



The Change of the Power in the Context of Factional Struggle in the Formation Years of the Mamlūk State

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ABSTRACT

There are numerous studies in the literature dealing with the formation years of the Mamlūk state. These studies generally focus on the issue of the legitimacy of the state due to the *mamlūk* origin of the sultans. In order to overcome this problem, the Mamluks emphasized their identity as the *guardians of Islam*. According to this narrative, being the protector of Islam would legitimise their future independent state. However, this argument largely attributes the formation of the state to successful struggles against external factors such as Crusader-Mongol attacks. This leads to the neglect of many reasons behind the formation of the Mamluk State. While it is accepted that the state derives legitimacy from its struggles against external elements, this study focuses on inter-factional conflicts and reveals that the state has become dynamic due to these struggles. In this respect, the struggle between factions, which had been active since the time of the Ayyubids, must be taken into account in the internal transformation of the Mamlūk power. In addition, although there are narratives such as *becoming sultan by killing the sultan*, which is among the arguments frequently mentioned in the Mamluks, the determining power of the elite amirs, which is one of the unwritten rules known by everyone in the functioning of the state system, should be taken into account. Because when this is missed, the results of inter-factional struggles will be ignored. In these rules/system, not only the sultan changed, but also a series of changes occurred in the elite amirs in power. The autocracy-oligarchy conflict between the sultan and the elite amirs was ever-present. Whenever one of the amirs who provided the oligarchic power became the sultan, the power struggle between the sultan and the elite amirs would begin. In this case, the sultan would be in a dilemma and would establish a new faction in order to reassert his authority. Therefore, the struggle between factions at the point of the formation of the Mamlūk State was one of the most important factors that ensured the formation of the state and the change of power. As a matter of fact, it is a known fact that Mamlūk factions such as ‘Adiliyya, Kāmiliyya and Sālihiyya held the state power *de facto*, if not officially. On the other hand, this work takes a holistic approach to the conditions that led to the statehood of the Sālihiyya-Bahriyya mamlūks in the process. It also discusses how the tensions between the sultan’s mamlūks (*al-mamālik al-sultāniyya*) and his *khushdāshs* affected the change of power. Focusing specifically on the Bahriyya-Mu‘izziyya struggle, this work examines how the formation, maintenance, and transition of power took place during the formative years of the Mamlūk state. Finally, the work focuses on the role of background conflicts between the sultan and the senior amirs, power gathering, etc. in the formation and decline of the state through the chronicles of the early Mamlūk period in general and works devoted to the Mamlūk sultanate in particular.

Keywords: Medieval History, Mamlūk State, State Formation, Civil Struggle, Bahriyya, Mu‘izziyya

Memlûk Devleti'nin Oluşum Yıllarında Hizipsel Mücadele Bağlamında İktidar Değişimi

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ÖZ

Memlûk Devleti'nin kuruluş yılları ile ilgili literatürde pek çok çalışma mevcuttur. Bunlar genellikle sultanların *memlûk* kökenli olmalarından dolayı devletin meşruiyeti meselesini merkeze almaktadırlar. Memlûkların bu sorunu aşmak için kendilerini *İslam'ın koruyucuları* kimliğiyle öne çıkardıkları anlatılmaktadır. Bu anlatıma göre İslam'ın koruyucusu olmak ileride kuracakları müstakil devletlerini meşrulaştıracaktı. Ancak bu argüman, devletin oluşumunu büyük oranda Haçlı-Moğol saldırıları gibi dışsal unsurlara karşı yapılan başarılı mücadelelere bağlamaktadır. Bu durum Memlûk Devleti'nin oluşumunun ardında yatan pek çok nedenin göz ardı edilmesine neden olmaktadır. Devletin dışsal unsurlara karşı yürüttüğü mücadelelerden meşruiyet devşirdiği kabul edilmekle birlikte, bu çalışma, hizipler arası çekişmelere odaklanarak bu mücadeleler dolayısıyla devletin dinamik bir hâl aldığı ortaya koymaktadır. Bu bakımdan Memlûk iktidarının kendi içindeki dönüşümünde Eyyûbîler zamanında beri faal olan hizipler arası mücadele dikkate alınmak durumundadır. Ayrıca Memlûklar'da sıklıkla bahsedilen argümanlar arasında bulunan *sultan öldürerek sultan olmak* gibi anlatımlar mevcut olmasına rağmen devlet sisteminin işleyişinde herkes tarafından bilinen ve yazılı olmayan kaidelerden olan seçkin emîrlerin belirleyici gücü dikkate alınmalıdır. Zira bu iskanlandığında hizipler arası mücadelelerin getirdiği neticeler de göz ardı edilecektir. Bu kaidelerde/sistemde yalnızca sultan değişmiyor aynı zamanda iktidarda bulunan seçkin elit kadroda da bir dizi değişiklikler hasıl oluyordu. Sultan ve seçkin emîrler arasındaki otokrasi-oligarşi çatışması her daim yaşanmaktaydı. Ne zaman ki oligarşik gücü sağlayan emîrlerden biri sultan olur, işte o zaman sultan ile seçkin emîrler arasında iktidar mücadelesi başlardı. Bu durumda sultan açmazda kalarak otoritesini ihdas edebilmek amacıyla kendisine yeni bir hizip kurardı. Dolayısıyla Memlûk Devleti'nin oluşumu noktasında hizipler arası mücadele devletin oluşumunu ve iktidarın değişimini sağlayan önemli etkenlerdendi. Nitekim resmen olmasa da *de facto* olarak Âdiliyye, Kâmilîyye ve Sâlihîyye gibi memlûk hiziplerinin de devlet gücünü ellerinde tuttukları bilinen bir gerçektir. Diğer taraftan bu çalışma, süreç içerisinde Sâlihîyye-Bahriyye memlûklarının devletleşmesini sağlayan koşulları bütünsel bir yaklaşımla ele almaktadır. Ayrıca sultanın memlûkları (*el-memâlikü's-sultaniyye*) ile *hûşdâşları* arasındaki gerilimin iktidarın el değiştirmesini nasıl etkilediğini tartışmaktadır. Spesifik olarak Bahriyye-Mu'izziyye arasındaki mücadeleye odaklanan bu çalışma, Memlûk devletinin kuruluş yıllarında iktidarın oluşumu, sürdürülmesi ve değişiminin nasıl gerçekleştiğini incelemektedir. Son olarak çalışmada genel olarak erken Memlûk dönemine ait kronikler ve hususi olarak Memlûk sultanlık anlayışına hasredilmiş çalışmalar sadedinde sultan-seçkin emîrler arasındaki arka plan çatışmaları, iktidar devşirmeleri vb. hadiselerin devletin oluş-bozuluşunda oynadığı rol esas alınmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Orta Çağ Tarihi, Memlûk Devleti , Devlet Oluşumu, İç Mücadele, Bahriyye, Mu'izziyye..

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Introduction

Scholars who have studied the administrative structure of the Mamlūk state, its power, and the concept of the sultanate have presented conflicting discourses. David Ayalon, who has drawn attention to this problem, has noted that the Mamlūks introduced the inheritance system from time to time and sometimes adopted policies that opposed the inheritance system.¹ P. M. Holt, pointing out the weakness of the understanding of dynasty, stated that the power to elect a sultan was realised by the consensus of the amirs who formed the victorious faction.² Amalia Levanoni acknowledged that there were some uncertainties in their decision-making procedures, noting that an anti-hereditary view prevailed.³ Ali Aktan not only accepted the fact that the inheritance system was adopted in the historical process, but also noted that it was based on the power and determination of the senior amirs.⁴ Konrad Hirscler, on the other hand, noted that the hereditary system was abandoned during the Mamlūk period and instead a practice was introduced whereby the senior amirs became sultans by creating their own power base. He also noted that *awlād al-nās* (the children of the sultans/amirs) were not favoured, but were only used as a temporary solution in the struggle between the amirs.⁵

Another prevailing view of the Mamlūk sultanate was based on the principle that *whoever kills the sultan becomes the sultan*. In fact, ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Khuwayṭir wrote that after the assassination of Quṭuz (657-658/1259-1260), al-Ẓāhir Baybars (658-676/1260-1277) was declared sultan by the senior amirs in accordance with *Turkish law*.⁶ Albrecht Fuess wrote that in the first Mamlūk period, the concept of Turkish law prevailed, so that whoever killed the sultan at that time ascended the throne.⁷ In this sense, Süleyman Özbek stated that it was misleading to see the hereditary system in the Mamlūk state, that it was applied with few exceptions, but by claiming that whoever kills the sultan becomes the sultan,⁸ he extended this principle to the entire Mamlūk state and gave the impression that this conception had always prevailed.

Ulrich Haarmann, who criticised the notion that whoever killed the sultan would become sultan and the assertion that the powerful and influential could become sultan, noted that he doubted

¹ David Ayalon, “Aspects of the Mamlūk Phenomenon”, *Der Islam: Journal of the History and Culture of the Middle East* 53/2 (1977), 208-209.

² P.M. Holt, “The Position and Power of the Mamlūk Sultan”, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 38/2 (1975), 239.

³ Amalia Levanoni, “The Mamlūk Conception of the Sultanate”, *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 26/3 (1994), 373.

⁴ Ali Aktan, “Memlûklerde Saltanat Değişikliği Usulü”, *Atatürk Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 9 (1990), 287.

⁵ Konrad Hirscler, “He is a Child and This Land is a Borderland of Islam: Under-Age Rule and the Quest for Political Stability in the Ayyūbid Period”, *al-Masāq* 19/1 (2007), 38.

⁶ ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Khuwayṭir, *Baybars The First: His Endeavours and Achievements* (London: The Green Mountain Press, 1978), 26-27.

⁷ Albrecht Fuess, “Mamlūk Politics”, *Ubi Sumus? Quo Vademus*, ed. Stephan Conermann (Bonn: Bonn University Press, 2013), 100.

⁸ Süleyman Özbek, “Memlûklerde Meşrûiyet Arayışları ve Saltanat İnşasına Yönelik Çabalar ‘Sultan Öldüren Sultan Olur’”, *Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi* 32/53 (2013), 168.

this since neither attitude worked efficiently in the Mamlūk state. Nevertheless, the senior amirs preferred to make the man who was weak in comparison to them the sultan rather than put strong people in charge. In fact, Turanshah ibn al-Şāliḥ Ayyūb (647-648/1249-1250) was killed by Fāris al-Dīn Aqtay al-Jamdar, (d. 652/1254) the leader of the Bahriyya, but the senior amirs did not allow him to become sultan because he was one of the strongest candidates for the throne.⁹ Linda S. Northrup has argued that there was a conflict between oligarchy and autocracy in the Mamlūk state, that the oligarchy of the chief amirs usually dominated the autocracy of the sultan, and that they eliminated the sultan in question when their oligarchic power structures were threatened.¹⁰ On the other hand, Daniel Beaumont wrote that the Mamlūk state could never mention that whoever killed the sultan became the sultan, and stressed that Mu‘izz Aybak’s (648-655/1250-1257) proclamation as sultan explicitly confirmed this. According to him, Aybak was favoured by the fact that he was one of the weak and middle-ranking amirs.¹¹ Therefore, senior amirs believed that they could eliminate him immediately if he tried to seize power.

Another claim regarding the concept of the sultanate in the early period of Mamlūk rule was that the Egyptian mamlūks had a serious problem of legitimacy because they were not based on a specific dynasty. To overcome this problem, the Mamlūks preferred to adhere to the Ayyūbid lineage during the early years of the state. Indeed, Angus Stewart has noted that the administration of Shajar al-Durr (d. 655/1257) relied on her long-dead son Khalīl. Similarly, the administration of Mu‘izz Aybak was based on al-Ashraf Musa of the Ayyūbid lineage between 1250 and 1252. Coins minted for Mu‘izz Aybak indicate that he was the assistant of al-Şāliḥ Ayyūb.¹² On the other hand, Mustafa M. Ziyāda pointed out that five days after Mu‘izz Aybak was proclaimed sultan, in order to avoid both the legitimacy problem of the Egyptian mamlūks and the power struggle among the chief amirs, al-Ashraf Musa, a descendant of the Ayyūbids, was declared sultan and Mu‘izz Aybak was appointed atābak al-‘asākir.¹³ On the other hand, Turkī ibn Fahd, without mentioning the problem of legitimacy, attributed the fall of Aybak and the replacement of his Ayyūbid successor al-Ashraf Musa to friction between the Bahriyya and Aybak.¹⁴

Finally, Jo Van Steenberg wrote that many states to which the mamlūks belonged developed a “military patronage system” between the 13-16th centuries in Central Asia, north of the Black Sea, Persia, Anatolia, and Egypt-Syria. He also explained that the main purpose of this system is to secure their existence against their enemies with extended family networks. What prolongs this

⁹ Ulrich Haarmann, “Regicide and the Law of the Turks”, *Intellectual Studies on Islam: Essays in Honor of Martin B. Dickson*, ed. Michel M. Mazzaoui (Salt Lake City: University of Utah, 1990), 133.

¹⁰ Linda S. Northrup, “The Bahri Mamlūk Sultanate, 1250–1390”, *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, ed. Carl F. Petry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 255.

¹¹ Daniel Beaumont, “Political Violence and Ideology in Mamlūk Society”, *Mamlūk Studies Review* 8/1 (2004), 218.

¹² Angus Stewart, “Between Baybars and Qalāwūn: Under-Age Rulers and Succession in the Early Mamlūk Sultanate”, *Al-Masāq* 19/1 (2007), 48.

¹³ Mustafa M. Ziyāda, “The Mamlūk Sultans to 1293”, *A History of the Crusades*, ed. Robert Lee Wolff-Harry W. Hazard (London: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), 2/742.

¹⁴ Turkī ibn Fahd Āl-i Suūd, *Nash‘atu Dawlat al-Mamālik (648/1250-658/1260)* (al-Haram: li al-dirasāt wa al-Buhūs al-Insāniyya wa al-Ijtima‘iyya, 2017), 68.

system is the income they receive in exchange for loyalty and services. As long as the income was maintained, the political power of each sultan was maintained. In addition to the households formed by the sultans, many high-ranking amirs also had their own households. For example, al-Manşūr Qalāwūn (678-689/1279-1290) acquired many mamlūks during al-Zāhir Baybars' reign, greatly increased the number of his own households, and was able to gain superiority over the Zāhiriyya after Baybars' death thanks to their military support.¹⁵

Given the coherence of all these approaches, this paper will explore the question of how factional struggles affected the change of power in the formation years of the Mamlūk state. It will also focus on factions as a power-creating or power-destroying force, since factional struggles played an active role in maintaining power. This work will also discuss how the mamlūk factions were utilised to seize power and how the sultans who came to power through an treaty (*h̄ilf*) created their own factions in case they wanted to become absolute sultans in later times. It will reveal that even though the mamlūk factions were loyal to the sultans in question, they directly held the power in their own hands after the death of their master and appointed sultans in line with their own interests. Finally, inter-factional struggles will be pointed out as the main factor determining the state's process.

1. The Emergence of the Sālihiyya-Baḥriyya Faction

It is known that in most Islamic states there were mamlūks who were part of the retinue of maliks or high-ranking amirs. It is believed that the mamlūks, who were involved in various patronage networks, held a ruler-making position and were not simple slaves. Indeed, it was the case that the mamlūks, who were also influential during the Ayyūbid period, overthrew al-Malik al-ʿĀdil II (635-637/1238-1240) and replaced him with his brother al-Şāliḥ Ayyūb, (637-647/1240-1249) even though the former was a crown prince.¹⁶

Although al-Şāliḥ Ayyūb conquered Egypt with the support of his father's mamlūks he did not fully trust them. At the same time, he was aware that in order to prevail against other Ayyūbid rulers, he needed to build a broad network of patronage loyal to him. According to Cāsim Muḥammad Cāsim, who pointed out the necessity of this situation, al-Malik al-Şāliḥ Ayyūb allied himself with the Khwarezmiyya on the one hand and the Baḥriyya on the other in order to assert himself against al-Malik al-Şāliḥ al-Ismaʿil, (635-643/1237-1245) ṣāḥib of Damascus.¹⁷ In fact, thanks

¹⁵ Jo Van Steenbergen, "The Mamlūk Sultanate as a Military Patronage State: Household Politics and the Case of the Qalāwūnid Bayt (1279-1382)", *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 56/2 (2013), 193-196.

¹⁶ Ahmad Mukhtār al-Abbādī, *Qiyāmu Dawlat al-Mamālīk al-ūlā fī Mişr wa al-Shām* (Beirut: Dār al-Nahda al-ʿArabiyye, 1986), 87; Cengiz Tomar, *Memlūk Devleti'nin Kuruluşu ve Gelişmesi (1240-1260)* (İstanbul, Marmara Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, 1996), 22; Cengiz Tomar, "el-Melikü'l-Ādil II", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi* (Ankara: TDV Yayınları, 2004), 29/60; Muhammad Suhayl Taqūsh, *Tārīḥ al-Ayyūbiyyin fī Mişr ve Bilād al-Shām wa İklim al-Jazira 1174-1263* (Beirut: Dār al-Nefāis, 2008): 357; Kazim Yaşar Kopruman, "Mısır Memlûkleri (1250-1517)", *Türkler* (Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, 2002), 5/110; Ziyāda, "The Mamlūk Sultans to 1293", 737.

¹⁷ Cāsim Muḥammad Cāsim, "al-Ahammiyya al-siyāsiyya wa al-ʿaskariyya li-qiyāmi Dawlat al-Mamālīk al-Baḥriyya fī Mişr ve Bilād al-Shām (648-784/1250-1382)", *Majalla Cāmiʿa Karkuk lid-Dirāsāt al-Insāniyya* 6/1 (2011), 134.

to their military support, he defeated al-Malik al-Şālih Isma‘il in the Battle of Ascalan in Jumada I 642/October 1244.¹⁸ This clearly shows how important it is to obtain military factions in the internal struggles among the Ayyūbids.

On the other hand, Egyptian army upon the threat of Frank was stationed near Manşūra. al-Şālih Ayyūb fell seriously ill, and he died in Shaban 647/November 1249. His wife, Shajar al-Durr, kept his death a secret, informing only Fakhr al-Dīn ibn al-Shaykh (d. 647/1250) and al-Amīr Tawashī Muhsin al-Şālihī. Currently, Fakhr al-Dīn ibn al-Shaykh was atābak, Husam al-Dīn ibn Abu Ali al-Hazbānī (d. 658/1260) the nā‘ib al-saltana. Atābak al-‘asākīr Fakhr al-Dīn ibn al-Shaykh summoned Turanshah ibn Şālih Ayyūb, who was staying in Hişn Kayfā. Thereupon, a rumor circulated among the people that the sultan had died. The Franks, who wanted to use this as an opportunity, came from Damietta to the Manşūra. In Shawwal 647/February 1250, there was a major battle between the two armies. Fakhr al-Dīn ibn al-Shaykh was killed in this battle. In the following days, however, the war between the Muslims and the Franks escalated decisively. The Franks ran into serious difficulties, both in terms of equipment and street fighting in Manşūra, and suffered many losses against the army under the command of Baybars al-Bunduqdārī. Therefore, they wanted to give up Damietta and take Jerusalem in return, but this proposal was not accepted.¹⁹ As the war progressed, the Muslims blocked the Damietta-Manşūra crossing, by preventing the arrival of an aid to the Franks. It was almost time for a fierce battle between the two sides. The war with the attack of the Muslims broke out in Fariskur in Muharram 648/April 1250. The number of Franks killed had reached thirty thousand. Many prisoners were taken, including IX. Louis, king of France. Finally, an unconditional assurance (*amān*) was demanded, which was given to them by Tawashī Muhsin al-Şālihī.²⁰

The battles of Mansūra and Fariskur proved that the Şālihīyya-Baħriyya mamlūks were politically influential in the state. However, the influence of these Mamlūk factions in the state goes back much earlier. Therefore, in addition to the successful military results, the power held by the mamlūk factions in the background should be taken into account. When al-Malik al-Şālih Ayyūb was enthroned in Egypt, he first abolished his father’s mamlūks (*Kāmiliyya*) and became the absolute sultan through the backing of their own mamlūks. He knew that he had to increase the number of his mamlūks to secure his sultanate. Also, civil wars required the existence of a military faction that would be dependent on him in any case. However, if this situation was not controlled, there was a danger that the military faction would grow and influence the functioning of the state. In fact, the uncontrolled strength and dominance of the Baħriyya was made possible by the death of al-Şālih Ayyūb and the defeat of the Franks in the battles of Manşūra and Fariskur.

¹⁸ Jamal al-Dīn Muhammad b. Sālim ibn Wāsil, *Mufarrij al-kurūb fi akhbār Banī Ayyūb*, Critical ed. Jamal al-Dīn al-Shayyāl (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub wa’l-Wasāik al-Qawmiyya, 1957), 5/338-339; Abū ‘Abd Allah Shams al-Dīn Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn ‘Uthman al-Zahabī, *al-‘Ibar fi ḥabar man ḡabar*, Critical ed. Abū Hācir Muhammad al-Said (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1985), 3/242.

¹⁹ Ismā‘il Ibn ‘Alī Abū al-Fidā‘, *al-Muḥtaşar fi aḡbār al-başar*, Critical ed. Al-Sayyid ‘Abd al-Latif al-Hāṭib (Cairo: Maṭba‘a al-Husayniyya al-Mişriyya, 1907), 3/140; Muhammad Mustafa Ziyāda, *Hamlatu Lu‘is al-Tāsi‘ ‘ala Mişr wa hazimatuhu fi’l-Manşūra* (Cairo, s.l. 1961), 169.

²⁰ Abū al-Fidā‘, *al-Muḥtaşar*, 3/141; Zahabī, *al-‘Ibar fi ḥabar*, 3/259; Mahmūd Rızq Salim, *‘Asru Salātīn al-Mamālik wa nitācih al-‘ilmi wa’l-ādābi* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Ādāb, 1962), 1/19-20; Kopruman, “Mısır Memlūkleri”, 112.

2. The Massacre of al-Mu‘azzam Turanshah and the Challenges Against the Sovereignty of the Baḥriyya

After the death of al-Şāliḥ Ayyūb, al-Malik al-Mu‘azzam Turanshah was put on the throne with the support of the mamlūks under the command of Shajar al-Durr and Tawashī Muhsin al-Şāliḥī.²¹ Thus, they thought that Turanshah would be loyal to them. However, after the battles of Manşūra and Fariskur, Turanshah turned his attention to those he considered as a threat to himself. Firstly, al-Malik al-Mughith ‘Umar (647-662/1249-1263) had been arrested and imprisoned in Shawbak. Secondly, al-Malik al-Sa‘id Fakhr al-Dīn Hassan, who had fled from Egypt to Damascus out of concern for this situation, had denounced him and was arrested by Jamal al-Dīn ibn Yagmur. (d. 655/1257) He then threatened Shajar al-Durr and demanded that she immediately hand over all the property she had inherited from his father.²² On the other hand, the Baḥriyya patiently resisted all the oppressive policies of al-Malik al-Mu‘azzam Turanshah. They recall that it was thanks to them that he ascended the throne, and they expected compliments from the Sultan for their decisive role in the Manşūra. But far from being granted their rights, the Baḥriyya were seriously persecuted.²³ In the meantime, he removed the senior amirs from the state ranks and replaced them with the Mu‘azzamiyya mamlūks who accompanied him.²⁴ This meant that the income of the Baḥriyya’s *iqṭā‘* would also decrease. At this last stage, the Baḥriyya believed that the only way to find peace was to kill him. If this situation was not prevented, the Baḥriyya could be completely eliminated.

The Şāliḥiyya-Baḥriyya mamlūks wanted to resolve Turanshah’s oppressive policy once and for all. Indeed, when Turanshah ascended the throne in Fariskur, Baybars al-Bunduqdārī appeared in front of him and struck him with his sword to kill him. Then Turanshah came to Burj al-Hashb and cried out, *who has wounded me?* They replied that the Hashasis had done it. But he said, *by Allah, it can be none other than the Baḥriyya who have injured me.* The mamlūks of the Baḥriyya went to Turanshah, but he climbed to the top of the tower wounded. They shot fiery arrows at his position and he had to throw himself into the Nile from the top of the tower. Although he said to the Baḥriyya mamlūks who came to catch him, *let me go, I do not want to be sultan*, he could not escape being slaughtered on a nail.²⁵ The assassination of Turanshah was among the incidents that paved

²¹ Abū al-Fidā‘, *al-Muḥtaşar*, 3/140.

²² Taqī al-Dīn Ahmad ibn ‘Ali al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-sulūk li-ma‘rifat duwal al-mulūk*, Critical ed. Muhammad ‘Abd al-Qādir ‘Atā (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1997), 1/456.

²³ Khuwayṭir, *Baybars The First*, 10; Ziyāda, “The Mamlūk Sultans to 1293”, 740; Tomar, *Memlūk Devleti’nin Kuruluşu*, 60.

²⁴ Muhammad Jamal al-Dīn Surūr, *al-Zāhir Baybars ve hadāratu Mişr fi ‘asrihi* (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Mişriyya, 1938), 35; Robert Irwin, *The Middle East in the Middle Ages: The Early Mamlūk Sultanate 1250-1382* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1986), 21-22; Kasım Abduh Kasım, ‘*Asru Salātīn al-Mamālik al-tārīḥ al-siyāsī wa al-ijtimā‘ī* (al-Haram: ‘Aynu li al-Dirāsāt wa al-Buhūs al-İnsaniyya wa al-İctimāiyya, 1998), 32.

²⁵ Abū al-Fidā‘, *al-Muḥtaşar*, 3/141; Zain al-Din ‘Umar ibn Muzaffar al-Shahin Ibn al-Wardī, *Tārīḥu Ibn al-Wardī* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1996), 2/178; Ziyāda, “The Mamlūk Sultans to 1293”, 740; ‘Abd al-Mun‘im Mājid, *al-Tārīḥ al-siyāsī: li-Dawlati Salātīn al-Mamālik fi Mişr dirāsati tahliliyya li al-Izdihār wa al-Inhiyār* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Anglo’l-Mişriyya, 1988), 74; Tomar, *Memlūk Devleti’nin Kuruluşu*, 61-62; Kopruman, “Mısır Memlūkları”, 117; Cāsım, “al-Ahammiyya al-siyāsīyya”, 3.

the way for the becoming a state of the Mamlūks. Nevertheless, all these were instincts to protect their own interests rather than statification with planned steps.

When Turanshah was personally invited by Shajar al-Durr to ascend the throne in Egypt after the death of his father, he acted immediately, first coming to Damascus and proclaiming the sultanate there. While he was still in Damascus, his harsh attitude towards the Baḥriyya became known. The idea was to undermine the Baḥriyya and the Turkish amirs in general and replace them with the Kurdish amirs of the Qaymariyya.²⁶ According to M. M. Ziyada, when Turanshah arrived in Damascus on 29 Ramazan 647/5 January 1250, his sultanate was first proclaimed and Jamal al-Dīn Musa ibn Yagmur was appointed nāʾib of Damascus. Thereafter, Turanshah treated the Qaymariyya amirs generously, giving them donations from his father's treasury. He then went to Egypt and was received by the Nāʾib al-saltana Ḥusām al-Dīn ibn Abī ʿĀlī al-Hazbānī in Sālihiyya. al-Malik al-Muʿazzam Turanshah negotiated with the al-Amir Ḥusām al-Dīn, thanked him for protecting the throne against internal and external enemies, and gave him three thousand dinars.²⁷

In fact, events such as al-Hazbānī's distrust of the Baḥriyya, Turanshah's cautious behaviour towards the Baḥriyya when he was appointed sultan in Damascus, he made various donations to the Qaymariyya amirs and neglected the Baḥriyya. So, it can be said that there was at least an atmosphere of mistrust between Turanshah and the Baḥriyya. The mistrust between the two sides eventually led to his assassination, as Turanshah apparently tried to intimidate the Baḥriyya. In this respect, it would be misleading to see Turanshah's assassination as merely a deprivation of the Baḥriyya's income or their removal from the ranks of the state. Rather, the situation can be seen as an extension of the competition between the Kurdish Ayyūbid amirs and the Turkish mamlūks who became involved in the army during the reign of al-Şāliḥ Ayyūb. As will be mentioned later, Bilad al-sham generally abandoned its dependence on Egypt after the assassination of Turanshah, and the enthronement of al-Nāṣir Yūsuf, (634-658/1236-1260) the şāḥib of Aleppo, by inviting him to Damascus by the Kurdish amirs, is one of the indicators of this conflict.

On the other hand, this time a problem arises as follows. If the tensions between Turanshah and the Baḥriyya predated his arrival in Egypt, why did the Baḥriyya bring Turanshah into the sultanate? Moreover, al-Şāliḥ Ayyūb kept his son in seclusion during his reign and, as far as is known, did not give him the title of crown prince. According to Turkī ibn Fahd, the Baḥriyya faction considered the Ayyūbid forces in the Syrian region a threat. To eliminate this threat, they invited Turanshah, whom they considered the lesser evil (*ehven-i şer*).²⁸ Thusly, they may have wanted to maintain their status quo, even though they did not want Turanshah.

After Turanshah's assassination, the Şāliḥiyya faction initially wanted to swear allegiance to Mughith ʿUmar, but the latter refused, fearing that the same fate would befall him.²⁹ Then they swore allegiance to the widow of al-Şāliḥ Ayyūb, Shajar al-Durr. They had enthroned Shajar al-Durr

²⁶ Ziyāda, *Hamletu Luis et-Tāsi*, 166.

²⁷ Ziyāda, *Hamletu Luis et-Tāsi*, 166-167.

²⁸ Ibn Fahd, *Nashʿatu Dawlat al-Mamālik*, 43-52.

²⁹ Shihāb al-Dīn Abī Muhammad ʿAbd al-Rahman ibn Ismāʿīl Abū Shāma, *al-Dhayl ʿala al-rawḍatayn tarājimu ricāl al-qarnayn al-sādis wa'l-sābiʿ*, Critical ed. Muhammad Zāhid ibn al-Hasan al-Kavsari (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1974), 186.

and had a sermon (*hutbe*) and coins issued in her name. In a royal patent of rank (*manshūr*) and a sovereign's signature (*tawki'*), *Validatu Khalīl* was written for short. During the reign of Shajar al-Durr, 'Izz al-Din Aybak al-Chashnigir al-Şāliḥī was appointed to the position of atābak.³⁰ This situation clearly shows that the power lies with the Şāliḥiyya-Baḥriyya, but it also implies that they try not to oppose the Ayyūbid rulers. Although Shajar al-Durr was declared a *malika*, it is believed that she maintained a relationship with the Ayyūbid lineage on the one hand and tried to remain in the shadow of the Abbasids on the other. This also shows that the problems of legitimacy have not yet been resolved.

After the surrender of Damietta to the Franks in accordance with the treaty, the Egyptian army entered Cairo on 9 Safer 648/13 May 1250. A message was then sent to the amirs of Damascus asking them to abide by the decisions taken. Not only was this brusquely refused, but the Kurdish amirs of the Qaymariyya in Damascus sent a message to the şāḥib of Aleppo, al-Nāşir Yūsuf, asking him to ascend the throne.³¹ The şāḥib of the Subaiba, al-Malik al-Sa'id ibn 'Aziz, (d. 658/1260) had previously declared his allegiance to al-Şāliḥ Ayyūb, but in the face of such a situation he reversed his decision and took back the Subaiba that he had previously abandoned.³² In the same way, Badr al-dīn al-Sawwābī al-Şāliḥī, the nā'ib of Karak and Shawbak, released al-Malik al-Mughith 'Umar from prison and raised him to the throne.³³ It is clear that the Ayyūbids did not approve of the Egyptian mamluks' assassination of Turanshah and his replacement by Shajar al-Durr. However, this decision of the Egyptian mamlūks was ironically criticised not only by the Ayyūbid rulers but also by the Abbasid caliph al-Mustaşir (623-640/1226-1242). The Caliph stated unequivocally that he did not recognise the malika of Shajar al-Durr, saying: "If there is no man left to be sultan in your country, we would send one to you".³⁴

The fact that Shajar al-Durr was recognised by neither the Ayyūbids nor the Abbasids led to the political isolation of the Egyptian mamlūks. To prevent this, Shajar al-Durr ended her sultanate some eighty days later. Aybak, who had been made atabek by a joint decision of the Baḥriyya-Şāliḥiyya, was married to Shajar al-Durr on 29 Rabi' I 648/31 July 1250 and brought into the sultanate in her place.³⁵ However, on the 5th of Jumada I/5th of August, Baḥriyya-Şāliḥiyya said: "One of the Banī Ayyūb, to whom all will be subject, will ascend the throne". Among the pioneers of this movement were Fāris al-Dīn Aqtay al-Jamdar, Baybars al-Bunduqdārī, Sayf al-Dīn Balābān al-Rashīdī, (d. 677/1278) and Shams al-Dīn Sunqur al-Rūmī. In a joint decision, they agreed that

³⁰ Shihab al-Dīn Ahmad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab fi funūn al-adab*, Critical ed. Najip Mustafa Fawwāz-Hikmat Kashlī Fawwāz (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 2004), 29/235; Ibn al-Wardī, *Tārīḥu Ibn al-Wardī*, 2/178; Abd al-Rahman ibn Muhammad Ibn Khaldūn, *Tārīḥu Ibn Khaldūn: Dīwān al-mubtada' wa-l-khabar fi Tārīḥ al-'Arab wa-l-Barbar wa-man 'āsarahum min dhawī ash-sha'n al-akbār*, Critical ed. Suhayl Zakkar (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 2001), 5/430-431; Tomar, *Memlūk Devleti'nin Kuruluşu*, 64-65.

³¹ Amalia Levanoni, "The Mamlūks' Ascent to Power in Egypt", *Studia Islamica* 72 (1990), 124.

³² Abū al-Fidā', *al-Muḥtaşar*, 3/142.

³³ Ibn al-Wardī, *Tārīḥu Ibn al-Wardī*, 2/179.

³⁴ Kasım, *Asru Salātīn al-Mamālik*: 22; Philip K. Hitti, *Syria: A Short History* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1959), 201.

³⁵ Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, 29/235; Ibn Khaldūn, *Tārīḥu Ibn Khaldūn*: 5/431.

Aybak should become atābak again. Then they chose al-Ashraf Musa, who was still a child of the Ayyūbid family.³⁶

On the other hand, al-Nāṣir Yūsuf's power and influence in Damascus had grown considerably. At the same time, he was planning to invade Egypt. In turn, Egypt, had sent an army under the command of al-Amir Rukn al-Dīn Hās Turk (d. 674/1275) to the Gaza border to counter any possible threat from the Damascus army. However, Hās Turk withdrew with his soldiers to Ṣālīhiyya and subsequently declared his obedience to al-Malik al-Mughith ʿUmar. In return, the amirs of Egypt made a strategic move, preaching in Egypt and Cairo in the name of the Abbasid caliph al-Mustaʿsim and renewing the treaty he had previously signed with al-Ashraf Musa as sultan and Muʿizz Aybak as atābak.³⁷ It cannot be said, then, that the Ṣālīhiyya mamlūks were in complete agreement with the new conditions that arose in Egypt after the assassination of Turanshah. It is clear that there are Ayyūbid sympathizers who are dissatisfied with the events, and these people have reacted to the decisions of the Baḥriyya regime.

3. The Battle of Kūra and the Official Recognition Process of the Baḥriyya

al-Nāṣir Yūsuf set out from Damascus with his soldiers to conquer Egypt and to put an end to the Turkish outrage.³⁸ At his side were al-Ṣālīḥ Ismaʿil ibn al-ʿĀdil, (634-642/1237-1245) al-Ashraf Musa, (643-661/1246-1263) the ṣāḥib of Hims, al-Muʿazzam Turanshah ibn Sultan Saladin, (d. 658/1260) and his brother Nusr al-din of the Ayyūbid lineage. At the head of the army was Shams al-Dīn Luʿluʾ al-Amīnī (d. 648/1251). The Egyptian army had also moved against them. Sultan al-Ashraf Musa was left behind in Qalʿat al-jabal, and ʿIzz al-Dīn Aybak personally went on an expedition with his army. At the same time, Aybak made another strategic move. He released from prison the imprisoned children of al-Malik al-Ṣālīḥ Ismaʿil, the former ṣāḥib of Damascus, in order to use them against al-Nāṣir Yūsuf.³⁹

The Egyptian and Damascene armies continued their joint advance and met at Kūra near Abbase on 10 Dhul-Qadah/3 February 1251. At the beginning of the war, the Egyptian army was defeated, but later the mamlūks of the ʿAzīziyya betrayed al-Malik al-Nāṣir Yūsuf and turned to the Egyptian army. For the ʿAzīziyya could not come to an agreement with Atābak Shams al-Din Luʿlu and accused him of acting against own interests.⁴⁰ Muʿizz Aybak, on the other hand, remained with a small number of the Baḥriyya. The mamlūks of al-Nāṣir Yūsuf's father had strengthened them by

³⁶ Abū Bakr ibn ʿAbdallāh ibn Aybak al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar wa-jāmiʿ al-ghurar*, Critical ed. Edward Budin (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, 1960), 8/14; Salah al-Dīn Abū al-Ṣafa Khalil ibn Aybak al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi bi'l-wafayāt*, Critical ed. Ahmad al-Arnawut-Turkī Mustafa (Beirut: Dāru lhyā al-Turās al-ʿIlmiyya, 2000), 9/264; Ibn Khaldūn, *Tārīḥu Ibn Khaldūn*: 5:431; Abū al-Maḥāsīn Yūsuf ibn Taghribirdī, *al-Nujūm al-zāhira fī mulūk Miṣr wa al-Qāhira*, Critical ed. Ibrahim ʿAlī Tarhan (Cairo: Dar al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, 1963), 7/5-6; Ziyāda, "The Mamlūk Sultans to 1293", 742; R. Stephen Humphreys, *From Saladin to the Mongols: The Ayyūbids of Damascus* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1977), 315.

³⁷ Ibn al-Wardī, *Tārīḥu Ibn al-Wardī*, 2/180; Humphreys, *From Saladin*, 315.

³⁸ Ibn Khaldūn, *Tārīḥu Ibn Khaldūn*, 5/431.

³⁹ Ibn al-Wardī, *Tārīḥu Ibn al-Wardī*, 2/180.

⁴⁰ Humphreys, *From Saladin*, 317.

going over to the Bahriyya side. When the Egyptians were defeated and the Damascene army followed them, al-Nāşir Yūsuf remained on the battlefield and did not leave his position. Aybak took the opportunity to attack with the Bahriyya and defeated al-Nāşir Yūsuf's central army. After this defeat, al-Nāşir Yūsuf fled to Damascus. Aybak, however, marched against Shams al-din Lu'lu' al-Amīnī, defeated them, and captured the army commander. He executed Shams al-Dīn Lu'lu' and al-Amir Zia al-Din al-Qaymarī (d. 650/1252). al-Şāliḥ Isma'īl, al-Ashraf Musa, and others were captured.⁴¹

Gaining superiority in the Kūra secured the process of political recognition for the Egyptian mamlūks externally, while internally they sought to create an alternative to the Bahriyya of the 'Azīziyya mamlūks, who had joined Mu'izz Aybak. Thus, as will be mentioned gradually, the process of challenging and gaining independence of Mu'izz Aybak, who was under the yoke of the Bahriyya, was initiated. After the victory, Mu'izz Aybak has supported and strengthened the Mu'izziyya against the Bahriyya with all his determination. Of course, his main purpose in doing so was to create a faction that would always remain loyal to him instead of the Bahriyya and to secure his reign.

After the victory of the Egyptian army in the battle of Kūra in 650/1252, the Caliph Musta'sim sent Sheikh Nacm al-Dīn al-Badrā'ī (d. 655/1257) as a mediator and wanted to make peace between al-Nāşir Yūsuf and Mu'izz Aybak. al-Nāşir Yūsuf lay down condition the sermon and the coin in Egypt should be in his name. Mu'izz Aybak, on the other hand, firmly refused. The Bahriyya said: *We saved Egypt and Damascus from the hands of the Franks with our swords. There can be no peace between us until we possess the places from Gaza to Aqaba.* Thusly, first negotiations between the two sides did not produce a positive result. However, due to increased Mongol activity in the Middle East in 651/1253, at least a non-aggression treaty was signed between the two sides at the caliph's insistence, and both maliks accepted each other's authority. According to this treaty, Aybak received Jerusalem, Gaza, and some places on the coastal border and in return accepted the sovereignty of al-Nāşir Yūsuf in Syria.⁴²

When Mu'izz Aybak officially became sultan and established a new formation by eliminating the sovereignty of the Ayyūbids in the region, the Arabs in the Sa'id region of Upper Egypt reacted by refusing to submit to this newly established state. In contrast, Aybak distributed various goods and gifts to those who would not accept his power in order to consolidate his rule. However, the inhabitants of the region were not willing to accept the sultanate of a slave (*al-rakk*). The rule of the Turks and mamlūks was unacceptable to them. At the same time, they demanded that the Egyptian government should remain only among the Arabs.⁴³ In fact, according to al-Abbādī, the Arabs of Upper Egypt revolted to abolish the taxes imposed on them and to oppose the rule of the

⁴¹ Sibṭī Ibn al-Jawzī, *Mir'at al-zamān*, 22/414-416; Abū Shāma, *al-Dhayl*, 186; Zahabī, *al-'Ibar fī ḥabar*, 3/259-260.

⁴² Ibn Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 8/22-23.

⁴³ Taqī al-Dīn Abū al-'Abbās Aḥmad ibn 'Alī ibn 'Abd al-Qādir ibn Muḥammad al-Maqrīzī, *al-Bayān wa'l-i'rāb 'ammā bi-ardi Mişr min al-A'rāb*, Critical ed. İbrahim Remzi (Cairo: Matba'at al-Ma'arif bi-Şāri' al-Fajjāla bi-Mişr, 1916), 44; Surūr, *al-Zāhir Baybars*, 42; Ashtor, *A Social and Economic History*, 285-286; Fatih Yahya Ayaz, "Türk Memlükler Döneminde Mısır Halkının Siyasî Olaylara Karşı Tutumu", *Çukurova Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 7/1 (2007), 54-55.

mamlüks. This revolt was not limited to the Arabs, but included most of those who were dissatisfied with the rule of those they considered slaves. Whenever Aybak went out into the streets, the people who confronted him would say, “We only want someone who is a sultan by birth”.⁴⁴ Stanley Lane Poole, on the other hand, takes a different view of the causes of this rebellion. According to him, in times of war Bahriyya acted in concert with Aybak and supported him, and in times of peace they acted autonomously in Egypt and were able to commit various acts of injustice. They attacked shopkeepers and extorted their property, entered the baths and assaulted women.⁴⁵ The Sa‘id Arabs, complaining of general chaos in the area, formed a cavalry force of about twelve thousand with the support of various tribes and placed al-Amir Hisn al-Din ibn Tha‘lab, (d. 651/1253) a descendant of ‘Ali ibn Abu Talib, at their head. After using the Egyptian-Damascus war as an opportunity not to pay taxes, the Mamluk army marched against them and crushed their rebellion in short time.⁴⁶ But despite this, the Arabs in the region did not accept to be subject to Mamluk rule except for an external threat, they sustained their rebellions at different times.⁴⁷

After gaining the upper hand against al-Nasir Yusuf and putting down the Arab revolt, the power and influence of the Bahriyya grew even more. The leader of the Bahriyya, Faris al-Din Aqtay, had greatly expanded his influence in Egypt. His influence in the army was well known; the Bahriyya recognized no power other than Aqtay and called him al-Malik al-Jawad. Encouraged by all this, Aqtay sent letter to al-Malik al-Muzaffar, the shahib of Hama, informing him that he wished to marry his daughter.⁴⁸ This was the last straw for Mu‘izz Aybak. For the military power of Faris al-Din Aqtay continued to exist as a *de facto* administration during the first years of Aybak’s rule. Settling in Qal‘at al-jabal would now also give him political strength through this marriage, and with the courage gained from it, he could perhaps officially proclaim his sultanate.

The Bahriyya’s restrictive influence on the administration had reached an intolerable point. For Mu‘izz Aybak to become a true sultan, the assassination of Faris al-Din Aqtay was almost imperative. To this end, Aybak invited him to Qal‘at al-jabal on 3 Shaban 652/18 September 1254 to seek Aqtay’s opinion on some issues. When he arrived, his mamlüks were prevented from entering with him. When he entered the corridor, a group of soldiers appeared before him. Among them were Qutuz, Bahadir, and Sanjar, who were from Mu‘izziyya. They attacked Aqtay all together and killed him by the nails.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Ibn Taghribirdi, *al-Nujum*, 7/13; Ahmad Mukhtar al-Abbadi, *fi Tariḥ al-Ayyubiyyin wa al-Mamalik* (Beirut: Dār al-Nahda al-Arabiyye, 2014), 118.

⁴⁵ Stanley Lane Poole, *A History of Egypt in the Middle Ages* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Son, 1901), 259.

⁴⁶ Abbadi, *fi Tariḥ al-Ayyubiyyin*, 119.

⁴⁷ Mahmud al-Sayyid, *Tariḥ al-kabail al-Arabiyya fi ‘asri Dawlatayn al-Ayyubiyya wa’l-Mamlukiyya* (Alexandria: Muassasa Shabab al-Jami‘a, 1998), 44.

⁴⁸ Kamal al-Din ‘Abd al-Razzak ibn Ahmad ibn al-Fuwaṭi, *al-Ḥawadith al-jami‘a wa-l-tajrib al-nafi‘a fi’l-mi‘a al-sabi‘a*, Critical ed. Mahdi al-Najm (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘ilmiyya, 2003), 209; Sharim al-Din Ibrahim b. Muhammad b. Aydamur al-‘Ala‘i al-Misri Ibn Duqmāk, *Nuzhat al-anam fi Tariḥ al-Islam*, Critical ed. Samir Tabbāra (Beirut: al-Maktabat al-‘Asriyye, 1999): 216; Abū al-Mahasin Yusuf ibn Taghribirdi, *al-Manhal al-ṣafi wa’l-mustawfi ba‘d al-wafi*, Critical ed. Muhammad Muhammad Amin (Cairo: al-Hay‘at al-Misriyya Amma li al-Kitāb, 1984), 1/25.

⁴⁹ Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzi, *Mir‘at al-zamān*, 22/426; Fuwaṭi, *al-Ḥawadith al-jami‘a*, 210; Ibn Fahd, *Nash‘atu Dawlat al-Mamalik*, 70; Abbadi, *fi Tariḥ al-Ayyubiyyin*, 120; Yusuf Ötenkaya, *Memlûk Devleti’nin Oluşumu, Yapısı ve Dinî Siyaseti (648-742/1250-1341)* (Kayseri: Erciyes Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Doktora Tezi, 2021), 74.

After Aqtay's assassination, seven hundred Baḥriyya cavalrymen under his command left Cairo out of concern for their safety. Some of them ran away to al-Malik al-Mughith ʿUmar, the ṣāḥib of Karak, and some to al-Nāṣir Yūsuf. Then al-Nāṣir Yūsuf took them personally and gave Nablus to the Baybars as iqtāʿ revenue. On the other hand, the Baḥriyya members who remained in Cairo were attacked and arrested by the Muʿizziyya regime, and their property and iqtāʿs were confiscated.⁵⁰ Therefore, during factional struggles, in order to accelerate the transition of power from one party to another, the victorious faction might have to use its toughness against the other to maintain its sovereignty and reign.

4. The Years of the Exile of the Baḥriyya and the Domination of the Muʿizziyya

After the assassination of Fāris al-Dīn Aqtay, al-Malik al-Muʿizz Aybak became the absolute sultan in the state administration, albeit for a short time.⁵¹ However, it cannot be said that Aybak's negative attitude towards the Baḥriyya was very successful, for the Baḥriyya was used as a means of transferring power into the hands of the surrounding maliks. They had an important tool in their political relations with Egypt, since they had the Baḥriyya in their service. After the assassination of Aqtay, the Baḥriyya under the leadership of Baybars al-Bunduqdārī turned to al-Malik al-Nāṣir Yūsuf. However, the main intention of the Baḥriyya was not to defect to another malik out of concern for their lives, but to restore their political sovereignty in Cairo. In fact, when they arrived in Damascus, they encouraged al-Nāṣir Yūsuf to attack Egypt.⁵² On the other hand, al-Amīr ʿIzz al-Dīn al-Afram al-Ṣāliḥī, (d. 695/1296) who was one of the followers of Baybars, took over many places in the Saʿid region and preached sermon in the name of al-Nāṣir Yūsuf. He informed him of this latest situation and encouraged him to go to Egypt.⁵³ Thereupon, al-Nāṣir Yūsuf acted on the power he received from the Baḥriyya in 653/1255 and launched an expedition against Egypt. al-Malik al-Muʿizz Aybak, receiving news that al-Nāṣir Yūsuf was marching to Egypt, acted immediately and brought his army near Abbase. Although no serious war broke out between the two sides, al-Nāṣir Yūsuf managed to use the Baḥriyya as a threat and get Sahil and Jerusalem out of Aybak's hands.⁵⁴

The power established by al-Malik al-Muʿizz Aybak had been seriously shaken by recent events. The fact that the Baḥriyya joined al-Nāṣir Yūsuf, that al-Afram, who was in the Saʿid region, rebelled and then sided with al-Nāṣir Yūsuf, probably caused a crack in Aybak's side in Cairo. For the ʿAzīziyya mamlūks, who had previously sided with Aybak in the Kūra struggle, were now pursuing a policy against him. However, as soon as Aybak learned of the situation in 653/1255, he instructed the Vizier Sheraf al-Dīn al-Fāizī (d. 655/1257). Through al-Fāizī's efforts, the leaders of the rebellion

⁵⁰ Muhyi al-Din ʿAbd Allāh ibn Nashwan Ibn ʿAbd al-Zāhir, *al-Rawḍ al-zāhir fī sirat al-Malik al-Zāhir*, Critical ed. ʿAbd al-Azīz Khuwayṭir (Riyad: s.l. 1976), 54; Thomas Herzog, "The First Layer of the Sirat Baybars: Popular Romance and Political Propaganda", *Mamlūk Studies Review* 7/1 (2003), 144.

⁵¹ Abū Shāme, *al-Dhayl*, 188; Abū al-Fidāʿ, *al-Muḥtaṣar*, 3/190; Ibn al-Wardī, *Tārīḥu Ibn al-Wardī*, 2/187; Poole, *A History of Egypt*, 260.

⁵² Kasım, *ʿAsru Salātīn al-Mamālik*, 42.

⁵³ Ibn ʿAbd al-Zāhir, *al-Rawḍ*, 55; Ibn Duḫmāk, *Nuzhat al-anām*, 223.

⁵⁴ Zahabī, *al-ʿIbar fī ḥabar*, 3/268; Ibn Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 8/28-29; Ibn al-Wardī, *Tārīḥu Ibn al-Wardī*, 2/187.

were arrested and a major attack was prevented.⁵⁵ As is evident from the ‘Azīziyya’s sudden change of sides, there can be no question of the mamlūks’ unconditional loyalty to a sultan. It should not be forgotten that their slightest unrest can trigger great uprisings; they can suddenly come to an agreement with another malik and play a key role in the change of power.

Al-Malik al-Mu‘izz Aybak was greatly disturbed by al-Nāṣir Yūsuf’s increasing pressure lately. He wanted to marry the daughter of Badr al-Dīn Lu’lu, (d. 657/1259) the ṣāḥib of Mawṣil, both to oppose him and to literally get rid of the pro-Baḥriyya Shajar al-Durr on whom he based his power.⁵⁶ Shajar al-Durr, however, first sent a message to al-Nāṣir Yūsuf informing him that she intended to kill Aybak and marry him, thus bringing Egypt into his possession. But al-Nāṣir Yūsuf ignored this offer, believing it to be a ruse.⁵⁷

Badr al-Dīn Lu’lu realized that Shajar al-Durr was preparing a conspiracy against Aybak and warned him against it. However, Shajar al-Durr managed to act before Aybak and prepared five people, whom he selected from the Baḥriyya, to assassinate him as soon as they had the opportunity.⁵⁸ On 23 Rabi‘ I 655/10 April 1257, after the game of *lāb al-kura*, al-Malik al-Mu‘izz Aybak came to Qal‘at al-jabal. He was accompanied by Vizier Sheraf al-Dīn al-Fāizī and Qādī Badr al-Dīn Sincarī (d. 664/1266). When they reached the castle, they left the sultan alone and he went to the bathhouse. While he was undressing, Sanjar al-Jawjarī attacked the sultan, and the huddams helped him and killed him by the nails. Later, as a result of the deliberations, Shajar al-Durr wanted to make al-Amīr Jamal al-Dīn Aydogdu al-‘Azizī (d. 664/1266) the sultan. She brought al-Amīr Aydogdu, who was under arrest, out of prison and asked him to ascend the throne, telling him what had happened. But Aydogdu could not accept. Later, Shajar al-Durr met with al-Amīr ‘Izz al-Dīn al-Ḥalabī (d. 692/1293) in the same way and offered him the reign, but he too did not dare.⁵⁹ The reason why the two chief amīrs rejected such an offer was probably the power that the Mu‘izziyya mamlūks had. They may have feared that the Mu‘izziyya mamlūks, whose sultans had been slaughtered, would reactively descend upon them.

With the assassination of Aybak, Shajar al-Durr thought that the Ṣāliḥiyya amīrs who were dissatisfied with his rule might seize power. However, things turned out differently than she had hoped: After the death of their master, the Mu‘izziyya took the initiative and first put Nur al-Dīn ‘Alī, (655-657/1257-1259) their master’s 15-year-old son, on the throne and then killed Shajar al-

⁵⁵ Badr al-Din Mahmūd al-‘Aynī, *ʿIqd al-Jumān fi Tārīkh Ahl al-Zamān: al-Hawādith wa-l-Tarājim min sanat 815h. ilā sanat 823h.*, Critical ed. ‘A.R. al-Ṭanṭāwī al-Qarmūṭ (Cairo: Maṭba‘at al-Zahrā’ li-l-ʿIlām al-‘Arabī, 1985), 1/108; Ibn Taghribirdī, *al-Manhal*, 1/25;

⁵⁶ Humphreys, *From Saladin*, 329.

⁵⁷ Ṣafadī, *Wāfi bi’l-wafayāt*, 9/265; Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, 1/493.

⁵⁸ Zaybak, *Abū Shāme*, 197.

⁵⁹ Ṣafadī, *Wāfi bi’l-wafayāt*, 9/265; Ibn Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 8/32; Muhib al-Dīn Muhammad b. Khalīl Qudsi al-Shafi‘ī, *Duwal al-Islam al-sharifat al-Bahiyya*. Critical ed. Subhi Lebib-Ulrich Haarman (Beyrut, s.l. 1997), 27; Ibn Taghribirdī, *al-Manhal*, 1/26-27; Khuwayṭir, *Baybars The First*: 14; Ziyāda, “The Mamlūk Sultans to 1293”, 744; Humphreys, *From Saladin*: 330; Irwin, *The Middle East*, 29.

Durr.⁶⁰ The sermon (*hutbe*) was read on behalf of al-Malik al-Manşūr Nur al-Dīn ‘Ālī and then Atābak Sanjar al-Ḥalabī with the help of the Mu‘izziyya. However, shortly after the various appointments were made, Sayf al-Dīn Quṭuz, Sanjar al-Ghatamī, and Bahadur of the Mu‘izziyya intervened and arrested Sanjar al-Ḥalabī because they considered him a threat.⁶¹ According to Ibn Taghribardī, (d. 874/1470) one of the reasons for his arrest was that Shajar al-Durr offered the sultanate to Sanjar al-Ḥalabī. The second reason was that after she offered the rulership, the news that al-Ḥalabī regretted rejecting it was passed on to Mu‘izziyya. Thus, since they thought he wanted to remain in power, they had to act against him and arrest him. However, this situation frightened the *khushdāshs* of Sanjar al-Ḥalabī from Şālihiyya. Each of them was worried that Mu‘izziyya would bring such disaster upon them. For this reason, most of them fled Egypt for Damascus. Al-Amīr ‘Izz al-Dīn Aybak al-Ḥalabī al-Kabīr and al-Amīr Hās Turk al-Sagir, (d. 655/1257) who did not escape, were killed.⁶² On the other hand, the Vizier Sheraf al-Dīn al-Fāizī was first imprisoned and then executed by Mu‘izziyya for offering to hand over power to al-Nāşir Yūsuf.⁶³ Therefore, Qādī Badr al-Dīn Yūsuf al-Sincari was appointed as vizier in his place. But soon afterwards, Taj al-Dīn ibn Bint al-‘Eazz (d. 665/1267) was appointed vizier. Later, al-Malik al-Manşūr Nur al-Dīn ‘Alī brought al-Amīr Aktay al-Musta‘rib to replace Sanjar al-Ḥalabī as atābak.⁶⁴ For this reason, it is understood that Şālihiyya amirs who openly opposed Mu‘izziyya were isolated and replaced by more moderate ones or those who were not seen as a threat to Mu‘izziyya.

On the other hand, during the time of Mu‘izz Aybak, peace was made with al-Nāşir Yūsuf. Baḥriyya was not at all pleased with this peace, for their main aim was to capture Egypt. Therefore, they now sent messages to al-Malik al-Mughith ‘Umar, the şāhib of al-Karak, and joined him.⁶⁵ Then they encouraged him to seize Egypt and said: “This property belongs to your father, grandfather, and uncle.”⁶⁶ This promise was indeed enough to encourage al-Malik al-Mughith ‘Umar. However, the Egyptian army then set out under the command of Atābak Aktay al-Musta‘rib and Nā’ib al-saltana Sayf al-Dīn Quṭuz. On 25 Dhu al-qadah 655/4 Aralık 1257, two armies faced each other in the Şālihiyya region, and the Baḥriyya-Karak armies were defeated. Balābān al-Rashidī and Qalāwūn al-Alfī were among the captives.⁶⁷

The victory of al-Amīr Quṭuz over the Baḥriyya under the leadership of Baybars al-Bunduqdārī and al-Malik al-Mughith ‘Umar, the şāhib of Karak, was occasioned both to eliminate the Ayyūbid threat and to strengthen the power of the Mu‘izziyya. After winning the battle against the Ayyūbids

⁶⁰ Abū al-Fidā‘, *al-Muḥtaşar*, 3/192; ‘Aynī, *‘Iqd al-Jumān*, 1/143; Ibn Taghribirdī, *al-Manhal*, 1/27; Khuwayṭir, *Baybars The First*, 14-15.

⁶¹ Ibn al-Wardī, *Tārīḫ Ibn al-Wardī*, 2/188; Ibn Khaldūn, *Tārīḫ Ibn Khaldūn*, 5/434; Surūr, *al-Zāhir Baybars*, 44.

⁶² Ibn Taghribirdī, *al-Nujūm*, 7/41-42; Abbādī, *fī Tārīḫ al-Ayyūbiyyin*, 124-125; Irwin, *The Middle East*, 29.

⁶³ ‘Aynī, *‘Iqd al-Jumān*, 1/143; Humphreys, *From Saladin*, 330; Fatih Yahya Ayaz, *Memlûkler Döneminde Vezirlik (1250-1517)* (İstanbul: İsam Yayınları, 2009), 40.

⁶⁴ Ibn Taghribirdī, *al-Nujūm*, 7/43; Ayaz, *Memlûkler Döneminde Vezirlik*, 42.

⁶⁵ Ibn Duḫmāk, *Nuzhat al-anām*, 231; Surūr, *al-Zāhir Baybars*, 44; Humphreys, *From Saladin*, 331.

⁶⁶ Ibn Taghribirdī, *al-Nujūm*, 7/45.

⁶⁷ Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, *al-Rawḍ*, 57-59; Ibn Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 8/30; Ibn Duḫmāk, *Nuzhat al-anām*, 233; Zaybak, *Abū Shāme*, 200.

and the Bahriyya, he began to resolve internal problems. Firstly, al-Amīr Quṭuz arrested al-Amīr ʿIzz al-Dīn Aybak al-Rūmī al-Şāliḫī, ʿIzz al-Dīn Aybak al-Ḥamawī, Rukn al-Dīn al-Sayrafi, ibn Atlas Khān al-Harazmī of the Şāliḫiyya amīrs, whom he considered a threat. He had them executed and their property completely expropriated on 26 Rabiʿ I 656/2 April 1258.⁶⁸

5. The Mongol Invasion and the Return to Egypt of the Bahriyya-Şāliḫiyya

After the takeover of Baghdad and partly Bilad al-sham, al-Amīr Quṭuz deposed al-Malik al-Manşūr Nur al-Dīn ʿAlī from the throne. He took advantage of the absence of the leading amīrs of the Muʿizziyya, such as ʿAlam al-dīn Sanjar al-Ghatamī, Sheraf al-Dīn Kizān al-Muʿizzī, Sayf al-Dīn Bahadır, ʿIzz al-Dīn Aybak al-Tajibī al-Sagīr, and Shams al-Dīn Qarasunqur (d. 683/1284). When they arrived in Egypt, he immediately had them arrested because of their opposition to him. As a result, Quṭuz was proclaimed sultan of Egypt on 22 Shawwal 657/12 November 1259.⁶⁹ Quṭuz, knowing that his sultanate would not be accepted, made a speech as follows: “I have no other aim but to fight the Mongols. This calamity cannot be eliminated without a strong malik. When we have put away this enemy, the decision will be up to you. Then you can determine whoever you want as sultan.”⁷⁰

On the other hand, Baybars al-Bunduqdārī had left al-Malik al-Mughith ʿUmar and rejoined al-Nāşir Yūsuf. In the meantime, al-Nāşir Yūsuf sent messages to Karak and Cairo due to the increasing Mongol invasions in northern Syria, asking both Mughith ʿUmar and Quṭuz for help. But al-Nāşir Yūsuf was losing power day by day, and the fear of his amīrs was growing. So, al-Amīr Zayn al-Dīn al-Hafizī said that it would be useless to fight with Hulagu Khan (653-663/1256-1265) and that he should be obeyed. Baybars al-Bunduqdārī disagreed and slapped al-Amīr Zayn al-Dīn, saying, *you are the reason why Muslims are killed*. When it was night, some of the mamlūks suddenly charged and wanted to kill al-Nāşir Yūsuf and appoint another as malik in his place. However, they failed due to the resistance of Qaymariyya and Shahrizoriyya. For this reason, they first retreated to Gaza and then joined Quṭuz. Quṭuz was glad that Baybars and the Bahriyya had joined him before the battle against the Mongols, and he granted Baybars and his retinue Qalyub.⁷¹

Meantime as a result of the Syria campaign, Hulagu Khan succeeded in gaining supremacy beyond the Euphrates by capturing the most important cities. He then sent a letter to al-Malik Quṭuz, apparently threatening him with surrender. Thereupon, Quṭuz had executed the legation consisting of forty people, and hanged at Bab al-Zuwayla. Thereafter, he proclaimed *jihad* against the Mongols and attracted many people to his side. Many groups of Arabs, Bedouins and Kurds had

⁶⁸ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *al-Nujūm*, 7/46; Kasım, *ʿAsru Salātīn al-Mamālik*, 46; Humphreys, *From Saladin*, 333.

⁶⁹ Abū Shāme, *al-Dhayl*, 203; Abū al-Fidāʿ, *al-Muḥtaşar*, 3/199; Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, 29/300; Zahabī, *al-ʿIbar fi ḥabar*, 3/285; Ibn al-Wardī, *Tārīḫi Ibn al-Wardī*, 2/196; Khuwayṭir, *Baybars The First*, 16; Irwin, *The Middle East*, 32; Zaybak, *Abū Shāme*, 227.

⁷⁰ Ibn Khaldūn, *Tārīḫi Ibn Khaldūn*, 5/436; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *al-Nujūm*, 7/55; Surūr, *al-Zāhir Baybars*, 47; Ziyāda, “The Mamlūk Sultans to 1293”, 744; Kasım, *ʿAsru Salātīn al-Mamālik*, 51.

⁷¹ Ibn Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 8/49; Ibn al-Wardī, *Tārīḫi Ibn al-Wardī*, 2/197; Ibn Dukmāk, *Nuzhat al-anām*, 256; Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, 1/509; Surūr, *al-Zāhir Baybars*, 48; Süleyman Özbek, “Yakın DoĖu Türk-İslam Tarihinin Akışını DeĖiştiren Bir Meydan Savaşı: Ayn Calud”, *Türkler* (Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, 2002), 5/219-220.

obeyed him.⁷² However, some of the high-ranking amīr cadres did not agree with Quṭuz. They did not want to wage direct war on the front lines against the Mongols. Then Quṭuz said to them, *we are at a time when we are using up the property of the state. No matter what you do, I will fight against the Mongols. The sin of Muslims weighs on the necks of those who withdraw from jihad.* After this speech, the high-ranking amīrs had announced that they would fight alongside the sultan.⁷³ Indeed, in the place of ‘Ayn Jālūt, the Mongols were defeated for the first time on 25 Ramadan 658/3 September 1260. Katboga Noyan (d. 658/1260) was among those killed on the battlefield. Since this victory did not satisfy Quṭuz, Egypt army continued to attack, and the Mongols were completely driven out of Syria beyond the Euphrates.⁷⁴ This victory not only extended the rule of the Mamlūks to Syria, but also provided political opportunity to the Ayyūbids, who had been completely disintegrated by the Mongols. In other words, the Ayyūbid maliks, who were under the Mongol yoke, became directly dependent on the Mamlūks.

When Quṭuz captured Damascus, he went to Aleppo and wanted to rebuild the places destroyed by the Mongols. However, he had received news that Baybars al-Bunduqdārī and the Baḥriyya were preparing against him, and he then turned towards Egypt for safety.⁷⁵ In the same way, Quṭuz secretly sought an opportunity against the Baḥriyya. When news of this reached Baybars, they left Damascus. Both Quṭuz and Baybars were careful with each other.⁷⁶ When Quṭuz arrived in the Qusayr region on 16 Dhu al-qadah 658/23 October 1260, he went rabbit hunting with his retinue. al-Amīr ‘Izz al-din Anas managed to kill the rabbit and present it to the sultan. The sultan was very surprised at this. He got off his horse, took the rabbit, and said to al-Amīr ‘Izz al-Dīn Anas, *what do you want from me when we come to Egypt?* And he said, o ruler, I want a concubine taken from the Mongols. al-Malik Quṭuz accepted this, so he approached Quṭuz to thank him and held his hand as if to kiss it. With his other hand he grasped his sword. This was a sign among the assassins. Al-Amīr Baktūt al-Javkandārī set out and attacked Quṭuz. Al-Amīr Anas also supported him and threw Quṭuz down from his horse. On the other hand, Bahadur al-Mu‘izzī shot arrows and they slaughtered Quṭuz. However, it is also said that Baybars was the one who struck Quṭuz the first blow.⁷⁷

⁷² Ibn Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 8/47-48; Ibn Duqmāk, *Nuzhat al-anām*, 262-263; Peter Thorau, *The Lion of Egypt Sultan Baybars I and the Near East in the Thirteenth Century* (New York: Longman Publishing, 1992), 75; Ahmet Saglam, “Memlūk-İlhanlı İlişkileri.” *Bellekten* 82/293 (2018), 87; Özbek, “Yakın Doğu”, 5/220.

⁷³ Qudsī, *Duwal al-Islam*, 30; Abbādī, *fi Tārīḫ al-Ayyūbiyyin*, 139.

⁷⁴ Abū Shāme, *al-Dhayl*, 207; Fuwaṭī, *al-Ḥawādith al-jāmi‘a*, 247; Şehabeddin Tekindağ, “Memlūk Sultanlığı Tarihine Toplu Bir Bakış”, *Tarih Dergisi* 25 (1971), 9; Abdülkerim Özaydın, “Aynicâlūt Savaşı”, *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, (Ankara: TDV Yayınları, 1991, 4/276; Ali Aktan, “Sultan Kutuz ve Ayn Câlūd Zaferi”, *Atatürk Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 10 (1991), 197; Robert Irwin, “The Rise of the Mamlūks”, *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, ed. David Abulafia (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 5/616; Cüneyt Kanat, “Baybars Zamanında Memlūk-İlhanlı Münasebetleri (1260-1277)”, *Tarih İncelemeleri Dergisi* 16/1 (2001), 31.

⁷⁵ Khuwayṭir, *Baybars The First*, 24.

⁷⁶ Ibn Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 8/60.

⁷⁷ Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, *al-Rawḍ*, 67-68; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 8/61-62; Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, 29/305; Ibn al-Wardī, *Tārīḫ Ibn al-Wardī*, 2/203; Ibn Duqmāk, *Nuzhat al-anām*, 267; ‘Aynī, *‘Iqd al-Jum‘an*, 1/261-262; Ibn Taghribirdī, *al-Nujūm*, 7/84; Qudsī, *Duwal al-Islam*, 33; Tekindağ, “Memlūk Sultanlığı”, 9.

After the assassination of Quṭuz, they all went to the pavilion (*dehliz*) and gathered. After long discussions, the sultanate of al-Amīr Rukn al-Dīn Baybars al-Bunduqdārī was decided. Atābak Fāris al-Dīn Aqtay al-Musta‘rib was the first to step forward and swear allegiance to him. Later, the amīrs swore allegiance according to their rank.⁷⁸ However, Aqtay said Baybars: *The sultanate will not be completed until we arrive in Qal‘at al-jabal*. When they left for Egypt together, Nā‘ib al-saltana ‘Izz al-Dīn al-Ḥillī (d. 667/1269) met them on the way. They told him what had happened, and he swore allegiance to Baybars. Thus, the sultanate of Baybars was finally sealed.⁷⁹

After Quṭuz’s assassination, Sultan Baybars had to eliminate those he considered a threat in order to consolidate his rule. First, Sanjar al-Ḥalabī, whom Quṭuz had appointed nā‘ib of Damascus, rebelled against Baybars and declared his own sultanate.⁸⁰ Turning this situation into an opportunity, the Mongol army arrived in al-Bira and continued its rapid advance, capturing Aleppo and Hama on 16 Dhu al-Hijja 658/22 November 1260.⁸¹ The army, consisting of al-Manşūr, the şāḥib of Hama and his brother Ali al-Afdal, al-Ashraf ibn Shirkuh, the şāḥib of Hims, and ‘Azīziyya-Nasiriyya troops, defeated the Mongols at the Battle of Hims in 659/1261. After this victory, al-Manşūr, the şāḥib of Hama, and al-Ashraf ibn Shirkuh, the şāḥib of Hims, met with Sanjar al-Ḥalabī, who proclaimed his sultanate in Damascus. They paid no attention to him, knowing his weakness.⁸² However, Sultan Baybars sent an army under the command of al-Amīr ‘Ala al-Dīn Aytakin al-Bunduqdārī (d. 684/1285) and Bahā‘ al-Dīn Bughdi to Damascus. The Egyptian army had won the war between them, and Sanjar al-Ḥalabī had taken refuge in the castle of Damascus. He then took advantage of the darkness of the night and fled to Ba‘lbak, but was eventually captured. Later he was sent to Egypt to be delivered to Baybars, and he was captured there as well. The nā‘ib of Damascus was replaced by ‘Ala al-Dīn Aytakin al-Bunduqdārī. After the suppression of the uprising, a sermon (*hutbe*) was read in Damascus on behalf of Sultan Baybars on 13 Safar 659/17 January 1261.⁸³ This clearly shows that it was not a rule to come to power by killing the sultan. Rather, it can be said that the consensus of the elite amīrs was the main thing.

After the rebellion of Sanjar al-Ḥalabī, al-Malik al-Zāhir Baybars had the leading amīrs of the Mu‘izziyya arrested. The reason for this was that Baybars received news that some of the amīrs of

⁷⁸ Abū al-Fidā‘, *al-Muḥtaşar*, 3/207; Ibn Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 8/62; Baybars al-Manşūrī, *Mukhtār al-Akḥbār: Tārīkh al-dawla al-Ayyūbiyya wa-dawlat al-Mamālīk al-Baḥriyya ḥattā sanat 703H*, Critical ed. ‘Abd al-Ḥamid Şāliḥ Ḥamdān (Cairo: al-Dār al-Mişriyya al-Lubnāniyya, 1993), 11; Khuwayṭir, *Baybars The First*, 26-27; Irwin, “The Rise of the Mamlūks”, 5/616; Ramazan Şeşen, *Sultan Baybars ve Devri* (İstanbul: İSAR Yayınları, 2008), 23.

⁷⁹ Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, *al-Rawḍ*, 71; Amitai-Preiss, “The Mamlūk Officer Class”, 275; Yusuf Ötenkaya, “el-Melikü’z-Zāhir Baybars’ın Sultanlığı Meselesi: Sultan Öldüren Sultan Olur mu?”, *İlahiyat Tetkikleri Dergisi* (2023), 17-18.

⁸⁰ Ibn al-Wardī, *Tārīḥu Ibn al-Wardī*, 2/204; Surūr, *Zāhir Baybars*, 57; Thorau, *The Lion of Egypt*, 94-95.

⁸¹ Abū al-Fidā‘, *al-Muḥtaşar*, 3/208-209; Ibn Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 8/65.

⁸² Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, *al-Rawḍ*, 97; Ibn Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 8/68; Ibn Khaldūn, *Tārīḥu Ibn Khaldūn*, 5/439; ‘Aynī, *‘Iqd al-Jumān*, 1/269; Kanat, “Baybars Zamanında Memlūk-İlhanlı Münasebetleri”, 33-34.

⁸³ Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, *al-Rawḍ*, 94-96; Qutb al-Dīn Abu’l-Fath Musa al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl mir‘at al-zamān fi ta‘rīkh al-a‘yān*, (Haydarābād: Dâiretü’l-Ma‘rifil’l-Osmaniyye, 1954), 2/118; Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, 30/20; ‘Aynī, *‘Iqd al-Jumān*, 1/265-266; Ibn Tagḥribirdī, *al-Nujūm*, 7/107-108; Surūr, *Zāhir Baybars*, 58; Khuwayṭir, *Baybars The First*, 29; Ziyāda, “The Mamlūk Sultans to 1293”, 746; Abbādī, *fi Tārīḥ al-Ayyūbiyyin*, 151-152; Zaybak, *Abū Şāme*, 278; Thorau, *The Lion of Egypt*, 95; Şeşen, *Sultan Baybars*, 25.

the Mu‘izziyya were preparing to assassinate him. Al-Amīr ‘Izz al-Dīn al-Şakallī, al-Amīr ‘Alam al-Dīn Sanjar al-Ghatamī, Bahadur al-Mu‘izzī, and al-Shuca‘ Baktūt all agreed to get rid of Baybars. However, Baybars had managed to arrest them by acting earlier.⁸⁴ In fact, the main reason why Baybars had the Mu‘izziyya mamlūks arrested was that he wanted to secure his throne. Of course, this was an instinctive behaviour rather than planned steps as Aybak and Qutuz had done before.

After imprisoning the leaders of the Mu‘izziyya, Sultan Baybars sent a message to ‘Ala al-Dīn al-Bunduqdārī, the nā‘ib of Damascus, asking him to arrest al-Amīr Bahā‘ al-Dīn Bughdi, Shams al-Dīn Aqqush al-Barlī, (d. 661/1263) and some mamlūks from the ‘Azīziyya-Nasiriyya to increase his rule in Bilad al-sham. ‘Ala al-Dīn al-Bunduqdārī captured Bahā‘ al-Dīn Bughdi, but the mamlūks of the ‘Azīziyya and Nasiriyya could not be captured because they fled along with Aqqush al-Barlī. Then al-Barlī had told them that he wanted to join the şāhībs of Hims and Hama against Sultan Baybars. However, he said that he wanted to rebuild the Ayyūbid sultanate with his help. After receiving no positive response from either of them, he was forced to move to Aleppo.⁸⁵ With the support of Arabs and Turkmen, they prepared the war in Aleppo. Sultan Baybars, however, wishing to settle the al-Barlī issue once and for all, sent an army of three divisions under the command of al-Amīr Jamal al-Dīn Muḥammadī, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Himsī, and Sanjar al-Ḥalabī. In the battle with the Egyptian forces, Aqqush al-Barlī was defeated and had to retreat to al-Bira. However, Baybars also sent an army under the command of al-Amīr Sunqur al-Rūmī to al-Bira in 660/1262. The şāhībs of Hama and Hims assisted him. Realizing that he could not deal with this army, al-Barlī found the solution in obeying them. Baybars then appointed al-Bira to al-Barlī as amīr of sab‘in, but later changed his mind and ordered his arrest.⁸⁶

Sultan Baybars sent an army under the command of al-Amīr Badr al-Dīn Aydamīrī to Shawbak in 660/1262. After Aydamīrī captured Shawbak, Badr al-Dīn Balābān was appointed nā‘ib of the region. In the meantime, al-Malik al-Mughith ‘Umar had taken into his service a group of Shahrizoriyya Kurds who had fled Bilad al-Sham. He raised an army of them and encouraged them to attack Shawbak. Sultan Baybars immediately opposed this and attacked Karak on 8 Muharram 661/22 November 1262. Mughith ‘Umar, who was concerned about this situation, reported that he obeyed him so as not to suffer any harm from Baybars. On the other hand, Baybars had succeeded in separating them from Mughith ‘Umar by providing security for the Kurdish groups in the region. As a result, Baybars organized his second expedition to Karak on 7 Rabi‘ II 661/18 February 1263. When he arrived in Gaza, Mughith ‘Umar’s mother met with Baybars to mediate for her son. Baybars initially agreed, but then ordered Mughith ‘Umar’s arrest. After being imprisoned for some time, he was sentenced to death for his relations with the Mongols.⁸⁷ Sultan Baybars, after the murdered of al-Malik al-Mughith ‘Umar, brought his son ‘Azīz Fakhr al-Dīn ‘Uthmān to the nā‘ib of

⁸⁴ Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, 30/6; Ibn Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 8/70; Ibn Duḡmāk, *Nuzhat al-anām*, 274; Ibn Taghribirdī, *al-Nujūm*, 7/108; Amitai-Preiss, “The Mamlūk Officer Class”, 278.

⁸⁵ Yūnīnī, *Dhayl mir‘at al-zamān*, 2/119-120; Abū al-Fidā‘, *al-Muḥtaşar*, 3/211; Ibn Duḡmāk, *Nuzhat al-anām*, 274.

⁸⁶ Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, *al-Rawḍ*, 135; Yūnīnī, *Dhayl mir‘at al-zamān*, 2/157-158; Ibn al-Wardī, *Tārīḫi Ibn al-Wardī*, 2/205; Ibn Khaldūn, *Tārīḫi Ibn Khaldūn*, 5/439; Khuwayṭir, *Baybars The First*, 31.

⁸⁷ Yūnīnī, *Dhayl mir‘at al-zamān*, 2/193; Ibn Khaldūn, *Tārīḫi Ibn Khaldūn*, 5/442; Ibn Taghribirdī, *al-Nujūm*, 7/120.

Karak and gave him the amīr mīa. In this way Baybars connected Karak with him in Jumada II 661/April 1263.⁸⁸

It is understood that Sultan Baybars had a harsh policy towards the amīrs who questioned his decisions, regardless of the factions to which they belonged. If one examines the historical record, one will find that there were some amīrs who opposed the arrest of Muḡhith ʿUmar. Thus, after the removal of Muḡhith ʿUmar, Baybars had al-Amīr Sayf al-Dīn Balābān al-Rashidī, al-Amīr ʿIzz al-Dīn Aybak al-Dimyātī, and al-Amīr Shams al-din Aqqush al-Barlī arrested and imprisoned in Qalʿat al-Jabal on 28 Jumada II 661/9 May 1263.⁸⁹ Hereby, Baybars got rid of the rival amīrs who had previously caused him political problems. Perhaps his experiences during his exile between 654/1254 and 658/1260 forced him to act in this way.

It is noted that during the first three years of his reign, Baybars tried to eliminate the amīrs who had been placed in important positions by Quṭuz. If one looks at the distribution of the iqtāʿ he commissioned in 663/1265, one sees that he greatly reduced the number of opponents and brought forward those who were of the Baḡriyya-Şāliḡiyya or those who were dissatisfied with the Muʿizziyya.⁹⁰ This situation obviously indicates that after Baybars ascended the throne, he attacked the amīrs of the Muʿizziyya, ʿAzīziyya, and Nasiriyya, arrested gradually many of them, and attempted to secure his power by slaughtering some of them.

Conclusion

It is obvious that the nature of the Mamlūk state, the concepts of the sultanate, and the way the foundations of power are formed, all these theories and arguments do not contradict the historical case only when they are evaluated together. However, neglecting any one of these theories and arguments in the search for an answer to the question of how power is formed leads to a narrowing of the subject and inadequate answers. Similarly, the change of Mamluk power can be understood by considering the struggles between mamluk factions.

Although there are descriptions such as becoming sultan by killing the sultan and becoming sultan by succession, it is seen that there are unwritten rules in the functioning of the state system. The most important of these principles was based on factional struggles. Indeed, in this system, not only the sultan did not change, but also the elite cadre in the ruling structure as a whole underwent changes. Therefore, the changes of power in the Mamlūks cannot be simply confined to the sultans. The autocracy-oligarchy tension between the sultan and the mamlūk factions has always existed. In order to emerge victorious from this struggle, a fierce rivalry would often arise between the sultan and those who had once been favourites of the sultan. In order to be victorious in this struggle, the sultan tried to pave the way for the mamluk faction, which he formed in his own name, and appointed them to important positions. However, even if this situation resulted in

⁸⁸ Yūnīnī, *Dhayl mirʿat al-zamān*, 2/194; Ibn Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 8/96; Zahabī, *al-ʿIbar fī ḡabar*, 3/301; Surūr, *al-Zāhir Baybars*, 60; Şeşen, *Sultan Baybars*, 29.

⁸⁹ Ibn ʿAbd al-Zāhir, *al-Rawḡ*, 169-170; Yūnīnī, *Dhayl mirʿat al-zamān*, 2/194; Zahabī, *al-ʿIbar fī ḡabar*, 3/301.

⁹⁰ Ibn Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 8/110-112.

favourable results for the sultan, it did not continue in the sultan's lineage in the following periods and caused new factional struggles to continue.

Since the end of the Ayyūbids, the Mamlūk factions, although they remained in the rear, were the *de facto* power holding power in their own hands. If the sultan acted against their interests, this usually resulted in his deposition or murder. They would appoint those whom they thought would not harm their interests to the sultanate. Of course, in this case, it is obvious that the sultan in question was a puppet. If the sultan wanted to gradually seize power with his own mamluks and become an absolute sultan, he had to be ready for factional conflicts. Therefore, it can be concluded that the source of factional struggles was based on the determination of the sultan in power or the struggle of the sultan who seized power against the opposing mamluk factions. In addition, the slightest unrest among the Mamluk factions could lead to widespread revolts or to their changing sides. As a matter of fact, during the Battle of Kūra, the 'Azīziyya mamlūks, who were uncomfortable with the policies of al-Nāṣir Yūsuf, switched sides at the most important point of the battle.

However, in the Mamlūk State, one of the elite amirs could seize power despite the opposition of his own faction. However, it is understood that this situation did not last long, as seen in the examples of Turanshah and Quṭuz. Their behaviour, which clearly contradicted the interests of the existing Mamlūk faction, led to their assassination soon after. Therefore, being an absolute sultan in the Mamlūk State was quite rare. However, power struggles between factions also had positive consequences, the most important of which was that the military system was in a dynamic state and was constantly strong. In other words, the concern to stay in power or to maintain it brought along a qualified military/bureaucracy organisation.

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