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THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS IN EGYPT
DURING THE THIRD REIGN OF SULTĀN

AL-NĀSIR MUHAMMED IBN QALĀWŪN,

A.D.

709-741/1309-1341

by

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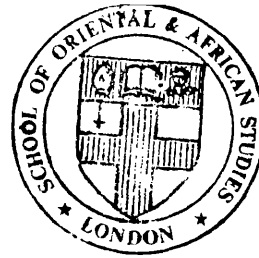
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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my beloved husband Abdulla for his encouragement and unfailing support while I have been engaged in this work.





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PREFACE

Studies previously undertaken by scholars concerning the Mamlūk period in Egypt concentrate on either military activities or relationships with other countries. The Mamlūk Sultanate was fundamentally a military regime, and the Mamlūks were responsible for bringing the Crusade to an end. Few contemporary records exist with regard to the internal affairs of Mamlūk Egypt, therefore any study shedding light on this subject covers new ground. For this reason the following dissertation was undertaken.

This study deals with aspects of the subject which so far have been subjected neither to academic research, nor to sufficiently practical analysis. There are historical writings concerning Mamlūk history in general and articles on the Mamlūk army, trade with other countries and the 'Abbāsīd Caliphate at the beginning of the Mamlūk period; but there is no comprehensive review of the internal affairs of Egypt during the third reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.

There survive a number of manuscripts either of contemporary chroniclers, or of historians who were interested in recording events relating to this period. Some of these manuscripts are of great value because they were written either by Mamlūk emirs such as Baybars al-Manṣūrī, or by people of high rank such as Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umārī, the confidential secretary (kātib al-Sirr), of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. Those chroniclers witnessed closely events either at the royal court or in the governmental offices. At the end of this thesis there is

an introduction to the bibliography concentrating on the manuscripts written by contemporary chroniclers and historians, which have been the foundation of the evidence for this thesis. The subject we have studied is new, there are substantial materials available, and al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's third reign was the golden age of the Mamlūk period; there was a flourishing economy, internal stability, social security, progressive administration and advancement in studies, history in particular. Consequently with these three factors one might succeed in giving a convincing picture of the period, and this thesis attempts a detailed and comprehensive study of the internal affairs of Mamlūk Egypt during the reign.

In this thesis there is an introduction followed by seven chapters; the introduction is a brief study of the political situation of Mamlūk Egypt during the first and second reigns of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, the periods of usurpation by Sayf al-Dīn Kitbughā, Ḥusām al-Dīn Lāchīn and Baybars al-Jāshnakīr, then of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in power as sole ruler of the Mamlūk Sultanate and the beginning of his third reign, which has been studied in detail. Thus one achieves an historical survey of the Mamlūk Sultanate during the preceding reigns of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and an understanding of the fundamental nature of the political, economic, social and religious aspects of the Mamlūk Sultanate during the first half of the fourteenth century. Accordingly one comes to understand that the Mamlūks had no respect for hereditary right

concerning the elevation to the Sultanate, and the emirs desired competent authority; therefore there were conspiracies to murder the Sulṭān or to depose him. Moreover the events show the danger which might come from the office of vicegerent (nā'ib al Salṭana bi 'L-diyār al-Miṣriyya), as well as its extreme importance.

During those years al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's power was nominal and the oligarchy of emirs enjoyed competent authority. Subsequently it was impossible for that political situation to continue without causing dangerous dissatisfaction; therefore open conflict appeared and continued until al-Nāṣir Muḥammad succeeded in establishing his authority and began his third reign with competent power.

After this review of the political struggle and rivalry which surrounded the Mamlūk Sultanate during the early years of the fourteenth century we come to the subject of the first chapter which is the 'Abbāsīd Caliphate, the attitude of the Caliph towards al-Nāṣir Muḥammad at the beginning of the latter's third reign, the hostility of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to the Caliph, al-Mustakfī, and the position of the 'Abbāsīd Caliphate in Egyptian society. The 'Abbāsīd Caliphs were respected neither by the Mamlūk emirs nor by the people. There is also a study of the diplomas ('Uḥūd) submitted to Baybars al-Jāshnakīr and to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad by al-Mustakfī. As a consequence of the part which al-Mustakfī played against al-Nāṣir Muḥammad during the reign of Baybars al-Jāshnakīr, al-Mustakfī suffered from being placed in a critical situation especially

if we compare it with the powerful position of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. Nevertheless, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was anxious to obtain the diploma ('ahd) at an official meeting in the presence of the judges for purposes of legitimacy. On the other hand, it is worth noting that the Caliph, at the time of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, was not allowed the right to refuse to confirm the coming of a new Sulṭān into power and that he had to be satisfied with being a Caliph with no political or social influence but only a head of religious authority. The chapter contains an analysis of the reasons for the unfriendly atmosphere surrounding the intercourse between al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and al-Mustakfī. The study of the 'Abbāsīd Caliphate during this period sheds light upon the personality of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, who used both force and diplomacy to accomplish his great expectations in both the political and the religious fields.

The second chapter contains a detailed study of the administrative divisions of Egypt during this period, the importance of these divisions and the attitude of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad towards the local administration. The chapter comprises historical discussion respecting the regularity of the division, the financial resources and expenditure of every province (niyāba), a study of the administrative division of Egypt after the speedy accomplishment of the cadastral survey of Egypt and the redistribution of lands (the Nāṣirī rawk) which was carried out by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's order in 715/1315. It then analyses the

basic-division, the local administration of the different parts, the economic importance of the Egyptian provinces (aqālīm), the Nāṣirī reforms at the provinces, how the Mamlūk governors, especially the emirs, were responsible for preserving order within the cities and provinces and how the administrative division of Egypt into separate units increased the productivity of the land.

The third chapter concerns the continuous struggle for power between al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and the Mamlūk oligarchy, and the plots to overthrow al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, their reasons, details and consequences. Subsequently one might say that there were factors which made it necessary for al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to build a strong foundation for his rule and his state, his co-operative clique and large personal fortune. By studying the political situation one comes to see clearly that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was working all the time to confirm the reality of his being the only ruler of the Mamlūk Sultanate, to extend his power over the oligarchy of emirs and to exercise both the legislative power and the executive power. Thus al-Nāṣir Muḥammad practised a new political policy towards the power and the position of the oligarchy of emirs and took a different attitude towards the post of vicegerent in Egypt. Many useful functions were fulfilled by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad for the benefit of the people, in order to be sure of his popularity. The chapter shows how far al-Nāṣir Muḥammad succeeded in foiling the plots arranged by the powerful senior emirs to overthrow his rule, and

in directing administrative matters.

The fourth chapter recounts the conditions of the non-Muslim subjects, the Christians and the Jews, who lived under Mamlūk rule, the relations between these communities and the Mamlūk government, the attitude of the Muslim Egyptians towards these communities and the nature of this relationship. The chapter contains a study of the western merchants, the active commercial relations between the Mamlūk Sultanate and the western world, the social conditions of both the Jewish community and the Christian community, how far the dhimmīs suffered during the first and the second reigns of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, how far that situation changed during his third reign when al-Nāṣir Muḥammad became his own master, the attitude of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad towards the dhimmīs and how far they succeeded in having his support during critical times and fanatical reactions.

The fifth chapter concentrates on the relationship between the Mamlūk government and the Bedouins throughout Egypt, the Bedouin revolts for independence, the Mamlūk determination to dominate the Bedouins, and the occasional co-operation between them. The study sheds light upon the early contact between the Bedouin tribes and the Mamlūk government during the period under consideration, the political and economic relationships between the two parties during this period, the continuous Bedouin revolts, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's reaction and how far he was strict with them and how far they succeeded in achieving

.their aims.

The taxation system of Egypt during the period under review is the theme of the sixth chapter, including the cadastral survey of Egyptian land i.e. the Nāṣirī rawk and the subsequent abolition of taxes.

The chapter is devoted to give a clear picture of the taxation structure during the period under consideration, including the system of payment, the different kinds of taxes, the methods of the tax collectors and of the tax-farmers, the condition of the tax payers and eventually al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's attitude towards each group.

Moreover the chapter includes a survey concerning the abolition of taxes which was undertaken by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in 715/1315. The abolition of taxes was a bold act carried into effect by a determined Sulṭān who wanted to protect his subjects from the maltreatment which they suffered at the hands of tax collectors and to provide social freedom for them; and in return he would have popularity among them and would enjoy their unfailing support. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad also paid much attention to both agriculture and irrigation. Finally it is imperative here to state that at the same time as al-Nāṣir Muḥammad began his scheme of tax cancellation in 715/1315, work regarding the Nāṣirī rawk had already been started. In undertaking that essential work great changes would occur, both in the amount of State revenue and in the assignment of cultivated land.

The seventh and last chapter at the same time deals with the famines and epidemics which occurred in Egypt during this period and the co-operation between al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and the population of Egypt to overcome these crises. The chapter contains a study of the famines and epidemics before al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's third reign, in order to achieve through that comparative study a comprehensive picture of the situation in Egypt during the third reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. This study also allows one to understand the attitudes of the Mamlūk historians in discussing these aspects of life.

There is also an historical analysis of trouble periods and their effect on internal affairs, and the political and economic structure. The study shows how deeply the instability of the annual flood of the Nile affected economic life (there were times of drought and of extra flood), and how the unstable political situation which occurred occasionally in Egypt during the period affected the prosperity of daily life. On the other hand through the comprehensive study of the co-operation between government and people during the trouble periods one perceives the extensive administrative discipline in the Mamlūk regime during the reign.

At the end of each individual chapter conclusions have been presented, and at the end of the thesis there is an attempt to bring together the main points of these conclusions. From those general and final conclusions one can understand the true state of the internal affairs of Mamlūk Egypt during the third reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.

Declaration by the author

I declare that this research is my original work and that it has neither been submitted for a degree in any other University, nor has any part of it been done in collaboration with any other person.

Ḥayāt al-Ḥajji

Hayat Al-HAJJI

ABBREVIATIONS

<u>Albāb,</u>	al-Ṣafadī	=	<u>Tuḥfat dhawī al-albāb fī man ḥakam bi-Dimashq min al-Khulafā' wa'l-Mulūk wa'l-nuwwāb.</u>
<u>Badr,</u>	al-'Aynī	=	<u>Tārīkh al-badr fī awṣāf ahl al-'aṣr</u>
<u>Bahriyya,</u>	Ḥasan	=	<u>Tārīkh al-Mamālīk al-bahriyya</u>
<u>Bayān,</u>	al-Maqrīzī	=	<u>Al-Bayān wa'l-i'rāb</u>
<u>B.E.O.</u>		=	<u>Bulletin d'études orientales</u>
<u>Bidāya,</u>	Ibn Kathīr	=	<u>Al-Bidāya wa'l-nihāya</u>
<u>B.M.</u>		=	British Museum
<u>B.N.</u>		=	Bibliothèque Nationale
<u>B.S.O.A.S.</u>		=	<u>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies</u>
<u>Bul,</u>	Abū al-Fidā	=	<u>Taqwīm al-buldān</u>
<u>Buldān,</u>	Yāqūt	=	<u>Muḥjam al-buldān</u>
<u>Copts,</u>	al-Maqrīzī	=	<u>A Short history of the Copts and their church</u>
<u>Daū',</u>	al-Sakhāwī	=	<u>Al-Daū' al-lāmi'</u>
<u>Dhayl,</u>	al-Yūnīnī	=	<u>Dhayl mir'āt al-zamān</u>
<u>D.M.C.</u>		=	<u>The document of Mount Sinai</u>
<u>Durar,</u>	Ibn Ḥajar	=	<u>Al-Durar al-kāmīna</u>
<u>Durr,</u>	Al-Dawādārī	=	<u>Al-Durr al-fākhīr fī sīrat al-Malik al-Nāṣir</u>
<u>Durrat,</u>	Ibn Ḥabīb	=	<u>Durrat al-aslāk fī dawlat al-Atrāk</u>

<u>Duwal</u> ,	al-Dhahabī	=	<u>Kitāb duwal al-Islām</u>
<u>E.I.</u>		=	<u>The Encyclopaedia of Islam</u>
<u>Hadā'iq</u> ,	Ibn Abī Bakr	=	<u>Hadā'iq al-'uyūn al-bāṣira fī akhbār aḥwāl al-ṭā'ūn wa'l-ākhirā</u>
<u>Husn</u> ,	al-Suyūṭī	=	<u>Husn al-muḥāḍara</u>
<u>Ibar</u> ,	Ibn Khaldūn	=	<u>Kitāb al-'ibar</u>
<u>Ighāthat</u> ,	al-Maqrīzī	=	<u>Ighāthat al-umma bi-kashf al-ghumma</u>
<u>I. J. M. E. S.</u>		=	<u>International journal of Middle East studies</u>
<u>Intiṣār</u> ,	Ibn Duqmāq	=	<u>Al-Intiṣār li-wāsiṭat 'iqd al-amsār</u>
<u>J. A. O. S.</u>		=	<u>Journal of the American Oriental Society</u>
<u>Jawāhir</u> ,	Anonymous	=	<u>Tārīkh jawāhir al-sulūk fī siyās at al-Khulafā' wa'l-Mulūk</u>
<u>J. E. S. H. O.</u>		=	<u>Journal of the economic and social history of the Orient</u>
<u>J. R. A. S.</u>		=	<u>Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society</u>
<u>Kashf</u> ,	al-Zāhirī	=	<u>Zubdat kashf al-mamālik</u>
<u>Khabar</u> ,	al-Dhahabī	=	<u>Al-'Ibar fī khabar man ghabar</u>

- Khiṭ, al-Maqrīzī = Al-Mawā'iz wa'l-i'tibār
(Cairo edition 1853)
- Khiṭaṭ, al-Maqrīzī = Al-Mawā'iz wa'l-i'tibār
(Beirut edition 1959)
- Khulafā', al-Suyūṭī = Tārīkh al-Khulafā'
- Ma'āthir, al-Qalqashandī = Ma'āthir al-ināfa fī manāqib
al-khilāfa.
- Madkhal, Ibn al-Ḥājj = Al-Madkhal
- Mālik, al-Ṣafadī = Nuzhat al-mālik wa'l-mamlūk
- Masālik, al-'Umarī = Masālik al-absār
- Mawrid, Ibn Taghrī Birdī = Mawrid al-laṭāfa
- Mir'āt, al-Yāf'ī = Mir'āt al-janān wa-'ibrat al-
yaqzān
- Miṣr, Muḡhlaṭāy = Tārīkh Salāṭīn Miṣr wa'l-
Shām wa-Ḥalab
- M.T.M. = Al-Majalla al-tārīkhiyya al-
Miṣriyya
- Mukhtaṣar, Abū al-Fidā = Al-Mukhtaṣar fī akhbār al-bashar
- Mulūk, Ibn al-Furāt = Tārīkh al-duwal wa'l-mulūk
- Nahj, Ibn Abī al-Faḡā'il = Kitāb al-nahj al-sadīd wa'l-
durr al-farīd fī mā ba'da tārīkh
Ibn al-'Amīd
- Nāsir, al-Shujā'ī = Tārīkh al-Sulṭān al-Malik al-
Nāsir Muḡammad b. Qalāwūn
- Nāzirīn, al-Karmī = Nuzhat al-nāzirīn fī tārīkh man
waliya Miṣra min al-Khulafā' wa'l-
Salāṭīn.

<u>Nihāyat,</u>	al-Nuwayrī	=	<u>Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab</u>
<u>Nuzhat,</u>	Anonymous	=	<u>Nuzhat al-insān fī dhikr al-Mulūk wa'l-a'yān</u>
<u>Nujūm,</u>	Ibn Taghrī Birdī	=	<u>Al-Nujūm al-zāhira</u>
<u>Salāṭīn,</u>	Anonymous	=	<u>Tārīkh al-Salāṭīn wa'l-'asākir</u>
<u>Saniyya,</u>	Ibn al-Jī'ān	=	<u>Al-Tuhfa al-saniyya bi asmā' al-bilād al-Miṣriyya</u>
<u>Shadharāt,</u>	Ibn al-'Imād	=	<u>Shadharāt al-dhahab</u>
<u>Subḥ,</u>	al-Qalqashandī	=	<u>Subḥ al-a'shā</u>
<u>Sulūk,</u>	al-Maqrizī	=	<u>Kitāb al-sulūk li ma'rifat duwal al-mulūk</u>
<u>Tadhkirat,</u>	Ibn Ḥabīb	=	<u>Tadhkirat al-nabiḥ fī ayyām al-Manṣūr wa-banīh</u>
<u>Tālī,</u>	al-Ṣaqa'ī	=	<u>Tālī kitāb wafayāt al-a'yān</u>
<u>Taqwīm,</u>	Anonymous	=	<u>Taqwīm al-buldān al-Miṣriyya fī al-a'māl al-Sultāniyya</u>
<u>Ta'rīf,</u>	al-'Umarī	=	<u>Al-Ta'rīf bi'l-muṣṭalaḥ al-sharīf</u>
<u>Tashrif,</u>	Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir	=	<u>Tashrif al-ayyām wa'l-uṣūr fī sīrat al-Malik al-Manṣūr</u>
<u>Tatimmat,</u>	Ibn al-Wardī	=	<u>Tatimmat al-mukhtaṣar fī akhbār al-bashar</u>
<u>Tā'ūn,</u>	al-Kamālī	=	<u>Fatāwā fī al-ṭā'ūn</u>
<u>Thamīn,</u>	Ibn Duqmāq	=	<u>Al-Jawhar al-thamīn fī tārīkh al-Khulafā' wa'l-Salāṭīn</u>

- Tibr, al-Sakhāwī = Al-Tibr al-masbūk fī dhayl al-sulūk
- Tuhfa, Ibn Baṭṭūṭa = Tuḥfat al-nuẓẓār fī gharā'ib al-amṣār wa-'ajā'ib al-asfār
- Turkiyya, Anonymous = Tārīkh al-dawla al-Turkiyya
- 'Uṣūr, Ḥasan = Miṣr fī al-'uṣūr al-wuṣṭā
- 'Uyūn, Ibn Shākīr = 'Uyūn al-tawārīkh
- Wāfī, al-Ṣafadī = Al-Wāfī bi'l-wafayāt
- Wā'un, al-Suyūṭī = Kitāb mā rawāh al-wā'un fī akhbār al-ṭā'un
- Zetterstéen, Zetterstéen = Beiträge zur Geschichte der Mamlükensultane in den Jahren 690-741 der Hígra nach arabischen Handschriften
- Zubdat, al-Manṣūrī = Zubdat al-fikra fī tārīkh al-hijra

INTRODUCTION

In dealing with the internal affairs of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's third reign it is imperative to give an historic survey of the Mamlūk Sultanate during his preceding reigns and to make a general study of the whole situation in order to have an understanding of the fundamental nature of the political, economic, social and religious aspects of the Mamlūk Sultanate during the first half of the fourteenth century. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was elected Sultān at the age of eight because his brother, al-Ashraf Khalīl, was murdered during a hunting expedition (12 Muḥarram 693/14 December 1293). Therefore the election of the chief officers of state was arranged by the leading emirs: Zayn al-Dīn Kitbughā al-Manṣūrī¹ as vicegerent in Egypt (na'ib al-Salṭana bi'l-diyār al-Miṣriyya) and 'Alam al-Dīn Sanjar al-Shujā'ī al-Manṣūrī² as wazīr. Consequently, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad b. Qalāwūn's Sultanate was nominal and power passed to the oligarchy of emirs.³

Within a short time jealousies arose, a clash developed and personal ambitions for political purposes clearly appeared between Kitbughā and Sanjar. The two desired to hold the reins during the nominal rule of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. The personal struggle and open conflict ended by Sanjar's assassination while Kitbughā, who

¹For his biography, see Tālī, fols. 61b-62a; Durar, iii, 262-264; Nujūm, viii, 7, 8, 42-43, 44-45, 49-50, 55-57, 58, 63-67; Mulūk, viii, 192-193, 203-205.

²For his biography, see Tālī, fols. 43b 44a.

³Masālik, fol. 132b (Paris Ms. 2328); Zubdat, fol. 185b; Nuzhat, fol. 22b; Miṣr, fols. 33a-b; Durrat, vol. 69b; Tadhkirat, fol. 11a; Mulūk, viii, 184; Sulūk, i, 794, 806; Khiṭaṭ, iii, part II, 177; Durar, iii, 262: iv, 144; Nujūm, viii, 41-42.

was the victor, was confirmed in office. Some of the royal Mamlūks (the Burjiyya)¹ who supported Sanjar were punished; therefore Kitbughā became the most effective emir at the royal court.² Here it could be asked how far Kitbughā aspired to the Sultanate? Was the personal clash between Kitbughā and Sanjar a matter of necessity which occurred because the former assumed the formal leadership of the Mamlūk state? A few months later, Ḥusām al-Dīn Lāchīn al-Manṣūrī, the conspirator who plotted the murder of the previous Sulṭān, al-Ashraf Khalīl, emerged from hiding and was graciously received and pardoned by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad for Kitbughā's sake. Therefore how far could the appearance of Lāchīn confirm the suggestion previously mentioned concerning Kitbughā's aspiration to the Sultanate? Accordingly, the Ashrafiyya rose in revolt, seized the royal stables and the armourers' market (sūq al-silāh), plundered whatever lay at hand, and set fire to many buildings. Yet Kitbughā succeeded in defeating the rebels and tortured them to death. Thus the Ashrafiyya rebellion showed how far the factions were discontented with Lāchīn's appearance and even that he enjoyed royal forgiveness.³

Ibn Taghrī Birdī analyzes the reasons for the Ashrafiyya's revolt and says that: firstly, Lāchīn emerged free and attained

¹Concerning the conflict between the Turks' faction and the Burjiyya faction during the Baḥrī period in the Mamlūk Sultanate, see Ḥakīm Amīn 'Abd al-Sayyid, Qiyām dawlat al-Mamālīk al-thāniya, Cairo, 1966, pp. 11-35.

²Masālik, fol. 132b (Paris Ms. 2328); Zubdat, fols. 185b-187a; Nuzhat, fols. 23a-24a; Miṣr, fols. 35b-35a; Zetersteen, 29-31; Durrat, fol. 70a; Mulūk viii, 172, 181-182; Ibar, v, part V, 876-877; Tashrīf, 272-281; Sulūk, i, 800-802; Durar, iii, 262; iv, 144; Nujūm, viii, 42-46; cf. Mālik, fol. 41b.

³Masālik, fol. 132b (Paris Ms. 2328); Zubdat, fols. 188a-b; Nuzhat, fols. 24a-b; Miṣr, fol. 36a; Mukhtaṣar, iv, 31; Zetersteen, 32-33; Ibar, v, part V, 875, 877; Sulūk, i, 803, 805-806; Nujūm, viii, 48-49.

an honourable position at the royal court; secondly, Kitbughā's longing for supreme power became apparent.¹ In addition it could be said that the Ashrafiyya were sympathetic with the weak position of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, while the oligarchy of emirs enjoyed power.

The question arises here, how far Kitbughā would use the outbreak as an excuse for holding sovereignty? Was that rebellion the main cause of Kitbughā's ambition to assume the reins of government and the administration? The previous revolt by the Ashrafiyya made it clear that the political situation lacked stability to a considerable degree and that supreme power should be in the hands of a powerful politician and not in the hands of a Sulṭān of eight years of age. This is how Kitbughā explained the quandary to the oligarchy of emirs, and Lāchīn influenced him strongly in this direction.²

The questions which should be answered here are why Lāchīn supported and even encouraged Kitbughā to assume the reins of power? Was it only the necessity of the critical circumstances? Was it his fears of the Ashrafiyya's anger? And how much did personal interest affect the part which Lāchīn played during that difficult time? Besides, how far was Kitbughā's intention to hold power affected by Lāchīn's influence and support? Hence, we may estimate the whole position by saying that the oligarchy of emirs regarded these circumstances and the rule of a child Sulṭān as a temporary situation until a powerful emir should emerge to seize power and inaugurate a new reign, supported by the oligarchy of emirs, and encouraged by

¹Nujūm, viii, 49; cf. Sulūk, i, 792.

²Nuzhat, fols. 24a-25a; Mulūk, viii, 192-193; Sulūk, i, 806.
Nujūm, viii, 49.

a powerful faction.

Ibn Khaldūn believes that both Sanjar's movement for supreme power and the Ashrafiyya's revolt were the reasons for which Kitbughā intended to take power, and his supporters influenced him greatly to put his plan into action.¹ Besides, it seems that these events showed the powerful position of Kitbughā, both at the royal court and in society; therefore he worked to accomplish his ambition in the governmental field. On 12 Muḥarram 694/3 December 1294 Kitbughā was elevated to the Mamlūk Sultanate and succeeded in obtaining the assent of the Caliph al-Ḥākim (d. 701/1302),² the judges, emirs and troops. It was only two days after the Ashrafiyya's rebellion that Kitbughā attained his own accession as al-'Adil Kitbughā with complete official support.³

In accordance with this could we assume that Kitbughā was planning to be in power long before this political crisis and found in that situation fitting circumstances to accomplish his desire. Besides, how far does the previous event confirm the idea that the Mamlūk had no respect for hereditary rights concerning the elevation to the Sultanate, especially during similar crises; how much does it show the emirs' desire for competent authority, and how often were conspiracies arranged to murder the Sulṭān or to depose him because of the greed of the emir oligarchy for higher rank or more powerful position in the government?

When Kitbughā ascended the throne he appointed Lāchīn vicegerent in Egypt, but Kitbughā was unfortunate in being, firstly,

¹ Ibar, v, Part V, 877.

² Infra, 31-32.

³ Masālik, fol. 133a (Paris Ms. 2328); Zubdat, fol. 188b; Nuzhat, fol. 25a; Tadhkirat, fol. 11b; Mulūk, viii, 193; Sulūk, i, 806-807; Durār, iii, 262; Nujūm, viii, 49-50.

associated in the people's mind with a great famine and dreadful plague; secondly, Kitbughā shared power with Lāchīn.¹

On 28 Muḥarram 696/26 November 1296 when Kitbughā was on his way back to Cairo from Damascus, where he had been for a short visit, he was attacked by his vicegerent Lāchīn with other conspirators, but Kitbughā managed to flee to Damascus with four or five retainers, regretting what he had done for his vicegerent and what he had received in return.² Thus, for the purpose of seizing power, the principles of friendship, loyalty and sincerity weighed nothing during the period under study, and the Sultanate was regarded as a free heritage for the most powerful emir who could find a strong faction for support, and loyal Mamlūk emirs for promotion, regardless of any political, religious or even moral considerations.

Moreover, the previous events show the danger which might come from the office of vicegerent (nā'ib al-Saltāna bi'l-diyār al-Miṣriyya), as well as its extreme importance. Al-Ashraf Khalīl was murdered by his vicegerent, Badr al-Dīn Baydarā al-Manṣūrī; al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was deposed, peacefully because of his youth, by his vicegerent Kitbughā, and Kitbughā himself was deposed, by force, by his vicegerent Lāchīn.

While Kitbughā was in Damascus persuading the emirs to swear allegiance to him, Lāchīn succeeded in elevating himself to the Sultanate.

Kitbughā heard of the recognition of his vicegerent as Sulṭān in Palestine and Egypt, and the name of Lāchīn was prayed for on Friday. Therefore, Kitbughā announced his submission and

¹ Masālik, fol. 133b (Paris, Ms. 2328); Nuzhat, fols. 25a-b; Miṣr, fols. 36b-37a, 38a; Mālik, fol. 42a; Durrat, fol. 71b; Khabar, v, 380; Mulūk, viii, 193; Sulūk, i, 806-807, 810; Khiṭaṭ, iii, part II, 177; Durar, iii, 262, 263; iv, 144; Nujūm, viii, 57-58.

² Masālik, fol. 134a (Paris Ms. 2328); Zubdat, fol. 193b; Nuzhat, fol. 26a; Mālik, fol. 42a; Miṣr, fol. 39a; Mir'āt, iv, 228; Durrat, fol. 74b; Sulūk, i, 819-820; Khiṭaṭ, iii, part II, 177; Durar, ii, 262-263; Nujūm, viii, 65.

wrote to Lāchīn consulting him with regard to his position.¹ It is a strange situation to see a Sulṭān give up his supreme position to a usurper without resistance and even agreeing to be a governor of a Mamlūk province under his rival's command. Was it a question of preserving his life and liberty or a clever understanding of the actual circumstances with respect to existing political instability? In addition to the fact previously mentioned that Kitbughā himself was a usurper, although he was too weak to fill the office of sovereignty, in practice, Lāchīn directed the affairs of state. Thus, on 10 Ṣafar 696/8 December 1296, Lāchīn was elected to the Sultanate and appointed the former Sulṭān Kitbughā governor of the fortress of Ṣarkhad. Accordingly, Kitbughā left Damascus with his family for Ṣarkhad after a period of two years and about one month in the governorship of the Mamlūk Sultanate.²

Subsequently Kitbughā administered the fortress of Ṣarkhad until al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, in his second reign, transferred him to the governorship of Ḥamāh, where he continued to fulfil the duties of his office until his death in 702/1303.³ Therefore, could we assume that Kitbughā's reaction was an approval given by a Mamlūk Sulṭān of the fact that the governorship of the Mamlūk Sultanate was like a public domain? What were the reasons for the episode

¹ Masālik, fol. 134a (Paris Ms. 2328); Mālik, fol. 26b; Sulūk, i, 824; Durar, iii, 262-263; Nujūm, viii, 65-67.

² Masālik, fols. 134a-b (Paris Ms. 2328); Zubdat, fols. 193b, 195a; Nuzhat, fol. 26b; Mālik, fols. 42a-b; Miṣr, fols. 39a-b; Durrat, fol. 74b; Mir'āt, iv, 228; Sulūk, i, 824-826; Khiṭaṭ, iii, part II, 177; Durar, iii, 263; iv, 144; Nujūm, viii, 67-68, 85.

³ Nuzhat, fol. 26b; Durrat, fol. 83b; Durar, iii, 264.

respecting Kitbughā's deposition? In spite of Kitbughā's weak personality and the typical aspect of the political instability of the period there were other reasons for which Kitbughā's deposition had to take place. Firstly, the greed and the personal ambition of the powerful emirs regarding the accession to the throne; therefore a series of conspiracies and assassinations occurred in the royal court in that period of political struggle. Secondly, the rise in prices, the famine and the plague, so that the poor starved to death, and the dead were lying in the streets; therefore the people disliked Kitbughā.¹ Thirdly, the migration to Syria of about ten thousand Oirat Mongol² tribesmen and their families who were graciously welcomed by Kitbughā and his governors in the Syrian provinces, because Kitbughā was of Mongol origin, so that the oligarchy of emirs were jealous enough to hate Kitbughā and to resent his reign and to work for its end.³ Fourthly, Kitbughā raised a large number of his Mamlūks to be emirs and governors at the expense of the oligarchy of emirs who energetically

¹Nuzhat, fols. 25b, 27a; Mālik, fol. 42a; Miṣr, fol. 38a; Mir'āt, iv, 227-128; Durrat, fols. 71a, 73a; Mulūk, viii, 193; Sulūk, i, 807, 810; Khiṭaṭ, iii, part II, 177; Durar, iii, 263; Nujūm, viii, 57, 68.

²For details about the Oirat immigration, see David Ayalon, "The Wafidiya in the Mamluk kingdom", Islamic Culture, xxv, 1951, 91-93.

³Zubdat, fols. 191b-192b; Mukhtaṣar, iv, 33; Mulūk, viii, 203-205; Ibar, v, part V, 878-879; Sulūk, i, 812-813; Khiṭaṭ, iii, part II, 177; Nujūm, viii, 63.

refused to accept this policy and hoped for his overthrow.¹ Fifthly, since Kitbughā himself was a usurper, the plot against him to take power from his hands became easy for the conspirators who, as soon as they found the circumstances suitable, planned to dethrone Kitbughā. Sixthly, there is also Kitbughā's attitude towards the emirs of high rank; he discharged some emirs from their offices and did not treat the oligarchy of emirs as graciously as they had been honoured by former Sultāns.² Hence, Kitbughā genuinely welcomed Lāchīn, probably to gain his support when he accomplished his plan concerning his elevation to the Sultanate, but, on the other hand, it seems that Lāchīn himself was planning his own accession to the throne and his help and support to Kitbughā was temporary until he was able to take a decisive step with regard to his personal ambition to rule the Mamlūk Sultanate.³ Furthermore, the accession of Lāchīn explains his extreme encouragement which Kitbughā enjoyed before he was elevated to the Sultanate because Lāchīn, probably, thought that to plot against a usurper could assist him in achieving success, while conspiring against a Sultān of a ruling family contained a greater risk, especially if we know the sensitive position of Lāchīn at the royal court shortly before Kitbughā's accession. It appears that the above statement is correct and that Lāchīn longed to succeed to the throne; therefore he worked to a considerable degree to fit the situation to his political greed. It might be worth noting that, depending on the previous events, as soon as a new Sultān was elevated to the Mamlūk Sultanate he started to appoint his Mamlūks to important offices of state, making a large number of royal Mamlūks emirs

¹Zubdat; fol. 189a; Mukhtaṣar, iv, 34; Zetterstéen, 38-40; Sulūk, i, 818-819.

²Zubdat, fol. 192b.

³For detailed description, see P.M.Holt, "The sultanate of al-Mansūr Lāchīn (696-8/1296-9)", B.S.O.A.S., XXXVI, part 3, 1973, pp. 521-532.

and dismissing the Mamlūk emirs from their high offices and even in some cases confiscating their wealth. It was an important political aspect which appeared with each rising of a new Sulṭān to obtain the help and support which he would need to strengthen his position in order to face the oligarchy of emirs.

On 10 Ṣafar 696/8 December 1296 Lāchīn¹ was elected by his supporters of the Mamlūk emirs to the Sultanate and ruled for two years and two months.² Lāchīn appointed Shams al-Dīn Qarāsunqur al-Manṣūrī vicegerent in Egypt (nā'ib al-Saltana bi 'l-diyār al-Misriyya) but, on 14 Dhū 'l-Qa'da 696/4 September 1297, Qarāsunqur was arrested and Mankūtamur,³ Lāchīn's Mamlūk, was nominated vicegerent in Egypt (nā'ib al-Saltana bi 'l-diyār al-Misriyya) and was allowed a free hand to rule the affairs of state.⁴ This procedure could be put into action and continued without effect but, if we study the attitude of the oligarchy of emirs shortly before Lāchīn's succession, we find that they gave Lāchīn their agreement to seize power on certain conditions: firstly, Lāchīn must never try to attain a superior position to theirs; secondly, the emirs would share the power and discuss

¹For the biography of al-Manṣūr Ḥusām al-Dīn Lāchīn al-Manṣūrī, see Dhayl, fols. 43b-44a; Khabar, v, 386-387, 389-390; Mulūk, viii, 222-223; Ibar, v, part V, 879-882, 883-884, 885; Tashrif, 60, 71-72, 292-295; Sulūk, i, 820-828, 829-830, 831, 832, 833-837, 848-849, 852, 856-857, 859-865; Nujūm, viii, 12, 17, 85, 92-99, 101-109, 224.

²Masālik, fols. 134a-b (Paris Ms. 2328); Nuzhat, fols. 27a-b; Mālik fols. 42a-b; Miṣr, fols. 39a-b; Sulūk, i, 825; Khiṭaṭ, iii, part II, 177; Durar, iv, 144; Nujūm, viii, 85; cf. Zubdat, fol. 194b.

³He was mentioned by al-Maqrīzī, Sulūk, i, 826-827, 829, 833, 834, 838, 843-844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 852, 853, 856, 859, 861, 862, 863, 865, 866, 870, 871.

⁴Masālik, fol. 134b (Paris Ms. 2328); Zubdat, fols. 194b, 201b; Nuzhat, fols. 27a-b, 29a-b; Mālik, fol. 42b; Miṣr, fol. 39b; Khabar, v, 386; Sulūk, i, 823, 829, 843, 845, 846, 848, 852-855; Khiṭaṭ, iii, part II, 177; Nujūm, viii, 88, 91, 94, 95, 100-101.

the affairs of state with him in the royal court, on the other hand he had no right to give his own Mamlūks power or preference or instal them in the chief offices of state; thirdly, he ought not to give his Mamlūk Mankūtāmūr primacy over the oligarchy of emirs.¹ But soon, when Lāchīn felt the effectiveness of his accession, he demonstrated Mankūtāmūr's ascendancy and allowed him to exercise power. Furthermore, Lāchīn arrested a number of powerful emirs and banished others to the Syrian provinces.² Lāchīn schemed to send al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to al-Karak and promised that as soon as al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was old enough he would put the power into his hands. If Lāchīn gave al-Nāṣir Muḥammad the power immediately this would provoke the oligarchy of emirs to plot against him. In return al-Nāṣir Muḥammad promised that he would put Damascus under the control of Lāchīn when he returned to power. Therefore al-Nāṣir Muḥammad left Cairo for al-Karak.³ The question arises here, what was Lāchīn's aim in taking such procedure against al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, was he honest in his promise and would he put al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in a position of power when the latter came of age?

¹Zubdat, fols. 194b-195a; Nuzhat, fol. 27b; Sulūk, i, 822; Nujūm, viii, 99.

²Nuzhat, fols. 27b, 29b; Khabar, v, 386; 'Ibar, v, part V, 881, 882, 884; Sulūk, i, 829, 833-837, 852; Nujūm, viii, 88, 89-90, 96, 100.

³Zubdat, fol. 195a; Nuzhat, fol. 27b; Durrat, fol. 75b; 'Ibar, v, part V, 881; Sulūk, i, 832-833; Durar, iv, 144-145.

Lāchīn decided to make his Mamlūk Mankūtāmūr his successor so that he was second to the Sulṭān, the Friday prayer would be delivered in the names of Lāchīn and Mankūtāmūr, and their names would be inscribed together on coins.¹ It seems that Lāchīn was not honest in his promise to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad that he would keep power for al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, and this procedure concerning the sending of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to al-Karak was a preliminary step towards appointing Mankūtāmūr the heir-apparent. It might be also that Lāchīn did this as a precaution, so that if the oligarchy of emirs acted against him, he would send for al-Nāṣir Muḥammad who would grant the governorship of Damascus to him, and was his attitude towards al-Nāṣir Muḥammad a preliminary proceeding for Lāchīn's own sake.

Lāchīn made a cadastral survey of the quantity and value of the land of the country (al-rawk al-Ḥusāmī).² Therefore Lāchīn succeeded in acquiring a large quantity of land, while the oligarchy of emirs had the smallest share; consequently, the latter felt great resentment. The emirs decided to be rid of Lāchīn and his Mamlūk Mankūtāmūr,³ probably for the following reasons: firstly, the land survey which he had undertaken; secondly, the arrest of many emirs; thirdly, Lāchīn allowed too great a power to his Mamlūk Mankūtāmūr, and his intention was that his Mamlūk should succeed him; fourthly, Lāchīn became an autocrat. In consequence,

¹ Ibar, v, part V, 882; Sulūk, i, 833.

² Nuzhat, fols. 28a.b.; Mālik, fol. 42b; Miṣr, fol. 41b; Ibar, v, part V, 881-882; Sulūk, i, 841-846; Nujūm, viii, 91-95, 98-101.

³ Nujūm, viii, 98.

the oligarchy of emirs, Sayf al-Dīn Kurjī and Sayf al-Dīn Ṭughjī who, precisely, organized and led the conspiracy, rose against him and had him¹ and his Mamlūkmurdered.² Eventually the emirs thought they would restore al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to power, and they appointed Sayf al-Dīn Ṭughjī vicegerent in Egypt.³

The contemporary historian Baybars al-Manṣūrī records in his work Zubdat al-Fikra that both Sayf al-Dīn Kurjī and Sayf al-Dīn Ṭughjī thought they were entitled to assume power in the Mamlūk Sulṭanate, but the senior emirs rejected the idea and decided to support al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and put him in power.⁴

Al-Maqrīzī records the above statement of Baybars al-Manṣūrī but, on the other hand, al-Maqrīzī continues that Ṭughjī and Kurjī planned that the former would be the Sulṭān of the state and the latter vicegerent in Egypt; therefore the summons to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to come back to Cairo was delayed until 14 Rabī', II, 698/19 January 1299 when the Cilician expeditionary force under Bak-tāsh al-Fakhrī returned to Egypt.⁵ This might prove that the murder of the Sulṭān of the state and the accession of the killer afterwards was a common event in this period of political instability. Having had Ṭughjī

¹ Masālik, fol. 134b (Paris Ms. 2328); Zubdat, fol. 202a; Nuzhat, fols. 30a-b; Mālik, fol. 42b; Khabar, v, 386, 390; Mir'āt, iv, 229; Durrat, fol. 77a; Sulūk, i, 856-859; Khiṭaṭ, iii, part II, 177; Durar, iv, 144-145; Nujūm, viii, 101-102.

² Masālik, fol. 134b (Paris Ms. 2328); Zubdat, fol. 202a; Nuzhat, fols. 30a-b; Mālik, fol. 134b; Khabar, v, 386, 390; Durrat, fol. 77b; Sulūk, i, 857-878; Nujūm, viii, 102-103.

³ Masālik, fol. 134b (Paris Ms. 2328); Nuzhat, fol. 30b; Sulūk, i, 865-886; Nujūm, viii, 103; cf. Khabar, v, 386-387.

⁴ Zubdat, fols. 202a-203a.

⁵ Sulūk, i, 865-867.

and Kurjī murdered, Baktāsh al-Fakhrī¹ and the senior emirs wanted to put an end to that series of conspiracies and assassinations.² It is worth noting that afterwards the emirs asked Baktāsh al-Fakhrī to take power, but he refused the proposal and strongly influenced the senior emirs in the direction of re-instating al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in Cairo.³ This attitude of Baktāsh al-Fakhrī towards a proposal made to him by the senior emirs clarifies the political situation of the royal court in the Mamlūk Sultanate. It was a continuous game of plots and murders so that a reasonable emir never tried to take part in this unstable situation, even if he had the offer from all the senior emirs to succeed to full sovereignty, because he knew that the acceptance of the offer would cost him his life sooner or later. Besides, it seems that there was distrust among the senior emirs at the royal Mamlūk court; therefore the oligarchy of emirs had no confidence in each other's words or support. Subsequently the emirs elected among themselves a council of eight emirs to rule until the arrival of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. During this time they shared power. Accordingly those emirs met frequently to discuss the affairs of state.⁴ Doubtless it was an important coup that several emirs of powerful position in the state acted as a collective regency, shared power and waited to put a young Sulṭān of fourteen years old in power. It is strange

¹For his biography, see Durar, i, 480-481.

²Masālik, fol. 134b (Paris Ms. 2328); Zubdat, fol. 203a; Nuzhat, fols. 30b-31a; Mālik, fol. 42b; Miṣr, fols. 44a-b; Sulūk, i, 868-869; Nujūm, viii, 104-105.

³Nujūm, viii, 224.

⁴Mālik, fol. 42b; Sulūk, i, 869.

that no one tried to hold power in these temporary circumstances; therefore, either they were equal in power so that it was impossible for any one of them to try to take control, or they realized that it was useless to attempt because, even if one of them succeeded in being elevated to the Sultanate, he would soon be dethroned or murdered by the others.

On 14 Jumādā, I, 698/17 February 1299 al-Nāṣir Muḥammad arrived in Cairo and the affairs of state were put into his hands, with Sayf al-Dīn Salār¹ as vicegerent (nā'ib al-Saltāna bi 'l-diyār al-Miṣriyya) and Baybars al-Jāshnakīr² as steward (ustādār).³ The question arises here, why did the senior emirs decide to bring al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to Cairo and to instal him as Sultān? Did they believe that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad had a legal claim to seize power, and was he entitled to the Sultanate? It seems that the oligarchy of emirs recalled al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to the throne because they acknowledged what they owed to his father, Qalāwūn (678-689/1279-1290), and his brother, al-Ashraf Khalīl (689-693/1290-1293). Or it might be that it was only a temporary solution until a powerful emir took over the government, and the oligarchy of emirs assumed that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's power would be nominal; therefore, they would enjoy competent authority. But if the above assumption is correct, how far would that political situation continue without causing dangerous dissatisfaction?

¹For his biography, see Dhayl, fols. 43a-b; Durar, ii, 179-182; Nujūm, viii, 100, 105, 130, 160, 167, 170, 173, 175, 180, 235, 240, 248, 250, 257, 270.

²For his biography, see Dhayl, fols. 28a-b; Durar, i, 502-507; Nujūm, viii, 46, 100, 132-133, 157-160, 167, 171, 173, 200, 202, 222-223, 226-227.

³Masālik, fol. 134b (Paris Ms 2328); Zubdat, fol. 203b; Nuzhat, fol. 31b; Mālik, fol. 42b; Miṣr, fols. 42b-44a; Durrat, fol. 77a; Sulūk, i, 872-873; Khiṭaṭ, iii, part II, 177; Durar, i, 503; iv, 145; Nujūm, viii, 115-116.

Soon after al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's return to Cairo a war broke out between the Mamlūk Sultanate and the Īl-Khān. On 27 Rabī', I, 699/22 December 1299, in Wādī al-Khāzindār in Syria, the Mamlūks were defeated and the Mongols succeeded in entering Syria. Shortly after, the Mongols left Syria and returned to Persia.¹ Presumably the Mamlūks' defeat was due to the internal disputes among the oligarchy of emirs, so that the military force was weakened owing to political instability.

Then the Caliph al-Ḥākim bi Amr Allāh Aḥmad b. 'Alī died, and his son Abū al-Rabī' Sulaymān succeeded him on 25 Jumādā, I, 701/26 January 1302, and the Khuṭba of Friday prayer was delivered in the latter's name.² However, the condition of the 'Abbāsīd Caliphate in this period will be studied in detail. Two years later, on 2 Ramaḍān 702/20 April 1303, another war broke out between the Mamlūks and the Īl-Khān in Marj Rāhiṭ, and the latter were defeated. The Mamlūks succeeded in winning and consolidated their power.³ Some of the Oirat Mongol tribesmen (al-'Uyrātiyya) organized a conspiracy to murder both Sayf al-Dīn Salār and Baybars al-Jāshnakīr and to return Zayn al-Dīn Kitbughā to power, but the conspirators failed and were arrested.⁴

¹For details, see Masālik, fols. 135a-b (Paris Ms. 2328); Nuzhat, fols. 31b-33b; Mālik, fol. 43b; Miṣr, fols. 45a-46b; Durrat, fol. 78; Tadhkirat, fol. 12a; Sulūk, i, 879, 882-902; Durar, iv, 145; Nujūm, viii, 117-130.

²Masālik, fol. 136b (Ms. Paris 2328); Mālik, fol. 44a; Miṣr, fol. 47a; Durrat, fols. 81b, 82a; Nujūm, viii, 147-149.

³Masālik, fols. 136b-137b (Paris Ms. 2328); Dhayl, fols. 4a-8b; Nuzhat, fols. 35a, 35a; Mālik, fols. 44a-45a; Miṣr, fol. 48a; Durrat, fols. 82b-83a; Tadhkirat, fol. 13a; Sulūk, i, 930-939; Durar, iv, 145; Nujūm, viii, 157-166.

⁴Mālik, fols. 43a-b; Miṣr, fol. 45a; Sulūk, i, 883-885.

There is another factor which throws light upon the internal political situation in this period. It is al-Maqrīzī's statement that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was a figurehead and that the real power was in the hands of the oligarchy of emirs; Sayf al-Dīn Salār and Baybars al-Jāshnakīr who held the reins in their hands, prevented al-Nāṣir Muḥammad from drinking or eating what he liked, allowed him only a little sum of money for his personal expenditure and put nothing at his disposal, neither power nor money, while they administered the affairs of state with full power.¹

Ibn Hajar confirms al-Maqrīzī's record and adds that the second Sultanate of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was but nominal. Sayf al-Dīn Salār and Baybars al-Jāshnakīr exercised competent authority over al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and governed the Mamlūk Sultanate.²

Moreover, al-Maqrīzī records that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was in straitened circumstances and was continuously short of money; therefore he borrowed money from the merchants and the rich in society.³

Accordingly, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was in a critical situation and the oligarchy of emirs put him in power in order to enjoy the opportunity of wielding authority. That was the main reason for which the oligarchy brought al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to Cairo. They wanted him to rule the Mamlūk Sultanate for the second time, but only as a nominal head. It appears that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad hoped

¹Sulūk, i, 879; see also Nuzhat, fols. 35a, 36a.

²Durar, i, 505: iii, 263.

³Sulūk, i, 879.

to take over the government, but to no effect. Consequently, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad plotted with Baktamur al-Jūkandār¹ to be rid of Sayf al-Dīn Salār and Baybars al-Jāshnakīr, and the royal Mamlūks helped and supported the young Sulṭān. But Sayf al-Dīn Salār and Baybars al-Jāshnakīr were informed and succeeded in foiling the plot. Yet great disturbances occurred in Cairo, markets were closed and troops surrounded the Citadel of Cairo; therefore, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad announced his readiness to resign from the Sultanate.² When the public of Cairo, al-‘āmmah, knew about the plot, the fears of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and his readiness to resign, they went to the doors of the Citadel of Cairo in a storm of applause, showing their support for al-Nāṣir Muḥammad against Sayf al-Dīn Salār and Baybars al-Jāshnakīr, who became aware of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's popularity and of the gravity of the situation.³ Thus, for the first time in the history of the Mamlūk Sultanate, the public of Cairo's support emerged. The public of Cairo, al-‘āmmah, wanted to strengthen al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's position against the powerful emirs who held the reins. Accordingly, they showed their disapproval by calling the name of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and refused to draw off when the official troopers (Mamālīks) attacked them. Sayf al-Dīn Salār and Baybars al-Jāshnakīr realized

¹Infra, 108-112.

²Dhayl, fol. 136b; Nuzhat, fols. 35a-36a; Sulūk, ii, 33-36; Nujūm, viii, 170-173.

³Sulūk, ii, 35-36; Nujūm, viii, 173-174.

that it was to no effect to use force; therefore they tried diplomacy; they told the populace of Cairo, al-‘āmmah, that peace had been restored in the Citadel of Cairo, things were straightened out and there was no need to worry about al-Nāṣir Muḥammad who was safe and in good spirits.¹ Here it is imperative to study the attitude of the populace of Cairo, al-‘āmmah, towards the ruling class: firstly, the appearance of the support of the populace of Cairo, al-‘āmmah, for the Sulṭān who, probably, enjoyed a popular position among his subjects; secondly, the oligarchy of emirs knew that there was the populace of Cairo, al-‘āmmah, who desired stable rule and longed to see the end of this series of plots and murders; thirdly, the oligarchy of emirs, especially Sayf al-Dīn Salār and Baybars al-Jāshnakīr, took account of the attitude of the populace of Cairo, al-‘āmmah, when they failed to subject them to their authority and to return matters to normal by force; fourthly, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad became certain of his popularity among the populace of Cairo, al-‘āmmah; therefore how far would al-Nāṣir Muḥammad use this factor for his personal and political interests? According to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's demand Baktamur al-Jūkandār was sent out of Egypt.² Some of the royal Mamlūks (al-khāṣṣakiyya) were accused by Sayf al-Dīn Salār and Baybars al-Jāshnakīr of taking a main part in this sedition, therefore

¹Sulūk, ii, 35-36; Nujūm, viii, 173-174.

²Sulūk, ii, 36; Nujūm, viii, 174.

they were sent to Jerusalem, but al-Nāṣir Muḥammad strongly intended to return his Mamlūks to Cairo and succeeded in fulfilling this desire.¹ Because of the previous events an important question should be asked with regard to the ruling situation in the Mamlūk Sultanate; that is, whether it was ruled by the oligarchy of emirs, precisely Sayf al-Dīn Salār and Baybars al-Jāshnākīr? Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was only a figurehead of the Mamlūk state and, in time, his condition became worse; he was in great need of money and on bad terms with the oligarchy of emirs, mainly Baybars al-Jāshnākīr, so that he refused to sign the government bonds.² Consequently Sayf al-Dīn Salār, Baybars al-Jāshnākīr and other emirs of high offices feared that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad might arrange another conspiracy to get rid of them.³

At the same time, party spirit ran high between Sayf al-Dīn Salār and his supporters, the independent emirs, and his rival Baybars al-Jāshnākīr and his faction the Burjiyya. The personal struggle for power became an open conflict, each of the two emirs desired to have the governorship of the Mamlūk Sultanate at the expense of the other.⁴ Thus the personal political competition became part of the factional conflict for supreme power. It seems that it became impossible to hide that personal and party rivalry during a period in which the position of the Sulṭān was weakened to a considerable degree, and the relationship between the Sulṭān and the oligarchy was no longer friendly even outwardly.

¹Sulūk, ii, 35-36, 37; Nujūm, viii, 173.

²Dhayl, fol. 136b; Salātīn, fols. 70a-72a; Nuzhat, fols. 36a, 37b; Durar, iv, 145; Nujūm, viii, 175.

³Sulūk, ii, 37.

⁴Zubdat, fol. 252a; Sulūk, ii, 22-23, 23-26, 37-38; Durar, i, 504.

Eventually, on 10 Shawwāl 708/23 March 1308, on the pretext of making the pilgrimage, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad left Cairo, retired to al-Karak and announced his resignation from the throne. For him it was a necessary step which had to be undertaken as he was deprived of all hand in the affairs of state, while Sayf al-Dīn Salār and Baybars al-Jāshnakīr had taken over the government. Thus the second Sultanate of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, which lasted ten years, five months and ten days, was ended.¹

Here it is imperative to study the writings of the contemporary historians with regard to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's abdication. Baybars al-Manṣūrī records that, as soon as al-Nāṣir Muḥammad arrived at al-Karak, he sent a letter to Sayf al-Dīn Salār and Baybars al-Jāshnakīr concerning his resignation from the Sultanate and asked them to take over the government.² Ibn Taghrī Birdī repeats the above statement of the contemporary historian Baybars al-Manṣūrī.³ But, on the other hand, another contemporary historian gives different information with respect to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's letter to Sayf al-Dīn Salār and Baybars al-Jāshnakīr. Ibn al-Dawādārī states that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad had to resign, although it was against his will. Moreover al-Nāṣir Muḥammad did not write or send that letter renouncing the throne to the oligarchy of emirs. This letter was written by Aydamur al-Dawādār (d. 776/1374)⁴ and 'Alā'

¹Masālik, fol. 138b (Paris Ms. 2328); Dhayl, fol. 149a; Zubdat, fols. 261a-b, 262a; Mukhtaṣar, iv, 54-55; Nuzhat, fols. 36a-37b; Mālik, fol. 45b; Miṣr, fols. 52a-b; Salātīn, fols. 72a-74b; Durrat, fol. 90b; Sulūk, ii, 43-45; Khiṭaṭ, iii, part II, 177; Durar, iv, 145-146; Nujūm, viii, 176-179.

²Zubdat, fol. 262a.

³Nujūm, viii, 179.

⁴For his biography, see Durar, i, 429.

al-Dīn 'Alī b. Aḥmad b. al-Athīr (d. 730/1329)¹ in the name of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad without his knowledge.² Thus two different statements are given by two contemporary historians, Baybars al-Manṣūrī and Ibn al-Dawādārī. Not much need be said about the difficulties which al-Nāṣir Muḥammad suffered at the hands of the oligarchy of emirs, mainly Sayf al-Dīn Salār and Baybars al-Jāshnakīr; therefore al-Nāṣir Muḥammad left Cairo for the purpose of giving up his position as governor of the Mamlūk Sultanate. Furthermore, 'Alā' al-Dīn 'Alī b. Aḥmad b. al-Athīr, who is accused by Ibn al-Dawādārī of writing that false letter, held high office at the royal court of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in his third reign and was the confidential secretary (kātib al-sirr) of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad until his death in 730/1329.³ Accordingly, one might say that that resignation from the Sultanate had been undertaken by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad himself, although he was forced to take that decisive step because the situation at the royal court and in the government was hard to bear. Consequently, the office of the Sultanate became vacant, and when Sayf al-Dīn Salār was asked by the oligarchy of emirs to seize power he refused and suggested that Baybars al-Jāshnakīr⁴ be in power.⁵

After this review of political struggle and ruling rivalry at the royal Mamlūk court during the early years of the fourteenth

¹For his biography, see Durar, iii, 14-16.

²Durr, ix, 157-158.

³Durar, iii, 14-15.

⁴For Baybars al-Jāshnakīr's reign, see Sulūk, ii, 45-71; Nujūm, viii, 232-277.

⁵Nuzhat, fol. 38a; Nujūm, viii, 235.

century, we may find this attitude of Sayf al-Dīn Salār strange because we know about his unfriendly relationship with al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and how he deprived al-Nāṣir Muḥammad of power both in the government and at the royal court. Sayf al-Dīn Salār held a high office in the Mamlūk Sultanate and his position at the royal court was powerful to a considerable extent, yet he refused to hold supreme power. Seemingly Sayf al-Dīn Salār, who was always eager for power, refused that proposition because he was not sure of his powerful position, or he might have thought that his status was not powerful enough to guarantee him the dominant position. Besides Salār was not prepared to accept what the supreme power and the ruling responsibilities provided. In addition the power was in the hands of the oligarchy of emirs, and Sayf al-Dīn Salār was afraid that his accession might rouse dangerous dissatisfaction. Moreover, there was Baybars al-Jāshnakīr, his powerful position and his supportable faction, the Burjiyya; what would be their reaction towards Salār's acceptance of power? Furthermore, it appears that Sayf al-Dīn Salār knew that even if he elevated himself to the Sultanate, it would be only for a short time and his reign would end by a plot to depose him. It could be also that Sayf al-Dīn Salār suspected that the Burjiyya might revolt against his rule because they desired to see their master Baybars al-Jāshnakīr in power. Furthermore, what about al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and the possibility that one day he might plan to return to take power, which meant difficulties would appear, and then Salār would have to face a hard situation. This thought might have crossed Sayf al-Dīn's mind especially as Salār was aware of the political difficulties which had occurred during the reigns of

Kitbughā and Lāchīn and had witnessed al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's return to the throne to rule for a second time.

Moreover, it might be that Sayf al-Dīn Salār was an understanding and reasonable politician and his cognizance of the political condition in the Mamlūk Sultanate was deep to a considerable extent, especially as Salār was a man of experience and had lived through that continuous struggle for power and had even had a great part in it. Therefore, Sayf al-Dīn Salār thought and decided to refuse the governorship of the Mamlūk Sultanate for the sake of his life and liberty and even for the sake of his political position at the royal court. In other words, he was probably sure that he would be safer if he continued to live as a powerful emir than as the ruler of the Mamlūk Sultanate. Yet even when Baybars al-Jāshnakīr was elected by the Mamlūk emirs to the Sultanate, Sayf al-Dīn Salār rejected the idea of holding the office of vicegerent in Egypt (nā'ib al-Saltāna bi 'l-diyār al-Misriyya). But, when Baybars al-Jāshnakīr put Sayf al-Dīn Salār's acceptance of that office as a condition to be fulfilled, then Sayf al-Dīn Salār accepted the vicegerency in Egypt, especially as the emirs urged him to do so.¹

The contemporary historian, Baybars al-Manṣūrī, mentions that Baybars al-Jāshnakīr was always longing to be in power, and he had already planned secretly that he, his faction the Burjiyya and his supporters would co-operate to fulfil that desire concerning Baybars's elevation to the Sultanate.²

¹Nujūm, viii, 235.

²Zubdat, fol. 263b.

On 23 Shawwāl 708/5 April 1309 the accession of Baybars al-Jāshnakīr was accomplished and on 29 Shawwāl 708/11 April 1309 the khuṭba of Friday prayer in Cairo was delivered in the name of Baybars al-Jāshnakīr. Subsequently the latter give al-Nāṣir Muḥammad authority over al-Karak.¹

There were some important aspects concerning Baybars al-Jāshnakīr's reign. Firstly, the governors, Shams al-Dīn Qarā-sunqur of Aleppo, Sayf al-Dīn Qabjaq of Ḥamāh and Asandamur of Tripoli refused to give their oath of allegiance (ḥilf al-walā') to Baybars al-Jāshnakīr who failed to exact that oath from them until al-Nāṣir Muḥammad interfered and persuaded them to swear to Baybars al-Jāshnakīr.² Accordingly could we understand from this that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad regarded his stay in al-Karak as indefinite? Would al-Karak be the last residence of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad? Could we understand from al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's last attitude towards his loyal friends, the governors of the Syrian provinces, with regard to their attitude towards Baybars al-Jāshnakīr, that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad gave up his position in the governorship of the Mamlūk Sultanate for ever, and would never go back on his word? How far would al-Nāṣir Muḥammad be effected by the situation of the Syrian governors? And how far would he use the attitude of the Syrian governors for his personal interest? The second aspect

¹Masālik, fol. 138b (Paris Ms. 2328); Dhayl, fols. 149a-150a; Zubdat, fols. 263b-267a; Nuzhat, fols. 38a-b; Mālik, fol. 45a; Miṣr, fols. 52a-53a; Salāṭīn, fols. 77a-78a; Durrat, fol. 90a; Sulūk, ii, 45-47, 48; Durar, i, 505; iv, 146; Nujūm, viii, 180-181, 232-235.

²For details, see Nuzhat, fols. 38b-41a; Nujūm, viii, 236-242.

respecting Baybars al-Jāshnakīr's rule was the attitude of the populace of Cairo towards Baybars al-Jāshnakīr. In reality Baybars al-Jāshnakīr was not popular among the populace of Cairo who were tired and weary of Baybars al-Jāshnakīr and Sayf al-Dīn Salār.¹

This situation reminds us of the attitude of the populace of Cairo, previously mentioned, towards al-Nāṣir Muḥammad when they stood with him and supported him against the oligarchy of emirs.² The third aspect of Baybars al-Jāshnakīr's rule was al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's co-operation with the governors of the Syrian provinces. This coup which had emerged unexpectedly and which was followed by a series of preparations with regard to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's second restoration to the throne³ badly affected the relationship between him and Baybars al-Jāshnakīr.⁴

Fourthly, the appearance of the greed and hatred among Baybars al-Jāshnakīr's faction the Burjiyya against Sayf al-Dīn Salār's supporters. Besides, some emirs left Cairo for al-Karak to join al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and to help him to return to Cairo and hold power.⁵

¹Nuzhat, fol. 41a; Sulūk, ii, 55; Durar, i, 506; Nujūm, viii, 244.

²Supra, 17-19.

³Infra, 27.

⁴Dhayl, fols. 159b-160a; Zubdat, fols. 269a-270a; Mukhtaṣar, iv, 56. Nuzhat, fols. 41a-42b; Ṣalātīn, fols. 81a-82b; Sulūk, ii, 56-59; Nujūm, viii, 245-247; 256-257.

⁵Dhayl, fols. 159a-b; Zubdat, fol. 268b; Nuzhat, fols. 42b-43a; Mālik, fol. 46a; Miṣr, fols. 53b-54a; Ṣalātīn, fols. 78a-79b, 80b-81a; Sulūk, ii, 53, 59-61; Durar, i, 505; Nujūm, viii, 247-250, 255.

Ibn Taghrī Birdī suggests that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was always thinking and planning to fulfil his determination regarding his position in the governorship of the Mamlūk Sultanate.¹ The situation both in Cairo and al-Karak developed to a considerable extent so that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was militarily ready to march into Egypt to face Baybars al-Jāshnakīr with force, while a great part of the Mamlūk army left Cairo for al-Karak to support al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.² Baybars al-Jāshnakīr found himself in a difficult situation and the circumstances worsened so that he sought for a new source of support; this was when Baybars al-Jāshnakīr obtained a second diploma³ from the Caliph al-Mustakfi.⁴ But it seems even this was not enough to give Baybars al-Jāshnakīr the help and support he needed. Eventually al-Nāṣir Muḥammad left al-Karak for Damascus and he entered the city on 12 Sha'bān 709/12 January 1310. When Baybars al-Jāshnakīr left Cairo he did not know even where to go, while al-Nāṣir Muḥammad arrived at Cairo on 16 Ramaḍān 709/17 February 1310. Immediately after he received a letter from Baybars al-Jāshnakīr informing him of his resignation from the Sultanate and asking al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to give him the governorship of the Syrian province Ṣahyūn.⁵ Again the populace of

¹Nujūm, viii, 181.

²Dhayl, fols. 161a-162a; Zubdat, fols. 270b-271a; Nuzhat, fol. 43a; 'Ibar, v, part V, 907, 908; Sulūk, ii, 63, 67; Nujūm, viii, 259-261.

³Infra, 32-33.

⁴Salātīn, fol. 89b; Sulūk, ii, 64-66; Durar, i, 505-506; Nujūm, viii, 262-263; Husn, ii, 112-113.

⁵Dhayl, fols. 161a-163a; Mālik, fols. 46a-b; Misr, fols. 54a-b; Salātīn, fols. 82b-84a; Durrat, fols. 91b-92a; Sulūk, ii, 68-72; Khiṭaṭ, iii, part II, 177; Durar, i, 506; Nujūm, viii, 264-271; Cf. Masālik, fol. 139b (Paris Ms. 2328).

Cairo, al-'āmmah, showed that they were tired of Baybars al-Jāshnakīr and announced frankly their weariness of his rule.¹

Thus the third reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad began and, on 19 Ramaḍān 709/20 February 1310, the khuṭba of Friday prayer was delivered in his name.² Although al-Nāṣir Muḥammad promised Baybars al-Jāshnakīr forgiveness and the governorship of Ṣahyūn, he strangled him soon after his arrest.³ As to Sayf al-Dīn Salār's affair, we will deal with this in detail in a later chapter.⁴ But, briefly, it could be said that Sayf al-Dīn Salār was arrested by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad shortly after the latter's accession and died of hunger in his prison in Jumādā, I, 710/September 1310.⁵

Al-Maqrīzī cites that when Shams al-Dīn Qarāsunqur and Bahādur Aṣ captured Baybars al-Jāshnakīr, Bahādur Aṣ suggested that it might be useful to keep Baybars al-Jāshnakīr alive and to send him to Ṣahyūn to hold the governorship there, so that if al-Nāṣir Muḥammad changed his friendly attitude towards them, they would be able to use Baybars al-Jāshnakīr against him and support Baybars al-Jāshnakīr to seize power. But Shams al-Dīn Qarāsunqur rejected the idea. Afterwards, when Shams al-Dīn Qarāsunqur knew about al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's determination to arrest Shams al-Dīn Qarāsunqur,

¹ Sulūk, ii, 70; 71; Durar, i, 506; Nujūm, viii, 244, 270, 271.

² Masālik, fols. 139a-b (Paris Ms. 2328); Dhayl, fol. 163a; Mālik, fols. 46b-47a; Misr, fols. 54b-56b; Salāṭin, fols. 84a-86b; Durrat, fol. 92a; Sulūk, ii, 68-71; Nujūm, viii, 272-274.

³ For details, see Masālik, fol. 139b (Paris Ms. 2328); Misr, fol. 64a; Sulūk, ii, 78-81; Durar, i, 506-507; Nujūm, viii, 272-275; cf. Durrat, fol. 92.

⁴ Infra, 102-103.

⁵ Zamān, iv, fols. 189a-191a; Durrat, fol. 93b; Turkiyya, fols. 26b-27b; Thamīn, fols. 128b-130a; Tālī, fol. 43a; Mawrid, 57-58.

the latter regretted his previous rejection, and marched towards Damascus instead of Cairo for the sake of his liberty.¹ Ibn Taghrī Birdī repeats this statement by al-Maqrīzī.² In these political circumstances al-Nāṣir Muḥammad began his third reign in Ramaḍān 709/February 1310 and ruled the Mamlūk Sultanate for thirty-two years until he died on 21 Dhū 'l-Ḥijja 741/7 June 1341 at the age of sixty.³

From an examination of the material summed up above, we reach the following conclusions:

- (i) During the military rule which was established by the Mamlūks and which continued throughout their long reigns, the throne was the prize of personal prowess, courage and daring although the reigning Sulṭān had always to have an open eye and a strong body-guard. He also had to be conscious and aware of the oligarchy of emirs; then he would be able to carry out his work. Only with force did the oligarchy of emirs accept the principle of the hereditary monarchy. Thus al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, because of his strong personality, succeeded in making that principle respected by the emirs although the situation was difficult for him because every emir had his own body-guard. Also, the Mamlūks secured the approval and blessing of the 'Abbāsīd Caliph for their authority.
- (ii) The oligarchy of emirs or the ruling class in the Mamlūk Sultanate never acknowledged the hereditary right to govern.

¹Sulūk, ii, 80.

²Nujūm, viii, 274.

³Masālik, fols. 139b, 149a-b; Sulūk, ii, 72, 507; Khiṭaṭ, iii, part II, 177-178.

- (iii) The oligarchy of emirs changed their allegiance from one, the present Sulṭān, and elected another because the power was in their hands.
- (iv) The newly elected Sulṭān received official authority from the Caliph ('ahd).
- (v) The deposed Sulṭān accepted the situation and became only a provincial governor of the Mamlūk territory if the circumstances demanded that situation, as happened with Kitbughā.
- (vi) There was always a struggle for power among the oligarchy of emirs.
- (vii) There was the office of vicegerency which was as important as it was dangerous.
- (viii) The ruling classes were divided into three groups: the Sulṭān, the Mamlūk emirs and the Mamlūk soldiers (ajnād al-Ḥalqa).
- (ix) The ruling class was extremely wealthy and they always left vast sums of money when they died.
- (x) There was always personal ambition to take possession of the throne, and the oligarchy of emirs worked to accomplish that aim without paying any consideration to the heir of the ruling family and did not keep their word with regard to that ruler.
- (xi) Sometimes circumstances aided a powerful emir to rule and his diplomacy and his political acumen helped him to rule, as happened with al-Nāṣir Muḥammad when he governed for the third time.
- (xii) The Sulṭān would be the head of the state as soon as he had sufficient power to impose himself.
- (xiii) There was political rivalry among the emirs and al-Nāṣir Muḥammad exploited this rivalry to his own ends.

(xiv) Although the populace of Cairo (al-‘āmmah) succeeded in showing their joy when a new Sulṭān came to power and another Sulṭān, whom they hated, was deposed or executed, their position and attitude had no deep effect on the political situation in the Mamlūk Sultanate.

Chapter I

THE 'ABBĀSID CALIPHATE

(i) The relation between al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and al-Mustakfī

Under different circumstances al-Nāṣir Muḥammad succeeded in ascending the throne for the third time. His feelings were unfriendly towards the contemporary Caliph, al-Mustakfī bī Allāh Abū al-Rabī' Sulaymān,¹ because of the latter's support for the last usurper of power, Baybars al-Jāshnakīr. That feeling may be clearly illustrated by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's words to the Caliph soon after his successful arrival from al-Karak at Cairo, when al-Nāṣir Muḥammad snapped rudely at the Caliph: "How could you come and shake hands with a khārijī? Am I a khārijī and Baybars of 'Abbāsīd's descent?" The Caliph, shocked by this attitude, kept silent.² This situation gives us a fundamental idea of the nature of the unfriendly relations between the religious head of the Muslims and the ruler of the Mamlūk Sultanate. There are many aspects of their relations to be taken into account: firstly, the acceptance of the new political position of the Mamlūk regime, without any objection by the Caliph or obligation on the part of the Sultān; secondly, the ignoring of the 'ahd which had been given by the Caliph to Baybars al-Jāshnakīr; thirdly, the lack of interest in having official support from the Caliph for the new Sultān.

The question which should therefore be answered here is, who was this particular Caliph? Abū al-Rabī' Sulaymān b. al-Ḥākim bi-Amr

¹For his biography, see Durar, ii, 141-144.

²Sulūk, ii, 73; Nujūm, ix, 8.

Allāh b. al-'Abbās Aḥmad b. Abī Alī al-Ḥasan was born in Muḥarram 683/ March 1284 in Baḡhdād. He moved with his father to Cairo during the reign of al-Zāhir Baybars (658-676/1260-1277) to be Caliph with the title of al-Mustakfī in the place of his father, al-Ḥākim bi Amr Allāh, in 701/1301 at twenty years of age, after the death of his father and during the second reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.¹ Moreover, al-Mustakfī was fortunately to enjoy a close friendship with al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.² On the other hand, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was careful to have 'ahd from al-Mustakfī when the latter ascended to the Caliphate in 701/1301, although al-Nāṣir had already obtained a charter of the same kind from the late Caliph.³

The two bravely led the Mamlūk troops to save the Syrian provinces from the Mongol attack in 702/1302.⁴ It seems that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad thought of the spiritual help which the soldiers would need at that difficult time, and it would not be available without the presence of the Caliph on the field of battle. This friendship was ended when al-Nāṣir Muḥammad decided to resign, thinking that resignation would be more suitable for him than being a monarch without competent authority. On the other hand, the Caliph had to accept the change and nominate Baybars al-Jāshnakir to be the new Sulṭān of the Mamlūk state in 708/1308.⁵ It appears that the 'ahd⁶ which Baybars al-Jāshnakir

¹Durr, ix, 79; Zetterstéén, 105-7; Nahj, iii, 78-80; Mir'āt, iv, 235; Bidāya, xiv, 187; Tadhkira, fol. 121a; Durrat, fol. 242b; Subḥ, iii, 265; Badr, fol. 39b; Khulafā', 484.

²Khulafā', 487.

³Zetterstéén, 106; Husn, ii, 67.

⁴Khulafā', 484.

⁵Nujūm, viii, 232-233; Husn, ii, 112.

⁶Subḥ, x, 68-75.

succeeded in obtaining was not sufficient to give his reign the legitimacy which he had desired, or perhaps not sufficient to stand against the aim of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to be the effective ruler of the Mamlūk Sultanate for the first time, and not its nominal head, as he had already been twice. Baybars al-Jāshnakīr, realizing the situation, tried to get aid from the religious head of the Muslims for a second time, either not realizing that the Caliph's authority no longer had any kind of effectiveness, or unable to find another source of support. Consequently, Baybars al-Jāshnakīr eagerly procured another diploma ('ahd) from al-Mustakfī bi Allāh, not only nominating Baybars as the only Sultān of the kingdom who should be obeyed and respected, but also under estimating al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's preparations for his coming to Cairo by describing the whole affair as a riot against the stability of the kingdom. Al-Mustakfī also announced his readiness to fight al-Nāṣir Muḥammad if the latter refused to accept the accomplished fact.¹

But, on the other hand, in order to understand the importance of this edict and to get to the reality of it, one should not forget the weak condition of al-Mustakfī at this time in the reign of Baybars al-Jāshnakīr. He was respected ~~not~~ ² by the Mamlūk emirs.

Hence it might be worth finding out if al-Mustakfī gave the 'adh to Baybars al-Jāshnakīr willingly or was forced to do so? We find that some of the Mamlūk historians, such as Ibn al-Dawādārī, Baybars al-Maṣūrī, al-Maqrīzī, Ibn Taghrī Birdī and others keep silent

¹ Salāṭīn, fol. 95a; Sulūk, ii, 65-66; Nujūm, viii, 264.

² Sulūk, ii, 64; Nujūm, viii, 262, 264.

on this matter, either because of their failure to analyse the standing of al-Mustakfī or because the situation itself was not clear enough to be described. According to the data of Tārīkh al-Salāṭīn wa'l-‘Asākīr one could say that al-Mustakfī bi Allāh gave the ‘ahd under compulsion.¹

Regarding the attitude of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad towards al-Mustakfī it was, as we have previously seen, unfriendly; thereafter al-Mustakfī endeavoured to explain that he had supplied Baybars al-Jāshnakīr with the second ‘ahd reluctantly,² and the chief judge, Badr al-Dīn b. Jamā‘a (d. 733/1334),³ could cement his statement as an eye witness of the previous events.⁴ Subsequently, all the judges of Egypt and Syria pronounced their verdict respecting the legitimacy of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's rule, and al-Mustakfī strengthened the edict with his approval.⁵ Moreover, the judges, desiring to put the decree into action, asked al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to renew their appointment.⁶ Giving that order at the early stage of his third reign, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad can be regarded as a ruler of effective authority. Thus, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad succeeded in having complete support from the judges and from al-Mustakfī, who handed over the ‘ahd which gave al-Nāṣir Muḥammad legitimate power in his kingdom.⁷

¹ Salāṭīn, fols. 95a-b.

² Ibid., fol. 95a.

³ For his biography, see Durar, iii, 280-283.

⁴ Salāṭīn, fol. 95b.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Salāṭīn, fols. 96a-b.

⁷ Ibid., fols. 97a-b.

Subsequently, it might be useful to study the text of the 'ahd which, after the ordinary beginning, continues:

"In the name of God the Merciful the Compassionate, now then, praise be to God, the entrusted to manage the affairs which had been handled to him ... shows the excellent morals of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, pious, just, enduring and competent. Besides his popularity among his people, his high position between his supporters, and his hereditary right to govern."¹

Here it is worth stating that this beginning of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's 'ahd is more or less similar to those of the two diplomas ('uhūd) submitted to Baybars al-Jāshnakīr by al-Mustakfī in Shawwāl 708/March 1309,² and in Sha'bān 709/January 1310.³

Besides, if we study the diploma ('ahd) which had been given in Sha'bān 709/January 1310⁴ by al-Mustakfī to Baybars al-Jāshnakīr, we find that al-Mustakfī himself gives no regard to the importance of hereditary right to rule, and confirms his idea by stating that the governorship must be held by a qualified ruler only.⁵ Thus hereditary right was specifically denied in the earlier diploma. The diploma continues to praise al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's character and his personal conduct by recording:

"His perfect thought, his sincere consideration, and faultless meditation help him to keep the customary practice of his predecessors."⁶

¹Ibid., fols. 98a-b.

²Subh, x, 69-70; Sulūk, ii, 46; for this diploma ('ahd), see Subh, x, 68-75.

³Sulūk, ii, 64-66; Nujūm, viii, 262-263.

⁴For this 'ahd see Sulūk, ii, 65-66; Nujūm, viii, 263.

⁵Sulūk, ii, 65; Nujūm, viii, 263.

⁶Salātīn, fols. 99a-b.

"God has helped him with assistance, backing, victory, glory and consolidation; it was God's will for him to achieve this complete success.¹ God has kept his rights, supported him with men, capable personality, and protected him with divine providence.² This holy care still assists the most exalted master, the greatest Sultān al-Malik al-Nāṣir, the corroborated and the triumphant.³ The victorious, the Sultān of Islam and Muslims, who succeeded in taming al-Khawārij and the rebellious, the heir of the kingdom, the Sultān of the Arabs, of the Persians, and of the Turks."

This title which is mentioned here for the first time in a Mamlūk text became an Ottoman title.

"The sword of Islam, the successor of al-Imam, he is the Alexander of the time, the owner of the Qur'ān, Pahluvān-i jahān,⁴ Chosroes of 'Iran, the king of the universe, the Sultān of the world Abū al-Ma'ālī Muḥammad the son of the happy Sultān the martyr al-Malik al-Manṣur Sayf al-Dīn Qalāwūn, God may keep his power immortal and make his demonstration visible."

These titles are very interesting in several respects. Firstly, the assertion of hereditary right; secondly, the aspect of universality with which al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's rule is attributed; thirdly, the confirmation of the religious position of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and how far this supports his right to rule and, fourthly, the comparison of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's personality with those of previous distinguished rulers of the world.

"If God leads him to be straight and honest, aids him against his enemies, saves him from any danger that may face him,⁵ supplies him with sons and money, strengthens him with wisdom and right guidance, protects him from wickedness, guides him safely, then God knows that he would be the man of his period like the sun of the earth,⁶ especially because of the encouragement he

¹ Salāṭīn, fol. 99b.

² Ibid., fol. 100a.

³ Ibid.; cf. Sulūk, ii, 66; Nujūm, viii, 263.

⁴ Pahluvān-i jahān is Persian: "The hero of the world".

⁵ Salāṭīn, fol. 100b.

⁶ Ibid., fol. 101a.

has from his assistants, and from the fitting circumstances, and the only thing which he has to do is to take his place on the throne, and draw the despised men away from his kingdom, and if he would like to be the ruler of Egypt he should be the most strong man, and he would be, for God would support and promote his condition."¹

"Coming back to authority successfully, having military aid from the soldiers, spiritual promotion from his subjects who come from different parts to confirm his situation.² Furthermore with the backing of God and the diploma nothing would stand in his way, or obstruct a happy conclusion when he claims the throne as a powerful monarch, he would have the Sultanate and the obedience of his subjects."³

"The year which had already passed had been futile and worthless, and the weak Caliph had to approve the preceding events, although his heart was full of friendly emotions and deep belief with al-Nāṣir Muḥammad; besides al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and the Caliph have announced by their common edict, their interests of unity and co-operation, and the judges (quḍāt) had witnessed the meeting and heard the evidence of al-Mustakfī that he had given Baybars al-Jāshnakīr the 'ahd under pressure.⁴ Moreover the Caliph gave his complete support to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad by a legitimate verdict."⁵

"Hence with this decree the foundation of the kingdom would be strong, and the clouds of the previous year would disappear. Furthermore the judges of the Muslims regarded this charter as a decisive order which should be officially certified at dīwān al-'Inshā', including its order that the Caliph concede to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad full power and mandayory authority to rule the country with justice, kindness, and a well equipped army. The names of the Sultān and of the Caliph would be engraved together on dirham and dīnār.⁶ Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad had the right to appoint governors for the provinces of the state, to terminate corruption, to mobilize an army against his enemies, to nominate rulers, leaders and representatives, to collect money and levy taxes from his various resources,

¹ Ibid., fol. 101b.

² Ibid., fol. 102a.

³ Ibid., fol. 102b.

⁴ Salātīn, fols. 103a-b; cf. Sulūk, ii, 66; Nujūm, viii, 263.

⁵ Salātīn, fol. 103b.

⁶ Ibid., fols. 104a-b.

and to spend the money for the good of the state.¹ Also, to observe the Muslim posts, to protect the frontiers, to give back to the people the money which had been acquired unlawfully and arbitrarily, whether it was a small or a large sum.² Emirs and commoners should be treated equally, paying attention to the unjustly treated people was proof of good determination.³

Following the orders of God in the Qur'ān, and the advice of the prophet Muḥammad in the Sunna would keep him on the right track. The Sulṭān must also be a military leader, and hence the accomplishment of his duties should encourage his subjects to fight for the sake of God, and sacrifice their properties and souls to achieve victory over their enemies. They would then be taken to Paradise.⁴ All these items have been listed only as reminders for he was utterly known as a man of qualification and of skill. Thus he could respectfully have the 'ahd from Amīr al-Mu'minīn who believes that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad will be the most capable ruler of the kingdom, who knows exactly the truth of every matter, and understands precisely the state of different affairs.⁵

There are great expectations that he would successfully accomplish what is expected from him, and above all that he would have divine support, and the holy aid of a will of God."⁶

Seemingly, this diploma is the only available document concerning mu'āhadat al-Nāṣir Muḥammad for a second time by al-Mustakfī bi Allāh. What should be asked about this diploma ('ahd) is why al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was intent on having an 'ahd, especially if we compare the powerful position of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad with the critical situation of al-Mustakfī as a consequence of the part which he had played during the reign of Baybars al-Jāshnakīr. Was it a question of legitimacy? And even if it was, why was al-Nāṣir Muḥammad so keen to obtain that 'ahd at an official meeting in the presence of the judges?

¹ Ibid., fol. 104b.

² Ibid., fol. 105a.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Salātīn, fols. 105a-b.

⁵ Ibid., fol. 105b.

⁶ Ibid., fol. 106a.

Apparently al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, at the beginning of his third reign, wanted to make use of every possibility which could cement his position, with complete disregard for the connected difficulties, at least in those early days of his rule. Besides, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and the judges were careful to make use of the question of 'ahd; hence, to accomplish the common aim, the judges asked al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to renew their appointment in their offices, having acceded to the request that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad be esteemed as a legitimate ruler who could practice his authority freely. There is nothing mention by contemporary historians about the relationship between al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and al-Mustakfī during the following years but one may assume that this relation was less friendly than it had been during the preceding years. As a result, it might be worth saying that the Caliph was the head of the Muslims but not the head of the Muslim states. Furthermore, although the name of al-Mustakfī was mentioned in the Friday khuṭba before the name of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad we should not assume that this carried political weight: it was only a kind of formality. Besides, in spite of recording in 'ahd that the name of al-Mustakfī would be engraved on coins, there is no mention in the Mamlūk writings in regard to the fulfilling of this condition.

The essential work which the Caliph was obliged to carry out was to submit 'ahd to the Sulṭān for the purposes of legitimacy, although he never held the right to promote himself with that kind of transaction, and to claim the office of the Caliphate; he should be permitted that office by the Sulṭān and the judges. In conclusion, it is worth noting that the Caliph, at the time of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, was not allowed the right to refuse to confirm the coming of a new Sulṭān into power; also, he had to accept the settled situation

without any proposal of change.¹ Therefore it appears that the relation with al-Nāṣir Muḥammad continued, at least formally, to be friendly, but this does not mean that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad forgot that historic episode when al-Mustakfī stood in his way to the Sultanate.² This last statement can be easily borne out by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's behaviour towards al-Mustakfī in Muḥarram 737/ August 1336, when the former arrested al-Mustakfī and imprisoned him and his family in a tower in the Citadel of Cairo where his father, al-Ḥākim bi Amr Allāh (d. 701/1301)³ used to live, forbade him intercourse with the people and put a Jāndār at his door as guard.⁴ What reasons lie behind this occurrence? And what sort of misunderstanding forced al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to take such an action against al-Mustakfī, especially as we know that there was considerable goodwill at first between the two heads? No doubt the foregoing action which had been perpetrated by al-Mustakfī against al-Nāṣir Muḥammad had adversely influenced their friendship and had a bad effect upon al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's standing towards al-Mustakfī. Thereafter, it appears that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad kept his feelings and waited for the soonest fitting moment to take a firm hand with al-Mustakfī,⁵ to make it clear to him that being Caliph did not give him the right to interfere in the affairs of the state and that he should be satisfied with being a Caliph with no political or social influence but only a head of religious authority. Imprisoned like that, the Caliph was deprived even of his personal rights concerning his dwelling place

¹Nahj, iii, 80.

²Sulūk, ii, 65-66; Nujūm, viii, 263.

³For his biography, see Durar, i, 119-120.

⁴Uyūn, fol. 11a; Bidāya, xiv, 178; Sulūk, ii, 403; Badr, fol. 34b; Khulafā', 486.

⁵Sulūk, ii, 416.

and the people he could meet. In other words, it shows complete interference by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in al-Mustakfī's freedom of thought, speech, and way of life.

Some historians mention direct reasons which caused the unfriendly atmosphere surrounding the intercourse between al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and al-Mustakfī. Ibn Kathīr¹ states that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad became angry with al-Mustakfī, without giving details. Al-Suyūṭī says the reason for the misunderstanding between al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and al-Mustakfī was that a plaint was taken to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in the handwriting of the Caliph to the effect that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad should attend the sessions of the holy law (Majlis al-Shar' al-Sharīf) at which the Sulṭān was angry and the affair came to this pass, that al-Mustakfī was banished to Qūṣ.² As a result, it could be that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad got from those words an impression that al-Mustakfī was trying to hold on to some religious rights or to be supreme in the religious field. Ibn Shākir al-Kutubī says that Muḥammad, the son of al-Mustakfī (d. 738/1337), was the cause of the broken relations between al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and al-Mustakfī but unfortunately Ibn Shākir does not explain the matter in any detail.³ On the other hand, al-Suyūṭī also records that Ibrāhīm, the nephew of al-Mustakfī, was the cause of the misunderstanding between the Caliph al-Mustakfī and the Sulṭān after they had been like brothers, by his having carried to him a slanderous tale regarding him.⁴

¹Bidāya, xiv, 187.

²Khulafā', 487; cf. Sulūk, ii, 416-417.

³Uyūn, fol. 34a.

⁴Khulafā', 488.

Therefore we could assume that Ibrāhīm, probably, desiring to hold the office of the Caliphate, and knowing the possibility of fulfilling his wish because of his relation to al-Mustakfī, tried to rouse al-Nāṣir Muḥammad against al-Mustakfī for his personal desire, especially as he knew about the unfriendly relationships between al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and al-Mustakfī. Hence, if this assessment is right, that could be regarded as a clever operation carried out by Ibrāhīm to make use of the situation at the expense of al-Mustakfī's position in the royal court.

Having been imprisoned, al-Mustakfī spent about five months and seven days in the Citadel of Cairo until he was set free in Rabī' I, 737/October 1336,¹ mostly for the sake of Qūṣūn (d. 742/1341),² the close friend of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.

Immediately after, in Dhū 'l-Ḥijja 737/July 1337, a royal decree of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ordered the exile of al-Mustakfī to Qūṣ in Upper Egypt. Concerning the subject matter, al-Shujā'ī records that the association between al-Mustakfī and a young Mamṭūk called Abū Shāma caused tension in his relations with al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, who imprisoned the Mamṭūk and exiled al-Mustakfī.³ Accordingly, al-Mustakfī, with his family of about one hundred persons, left Cairo for Qūṣ in Muḥarram 738/July 1337.⁴ Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad allowed al-Mustakfī and his family what was sufficient for their maintenance,⁵ although

¹ Sulūk, ii, 416; Badr, fol. 35b.

² For his biography, see Durar, iii, 257-258.

³ Nāṣir, fol. 10a; cf. Sulūk, ii, 416.

⁴ Nāṣir, fol. 9a; Miṣr, fol. 112a; Zetterstéen, 194; Subh, iii, 265; Sulūk, ii, 417; Badr, fol. 36b; Khulafā', 486.

⁵ Khulafā', 286.

al-Maqrīzī states that the annual allowance of the Caliph was decreased from five thousand dirhams to three thousand, and ultimately to one thousand dirhams and that his women had to sell their clothes for a living.¹ Although the position which the Caliph held in the court and in society was religious only, the people received the news of the banishment of al-Mustakfī with regret and grief.² Hence to be expelled although a Caliph could be regarded as a vital step, accomplished for the first time by a Sulṭān regarding a Caliph, in the history of the Mamlūk Sultanate. It helps to make the position of the Caliphate at the time of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad clear to scholars. The taking of this measure by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad against al-Mustakfī might give the idea that the Caliph in this period was no more than a subject who had to accept the orders of the ruler without protest. But, on the other hand, one must wonder, if the situation had this element of loyalty by the 'Abbāsīd Caliph towards the Mamlūk Sulṭān, why al-Nāṣir Muḥammad took this step at all? As there is no contemporary document dealing with the matter, the only alternative is conjecture. Firstly, because of the weak status of al-Mustakfī, it seems there was no reason for al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to fear him, which could have been the cause of his banishment. Therefore, one reason which can be suggested here is that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, with a long period of settled rule, wanted to be the only distinguished head in the Mamlūk Sultanate, even if the other head was merely nominal. Secondly, if we reject the idea that al-Nāṣir

¹Sulūk, ii, 417.

²Badr, fol. 36b.

Muḥammad had no fears concerning his supreme power in the state, it could be worth saying that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad might have been afraid of a well organized conspiracy against him by al-Mustakfī and the Mamlūk emirs. But without proof of this suggestion a third reason comes to light, which concerns the character of al-Mustakfī as a person of religious authority. Seemingly al-Nāṣir Muḥammad became angry and so decided to send al-Mustakfī to Qūṣ, far from the capital of the Sultanate.¹

In conclusion, it might be worth saying that these three purposes together could be the cause of the action taken by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, even though one of them alone might explain al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's motives. The most remarkable feature of this series of important events was that the name of al-Mustakfī continued to be mentioned in the khuṭba in Cairo in spite of his being in Qūṣ.² This may confirm the idea that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad wanted a Caliph to stand beside him at the summit of the monarchy provided the Caliph had no effective position from the practical point of view.

Finally, in Sha'bān 740/February 1340, in Qūṣ, al-Mustakfī died, and was buried there, being upwards of fifty-six years of age, and having spent thirty-nine years in the office of the Caliphate.³

It is strange that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad did not try to deprive al-Mustakfī of his nominal functions. Either he meant to reassure the people that there was still a Caliph in the Sultanate who, having been exiled, had no effect on the Sultān's position in the society,

¹Sulūk, ii, 416; cf. Khulafā', 487.

²Husn, ii, 67; Khulafā', 487.

³Nāṣir, fol. 53b; Miṣr, fol. 127a; Zetterstéen, 207; Tadhkira, fol. 121a; Sulūk, ii, 502; Nujūm, ix, 151; Khulafā', 486.

or else Nāṣir did not feel that he had the right, in spite of his powerful standing, to deprive al-Mustakfī of his status, especially if we remember that al-Mustakfī had a good standing in society,¹ as he was popular among the people.² According to al-Suyūṭī, Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umari in Masālik al-Absār, states that al-Mustakfī was of good character.³

Respecting the personality of al-Mustakfī it is probably worth pointing out that he had a sense of modesty and a grasp of management. He had intelligence and knowledge.⁴ Al-Mustakfī was also accomplished and generous, wrote an extremely fine hand and was brave and skilled in the game of polo (La'b al-Kurā) and in shooting with the crossbow (al-ramy bi'l-bunduq).⁵ He conversed with learned and literary men and was munificent to them and a benefactor of their society.⁶ Al-Maqrīzī writes that al-Mustakfī was an honourable man of good character, was rich and had accomplished many meritorious deeds.⁷ Among other things, he built a school in the city of Ikhmīm in Upper Egypt.⁸

(ii) The Caliphate in the later time of al-Nāṣir Muhammad

When al-Mustakfī felt that his fate had overtaken him he held a meeting of forty honest persons to witness that his son Ahmad would

¹ Khulafā', 487.

² Badr, fol. 36b.

³ Khulafā', 487.

⁴ Al-Shujā'ī in his Nāṣir, fol. 71a says:

وكان فيه من الحشمة والرياسة مالا يوصفهم عبارة حسنة وذكاء، وكتابة جيدة، ومجيد في لعب الأكرة وربي البندق .

⁵ Ibid. See D. Ayalon, Notes on the Furūsiyya exercises and games in the Mamlūk Sultanate. Studies in Islamic history and civilization (Scripta Hierosolysitana, ix), Jerusalem, 1961, 46.

⁶ Khulafā', 487.

⁷ Sulūk, ii, 504.

⁸ Miṣr, fol. 127a; Jawāhir, fol. 231b; Zetterstéen, 207; Nujūm, ix, 151.

take over the Caliphate as his successor to the religious power, as the new Caliph of the Muslims.¹ The judge of Qūṣ, having seen and heard the will, confirmed the appointment.² Consequently, it could appear from the will that the Caliph had the right to appoint the next Caliph, assuming that he was the person who knew best who was the most suitable candidate for the office.³

Hence it is the more noteworthy that, when al-Nāṣir Muḥammad heard that al-Mustakfī had nominated his son Aḥmad as his successor to the Caliphate, he refused to accept the appointment on account of his personal feeling against al-Mustakfī,⁴ on which al-Shujā'ī says:

وأرسل متولي قوص إلى السلطان، وأخبره بوفاته، فأرسل السلطان بريدي
أحضر أولاده، وعيالهم، إلى القاهرة وأعلموه بالوصية بالخلافة لولده أحمد فلم
يوافق السلطان على توليته لحقده كان في نفسه منه .

In addition, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad wanted to nominate Ibrāhīm,⁵ who was the son of the heir to the Caliphate, al-Mustamsik bi Allāh Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad, son of al-Ḥākim bi-Amr Allāh Abū al-'Abbās Aḥmad. His grandfather, al-Ḥākim, had covenanted for the succession for his son Muḥammad and gave him the title of al-Mustamsik bi-Allāh, but Muḥammad died during al-Ḥākim's lifetime, whereupon he took the covenant for al-Mustamsik's son, this Ibrāhīm, thinking that he would be worthy of the Caliphate. But after a while he discovered

¹ Nāṣir, fol. 53b; Nujūm, ix, 151.

² Nujūm, ix, 151.

³ For such an appointment from a Caliph to his successor, see Subh, ix, 379-385.

⁴ Nāṣir, fol. 53b; Sulūk, ii, 502; Nujūm, ix, 151; Khulafā', 488; cf. Badr, fol. 39b.

⁵ Durar, i, 56.

that he was wrong in his belief.¹ Consequently, al-Hākim turned to nominate his son, al-Mustakfī, the uncle of Ibrāhīm.²

It seems that circumstances came to the aid of Ibrāhīm with a second opportunity to be Caliph with the title al-Wāthiq bi Allāh.³ Thereafter, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ordered that Aḥmad, the son of al-Mustakfī, would be given the allowance which used to be submitted to Ibrāhīm which was: monthly, five hundred and sixteen and two-thirds dirhams, eight arādib of wheat, three arādib of barley; bread four times a day, twenty pounds of meat daily and the usual clothes.⁴ Immediately after, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad called Ibrāhīm for a personal talk, and again for a meeting until he held an official meeting at the house of justice (Dār al-'Adl) and, in the presence of the judges, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad made clear his desire to appoint Ibrāhīm as the new Caliph of the Muslims and asked them to approve his nomination. But the judges refused his request, for they thought that Ibrāhīm was unfit for the office of the Caliphate because of his bad morals,⁵ especially as he had been married for a while to a girl singer who had been divorced according to the Sulṭān's order.⁶

¹Khulafā', 489.

²Nāṣir, fol. 53b; Khulafā', 488.

³Nāṣir, fol. 53b; Khulafā', 488.

⁴Miṣr fol. 127b; Zetterstéen, 207.

⁵Zetterstéen, 207; Sulūk, ii, 502-3; Nujūm, ix, 151.

⁶Sulūk, ii, 268; Badr, fol. 17a.

Finally al-Nāṣir Muḥammad succeeded in achieving his aim and Ibrāhīm was installed as the new Caliph of the Muslims with the title al-Wāthiq bi Allāh and was permitted to be given the allowance of the late al-Mustakfī, which was about three thousand and five hundred dirhams, nineteen irdabb of wheat and a few arādib of barley.¹ But it seems that the judges never agreed with al-Nāṣir Muḥammad regarding the appointment of Ibrāhīm as Caliph.²

As a result the khuṭba was cut off from the mosques for three months and three days; it was precisely from Sha'bān 740/February 1340, the death of al-Mustakfī, until Dhū 'l-Qa'da 740/May 1340, the date of the succession of Ibrāhīm as a Caliph.³ This fact is quite different from Arnold's statement that "al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, deprived the Caliph, Wāthiq bi-Allāh Ibrāhīm, for some months even of the empty dignity of having his name mentioned in the khuṭba";⁴ for Ibrāhīm was not at that time a Caliph from an official point of view.

The part which was played by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad suggests that the actions taken by him against al-Mustakfī were partly created by his personal feelings against al-Mustakfī.

Seemingly, it was because of this personal feeling that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad refused to approve the appointment of Aḥmad, the son of al-Mustakfī, given to him by his father. Besides, although al-Nāṣir Muḥammad knew that Ibrāhīm was not the person to be a Caliph

¹ Nāṣir, fols. 53b-54a; Miṣr, fols. 128a-b; Jawāhir, fol. 231b; Zettersteen, 207-208; Sulūk, ii, 503.

² Nāṣir, fol. 54a.

³ Miṣr, fol. 128b; Zettersteen, 208.

⁴ Arnold, The Caliphate, 100.

because of his disreputable personal behaviour,¹ he appointed him Caliph. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was only interested in the fact so far as it served his purpose.

Concerning the personality of al-Wāthiq bi-Allāh Ibrāhīm, the second Caliph of the Muslims during the third reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, it appears that he succeeded so little in gaining the confidence of the people that they petitioned the Sulṭān against him, describing his evil life. But al-Nāṣir Muḥammad paid no attention to this and persisted in his intentions until the people acknowledged him.² Moreover, it seems that the allowance granted to Ibrāhīm was so scanty that the populace in derision nicknamed him al-Musta'ṭī bi-Allāh (the beggar).³ Al-Suyūṭī quotes Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī in Masālik al-Aḥsār, that Ibrāhīm had been a man of disreputable behaviour during the early years of his life, that he grew up in dishonour, and inclined to naught but the neglect of piety. He was led astray by sensualities, and did unnecessarily sinful things. He associated with the mean and the base. His extravagance brought his reputation low; he was so blind as to think praiseworthy that which was wicked.⁴

Thereafter, when al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was at the point of death, he commended to the emirs the restoration of authority to the heir of al-Mustaḥfi, his son Aḥmad. Thus, when al-Manṣūr Abū Bakr, the son of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, assumed supreme power, he convened an assembly on the 21st Dhū 'l-Ḥijja 741/7th June 1341, and summoned the

¹Sulūk, ii, 503; Badr, fol. 17a.

²Jawāhir, fol. 232b; Sulūk, ii, 503; Khulafā', 488-9.

³Jawāhir, fol. 232b; Sulūk, ii, 503; Khulafā', 488-9, Nujūm, ix, 151.

⁴Khulafā', 489.

Caliph al-Wāthiq Ibrāhīm and the heir Aḥmad and the judges and asked them, "Who by law is entitled to the Caliphate?"¹ The judge, 'Izz al-Dīn b. Jamā'a² answered "Verily the Caliph al-Mustakfī, who died in the city of Qūṣ, bequeathed the Caliphate after him to his son Aḥmad and had it attested by forty witnesses in the city of Qūṣ; and this was proved before me after its confirmation before my deputy in the city of Qūṣ."³ Consequently, the Sulṭān Abū Bakr deposed Ibrāhīm and gave his mubāya'a to Aḥmad who was surnamed al-Ḥākim bi-Amr Allāh,⁴ and became the Caliph of the Muslims until his death in Sha'bān 748/November 1347.⁵ What reasons made al-Nāṣir Muḥammad make this change respecting the office of the Caliphate in the last years of his rule? Regarding this, it is worth noting that al-Ḥākim bi-Amr Allāh Aḥmad had been appointed with a new form of covenant of allegiance.⁶ Reverting to our question, one might say that there is no mention of any direct reasons which would have had a deep influence upon al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's position towards the Caliphate or against the personality of the Caliph, and thus the sole comment which can be made is that either al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was displeased with the character of Ibrāhīm and decided that he was unfit to be a Caliph,

¹Ibid., 490.

²For his biography see, Durar, ii, 378-382; Shadharāt, vi, 208-209.

³Khulafā', 490.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Subh, iii, 265-266.

⁶For this covenant of allegiance (mubāya'a), see Subh, ix, 320-331; Khulafā', 491-499.

or else he realized that his actions against the Caliphate had had a bad influence upon the court as well as upon society, and that he should be more careful in his policy towards the Caliphate. Therefore al-Nāṣir Muḥammad had second thoughts in the matter and the change respecting the holder of the office taking place before his death.

(iii) The function of the Caliphate

Although it is true that there were in the Mamlūk Sultanate two heads, the Sulṭān and the Caliph, it is also quite true that the Sulṭān was the only effective ruler who dealt with political affairs as well as with religious matters. Therefore, the only reason for the Sulṭān to welcome the Caliph as a religious authority besides his power was the legitimacy it gave to his rule. Subsequently, the rights which the Caliph enjoyed were firstly, presenting a delegation to the Sulṭān to give a legitimate aspect to his power; secondly, the mention of his name in the khuṭba before the name of the Sulṭān and thirdly, the inscribing of his name on coins beside the name of the Sulṭān, but it seems that this last function was not carried out during the reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. Fourthly, the Caliph was accustomed to exercise the right of choosing his successor, although, as we have seen, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad successfully managed to cancel the will of al-Mustakfī regarding the succession of his son Aḥmad to the Caliphate. On the other hand, the Caliph had to be an obedient subject who had to yield to the royal command either respecting his position as Caliph or concerning his personal conduct. Moreover, the whole history of the Caliphate during the era of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad indicates that the Caliph had no right to interfere in political life, although al-Nāṣir Muḥammad

was careful to pave the way for him to enjoy a comfortable life. From a military standpoint the Caliph could be a useful person and this can be observed from the part which was played by al-Mustakfī when the governor of Yemen, al-Mu'ayyad Hizabr al-Dīn Dāwud¹ stopped sending the usual annual present to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in 707/1307.² Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad asked al-Mustakfī to use his position as Caliph of the Muslims, and to write to the Yamanī king advising him to respect his loyalty to the 'Abbāsīd Caliphate and to remember his friendship with the Mamlūk Sultanate by continuing to send his annual gift as a symbol of obedience.³

This gives one the impression that the Caliph could be a help to the kingdom in practising his religious authority, although that must be by the order of the Sultān and under his supervision too. There was also Muḥammad Tughluq, the ruler of Dihli during the first half of the fourteenth century, who sent to the Caliph al-Mustakfī a humble petition, seeking his recognition, and at once substituted his name for his own on the coins of the empire.⁴ This could give us an idea about the importance to a Muslim ruler of having recognition from the Caliph of the Muslims for the purposes of legitimacy.

(iv) Conclusion

Through this long discussion concerning the Caliphs who lived during the third reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and the function of the Caliphate, it can be understood that, although the Caliphs contemporary

¹For his biography, see Durar, ii, 99-100.

²Subh, vi, 421-422.

³For this letter, see Subh, vi, 421-426.

⁴Sir Wolseley Haig, "Five Questions in the History of the Tughluq Dynasty of Dihli", J.R.A.S. (1922), 351; see also Cambridge History of Islam, ii, 18.

with al-Nāṣir Muḥammad used to be brought out with great pomp and ceremony¹ as the Caliphs of the Muslims, to give the colour of legitimacy to the rule of the contemporary Mamlūk governor, who had the right to assume the title of Sulṭān, the situation of the Caliphs at the time of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was humiliating, and the Caliphs never had the right to speak or to live freely. Hence, it is untrue to say that the Caliphs enjoyed an independent position. During the period of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's rule the Caliphs lived as prisoners and acted under the supervision of the Sulṭān, and they had no right to interfere in political life, which was considered to be the business of the Sulṭān only and to have nothing to do with the Caliph of the Muslims.

Finally, it might be worth stating that the condition of the 'Abbāsīd Caliphate during al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's third reign was of no effect in regard to political life; and the internal circumstances, especially respecting the Mamlūk governorship, made this situation clear enough to be noticed by both the ruling class and the people. It was a period of powerful foundation concerning the political status and the governorship. Furthermore, one might say that the aspect of legitimacy, which had been much desired by the Mamlūk rulers, even those of competent authorities and great power like al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, was the only thing which helped the Caliphate to exist throughout the period under study.

Besides, although al-Nāṣir Muḥammad worked to weaken the position of the Caliphate because of his political ambitions and personal feeling, and to disgrace the standing of the Caliphs in the royal court as well as in society, he was careful to keep the Caliphate and to protect its existence. This statement gives us a

¹Subh, iii, 280.

clear idea of the importance of having a Caliph beside the Mamlūk Sulṭān in the royal court, in the Egyptian society, in the Mamlūk Sultanate and in the Islamic world. The Mamlūk rulers, probably, wanted to show themselves supported by the Caliphate, even if they were powerful and could easily have continued to rule the Mamlūk Sultanate alone, as could al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. It was, in fact, the religious right and the legitimate aspect which were eagerly desired by the Mamlūk Sulṭāns. But that importance was not enough to provide the 'Abbāsīd Caliphate with power or efficiency; therefore, one could record that, if the Caliphs during the period under review tried to practise political work or to interfere in state affairs, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad would not have hesitated to put an end to the 'Abbāsīd Caliphate and to its nominal existence.

Moreover we should not forget that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was very careful and extremely serious in using every source of power and every element of support to cement his political position as the most powerful head in the Mamlūk Sultanate; therefore he used both force and diplomacy, even with the weak factors, to accomplish his great expectations in the political, diplomatic, economic, religious and social fields.

Chapter II

THE ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS

(i) The basic divisions

Coming to study the administrative division of Egypt during this period one might ask what were the main parts of Egypt? How far is it possible for us to reconstruct this from existing sources and documents? Information comes rather sporadically about the administrative division of Egypt. Besides the work of Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī, Masālik al-absār,¹ there is the anonymous work, Taqwīm al-buldān al-Miṣriyya fī al-a'māl al-Sulṭāniyya,² which was carried out by the order of al-Ashraf Sha'bān. Therefore, we may deduce certain general principles with regard to the main administrative provinces and centres in Egypt. It might be important in the history of this period to discuss the regularity of the division, the financial resources and expenditure of every province (niyāba) and of every wilāya, and the local administration of this division. We will study the administrative division of Egypt before and after the Nāṣirī rawk, i.e. redistribution of lands between the Sulṭān and the muqta's. When that speedy cadastral survey (kashf al-bilād) was made, the estates were divided into Royal (al-khāṣṣ al-Sulṭānī) and iqṭā's.

Subsequently, a new division concerning the administrative picture of the Egyptian lands appeared. Accordingly, the districts' chiefs of police (wulāt) were of the muqta's.³

¹Paris Ms. 2325.

²Cambridge, U.L. Ms. Qq. 65.

³Poliak, Feudalism in Egypt, Syria, Palestine and the Lebanon 1250-1900, 25.

According to al-Qalqashandī, al-Quḍā'ī records in his Khiṭaṭ that Egypt was divided into three main sections (ahyāz), consisting of fifty-five regions (kūrat).¹ The first section (ḥayz) is Upper Egypt (al-Wajh al-Qiblī), which extends from the south part of Fuṣṭāṭ to the southern limits of Egypt and comprises twenty regions.² The second section is Lower Egypt (al-Wajh al-Baḥrī), which consists of thirty-three regions distributed in four districts (nawāhī). The first part, the Eastern Ḥawf, comprises eight regions.³ The second part, Baṭn al-Rīf,⁴ consists of seven regions. The third part, Miṣṭaqat al-Jazīra, between the eastern and the western banks of the Nile, comprises five regions. The fourth part, the Western Ḥawf, consists of eleven regions. The third section covers the Qibla kuwar which were five regions,⁵ but only four are recorded.⁶

Table I

The regions of:

The first section	The third section
1. al-Fayyūm	1. al-Ṭūr wa-Fārān
2. Manf	2. Rāya wa'l-Qulzum
3. Wasīm	3. Ayla wa-ḥayyizihā wa-Madyan wa-ḥayyizihā wa'l-'Awnīd wa-ḥayyizihā wa'l-Ḥawrā' wa-ḥayyizihā
4. al-Sharqiyya	4. Badā Ya'qūb wa-Shu'ayb

¹Subh, iii, 379; cf. Khiṭaṭ, i, part I, 129.

²Subh, iii, 379-384. Kuwrat no. 13 is missing from Subh, see Table I.

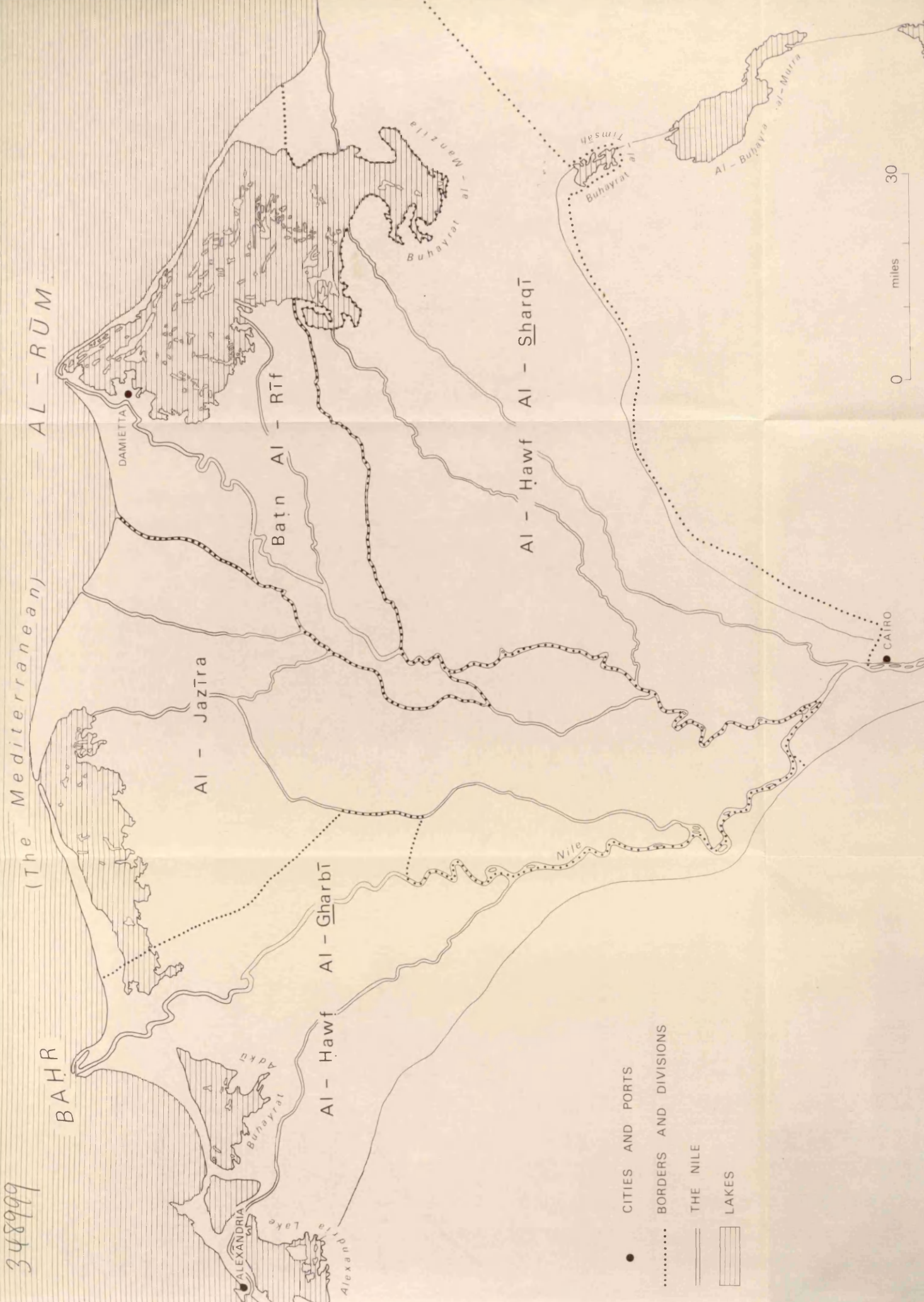
³Subh, iii, 385-386. See Table II.

⁴It means the lower land in Egypt, see Subh, iii, 386.

⁵Ibid., iii, 386-388, 389-391. See Table I.

⁶See Maps Nos. I & II.

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(The Mediterranean)

AL - RŪM

BAHR

DAMIETTA

Al - Jazīra

Baḥn Al - Rīf

Al - Hawf Al - Gharbī

Al - Hawf Al - Sharqī

Nile

CITIES AND PORTS

BORDERS AND DIVISIONS

THE NILE

LAKES

0 30 miles

MAP No. I

THE ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION OF LOWER EGYPT in the 9th Century when Lower Egypt was divided into four divisions (aqālim):

1 Al - Hawf al Gharbī 2 Al - Jazīra



MAP No. I

THE ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION OF LOWER EGYPT in the 9th Century when Lower Egypt was divided into four divisions (aqālīm) :

1. Al - Hawf al Gharbī
2. Al - Jazīra
3. Batn al - Rṭf
4. Al - Hawf al - Sharqī



This map is taken from 'Atlas tarikhī Li asfal al-ard' by Omar Toussoun.

MAP No. II

The following table displays the provinces (aqālim) of Lower Egypt and its centres as illustrated on the map:

The Province	its Centre
1 ALEXANDRIA	Alexandria
2 AL-BUHAYRA	Damanhūr
3 FAWWA WAĻ-MUZĀHAMAYYATĀN	Fuwwa
4 ROSETTA	Rosetta
5 AL-NASTARĀWIYYA	Nastarāwa
6 AL-TAMRISIYYA	Tamrīs
7 AL-DUNJĀWAYYA	Dunjāwayya
8 DAMIETTA	Damietta
9 AL-UBWĀNIYYA	Ubwān
10 AL-FAQŪSIYYA	Fāqūs
11 AL-SHARQIYYA	Bilbays
12 AL-MURTĀHIYYA	Ushmūm Janāh
13 AL-DAQAHLIYYA	Daqhala
14 AL-SAMANNUDIYYA	Samannūd
15 AL-SAKHĀWIYYA	Sakhā
16 AL-SANHŪRIYYA	Sanhūr
17 ḤAWF RAMSĪS	Ramsīs
18 JAZĪRAT BANĪ NAṢR	Abyār
19 AL-ṬANDATĀWIYYA	Ṭandatā
20 JAZĪRAT QUWAYSANĀ	Quwaysanā
21 AL-MANŪFIYYATĀN	Manūf
22 AL-QALYŪBIYYA	Qalyūb

THE ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS OF LOWER EGYPT in the second half of the 10th Century when Lower Egypt was divided into 22 Provinces (aqālim)

Table I (cont.)

The first section	
5.	Dalāṣ wa-Būṣayr
6.	Ahnās
7.	al-Qays
8.	al-Bahnasā
9.	Ṭaḥā wa-Ḥayr <u>Shanūda</u>
10.	Buwayṭ
11.	al- <u>Ashmūnayn</u> wa-Anṣinā wa- <u>Shuṭb</u>
12.	Suyūṭ
14.	Qahquwa
15.	<u>Ikhmīm</u> wa'l-Dayr wa- <u>Abshāya</u>
16.	Hū wa-Dandara wa-Qinā
17.	Qift wa'l-'Uqṣur
18.	Qūṣ
19.	Asnā wa-Armant
20.	'Uswān

Table II

The regions of the second section

Part one	Part two	Part three	Part four
1. 'Ayn <u>Shams</u>	1. Banā wa-Būṣayr	1. Damsīs wa-Manūf	1. Ṣā
2. Atrīb	2. Samannūd	2. Ṭuwwat Manūf	2. <u>Shabās</u>
3. Banā wa-Tumayy	3. Nawasā	3. <u>Sakhā</u> wa- Tayda wa'l- Farrājūn	3. al-Badhaqūn
4. Baṣṭa	4. al-Awsiyya	4. Buqayra wa-Dayṣā	4. al- <u>Khays</u> wa'l- <u>Shirāk</u>

Table II (cont.)

Part one	Part two	Part three	Part four
5. <u>Tarābiya</u>	5. al-Bujūm	5. <u>Bashrūd</u>	5. <u>Khirbitā</u>
6. <u>Qurbayṭ</u>	6. Daqahla		6. <u>Qarṭasā wa-Maṣīl</u>
7. <u>Ṣān wa-Iblīl</u>	7. <u>Tannīs wa-Dimyāt</u>		7. al-Milyadas
8. <u>al-Farmā wa'l-'Arīsh</u>			8. <u>Ikhnā wa-Rashīd wa'l-Buḥayra</u>
			9. (missing)
			10. <u>Maryūṭ</u>
			11. <u>Lūbiya wa-Marāqiya</u>

This administrative division of Egypt was completely changed after this speedy cadastral survey of Egypt and the redistribution of lands (the Nāṣirī rawk) which was accomplished by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's order in 715/1315.¹ Moreover, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad spent two months in Upper Egypt to supervise the carrying out of the operation.² Concerning this period, the first political geographer worthy of consideration is Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī, the Sulṭān al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's confidential secretary (kātib al-sirr), who wrote Masālik al-absār and records that Egypt during this period was divided into two fundamental parts,³ Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt.⁴ There were 2,163 districts (nawāḥī) in Egypt excluding the Jīziyya parts which belonged to the Royal privy purse or were the Sulṭān's estates (bilād al-Dīwān bi'l-Jīziyya).⁵ Lower

¹Infra, 263-271.

²Sulūk, ii, 147.

³Masālik, fol. 201b (Paris Ms. 2325).

⁴See Maps Nos. III, IV.

⁵Taqwīm, fol. 2b; cf. Saniyya, 3.

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AL - RŪM

(The Mediterranean)

BAHR

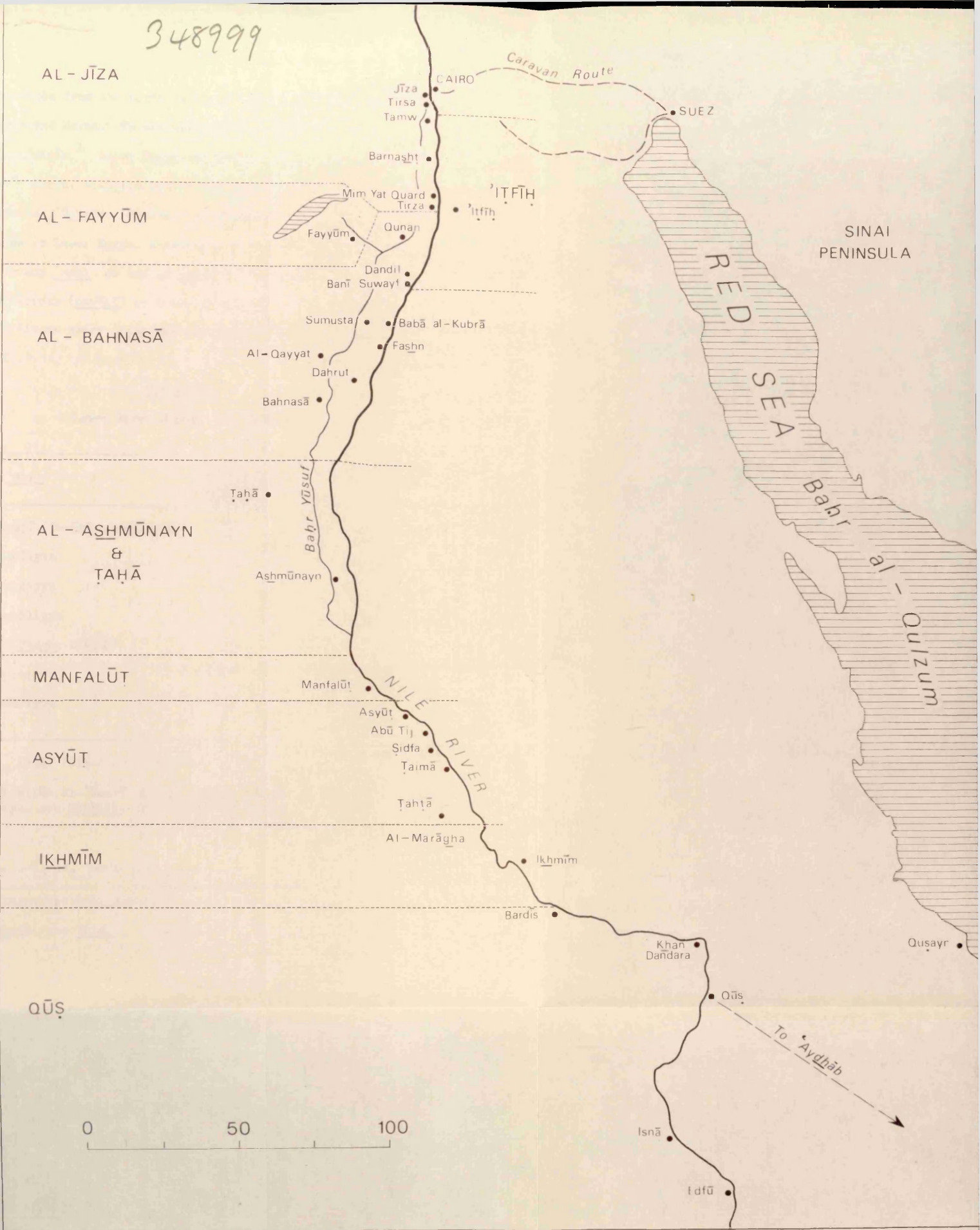


The Province	its Centre
1 AL-ḌAWĀḤĪT	Cairo
2 AL-QALŪBIYYA	Qalīb
3 AL-SHARQIYYA	Bilbays
4 AL-DAQAHLIYYA WA 'L-MURTĀHIYYA	Uṣṣimūm Tanāḥ
5 DAMIETTA	Damietta
6 AL-ḠHARBIYYA	Al-Mahalla al-Kubra
7 AL-MANŪFIYYA	Manūf
8 JAZIRAT ABYĀR	Abyār
9 AL-BUHAYRA	Damanhūr
10 FUWWA WA AL-MUZĀHAMAYTAYN	Fuwwa
11 AL-NASTARĀWIYYA	Nastarāwa
12 ALEXANDRIA	Alexandria

MAP No. III

THE ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS OF LOWER EGYPT from the time of al Rawk al-Nāṣiri 715/1315 until the time of Al-Ashraf Shābān 777/1375 when Lower Egypt divided into 13 provinces (āqālim), every province had its own centre

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MAP N^o IV

THE ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION OF UPPER EGYPT

8
3

Egypt extended from the north coast of Egypt to Cairo and covered Alexandria and Barqa. To the east it stretched as far as Khalīj Amīr al-Mu'minīn.¹ Lower Egypt was divided into six a'māl, as follows:² Barqa, al-Gharbiyya, al-Sharqiyya, al-Qalyūbiyya, al-Manūfiyya and 'Ushmūm. Besides the capital of Egypt, there were two cities in Lower Egypt, Alexandria and Damietta, which did not belong to any 'amal or had no 'amal of their own.³ There were 1,651 districts (nawāhī) in Lower Egypt, distributed in eleven a'māl.⁴ Almost every 'amal had its own centre, as is shown in Table III.

Table III

Lower Egypt during this period

The <u>'amal</u>	its districts (<u>nawāhī</u>)	its centre
1. Al- <u>Ḍawāhī</u> (<u>Ḍawāhī al-Qāhira</u>)	20	Cairo
2. Al- <u>Qalyūbiyya</u>	59	Qalyūb
3. Al- <u>Sharqiyya</u>	380	Bilbays ⁵
4. Al- <u>Daqahliyya</u>	217	' <u>Ushmūm</u> ⁶
5. <u>Ḍawāhī Thaghr Dimyāt</u>	12	-
6. Al- <u>Gharbiyya</u>	471	al-Maḥala
7. Al- <u>Manūfiyya</u>	232	Manūf

¹ Masālik, fols. 201b-202a (Paris Ms. 2325).

² Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī does not make a distinction between a'māl and wilāya, see Masālik, fols. 201b-202a (Paris Ms. 2325).

³ Ibid.

⁴ Saniyya, 3-4; cf. Table III.

⁵ For Bilbays, see Bul, 118-119.

⁶ For 'Ushmūm, see Ibid.

Table III (cont.)

The 'amal	its districts (<u>nawāhī</u>)	its centre
8. Abyār wa-Jazīrat Banī Naṣr	46	Abyār
9. Al-Buḥayra	222	Damanhūr ¹
10. Fuwwa wa'l-Muzāḥamatayn	16	Fuwwa
11. Nasturāwa	6 ²	-

According to Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī there were nine a'māl in Upper Egypt, as follows: Qūṣ, which was on the east bank of the Nile; it was the greatest and covered the Bedouins, 'Arab Qamūla, and Uswān which was at the further end of the southern frontiers of the Mamlūk Sultanate, Ikhmīm, Asyūṭ, Manfalūt, al-Ashmūnayn, al-Bahnasā, al-Fayyūm, 'Iṭfīḥ and al-Jīza.³ Al-Qalqashandī confirms this record and adds briefly some notes regarding the centres (marākiz) of the a'māl which will be illustrated in Table IV.⁴

Table IV

Upper Egypt during this period

The 'amal	its districts	its centre
1. Qūṣ	-	Qūṣ
2. Ikhmīm	26	Ikhmīm
3. Asyūṭ	32	Asyūṭ
4. Manfalūt	-	Manfalūt
5. Al-Ashmūnayn	103	Al-Ashmūnayn

¹Subh, ii, 402-410.

²Taqwīm, fols. 3a-b; cf. Saniyya, 3-4; Khiṭaṭ, i, part I, 129.

³Masālik, fol. 201b (Paris Ms. 2325).

⁴Subh, iii, 396-404.

Table IV (cont.)

The a'māl	its districts	its centre
6. Al-Bahnasā	256	Al-Bahnasā
7. Al-Fayyūm	97	Al-Fayyūm ¹
8. 'Iṭfīḥ	50	'Iṭfīḥ ²
9. Al-Jīza ³	4	Al-Jīza

However, it is both interesting and important to note that there were a'māl in both Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt, and almost every a'māl had its administrative centre.

Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī states that Qūṣ was the only city in Upper Egypt.⁵ Yet we know that Qūṣ, the city, was the administrative centre (markaz) of Qūṣ the a'māl.⁶ Abū al-Fidā' (d. 732/1331) confirms the previous statement that Qūṣ was the most important city in Upper Egypt and came next to al-Fuṣṭāṭ in its greatness; Qūṣ was an important market for the merchants from 'Adan.⁷ Abū al-Fidā' continues that Qūṣ was on the eastern bank of the Nile.⁸ Qūṣ had its own port on the coastal section, at a distance of three days' journey, the port of al-Quṣayr on the Red Sea.⁹ Moreover, Abū al-

¹For detail, see Bul, 110-115.

²Subh, iii, 396-404.

³Masālik, fols. 201b; Tacwīm, fols. 3b-4a; cf. Saniyya, 45.

⁴Tacwīm, fols. 3b-4a; cf. Saniyya, 4-5; Khiṭaṭ, i, part I, 129.

⁵Masālik, fol. 195b (Paris Ms. 2325).

⁶Supra, 42.

⁷Bul, 111.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid.

Fidā', in his book Taqwīm al-buldān records that Uswān was on the eastern bank of the Nile and was at the same time an important part of Qūṣ the wilāya. Besides, Uswān was the last part of the southern frontier of Upper Egypt.¹

Furthermore Abū al-Fidā' cites that 'Aydḥāb,² on the Red Sea in Upper Egypt, was the commercial port for the merchants from Yemen and the main port from which the pilgrims left Egypt for al-Ḥijāz.³

Ibn Faḡl Allāh al-'Umarī describes Alexandria as a fortified city, protected by a military force, and it was the only city in Egypt whose governor (ḥākim) was appointed by Royal Decree (marṣūm sultānī). The people of Alexandria were aware of the maritime affairs. Alexandria was a glorious city of beautiful buildings.⁴ There were eight districts (nawāḥī) in the port of Alexandria.⁵

Abū al-Fidā', the contemporary historian of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, records that Alexandria was on the Mediterranean Sea (Baḥr al-Rūm); it was one of the greatest cities, and it had a little fertile island on which one could find different kinds of land production.⁶ Alexandria was surrounded by a strong wall of stone with four gates (abwāb), Rashīd gate (bāb), Sidra gate, Sea gate and a fourth gate which was opened only on Friday.⁷ It is clear from this short survey

¹ Ibid., 113.

² Infra, 227-228.

³ Bul., 131.

⁴ Masālik, fol. 195b (Paris Ms. 2325); cf. also Khiṭaṭ, i, Part I, 130.

⁵ Taqwīm, fol. 3b; cf. Saniyya, 4.

⁶ Bul., 113.

⁷ Ibid.

that Alexandria was not far from constituting a provincial unit. Alexandria covered the northern coastal parts of the west part of Lower Egypt and stretched to Barqa.¹

Besides the three wilāyāt of Egypt, already mentioned, Upper Egypt, Lower Egypt and Alexandria, Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī mentions Barqa² which was inhabited by the Bedouins.³ It was a large wilāya, divided into three sections: the coastal section, the mountainous section and the country.⁴ Barqa was an important part of the Mamlūk Sultanate, and it was governed by a Mamlūk governor.⁵

Besides the capital (qā'ida) of Barqa, Anṭābulus, there were other cities in Barqa such as Ṭulymathā and Ṭabrqa.⁶ According to al-Qalqashandī, Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī records in his work Masālik al-absār that Barqa was a large province (iqlīm), of beautiful parts, fertile land, inhabited cities and full of livestock and strong horses.⁷

According to Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī there was another part of Egypt, i.e. the oases, which was an important division, although it could not be listed among the wilāyāt, or the a'māl with regard to the administrative division of Egypt.⁸ Some of the Wahāt were situated

¹ Masālik, fols. 201b-202a (Paris Ms. 2325).

² Masālik, fol. 202b (Paris Ms. 2325).

³ Infra, 223, 230-232.

⁴ Masālik, fol. 202b (Paris Ms. 2325).

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid., fols. 203 a-b; cf. Subh, iii, 395.

⁷ Subh, iii, 395.

⁸ Masālik, fols. 202a-b (Paris Ms. 2325).

in Upper Egypt. Others were between Miṣr (Fuṣṭāṭ) and Alexandria.¹ Subsequently Egyptian oases (wāḥāt) were distributed among the limits of Miṣr (Fuṣṭāṭ), Alexandria, Upper Egypt, Nubia and Abyssinia.² The wāḥāt were rich in their springs and fertile land.³ There were three regions (kuwar) in the oases territory (Minṭaqaṭ al-Wāḥāt), which extended from the western side of Upper Egypt to the northern frontiers of Nubia: firstly, al-Wāḥ al-Khāṣṣ or Wāḥ al-Bahhasā which was an important centre for the production of dates (tamr) and raisins (zabīb).⁴ Secondly, al-Wāḥ al-Dākhila which came next to the first Wāḥ in the building ('imāra) and covered many cities such as al-Quṣayr and al-Qalamūn. Thirdly, al-Wāḥ al-Khārija which was between al-Wāḥ al-Dākhila and the countryside of Upper Egypt.⁵

In 733/1333 Gaza became a province (niyāba) of Syria and its governor (nā'ib) had to correspond with the viceroy of Syria (nā'ib al-Shām) concerning the local affairs of Gaza. Before that Gaza was a wilāya, and its governor corresponded with the Sulṭān.⁶ Abū al-Fidā' regards Gaza as a Syrian province.⁷ Therefore it could be said that this change respecting the political and the administrative position of Gaza affected the picture of the administrative division of Egypt during the period under study. Consequently we will not deal with Gaza in this work with regard to the administrative division of Egypt.

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid; cf. Intiṣār, ii, 11.

³ Masālik, fols 202a-b (Paris Ms. 2325); cf. Intiṣār, ii, 11.

⁴ Subh, iii, 393-394; cf. Intiṣār, ii, 11.

⁵ Subh, iii, 393-394; cf. Intiṣār, ii, 11-12.

⁶ Subh, iv, 198; Sulūk, ii, 358.

⁷ Bul, 238-239.

(ii) The local administration

After the re-distribution of Egyptian land, the Nāṣirī rawk, there were in Egypt twenty-four emirs, each was the commander of 1,000 horsemen of the Ḥalqa (muqaddam 'alf).¹ There were also other emirs, each of whom had under his command more than seventy horsemen. This statement is made by Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī, and recorded by al-Qalqashandī in Ṣubḥ al-a'shā.² There was one inspector (kāshif)³ for Upper Egypt and another for Lower Egypt; a few years later they became provinces (niyābāt), nevertheless they maintained the two inspectors, each of whom had under his command seventy horsemen (the emirs of al-ṭablakhānāh).⁴

Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī records that there was a chief of police (wālī) in Qūṣ in Upper Egypt.⁵ The chiefs of police (wulāt) of the a'māl kept the Sulṭān informed of every detail concerning the internal affairs of their a'māl.⁶ Accordingly, the Sulṭān made all the decisions with respect to local administration through the chancery (dīwān al-'inshā'). If the matter was vital the Sulṭān dealt with the essentials and left the polite formulas for the confidential secretary (ḵātib al-sirr).⁷

¹Subh, iv, 14.

²Ibid., iv, 15.

³It seems that the function of the inspector (kāshif) was to inspect the administrative affairs and the social situation of either Upper Egypt or Lower Egypt because each part had its own inspector (kāshif); see Subh, iv, 25.

⁴Ibid., iv, 25, 65.

⁵Masālik, fol. 195a (Paris Ms. 2325).

⁶Subh, iv, 59.

⁷Ibid.

There were seven chiefs of police (wulāt) in the wilāyāt of Lower Egypt and Upper Egypt, each of whom had under his command seventy horsemen (the emirs of al-ṭablakhānāh).¹ In Upper Egypt there were four wilāyāt, each wilāya governed by one of these emirs.² These wilāyāt are al-Bahnasā, al-Ashmūnayn, Qūṣ and Uswān.³ There was no chief of police in Asyūṭ because the head of the administration or the governor-general (wālī al-wulāt)⁴ resided there. Lower Egypt was divided into four wilāyāt: al-Sharqiyya, al-Manūfiyya, al-Gharbiyya and al-Buḥayra.⁵ These are the wilāyāt in Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt which were administered by emirs of al-ṭablakhānāh.⁶

Although al-Qalqashandī mentions that there were only seven wilāyāt in Mamlūk Egypt during this period he records eight. A chief of police (wālī) was appointed to each wilāya and lived in the wilāya town (maqarral-wālī)⁷, for example, in the wilāya of al-Sharqiyya the chief of police (wālī) lived in Bilbays.⁸ In the wilāya of al-Manūfiyya the chief of police (wālī) lived in Manūf and in the wilāya of al-Gharbiyya the chief of police (wālī) lived in al-Maḥalla al-Kubrā. This wilāya, al-Gharbiyya, in lower Egypt, was as important

¹Ibid., iv, 66; see also p.26.

²Ibid., iv, 66.

³Ibid., iv, 26, 66.

⁴Ibid., iv, 26, 66.

⁵Ibid., iv, 26-27, 66.

⁶Infra, 69, 70.

⁷Subh, iv, 26-27, 66.

⁸Ibid., iv, 27, 66.

as the wilāya of Qūṣ in Upper Egypt.

There was also the wilāya of al-Buḥayra and the chief of police (wālī) lived in the wilāya town (maqarr al-wālī) of Damḥūr.¹

There were also other wulāt, the emirs of twenty (al-'ashrāwāt),² each of whom had under his command approximately twenty horsemen.³

There were seven wilāyāt in Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt administered in this way.⁴ There were three wilāyāt in Upper Egypt, al-Jīza, 'Iṭfīḥ and Manflūṭ. Four wilāyāt of this kind were in Lower Egypt, Manūf, Ushmūm, Damiette and Qaṭya.⁵

There was also the office of controller (nāzīr) of al-Jīza who was responsible for the Royal privy funds (al-khāṣṣ al-Sulṭānī) in all parts of al-Jīziyya ('amal al-Jīziyya).⁶

There was a controller (nāzīr) in Upper Egypt (nāzīr al-Wajh al-Qiblī) who was responsible for money left by any citizen who died without an heir.⁷ There was also a controller fulfilling the same function in Lower Egypt (nāzīr al-Wajh al-Bahrī).⁸ In all probability al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was responsible for appointing the chief administrators of both provinces and a 'māl.

During the period under study there were in the Mamlūk Sultanate two market inspectors (muhtasib-nazar al-hisba), one in Cairo and

¹ Ibid., iv, 27, 66.

² Ibid., iv, 66.

³ Infra, 69.

⁴ Subh, iv, 27, 66.

⁵ Ibid., iv, 27, 28, 66, 67.

⁶ Ibid., iv, 33.

⁷ Ibid., iv, 33.

⁸ Ibid., iv, 34.

one in al-Fuṣṭāṭ.¹ The latter was responsible for appointing the chief of police (wālī) of the a'māl in Upper Egypt.² The Cairo inspector was responsible for appointing the chief of police of the a'māl of Lower Egypt except for the city of Alexandria.³ These contradictory statements appear in Ṣubḥ al-a'shā. However, the Sulṭān was solely responsible for appointing the chiefs of police (wulāt) of the a'māl and provinces in both Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt. Perhaps these contradictory statements are due to the frequent consultations, all of which were written down but not dated.

There were two inspectors (kāshif): one in Upper Egypt, the other in Lower Egypt.⁴

A Royal Decree is recorded by al-Qalqashandī concerning the appointment of the controller of Alexandria (nāzir).⁵ His responsibilities were, firstly, to direct the internal affairs of Alexandria with integrity; secondly, to maintain order; thirdly, to collect the various taxes levied on the inhabitants and foreign merchants; fourthly, to be lenient towards the foreign merchants and to behave with justice towards them.⁶ because they contributed to the national wealth;⁷ fifthly, to act towards the foreign merchants in accordance with the Royal Decrees (al-marāsīm al-sharīfa), and to adopt a benevolent attitude; sixthly, to send all the money so collected direct

¹Ibid., iv, 37.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Ṣubḥ, vii, 157; cf. Kashf, 129-130.

⁵Ṣubḥ, vii, 226.

⁶Ibid., xi, 419, 420, 421.

⁷Ibid., xi, 421.

to the Treasury; seventhly, to supervise every transaction which increased the capital of the port; eighthly, to control the civil servants and, on the other hand, not to be over strict with them; ninthly, if the controller (nāzir) observed any new events he could send to the government in Cairo for consultation.¹ Subsequently he would receive a reasonable answer.²

Other Royal Decrees concerning the office of control (nāzir) in Alexandria are mentioned by al-Qalqashandī.³ He quotes a Royal Decree concerning the nomination of the chief of police (wālī) of the wilāya of al-Sharqiyya. This decree deals firstly with the importance of the wilāya; secondly with the maintenance of order;⁴ thirdly, the protection of the citizens; fourthly, this position was offered to this chief of police (wālī) in consequence of his strong personality, his good reputation, his honesty and his incorruptability; fifthly, the decree deals with his duties to control the conduct of the wilāya, trade, agriculture, construction and taxation.⁵

This Royal Decree was issued by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.⁶ A similar Royal Decree had been issued concerning al-Gharbiyya by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.⁷

¹Ibid.

²Subh, xi, 42; also cf. 42.

³Ibid., xi, 40-42, 421-423.

⁴Ibid., xi, 43.

⁵Ibid., xi, 43-44.

⁶Ibid., xi, 44.

⁷Ibid., xi, 45-47.

Al-Qalqasnandī records a Royal Decree concerning the office of the governor-general (wālī al-wulāt) in Upper Egypt.¹ The decree mentions:

1. A prayer of thanks.²

2. The importance of Upper Egypt was due to: firstly, that it was the route to Yemen and al-Ḥijāz and must have complete protection from outside attack; secondly, that there were important centres in Upper Egypt and they were included in the decree: al-Bahnasā, al-Ashmūnayn, Qūṣ, Ikhmīm, Asyūṭ, Manfalūṭ and 'Iṭfīḥ. Within these territories were the assignments (iqṭā's) of the Mamlūk emirs of different ranks: the emirs of thousands (muqaddamū al-'Ulūf)³, the emirs of seventy ('umarā' al-ṭablahānāh), the soldiers (al-mamālīk) and the troopers (ajnād al-ḥalaqa).⁴

3. Owing to the extent and the importance of Upper Egypt it was necessary to appoint a governor-general (wālī al-wulāt) to maintain order, to protect the people and the region from attack.⁵

4. To protect Upper Egypt from robbery and violence a governor-general was appointed, a man of experience and integrity. The decree states that the governor-general would introduce reforms and suppress riots.⁶

¹ Ibid., xi, 426-427.

² Ibid., xi, 427-428.

³ Ibid., xi, 428.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Subh, xi, 429.

5. The governor-general had to fulfil his duties according to the laws of Islam (sharī'a):¹ punish dishonesty, reward honourable conduct and show benevolence towards the people, and himself be incorruptible.²

On the other hand, it was part of his office to inspect other cities and provinces to see that law and order were maintained and that there was no prostitution.³

6. The government decreed that all the chiefs of police (wulāt) of the a'māl should obey the governor-general and sustain him in the fulfilment of his duties.

No protection was to be given to robbers and law breakers. If this law were infringed the penalty would be execution and confiscation of property.

7. Moreover, it was the governor-general's responsibility to guard the city gates and outside the city walls.

8. Another edict forbade the Bedouins and the cultivators to own horses and carry arms, under pain of punishment.

9. It was part of the governor-general's office to encourage the development of industry and trade, and to collect taxes from the traders; on the other hand, to show leniency in the fulfilment of his functions. If a merchant was brought to court he must be treated with forbearance.⁴

¹Ibid., xi, 429.

²Ibid.

³Subh, xi, 430.

⁴Ibid.

10. To help people in difficulty and to investigate thoroughly each case; to apply the laws of Islam and of the Sultān. At the same time the guilty must be punished.¹

11. And may God bless you in the fulfilment of this office.²

According to the Mamlūk sources, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad chose very strict chiefs of police (wulāt) for the a'māl and wilāyāt and gave them absolute power to maintain order and to keep the people in subjection.³ The Mamlūk sources reveal that the chiefs of police (wulāt) were unduly severe; when al-Nāṣir Muḥammad became aware of this he dismissed these wulāt, confiscated their money and property⁴ and sent them into exile⁵, as happened in the years 733/1333, 737/1336 and 739/1338.⁶ If the chief of police (wālī) or the inspector (kāshif) fulfilled his duties satisfactorily he was promoted, as in the case of Sayf al-Dīn Zuluḡaya (d. 738/1337)⁷ who was, firstly, the chief of police (wālī) of al-Sharqiyya, and al-Nāṣir Muḥammad appointed him inspector of Lower Egypt.⁸ According to the Mamlūk chronicles, there were many appointments and dismissals, as in the wilāyāt of Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt, namely al-Sharqiyya al-Gharbiyya, Qūṣ and al-Ashmūnayn.⁹

¹Ibid., xi, 430-431.

²Ibid., xi, 431.

³Nāṣir, fol. 25b; Sulūk, ii, 301-302, 361; Durar, ii, 209.

⁴Nāṣir, fol. 25b; Durr, ix, 378; Sulūk, ii, 358, 419, 463.

⁵Nāṣir, fol. 25b; Durr, ix, 378; Sulūk, ii, 358, 419, 463.

⁶Sulūk, ii, 358, 419, 463.

⁷Ibn Ḥajar named him Ḍaldāy, see Durar, ii, 209.

⁸Nāṣir, fol. 25b.

⁹Misr, fols. 117a, 119b, 120a, 126a; Sulūk, ii, 463.

In Sha'bān 739/March 1339 al-Nāṣir Muḥammad appointed the emir 'Izz al-Dīn Azdamur Qulī,¹ inspector of Lower Egypt,² who was blood-thirsty and imprisoned many lawbreakers and criminals.³

Although the information with regard to this matter is brief, one might say that being strict and firm helped to hold the office of chief of police (wālī) in an 'amal or of a governor (nā'ib) in a province in order to maintain order and to provide protection. Besides, it could be said that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad practised that firm policy for public welfare and commonweal on the one hand, and to the advantage of his personal interests on the other.

Ibn Ḥajar records that 'Alī b. Ḥasan al-Marwānī (d.740/1339) was first chief of police (wālī) in Upper Egypt and later became chief of police (wālī) of Cairo. In the fulfilment of his duties he was extremely severe.⁴ Therefore it can be assumed that his conduct was approved by the government. The Mamlūk chronicles state no reasons for these dismissals and appointments, merely the names of the chiefs of police (wulāt),⁵ and few details regarding these dismissals and appointments; we deduce from this that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad chose men of powerful personalities as wulāt.⁶ The Mamlūk historians give no reasons for these dismissals and appointments.

¹For his biography, see Durar, i, 355-356.

²Miṣr, fol. 121a.

³Durar, i, 355.

⁴Ibid., iii, 40-41.

⁵Miṣr, fols. 118b, 120b-121a; Zeterstéen, 198, 200, 201, 202; Sulūk, ii, 270, 310, 410, 418-419.

⁶Miṣr, fol. 121a; Durar, ii, 209.

Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was very strict with his chiefs of police (wulāt) and if he learnt of any impropriety of conduct, he dismissed them, punished them severely and confiscated their property.¹

Al-Turkumānī was the chief of police (wālī) of al-Buḥayra, subsequently he became inspector (kāshif) of Lower Egypt.² Some of the wulāt who were dismissed were later reinstated, presumably because of their experience or through the intercession of powerful friends.³ The inspector (kāshif) of Lower Egypt was responsible for the prosperity of the region. When the office of chief of police was offered and refused, the recipient was arrested and his property confiscated.⁴

Qadīdār (d. 730/1329),⁵ the chief of police (wālī) of Cairo for a period of six years, was conscientious and succeeded in arresting many of the law-breakers (mufsidūn); therefore al-Nāṣir Muḥammad gave him absolute authority, which he wielded.⁶ This proved that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad wanted his chiefs of police (wulāt) to be firm but just.

Al-Maqrīzī states that in Jumādā, I, 737/December 1336 al-Fayyūm was raided, one thousand, two hundred horsemen (fursān) were captured. The chief of police (wālī) of al-Fayyūm came with the Bedouin emirs and brought arms and horses. According to the Royal Decree, the Bedouins were not allowed to carry arms or to own horses.⁷

¹Sulūk, ii, 313, 413.

²Nāṣir, fol. 23a.

³Ibid.

⁴Zeterstéen, 152.

⁵For his biography, see Durar, iii, 244.

⁶Sulūk, ii, 300-301; Durar, iii, 244.

⁷Sulūk, ii, 424.

Apparently al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was informed that the Bedouins in al-Fayyūm carried arms and owned horses; then, in order to be sure, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ordered that al-Fayyūm must be taken by surprise. Subsequently al-Nāṣir Muḥammad knew with certainty that the situation in al-Fayyūm was contrary to his orders; therefore the armed Bedouins were captured.

The coming of the chief of police (wālī) of al-Fayyūm, accompanied by the Bedouin emirs, to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad with arms and horses¹ proved that the situation in al-Fayyūm was against al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's desire. Owing to this event one might say that, firstly, there were chiefs of police (wulāt) who did not carry out the Royal Decree including local affairs. Secondly, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad feared that the Bedouins might revolt against his rule if they were allowed to carry arms and to own horses, or at least they might cause disorder in their regions; therefore he opposed them.

According to al-Maqrīzī, one might say that the chief of police (wālī) of Alexandria, in order to maintain order and to provide public safety, could use both force and fines (gharamāt),² and be firm with the law-breakers (mufsidūn).

In Rajab 727/May 1327 the inhabitants of Alexandria revolted against the chief of police (wālī), Baybars al-Karkarī, and wanted to get rid of him.³ Then the emirs 'Alā' al-Dīn al-Jamālī (d. 730/1330)⁴

¹Sulūk, ii, 424.

²Ibid., ii, 250.

³Durr, ix, 342.

⁴Infra, 141.

Sayf al-Dīn Ṭūghān al-Shamsī (d. 741/1340)¹ and others went to Alexandria to quell the revolt and to help Baybars al-Karkarī the chief of police (wālī) of Alexandria. Subsequently many people were arrested and thirty-one persons were executed because of the part which they had taken in the riot. The magnates of Alexandria (kibār al-balad) were arrested and fined 1,070,000 dirhams.² Thus, with force and firmness, the riot was subdued and conditions returned to normal.

Unfortunately Ibn al-Dawādārī does not give any reason for the riot, and does not discuss in detail the factors which made the inhabitants of Alexandria take this aggressive attitude towards the chief of police (wālī) of Alexandria. It might be both a question of lack of principle with regard to the personality of the chief of police (wālī), and because the chief of police (wālī) was extremely firm and strict that the inhabitants rose against his policy.

In Rabī', II, 740/October 1339, Jamāl al-Kufāh,³ the controller of privy funds (nāzir al-khāṣṣ) went to Alexandria⁴ and confiscated all the property⁵ of Baybars al-Karkarī al-Ruknī,⁶ the chief of police (wālī) of Alexandria, who had died a short time before.⁷ Jamāl al-Kufāh found many houses and shops and twenty gardens belonging

¹For his biography, see Durar, ii, 227-228.

²Durr, ix, 342; Dura, iv, 354.

³No biography is found.

⁴Sulūk, ii, 493.

⁵Nāsir, fol. 69a; Zeterstéen, 205; Sulūk, ii, 493.

⁶His name and the exact date of his death are in dispute; for detailed information, see Nāsir, fol. 69a; Zeterstéen, 205; Sulūk, ii, 493.

⁷Sulūk, ii, 493.

to Baybars al-Karkarī and sold them for 560,000 dirhams. When Jamāl al-Kufāh completed the work he returned to Cairo.¹ Thus al-Nāṣir Muḥammad confiscated all the property of Baybars al-Karkarī al-Ruknī.² Probably the confiscation of the property was accomplished for the benefit of the privy purse of the Sulṭān (al-khāṣṣ al-Sulṭānī).

Accordingly, it might be concluded that, firstly, Baybars al-Karkarī was the chief of police (wālī) of Alexandria for a long period.³ Secondly, al-Maqrīzī here calls the chief of police (wālī) of Alexandria by the title governor (nā'ib).⁴ But we knew that Alexandria was changed from a wilāya into a province (niyāba) in 767/1360,⁵ and here al-Maqrīzī speaks about Alexandria in 740/1339 as a province (niyāba) administered by a governor (nā'ib).⁶ Thirdly, Baybars al-Karkarī was rich and therefore it could be said that the chief of police (wālī) sometimes worked for his personal interests. Fourthly, the continuous confiscation respecting the emirs' property and wealth for the benefit of the Royal privy purse of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad; therefore the economic factor played an important part in the confiscation of the property of the emirs and the chiefs of police (wulāt) for the personal interests of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.

¹Sulūk, ii, 493.

²Nāṣir, fol. 69a; Zeterstéen, 205; Sulūk, ii, 493.

³Supra, 62-63.

⁴Sulūk, ii, 498.

⁵Subh, iii, 408; iv, 24, 63-64.

⁶Sulūk, ii, 498.

Concerning Barqa, Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī states that Barqa was distributed among the Mamlūk emirs (iqṭā's) for a time, and subsequently was distributed as iqṭā's among the Bedouin emirs of Banū Sulaym.

(iii) The economic importance

The 'ibra of the Egyptian provinces (aqālīm) was 9,584,064 dīnār jayshī.¹ The 'ibra of Lower Egypt (Wilāyat al-Wajh al-Baḥrī) was 6,228,455 dīnār jayshī.² This 'ibra of Lower Egypt was distributed among its a'māl as appears in Table V.³

Table V

Lower Egypt

	The <u>'amal</u>	its <u>'ibra</u>
1.	Al-Ḍawāḥī	153,075 D.J. ⁴
2.	Al-Qalyūbiyya	419,850 D.J.
3.	Al-Sharqiyya	1,411,875 D.J.
4.	Al-Daqahliyya	596,071 D.J.
5.	Ḍawāḥī <u>Thaḡhr</u> Dimyāt	11,100 D.J.
6.	Al-Gharbiyya	1,844,471 D.J.
7.	Al-Manūfiyya	574,629 ¹ / ₃ D.J.
8.	Abyār wa Jazīrat Banī Naṣr	200,232 D.J.
9.	Al-Buḥayra	741,294 D.J.
10.	Fuwwa wa'l Muzāḥamatayn	50,846 D.J.
11.	Nasturāwa	43,500 D.J.
12.	Al-Jīziyya ⁵	62,000 D.J. ⁶

¹Taqwīm, fol. 2b; cf. Saniyya, 3.

²Taqwīm, fol. 3a; Saniyya, 4; cf. Table V.

³Taqwīm, fols. 3a-b; cf. Saniyya, 3-4.

⁴D.J. = dīnār jayshī.

⁵The land of dīwān al-khāṣṣ or al-khāṣṣ al-Sultānī is excepted, see Saniyya, 4.

⁶Taqwīm, fols. 3a-b; Saniyya, 3-4; c.f. supra, 61, Table IV.

The 'ibra of Upper Egypt (Wilāyat al-Wajh al-Qiblī) was 3,355,808¹/₂ and ¹/₃ dīnār jayshī¹ and was distributed among its a'māl as in Table VI.²

Table VI
Upper Egypt

The <u>'amal</u>	its <u>'ibra</u>
1. Al-'Iṭfīḥiyya	143,997 ¹ / ₂ D.J. ³
2. Al-Bahnasāwiyya	1,301,642 D.J.
3. Al-Fayyūmiyya	164,050 D.J.
4. Al-Ashmūnayn	762,040 D.J.
5. Al-Asyūṭiyya	323,920 D.J.
6. Al-Ṭkhmīmiyya	243,925 ¹ / ₃ D.J.
7. Al-Qūṣiyya	414,663 ¹ / ₂ D.J. ⁴

The 'ibra of Ḍawāḥī Thaghr Alexandria was 11,000 dīnār jayshī.⁵ If we compare this with the 'ibra of Ḍawāḥī Thaghr Dimyāṭ we find the two almost the same.⁶

Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī records that Alexandria was the sea-port (furḍa) of the West (al-gharb), Spain (al-Andalus) and the European Islands (jazā'ir al-ifranj); from all these parts ships came to Alexandria loaded with goods, and from there the ships

¹Taqwīm, fol. 3b; Saniyya, 4.

²Taqwīm, fols. 3b-4a; cf. Saniyya, 4-5.

³D.J. = dīnār jayshī.

⁴Taqwīm, fols. 3b-4a; cf. Saniyya, 4-5.

⁵Taqwīm, fol. 3b; cf. Saniyya, 4.

⁶See Table V.

returned with the local products of Alexandria.¹ Unfortunately, Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī does not mention any of these products of Alexandria. Accordingly, it could be said that Alexandria was almost an international market and free port for different kinds of goods and a commercial centre for merchants, especially of the Mediterranean countries.²

Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī describes Alexandria as a city of beautiful paved roads and cheap fruit.³ This shows that Alexandria had its own local production from its fertile land, and the fruit was of great amounts and accordingly low priced.

Moreover, Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī states that Damietta was an important seaport, although it was not of the greatest importance, like Alexandria in the Mamlūk Sultanate.⁴

Furthermore, Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī compares Alexandria with al-Fuṣṭāṭ,⁵ which means that al-Fuṣṭāṭ was a city of economic significance. Therefore one could say that Alexandria was the first from the economic point of view.

Concerning the economic activity of Upper Egypt, Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī states that Uswān was the way to 'Aydḥāb on the coast of the Red Sea; from 'Aydḥāb one could go to India, Abyssinia and Yemen.⁶ Thus 'Aydḥāb was a port of commercial activity, and the commercial relations between Mamlūk Egypt and the Yemenite merchants were strong, and the merchants enjoyed safe conduct in Egypt.⁷ In consequence, there was commercial exchange between Egypt

¹Masālik, fol. 196b (Paris Ms. 2325).

²For details about Alexandria as a seaport, see Subhi Labib, "Egyptian Commercial policy in the Middle Ages", Studies in the Economic history of the Middle East, ed. Cook, 54, 66-67, 71, 73.

³Masālik, fol. 197a (Paris Ms. 2325).

⁴Ibid., fol. 196b.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Masālik, fol. 195b (Paris Ms. 2325).

⁷Subhi Labib, op.cit., 68-69.

and the other parts of the world, both in the East and the West; besides the economic activity in both Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt was continuously vivid and vital.

About Barqa, Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī records that Barqa was of great significance with regard to there being grassland for riding animals (horse, mule, donkey) and for beasts.¹ Barqa's horses were famous and strong, but one could not compare the famous Arab horses from al-Ḥijāz, al-Baḥrayn and Syria with the horses of Barqa, although the latter were good and expensive. The Egyptian soldiers (jund, al-Mamālīk) were always eager to buy horses from Barqa.²

The Bedouins of Barqa lived on pasture and cultivation, and they were primitive in their way of living. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad permitted the Bedouin emirs of Banū Sulaym large iqṭā's, for example the emir Fā'id b. Muqaddam,³ who was a muqṭa' of an extensive part of Barqa.⁴

Respecting the iqṭā's of the Mamlūk emirs we find that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad had the absolute authority to assign the places in which those iqṭā's must be;⁵ therefore al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was careful that the iqṭā's of the Mamlūk emirs and the troopers (ajnād al-halqa) were scattered to weaken their position; for example, an iqṭā' of an emir of high rank would not be near to another iqṭā' belonging to another emir of similar rank, so that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad

¹Masālik, fol. 203a (Paris Ms. 2325).

²Ibid.

³Infra, 222.

⁴Masālik, fols. 202b-203a (Paris Ms. 2325).

⁵Khiṭaṭ, i, Part I, 144.

could centralize the power in his hands and be absolutely certain of the security of his political position as the head of the Mamlūk Sultanate.¹

Al-Maqrīzī accuses the Copts of being responsible for the determined policy undertaken by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad against the Mamlūk emirs.² Al-Maqrīzī records that the Copts succeeded in arousing al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's feelings against the Mamlūk emirs; on the other hand, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was favourably ~~disposed~~ to the Copts,³ who adopted Islam.⁴ *disposed*

Large parts of the Egyptian land were kept for the benefit of the Royal privy purse (al-dīwān al-Sulṭānī, al-khāṣṣ al-Sharīf); therefore the biggest share of the whole 'ibra of the Egyptian land went to the Sulṭān, especially in al-Jīza⁵ and Alexandria. As we know the importance of al-Jīza for its fertile land and the significance of Alexandria as one of the most important sea ports in the Mediterranean, we are not in need of further explanation of why al-Nāṣir Muḥammad had personal interest in those areas.

(iv) The Nāṣirī reforms

In 711/1311 al-Nāṣir Muḥammad decided to dredge the Canal of Alexandria⁶ in order to preserve water throughout the year;

¹ Khiṭaṭ, i, part I, 144-145.

² Ibid., i, part I, 145.

³ Infra, 249.

⁴ Khiṭaṭ, i, part I, 145.

⁵ Saniyya, 137-138, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 151, 152.

⁶ Nujūm, ix, 217; cf. Khiṭaṭ, i, part II, 301.

accordingly, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad commanded the Mamlūk emirs to supply a share of the workmen, and all the chiefs of police of provinces (wulāt al-aqālīm) went to Alexandria to supervise the operation.¹ The work began in Rajab 711/November 1311, with a work force of 40,000 labourers; the object was to widen and deepen the Canal. When the work was completed and the Canal became wider and deeper they built arched bridges (qanāṭir). They discovered a large amount of lead (raṣāṣ). Afterwards the people built water-wheels (sawāqī),² a new village was founded and called al-Nāṣiriyya.³ The extent of the land which was used was 100,000 faddān; they constructed 600 water-wheels (sawāqī) and 40 villages. Consequently this facilitated the approach of large vessels. There were about 1,000 fields under cultivation, and a sufficient number of villages to house the people. Thus the waste land became useful in every way and the people came to live there.⁴

They constructed an embankment (jīsr) and used lead (raṣāṣ) for the foundation. The work took three months to construct. Subsequently, they constructed 30 arched bridges of stone and brick. The cost of the embankment was 60,000 dīnārs,⁵ and there was an old palace outside Alexandria which was demolished in order to use the stone from which it was built.⁶ In the foundations of the palace

¹Nujūm, ix, 217-218.

²Khiṭaṭ, i, part II, 301; Nujūm, ix, 217-218.

³Nujūm, ix, 218.

⁴Khiṭaṭ, i, part II, 301; Nujūm, ix, 218.

⁵Khiṭaṭ, i, part II, 301; Nujūm, ix, 218-219.

⁶Khiṭaṭ, i, part II, 302; Nujūm, ix, 219.

was a strip of lead (raṣāṣ) which led from the palace to the sea;¹ there was an immense quantity of this metal, lead.²

In 714/1314, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was very anxious to construct a large number of embankments (jusūr) and irrigation canals.³ In order to realize this scheme he sent the emir 'Iz al-Dīn Aydamur al-Khaṭīrī⁴ to al-Sharqiyya, the emir 'Alā' al-Dīn Aydaḡhī Shaḡīr⁵ to al-Bahnasāwiyya, the emir Sharf al-Dīn Husayn b. Jandar⁶ to Asyūṭ and Manfalūṭ, the emir Sayf al-Dīn Aqūl al-Ḥāḡib⁷ to al-Gharbiyya,⁸ the emir Sayf al-Dīn Qullī⁹ to al-Taḡāwiyya and Bilād al-Ashmūnayn, the emir Badr al-Dīn Jankalī al-Bābā¹⁰ to al-Qalyūbiyya,¹¹ the emir 'Alā' al-Dīn al-Talīlī¹² to al-Buḡayra,¹³ the emir Badr al-Dīn Baktūt al-Shamsī¹⁴ to al-Fayyūm,¹⁵ the emir Sayf al-Dīn Bahādur al-Mu'izzī¹⁶ to Ikhmīm and the emir Bahā' al-Dīn Aṣlam¹⁷ to Qūṣ.¹⁸

¹Khiṭaṭ, i, part II, 302; Nujūm, ix, 219.

²For the whole work, see Nujūm, ix, 217-219.

³Sulūk, ii, 137; Nujūm, ix, 38.

⁴Infra, 265.

⁵Infra, 125.

⁶For his biography, see Durar, ii, 50-52.

⁷No biography is found.

⁸Sulūk, ii, 137-138; Nujūm, ix, 38-39.

⁹No biography is found.

¹⁰Infra, 156, 265.

¹¹Sulūk, ii, 138; Nujūm, ix, 40.

¹²No biography is found.

¹³Sulūk, ii, 138.

¹⁴For his biography, see Durar, i, 489.

¹⁵Sulūk, ii, 138.

¹⁶No biography is found.

¹⁷Infra, 130.

¹⁸Sulūk, ii, 138; Nujūm, ix, 40.

Accordingly it could be said that the Mamlūk government paid great attention and beneficial supervision under al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's rule with regard to cultivation and irrigation.

The troopers (ajnād al-ḥalqa) complained that the emirs annexed their land, but al-Nāṣir Muḥammad refused to listen to their complaints. The reason for this annexation was as follows: when al-Nāṣir Muḥammad constructed the embankments (jusūr) and built arched bridges (qanāṭir) the river water was kept in and formed a reservoir which increased until it became a lake or small canal which was vital to irrigation.¹ Then one of the emirs, Rukn al-Dīn al-Qalnajqī² - the inspector (kāshif) of al-Buḥayra - asked al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to give his son an assignment (khubz) in this rich area, al-Buḥayra.³

Subsequently, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad sent the emir Aytamush al-Muḥammadī with the accountant of finances in the vizierate (mustawfī al-dawla), al-Muwafaq,⁴ to measure these lands; they found it was 25,000 faddān.⁵ They returned with the measurements (mashārīḥ), the documents in which the measurements were recorded.⁶ However, the emirs had mis-stated the measurements and recorded only 15,000 faddān, because the land was divided among the emirs (muqta's). Therefore al-Nāṣir Muḥammad assigned to them between 300 and 400

¹Sulūk, ii, 231.

²No biography is found.

³Sulūk, ii, 231.

⁴No biography is found.

⁵Sulūk, ii, 231.

⁶Sulūk, ii, 231, fn.6.

dīnārs permits (mithālāt); subsequently the troopers (ajnād al-halqa) were indignant¹ because that money was taken from their assignments.²

In 725/1325 al-Nāṣir Muḥammad decided to dig a new canal which extended from outside Cairo to Siryāqūs, in order to widen the Great Canal.³ Besides, he wanted to build water-wheels (sawāqī) and to plough the surrounding land.⁴ Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad wanted that new Canal (the Nāṣirī Khalīj)⁵ to be wide enough to allow ships to transport crops when the Nile was at its height during floods.⁶ In order to execute his plan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad placed the work completely in the hands of his vicegerent,⁷ the emir Arghūn al-Dawādār. The latter went with the engineers (muhandisūn) to the Nile to choose the most suitable site in that part of Upper Egypt.⁸ Finally they decided on Siryāqūs. They brought labourers from different a'māl to start digging in Jumādā, I, 725/April 1325.⁹ They destroyed the houses and the gardens in that area in order to use the land for their construction. Subsequently al-Nāṣir Muḥammad compensated the owners of the property. The work lasted two months. They

¹Sulūk, ii, 231.

²Ibid.

³Khiṭaṭ, iii, part I, 34; Nujūm, ix, 80.

⁴Nujūm, ix, 80.

⁵Khiṭaṭ, iii, part I, 34, 35; Nujūm, ix, 80, fn. 1.

⁶Nujūm, ix, 80.

⁷Khiṭaṭ, iii, part I, 34; Nujūm, ix, 81.

⁸Khiṭaṭ, iii, part I, 34; Nujūm, ix, 81.

⁹Khiṭaṭ, iii, part I, 34; Nujūm, ix, 81-82.

constructed many arched bridges (qanṭara, qanāṭir).¹ When the work was finished, the Canal was used for shipping, the water-wheels (sawāqī) supplied water for irrigation.² Therefore a settlement developed including houses, gardens and farms. On 6th Jumādā, II, 725/20th May 1325 al-Nāṣir Muḥammad inspected in person the entire work; he was pleased and satisfied with the success and there were celebrations.³

In 738/1337 al-Nāṣir Muḥammad decreed that a new embankment (jisr) must be constructed on the eastern bank of the Nile to prevent flooding. Therefore, to construct this embankment engineers were brought from Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt. They decided to remove the sand and to widen the Nile so that the water flowed into a Canal;⁴ then they raised the embankment to protect Cairo from floods.⁵ Then al-Nāṣir Muḥammad returned to the Citadel of Cairo and gave his permission for the plan to be carried out. Subsequently al-Nāṣir Muḥammad sent postboys (barīdī, burud) with his Royal command to bring men from different a'māl, and superintendents (mushiddūn) were to accompany their labourers. They also summoned stonemasons (hajjārūn) to prepare material for making the embankment. Then the stones (hijāra) were transported to the river-bank where the embankment was to be built.⁶ Within ten days men came from

¹Khiṭaṭ, iii, part I, 34-35; Nujūm, ix, 82-83.

²Khiṭaṭ, iii, part I, 35; Nujūm, ix, 83.

³Khiṭaṭ, iii, part I, 35; Nujūm, ix, 83-84.

⁴Sulūk, ii, 449-450.

⁵Ibid., ii, 450.

⁶Ibid.

different parts (nawāhī)¹ and the emirs Abaghā 'Abd al-Wāhid² and Barsanbaghā al-Ḥājib³ received the men, organizing and distributing the work among them.

The chief of police of Cairo (wālī al-Qāhira) and the chief of police of Fustāṭ (wālī Miṣr) conscripted all the men required and forced them to work on the embankment. Men were seized from the mosques and the markets; therefore the people remained in their houses and dared not go out. The work began and continued until some of the men fell unconscious and were covered in sand, in consequence they died immediately.⁴ This was the fate of many workmen.⁵ Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad came to inspect the work and insisted that the work be accomplished in the shortest time. The work was terminated in two months. While the work was in progress twelve ships sank.⁶

23,000 ships transporting the rocks were discharged to form the embankment. The machines employed were made of wood and very strong ropes were used for this purpose. In a certain place, al-Jazīra, they excavated deeply to form a Canal (khalīj) to conserve extra water when the Nile was at flood.⁷ They realized the importance

¹Sulūk, ii, 450.

²No biography is found.

³For his biography, see Durar, i, 474.

⁴Sulūk, ii, 450.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Sulūk, ii, 450-451.

of this work during the floods, and al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was exultant at the result.¹

In Shībīn, a part of al-Manūfiyya² in Upper Egypt, the pressure of the water against the embankment, which had been already constructed by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, was so great that it overflowed and flooded the lower land. Therefore al-Nāṣir Muḥammad decided that another embankment was essential to withstand the pressure of the water.³ It was in Rabīʿ, II, 740/October 1339 when al-Nāṣir Muḥammad appointed one of the emirs, Baybughā⁴ the falconer (hāris al-tair), to supervise the work.⁵

Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad raised a levy to cover this extra cost. He levied on the villages $\frac{1}{8}$ dirham per dīnār. They conscripted the workmen and constructed the embankment (jīsr) of bricks and plaster (jibs). Finally the work was completed. It was of great use because it enabled the irrigation of a large extent of land.⁶ Consequently al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was concerned to build embankments (jusūr) in certain reaches of the Nile. The work was carried out under government supervision. There was public contribution towards the cost. The Mamlūk government was anxious to protect the agricultural land for the benefit of the country. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was concerned with agricultural reform and irrigation, and also to enhance his own popularity. These improvements increased the prosperity of the country as a whole.

¹Sulūk, ii, 451.

²Khiṭaṭ, iii, part I, 73.

³Sulūk, ii, 493.

⁴For his biography, see Durar, i, 511.

⁵Sulūk, ii, 451.

⁶Ibid., ii, 493.

In 741/1340 al-Nāṣir Muḥammad went to Birkat al-Ḥabash, outside Cairo, accompanied by engineers, and decided to dredge a small Canal from the Nile to the foot of the mountain. Then he planned to dig for wells, ten in number, of the depth of forty dhirā', and to construct water-wheels¹ in order that the water could be drawn from the Nile to the aqueducts (qanāṭir) to provide water for the Citadel of Cairo. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad appointed the emir Abghā 'Abd al-Wāḥid to supervise the work. Many houses were destroyed in making the Canal. They mobilized the stonemasons (ḥajjārūn).² The work proved a great success.³

Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was greatly concerned with al-Jīza, so that he constructed many embankments (juṣūr) and aqueducts⁴ (qanāṭir) throughout al-Jīza; for example, in 'Umm Dīnār⁵ where the work was completed in two months.⁶ It was al-Nāṣir Muḥammad who initiated the work and succeeded in protecting the land from flooding. This work was beneficial to the inhabitants of al-Jīza. Much of the land came under cultivation.⁷ There were five aqueducts (qanāṭir) on the Nāṣirī Canal (al-Khalīj al-Nāṣirī).⁸ Then many aqueducts (qanāṭir) were constructed during al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's reign and by

¹Khiṭaṭ, iii, part II, 163; Nujūm, ix, 160-161.

²Khiṭaṭ, iii, part II, 163; Nujūm, ix, 161.

³Nujūm, ix, 161; cf. Khiṭaṭ, iii, part II, 163.

⁴Nujūm, ix, 190.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Infra, 259.

⁷Nujūm, ix, 190.

⁸Khiṭaṭ, iii, part I, 35.

his own command, for example, Qanāṭir al-sibā in 735/1334, Qanṭarat 'Aq Sunqur,¹ Qanāṭir al-awuz in 725/1325,² Al-Qanṭara al-jadīda in 725/1325, Qanāṭir banī Wā'il in 725/1325, Qanṭara al-amīriyya in 725/1325, Qanāṭir bāb al-baḥr in 725/1325 and Qanāṭir al-Ḥājib in 725/1325.³

Lastly, it could be said that great care was taken by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in the economic administration and the social improvement in the Egyptian wilāyāt and districts (nawāḥī). Besides, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was concerned about his popularity among his subjects. Thus the Nāṣirī reforms served the political and the economic aims of the Mamlūk government during the period under study. On the other hand, there were chiefs of police (wulāt) who were unfaithful with regard to either their internal administration in those parts where they held the administrative offices, or in their attitude as officials responsible for carrying out their duties with sincerity, especially in their relations with al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, the head of the Sultanate, who was presumably anxious to see them fulfilling their obligations efficiently.

(v) Conclusion

The administrative system in the Mamlūk Sultanate was efficient because there was a central administration in Cairo where the most important offices (dawāwīn) were situated and the head administrators lived. Besides, there was a local administration in each province (iqlīm) under the control of the chiefs of police (wulāt al-aqālīm).

There was a chief of police (wālī) who was responsible for the protection of the 'amal from outside interference and internal

¹ Ibid., iii, part I, 37.

² Ibid., iii, part I, 39.

³ Khiṭaṭ, iii, part I, 38-40, 44.

disruption; therefore the Sulṭāns were careful to appoint those in whom they had complete confidence and who were already known for their bravery and administrative skill.

The chief of police of Cairo (wālī) was responsible for the protection of Cairo, and for maintaining order within the city, namely, to arrest the thieves and the agitators, and the governor of Cairo and his civilian force for the control of fire, riot and general protection of civilians. Besides one of his duties was to prevent the making and distribution of alcohol and to prevent the cultivation and the consumption of hashish. Consequently the chief of police (wālī) of Cairo was fully occupied. He had to protect and maintain the gates of Cairo and to survey the closing of these gates at night to protect the city from attack. There were also other administrators whose concern it was to help the chief of police (wālī) of Cairo, for example, the governor of Miṣr (Fusṭāṭ).

Special consideration was given to Alexandria because there were many foreign communities; it was a very prosperous port and it had a flourishing international trade. Also Uswān, which had become self-sufficient owing to its importance as a port during the reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. There was an inspector (kāshif) for Lower Egypt where authority included all the provinces (aqālīm) of the Delta, and another inspector (kāshif) for Upper Egypt, whose authority included all the provinces (aqālīm) of Upper Egypt. None of the administrators who held the highest offices nor those who held the lower offices enjoyed permanent positions. Each of these officials could be dismissed, imprisoned or even killed merely on suspicion or because he was not competent; sometimes the dismissed official might be exiled to another city, such as Jerusalem, Qūṣ or

Mecca . It was possible that an important official might be exiled to a distant province on suspicion of plotting.

The administrative division of Egypt during this period was divided into limited provinces because the power of the Mamlūks was sustained by military force. Although Egypt was divided into a 'māl, that does not imply that every 'amal had its own chief of police (wālī); besides some wilāyāt were divided into small administrative parts. Each chief of police (wālī), irrespective of the extent of his wilāya, owed the same subjection to the Sulṭān, who had the power to appoint or dismiss him.

All the Mamlūk governors, especially the emirs, were responsible for preserving order within the cities and provinces.

There was one market inspector (muhtasib) in Cairo who was responsible for the conduct of the markets and the control of the merchants; besides there was the chief of police (wālī) of Cairo who was in completely control of the functioning of the entire process.

The money which the emirs earned by the sale of their produce ('ibra) fluctuated because of shortage or the poverty of the crops, or because of a re-distribution of the land, the Nāṣirī rawk, which affected the administrative division of Egypt, or even because of neglect of the land, which deteriorated. Sometimes the Mamlūk emirs (muqta's) restored the fertility of the land, subsequently producing crops, and the money which resulted was used for the enrichment of the land and the land-owners, the Mamlūk emirs. For example, Kawm al-Wadān in al-Gharbiyya in Lower Egypt, the 'ibra was 500 dīnārs before the Nāṣirī rawk and after the re-distribution of land became 825 dīnārs.¹ The shortage of labour affected the

¹For details see Saniyya, 63-68.

size of the crops, as happened in Ṭabrīna in al-Buḥayra in Lower Egypt when profits rose from 500 dīnārs to 750 dīnārs because there was an increase in the labour force.¹ Sometimes the profits did not fluctuate because of the stability of conditions.

If we examine the functioning of the Nāṣirī rawk as a re-distribution of the land would this reveal the importance of the economic and social factors? Probably it would reveal that, for example, the Mamlūk emirs complained sometimes of the extent of the duties claimed by the government. The soldiers objected to the ill-treatment which they suffered at the hands of their masters, the Mamlūk emirs (muqta's).

The cultivators complained of the treatment received at the hands of the Mamlūk emirs (muqta's), and the excessive taxes which they had to pay, and the attacks to which they were subjected at the hands of the robbers on the roads.

The people endured miserable conditions owing to heavy taxation and the demands of the tax collectors and the tax farmers for sums of money for their own pockets, and the manner in which the taxes were enforced; therefore the re-distribution of iqṭā's benefited the population.

The administrative division of Egypt into separate units increased the productivity of the land.

There were great extremes in the economic conditions throughout Egypt which caused social unrest; subsequently there were political movements which affected the nature of the administrative division there.

¹For details, see Saniyya, 116-123; Taqwīm, fols. 58b-61b.

Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was the sole source of power who appointed the chiefs of police (wulāt) of the wilāyāt and a'māl, but he was careful to consult the judges (quḍāt) and high ranking emirs.

Chapter III

THE POLITICAL PLOTS

(i) The political situation

It seems that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, in order to come to power, directed his attention to achieve many factors for a strong foundation of a new era. Probably al-Nāṣir Muḥammad realized, through his personal experience, that having a strong and united league supporting high aims which aspired to take over the government was of great importance for what help and support this union could give.¹ Besides, it appears that the strong position of Baybars al-Jāshnakīr and Sayf al-Dīn Salār in the state was one of the important factors which, according to al-Nāṣir's view, helped them to act against his power; therefore, the question arises here, how far would al-Nāṣir Muḥammad work to limit the legislative power and to minimize the executive authority of the Mamlūk emirs? And to what degree would the failure of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's co-operation with Baktamur al-Jūkandār against Baybars al-Jāshnakīr and Salār² be a lesson to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad during the third period of his rule, when he became his own master? Moreover, it appears that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad became certain of his popularity among the populace of Cairo, al-ʿāmmah;³ the question which should be asked here is to what extent would al-Nāṣir Muḥammad take advantage of that condition? And how far would the internal policy of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad be affected by that

¹ Nujūm, viii, 233-235.

² Nujūm, viii, 170-173.

³ For detailed information, see Sulūk, ii, 67; Nujūm, viii, 173, 244, 264, 268, 270, 271.

standing? Seemingly, the failure of the conspiracy planned by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and Baktamur al-Jūkandār in 707/1307 against Baybars al-Jāshnakīr and Sayf al-Dīn Salār, the close friendship between Baybars and Salār during the second reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and the unfriendly relation between the two after al-Nāṣir Muḥammad gave up his position in the Mamlūk Sultanate.¹

These events, however, affected the nature of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's behaviour with the Mamlūk emirs. It is likely that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad became certain that every emir worked to fulfil personal aims; subsequently, how far would al-Nāṣir Muḥammad change his character with different diplomatic and political aspects for the cause of his own power?

In Ramaḍān 708/March 1308 al-Nāṣir Muḥammad left Cairo with his family, ostensibly for a pilgrimage, but in reality to accomplish his plan of resignation from office and establish his residence at al-Karak, and the emirs commended him to God's protection while they were still on horseback. Afterwards al-Nāṣir Muḥammad wrote to them from al-Karak about his resignation.

When the emirs knew about the abdication, they wrote furiously to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad asking him to come back to Cairo. When he received their demand, he answered that he would stay, isolated, at al-Karak until the crisis was over with God's will, either by death or by another solution.² This statement by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad could be estimated as a turning point in the historic nature of the Mamlūk regime under the rule of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. Besides, it could be inferred that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's residence at al-Karak was not a

¹Nujūm, viii, 221-225.

²Nujūm, viii, 181.

genuine intention of a lasting resignation and definite abdication. It was probably a step which had to be taken by him, either for better conditions concerning his position as ruler of a great kingdom, or for the sake of his honourable dignity and his high-mindedness.

In other words, al-Nāṣir refused to be a governor of a country without wielding any kind of power, while the different kinds of authority were in the hands of Baybars and Salār. Therefore, it was not the end of his reign, but was almost a period of preparation for a new rule, an era in which he could practise his legitimate rights in government. On the other hand, being so eager to have al-Nāṣir Muḥammad back on the throne means that Baybars and Salār were afraid that they might not succeed in having absolute approval from the Mamlūk emirs and the complete support of the people. Furthermore, they themselves were no longer friends and each tried hard to seek personal aims at the expense of the other. Immediately after, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad knew that Shams al-Dīn Qarāsunqur,¹ Qabjaq al-Manṣūrī,² and Asandamur Kurjī,³ the governors of Aleppo, Ḥamāh and Tripoli respectively, refused to acknowledge Baybars al-Jāshnakīr as sovereign or to pay homage to him and they even sent to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad informing him of their support and readiness for military help to return him to power. Here again al-Nāṣir Muḥammad gives a clear picture, according to the Mamlūk historians, of his situation and how it was only temporary, yet they should be subject to the

¹Infra, 114.

²For his biography, see Durar, iii, 241-243.

³For his biography, see Durar, i, 387-388.

existing power and must assume the burdens of government. Therefore the three governors swore an oath of loyalty to Baybars al-Jāshnakīr.¹ Subsequently, one might say that it was a period of waiting, of thinking and of preparation until the suitable opportunity arrived.

The Mamlūk writings agree that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, in his letter to Baybars,² used to address him with his royal title al-Malakī al-Muẓaffarī for the purpose of peace, while Baybars kept asking for al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's loyalty and subjection.³ Yet, at the same time, when al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was confirming his subjection to Baybars al-Jāshnakīr, he wrote to the governors of Aleppo, Ḥamāh, Ṣafad and Tripoli for help and support, and they granted his request willingly.⁴ Thus, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad started working for his return to Cairo with a new policy; it was a practical policy of diplomatic and political aspect. Moreover, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad tried to use the factor of affection and sympathy with the governors of the Syrian provinces by reminding them of his ancestral line, his forced abdication, his helpless condition, his patience with Baybars, who displayed arrogance towards al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's Mamlūks, horses and arms, and lastly, asking them for help.⁵

Probably al-Nāṣir Muḥammad succeeded in making these governors favourably disposed towards him and deeply attached to his status. However, this is the first time that we see al-Nāṣir Muḥammad using this kind of diplomacy in seeking the Syrian governors' compassion;

¹ Nujūm, viii, 238-242.

² For the text of this letter, see Sulūk, ii, 52-53.

³ Sulūk, ii, 52-53; Nujūm, viii, 245.

⁴ Sulūk, ii, 57-58, 61; Nujūm, viii, 247.

⁵ Ibar, v, part V, 907-908; Sulūk, ii, 56.

apparently he expected the sympathy and support that he had earned by his deeds. It seems that, under the influence of sympathy, decency and nobility on the one hand, and the feeling of responsibility on the other hand, the Syrian governors were totally prepared to give al-Nāṣir Muḥammad the aid, promotion and encouragement which he needed. It might be also that the Syrian governors helped al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in their own political interests, that Baybars al-Jāshnakīr might one day act against them, or they thought that through the help which they would give al-Nāṣir Muḥammad they could achieve higher positions in the ruling field of the state. Mostly they became his right hand in helping him in his hopeless situation which al-Nāṣir Muḥammad could not longer bear, and eagerly worked to regain his royal position and restore the status quo.

In Sha'bān 709/January 1310 al-Nāṣir Muḥammad left al-Karak for Damascus, accompanied by his helpful and sincere emirs, and the public were extremely happy and warmly welcomed his return.¹ Soon in Damascus the Muslim Friday sermon, khutba, was changed and delivered in al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's name instead of Baybars al-Jāshnakīr's; it was in reality a memorable day.² Concerning the situation in Egypt, we find that Baybars' supporters severely blamed him for being friendly with Salār whom they saw as the cause of the unstable position because of his jealousy and misguidance.³ This data gives us the opportunity to see the importance of the office of vicegerent of Egypt (nā'ib al-Saltāna bi'l-diyār al-Misriyya) and allows us to ask what action al-Nāṣir Muḥammad would take respecting this office, especially after he realized the significance of the post and,

¹Durr, ix, 171-172; 'Uyūn, xii, fols. 136b-137a; Sulūk, ii, 66-67; Nujūm, viii, 267.

²'Uyūn, xii, fol. 137b; Sulūk, ii, 68; Nujūm, vii, 268.

³Sulūk, ii, 59, 61, 70; Nujūm, viii, 270.

at the same time, how far that dignity could be dangerous to great power. Besides, if al-Nāṣir Muḥammad abolished the office of vicegerency of the Sultanate what would be the reaction by the Mamlūk oligarchy regarding that cancellation?

In Ramaḍān 709/February 1310 the khutba of Friday prayer in all the mosques of Cairo was delivered in the name of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, while he was on his way to Cairo.¹ Eventually Baybars al-Jāshnakīr was strangled in the presence of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in Dhū'l-Qa'da 709/April 1310, and the third reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad began.² Hence, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad began his third reign by putting an end to the life of Baybars al-Jāshnakīr.³ This point throws some light on al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's political methods with the powerful emirs for the sake of his absolute power, as we will see throughout this chapter. In addition, it appears that what al-Nāṣir Muḥammad did to Baybars was only the beginning of a long series of actions against the strong Mamlūk oligarchy, and it would not finish until the end of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's life. Seemingly, Baybars' hopes were frustrated sooner than he had imagined. In order to explain in detail: firstly, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad always enjoyed great popularity, and he was still popular during the rule of Baybars al-Jāshnakīr. Probably it was not easy for the populace of Cairo to forget al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. Secondly, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad desired to rule, to take over the government, and to come to power, worked and planned efficiently to achieve his claim, and to accomplish his desire to be the head of the Mamlūk Sultanate and his own master at the same time. Thus al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in 709/1310, being a man whose character and personality had changed

¹ Sulūk, ii, 71.

² Sulūk, ii, 72-73; Nujūm, viii, 275-276.

³ For details, see Durr, ix, 197-204; 'Uyūn, xii, fols. 135a-138b.

deeply, started his third period of rule with a varied policy of political astuteness, diplomatic cunning and administrative subtlety; these aspects would be obviously noticed through a study concerning his relations with the Mamlūk oligarchy, and his behaviour towards the sincere supporters who helped him in making arrangements and preparations for a successful return to power. Subsequently, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad turned his attention towards Sayf al-Dīn Salār, who claimed power during the second reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad at his expense.¹ Carefully al-Nāṣir Muḥammad started to plan Salār's fate; he was friendly to him after his return, accepted his precious gifts and made him the governor of al-Shawbak in Shawwāl 709/April 1310.² A few months later, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad sent for Salār to come back to Cairo, but the latter gave the excuse that he was ill and unable to travel. Consequently al-Nāṣir Muḥammad dispatched an immediate order to the governors of the Syrian provinces to take care to prevent Salār's flight, and simultaneously sent Baybars al-Dawādār³ and Sanjar al-Jāwili⁴ to Salār to persuade him to return with them to Cairo.⁵ Although they assured Salār that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad wanted him to return to Cairo only because he was eager to have him near him for his advice, Salār refused to accompany them and promised to follow. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad became worried when they returned to Cairo without Salār.⁶

On the other hand, Salār was bewildered at the loss of his position, and uncertain about al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's attitude towards him.⁷

¹Durar, ii, 181; Nujūm, viii, 170, 181.

²Salātīn, fols. 92b-94a; Tālī, fol. 43a; Sulūk, ii, 75; Durar, ii, 180; Nujūm, ix, 11; Mawrid, 57.

³For his biography, see Durar, i, 509-510.

⁴For his biography, see Durar, ii, 170-172.

⁵Uyūn, xii, fol. 159b; Sulūk, ii, 88; Nujūm, ix, 16.

⁶Sulūk, ii, 88; Nujūm, ix, 17.

⁷Sulūk, ii, 88; Nujūm, ix, 17.

Eventually Salār decided to leave for Cairo where he was imprisoned by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in the Citadel of Cairo in Rabīʿ, II, 710/August 1310.¹ Although Salār left a great fortune of money, gold, silver, jewels of different kinds, horses, clothes and quantities of valuable things,² he died of hunger in his prison in Jumādā, I, 710/October 1310.³

Hence, the impression is that there were many factors which were necessary for al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to build a strong foundation concerning his rule and his state. Firstly, a brave and co-operative clique consisting of the royal Mamlūks, for support and assistance, especially at times of difficulty. Secondly, great wealth and large personal fortune either by personal investment in the business field, or by confiscating the property of the wealthy emirs. Thirdly, considering the fact that the Mamlūk emirs should enjoy a respectable position at the court, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad kept paying them great attention either by being careful to ask for their advice in every respect or by allowing them competent authority, in view of the fact that they would be under strict supervision by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad himself. Fourthly, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was keen, in his career, to take care of his subjects' condition so that they should enjoy satisfaction and gratification concerning their economic and social status. It seems that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad knew that he was popular among the populace of Cairo, al-ʿāmmah, and was determined to promote that popularity to attain its highest degree. Through the previous study respecting the first steps of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's third reign one could clearly notice that he was

¹ Sulūk, ii, 88; Nujūm, ix, 18.

² Uyūn, xii, fols. 167b-169a; Dh̄ȳl, iv, fol. 189b; Turkiyya, fols. 26b-27b; Thamīn, fols. 128b-130a; Sulūk, ii, 97-99; Nujūm, ix, 17-20; Mawrid, 57-58.

³ Uyūn, xii, fol. 168a; Dh̄ȳl, iv, fols. 189a, 190a-191a; Tālī, fol. 43a; Ḍarrat, fols. 284b-285a; Turkiyya, fols. 26b-27a; Thamīn, fol. 128b; Sulūk, ii, 97; Nujūm, ix, 18; Mawrid, 57.

working all the time to confirm the reality of his being the only ruler in the Mamlūk Sultanate. Therefore, he kept watching the position of the emirs with suspicion, fears and astuteness and was clearly aware of every action he had to take either against the Mamlūk emirs, or for the sake of his personal rights. Fifthly, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad understood through his personal experience that the Mamlūk emirs did not respect his inherited claim to rule; subsequently, in order to be in power, to hold supreme authority and to enjoy continuous possession of the throne, he worked to have the confidence of his supporters and to favour his followers in employing them in the important offices of the state. On the other hand, it appears that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad tried hard to hold the power of making ordinances and executive power in his own hands in order to reach the central position in the Mamlūk regime. The question arises here, how far would al-Nāṣir Muḥammad go in order to accomplish what he most desired of power and centralisation. And to what degree would al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's achievements be crowned by success. Furthermore, it might be worth noting that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad probably was working to achieve a strong basis. Accordingly, in 709/1309, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad released some emirs who had been imprisoned during the preceding period, and bestowed on them high posts in Syria,¹ but as soon as al-Nāṣir Muḥammad became sure of his situation he put them back in prison.²

Besides, it seems that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was trying to extend his power over the judges (quḍāt) and to consult them concerning the

¹ Sulūk, ii, 77-78; Nujūm, ix, 15.

² Nujūm, ix, 15.

most important judicial matters.¹ The previous analysis and the additional facts, already mentioned, lead us to ask, was al-Nāṣir Muḥammad attempting to transform the Mamlūk regime into a personal autocracy? In order to reach a reasonable result a comprehensive study of the relations of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and the Mamlūk oligarchy should be undertaken.

(ii) The Mamlūk oligarchy.

Concerning the Mamlūk oligarchy it seems that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was acting according to previously studied plans when he appointed Shams al-Dīn Qarāsunqur viceroy of Damascus (nā'ib Dimashq), Qabjaq al-Manṣūrī, governor of Aleppo, Asandamur Kurjī, governor of Ḥamāh, al-Ḥājj Bahādur al-Ḥalabī,² governor of Tripoli and Quṭlūbak al-Manṣūrī,³ governor of Ṣafad.⁴ Thus, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad appointed his supporters to the ruling offices soon after his arrival in Cairo.

On the other hand, in Shawwāl 709/March 1310, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad planned to arrest twenty-two Mamlūk emirs of high rank, and succeeded with the help of his royal Mamlūks in taking possession of them by a well organised scheme.⁵ Other emirs fell into al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's hands later in 712/1312.⁶ Hence, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad succeeded in executing all the Mamlūk emirs who either had acted against him, or had been loyal to his former enemies, the predominant usurper predecessors.⁷ Simultaneously al-Nāṣir Muḥammad accomplished the

¹Husn, ii, 114.

²For his biography, see Durar, i, 500.

³For his biography, see Durar, iii, 252-253.

⁴Durrat, fols. 278a-b, 282b, 285a-b; Sulūk, ii, 75-76; Nujūm, ix, 11.

⁵Durrat, fol. 278b; Sulūk, ii, 76; Nujūm, ix, 13.

⁶Tadhkirat, fol. 64b; Sulūk, ii, 117, 118; Nujūm, ix, 30, 34.

⁷Sulūk, ii, 77-78.

third step of his plan concerning his internal policy with the Mamlūk oligarchy; he started raising his Mamlūks and friends to the amirate and installed them as governors and viceroys; they were thirty-two of his Mamlūks, such as Tankiz al-Ḥusāmī,¹ Aydamur al-Shaykhī,² Arghūn al-Dawādār, Baybars Amīr Akhūr,³ Aytamush al-Muḥammadī,⁴ and others.⁵

Moreover, in Rabī', II, 712/August 1312, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad brought into power another group of forty-six Mamlūks of his party and made them emirs with big celebration.⁶ Probably al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's main aim through these acts was to create a powerful circle of supporters around him. Therefore one could infer that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, with greater subtlety and resolution, determined to have his situation stabilized, his reign firmly established and his position utterly secure. Thereafter, having been confirmed as a powerful ruler, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad began his coup concerning his powerful supporters, that is to say, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad made up his mind to get rid of those senior emirs who had helped him to achieve his second restoration; with his previous fundamental steps and the changed circumstances al-Nāṣir Muḥammad thought that his coup would be achieved successfully. Seemingly, supporters such as Shams al-Dīn Qarāsunqur realized the basis of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's behaviour against them, and became worried about their position and afraid

¹Infra, 149.

²For his biography, see Durar, i, 428.

³For his biography, see Durar, i, 508.

⁴For his biography, see Durar, i, 424.

⁵Sulūk, ii, 77; Nujūm, ix, 13-14.

⁶Tadhkirat, fol. 64b; Sulūk, ii, 118.

that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad would annihilate them and, lastly, they decided to keep at a distance from him.¹ Al-Maqrīzī confirms the above fact by recording that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was planning to seize Shams al-Dīn Qarāsunqur and Asandamur Kurjī.² Thus, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad prepared to seize the strong emirs whose help and support were the main reason for al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's successful return to rule. Apparently circumstances helped al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in approaching his object through the sudden death of both Qabjaq al-Manṣūrī, governor of Aleppo,³ and al-Hājj Bahādūr, governor of Tripoli.⁴ Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was extremely happy when he received the news of their deaths in 710/1310 because of his fears of their strong position.⁵

Subsequently, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad turned his attention towards Asandamur Kurjī, governor of Ḥamāh,⁶ who soon after he learnt of the death of Qabjaq al-Manṣūrī moved to Aleppo to hold the office of governorship there.⁷ That personal movement accomplished by Asandamur Kurjī without asking al-Nāṣir Muḥammad had a profound effect upon the latter, and made him more serious and quick to put his thought into action regarding the capture of the governor of Aleppo.⁸

¹Sulūk, ii, 82.

²Ibid.

³Durrat, fols. 285a-b.

⁴Sulūk, ii, 90.

⁵Ibid.; Nujūm, ix, 24.

⁶Durrat, fol. 278a.

⁷Ibid., fol. 282b; Sulūk, ii, 89.

⁸Sulūk, ii, 89.

According to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's command Karāy al-Manṣūrī¹ (d. 719/1319), governor of G aza, left Cairo for Aleppo, with a reinforced army on the pretext of making a sudden attack on Sīs, the Armenian capital, and successfully captured Asandamur Kurjī, who gave himself up without resistance.² Thus al-Nāṣir Muḥammad succeeded in having Kurjī imprisoned in Cairo after only six months of his being governor of Aleppo,³ and all his wealth was confiscated.⁴ Eventually, Asandamur Kurjī was executed in his prison in Dhū 'l-Qa'da 721/November 1321.⁵ After this event it was obvious that the ruling policy of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad concerning his relation with the Mamlūk oligarchy had been accomplished for his personal aims and to protect his position from any danger that might occur from the powerful emirs, without paying any regard or consideration to what they had given him of political allegiance, sincere support and military aid to enable him to maintain supreme power.

(iii) The plot of Baktamur al-Jūkandār

As a result of the previous action by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad against one of his main supporters whose assistance was almost the cause of his taking over the government, all the senior emirs became afraid of further action against them and opposition to their powerful position. And, on account of their fears, they tried to seek protection for their lives.⁶ Furthermore, because of these different

¹For his biography see, Durar, iii, 266-267.

²Durrat, fol. 282b; Sulūk, ii, 93; Durar, iii, 267; Nujūm, ix, 26-27.

³Durrat, fol. 282b; Sulūk, ii, 94; Nujūm, ix, 27.

⁴Sulūk, ii, 93; Nujūm, ix, 27.

⁵Durar, i, 388.

⁶Nujūm, ix, 26.

circumstances, there was a conspiracy plotted against al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to dismiss him from governorship.¹ Subsequently, in 710/1310, when Baktamur al-Jūkandār,² the vicegerent of the Sultanate (nā'ib al-Saltana bi'l-diyār al-Miṣriyya),³ in dread of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's policy as an astute politician, and fearing for his life,⁴ co-operated with Batkhāṣṣ al-Manṣūrī⁵ (d. 711/1311) and organized a plan to end al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's rule and to replace him by Mūsā,⁶ the son of Alī b. Qalāwūn, or al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ 'Alī, who had been joint Sulṭān with Qalāwūn and his intended successor, but predeceased him,⁷ the cousin of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, as ruler of the Mamlūk Sultanate.⁸ The coup was well organised by Baktamur al-Jūkandār, Batkhāṣṣ al-Manṣūrī and the emir Mūsā b. 'Alī b. Qalāwūn. Besides, with the help of the Muḏaffariyya Mamlūks⁹ who were prepared to seize the emirs who were close to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad on the arranged day of the plot, it seemed that the plot would be accomplished.¹⁰ According to Ibn al-Dawādārī, one might understand that Baktamur al-Jūkandār had been planning that day for such a long time that he tried hard to persuade al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to make thirty Mamlūks of his party emirs until he succeeded in fulfilling his desire, for he wanted them to stand beside him on that day against al-Nāṣir

¹Ibid.

²For his biography, see Durr, ix, 212-213; Durar, i, 484-487; Nujūm, viii, 105, 146, 159, 170-171, 174, 245, 259; ix, 13, 24, 25-26, 28, 29-30.

³Durrat, fol. 277b; Sulūk, ii, 77; Nujūm, ix, 13.

⁴Sulūk, ii, 91; Nujūm, ix, 24.

⁵For his biography, see Durar, i, 472-473.

⁶For his biography, see Durar, iv, 377-378.

⁷Sulūk, i, 682, 744-745.

⁸Sulūk, ii, 91-92; Durar, i, 485; iv, 377; Nujūm, ix, 24.

⁹The Muḏaffariyya Mamlūks belonged to Baybars al-Jāshnakīr who was strangled immediately after al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's return to power.

¹⁰Sulūk, ii, 92; Durar, i, 485; iv, 377; Nujūm, ix, 24-25.

Muḥammad.¹ Unexpectedly Baybars al-Jumdār, one of the conspirators, for the purpose of reaching a high position at the royal court, went and informed al-Nāṣir Muḥammad about the plot.² On the other hand, Baktamur al-Jūkandār sent to Karāy al-Manṣūrī (d. 719/1319),³ governor of Damascus, Quṭlūbak al-Manṣūrī (d. 716/1316),⁴ governor of Ṣafad, and to Quṭluqtamur,⁵ governor of G aza for their support.⁶ Subsequently Karāy al-Manṣūrī was the only one who warned Baktamur to be careful and to reject the idea, but the latter continued with his plan against the rule of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.⁷ Eventually, al Nāṣir Muḥammad, discovering the conspiracy, sent immediately for Baktamur, arrested Batkhāṣṣ in his presence and dispatched his soldiers to seize Mūsā who escaped because of his fears.⁸ Two days later the emir Mūsā and all his followers and supporters were seized.⁹

Surprisingly al-Nāṣir Muḥammad succeeded in foiling the conspiracy without mention of Baktamur's participation in the plot;¹⁰

¹Durr, ix, 212.

²Sulūk, ii, 92; Nujūm, ix, 25.

³Supra, 108.

⁴Supra, 105.

⁵For his biography see, Durar, iii, 250.

⁶Nujūm, ix, 25.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Sulūk, ii, 92; Durar, iv, 377; Nujūm, ix, 25.

⁹Sulūk, ii, 92; Durar, iv, 378; Nujūm, ix, 26.

¹⁰Sulūk, ii, 92; Nujūm, ix, 26.

all the conspirators were taken, by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's order, to be executed by being nailed in the presence of the populace of Cairo, al-‘āmmah, against the walls of the Citadel of Cairo but, as soon as this was begun the populace of Cairo, al-‘āmmah, wept for them and al-Nāṣir Muḥammad issued his order of forgiveness through pity and mercy.¹ In conclusion, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was commended and praised by the populace of Cairo, al-‘āmmah.² Thus we see how al-Nāṣir Muḥammad acted in accordance with the will of the populace of Cairo, al-‘āmmah, so that one might almost infer that he knew of his popularity and on this account worked as far as he could to keep and to promote it. Thereafter the question which should be answered here is, why was al-Nāṣir Muḥammad careful to continue his friendly relationship with Baktamur al-Jūkandār in spite of his knowledge of his collaboration in the conspiracy? Yet why was al-Nāṣir Muḥammad concerned not to mention the essential part which had been played by Baktamur al-Jūkandār and even to be extremely mindful to show his utter ignorance respecting this. Presumably he was biding his time. But not before long al-Nāṣir Muḥammad succeeded in seizing Baktamur al-Jūkandār in Jumādā, I, 711/ September 1311.³

With Baktamur al-Jūkandār many emirs of high rank, who were among his main supporters, had been arrested.⁴ Baktamur al-Jūkandār remained in his prison in Alexandria and later in al-Karak until he was killed in 716/1316.⁵ Through a study concerning the way in which

¹Nujūm, ix, 26.

²Ibid.

³Jawāhir, fol. 226a; Sulūk, ii, 102; Durar, i, 485; Nujūm, ix, 28; cf. Durr, ix, 213.

⁴Sulūk, ii, 102-103; Nujūm, ix, 28-29.

⁵Durar, i, 485.

Baktamur al-Jūkandār was captured, one could easily understand that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad had been preparing for that day for a long time, until he succeeded in devising a satisfactory plan to seize Baktamur al-Jūkandār without his being aware of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's plot against him.¹ Apparently al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was afraid that Baktamur al-Jūkandār might flee to Damascus, where he would probably be protected and supported by his friends, the governors of the Syrian provinces. Besides that, Baktamur al-Jūkandār was the vicegerent of the state (nā'ib al-Saltāna bi'l-diyār al-Miṣriyya), and his being in that strong position could easily help him either to escape or to act against al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. Consequently al-Nāṣir Muḥammad planned secretly, with great caution and reflection, a scheme to arrest Baktamur al-Jūkandār, and managed to seize him and immediately imprisoned him in Alexandria.² At the same time, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad arrested Karāy al-Manṣūrī, Quṭlūbak al-Manṣūrī and Quṭluqtamur, who had collaborated with Baktamur al-Jūkandār against al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, and they were imprisoned together with Baktamur at al-Karak.³

Soon, in Jumādā, I, 711/September 1311, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad nominated Baybars al-Manṣūrī (d. Ramaḍān 725/August 1325) to be vicegerent of the Sultanate.⁴ It seems that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, in order to weaken the powerful status of the Mamlūk emirs, and to found a direct personal relation with his subjects at the same time, announced shortly, in Jumādā, I, 711/September 1311, that he himself would attend the

¹Concerning the seizure of Baktamur al-Jūkandār, see Sulūk, ii, 102-103; Durar, i, 485; Nujūm, ix, 28-30.

²Durar, i, 485; Nujūm, ix, 29-30.

³Durr, ix, 212-213; Jawāhir, fol. 226a; Sulūk, ii, 101, 104; Nujūm, ix, 30.

⁴Sulūk, ii, 103, 104, 105; Durar, i, 510.

house of justice (Dār al-'Adl) regularly every Monday to listen to the complaints of the people and to give personal judgment.¹ Consequently, the Mamlūk emirs became frightened.² There is a lack of information concerning the reasons which made Baktamur al-Jūkandār conspire against al-Nāṣir Muḥammad by seeking a broad collaboration with other emirs in order to put an end to his rule and to replace him with his cousin Mūsā. Therefore, it could be inferred that this plot could be regarded as the end of one period as well as the beginning of another. Seemingly the Mamlūk emirs held a powerful position in the Mamlūk regime and respected the ruling power as far as that subjection did not affect their effective bureaucratic condition. Subsequently they realized that, as soon as al-Nāṣir Muḥammad took possession of power, he began to rule with determination, using diplomacy and politics to strengthen his authority; in other words, he acted according to the situation that necessity makes its own laws. Probably al-Nāṣir Muḥammad governed for the sake of his authority as if it was a necessity and even had no respect for promises. Consequently, the Mamlūk emirs, who apparently were displeased and disagreed with this different royal policy, co-operated for the collapse of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's government, but it seems that they took futile steps which resulted in absolute failure.

Besides it seems that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad determined to follow his political policy concerning his standing with the powerful emirs for the purpose of keeping the Mamlūk regime under his absolute command on the

¹Tuḥfa, 24; Sulūk, ii, 103.

²Sulūk, ii, 103.

one hand, and in order to exercise authority over the military, the legislative power and the executive power on the other hand. To accomplish each item of his policy al-Nāṣir Muḥammad worked to take power from the hands of the senior emirs, to prove that he was no longer a titular Sulṭān, and to take up with great subtlety and reciprocal integrity the policies to transform the Mamlūk ruling system of the Sulṭān and the oligarchy of emirs into a personal autocracy and authoritarian regime. It appears that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad wanted to put a definite end to the continuous tension in the Mamlūk state between the oligarchy of the great emirs and the personal autocracy of the Sulṭān.

(iv) The issue of Shams al-Dīn Qarāsunqur

Thereafter al-Nāṣir Muḥammad turned his attention to Shams al-Dīn Qarāsunqur (d. 728/1327),¹ seeking for a successful plan to get rid of him. This determination was the next step which al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was eager to take concerning his policy and his aim, at the same time to hold the reins of power in his hand, in spite of the fact that Qarāsunqur was the first one who helped him to assume power,² and encouraged him with great support and unlimited help to restore his position among the ruling class.³ Besides, the Ashrafiyya kept remembering that Qarāsunqur was one of the killers of al-Ashraf Khalīl, and urged al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to take his revenge.⁴

¹For his biography see, Mulūk, viii, 96, 129, 130, 145, 150, 166-167, 168, 170, 173, 174, 184, 204, 212, 224, 232; Durar, iii, 246-247; Nujūm, viii, 4, 13, 22, 88, 99, 106, 130, 237-238, 239-241, 245, 258-259, 266, 273; ix, 27-28, 30-33.

²Sulūk, ii, 61; Nujūm, viii, 240-241.

³Sulūk, ii, 67-68; Nujūm, viii, 245, 258-259, 264, 266; cf. H. Massé, Mélanges D'orientalisme, Un réfugié Mamlouk à la cour mongole de Perse, by G. Wiet, pp. 396-397 (Teheran 1963).

⁴Tuhfa, i, 43; Sulūk, ii, 79; Nujūm, viii, 273.

Immediately after, when Qarāsunqur was informed about the attitude of the Ashrafiyya towards him, Qarāsunqur left Egypt for Damascus for his own safety.¹ Besides, it seems that Qarāsunqur became afraid of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's new situation.²

In Shawwāl 709/March 711 al-Nāṣir Muḥammad appointed Qarāsunqur viceroy of Damascus (mā'ib Dimashq), but Qarāsunqur was still worried for his life, especially after the capture of Asandamur Kurjī in 710/1310.³ Consequently Qarāsunqur asked al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to be appointed governor of Aleppo and his request was granted in Dhū 'l-Hijja 710/April 1311 by a royal decree issued by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and sent with Arghūn al-Dawādār al-Manṣūrī⁴ (d. 731/1330), who had been secretly commanded to capture Qarāsunqur if he was fortunate enough to find helpful circumstances.⁵

In Muḥarram 711/May 1311 Arghūn al-Dawādār arrived in Damascus to accomplish the transmission of Qarāsunqur to Aleppo, and in spite of his kind and noble behaviour towards Qarāsunqur the latter was careful to be protected all the time during Arghūn's visit and extremely careful to make Arghūn miss every opportunity that could be used against his safety.⁶ A few days later, Qarāsunqur left Damascus with his Mamlūks, six hundred horsemen, for Aleppo with

¹ Sulūk, ii, 79, 80; Nujūm, viii, 274.

² Sulūk, ii, 80; Nujūm, viii, 274.

³ Durrat, fol. 278a; Sulūk, ii, 75, 93; Nujūm, ix, 27.

⁴ For his biography see, Durar, i, 351-352.

⁵ Tatimmat, i, 66; Durrat, fol. 278a; Sulūk, ii, 93, 94, 99-100; Nujūm, ix, 27.

⁶ Tatimmat, ii, 66; Bidāya, xiv, 61; Durrat, fol. 278a; Sulūk, ii, 99; Nujūm, ix, 28.

extreme caution and complete protection from any danger that might occur on the way, and Qarāsunqur settled in Aleppo; in Muḥarram 711/May 1311 Arghūn left Aleppo for Cairo, unsuccessful in fulfilling al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's order. Yet al-Nāṣir Muḥammad thanked Arghūn for being careful.¹ Subsequently when Qarāsunqur was informed that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad had seized Karāy al-Manṣūrī, Asandamur Kurjī and Baktamur al-Jūkandār, he took precautions, provided care, made friendly relations with the Bedouins on the eastern borders of Syria and strengthened his good friendship with the nomads of Al Muhannā.² Moreover, in order to obtain the sympathy and affection of Sulaymān b. Muhannā,³ the Bedouin emir (d. 745/1344), Qarāsunqur let Sulaymān b. Muhannā know about al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's intention to arrest Sulaymān by showing him the Royal Edict.⁴ Thus we see that, at the time when al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was trying to seize Qarāsunqur, he was using him to fulfil a similar function respecting his political policy with the powerful heads in the state. Furthermore, when Qarāsunqur received al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's permission for a pilgrimage, according to his request, he left Aleppo in Shawwāl 711/February 1312 for al-Ḥijāz, accompanied by four hundred Mamlūks, and ordered the rest to stay in Aleppo to protect his property.⁵ In the meantime,

¹Tatimmat, ii, 66; Sulūk, ii, 100; Nujūm, ix, 28.

²Sulūk, ii, 107; Nujūm, ix, 30.

³For his biography, see Durar, ii, 163-64.

⁴Sulūk, ii, 107-108; Nujūm, ix, 31; cf. Masālik, iv, fol. 78b.

⁵Mukhtaṣar, v, 64; Durr, ix, 219; Nahj, iii, 205; Tatimmat, ii, 66; Sulūk, ii, 108; Nujūm, ix, 31.

while Qarāsunqur was on his way al-Nāṣir Muḥammad accomplished three steps of great importance. Firstly he ordered Qaraṭāy Al-Ashrafī¹(d. 734/1333), who had been appointed by Qarāsunqur to be his vicegerent in Aleppo during his absence on pilgrimage, to prevent Qarāsunqur when he came back from entering Aleppo unless he brought a Royal Edict.² Secondly al-Nāṣir Muḥammad dispatched a force of five hundred Mamlūks to al-Ḥijāz to seize Qarāsunqur as soon as he arrived.³ Thirdly, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ordered all the governors of the Syrian provinces to stop Qarāsunqur with force if he tried to pass through their districts or cross their provinces.⁴ When Qarāsunqur was told about al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's preparations against him he returned by a different road to Aleppo with the help of Sulaymān b. Muḥannā, but Qaraṭāy Al-Ashrafī stopped him from entering his province, Aleppo, because of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's order, and even refused to allow him to take his wealth or property or his family.⁵ Therefore Qarāsunqur succeeded in seeking refuge in the eastern frontiers of Syria with Al Muḥannā who welcomed him and granted him protection, and Sulaymān b. Muḥannā wrote to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad asking forgiveness for

¹For his biography, see Durar, iii, 248.

²Sulūk, ii, 108; Nujūm, ix, 31.

³Mukhtaṣar, v, 64; Durr, ix, 219; Nahj, iii, 205-206; Tatimmat, ii, 66.

⁴Durr, ix, 221; Sulūk, ii, 108; Nujūm, ix, 31; cf. Wiet, op.cit., 398.

⁵Mukhtaṣar, v, 64; Durr, ix, 221; Nahj, iii, 206; Tatimmat, ii, 66; Bidāya, xiv, 63; Sulūk, ii, 108, 110; Nujūm, ix, 31-32.

Qarāsunqur and a new province for him.¹ Then al-Nāṣir Muḥammad agreed to Sulaymān b. Muḥannā's demand and gave Qarāsunqur the choice between the Syrian provinces.² Yet it seems that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was not honest about his offer because, immediately after the departure of Sulaymān b. Muḥannā's messenger from Cairo, he dispatched a strong army towards the districts of Āl Muḥannā; meanwhile Qarāsunqur, probably practising the same policy, wrote to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad accepting his offer and asking for the fortress of Ṣarkhad, although he had written to Aqush al-Afram³ (d. 720/1320), viceroy of Damascus, to help him at that time of difficulty, and both al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and al-Afram agreed to Qarāsunqur's requests.⁴

At last Qarāsunqur succeeded in taking his wealth from Aleppo and painfully departed from the province, where he had administered local affairs for twenty-four years, while the people of Aleppo watched him sadly.⁵

Ibn al-Dawādārī records that Qarāsunqur was mistaken concerning the attitude of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad towards him and made a mistake in taking extensive precautions.⁶ Besides, Qarāsunqur imagined

¹ Masālik, iv, fol. 78b; Durr, ix, 220-221; Mālik, fol. 67b; Tuhfa, 43; Sulūk, ii, 109; Durar, iii, 246; Nujūm, ix, 31-32.

² Mukhtaṣar, v, 64; Tatimmat, ii, 67; Sulūk, ii, 109; Nujūm, ix, 32; cf. Masālik, iv, fol. 78b.

³ For his biography, see Durar, i, 396-398; he is named in other Mamlūk chronicles Aqūsh.

⁴ Mukhtaṣar, v, 66; Durr, ix, 222; Tuhfa, i, 44; Sulūk, ii, 109-110; Nujūn, ix, 32; cf. Masālik, iv, fol. 78b.

⁵ Durr, ix, 221-22; Nahj, iii, 206; Sulūk, ii, 110.

⁶ Durr, ix, 223; cf. Mukhtaṣar, v, 64, 66.

al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's evil intentions towards him, and he was completely wrong concerning al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's decision respecting his capture.¹ The question arises here, how far is the above statement of Ibn al-Dawādārī correct? Considering the position of Ibn al-Dawādārī as a contemporary historian in the period of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, and through a full study regarding the political policy of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad towards the oligarchy of powerful emirs, and according to the writings of the Mamlūk historians, it could be said that the seizure of Qarāsunqur was the most important part of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's policy respecting the execution of the senior emirs.² Subsequently al-Nāṣir Muḥammad sent the emir, Ṭaqṭāy al-Jumdār, and Arghūn al-Dawādār to persuade Qarāsunqur to return to Aleppo and to assure him of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's sincerity and respect. But Qarāsunqur, because of his fears, refused to accept the offer, and, even when he received the Royal Edict concerning his appointment as viceroy of the Sultanate, Qarāsunqur insisted on refusing the offer.³ Immediately after Aqush al-Afram arrived to assist Qarāsunqur, informed him about the armed forces which had been already dispatched by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad against them, and suggested that they should fight al-Nāṣir Muḥammad for the sake of their prestige, but Qarāsunqur rejected the idea.⁴

¹ Durr, ix, 223; see also Ibar, v, part iv, 914; cf. Mukhtaṣar, v, 64, 66; Nahj, iii, 207-208; Tuhfa, 43.

² Mukhtaṣar, v, 66; Nahj, iii, 207-208; Tatimmat, ii, 68; Tuhfa, 43; Ibar, v, part iv, 914.

³ Mukhtaṣar, v, 66; Durr, ix, 223-225; Tatimmat, ii, 69.

⁴ Mukhtaṣar, v, 66; Durr, ix, 225-226; Nahj, iii, 208-209; Tatimmat, ii, 68; Bidāya, xiv, 65; Tuhfa, 44; Ibar, v, part iv, 914; Sulūk, ii, 110-111; Nujūm, ix, 32.

Lastly, when Qarāsunqur and al-Afram received a letter of welcome and an offer of protection from the Mongol ruler, Öljeitü b.

Arghūn b. Abghā b. Hūlakū, and became sure at the same time that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad had reinforced that army to fight them, they decided to flee to the Mongol court where they would be honorably welcomed and graciously treated.¹

When the Mamlūk army reached Ḥimṣ they knew about the flight of Qarāsunqur and al-Afram, therefore they left Ḥimṣ and returned to Cairo, while al-Nāṣir Muḥammad had been acquainted with the news of the escape in Muḥarram 712/May 1312.² Then the Mongol ruler appointed Qarāsunqur governor of Marāgha, and al-Afram governor of Hamadhān.³ Thus, as we have seen, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad worked hard to get rid of Shams al-Dīn Qarāsunqur, the man without whose moral encouragement, political help and military aid, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was unable to restore his ruling position. The point which is worth noting here must be about the reasons which made al-Nāṣir Muḥammad insist so firmly on seizing Qarāsunqur. It might be the powerful position of Qarāsunqur and his political influence on the other emirs made al-Nāṣir Muḥammad worried and afraid with regard to his status so that he was extremely anxious to arrest Qarāsunqur for the sake of his rule and his personal ambition to govern.

It could be also that because of the personal experience of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad with the oligarchy of the emirs during his two previous reigns he became excessively careful, deeply suspicious and cautious in his attitude towards the strong emirs of the state,

¹Masālik, iv, fol. 78b; Mukhtaṣar, v, 66-67; Durr, ix, 227-230; Nahj, iii, 210-211; Mālik, fol. 67b; Tatimmat, ii, 69; Bidāya, xiv, 140; Tuhfa, i, 44; Ibar, v, part iv, 914; Sulūk, ii, 115; Durar, iii, 246-247; Nujūm, ix, 32-33.

²Tatimmat, ii, 69; Ibar, v, part iv, 914; Sulūk, ii, 110-111; Nujūm, ix, 32.

³Sulūk, ii, 115; Nujūm, ix, 33; for details, see Durr, ix, 230-235; Tuhfa, 44; cf. Wiet, *op. cit.*, 398.

even those who helped him to take possession of the throne, the emirs of high rank and of effective authority; he followed them one after another to arrest them, imprison them and put them to torture until they were executed. This policy was applied by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad soon after he became sure of his effective power.

Besides, we know through the biography of Qarāsunqur that he was party to the murder of al-Ashraf Khalīl, brother of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad; it would be easy for us to understand the reality of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's attitude towards Qarāsunqur almost because of his fears of a similar action taken against him.

But, on the other hand, we see that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad followed that political policy with almost every powerful emir and especially those who brought power back into his hands. He assumed that they had the ability to take the power out of his hands and to prevent him from ruling effectively. Therefore, in the interest of protecting his position, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad accomplished the policy of putting an end to the lives of the effective emirs. Seemingly, Baktamur al-Jūkandār realized the reality of that situation; he plotted against al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's government in order to replace him by his cousin Mūsā so that the emirs could have the opportunity of practising their previous customary domination, but he failed to achieve success.

Furthermore, it might be also that economic interests had played a part in that policy as an aim to the advantage of the royal privy funds.

On the other hand, we see how Qarāsunqur acted his part as an astute politician who knew exactly the character of his enemy,

so that he never trusted the promises of forgiveness, of protection and of high office which al-Nāṣir Muḥammad had frequently given him. It seems that the two men were politicians of equal skill. Therefore, it was difficult for either of them to succeed. But it is surprising how Qarāsunqur rejected the idea of fighting al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and the only answer to that is that either Qarāsunqur found it impossible to wage war against al-Nāṣir Muḥammad owing to being uncertain of winning a victory, or that he was loyal to the Mamlūk Sultanate and did not want to provoke a civil war and, for the welfare of the people and for the peace of the country, he preferred to seek refuge with the Mongols. It could be also that Qarāsunqur had no personal interest either in ruling the kingdom, or in holding supreme power, for, if he had desired to be in power, he would have arranged that for himself instead of helping al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to seize power.

Lastly, through a study concerning the function of Qarāsunqur, his biography and his later status in the Mamlūk state, it can be seen that he was to a considerable extent a wealthy man, widely popular and extremely powerful and consequently he was of great danger to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's position. Therefore, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad used diplomatic negotiations, political lures and military threats to seize him, but he failed to fulfil his desire. This was a clear picture of one aspect in the Mamlūk political field concerning the nature of the relations between al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and the oligarchy of emirs at the beginning of his third reign.

In Rabī', II, 712/August 1312 the army which had been sent by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad after Qarāsunqur returned to Cairo, and al-Nāṣir

Muḥammad arrested most of the leaders because they had failed to accomplish his design concerning the capture of Qarāsunqur.¹ Besides, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad seized several emirs whom he had thought were sympathetic to Qarāsunqur, such as Baybars al-Manṣūrī, the vicegerent of the Sultanate, Sunqur al-Kamālī,² and others.³ Immediately after al-Nāṣir Muḥammad appointed Arghūn al-Dawādār to hold the office of vicegerent of the Sultanate,⁴ and Tankiz al-Ḥusāmī, viceroy of Damascus.⁵ Moreover al-Nāṣir Muḥammad confiscated Qarāsunqur's wealth, which was about thirty two thousand golden dīnārs with some other valuable objects made of gold and silver.⁶ This might support the economic factor concerning the reasons which made al-Nāṣir Muḥammad anxious to seize Qarāsunqur.

Ibn al-Dawādārī states that the ruler of the Mongols started, because of Qarāsunqur's encouragement, to prepare a campaign to attack Syria; the Mongol campaign besieged al-Raḥba in Ramaḍān 712/January 1313, but when they knew about the arrival of the Muslim army at Gaza on their way to fight the Mongols, the latter left for their country.⁷ It seems that Qarāsunqur had to take part in any campaign that might be organized by the Mongols against the Mamlūk Sultanate even if Qarāsunqur was against the idea because, above all, he was under Mongol protection.

¹Durr, ix, 229; 'Ibar, v, part V, 914-915; Sulūk, ii, 117.

²For his biography, see Durar, ii, 177.

³Sulūk, ii, 117.

⁴Ibid.

⁵See 'Ibar, v, part V, 914.

⁶Nahj, iii, 228.

⁷For details, see Durr, ix, 251-259.

In 713/1313 when Qarāsunqur was informed that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad had arrested his sons and confiscated their wealth, he was sad,¹ therefore he thought of attacking Syria but circumstances did not help him to fulfil his wish.² Again, in 715/1315, Qarāsunqur thought of putting his plan concerning an attack against Syria into action but it was only a thought.³ Hence the impression is that Qarāsunqur planned to wage war against the Mamlūk Sultanate for the destruction of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's rule as revenge had to be taken against al-Nāṣir Muḥammad because of his opposition to Qarāsunqur's sons. On the other hand, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad never gave up the idea of putting an end to Qarāsunqur's life. Consequently al-Nāṣir Muḥammad kept sending his men to the Īlkhānid territories to fulfil his desire; for instance, in 720/1320, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad sent thirty men (fidāwiyya)⁴ one after another, but none succeeded in accomplishing his command; many of these men were killed while they were attempting to carry out that order.⁵ The question arises here, why was al-Nāṣir Muḥammad eager to execute Qarāsunqur even after the latter's flight to the Mongols? Was it only personal feelings of hatred, or political fears

¹ Durr, ix, 267-268.

² For details, see Durr, ix, 268-279.

³ Mukhtaṣar, v, 77; Bidāya, xiv, 74.

⁴ Al-fidāwiyya were a section of al-Ismā'īliyya who were descended from Ismā'īl b. Ja'far al-Ṣādiq b. Muḥammad al-Bāqir b. 'Alī Zayn al-'Abidīn b. al-Ḥusayn al-Sabiṭ b. 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib. However, the Ismā'īliyya were a group of al-Shiites.

In

time they became powerful and occupied large parts of Persia and Syria. Al-Qalqashandī quotes Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī who says that al-fidāwiyya believed that the ruler of Egypt was their supreme head; therefore they obeyed him and followed every single instruction for his personal interests. Accordingly, the ruler of Egypt sent al-fidāwiyya to kill his enemies; on the other hand, they did not care to lose their lives in order to fulfil the demand. Subsequently, if al-fidāwiyya messenger failed to carry out the order his family would execute him. For details, see Subh, i, 119-112.

⁵ Nahj, iii, 241-242; Bidāya, xiv, 74; Tuhfa, i, 44; Sulūk, ii, 207; see also Wiet, op. cit., 399-401.

of Qarāsunqur's influence and position in the Mongol court? It appears that the two factors were behind that attitude of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad towards Qarāsunqur.

In return, Qarāsunqur succeeded in 720/1320 in sending four fidāwiyya to Cairo for the purpose of assassinating al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, and when they were discovered by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's officials two were killed and two fled. As a result al-Nāṣir Muḥammad became careful to protect himself and, for his safety, he ordered the people not to stand on the sides of the streets while he was going to the Maydān.¹

In 727/1327 al-Nāṣir Muḥammad arrested Faraj b. Shams al-Dīn Qarāsunqur (d. 734/1333)² and imprisoned him.³

In Shawwāl 728/August 1328 Qarāsunqur died in the Mongol kingdom.⁴ In conclusion al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was pleased and sent his sons 'Alī b. Qarāsunqur (d. 748/1347)⁵ and Faraj b. Qarāsunqur, to Damascus to hold high posts there.⁶ Thus with the death of Qarāsunqur the reasons for the unfriendly relationship between al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and Qarāsunqur's sons came to an end and a new and friendly relationship came into being.

(v) The political reaction of the emirs

In Rabī', II, 715/July 1315 al-Nāṣir Muḥammad arrested Baktamur al-Ḥājjib (d. 728/1328)⁷ and Aydaghdī Shaqīr (d. 715/1315)⁸ because

¹Sulūk, ii, 208-209.

²For his biography, see Durar, iii, 230.

³Badr, fol. 19b.

⁴Bidāya, xiv, 140; Tuḥfa, i, 44; Sulūk, ii, 305; Nujūm, ix, 273.

⁵For his biography, see Durar, iii, 95-96.

⁶Bidāya, xiv, 143; Sulūk, ii, 305.

⁷For his biography, see Durar, i, 483-484.

⁸For his biography, see Durar, i, 425-426.

they co-operated in formulating a plot against al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and he was informed about it immediately before they succeeded in putting their intention into action.¹ Soon after their capture, Aydaḡhdī admitted that he had formed a scheme against al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's power, therefore he was killed at once.² All the wealth and the property of the conspirators were confiscated immediately.³ At the same time, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad captured other emirs such as Bahādur Aṣ (d. 730/1329)⁴ and Tamur al-Sāqī (d. 743/1342)⁵ who were powerful emirs of high rank.⁶ The question which should be asked here is, who are these conspirators?

Baktamur al-Hāḡib was appointed chamberlain (hāḡib) in Damascus. He was a man of experience and probity, subsequently he became vice-roy of Gaza.⁷ Later, in 710/1310, he became wazīr of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's government. In 715/1315 Baktamur was arrested. Later he was set free and became viceroy of Ṣafad. Afterwards he joined the group of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's advisers (umarā' al-mashūra) in Cairo. He was a man of great moral courage and prepared to face al-Nāṣir Muḥammad when he disagreed with him.⁸ Baktamur was wealthy

¹Bidāya, xiv, 73; Sulūk, ii, 144.

²Durar, i, 426; Sulūk, ii, 144.

³Bidāya, i, 73; Durar, i, 426.

⁴For his biography, see Durar, i, 497.

⁵For his biography, see Durar, i, 519.

⁶Sulūk, ii, 144; Durar, i, 519.

⁷Durar, i, 483.

⁸Ibid.

and when al-Nāṣir Muḥammad arrested him in 715/1315 he confiscated his wealth which amounted to 120,000 dīnārs and 500,000 dirhams.¹ He was liberated four years later in 719/1319 and died in 728/1328.² Presumably Baktamur was arrested under suspicion and later released, his experience made him valuable as an adviser. It is possible that there was a lack of evidence.

Aydaḡhdī Shaqīr was a Mamlūk of the former Sulṭān Lāchīn³ and he proved worthy of his office and was raised to the emirate;⁴ subsequently he became a close friend of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.⁵ When al-Nāṣir Muḥammad left for al-Karak he followed him and became his favourite.⁶ He incited al-Nāṣir Muḥammad against the other emirs; therefore the emirs united against him and informed al-Nāṣir Muḥammad that Aydaḡhdī was planning to overthrow him.⁷ Consequently al-Nāṣir Muḥammad arrested him and had him executed in the year 715/1315.⁸

Bahādur Aṣ was a handsome man, apparently al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was attracted to him. Bahādur served al-Nāṣir Muḥammad devotedly in al-Karak. In return al-Nāṣir Muḥammad appointed him viceroy of Ṣafad in 711/1311.⁹

¹Durar, i, 484.

²Ibid.

³Durar, i, 425.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Durar, i, 426.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Durar, i, 497.

Tankiz al-Ḥusāmī, the viceroy (nā'ib) of Syria, resented Bahādur and persuaded al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to arrest him for reasons which are unstated and he was imprisoned for an unspecified period¹ before being released and returned to Damascus, where he remained until his death in 730/1329.²

Tamur al-Sāqī was a Mamlūk of Qalāwūn who became viceroy (nā'ib) of Ḥimṣ and later of Tripoli; he was arrested in 715/1315 and imprisoned in Alexandria for approximately twenty years. He was liberated in 735/1334 and appointed emir in Damascus.³

On the advice of Tamur the viceroy of Syria, Tankiz, who had been determined to fight al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, surrendered. Tamur died in 743/1342.⁴

This shows how the oligarchy of the emirs was trying to put an end to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's reign by a conspiracy. On the other hand, with the discovery of the plot, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad became strict and violent with regard to conspirators and more careful in observing the other emirs and even imprisoned some of them. In other words, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad wanted a reign of new aspect, different from his two previous reigns, while the oligarchy of the Mamlūk

¹Ibid.

²Ibid.

³Durar, i, 519.

⁴Ibid.

emirs fought him by plotting against his rule to the advantage of their powerful position in the Mamlūk state. Subsequently al-Nāṣir Muḥammad continued to fulfil his policy concerning the capture of the emirs who held important posts, or of powerful influence; for example, in 718/1318, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad seized several emirs such as Sayf al-Dīn Ṭughāy al-Nāṣirī (d. 718/1318).¹ because al-Nāṣir Muḥammad had no confidence in Ṭughāy al-Nāṣirī and completely mistrusted his intent.² Thus we see how al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was extremely strict concerning both the intentions and the actions of the Mamlūk emirs, and eagerly desired to be absolutely sure of their sincerity and their loyalty to him and to his rule, and to accept with complete obedience his reign in all its aspects. Besides, at the same time, he wanted to stop them from grumbling and complaining. Probably al-Nāṣir Muḥammad believed profoundly that, in order to restore his right to rule, he should exact an effective promise from the emirs of his Sultanate.

Apparently the populace of Cairo, al-‘āmmah, realized the reality of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's position towards the oligarchy of the emirs, and of his character with regard to his suspicion, care and awareness; therefore, the populace behaved so as to derive advantage from this situation by writing to him accusing his emirs and the powerful officials of the state of working against al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's rule. In addition, these letters were without signatures.³ The question that arises here is, how far al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was affected by these

¹For his biography, see Durar, ii, 221-222.

²Durrat, fols. 301b-302a; Sulūk, ii, 183-184; Durar, iii, 222.

³Sulūk, ii, 208.

anonymous letters. The answer is to state that, in Rabī', II, 726/March 1326¹ al-Nāṣir Muḥammad seized Sayf al-Dīn Qaṭlūbghā al-Fakhrī² (d. 744/1343), and Ṭashtamur al-sāqī (d. 743/1343)³ because he found an anonymous letter recording that Qaṭlūbghā and Ṭashtamur had planned to kill al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.⁴ But the Mamlūk emirs stood beside the accused emirs, denied the accusation and persuaded al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to release them. Eventually al-Nāṣir Muḥammad granted the emirs' demand.⁵ Qaṭlūbghā was sent to Damascus,⁶ and Ṭashtamur became one of the courtiers (al-'umarā' al-khāṣṣakiyya).⁷ Seemingly as much as personal hatred played an important part in stirring al-Nāṣir Muḥammad against other emirs, also the strong friendly relations of the emirs (khushdāshayya) had been usefully employed for the safety of other innocent emirs.

Afterwards, in Jumādā, I, 726/April 1326, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad seized the emir Bahā' al-Dīn Aṣlam (d. 747/1346)⁸ and his brother Sayf al-Dīn Qarmajī because of an anonymous letter stating that they were conspiring with the support of their Mamlūks to attack al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and to change the government of his state.⁹ Al-Nāṣir

¹Cf. Durar, iii, 250.

²For his biography, see Durar, iii, 250-252.

³For his biography, see Durar, ii, 219-220.

⁴Sulūk, ii, 281; Durar, iii, 250.

⁵Sulūk, ii, 281; Durar, iii, 250.

⁶Durar, iii, 250.

⁷Ibid., ii, 219.

⁸For his biography, see Durar, i, 389.

⁹Sulūk, ii, 281-282.

Muḥammad, who believed every evil accusation, imprisoned the brothers with other emirs without a proof of guilt.¹

(vi) The office of "vicegerency in Egypt" (Niyābat al-Saltāna).

Through the preceding study concerning the first stages of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's third reign it was remarkable that a new political policy had been started especially respecting the power as well as the position of the oligarchy of the emirs, notably those who held high posts such as the office of the vicegerency of the Sultanate (niyābat al-Saltāna bi 'l-diyār al-Miṣriyya).² Concerning this important post we know that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad had been either deposed during his first reign, or forced to resign during his second reign, and the situations had occurred because of the holders of that post. The question which should be raised here is, what was the attitude of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad towards that post during his third reign when he became his own master? Returning to the beginning of the third reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad we see Sayf al-Dīn Salār in 710/1310 asking al-Nāṣir Muḥammad for his resignation from the office of vice-Sulṭān (niyābat al-Saltāna bi 'l-diyār al-Miṣriyya).³ Accordingly Baktamur al-Jūkandār became vicegerent (nā'ib al-Saltāna bi 'l-diyār al-Miṣriyya) in Shawwāl 710/February 1311,⁴ but, for his action against al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, Baktamur was imprisoned in 711/1311.⁵ Therefore, Baybars al-Manṣūrī held the vicegerent office in 711/1311,⁶ but, shortly, in 712/1312, Baybars was seized by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad

¹Sulūk, ii, 282.

²For this office, see Subh, iv, 16-17.

³Sulūk, ii, 75; Durar, ii, 181; Nujūm, ix, 11.

⁴Sulūk, ii, 77; Durar, i, 485; Nujūm, ix, 13.

⁵Sulūk, ii, 91-92, 102; Durar, i, 485; Nujūm, ix, 24-26, 28-30.

⁶Sulūk, ii, 103; Durar, i, 510; Nujūm, ix, 30.

and was put in prison until 717/1317 because of his sympathetic attitude towards Shams al-Dīn Qarāsunqur.¹ Subsequently, in Jumādā, I, 712/September 1312, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad appointed Arghūn al-Dawādār (d. 731/1330)² vicegerent of the Sultanate. Thereafter, in Muḥarram 727/November 1326, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad captured Arghūn because he had failed to seize Muhannā the Bedouin chief and al-Nāṣir Muḥammad accused him of being unfaithful in accomplishing this command.³ Afterwards, for the sake of Baktamur al-Sāqī, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad forgave Arghūn and nominated him governor of Aleppo, whereupon he held that post until his death in Rabī', I, 731/December 1330 in Aleppo.⁴ Then al-Nāṣir Muḥammad abolished the office of vicegerent of the Sultanate and until his death in 740/1341 for thirteen years there was no vicegerent in the Mamlūk Sultanate.⁵ Ibn Taghrī Birdī says that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was afraid that any one might claim that vital office; therefore he abolished that post.⁶ In another place Ibn Taghrī Birdī states that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad abolished the office of vicegerency in order to be the only one who had the right to rule the Mamlūk Sultanate with full authority and unlimited power.⁷

¹Sulūk, ii, 117; Durar, i, 510; Nujūm, ix, 33-34.

²Wafī, viii, 358; Sulūk, ii, 118; Durar, i, 351; Nujūm, ix, 34.

³Wafī, viii, 359-360; Bidāya, xiv, 127; Sulūk, ii, 279; Durar, i, 351-352; Nujūm, ix, 88.

⁴Wafī, viii, 360; Bidāya, xiv, 127; Sulūk, ii, 279, 339; Durar, i, 352; Nujūm, ix, 88.

⁵Nujūm, ix, 108.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Nujūm, ix, 174.

(vii) The conspiracy of Baktamur al-Sāqī

It seems that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was preoccupied by the powerful position of the vicegerent (nā'ib al-Salṭana bi 'l-diyār al-Miṣriyya), either because of his personal experience, or because of the attempts of some vicegerents towards him, especially during the first half of his third reign when he became an astute politician who wanted to rule the state with full power and competent authority. Apparently in order to have complete co-operation and to enforce respect for his status, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad worked to have his own Mamlūks around him for help and support, and at the same time abolished the office of vicegerency in order to have no official of significant authority. Besides, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad attached importance to being the sole ruler, and to having complete supremacy over the oligarchy of the emirs and to be in control of power. The question which ought to be asked here is, how far would the fact of having his own Mamlūks around him help al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to seize the reins of power? Moreover to what degree the Nāṣirī Mamlūks would be loyal to their master; they were privileged to assume considerable power depending on their being his Mamlūks (al-Mamālīk al-Nāṣiriyya), and therefore they would be faithful to him. This brings us to a conspiracy secretly organized by some of the Nāṣirī Mamlūks who were greatly favoured by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. Baktamur al-Sāqī (d. 733/1332)¹ was the closest friend to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad;² thereupon he became extremely rich and highly respected by other emirs.³ Baktamur al-Sāqī was a Mamlūk of the Sulṭān Baybars al-

¹For his biography, see Tuhfa, i, 169; Jawāhir, fols. 230a-231a; Durar, i, 486-487; Badr, fol. 32a; Nujūm, ix, 69, 75, 100, 101-102, 104, 105-106, 300.

²Jawāhir, fol. 230b; Sulūk, ii, 364; Durar, i, 486; Badr, fol. 32a; Nujūm, ix, 100, 105, 300, 301.

³Bidāya, xiv, 161; Jawāhir, fol. 230b; Sulūk, ii, 364; Durar, i, 418, 486; Badr, fol. 32a; Nujūm, ix, 102, 105.

Jāshnakīr.¹ When al-Nāṣir Muḥammad came to power Baktamur became one of his Manlūks.² In time, Baktamur became intimate with al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and they spent most of their days together.³ Baktamur reached a high position in the state and in consequence became wealthy.⁴

There is a certain amount of evidence to show that Baktamur was actually planning to kill al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.⁵ In fact, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad forestalled him, killed him and confiscated his wealth.⁶ Subsequently al-Nāṣir Muḥammad regretted this hasty action and said openly that there would never again be such a man in the Royal Court.⁷

Moreover Anūk, the son of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad (d. 740/1339),⁸ married the daughter of Baktamur in a ceremonious wedding in 732/1332.⁹

In the same year al-Nāṣir Muḥammad intended to leave Cairo for a pilgrimage with some emirs of powerful office, chiefly Baktamur al-Sāqī, his wife and his son Aḥmad (d. 733/1332).¹⁰ Subsequently they left Cairo and al-Nāṣir Muḥammad appointed the chamberlain (al-

¹Durar, i, 486.

²Ibid, i, 487.

³Ibid.

⁴Durar, i, 486.

⁵Ibid., i, 487.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

⁸For his biography, see Durar, i, 418.

⁹Bidāya, xiv, 157; Durar, i, 418; Nujūm, ix, 100, 101-102.

¹⁰For his biography, see Durar, i, 114-115.

hājib), Sayf al-Dīn Almās (d. 733/1332),¹ in the office of vice-royalty (nā'ib al-Saltāna) during the absence of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad on pilgrimage, it was a temporary appointment because as we have already seen the office of vicegerency had been abolished.² Almās was an intimate friend of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. He gradually wielded more power.³ Without possessing the title he in fact exercised the power of interim viceroy of the Mamlūk Sultanate (nā'ib al-ghayba).⁴ When al-Nāṣir Muḥammad left for al-Ḥijāz for pilgrimage he left Almās with two other emirs in the Citadel of Cairo to direct affairs of state in the year 732/1332.⁵ On his return, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad arrested Almās.⁶ Nā'ib al-ghayba was an office of regent, who was appointed during the absence of the Sulṭān.⁷

Shortly, while al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was on his way to al-Ḥijāz, he knew that Baktamur had made an agreement with some of the royal Mamlūks to slay al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.⁸ Consequently al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, for his own safety, on the pretext of illness, decided to return to Cairo and the emirs agreed to the intention, except Baktamur who advised al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to continue the journey for pilgrimage.⁹ Thereupon al-Nāṣir Muḥammad accepted Baktamur's advice, but he sent

¹For his biography, see Badr, fol. 32a; Durar, i, 410-411; Nujūm, ix, 103.

²Badr, fol. 32a; Durar, i, 410; Nujūm, ix, 102.

³Durar, i, 410.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Subh, iv, 17.

⁸Tuhfa, i, 169; Jawāhir, fol. 231a; Sulūk, ii, 364; Badr, fol. 32a; Nujūm, ix, 104.

⁹Nujūm, ix, 104.

his son Anūk and his wife Khawand Tuḡhāy (d. 749/1349)¹ to al-Karak for their safety.² Thus al-Nāṣir Muḥammad started taking steps to thwart Baktamur's plot. Thereafter al-Nāṣir Muḥammad continued his journey with great caution and he was careful secretly to change the place where he slept many times during the night.³ Besides, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was careful to tell no one of this matter.⁴ Before al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's arrival in Mecca thirty of his Mamlūks fled towards Iraq, probably because of their fears of his anger that he knew about the organized plot, but al-Nāṣir Muḥammad continued to fulfil the duties of the pilgrimage, trying to assume indifference concerning the flight of the Royal Mamlūks.⁵ These aspects of care and precaution regarding the character of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad throw light on his personality as a politician who had great interest in protecting his position as a ruler of a great state. Moreover, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad succeeded in capturing the fleeing Mamlūks and sent them to al-Karak.⁶ Respecting the position of Baktamur we find that, on their way back to Cairo, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad planned to poison Baktamur and his son Aḥmad, and he succeeded in having them poisoned in Muḥarram 733/September 1332.⁷

Apparently it was a secret personal struggle between al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and Baktamur, each one wanted to succeed in killing the other.

¹For her biography, see Durar, ii, 221.

²Nujūm, ix, 104.

³Sulūk, ii, 355; Durar, i, 487; Nujūm, ix, 104.

⁴Sulūk, ii, 364; Nujūm, ix, 104.

⁵Nujūm, ix, 104-105.

⁶Sulūk, ii, 359.

⁷Tuḥfa, i, 169; Bidāya, xiv, 160-161; Jawāhir, fol. 231a; Sulūk, ii, 364-365; Durar, i, 487; Badr, fol. 32a; Nujūm, ix, 105.

According to the Mamlūk historians we see that the personal desire of the two against each other was created soon after their departure from Cairo for the pilgrimage.¹ Therefore every one tried to protect himself and to take advantage of any opportunity that could make the other fall into an ambush or into the other's hands.² Furthermore, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was extremely careful to keep Baktamur under his eye in order not to give him an opportunity to act against him and, with more wariness, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad began to plan Baktamur's death.³ The question arises here, why did al-Nāṣir Muḥammad poison the son Aḥmad as well as his father and, as a matter of fact, three days before his father, Baktamur al-Sāqī?⁴

Ibn Taghrī Birdī analyses the situation, stating that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad arranged the death of Aḥmad to be three days before that of his father so that Baktamur would be sad about his son's sudden death; therefore he would be less cautious concerning his own protection from any danger that might occur to him from al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and that would be the opportunity that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was waiting for.⁵ Besides that, Ibn Taghrī Birdī thinks that if al-Nāṣir Muḥammad left Aḥmad b. Baktamur alive, the Mamlūks of Baktamur might stand by him and support him in taking aggressive action against al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. Consequently, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, in order to

¹Tuhfa, i, 169; Nujūm, ix, 104-105.

²Nujūm, ix, 106.

³Sulūk, ii, 364; Nujūm, ix, 106.

⁴Durar, i, 115, 487; Nujūm, ix, 105, 106.

⁵Nujūm, ix, 106.

achieve complete success, had to put both of them to death.¹ Immediately after the arrival of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in Cairo he seized Almās, who had taken an important part in that conspiracy in spite of his being al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's Mamlūk, as Baktamur al-Sāqī was.²

As soon as al-Nāṣir Muḥammad arrived in Cairo, he confiscated all the property and the possessions of Baktamur and, among these things, he found a letter written by Sayf al-Dīn Almās to Baktamur, when the latter was with al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in al-Ḥijāz, telling him that he had prepared to take possession of Cairo and the Citadel of Cairo, and was waiting for news and orders from Baktamur.³ When al-Nāṣir Muḥammad found the letter he was sure that Baktamur al-Sāqī and Sayf al-Dīn Almās had co-operated in plotting to kill al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and to assume the power of the Mamlūk Sultanate; thereupon al-Nāṣir Muḥammad arrested Almās in Muḥarram 733/September 1332, and immediately killed him, and confiscated his wealth and all his possessions.⁴

Ibn Baṭṭūṭa states that Baktamur al-Sāqī arranged this plot in order that his son Aḥmad could come to power and take over the government.⁵

¹Nujūm, ix, 106.

²Durar, i, 410; Badr, fol. 32a; Nujūm, ix, 107.

³Durar, i, 410; Badr, fol. 32a; Nujūm, ix, 107-108.

⁴Durr, ix, 373; Badr, fol. 32a; Durar, i, 410; Nujūm, ix, 108.

⁵Tuḥfa, i, 169.

But it is recorded in the manuscript of Tārīkh Jawāhir al-Sulūk that Baktamur al-Sāqī planned this plot for his own ambition to hold supreme power in the Mamlūk Sultanate.¹

Both al-Maqrīzī and Ibn Taghrī Birdī in their statements regarding the position of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad towards Baktamur al-Sāqī agree to attribute al-Nāṣir Muḥammad with knowledge, understanding, cunning and astuteness.²

However al-Nāṣir Muḥammad succeeded in foiling this conspiracy which had been carefully planned by his own Royal Mamlūks who, without al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's care and friendly attitude, would not be able to maintain a high position in the Mamlūk Sultanate. They enjoyed high positions and a great amount of wealth. But it seems that the desire for personal independence and competent authority was extremely strong and uppermost in the minds of the Mamlūk emirs so that as soon as one of them found himself in such a powerful position he began to plan the destruction of the existing government in order to seize power. Besides these emirs were not used to being ruled by one governor, or to be under a supreme power; hence, when al-Nāṣir Muḥammad started his third reign with the fact that he would be the only one who had competent authority to carry out both the legislative power and the executive power, the oligarchy of the emirs was disappointed.

Consequently the Mamlūk emirs began to revolt against that authoritarian power by plots and conspiracies, which were mainly arranged to put an end to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's life and, consequently, his power. Apparently they believed that there was no distinction between themselves and al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, neither in economic condition, nor in social status; therefore why was al-Nāṣir Muḥammad the only one who enjoyed that absolute power?

¹The statement of Jawāhir, fol. 231a, is as follows: ان يكثر قده قتل السلطان في طريق الحجاز ويتسلطن عوضه .
²Sulūk, ii, 364; Nujūm, ix, 106.

On the other hand, it appears that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad understood the situation and perfectly realized how serious the political situation was, especially concerning his relations with those emirs. Consequently, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad worked to increase his wealth and to strengthen his political power in order to be able to face any revolt that might occur at the expense of his government.

(viii) The case of Sharf al-Dīn al-Nashū

When al-Nāṣir Muḥammad seized supreme power in 709/1309 for the third time there were two important offices, vicegerent of the Sultanate, which has already been mentioned, and the wazirate (al-wizāra).¹ The wizāra was both an honourable and responsible office, later the wazīr became more or less a figurehead, he had not the power to appoint or dismiss government officials. The Sulṭān insisted on being informed of all matters, therefore the wazīr was not necessarily a man of any outstanding qualifications or character. Later al-Nāṣir Muḥammad abolished this office.² Concerning the latter office, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad appointed Fakhr al-Dīn 'Umar b. al-Khalīlī (d. 711/1311)³ to be his first wazīr in his third reign,⁴ but he was deposed in Ramaḍān 710/January 1311.⁵ Immediately after al-Nāṣir Muḥammad nominated Baktamur al-Ḥājib (d. 728/1327)⁶ to be his wazīr, but soon Baktamur al-Ḥājib was discharged from his office in Rabī', II, 711/August 1311.⁷ Subsequently, Amīn al-Dīn 'Abd Allāh b. al-

¹For the function of wizāra, see Subh, iv, 28.

²Subh, iv, 28.

³For his biography, see Durar, iii, 170-171.

⁴Sulūk, ii, 76; Durar, iii, 171; Husn, ii, 223.

⁵Sulūk, ii, 89; Durar, iii, 171; Husn, ii, 223.

⁶Supra, 125.

⁷Sulūk, ii, 100-101; Husn, ii, 223.

Ghannām (d. 741/1340)¹ became the wazīr by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's order in Rabīʿ, II, 711/August 1311.² After two years, in Jumādā, I, 713/August 1313, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad dismissed Ibn al-Ghannām from his office.³ Then al-Nāṣir Muḥammad abolished the office of wizāra in 713/1313.⁴

After that for ten years there was no wazīr in al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's government until Rabīʿ, I, 723/March 1323, when al-Nāṣir Muḥammad returned Amīn al-Dīn b. al-Ghannām to his office.⁵ In Ramaḍān 724/August 1324 al-Nāṣir Muḥammad dismissed Ibn al-Ghannām from his office and replaced him immediately by 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥlaṭāy al-Jamālī⁶ (d. 730/1330),⁷ who was the last wazīr in al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's government. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad abolished that office completely from his government in Shawwāl 729/August 1329.⁸

Thus al-Nāṣir Muḥammad abolished the two offices, probably to be the sole master of state affairs, but it should be admitted that the office of wizāra was not as important as the office of vicegerency and the wazīr had not absolute power, neither profound effect on the internal matters of the state.⁹ Therefore the abolition of the wizāra did not affect the administrative structure of the Mamlūk Sultanate.

¹For his biography, see Durar, ii, 251-252.

²Sulūk, ii, 100-101; Durar, ii, 252; Husn, ii, 223.

³Sulūk, ii, 124; Durar, ii, 252.

⁴Sulūk, ii, 124.

⁵Sulūk, ii, 248; Durar, ii, 252; Husn, ii, 224.

⁶Sulūk, ii, 256; Durar, ii, 252; iv, 356; Husn, ii, 224.

⁷For his biography, see Durar, iv, 354-355.

⁸Sulūk, ii, 311; Durar, iv, 354; Husn, ii, 224.

⁹Subh, iv, 28; Sulūk, ii, 311.

On the other hand, in 711/1311 al-Nāṣir Muḥammad established the office of control of privy funds (nāzar al-khāṣṣ),¹ which had been held first by Karīm al-Dīn 'Abd al-Karīm² (d. 724/1324)³ and he continued to occupy that office until 723/1323.⁴ The controller of privy funds (nāzir al-khāṣṣ) was responsible for the Royal privy purse or to control the privy funds,⁵ but gradually he became close to the Sulṭān and controlled the different affairs of the state.⁶ Moreover, nāzir al-khāṣṣ had his own dīwān, dīwān al-khāṣṣ, with its directors (mubāshirūn), controllers (nuzzār), accountants (mustawfūn), superintendents (shāddūn) and other officials.⁷ After the arrest of Karīm al-Dīn al-Nāṣir Muḥammad appointed Tāj al-Dīn Ishāq (d. 731/1331)⁸ to fill the office of nāzir al-khāṣṣ in 723/1323.⁹ After the death of Tāj al-Dīn Ishāq in 731/1311, we find Muḥammad b. Naṣr Allāh (d. 736/1335)¹⁰ was the one who held the office of nāzar al-khāṣṣ.¹¹ Shortly, in Rajab 732/April 1332, Sharf al-Dīn 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Nashū (d. 740/1339)¹² filled the office of nāzar al-khāṣṣ and became controller of privy funds for eight years.¹³

¹ Sulūk, ii, 103; Nujūm, ix, 76; Subh, iii, 452.

² Sulūk, ii, 103; Nujūm, ix, 76.

³ For his biography, see Durar, ii, 401-404.

⁴ Durar, ii, 402, 404.

⁵ Subh, iv, 30.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Subh, iii, 453.

⁸ For his biography, see Durar, ii, 432.

⁹ Sulūk, ii, 247; cf. Durar, ii, 432.

¹⁰ For his biography, see Durar, iv, 274.

¹¹ Durar, iv, 274; Sulūk, ii, 340.

¹² For his biography, see Durar, ii, 429-430; Sulūk, ii, 347; 348, 358; 361, 370, 384, 393, 399-400, 408, 409-410, 413, 422, 446, 448, 475-476, 477, 478, 481, 485, 486; Nujūm, ix, 143.

¹³ Sulūk, ii, 347; Durar, ii, 429.

What happened to al-Nashū could be significant for giving clear picture concerning the political situation of the Mamlūk Sultanate during the third reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. In order to understand the whole situation it is better to start with the relationship between al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and al-Nashū. Al-Nashū succeeded in exploiting the two weak points respecting al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's character, suspicion and greed so that al-Nashū began to rouse al-Nāṣir Muḥammad against the emirs and to confiscate their wealth, as happened in Ṣafar 733/October 1332.¹ Al-Maqrīzī states that al-Nashū was cruel to the people without distinction.² But unfortunately al-Maqrīzī does not mention the reasons which made al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, who was formerly known as an astute politician, believe every statement made by al-Nashū without making a complete investigation, or even taking any kind of lawful procedure for the safety of the accused persons, either the emirs or the people, as occurred in 733/1332, in 735/1335 and in 736/1336.³ Besides a new aspect concerning the administrative affairs might be clearly noticed when some of those who succeeded in attaining high office tried to depose the others who might have a bad effect on their position, such as al-Nashū had carried out with Tāj al-Dīn Iṣḥāq and his family and with other emirs.⁴ Thus al-Nashū employed a mistaken policy against the emirs and the population as well.⁵ This policy had been frequently put into action by al-Nashū against the Mamlūk emirs, as occurred in the years 736/1335, 738/1337 and

¹For details, see Sulūk, ii, 358.

²Ibid., ii, 361.

³Sulūk, ii, 361, 393.

⁴Ibid., ii, 348, 358, 384, 400, 409; Nujūm, ix, 135, 289.

⁵Nāṣir, fols. 38b-40b, 48b-49b; Sulūk, ii, 351, 361, 400, 408-409; Nujūm, ix, 115.

739/1338 when al-Nashū held the office of nāẓar al-khāṣṣ.¹ Al-Shujā'ī, the contemporary historian of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's third reign, records that al-Nashū worked to confiscate the property of the ajnād al-ḥalqa, the emirs and even the poor.² The question arises here, what is the connection between the above events and the political situation? Apparently the political situation had been affected by these happenings concerning the safety of the people and the peace of society as well, but in order to understand the actual reaction, we should study the act of al-Nāṣir, of the people and of the emirs. Firstly, concerning al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, we find that his attitude was in agreement with al-Nashū that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was always ready to defend his nāẓir al-khāṣṣ.³ Furthermore, al-Nashū succeeded in spoiling the relation which had existed between al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and the emirs so that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad became mostly antagonistic to them.⁴ Secondly, respecting the populace of Cairo, it could be said that they suffered badly because of al-Nashū;⁵ therefore they took an aggressive position against al-Nashū and tried to kill him in Ramaḍān 737/April 1337, but the attempt did not succeed.⁶ Consequently, it seems that the populace of Cairo realized that it was God alone who could help them in their difficulties, accordingly they kept going to the mosques

¹Sulūk, ii, 351, 469.

²In his Nāṣir, fol. 48b, al-Shujā'ī says:

وحصل الضرر للغمي والفقير، وصَادَرَ خَلْقًا لَا يَحْصَى، وبلغ أمره
إلى أَنْ صَادَرَ الْجِنْدَ وَالْأَمْراءَ، وَكُلَّ مِنْ سَمْعِ أَنْفِهِ غَمِي.

³Nāṣir, fol. 45a; Sulūk, ii, 413.

⁴For detailed information, see Sulūk, ii, 400, 409-410, 411, 412-414, 419-420, 473-477.

⁵Ibid., ii, 400, 469, 476; Nujūm, ix, 113, 115, 131.

⁶Sulūk, ii, 422.

to make a complaint against al-Nashū's bad treatment and to ask God for help.¹ Furthermore, al-Shujā'ī states that when the populace of Cairo went on pilgrimage they asked God to help them against al-Nashū, and when al-Nāṣir knew about this, he attached no importance in coming to their aid.² This explains the social condition of the populace of Cairo, how severely they suffered and how difficult it was for them to enjoy justice even for a short time. Besides, it shows that the populace of Cairo were extremely religious and simple. Moreover, it probably proves that the social situation of the populace of Cairo was weak and that it was difficult for them to improve their condition either by personal meeting with the ruling class, or by direct letters to the Sulṭān; therefore they kept praying to God for care and support.

Thirdly, regarding the status of the emirs, especially when they became certain that al-Nashū was arousing al-Nāṣir Muḥammad against them, so that their possessions were often confiscated in the years 732/1331, 733/1332, 734/1333, 735/1334, 736/1335 and 737/1337.³ Consequently, the emirs tried to sow seeds of discord between al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and al-Nashū by sending anonymous letters to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, as happened in 736/1335, explaining to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad al-Nashū's act of sabotage, and how this would cause the fall of the Nāṣirī state unless al-Nāṣir Muḥammad set out to protect his power and to save his kingdom by executing al-Nashū.⁴ This gives

¹ *Ibid.*, ii, 446.

² Al-Shujā'ī in his *Nāṣir*, fols. 44b-45a, states:

وفيهما اتصل بالسلطان ما اتفق في الحجاج من الشكوى عند رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ، وفي مكة وعرفات من ظلم النشو ، وكان النشو قد زاد في الظالم
فلما حجّت الناس في الموسم فما بقي بمكة مكان يستجاب فيه الدعاء ، إلا ودعوا
على النشو .

³ *Sulūk*, ii, 348, 358; 361, 370; 384-385, 393; 400, 408-409.

⁴ *Sulūk*, ii, 399; *Nujūm*, ix, 113.

a clear picture concerning the powerful position of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad so that the emirs did not dare to speak with him frankly about the matter of al-Nashū, or even to send signed letters, apparently, for the safety of their lives; notably, they understood from the preceding years of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's rule the actual attitude of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad towards the Mamlūk emirs, and they probably realized the nature of his relationship with the officials of high rank. Besides, one gets the impression that al-Nashū enjoyed high position in the Royal Court, and al-Nāṣir Muḥammad favoured him.

But it is evident that the emirs did not succeed by these means in achieving their purpose concerning the seizure of al-Nashū; therefore they decided to speak personally with al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and agreed to choose Yalbughā al-Yaḥyāwī (d. 748/1347)¹ because he was a close friend of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, to act as representative of the umarā' al-khāṣṣakiyya and to tell al-Nāṣir Muḥammad that al-Nashū was not as al-Nāṣir Muḥammad thought and had expected. Subsequently Yalbughā al-Yaḥyāwī had a meeting with al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and informed him about the opinion of the courtiers (al-umarā' al-khāṣṣakiyya) of al-Nashū and how far al-Nashū's behaviour could cause the ruin of his kingdom;² therefore al-Nāṣir Muḥammad followed Yalbughā al-Yaḥyāwī's advice.³

Furthermore, Tankiz al-Ḥusāmī confirmed Yalbughā's words concerning the opinion of the emirs, of the merchants and of the populace

¹For his biography, see Durar, iv, 436-437.

²Al-Shujā'ī in his Nāṣir, fol. 46a, cites:

فقال يلينا للسلطان: يا خوند، وصي النشولا يظلم الناس، ولا يعادى الامراء، فقَالَ له: يا يلينا لا تتكلم في النشوفانِّه ينفعني، قال: يا خوند، والله يضرك أكثر مما ينفعك.

³Sulūk, ii, 476.

of Cairo against al-Nashū.¹ Tankiz's opinion was important because of the high position he enjoyed in the Mamlūk Sultanate.² Thus the emirs succeeded in turning al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's attention towards al-Nashū's mistakes, and they managed to persuade al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to seize al-Nashū. In addition, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad took his decision concerning al-Nashū's arrest because Yalbughā al-Yahyāwī told him that the khāṣṣakiyya were waiting for an opportunity to overthrow al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's government, and, in order to protect his kingdom, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad should arrest al-Nashū.³

Probably this was the main reason which made al-Nāṣir Muḥammad work to arrest al-Nashū without hesitation. Consequently, for the protection of the kingdom, and the safety of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's rule, we find al-Nashū and his family were arrested in Ṣafar 740/August 1339 and they were tortured to death.⁴

Moreover, at a meeting between al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and the emirs, the former asked the emirs about the situation of the khāṣṣakiyya against al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, and the emirs assured al-Nāṣir Muḥammad that the whole situation was caused by al-Nashū and for that he must be executed. Hence al-Nāṣir Muḥammad approved the suggestion for the sake of his rule.⁵ However, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was convinced of the emirs' opinion against al-Nashū when he found that al-Nashū left great wealth, though while he was nāzir al-khāṣṣ, he professed that he was in need of money, and proclaimed poverty in the presence of

¹Sulūk, ii, 476.

²Infra, 149-150.

³Sulūk, ii, 477; Nujūm, ix, 133.

⁴Nāṣir, fols. 46b-48b; Sulūk, ii, 478-479, 480-481, 485-486; Nujūm, ix, 131, 133-134.

⁵Sulūk, ii, 485; Nujūm, ix, 141-142.

al-Nāṣir Muḥammad; subsequently all al-Nashū's wealth was confiscated.¹

This leads us to consider again the reasons that made al-Nāṣir Muḥammad plan to arrest al-Nashū; it was the financial factor, because we know that whenever a person of high position in the Royal Court was arrested, his wealth was later confiscated for the benefit of the Royal privy funds (al-khāṣṣ al-Sulṭānī).

Therefore, the Mamlūk historians agree with the idea that al-Nashū accomplished his aggressive acts against the different social classes because he was a Christian and, even when he adopted Islam, he was a hypocrite,² especially when the Mamlūk historians mention the property of al-Nashū we find they are careful to state that a valuable cross was found among his belongings.³ Besides, after his death, it was found that al-Nashū was without circumcision.⁴ However the populace of Cairo, al-'ammāh, were delighted at the death of al-Nashū.⁵

Apparently al-Nashū's behaviour against the ruling class, the administrative officials and even against the poor might cause a revolt among the emirs against al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's rule, or a riot among the people, which might cause great damage to the government, but to agree with this idea does not mean we agree with the Mamlūk historians who say that al-Nashū had behaved thus simply because he was a Christian. Seemingly it was an individual case which had occurred because of the personal ambition of al-Nashū for higher position at the court at the expense of the emirs, and more money at the expense of the rich.

¹ Nāṣir, fol. 47b; 'Uyūn, fols. 40b-a; Sulūk, ii, 481, 483; Nujūm, ix, 138-139.

² Sulūk, ii, 481.

³ Ibid., ii, 481; Nujūm, ix, 138.

⁴ Sulūk, ii, 486; Nujūm, ix, 142.

⁵ 'Uyūn, fol. 40a; Nujūm, ix, 135-137.

(ix) The affair of Tankiz al-Ḥusāmī

Coming to the late years of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's third reign, it could be assumed that peace and stability would result in political life because of the changes concerning the administrative structure and the determined rule; these had been carried out by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. But what happened respecting the position of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad towards his Mamlūk, the emir Tankiz al-Ḥusāmī (d. 741/1340)¹ makes it obvious that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad faced political trouble shortly before the end of his rule.

Tankiz al-Ḥusāmī, the viceroy of Syria, came to Egypt at a very early age.² Sulṭān al-Ashraf Khalīl bought him as a Mamlūk, later he became the property of Lāchīn and, on his death, Tankiz became the property of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.³ He accompanied al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to al-Karak and served al-Nāṣir Muḥammad as messenger.⁴ When al-Nāṣir Muḥammad came to power he appointed Tankiz viceroy of Damascus as a reward for his loyalty.⁵ Respecting Tankiz al-Ḥusāmī, it is imperative to say that he was appointed by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to be viceroy of Damascus in Rabī', II, 712/August 1312.⁶ Afterwards Tankiz al-Ḥusāmī was highly respected by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, enjoyed an honourable position at the Royal Court, and became the closest

¹For his biography, see Nāṣir, fols. 31a-33b, 54b-68b; Durr, ix, 380-381, 392; Albāb, fols. 201a-204b; Durrat, fols. 297a-b; Sulūk, ii, 118, 237, 317, 359, 417, 432-433, 460-462, 497-501, 506-508, 509-512; Durar, i, 520-528; Badr, fols. 39b-40b; Nujūm, ix, 34, 38, 93, 101-102, 115, 119, 129-130, 145, 146, 147-49, 151-152, 153-158, 159-160.

²Durar, i, 520.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Nāṣir, fol. 54b; Albāb, fol. 201a; Durrat, fols. 297a-b; →

friend of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.¹ Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad welcomed Tankiz al-Ḥusāmī, whenever the latter went to Cairo, with a friendly reception and gracious celebration, as happened in the years 730/1329, 732/1331, 733/1332, 734/1333, 735/1334, 737/1336, 737/1336, 738/1337 and 739/1338,² and accordingly it appeared obvious that Tankiz al-Ḥusāmī was in al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's favour. Al-Shujā'ī states that Tankiz al-Ḥusāmī attained an exalted position during al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's rule because the latter entitled Tankiz al-Ḥusāmī to be the general governor of Syria with competent authority; therefore, if the other governors of the Syrian provinces wanted to contact al-Nāṣir Muḥammad concerning local affairs, it should be done through Tankiz al-Ḥusāmī. On the other hand, Tankiz al-Ḥusāmī was acquainted with everything respecting the local situation of the Syrian provinces.³ Subsequently, Tankiz al-Ḥusāmī continued to accomplish his duties as viceroy of Syria during his lifetime, for twenty-eight years, until he was seized by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's men in Dhū 'l-Ḥijja 740/June 1340 and brought to Cairo in Muḥarram 741/June 1340 to be imprisoned and executed only twelve days after his arrival in Cairo.⁴ Moreover,

¹ Ibar, v, part IV, 948; Sulūk, ii, 118; Durar, i, 520; Badr, fol. 40a; Nujūm, ix, 34.

¹ Nāṣir, fols. 31a-33b, 55a; Durr, ix, 380, 392; Albāb, fol. 202a; Uyūn, fol. 16a; Ibar, v, part IV, 948; Durar, i, 521-522; Sulūk, ii, 237, 317, 368, 417, 436, 460-462; Badr, fol. 40a; Nujūm, ix, 38, 93, 101-102, 119, 129, 130.

² Nāṣir, fols. 31a-33b, 56a-b; Albāb, fols. 202a-203a; Durr, ix, 380, 392; Uyūn, fol. 16a; Sulūk, ii, 237, 317, 359, 417, 436, 460-462; Durar, i, 523, 524; Nujūm, ix, 93, 101, 151, 129.

³ In his Nāṣir, fols. 55a-b, al-Shujā'ī says:

فحصل له (أي تكزز) عند السلطان اليد العظمى والرتبة العليا، وحكّمه بالشام جميعه تحكيميا
لم يحصل لغيره، ورسم لنواب الأقاليم الكبار مثل نائب حلب وطرابلس وحاجب حماه وغيرهم أن يطالعوهم
بأحوالهم، وما يتجدد لهم وهو يطالع بها لمولانا السلطان، وإذا حضرت كتب نواب الشام -
الأقاليم - للسلطان تعرض على الأمير سيف الدين تكزز وهي مفتوحة فيقرأها ويعلم مضمونها.....

⁴ Nāṣir, fols. 54a, 57b; Misr, fols. 132b, 134a; Albāb, fol. 204b; Uyūn, fol. 45b; Durrat, fol. 297b; Sulūk, ii, 506; Durar, i, 526; Badr, fol. 40a; Nujūm, ix, 151-152; Mawrid, 66.

al-Nāṣir Muḥammad arrested Tankiz al-Ḥusāmī's family and his Mamlūks as well, and confiscated all the great wealth which Tankiz al-Ḥusāmī had left, and even that which had been obtained by the Ḥusāmī Mamlūks.¹ The questions arise here, what were the reasons which made al-Nāṣir Muḥammad act so suddenly against his closest friend Tankiz al-Ḥusāmī; and what caused the change that resulted in Tankiz al-Ḥusāmī's execution by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's order soon after his arrest?

Al-Shujā'ī states that Tankiz became suspicious of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's attitude towards him a few months before he was seized; therefore Tankiz discussed the situation with his Mamlūks who advised him to take arms and money secretly to Qal'at Ja'bar,² and prepare the place as a refuge for him if the necessity should arise.³ In fact, Tankiz was right in his suspicions concerning al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's secret plan to capture Tankiz.⁴ Ibn Taghrī Birdī repeats al-Shujā'ī's statement and adds that, when al-Nāṣir Muḥammad knew about Tankiz's intentions, he decided to send an army to seize Tankiz before the latter accomplished what he intended.⁵ But we find Ibn Taghrī Birdī, in another place, when he explains the reasons which made al-Nāṣir Muḥammad arrest Tankiz, records that the latter asked al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to travel to Qal'at Ja'bar and, when al-Nāṣir Muḥammad refused the request, Tankiz commented that in a

¹ Nāṣir, fols. 67b-68b; Miṣr, fol. 136a; Albāb, fols. 204a-b; 'Uyūn, fols. 44b, 46b-47a; Sulūk, ii, 507-508; Durar, i, 526; Badr, fols. 40a-b; Nujūm, ix, 152; Mawrid, 66.

² For Qal'at Ja'bar, see Buldān, II, 150.

³ Al-Shujā'ī, in his Nāṣir, fol. 59b, states:

فأشاروا عليه بماليكه، جنغيه و طغياي أن يرسل بعض ثقله، إلى قلعة جعبر ويكون فيها سلاح و عديد و خزانه ذهب حتى إذا احتاج إليه وجدته، وأن يشيع بين الأسراء أنه يقصد الصيغند.

⁴ Nāṣir, fols. 60a-b.

⁵ Nujūm, ix, 146-146.

meeting with his friends, his Mamlūks and other emirs, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's mind was easily influenced by the young Nāṣirī Mamlūks, and it would be better for al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to resign, to give the supreme power to one of his sons, and to allow Tankiz to direct the affairs of state. Consequently, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was informed, became extremely angry and decided to capture Tankiz.¹ This proves that Ibn Taghrī Birdī agrees with al-Shujā'ī concerning Tankiz's secret move to Qal'at Ja'bar, although it seems that Ibn Taghrī Birdī regards this point and the following events as the reason which changed al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's attitude towards Tankiz.

Al-Maqrīzī endorsed the previous fact given by al-Shujā'ī and Ibn Taghrī Birdī that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's position towards Tankiz changed; therefore Tankiz planned to flee to Qal'at Ja'bar.² According to al-Maqrīzī, in Dhū al-Ḥijja 740/June 1340, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad appointed his son Abū Bakr (d. 742/1341)³ to be his heir-apparent.⁴ This fact confirms the previous statement concerning Tankiz's desire to direct the affairs of state, especially if we know that, immediately after, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad agreed with Mūsā b. Muḥannā (d. 741/1341)⁵ to seize Tankiz,⁶ and Mūsā promised al-Nāṣir Muḥammad that the Bedouins would prevent Tankiz from fleeing.⁷ According to al-Maqrīzī, there were thirty thousand dīnārs in Qal'at Ja'bar with arms and provisions,

¹Nujūm, ix, 159; see also, Sulūk, ii, 509.

²Sulūk, ii, 498.

³For his biography, see Durar, i, 462-464.

⁴Sulūk, ii, 499.

⁵For his biography, see Durar, iv, 382.

⁶Sulūk, ii, 499.

⁷Ibid; Nujūm, ix, 146.

all belonging to Tankiz al-Ḥusāmī.¹ Therefore, could we assume that Tankiz was certain about al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's unfriendly attitude towards him during the preceding months, and that Tankiz knew that if al-Nāṣir Muḥammad had the least suspicion of any person of high rank that meant the end of that person's life and, accordingly, that Tankiz prepared Qal'at Ja'bar to be his refuge but that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was quicker than Tankiz in word and deed?

In addition, the Mamlūk chronicles record that Artanā (d. 753/1352),² the governor of the Rūm state in Little Armenia, sent to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad a letter through Tankiz al-Ḥusāmī without a letter to Tankiz to keep him informed; therefore Tankiz sent the messenger back to his master without fulfilling his request and al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was enraged by Tankiz.³ How far does the above report confirm Tankiz's ambition for equal position with al-Nāṣir Muḥammad? Moreover, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad wrote to Tankiz to release one of the Mamlūks who had been imprisoned by Tankiz, but the latter refused al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's request; consequently, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad personally ordered the governor of al-Shawbak to set his Mamlūk free, and was on bad terms with Tankiz.⁴ Undoubtedly these events could be regarded as minor occurrences which would be forgotten in time, but if we know that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was involved in these events it would suffice to reveal how far that situation might be taken into account against Tankiz al-Ḥusāmī. Al-Maqrīzī mentions that Tankiz al-Ḥusāmī executed some Christians who caused a great fire

¹Sulūk, ii, 508, 512.

²For his biography, see Durar, i, 348-349.

³Sulūk, ii, 509; Nujūm, ix, 159.

⁴Sulūk, ii, 509; Nujūm, ix, 159-160.

in Damascus 740/1340; therefore Tankiz became the object of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's anger, especially because of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's fears that the Muslim merchants would be badly treated in Byzantium.¹ Besides Tankiz refused to send the money which he had taken from the Christians and said that he had to use that money for rebuilding.²

Al-Shujā'ī, who deals with this event in detail,³ records three excuses which Tankiz used for not sending the money. Firstly, the high level of prices in Syria. Secondly, the condition of drought in Damascus in that year. Thirdly, the use of money for rebuilding.⁴ Furthermore, Tankiz al-Ḥusāmī had to send two of his sons to Cairo to marry two daughters of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, but Tankiz delayed in sending his sons and al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was annoyed.⁵ Moreover, when al-Nāṣir Muḥammad sent Bashtāk al-Nāṣirī (d. 742/1341)⁶ to bring Tankiz's sons to Cairo, the latter thought that Bashtāk had come to seize him, and he refused to send his sons with Bashtāk.⁷

According to al-Shujā'ī Tankiz was in a state of military readiness and was entirely engaged in preparing war material; therefore al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was worried and seized Tankiz. But Tankiz's defence of the accusation was that he was always in military preparedness, and al-Nāṣir Muḥammad had never seemed aroused by that situation until a later time when the emirs succeeded in arousing

¹ Infra, 186-187.

² Sulūk, ii, 497.

³ Nāṣir, fols. 56b-58a.

⁴ Ibid., fol. 58a.

⁵ Sulūk, ii, 497-498; cf. Albāb, fols. 203b-204a.

⁶ For his biography, see Durar, i, 477-479.

⁷ Al-Shujā'ī in his work Nāṣir, 58a-b, says:

قبل الأَمير تنكز حضور بشتاك بهذه المبالغ الكبيره، فأنكره واختشى ذلك، وتوهم أن بشتاك لم يحضر إلا ليمسكه •

al-Nāṣir Muḥammad against Tankiz.¹

Al-'Aynī mentions another situation which exasperated al-Nāṣir Muḥammad with Tankiz. In reality al-Ḥasan b. Tamardāsh, the governor of Sīs (d. 744/1343),² was extremely afraid of Tankiz; therefore he sent a messenger to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad that Tankiz asked al-Ḥasan b. Tamardāsh to go and join him in order to form an alliance against al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. Consequently, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was infuriated, and had doubts about Tankiz's attitude towards him.³

Ibn Ḥajar analyses the attitude which al-Ḥasan b. Tamardāsh had adopted towards Tankiz that al-Ḥasan was extremely eager to have Syria in his power, and because he was certain that Tankiz would defeat him and would obstruct his advance into Syria, al-Ḥasan attempted this successful step with al-Nāṣir Muḥammad against Tankiz to pave the way for his military expedition against Syria.⁴ While al-Ṣafadī states that there was a widespread rumour that Tankiz would flee to al-Ḥasan, and al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was considerably influenced by that rumour; therefore, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's position towards Tankiz was changed for the worse.⁵ Furthermore, it is easy to understand from the Mamlūk writings concerning this period that the Mamlūk emirs played an important part in arousing al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's anger against Tankiz because of their jealousy, especially when they saw that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad kept asking for Tankiz's advice in every matter

¹Nāṣir, fols. 66b-67b.

²For his biography, see Durar, ii, 15.

³Badr, fol. 40a; see also, Durar, ii, 15.

⁴Durar, ii, 15.

⁵Albāb, fols. 203b-204a.

respecting the affairs of state, and they successfully worked to make al-Nāṣir Muḥammad believe that Tankiz was preparing for his flight from Damascus for self-protection.¹ In conclusion, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad prepared his army to fight Tankiz,² and sent letters of friendliness and politeness for the purpose of attachment and unity (mulattifāt) to the governors of the Syrian provinces, and to the Mamlūk emirs in Syria.³ Thus, because of the opposition of the emirs to Tankiz, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad became more determined to seize Tankiz al-Ḥusāmī.⁴

Seemingly, the idea that Tankiz might flee to the Mongols or to the Rūm to form an alliance against the Mamlūk Sultanate is difficult to believe because Tankiz was always sincere in fulfilling his duties and was loyal to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad; besides, he was always on good terms with al-Nāṣir Muḥammad until a few months before his capture. Consequently, there was no reason for Tankiz to think of taking refuge in any place. But the fact that Tankiz prepared Qal'at Ja'bar as a refuge for him when necessary was a natural reaction of self-protection against al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's plan to capture him either by diplomacy or by military function. Hence al-Nāṣir Muḥammad decided to send an army, including fifty-seven emirs and led by Jankalī al-Bābā (d. 746/1346),⁵ Bashtāk al-Nāṣirī, Arqaṭāy al-Qafjaqī (d. 750/1349),⁶ Qamārī Emir Shukār (d. 746/1345),⁷

¹Nāṣir, fols. 62a, 66b; Albāb, fols. 203b-204a; Sulūk, ii, 462, 498; Durar, i, 524, 525; Badr, fol. 40a; Nujūm, ix, 130, 146.

²Sulūk, ii, 498-499; Nujūm, ix, 146, 147.

³Nāṣir, fols. 62b-63a; Sulūk, ii, 498, 499, 500; Nujūm, ix, 147.

⁴Sulūk, ii, 509.

⁵For his biography, see Durar, i, 539-540.

⁶For his biography, see Durar, i, 354.

⁷For his biography, see Durar, iii, 256.

the emir Barsanbaḡhā (d. 742/1341)¹ and Ṭashtamur al-Sāqī,² to fight Tankiz al-Ḥusāmī in Damascus.³ Moreover, Mūsā b. Muḥannā left Cairo to be ready with the Bedouins near Ḥimṣ for immediate help.⁴ The army left Cairo in Dhū 'l-Ḥijja 740/June 1340.⁵ Besides, by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's order, Ṭashtamur al-Sāqī, the governor of Ṣafad, left his province with troops for Damascus.⁶ These data give us, indirectly, an idea of the strong position of Tankiz al-Ḥusāmī in Syria, and the extent of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's fears that his army might fail to achieve his desire concerning the capture of Tankiz.

Ibn Taḡhrī Birdī records that when the troops of Ṣafad, led by Ṭashtamur, arrived at Damascus, Tankiz thought of fighting them but, when he realized the weakness of his position, he gave up and surrendered to Ṭashtamur.⁷ Thus Tankiz al-Ḥusāmī was captured by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's emirs,⁸ and the army returned to Cairo.⁹ Subsequently al-Nāṣir Muḥammad became extremely happy when he received the news regarding the arrest of Tankiz al-Ḥusāmī.¹⁰

¹ Supra, 88.

² Supra, 130.

³ Nāṣir, fols. 62a-b; Miṣr, fols. 131b-132a; Sulūk, ii, 498-499, 500; Durar, i, 525; Badr, fol. 40b; Nujūm, ix, 147.

⁴ Sulūk, ii, 499; Badr, fol. 40b; Nujūm, ix, 146.

⁵ Nāṣir, fol. 62b; Miṣr, fol. 132b; Sulūk, ii, 499; Nujūm, ix, 147.

⁶ Nāṣir, fols. 62b-63b; Miṣr, fol. 32a; Albāb, fol. 204a; Sulūk, ii, 500; Durar, i, 525; Nujūm, ix, 147.

⁷ Nujūm, ix, 148; cf. Nāṣir, fol. 59b.

⁸ Nāṣir, fols. 63a-64b; Miṣr, fols. 132a-b; Albāb, fol. 204a; Sulūk, ii, 500; Durar, i, 525; Nujūm, ix, 148.

⁹ Sulūk, ii, 500-501; Nujūm, ix, 148-149.

¹⁰ Nāṣir, fol. 65a; Miṣr, fol. 132b; Sulūk, ii, 500; Nujūm, ix, 148.

Apparently al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was afraid of perfidy, afraid of ruse and extremely suspicious and careful for fear that he might be betrayed by other emirs; therefore while al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was preparing to capture Tankiz al-Ḥusāmī he issued a royal request that all the emirs, the troopers (ajnad), and the Mamlūks should take an oath of allegiance to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad during his lifetime and to his heirs afterwards, and the army must always be prepared for war, completely armed and perfectly trained.¹ Moreover Ibn Taghrī Birdī cites that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was determined to seize Tankiz al-Ḥusāmī eight years before Tankiz's capture was achieved, and al-Nāṣir Muḥammad had been waiting all these years for suitable circumstances.²

Probably there is an exaggeration in the above statement because it is obvious in the Mamlūk writings respecting this period that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad decided to seize Tankiz al-Ḥusāmī only a few months before Tankiz's capture had been accomplished by the Nāṣirī emirs, and only when circumstances made that capture a necessary step should it be carried out for the sake of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's rule. Besides, it is clear in al-Shujā'ī's writings that when Tankiz suspected al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's attitude towards him, he worked to protect himself; therefore al-Nāṣir Muḥammad started to make plans to capture Tankiz al-Ḥusāmī.³

Considering the different sides and the many aspects of the situation, one gets the impression that Tankiz al-Ḥusāmī succeeded in holding almost complete power to direct the local affairs of Syria without fulfilling any kind of obligation concerning al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's personal advice, even if it was from the theoretical

¹ Al-Shujā'ī, in his work Nāṣir, fol. 65a, cites:

نسخة اليمين أن يكونوا مع السلطان الملك الناصر محمد بن قلاوون قاتلين ومقتولين ، عدواً لمن عاداه ،
وسلماً لمن ساله ، وإن يطيعوه مندة خيائه ، ولورثته بعد وفاته .

² Nujūm, ix, 211; cf. Nujūm, ix, 145-146; Durar, i, 525.

³ Nāṣir, fols. 59a-b, 62a-b.

point of view. Seemingly, in time Tankiz al-Ḥusāmī was in a powerful position, and al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was as always suspicious, careful, and had no confidence either in the emirs of high rank, or in any circumstances which might arise. Subsequently, at that time, Tankiz was the most powerful emir in the Mamlūk Sultanate, and he was almost the ruler of Syria under al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's supervision. Therefore al-Nāṣir Muḥammad began to suspect Tankiz's affairs, even the ordinary ones, and he became more and more afraid of Tankiz's power and of his competent authority. Apparently al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was afraid that Tankiz might try to seize supreme power, either during his life or later during the reign of his heir-apparent, and his fears and suspicions made him plan to seize Tankiz before the latter worked to overthrow his government, at least, as al-Nāṣir Muḥammad seemed to think. Accordingly, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad fulfilled his decision and Tankiz al-Ḥusāmī was arrested.

(x) Conclusion

There has been a thorough study concerning the relations between al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and the oligarchy of the emirs who were either those who helped him to seize power for the third time, or the Foyal Mamlūks who had been brought up, educated and held high rank in the court or in the society because of his care and support. Concerning his position, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad found that in order to keep the reins of power in his hand, he should work to strengthen his situation; therefore he paid much attention to his adherents, that they should be a large number, well educated either in military or in cultural affairs.

Apparently al-Nāṣir Muḥammad pursued a policy of strange aspect towards his Mamlūks who had been made emirs to carry out his orders for the sake of his supreme power but, as soon as he was aware of

their strength, he tried by different methods to execute them because they might be a threat to his power. Thus, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad practised that political policy with his Mamlūks, extremely friendly and generous at the beginning and aggressive to the point of murder at the end, when they became strong and had many followers under their command. This policy was followed with a great number of the Nāṣiri emirs who were in power. It was probably personal feelings and extreme ambition regarding supreme power in the Mamlūk Sultanate. Seemingly, on the assumption that he should be in control of power, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad fought hard for this purpose without respect for personal friendship, and without regard for the sincere service and loyalty which he had had from those emirs who had to be murdered for the sake of maintaining his rule.

Secondly, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad probably realized that being wealthy added great consideration to his position as the head of the Mamlūk Sultanate and, from this viewpoint, the execution of the rich and powerful emirs was of great use and importance because this confiscated wealth and property was taken for the royal privy purse. Besides, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad had established the office of naẓar al-khāṣṣ to serve the royal privy funds; consequently al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was extensively wealthy. Thirdly, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad discussed internal affairs with the emirs and listened to their ideas and views to make them feel by this behaviour how important their position was in the royal Court, and that their presence for advice and discussion was essential to a considerable degree, although the words of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad were alone effective enough to be put into action. Consequently, the political position of the emirs was greatly weakened in different political, economic and social fields. Thus, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad succeeded in satisfying the desire

of the emirs to have some influence on current matters, and to have some part in managing the internal administration. Besides, probably al-Nāṣir Muḥammad allowed them to enjoy that situation because he was certain that this condition would not have the least effect either on the political status, or on his power as an astute politician and a powerful ruler.

Coming to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's position, it must be mentioned that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was cautious with respect to the attitude of the people towards him; therefore he was careful to be popular and to have their affection and attachment. Besides, many useful functions had been fulfilled by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad for the benefit of the people, and also to court and woo the people. Apparently, when al-Nāṣir Muḥammad became sure of his popularity, he was intent on maintaining that condition and to cement that popularity, either by benevolent actions, or by treating them with absolute justice. Moreover, he was careful to let them enjoy justice and honesty, even if it was at the expense of the emirs. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad trusted his people, depended largely on their support and relished to a considerable degree being popular among them. Seemingly, on the contrary, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was full of suspicion, caution and fears towards the oligarchy of the emirs. Apparently he was anxious to be diplomatic in his relations with them so that they might think that they had enough power to succeed in overthrowing al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's government, while in reality he was the one who succeeded in foiling their plots against his power. During his previous reigns, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad became sure that the oligarchy of the emirs did not respect his right to rule, and the government was in the hands of the powerful senior emirs; therefore al-Nāṣir Muḥammad

endeavoured to be the centre of power, to hold power in his hand and to be always aware of the ruling factors.

It appears that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad understood that being powerful would provide him with a different situation concerning the respect of the senior emirs, with a firm foundation for his rule, his situation would be stabilized and he would be installed in a ruling position permanently. So that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ended as an effective ruler in a secure position. Besides, it seems that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's resolution came into effect; he was his own master and he attained a definitive position at the expense of the emirs. Similarly, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad succeeded in seizing the reins of power and in holding the legislative power as well as the executive power. Moreover, although al-Nāṣir Muḥammad respected the four chief judges, it was obvious that he assumed judicial power.

On the other hand, coming into power at the expense of the emirs helped al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to put his hand on great amounts of money; in other words, having arrested the oligarchy of emirs and confiscated their property and wealth provided al-Nāṣir Muḥammad with movables and landed property. Consequently al-Nāṣir Muḥammad became wealthy and the political circumstances helped him to become a ruler of strong personality. These two factors, wealth and a strong personality, had an extensive effect on the third reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad so that it could be said that it was of great importance.

In addition, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, as the chief executive of the Mamlūk Sultanate, showed great success in management respecting political affairs and successfully managed, as administrative officer, in directing administrative matters, as well as in dealing with those of high-ranking emirs.

Probably al-Nāṣir Muḥammad wanted to put the powerful emirs

under his command, therefore he succeeded in accomplishing his desire so that he became awe-inspiring, and his reign was the object of reverence and respect. Additinnally, for thirty-two years, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad enjoyed a rule of dignity because of his determination to reign with resolution, firmness and subtlety.

Lastly, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad strengthened his rule in every possible way, such as by executing the powerful emirs, confiscating their wealth, buying new Mamlūks for support, putting an end to the senior emirs' desire for personal independence and establishing a new reign of firm foundation, strong structure, political stability, flourishing economy, social security and administrative progress. Thus, the political aspect of the Mamlūk period during the third reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad had been affected by bureaucracy and by administrative roles. By contrast, the political life concerning the rule of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad as an astute politician was much more highly determined. Thus, in the first half of the 14th century, Egypt and Syria were ruled by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, a ruler of Mamlūk origin and a Sultān of experience, and who could be regarded with firm justification as the founder of a new period with different aspects.

During the early years of the 14th century, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad considered his position in the political field of the Mamlūk Sultanate, the Nāṣiri emirs were a great help in revealing new aspects in the administrative structure and the economy. By the 14th century, the Mamlūk power was dominant in Egypt and Syria. The stability of the rule was an important factor there for lasting political domination, while the 'Abbāsīd Caliphs were, at that time, over-shadowed by the wealth and the governmental advance of the ruling class of the Mamlūks. It was a long period of political stability.

Chapter IV

THE NON-MUSLIM SUBJECTS

(i) The western merchants

The non-Muslim community in Egypt could be divided into two parts, the foreign merchants and the natives. Concerning the first group, there were three thousand Christian merchants according to the estimates of some foreign writers.¹ "Most of the Indian products poured into the empire of the Mamlūks, and the Venetians, Genoese, Florentines, Pisans, Catalans and, at a later date, the French, had no alternative but to come to the subject lands of the Sultan for the purchase and exchange of goods!"² This gives us an idea of the active commercial relations between the Mamlūk Sultanate and the western world. Foreigners had to take up residence in the funduq assigned to their country in which they transacted their business, stored their goods and had their living quarters. The Muslim government in Egypt also permitted foreign trading cities, in the first instance Venice, Genoa, Pisa, Barcelona and Marseilles, to maintain consular missions under their own jurisdiction.³ How far does the evidence of this condition confirm the view of the good treatment given to those merchants under the Mamlūk regime? The impression is that the European commercial groups succeeded in getting suitable and beneficial markets under their trade agreement. On the other hand, it seems that the Mamlūk

¹Kammerer, Le Regime et le status des Etrangers en Egypte, 17.

²Atiya, The Crusade in the Later Middle Ages, 115.

³Subhi Labib, "Egyptian commercial policy in the Middle Ages" (Studies in the Economic History of the Middle East (ed. M.A.Cook), p.71.

Sulṭāns regarded these European merchants as hostages to the state and, whenever the Muslims were attacked by any of the Christian countries, revenge would be taken on the foreign merchants in Cairo and Alexandria.¹ Consequently, the foreign minority might never have had a feeling of safety in Egypt. But, on the other hand, there were good relations between the Mamlūk Sultanate and the Christian countries for most of the Mamlūk period and firm precautions were taken against the foreign merchants only when danger of a Christian invasion seemed imminent.² These precautions can be regarded as a reasonable action taken by a state towards the nationals of a country threatening it since these people might be a danger, through loyalty to their own country. Besides, if these foreigners were badly treated during the Mamlūk period of the history of Islam, it was mostly by the natives, the Egyptians and the Mamlūks, as in the great conflict which occurred in Alexandria in 727/1326-7, when many people were killed.³ There were many consuls in Alexandria belonging to the different countries of the western merchants, such as the Venetian consul who was seen by the friar Mario Esposito in Jumādā, I, 724/April 1324.⁴

(ii) The Jewish community

According to a written statement by Bernard De Breydenbach who visited Egypt at the beginning of the second half of the Mamlūk period in Egypt there were about fifteen thousand Jews in Egypt, of different occupations, but particularly in trade. "On m'a dit

¹ Nujūm, xi, 29-30.

² Tibr, 61-62.

³ Sulūk, ii, 284.

⁴ Mario Esposito, Itinerarium Symonis Semeonis Ab Hybernia Ad Terram Sanctam, 75.

qu'il y a plus de 15,000 Juifs exerçant des métiers ou a donnés au commerce."¹ The Jews were free to retain their places of worship, to perform the liturgical rites and to have their religious ceremonies in an Islamic land, under the rule of the protectors of Islam, the Mamlūks.²

According to al-Qalqashandī the Jews of Egypt in the early Mamlūk period were divided into three communities: Rabbanites, Karaites,³ and Samaritans.⁴ They were all under the supervision of Ra'īs al-Yahūd, who had to take care of their social affairs and to deal with their judicial functions according to Jewish law.⁵ There were many Jewish synagogues in Cairo.⁶ In other words, the Jews lived in their small state within the Mamlūk Sultanate, where they had their own life and customs.⁷ Another traveller who discusses the condition of the non-Muslims in the Mamlūk period, Friar Jehan Thenaud, says in his book that there were more than ten thousand Jews in Cairo who had their streets, their synagogues and their markets, just as there were more than ten thousand Christians, Syrians and Copts who owned a great number of churches. "En ceste ville du Cayre sont

¹Larrivaz, Les Saints Prérégrination du Bernard de Bredenbach, 56.

²Khīṭ, ii, 464, 465, 473-474.

³For more details about Karaite Schism, see Baron, A Social and religious history of the Jews, 209-285.

⁴For more details, see Subḥ, xi, 385-390.

⁵Ta'rīf, 142-143; Subḥ, xi, 390.

⁶Khīṭ, ii, 464.

⁷See Bosworth. "Christian and Jewish religious Dignitaries in Mamlūk Egypt and Syria Qalqashandī's information on their Hierarchy, Titulature and appointments", I.J.M.E.S., iii, 1972, pp. 70-72.

plus de X mille Juifs qui ont leur rues, sinagogues et marchés et plus de X mille Chrestiens, tant Suriens, Coptes que Jacobites qui ont maintes eglises."¹ It seems that the economic rise of Egypt and its great commercial activity at that time attracted many Jews to come and settle in Egypt; they came from Constantinode, Baghdād, Damascus, Acre, Tyre, Aleppo and Muslim Spain (Andalus); they also arrived from European countries like Italy and France and from other parts.² It also appears that those Jews who dwelt in Egypt succeeded in obtaining a strong hold over banking operations and financial affairs.³

(iii) The Christian community

The friar Jehan Thenaud also speaks about his journey to Mount Sinai and to St. Catherine's Monastery.⁴ We will deal later with the monastery of St. Catherine from different points of view.⁵

The Christian natives of Egypt were divided into three groups: the Jacobite Christians (al-Ya'āqiba) or Copts, the majority Syrians, and the Melkite Christians. The people least mentioned in contemporary sources of the West and most neglected in the modern histories of the Crusade were the Jacobite Christians within the Mamlūk Sultanate itself.⁶ The head of the Christian community was the patriarch, who had to rule the internal and local affairs⁷ of the Christian community.⁸ In order to live safely in that Muslim

¹Jean Thenaud, Le voyage D'outremer, 51.

²Mujtama', 41.

³Larrivaz, loc.cit.

⁴Jean Thenaud, op.cit., 72-82.

⁵Infra, 176-183.

⁶Atiya, op.cit., 272.

⁷For more details about the Christian hierarchy, see Subh, v, 472-474.

⁸See Bosworth, op.cit., I.J.M.E.S., iii, 1972, pp. 66-70.

society the Christians had to comply with the conditions of 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb.¹

Apparently there were many monasteries in Egypt where the monks lived, worshipped and devoted their lives to the service of God and Christianity.² Some of the Copts were clerks in government offices, others were merchants and tradesmen, others were bishops and priests and such like. They were also tillers of land and there were others who worked as servants and domestics.³ Although we occasionally read about the life or the nature of the life of the Copts it is possible that they put their hands to different kinds of work and served in the royal offices as well.

The Copts kept their personal traditions, as they sustained their churches in Cairo and in the other Egyptian provinces and al-Maqrīzī counts fifty eight monasteries in Upper Egypt; the Christians performed votive offerings, immolations, and oblations to the monks there.⁴ The Coptic Church kept its religious customs. The Copts, especially in Upper Egypt, were very concerned to protect their traditional behaviour and to continue using their own language, "Coptic", among themselves.⁵

Baybars al-Manṣūrī, Ibn al-Dawādārī, Ibn Abī al-Faḍā'il and other historians of the period under consideration did not concern themselves to explain the Coptic system of rules, their religious methods or even the structure of their Church. It seems that the Copts had

¹For the condition of 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, see Subh, xiii, 357-360.

²For more details about the Christian monasteries, convents and churches, see Khiṭ, ii, 501-519.

³Copts, 72-73.

⁴Ibid., 36-54.

⁵Ibid., 43.

their own patriarch who was always appointed by the Sulṭān,¹ and who was treated respectfully in the official writings issued from the royal office, "dīwān al-Sulṭān".²

(iv) The situation of dhimmīs

During the Crusade the Christians in Egypt maintained a neutral attitude, and never tried to help the common religious and military union of the Mongols and Catholic Europe for a decisive battle against Egypt.³ This was never accomplished. Therefore the Christians in Egypt enjoyed good treatment throughout the Holy war. Afterwards, during the Mamlūk period, the Coptic community suffered painfully from Mamlūk enmity, although the Mamlūks never took an aggressive action against Coptic religious rites. This does not mean that the Mamlūk Sulṭāns had a common policy to the Copts, whereas the latter played an active part in the social life and official offices of the government.⁴ The question which should be answered here is what are the reasons which caused the Copts so much trouble in the Mamlūk period?

Apparently there are three reasons which were the basis of the critical situation. Firstly, the Mamlūk Sultanate obtained power illegally, and the Sulṭāns, remembering that sensitive situation tried to have a legitimate basis for their regime. Cleverly, they used Islam both as a faith and a state; they worked to make Egypt the centre of the Islamic Caliphate and to show themselves as the sincere

¹ Sulūk, ii, 157.

² Subh, xi, 392-393.

³ Atiya, loc.cit.

⁴ Uṣūr, 538.

supporters of the Caliphs. By that great deed they almost succeeded in accomplishing their aims. Secondly, the Crusade had a great effect on the bad treatment which the dhimīs suffered during the early period of the Mamlūk Sultanate. Undoubtedly that war increased the hostile religious feelings of the Muslims for the non-Muslims, especially the Christians. Thirdly, there was in Europe the crusading propaganda against the Mamlūk Sultanate in the early fourteenth century,¹ but it seems that, if the Roman Church approved the plan to cut off commercial relations with Egypt, the trading cities of Europe, now an important political influence, would not sacrifice their profits, and this ambitious scheme never became operative.² When the crusading countries failed in the military and political fields they turned their attention and exertions towards another realm: the economic factor could be a vital force for crusading targets.

Marino Sanudo,³ the Venetian who was born at the beginning of 1270, is one of the most important leaders of that propaganda. He worked most of his life for a functional and well organized Crusade, but the new circumstances were stronger than his wishes. It was a new period of economic activity and commerce. The Mamlūk Sultāns, knowing and hearing about that active propaganda, continued their aggressive feelings against the Christians. In the end, one should not believe that the whole period of the Mamlūk Sultanate was a series of different sorts of persecutions against the non-

¹Campbell, The Crusade, 452.

²Ibid., 458.

³For his biography, see Atiya, op.cit., 116-120.

Muslim subjects. Apparently the non-Muslims were justly treated during the first reign and the early years of the second reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad (699-708/1299-1308). The non-Muslims enjoyed freedom to worship and to hold their ceremonies. In Rajab 700/April 1300 this status changed; a Maghribī vizier (wazīr) arrived in Cairo on a pilgrimage, and was surprised to see the Christians and the Jews so free; they lived well, they dressed well and possessed livestock.¹ Besides, the vizier was depressed one day when he came upon a man on horse back with a white turban and a gorgeous cloak, followed by a multitude of people, who prayed to and implored him, embracing his feet, while he eschewed them, pushing them off, and ordering his slaves to drive them away from him. They were asking him to look upon their state, but this only made him more arrogant and rash and, later, when the vizier knew that that man was a Christian, he became furious.² In a meeting with al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, his vicegerent in Egypt, Sāyf al-Dīn Salār, his ustādār Baybars al-Jāshnakīr, and other emirs of high ranks, the Maghribī vizier spoke about the advanced condition of the non-Muslims in Egypt, their mighty and high social position, and the magnificent way of living which they enjoyed at that time. He also expounded the bad condition of the non-Muslims in his country compared with their condition in Egypt, and eventually he warned al-Nāṣir Muḥammad of the overbearing and overpowering status of his non-Muslim subjects.³ Therefore, in Rajab 700/March 1301, there

¹Khiṭ, ii, 498.

²Copts, 102-3; Khiṭ, ii, 498.

³Subh, xiii, 377; Copts, 103; Khiṭ, ii, 498.

was a general conviction that a new royal policy should be followed by the non-Muslims; the two emirs, Sayf al-Dīn Salār and Baybars al-Jāshnakīr, sent for the elders of the Christians, for the two Christian patriarchs, for the judge of the Jews, and for the congregation of the Christians of the Church of the Mu'allāqa, and for those of the Convent of the Mules, al-Quṣayr and others. Then came the four chief judges of the four madhāhib of Islam who contended with the Christians and the Jews, and bound them down to the terms of 'Umar's agreement with them.¹ Thereafter, the Royal Ordinance was announced that no emir was allowed to employ a non-Muslim in his office, that the Christians must wear blue turbans and the Jews yellow.²

"The women of the non-Muslims should have a different appearance to distinguish them from Muslim women, the two parties are not allowed to ride horses or to carry arms, and if they do ride donkeys they should double their feet inwards; furthermore, they are not permitted to ride along the middle of the road, to raise their voice louder than that of the Muslim, or to have their buildings higher than that of their Muslim neighbours."³

Besides this decree, the non-Muslims

"are not authorized to worship openly, or ring the bells of their holy places, or to propose their faith of Christianity or Jewish religion to a Muslim to convert him. Also they are prevented from buying a Muslim slave; moreover, they have to hang a bell around their necks if they want to go to the public bath. They are not allowed to imitate the Arab rings or to teach their children the Qur'ān or even employ a Muslim for their hard work. And they are not sanctioned to have a large fire. In the event of a person of the two communities committing adultery with a Muslim women he would be executed."⁴

¹Copts, 103; Khiṭ, ii, 498.

²Zetterstōen, 87; Subh, xiii, 377-8; Khiṭ, ii, 498.

³Ibar, vi, 894.

⁴Ibid., vi, 895.

Hence the patriarch of the Christians obliged his people to wear blue turbans and a girdle about their loins, and forbade them to ride on horses or mules. Moreover, he indicated to them that they were subject to the Royal Decree, and threatened anathema on any one of them who should act otherwise, and that he would be cast out of the Christian community if he rebelled. The same happened within the Jewish community.¹ This decision was then sent in a number of copies to the several provinces.² Seemingly that instruction had a great effect on the society of Egypt at that time for the circumstances were normal, and relations between the people of different religions were friendly. Furthermore, the Maghribī vizier asked for the destruction of the churches, but the chief judge refused his request and wrote a decree that no church should be demolished except those which had lately been restored. Many of the churches in Egypt were closed for some days although their elders tried to have them re-opened.³ After a short time some of the Christians re-opened a church and the public gathered and complained to Sayf al-Dīn Salār that this had been done without permission, and said that they regretted that the Christians had stopped wearing blue turbans and that some emirs were protecting them.⁴ Consequently an order was declared in Cairo and all over Egypt that the Christian and Jewish communities should wear their coloured turbans and, if anyone refused to follow any text of the ordinance he would be beheaded and his property confiscated. Also, it was absolutely forbidden to employ a non-Muslim

¹Copts, 103-4.

²Ibar, vi, 895.

³Copts, 104.

⁴Sulūk, i, 914.

in any office belonging to the Sultān, or to a Mamlūk emir.¹ Accordingly, the mob obtained domination over the Christians and Jews, pursued them and beat them on the neck with their shoes and with their fists. They treated in this way all whom they saw without the prescribed dress. So many non-Muslims hid, and did not dare to walk in the market.² Subsequently, the non-Muslim subjects were careful to wear their coloured turbans, blue for the Christians and yellow for the Jews, and to avoid riding horses and mules. The groups who worked at the offices of the state, or in the honourable dīwān of the Sultān, had to give up their work, except those who embraced Islam, and there were many. Afterwards, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad wrote to all the Mamlūk provinces in Syria and Egypt confirming the Royal Edict.³

When the people of Alexandria heard about this edict they hurried to demolish two churches which had been built during the Islamic period, and they ruined that part of every house belonging to a non-Muslim that was higher than the house of his Muslim neighbour.⁴

Accordingly, the people of the two communities, Jews and Christians, made every effort to regain their previous privileges - freedom to worship, to work in honourable offices and to wear white turbans - but without success. By money and promises they attempted this with the Mamlūk emirs, men of high posts, and with

¹ Ibid., i, 915.

² Ibid., i, 915; Copts, 105.

³ Zetterstéén, 87.

⁴ Ibid., Nujūm, viii, 134.

many of the important officials of the state. Nevertheless, they could not achieve their aims.. Undoubtedly, Baybars al-Jāshnakīr (al-Manṣūrī) encouraged and supervised these critical events.¹ Furthermore, when al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in 709/1309 took his seat one day between the Mamlūk emirs, the judges of Egypt and Syria and the 'ulamā', the vizier Ibn al-Khalīl informed the Sulṭān that the non-Muslims offered to pay 700,000 dīnārs every year to be allowed to wear white turbans. Al-Nāṣir, aware of the sensitivity of the situation, asked for the views of the 'ulamā', but they kept silent. Hence the great scholar, Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1327),² delivered a long sermon about the importance of the Islamic sharā'i and the necessity of putting those sharā'i into action. Ibn Taymiyya ended his speech with some words against the vizier. Eventually, Ibn Taymiyya said to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad "You are not the man who would support the non-Muslims". Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad confirmed the speech of Ibn Taymiyya, and refused the proposition.³ Therefore, the Jews and the Christians continued wearing their coloured turbans.⁴ This situation gives us a clear idea how important it was to the non-Muslim subjects to be able to wear the same colour, white, as the Muslims so as to look equal, to have the same position in society, and to enjoy the same rights. They used both peaceful and violent methods; they offered huge sums of money to the state, just to be free of these limitations and to have a normal life like the

¹ Zetterstéen, 87.

² For his biography, see Shadharāt, vi, 80-86.

³ Nāzirīn, fol. 107a; Bidāya, xiv, 53-54; Husn, ii, 300.

⁴ Husn, ii, 300.

Muslims.¹ Seemingly, we could understand from this stand that the 'ulamā' were powerful and effective. Obviously the Christians and the Jews suffered much from this condition and its restriction, otherwise they would not have continually endeavoured by every means to have it changed.

(v) The monks of Mount Sinai

So what was the attitude of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad towards these events concerning his non-Muslim subjects? In fact there is no mention in the contemporary writings of any kind of act by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad against them. On the other hand, there is a document which could give us an idea of the status of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad with his non-Muslim subjects, although this document concerns only the monks of St. Catherine of Mount Sinai.²

The Original Arabic Text:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ	1
مَثَلَنَا هَذَا لِكُلِّ وَاقِفٍ عَلَيْهِ	2
مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ قَلَاوْنٍ ³ ، يَعْتَمِدُ	3
مِنَ الْمَجَالِسِ السَّامِيَةِ لِلْأَمْرَاءِ، يُمَثِّلُ الْأَمْرَ الْعَالِيَّ أَعْلَاهُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى ⁴	4
الْأَجْلَاءِ الْأَكْبَابِ الْمَجَاهِدِينَ	5
الْمُؤَيَّدِينَ الْمَقْدَمِينَ الْمَجْنِدِينَ الْوَلَاءِ وَالنَّوَابِ	6
وَالشَّادِينَ وَسَائِرِ الْمُتَصَرِّفِينَ	7
بِالْأَعْمَالِ الشَّرْقِيَّةِ وَآيَلَةِ الْقَلْزَمِ وَسَاحِلِ	8
الطُّورِ وَمَقْطَعِي السَّاحِلِ وَقَارَانَ ⁵	9
أَمْجَادِ الْإِسْلَامِ أَشْرَافِ الْأَمْرَاءِ عَمَدِ الطُّلُوكِ	10

¹Bidāya, xiv, 53-54; Husn, ii, 300.

²D.M.S. no. 33.

³Stern, "Petition from the Mamluk period", B.S.O.A.S., xxix (1966), 256. f.n.97.

⁴Stern, op.cit., 248.

⁵Fārūn was a small town on the land of al-Ḥijāz on the Red Sea, see Subh, ii 391.

- 11 والسلاطين أدام الله توفيقهم
- 12 وسدادهم نعلمهم أن الرهبان
- 13 المقيمين بدير طور سينا أنهموا بالأبواب
- 14 الشريفة أنهم منقطعون بالجبل المذكور
- 15 للدعاء لهذه الدولة العامرة ، وخدمة الحجاج المنقطعين
- 16 عند عودتهم من الحجاز الشريف ، والزوار إلى جبل الطور
- 17 من المسلمين وقد انتصب لهم قوم يعرفون
- 18 بالصدريين ، يعتمدون لاتها مهم ، وينهون عنهم
- 19 بالأبواب الشريفه ما ليس له صحة ويقصدون
- 20 بذلك قطع مصا نعتهم بالترسيم من الباب الشريف
- 21 من كشف عن أمرهم ، ويخبر بالنهسي عنهم
- 22 عدة دفعوع وعمل محضر بعدم صحة ما أنهوه
- 23 ويدهم مراسيم الملوك المتقدمة
- 24 بالوصية بسهم ومراعاتهم في جميع أمورهم
- 25 وأحوالهم وملاحظة مصالحهم وقد رسنا
- 26 بالوصية التامة بهم ورعايتهم والشدة منهم
- 27 ومنع من يتعرض إليهم بأذية في نخلهم ، وحيازتهم
- 28 وكرومهم وزروعهم ، واسبابهم ، وغلا لهم
- 29 وتعلقاتهم وأحوالهم ، وبساتينهم وثمارهم
- 30 وأراضيتهم وجميع ما هو منسوب إليهم
- 31 ولا يغير عليهم عادة حملاً في ذلك
- 32 على حكم المراسيم الشريفة التي بأيديهم من
- 33 الملوك السالفة تخمدهم الله برحمته
- 34 المستمرة الحكم إلى آخر وقت ولا يعدل بهم
- 35 عن حكمها ، ولا يمنع فلاحوهم ولقأطوهم
- 36 من العبور إلى نخلهم متى أرادوا ، ومهما
- 37 سرق لهم أو عدم فليخلص لهم ، ويعاد عليهم
- 38 وسبيل كل واقف على مرسومنا هذا

من الولاة ، والنواب ، بالشرقية وايلة والقلمزم	39
وسا حل الطور ومقطعي الساحل	40
وفاران الانتهاء إليه ، والعمل به ، والعبادة إلى	41
امتثاله ولا يتعرض اليهم أحد بأذية	42
من الصدرين والركابين وغيرهم من العربان	43
ولا يحوجوا إلى مراجعة في ذلك	44
وللمره - إن شاء الله - ره	45
وكتب في ثالث عشر ربيع الآخر	46
سنة عشر وسبع مائة	47
ليمثل المملوك المرسوم الشريف أنفذه الله تعالى	48
ببيروس الباشقودي ¹ بالشرقية	49
وقلبه بالسمع والطاعة	50
بالإشارة العالية الأميرية السيفية	51
نائب السلطنة الشريفة أعزه الله	52
الحمد لله وحده ، وصلاته على سيدنا محمد نبيه ، وآله وصحبه وسلامه	53

الناصر
الملك
ليمثل المملوك
مخلطاي بالشرقية

الهواسيم الشريفة شرفها الله تعالى
وعظمتها بالسمع والطاعة

The English translation:

- 1 In the name of God the Compassionate the Merciful
- 2 This [Is] our rescript to all who take cognizance of it
- 3-4 Muḥammad b. Qalāwūn² approved from the Royal court to the emirs.
Let the exalted command - May God exalt it - be done³
- 5 viz. their excellencies the greater amīrs the fighters in
the holy war
- 6 the divinity assisted, the commanders, the chosen, the
observers, the deputies
- 7 the military supervisors, and all the administrators

¹Sic.

²Stern, *op.cit.*, 256, fn.97.

³*Ibid.*, 248.

8 in the provinces of al-Sharqiyya, Ayla, at Qulzum, the coast
of
9 Sinai, and the muqṭa's of the coast and Fārān
10 the glories of Islam, the noble emirs, the pillars of the
kings
11 and the Sultāns. God prolong their success
12 and fortune! We inform them that the Monks
13 dwelling in Sinai have used a submission to the Royal Court
14 that they are devoted in the said mountain
15 to prayer for this prosperous state, and to the service
of the devoted pilgrims
16 at their return from the holy Ḥijāz, and the Muslim
visitors to Mount Sinai
17-18 Now a people known as the Ṣadriyyūn have risen against
them making allegation , and submissions against them
19 to the Royal Court which are untrue, and their purpose
20 therein is to break the good relations, therefore there
was sent from the sacred Court
21 a person who investigated their affairs, being informed
of the prohibition concerning them
22 on several occasions, and produced a report of the untruth
of their submission,
23 and of their possession of decrees of previous rulers
24 recommending them and showing regard to them in all their
affairs
25 and circumstances, and attention to their welfare and we
have decreed
26 our entire recommendation, regard and protection
27 forbidding any who would offer them harm in their palm-
tree and ...

28 and their vineyard, their fields, their means, their crops,
 29 their possessions, their circumstances, their orchards,
 their fruits,
 30 their lands and all that is attributed to them;
 31 and let no enemy raid them
 32 Depending on this on the terms of the Royal Decrees which
 are in their possession from
 33 the preceding kings on whom be God's mercy,
 34 the terms holding valid until the end of time, and they
 shall suffer no change
 35 from these terms. Their peasants and pickers shall not be
 hindered
 36 from passing to their palm-trees when they will. Whatever
 37 is stolen from or is lacking, let it be paid to them and
 restored.¹
 38 The responsibility of all who are due aware of this our
 decree
 39 viz. the governors and the deputies in al-Sharqiyya, Ayla,
 al-Qulzum,
 40 the coast of Sinai, and the mug̃ta's of the coast
 41 and Fārān is to submit to it, to act according to it, and
 to hasten to obey
 42 obey it. Let no one offer them harm
 43 from the Ṣadriyyūn and the Rammākūr, and other nomads
 44 let them not read a repetition of this
 45 and not if God most high will²

¹Subh, xi, 114, cf. 106-7.

²Cf. Subh, vi, 233.

- 46 written on 13 Rabi' II
 47 in the year 710
 ? The slave has obeyed¹
 48 let the slave obey the sacred decree (May God most high
 exalt it) Mughlatāy in al-Sharqiyya
 49 Baybars in al-Sharqiyya the sacred decrees (May God Most High
 sanctify and honour them with complete obedience)²
 50 and has received it with complete obedience
 51 By the exalted instruction³ of the Emīr Sayf⁴ al-Dīn Baktamur
al-Jūkandār⁷
 52 vicegerent of the sacred Sultanate (May God grant power)
 53 Praise be to God alone and this blessing
 and peace be upon Our Lord Muḥammad. His
 prophet, and his people and his companion.⁵

This document contains a Royal Edict, which was issued by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in 710/1310 for the advantage and requirements of the Monks in the Monastery of St. Catherine. In that decree al-Nāṣir Muḥammad tells all the men of high rank who worked for the

¹Stern, op.cit., 248, 256-7.

²For Mustanad, see Subḥ, vi, 264-5.

³Stern, op.cit., 244, 271.

⁴For the post of Atābik see Subḥ, vi, 208.

⁵For Hamdala, see Subḥ, vi, 265-266.

state - the noble Mamlūk emirs, the leaders of the armies, the rulers of the provinces, the administrative officials and other directors of different affairs in Ayla, al-Qulzum, Sāhil al-Ṭūr, Mūqṭa'ī al-Sāhil and Farān - that the monks on Mount Sinai who served the state, the Muslim pilgrims to Mecca and the Muslim visitors to Mount Sinai, were reported by some people called al-Ṣadriyyūn, who worked in the offices of the state, as acting against the welfare of the state. In reality, al-Ṣadriyyūn aimed at disrupting the good relations existing between the Monks of the Monastery and the government. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, realizing the nature of the whole matter, ordered that the monks should be treated well and that all their affairs should be regarded carefully. They were to have support and care, freedom in their lands to protect their trees and to live their own life in safety and peace. At the end of the ordinance al-Nāṣir Muḥammad threatened punishment to anyone who tried to carry out an act of aggression against the monks, especially the Bedouins and the natives of those provinces. Probably this document is of great historical importance for it explains a great deal about the position of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad towards his non-Muslim subjects. Firstly, it makes clear that the written order of the Royal Court should be carried out according to certain formalities and under the supervision of Sāhib Dīwān al-Inshā', who should put the Sulṭān's command in a form suitable to the circumstances.¹ Also, it could be understood that it was possible to submit a petition to the Sulṭān, during the period under consideration, concerning difficult

¹For more details about Dīwān al-Inshā', see Subḥ, i, 101-139; vi, 197-200.

circumstances or in a situation of need; thus the petition could be handed to the Sulḩān in a reasonable form which could be dealt with efficiently.¹ Moreover, through studying this petition one gets the impression that al-Nāṣir Muḩammad sent his own men and faithful observers to search out the reality of the matter, to examine the circumstances behind the situation and to try to determine the best treatment for the condition.² Consequently, one could say that the administrative structure during the third reign of al-Nāṣir Muḩammad was well organized and strictly observed and supervised by the rḩlers of the state.

Furthermore, al-Nāṣir Muḩammad, desiring a complete solution for the complaint raised, added to the ordinance concerning the welfare of the Monks of St. Catherin's Monastery a threat of severe punishment for anyone who dared to act against the terms of the decree - those terms which showed great royal care and effective support for the loyal Monks.

It seems that this Royal Ordinance could be seen as a turning point in the history of Mamlūk-Christian relations during the period under review, for it shows clearly the just status of al-Nāṣir Muḩammad towards a section of his non-Muslim subjects.³

(vi) The European and Abyssinian reaction

No doubt the situation previously noted respecting the non-Muslims and the Mamlūk rule had a great effect in other parts of the world, notably the Christian countries. In 726/1326 al-Nāṣir Muḩammad was asked by Pope John XXII to treat his Christian subjects

¹Subḩ, vi, 202-204.

²Ibid., vi, 205-206.

³Cf. Bosworth, "Christian and Jewish religious Dignitaries in Mamlūk Egypt and Syria: Qalqashandī's information on their Hierarchy, titlature and appointment", I.J.M.E.S., iii, 1972, p.65.

kindly, with the promise that the same would be done for the Muslims in the West.¹ It seems that the Pope and the rulers of the Christian countries knew about the condition of the non-Muslims in the Mamlūk Sultanate, either from the European travellers who usually went through Egypt, Mount Sinai, and Syria to Jerusalem on a pilgrimage, or from the western traders who played an active part in the commerce with Egypt. These people, who certainly had either seen or heard about the strict regulations to which the Christians and the Jews must submit by order of the Mamlūk court, must have talked of it in their countries; consequently, the ruling class there tried to help their brothers in religion, in Egypt and Syria, by being in touch with al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to reach a reasonable solution for both sides. Thence the Pope diplomatically wrote to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to help the Christians, and, at the same time, promised him good treatment for the Muslims in the Catholic world. But it seems that the Pope's letter had no effect on the position in Egypt at that time. Aragon was one of the Christian kingdoms which attempted to help the Christians in Egypt by writing diplomatically to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. The correspondence between these two countries started in 700/1300 when Jaime II (1291-1327), king of Aragon, who treasured the interest of his country and realized the possibilities of reaping more benefit through diplomacy than by waging futile wars against Egypt,² sent a long letter to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad asking firstly for safety for the merchants who travelled between the two countries and, secondly, for assurance and protection for the Aragonese pilgrims to Jerusalem.³ In conclusion, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad

¹ Muir, op.cit., 73.

² Atiya, Egypt and Aragon, 10.

³ Alarcon y Santon, Los documentos Árabes diplomático, 345; Atiya, op.cit., 17-19.

answered Jaime II in a letter dated 13 Shawwāl 699/2 July 1300, promising him what security he wanted for his Aragonese subjects.¹ Respecting the matter of the non-Muslims in Egypt at that time, we find the second Aragonese embassy which was despatched in 703/1303 required the opening of Christian churches in Egypt which had been closed after the edict of 700/1300 concerning the non-Muslim subjects.²

Subsequently, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, wishing to be on good terms with the kingdom of Aragon, and desiring to come to an understanding with Jaime II, worked to accomplish the wishes of the king by opening two churches in Cairo. He also wrote a letter to the Aragonese court which was sent with the Egyptian envoys. In this letter he explained his action as being for the sake of friendship between the Aragonese kingdom and the Mamlūk Sultanate,³ although the subject of churches could only be settled in accordance with the religious law, which proclaimed that none of these churches might be left open except those which were in existence at the time of 'Umar.⁴ Apparently this exchange of letters between King Jaime II and al-Nāṣir Muḥammad had a great effect on the religious policy of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad for although, as we have seen, it was difficult for the Sulṭān to change the strict attitude of the pious, the 'ulamā', and the powerful Mamlūk oligarchy, he succeeded, somehow, in opening two churches to maintain diplomatic relations between the two countries. Eventually, it seems also, the exchange of embassies

¹Alarcón y Santon, loc.cit.; Atiya, loc.cit.

²Alarcón y Santon, op.cit., 351; Atiya, op.cit., 21.

³Alarcón y Santon, loc.cit.; Atiya, op.cit., 22.

⁴Alarcón y Santon, loc.cit.; Atiya, op.cit., 24.

and letters between the kingdoms of Egypt and Aragon prevailed in achieving many aims: first, friendship and good understanding between the two sides, second, protection for the Aragonese pilgrims to the Holy land and, third, security for the Christians in the Mamlūk Sultanate.

Furthermore, the Byzantine Emperor Andronicus II Palaeologus (1282-1320) was concerned about the status of the dhimmīs in the Mamlūk Sultanate, and so in 705/1305 he sent an embassy to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad requesting that al-Muṣallaba be given back to the Christians.¹ But apparently al-Nāṣir Muḥammad did not grant the demands of the Byzantine Emperor for in 710/1310 we see another Byzantine embassy from Andronicus II to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad repeating the request and stating the Emperor's wish to see the Christians in the Mamlūk Sultanate enjoying justice, peace, freedom of worship, and their churches opened.²

Consequently, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad succeeded in obtaining the agreement of the 'ulamā' that two churches of the Copts and the Melkites be given back to their people, and opened two synagogues, but he refused to open the Church of al-Muṣallaba.³ It appears that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad accomplished this either because of his feelings of sympathy with his non-Muslim subjects, or to maintain diplomatic and friendly relations with Byzantium and to strengthen them, or for both these reasons.

¹ Al-Muṣallaba was a church in Jerusalem which was turned into a mosque at the time of al-Zāhir Baybars (658-678/1260-1277), see Niyāhat, xxix, fol. 283b.

² Nihāyat, xxx, fol. 28a; Sulūk, ii, 90.

³ Sulūk, ii, 90; Tritton, The Caliphs and their Non-Muslim Subjects, 58; cf. Sulūk, ii, 17.

It seems that the Byzantine Emperor Andronicus II was grateful to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad for what he had done for the non-Muslims in the Mamlūk Sultanate. Andronicus II expressed his gratitude by sending valuable presents to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad with his third embassy, who arrived in Egypt in Sha'bān 712/December 1312, with 42 porters (ḥammālūn) carrying different kinds of precious gifts.¹ All these embassies from the pontifical court, Aragon and Byzantium, give us a clear picture of the Mamlūk court in the reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad at the beginning of the fourteenth century; clearly the court became a centre of many embassies sent by European rulers to promote their friendship with the Mamlūk Sultanate, and to confirm their co-operative attitude to the dhimīs in the Islamic world. Apparently those European Ambassadors who were welcomed by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad succeeded in obtaining his care and protection for the Christians in Egypt and Syria.

In order to improve the position of the Christians in Egypt the Abyssinian kings also wrote to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to this end.² The Abyssinian kings constantly interfered in religious affairs to indicate their sympathy with the Christians. The Christians were to receive different and better treatment, or the Muslims in Abyssinia would suffer retaliation. Probably relations between the Mamlūk Sultanate and Abyssinia continued to be friendly,³ especially in the reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.⁴ When 'Amda Ṣ yon,

¹ Nahj, iii, 229; Mālik, fol. 70a; Sulūk, ii, 120.

² Tashrīf, 170.

³ Sulūk, ii, 533.

⁴ 'Ashūr, "Ba'd adwā' jadīda 'alā al-'alāqāt bayna Miṣra wa'l-Ḥabasha fī al-'uṣūr al-wuṣṭā". M.T.M., xiv (Cairo, 1966-7), pp. 20-21.

the king of Abyssinia (712-743/1312-1342),¹ heard of the bad situation of the non-Muslims in Egypt, he sent his envoys to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in 726/1326 with a vehement letter asking for an immediate change, and threatened to persecute in like manner the Muslims who were domiciled in Abyssinia, and to deprive Egypt of water by deflecting the course of the Nile into the desert.²

Moreover, in the year 737/1336, the king of Abyssinia dispatched another embassy to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad presumably concerning the oppression of the Christians by the Muslim rulers.³ Although al-Nāṣir Muḥammad sent the Royal Mission back to Abyssinia with a sarcastic reply⁴ good relations between the two sides continued,⁵ and the Abyssinian embassies continued appealing to Egypt, especially when they needed a new Metropolitan, for the Coptic Patriarch⁶ in Egypt used always to appoint the Metropolitan of Abyssinia from the Christian Copts in Egypt.⁷

On the other hand, the indifference of the Mamlūk Sulṭāns towards the several missions from Abyssinia forced the Abyssinian kings to put their threats into action; King 'Amda Ṣyōn suppressed the Muslims violently and he killed many.⁸

¹Budge, A History of Ethiopia, Nubia and Abyssinia, i, 288-290.

²Sulūk, ii, 270; Trimingham, Islam in Ethiopia, 70-71.

³Sulūk, ii, 410.

⁴Trimingham, op.cit., 71.

⁵At the time of al-Zāhir Barqūq (783-790/1382-1388) an embassy came from Abyssinia to Egypt in 784/1382 with precious presents. For more details, see Nujūm, xi, 246.

⁶For more details about the Patriarch of Alexandria, see Subh, v, 308-321.

⁷Subh; v, 322-323.

⁸Trimingham, op.cit., 65-71.

Presumably the events concerning the non-Muslims in Egypt at the beginning of the third reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad encouraged some of the Muslim rulers in Abyssinia who lived in their seven small kingdoms (Ifāt, Dawāro, 'Arābabani, Hadya, Sharkhā, Bāli and Dāra)¹ to change their policy from one of casual raids and gradual penetration to a definite war of aggression.² They invaded Christian territory, burnt churches, and forced Christians to apostatize. An Abyssinian ambassador returning from Cairo was captured by the Muslims and, after failing to make him abjure his faith, they killed him.³ This aroused the Abyssinians. In 1328 'Amda Ṣyōn overwhelmed the Muslim outposts and then sent columns in all directions, paralysing Muslim positions.⁴ Between the years 1332 and 1338 the Muslims of Ifāt⁵ sent an embassy to Cairo to ask, with the help of 'Abd Allāh al-Zayla'ī,⁶ al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to intervene with the Abyssinians⁷ on their behalf. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad asked the Coptic patriarch to write to the king of Abyssinia asking him to change his policy and to refrain from persecuting the Muslims in his country. Immediately the Coptic patriarch sent a long letter to the Abyssinian ruler

¹For more details about these Muslim kingdoms, see Subh, v, 324-337.

²Trimingham, op.cit., 71.

³Trimingham, loc.cit.

⁴Trimingham, loc.cit.

⁵For more details, see Trimingham, op.cit., 72-73.

⁶(d. 762/1360). For his biography, see Durar, ii, 310.

⁷For more details about the struggle between 'Amda Ṣyōn and the Muslims in the east and south-east of Abyssinia, see T. Tamrat, Church and state in Ethiopia 1270-1527, 132-145.

expressing the desire of the Sultān respecting the persecution of the Muslims by the Abyssinians.¹ It seems that the Christian patriarch played an important part in the field of religious relations between the Mamlūk Sultanate and Abyssinia concerning the Christian and Muslim communities in the two states.² But no one can say that that position was not likely to change; it only lasted for a short time and soon the good relations were resumed and both parties were always trying to eliminate any cause which could affect their relations for the worse. Apparently the circumstances between the Christian and Muslim powers continued friendly during the following years.³ Besides, there were always strong links and continued correspondence between the ruling class in Abyssinia and the patriarchs in Cairo, Alexandria and Jerusalem.⁴ That was the situation between Abyssinia as a Christian stronghold in East Africa with the seven small Muslim kingdoms on its borders, and Egypt as the capital of the Mamlūk Sultanate and the centre of the Caliphate. It might be worth mentioning that the Abyssinian Christian governors were concerned and serious in their objections to the unkind treatment of the Christian community by the Mamlūk rulers.⁵ Nevertheless, at the same time, the Muslim communities in Abyssinia were being ill-treated. On the other hand the Mamlūk

¹ Subh, v, 333; Trimingham, op.cit., 72.

² A similar part was played by the Patriarch of Alexandria, Marcos, in 753/1352 for the help of the communities of different religions in the two countries, Egypt and Abyssinia. See Trimingham, op.cit., 73-74. Another similar event occurred in 783/1381 and needed the intervention of the patriarch for peace, see Subh, v, 333; 'Inbā', ii, 46.

³ Trimingham, op.cit., 75.

⁴ Tashrīf, 172-173.

⁵ The exchange of embassies between Egypt and Abyssinia concerning the dhimmīs continued throughout the Mamlūk regime in Egypt. For more details on this matter, see Tibr, 67-72.

Sulṭāns ignored the Abyssinian embassies' demands, and refused the request of the ambassadors, while, on the other hand, the Mamlūk rulers themselves continually asked the Coptic patriarch or the patriarch of Alexandria to write to the Abyssinian kings in order that the Muslims in Abyssinia should be well treated. Consequently, and because of this critical situation, if the condition of a minor religious community in one of the countries was changed, this was because the circumstances of that country demanded it. Apparently there were causes which helped to create this special aspect of the relationship between the Mamlūk Sultanate and Abyssinia. Firstly, perhaps the Mamlūk Sulṭāns thought that the Muslim rulers in the seven small Muslim kingdoms in Abyssinia could defend themselves, especially if they succeeded in uniting. Secondly, the Abyssinian kings demonstrated their ability to oppress the Muslims in the Abyssinian lands, although at the same time they never forgot to declare their desire to be on good terms with the Mamlūk regime. In other words, in their diplomatic letters to the Mamlūk Sulṭāns, they used a method of promises (targhīb) and threats (tahdīd)¹ which apparently the Muslim Sulṭāns ignored. In spite of these difficulties the two countries might easily have reached an agreement if there had been no other circumstances which, seemingly, affected their co-operation. But the exchange of embassies between the Catholic West and the Abyssinian kings and the Mamlūks' knowledge of the political contact between the two Christian powers against their kingdom militated against an agreement.

¹Tibr, 67-71.

Therefore the Mamlūks were not surprised to find this association between the Catholic West and Abyssinia because, if there were to be any sort of crusading effort in the European West against the Muslim country, no doubt the Europeans would hope to have assistance from Abyssinia since it was a Christian stronghold in the Islamic East with a strategic position in East Africa on the Red Sea. It might be also that the Abyssinian rulers realized the importance of the religious bond which connected them with the European Christian powers. Therefore, they appeared more demanding in their relations with the Mamlūk Sulṭāns.

Consequently, the Mamlūks could do nothing more than stop the patriarch of Alexandria from appointing a new Metropolitan for Abyssinia when one was needed. Moreover, if the Mamlūks intended to ill-treat the Christians, the Abyssinians would do the same by suppressing the Muslims in their country. Subsequently, in spite of these changed circumstances and the unfriendly relationship between the Mamlūk Sultanate and Abyssinia, the Mamlūks always welcomed the Abyssinian ambassadors who continued to go to Egypt throughout the Mamlūk period.

(vii) The position of dhimmīs between the years 714-721/1314-1321

In order to carry out a complete study of the social condition of the dhimmīs, the attitude of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad towards the dhimmīs as a minor party of a different religion in a Muslim environment, and the relation between the two sides, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad as a Muslim ruler of a Muslim realm and the dhimmīs as non-Muslim subjects, it is imperative to study the minor daily acts of the Muslim Egyptians towards the Christians and the Jews. In 714/1314 a man from al-Hūsayniyya, a quarter in Cairo, rode his

horse, carried his sword, and rushed through the streets trying to kill every Jew and Christian on his path. Unfortunately he managed to injure some and to cut the hands of others, and eventually he was arrested and beheaded.¹

Moreover, an unfortunate incident occurred to stir up the hidden resentment of the people (Muslim Egyptians). The carpets and lamps of a Muslim fair having been lent for use at a Christian festival, a fanatic and his followers attacked the worshippers and destroyed their church. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, in anger, threatened to cut out the fanatic's tongue, but in the end relented and sent him away with a solemn warning.² It is quite obvious that all these occurrences are individual, and it is unfair to judge the stand of the Muslims in Egypt at that time through these particular incidents. Presumably there were unfriendly feelings of the Muslims towards the dhimmīs.

Thereafter, in Shawwāl 715/January 1316, all the churches and synagogues in Cairo were closed but after two months, on the 20th Dhū 'l-Ḥijja 715/17th March 1316, al-Mu'allāqa, a church, was opened and al-Nāṣir Muḥammad bestowed a robe of honour upon the Christian patriarch.³ Accordingly a Byzantine embassy from Andronicus II Palaeologus arrived in 716/1316 to assure the support of the Emperor for the Christians in the Mamlūk Sultanate.⁴

¹Sulūk, ii, 139-140.

²Sulūk, ii, 135-136.

³Ibid., ii, 157.

⁴Ibid., ii, 164; Badr, fol. 7b.

In 718/1318 the Christians succeeded in obtaining permission from al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to restore the walls of the Church al-Barbāra in al-Rūm quarter. Therefore many of the Christians gathered, and the Copts brought tools, materials, etc. to accomplish the reparation of the Church. On the instructions of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad they had Muslim engineers and superintendents. When the work was finished, the church became one of the splendid buildings of Cairo. Some Muslims disliked the reparation of the church; they went to Arghūn, the vicegerent (nāi' b al-Sultān) (d. 731/1330)¹ and asked him to pull down the new parts of the church. They also accused Karīm al-Dīn al-Kabīr (d. 724/1323), nāṣir al-khāṣṣ, of using his strong and influential position in the Royal Court to gain more privileges for the Christians.

Eventually the Muslims succeeded in having a Royal Decree from al-Nāṣir Muḥammad allowing them to pull down the new parts of the church. Moreover, the Muslims built a mihrāb in the ruined place, and used the church as a mosque in which to perform ritual prayer. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, in anger, commanded that the mihrāb should be torn down and the whole building restored as a church for the Christians. But it seems that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's order was not carried out and the building was used neither as a church nor as a mosque until it became ruins.² It is likely that the dhimmīs succeeded in gaining the support of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and that later the Muslims gained his support. As we have seen, this happened for

¹ Supra, 115.

² Sulūk, ii, 182-183.

only a short time and, as soon as circumstances changed, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad turned in favour of the non-Muslims. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad also found, in the correspondence with the European countries who cared for the situation of the Christians in the Mamlūk Sultanate, a great opportunity to take immediate action for the sake of non-Muslim subjects. Therefore, one could assume that he was sympathetic to the dhimmīs for two reasons. Firstly, because they were his subjects, even if they were of a different religion, and for the stability of his state he was careful to observe two factors: justice and equality for all his subjects. Secondly, considering the importance of diplomatic and friendly relations with the Christian countries, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was concerned that the dhimmīs should be treated with justice.

Besides, if al-Nāṣir Muḥammad supported for a while the wishes of the public and the firm stand of the scholars, the 'ulamā', against the non-Muslims, he never allowed the Muslims to take a strong hand with the dhimmīs, and they were treated on an equal footing with Muslims.

(viii) The demolition of the churches, and fires in the mosques

On the 9th of Rabī', II, 721/8 May 1321, at the time of the Friday prayer, when the Mamlūk emirs were praying, some of the workmen who were digging the fountain of al-Nāṣir's pool decided to raze the church of al-Zuhrī. Later they devastated the church after they had plundered all the valuable objects, without the knowledge of the government.¹ Thence they went to the church called al-Ḥamrā',

¹Nihāyat, xxxi, fol. 3; Sulūk, ii, 216-217; Tritton, op.cit., 61.

which was one of the greatest churches in Egypt, where they robbed all the money and the wine of the church.¹ After that they moved to the "Church of the Bū Munā" by the seven water-mills, and did the like to it, dragging out the nuns, pillaging and burning everything.²

Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was indignant when the smoke of the burning churches told its tale;³ there were no commoners without some spoils from the sacking, such as a jug of wine, and they expelled the nuns.⁴ Consequently al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was enraged because of the sacrilege to the churches by the public,⁵ he immediately sent Aydaqmush⁶ with his troops to restrain the mob. The Mamlūk force arrived in time to protect the Mu'allāqa Church from attack.⁷ Aydaqmush succeeded in scattering the crowd at the doors of the church and in arresting some people. Fifty soldiers were appointed to guard the church.⁸ According to the order of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and the verdict of the judges, some of the arrested were beaten, others had their noses cut off.⁹

At the same time, in Alexandria, the mob and the public demolished four churches.¹⁰ "The same thing was going on all over Egypt;

¹Sulūk, ii, 217; Tritton, *op.cit.*, 62.

²Sulūk, ii, 217.

³Lane-Poole, *The story of Cairo*, 217.

⁴Sulūk, ii, 217.

⁵Nihāyat, xxxi, fol. 3.

⁶For his biography, see *Durar*, i, 426-428.

⁷Nihāyat, xxxi, fol. 3.

⁸Sulūk, ii, 217-218; cf. Tritton, *op.cit.*, 62-63.

⁹Nihāyat, xxxi, fol. 3.

¹⁰Sulūk, ii, 219.

at Alexandria, at Damascus, at Kus, churches were burning."¹ The number of churches which were subverted in Egypt at that time was sixty.² Although the previous occurrences might express the feelings of the common people and the mob towards the non-Muslims, it seems that they acted this way towards the non-Muslims because of their desire to plunder, to pillage and to damage, more than because of their religious fanaticism against Christianity or the Jewish religion.

About the position of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, it appears that the whole situation outraged him and, according to al-Maqrīzī's writings, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was greatly disturbed when he heard the news.³ Al-Maqrīzī continues that al-Nāṣir was furious so that he thought to go himself to punish the mob but, later, he ordered two of his Mamlūks to leave immediately to chasten the common people with the sword.⁴ Moreover, for a third time, al-Maqrīzī explains the anger felt by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad concerning the treatment of his non-Muslim subjects and to their churches at the hands of the common people and that the Mamlūk emirs tried hard to allay his annoyance and his fury.⁵

A month after the burning of the churches fires began to break out in Cairo. Fires started on Saturday, 15th Jumādā, I, 712/18th September 1312, and lasted until the end of the month.⁶ The fire

¹Lane-Poole, op.cit., 218.

²Sulūk, ii, 219.

³Ibid., ii, 217.

⁴Ibid.; Tritton, op.cit., 63.

⁵Sulūk, ii, 217.

⁶Ibid., ii, 220; Nujūm, ix, 63.

spread to many quarters and the wind carried the flames far and wide so that many schools, public baths, and about one hundred houses were burnt.¹ Many houses belonging to the Mamlūk emirs were burnt, one after another, and the fire continued although every effort was made to extinguish it. Different kinds of pots were filled with water and put near the shops, in the markets, besides the stables and in houses, without any success.² Every one believed that the whole of Cairo would be burnt. People climbed the minarets; poor and rich alike hastened to utter prayers and praise and lamentation. Men cried and wept everywhere. Men were even stationed at the Gates of Cairo, to turn back the water carriers if they tried to leave the city.³ The Mamlūk emirs and the public worked together to carry water from the schools and the public baths. All the water carriers were impressed, and twenty four emirs of the highest rank worked at the head of the lines of men carrying water.⁴ An area of seventeen houses was demolished to clear a space round the burning buildings.⁵ It was noticed that these fires were apparently aimed at the mosques;⁶ many mosques, inside and outside Cairo, were destroyed by the fire,⁷ and the people stayed on the roofs of their houses for protection so

¹ Al-Nuwayrī in his *Nihāyat*, xxxi, fol. 4 states:

كان جملة ما احترق من الدور المجاورات ما يزيد على ثلاثين داراً، ويقاربها لعاثة.

² Again al-Nuwayrī in his *Nihāyat*, xxxi, fol. 4 cites:

ترادف الحريق وتوالى فا احترقت عدة دور من مساكن الأمراء، وكانت النيران تقع في أعالي الدور، وتأهب الناس لذلك، ووضعوا الأواني مملوءة في الطرقات، وعلى أبواب الحوانيت، والأسواق
 . . . ولا سطلبات ولا حريق لا يفتروا وهو لا يقع عالياً إلا في النهار، وصار الناس يسمهرون طول
 الليل بالقبوة، خصوصاً دار الامراء فإن ممالئكم وغلمانهم كانوا يبيتون على أسطح دورهم، ويضربون

³ Tritton, *op.cit.*, 67. وامتنع كثير من الناس من حضور الجمعة لما رزمتهم أسطح بيوتهم.

⁴ *Nujūm*, ix, 65.

⁵ Tritton, *op.cit.*, 67-68.

⁶ Lane-Poole, *loc.cit.*

⁷ *Sulūk*, ii, 222; *Nujūm*, ix, 67.

that they could not sleep or go to Friday prayer.¹

On the 20th of the month three Christian monks were captured while they were throwing torches at some houses. Consequently the people were sure that the work of incendiaries was evidently organized by the Christians.² Although the monks confessed that they were responsible for the fires in the mosques, shortly they retracted their confessions, and al-Nāṣir Muḥammad refused to acknowledge that the Christians were the incendiaries because of his liking for them.³ Two monks were arrested while they were setting fire to the school of al-Kahāriyya, and before the chief of police of Cairo, (the Wālī), 'Alam al-Dīn Sanjar (d. 735/1334)⁴ they admitted that they had started the fires to avenge the destruction of the churches.⁵ Furthermore, a Christian was caught at the Mosque of al-Zāhir with pieces of cloth soaked in ^{بهم فقيل إنهم من الفلاحين، وإتتهم لم يفعلوا ذلك} he acknowledged that the Christian communi ^{هذا والسultan ينكر أن يكون ذلك من فعل النصارى} burning the mosques, using wicks of naphtha ^{اعتنى بهم: النصارى أضعف أبداناً وقلوباً من الإقدام} ordered his private secretary (nāzir al-khāṣṣ), ^{ونه فيقولون: إن السنار ظ لباً إنما تقع في دوس} ^{ومن أين حصل النصارى إلى ذلك فيرجع السلطان} ^{نارهم في الدنيا والنادية}

¹Nihāyat, xxxi, fol. 4.

²Al-Nuwayrī in his Nihāyat, xxxi, fol. 4 says:

فلما كان يوم الخميس العشرين من الشهر وجد ثلاثة من النصارى بحارة العطوف وقد رموا ناراً في بعض الدور فما شك الجفاج ذلك أن الحريق من النصارى، وانتقلوا من الظن والاختلاف إلى اليقين والإجماع.

³Al-Nuwayrī in his Nihāyat, xxxi, fol. 4 records the following statement:

وضرب هؤلاء وقرروا فاعترفوا بالحريق، ثم اعتنى بهم فقيل إنهم من الفلاحين، وإتتهم لم يفعلوا ذلك وإنما أقروا لما حصل لهم من ألم الضرب، فأطلقوا، وهذا والسultan ينكر أن يكون ذلك من فعل النصارى لما يلقيه إليهم من له اعتناء خاص بهم، ويقول المعتنى بهم: النصارى أضعف أبداناً وقلوباً من الإقدام على هذا الأمر الكبير، ويمتدولونه على ذلك ويوجهونه فيقولون: إن السنار ظ لباً إنما تقع في دوس الأياذهنجاته وأعلي الدور، ودور أكابر الأمراء، ومن أين حصل النصارى إلى ذلك فيرجع السلطان إليهم ويقول: هذا لا يتوصل إليه إلا بالنشاب.

⁴Durar, ii, 172.

⁵Sulūk, ii, 223-224; Nujūm, ix, 67-68; cf. Tritton, op.cit., 70-71.

⁶Sulūk, ii, 223; Nujūm, ix, 68; Tritton, op.cit., 69.

to call the Coptic patriarch, who came immediately and was welcomed by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. They brought before him from the governor's house the three Christians who repeated to Karīm al-Dīn al-Kabīr, in the presence of the patriarch and the chief of police, 'Alam al-Dīn Sanjar al-Khāzn,¹ what they had previously confessed.² When the patriarch was told about the happening, he wept and said that the incendiaries were as foolish as the Muslims who previously destroyed the churches without the permission or even the knowledge of the Sulṭān, and he left the whole matter in the hands of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. The Patriarch was sent back to his house in honour.³ Therefore two Christians, found guilty, were burnt in a pit in the presence of the public by order of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.⁴

Hence al-Nāṣir Muḥammad on 22 Jumādā, I, 721/19th June 1321 warned the people that he had chastised the incendiaries and, if a fire started at a house, the owner of the burning house should arrest his neighbour. The public became extremely exasperated and accused Karīm al-Dīn al-Kabīr of protecting the Christians.⁵

Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad asked for the advice of the Mamlūk emirs concerning the most suitable solution, in their opinion, with

¹Supra, 199.

²Tritton, *op.cit.*, 70.

³Sulūk, ii, 224; Nujūm, ix, 68.

⁴Lane-Poole, *op.cit.*, 219.

⁵Al-Nuwayrī in his *Nihāyat*, xxxi, fol. 5 says: فامر السلطان بهم فحرقوا — في يوم السبت الثاني والعشرين من الشهر والسلطان بالميدان، ثم قيل للعوام والناس: هولاء الذين كانوا يحرقون حرقناهم، فمن احترقت بعد هذا داره فليمسك جاره، ونحن نقابله فاشد ذلك على الناس، واستغاث العوام، واتهموا القاضي كريم الدين، وكيل السلطان بالاعتناء بالنصارى والذب عنهم ثم ذكر السلطان هذه الواقعة لأكابر الأمراء، وكل منهم على انفراد، فبدأ بالأمر سيف الدين بكتمر الأبي بكري واستشاره فيما يفعل في ذلك — والمذكور رجل تركي جا في الطبع وزير بالسياسة — فقال للسلطان: الصلحة أن السلطان يرسل إلى العوام فيقول لهم يا خوشد اشيه [أنتم] أهم رعايانا والسواد الأعظم وإذا كنتم قد كرهتم هذا الخنزير عزلناه عنكم وولينا غيره ويطيّب خواضرهم، فغضب السلطان من كلامه وشتته . . . وسنه رأيه وواجهه بالسب .

regard to the Christians for their responsibility for burning mosques, and the public who disliked the Christians and Karīm al-Dīn al-Kabīr who was acting for them at the Royal Court. The emirs Sayf al-Dīn Baktamur¹ and Jamāl al-Dīn Āqush al-Ashrafī² who had discussed the subject with al-Nāṣir Muḥammad separately, advised him to dismiss his private secretary and the other Christians who were working in the offices of the government to ensure the peace of the country.³

Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad disagreed with his advisers, sent troops throughout Cairo with orders to charge the crowds and spare none. The mob, learning the news, disappeared so that the Mamlūks or the soldiers found the markets closed and the streets deserted. Two hundred people were arrested near the Nile, and brought before al-Nāṣir Muḥammad who, with the agreement of the judges, ordered them to be executed or to have their hands cut off.⁴ Many Muslims were hung by their hands along the way from the Gate of Zuwayla to the Citadel of Cairo. It was a sad day for the people, and every place in Cairo was closed on that day. Many others had their hands cut off, and some died because of this. Others were commandeered for digging the ground at al-Jīza. Thus the decree of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was firmly carried out and Karīm al-Dīn al-Kabīr was extremely afraid of the anger of the public.⁵

¹For his biography, see Durar, i, 482; Nujūm, ix, 274.

²For his biography, see Durar, i, 395f; Nujūm, ix, 310.

³Nihāyat, xxxi, fol. 5; Sulūk, ii, 224-225; Nujūm, ix, 69; Tritton, op.cit., 72.

⁴Nihāyat, xxxi, fol. 6; Sulūk, ii, 225; Nujūm, ix, 69.

⁵Sulūk, ii, 225-6; Nujūm, ix, 69-70.

Apparently there are three deductions to be made. Firstly, the Christians who certainly were responsible for the burning of the mosques and other buildings; it would seem that their action could be attributed, in principle, to a natural reaction to what had happened to their churches. Also their action could be estimated as a courageous operation carried out by brave people who were members of a minority in an Islamic country governed by Muslim rulers.

On the other hand, the burning of the mosques by Christians made the gulf between the Muslims and the Christians more difficult to bridge. In other words, this action of the Christians probably gave rise to mutually hostile feelings. Secondly, the Muslims who were shocked to see their holy places ruined by fire and, in their great religious enthusiasm, acted foolishly in a way that cost many of them their lives. Thirdly, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, who protected the Christians, refused to accuse them of burning the mosques.¹ Shortly the whole situation became clear and the culprits among the Christians were chastised. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, who was seriously angry with the mob for their opposition to the Christians and their interference in the affairs of the government, insisted on hanging some of them; in vain they pleaded innocence, even the emirs interceded for them, but al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was resolved to make an example of somebody.²

Seemingly, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad acted unkindly towards his Muslim subjects, most of whom were ignorant, or unwisely moved by strong

¹Nihāyat, xxxi, fol. 4.

²Lane-Poole, loc.cit.

religious zeal. Besides, even if al-Nāṣir Muḥammad succeeded in gaining peace and quiet in the streets, certainly his action in hanging the Muslims precluded a trustful friendship between the Muslims and the Christians for a long time.

On the 24th of Jumādā, I, 721/21st June 1321, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad called together all the judges and discussed with them the question of his non-Muslim subjects being allowed to wear white turbans as they used to do during the early years of his reign. The judges refused to give al-Nāṣir Muḥammad their agreement on this; al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was displeased and kept silent.¹ Other fires started to break out here and there, near the Mosque of Aḥmad b. Ṭūlūn, in the Citadel of Cairo, in the House of Baybars al-Aḥmadī, the Mamlūk emir,² and in Ṭurnṭāī Funduq; all these mysterious fires surprised al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. He was sad when he knew that all the fourteen marble columns in the Funduq had been lost in the fires, and goods valued at ninety thousand dirhams belonging to a merchant were destroyed.³ Afterwards some Christians who were arrested admitted that they had caused the conflagrations. It seems that this admission made al-Nāṣir Muḥammad more ready to accept that the Christians were the incendiaries of the fires in the mosques and in the houses of the honourable Mamlūk emirs inside and outside Cairo.

¹Nihāyat, xxxi, fol. 6.

²For his biography, see Durar, i, 502.

³Sulūk, ii, 226; Nujūm, ix, 70.

⁴Nihāyat, xxxi, fol. 6.

(ix) The edict of 721/1321

In conclusion, on Thursday 27th Jumāda, I, 721/ 24th June 1321, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad issued a decree against the non-Muslim subjects concerning their social condition; it was more or less similar to the edict of 700/1300, with an addition that the annual tribute which the non-Muslims paid should be doubled.¹ The verdict was announced in all the provinces and cities of the Mamlūk Sultanate.² The churches and the synagogues closed, the Christians continued wearing the blue turbans and the Jews the yellow ones. The Copts were compelled to wear blue belts, to carry a bell round their necks at the baths, and to ride only asses. Moreover, the emirs were not allowed to employ Christian servants, nor were the Copts any longer to hold posts in the government offices. The public or the mob found in these circumstances a suitable opportunity to take revenge on the non-Muslims, who hardly dared to show themselves in public, and a great many became Muslims.³

But these regulations lasted only a few days and the Christian employees returned to their employment in the offices of the Mamlūk emirs.⁴ It seems that the need of the Mamlūk emirs for the administrative qualifications of the Christian employees was the cause of this immediate change. Apparently the edict, like similar edicts before it, fell into abeyance. Probably Lane-Poole is right when he says "it must be admitted that there was grave provocation on both sides,

¹ Ibid., xxxi, fols. 7-8; Sulūk, ii, 226-227. For more details about the non-Muslims' dress, see Tritton, op.cit., 120-123.

² Nihāyat, xxxi, fol. 6.

³ Sulūk, ii, 227; Nujūm, ix, 71.

⁴ Nihāyat, xxxi, fol. 8.

and that the outrages sprang from popular fury, not from the fanaticism of the rulers."¹

It appears that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was so firm with the public that it often happened that when he was riding to the Maydān he never saw anyone on his way. The public, fearing his anger, hardly appeared in the streets when they knew that he would ride that day.² Therefore al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, displeased to see empty streets while he was riding, announced that the public would not be molested wherever they might be.³ This does not mean that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad permitted his Muslim subjects to have a superior position in the society at the expense of the non-Muslims. One day in the year 723/1323 a fanatical Sūfī at Damascus, seeing a Muslim kiss the hand of a Christian secretary, advanced and killed the Christian. As a result, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, unmoved by the excited cries in favour of the fanatic, had him hanged at the city gate. The leaders of a dangerous outbreak at Alexandria were treated with similar firmness.⁴

In these events which happened in Egypt in the first half of the fourteenth century respecting the non-Muslims there was a man who played an active part; he was the reason for some of these occurrences. He was 'Abd al-Karīm b. Hibat Allāh b. al-Sadīd al-Miṣrī al-Qādī al-Kabīr,⁵ the nephew of al-Tāj b. Sa'īd al-Dawla (d. 708/1308).⁶ Karīm al-Dīn al-Kabīr was a Christian Copt, and he embraced Islam at the time of Baybars al-Jāshnakīr, who employed Karīm al-Dīn

¹ Lane-Poole, op.cit., 220.

² Nujūm, ix, 72.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Muir, Mamlūk or Slave Dynasty of Egypt, 60.

⁵ Supra, 142.

⁶ Sulūk, ii, 61; for the biography of al-Tāj b. Sa'īd al-Dawla, see Durar, i, 515-516.

al-Kabīr to take charge of all the written accounts of court matters after the death of his uncle al-Tāj b. Sa'īd al-Dawla, who had held that high post.¹ When al-Nāṣir Muḥammad b. Qalāwūn took revenge on Baybars al-Jāshnakīr, and took possession of the throne, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad dismissed Karīm al-Dīn al-Kabīr from his post and confiscated his wealth of 100,000 dīnārs.² In 710/1310 al-Nāṣir Muḥammad appointed Karīm al-Dīn as controller of the privy purse (nāzir al-khāṣṣ),³ which was a new office established by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in 710/1310, and Karīm al-Dīn al-Kabīr was the first to hold this post.⁴ By the time Karīm al-Dīn al-Kabīr succeeded in gaining the friendship and confidence of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad he had become a person of high position in the court and had seventy Mamlūks working in his service wherever he went.⁵ The Mamlūk emirs were anxious to serve him,⁶ and al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was careful to bestow a robe of honour upon him on many occasions, for example in 710/1310⁷ and 716/1316.⁸

Soon Karīm al-Dīn became such an important character at the court, as well as achieving a high position in the palace, that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad honoured him by allowing him to bestow robes of honour upon the Mamlūk emirs.⁹

¹Sulūk, ii, 61.

²Durar, ii, 401: iii, 15.

³Ibid., ii, 402.

⁴Ibid.; Sulūk, ii, 93. For more details about the part of Nāzir al-Khāṣṣ, see Subh, iv, 30.

⁵Durar, ii, 402.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Sulūk, ii, 103.

⁸Ibid., ii, 165.

⁹Durar, ii, 402.

Karīm al-Dīn al-Kabīr built many mosques in Cairo and Damascus, repaired numerous roads and dug sundry wells.¹ It seems that the friendship between al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and his nāẓir al-khāṣṣ was strongly cemented, in 716/1316, when Karīm al-Dīn al-Kabīr was ill in Alexandria. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was worried about him and, when he recovered, all Cairo was beautifully decorated for his return. 1,600 candles were lit and lots of golden and silver coins were thrown around him.² Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, pleased at the recovery and arrival of Karīm al-Dīn, bestowed upon him a robe of honour and presented him with 10,000 dirhams.³

On the other hand, it appears that Karīm al-Dīn was kind, generous and pious. He was fond of scholars, supported them, and tried to have some of the scholars of his time around him. Besides he never stopped attempting to prevent al-Nāṣir Muḥammad from plotting against anyone.⁴ He was also generous, reasonable, dignified, wise, intellectual, humble in his behaviour, and simple in his appearance.⁵ There were many examples of the wealth, the generosity and the kindness of Karīm al-Dīn,⁶ and of his close relationship to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad,⁷ through which he held the treasure

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

³ Sulūk, ii, 165.

⁴ Durar, ii, 402.

⁵ Ibid., ii, 403.

⁶ Sulūk, ii, 243-244, 245; Durar, ii, 403.

⁷ Sulūk, ii, 211, 241.

house (bayt al-māl) and the Royal Privy Purse of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.¹

These circumstances changed when the conflict started between the Christians and the mob who accused Karīm al-Dīn of acting for the Christians at the court of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.² It seems that the public did not forget the attitude of Karīm al-Dīn towards the Christians when they appealed to him to pull down the mihrāb which the Muslims had built in the Church of ^{al-}Barbāra. Karīm al-Dīn was angry and importuned al-Nāṣir Muḥammad until he had the mihrāb demolished.³

Although al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was annoyed by the action of the public, and firmly punished them for the sake of the security and safety of the country, it seems that he was affected by their reaction to Karīm al-Dīn;⁴ and that is why, when Karīm al-Dīn provoked al-Nāṣir Muḥammad against the commoners, al-Nāṣir sent him to Alexandria to get money and to examine the church which had been destroyed.⁵ The attitude of the public towards Karīm al-Dīn al-Kabīr might be one of the reasons which weakened the friendship and attachment between al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and the nāṣir al-khāṣṣ. There were also the Mamlūk emirs, who desired to have Karīm al-Dīn dismissed by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, and to have him rewarded for his previous efforts and activities concerning the affairs of the state

¹Durar, ii, 402.

²Sulūk, ii, 224; Nujūm, ix, 69.

³Sulūk, ii, 182-183.

⁴Ibid., ii, 226; Nujūm, ix, 70-71.

⁵Tritton, The Caliphs and their Non-Muslim subjects, 66.

and of the Sultān.¹ The only possible reason for the unfriendly attitude of the mob and the Mamlūk emirs towards Karīm al-Dīn al-Kabīr was his previous religion, Christianity, and from this might have emerged their suspicion of his honesty and his sincerity. It could also be that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was suspicious of the wealth and prosperity of Karīm al-Dīn al-Kabīr.²

Besides, we should not ignore the personal policy of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad towards his men and the powerful Mamlūk oligarchy. As soon as one of them reached a peak of success, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad hurried to put an end to his life, without paying any attention to his previous efforts and accomplishments on behalf of the state. It seems that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad decided to arrest Karīm al-Dīn al-Kabīr, and formed a plan to fulfil his aim in due course. On the 14th of Rabīʿ, II, 723/22nd April 1323, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ordered the Mamlūk emir Arḡūn al-Dawādār (d. 731/1330) to seize Karīm al-Dīn and to confiscate all his property.³ They found in his houses in Cairo, Birkat al-Fīl, material and dresses valued at 60,000 dīnārs and different kinds of valuables.⁴ After two months, on the 24th of Jumādā, II, 723/29th June 1323, Karīm al-Dīn was released and sent to Shawbak⁵ and from there to Jerusalem where he stayed about a year;

¹Nihāyat, xxxi, fol. 5; Sulūk, ii, 224; Nujūm, ix, 70.

²Sulūk, ii, 245.

³Sulūk, ii, 243; Durar, ii, 403-404.

⁴Sulūk, ii, 243.

⁵Fortress in Transjordan.

then by the order of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, Karīm al-Dīn al-Kabīr was brought back to Cairo on the 17th of Rabī', II, 724/13th April 1324.¹ In Egypt his lands and houses were confiscated, and all his wealth was taken for the state.²

Later, on the 18th of Rabī', II, 724/14th April 1324, Karīm al-Dīn al-Kabīr was sent to Uswān where he was kept prisoner.³

On Thursday, the 20th of Shawwāl 724/10th October 1324 he was hanged.⁴ According to Ibn Ḥajar, the precious things and valuable objects belonging to Karīm al-Dīn al-Kabīr were carried by a caravan of mules to the Citadel of Cairo; the beginning of the caravan was at the house of Karīm al-Dīn and the end of it at the Citadel of Cairo. This statement gives us a clear impression of the wealth of Karīm al-Dīn.

Furthermore, some historians accuse Karīm al-Dīn of working for the Christians, and attempting to break the good relations between al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and his Muslim subjects. Apparently, Karīm al-Dīn was acting with the Sulṭān on behalf of both sides to settle the matters of state, and to establish peace in the country. Hence, if Karīm al-Dīn took steps in a matter concerning the non-Muslims, he was striving for the best regarding the peace of Cairo.

Although Karīm al-Dīn knew that the populace disliked him,⁶ he attempted to persuade al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to change his order against

¹ Sulūk, ii, 248, 255; Durar, ii, 404.

² Sulūk, ii, 248, 255; Durar, ii, 404.

³ Sulūk, ii, 255; Durar, ii, 404.

⁴ Sulūk, ii, 259; Durar, ii, 404.

⁵ Durar, ii, 404.

⁶ Sulūk, ii, 224; Nujūm, ix, 68-69.

the mob and to be kinder to the public; it seems that he succeeded in achieving his desire.¹ Another example was when the Mam-lūks were going to cut off the hands of some people at the command of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, Karīm al-Dīn pleaded with al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to forgive them, and again al-Nāṣir Muḥammad did what Karīm al-Dīn wished.²

Moreover, when Karīm al-Dīn came back from Alexandria in 722/1322 he worked immediately to set free all those who had been imprisoned during the previous events in the struggle between the Muslims and the non-Muslims. All these examples support the view that, although Karīm al-Dīn was a Christian in the early years of his life, he adhered to the rites of his new religion when he adopted Islam and spent all his life at the court of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad working for the best concerning the affairs of the state.

(x) Dhimmīs in the late years of al-Nāṣir's reign

The late years of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's reign could be considered as a period of safety and peace when the Egyptians could live together without a Royal Edict severing the friendly ties which existed. Contemporary sources do not mention any event concerning the dhimmīs during the years 722-740/1322-1338, until we come to the end of the year 740/1340 when we see that contemporary writers and later historians mention an event of similar character. The most important aspect of this is the attitude of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad towards dhimmīs and towards the Christian countries. In Shawwāl 740/April 1340, fires broke out in the east side of the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus, soon the fire reached the Mosque and lasted two days until

¹Sulūk, ii, 225; Nujūm, ix, 70.

²Sulūk, ii, 226; Nujūm, ix, 70.

it was extinguished by the efforts of the governor of Damascus, Tankiz al-Ḥusāmī (d. 741/1340),¹ and his people.² At the beginning of the next month, Dhū'l-Qa'da/May, of the same year, great conflagrations broke out in different parts of Damascus which burned for another two days; seemingly many places and buildings were demolished, goods and possessions were lost to the value of 1,600,000 dīnārs.³ A slave boy told the governor of Damascus that his master, Yūsuf b. Mujallī al-Makīn, the clerk in the army office (lātīb dīwān al-Jaysh), and other Christian scribes were the incendiaries.⁴ Apparently, when Tankiz al-Ḥusāmī asked these Christians about the truth of the matter, they confessed that the conflagration had been organized by them, and by two monks recently arrived from Constantinople to teach the others how to make packets of naphtha; with those packets they had succeeded in starting the fires in Damascus, and the two monks had already left for Cyprus.⁵ Tankiz al-Ḥusāmī sent a letter to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad explaining the whole matter.⁶ After that the incendiaries, who were eleven Christians, were put to torture and finally killed.⁷ Moreover, their money, which was more than one thousand dirhams, was used for the repair

¹Supra, 153-154.

²Uyūn, fols. 42a-b; Sulūk, ii, 495.

³Sulūk, ii, 495.

⁴Ibid., ii, 496.

⁵Uyūn, fols. 42b-43a; Sulūk, ii, 496.

⁶Sulūk, ii, 496.

⁷Ibid., ii, 497.

of the Umayyad Mosque.¹ Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad disapproved of the action of the governor of Syria against the Christians, and warned him that this would arouse the anger of the Byzantine people against the Muslim merchants who used to go to Constantinople for trade.² Although the governor of Syria tried to expound the matter³ to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and told him that the money which had been confiscated from the Christians was used for the repair of the Umayyad Mosque, al-Nāṣir was still furious about the event,⁴ although it was true that the money was used to repair the mosque.

Although this is not the place to discuss relations between al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and the governor of Syria, it might be worth mentioning that the previous occurrence was probably one of the contributory factors which affected the close friendship between al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and Tankiz al-Ḥusāmī.

That this was the only occurrence during that long period of quiet and peace might confirm that kindness and friendliness towards his non-Muslim subjects, the Christians and the Jews, was an important aspect of the internal policy of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, who was always careful to implement that intention.

(xi) The feasts of dhimmīs

Seemingly the unfriendly circumstances above described respecting the non-Muslims during the period under consideration did not deeply effect the good relations between the Muslim and the non-Muslim Egyptians; the friendship and attachment between the two parties continued throughout the period. The most significant example is

¹ Uyūn, fols. 44a-b; Sulūk, ii, 497.

² Sulūk, ii, 497.

³ For more details about this matter, see Uyūn, fols. 42a-44b; Tadhkirat, fols. 119a-120b.

⁴ Sulūk, ii, 497.

the sharing of the Muslims in the festivals of other social assemblies. On these occasions both parties had common celebrations and enjoyed certain special aspects of amusement, although the Muslims were aware that these festivals concerned only the non-Muslims.¹ Whenever an opportunity for these feasts pertaining to the non-Muslim subjects arose we see the Muslims taking part, beautifully dressed, and exchanging extravagant presents.² One gets the impression that the Muslims celebrated non-Muslim events with gaiety and mirth. It is to be expected that our information about this subject is necessarily less complete and sufficient than we would wish because contemporary historians rarely mention this kind of social aspect and activity. On the other hand, the non-Muslims used to give presents to their Muslim friends and rulers on every suitable Muslim occasion; this had a great influence on the friendly relations between the Muslim rulers and their non-Muslim subjects.³ The Coptic feasts were many, and took place at different times in the Coptic year.⁴

Nayrūz,⁵ New Year's day, a Christian Copt festival, was one of the most important solemnizations which the Christians celebrated; they were accustomed to cook a certain kind of sweet called zalābya,⁶ and to make bonfires.⁷ The Muslim public, learned men, scholars

¹Madkhal, ii, 46.

²Ibid., ii, 47.

³Ibid., ii, 48.

⁴For more details, see Subh, ii, 415-419; Khiṭ, i, 264-267.

⁵For the word Nayrūz, see Subh, ii, 419.

⁶Madkhal, ii, 48.

⁷Subh, ii, 419; Khiṭ, i, 267.

officials and rulers, were careful to share in the Christian feast, to cook zalābya and to solemnize the occasion with their friends and relatives.¹ Nayrūz day was also regarded as an official holiday in Egypt and all the schools and the shops were closed on that day.²

There were some other important days when the Christians enjoyed certain traditional customs and the Muslims were eager to follow the Christians in their traditions. Khamīs al-'Adas³ was the second festive occasion; for this, the Christians solemnized three days before Easter.⁴ The Christian women were accustomed to go to market to buy incense (bakhūr) and rings.⁵ The Muslim women were minded to do the same, and the markets became so crowded that it was difficult for anyone to go there on Khamīs al-'Adas.⁶ Both Christian and Muslim women were mindful on that day to perfume themselves and their men with incense; not only that, but they also were careful to make a cross over the perfumed incense seven times, for they believed that this would safeguard them from envy, laziness and weakness.⁷ Moreover, the Christians were in the habit of presenting their Christian and Muslim friends with different sorts of

¹ Madkhal, ii, 48-49.

² For more details about Nayrūz Day, see Madkhal, ii, 49; Subh, ii, 419; Khiṭ, i, 269.

³ Khiṭ, i, 266.

⁴ Ibid., i, 266, 495.

⁵ Madkhal, ii, 54.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Madkhal, ii, 55.

fish, lentils and eggs.¹ These examples give us a clear impression of the friendly aspect of the relations between the Muslims and the non-Muslims.² Sabt al-Nūr was one of the festivals considered by the Christians and the Muslims together as a particular festival to be commemorated.³ The Muslims also followed the Christians in the celebration of Christmas.⁴ There were also Yaum al-Ghiṭās,⁵ and 'Īd al-Zaytūna⁶ on which the Muslims were keen to share the Christian community's commemoration.

Moreover, during the Mamlūk epoch, the Copts were accustomed to celebrate each year a special occasion called the Feast of the Martyr ('Īd al-Shahīd). On that day they used to throw into the Nile a coffin containing a finger of an old disciple; they believed that if they did not do this the Nile would not flood. At that time they went to Shubrā to have a great commemoration, and the Copts of different classes from all the villages in Egypt used to come and join in the celebration of that feast. Many people of Cairo, of diverse categories, celebrated that occasion. Together, the Muslims and the Copts pitched their tents, rode horses and played and enjoyed themselves in various ways.⁷ It seems that this factual example makes clear that the difference in the religions, Islam and Christianity, had no deep effect on

¹Khiṭ, i, 266.

²For more details, see Madkhal, ii, 55; Khiṭ, i, 266.

³For more details, see Madkhal, ii, 56-58.

⁴For more details, see Madkhal, ii, 58-59.

⁵Madkhal, ii, 59; Khiṭ, i, 265.

⁶Madkhal, ii, 59-60.

⁷Khiṭ, i, 68-69; Sulūk, i, 941-942; Nujūm, viii, 202-203.

the building of human relations between the Muslims and the non-Muslims at that time.

Furthermore, it shows that the events which broke out in Egypt at the beginning of the fourteenth century were quite superficial and, even if they brought unfriendly feelings between the two parties, that feeling was the result of circumstances and never the cause of any unjust act towards the other side. However, Baybars al-Jāshnakīr worked to stop the Copts from celebrating the Feast of the Martyr and succeeded in his desire, although the Copts tried hard to change his mind.¹

Later, in 736/1336, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad allowed the Copts to enjoy that traditional event again.² This gives us an idea that, although the Copts tried to regain permission to celebrate that feast, without success, during the second reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad they did not stop trying until they achieved their wish. This means that the Copts in Egypt at the Mamlūk time were careful to practise their religion and to exercise their holy traditions.

The Jews, as another community, had their own festivals at which they performed the liturgical rites, or held a ceremony.³ New Year's day was one of the vital occasions which the Jews were careful to celebrate, and they called it 'Īd Rā's Hīsha, which means the feast of the beginning of the month.⁴ 'Īd Sūmāryā, or the Kabūr, as the Jews used to call it, was a fast of twenty-five hours, although this was forbidden on Sundays, Tuesdays, and Fridays.⁵

¹ Nujūm, viii, 202; Tibr, 12.

² Khiṭ, i, 69.

³ Subh, ii, 426.

⁴ Ibid; cf. Khiṭ, ii, 473, 479.

⁵ Subh, ii, 426; Khiṭ, ii, 473, 479.

Besides these religious festivals such as 'Īd al-Mizalla,¹ the Jewish Easter,² 'Īd al-'Unṣara,³ and 'Īd al-Qarrā'īn,⁴ which the Jews used to celebrate, there were also other feasts on which they were accustomed to hold different kinds of ceremonies; for instance, 'Īd al-Fawz,⁵ and 'Īd al-Hunka.⁶

(xii) Conclusion

The situation, as we have seen, was exceptional for there were three sides. The Muslims, or the public, were the majority and, with their simple and pious minds, they were ready to take immediate action against any group trying to change the peaceful condition of the state. The non-Muslim community was the second side and they eagerly desired to have a normal life but it seems they had to try hard to accomplish their desire. Thirdly, there was al-Nāṣir Muḥammad himself, who found himself in a difficult position between these two groups, the majority and the minority, of his subjects, but who never departed from his firm intention of following his established internal policy. The necessity for him as a ruler of a great kingdom, and as a legal sovereign who had suffered two hard experiences regarding his accession to the throne, was either to practise a strong policy respecting the internal affairs of his kingdom, or expect to face another critical condition

¹Subh, ii, 426; Khiṭ, ii, 473, 479.

²Subh, ii, 427; Khiṭ, ii, 474.

³Subh, ii, 427; Khiṭ, ii, 474.

⁴Khiṭ, ii, 473.

⁵Subh, ii, 427; Khiṭ, ii, 473.

⁶Subh, ii, 428; Khiṭ, ii, 473.

which might pull out by the roots the establishment of the house of Qalāwūn as a ruling family.

It is likely that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad regarded his subjects, the Muslims and the dhimmīs, impartially, and prevented his Mamlūk emirs from affecting his clear judgement respecting his relations with his people. It could be also worth saying that the conduct of the Mamlūk rulers was often better than the law demanded, and it seems fair to mention that the relations between al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and the dhimmīs were friendly and faithful. Obedience and discipline must be strictly and relentlessly enforced, and the rule of justice must also be observed.

Furthermore, concerning this part of the internal policy of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, there was the status of the scholars, who were powerful and effective but not always strong enough to affect al-Nāṣir's thought or attitude towards his people.

The diplomatic relations between the Mamlūk Sultanate and the Christian countries was the most remarkable, if not the most important, aspect which affected and was effected by the situation of the dhimmīs. Al-Nāṣir respected the friendly relations with the Christian countries, and he was always careful during his reign to cement these relations for political purposes, economic benefits and historical development.

It appears that al-Nāṣir was naturally competent to handle the local conflict between his subjects, Muslims and dhimmīs, with skill and knowledge of the requirements of an efficient state established in a land belonging to people of different religions. Moreover, it seems that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was always hopeful of remedying old and deeply rooted vices. In order to fulfill his desire to have his people live together in peace and safety, al-

Nāṣir Muḥammad did his utmost to find the causes of that conflict and to handle every cause with the most suitable treatment.

It seems as if al-Nāṣir Muḥammad succeeded in reaping the fruits of his exertions when a new period began in the course of 729/-740/1328-1339. It was a time of friendship and close relations between his subjects. Consequently his fame and popularity began to spread with great rapidity.

In general, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was kind to all Egyptians, Muslims and dhimmīs, and he worked to please the two parties as much as internal and external affairs permitted him. This aspect of mutual celebration by the Muslims and the dhimmīs of all festivals and feasts of the two parties might be a good illustration of the development of the friendly association between the two sides in the third reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.

Chapter V

THE BEDOUIN REVOLTS(i) The early contact

In discussing the Bedouin revolts it is imperative to know the factual number of the Bedouin tribes during the period under consideration. Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī states that there were many Bedouin tribes in Egypt.¹ Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī cites that there were several tribes in Upper Egypt; he also gives a brief account of internal affairs. Concerning the other parts of Egypt, Ibn Faḍl Allāh mentions the names of some tribes who lived in Egypt, especially in the frontier regions, throughout the Islamic period until al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's third reign, including the families who held the internal office of governorship ('imra).² According to al-Qalqashandī, al-Ḥamadānī records in detail the matter of the governorship ('imra) concerning the nomads of Egypt during the period under review.³ According to Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī one could have an idea of the condition of 'imra in Lower Egypt, Upper Egypt and Barqa.⁴ In Uswān the affairs of management were in the hands of a powerful Bedouin emir called Sumra b. Mālik⁵ who succeeded in obtaining permission from al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to launch an attack against Ḥabasha and the communities of the Blacks with the assistance of his powerful subjects whenever he found suitable circumstances. Moreover, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad wrote to the governor

¹Ta'rīf, 76; see also Subh, vii, 160.

²Masālik, iv, fols. 92b-100b. See maps, nos. V, VI.

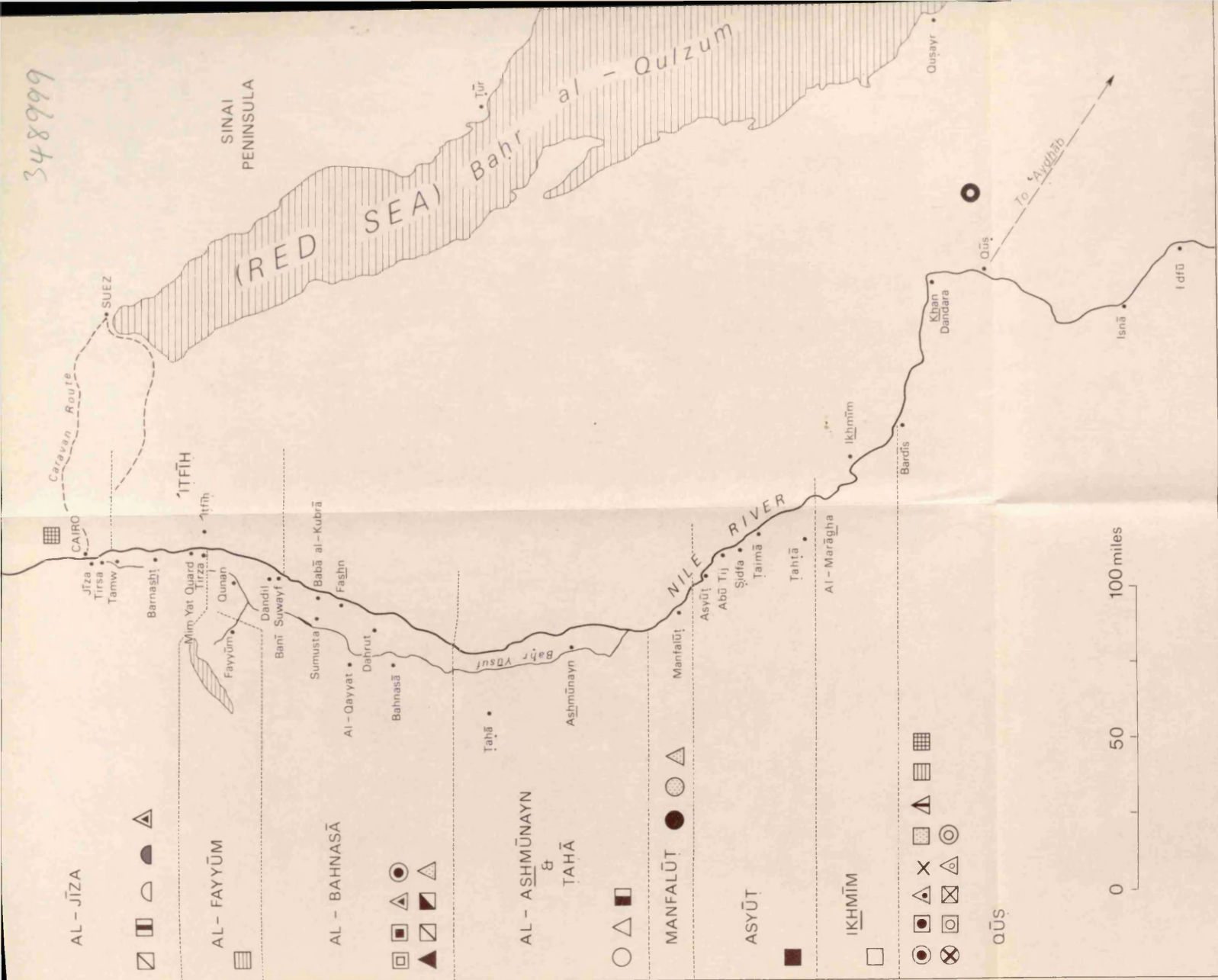
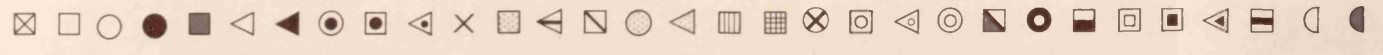
³Subh, iv, 67-68, 69-71. See maps, nos. V, VI.

⁴Ta'rīf, 76, 77-78, 81-83. See maps, nos. V, VI.

⁵Al-Qalqashandī calls him elsewhere Sumayra instead of Sumra. See Subh, iv, 68-69; cf. Subh, vii, 162.

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- 1 BANŪ SHĀDĪ
- 2 ʿARAB QUDĀʿĀ
- 3 JUHAYNA
- 4 ʿARAB AL-ZANĀʿIYYA
- 5 AL-ḤAFĀFIRA (al Hafāfira)
- 6 BANŪ ṬALḤA
- 7 BANŪ AL ZUBAYR
- 8 BANŪ SHAYBA
- 9 BANŪ MAKHZŪM
- 10 BANŪ UMAYYA
- 11 BANŪ ZUHRA
- 12 BANŪ QANBAR
- 13 BANŪ SAHM
- 14 BANŪ GHANĪ
- 15 BANŪ ʾIKRIMA
- 16 BANŪ MUḤAMMAD
- 17 ʿĀWF BANĪ SULAYM
- 18 FAZĀRA
- 19 LŪWĀTA
- 20 BANŪ ZUʿĀZĪ^e
- 21 AL-ʿAJĀLA
- 22 BANŪ QURAYSH
- 23 BANŪ BALĀR
- 24 BANŪ LAKHM
- 25 BANŪ ṬHĀLABA
- 26 BANŪ ʿĀLĪ
- 27 BANŪ NAZĀR
- 28 BANŪ SHAHLĀN
- 29 BANŪ MAJDHŪL
- 30 BANŪ ABĪ KATHĪR
- 31 BANŪ AL-JILLĀS



MAP No. V

THE BEDOUINS DISTRIBUTION IN UPPER EGYPT

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AL - RUM

(The Mediterranean)

BAHR



- 1 'AWF BANĪ SULAYM
- 2 BANŪ LAKHM

0 30 miles

MAP No VI

THE BEDUINS DISTRIBUTION IN LOWER EGYPT

of Upper Egypt and to the other Bedouin tribes to support Sumra in fulfilling his functions.¹ Lastly, he must be put in command of any region in which he was successful.² This statement should not lead us to understand that a Bedouin emir had managed to be vested with unlimited authority by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad because a deep investigation of this permission makes it easy for us to realize that the authorization serves, in the first place, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's ambition to be a ruler of a state with internal security and, that there was no harm if one of the Egyptian provinces came officially under the power of a Bedouin emir who obeyed the high authority of the Mamlūk court. There is a lack of evidence concerning the carrying out of this permission during the reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, but it is probable that it was allowed to become effective.

On the other hand, it seems that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad wanted active warrior-chiefs in the frontier-regions for security and protection and, in order to achieve his desire, he worked to be on good terms with the Bedouins especially those who lived in the frontier regions.

Al-Qalqashandī quotes Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī and al-Ḥamadānī in their statements that there were also al-Gharbiyya in which the Bedouins were led by a family of Ṭayy', al-Buḥayra which was administered at the time of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad by Khālīd b. Abī Sulaymān, and Fā'id b. Muqaddam who were famous for their generosity, bravery and wisdom,³

¹Ta'rīf, 77; Subh, iv, 68-69.

²Ta'rīf, 77; Subh, iv, 69.

³Subh, iv, 70-71; cf. Ta'rīf, 76; Subh, vii, 161.

and Barqa in which a Bedouin emir called Ja'far b. 'Umar tried to carry on with the function of supervising the internal affairs of Barqa as an independent ruler. But it seems that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, being dissatisfied with the way the Bedouin emir handled the affairs of the province, tried to put him to flight. When the emir found himself in difficulty he himself went to the court of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad for forgiveness and achieved his purpose.¹

Unfortunately, al-Qalqashandī does not give details about the circumstances which forced that emir to yield to the Mamlūk power. But, on the other hand, al-Qalqashandī's information helps one to assume that there were many tribes who lived in different parts of Egypt during the reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. Some of these Bedouins were careful to give their complete obedience to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, to fight under his supervision and to rule according to his orders, while others worked hard for independence from the Mamlūk authority. For example, in the year 700/1300, the Bedouins of Upper Egypt rebelled against the government; therefore, as Baybars al-Manṣūrī² records, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad sent him with Shams al-Dīn Sunqur al-Ashqar³ to bring peace and to return the situation to normal. There they succeeded in accomplishing victory with great tribute.⁴ Moreover, Ibn Abī al-Faḍā'il, having joined the Mamlūk troops against the Bedouins, notes that it was easy to overcome the Bedouins, and to bring them back to obedience.⁵

¹Ta'rīf, 77-78; Subh, iv, 71.

²Supra, 102.

³For his biography, see Durar, ii, 177-178.

⁴Zubdat, fols. 221b, 222a, 223b.

⁵Nahj, iii, 38.

The question arises, here, what was the cause of that revolt? Firstly, it seems that the supervision of the activities of the internal affairs in Upper Egypt were too hard a task to be performed by one person, so that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad devoted three of his emirs to restraining the recalcitrance of the Bedouins. Secondly, studying the surrounding circumstances one gets the impression that the Bedouins accustomed to dwell on the boundaries of Egypt kept desiring independence and found in the Mamlūks' defeat by the Mongols in Wādī al-Khāzandār in 699/1299 a good opportunity which could serve their longing for semi-independence but, as we have already seen, it was difficult for them to stand against the Mamlūk Sultanate, even at that difficult time in the Mamlūk's rule. On the other hand, it might be that the defeat of the Mamlūks was the cause of that Mamlūk campaign against the Bedouins to replenish equipment and obtain sufficient supplies for a new war against the Mongols.¹

Immediately after, in the year 701/1301, Ibn Abī al-Faḍā'il cites that another revolt occurred in Upper Egypt, while Baybars al-Manṣūrī adds that the Bedouins caused a great disorder in Upper Egypt, attacked the merchants, fought the soldiers of the state and caused wide destruction.² Furthermore, Ibn Taghrī Birdī confirms the statement and gives long details about this event.³ Subsequently, the contemporary historians and later ones agree that Sayf al-Dīn Salār and Baybars al-Jāshnakīr succeeded in capturing the leaders of the revolt, killed many of the Bedouins, took possession of Upper Egypt and spread the Mamlūk power all over the regions.⁴

¹ Durar, ii, 177; cf. Hasan, The Arabs and the Sudan, 102.

² Zubdat, fols. 231b, 232a; Nahj, iii, 61-62; see also Mālik, fol. 44b; Bayān, 129.

³ Nujūm, viii, 149-151; cf. Hasan, loc.cit.

⁴ Zubdat, fols. 231b, 232a; Zetterstéen, 107; Nahj, iii, 61-2.

This continuation of the Bedouin revolts during the rule of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad gives us entire understanding of many aspects of the situation of the Bedouins in Egypt. Firstly, during the period under consideration, the Bedouins had a deep and common desire for independence, even internal independence; they at least wanted to live as was their habit, free, and far from any regulation which might put them under the authority of the Mamlūks. Secondly, the Bedouins enjoyed a certain degree of power which helped them to continue fighting the Mamlūks whenever an opportunity occurred to their advance. Thirdly, it seems that it was difficult for the Mamlūk court, especially in the early years of the reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, to put the Bedouins under military power or a kind of political system directly connected with the supreme power in Cairo. Fourthly, these consecutive movements could be considered as internal revolts which might badly affect the political structure, the social structure and the economic activities too. In conclusion, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad continued to try, either by diplomacy or by force, to put an end to these successive revolts by the Bedouins. On the other hand, one might say that having the Bedouins' obedience was of great importance for internal security, safety on trade routes and for the protection for pilgrims on their way to al-Ḥijāz. Therefore, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad had to put the Bedouins, especially those of Upper and Lower Egypt and of 'Aydḥāb, under his command and obtain their utter obedience.

(ii) The political and economic relations

One should not get the complete impression that the Bedouins were always a source of aggression during the period under study for they could also be, in practice, a great help to the Mamlūk Sultanate if the latter had to face any sort of difficulty, as happened

in the year 711/1311 when al-Nāṣir Muḥammad wanted to conquer Tripoli in North Africa. The Bedouins of al-Buḥayra, hearing of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's campaign, hurried to join him and to take part in this military event for the sake of the Mamlūk Sultanate.¹ These data of Jawāhir al-Sulūk are probably important for they help us to understand that the Bedouins could be a support to the military force for a political purpose concerning the show of power of the Mamlūk Sultanate. But, unfortunately, the manuscript of Jawāhir al-Sulūk does not give further information concerning the position of the Mamlūk court towards the co-operative standing of the Bedouins with the Mamlūk military force. One might correctly imagine that the Mamlūk court willingly welcomed the indication of good will from the Bedouins for this was the first time in al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's third reign that such participation had occurred and it might also be followed by total co-operation between the two sides for the good of the country. But it appears that the Bedouins' thought and desire for a semi-independent condition were always active as we could easily notice through the step which was taken by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad when he marched in 711/1311 towards Upper Egypt in order to restore those parts of the area which had been damaged by the Bedouins and after a series of successful fights returned to Cairo

Accordingly, it seems that, in times of political trouble,³ al-Nāṣir Muḥammad regarded the Bedouins in Upper Egypt as a heavy

¹Jawāhir, fol. 225b.

²Ibid., fol. 226b.

³Sulūk, ii, 99, 104, 107-111.

burden on the Mamlūk rulers and that is why he went in person to Upper Egypt to restore order. Besides, it may be worth stating that the Mamlūk government had, even for a short period, to deal with the Bedouins' affairs to stabilize the state. In 716/1316 there was another Bedouin incident, this time in the desert of 'Aydhāb, the important port on the east side of Egypt on the Red Sea, where they broke out against the Mamlūk Law. Therefore al-Nāṣir Muḥammad sent a military force, well organized, and led by six emirs of highest rank, who managed to overcome the dissidents and came back to Cairo in success.¹

The only comment which can be made here is that the large numbers of the Bedouins encouraged them to continue their revolts, and the great distance between their settlements on the different borders of Egypt and the centre of government made circumstances more helpful for them to carry on rebelling against the Mamlūks with different types of revolt, such as sometimes a revolt of economic aspect by cutting the annual tribute which they paid to the government,² or a revolt of political aspect such as when they announced, more than once, that they liked to be self-governing.³ Lastly, it might be worth mentioning that 'Aydhāb was an important port through which the pilgrims travelled to al-Ḥijāz.⁴ At the same time, 'Aydhāb was a busy and active port for the products from

¹For 'Aydhāb under the Mamlūk rule, see Ḥasan, *op.cit.*, 74-82.

²In *Jawāhir*, fol. 227a, it is stated:

[في ٧١٦] جسر السلطان العساكر إلى صحراء عيذاب بسبب فساد العربان ، فخرج إليهم
ست أمراء مقدمين ألوف ومماليك سلطانيه ، فبلغوا إلى بلاد البجيه وما فوقها ورجعوا القاهرة
• سالمين

cf. Ḥasan, *op.cit.*, 76-78.

³*Nujūm*, viii, 149.

⁴*Khiṭaṭ*, i, part II, 356; see also *Tuḥfa*, i, 147, 169-170.

India, Yemen and al-Ḥijāz.¹ A Mamlūk administrator² used to be appointed by the Sulṭān to handle the local affairs of 'Aydhāb.³

In fact, it was a series of attempts made by the Bedouins on different parts of the Egyptian borders to put their wish to live independently into action. On the other hand, all the Mamlūk efforts which had achieved success against the rebellious Bedouins had temporary effect; and the most effective evidence which might confirm this statement was the new aggressive act by the Bedouins soon after a successful quelling of a revolt, which was something the Mamlūks had to face with a stronger force and a well organised army.⁴ This was in Rajab 713/December 1313 when the Bedouins in Upper Egypt acted against the rule of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. For example, they cut off the merchants' way and stopped paying the kharāj.⁵ As soon as al-Nāṣir Muḥammad heard about the Bedouins' attitude he marched from Cairo pretending that he was going hunting while in reality he meant to surprise the Bedouins with a sudden attack and, at the same time, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad sent his emirs through two parallel ways to blockade the Bedouins to promote the success of the attack.⁶ Subsequently, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad came back victoriously to Cairo in Ramaḍān 713/March 1314 bringing with him a monetary fine and many captive Bedouins who either were imprisoned or used for building bridges.⁷ Miqdām b. Shammās⁸ was one of the

¹Khiṭaṭ, i, part II, 357.

²Infra, 234-235.

³Khiṭaṭ, i, part II, 358.

⁴For details concerning the Mamlūk relations with Nubia during the period under consideration, see Ḥasan, op.cit., 117-121.

⁵Mālik, fol. 73b; Sulūk, ii, 192; Nujūm, ix, 36.

⁶Mālik, fol. 73b; Sulūk, ii, 129; Nujūm, ix, 36.

⁷Mālik, fol. 73b; Sulūk, ii, 129; Nujūm, ix, 36.

⁸For his biography, see Durar, iv, 356-357.

most important Bedouin leaders who were captured during this campaign; he was powerful, rich, and had four hundred slave girls, eighty sons and a large number of servants.¹ He was of high position among his people so that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, after having him imprisoned in the Citadel of Cairo for a short time, released him, giving him money and corn to start a new life in the town of al-Nāṣiriyya on the canal of Alexandria,² where he settled with his family.³

This data proves that the Bedouins under Mamlūk rule paid an annual tribute (kharāj) as a symbol of obedience towards the ruling class, and that the withholding of this payment could be considered as a revolt against the existing rule which required immediate treatment either by diplomacy or by force.

On the other hand, the Bedouin leaders probably regarding this payment as an aspect of submission, tried, as soon as they found themselves rich, powerful and of great importance, to prevent the annual kharāj to show their desire to be free of Mamlūk administration. It seems also that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad considered the payment of the kharāj to be of vital importance for the authority of the Mamlūk state. Consequently, this analysis might give us a reasonable explanation of why al-Nāṣir Muḥammad made this widespread attack against the Bedouins. The other specific cause which urged al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to fight the Bedouins of Upper Egypt was the need for security on trade routes for the sake of the economic condition of the Mamlūk Sultanate. Therefore,

¹ Sulūk, ii, 129; Durar, iv, 357; Nujūm, ix, 36.

² For the canal of Alexandria, see Sulūk, ii, 111-112.

³ Sulūk, ii, 129; Durar, iv, 357.

extensive security should have been provided on trade routes, especially in Upper Egypt on the roads which were followed by the merchants to 'Aydhāb. This would be accomplished, probably, by putting the rebellious Bedouins under Mamlūk power either by diplomacy or with force. Besides, it was, as we have seen, useful for the Mamlūk government to have the captive Bedouins in Cairo to use them for building work ('umrān or ta'mīr).

Another episode of this kind occurred during al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's rule in 719/1319, when the Bedouins of Barqa on the border between Egypt and Tripoli cut off the zakāt and revolted against the ruling power.¹ In fact, they were led by one of their emirs, Ja'far b. 'Umar.² Seemingly, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad immediately sent his troops under the leadership of Aytamush³ to suppress the Bedouin insurrection.⁴

It might be worth noting that Aytamush was one of the supporters who paved the way for al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to claim the throne for the third time.⁵ Aytamush left Cairo with his army for Ja'far b. 'Umar and his devoted men. It was two months march from Alexandria but, fortunately, Aytamush found a Bedouin guide who showed him a way in thirteen days only, for one hundred dīnārs and a promise

¹ Sulūk, ii, 190-91; Durar, i, 537.

² For his biography, see Durar, i, 537.

³ Supra, 106.

⁴ Sulūk, ii, 191; Durar, i, 423.

⁵ Durar, i, 423.

of an 'iqṭā' from the Sulṭān. This Bedouin guide was ignorant of the purpose of the campaign and was careful to lead Aytamush and his troops to their destination.¹ The Bedouins of Ja'far b. 'Umar were surprised to see themselves suddenly surrounded by the Mamlūk army and immediately announced their loyalty and obedience to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, but Aytamush insisted on delivering the order of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad the next morning in the presence of Ja'far b. 'Umar himself.² Therefore, the armed soldiers remained on horseback for the whole night in case there might be a sudden attack by the Bedouins under cover of the darkness of the night.³ The next morning Ja'far refused to show himself to Aytamush and his army; consequently Aytamush made a great assault against Ja'far and his men who stood ready to drive them back. But it appears that Aytamush succeeded in defeating the rebellious nomads after nineteen battles, taking their cattle and camels and killing many of them while the others fled to the western lands.⁴

Furthermore, Aytamush was careful to keep the women and the children in peace and safety, and to set six hundred captives free before he left with his troops to return to Cairo. In addition, the Mamlūk forces were on their six day journey to Cairo, bristling with arms for fear of capture in a surprise attack.⁵ In conclusion,

¹Sulūk, ii, 191.

²Ibid..

³Ibid..

⁴Ibid. ii, 191-192.

⁵Sulūk, ii, 192.

al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was glad to know the news of the victory. He took a fifth of the booty and divided the rest between the fighters.¹

A week later Ja'far b. 'Umar came to Cairo and went to Bak-tamur al-Sāqī² asking for his protection ('istījāra). The latter welcomed Ja'far b. 'Umar and managed to obtain the forgiveness of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad for him. Lastly, a meeting was arranged between al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and Ja'far b. 'Umar at which the latter announced his complete loyalty to the Mamlūk authority and his readiness to fulfill all obligations required of him.³ On his part, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad presented him with gold and valuable gifts, and appointed him officially as emir over his people on condition that he paid the annual tribute punctually, without delay or excuse, which Ja'far sincerely did until his death.⁴ This case, however, is an actual proof of the Bedouin character concerning their continuous fight for freedom of rule. Apparently, they were powerful and heavily armed, therefore it seems that they believed that they should endeavour to live independently, and not as subjects of the Mamlūk Sultanate. Probably they were so powerful that the Mamlūk troops hardly succeeded in triumphing over their devoted groups. Regarding the position of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, one might infer from his action with the Bedouin leaders that he wished their obedience and sincerity and that is why he granted their leaders

¹ Ibid.

² Supra, 133.

³ Sulūk, ii, 192; cf. Ta'rīf, 77-78; Ṣubḥ, iv, 71.

⁴ Sulūk, ii, 192; Durar, i, 537.

semi-independence by decree. On the other hand, the Bedouins had to show their subjection in two ways: firstly by acting according to the Mamlūk rules and by keeping every obligation respecting their loyalty to the Mamlūk power. Secondly, to be careful in paying the annual tribute on time as a practical symbol of their submission to the Mamlūk regime. Hence, in discussing the specific causes of the above mentioned episode we find that there was a similar cause to that of the Bedouin revolts in Upper Egypt, that is, the annual tribute which the nomads had to pay to the government for the public treasury; it was of great importance therefore for economic reasons as well as being a symbol of political subjection.

The second cause was the need for camels for use in the army, for transport and trade. This leads us to the attitude of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad towards the Bedouins of Al Muhannā and Al Faḍl who lived in the eastern frontier regions of Syria and who were respected by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad because of his great love of horse; he paid large sums of money to obtain the best kind of horses.¹ Besides, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was very knowledgeable on every matter concerning horses.² Moreover, because al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was extremely fond of, mainly, Arab horses, he granted Syrian nomads such as Al Muhannā and Al Faḍl large pieces of land (iqṭā's),³ gave their women most valuable articles of gold and silver as well as expensive clothes of silk,⁴ all this to supply him with good horses.⁵

¹Sulūk, ii, 525-526, 530; Nujūm, ix, 167.

²Sulūk, ii, 526, 529; Nujūm, ix, 167-170.

³Sulūk, ii, 526-527; Nujūm, ix, 167.

⁴Sulūk, ii, 527-528, 529; Nujūm, ix, 168.

⁵For details, see Sulūk, ii, 525-530; Nujūm, ix, 167-170.

Thus in name and practice the loyalty of the Bedouins to the Mamlūk Sultanate would be fulfilled. But it is noteworthy that to win a victory over a Bedouin tribe did not mean that all the Bedouins on Egyptian land would be loyal to the Mamlūk regime for it appears that the contrary was more correct. It seems that the Bedouin revolt would be shortly followed by another revolt by another Bedouin group in a different province. It appears that the first revolt encouraged others to follow and make another attempt at an active movement for freedom of administration. Besides, it seems that being severely punished by the Mamlūk troops used not to be always considered as a good lesson by other Bedouin tribes and that is why there was a series of successive Bedouin revolts during the period under review. Therefore, what happened in 'Aydhāb in 719/1319 might be a good example for this analysis and thus, in order to have a reasonable look at the factual situation it is better to start with the condition of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad when he thought that a reasonable policy should be practised with the Bedouins in their active and successive movements against the law especially during the period under study. It seems, however, that circumstances helped al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to accomplish his plan when the Bedouins of 'Aydhāb rebelled against the administrator (shādd) there and killed him.¹ At once al-Nāṣir Muḥammad despatched some of his emirs, including Āqūsh al-Manṣūrī,² 'Alī b. Qarāsunqur,³ Āqūsh al-Itrīs,⁴ and others with an army to establish order in

¹ Sulūk, ii, 194. Cf. Hasan, *op.cit.*, 78-79. We find that the word Wālī is used for administrator.

² He is named as Āqūsh, see Durar, i, 400.

³ Supra, 125.

⁴ He is named as Āqūsh, see Durar, i, 399.

that province. Apparently the military mission succeeded in obtaining order and Aqūsh al-Manṣūrī, who was appointed the governor of Uswān province, settled in 'Aydhāb.¹

This tracing of political contact and military struggle might easily give one the impression that violence was the only aspect from which the Mamlūk-Bedouin relations might be described. Hence, although there is a lack of information about economic intercourse between the Mamlūks and the Bedouins one might say that there was a commercial connection between the two sides, especially in times of war. Probably the common specific cause made the Mamlūk government considerably concerned to obtain peace in the Bedouin regions in Upper and Lower Egypt, in the different Egyptian frontier-regions and in the fringes of the Mamlūk state such as the Nubia frontier, Barqa and 'Aydhāb was protection of trade routes, Ḥajj and safe transport. Thus the economic factor played an important part in the Mamlūk-Bedouin relations.

Besides, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad used to write to the Bedouins on the frontiers and the Bedouins of Upper Egypt asking them to come to Cairo with what camels they had for sale.² In order to be more precise it might be useful to take what happened in the year 725/1324, for instance, as a proof for the above statement; it was also when al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was engaged with military preparations for a campaign to the Yemen in 725/1324. Therefore he was careful to order the Bedouins in the provinces of al-Sharqiyya and al-Gharbiyya in Upper Egypt to come to Cairo to supply the campaign with camels.³

¹Sulūk, ii, 194.

²Supra, 233.

³Sulūk, ii, 260.

This example could be useful in giving us an idea about the trade co-operation between the Mamlūks and the Bedouins. At the same time, it might let us assume that the same had been happening during every war respecting the Mamlūk regime throughout the period under consideration.

It was not long before a new revolt broke out in Upper Egypt, highway robbery started and a forcible apprehension of goods began. In order to have a considerable discussion concerning the reasons which made the Bedouins take that action against the Mamlūk rule it is better to study the circumstances of the existing regime during the period under review. Firstly, the bad situation in al-Ḥijāz which emerged suddenly because of the disturbance and the understanding which was incident between the governors there. For example, the murder of the emir Aldamar (d. 730/1331)¹ and his son by the governor 'Uṭayfa b. Abī Numayy² and his troops in a fight happened because of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's personal demand that one of his enemy who was in al-Ḥijāz on pilgrimage should be killed.³ And also because of the continuous fighting among the members of the ʿAl Numayy family for power.⁴ Thus the situation in al-Ḥijāz was far from stable.⁵ Therefore it is natural to assume that the government would be busy and diverted to some degree from other affairs. That they were engaged with an internal political problem⁶ could

¹For his biography see, Durar, i, 407.

²For his biography see, Durar, ii, 455-456.

³For details see, Sulūk, ii, 323-325, 328; Durar, i, 407.

⁴Sulūk, ii, 329, 331; Durar, ii, 111-112, 455-456. See also Subḥ, iv, 273-274.

⁵For more details see, Tuḥfa, i, 87-94, 99-101, 145-148.

⁶Sulūk, ii, 329.

be regarded by rebellious Bedouins as giving an opportunity for an immediate movement against the Mamlūk regime. Secondly, having new governors in some provinces could be considered by the rebellious subjects of those parts as a helpful factor for the governors did not know the cunning methods of the Bedouins, nor did the Bedouins understand the system which would be practiced by the new governors. So it is probable that the condition was an assistant factor for risking revolt. Seemingly that was the situation with the new governors in some provinces in Upper Egypt.¹

Probably al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, realizing the danger of this Bedouin revolt in 731/1330, sent immediately for the governor of al-Sharqiyya, Zalzīyya,² bestowed a robe of honour upon him and dispatched him to take over Upper Egypt and to use force to make peace.³ Consequently the governor with strength and force began to fight and defeat the rebellious emirs and their followers and succeeded in establishing order over the whole region. Lastly, he became the only governor who was obeyed and followed.⁴

(iii) Conclusion

It seems that the Juhayna tribe which settled in Upper Egypt with other Bedouin tribes desired to take power in Upper Egypt,⁵ but on the other hand having semi-independence on a region of Egypt

¹ Ibid., ii, 331.

² Supra, 72.

³ Sulūk, ii, 335.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Bayān, 128-129.

means threats of division for the Mamlūk Sultanate in a period of strong power and a regime of solid foundation. Apparently the Bedouins both in the eastern and the western borders or in Upper Egypt did not want to pay taxes to the Mamlūk government and desired to be the rulers of the land they dwelt on, and the only demonstrators who had to deal with their affairs. Thus the specific causes for these continuous Bedouin revolts were of political and economic aspects; therefore no tax obligation would have been accomplished, and no ruling subjections confirmed in different ways. But it appears that the Bedouins in time and experience understood the impossibility of having that desire accomplished for they always had to fight and the fight often ended with a defeat and another period of subjection to the Mamlūk regime. Consequently there was a period of peace and friendship during the late years of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's reign.

In fact, the Bedouins were more loyal to the region and the land they lived on than to the government and that is why they always had a part to play during time of necessity for the sake of the land and the regions they resided in between its boundaries. On the other hand, it appears that the Mamlūks knew that the Bedouins had always desired to establish a semi-sultanate of their own, especially because of their being Arabs, and yet they thought that they had the right to be the governors of the country and not subjects under the rule of foreigners. Therefore, the Bedouins were badly treated by the Mamlūks, and al-Nāṣir Muḥammad strictly tried to put them under his order. Moreover, it seems that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad never regarded the situation of winning a victory over the Bedouins as a purpose of practising a strict system with them so that their life and social condition soon returned to normal and an

opportunity might appear for them to have a new attempt for semi-independence with freedom of internal rule. Subsequently, military and political troubles could be fitting circumstances of which the Bedouins should take advantage for auspicious movement.

There was a long series of fights between the Bedouins and the Mamlūks during the reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad for different achievements and contrary aims. Yet peace was settled, and friendly co-operation took place in the common relations of the Bedouins tribes and the Mamlūk administration during the last ten years of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's rule.

Seemingly, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad practised a policy of three aspects towards the nomads. Firstly, diplomacy to gain their loyalty and obedience. Secondly, friendship to promote their respect for the Mamlūk government at the time of good relations. Thirdly, force in difficult times when conflict became necessary for internal security and protection in regard to the Mamlūk Sultanate.

Chapter VI

THE TAXATION SYSTEM

(i) The Taxation Structure

In dealing with the reforms concerning the taxation system which were founded by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, it is significant to have first a clear picture of that system during the period under consideration. It seems that taxes during this period could be divided into two categories: firstly the kharāj, secondly the mukūs. Under the first category there were different kinds of taxes:

(i) Kharāj al-Ard, the tax which used to be levied on different products,¹ and the Sulṭān had the right to impose the kharāj soon after the Nile flood reached the level of 15 dhirā' when all cultivated land² was covered by water.³ Tax clerks (kuttāb al-kharāj) supervised the yearly assignment of the land covered by water to the cultivators. Once the crops had been planted, the bureau officials (mubāshirūn) came to find out the details respecting the land, the crops, the taxes in fixed amounts and the names of the cultivators. All this information used to be recorded in a paper called the qundāq.⁴ Thus the qundāq would contain the names of the cultivators, the quantity of the crops and the fixed amounts of taxes.⁵ The assessment (almukallafa) used to be submitted

¹ Nihāyat, viii, 245; Khiṭaṭ, i, part II, 184.

² For details about the cultivated land, see Nihāyat, viii, 247-253; Subh, iii, 450-452; Khiṭaṭ, i, part II, 179-183.

³ Subh, iii, 452; Khiṭaṭ, i, part II, 184.

⁴ Subh, iii, 458.

⁵ Ibid.

to the farmers, informing everyone of the exact amount of tax he ought to pay.¹ It seems that it was the custom for this kind of kharāj tax to be levied on cultivated land of various degrees of fertility. The other kind of land tax, māl al-kharāj or kharāj al-zirā'a, used to be collected in cash ('ayn) in fixed amounts per faddān, or in kind.² Regarding taxes on products of cultivation al-Qalqashandī mentions in his statement kharāj dues calculated in money,³ and the fixed amounts of taxes per faddān on some kinds of products.⁴ Moreover, it might be worth stating that it was possible in Egypt during the period under study for the tax in kind to be paid, not only for the crops on which the tax was actually levied, but also on another. Al-Qalqashandī includes in his data the rates of exchange (badal) between the mentioned products on which the kharāj was levied in kind.⁵ According to al-Qalqashandī the usual price of one irdabb of wheat was 15 dirhams and that of one irdabb of barley was 10 dirhams.⁶ The Mamlūk sources say that the tax on a faddān of wheat was $37\frac{1}{2}$ dirhams, and the tax on every faddān of barley was 25 dirhams. It appears that nothing was written on the subject of the rate of exchange of lentils, and there was nothing for sesame, rape or flax.⁷

¹ Ibid.

² Subh, iii, 452-453.

³ For more details about the prices of crops, see Subh, iii, 447-488.

⁴ Subh, iii, 452-453; see also Rabie, The financial system of Egypt, 75-76.

⁵ Subh, iii, 454-455; see also Rabie, op.cit., 76.

⁶ Subh, iii, 447; cf. Sulūk, ii, 253.

⁷ Subh, iii, 455.

(ii) Pasturage, a tax on pasture-land, was imposed, according to al-Maqrīzī, in a well organised manner; dīwān al-marā'ī used to send yearly a superintendent (mushidd or shādd) with several witnesses (shuhūd) and a clerk (kātib) to record the number of livestock, and the assessment varied from one place to another.¹ This way of collecting tax on pasturage used to occur yearly after the Nile flood had receded, and the pasture-land was fully used.² A tax on pasture-land could also be paid as a fixed tax (darība muqarrara) annually, according to the quantity of livestock only.³

(iii) Industry: The sugar presses varied, in quality and in quantity, from one place to another in Egypt, as well as from one province in Lower Egypt to another in Upper Egypt.⁴ There is a lack of evidence about the amount of tax collected from sugar presses. This tax was abolished in 715/1315 by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.⁵ In 733/1333 al-Nashū,⁶ the controller of privy funds (nāẓir al-khāṣṣ), checked the amount of sugar delivered by the sugar presses to the dār al-qand on behalf of the emirs. Although sugar manufactured by the emirs had been exempted from tax by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, al-Nashū reimposed the tax, and its subsequent yield reached, in one day, the amount of 6,000 dīnārs, which encouraged al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to abandon his previous policy of exemption.⁷ In 738/1337-8 al-Nashū

¹ Khiṭāṭ, i, part II, 191.

² Nihāyat, viii, 262; Khiṭāṭ, i, part II, 191.

³ Khiṭāṭ, i, part II, 191.

⁴ Nihāyat, viii, 264-265.

⁵ Sulūk, ii, 151; Nujūm, ix, 47.

⁶ Supra, 142.

⁷ Sulūk, ii, 360.

discovered that Awlād Fuḍayl in Malawī in Upper Egypt had manufactured about 14,000 qintār of sugar in one year, but paid tax only on 1,000 qintār. Al-Nashū declared all the sugar in question, plus an additional 8,000 qintār, confiscated on behalf of the Sulṭān.¹

(iv) Minerals: There were three important minerals which were exploited in Egypt during the period under study and which had been of great value to the public treasury (bayt al-māl). Firstly emeralds which were, according to al-Qalqashandī, actively mined until the latter time of the third reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad,² when this was neglected, probably because the expense of exploitation became too high a burden. This mineral source of revenue near Qūṣ had its own bureau officials (mubāshirūn) and commissioners ('umanā'), who supervised the exploitation of emeralds (zumurrud), and thereafter either sold them for the benefit of the royal privy purse (al-khazā'in al-sulṭāniyya), which had a Mamlūk emir for supervision and care,³ or kept the most precious pieces in the royal privy purse,⁴ for royal use.⁵ Consequently, it appears that emerald mines were considered as the personal property of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and an important source of revenue for the royal privy purse.

Secondly, alum (al-shabb): according to al-Maqrīzī the beds of alum in the desert of Upper Egypt were exploited,⁶ the alum

¹Ibid., ii, 431.

²Subh, iii, 286, 309, 459.

³Nihāyat, viii, 213-217.

⁴For details about khazā'in al-Jawhar, see Khiṭaṭ, i, part I, 261-266.

⁵Subh, iii, 459.

⁶Khiṭaṭ, i, part II, 194.

being transported to the banks of the Nile at Qūṣ, Ikhmīm, Asyūṭ and Bahnāsā, and to Alexandria during the Nile flood.¹ The dīwān used to pay 30 dirhams, and sometimes less, for a qinṭār laythī of alum,² while the selling price went up to 4 and even 6 dīnārs.³ Tujjār al-Rūm, that is merchants from Byzantium or the European Christian countries in general, used to buy alum in Alexandria at a price between 4 and 6 dīnārs per qinṭār jarwī.⁴ While in Cairo, felt makers and dyers used to buy 80 qinṭār jarwī annually at the price of 6¹/₂ dīnārs.⁵

Natron, which is a naturally occurring product is a compound of sodium carbonate and sodium bicarbonate. It was mined in al-Ṭarrāna in al-Buḥayra province and in al-Fāqūsiyya in al-Sharqiyya province.⁶ According to al-Qalqashandī, the cost of production was only 2 dirhams per qinṭār, while its selling price in Cairo and Alexandria was 70 dirhams.⁷ Al-'Umarī states that the natron exploited in the 100 faddān, Birkat al-Naṭrūn in al-Buḥayra province, yielded a revenue of about 100,000 dīnārs.⁸ Even if this figure is exaggerated, there is no doubt that natron provided al-Nāṣir Muḥammad with a considerable amount of money.⁹

¹ Subḥ, iii, 288; Khiṭaṭ, i, part II, 194.

² Subḥ, iii, 459; Khiṭaṭ, i, part II, 194.

³ Khiṭaṭ, i, part II, 194.

⁴ Ibid. I could not trace the exact measures of weight of either a qinṭār Laythī or a qinṭār jarwī; however, Qinṭār: 100 ritl, 99¹/₄ pounds avoirdupois, see W. Popper, Egypt and Syria under the Circassian Sultans, ii, 39.

⁵ Khiṭaṭ, i, part II, 194; cf. Subḥ, iii, 460.

⁶ Subḥ, iii, 287-288, 460; Khiṭaṭ, i, part II, 194.

⁷ Subḥ, iii, 460.

⁸ Ta'rīf, 175.

⁹ Rabie, op.cit., 86.

(v) Zakāt: Al-Qalqashandī says that merchants and others had to pay 5 dirhams on each 200 dirhams on entering the city, but were otherwise unhampered in the pursuit of their trade there, and not further taxed if they returned within the tax year, which was 10 months, with the same amount of goods. The number of tax-free visits was restricted to four and the Kārimī merchants had to pay a yearly zakāt in every city in which they traded in spices (Kārim or Buhār).¹

(vi) The Jawālī was the annual tax² which the dhimmīs used to pay. Subsequently al-Nāṣir Muḥammad appointed the nāzir who had to carry out that yearly collection with the assistance of some superintendents (shāddūn), workers ('ummāl) and witnesses (shuhūd). However, help given by two dhimmīs, collectors of the tribute (ḥāshir al-jizya), one a Christian and another a Jew, was of great necessity.³ The ḥāshir had to give a full list of names of people in his community to pave the way for complete collection. That used to be done in Cairo and Fustāṭ every year.⁴ Moreover it might be worth noting that, until the time of the Nāṣirī rawk, the jawālī was sent to dīwān al-Mufrad, but in making the rawk the jawālī became part of every province's kharāj,⁵ or one almost might say that it was changed into a local tax which was collected

¹ Subh, iii, 461; see also Khiṭāṭ, i, part II, 193-194. For details regarding the kārimī merchants, see an article by S.D.Goitein, "New Lights on the beginnings of the kārimī merchants", J.E.S.H.O., i, 175-184 (1958).

² In Egypt the term Jawālī was used as a synonym of jizya, see E.I., i, 105 (1st ed.): ii, 561 (2nd ed.).

³ Subh, iii, 462.

⁴ Nihāyat, viii, 242; Subh, iii, 462.

⁵ Sulūk, ii, 150, 169; Khiṭāṭ, i, part I, 160; Nujūm, ix, 43-44.

by the muqṭa'. Seemingly, the above change concerning the way of collecting the jawālī was made mainly for the benefit of the dhimmīs.¹ Consequently that change allowed by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad could be taken into account respecting his attitude towards his non-Muslim subjects. It might be also that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad wanted the jawālī to be part of the muqṭa's' duty for their personal advantage.

(vii) Wājib al-dhimma: During the period under consideration there was a tax imposed on the imports of dhimmīs called 'ushr'.² It was usually 10 per cent, decreasing to practically 5 per cent during the necessary time, or perhaps abolished, according to the welfare of the country.³ Moreover this tax was in the form of an internal toll in three ports, Alexandria, Damietta, Ikhmīm, and in the city of Miṣr (Fuṣṭāṭ).⁴ Furthermore, sometimes an amount of 35 dīnārs was taken as a tax on goods valued at 100 dīnārs, and was decreased to 20 dīnārs, in both cases it was called khums.⁵ In addition, if the dhimmī merchants left for their countries and returned to Egypt within the tax year (which was 10 months), with the same amount of goods, they were not taxed at all.⁶ Furthermore it might be worth noting that wājib al-dhimma was a part of the kharāj al-hilālī⁷ or the mukūs.⁸ This tax was paid by the dhimmīs.⁹

¹Rabie, The financial system of Egypt, III.

²Subḥ, iii, 463.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid; Khiṭāṭ, i, part II, 197.

⁵Subḥ, iii, 463-464; cf. Khiṭāṭ, i, part II, 194.

⁶Subḥ, iii, 463.

⁷Khiṭāṭ, i, part II, 184.

⁸For details about al-Sana al-hilāliyya, see Subḥ, xiii, 54.

⁹Subḥ, iii, 463; Khiṭāṭ, i, part II, 197.

(viii) The Mawārīth al-ḥashriyya: If someone died and there were no heirs, or even if there were heirs who were not entitled to the whole of the inheritance, the whole wealth in the first case, or its residue in the second, would go to bayt al-māl.¹ Al-Qalqashandī states that there was dīwān al-mawārīth which had to deal with affairs concerning the mawārīth. Nāzir dīwān al-mawārīth used to be appointed to his office by a royal order, with several assistants, superintendents and clerks to help him in fulfilling his duties.²

Dīwān al mawārīth used to register daily the names of those who had died during the day, until late afternoon; names of the dead after that time would be added to the register of the following day. Two copies of the registration would be made each day, one handed to the dīwān al-wizāra and the other to the controller of financial bureaux (nāzir al-dawāwīn).³

This routine was followed in Cairo and Miṣr (Fuṣṭāṭ). Concerning other Mamlūk provinces there were other directors (mubāshirūn) who had to collect the wealth of the dead who had no heirs, and to send that amount of money to the privy purse (dīwān al-Sultān),⁴ or (dīwān al-Khāṣṣ).⁵ It appears that the mawārīth al-ḥashriyya were frequently unfairly collected. For example, in 737/1336, the royal Mamlūks complained that the bestowal of their clothing (kiswa) was delayed. Consequently al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ordered al-Nashū, the nāzir al-Khāṣṣ, to grant their demand, together with 20,000 dīnārs.

¹Subh, iii, 464; Khiṭāṭ, i, part II, 197.

²Subh, iii, 464.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Supra, 142. For more details about dīwān al-khāṣṣ, see Kashf, 107-109; Subh, iii, 452: iv, 30; Sulūk, ii, 247, 340, Nujūm, ix, 76.

Al-Nashū, in order to fulfil al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's decree, commanded al-Ṭayyibī, the nāzir dīwān al-mawārīth, to collect the amount of 5,000 dīnārs from the estates of the deceased.¹ Hence the whole estate of Najm al-Dīn Muḥammad al-'Is'ardī² (d. 737/1337)³ was taken, although he had a wife, a son and a daughter who were his heirs.⁴ Thus one gets the impression that the law of dīwān al-mawārīth had been put into action illegally. Furthermore, al-Ṭayyibī instituted a complicated procedure to seize the property of deceased persons on behalf of dīwān al-mawārīth. In the case of a person of social position, his son, in order to inherit his wealth, had to prove that he was his legal heir, and had a right to a part of the legacy. Thereafter he had to obtain his share from the treasury of the dīwān al-mawārīth for which he had to wait so long that he finally received nothing.⁵ In 738/1337 al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, desiring to bring reform and to abolish the cause of corruption, prevented the chief judge from writing reports respecting the inheritance of an estate (maḥḍar bi-istiḥqāq mīrāth) without his permission. In conclusion, the condition worsened, and the heirs were deprived even of having the chance to prove their relationship.⁶

¹ Sulūk, ii, 413-414.

² Sulūk, ii, 414.

³ No biography is found.

⁴ Sulūk, ii, 414.

⁵ Ibid., 435-436.

⁶ Ibid.

(ix) Mukūs al-kārimīyya were dues to be collected from Muslim and dhimmī merchants from Islamic territories such as the Red Sea, Yemen and al-Ḥijāz, to be transferred by the Nile to Fustāṭ.¹ There were also other ports, Quṣayr, al-Ṭūr, Suez, where merchandise imported by Kārimī merchants used to be taxed as well.² The value of the tax on Kārimī merchandise was about 10 per cent, including a part of the goods.³

(ii) The reform of taxes

In 715/1315 al-Nāṣir Muḥammad cancelled about twenty-four taxes. Those taxes were important sources of revenue in Cairo and other Egyptian provinces.⁴ The maks of sāhil al-ghalla was a tax levied on corn brought to Cairo, where corn was taxed before it was sold. According to Ibn Taghrī Birdī, this tax caused injustice to the people, for many officials, sailors (nuwā tiyyat al-marākib), corn measurers (kayyālūn), superintendents (mushiddūn) and clerks (kuttāb), were involved in collecting that tax.⁵ Therefore it seems that everyone was extremely eager to benefit from it. The official tax per irdabb was 2 dirhams, and an additional $\frac{1}{2}$ dirham for the Sulṭān. The total was estimated at 4,600,000 dirhams a year, and was conferred in the form of iqṭā' on four hundred muqta's of Mamlūk emirs and ajnād al-halqa, the share of each ranging from approximately 3,000 to 10,000 dirhams for a soldier of ajnād al-halqa and 40,000 to 100,000 dirhams for a Mamlūk emir.⁶

¹ Subḥ, iii, 468.

² Ibid., iii, 469-470.

³ Ibid., iii, 470. For more information, see an article by W.J.Fischel, "The spice trade in Mamluk Egypt", J.E.S.H.O., i, 157-174 (1958).

⁴ Mālik, fol.80a.

⁵ Nujūm, ix, 45; see also Sulūk, ii, 150; cf. S.J.Shaw, The Financial and Administrative Organization and Development of Ottoman Egypt 1517-1740, pp. 19-50 (Princeton, New Jersey, 1962).

⁶ Sulūk, ii, 150; Khiṭaṭ, i, part I, 185; Nujūm, ix, 44-45.

Respecting the affairs and the achievements of maks sāhil al-ghalla, there was a dīwān in Būlāq where sixty men, either controllers (nuzzār), or clerks (kuttāb), or accountants (mustawfūn) had to fulfil the duties of that dīwān with about thirty soldiers for support and supervision. The corn of all the provinces had to be sold there.¹ Al-Maqrīzī states that the observers gained great profits through carrying out their work in dīwān sāhil al-ghalla; and goes on to say that the people suffered painfully from that situation, while Ibn Taghrī Birdī confirms al-Maqrīzī's statement by noting that big fines were imposed and unjust accusations brought frequently at the time of purchase.²

The Mamlūk sources state that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad abolished the tax of maks sāhil al-ghalla in 715/1315 to save the people from great trouble.³ Consequently the price of wheat decreased starting from the day of abolition.⁴ But it seems that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad re-introduced maks sāhil al-ghalla, for it was noted that in 724/1324 al-Nāṣir Muḥammad cancelled maks sāhil al-ghalla in Egypt and Syria.⁵

There was also the tax of half the brokerage (niṣf al-samsara) which was a tax collected from each broker (simsār or dallāl). It was 2 dirhams brokerage on each 100 dirhams, 2 per cent, one dirham for the Sulṭān and one for the simsār. Subsequently the simsār, in order to save his share, tried to have first his dirham and afterwards the dirham of the Sulṭān.⁶ Apparently al-Nāṣir Muḥammad

¹ Khiṭaṭ, i, part I, 158; Nujūm, ix, 45.

² Sulūk, ii, 150; see also Nujūm, ix, 45; Khiṭaṭ, i, part I, 158.

³ Durr, ix, 286; Mālik, fol. 80b; Thamīn, fol. 131a; Sulūk, ii, 150; Khiṭaṭ, i, part I, 158; Nujūm, ix, 45.

⁴ Nujūm, ix, 45.

⁵ Infra, 256-257.

⁶ Sulūk, ii, 151; Nujūm, ix, 45; cf. Tadhkirat, fol. 68a; Jawāhir, fol. 235b; Khiṭaṭ, i, part I, 158-195; Durar, ii, 177.

knowing that the simsārs were using dishonest methods to keep their shares, cancelled the tax of niṣf al-samsara in the year 715/1315.¹ Ibn Taghrī Birdī records that a great sum of money was obtained through that tax, and it became an important source of revenue for the salaries of ajnād al-ḥalqa.²

Rusūm al-wilāyāt or rusūm al-wulāt were collected on behalf of the (wulāt , commanders (muqaddamūn) and police (shurṭa), to be used for paying the soldiers (jund), salaries. It used to be collected as a fine imposed on every house of ill-fame in the cities and towns and on the immoral men in the markets.³ The Mamlūk sources record that for the sake of protecting the sanctity of the home from disgrace, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad abolished the tax of rusūm al-wilāyāt in 715/1315.⁴

Muqarrar al-sujūn was a tax of about one hundred dirhams which had to be paid by every prisoner at the moment of his arrest, even if he were to be released after a short time, as well as the fine that every prisoner had to pay.⁵ Al-Maqrīzī states that it was only six dirhams.⁶ Moreover, there was a tax farmer (dāmin)⁷ who was obliged to collect that money from the different prisons to be used for the payment of state officials.⁸ In 715/1315 al-Nāṣir Muḥammad abolished that tax.⁹

¹Durr, ix, 286; Mālik, fol. 80b; Thamīn, fol. 131a; Sulūk, ii, 151; Khiṭaṭ, i, part I, 158; Nujūm, ix, 45.

²Nujūm, ix, 46.

³Sulūk, ii, 151; Khiṭaṭ, i, part I, 159; Nujūm, ix, 46.

⁴Durr, ix, 286; Mālik, fol. 80b; Thamīn, fol. 131a; Sulūk, ii, 151; Khiṭaṭ, i, part I, 159; Nujūm, ix, 46.

⁵Nujūm, ix, 46.

⁶Sulūk, ii, 151.

⁷For dāmin and damin, see E. I., i, 1144. (2nd Ed.).

⁸Khiṭaṭ, i, part I, 159; Nujūm, ix, 46.

⁹Durr, ix, 286; Mālik, fol. 80b; Sulūk, ii, 151; Khiṭaṭ, i, part I, Nujūm, ix, 46.

Muqarrar al-ḥawā'is wa'l-biḥāl was a tax imposed in all the cities and provinces in Egypt. Every wālī and muqaddam had to give a certain amount of money every year to bayt al-māl; it was about five hundred dirhams for the cost of every mule (baḡhl).¹ According to Ibn Taghrī Birdī there were several muqta's who had to levy that tax and who were corrupted in that they took some of the collected money for their ownpurse, and some for the royal purse, besides the fixed amount which had to be carried to bayt al-māl,² Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad abolished that tax in 715/1315.³

Muqarrar tarḥ al-farārīj was a tax cancelled by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in 715/1315. Apparently the rulers made the rearing of chickens (al-farārīj) a kind of state monopoly. It seems that the muqta' had to supervise this compulsory co-operation. Subsequently poor people, widows and orphans suffered painfully from injustice; also, all chickens had to be brought from the tax farmer (qāmin) and the unauthorised sale of chickens was forbidden by law.⁴ Consequently one gets the impression that the abolition of this indirect tax was a great relief to these people.

Muqarrar al-fursān was a tax exclusively for the personal interests of the horse-soldiers (al-fursān), the (wulāt and commanders (muqaddamūn); it was, in fact, a kind of personal obligation which had to be fulfilled by the subjects by giving presents and gifts to officials of high rank.⁵ Great sums of money were levied, and the poor people were forced to pay three times as much

¹ Sulūk, ii, 151; Khiṭaṭ, i, part I, 159; Nujūm, ix, 46.

² Nujūm, ix, 46.

³ Mālik, fol. 81a; Sulūk, ii, 151; Khiṭaṭ, i, Part I, 159; Nujūm, ix, 46

⁴ Durr, ix, 286; Mālik, fol. 81a; Tadhkirat fol. 68a; Khiṭaṭ, i, Part I, 159; Nujūm, ix, 46-47.

⁵ Tadhkirat, fol. 68a; Sulūk, ii, 151; Khiṭaṭ, i, Part I, Nujūm, ix, 47.

as the fixed amount, 3 dirhams for one dirham.¹ This was an example of the iniquity which the people of that time had to face during the early years of the period under study. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad abrogated that tax in 715/1315.² In the same year, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad also repealed the tax on the sugar presses, which has already been mentioned.³

Concerning the wedding taxes (rusūm al-afrāḥ), no-one knows the date of its introduction, but it was collected all over the country by dāmins, and was abrogated by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in 715/1315.⁴

Taxes on ships (jibāyat al-marākib): every ship on the Nile was obliged to give a fixed amount of money, which varied from one ship to another, called muqarrar al-himāya.⁵ In reality that sum of money was paid by the passengers, the poor and the rich, regardless of their financial condition. This tax was abolished by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in 715/1315.⁶

Moreover, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad annulled many other taxes in the same year, 715/1315, such as, firstly dummān tujīb in Egypt which

¹ Sulūk, ii, 151; Khiṭaṭ, i, part I, 159; Nujūm, ix, 47.

² Durr, ix, 286; Mālik, fol. 81a; Sulūk, ii, 151; Khiṭaṭ, i, part I, 159; Nujūm, ix, 47.

³ Mālik, fol. 81a; Thamīn, fol. 131a; Sulūk, ii, 151; Khiṭaṭ, i, part I, 159; Nujūm, ix, 47.

⁴ Mālik, fol. 81a; Tadhkirat, fol. 68a; Thamīn, fol. 131a; Sulūk, ii, 151-152; Khiṭaṭ, i, part I, 159; Nujūm, ix, 47.

⁵ Sulūk, ii, 152; Khiṭaṭ, i, part I, 159-160; Nujūm, ix, 47. For the term himāya, see an article by Cl. Cahen in E.I., iii, 394 (2nd ed.).

⁶ Mālik, fol. 81a; Tadhkirat, fol. 68a; Sulūk, ii, 152; Khiṭaṭ, i, part I, 159-160; Nujūm, ix, 47.

referred to the taxes levied by dāmins from slaves ('abīd) and slave girls (jawārī) who were prostitutes.¹ Secondly, kashf marākib al-Nūba which was similar to the above tax.² Thirdly, shadd al-zu'amā', and huqūq al-sūdān which are, unfortunately, not explained in detail by the Mamlūk historians.³ Fourthly, huqūq al-qaynāt: this was a tax which used to be collected by muhtār al-tashtikhāna from the prostitute (baghāya).⁴ Sometimes we see that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad abolished a tax which had already been abolished by him a few years earlier; seemingly these taxes had been re-introduced either because the state was in need of money in a time of war, famine, or high prices, or because al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, for the sake of his popularity, re-introduced the abolished taxes in order to be able to abrogate them a second time.

Muqārrar al-mashā'iliyya was payable on permits for the cleaning of public baths, houses, schools and other buildings. The owner of the building was not allowed to remove rubbish from any building belonging to him without the presence of a tax farmer (qāmin) who used to give permission for collection and impose high taxes. Fortunately this tax was repealed by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in 715/1315.⁵ He also abolished in the same year a tax which was paid by the engineers (muhandisūn) and chiefs of police (wulāt al-aqālīm); it was called mutawaffir al-jarārīf.⁶

¹ Mālik, fol. 81a; Sulūk, ii, 152; Nujūm, ix, 48.

² Sulūk, ii, 152; Khiṭaṭ, i, part I, 160; Nujūm, ix, 48.

³ Sulūk, ii, 152; Nujūm, ix, 48.

⁴ Jawahir, fols. 235a-b; Sulūk, ii, 152; Khiṭaṭ, i, part I, 160; cf. Nujūm, ix, 48.

⁵ Durr, ix, 286; Sulūk, ii, 152; Khiṭaṭ, i, part I, 160; Nujūm, ix, 48.

⁶ Mālik, fols. 80b-81a; Sulūk, ii, 152; Nujūm, ix, 48.

Other taxes were abrogated by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in 715/1315 such as tax on the price of wollen cloaks (thaman al-'abā'a),¹ tax on travellers (zakāt al-raḥḥāla)² and tax on grooms (rikwat al-suwās).³

Moreover, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad also repealed in 715/1315 qawad al-khayl, 'idād al-nakhīl, muqarrar al-manāshīr, the payment for the dead or absent person.⁴ But there is no further detail respecting the abolition of the above taxes in the contemporary sources. Other taxes of less importance were abolished by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in 715/1315. For example, jināyat al-shāsha, shadd al-ḥukkām,⁵ tax on animal skins (qaṭā'i' al-'urbān), tax for protection on roads (damān al-ṭarīq), salt tax (damān al-milḥ), and tax for beekeepers (huqūq al-nahhālīn).⁶

It seems that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad exerted every conceivable effort in order to fulfil a long series of abolitions regarding local taxes either in cities like Fustāṭ and Cairo, or in districts and provinces in Lower Egypt and in Upper Egypt.

According to the Mamlūk historians one could understand that the people were extremely pleased and grateful when the royal decrees concerning the abolition of taxes were announced all over Egypt.⁷

Apparently this long series of tax abrogation was not confined to this period of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's rule, 715/1315. The Mamlūk

¹Nihāyat, xxx, fol. 91; Durr, ix, 286; Mālik, fol. 81a; Sulūk, ii, 152; Nujūm, ix, 48.

²Nihāyat, xxx, fol. 91; Mālik, fol. 81a; Tadhkirat, fol. 68a; cf. Sulūk, ii, 152.

³Nujūm, ix, 48.

⁴Durr, ix, 286; Mālik, fol. 81a; Thamīn, fols. 131a-b.

⁵I could not trace the meaning of these two taxes.

⁶Durr, ix, 286.

⁷Tadhkirat, fol. 68a; Sulūk, ii, 154; Nujūm, ix, 50.

historical sources confirm that further abolition of taxes had been accomplished by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad during later years. For instance, tax on wheat (maks al-gamḥ), which was repealed by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in 720/1320,¹ salt tax (maks al-milḥ), which was abrogated in 721/1321,² the abolition of which had a remarkable effect on the price of salt; the price of every irdabb of salt decreased to only 3 dirhams instead of 10 dirhams.³ Furthermore the people were allowed to bring salt, for their own use, from salt works (mallāḥāt) without any kind of obligation or distinction.⁴

Seemingly, depending on the above statement, one gets the impression that it was forbidden to bring salt from the mallāḥāt without certain regulations being put into operation. Therefore as soon as those regulations were cancelled the people set out to bring salt from the mallāḥāt.⁵ Again in 724/1324 we see that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad abolished maks sāhil al-ghalla⁶ which had already been cancelled in 715/1315.⁷ Apparently al-Nāṣir Muḥammad had reintroduced that tax during the years 715/1315-724/1324, either to provide money, or for the sake of the Copts who were considerably interested in keeping that tax for personal reasons.⁸ Here it

¹Tadhkirat, fol. 76b.

²Sulūk, ii, 203; Nujūm, ix, 62.

³Sulūk, ii, 203; Nujūm, ix, 62.

⁴Sulūk, ii, 203.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Tadhkirat, fol. 81a.

⁷Supra, 250.

⁸Nujūm, ix, 45.

might be worth noting that in the same year 724/1324, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad abolished maks sāhil al-ghalla in Syria, besides a large number of other taxes.¹ Moreover, other taxes in al-Ḥijāz were cancelled by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in the years 719/1319 and 722/1322 when he was there on a pilgrimage.²

Thus it was a comprehensive plan³ concerning the abolition of many taxes carried into effect by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to achieve, probably, many purposes. Firstly, to help his subjects by the repeal of those taxes which covered almost everything, and which they had to pay under any circumstances. Secondly, to protect the people from the maltreatment which they suffered at the hands of tax collectors; it was a practical aspect of injustice. Thirdly, to provide social freedom for the people respecting daily life and individual independence. Fourthly, it seems that there was also a certain political advantage for which al-Nāṣir Muḥammad accomplished this abolition of taxes; it was for the sake of his popularity in the eyes of his subjects.

Ibn Taghrī Birdī believes that the abolition of taxes is a bold act accomplished by a determined Sultān, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, for the welfare and good of both the people and the state.⁴ Probably by this tax reform al-Nāṣir Muḥammad succeeded in attaining popularity among his people. The question arises here, did al-Nāṣir Muḥammad fulfil that tax reform to gain popular support, or did he want, by means of that deed, to reward his subjects who had stood by him many times during political crises which he had

¹ Mukhtaṣar, iv, 92; Duwal, ii, 180.

² Husn, ii, 115.

³ Ibid., ii, 300.

⁴ Nujūm, ix, 49; see also Durr, ix, 286-287.

faced throughout his second reign,¹ and he was still enjoying that feeling of approval and support during the period under study?² Concerning this point, it seems that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad desired to achieve two aims. Firstly, to reward the people for the attention and help that they had given him. Secondly, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was eager, by that bold and determined act, to have popular support, and to cement his privileged position among the Egyptians. Hence that was the situation regarding the relationship between al-Nāṣir Muḥammad as a ruler of great power and his people who were in great need of his care and protection.

On the other hand, that extensive abolition of different taxes accomplished by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad for the purpose of reform caused a decrease in State revenue. The question arises here, what kind of substitutes was al-Nāṣir Muḥammad considering for this economic situation? It appears that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad had in mind many alternatives for other sources of revenue to fill that financial gap.

Firstly, the Nāṣirī rawk: it is imperative here to state that at the same time as al-Nāṣir Muḥammad began his scheme concerning the tax cancellation in 715/1315, the work regarding the Nāṣirī rawk had already been started and, in accomplishing that work great changes would occur, both in the amount of State revenue and in the assignment of cultivated land. The Nāṣirī rawk will be comprehensively studied under the next subtitle, but one might say that the making of the Nāṣirī rawk was of great significance for the tax reform.

¹For details, see Sulūk, ii, 66-67, 71; Nujūm, viii, 173.

²Sulūk, ii, 356.

Secondly, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad paid much attention to agriculture. It appears that he realized the importance of farming and the need for irrigation, and that is why he worked hard for the cultivation of land, to build bridges,¹ and dig channels (qanawāt).² For instance, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad paid great attention with regard to the agricultural land of al-Jīza through the cultivation of the land and irrigation, so he built a causeway (jīsr) and an arched bridge (qanṭara) in every part, levelled the land and supplied the field with regular and sufficient irrigation: this work took two months to accomplish.³ Large tracts of land were cultivated and planted to establish farms and fields for crops.⁴

Other neglected land in al-Sharqiyya province and in Fuwwa district was given as iqṭā's to the ajnād to be cultivated and planted according to the iqṭā' system in the Mamlūk Sultanate, and that land gradually became useful agrarian fields.⁵ Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ordered that a dam should be built in al-Sharqiyya to supply the cultivated land with enough water throughout the year.⁶ Consequently, the kharāj of al-Sharqiyya increased greatly.⁷

¹For details concerning building bridges, see Subḥ, iii, 448-450. Khiṭaṭ, i, part II, 179-180; Nujūm, ix, 190.

²Nujūm, ix, 190.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Nujūm, ix, 191.

⁶Ibid., ix, 191-192.

⁷Ibid., ix, 192.

Unlimited care was paid by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to cultivation in Jazīrat al-Fīl, and every part of Egypt was provided, according to his royal command, with a sufficient number of embankments (juṣūr) and canals (tura'), and no place was disregarded by him.¹ Moreover, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was eager to visit these different places regularly for supervision and attention. He was extremely anxious not to leave any place without reclamation and cultivation.²

According to Ibn Taghrī Birdī, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was deeply concerned about the reform in every estate, province, district, town, village and particularly with causeways (juṣūr), canals and dams.³ According to Ibn Taghrī Birdī al-Nāṣir Muḥammad never forgot that the money of bayt al-māl was, in the main, kept for help and reformation concerning the economic administration, social structure and building.⁴

In conclusion, the kharāj of Egypt was considerably increased during the period under study.⁵ Similar attention was given by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to the cities, the provinces and the villages of Syria.

Thirdly, the role which had been played by money in these varying circumstances.

The only evidence which could confirm that the value of money was of importance with respect to the increase of revenue, is in the writing of Ibn Taghrī Birdī when he states that in Muḥarram 724/ December 1323, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ordered that the people should

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Nujūm, ix, 192-193.

⁵ Ibid., ix, 192.

use fulūs (fels-money), in their exchange, in a kind of rotl (ratl) that every rotl of fulūs makes two dirhams, and at the same time he issued a royal order that fulūs must be minted and every fiḥs must equal about one dirham.¹ Accordingly 200,000 dirhams were minted and distributed among the people.²

Immediately afterwards, a royal ordinance was announced that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad wanted to be acquainted every day with the official paper regarding the income from his personal interests and property, and the extent of the daily expenditure, which he wanted to supervise.³

Depending on the above statement, one might say that there was a lack of confidence concerning the relationship between al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and his own civil servants (mubāshirūn), as well as his desire to be his own master concerning the financial administration. According to Ibn Taghrī Birdī, great amounts of money were obtained in consequence of the preceding orders commanded by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.⁴

On the other hand, the clerks of the dawāwīn were extremely distressed by the loss of money which they had suffered by handling the Sulṭān's affairs by unlawful methods.⁵

It seems that there were some indications of mismanagement and maladministration in the field of finance and taxation; al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, knowing about this corruption, tried as much as he could to reform the bad aspects and to exterminate the roots which

¹Ibid., ix, 77; see also Sulūk, ii, 253.

²Nujūm, ix, 77; cf. Sulūk, ii, 253; E. Ashtor, "Débat sur l'évolution economico-sociale de l'Égypte à la fin du moyen âge, à propos del' d'un livre récent", J.E.S.H.O., xii, 102-109 (1959).

³Sulūk, ii, 258; Nujūm, ix, 77-78.

⁴Nujūm, ix, 78.

⁵Ibid.

might cause any kind of incorrect behaviour in the different fields of administration.

Fourthly, it appears that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was not satisfied with what he had achieved by extensive abolition regarding taxes on people of different professions and of varied social categories, and he worked to remove the offices whose holders had collected those different taxes either lawfully or by force and injustice. To fulfil his intention, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad abolished the offices of the controller of the province (nazar-nāṣir), and the office of accountant of finances in the provinces ('istīfā'-mustawfī).¹

It is apparent, however, that a royal decree was issued by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad concerning the abolition of the offices of the province controller and the finance accountant in the provinces. Thereafter that ordinance was put into action in all the provinces and the districts of Egypt, except those in which the Sultān had personal interests.² Thus the people in Egypt became free from the daily injustice relating to tax collection which they had suffered at the hands of administrators (mubāshirūn), controllers (nuzzār),³ accountants (mustawfūn)⁴ and chiefs of police (wulāt).⁵

Thus, by fulfilling the four factors, the Nāṣirī rawk, the cultivation of land, the reform concerning the evaluation of money, and lastly the abolition of some important offices in the financial, administrative and taxation fields, it seems that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad would be able to make substitution for the decrease of State income

¹ Jawāhir, fol. 131b; Sulūk, ii, 153; Khiṭaṭ, i, part I, 160; Nujūm, ix, 48.

² Sulūk, ii, 153; Khiṭaṭ, i, part I, 160; Nujūm, ix, 48; infra.

³ For the office of province nazar for financial and tax affairs, see Nihāyat, viii, 299-300.

⁴ For the office of province mustawfī for collecting taxes, see Nihāyat, →

which might be the result of the tax repeal. Furthermore, it might be worth stating that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad achieved these imperative reforms after a considerable passage of time, about six years, of his third reign. In other words, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad began this essential series of reforms when he was assured that his political position and diplomatic power would not be affected by that fundamental change, and the new policy concerning the privy purse and the public treasure on one hand and the strong Mamlūk oligarchy in the economic administration on the other hand. Thus, being certain of a strong foundation from the political point of view, and confident of his strong will, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad continued with his reforms and changes in that field of activity with undaunted energy, as if he was sure that his great deeds would be crowned by success.

(iii) The Nāṣirī rawk.

The Nāṣirī rawk which was inaugurated by the royal orders in Sha'bān 715/November 1315 was the second rawk in the Mamlūk sultanate,¹ the Ḥusāmī rawk being the first.²

It seems that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad wanted to know the exact extent of Egyptian land. On the other hand, it appears that his main object was to strengthen his position by two means, firstly by weakening the powerful condition of the Mamlūk emirs by decreasing the extent of their iqṭā's; secondly, by cementing his power

viii, 301-303.

⁵For the office of district wālī who had to supervise the accomplishment of the taxation system, see Nihāyat, viii, 298.

¹Mālik, fol. 80b.

²For the Ḥusāmī rawk, see Zubdat, fols. 198b-199b; Sulūk, i, 841-846; Khitaṭ, i, part I, 157; Rabie, op.cit., 52-53.

by increasing the size of the Sulṭān's iqṭā' khāṣṣ. To accomplish the above plan, a new reassignment of the iqṭā's was necessary. Thus, according to the data contained in the writings of the Mamlūk historians, the Nāṣirī rawk became a step of great significance.¹ In the last ten days of Sha'bān 715/November 1315 al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ordered the rawk to be started.² The Mamlūk historical writings confirm that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was eager to decrease the profit of the iqṭā' land in money (khubz)³ of the Mamlūk emirs belonging to the previous powerful governors, Baybars al-Jāshnakīr and Sayf al-Dīn Salār.⁴ That is to say, the Nāṣirī rawk had a personal purpose greatly desired by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, probably to consolidate his own position politically and economically. The evaluation of khubz was between 800 and 1,000 mithqāl⁵ for every Mamlūk yearly.⁶ Al-Maqrīzī states that it was between one thousand dīnārs and eight hundred dīnārs for every Mamlūk annually.⁷

However, it seems that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad found this re-assignment unjust or unfit for his changing situation as the supreme power in the Mamlūk Sultanate during the period under consideration. Therefore al-Nāṣir Muḥammad thought to deprive those emirs of their khubz by force, but he postponed his intention for fear of dissension and civil strife.⁸

¹ Nujūm, ix, 42.

² Durr, ix, 285; Mālik, fol. 80b; Nahj, iii, 255; Sulūk, ii, 146; Khiṭaṭ, i, part I, 157; Nujūm, ix, 42; Husn, ii, 300.

³ For the term khubz, see Poliak, "Some Notes on the Feudal System of the Mamlūks", J.R.A.S. (1937), p.99, fn. 6.

⁴ Sulūk, ii, 146; Nujūm, ix, 42; cf. Rabie, op.cit., 53.

⁵ Mithqāl is 4.25 (4.2572) grams, 15 ounces, see W. Popper, loc.cit.

⁶ Sulūk, ii, 146; cf. Nujūm, ix, 42.

⁷ Khiṭaṭ, i, part I, 157.

⁸ Sulūk, ii, 146; Khiṭaṭ, i, part I, 157; Nujūm, ix, 42.

Consequently al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, according to the advice of Fakhr al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Faḍl Allāh, head of the army department (nāzir al-jaysh), issued his royal command concerning the rawk of the Egyptian land.¹ In order to fulfil the royal ordinance many emirs were sent to different provinces and districts to start this work; for instance the emir Badr al-Dīn Jankalī b. al-Bābā (d. 746-1345)² who was sent to al-Gharbiyya, with Aqūl al-Ḥāḥib and the scribe Makīn al-Dīn Ibrāhīm b. Qarwina.³ Another deputation was despatched to al-Sharqiyya, the emir Aydamur al-Khatīrī (d. 738/1337),⁴ Aytamush al-Muḥammadī (d. 733/1332)⁵ and the clerk Amīn al-Dīn Qarmūṭ.⁶ To al-Manufiyya, in Lower Egypt, and to al-Buḥayra, the emir Balbān al-Ṣarkhadī (d. 730/1329),⁷ Ṭurnṭāy al-Qulunjiqī, Muḥammad b. Ṭurnṭāy and Baybars al-Jamdār.⁸ Another delegation was sent to Upper Egypt.⁹

In order to keep in touch with these emirs, and to have personal supervision, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad himself went to Upper Egypt and spent two months there.¹⁰ Immediately these emirs, clerks and land

¹Sulūk, ii, 146; Khiṭaṭ, i, part I, 157; Nujūm, ix, 42.

²Supra, 84, 156.

³Sulūk, ii, 146; Khiṭaṭ, i, part I, 157; Nujūm, ix, 42.

⁴For his biography, see Durar, i, 429.

⁵Supra, 106.

⁶Sulūk, ii, 147; Khiṭaṭ, i, part I, 158; Nujūm, ix, 42.

⁷For his biography, see Durar, i, 494.

⁸Sulūk, ii, 147; Khiṭaṭ, i, part I, 158; Nujūm, ix, 42.

⁹Sulūk, ii, 147; Khiṭaṭ, i, part I, 158; Nujūm, ix, 43.

¹⁰Mālik, fol. 80b; Sulūk, ii, 49; Khiṭaṭ, i, part I, 158; Nujūm, ix, 43.

surveyors began their work in all the Egyptian provinces and districts.¹ Every group started by immediate meetings with the grand shaikh (shaykh) of the province, the guides (dalīls),² the brokers, the surveyors and the judges, to study the records of every province. Subsequently they had to know the extent of the province or the district in faddān, its yield, its 'ibra; "a term used in Mamlūk Egypt to signify the weight of the dirhams collectively," after making divisions of them, and the share of every one of the troopers (ajnad) in money, in crops, and in livestock.³ They also had to survey the area and many copies were written.⁴ Similar surveys were carried out in every part of Egypt, so that it was easy at the end to differentiate between the khāṣṣ of the Sulṭān, the iqṭā's of the emirs and of the troopers.⁵ Lastly, Fakhr al-Dīn Muḥammad, Controller of the Army, being supplied with all the lists concerning almost everything of that local survey and field work, had a meeting with As'ad b. Amīn al-Mulk Taqī al-Dīn (d. 716/1316)⁶ the Controller of financial bureaus (nāzir al-dawla) to assign certain areas of the important provinces and cultivated land to the Sulṭān.⁷ When the making of the rawk, being completed;⁸ "cadastral survey of

¹Sulūk, ii, 149; Khiṭaṭ, i, part I, 158; Nujūm, ix, 43.

²The function of dalīl in Mamlūk Egypt is to give the names of the farmers of the cultivated land, which would be measured, see Sulūk, ii, 149, fn.3.

³Sulūk, ii, 149; Khiṭaṭ, i, part I, 158; Nujūm, ix, 43.

⁴Zettersteen, 64; Nahj, iii, 255; Mālik, fol. 80b; Sulūk, ii, 149; Nujūm, ix, 43.

⁵Khiṭaṭ, i, part I, 158; Nujūm, ix, 43.

⁶For his biography, see Durar, i, 359.

⁷Durr, ix, 286; Sulūk, ii, 149-150; Khiṭaṭ, part I, 158; Nujūm, ix, 43.

⁸In 711/1311 the first Syrian rawk had been accomplished by order of al-Nāzir Muḥammad, see Jawāhir, fol. 226b.

the Egyptian land and the redistribution of land between the khāṣṣ and the emirs iqṭā's; al-Nāṣir Muḥammad began to put into action the final step concerning the completion of the rawk.¹ Consequently the 'ibra of Upper Egypt was 6,223,455 dīnārs jayshī,² and the 'ibra of Lower Egypt was about 3,355,808 dīnārs jayshī.³

Figures found in the Kitāb al-tuḥfa al-saniyya by Ibn al-Jī'ān indicate that the data provided by the Nāṣirī rawk were copied, without modification, from its registers, until the end of the fifteenth century or even later.⁴

In Dhū 'l-Hijja 715/April 1316 al-Nāṣir Muḥammad held court to distribute the authorisations of assignment (mithālāt) to the emirs, the officers of the ḥalqa and the ajnād respectively.⁵ The Mamlūk assignment, denoted as iqṭā', khubz, or mithāl, was a source of revenue temporarily conceded by the state to a horse-soldier or emir and bringing an average yearly income corresponding to his military grade.⁶

Having everything ready, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad accomplished the distribution of iqṭā's according to a strict organized method that every two emirs of the first grade (muḡaddamī al-ḥalqa) had a day to receive with the troops, under their supervision, their mithālāt.⁷ On that day al-Nāṣir Muḥammad used to call every

¹In 713/1313 al-Nāṣir Muḥammad issued his second royal decree concerning the rawk of the Syrian land (al-rawk al-Shāmī) which had been completed within a few months. For details, see Sulūk, ii, 127. Subsequently there was a rawk in Aleppo in 725/1325. For details see Sulūk, ii, 264.

²Saniyya, 3.

³Ibid., 4.

⁴Rabie, op.cit., 55.

⁵Durr, ix, 286; Nahj, iii, 255; Mālik, fol. 80b; Sulūk, ii, 154; Nujūm, ix, 51.

⁶Poliak, Feudalism in Egypt, Syria, Palestine and the Lebanon 1250-1900, 18.

⁷Sulūk, ii, 154; Khitāt, i, part II, 161; Nujūm, ix, 51.

muqṭa' by his name to ask him about his origin, his social position, his experience and even about the small things concerning the status of the muqṭa' in the state.¹ According to Ibn Taghrī Birdī the distribution of the mithālāt was of great importance in throwing light on the personality of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad that he was knowingly aware of military affairs of the Mamlūk army, and cognisant of the social condition of his subjects.² Besides al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was keen to forbid the recommendation of a muqṭa' by any emir. He wanted to prevent patronage by any but the Sulṭān and he was extremely careful to warn the emirs not to turn the mithālāt handed to them.³ That careful personal investigation was also followed by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad with his royal Mamlūks and troops ('asākīr) to ascertain the name of the Mamlūk, his origin, his former owner, the date of his arrival in Egypt, his participation in battles, his age and the length of time which the Mamlūk had been at tibāq.⁴ If the Mamlūk were honest, he would be justly rewarded,⁵ Furthermore, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad allowed the old Mamlūks or troopers to choose between khubz or a yearly pension, about 3,000 dirhams, except the disabled troopers who were obliged to accept the yearly pension without choice.⁶

¹Sulūk, ii, 154; Khiṭaṭ, i, part I, 154; Nujūm, ix, 51.

²Nujūm, ix, 51; see also Sulūk, ii, 154.

³Mālik, fol. 80b; Nujūm, ix, 54.

⁴Sulūk, ii, 155; Khiṭaṭ, i, part II, 161; Nujūm, ix, 52. (The term tibāq, pl. ṭabāqa, is a military camp in the Citadel of Cairo where the young Mamlūks used to be trained and taught), see Sulūk, ii, 156, fn.2.

⁵Sulūk ii, 155; Nujūm, ix, 52.

⁶Sulūk, ii, 156; Khiṭaṭ, i, part II, 161; Nujūm, ix, 52.

Thus, at the end of the distribution in Muḥarram 716/March 1316, which lasted about a month, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad succeeded in saving 200 iqṭā's.¹ Concerning the large iqṭā's of the troopers belonging to Baybars al-Jāshnakir, Sayf al-Dīn Salār and other emirs who had acted against al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, these iqṭā's were cancelled and added to the Sulṭān's privy purse (al-khāṣṣ).²

Subsequently every emir was clearly informed that if he returned his mithāl or complained about it he would be beaten, imprisoned and deprived of his khubz. In addition, all the Mamlūk emirs were forbidden to speak with the Sulṭān about any matter concerning the condition of any trooper or Mamlūk and related at the same time to the rawk.³ Consequently, ten qīrāts⁴ of Egyptian land, which was divided into twenty-four qīrāts, became iqṭā' khāṣṣ for al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, while the rest, fourteen qīrāts, were re-assigned as iqṭā's to the Mamlūk emirs and the troopers (ajṅād).⁵ The parts belonging to the Mamlūks of Baybars al-Jāshnakir, the Burjiyya, such as Jīza province, al-Kawm al-Aḥmar, Manfalūt, al-Marj and al-Khuṣūṣ, became part of the khāṣṣ.⁶

Apparently neither the emirs nor the ajṅād were pleased with the distribution of the iqṭā's and they earnestly desired to speak to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad about this matter but they were afraid of his anger and vividly remembered the trouble they would face if they dared

¹ Mālik, fol. 80b; Khiṭaṭ, i, part II, 161; Nujūm, ix, 53.

² Sulūk, ii, 156; Khiṭaṭ, i, part II, 161; Nujūm, ix, 53.

³ Sulūk, ii, 156; Khiṭaṭ, i, part I, 160; Nujūm, ix, 54.

⁴ Qīrāt is $\frac{1}{24}$ of any unit, see W. Popper, op.cit., 36.

⁵ Khiṭaṭ, i, part I, 160.

⁶ Sulūk, ii, 153, 156; Khiṭaṭ, i, part I, 160: part II, 162.

to pronounce one word.¹ Hence one might say that the cadastral survey and the resulting distribution of assignments which were made in about five months, showed significant changes and proved that the primary aim of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in accomplishing this bold and determined act, the rawk, was to consolidate his own position in the state; besides the revenue of the Mamlūk Sultanate was reorganized to the advantage of the Sulṭān. Moreover, the gift (al-hadiyya) imposed on the inhabitants of every province and district for the welfare of the muqṭa' and the jawālī tax were included in the yield of each iqṭā'.² Furthermore, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad granted portions of different villages instead of a whole village, and small portions of several scattered villages instead of a great portion of a single village; all this had been done for the purpose of weakening the power of the Mamlūk emirs and increasing their expenses.³ In addition, the diyāfa imposed on the farmers (fallāhūn) was calculated in the 'ibra for each iqṭā'.⁴

It seems that a number of the provinces which became a part of the khāṣṣ did not become subject to the cadastral survey of the Nāṣirī rawk, such as al-Jīza,⁵ al-Kawm al-Aḥmar⁶ and al-khuṣūṣ,⁷ all in Upper Egypt. The only reason for this, probably, was that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad wanted to put those powerful parts under his command and for his own purse, to strengthen his political position

¹Sulūk, ii, 156-157; Khiṭāṭ, i, part II, 162-163; Nujūm, ix, 54-55.

²Khiṭāṭ, i, part I, 160: part II, 161.

³Khiṭāṭ, i, part I, 160.

⁴Sulūk, ii, 150.

⁵Saniyya, 138.

⁶Ibid., 141.

⁷Ibid., 185.

in upper Egypt, fearing that the Mamlūk emirs might use this large part for aggressive revolt against al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.

(iv) Conclusion

Through the preceding study concerning the tax reform and the new cadastral survey of the Egyptian land, the impression is that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's third reign was a brilliant period in Mamlūk history. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad initiated the first half of the fourteenth century's prosperity by reorganizing the state finances. The Egyptians generally enjoyed economic security. The tax reform and the reorganization of State finance served to concentrate control of the Mamlūk emirs and the tax revenues in the hands of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.

The taxation system was organized by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to be closely tied to political considerations. In reality the policy which had been practised in making the Nāṣirī rawk was of active military responsibilities respecting especially the ajnad. In both a military and social sense the tax reform and the Nāṣirī rawk was against the greed of the officials, and at the same time to rebuild the disorganized economic structure. The fundamental reasons for those agricultural, economic and administrative functions were to augment the financial resources of the Sulṭān, to strengthen his political position at the expense of the emirs, and lastly to attain popular support for him. Probably the tax reform by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was a bold effort for the welfare of the population. His efforts as a determined Sulṭān continued to minimise the political and economic positions of the emirs and officials to be less effective and to be more tied to the central government by direct regulations, by effective control of their iqṭā's, and to put them under strict

lawful supervision, all for the greater advantage of the Sulṭān.

Seemingly the people became no longer under the yoke of abuses and forced taxes. Besides the changed circumstances gave the people the opportunity of direct appeal to justice for protection and for a lower cost of purchases. In addition, it became impossible for the Mamlūk emirs to acquire personal control over the general economy of any village or to put the people at the mercy of their demands and their greed. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's fiscal policy could be regarded as the turning point in ending that series of monopolies accomplished by the Mamlūk emirs at the expense of the people and in reinforcing the dominant position of the Sulṭān.

Thus the reorganized structure of taxation served to better the local status of the people and to validate that situation in finding a socially and financially suitable aspect of freedom. Probably there were many other factors which helped al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to put his fiscal plan into action and related, at the same time, to the entire condition of the Sultanate, the political stability, the well organized society, the active and flourishing economy, the immense revenue of the State, the controlled bureaucracy, the fabulous standard of living and lastly, the loyalty to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's power. Besides, it might be worth noting that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad enjoyed political advantage through that long series of tax abrogations. Seemingly, it was for the sake of his popularity that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad carried out this abolition of taxes. Probably it is worth noting that the deeds accomplished by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in 715/1315 concerning the taxes which used to be levied from different sources, even immoral ones, have social significance in throwing some light upon the personality of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and his attitude towards Islam as a faith and law for co-operative and respectable life.

Chapter VII

FAMINES AND EPIDEMICS

(i) Famines and epidemics before al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's third reign

In discussing the role of famine in Egypt between 709/1309 and 740/1341 it is imperative to study the diseases which occurred there in various degrees of intensity during the period under consideration, for it is difficult to study one of these connected aspects without throwing some light on the other. On the other hand, although the third reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad did not suffer exhaustively from these two phenomena, the period was of the greatest importance because of the care taken for the sake of the country in dealing with these factors. But it is important to follow the historical steps concerning events in these matters before giving any kind of judgment. Moreover, it might be important to understand the status of the Mamlūk historians in discussing these aspects of life. For example, the famine which happened between 694/1294 and 696/1296 had a deep effect on the stability of the Mamlūk Sultanate as the price of every irdabb of wheat went up to one hundred and twenty dirhams while the normal price was twenty five dirhams.¹ The price continued to increase until "one irdabb of wheat became one hundred and sixty dirhams".² Obviously the price of an irdabb of wheat increased six-fold.

¹ Turkiyya, fol. 20b; Mulūk, viii, 199; Jawāhir, fol. 209b; Sulūk, i, 813; Ighāthāt, 33; Nujūm, viii, 57.

² Nujūm, viii, 57; cf. Sulūk, i, 813; Ashtor, Histoire des prix et des salaires dans l'orient médiéval, 295.

Date	Product	Normal price	Temporary increased price
694/1294	wheat	25 dirhams ¹	150 dirhams ²
	barley	about 15 " 3	100 " 4
	beans	about 10 " 5	110 " 6
695/1295	wheat	-	190 " 7
	barley	-	120 " 8
	beans	-	120 " 9

Immediately after this increase in prices which still continued,¹⁰ disease spread all over Egypt in a frightful way so the number of dead became thousands per month. This disaster, which happened in Egypt during the Sultanate of Kitbughā (694-696/1294-1296), could be considered one of the most influential events concerning the annual overflowing of the Nile,¹¹ disease, which occurred through lack of food, the rise in prices and the greed of

¹ Nujūm, viii, 57; cf. Ashtor, op.cit., 293.

² Jawāhir, fol. 59b; Turkiyya, fol. 20b; Sulūk, i, 810; cf. Mulūk, viii, 199; Ighāthāt, 33.

³ Cf. Sulūk, ii, 813-814; Ashtor, op.cit., 301.

⁴ Jawāhir, fol. 59b; Turkiyya, fol. 20b; cf. Sulūk, i, 813; Ighāthāt, 33.

⁵ Cf. Sulūk, i, 813; Ighāthāt, 33; Ashtor, loc.cit.

⁶ Ighāthāt, 33.

⁷ Ighāthāt, 33; cf. Jawāhir, fol. 59b.

⁸ Jawāhir, fol. 59b; Ighāthāt, 33; cf. Sulūk, i, 813.

⁹ Jawāhir, fol. 59b; Mulūk, viii, 208; cf. Sulūk, i, 813; Ighāthāt, 34.

¹⁰ Mulūk, viii, 208; Ighāthāt, 33; Nujūm, viii, 57.

¹¹ For more details, see Turkiyya, fol. 20b; Mulūk, viii, 199-212; Jawāhir, fols. 209a-b; Sulūk, i, 814-815; Ighāthāt, 31-38; Nujūm, viii, 57.

the merchants.¹

Lastly, Kitbughā ordered that all the poor people should be divided among the rich emirs to be cared for and supported. Accordingly, some of the emirs had to feed one hundred poor people, others had to take care of fifty, feeding them either with meat or cakes according to the social position of every emir in the Mamlūk regime.²

The question which might be worth answering here is in regard to the stand of the Mamlūk historians towards this event. It seems that the Mamlūk historians mostly agreed that the decrease in the annual inundation of the Nile was the cause of this extensive famine.³

Later, in the year 700/1300, an indirect and limited famine occurred; this was during the second reign of al-Nāsir Muḥammad when the cattle in all parts of Egypt were wiped out by epizoötic (wabā'). This had a deep effect on the economic life in the Mamlūk kingdom in that the price of money became very high and the prices of food went up.⁴ But, unfortunately, Ibn Abī al-Faḍā'il does not give details respecting the effect of this limited famine upon the society.

A few years later, in 706/1306, Ibn Iyās mentions another rise in prices when he states that there were decreases in crops with a high level of prices and that the people became worried, especially

¹Ighāthah, 33, 36.

²Ibid., 34.

³Turkiyya, fol. 20b; Mulūk, viii, 199, 209; Jawāhir, fol. 209a; Sulūk, i, 817.

⁴Nahj, iii, 30.

when the price of a flat loaf of bread (raghīf) became one silver dirham. But luckily, after a short time, the situation returned to normal.¹ This statement gives us an understanding of the importance to the people of finding food in the markets at normal prices; any change, however small, could cause great worry to the people and could deeply affect the exchange of goods in the markets. Besides, it seems that the political trouble which emerged as an obvious result of the conflict which continued between Baybars al-Jāshnakīr and Sayf al-Dīn Salār could be considered as a helpful factor in the fluid situation of 706/1306.²

(ii) Historical analysis of trouble periods

However, it seems that the internal affairs concerning this subject during the period between 706/1306 and 709/1309, when Baybars al-Manṣūrī states that the flood of the Nile was late and a few days later the level of the water decreased. Immediately after the price of wheat went high and the people became worried about this.³ Concerning this matter of rise in prices, some historians believe that the reason for the rise is to be found in the unstable movement respecting the flood of the Nile, as well as the drought which the people had to suffer that year, 709/1309.⁴ Consequently, the Mamlūk emirs, realizing the importance of high costs, refused to sell the crops which were already reserved in their granaries.

¹ Ibn Iyās, Badā'i' al-zuhūr, i, 147.

² Sulūk, ii, 22-26.

³ Zubdat, fol. 266a.

⁴ Ibid., fols. 266a-b; Nuzhat, fol. 41a; Sulūk, ii, 55; Nujūm, ix, 10; Mawrid, 56.

However, Aydamur al-Khaṭīrī (d. 738/1337),¹ the steward (ustādār), ordered his directors to keep a sufficient amount of the crops in his storehouse for only a year and to sell the rest to the people at a suitable price.² It could probably be understood from this that the Mamlūk emirs used to store great amounts of crops in their granaries until a time of drought or high level of prices, either to have a supply for themselves in critical times or to sell at an expensive price.³

In other words, the natural circumstances of Egypt materialistically served the greed of the Mamlūk emirs in two different ways. However, the prices increased regularly so that the price of one irdabb of wheat became fifty dirhams, and that of an irdabb of barley or of beans twenty dirhams.⁴ The normal price of one irdabb of wheat at that time was fifteen dirhams and of one irdabb of barley ten dirhams.⁵ Probably the price of one irdabb of beans was about five dirhams. Apparently the lack of food in markets and shops and the high cost caused disease which diffused among the people in Cairo and in all the provinces of Egypt.⁶ Many people died, especially because of the plague, notably the Mamlūks of the emirs.⁷

¹Supra, 265.

²Nuzhat, fol. 41a; Sulūk, ii, 55.

³Cf. Lapidus, Muslim cities in the later middle ages, 51-52.

⁴Sulūk, ii, 55.

⁵Subh, iii, 447.

⁶Zubdat, fol. 268b; Nuzhat, fols. 43b-44a; Sulūk, ii, 55.

⁷Zubdat, fol. 268b; Ashtor, op.cit., 272; Ayalon, "The plague and its effects upon the Mamlūk army," JRAS, 1946, 68.

Dr. Ayalon believes that the losses caused by epidemics were sustained largely by the Mamlūks of the ruling Sulṭān;¹ therefore, if we know that the Mamlūk state did not experience great epidemics during the third reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad we can understand that this was an important factor in enabling the Mamlūk state to attain considerable power in the period under study.

The author of Nuzhat al-Insān notes that in Jumādā. I, 709/ October 1309 the names of about sixty dead were usually registered every day at dīwān al-Mawārīth, besides the number of people who were found dead in the Bīmāristān, in different parts of Cairo, in the desert and, lastly, in the countryside of Lower Egypt.² It could be accepted that lack of water, both in the Nile and in the ground, caused the lack of crops and the high level of prices. Subsequently, hunger and famine spread in every part of Egypt and was the direct cause of the plague.

Although there is a lack of information concerning the change which may have occurred in the economic and political situation in Egypt during the period under study, one might say that the political building and the economic structure were affected by the social condition. Furthermore, the economic and political life affected the temporary status of the Egyptian society during the period under review. In order to express our views precisely, we should take a brief look at the political position of the Mamlūk regime at that time. It appears that the Mamlūk regime was going through a hard spell in its history; it was the time when al-Nāṣir Muḥammad

¹Ayalon , op.cit., 71.

²Nuzhat, fols. 43b-44a.

was very much engaged in preparing for his return to Cairo as Sulṭān for the third time, and his own master, while Baybars al-Jāshnakīr (d. 709/1309)¹ was fighting for his life, in the first instance, and his royal power.² This situation was deeply affected by the critical and social position of the famine and the plague. The people connected the two factors and felt that the short and fruitless reign of Baybars al-Jāshnakīr was the reason for the decrease in the inundation of the Nile in that year, 709/1309.³

On the other hand, it appears that the crucial state of Egypt during the time of the famine and disease affected the stability of the political construction so that it became easy for al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to overcome the difficulties which would stand in his way to the throne, while it was hard for Baybars al-Jāshnakīr to face the political problem, the advance of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad from Syria to Cairo, the economic trouble, the famine and the plague and the social act against him at the same time.

Furthermore, it seems that the maladministration in the offices of the state made the situation of the society worse, and greatly affected the political, economic and social affairs of the state, for example, the office of vicegovernor (niyābat al-Salṭana).⁴

¹ Supra, 14.

² Sulūk, ii, 52.

³ Nuzhat, fol. 41a; Sulūk, ii, 55; Mawrid, 56.

⁴ Sulūk, ii, 61, 71.

Probably the third factor which might have adversely affected the unstable position of the society from different points of view was the fear of a new Mongol invasion against the Mamlūk Sultanate.

Lastly, one might state that, besides the natural factor - the annual flood of the Nile which could sometimes have a deep effect upon the stability of economic life - there were also other factors which could be ancillary reasons, if not direct causes, for any change that might have occurred in the Mamlūk regime.

(iii) The drought and the extra flood

Perhaps it is noteworthy that kasr al-khalīj which is mentioned in most writings of the Mamlūk historians as the festival which was celebrated when the Nile was at a moderate (mu'tadil) level and not during the difficult time, for example the year 709/1309.¹ The question arises here, what was the function of kasr al-khalīj? And the answer would be that kasr al-khalīj was connected with the Nilometer (Maqyās al-Nīl).²

The Nilometer was a marble column of eight pieces positioned to facilitate the gathering of the waters of the Nile at the time of flood. The Nilometer was divided into twenty two parts, each part called dhirā'; it seems that, in the lower part, or the first twelve dhirā', every dhirā' was divided into twenty eight pieces, each piece called iṣba', while in the higher part, ten dhirā', each dhirā' was divided into twenty four parts, each part called iṣba'.³

¹ Zubdat, fol. 266b; Nuzhat, fol. 41a; Sulūk, ii, 55.

² For more details about Miqyās al-Nīl, see Khiṭaṭ, i, part I, 102-109; Husn, ii, 220.

³ Khiṭaṭ, i, part I, 105.

It seems that, when the level of the annual flood of the Nile reached sixteen dhirā', kasr al-khalīj¹ was carried out, as an official celebration of the flooding of the Nile.² During different period Egypt built several Nilometers but the only one which the Mamlūks kept in use was the Nilometer of al-Rawḍa.³ It seems that the level of the Nile used to rise during the month of June and continue to rise throughout July and August until reached its level of "seventy dhirā'" at the beginning of September, when the waters began to decrease.

The day of the accomplished flood became to be regarded as an important occasion which all the people were accustomed to celebrate,⁴ and the height of the water level used to be announced to the people every day in the streets of Cairo.⁵ This data proves that it was essential for the people to know the annual flood level of the Nile during the time that it normally occurred, since, if the flood came late or was less than the usual level, it meant great worry and fear of drought, high level of prices and, lastly, famine, which might bring disease and a period of trouble.

Seemingly, not only drought could cause a period of trouble and anxiety,⁶ but also an increase in the flood level of the Nile could be a cause of great damage since the overflow might destroy surrounding buildings and nearby towns so that it would be difficult

¹Khiṭaṭ, i, part I, 104.

²Ibid.

³Khiṭaṭ, i, part I, 102-105.

⁴Subḥ, iv, 47-48; Khiṭaṭ, i, part I, 104-105.

⁵For more details, see Subḥ, iii, 297.

⁶There was such dreadful famine along the eastern borders of Syria in 718/1318 that the people ate corpses. See Mir'āt, iv, 257; Duwal, ii, 174.

to save the inhabitants, as happened in the year 717/1317.¹

It is likely that this happened a few years later when the level of the Nile greatly increased in Sha'bān and Ramaḍān of 724/ July-August 1324.² Ibn Kathīr notes that there had not been such an increase in the level of the Nile for a hundred years, and that it was very useful for the land.³

Consequently, the preceding historical review helps one towards the impression that drought and the unstable political situation might influence the economic field; the contrary also could be the case if one studies the steady political position and normal condition of the flood in 726/1326, where we could see that there was a reduction in prices in Egypt, that the price of one irdabb of wheat became eight dirhams and that one irdabb of barley or beans (fūl) was half this price.⁴ The second factor which could be noticed, and is worth noting, is that famine and disease did not always exist in parallel, for one can see the occurrence of one without the other, as happened in 727/1327, when disease spread all over Cairo in spite of the flourishing economy of the third reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.⁵ The third aspect which must be stated here is that there was another reason which might effect the economic conditions, unrelated either to the Nile or to the political situation. This was the state of agriculture in Egypt during the period under

¹Bidāya, xiv, 82.

²In the same year the level of prices in Syria was so high that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ordered that wheat should be sent from Egypt to Syria immediately; subsequently the price reduced. See Mir'āt, iv, 270-271.

³Bidāya, xiv, 112.

⁴Durr, ix, 320.

⁵Sulūk, ii, 278.

review, and how any waste or loss in the agricultural field could have a bad effect upon the economic life of the state, as happened in 728/1327,¹ and again in Ramaḡān 738/March 1338.²

It seems that there was a high level of prices in Egypt with a different outcome from what had already occurred in high cost or famine during the reign under consideration. Probably this started in Jum-ādā, II, 735/January 1336³ when the price of one irdabb of wheat, which a few days before, had been normally priced at fifteen dirhams, became twenty, and went on to become thirty and, eventually, seventy dirhams before finally disappearing from the markets.⁴ The same happened to other crops such as beans, because the price of one irdabb became fifty dirhams and the price of five pounds of bread had to be one dirham because of the lack of wheat; therefore matters reached alarming proportions when it was difficult to find bread in any market.⁵ Apparently al-Nāṣir Muḡammad, realizing the aggravation of the problem, especially when he found that the emirs held a monopoly over crops, sent for an immediate meeting with the emirs and ordered the Wālī, 'Alī b. Ḥasan al-Marwānī,⁶ to solve the matter and ensure that the bakers sell bread at a reasonable price.⁷ Subsequently, the Wālī arranged to have four of his assistants

¹Ibid., ii, 300.

²Zetterstéen, 197.

³Sulūk, ii, 398; cf. Ighāthāt, 39.

⁴Turkiyya, fol. 30b; Sulūk, ii, 392, 394; Ighāthāt, 39.

⁵Sulūk, ii, 394; Ighāthāt, 39.

⁶For his biography, see Durar, iii, 40-41.

⁷Sulūk, ii, 394; cf. Lapidus, op.cit., 52.

at the door of every bakery for protection, and punished several bakers for having kept the bread from the people or for selling it at a high price.¹ Furthermore, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad wrote to the different Syrian provinces to send at once to Egypt what they had of stored wheat and, at the same time, a Royal Decree was announced all over Cairo that no irdabb of wheat was to be sold for more than thirty dirhams and, if any one acted against the terms of the ordinance, a heavy punishment would be inflicted on him.² It appears that it was for the sake of his subjects that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad held the meeting with the emirs, asking them to sell what they had of wheat in their storehouses according to the lawful price already pronounced during the month of Rajab/February, and that he did the same during the next month, Sha'bān 736/March 1336.³

Seemingly, the order of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was neither satisfactory to nor pleasant for the Mamlūk emirs; therefore they commanded their directors (mubāshirūn) to hold back what crops they had in their granaries and to try to sell part of the stored crops secretly at a high price, say, sixty or seventy dirhams for every irdabb.⁴ Secretly and successfully the emirs accomplished their plan, but only for a while. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad soon heard about this.⁵ Immediately al-Nāṣir Muḥammad sent for Diyā' al-Dīn Yūsuf b. Abī Bakr b. Muḥammad,⁶ who was famous for his nobility

¹ Sulūk, ii, 394; Ighāthah, 39.

² Sulūk, ii, 394.

³ Ibid.; Ighāthah, 39.

⁴ Sulūk, ii, 394; cf. Lapidus, op.cit., 51.

⁵ Sulūk, ii, 394.

⁶ No biography is found.

of character, appointed him to be the Muhtasib of Cairo,¹ and asked him to be strict in his duty with the emirs.² It seems that the nomination of Ḍiyā' al-Dīn was of great importance, notably when he started checking the granaries of the Mamlūk emirs, registered how many irdabb they had, gave every emir a sufficient amount of wheat to last until the time of the next crop, and began selling the rest in every granary regularly at a price of thirty dirhams for every irdabb.³ Moreover, in Sha'bān, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad opened his storehouse and sold his stored wheat at twenty five dirhams for every irdabb.⁴

Subsequently, when the Muhtasib Ḍiyā' al-Dīn was informed that the directors of the two emirs, Qawṣūn⁵ and Bashtāk,⁶ had sold some of the stored wheat in the granaries of the two emirs at more than the lawful price, he sent for them, beat them with strong cudgels, and explained the whole matter to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.⁷ Consequently, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was furious and shouted at Qawṣūn in the presence of other emirs, "How dare you! Do you want to pull Egypt apart against me? And how could you act against my decree?" Furthermore, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad insulted and angrily abused Qawṣūn so that none of the emirs dared to speak, especially when al-Nāṣir Muḥammad asked for the steward (ustādār) of Qawṣūn, who came at

¹For this post, see Subh, iv, 37.

²Sulūk, ii, 394.

³Ibid., ii, 395.

⁴Ighāthah, 39.

⁵Supra, 42.

⁶Supra, 154.

⁷Sulūk, ii, 395.

once, to be severely beaten in his presence.¹ In conclusion, one might record that, starting from that day, no emir would dare to think of opening his granary without the permission of the muhtasib.²

In addition, when Diyā' al-Dīn was told that the emir Ṭashtamur al-Sāqī³ (d. 743/1342) had brought out four hundred irdabb of wheat from his granary for sale without permission of the market inspector (muhtasib), the latter warned Ṭashtamur that, if he did not take the wheat back to his storehouse, Diyā' al-Dīn would inform al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. Hence, it seems that that warning was enough for Ṭashtamur al-Sāqī to obey the request of Diyā' al-Dīn.⁴ Moreover, concerning the role of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad towards this social trouble, it might be worth noting that he wrote to the Wulāt of the provinces of Egypt telling them to start immediately to collect crops in the different parts of the state and to send them at once to Cairo and ask the owners of those crops to come to Cairo to be paid thirty dirhams per irdabb of wheat.⁵

At the same time, a Royal Order was announced all over Cairo that every one who had grain and tried to hoard it would have it confiscated.⁶ Furthermore, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad knew that the soldiers used to have crops and sell them partly and regularly at meal-times but, after the royal announcement, some of the soldiers sold what crops they had while others held their stored sheaves

¹ Sulūk, ii, 395; cf. Lapidus, op.cit., 55.

² Sulūk, ii, 395.

³ Supra, 130.

⁴ Sulūk, ii, 395.

⁵ Ibid., ii, 395-396; cf. Lapidus, op.cit., 52.

⁶ Sulūk, ii, 396.

back.¹ However, this was known through some of their colleagues and they were either plundered by the mob or confiscated by the Wālī.² Thereafter, a guard was appointed at the door of every bakery to witness the quantity of flour which the baker was using for the daily bread, and to give a report concerning this to the Wālī at the end of every day. Accordingly, it was easy to determine the average amount of flour used daily in Cairo.³ Consequently, after this strict investigation, the Wālī knew the exact needs of every bakery; subsequently, the wheat which had just been collected from all over the country was divided between the bakers of Cairo according to their needs. Thus, the problem of shortage of bread was solved.⁴

From the above statement it could be understood how a social problem connected with the economic life of the monarchy on one side, and with the rural and public life on the other, might be regarded by some greedy officials as a fruitful opportunity of which extreme advantage could be taken. On the other hand, it shows the extensive administrative discipline in the Mamlūk regime during the period under consideration. Dr. Lapidus says "the emirs and even the Sultān himself, however, were rarely content to let their revenue depend on the conditions of local supply and demand, but rather sought to control and exploit the grain market for the sake of further profits."⁵ The preceding facts confirm

¹Ibid.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Lapidus, loc.cit.

the above statement concerning the attitude of the emirs, but the position of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, which has already been mentioned, gives a different impression with respect to his stand during the times of famine or high prices. Probably, he acted for the sake of the state and the people and not for his personal revenue.

Apparently, at the end of Rajab 736/March 1336, four thousand sacks of wheat arrived in Cairo from Syria, and more came from Upper Egypt, ^{and} al-Sharqiyya, al-Gharbiyya and al-Buḥayra.¹ Besides that, the owners of crops were personally afraid of the high power and worked to sell their wheat.² It appears that these subsequent events helped to ameliorate the critical situation. Lastly, in Ramaḍān 736/April 1336, the new crop came, the prices of different crops were lowered, and the people enjoyed a period of standard prices.³ Immediately after, the annual inundation of the Nile occurred; thus the flood indirectly marked the end of that troubled time.

It seems that the part which was played by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad could be considered as a vivid proof of his sense of responsibility for his people, their needs and their convenience. In words and power he worked for the sake of his subjects and to solve the problem of famine. Apparently he ensured that every ordinance issued by the Royal Court was practiced by him as well as by his emirs and officials of high rank. In addition, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was strict in having his ordinances concerning the famine and its solution carried out, especially by his emirs of high posts, as an example

¹Sulūk, ii, 396.

²Ibid.

³Turkiyya, fol. 30b; Ighāthat, 39.

to others of lower classes. Besides, he made much effort to have all his subjects co-operate without delay to find a suitable solution for their common problem, and to make them understand that it was not the problem of the poor people only, but was, in reality, a problem of the country and its people who should work with the existing regime for their own good.

However, there is also the stand that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad took in 738/1338 when a Royal Order was issued that, at Būlāq, the hollow between two points on the bank of the Nile should be strongly dammed to keep the waters from overflowing on to the land to the east. Great damage could be caused by the strong current of the Nile during the flood period.¹ Also, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad commanded al-Khalīj al-Kabīr² to be dug in the middle of the Nile between Būlāq and Cairo, from south to north, and between Jazīrat al-Rawḍa and the land of al-Jīza, from east to west. It seems that the main function of this canal would be to stop the fast flowing water from rushing towards Būlāq and causing great destruction.³

These two precautions taken by al-Nāṣir's order might be regarded as two vivid factors which could clearly illustrate his deep care and support for the welfare of the country which he was ruling.

(iv) Conclusion

It appears, as we have already seen, that the period under study witnessed many aspects concerning famines and diseases. Hence, there must be reasons which might have played a direct and effective part in the existence of those aspects of life. Firstly the finding

¹ Sulūk, ii, 449-450; Nujūm, ix, 124-128.

² It is sometimes called Khalīj Akhūr.

³ Sulūk, ii, 450-451; Nujūm, ix, 124-128.

of the counterfeit money in the markets.¹ Secondly, the maladministration in internal affairs, as happened in 736/1335.² Thirdly, a natural factor connected with the annual inundation of the Nile, when there would be either a year of drought or an extra flood which might cause great damage to the agricultural land.³

There are also other factors which might have affected the economic and social life concerning famines and diseases, such as the internal trouble, or the personal struggle between the Mamlūk emirs and their factional parties, the lack of peace and safety in the country, the sudden death of the Sultān and a military defeat of the army. These factors could cause a famine followed by extensive disease, but this did not occur during the period under consideration. However, the factors regarding counterfeit money, the maladministration and the flood of the Nile had a deep influence upon the economic and social aspects of life during the period under review.

Apparently these factors worked together to cause great economic trouble and social worry and the resulting unrestful situation could gradually and indirectly cause a difficult time of famine and disease. Subsequently, one might say that natural, economic and political factors could have extensive effect on the lack of food; therefore, high price levels could occur in all parts of the country under the Mamlūk regime and might lead gradually to famine and disease afterwards, especially among the middle class and the poor people. Moreover, the Mamlūk historians did not always care to give a

¹Sulūk, ii, 392. See also Rabī', The financial system of Egypt, 189-197.

²Sulūk, ii, 381, 382, 385, 390-391, 393-394.

³Nujūm, ix, 10.

sufficient analysis of famines and diseases which occurred during the period under study. It seems also that the political structure might be deeply influenced by the economic condition. Besides, any change occurring in the economic field might have a remarkable impression on the political and social aspects.

It is also because of the factors previously mentioned that the economic condition was unstable, therefore the Mamlūk emirs, realizing the reality of the situation, worked to obtain enough crops in their granaries for times of difficulty. Through this the Mamlūk emirs could achieve two purposes: to get crops for their own needs and to sell the rest at a high price. But, on the other hand, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, understanding the danger of the whole situation, tried hard to fulfill different functions for the sake of his poor people, either by issuing ordinances concerning the limitation of the price of food in the markets to a reasonable level for the poor, or by establishing structures affecting the annual flood of the Nile for the purpose of saving inhabited areas from destruction. There is also the great care respecting qiyās al-Nīl at the time of flood, which could be an effective proof of the attention which was paid by the Mamlūk government to that main source of life.

Lastly, it seems that some reduction in revenue was caused by the death of workers and sellers but, on the other hand, the effects of famine and disease upon the revenue of the Mamlūk regime during the third reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad were small because of the stability and settlement of the economic activities.

In conclusion, it might be worth noting that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad succeeded in building a powerful structure in both the

political and administrative fields so that the famines and epidemics which occurred in the Mamlūk Sultanate during the period under review did not affect what al-Nāṣir Muḥammad worked hard to achieve.

Seemingly, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's third reign was in many ways striking, mainly concerning the economic organization, and, of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad himself was perfectly ready to expend his efforts to be efficient and competent in official procedure. Consequently, the ruling class succeeded in possessing extensive wealth and in proving very familiar with the official routine.

Therefore, the administrative structure and the political situation of that reign, which was the most sophisticated environment of Muslim civilization, were hardly affected by the famines and the epidemics of the period under consideration.

CONCLUSIONS

From the fore-going study of the internal affairs of the Mamlūk Sultanate during the third reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, the following points emerge.

Throughout the regime of the Mamlūk Sulṭāns the throne tended to go to the strongest contender among the ruling class of emirs: a hereditary monarchy was never established. Only through force of personal prestige was al-Nāṣir Muḥammad able to compel the emirs to respect the hereditary principle, and then only with difficulty because of the private armies which the emirs had at their disposal. Thanks to these private forces and to their immense personal wealth, the emirs were able, by changing their allegiance from one contender to another, in effect to elect and depose the sulṭāns. The fate of a deposed Sulṭān was not usually severe: it might be to become a provincial governor (as in the case of Kitbughā), and in the state of permanent rivalry among the emirs it was possible for a man such as al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, who combined diplomatic and political acumen with military prowess, to enjoy power more than once. Political power of any significance, then, was normally restricted to the Sulṭān, his vicegerent (an office as dangerous as it was important), the emirs, and the Mamlūk soldiery (ajnād al-ḥalqa).

The political role of the Cairene populace was normally restricted to celebrating the accession of a new Sulṭān or the deposition of an unpopular one.

Theoretically, the authority of the Sulṭān came with the receipt of the ʿahd of the reigning Caliph, whose role despite the pomp with which it was surrounded consisted solely in giving a colour of legitimacy to the rule of the Sulṭān, whose virtual prisoner he was. Indeed it seems probable that the very survival of the Caliphate was due simply to the desire of the Mamlūk rulers, even those as powerful as al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, for the support which the prestige of the Caliphate could lend them. Though the policy of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad for political and personal reasons was to prevent the immense prestige of the Caliphate from being converted into real political influence, he was none the less careful to preserve the institution.

The administrative system of the Mamlūk Sultanate was centralised, the most important administrative departments (dawāwīn) were situated in Cairo. For administrative purposes, the country was divided into provinces. Each province was under the control of local chiefs of police (wulāt al-aqālīm). A chief of police (wālī) was responsible for the protection of the ʿamal from interference, external or internal. Not every ʿamal,

however, had its own wālī and some wilāyāt were further subdivided into smaller units.

The chief of police in Cairo was responsible for the defence of the city and the prevention of crime and political agitation. The governor of the city, with a civilian force at his disposal, was responsible for the prevention of fires, rioting, and the maintenance of public order generally (including the enforcement of laws against the manufacture and distribution of alcoholic drinks and the cultivation and consumption of hashish). Miṣr (Fuṣṭāṭ) had its own governor. In addition a muḥtasib was responsible for the proper conduct of markets. The administration of the provinces was supervised by two inspectors (Kāshifs), for Upper and Lower Egypt respectively. The appointment of such officials was carried out personally by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad himself. Such administrative posts were not necessarily permanent appointments: the holder was liable to dismissal, imprisonment, exile or execution on the merest suspicion of incompetence or dishonesty.

The key to the understanding of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's seemingly contradictory policy towards the Mamlūks lies in understanding that, in order to retain and extend his personal power, he deliberately strengthened the position of his adherents and steadily enlarged his retinue, but at the same time was ruthless

in destroying any of his supporters who seemed to present a personal threat. To this end he was prepared to sacrifice friendship, loyalty and devoted service. Besides this, the execution of wealthy emirs and the confiscation of their property was a useful way of increasing the Sultān's own wealth, an end to which al-Nāṣir Muḥammad (who created the office of nazar al-khāṣṣ especially to manage the privy purse) was notably devoted. Though he made extensive use of the advice of the emirs, and found it politic to give them the appearance of power, he was careful to retain real control of affairs in his own hands. It must be remembered that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, having twice been Sultān in the past, had considerable experience of the power of the emirs and of the ways in which it was used. To counter-balance this influence, he courted the favour of the populace, and seems as a result to have been able to rely on its support. At the same time he was able to buy the support of powerful emirs with wealth confiscated from other members of their class. However, while undermining the power of the emirs, he was careful not to do so openly, for fear of the reaction which this might provoke. Thus, he pursued a policy of consolidating his own position, while fostering the illusion that no major re-distribution of political power had taken place. This combination of determination, ruthlessness and subtlety

enabled him to enjoy absolute power for 32 years. Thus, as a result of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's intrigues, Egypt and Syria enjoyed a long period of political stability during which an efficient administration was able to develop and function.

The policies of the Sulṭān with respect to his humbler subjects was characterised by an anxiety to promote the prosperity, and to this end he was active in encouraging harmony between Muslim and non-Muslim. He was also anxious to prevent the development of any mutual grievance between his subjects which might be exploited against himself. Thus, while favouring the dhimmīs more than was strictly required by Muslim custom, he was careful to reassure the Muslims that no serious change in their relative status was intended. In promoting good relations between the various communities he seems to have enjoyed a considerable measure of success since we hear of them joining in celebrating the festivals of each other's faiths. He further secured the loyalty of the dhimmīs by cultivating friendly political and economic relations with Christian states.

A less tractable problem was that presented by the Juhayna and other Bedouin tribes who had settled in Upper Egypt, and were intent on living independently of the rest of the country, and on setting up their own Sultanate. These Bedouin were a constant source of trouble to the Mamlūks since they were

always ready to take advantage of the internal troubles of the State to assert their independence. By assiduously cultivating their friendship, and relentlessly putting down their rebellions, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was able by the latter years of his reign to subject the Bedouins to his administration.

In matters of taxation, his policy was one of rationalisation and the imposition of central control over the administration of the iqṭā's and of subjecting their allocation more closely to considerations of military efficiency. The income of the emirs from the sale of agricultural produce (ibra) was subject to fluctuation owing to natural causes and also owing to neglect and inefficient use of the land. The redistribution of the land under the Nāṣirī rawk went far towards ensuring a more economical use of land. Thus, in the case of Kawm al-Wadān in Lower Egypt the ibra was increased, after the rawk, from 500 to 800 dīnārs, while at Ṭabrīna in Lower Egypt, the increase in the work-force resulting from the rawk led to an improvement in ibra from 500 to 750 dīnārs. It would seem that the functioning of the rawk was beneficial to the farming community. Evidently the holders of iqṭā's had previously found the exactions of the State burdensome, while the farmers had complained of the treatment at the hands of the emirs and of the abuse of their office by tax-collectors. The more direct

control over the tax-system initiated by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad had the effect of eliminating many of the malpractices of minor officials and of ensuring easier access to justice for those seeking redress for unjust exactions. So successful were the reforms that the Sulṭān was eventually able to abolish certain taxes altogether, thus further increasing his popularity with the people at large and securing his position.

Thus, though the prosperity of his third reign was not however completely untroubled, and the stability of the Mamlūk state was from time to time threatened by various inter-acting natural and social troubles (notably the circulation of counterfeit money, variations in the annual flooding of the Nile, and the outbreak of epidemic disease), nevertheless al-Nāṣir Muḥammad succeeded, through the efficiency of his administrative machine in stabilising food-prices and preventing the hoarding of grain by the emirs to minimise the effects of natural disasters on the population.

INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLIOGRAPHY

In order to have a just evaluation of the sources consulted we cite their authenticity, the list of manuscripts and the reason for which these manuscripts were consulted.

The work of Tārīkh Salāṭīn Miṣr wa'l-Shām wa Ḥalab by Ibrāhīm Mughlaṭāy begins with the events of 532/1137. The writer lived during this period and was a contemporary of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. The work relates to the first rule of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and concentrates on the political movements such as the Ashrafiyya movement against the emir Sayf al-Dīn Kitbughā. Ibrāhīm Mughlaṭāy lists high ranking officials both in the government and in the Mamlūk army. He writes obituaries of important people. When he speaks of the reign of Lāchīn he concentrates on the activities of the Mamlūk army, events of administrative importance and the relationship between the Sulṭān and the Mamlūk oligarchy. Concerning the second reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, the writer continues the same method with regard to administrative changes, political plots and military conflict; however, he mentions these matters briefly, especially those movements outside Cairo such as the Bedouin revolts. The work is vital for the study of the administration of the period.

Mughlaṭāy was careful to mention everyone concerned in the administration in Egypt. He mentions briefly the sultanate of Baybars al-Jāshnakīr and then he comes to the third reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. It is obvious from his work that he was an eye witness of the events which he describes.

From written accounts it is evident that the writer was a military commander and that he held this position during the last years of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's third reign.

وتولاهما (اى نقابة الجيوش) بعده مؤلف هذا التاريخ المبارك¹.

He wrote these accounts in chronological order, stating the facts without comment.

He is careful to mention the diplomatic relations between Egypt and other countries in the East and the West.

He refers briefly to the internal reforms in Egypt. The work is important to the understanding of the attitude of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad towards the 'Abbāsīd Caliphate.

The work ends with the death of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in 741/1341 and the accession of his son, Abū Bakr, to the Mamlūk Sultanate.

The work of Shams al-Dīn al-Shujā'ī, Tārīkh al-Sultān al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad wa-banīh begins with the events of the last years of the third reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad from the year 737/1336. This work concentrates on the events of the Mamlūk Sultanate between the years 737/1336 and 743/1342 and is important for an understanding of the activities of the military within the Mamlūk Sultanate and outside, for example, in Asia Minor, al-Ḥijāz and Syria.

The Mamlūk chronicles and biographies make no mention of the author, in spite of the importance and the precision of his work.

The importance of the work lies in the detailed information respecting the central administration in Cairo and the local administration in the Egyptian provinces. Al-Shujā'ī is careful to discuss with great precision the diplomatic relations between the Mamlūk Sultanate and the Mongols in Iraq and Persia, Asia Minor and Byzantium. Al-Shujā'ī gives detailed accounts of the various courts, for example, the court of Il Khān. From these we deduce Egypt's relationships with

¹fols. 61b-62a.

other countries.

The work is vital to the thesis for the light it sheds on the internal reforms within Egypt. It has been of great assistance in understanding the relations between al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and the Mamlūk oligarchy, for example, the relationship between al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and the emir Tankiz al-Ḥusāmī, and also al-Nashū, but not in such detail. Al-Shujā'ī states that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was an astute politician and discusses in detail his shrewd methods of dealing with the powerful emirs and with the 'Abbāsīd Caliphs which have been studied in detail in the thesis.

Finally, the work is important in clarifying the final stages of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's reign in 741/1341 and the accession of his son, Abū Bakr.

The work of Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī, Masālik al-absār, Paris Ms. 2328, is one of the primary sources of information for this period because al-'Umarī was the confidential secretary of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, therefore he was able to observe closely all that occurred at the court, and to handle all vital documents. Al-'Umarī mentions incidents to which no other chronicler refers and from his writings it is evident that he was a supporter of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. Later historians quoted and copied his writings.

Volume IV of Masālik al-absār is an important source of information concerning the distribution of the Bedouins. Hence this work has been of unique value for this thesis, for Chapter VI in particular.

Volume II of Masālik al-absār, Paris Ms. 2325, refers to the administrative division of Egypt during this period and, therefore, was of primary importance for this thesis, particularly for Chapter II. The volume contains detailed information about the administrative

division of Egypt from 715/1315 onwards; therefore no study concerning the administrative division of Egypt during this period would be complete without reference to this work.

The work of Zubdat al-fikra fī tārīkh al-hijra, by Baybars al-Manṣūrī, begins with the events of the year 655/1257 and ends with the incidents of 709/1309; therefore the work is important to the subject of this thesis, particularly for the introduction concerning the political plots and the periods of usurpation which occurred during the first and second reigns of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. Besides, it is vital to learn the attitude of the Syrian governors towards al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and of his preparations to restore his position and to become the sole ruler of the Mamlūk Sultanate. Consequently, the work is indispensable in order to understand the political background of the Mamlūk Sultanate at the beginning of the fourteenth century, especially since we know that Baybars al-Manṣūrī himself was a contemporary Mamlūk emir and witnessed the events of this period.

The work of Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb, ^{al-Nuwayrī} Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab, volume 31, is vital with regard to the early years of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's third reign. It has been of great use concerning certain aspects of this period, such as the position of the non-Muslim subjects in the Mamlūk Sultanate, which is studied in this thesis. This chronicle helps us to study the relationship between the non-Muslim subjects and the Muslims, the conflict which occurred between the two sections and the attitude of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad towards that situation.

This work has also been important with regard to the political situation of the Mamlūk Sultanate during this period and the attitude of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad towards the powerful emirs.

The work of Ibn Shākir al-Kutubī, 'Uyūn al-tawārīkh, is important for this period. This chronicle begins with the events of 688/1289 during the reign of Qalāwūn and contains details until his death and the accession of his son, Al-Ashraf Khalīl, to the throne.

When al-Ashraf was assassinated al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's first reign began. Thereafter the chronicle is important for knowledge of the political situation of the Mamlūk Sultanate at the beginning of the fourteenth century. When Ibn Shākir mentions the internal events he provides a political analysis with essential details, and presents them in chronological order, i.e. he gives, therefore, dates, the most important events of the year, and biographies of the people who died in that year, as did al-Maqrīzī in his chronicle, Kitāb al-sulūk li ma'rifat duwal al-mulūk.

Ibn Shākir mentions the reign of Kitbughā and the important events, for example, the famine. He also mentions the reign of Lāchīn, who instigated the cadastral survey of the Egyptian land (al-rawk al-Husāmī). Subsequently, Ibn Shākir records the death of Lāchīn and the second reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. This was vital as it sheds light on the political situation in the Mamlūk Sultanate and on the open conflict between the Mamlūk emirs.

Ibn Shākir also records the subject of the dhimmis and the attitude of the Mamlūk government, against them in the year 700/1300, and the position of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad towards the whole event. Ibn Shākir also gives details concerning the attitude of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad against Sayf al-Dīn Salār and Baybars al-Jāshnakīr.

This chronicle is important for the knowledge it contains of the third reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, the internal affairs of Egypt during this period and the political situation of the Mamlūk Sultanate

at that time. Being provided with this chronicle is vital for a study concerning the affairs of the Mamlūk Sultanate during the three reigns of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, in general, and the third reign in particular.

The chronicle of Dhayl mir'āt al-zamān by Mūsā b. Muḥammad al-Yūnīnī (d. 726/1326) is a main and primary source for any study concerning this period. It contains comprehensive history regarding the first and the second reigns of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and the first years of his third reign, when he became his own master. With the end of each year al-Yūnīnī gives brief biographies of the distinguished persons who died during that year.

This chronicle has been useful for every chapter of this thesis because: firstly, it contains detailed information respecting this period; secondly, al-Yūnīnī was an eye witness and was a contemporary of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. This work has been of vital importance with regard to details included concerning the high power in the Mamlūk Sultanate, the position of the Mamlūk oligarchy, the attitude of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad towards the powerful emirs and the military activities of the Mamlūk army.

Concerning the chronicle of Abū Muḥammad 'Abd Allāh b. As'ad al-Yāfi'ī, Mir'āt al-janān wa 'ibrat al-yaqẓān fī ma'rifat ḥawādith al-zamān wa taqallub aḥwāl al-insān, this contains brief records of the three reigns of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, therefore it has been useful in almost every part of this thesis.

On the other hand, al-Yāfi'ī gives long biographies of the people who died during this period; consequently, this work is important in throwing light on the part which had been played by these people and which had affected the internal situation of the Mamlūk Sultanate.

Since he was a contemporary of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, al-Yāfi'ī's

chronicle is important in studying the relationships between al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and the powerful emirs on the one hand, and the over-reaction of the Mamlūk emirs against al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and his dictatorial policy on the other.

The chronicle is important also for the study of the relationships between the Mamlūk Sultanate during this period and the Bedouins of Āl Muḥannā and Āl Faḍl in Syria, on the one hand, and the relationships with India, Īl-Khān, North Africa (Bilād al-Maghrīb) and Yemen, on the other hand.

Last, but not least, the chronicle is vital to the study of the history of the Mamlūk Sultanate during the Baḥrī period because it contains over-all record of that period.

The chronicle of al-Ḥasan b. 'Abd Allāh al-Ṣafadī, Nuzhat al-mālik wa'l-mamlūk has been useful for the study of the subject of this thesis; it helps us to learn the reality of the political and social situation in the Mamlūk Sultanate during this time. In his chronicle, al-Ṣafadī concentrates on the most important events of each year; for example, in the year 694/1294, he mentions the claim of Kitbughā to the throne, the appointment of Lāchīn as vicegerent (nā'ib al-Saltāna), the arrival of the Oirat Mongol tribesmen in Egypt and the dreadful famine which occurred during that time.

Although al-Ṣafadī writes only briefly about the general situation in the Mamlūk Sultanate he gives detailed information about the important events; therefore, this work helps in the achievement of a comprehensive picture with regard to the internal affairs of Mamlūk Egypt during this period.

The work of al-Ḥasan b. 'Umar, Ibn Ḥabīb, Durrat al-aslāk fī dawlat al-Atrāk, is valuable to this thesis as it contains a detailed

study of the three reigns of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. Ibn Ḥabīb records events in chronological order during this period. Although this work opens with the events of 648/1250, it concentrates on al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's three reigns. It is essential to the understanding of the political development of the Mamlūk Sultanate, and foreign relationship between the Mamlūk regime and other countries, for example, Īl-Khān, and the political plots to overthrow al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.

Tārīkh al-Salāṭīn wa'l-'asākīr is an anonymous work and begins with the events of 702/1302 after the Mamlūks succeeded in defeating the Mongols in Syria or, in other words, with the early years of the second reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. Although the work is anonymous it is obviously contemporary. The anonymous writer refers to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad as the reigning Sultān and was apparently acquainted with events taking place at court, such as the presentation of ambassadors. He refers briefly to the most important events taking place in the Mamlūk Sultanate, for example, the activities of the Mamlūk army either in Asia Minor or against the Bedouins.

The work is important for its detailed accounts of the missions from various states, for example, Venice, and mentions the reasons for which they came; therefore the work is vital for an understanding of the relationship between the Mamlūk Sultanate and foreign countries. The work is written chronologically and mentions the most important events, such as the conflict between the different Mamlūk factions, and the embassies from Byzantium, Īl Khān, Nubia, Yemen and Aragon for establishing friendly co-operation, thereby shedding light on the situation at the court.

This chronicle notes the abdication of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in

708/1308 and the accession to the throne of Baybars al-Jāshnakīr. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad retired to al-Karak where later he prepared to return to power by intriguing with the Syrian governors. Henceforward, the anonymous writer concentrates on the internal affairs of the Mamlūk Sultnate, for example: the return of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to power, his attitude towards Baybars al-Jāshnakīr, and his plot to starve Sayf al-Dīn Salār to death.

The chronicle gives detailed accounts of the 'Abbāsīd Caliphate, the attitude of the Caliph towards Baybars al-Jāshnakīr and how he gave him the first and the second diploma ('ahd) in which he permitted Baybars to fight al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, and then the attitude of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad towards the Caliph al-Mustakfī. In studying these accounts it is obvious that the anonymous writer was an eye witness of these events. This work contains an authentic copy of the diploma ('ahd) which was given by the Caliph to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to permit him to rule. In this diploma ('ahd) we find the Caliph supporting al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's return to power. Therefore this work is of vital importance for this thesis in which we study the situation of the 'Abbāsīd Caliphate during this period. This chronicle is the sole work which mentions this diploma ('ahd) and it is the final statement made in this chronicle.

Nuzhat al-insān fī dhikr al-Mulūk wa'l-a'yān is an anonymous work referring to Mamlūk history from 655/1257 onwards. This work is vital for this thesis since it contains details concerning: firstly, the three reigns of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad; secondly, the usurpations by Kitbughā, Lāchīn and Baybars al-Jāshnakīr; thirdly, the plots against al-Nāṣir Muḥammad organized by powerful emirs. The work terminates with the events of the year 873/1468.

The work of Taqwīm al-buldān al-Misriyya fī al-a'māl al-Sultāniyya was carried out by the order of al-Ashraf Sha'bān (764-778/1363-1377). It contains a complete description of the administrative division of Egypt after al-rawk al-Nāṣirī in the year 715/1315; therefore it has been of great importance in the study of the administrative division of Egypt during this period because this did not change at the reign of al-Ashraf Sha'bān. It seems that this work was carried out in the year 778/1375, but unfortunately the writer is anonymous. Nevertheless, presumably al-Ashraf was sure of the writer's reliability so that he put him in charge of this work.

Concerning the study of the administrative division of Egypt during the period under consideration, the work is important for the knowledge of the basic administrative divisions of Egypt at this time, the 'ibra of the provinces (aqālīm) and of the agricultural land, the distribution of Egyptian land among the Mamlūk emirs, the quantity of al-khāṣṣ al-Sultānī and the most important centres for economic activities. All this is necessary in achieving a reliable study of the administrative and economic situation of Egypt during this period, especially concerning the extent of Egyptian land and its value.

The work of Tārīkh al-dawla al-Turkiyya begins with the early years of the Mamlūk Sultanate and ends with the events of the year 805/1402; therefore it contains details with regard to the three reigns of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. Subsequently this chronicle is important in order to learn the political situation in the Mamlūk Sultanate, especially as it appears that the anonymous author of this work was an eye witness of this period and died at the beginning of the fifteenth century.

This chronicle has been of vital importance in the study concerning the political state and the open conflict among the Mamlūk oligarchy which has been studied in the introduction and the chapter concerning political plots. The chronicle sheds light on the attitude of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad against the powerful emirs, for example, Sayf al-Dīn Salār, Sayf al-^{Dīn}Karāy, Baktamur al-Jūkandār and Tankiz al-Ḥusāmī. In conclusion, the work is important in order to give a clear picture concerning the struggle for power between al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and the Mamlūk oligarchy.

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