūnīnī, *op.cit.*, Vol. I, p. 160.

anxious that Asia Minor should continue to be under a threat. Before withdrawing his army, therefore, he demanded the release and handing over of 'Izz al-Dīn.

Meanwhile Baibars arranged a meeting with the Christian religious dignitaries, at which he confronted them with copies of Michael's oath to Baibars. They gave their verdict that such a violation of an oath rendered a man liable to excommunication.⁴⁰⁵ Serious as was Michael's action, however, Baibars was not ready to sever relations. In spite of the fact that he reproached him strongly for his behaviour,⁴⁰⁶ he was anxious to maintain friendly relations with him. He therefore offered to mediate between him and Bereke and actually sent to the latter with a suggestion to this effect.⁴⁰⁷

5. LATER RELATIONS

The storm was soon over, and Michael went on to strengthen the newly-established relations. One of his daughters was given in marriage to the Ilkhān of Persia, while, to balance this, another was married to Nogay, the chief commander of the armies of the Golden Horde.⁴⁰⁸ Baibars's mission continued to pass through Michael's territories without hindrance until some time in 667/1268-9, when Baibars was again offended by the detention of his envoys by Michael. This seems to have led to a quarrel during which Michael addressed harsh words to Baibars, who replied in similar tone. However, a letter which Baibars received after his journey to Syria in 667/1268-9 intimated, it was said, Michael's withdrawal from his former unfriendly attitude and tendered his apologies for having detained Baibars's envoys, explaining that this had been done because of the death of Bereke.⁴⁰⁹ In fact, Michael's reason for keeping the envoys may well have been that he was not certain of the outcome of that event.

It was during this period, and indeed in the same letter, that Michael approached Baibars concerning an alliance between the latter and Abaghā, who was now the Ilkhān of Persia, and

⁴⁰⁵ *Biography*, ff. 52-3.

⁴⁰⁶ *Sulūk*, Vol. I, p. 514.

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, see also p. 48.

⁴⁰⁸ Prawdīn, *The Mongol Empire, Its Rise and Legacy*, p. 371.

⁴⁰⁹ *Biography*, f. 124.

who could see Baibars's power growing but was unable to curtail it because of the difficulties he was facing with his cousins. It would have been of great benefit to Abaghā if the potential threat posed by Baibars could have been avoided by the conclusion of an alliance which could then have been broken once he was free from his preoccupations. This alliance might well have been suggested originally by Abaghā to Michael, to whom this would have been a welcome outcome. On the other hand, on seeing Abaghā's situation, Michael might have taken the opportunity of his being agreeable to peace negotiations with Baibars.⁴¹⁰ Baibars, who had always been strongly against the Mongols, could appreciate the difficulties in which Abaghā found himself and vigorously rejected the idea.⁴¹¹

From 668/1269-70 onwards, the friendly relations between the Greek Emperor and Baibars seem to have been maintained, for the envoys continued to make their journeys across the Emperor's possessions. This state of affairs continued even after the death of Baibars and it was to Constantinople that the Egyptian Sultan sent in exile those personages who were regarded as politically dangerous.

(vi) HIS RELATIONS WITH NUBIA

1. THE COUNTRY OF NUBIA

The country of Nubia is described by the Arab writers as lying beyond the southern frontier of Egypt and being divided into two main parts, 'Alwa and al-Maqrura.⁴¹² 'Alwa was the southern part and its northern frontier began at a group of villages called al-Abwāb—the Gates⁴¹³—in the region of the sixth cataract.⁴¹⁴ Al-Maqrura stretched north from al-Abwāb to a village called Tāfa, one stage south of Aswān.⁴¹⁵

⁴¹⁰See above, p. 57.

⁴¹¹*Biography*, f. 124.

⁴¹²Ya'qūbī, Vol. I, p. 217.

⁴¹³Mod. Kabūshiya.

⁴¹⁴Maqrīzī, *Mawa'iz*, Vol. III, p. 258 (Ed. Wiet); see also Trīmingham, *Islam in the Sudan*, p. 72 and Macmichael, *A History of the Arabs in the Sudan*, Vol. I, p. 170.

⁴¹⁵*Mawa'iz*, Vol. III, p. 258, cf. (p. 252) where Maqrīzī, citing 'Abdallāh ibn Aḥmad ibn Salīm al-Aswānī, indicates that a village called al-Qaṣr, five miles south of Aswān, was the beginning of Nubian territory.

Dunqula was the main town of the northern part of Nubia. The northern part of al-Ma Qurra was then called Marīṣ, and referred to as being Nubia's frontier.⁴¹⁶ Muslim contact seems to have been with the kingdom of al-Ma Qurra, from where, for instance, *baqt* was received.⁴¹⁷

The king of Nubia resided in Dunqula, the southern part of the northern kingdom, entrusting the extreme northern part to a governor known as Ṣaḥīb al-Jabal—the Lord of the Mountain—which name probably indicated the rocky regions of the cataracts which were under his control.⁴¹⁸ Because of his proximity to the Muslim frontier, this officer was regarded as the most important of the governors serving under the king of Nubia. One of his main tasks was to supervise the traffic from the Muslim lands to the outer regions of the Nubian countries, and no one was allowed to pass south of the second cataract without first obtaining his permission.⁴¹⁹ The northern part of Marīṣ was frequented by Muslim traders. In fact there were some Muslims actually living in those regions, and some of the Muslim merchants who frequented these districts had acquired property and estate there.⁴²⁰

2. EARLY MUSLIM CONTACTS WITH NUBIA

The Arab historians are not in agreement on the early relations between Muslims and Nubians. Some maintain that the Nubians were defeated in 31/651-2 during the Caliphate of 'Uthmān by 'Abdallāh ibn Abī'l-Sarḥ, who forced them to plead for peace.⁴²¹ Other historians, however, say that 'Abdallāh was approached by the Nubians with a request for peace and that an agreement was concluded with them. These varying explanations may have been caused by different expeditions having been sent against Nubia, each with a different conclusion. The agreement stipulated that the Nubians should give the Muslims a certain number of slaves (*baqt*), in return for which they would receive provisions of an equivalent value.⁴²²

⁴¹⁶ *Mawā'iz*, Vol. III, p. 258 and also Mas'ūdī, *Murūi*, Vol. III, p. 31.

⁴¹⁷ Ya'qūbī, *op.cit.*, Vol. I, p. 217.

⁴¹⁸ Trimmingham, *op.cit.*, p. 64, n. 4.

⁴¹⁹ *Mawā'iz*, Vol. III, p. 254 and Trimmingham, *op.cit.*, p. 65.

⁴²⁰ *Mawā'iz*, Vol. III, p. 253.

⁴²² Balādhurī, *op.cit.*, pp. 238-9.

⁴²¹ *Ibid.*

The Nubians continued to pay the *baqt* and to receive from the Muslims the quantities of provisions stipulated. However, there were repeated interruptions to this agreement, occasioned, it is said, by the inability of the Nubians to provide the stipulated number of slaves, whereupon the Muslims would not only refuse to pay them the wheat and other cereals assigned to them, but would also launch an attack on the Nubians.⁴²³ The Nubians themselves seem to have initiated the aggression on certain occasions, apparently not content merely to withhold payment of *baqt*. They were probably driven to this by need and encouraged by the preoccupation of the Egyptian government with affairs in the north of the country. As soon as they were free to do so, the governors of Egypt would send punitive armies against the Nubians. Al-Ikhshīd, for instance, sent one in the year 345/956-7.⁴²⁴

The Fāṭimīs also sent armies to check the raids of the Nubians against the southern part of Egypt. These raids were effective enough to justify the maintenance of a Fāṭimī garrison in Aswān.⁴²⁵ Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, while governor of Egypt, sent an expedition in 568/1172 under his brother Tūrān Shāh. The reason was probably that the Nubians had given refuge to some of the black Fāṭimī soldiers fleeing before Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's troops.⁴²⁶

3. THE BEJA TRIBES

Connected with the Nubians in their relations with the Muslims were the Beja tribes. Their country lay south-east of Aswān in the regions between the Nile and the Red Sea and in the neighbourhood of Nubia. The nearest point on their border was a village known as al-Ḥizba, situated in the desert about three stages from the town of Qūṣ. The furthest point to the south was the border of Abyssinia.⁴²⁷

The Beja were divided into two main sections, al-Ḥadārib

⁴²³ *Mawā'iz*, Vol. III, p. 294.

⁴²⁴ *Ibid*, p. 283; Ibn al-Furāt, *op.cit.*, Vol. VII, p. 45.

⁴²⁵ *Mawā'iz*, Vol. III, p. 285; Ibn al-Furāt, *op.cit.*, Vol. VII, p. 45.

⁴²⁶ Ibn al-Furāt, *op.cit.*, Vol. VII, p. 45 and Trimmingham, *op.cit.*, pp. 68-9.

⁴²⁷ Ya'qūbī, *op.cit.*, Vol. I, p. 217; *Mawā'iz*, Vol. III, p. 267; Ibn al-Furāt, *op.cit.*, Vol. VIII, p. 49; Mas'ūdī, *Muruj al-Dhahab*, Vol. III, p. 32; and Enc. Isl. Art. Bedja (2nd Edit.).

and al-Ranāfij, of which al-Ḥadārib was the more important. They occupied the northern part of the country, and their proximity to the Muslim lands brought them into contact with the Muslims in Aswān and 'Aidhāb through trade and raids. Their superiority to al-Ranāfij had also brought them into prominence when the Arab tribes emigrated to these areas, and as a result of this contact they had been more exposed to intermarriage with the Arabs and to Islam. Al-Ranāfij occupied the southern part of that country and were more numerous than al-Ḥadārib, who had at one time been subject to them. Now, probably owing to the military experience gained by the Ḥadārib in their skirmishes against Nubia and the Muslims, the Ranāfij had come to occupy a position subordinate to their Northern brothers. We are told that they provided the Ḥadārib with guards and presented them with cattle and that each chieftain of the Ḥadārib would have a number of Ranāfij serving under him. When he died, these servants would pass by inheritance to his successor, like slaves.⁴²⁸

The Nubians had originally been much more powerful than the Beja, but the Beja's gold and emerald mines had attracted certain of the Arab tribes, especially Rabi'a, who settled there and intermarried with the Beja. After this they seem to have gained in strength sufficiently to enable them to conduct raids against Nubia.⁴²⁹

4. MUSLIM CONTACT WITH BEJA

The power of the Beja at the time of the Muslim expedition against Nubia was very slight. This is shown by the indifference with which 'Abdallāh ibn Abī'l-Sarḥ greeted their gathering on the bank of the Nile when he returned from his expedition against Nubia. It is related that, when he saw them thus gathered and had enquired about them, he did not consider it worth pausing to make a treaty with them.⁴³⁰

However, the Beja shortly made themselves felt by extending their raids against the regions of Egypt, though its

⁴²⁸ *Mawā'iz*, Vol. III, p. 272.

⁴²⁹ *Mas'ūdi*, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 32.

⁴³⁰ *Ibid.*.

government was soon in a position to take strong action against them. After several engagements an agreement was reached in the year 216/831-2. After another outbreak of hostilities a truce was signed in the year 241/855-6.⁴³¹

By this time the country's emerald and gold mines had become famous and the new agreement had stipulated that the Muslims should be permitted to work in the mines. This marked a turning point in the life of the Beja and their relations with their Muslim neighbours. Because of the need of the Beja for the support of the Arab nomads, there seems to have been no fresh opposition offered by the Beja to the settlement of the Arabs. The close relationship which soon developed between the two races was maintained by inter-marriage between the males of Rabi'a and the daughters of the chieftains of the Beja. The fact that among the Beja the female line was of more importance than the male brought the next generation of Rabi'a into the government of the Beja tribes.⁴³²

This new development in the Beja country was in time to bring peace to the neighbouring Muslim regions.⁴³³

5. BAIBARS'S CONTACTS WITH NUBIA

Up to the time of the Mamlūk state the military activities conducted against Nubia were for the purpose of punishing the Nubians, either for raids against Aswān region, or for withholding the *baqt*. None of these actions seems to have had the aim of establishing Muslim authority within Nubia itself. The boldest action, and one which may be regarded as exceptional in this respect, was the attempt of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's brother, who penetrated as far as Ibrīm. He hoped to post a Kurdish garrison in that region, but his troops were soon driven out.⁴³⁴ It was not until the Mamlūk period, during Baibars's reign, that the subjugation of Nubia was brought about.⁴³⁵

There is no evidence that Baibars had conceived any

⁴³¹Balādhuri, *Futuḥ*, pp. 239-40.

⁴³²Mas'ūdi, *op.cit.*, Vol. III, p. 32 and *Mawā'iz*, Vol. III, pp. 267 and 279.

⁴³³*Mawā'iz*, Vol. III, p. 277.

⁴³⁴Trimingham, *op.cit.*, pp. 68-9.

⁴³⁵Ibn al-Furāt, *op.cit.*, Vol. VII, p. 45.

previous intention of conquering Nubia; it was only when he became involved in military engagements there that he pursued the idea, losing no time in pressing forward his activities and neglecting no opportunity, military or diplomatic, to gain control of Nubia. Concerned as he always was about his military prestige, Baibars could never leave a task unfinished, and was not content merely to repulse an attack by Nubia.

6. SAFETY OF TRADE ROUTES

The country itself, although, like any other conquered country, it could be squeezed to yield some benefit, hardly justified the expense of large-scale military operations. Even the slaves Nubia was supposed to provide were not worth the diversion of Baibars's effort in the north against the Crusaders and the Mongols. It was therefore neither territorial gain nor the acquisition of booty that prompted Baibars to turn his vigour and energies against Nubia. Rather, it was the economic threat to one of Egypt's sources of income, one of the sources of her prosperity and of her ability to stand the heavy financial demands of gigantic military undertakings, which the wars in Syria constituted. This source of prosperity was the spice trade from the East to the ports on the western shore of the Red Sea. These routes to Egypt ran through Beja and Nubian countries and through the desert of 'Aidhāb.⁴³⁶ As a result, Baibars, who realised the role of this trade in the prosperity of Egypt, was anxious that peace should be maintained in the regions through which it passed.

7. THE ARABS OF UPPER EGYPT

The degree of importance of this trade is shown by Baibars's ruthless action against the nomad Arabs who by their revolt in Upper Egypt had reduced its flow and at certain times brought it to a standstill altogether. The result of this action was the firm establishment of Baibars's prestige. So successfully, indeed, did Baibars quell the trouble, that although that region had not yet had a governor, the merchants felt safe enough to resume their journeys. Their

⁴³⁶ *Mawa'iz*, Vol. III, pp. 299-300.

confidence became so great that they began to make two journeys annually instead of the usual one. This was regarded as a remarkable event in the history of trade in those regions at that time.⁴³⁷

8. THE RULERS OF SAWĀKIN AND DAHLAK

This was not the only action Baibars took to safeguard the welfare of the spice trade. He also intervened when, further to the south, another danger appeared to be threatening the merchants. Sawākin and Dahlak were two places through which a large number of merchants were accustomed to pass, and Baibars received repeated complaints against their rulers,⁴³⁸ who were accused of seizing the property of merchants who died on the journey. In 662/1263-4 Baibars sent them a warning.⁴³⁹ This served its purpose with the ruler of Dahlak, for there seems to have been no further action taken against him. The case with the ruler of Sawākin, 'Alā al-Dīn Asba'ānī, was different, as he took little notice of Baibars's warning, probably encouraged by the news of Baibars's engagement in the north which seemed to make the possibility of his carrying out his threat remote. In 664/1265-6, however, Baibars ordered his governor of Qūṣ to set out with an army against the ruler of Sawākin. Asba'ānī was eventually driven out of Sawākin, which was then entrusted to a man chosen by Baibars for this task.⁴⁴⁰ The former ruler was later reconciled with Baibars and restored to his former position, but now governing the town in the name of Baibars.⁴⁴¹

Baibars's dealings with these two rulers showed that his concern was solely for the safety of the merchants, for in the case of the ruler of Dahlak he took no further action as soon as the cause of complaint was removed. In the case of the ruler of Sawākin, military action was taken only when it was found necessary. The capture of Sawākin does not suggest that Baibars had aimed at territorial gains: his action there was taken merely as a step to shatter the delusions of the ruler of Sawākin, who underestimated Baibars's capacity to carry out his threat. That Baibars's sole aim was to ensure security

⁴³⁷ *Biography*, ff. 26-7.

⁴³⁸ They were probably descendants of mixed Arab and Beja races.

⁴³⁹ *Biography*, f. 44.

⁴⁴⁰ *Ibid*, f. 78.

⁴⁴¹ Safī', *Husn al-Manāqib*, f. 84 a.

for the merchants was confirmed by the rapid restoration of this ruler to his throne. Asba'ānī was more familiar with his subjects and better qualified to govern them than anyone Baibars might have appointed; moreover, if he were not reconciled he would certainly seek an opportunity to regain his lost throne, and Baibars would be distracted from other and more important matters. The sooner the matter could be settled the better for trade, which was suffering from the uncertainty of the routes. The fact that Asba'ānī was installed on the throne in the name of Baibars⁴⁴² does not invalidate the argument that Baibars was not seeking territorial gains: this measure was necessary to safeguard his prestige on withdrawing from the conquered town. There may even have been a nominal payment to Baibars to serve the same purpose.

9. SUBJUGATION OF NUBIA

Baibars's original intentions towards Nubia do not seem to have differed much from his intentions towards the rulers of Dahlak and Sawākin. However, at a certain juncture and for certain specific reasons, his attitude changed. The situation of Nubia on Baibars's border, the attitude of the Nubians towards him, and his own disposition in dealing with his opponents were all factors in this change.

His contacts with them began in 667/1268-9, when the ruler of Nubia, one Abū'l—'Izz, had become blind and had been dethroned by his nephew Dāwūd. Dāwūd sent to inform Baibars of the change in government, despatching a present with his mission as a token of friendship. In return, Baibars demanded the resumption of the payment of the annual tribute known as *baqt*, which had probably been interrupted even before the rise of the Mamlūk state.⁴⁴³

Dāwūd might have hoped to win Baibars's favour and support by approaching him in this way and informing him of his action against the former ruler, who had failed to pay the *baqt*, and who must consequently have fallen into disgrace in the eyes of Egypt. He presumably also assumed that Baibars would be satisfied with the present he had sent, and that he

⁴⁴²Shāfi', *op.cit.*, f. 84 a.

⁴⁴³*Biography*, f. 125.

would not raise the question of the *baqt*. It is not certain, however, whether Baibars did not rather regard the step taken by Dāwūd as a sign of weakness and therefore determined to exploit it: the alternative explanation is that he had from an early date resolved to be content with no less than the traditional tribute, plus an assurance of the safety of the regions of Aswān and the other trade routes. Whatever the reason, Baibars's demand must have been delivered in a form that left Dāwūd no hope of bargaining. He therefore, probably driven by economic necessity, adopted a policy of aggression and took the offensive against Baibars's territory.

It is related that in Muḥarram 671/August 1273, Dāwūd led a raid against 'Aidḥab, killing the *qaḍī* of the town, its governor and a number of merchants. Baibars's governor in Qūṣ retaliated by raiding and devastating the neighbouring Nubian region.⁴⁴⁴

In 674/1275-6 Dāwūd led another attack, this time against Aswān where, among other damage inflicted, some mills were destroyed. Before Baibars's governor arrived, Dāwūd had managed to withdraw safely, but Baibars's governor was partly compensated by the capture of Dāwūd's governor (probably Ṣāḥib al-Jabal) and some of his followers. They were sent to Egypt and executed.⁴⁴⁵

During this same year (674) and while Baibars was presumably thinking of more effective methods of dealing with Dāwūd, there arrived at his court a man known as Shakanda, a relative of the Abū'l-'Izz whom Dāwūd had deposed.⁴⁴⁶ This person sought Baibars's help against Dāwūd, thus giving Baibars the opportunity of taking a decisive step towards Dāwūd's elimination. Baibars sent an army of 3,000 horsemen under the command of two of his ablest generals, with instructions that, on capturing Dunqula, the Nubian capital, Shakanda should be installed as Baibars's governor. When these arrived outside Dunqula, Dāwūd and his men came out mounted on camels, with spears as their only weapons. Since

⁴⁴⁴Ibn Shaddād, *Tarīkh al-Malik al-Zāhir*, Vol. II, f. 16.

⁴⁴⁵*Nihāya*, Vol. XXIX, f. 89 and Ibn al-Furāt, *op.cit.*, Vol. VII, p. 45.

⁴⁴⁶Ibn Shaddād, (*op.cit.*, Vol. II, f. 76) introduces him as the son of Dāwūd's paternal uncle, while Maqrīzī (*Sulūk*, Vol. I, p. 621) and Nuwairī (*Nihāya*, Vol. XXIX, f. 89) both state that he was the son of Dāwūd's sister.

they had no shields to protect them, they were easy targets for the archers and they suffered a crushing defeat.⁴⁴⁷

Dāwūd fled, his family, including his mother and sister, being captured during the pursuit.⁴⁴⁸ He himself took refuge with the lord of al-Abwāb, who, probably because he bore a grudge against Dāwūd, sent him to Baibars on the 2nd Muḥarram 675/16th June 1276. He was imprisoned in Egypt.⁴⁴⁹

In return for the help Baibars had given Shakanda to gain a throne, the latter was to govern Nubia in Baibars's name. In the treaty he was to impose *Jizya* on the Nubians at the rate of a *dīnār* for every adult male and the revenue of the country was to be divided into two halves, one half to be surrendered to Baibars and the other to be spent on the welfare of the country and for its protection against foreign attack.⁴⁵⁰ The region close to Aswān, which formed one quarter of the whole of Nubia, was to be assigned to Baibars as a private domain.⁴⁵¹

Administrative measures were now taken to assess and organise the new source of income. Officials were appointed to deal with the collection and supervision of the *Jizya* and *Kharāj*.

With the defeat of Dāwūd and the installation of Shakanda, relations between Egypt and Nubia entered a new stage. The barrier which had resisted the Muslims for centuries was now broken and Muslim merchants penetrated deep into the country. Unable to provide slaves as it had done in the past, Nubia was now found to possess other treasures, and, as well as opening the way to further regions through which merchants were in time able to pass safely, it was eventually to provide new territory for Muslim settlers.

⁴⁴⁷Ibn Shaddād, *op.cit.*, Vol. II, f. 76 and Ibn al-Furāt, *op.cit.*, Vol. VII, p. 46.

⁴⁴⁸*Nihaya*, Vol. XXIX, f. 89 and Ibn Shaddād, *op.cit.*, Vol. II, f. 77.

⁴⁴⁹Ibn Shaddād, *op.cit.*, Vol. II, f. 77.

⁴⁵⁰Cf. Ibn Shaddād, *op.cit.*, Vol. II, f. 76.

⁴⁵¹Ibn al-Furāt, *op.cit.*, Vol. VII, p. 47.

PART FOUR: THE SOURCES

ABBREVIATIONS

- Biography:* *Al-Rauḍ al-Zāhir fī Sīrat al-Malik al-Zāhir.*
Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir (Istanbul,
al-Fātiḥ Library MS. No. 4367).
- B.S.O.A.S.:* *The Bulletin of the School of Oriental and
African Studies.*
- Ighātha:* *Ighāthat al-Umma bi Kashf al-Ghumma.*
Aḥmad Ibn 'Alī al-Maqrīzī, (Cairo, 1940).
- Ilmām:* *Al-Ilmām bi Akhbār man bi Arḍ al-Ḥabasha
min Mulūk al-Islām.*
Aḥmad Ibn 'Alī al-Maqrīzī. (Cairo, 1890).
- Khiṭaṭ:* *Kitāb al-Mawā'iz wa'l-l'tibār bi Dhikr
al-Khiṭaṭ wa'l- Āthār.*
Aḥmad Ibn 'Alī al-Maqrīzī. (Cairo,
1270 A.H.).
- Mufaḍḍal:* *Al-Nahj al-Sadīd fī mā Ba'd Tārīkh Ibn
al- 'Amīd.*
Mufaḍḍal ibn Abī'l-Faḍā'il (ed. Blochet,
Paris, 1920).
- Nihāya:* *Nihāyat al-Arab fī Funūn al-Adab.*
Aḥmad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Nuwairī (Cairo,
1923-1935 and Bibliotheque Nationale, Suppl.
Arabe 739).
- Nujūm:* *Al-Nujūm al-Zāhira fī Mulūk
Miṣr wa'l-Qāhira.*
Yūsuf ibn Taghrībī. (Cairo, 1938).
- Ṣubḥ:* *Ṣubḥ al-A'shā fī Ṣinā'at al-Inshā.*
Aḥmad al-Qalqashandī. (Cairo, 1913).
- Sulūk:* *Kitāb al-Sulūk li Ma'rifat Duwal al-Mulūk.*
Aḥmad ibn 'Alī al-Maqrīzī. (Cairo, 1936).
- Yāqūt:* *Mu'jam al-Buldān.*
Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī. (Cairo, 1906).

PART FOUR:

THE SOURCES

The main medieval sources for the reign of Baibars fall into three categories:

- I Biographies and contemporary chronicles.
- II Inscriptions and coins.
- III Chronicles of the 14th and 15th centuries.

Except in the case of Baibars's biography by Muḥyī al-Dīn, which is dealt with in detail, these different sources are here summarised.

I BIOGRAPHIES AND CONTEMPORARY CHRONICLES

(i) MUḤYĪ AL-DĪN IBN 'ABD AL-ZĀHIR.

The Qādi Muḥyī al-Dīn Abū'l-Faḍl 'Abd Allāh ibn Rashīd al-Dīn 'Abd al-Zāhir ibn Nashwān ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir al-Sa'dī al-Miṣrī¹ was born in Cairo in 620/1223 and died on the third of Rajab 692/1292.² His chief claim to fame rests upon the biography of Baibars, which he composed whilst holding the post of a secretary for state correspondence under that ruler.

At the time of Baibars's accession, Muḥyī al-Dīn was already a secretary in the Dīwān al-Inshā', and he seems to have been employed in this capacity under al-Malik al-Muẓaffar Quṭuz, whom he accompanied on his expedition

¹Maqrīzī: *Sulūk*, Vol. I, p.787, and Taghrīberdī: *Nujūm*, Vol. VIII, pp.38 and seq.

²*Nujūm*, Vol. VIII, pp.33 and seq.

against the Mongols in Syria.³ He seems to have gained the confidence of Baibars at a fairly early stage; however, his first official activity under the new reign which we hear about is his drafting a letter to be sent on behalf of Baibars to Bereke,⁴ the khan of the Golden Horde, whom Baibars was anxious to win over to the side of Islam.

The Biography itself is full of documents of various types, quoted in whole or in part, many of them drawn up by the author. They deal either with matters of external policy—such as hostile letters,⁵ or letter professing friendship⁶—or with matters of internal policy, including different ceremonial occasions.⁷

The nature of this work brought Muḥyī al-Dīn into constant contact with his sovereign, who proceeded to draw him even closer to himself and consequently to trust him with tasks of the greatest importance. Thus on one occasion when Baibars had gained a victory, he favoured Muḥyī al-Dīn by allowing him to convey the good news of the Sultan's conquest to the ruler of Ḥamah.⁸ An even more important duty was entrusted to him as early in the reign of Baibars as 666/1267-8, when he was sent on an embassy to the ruler of Acre to secure his oath on a treaty which had been negotiated.⁹

Muḥyī al-Dīn retained his office during the reigns of Baibars's two sons and for at least part of the reign of Qalāwūn, who on one occasion went to Syria, leaving behind his son al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ as his deputy in Egypt, with whom he left Muḥyī al-Dīn to attend to dispatches and similar affairs.¹⁰ Thus Muḥyī al-Dīn seems to have been still active in the Dīwān al-Inshā' in spite of the deterioration of his eyesight: that, according to Shāfi', had already begun some years earlier.¹¹

³As is indicated by the passage in the *Biography* (f.1) stating that the author himself "entered Acre in the company of the Atābeg".

⁴See *Biography*, f. 10.

⁵An example of this is the letter which Baibars sent to the king of Cyprus, on whose coast his galleys had been wrecked. *Biography*, f. 150.

⁶The author relates that he wrote a letter to Bereke on behalf of Baibars, f. 10.

⁷*Biography*, f. 53 b.

⁸*Biography*, f. 151.

⁹*Sulūk*, Vol. I, p.571.

¹⁰*Ibid*, Vol. I, p.684.

¹¹On one occasion during the reign of Baibars, Muḥyī al-Dīn arranged with Shāfi' that the latter should read out the marriage contract of the Sultan's son as Baibars was expected to come out early in the morning, when the light was not sufficient for Muḥyī al-Dīn to be able to read. Shāfi', *Manāqib*, f. 140.

The family of Muḥyī al-Dīn is well known in the history of Islamic scholarship. The biographer himself may have been the first member of it to join the Dīwān al-Inshā', but he was certainly not the last, for his son Faṭḥ al-Dīn Muḥammad is known to have been a secretary there as early as the reign of Baibars.¹²

1. HIS WRITING

Muḥyī al-Dīn was regarded by his contemporaries as a writer of the highest quality; praise to this effect was showered on him in every biographical note of which he formed the subject written during the Mamlūk period. Described by one historian as "one of the eloquent men, excelling in both poetry and prose",¹³ he was termed by another "a master, a principal and superior man among writers".¹⁴ Although such estimates of Muḥyī al-Dīn by his contemporaries are understandable if we compare him with the other writers of his day, the quality of his work when viewed beyond this context scarcely justifies this degree of praise. In his poetry, the fragments quoted in the Biography are scarcely of a high standard, and even compared with other poets of the time would with difficulty earn him a place amongst the foremost of them. The quality of his prose will be examined¹⁵ when the literary value of the Biography is assessed, and it would seem to show that the views of his contemporaries were rather too generous.

It appears that Muḥyī al-Dīn's popularity with his contemporaries, who were fascinated by his method of writing, certainly shielded him from criticisms which were applied to others on the same grounds. For example al-Qalqashandī, who thinks highly of the Biographer's literary ability, states when discussing "titles" that Muḥyī al-Dīn wrote at a later period in a style very different from that of his earlier writings;¹⁶ yet, having criticised Ibn Luqmān for this very reason,¹⁷ he was careful to excuse Muḥyī al-Dīn. Whether it

¹²Muḥyī al-Dīn writes that while Baibars was in Syria "he gave orders to the son of the Biographer to write letters to his [various] governors, informing them of the appointment of 'Izz al-Dīn Aidimur as his deputy in Syria. *Biography*, f. 154.

¹³*Husn*, Vol. I, p.328.

¹⁵See below, p.156.

¹⁷*Ibid*, p.98.

¹⁴*Nujūm*, Vol. VIII, p.38 and seq.

¹⁶*Ṣubḥ*, Vol. X, p.160.

was Muḥyī al-Dīn's style which exercised its charm on his contemporaries, or the esteem and respect in which he and his family were held, is not quite clear. Perhaps they combined to bring about the same effect. His style was new, and may have derived some of its fascination from this very factor; its faults may easily have been overlooked for the sake of the writer himself, for since he was an Egyptian, an Arab and a *qāḍī* holding the office of secretary to the Sultan, he could serve his compatriots and guard their interests should the need arise. Thus his influence in government circles earned him affection or at least respect amongst his contemporaries.

However, a stricter view of the quality of at least some of the documents issued by Muḥyī al-Dīn's department goes back as far as the time of al-Qalqashandī who, although an admirer of Muḥyī al-Dīn, could not help wondering at the low standard of some of the documents issued from that Dīwān in the charge of Muḥyī al-Dīn or one of his family "who were regarded as the House of Eloquence and Head of Rhetoric".¹⁸

2. HIS BOOKS

Besides the Biography of Baibars, Muḥyī al-Dīn wrote other books, some of which were quoted by later historians. One of these was the *Kitāb al-Rauḍa al-Baḥiyya al-Zāhira fī Khīṭaṭ al-Mu'izziyya al-Qāhira*, which seems to have been a work on the topography of Cairo. It was frequently quoted by Maqrīzī¹⁹ and Qalqashandī.²⁰ Also, probably as a result of his position as a secretary concerned with correspondence, which brought him into close contact with the carrier-pigeon service (which seems to have played an important role in the communications of the day), Muḥyī al-Dīn wrote a book which is called by Qalqashandī *Tamā'im al-Ḥamā'im*²¹ and by al-Suyūṭī *Tamām al-Ḥamam*²² (A guide to the pigeon service).

3. HIS EDUCATION

Muḥyī al-Dīn's father was a *qāḍī* and must have seen to

¹⁸ *Subḥ*, Vol. XIV, p.70.

¹⁹ See for instance *Mawā'iz* Vol. I, pp. 5, 360.

²⁰ *Subḥ*, Vol. III, pp.303, 348, 350-364.

²¹ *Ibid*, Vol. II, p.87 and Vol. XIV, p.390.

²² *Husn*, Vol. II, p.221.

the education of his son from the boy's childhood.²³ In the biographical account of Muḥyī al-Dīn given by al-Kutbī,²⁴ Muḥyī al-Dīn is said to have been taught by Ja'far al-Hamdānī, 'Abd Allāh ibn Ismā'il ibn Ramaḍān, Yūsuf ibn al-Mukḥayyalī and others. Among his own disciples later on were al-Barzānī, Ibn Sayyid al-Nās, Athīr al-Dīn and ibn Jamā'a.

Muḥyī al-Dīn does not seem to have confined himself to the normal curriculum as taught by his teachers, but appears to have added to his knowledge by reading works which were certainly not part of the customary formal education. History was probably one of those subjects: from the Biography of Baibars it is clear that he had read some of the early historical writings in Arabic, such as al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Asākir and Ibn al-Athīr. And his interest in history led him to read historical documents hitherto unpublished.

The fact that he was considered to be qualified for the office of secretary in the Dīwān al-Inshā' suggests that he had had a full education in Arabic literature, and the language in which his work is couched and the quotations therein²⁵ support this view; moreover, it is known that he followed the literary method introduced by al-Qāḍī al-Fāḍil,²⁶ and his quotation of the latter in the Biography²⁷ is a proof that he had read his work.

4. DESCRIPTION OF THE TEXT

The manuscript entitled *al-Rauḍ al-Zāhir fī Sīrat al-Malik al-Zāhir*, by Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, is in Istanbul in the library of al-Fātiḥ, number 4367. The number of folios is 194 and there are seventeen lines on each page. The manuscript is written in Naskh and the writing is well formed and clear, with the exception of a few pages at the beginning and the end, and some pages defaced in the middle; diacritical points and vowel signs are in general properly placed, but misplacing or omission is not infrequent. On the evidence of the handwriting the manuscript may be said to have been

²³Kutbī, *Fawāt*, Vol. II, p.271.

²⁴*Ibid.*

²⁵He quotes al-Mutanabbī, al-Buḥturī and other poets: *Biography*, ff. 4 b, 58, 167 b and 175 b.

²⁶*Fawāt*, Vol. II, p.271.

²⁷*Biography*, f. 181.

written about the end of the 13th century or the beginning of the 14th century, but it is obviously by the hand of a copyist and not that of the author. This is indicated by the use of the word *kadhā* to draw attention to the strange usage of a word,²⁸ by the marginal notes proposing amendments²⁹ and by the insertion of sentences which, in the text from which the copy was made, may have been marginal notes.³⁰

5. GAPS

There are approximately 8 folios missing from the beginning and a number of folios missing from the end. In the body of the manuscript, there is about a folio missing from the two pages of folio 8, several folios between the two pages of folio 35, at least a folio between the two pages of 75, a number of folios between the two pages of folio 183, and finally some folios between the two pages of folio 185. These gaps have been completed from the British Museum Manuscript Add. 23, 331,³¹ which is available only up to folio 98a, corresponding to folio 65a, in the Istanbul Manuscript. Gaps left unfilled³² have been completed from the works of later historians, wherever possible,³³ where these are known to have quoted the Biography repeatedly. Certain unfinished sentences have been completed in the same way.³⁴ This is indicated in the text in every case.

6. ORIGINAL OR ABRIDGEMENT?

A close examination of the present text shows clearly that it is the original text of the Biography of Baibars by his

²⁸*Biography*, f. 33 b and B.M. ff. 2, 6.

²⁹*Ibid*, f. 41 a, where the word 'Sultan' has been altered to 'Atābeg'.

³⁰*Biography*, ff. 153 and 147 b.

³¹This extant part of the MS. has been edited, with a translation, a short account of Baibars's life and an introduction by Dr. S. F. Sadeque. It was published in Pakistan in 1956 by the Oxford University Press.

³²Such as the folios left missing at the end of the MS. where, under the heading "The removal of Baibars to His Blessed Tomb", information regarding the burial of Baibars is thought to have been lost; this would have continued the existing part under this heading, together, perhaps, with poetry lamenting his death.

³³The gap between the two pages of folio 75 is left unfilled.

³⁴A sentence in folio 183a was completed from al-Nuwairī, who frequently quotes Muḥyī al-Dīn in his work on Baibars, and in folio 185 the gulf in the MS. is bridged by a letter found in al-Qalqashandī in which Muḥyī al-Dīn describes to the vizier the Ṣāhib Bahā' al-Dīn the Sultan's expedition to al-Rūm. This letter is almost identical with the part of the account in the Istanbul MS. See *Ṣubḥ*, Vol. XIV, p. 139.

Secretary for State Correspondence, Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, and not an abridgement. The introduction to the work makes it evident that it was the author’s intention to provide detailed information;³⁵ the style of the introduction is that appropriate to a work of some length;³⁶ the omission of any reference in the extant part of the introduction to this text’s being an abridgement also provides a negative proof. This evidence and a comparison of the introduction of the present work with that of Shāfi’s abridgement show that the former is undoubtedly an unabridged work.

Certain references in the Biography, which might be taken as indications that it is an abridgement of the author’s original work, do not, on closer examination, bear this interpretation, and in view of the evidence to the contrary can be set aside. These references form two groups.

First, the author refers to a preceding account which does not exist in the Biography as we have it or promises to explain an incident in a later account, yet fails to do so.³⁷ Both of these circumstances could be explained by the author’s having given what he referred to or promised to give, but only in the original work of which we may have merely an abridgement. However, what is more likely is that the author simply overlooked what he had said elsewhere; moreover there are certain gaps in the text, and it is not impossible that some of the missing accounts were included there.

The second group of references is formed by those places in which the text states: “The one who abridged the Biography said . . .”³⁸ or “Ibn al-Qaisarānī, who abridged the Biography, said . . .”³⁹ Although these occur within the text, they can be explained by the theory that they were originally marginal notes which were mistakenly incorporated into the body of the work by a later copyist, as is the case with the word *kadhā*.⁴⁰ In one of the two places where this occurs, the sentence is incomplete and meaningless, and is not found in Nuwairī, who quotes the whole chapter.⁴¹

There is a further proof that the existing version of the

³⁵*Biography*, B.M. f. 2. b.

³⁶*Ibid*, B.M. f. 2 a.

³⁷*Biography*, f. 97 b.

³⁸*Ibid*, f. 147 b.

³⁹*Ibid*, f. 153.

⁴⁰*Ibid*, B.M. f. 2 b and also f. 33.

⁴¹*Biography*, f. 153a and *Nihāya*, Vol. XXIX, f. 85 b.

Biography of Baibars by Muḥyī al-Dīn is a complete one, in the fact that certain accounts are introduced by the words: "the author (*mu'allif*) of the Biography said"⁴² or "the author or the writer (*kātib*) of the Biography said"⁴³ or, more precisely, "the author of the Biography, the Qāḍī Muḥyī al-Dīn, said"⁴⁴ or "the Qāḍī Muḥyī al-Dīn, the author of the Biography, said".⁴⁵ The past tense of the word "said" (*Qāla*) does not reduce the value of the evidence, as Arabic historians frequently refer to their works in the past tense, which they perhaps felt withdrew their own names from the foreground and so avoided presumption. It is not uncommon, for example, to find an author saying: "the historian said".⁴⁶ Muḥyī al-Dīn uses the word *oultu* (I said) very rarely, and then only when he has some justification for using the first person in the account he is about to quote, usually the Qur'ān or Ḥadīth.

As a further instance of this type of humility, the author introduces a poem known to be his own with the words: "the *mamlūk* (slave) composed the following poem",⁴⁷ and in another place refers to himself as "the author of the Biography, the *maulā* (slave) Muḥyī al-Dīn".⁴⁸ To abridge a work is a show of respect and appreciation, and no abridger would be likely to speak of his author in such terms. When the author himself does so, however, it is justified as an instance of humility before his patron.

The repetition of these different but similar phrases, all referring to the same person, is compelling evidence, for nowhere else in the whole of the Biography is there a similar phrase concerning any other historian, except for the two groups referring to abridgement which have already been discussed and placed in a different category.⁴⁹

Furthermore, the present biography contains accounts quoted by later historians and attributed to Muḥyī al-Dīn. All of these quotations in works still extant have been checked

⁴²*Ibid.* ff. 43, 45, 87, 92, 94, 97, 101 and 103.

⁴³*Ibid.* f. 39.

⁴⁵*Ibid.* f. 72.

⁴⁴*Ibid.* ff. 69 and 72.

⁴⁷*Biography*, ff. 39 and 40.

⁴⁸*maulā* also has the meaning "lord", but the word *mamlūk* in a similar context indicates the meaning to be taken here.

⁴⁹*Biography*, f. 53.

when possible and found to be identical with the contents of the present work, and to contain no additional information.⁵⁰

In conclusion, no abridgement by the author is known. If any had existed, his relative, Shāfi' ibn 'Alī, who abridged the Biography, would surely have mentioned it. This omission, together with the reasons which Shāfi' gives for making his abridgement, is strong evidence of the originality of the present text.⁵¹

7. DATING

The impression gained from the text is that it was composed during the reign of al-Malik al-Zāhir Baibars; the author uses the words "May God grant him victory!"⁵² referring to the Sultan and "May his majesty be increased"⁵³ referring to Bereke, the ruler of the Golden Horde, who pre-deceased Baibars. The repetition of the words "our lord" (*maulānā*) strengthens this impression.

The author himself says that he has written the Biography for the Royal Library⁵⁴—that is to say, for the library of Baibars—and that Baibars himself later on helped the author by dictating to him information concerning his earlier life.⁵⁵ Shāfi', the author of the abridgement, gives a similar account.⁵⁶ It is therefore clear that the Biography was written during the lifetime of Baibars, although additional information may well have been inserted by the author at a later date when he was revising his work.

With the exception of the details of the period before Baibars's seizure of the throne, Muḥyi al-Dīn appears throughout to be recording events as they took place, or as soon as the accounts of them were made available to him.

8. METHOD OF COMPOSITION

At the beginning of the Biography, Muḥyi al-Dīn seems undecided on the method he is going to adopt, but as he

⁵⁰Where additional material appears, it is usually because the author has not indicated the end of his quotation, which he has allowed to run on into his own account.

⁵¹See Shāfi', *op.cit.*, f. 4 b

⁵³*Ibid.*, f. 30.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, B.M. f. 10 a.

⁵²*Biography*, f. 2.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, B.M. f. 2 a.

⁵⁶See Shāfi', *op.cit.*, f. 146.

proceeds he gradually introduces a systematic arrangement.⁵⁷ In its essence, it is a chronological sequence, each year being treated separately, though this is not without a certain confusion.⁵⁸ On the whole, however, this system is used throughout the Biography down to the death of his hero in 676 A.H.; always the historian is concerned to record the exact date, giving the day, month, and sometimes even the approximate time of day,⁵⁹ although the omission of at least one of these is not rare in other parts of his work. There are also certain obvious mistakes in recording dates which may well be the fault of the copyist rather than that of the author.⁶⁰

In addition to the chronological arrangement, the material is also introduced in sections under subject-headings. Although some of these headings are clear and precise, the sections often include matter which is quite alien to their professed subject and in itself of little importance.⁶¹

9. HIS SOURCES

The author was the Sultan's secretary for official correspondence, a position which gave him access to the information he needed for composing this biography, and which made him one of the few people in charge of state documents and at the same time in a position to meet those who shared with the Sultan the tasks of government; also he was able to accompany the ruler on his various expeditions, military and otherwise. The bulk of the material which makes up the Biography seems to have been derived through one of these three channels. In his introduction the author points out that "this humble servant was an eye-witness of these events, both at home and abroad, beholding them himself and not merely being told of them",⁶² and although he does not often relate how he obtained a specific piece of information, it can usually

⁵⁷The first year to be so treated is 662 A.H.

⁵⁸See for example f. 98, where the author gives an account of what took place in Šafar 666 A.H., and f. 99, where he introduces the new year 666 A.H.

⁵⁹*Biography*, f. 156 b.

⁶⁰*Biography*, B.M. f. 60 b.

⁶¹The section headed "The Arrival of the Envoys of al-Malik Bereke" commences with an account of the arrival of the sons of al-Malik al-Mughith. B.M. f. 65a and also ff. 28-29.

⁶²*Biography*, B.M. f. 2a.

be assumed that it came to him through the course of his official work. When he is present at events he describes them, and when he has received the documents which record events he either quotes them or utilises them. He was, for example, eye-witness at a siege when Baibars joined his troops in the preparations,⁶³ and on another occasion he gives an account of his own embassy to the ruler of Acre.⁶⁴

When the author gives his authorities they fall into two categories, oral and written.

10. ORAL SOURCES

His authority here is usually some prominent person, from a *qādī* up to the Sultan himself. The latter is sometimes indicated as the source of information recorded in the work,⁶⁵ and on one occasion as having dictated to the author an account of one of his early journeys.⁶⁶ Other authorities include those prominent members of his government who played a part in the incidents related.

The terms employed in introducing accounts from such different sources are as follows: "The author of the Biography said, according to what the Sultan dictated in his own words";⁶⁷ "the Sultan related, saying";⁶⁸ "the Sultan said to me";⁶⁹ "this is what our lord the Sultan told me, saying";⁷⁰ "the Sultan has said";⁷¹ "this is what the Atabēg told me, saying";⁷² "the author of the Biography said: the lord of al-Jazīra, al-Malik al-Mujāhid, related to me";⁷³ and "the Amīr Iftikhar al-Dīn, the governor of Buṣrā, related, saying".⁷⁴

He rarely conceals his authorities, and when he does so uses the expressions "I was told"⁷⁵ or "it reached me that".⁷⁶

⁶³ *Biography*, B.M. f. 2a.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, f. 123.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, f. 6 and f. 18 where the Sultan indicates the amount spent on the Caliph and the princes of Maṣīl. See also f. 10 a.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, f. 128.

⁶⁷ *Biography*, f. 128.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, f. 10 a.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, f. 18 b.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, f. 6.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, f. 38.

⁷² *Ibid*, f. 4.

⁷³ *Ibid*, ff. 82-83.

⁷⁴ *Ibid*, f. 2.

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, f. 178.

⁷⁶ *Ibid*, f. 7.

11. WRITTEN SOURCES

The author quotes the work of earlier historians on periods prior to his own time, giving the name of the author and of his work. These he introduces with such terms as "Al-Balādhurī, in his book 'The Conquest of Countries', said";⁷⁷ "al-Rūmī, in his book 'The Conquest of Syria', related, saying";⁷⁸ "We shall mention what Ibn Ḥamdūn has copied in his book *Al-Tadhkira*";⁷⁹ "I have copied from the handwriting of Abū Zakariya Yazīd ibn Iyas ibn al-Qāsim, the author of the History of al-Mauṣil";⁸⁰ "Ibn al-Athīr in his history related";⁸¹ and "Ibn al-Samʿānī in his history related".⁸² The name of the author quoted is occasionally omitted, as in: "The author of the Biography said: 'I saw a letter in the Biography of al-Ḥākim' ",⁸³ and sometimes only the name of the author is given and not that of the work in question, as "Balādhurī related on the authority of his *shaiḥs*"⁸⁴ or "the foregoing information regarding *faqīhs* was related by Ibn Zūlaq who attributed it to accounts of al-Masīḥī".⁸⁵

There are also occasions when the author seems to be quoting from documents no longer extant: in relating the history of the Azhar, he mentions the copy of a document concerning its *waqf* and says, "I saw a copy of it in the possession of Najm al-Dīn al-Ḥillī, which is now in the hands of the Chief Qāḍī, Taqīy al-Dīn ibn Razīn".⁸⁶ This is also the case in the references to al-Quṣair being the fort of Antioch.⁸⁷

When the author utilises written sources, therefore, he rarely fails to give either the name of the author or that of the work, and the expressions "it was said",⁸⁸ "someone said",⁸⁹ "another said",⁹⁰ or "it was related on the authority of . . ."⁹¹ occur only rarely; and as they may sometimes have been in the middle of a quotation, they possibly represent

⁷⁷*Biography*, f. 114.

⁷⁸*Ibid.*, f. 114.

⁸⁰*Ibid.*, f. 160.

⁸²*Ibid.*, f. 141.

⁸⁴*Ibid.*, f. 114.

⁸⁶*Ibid.*, f. 95.

⁸⁷*Ibid.*, ff. 60-61, 27 and 114.

⁸⁹*Ibid.*, f. 13.

⁹¹*Ibid.*, f. 75.

⁷⁹*Ibid.*, f. 26.

⁸¹*Ibid.*, f. 22.

⁸³*Ibid.*, f. 95.

⁸⁵*Ibid.*, f. 181.

⁸⁸*Ibid.*, ff. 27 and 114.

⁹⁰*Ibid.*, f. 26.

words by the writer quoted. It should be mentioned that there is one expression which the author uses more than once and which, although referring to a source of a kind, is just as obscure; this is "Aṣḥāb al-Akhbār", "the possessors of information", i.e. the historian's informants.

12. LANGUAGE AND STYLE

It is rarely an easy matter to estimate the responsibility of the copyist for the language and style of a manuscript, and in consequence authors are frequently accused of faults which may not have been their own. Some of the judgements which will be passed here are subject to this reservation.

Muḥyī al-Dīn was known to his contemporaries as a writer with a lofty and highly characteristic style, and it is true that later writers failed to equal him—just as he himself failed to equal al-Qāḍī al-Fāḍil, in whose steps he followed and whom he tried to imitate.⁹² However, famous as Muḥyī al-Dīn was in other fields of literary composition, he appreciated that the writing of history was quite different from writing either for purely literary or purely official purposes. This is clear from his use of certain documents composed by himself for other objects, when he makes changes in the text for easier reading, and rids them of some of their stylistic flourishes;⁹³ it is also done with documents written by others and required for quotation.⁹⁴

As a result of this treatment, his style in the Biography is to some extent free from the ornamentation found in it in other contexts. Indeed, the difference between the two styles is quite remarkable,⁹⁵ though here we shall restrict ourselves to dealing with some of the more distinctive features of the language of the Biography.

Rhyme remains a feature of the author's style here, and is introduced as an ornament even when it interrupts the smoothness of a sentence, and often without any compelling reason for its introduction,⁹⁶ although in the majority of

⁹²Fawā, p. 271

⁹³His letter describing the expedition to al-Rūm, and the section on this expedition in the text, f. 185.

⁹⁴See *Biography*, B.M. f. 55 b seq. for quotation of parts of a document.

⁹⁵See *Biography*, the letter quoted from *Ṣubḥ*, f. 185 a.

⁹⁶*Ibid*, B.M. ff. 7 a and 10 b.

instances this occurs when the subject matter appeals to his emotions, as when he refers to the Sultan's glorious deeds.⁹⁷ The rhyme is sometimes easy and natural, but is often very forced, and this, with other extravagant stylistic devices, frequently leads the author into a sentence not only strained and unnatural, but even either meaningless or with a conclusion wholly alien to its beginning. A word which reminds him of a phrase in the Qur'an⁹⁸ or in any other literary work not seldom prompts him to utilise the quotation even when the connection between the two is tenuous.⁹⁹ This, in turn, creates a diversion, and other irrelevant ideas are introduced. Not satisfied with quoting a single verse from the Qur'an, he tries to convey his thought through a succession of verses interrupted by phrases of his own. This only results in sentences left isolated from their proper context and requiring a considerable effort on the part of the reader to make intelligible in their new frame.¹⁰⁰

One of the outstanding faults of his writing is that the sentences are sometimes disjointed.¹⁰¹ In certain cases it is not easy to see the relationship between one sentence and the next:¹⁰² some of the proverbs which he introduces contribute to this lack of smoothness in style, and in one place¹⁰³ at least cause confusion as to the real meaning of what is being said. Such difficulties tend to arise because Muḥyī al-Dīn is trying to make these intrusive colloquial sentences sound classical, in spite of their faulty grammatical construction.¹⁰⁴

Other weak points in his style are the misuse of pronouns and of prepositions, his usage of the latter case occasionally giving a completely wrong meaning.¹⁰⁵ With regard to pronouns, instead of retaining one pronoun throughout a sentence, he sometimes follows it with the proper name or the title of the person to whom he has been referring,¹⁰⁶ repeats a pronoun unnecessarily¹⁰⁷ or even adopts the plural after

⁹⁷*Biography*, ff. 63 a seq. and 162 a.

⁹⁸*Ibid*, f. 165 a.

⁹⁹*Ibid*, ff. 104, 170 b and seq.

¹⁰⁰For comparison of style see Professor H. A. R. Gibb's analysis of Ibn Shaddād's style in (W.Z.K.M., Wien 1953) pp.96-102.

¹⁰¹*Biography*, f. 96.

¹⁰²*Ibid*, ff. 2 and 152.

¹⁰³*Biography*, B.M. f. 7 a and f. 141 a.

¹⁰⁴*Ibid*, f. 23.

¹⁰⁵*Ibid*, ff. 15 and 23.

¹⁰⁶*Ibid*, f. 48.

¹⁰⁷*Ibid*, f. 19.

starting out with the singular.¹⁰⁸ Even in his quotations he does not seem able to avoid switching from one pronoun to another, and in one case the pronoun is changed from the second to the third person.¹⁰⁹

All this is a source of confusion and is liable to lead to an interpretation far from the author's original intention. It inevitably reduces both the literary and the historical value of the work of Muḥyī al-Dīn.

13. HISTORICAL VALUE

If it is accepted that this work constituted, when complete, the full version of the Biography of Baibars by Muḥyī al-Dīn, it can be assumed to contain most of the information regarded (by the standards of his time) as important and worthy of record. Its value, however, is not to be judged solely by this, but also by certain outstanding qualities which give it a significant place in biographical literature as a whole, and that concerning Baibars in particular.

The Biography is one of the only two complete biographies devoted solely to Baibars's life, and is the only one of which virtually the full text is available. It has already been indicated that the fact of the author's being secretary for official correspondence is significant, since it gave him access to official documents which he was able to utilise for his work,¹¹⁰ and also gave him an opportunity to meet high officials and others from whom he was able to obtain a variety of useful information.¹¹¹ He attended meetings of the Sultan's council, was present at discussions, and accompanied the Sultan on his various expeditions. This, together with his firsthand experience on ambassadorial missions,¹¹² placed him in a unique position as an eye-witness of events. As he himself remarked in the Biography:

“This humble servant was an eye-witness of these events both at home and abroad, beholding them himself and not merely being told of them.”¹¹³

¹⁰⁸*Biography*, f. 19.

¹⁰⁹*Ibid*, f. 4.

¹¹⁰A number of documents are quoted in full, some of them being of his own composition. Others are quoted in part or incorporated in the text.

¹¹¹*Biography*, ff. 4, 18 and 22.

¹¹²*Ibid*, f. 123.

¹¹³*Biography*, B.M. f. 2 a.

His position as secretary to the Sultan had, however, its corresponding disadvantages, for it placed him under the direct patronage of the man whose biography he was writing: most of the shortcomings of his work are a direct result of this personal relationship to the Sultan. Faults which arise from this cause can be divided into categories:

FALSIFICATIONS

Certain information Muḥyī al-Dīn is thought to have deliberately falsified. An example of this is his account of the murder of the former Sultan, al-Malik al-Muẓaffar Quṭuz, and the circumstances which led to Baibars's succession to the throne. The author emphasises the point that Baibars carried through this action alone and entirely unassisted,¹¹⁴ but Shāfi' states that it was Quṭuz's servant, the Silāḥdar, who delivered the first blow, that this stroke was not fatal, having been delivered by a frightened man, and that Baibars merely turned back to finish off the victim.¹¹⁵ Shāfi' excuses Muḥyī al-Dīn for not having given a truthful account, and claims in one place that "the time and the wish of the Sultan demanded this",¹¹⁶ declaring elsewhere¹¹⁷ that it was fear which dictated the statement. The omission of the whole account of a claim that he did not know the true version might well have been expected of the author in a case such as this. The reference by Shāfi' to "the present time and wish of the Sultan" and to Muḥyī al-Dīn's fear (of the Sultan?) seem to indicate that Baibars was not anxious to share with others the honour of having removed the Sultan from power "in the midst of so great an army".¹¹⁸ A further passage in the abridgement of Shāfi' throws some light on the attribution of the deed to Baibars alone: in the course of a discussion on Baibars's succession to the throne, the Atābeg reminded the *amīrs* of the law of the Turks: "he

¹¹⁴ *Biography*, ff. 3 and 6.

¹¹⁵ Shāfi', *op.cit.*, f. 8. For similar accounts with some difference, see p.26 for reference.

¹¹⁶ Shāfi', *op.cit.*, f. 9. The statement could be read differently to mean: "present time and circumstances of authority demand this", if 'arad were read *gharaḍ*.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, f. 136.

¹¹⁸ *Biography*, f. 3.

who kills the king takes his place" (*man quatala malikan k̄āna huwa al-malik*).¹¹⁹ If this were to be accepted as binding, it would have brought forward those who claimed to have assisted Baibars to demand their share in the fruits of the action. The admission that others participated might thus have been most harmful to Baibars.

Another aspect of this account open to criticism is that Muḥyī al-Dīn says that no one had the courage to oppose Baibars,¹²⁰ which conflicts with the account given by Ibn Shaddād, the author of the other biography of Baibars. Ibn Shaddād states that Baibars was subsequently attacked by one of those who were loyal to Qutuz.¹²¹

Again, Muḥyī al-Dīn gives the impression that when news reached Cairo of the death of Qutuz and the succession of Baibars, the people were pleased,¹²² although evidence from other sources suggests that the people were alarmed at the news, remembering their previous misfortunes under the Baḥrī *mamlūks*.¹²³ Indeed the history of the Baḥrīs in Egypt before the reign of Baibars would amply justify such reaction to news that the Baḥrīs were back in power.

Further, the author omits to mention that the *amīrs* who were assembling to elect a new Sultan were about to instal al-Rashīdī, when suddenly the Atābeg, who had been detained in another tent, burst into the gathering and succeeded in getting Baibars elected instead. There was a danger that al-Rashīdī might have been able to use an account of this incident to further his claims. This episode would furthermore explain why al-Rashīdī, after being favoured by Baibars at the beginning of the reign, was later detained in prison and perhaps killed.¹²⁴

OMISSIONS

Another type of fault to be found in Muḥyī al-Dīn's

¹¹⁹Shāfi', *op.cit.*, f. 9.

¹²⁰*Biography*, f. 3.

¹²²*Biography*, f. 4.

¹²⁴*Biography*, B.M. f. 65 a, and for the death of Al-Rashīdī see *Mufarij*, Vol. II, f. 422.

¹²¹Ibn Shaddād, *Tārīkh al-Malik al-Zāhir*, f. 202.

¹²³*Nihāya*, Vol. XXIX, f. 2.

work which seems to spring from his association with the Sultan in an official capacity is the omission of certain facts which the historian must have known and without which, because of their significance, the Biography is incomplete. The most obvious of these omissions is that of the early life of Baibars, recorded by later historians. This cannot have been because Muḥyī al-Dīn did not know the facts or omitted them unintentionally: rather, it was out of respect for the Sultan who had earlier been a slave.¹²⁵

This omission of events which might logically be expected to have been included in the Biography has been noticed before, and Shāfi' himself mentions in several places the absence of accounts of matters which he regarded as important and essential. In one instance he draws attention to the fact that Muḥyī al-Dīn has neglected to include the Caliph's genealogical tree.¹²⁶

GENERALISATIONS

Yet another drawback to the value of the Biography arises from the same cause, in that the author occasionally resorts to vague generalisations when he is anxious to avoid recording anything which might be offensive to his patron. In his treatment of the Caliph's expedition against the Mongols,¹²⁷ for example, Muḥyī al-Dīn is far from clear, especially when he reaches the episode where later historians have accused Baibars of deliberately exposing the Caliph to the danger of defeat by sending with him, on the advice of certain *amīrs*, a smaller force than the one promised.¹²⁸ Shāfi' was puzzled to account for the reason behind this profitless expenditure of men and money, and says of the author "He murmured, and did not record anything of it".¹²⁹

Muḥyī al-Dīn shows a similar vagueness about the cause of the dispute between Baibars and Quṭuz which led to the death of the latter. The sentence with which he introduces the account of the death of Quṭuz—"when al-

¹²⁵Shāfi', *op. cit.*, f. 5.

¹²⁷*Biography*, f. 18 b.

¹²⁹The word Shāfi' gives as ghamghana can be read 'am'ama, meaning generalised, *op. cit.*, ff. 11 and 23.

¹²⁶*Ibid*, f. 31.

¹²⁸*Sulūk*, Vol. I, p. 462.

Malik al-Muẓaffar, in whose company the Sultan Baibars was, left for Egypt, he began to display arrogance and his attitude changed, as the Sultan noticed”¹³⁰—presents only the broadest picture. Even the account given in the abridgement is clearer than this.¹³¹

PATRONAGE

Shāfi‘ relates that, when Muḥyi al-Dīn had “completed a part (*juz*)”, Baibars would sit down, and would have the author seated in order to listen to it. He would then favour him with magnificent robes of honour and that which goes with them, as a reward for these enjoyable and excellent [accounts]”.¹³² This implies that the work was under the direct supervision of Baibars, and the author exposed to the temptation of recording only what might please the Sultan and gain him a reward.

Dangerous as this might seem at first, the fact remains that there is little in the Biography which would call for the interference of Baibars. Also, Muḥyi al-Dīn had the opportunity to revise and amend his account after the death of Baibars and thus to save the Biography from being no more than Baibars’s own life-story.

In addition to these disadvantages under which the Biography labours, all of which can be ascribed directly or indirectly to the influence of Baibars himself, there are also the occasional confusions noticed earlier as being due to the author’s style, as when he describes how the Sultan was approached by two persons who produced certain papers in connection with matters they raised.¹³³ The account as it stands is confusing, and it is only with an effort of the imagination that any intelligible idea can be constructed from it. The first story concerns a man who produced some papers, apparently in confirmation of the existence of a certain treasure and perhaps also specifying its location. The second story deals with someone who wrote some papers, which, to judge from what happened in the court set up by the Sultan, contained grievances the Sultan was meant to

¹³⁰*Biography*, f. 3 a.

¹³²Shāfi‘, *op.cit.*, f. 146 a.

¹³¹Shāfi‘, *op.cit.*, ff. 8 and 136.

¹³³*Biography*, f. 38.

redress. These two accounts could be taken as completely different, had not the author quoted them as being similar.

Again this eccentricity in style obscures the meaning of a sentence whose significance cannot be seen: "The Sultan sent a royal pavilion in sections and carried on mules, with the *amīr* Badr al-Dīn al-Aidimurī; he wanted to show people what concealed their deeds and to establish assurance in their hearts". Since the author was discussing the intention of al-Rashīdī, who was literally trying to steal a march on Baibars and take over al-Karak against his wish, who was in his turn trying to prevent this, the significance of sending a pavilion in sections on mules is not apparent. Furthermore the rest of the sentence, in which this pavilion seems to have been meant to uncover concealed deeds and establish assurance in people's hearts, destroys any attempt at suggesting a reasonable interpretation.¹³⁴

Finally; certain of the accounts in the Biography are clearly misplaced or are so obviously irrelevant that they can only have been introduced for external reasons.¹³⁵ The reader who attempts to link such passages with those preceding or following is invariably faced with more than one possible interpretation.

The points listed inevitably reduce the value of the particular sections of the Biography where they occur, but the usefulness of the great bulk of the work remains unimpaired. It sets out the facts in a masterly manner and gives a clear, authentic picture of Baibars and his period.

14. ITS WORTH TO MAMLŪK HISTORIANS

The value of the Biography was recognised by other historians of the Mamlūk period, who quoted it as the main source of their works. Some of them copied long passages without attempting to make any alteration, while others abridged it, but keeping as close to the original as possible. Its

¹³⁴*Biography*, B.M. f. 64 a.

¹³⁵*Ibid*, f. 138 and B.M. f. 64 a.

acceptance by contemporary historians increases its significance for the history of Baibars's times, and the few additional pieces of information about the reign which can be gleaned from later chroniclers are usually found to have been introduced and developed for specific reasons. Of such later writers Maqrīzī, who granted Baibars the virtues ascribed to him by his contemporaries¹³⁶ but added information emphasising his faults or revealing new ones, is perhaps a good example. The Shāfi'ī rite was predominant in Egypt in Mamlūk times, and perhaps the new access of vigour it acquired after the fall of the Fāṭimī regime in Egypt caused some inconvenience to the authorities, since early in his reign Baibars made the expansion of Cairo¹³⁷ an excuse to reduce the importance of the Shāfi'ī rite by appointing judges from other Sunni rites. This was much resented by the Shāfi'īs, who dared not object openly during his reign, but made certain accusations after his death, circulating stories which developed as they were bandied about. There is a passage in the work of a Shāfi'ī where Baibars is alleged to have seen al-Shāfi'ī in a dream saying: "You have humiliated my rite. Is the country mine or yours? I have dismissed you, together with your descendants, till the Day of Judgement". Another passage makes Baibars say, after his death: "God has tormented me greatly because I increased the number of Qāḍīs to four, and he has said to me: 'You have split the Word of the Muslims' ".¹³⁸

Maqrīzī, himself a Shāfi'ī, was undoubtedly prejudiced against Baibars, and would naturally favour such stories as had been in circulation since the death of Baibars, recording them in final form and giving them permanence.

Baibars lived at a crucial period, when the Mongols had swept over and occupied most of the Muslim lands. To stand prepared against their attacks, new and strict measures, often

¹³⁶*Sulūk*, Vol. I, pp.637 and 641.

¹³⁷Expansion is given as the reason by Muhyī al-Dīn (f. 41 a), but other historians give a specific incident as being the reason. See for example *Nihāya*, Vol. XXIX, f. 29 a.

¹³⁸Suyūṭī: *Husn*, Vol. XI, p.133; *Sulūk*, Vol. I, p.640. Cf. S. F. Sadeque, *Baybars The First of Egypt*, pp.20-21.

regarded with suspicion by the populace at large, had to be taken. Such things were remembered, and not always in association with their immediate causes. Some of them were measures connected with finance, involving merchants and property owners; and we see that Baibars has been criticized by later historians for his oppressive taxation, although he seems to have enforced such measures only on one occasion.¹³⁹ His abolition of taxes imposed by former sovereigns was recorded by the biographers of Baibars and by other writers of the Mamlūk period, but although these reductions applied to more than one kind of taxation, they never received the same emphasis in accounts of his reign as did his imposition of fresh taxes.

Another matter which called for Baibars's attention was the establishment of order, which meant dealing with the power of the *amīrs*, a problem which had been an embarrassment to Saladin and had eventually destroyed the authority of his descendants. This power had been growing continuously, and unless the ruling Sultan could harness it, he would have little chance of being master in his own house. The need to reduce the power of the *amīrs* in matters of state was obvious, and harsh and perhaps inequitable measures were needed. Baibars did not hesitate to take any action he thought necessary for the safety of the state, and it often obliged him to exclude neither cruelty nor treachery. Naturally, this policy and the means by which it was implemented gave scope for criticism of Baibars by later writers. During his own lifetime, most of what had taken place was never mentioned, either because it was not known at the time or because fear of the consequences prevented discussion; but after his death there was a chance to state the facts, often with exaggeration, against a ruler who had executed punishment on his enemies, their relatives and friends. The social and political conditions which dictated his actions were later to disappear, and with them the justifications for a policy which met with a good deal of posthumous disapproval. Only an outline of the memory of Baibars remained, in which were embedded certain isolated instances by which henceforth he was to stand accused.

¹³⁹Even on this occasion, Baibars was said to have abandoned the idea and returned to people the amount collected. Ibn Shaddād, *op.cit.*, ff. 31-2.

Not all the accounts absent from Muḥyī al-Dīn's Biography and included by later historians are of this nature, however, and some of the information from later sources is just as important as that given in the Biography in forming a complete picture of the life of Baibars. Shafī ibn 'Alī deals with several points not found in Muḥyī al-Dīn, of great value not only for what they add to the picture of Baibars in the Biography, but also as throwing into relief the attitude of Muḥyī al-Dīn towards the information he gives.

(ii) ABŪ SHĀMA

Shihāb al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ismā'īl ibn Ibrahām ibn 'Uthmān al-Maqdisī Abū Shama was born in Damascus in 596/1199-1200 and died in 665/1267.¹⁴⁰ From an early age he showed great promise as a scholar. His time was a period when great encouragement was given to learning and he soon became prominent. Among the posts he held was the chair of Qur'ān reading in the Ashrafi turba and that of the Ḥadīth in the Ashrafi school.¹⁴¹

Abū Shāma wrote several books on different subjects. History received a considerable part of his attention. The result of this was the writing of his two abridgements of the history of Damascus by Ibn 'Asākir: in the first he reduced this voluminous work into fifteen volumes and in the second into five.¹⁴² But the most important historical work for which Abū Shāma is well known is his book *Al-Raudaṭain fī Akhbār al-Daulatain*, where he recorded the history of the two dynasties of Nūr al-Dīn Zankī and Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Ayyūbī. Abū Shāma's importance as regards the reign of Baibars lies in his work *al-Dhail*, a continuation of *al-Raudaṭain*. There he gives information covering the period of Baibars's reign up to 665/1266-7, shortly before the death of the author.¹⁴³ The passages dealing with Baibars are short and add little to what other contemporaries detail. Nevertheless it represents the opinion of a Syrian historian who was not under Baibars's

¹⁴⁰ Al-Kutbī, *Fawāt al-Wafayāt*, Vol. I, p.322, cf. al-Subkī, *Tabaqat al-Shafi'iya*, Vol. V, p.61, where the date of his birth is 579/1183-4 and Ibn al-'Imād, *Shadharat al-Dhahab*, Vol. V, p.318 where it is 599/1202-3.

¹⁴¹ Subkī, *op.cit.*, Vol. V, p.61 and Ibn al-'Imād, *op.cit.*, Vol. V, p.318.

¹⁴² Ibn al-'Imād, *op.cit.*, Vol. V, p.318 and also al-Kutbī, *op.cit.*, Vol. I, p.322.

¹⁴³ *Al-Dhail* begins with the year 590/1193-4.

patronage, as for instance were Muḥyī al-Dīn and Ibn Shaddād.

There are several MSS of *al-Dhail* scattered in different libraries,¹⁴⁴ and three of these seem to present a complete copy.¹⁴⁵ There is an edition of *al-Dhail*, by 'Izzat al-'Aṭṭār and Zahid al-Kautharī, which appeared in 1947, but omission of the preface and additional information found in MSS not available to the editors, reduces its value.¹⁴⁶ In it the title, given as "The Biographies of the Men of the Sixth and Seventh Centuries" (*Tarājim Rijāl al-Qarnain al-Sādis wa al-Sābi*) is also thought to be incorrect.¹⁴⁷

(iii) IBN WĀṢIL

Jamāl al-Dīn Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad Ibn Sālim Ibn Naṣr Allāh Ibn Wāṣil¹⁴⁸ was born in Ḥamāh in the year 604/1207-8. There he was brought up and received part of his education, continued later in Jerusalem and Damascus. He died on the 28th Shawwāl 697/8th August 1298.¹⁴⁹

The century during which Ibn Wāṣil lived was marked for its activity in many fields of learning, which resulted from schools founded by Nūr al-Dīn Zankī, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn and later Ayyūbī princes. The encouragement of scholarship and the patronage afforded to scholars, together with other factors, helped Aleppo and Damascus to become centres of learning. It was in this environment that Ibn Wāṣil lived, enjoying all the privileges offered to scholars. He himself was learned in many subjects, amongst which was history, to which he later contributed by writing the history of the Ayyūbī dynasty.¹⁵⁰ This chronicle is called *Mufarrij al-Kurūb fī Akhbār Banī Ayyūb* and contains the Ayyūbī dynasty's history from their appearance until the establishment of the Mamlūk State.¹⁵¹

The book is divided into three volumes, the manuscripts of

¹⁴⁴A detailed description of these MSS. and their whereabouts may be found in a work by M. H. M. Aḥmad entitled *Studies on the Works of Abū Shāma 599-665 A.H. (1203-1267)*. A Ph.D Thesis (University of London, June 1951).

¹⁴⁵Brit. Mus. or 1538, or 1539 and Koprulu 1180.

¹⁴⁶Aḥmad, *op.cit.*, p.122.

¹⁴⁷*Ibid*, p.122.

¹⁴⁸*Shadharāt al-Dhahab*, Vol. V, p.318.

¹⁴⁹Abu'l-Fida', *al-Mukhtasar*, Vol. IV, p.39. See also Waddy, *An Introduction to the Chronicle called Mufarrij al-Kurūb by Jamāl al-Dīn Ibn Wāṣil*, preface i.

¹⁵⁰Abu'l-Fida', *loc.cit.*

¹⁵¹The editing of *Mufarrij al-Kurūb* was undertaken by Jamal al-Dīn al-Shayyāl of Alexandria University.

which seem to be scattered in various libraries. A complete MS of the first volume is in Cambridge (no. 1079); it continues until 617/1220-21. Almost a complete MS of what appears to be the third volume is in Paris (Arabe 1703), beginning with part of the events which took place in 635/1237 and ending with accounts of 659/1260-61. The third MS is also in Paris (Arabe 1702); probably it originally contained the whole of the work, but now only about half of the MS is extant.¹⁵² A fourth MS is in Istanbul in the Mulla Chalabi Library No. 119 and covers the middle of the work; the extant part begins with events taking place in 589/1193 after Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's death and ends in 635/1237-8.¹⁵³

The importance of Ibn Wāṣil's work for the history of Baibars is that, besides the information it contains regarding the Ayyūbī princes at that period, it provides some further information about Baibars's early reign. His information in that respect ends with the year 659/1260-1,¹⁵⁴ which was the year when the author was chosen by Baibars to leave for Sicily as an envoy to Manfred.¹⁵⁵ This journey seems to have interrupted the recording of current events by Ibn Wāṣil, but a supplement was added to his work, apparently by a student of the author, which continues it till 695/1295-6.¹⁵⁶

The period Ibn Wāṣil spent in Sicily had naturally excluded him as witness of events and was probably one of the reasons which discouraged him from resuming the writing of the history of that period. Nevertheless his book *Mufarrij al-Kurūb* was furnished, probably while being revised by the author, with accounts of his stay in Sicily. One such account, for instance, was inserted under the year 626/1228-9.¹⁵⁷

(iv) IBN SHADDĀD

The Ṣāhib 'Izz al-dīn Muḥammad Ibn 'Alī Ibn Ibrāhīm¹⁵⁸

¹⁵²Waddy, *op.cit.* See also *Mufarrij al-Murūb* (Edit. al-Shayyāl) intro, pp.8-12.

¹⁵³Ibn Wāṣil, *op.cit.*, (Edit. Shayyāl) introduction, p.13.

¹⁵⁴Ibn Wāṣil, *op.cit.*, (Arabe 1703) f. 172. ¹⁵⁵Abū'l-Fidā', *op.cit.*, Vol. IV, p.39.

¹⁵⁶Ibn Wāṣil, *op.cit.*, (Arabe 1703) f. 172 a. cf. (Arabe 1702) where the copyist is thought to have introduced some alterations in the hope that it would appear as his own composition. See Ibn Wāṣil, *op.cit.*, (Edit. Shayyāl).

¹⁵⁷Waddy, *op.cit.*, pp.89-90, citing (Arabe 1702) ff. 121 b-123 a.

¹⁵⁸According to other source Muḥammad Ibn Ibrāhīm, Ṣafadī *al-Wāfi*, Vol.II, p.3.

Ibn Shaddād al-Anṣārī al-Ḥalabī was born on the 6th Hījja, in 613/16th March 1217 and died in Egypt during the month of Ṣafar 684/1285-6.¹⁵⁹

There is no information regarding his early life. However, the evidence which it was possible to assemble from his book, in which it is scattered, deals with his manhood and later life. As a young man he visited Damascus in 631/1233-4 where he later lived for ten years during the reign of al-Malik al-Nāṣir, the Ayyūbī, whose reign extended from 634/1236-7 to 658/1259-60.¹⁶⁰ During his stay there he seems to have been introduced into the service of al-Nāṣir, who on capturing Aleppo in 638/1240-41, sent the author there in 640/1242-3, to assess its income.¹⁶¹ Apparently he remained in the service of this prince, for Ibn Shaddād was sent by him on a mission to the Mongols, who were then at Mayāfariqīn. On this mission he must have held an important place among its members, for the vigorous speech with which he addressed the Mongol commander seems to have been made from a position of great responsibility.¹⁶² Meanwhile his main office, which was quite probably connected with finance, may have been at Aleppo. The steady westward advance of the Mongols alarmed Syria, especially the Northern regions. Aleppo was struck by panic, during which a large number of its inhabitants emigrated south, and Ibn Shaddād was amongst those who left Aleppo in 657/1258-9, probably for Damascus where his master had been residing. The arrival of the Mongols in Syria and their siege of Aleppo greatly alarmed the rest of Syria, and al-Nāṣir left Damascus, which was then deserted by many others, travelling South towards Egypt. Ibn Shaddād was amongst those who left for Egypt to seek a safe place,¹⁶³ and he found it there, in due course entering the service of al-Malik al-Zāhir Baibars. He worked in the secretarial department under the vizier Bahā' al-Dīn ibn Ḥannā, who seems to have treated him with great kindness. He accompanied the vizier on his journeys to Syria

¹⁵⁹Ibn al-ʿImād, *Shadharāt al-Dhahab*, Vol. V, p.388 and Ṣafadī, *op.cit.*, Vol. II, p.3.

¹⁶⁰Ibn Shaddād, *A'lāq*, Damascus Section, p.188 and /34m/ (Edit. Dahhān).

¹⁶¹*A'lāq*, Jazīra Section, f. 19.

¹⁶²*A'lāq*, Jazīra Section, f. 137.

¹⁶³*Ibid*, Aleppo Section, f. 1.

and benefited from his company to advance his knowledge about state affairs.¹⁶⁴ It seems that the vizier had great trust in him; this later resulted in his maintaining his position even after the death of Baibars.¹⁶⁵ After the death of Baibars, Ibn Shaddād enjoyed the same favour with his son al-Malik al-Sa'id Baraka, who appointed him a warden of his *waqf* property.¹⁶⁶

TĀRĪKH AL-MALIK AL-ZĀHIR

The kindness and favour which Baibars showed to this refugee, if taken literally as the author gives it, exceeded what he expected.¹⁶⁷ As a token of gratitude for the generosity of his patron and an acknowledgement of his favour, Ibn Shaddād composed a biography covering the deeds of Baibars, entitled, as the second volume shows, *Tārīkh al-Malik al-Zāhir*. The book is in two volumes, but the first has unfortunately been lost; it evidently contained the history of Baibars's reign almost up to the end of the year 670/1271-2.

Judging by the accounts in the second volume, this biography contains detailed information on events, covering Baibars's relations with the Crusaders, with the Mongols, with Anatolia, with Constantinople, with the Yamān, with Nubia and with Frankish Princes in Europe. For the arrangement of the biography, the author employs a chronological system, and at the end of each year gives short obituary accounts of persons who have died during that year.

The existing part of the biography forms the second volume, which begins with short obituary accounts of men who died during 670/1271-2. It continues, covering the last five years of Baibars's reign, after which, at folio 189, a summary of fifteen chapters, dealing with the administration and character of Baibars, begins. This summary, which recalls some points mentioned in the missing volume, is of great value, and in some measure compensates for the loss of that missing part.

There are several gaps in the biography, mainly in parts dealing with obituary information, where a page or so has

¹⁶⁴Ibn Shaddād, *Tārīkh*, Vol. II, ff. 29-31.

¹⁶⁵Ibn Shaddād, *Tārīkh*, Vol. II, ff. 36 and 156.

¹⁶⁶*Sulūk* Vol. I, p. 647.

¹⁶⁷Ibn Shaddād, *Tārīkh*, Vol. II, f. 208.

been left blank.¹⁶⁸ There are also some folios missing in this copy.¹⁶⁹

This biography may have been begun during the life of Baibars and finished after his death and during the reign of his son al-Malik al-Sa'id. On the other hand, the whole of the work may have been completed during Baibars's life, and a revision undertaken by the author during the reign of al-Malik al-Sa'id, Baibars's son. The uncertainty has been caused by certain indications in the biography, which might have been clearer had it not been for the loss of the first volume. These indications are as follows: Discussing the construction of a certain bridge in 671/1272-3, Ibn Shaddād says: "I crossed over it in 672/1273-4; it had then been completed with his name written on it (may God enclose him with His mercy!)"¹⁷⁰ Also, in accounts given under the year 675/1276-7, the author points out that certain Saljūq *amīrs*, then imprisoned by Baibars, were later after his death released by his son.¹⁷¹ Again under the same year, the author relates that Baibars on his way to Anatolia observed that a certain place at the foot of the citadel of Ḥimş needed construction, for which Baibars gave his orders. "The work on it was begun" says Ibn Shaddād, "and it was completed during the reign of his son al-Malik al-Sa'id".¹⁷² Finally, under the year 676/1277-8, while identifying the authority who had supplied him with certain information, Ibn Shaddād indicates that this man, a chief Qāḍī, had arrived at the court of the Sultan al-Malik al-Sa'id.¹⁷³

(v) IBN AL-ʿIBRĪ (BAR HEBRAEUS)

Abū'l-Faraj Gregorius, the son of Aaron, was born in 626/1225-6 at Melitene (Malaṭiya). His father was a distinguished physician of Hebrew descent.¹⁷⁴ Abū'l-Faraj studied

¹⁶⁸Ibn Shaddād, Vol. II, ff. 45, 47, 49 and 60.

¹⁶⁹The longest is about eight pages, which are missing between the two pages of folio 2. See also f. 6.

¹⁷⁰Ibn Shaddād, *Tārīkh*, f. 23.

¹⁷¹Ibn Shaddād, *Tārīkh*, f. 104.

¹⁷²*Ibid.*, f. 109.

¹⁷³*Ibid.*, ff. 153-4.

¹⁷⁴Ibn al-ʿIbrī, *The Chronography of Gregory Abū'l-Faraj*, translated from Syriac into English by W. Budge, p. XV, and *Tārīkh Mukhtaṣar al-Duwal*, introduction by Anṭun Ṣāḥanī, p. 8; See also *Enc. Isl.* art. "Barhebraeus" (1st ed.).

philosophy, theology, Syriac and Arabic; and under the guidance of his father he acquired a considerable knowledge of medicine, which he also studied under the famous physicians of his time.¹⁷⁵

The strategic situation of Little Armenia had rendered it liable to be frequently traversed by hostile troops of Franks, Saljūqs and Arabs. But the most alarming danger came from the Mongols after the fall of Baghdād in A.D. 1258. Panic in Melitene drove a large number of its inhabitants to regions lying to the south. Abū'l-Faraj, however, does not seem to have left his home town until A.D. 1243, when he proceeded together with his father to Antioch. Choosing to lead the life of a hermit, he lived in a cave there, where he was later visited by the Jacobite Patriarch Ignatius Sābā.¹⁷⁶ After a time he moved to Aleppo, where he continued his studies. It was while he was there that the Patriarch Ignatius sent for him and in 1246 ordained him Bishop of Jūbās, a dependent of Melitene, and next year transferred him to Laqabīn, where he remained for about seven years. Ignatius II then died, and a disagreement regarding the election of his successor arose. During the dispute Abū'l-Faraj supported Dionysius, who was finally elected, against Ibn al-Ma'danī. The new Patriarch in 1253 transferred Abū'l-Faraj to Aleppo.¹⁷⁷ After only a short stay he left for Damascus, where he was received amicably by its ruler, al-Nāṣir, who restored him to his position in Aleppo.¹⁷⁸

Abū'l-Faraj in 1264 was elected as a Marphan of the East. He held this office for about 22 years until his death on the 30th day of July 1286 at Marāgha in Azerbaijan.¹⁷⁹

Among the books Ibn al-'Ibrī wrote are two histories which concern the reign of Baibars. One is a universal history which he wrote in Syriac.¹⁸⁰ The second is another universal history

¹⁷⁵Ibn al-'Ibrī, *Chronography*, introduction, p.XVI and *Mukhtaṣar*, introduction p.C.

¹⁷⁶Ibn al-'Ibrī, *Chronography*, introduction, p.XVII and *Mukhtaṣar*, introduction, p.C.

¹⁷⁷Ibn al-'Ibrī, *Mukhtaṣar*, introduction, p.D. and *Chronography*, introduction, p.XVIII.

¹⁷⁸Ibn al-'Ibrī, *Mukhtaṣar*, introduction, p.4.

¹⁷⁹*Ibid*, introduction, p.H., and *Chronography*, introduction, pp.XXIV and XXX.

¹⁸⁰This has now been translated into English by Ernest A. Wallis Budge (Oxford University Press, London, 1932).

which the author translated from Syriac in answer to a request made to him by his Muslim friends in those territories. He began the task, but, when only about three folios remained for completion, he died.¹⁸¹

On the reign of Baibars the information found in these two works is short. As far as Egypt and Syria, and Baibars's activities in them, are concerned, the author provides little new material. His chief concern appears to have been the Mongols, about whom he provides valuable information which is sometimes unique. Comparatively extensive information is given about the Mongols' activities in Iraq, Asia Minor and Armenia. Limited though his work is as regards Baibars, it helps a great deal towards completing the picture of the countries which Baibars had to deal with, and about which Muslim historians' accounts are far from being complete. Also, as a historian whose inclination is evidently towards the Mongols, his frequent agreement with his Muslim contemporaries adds to the authenticity of their works.

II COINS AND INSCRIPTIONS

The military nature of Baibars's reign necessitated the building of new fortresses and the repair of decaying ones. The passage of troops through lands with rivers and marshes involved the construction of a number of bridges and dykes; this was in addition to Baibars's realisation of the usefulness of these things for agriculture, which he greatly needed for revenue to meet the continuous costly military campaigns. When constructed or restored, these buildings were completed with an inscription consisting usually of Baibars's name and titles, together with dates and other details.

Inscriptions on these buildings, together with coins relating to Baibars's reign, add to the information found in the biographies of this ruler and in the contemporary chronicles; they thus constitute a very important source for his life. In certain cases they provide new facts, confirm existing ones,

¹⁸¹Ibn al-'Ibrī, *Chronography*, introduction, pp. XXIV and XXX and *Mukhtaṣar*, introduction, p. W. For the MSS copies of his historical work see 'Azzāwī, *al-Ta'rīf bi'l-Mu'arrikhīn*, pp. 121-123.

clarify doubtful points, or give much-needed details of particular matters. Furthermore they serve as a check on facts found in chronicles which are liable to intentional and unintentional interference by the copyist. By comparing them with chronicles the partiality or impartiality of the chroniclers may be decided and consequently the authenticity of their works determined.

A number of facts concerning the building of citadels or their repair have been preserved in this way. The names of the Sultan and some of his titles are enumerated, and the year of the construction or restoration (and often the name of the officer in charge) are given. Because of their importance, some historical events are recorded in the inscriptions; for instance, the date on which part of the citadel of Damascus was destroyed by the Mongols and its recapture by the Muslims.¹⁸² They sometimes go beyond the usual form and include some unexpected information, which is important for other fields, giving considerable detail in a limited space.¹⁸³

The titles which are repeatedly listed in these inscriptions may on occasions suggest that Baibars was anxious to confirm his constitutional rights of one kind or another. The title Qasim Amīr al-Mu'minīn, "The Partner of the Commander of the Faithful", provides an example of this intention. Naturally the inscriptions are usually unlike the chronicles, concise and to the point, and whenever they include what might be regarded as prolixity, it is often with a reason. When this reason is sought, it is often found that the mere existence of certain details in an inscription suggests far-reaching conclusions; which is not the case with irrelevant information found in chronicles. Baibars, for instance, was determined that his son al-Malik al-Sa'id should succeed him. He therefore endeavoured to bring him to the fore whenever he could. The Prince's name may be inserted in an inscription as a further means of confirming and publicising his position.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸² *Repertoire Chronologique D'Epigraphie Arabe*, Vol. XII, p.58.

¹⁸³ See for instance, the inscription on the White Mosque at al-Ramla, where Baibars gave orders for a dome and a door to be built in that mosque. The inscription includes the date on which Baibars set out for Syria and his conquest of Jaffa. *Ibid*, Vol. XII, pp.123-4 and 104.

¹⁸⁴ See, for instance, the inscriptions on the tower of the citadel of Damascus. *Repertoire Chronologique D'Epigraphie Arabe*, Vol. XII, p.58.

Inscriptions have also provided significant information concerning the development of certain aspects of Muslim political ideas. Other contemporary sources do not seem to have recorded them in spite of their significance. This is true of Baibars's title *Zill Allāh fi'l-Arḍ*—"the Shadow of God on Earth", a title normally reserved for Caliphs.¹⁸⁵

An example of the contribution of coins to this period is seen in the following resolution of an apparent contradiction. Where Muḥyī al-Dīn stated that Baibars gave orders that coins should be minted with the Caliph's name, al-Maqrīzī gives the orders as being that both the Caliph's and Baibars's names should be inscribed on the coins. Of coins made available, some have the name of the Sultan¹⁸⁶ and others both the Caliph's and the Sultan's names.¹⁸⁷ Muḥyī al-Dīn may, therefore, have been referring to an order by Baibars for the inclusion of the Caliph's name together with his own, while al-Maqrīzī referred to the form in which the coins appeared as a result of the order.

III FOURTEENTH AND FIFTEENTH CENTURY HISTORIANS:

(i) SHĀFI' IBN 'ALĪ

Naṣir al-Dīn Shāfi' Ibn 'Alī ibn 'Abbās ibn Ismā'īl ibn 'Asākīr al-Kinānī al-'Asqalānī al-Miṣrī was born during the month of Ḥijja 649/Feb.-Mar. 1252, and died on the 14th of Sha'ban 730/2nd June 1330.¹⁸⁸ Correcting Ibn Rāfi', who stated that Shafi' was a son of a daughter of Muḥyī al-Dīn, Ibn Ḥajar points out that he was actually the son of Muḥyī

¹⁸⁵*Repertoire Chronologique D'Epigraphic Arabe*, Vol. XII, pp. 222-4.

¹⁸⁶The date of one of the coins of this kind is 666 A.H. and the place of origin Cairo, Lavoix, *Catalogue De Monnaies Musulmanes De La Bibliotheque Nationale*, p.283; another coin is of 667 A.H., from Cairo, (*Ibid*, pp.283-4); a third is dated 667 A.H. and was minted in Alexandria (*Ibid*, p.227); and a fourth is dated 674, in Cairo (*Ibid*, p.284).

¹⁸⁷Coins of this description are dated 668 A.H., in Ḥamāh (*Ibid*, p.280); or 675 A.H., in Damascus. There is a coin with one side bearing the name of the Caliph, while the other side, which is defaced, may have had that of Baibars.

¹⁸⁸Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar*, Vol. II, p.184; cf. Kutbī, *fawāt*, Vol. I, p.234, where he is stated to have died during the year 733/1332-3.

al-Dīn's sister.¹⁸⁹

Shāfi' began his career as assistant to Muḥyī al-Dīn's son, who was, in turn, a secretary to Sultan Qulawūn. His talents ensured his rapid rise and soon he was put in charge of the state chancery. He held this office probably until shortly after the year 680/1281-2, when during the great battle of Hims, he was hit by an arrow in the side of the head and blinded.¹⁹⁰ Thenceforward he kept to his house, presumably devoting his whole time to the study of books, of which he is reputed to have had a large number.¹⁹¹

Shāfi''s contribution to the study of Baibars's reign comes in the form of an abridgement of the biography of Baibars by Muḥyī al-Dīn. This abridgement is called *Ḥusn al-Manāqib al-Sirriya al-Muntaza'a min al-Sīra al-Zāhiriya*,¹⁹² and was completed in the year 717/1317, as he himself indicates at the end of the book.

Shāfi' states that the suggestion that he should write an abridgement came from Muḥyī al-Dīn himself, but he declined to do so during the lifetime of the author, both as a matter of respect and because he would then be precluded from giving his own views and from possible criticism. However, when Muḥyī al-Dīn died, Shāfi' was able to carry out the enterprise to his own satisfaction.¹⁹³

In Shāfi''s opinion, the biography was too long and contained too much inessential detail; in his own words, "The circumstances obliged Muḥyī al-Dīn to include accounts both sound and unsound and to repeat those eulogies proper in the presence of the Sultan".¹⁹⁴ This was not the only reason for the abridgement, but also "a desire for that brevity which is the essence of eloquence". He goes on to say: "I have included the important and essential matters so that its reading will be pleasant and its consultation enjoyable".¹⁹⁵

He also has certain views of his own, which he was unable to set out in a separate book, both because of their shortness and their dependence on the work of Muḥyī al-Dīn. These views

¹⁸⁹Ibn Hajar, *op.cit.*, Vol. II, pp.185-6.

¹⁹⁰Up to Ramaḍān 681/Dec. 1282, there is evidence that he was still in the chancery, for he wrote a letter to the Mongol Khān on behalf of Qalāwūn. See *Ṣubḥ*, Vol. VII, p.237.

¹⁹²See bibliography.

¹⁹⁴*Ibid.* f. 4.

¹⁹³Shāfi', *op.cit.*, ff. 4-5.

¹⁹⁵*Ibid.* ff. 4-5.

were so important to him that he could not leave them unrecorded, and abridgement of the original work was therefore the best solution to his problem. Moreover, by attaching his work to so famous a work by so famous an author, he might hope that it would reach a wider circle.

Besides providing new material for the life of Baibars, which is not found in Muḥyī al-Dīn,¹⁹⁶ there is another important feature of his work. It often completes an account begun, but left unfinished, by Muḥyī al-Dīn. For instance, Shāfi' records in detail the welcome Baibars showed to the Caliph and also gives a fairly clear description of the Caliph's life, not only during the time of Baibars, but also subsequently.¹⁹⁷

The originality of Shāfi''s work can also be seen in his attempt more or less to correct Muḥyī al-Dīn when the latter hastily records an event as it appeared to him at the time of its occurrence, which proves in the event to be quite different in its effect. There was a promise made by the ruler of Anatolia to give Baibars half of his territory to grant in fief as he wished. Shāfi', later on in his abridgement, records that nothing came of this promise, and that instead Baibars spent money without any resulting benefit.¹⁹⁸

Apart from abridging what he thought was too long and completing what he thought incomplete, Shāfi' did not hesitate to point out the falsehoods he thought Muḥyī al-Dīn had deliberately manufactured. At the same time, he makes it clear that it was not easy for Muḥyī al-Dīn to write freely, and he appreciated the force of circumstances which compelled him to this dishonesty. At least one of Muḥyī al-Dīn's misstatements was a major falsehood: it concerned the carrying out of the murder of Quṭuz and its consequences, which led to Baibars's occupying the throne. Muḥyī al-Dīn emphasises that Baibars carried out the assassination alone, but Shāfi' refutes this and enumerates the associates of Baibars in this action.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁶See, for example, the information given to him by Muḥyī al-Dīn on Baibars's entry to Tripoli in disguise, which is not in the biography (Shāfi', *op.cit.*, ff. 107-9); the story of the Khatib of the Mosque of Alexandria (*Ibid.*, f. 129) and that of the inspector of Dūmyāt (*Ibid.*, f. 51).

¹⁹⁷*Ibid.*, f. 31.

¹⁹⁹Shāfi', *op.cit.*, ff. 9 and 136.

¹⁹⁸Shāfi', *op.cit.*, f. 26.

It is not always that Shāfi' is able to correct Muḥyī al-Dīn and provide a positive ruling on a matter in discussion; nevertheless, his mere doubt has its own value. It draws the attention of the reader to this information and puts him on guard, if not wholly against Muḥyī al-Dīn's opinion, then against those who provide opposite views. The best example of this is the question of the Caliph's expedition to Iraq. Baibars sent with the Caliph a small force, which was defeated by the Mongols, then occupying Iraq. Baibars was accused by later historians of having first intended to send a larger force, but later, afraid that the success of the Caliph might provide difficulties for himself, sending a small force only. The vagueness and brevity of Muḥyī al-Dīn's account do not help in deciding the matter. Shāfi' could neither confirm nor deny Baibars's intention, but neither could he explain the attitude of Baibars, a military man and an authority on the strength of the Mongols. Shāfi' sets out his difficulties thus:

“What I say is that this expedition brought no benefit and I am surprised at the decision taken. The Caliph set out for Baghdād with a force too small in comparison with that of the Mongols. He was slain, together with most of his men. The princes of al-Mauṣil achieved no principedom nor any other gain, returning after this waste of money and of souls. Muḥyī al-Dīn has generalised (or murmured) on this matter and given no details.”²⁰⁰

In another place in the abridgement Shāfi' gives further comments and points out once more the causes of his perplexity:

“I have never known anything more amazing than this [the expedition of the Caliph] but the most amazing part is the decision of those who advised and deliberated. How could such people as the Mongols, who had occupied the country with their vast numbers and equipment, be faced by so small a force, obviously unable to stand against them, even if their [the Mongols'] number had been only a thousand men? However, it was no more than a waste of money and lives. Had the whole of the Egyptian army and the Syrian army, together with its Arabs, been sent out, it would still have

²⁰⁰The Arabic word is either 'am'am or gham gham. Shāfi', *op.cit.*, f. 11.

been a great risk, but it was fate and nothing else.”²⁰¹

Unlike Muḥyī al-Dīn, Shāfi‘ was not under the direct patronage of Baibars, nor did he write his abridgement in the lifetime of the hero of his work. He even refused to write his abridgement when the author of the original was alive. Moreover, unlike certain historians of his time, he showed no bias or bitterness against Baibars. All this contributes to the authoritativeness of his work. The accounts he inserts here and there, the additional information he provides, which is lacking in the biography, and the personal point of view he incorporates into his work, give it the status of more than a mere abridgement. The weak points found in the biography written by Muḥyī al-Dīn are put right by the abridgement of Shāfi‘. Any historian who accepts Muḥyī al-Dīn’s work as a first-hand source for the life of Baibars will find it essential to consult Shāfi‘ and impossible to disregard him.

(ii) BAIBARS AL-DUWAIDĀR²⁰²

The Amīr Rukn al-Dīn Baibars al-Manṣūrī al-Khatā’ī, was, as his name shows, a *mamlūk* of al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn.²⁰³ The latter entrusted to him the government of al-Karak, from which he was removed by the Sultan al-Ashraf Khalīl, who appointed him to the office of Dawā-dār. There he remained until the year 704/1304-5, when he was dismissed by Sallār for an insult to the confidential secretary. Al-Nāṣir, however, restored him to this office and in addition put him in charge of the religious foundation and the court of justice. He was also appointed the Sultan’s deputy until 711/1311-12, when he was seized and imprisoned at Alexandria for five years. In 717/1317-8 he was released and the Sultan showed him great honour. He died in Ramaḍān 725/1324-5.²⁰⁴

He was one of the closest of the early fourteenth century historians to the time of Baibars. His work *Zubdat al-Fikra fī Tārīkh al-Ḥijra*, a history said to be in 25 volumes, is a universal history extending down to just a year before he

²⁰¹Shāfi‘, *op.cit.*, f. 23.

²⁰²Probably the diminutive of Dawā-dār, an office he once held.

²⁰³Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Durar al-Māmina*, Vol. I, p.509 and Ibn al-‘Imād, *Shadharat al-Dhahab*, Vol. VI, p.66.

²⁰⁴Ibn al-‘Imād, *op.cit.*, Vol. VI, p.66 and Ibn Ḥajar, *op.cit.*, Vol. I, p.509.

died.²⁰⁵ The author gives a detailed account of the reign of Baibars, for which his main authorities seem to be the early biographies of Baibars. However, he adds new and valuable information which is not to be found in previous works, and seems to be the result of his own experience, or to have come to him from eye-witnesses. Having himself lived through part of Baibars's reign and been a *mamlūk* of Qalā-wūn, who was a close friend of Baibars, al-Duwaidār had the opportunity of being a witness of important events or being in contact with those who had taken part in them. One of the indications of the value of his work is that it has been quoted by almost all the later chroniclers who dealt with Baibars's reign.

(iii) AL-YŪNĪNĪ

Quṭb al-Dīn Mūsā Ibn Muḥammad al-Yūnīnī al-Ḥanbalī was born in Ba'labakk during the month of Ṣafar in 640/Aug. 1242. He was brought up and educated there. After the death of his brother he became the Shaikh of the town. He himself died in the year 726/1325-6.²⁰⁶

In his book *Dhail Mir'āt al-Zamān*, a continuation of a work begun by Ṣibt ibn al-Jauzī, al-Yūnīnī gives fairly extensive information regarding the life of Baibars. New material not to be found in earlier works appears now and again in his account of this period. The fact that he was a Syrian adds to the importance of his work, providing a certain objectivity in the Egyptian context.

(iv) NUWAIRĪ

Shihāb al-Dīn ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Dā'im al-Nuwairī was born in Ikhmīm in Upper Egypt on the night preceding Tuesday 21st of Qa'da 677 A.H. (5th April A.D. 1279).²⁰⁷ He was held in favour by al-Nāṣir, who entrusted to him the management of certain of his private affairs. On one occasion, however, he fell out of favour for an offence for which he was punished, though later

²⁰⁵ Ibn al-'Imād, *op.cit.*, Vol. VI, p.66.

²⁰⁶ Ibn Ḥajar, *op.cit.*, Vol. IV, p.382.

²⁰⁷ *Nihāya*, Vol. XXIX, f.101.

pardoned. He held various secretarial posts and at one time was appointed the *Nāẓir al-Jaish* [Inspector of Forces] of Tripoli. Al-Nuwairī died on the 21st of Ramaḍān 733 A.H. (5th June A.D. 1333).²⁰⁸

He wrote an encyclopaedia in 30 volumes, to which he gave the title *Nihāyat al-Arab fī Funūn al-‘Arab*. Part of it was devoted to history, and Baibars’s life is dealt with in its 28th volume. For this particular period he utilised previous works, especially Muḥyī al-Dīn and Ibn Shaddād. From Muḥyī al-Dīn particularly, he often quotes a whole paragraph with little if any alteration. His plan in the book, however, differs from that of Muḥyī al-Dīn in that he divided his material into two parts—the first dealing with aspects other than Baibars’s conquests,²⁰⁹ the second with his military conquests.²¹⁰ The extensive quotations from Muḥyī al-Dīn have proved to be of great value for the editing of the Biography. It also helped to check accounts not clear there. Furthermore, copyist’s faults such as the omission of words, or calligraphic errors, have been amended in the light of Nuwairī’s history. The value of this work can also be seen in the new material it provides, which may be quoted from the lost parts of Muḥyī al-Dīn’s. Finally it gives in detail some of the documents Muḥyī al-Dīn deliberately omitted or abridged.

Part of *Nihāyat al-Arab*, up to the eighth volume, has been published in Egypt,²¹¹ but the 28th volume, which contains accounts of Baibars’s reign, still exists only in manuscript. A copy of it is in Paris, at the *Bibliothèque nationale*, No. Suppl. Arabe 739.

(v) ABŪ‘L-FIDĀ’

Al-Malik al-Mu’ayyad ‘Imād al-Dīn Ismā‘īl ibn ‘Alī ibn Ayyūb Abū‘l-Fidā’ was born in Jumādā the First 672/Nov.-Dec. 1273. He was originally one of the *amīrs* of Damascus. The service he rendered to al-Nāṣir, who was then exiled in al-Karak, won him his friendship. Al-Nāṣir gave him his

²⁰⁸Al-Īdfuwī, *a l-Ṭālī‘ al-Sa‘īd*, pp.46-7.

²⁰⁹This part ends at folio 60.

²¹⁰This part begins at folio 60 and ends at folio 94, where information on Baibars’s death commences.

²¹¹See Bibliography.

promise that, when he was restored to the Sultanate, he would give him the government of Ḥamāh which he would then rule independently. This promise was honoured and Abū'l-Fidā' became the sole ruler of Ḥamāh and its dependencies. Whenever the opportunity presented itself, al-Nāṣir showed great favour and drew him closer to him. When visiting Cairo on one occasion, al-Nāṣir made him ride with the insignia of the kingdom and conferred on him the title of Sultan. This honour was rarely accorded by a ruling Sultan. Abū'l-Fidā' died in Muḥarram 732/Oct.-Nov. 1331.²¹²

His book *Al-Mukhtaṣar fī Akhbār al-Bashar* is, as its title indicates, a concise universal history extending down to his own time. Like most historians of the early Mamlūk period, when dealing with Baibars, he made use of earlier work, and on Baibars's reign this author drew his material from Ibn Waṣīl and Muḥyī al-Dīn.

(vi) AL-DHAHABĪ

Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn 'Uthmān ibn Qāyṡ al-Turkumānī al-Dhahabī was born in Māyāfariqīn on the 3rd of Rabī' the Second in 673 A.H. (6th Oct. A.D. 1274) and died on the night preceding the 3rd of Qa'da in the year 748 A.H. (4th Feb. A.D. 1348).²¹³

He visited Egypt, where he studied for a while, and then returned to Syria about the beginning of the year 699/1299. There he took his place in the great mosque of Damascus and began teaching. Among the posts he held was the teaching of Ḥadīth in the Nafīsīya *Madrasa*. He was very much venerated by his contemporaries, and his books were well received and circulated, gaining great popularity.²¹⁴

One of the most famous among his books is his history *Tārīkh al-Islām*, reported to have been in twenty-one volumes.²¹⁵ This work is arranged annalistically, and at the end of each year are listed obituary notices of the important persons who

²¹²Ibn Ḥajar, *op.cit.*, Vol. I, p.372; al-Kutbī, *Fawāt*, Vol. I, pp.20-23; and al-Subkī, *Tabacāt*, Vol. VI, pp.84 and 98.

²¹³Al-Suyūṭī, *Dhail Ṭabaqāt al-Huffāz* by al-Dhahabī, p. 347; Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Durar al-Māmina*, Vol. III, p.336; Ibn al-'Imād, *Shādharat al-Dhahab*, Vol. VI, pp.153-4 and al-Subkī, *Tabaqat*, Vol. V, pp.216-219.

²¹⁴Ibn Ḥajar, *op.cit.*, Vol. III, p.336.

²¹⁵Ibn al-'Imād, *op.cit.*, Vol. VI, p.155.

died during that year. Again like other historians of al-Nāṣir's period, al-Dhahabī utilised Muḥyī al-Dīn, Ibn Shaddād's and Ibn Waṣīl's works for the accounts of Baibars in his book.

(vii) MUFADḌAL IBN ABĪ'L-FADĀ'IL

He was a Coptic Christian; neither his birth nor his death seems to have been recorded. All that is certain about him is that he lived during the reign of al-Nāṣir.

His history, which is entitled *Al-Nahj al-Sadīd wa al-Durr al-Farīd fī mā Ba'd Tārīkh ibn al-'Amīd* is, as the title indicates, a continuation of Ibn al-'Amīd's history. The history of ibn al-'Amīd ends at the beginning of Baibars's reign, when the work of Mufaḍḍal begins.²¹⁶

In this work Mufaḍḍal covers the reign of Baibars. The main sources he utilizes for this period are the principal earlier works: Muḥyī al-Dīn, Ibn Shaddād, Ibn Wāṣil and also Baibars al-Duwaydār are quoted. Although little additional information on Baibars is provided by him, his work, like Nuwairī's, serves to throw light on points that were defaced or omitted in MS copies of the Biography of Baibars by Muḥyī al-Dīn. For some time before the discovery of the extant parts of Muḥyī al-Dīn's work on Baibars, Mufaḍḍal's served as one of the main sources for quotation from that work. This made the loss of the biography less felt by those who wrote about that period.

(viii) IBN KHALDŪN

Walīy al-Dīn Abū Zaid 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ḥaḍramī al-Ishbīlī al-Mālīkī was born on Wednesday the 1st of Ramaḍān 732 A.H. (27th May, A.D.1332) in the town of Tunis. There he spent his childhood and received his education. One of the first offices he held was that of a confidential secretary to the Murīdī ruler, Abū 'Inān. But he fell into disfavour with him and was cast into prison, where he remained until this ruler died. Then Abū 'Inān's brother, Abū Salīm, who succeeded him, took

²¹⁶Mufaḍḍal, *op.cit.*, Vol. I, p.407.

Ibn Khaldūn into his service, where he remained till the death of that prince.²¹⁷ After that he moved about: his travels took him to Spain and back to North Africa, where life gradually became difficult with the rapid political changes accompanied by continuous intrigues. In Sha‘ban 784 (Oct.-Nov. 1382) he seized an opportunity to escape from Tunis, where he was then living, and emigrated eastward, arriving at Cairo to settle. There he was appointed the Chief Qāḍī of the Mālīkīs, the last occasion being in Ramaḍān 808 A.H. (16th March, A.D.1406), on the 25th of which he died.²¹⁸

The most famous of his books is his history, *Kitāb al-‘Ibar wa Dīwān al-Mubtada’ al-Khabar*, especially its *muqaddima*. But what concerns us in this study is that part of it where he deals with Baibars. Although his account of this Sultan is short for such an important period, and although the author lived at a later date, it is quite significant. The ideas of Ibn Khaldūn about history had affected the presentation of this work, and it is evidently not merely quotations from earlier sources linked together, but a work of individual character. Like some of the historians of his time, and some of those before him, Ibn Khaldūn had arranged his material and shaped it in a way that made his work different from others, and therefore gave value to his account.

His writing about this particular period is distinguished by several characteristics. He probably comes closer to the modern historian than does any contemporary or earlier Mamlūk writer. A significant event is usually preceded in his work by a short note giving its background and linking it with earlier history. This is often undertaken with some effort to point out the reasons for the occurrence of an event or stage and its later development. For instance, when introducing the Mamlūk State, he goes back to the ‘Abbāsī period, during which the Turkish slaves were first introduced.²¹⁹ Unlike other historians, he does not limit himself to recording fundamental information, but also produces profound reasons underlying events. Thus he lays before the modern reader a clearer picture of happenings, and supplies a

²¹⁷Ibn al-‘Imād, *op.cit.*, Vol. VII, p.76.

²¹⁹*Tārīkh*, Vol. V, p.369.

²¹⁸*Ibid.*

satisfactory explanation. He is probably the only one, among those who wrote about this subject, to see that Aibak's desire to marry a princess from al-Mauṣil was for the purpose of winning the support of both the prince of that region and the ruler of Ḥamāh.²²⁰ Again, in contrast to most other historians who wrote on Baibars, Ibn Khaldūn does not take sides. The reader therefore is not prejudiced by any bias on the part of the author and is left to decide for himself. Furthermore, this historian seems to have an eye for fundamental matters which other historians have ignored, and brings these to the fore. One such was the friction between the Türkmens in the coastal areas in Syria and the Franks, with whom Baibars had a treaty. When the Türkmens broke this treaty by their attack on the Franks, the former fled to Asia Minor for fear of the consequences.²²¹

These points, together with his easy, fluent style in writing this part of his history, are some of the qualities which make his work important as a contribution to the study of this period.

(ix) IBN AL-FURĀT

‘Izz al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥīm ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥīm was born in Cairo in the year 759/1357-8 and died on Saturday 26th of Ḥijja of the year 851 A.H. (3rd March, A.D.1448).²²²

His book *Tārīkh al-Duwal wa’l-Mulūk* contains detailed accounts of the life of Baibars. Although late in time, his work has its own merits in that it often quotes Muḥyi al-Dīn and Ibn Shaddād extensively, preserving their work in its original form and therefore greatly helping to replace the losses in them. When compiling his material quoted from others, he has his own unique method in choosing and arranging the material. Smoothness of style is clearly apparent in his work.

His history begins with the eighth century and works backward, reaching only the fourth century. The account

²²⁰*Tārīkh*, Vol. V, p.377. If he was citing an earlier source, he still has the credit for pointing it out in such a precise work.

²²¹*Tārīkh*, Vol. V, p.383.

²²²Al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw’ al-Lāmi’*, Vol. IV, pp.186-188; ibn al-‘Imād, *op.cit.*, Vol. VII, p.269 and al-Suyūṭī, *Nazm al-‘Iqān*, p.127.

relating to the life of Baibars is divided between volume six, which contains the first twelve years, and volume seven, which includes the last five years. The seventh volume, together with later volumes, has been edited in Beirut,²²³ while the rest are still in MSS in Vienna.

(x) AL-MAQRĪZĪ²²⁴

Taqīy al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī ibn ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Maqrīzī was of a family who lived in the Maqrīziya district of Ba‘labakk. His father had emigrated to Cairo, where he held various posts connected with jurisdiction. Al-Maqrīzī was born in Cairo about 765/1363-4 and died on Thursday 26th of Ramaḍān 845 A.H. (7th Feb., A.D.1442).²²⁵

He was brought up and educated under the supervision of his maternal grandfather, who was a Ḥanafī. As a result of this, al-Maqrīzī at first adopted the Ḥanafī rite, in spite of the fact that his father and his line were Ḥanbalīs. Later, however, when he grew up, al-Maqrīzī changed into a Shāfi‘ī, and observed this rite throughout his life. Nevertheless, there has been some suspicion that he favoured the Zāhiri rite which gave weight to literal interpretation of Ḥadīth. His biographer who recorded this, however, hastened to disperse any impression that al-Maqrīzī had been affected by Ibn Ḥazm, the head of the Zāhiri rite.²²⁶

Among the posts he held in Cairo was the office of *muḥtasib*, to which he was appointed more than once, the first occasion being in 781/1379-80. Later he turned down all offers of governmental offices and devoted his life mainly to writing history, for which he became well known. Al-Sakhāwī, who is known to have criticised sharply most of the learned men of that period, has the following to say about him: “Although al-Maqrīzī has a good knowledge of history, of that part of it which concerns earlier periods he knows little. Therefore, omission and distortion often occur in his accounts of it. Regarding later generations, he is unique in including in their

²²³By Dr. Zuraiq.

²²⁴Ibn al-‘Imād, *op.cit.*, Vol. VI I, p.254 and al-Sakhāwī, *op.cit.*, Vol. II, p.21.

²²⁵Sakhāwī, *op.cit.*, Vol. II, p.25.

²²⁶Sakhāwī, *op.cit.*, Vol. II, p.22.

biographies what cannot be accepted. Besides all this he often relies on unreliable authorities.”²²⁷

His main historical work in which the reign of Baibars was recorded was *Kitāb al-Sulūk li ma‘rifat Duwal al-Mulūk*. There al-Maqrīzī utilised the chronicles of the earlier historians, such as Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, Ibn Shaddād and other later chroniclers. His book differs from the works of other historians who quote the same authorities, in that it shows certain unique characteristics. Al-Maqrīzī, for instance, cast his material in a language of higher literary value, leaving out many of the flowery phrases with which other historians adorned their work, and which those who quoted them avidly seized upon. The worth of his work is not only that he simplified earlier works, but also in the new accounts with which he furnished it. Further information existed both in the oral tradition and in private documents, which had not been used by al-Maqrīzī’s predecessors. In course of time such facts may have gained in significance or become available for use, and it was al-Maqrīzī who included them in his record. Some of them may have been known to writers of Baibars’s time, but these could not record them for political reasons. Yet some of the stories given by al-Maqrīzī may have been rumours with little or no foundation, which had not become established at an earlier period, and mainly because of their new fame were now worth committing to paper.²²⁸ By casting earlier accounts in a new style, al-Maqrīzī may clarify a term which cannot be fully understood in earlier works: on the other hand, he may cause confusion by misunderstanding an expression used by a previous writer, a term which had since undergone a change of meaning. However, his history was popular among his contemporaries, probably for its easy style and its precision, which indeed have won him the admiration also of modern writers.

(xi) AL-‘AINĪ

Abū Muḥammad Badr al-Dīn Maḥmūd ibn Aḥmad ibn Mūsā al-‘Ainī al-Ḥanafī was born in ‘Aintāb on 27th Ramaḍān 762 A.H. (31st July, A.D.1361). He was brought up there,

²²⁷Sakhāwī, *op.cit.*, Vol. II, p.23.

²²⁸See above, p.164.

when his father was a judge. There also he received his early education, which entitled him at certain times to deputise for his father in that office. In 782/1380-1 he moved to Aleppo, the main town of that district, where he further studied under famous learned men; he then returned to 'Aintāb, which he left after his father's death, making several journeys to different parts of the neighbouring countries. In 788/1386-7 his travels led him to Egypt; in the following years he held several posts in Cairo, amongst which was the *hisba* of Cairo which he held on several occasions.²²⁹ He was favoured by al-Mu' ayyad, in whose service he occupied such an intimate position that he was sent on one occasion as an envoy to al-Rūm. Tuṭuz, on his succession, accorded him the same kindness. He used to favour his company, during which periods al-'Ainī would read to him the history he had written in Arabic; and because of his knowledge of Turkish, he used to translate it into that language. This close friendship resulted in al-'Ainī's occupying the office of the Ḥanafī judge in 829/1425-6. Apart from an interval, he held this office until after the death of al-Ashraf, when he was removed from it by al-Ashraf's son in 842/1438-9. Since then he held only the management of the religious foundations, and continued to give lessons in Tradition in the al-Mu' ayyad's *madrassa*. He was the first to hold simultaneously the three offices of a judge, a market inspector (Muḥtasib) and a warden of religious foundations.²³⁰

Among the subjects he studied was history. Al-Sakhāwī, who credits him with having written a large number of books, believes that his handwriting, which was beautiful and rapid, was much better than the information he committed to paper. Nevertheless, he devoted the rest of his life to both copying and composing, until he died on the night preceding Tuesday the 4th Ḥijja 855 A.H. (28th Dec., A.D.1451).²³¹

His contribution to the study of Baibars's reign is included in his book *'Iqd al-Jumān fī Tārīkh Akhl al-Zamān*. There, in the 20th volume, al-'Ainī deals with the life of Baibars and his reign, quoting previous works, notably *Zubdat al-Fikra* by

²²⁹Suyūṭī, *op.cit.*, p.174 and al-Sakhāwī, *op.cit.*, Vol. X, pp.131-2.

²³⁰Sakhāwī, *op.cit.*, Vol. X, pp.132-3.

²³¹Sakhāwī, *op.cit.*, Vol. X, p.133 and Suyūṭī, *op.cit.*, p.174.

(xii) IBN TAGHRĪBIRDĪ

Abū'l-Maḥāsīn Jamāl al-Dīn Yūsuf ibn Saif al-Dīn ibn Taghrībīrdī was born in Cairo in the month of Shawwāl of either the year 812 or 813/Feb.-Mar. 1410-11.²³³ His father became the Governor of Damascus, where he died while his son was still in his minority. His sister took care of him, and under the supervision of her husband, the chief Qāḍī, Nāṣir al-Dīn ibn al-'Adīm the Ḥanafī, al-Taghrībīrdī received part of his education. When ibn al-'Adīm died, his wife married another learned man by the name of Jalāl al-Dīn al-Balqīnī, the Shāfi'ī, to whom the supervision of Taghrībīrdī was then transferred. When Ibn Taghrībīrdī grew up, he pursued the study of the Ḥanafī rite.²³⁴

He was later attracted to the study of history, and consequently attached himself to prominent historians of his time, particularly al-'Aīnī and al-Maqrīzī. He began to devote himself to this subject, which his natural talents helped him to absorb. According to ibn al-'Imād, the result of this was that he was later regarded as the leader in this field among his contemporaries.²³⁵ He died on Tuesday 5th of Hījja 874 A.H. (5th June, A.D.1470).²³⁶

Al-Sakhāwī, who is known for his sharp criticism, has a different judgment to give about this historian. He seems to question the claims that Ibn Taghrībīrdī showed some of his historical writing to al-Maqrīzī and won his approval. He treats in the same manner another pretension of this author—that by his criticism he had caused al-Maqrīzī to amend certain parts of his work. In no less disparaging tone al-Sakhāwī relates that he himself heard this historian boast of having excelled historians as far back as three centuries. This he asserted on the strength of his knowing more than any of

²³²Surūr, *al-Zāhir Baibars*, p.17.

²³³Ibn al-'Imād, *op.cit.*, Vol. VII, p.317; cf. al-Sakhāwī, *op.cit.*, Vol. X, p.305. See also the biographical note on him by his disciple al-Murjī, quoted by al-'Adawī in his edition of *al-Nujūm*, Vol. I, p.10.

²³⁴Ibn al-'Imād, *op.cit.*, Vol. VII, p.317.

²³⁵*Ibid.*

²³⁶Sakhāwī, *op.cit.*, Vol. VII, p.308; cf. Ibn al-'Imād, *op.cit.*, Vol. VII, p.318, where he states that his death took place during the month of Hījja 873 A.H.

them did about the Mamlūk State, and the language and life of its people. Al-Sakhāwī regards this as folly, especially when among the Mamlūk notables were those who accused Ibn Taghrībirdī of much confusion in these matters. Al-Sakhāwī goes so far in his attack as to attribute the success of Ibn Taghrībirdī in winning the favour of Jamālī, the warden of the Sultan's private domain, to Ibn Taghrībirdī's praise of this officer in the course of his histories. He further throws doubt on his writings by accusing him of being under the influence of al-Biqā'ī, who plied him with visits during some of which he made him record what was not appropriate, only because it suited his purpose. This is particularly true of the biographical notes he writes on certain men whom he loathed, such as Abū'l-'Abbās al-Wāiz and Ibn Abī'l-Su'ūd. Less offensive, though still reducing his authority, is the allegation that he usually put al-Taḳīy al-Qalqashandī in charge of the recording of events, whenever he himself was away on a journey. Al-Sakhāwī, however, credits him with being a pleasant companion, well-mannered and an entertaining conversationalist.

Al-Sakhāwī's accusations cannot be ignored, since Ibn Taghrībirdī contributes new material to the reign of Baibars. He, for instance, gives information about the Turks, the recording of which had never taken place before. Part of al-Sakhāwī's attack was on this particular point. Therefore, if al-Sakhāwī's criticism is to be given weight, then information given by Ibn Taghrībirdī in this regard should be treated with caution.

Apart from this, his work *al-Nujūm al-Zāhira fī Akhbār Miṣr wa al-Qāhira*, which begins with the Muslim conquest of Egypt in 20/640 and continues down to 872/1467-8, like other later works, has its own character. This is mainly in the way it is arranged, in the authorities its author quotes, in the information he provides and in the style in which it is written.

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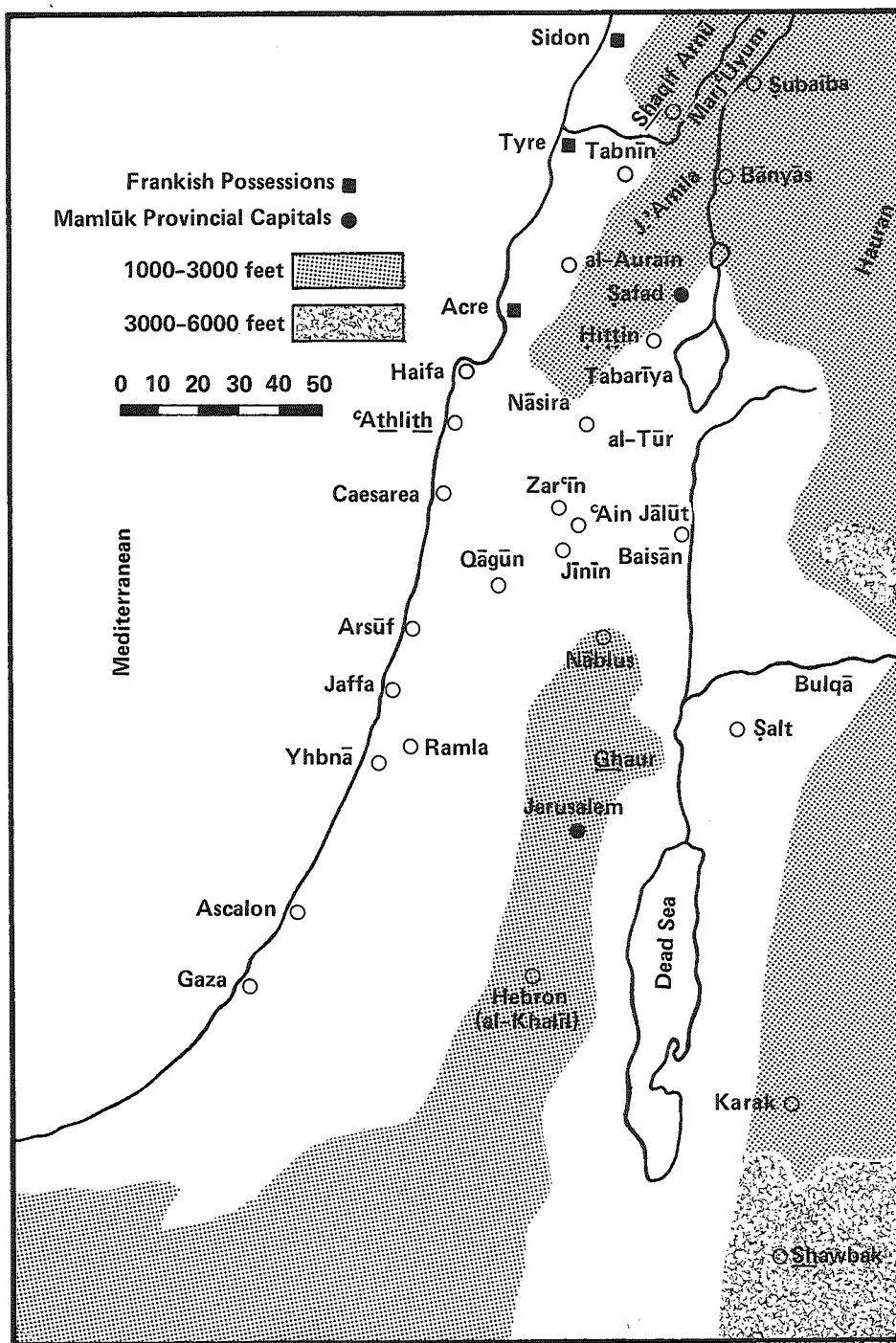
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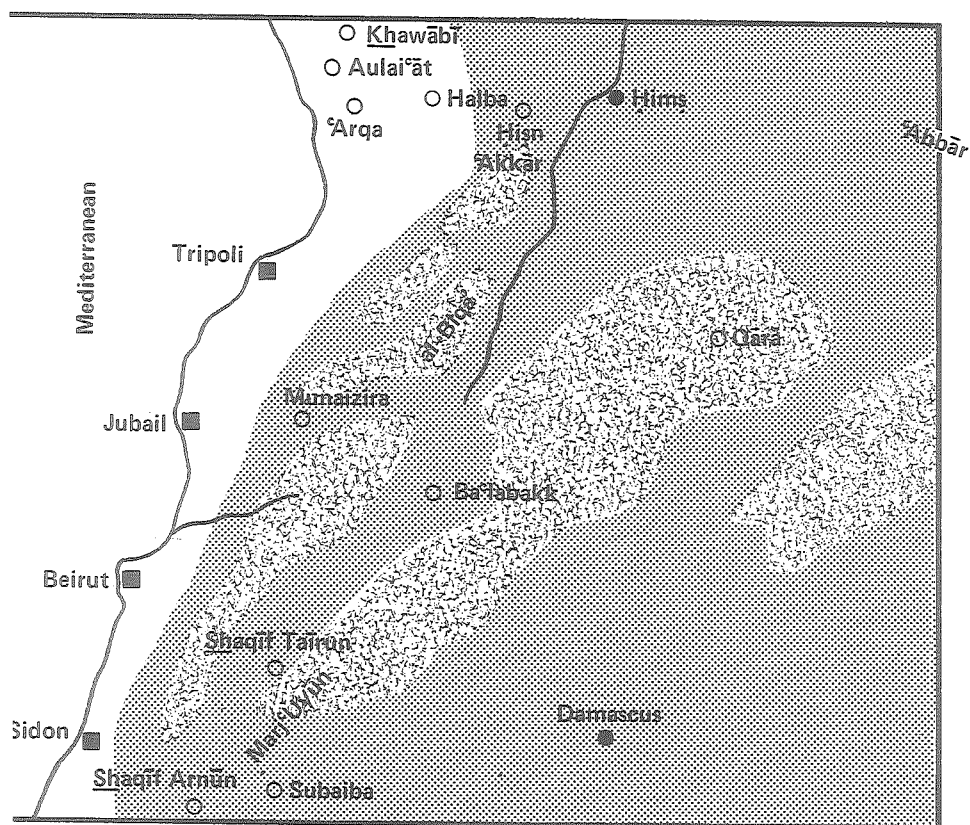
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Southern Syria



Central Syria



Mamlūk Provincial Capitals ●

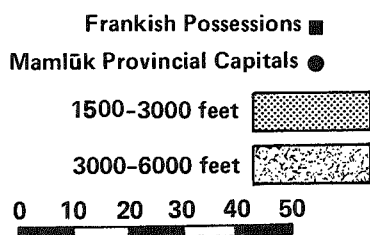
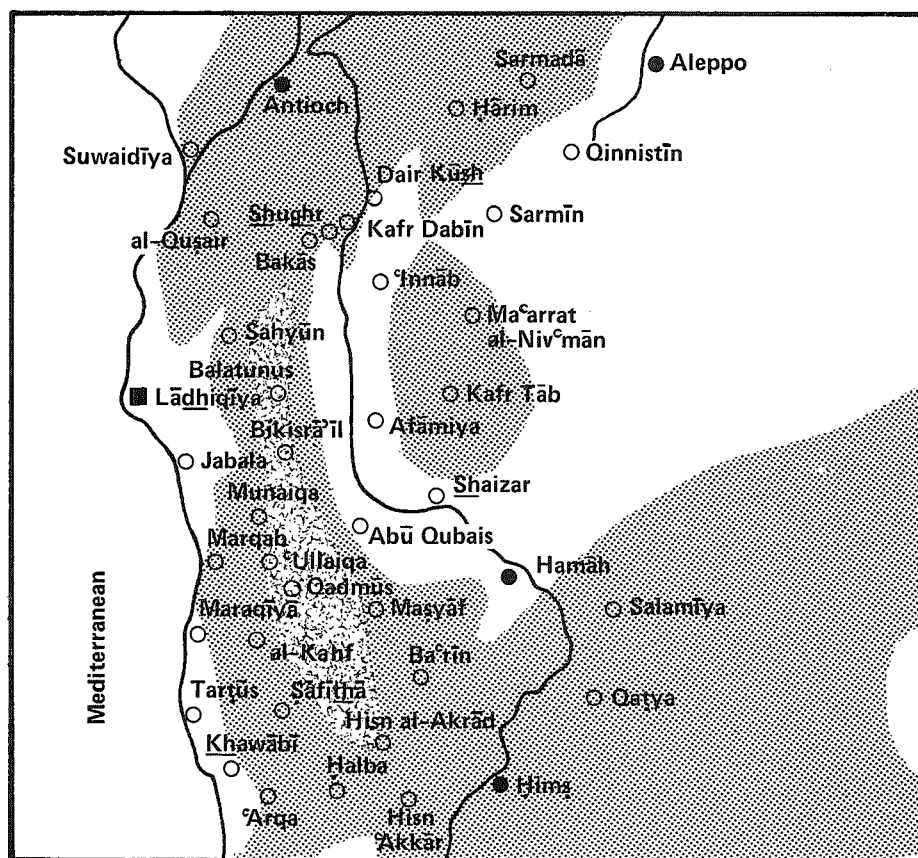
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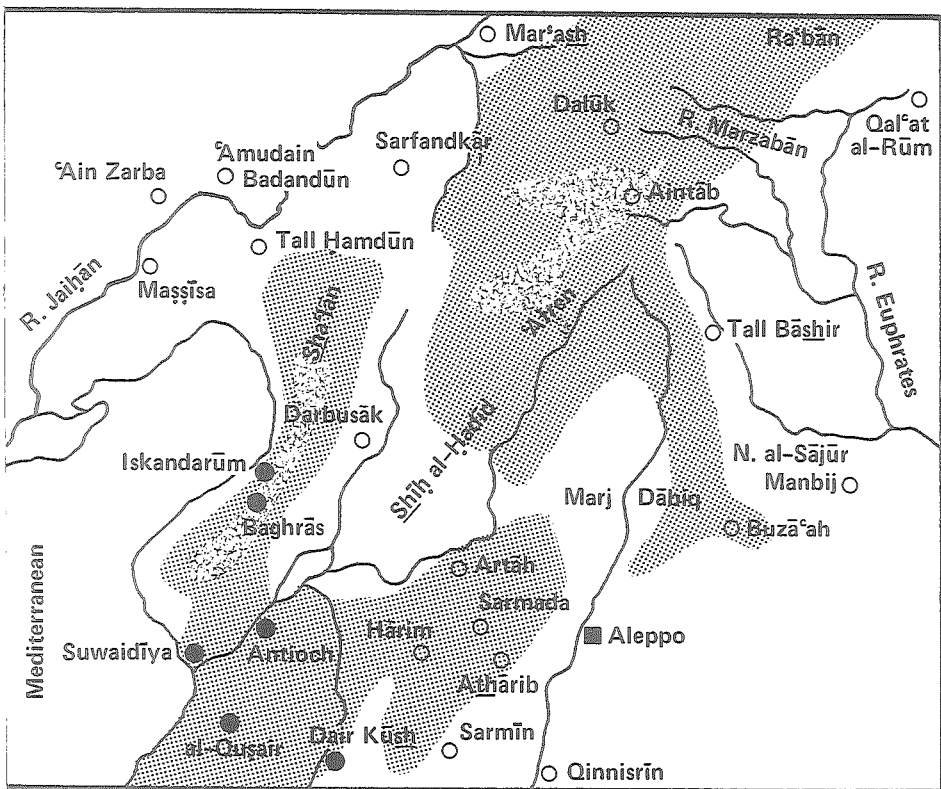
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Ismā'īlī Castles



The Northern Frontier Territories

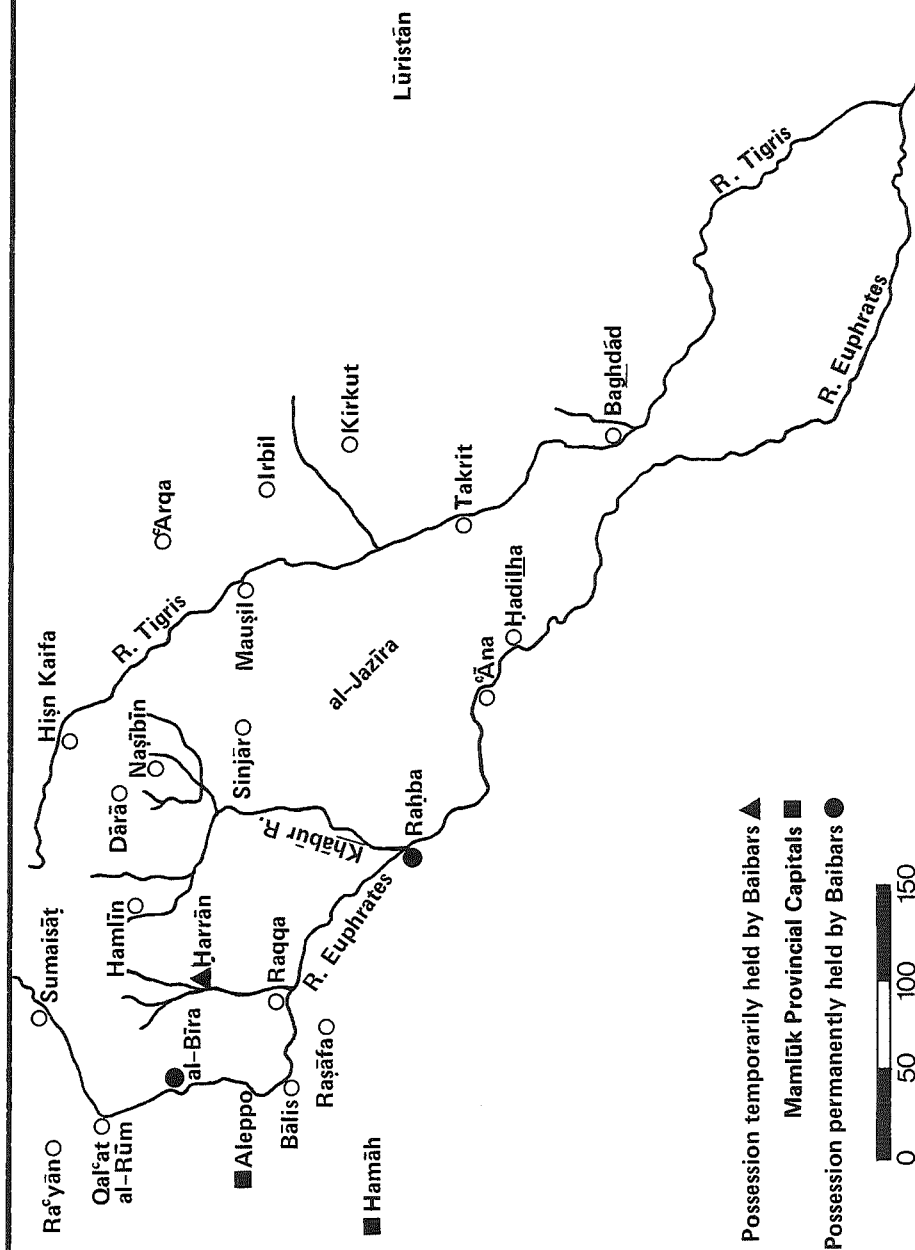


Mamlūk Provincial Capital ■
 Possessions permanently held by Baibars ●

1000-3000 feet ■

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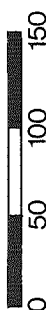
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Possession temporarily held by Baibars ▲

Mamlūk Provincial Capitals ■

Possession permanently held by Baibars ●



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The distinguished author of this illuminating and scholarly book has been Saudi Arabia's Minister of Education since 1975. He had exchanged academic life for the holding of public office some four years earlier, when he was offered and accepted the highly responsible and often onerous post of Auditor-General for the Kingdom. From that appointment he took over the portfolio for Health, being Minister of Health from 1973 till 1975.

But by many Dr Abdul-Aziz Khowaiter will first and foremost be remembered for his connection with the University of Riyadh during its vital, formative years. As its Vice-Rector from 1961 till 1971, he had in his personal keeping for a full ten years a national body of considerable significance in the development of the Kingdom in cogent fields: he might well be among those who define a university as a *fortress of truth*. Prior to becoming its head, he had been the University's Secretary-General in 1960, and in the present context there is particular relevance in his having taught history throughout this time at the University's College of Literature.

Dr Khowaiter is in the fullest sense a citizen and native of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, for he was born in its heartland, the Najd, in 1927, in the country town of 'Unaizah, whose especial culture in its desert setting has carved something of a niche for it in the social history of the peninsula. His early studies took place in Mecca, followed by Dar-al-'Ulum Cairo University, where he received his BA in History and Islamic Studies in 1951. The School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, awarded him its PhD in 1960.

Though this biography of Baibars is the first book which Dr Khowaiter has written in English, he has been author and editor of a number of historical works published in Riyadh in Arabic. These include his biography of Uthmān Ibn Bishr, an early historian of Central Arabia (1975), editorship of a book on Tarīkh al-Manqūr, another Central Arabian historian (1970), and of *Al-Rawd al-Zahir* by Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir (1977), following editorship of *Ḥusn al-Manāqib al-Sirriyah* by Shafī' ibn 'Alī, published in the previous year.