

AL-MALIK AL-MANSUR QALAWUN (617/1220-678/1279):
HIS EARLY CAREER AND HIS EMERGENCE AS AN
IMPORTANT FIGURE IN THE MAMLUK SULTANATE

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HIS CHILDHOOD AND EDUCATION

No source provides a firm factual framework for the early life and career of Qalawun al-Alfi al-'A'la'i al-Salihi al-Najmi, Abu'l Ma'ali, Saif al-Din al-Sultan al-Malik al-Mansur¹ in the period before he was brought as a child to Egypt with other slaves.² It is generally agreed that he was born in the country of the Kipcak³ Turks on the northern shore of the Black Sea. There are, however, conflicting opinions in the Muslim sources on the exact date of his birth. In the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, it is stated that the year of Qalawun's birth is unknown.⁴ In his book *The Middle East in the Middle Ages* Robert Irwin mentions that Qalawun's birth was around 617/1220⁵ although he seems cautious about this information. P.M. Holt, in his book, *The Age of the Crusades: the Near East from the eleventh century to 1517*, writes that this sultan was born

¹Ibn al-Shaddad, *Al-A'laq al-Khatira fi Dhikr al-Sham wa'l Qahira*, Damascus, 1978, vol. III, p.687; cf. also Ibn al-'Imad, *Shadharat al-Dhahab fi Khabar man Dhahab*, Cairo, 1351 A.H. vol. V, p.409; al-Kutubi, *Fawat al-Wafayat*, Cairo, 1951, vol. II, p.269; Ibn Taghribirdi, *al-Nujum al-Zahira fi Muluk al-Sham wa'l Qahira*, Cairo, n.d., vol. VI, p.292; Gustav Weil, *Geschichte des Abbasidenchalifats in Agypten*, Wiesbaden, 1846, vol. IV, p. 170.

²Shafi' ibn Ali is the only chronicler who says that Qalawun arrived in Egypt when he was fourteen years old. Holt states that Qalawun was brought to Egypt in his late twenties. However, the author fails to produce evidence to substantiate this assertion. Cf. Shafi' ibn 'Ali, *al-Fadl al-Ma'thur min Sirat al-Malik al-Mansur*, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Marsh 224, fol.3b; P.M. Holt, *The Ages of the Crusades*, Singapore, 1986, p. 101.

³Kipcak was the name of Turkish tribes who settled on the northern shores of the Black Sea. They migrated and stayed in the south of Russia and this area was known as Kipcak. Cf. *The Encyclopaedia of Islam (second edition) EI(2)*, Leiden, vol. IV, art: "Kipcak", pp. 125-6; al-Maqrizi, *Kitab al-Suluk*, Beirut, n.d. vol. I, p. 663.

⁴EI(2), vol. IV, art: "Kipcak", pp. 125-6.

⁵Robert Irwin, *The Middle East in the Middle Ages*, London, 1986, p. 64. The author states that "he seems to have been born around 1220 A.D."

about the year 619/1222.⁶ Neither Holt nor Irwin give the source or sources of their dating. The only primary source which explicitly states Qalawun's year of birth is Ibn Shaddad who is sure that the year of birth was 620/1223.⁷ All that may be said with reasonable certainty therefore from these evidences is that Qalawun was born between the years 617/1220-620/1223. If al-Maqrizi is to be believed, Qalawun died in 689/1289 at the age of seventy. This would mean that Qalawun must have been born in 617/1220, although al-Maqrizi's figure of seventy may well be suspiciously too exact.⁸

The paucity of information about Qalawun's early life is not surprising. He belonged to a social group, the *mamluks*, whose activities in their original tribal homelands before embracing Islam did not excite great interests and were not usually recorded by Muslim historians. Moreover, it seems that Qalawun did not personally commission the writing of his own biography during his rule as sultan and the two contemporary historians who wrote about him do not deal with his early life in their works which have come down to us.

For the period immediately after the *mamluks* arrived in Egypt, however, much more is known. Indeed, Muslim historical sources offer an immense wealth of information on the military training of this "wealthy, powerful and sophisticated medieval state".⁹ These writings can therefore be used as a guide to a study of Qalawun's early life and background.

Qalawun was the seventh in the long line of Bahrite Mamluk Sultans, who sat upon the throne of Egypt. He had been purchased as a slave by al-Amir 'Ala' al-Din Aqsunqur al-Saqi al-'Adili, a slave of the Ayyubid sultan al-Malik al-Salih b. Ayyub for a thousand dinars.¹⁰ Al-Malik al-Salih was one of the most capable Ayyubid sultans. He came to the throne in 637/1240. It was during his reign that the Ayyubids conquered Damascus in 637/1245. In an attempt to strengthen his government, the sultan trained a large

⁶P.M. Holt, *The Age of the Crusades*, p. 101.

⁷Ibn Shaddad, *op. cit.*, vol. III, p. 684.

⁸Al-Maqrizi, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p.756.

⁹P.M. Holt, "The Position and Power of the Mamluk Sultan" in *B.S.O.A.S.*, vol. XXXVIII, p. 249.

¹⁰He was bought for a thousand dinars, hence the nickname "al-Alfi". Cf. al-Maqrizi, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 203; al-Kutubi, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 269; Ibn Iyas, *Badai' al-Zuhur fi Waqai' al-Duhur*, Wiesbaden, 1975, vol. I, part I, pp. 387-8; EI(2), art: "Kalawun", vol. IV, p. 484.

number of his own *mamluks* in the Citadel of Nile on the island of al-Rawda. For this reason, these *mamluks* were known as *Mamalik al-Bahriyya*.¹¹ When his master died in 647/1249, Qalawun came into his possession of al-Malik al-Salih and it was around this time that Qalawun joined the Bahris.

At this point, it is appropriate to describe in brief the process of recruitment which *mamluks* underwent before entering into service as qualified soldiers since it is highly probable that Qalawun would have followed such a training. *Mamluks* would start the first stage of their military education at a very young age and the process continued until they were fifteen years old. During this phase, a *ra's nawbat al-nuwab* (the chief of the corps of *mamluks*)¹² would teach them basic reading, writing and a knowledge of the Qur'an and Islamic Law.

The system of education for the *mamluks* once they had reached the age of fifteen was extremely strict. Punishment for transgression of rules of discipline was very exacting and harsh.¹³ At this stage, they were divided into various groups, each under the supervision of experienced teachers who imparted training to each group. The physical exercises comprised swimming, fencing and archery. Moreover, the *mamluks* were also taught literature, religion and other fields of knowledge during their leisure time. Having completed this stage of training, the *mamluks* were sent to the battle field to test their skills in warfare. Thus ended their formal education.

After the completion of the training, all *mamluks* were presented with a passing out paper, horse and military equipment¹⁴ before they were accepted into the army.

The young Qalawun was sent by his master for military training (*furusiiyya*) on al-Rawda, an island on the Nile, where he succeeded in proving his efficiency and prowess as a fully-fledged and promising warrior. His undivided loyalty towards al-Malik al-Salih was rewarded by manumission and the title of *al-amir*¹⁵ that was bestowed upon him by his master despite the fact that Qalawun

¹¹ Cf. al-Maqrizi, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 340; Shafi, *op. cit.*, fol. 4a; Baybars al-Mansuri, *Zubdat al-Fikra fi Tarikh al-Hijra*, British Library, MSS. Add. 23325, fol. 49a; EI(2), art. "al-Bahriyya", vol. I, p. 944; P.M. Holt *et. al*, *The Cambridge History of Islam*, London, 1970, vol. I, p. 209.

¹² Al-Maqrizi, *Khitat al-Maqrizi*, Beirut, n.d., vol. II, p. 213-4; Hassanein Rabie, "The Training of the Mamluk Faris", in *War, Technology and Society in the Middle East*, eds: V.J. Parry and M.E. Yapp, London, 1975, p. 154.

¹³ *Ibid*, p. 154.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 162.

had only just entered into his service. Upon his completion of military training in the Citadel of the Nile, Qalawun became involved in the Bahri regiment until the enthronement of Baybars in 658/1260.¹⁶

QALAWUN'S EARLY CAREER

When al-Malik al-Salih died in 647/1249, his son, Turan Shah came to the throne but in reality, it was al-Salih's widow, Shajar al-Durr, and Fakhr al-Din, the *atabeg*, who held the reins of the government. The newly elected sultan was unable to stem the turbulence that swept over the government. This provided a timely opportunity for the Crusaders who set out to conquer Muslim territories. Turan Shah contacted the Bahris and other Mamluk armies in order to meet the impending threat of the Crusaders. The two sides met at the battle of al-Mansura (Dhu'l Qa'da 647/February 1250)¹⁷ in which Qalawun too actively participated. From this encounter the Muslims emerged as victors.

This expedition, led by Faris al-Din Aqtay, enhanced the reputation of the Bahri regiment. Before this battle, Aqtay had been promised the position of *amir* by Turan Shah. However, the sultan, probably fearing Aqtay's rising influence, failed to fulfil his promise.¹⁸ This imprudence led to discontent among the Bahris and created hard feeling between them and the sultan.

After assuming the sceptre, Turan Shah, always mindful of Bahris hostility, entertained a hatred for some Bahris followers of his father, whom he had hesitation to remove from office. In their place he appointed men of his own choice. For the Bahris, this was an act of "treachery" on the part of the sultan, it also confirmed the sultan's failure to give proper due to the role played by the *mamluks* in securing him the throne. Finally the Bahris decided to assassinate their master. Thus, at the end of Muharram 648/May

¹⁵ EI(2), art. "Kalawun", vol. IV, p. 484; Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidaya wa'l Nihaya*, Beirut, 1966, vol. XIII, p. 73.

¹⁶ Al-Maqrizi, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 436; al-Yunini, *Dhail Mir'at al Zaman*, Hyderabad, 1960, vol. III, p. 241; Ibn al-Dawadari, *op. cit.*, vol. VIII, p. 63; Ibn 'Abd al-Zahir, *al-Raud al-Zahir fi Sirat al-Malik al-Zahir*, Riyadh, 1976, p. 69-70; Ibn Khatir, *op. cit.*, vol. XIII, p. 222; al-Mansuri, *op. cit.*, fols. 41b-42a.

¹⁷ Al-Maqrizi, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 349; cf. also Irwin, *op. cit.*, p. 20; M.M. Ziadeh, "The Mamluk Sultans" to 1293 A.D. in *A History of the Crusades*, eds: K. Setton et. al, London, 1962, vol. II, p. 738.

¹⁸ Al-Maqrizi, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 358; cf. also Ibn al-Dawadari, *Kanz al-Durar wa Jami' al-Ghurur*, Cairo, 1971, vol. VII, p. 382; Ziadeh, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 739.

1250, Turan Shah was killed.¹⁹ The death of Turan Shah, the last Ayyubid sultan, marked the opening of a new chapter in the history of Egypt. It was at this stage that the *mamluks* in general and the Bahris in particular revealed themselves as the new rulers of Egypt and Syria. This period is described by Holt as the “inauguration of the Mamluk Sultanate”.²⁰

A month later, the *amirs* appointed ‘Izz al-Din Aibak as the *atabeg* of the army. Shajar al-Durr, the widow of al-Malik al-Salih, usurped the throne and married Aibak. Aibak was thus elevated to the sultanate²¹ and became the first of the Mamluk rulers of Egypt. Aqtay, the Bahris’ leader, demanded the position of *atabeg* from the new sultan. Qalawun too rose to a higher position among the *mamluks* during the reign of Aibak (648/1250-655/1257).²²

The sultan, fully aware of threat posed by Aqtay to his throne, succeeded with the help of his own *mamluks* in killing the latter.²³ Realising the danger to their lives, Qalawun and other Bahris, notably Baybars, fled to Syria.²⁴ The sultan did not spare the lives of those Bahris who remained in Egypt. It is at this stage that Baybars emerged as their leader and Qalawun became one of his followers. In Egypt, for the time being, the power of the Bahris was terminated. In Syria, Qalawun, Baybars, Sunqur and other Bahris entered the service of the Ayyubid al-Malik al-Nasir who later, in 653/1253, sent this regiment on an unsuccessful raid against Egypt.²⁵

Two years later, in 655/1255, Qalawun and his fellow Bahris fell foul with al-Nasir and were forced to leave Syria.²⁶ They fled to Karak and joined the service of another Ayyubid ruler, al-Malik al-Mughith. The Bahris then attempted to raid Egypt again but this

¹⁹ Abu’l Fida’, *Al-Mukhtasar fi Akhbar al-Bashar*, Istanbul, 1286/1869-70, vol. III, p. 190; Ibn al-Dawadari, *op. cit.*, vol. VII, p. 382.

²⁰ Holt, *The Age of the Crusades*, p. 82.

²¹ Al-Maqrizi, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 369; see also al-Yunini, *op. cit.*, vol. VII, p. 4; Ziadeh, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 740.

²² EI(2), art: “Kalawun”, vol. IV, p. 484.

²³ Al-Maqrizi, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 390; see also al-Yunini, *op. cit.*, vol. III, p. 240; Ziadeh, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 743; Weil, *op. cit.*, vol. IV, p. 7.

²⁴ EI(2), art: “Kalawun”, vol. IV, p. 484; see also al-Maqrizi, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 663; al-Yunini, *op. cit.*, vol. III, p. 241; *The Cambridge History of Islam*, vol. I, p. 210.

²⁵ Al-Maqrizi, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 396; see also al-Yunini, *op. cit.*, vol. III, p. 242; Weil, *op. cit.*, vol. IV, p. 7.

²⁶ Ibn al-Dawadari, *op. cit.*, vol. VII, p. 44; see also al-Maqrizi, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 406.

effort was paralysed by Saif al-Din Qutuz, the *na'ib al-saltana* of the newly elected sultan, al-Mansur 'Ali (655/1257-657/1259). Qalawun and Balban al-Rashidi were captured by the Egyptian army²⁷ but Qalawun managed to escape and returned to Karak.

In 657/1259, the Mongols began to advanced upon Aleppo and Damascus, ravaging it with such savagery that people fled everywhere. Egypt appeared to offer a safe shelter for these war-stricken refugees. Qalawun, Bektash al-Fakhri, Bektash al-Najmi and Taybars al-Waziri were among those who took refuge in Egypt. Realising the imminent danger from the Mongols Qutuz (657/1259-658/1260), who had now become the third Mamluk sultan negotiated with the Bahris, his former adversaries, for a joint effort to overcome the invading force. As a result, on Saturday 22nd Rabi' 658/7th March 1260, they marched together to the battle field to face the Mongol army.

By this stage Aleppo and Damascus had already been conquered by the Mongol who were practically at the gate entering Egypt when Hulegu, their leader, was forced to return to the East at the tiding of the death of the Mongol Khan Mongke.²⁸ Kitbugha then took over the leadership of the Mongol army in Syria. On 2nd Ramadan 658/3rd September 1260 commenced the fierce battle of 'Ain Jalut between the two armies. The Mongols suffered their first notorious defeat at the hands of the Muslims.²⁹ This was the last battle in which Qalawun was involved before Baybars' accession to the throne.

To summarise this early phase of Qalawun's career, the *mamluk* system of servitude had instilled in Qalawun a feeling of profound loyalty towards his master, al-Malik al-Salih. The results of his training and discipline were demonstrated in the battle field. He showed himself to be endowed with the finest military talent in his first battle, al-Mansura, against the Franks. With the death of al-Malik al-Salih, Qalawun together with Baybars and other Bahris entered the service of one master after other. In the continual rise and fall of the sultans and the struggle for power in the court circle, this was a familiar situation faced by all *mamluks*. Attacks from the

²⁷ Ibn al-Dawadari, *op. cit.*, vol. VII, p. 45; al-Maqrizi, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 406; Weil, *op. cit.*, vol. IV, p. 9.

²⁸ Ibn al-Dawadari, *op. cit.*, vol. VIII, p. 56; see also al-Maqrizi, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 427; Ziadeh, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 744.

²⁹ Ibn Wasil, *Mufarraj al-Kurub fi Akhbar Bani Ayyub*, Cairo, 1951, vol. IV, p. 324; see also al-Mansuri, *op. cit.*, fol. 39a; The Cambridge History of Islam, vol. I, pp. 212-3.

Mongols severely exacerbated the turbulence in the Muslim world and more especially in Egypt and Syria.

THE EMERGENCE OF QALAWUN AS AN IMPORTANT FIGURE IN THE MAMLUK SULTANATE

Upon his accession to the Mamluk Sultanate in 658/1260 Baybars brought a considerable measure of peace to Egypt and Syria. Qalawun's contribution towards stabilising the Mamluk dynasty was substantial. Our discussion will now focus on this.

The intelligence and bravery of Baybars, Qalawun's leader, won him many battles for Qutuz, the sultan of Egypt. Baybars had expected the governorship of Aleppo for his role in defending the latter's power. Qutuz who was very much aware of Baybars' rising popularity and which in turn presented him with a formidable rival the existence of his most dangerous to his throne, was naturally, disinclined to give Baybars the governorship.³⁰ This rebuff by the sultan was to cost him dearly. He was assassinated by Baybars while both were on their way back from Damascus on 15th Dhu'l Qa'da 658/22nd October 1260.³¹

Qalawun was among the *amirs* who attended the meeting called a new sultan after the assassination of Qutuz. Baybars was elected as the new sultan. On this occasion, Qalawun was one of the first *amirs* who gave his oath of allegiance to Baybars.³² This happened in 19th Dhu'l Hijja 658/25th November 1260.

Before we embark on a discussion of the position of Qalawun in the Mamluk Sultanate, a few words must be engaged to describe the enthronement of Baybars. In earlier periods, the authority of a new Sunni ruler had been confirmed by the caliph in Baghdad. At the time of Baybars' accession, however, there was no caliph. The last 'Abbasid caliph, al-Mu'tasim bi Allah had been driven out of Baghdad by the Mongols in 656/1258. This event brought about the end of the caliphate in Baghdad. Baybars then took the initiative in inviting a member of the 'Abbasid family to Cairo after his

³⁰ Ibn al-Dawadari, *op. cit.*, vol. VII, p. 82; see also S.F. Sadeque, *Baybars I of Egypt*, Dacca, 1956, p.41.

³¹ Al-Maqrizi, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 434-5; see also Ibn al-Dawadari, *op. cit.*, vol. VIII, pp. 61-2. Ibn Taghribirdi states that Qutuz was killed in 657/1259. See Ibn Taghribirdi, *op. cit.*, vol. VII, pp. 83-4, 102; al-Mansuri, *op. cit.*, fol. 41a.

³² Al-Maqrizi, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 436.

enthronement in 659/1261.³³ After due formalities, Baybars installed this royal refugee as caliph with the title al-Munstansir bi Allah who became the spiritual leader of the Islamic world. All the temporal authority over the Muslims in Mamluk lands was invested in Baybars and those sultans who followed after him. Baybars had absolute military control over his territories with the full support of the Bahris.

With regard to the hierarchy of Mamluk government, power was delegated by the sultan to various provincial governors, each of whom bore the title *na'ib al-saltana*,³⁴ although their position was not equal. At the top of the hierarchy was the vicegerency of Egypt, which in Shawwal 662/August 1264, was held by Baybars' son, al-Malik al-Sa'id Muhammad Baraka Khan.³⁵ Below him came Sanjar al-Halabi, the governor of Damascus, to be followed in turn by the governors of Aleppo, Hama, Safad and Karak respectively. Apart from these officials there was also an *atabeg*, a post held during Baybars' time by Aqtay al-Musta'rib,³⁶ who was the sultan's closest advocate. The *atabeg* came second only to the *na'ib al-saltana* in the hierarchy.

Although Qalawun did not hold any position in Baybars' ministerial hierarchy, he was wealthy and had successfully established his popularity and influence in the government. He was a member of the royal council,³⁷ a body which discussed affairs of the state, and he was usually the government's choice as a commander in any major campaigns against the Mongols or the Crusaders.

Qalawun's first task during the first year of Baybars' reign was the reconstruction of the forts of al-Rawda, under the leadership of Aydamur. Baybars spent large sums of money on his project and he later presented the forts to Qalawun, 'Izz al-Din al-Hilli, al-Amir Baysari and the other *amirs*.³⁸ Money was also spent on

³³ Ibn al-Dawadari, *op. cit.*, vol. VIII, pp. 72-3; see also Ibn Taghribirdi, *op. cit.*, vol. VII, p. 201; al-Mansuri, *op. cit.*, fol. 43b; P.M. Holt, "The Position and Power of the Mamluk Sultan" in *B.S.O.A.S.*, vol. XXXVIII, p. 243; *The Cambridge History of Islam*, vol. I, p. 216.

³⁴ Ibn 'Abd al-Zahir, *Tashrif al-Ayyam wa'l 'Usur fi Sirat al-Malik al-Mansur*, Cairo, 1961, p. 40.

³⁵ *Ibid.*; cf. also al-Mansuri, *op. cit.*, fol. 65a; Holt, "The Position and Power of the Mamluk Sultan" in *B.S.O.A.S.*, vol. XXXVIII, p. 237.

³⁶ Al-Maqrizi, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 438; cf. also Holt, *The Age of the Crusades*, p. 91.

³⁷ Shafi, *op. cit.*, fol. 4b; see also Irwin, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

³⁸ Ibn 'Abd al-Zahir, *Al-Raud al-Zahir*, Riyadh, 1976 p. 90; see also al-Maqrizi, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 445; Sadeque, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

renovating at Mosque of the Prophet in Medina and the Aqsa Mosque at Jerusalem.

In the year 661/1263, Baybars set out for Syria, accompanied by Qalawun and other *mamluks*.³⁹ They visited Gaza to hunt and later stopped at Tyre. On reaching Baisan, the sultan met the Ayyubid, al-Malik al-Mughith of Karak who had committed treachery against him.⁴⁰ Baybars made a show of providing a good reception for al-Malik al-Mughith whilst concealing his plan to capture him. The latter was then held in captivity in Cairo.

In 663/1265, while the sultan was hunting, news reached him that the Mongols had advanced as far as Bira. Baybars and the Mamluk army marched to the battle field to confront their enemy.⁴¹ They halted at Gaza where the sultan received letters from his deputies informing him that the Mongols had brought with them some mangonels to be employed against the town of Bira. Baybars took Qalawun and Sunqur al-Rumi into his confidence, informing only them of the contents of the letters.⁴² No source indicates the reason for Baybars' choice but the two *amirs* were probably his most trusted allies at this stage. In the event, Baybars and his army won this battle against the Mongols without having to fight, since the latter fled upon hearing of the advance of their enemy.

In 664/1266, the sultan made preparations for a new campaign against the Franks. This time, his target was to cripple Safad. Qalawun once again participated in this expedition when Baybars selected him and al-Amir Aidughdi al-'Azizi to lead the troops to al-'Auja.⁴³ The *mamluks* were able to capture the fortresses of Halba and 'Arqa. On their way back to Syria, the troops camped at Qulai'at where fifty Frankish soldiers were captured by Qalawun's.⁴⁴

The Mamluk army once again launched an attack against the Mongols in 671/1272. Qalawun, the appointed commander of the

³⁹ Al-Zahir, *Al-Raud*, p. 148; see also Sadeque, *op. cit.*, p. 164.

⁴⁰ Al-Maqrizi, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 481-2; see also Ibn al-Dawadari, *op. cit.*, vol. VIII, pp. 95-6; al-Zahir, *Al-Raud*, pp. 149-50; Irwin, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

⁴¹ Ibn al-Dawadari, *op. cit.*, vol. VIII, p. 107; see also al-Maqrizi, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 524; al-Zahir, *al-Raud*, pp. 221-2.

⁴² Al-Maqrizi, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 524; see also al-Zahir, *al-Raud*, p. 223.

⁴³ Al-Maqrizi, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 545; cf. al-Zahir, *al-Raud*, p. 250; Ziadeh, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 576; Ibn al-Dawadari, *op. cit.*, vol. VIII, p. 116; P. Thorau, *Sultan Baybars I von Agypten*, Wiesbaden, 1987, pp. 202-3.

⁴⁴ Al-Zahir, *al-Raud*, p. 252; Thorau, *op. cit.*, p. 203.

expedition, won the day when he became the first of the Mamluk *amirs* to cross the Euphrates.⁴⁵ The Mongols suffered an indisputable defeat and were driven out of Syria.

In his attempt to foster a closer relationship with Baybars, Qalawun consented to the marriage between his daughter, Ghazia Khatun and Baraka Khan, Baybars's son and the vicegerent of Egypt.⁴⁶ It was said that Baybars was extremely pleased with this turn of events and he celebrated the occasion with great festivities. The marriage took place in 675/1276.

When Baybars died in Muharram 676/June 1277, his heir, Baraka Khan, was enthroned as the sultan of Egypt and al-Amir Saif al-Din Kunduk al-Saqi as the deputy of the sultan. Qalawun was then appointed assistant to Saif al-Din.⁴⁷ During the brief reign of Baraka Khan, Qalawun succeeded in acquiring a remarkable degree of prestige and popularity which enable him to gain the position of the most powerful *amir* in the sultan's palace. Being the sultan's father-in-law was an obvious advantage to Qalawun.

At this time, every *amir* was casting covetous eyes on the throne. It was said that the sultan was aware of a possible conspiracy against him. In his effort to avoid a *coup*, he appointed Qalawun and Baysari,⁴⁸ the two most powerful and influential *amirs*, as leaders of an expedition against Lesser Armenia in 677/1279. The two *amirs* returned to Cairo⁴⁹ after their engagement in Armenia whereupon they became involved in the dispute between the old and the new *mamluks* to gain an ascendancy in the palace. Qalawun then organised his plan to depose the sultan.

In his bid to save his throne, Baraka Khan deputed his mother to negotiate with the rebels.⁵⁰ However, he failed in his attempt

⁴⁵ EI(2), art. "Kalawun", vol. IV, p. 484; see also Weil, *op. cit.*, vol. IV, p. 77.

⁴⁶ EI(2), art. "Kalawun", vol. IV, p. 484; see also al-Maqrizi, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 619; al-Zahir, *al-Raud*, p. 449; al-Yunini, *op. cit.*, vol. III, p. 119; Ibn al-Furat, *Tarikh Ibn al-Furat*, Beirut, 1966, vol. VII, p. 67; Shafi, *op. cit.*, fols. 6a-b.

⁴⁷ Al-Maqrizi, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 645; see also Ibn al-Furat, *op. cit.*, vol. VII, p. 95.

⁴⁸ Ibn al-Dawadari, *op. cit.*, vol. VIII, p. 225; cf. also Ibn Kathir, *op. cit.*, vol. XIII, p. 280; *Mukhtasar*, vol. IV, p. 12; Ibn al-Furat, *op. cit.*, vol. VII, p. 117; Shafi, *op. cit.*, fol. 16b; Irwin, *op. cit.*, p. 63; Holt, *The Age of the Crusades*, p. 100; Weil, *op. cit.*, vol. IV, p. 107.

⁴⁹ Al-Maqrizi, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 653; Ibn al-Furat, *op. cit.*, vol. VII, pp. 142, 144; Irwin, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

⁵⁰ Ibn Kathir, *op. cit.*, vol. XIII, p. 288; see also al-Maqrizi, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 652; Ibn al-Dawadari, *op. cit.*, vol. III, p. 288; Shafi, *op. cit.*, fol. 20b.

to ward off the assault by his enemies and he was imprisoned in the Citadel of Cairo. The unfortunate sultan was then forced to abdicate⁵¹ and Qalawun, the leader of the rebels, sent him to Karak where he was granted permission to establish as his royal residence in Rabi' II 678/August 1279.⁵²

Presumably, Qalawun had his own reasons for not killing Baraka Khan. The deposed sultan was his son-in-law and it would have been more difficult, although not impossible, for Qalawun to get rid of a member of his own family, whatever the circumstances. More probably, killing Baraka Khan would only arouse unnecessary anger amongst Qalawun's enemies, especially the Zahiris (Baybars' own *mamluks*), and could invite severe reprisals. Qalawun, therefore, refrained from taking any extreme actions against Baraka Khan and hoped that his generous decision would be of advantage to him in his attempt to seize the throne for himself.

With Baraka Khan in exile in Karak, the *amirs* once again assembled to elect his successor. Qalawun, whose ascendancy over the other *amirs* was well-known, was suggested as the new sultan. However, he declined to accept the position as he felt that the throne should be held only by a member of Baybars' household.⁵³ Presumably, there was another reason why Qalawun rejected this privilege. He was biding his time. Most of the soldiers of the palace were from the house of Baybars (the Zahiris)⁵⁴ and Qalawun was therefore aware that he would not have been accepted by them. This astute action on the part of Qalawun gave him enough time to train and bring in as many as possible of his own allies into the palace.

In the same year 678/1279, Sulamish, Baybars' son, was finally proclaimed as the new ruler and Qalawun, as expected, was ap-

⁵¹ Ibn Khaldun, *Kitab Al-'Ibar*, Bulaq, n.d. vol. V, p. 318; see also Ibn Kathir, *op. cit.*, vol. XIII, p. 288; Irwin, *op. cit.*, p. 63; Holt, *The Ages of the Crusades*, p. 100; S. Lane-Poole, *A History of Egypt in the Middle Ages*, London, 1901, Vol. VI, p. 277.

⁵² Ibn al-Suqai', *Tali Kitab Wafayat al-'Ayan*, Damascus, 1974, pp. 129-30; see also Abu'l Fida', *op. cit.*, vol. IV, p. 12; Ibn Kathir, *op. cit.*, vol. XIII, p. 228; Ibn al-Dawadari, *op. cit.*, vol. VIII, p. 229; Ibn al-Furat, *op. cit.*, vol. VII, p. 147; al-Mansuri, *op. cit.*, fol. 96b; Weil, *op. cit.*, vol. IV, p. 110.

⁵³ Al-Maqrizi, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 656; see also Ibn al-Furat, *op. cit.*, vol. VII, p. 147; al-Mansuri, *op. cit.*, fol. 96b; Weil, *op. cit.*, vol. IV, p. 111.

⁵⁴ Ibn Taghribirdi, *op. cit.*, vol. VII, p. 286; cf. also Ibn al-Furat, *op. cit.*, vol. IV, p. 8; al-Maqrizi, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 656.

pointed as *atabeg*.⁵⁵ Al-Amir 'Izz al-Din Afram was elected as the vicegerent of Egypt and Sunqur al-Ashqar retained his power in Damascus. There are two pieces of evidence which indicate that Qalawun had become a main figure in the Mamluk Sultanate by this stage. Firstly, his name was mentioned in the *khutba* along with that of the sultan and secondly coins were minted jointly in Qalawun's and Sulamish's names.⁵⁶

In his effort to wrest power from the Zahiris, Qalawun, in his capacity as *atabeg*, ordered the *amirs* who favoured Baybars' household to be seized. These were then replaced by the Bahris⁵⁷ who were Qalawun's faithful supporters. This act of aggression by Qalawun is described by al-Maqrizi and other historians who suggest that whilst he was actually only an *atabeg* he was conducting himself like a sultan.⁵⁸ Qalawun also sought to win the favours of the *amirs* by distributing to them large sums of money or *iqta's*.⁵⁹ Thus he was preparing the ground for his own bid for supreme power. Three months later, in Rajab 678/November 1279, Sulamish was deposed and sent to Karak. Qalawun became the sole candidate to succeed the throne.

⁵⁵ Ibn Kathir, *op. cit.*, vol. XIII, p. 288; cf. also Ibn al-Dawadari, *op. cit.*, vol. VIII, p. 228; Ibn Taghribirdi, *op. cit.*, vol. VII, p. 286; al-Yunini, *op. cit.*, vol. IV, p. 5; al-Dhahabi, *Kitab Duwal al-Islam*, Hyderabad, 1946, vol. II, p. 138; Ibn al-Furat, *op. cit.*, vol. VII, pp. 148-50; al-Mansuri, *op. cit.*, fol. 96b; Shafi, *op. cit.*, fol. 26a.

⁵⁶ Ibn Taghribirdi, *op. cit.*, vol. VII, p. 286; see also Ibn Kathir, *op. cit.*, vol. XIII, p. 288; al-Yunini, *op. cit.*, vol. IV, p. 5; al-Dhahabi, *al-'Ibar fi Khabar man Ghabar*, Kuwait, 1966, vol. V, p. 318; Ibn Iyas, *op. cit.*, vol. I, part I, p. 346.

⁵⁷ Al-Maqrizi, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 658; see also al-Yunini, *op. cit.*, vol. IV, p. 8; Ibn Iyas, *op. cit.*, vol. I, part I, p. 347.

⁵⁸ Al-Yunini, *op. cit.*, vol. IV, p. 8; see also al-Maqrizi, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 658; Ibn al-Furat, *op. cit.*, vol. VII, pp. 148, 151-2; Ibn Iyas, *op. cit.*, vol. I, part I, p. 346.

⁵⁹ For description of this events, cf. also Weil, *op. cit.*, pp. 114-6.