

**The Indigenous Christians of the Arabic Middle East in an
Age of Crusaders, Mongols, and Mamlūks (1244-1366)**

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Declaration of Authorship

I, Kenneth Scott Parker, hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

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Abstract

This thesis examines the indigenous Christians of the Arabic Middle East from 1244-1366. During this period, the Muslim world was under external threat both from the Mongol invasions and from the latter Crusades. There were also internal developments in the area such as the rise of the Baḥrī Mamlūks and the hardening of Islamic religious and popular sentiment against Christians. The impact of these events on the various Christian Communities is analysed, paying particular attention to their diverse experiences, influence and participation in the political context. Efforts to strengthen each Community and instances of continued artistic and literary expression in the midst of adverse circumstances is also explored. The thesis argues that the situations and experiences of the different confessions varied widely according to time and place depending, for example, on whether the Christians were at the heart of power in Egypt or at the periphery in northern Syria. Overall, the thesis fills a void by addressing a neglected but important period in the demographic development of the diverse medieval Near East.

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Abbreviations

AOL. *Archives de l'Orient Latin.*

BSOAS. *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies.*

BJRL. *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library.*

CE. *The Coptic Encyclopedia*, ed. Aziz S. Atiya, 8 Vols. (New York, 1991).

DHGE. *Dictionnaire d'Histoire et de Géographie Ecclésiastiques*, ed. R. Aubert et al, 31 Vols. (Paris, 1912- <2011 >).

EI. *The Encyclopedia of Islam, New Edition*, ed. C.E. Bosworth et al, 12 Vols. (Leiden, 1960-2002).

HC. *A History of the Crusades*, ed. Kenneth M. Setton, 6 Vols. (Madison, WI, 1969-89).

HJAS. *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies.*

HPEC. *History of the Patriarchs of the Egyptian Church (History of the Holy Church)*, attributed to Sawirus ibn al-Muqaffa^c, ed. and trans. by Antoine Khater, O.H.E. Khs-Burmester et al., 4 Vols. (Cairo, 1943-74).

JAOS. *Journal of the American Oriental Society.*

JESHO. *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient.*

JRAS. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society.*

MSR. *Mamlūk Studies Review.*

OC. *Oriens Christianus.*

OCP. *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*.

PDO. *Parole de l'Orient*.

PPTS. *Palestine Pilgrims Text Society*.

RHC Arm. *Recueil des Historiens des Croisades – Documents Arméniens*, 2 Vols. (Paris, 1869-1906).

RHC Occ. *Recueil des Historiens des Croisades – Historiens Occidentaux*, 5 Vols. (Paris, 1844-96).

RHC Or. *Recueil des Historiens des Croisades – Historiens Orientaux*, 5 Vols. (Paris, 1872-1906).

ROL. *Revue de l'Orient Latin*.

RS. Rolls Series.

Al-Sulūk. Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk li-maʿrifat Duwal al-Mulūk*, eds. M. Muṣṭafā Ziyāda and Saʿīd ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ ʿAshūr, 4 Vols. (Cairo, 1934-73).

Introduction

In this thesis, I will examine the situation of the indigenous Christians living within the Arabic Middle East¹ in the years 1244-1366. Most general histories of the Middle East neglect the native Christian population and relegate them to little more than a footnote.² As such, when all of the Christians are grouped together with little context, few realize that there were actually nine different Christian Confessions indigenous to Greater Syria (that is, *Bilād al-Shām*) and Egypt during the later Middle Ages. These were: Armenians, adherents of the Assyrian Church of the East, Copts, Nubians, Ethiopians, Maronites, Georgians, Melkites, and Syrian Orthodox. The chronological period of study is highlighted by the usurpation of the Ayyūbid-ruled Sultanate by the Baḥrī Mamlūks, while the two most important political-military events in the region were the collapse of the Crusader States and the invasion of the Mongols. This thesis will examine how events impacted on the nine Christian Confessions, treating each separately.

The need for a comprehensive study of the indigenous Christians of the Near East is exemplified by the recent essay by Jorgen Neilsen called ‘Christians under the Mamluks’ in the comprehensive *Christianity: a History in the Middle East*. Only seven

¹ Excluding the Arabian peninsula and North Africa.

² See, for example, Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples* (Cambridge, MA, 1991), 96-97 and 118-19; Arthur Goldschmidt, Jr., *A Concise History of the Middle East* (Oxford, 1999), 86-87 and 112. These brief paragraphs are their only mention of native Christians in the latter Middle Ages, and mostly in the context of Mongol expansion.

pages long in total, four of these pages are devoted to general background information while only Copts and Melkites are mentioned by name.³ There is much more primary material on the indigenous Christians available, however, as is evidenced by the increasing number of scholarly monographs published in recent years. These works – although very interesting and scholarly – have either oriented towards a largely earlier chronological period or have focused only upon a specific Confession.⁴ Thus, for example, Sidney Griffith adeptly describes the difficult position of the Christians in the Arabic-speaking milieu, though focusing largely on the eighth-eleventh centuries.⁵ Christopher MacEvitt has provided a most interesting study of the varied Christians inhabiting northern Syria and Palestine primarily during the first century of Crusader rule, particularly Armenians, Greeks, and Syrian Orthodox.⁶ Johannes Pahlitzsch has more expansively examined the Melkites of Palestine, but ends his investigation in 1244.⁷ Bernard Hamilton’s well-known study of the Christians in the Crusader States certainly provides great insight into the Eastern Churches, but is focused mostly vis-à-

³ Jorgen Neilsen, ‘Christians in the Non-Arab Islamic Eras, II: Christians under the Mamluks’, in ed. Habib Badr, *Christianity: A History in the Middle East* (Beirut, 2005), 597-603.

⁴ In the context of this thesis, the Near East encompasses *Bilād al-Shām* and Egypt. In modern terms, *Bilād al-Shām* would include: southern Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel, and the Palestinian Territories.

⁵ Griffith, Sidney H., *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque: Christians and Muslims in the World of Islam* (Oxford, 2008).

⁶ MacEvitt, Christopher, *The Crusades and the Christian World of the East: Rough Tolerance* (Philadelphia, 2008).

⁷ Pahlitzsch, Johannes, *Graeci und Suriani im Palästina der Kreuzfahrerzeit : Beiträge und Quellen zur Geschichte des griechisch-orthodoxen Patriarchats von Jerusalem* (Berlin, 2001).

vis the Latin Church and generally limited geographically within the Crusader principalities.⁸

Scholars writing from the Mamlūk perspective include Robert Irwin, whose classic study of the Bahrī period (ca. 1250-1382) references the indigenous Christians in the context of military expeditions (e.g. Cilicia), but also notes the influence of Coptic secretaries and even devotes several pages to the persecution of Christians.⁹ Peter Thorau, in his important work on Sultan Baybars, largely only mentions Eastern Christians in a military context, as does Linda Northrup in her more recent monograph of Sultan Qalāwūn (1279-90).¹⁰ Likewise, Amalia Levanoni's study of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn (1293-4, 1298-1308, and 1310-41) includes but a single reference to the Copts.¹¹ The perspectives of the indigenous Christians are, to these scholars, peripheral to their purpose. Other scholars have offered monographs of specific Christian Confessions. Although fascinating in their own right, these have usually been wider in scope, such as Mark Swanson's history of the medieval Coptic

⁸ Hamilton, Bernard, *The Latin Church in the Crusader States: The Secular Church* (London, 1980).

⁹ Irwin, Robert, *The Middle East in the Middle Ages: The Early Mamluk Sultanate, 1250-1382* (Beckenham, 1986), e.g. 68-9, 98-9, and 141-2.

¹⁰ Thorau, Peter, *The Lion of Egypt: Sultan Baybars I and the Near East in the Thirteenth Century*, trans. P.M. Holt (London, 1992), e.g. 150-1, 224-5, and 232-4, though cf. 78 and 227 for violence against indigenous Christians; Linda S. Northrup, *From Slave to Sultan: the career of Al-Mansūr Qalawūn and the consolidation of Mamluk rule in Egypt and Syria (678-689 A.H./1279-1290 A.D.)* (Stuttgart, 1998), e.g. 132, 146, and 151.

¹¹ Levanoni, Amalia, *A turning point in Mamluk history: the third reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn (1310-1341)* (Leiden, 1995). Her single reference is to Coptic farmers' tax evasion (123).

Patriarchs or David Wilmshurst's study of the Assyrian Church of the East.¹² Only a few recent books, in fact, have focused specifically on the indigenous Christians of the Near East in the late Ayyūbid and Baḥrī Mamlūk period, such as a volume on the Syrian Orthodox edited by Herman Teule and Bayarsaikhan Dashdondog's study of the relationship between the Armenians and the Mongols.¹³ There have been relatively few scholarly monographs, then, dealing with the indigenous Christians of the Near East specifically between 1244 and 1366. A number of scholars have offered articles or an occasional chapter on them, but there has long been a need for an in-depth study.

Though it is but little known, the Christian population of Near East was truly diverse and quite vibrant in much of the thirteenth century. In some areas of Syria and Palestine they actually constituted a majority of the population and enjoyed relative prosperity. While conditions differed according to each Confession and geographic location in a given year, for all Churches the period under discussion was a time of great change and challenge. The issues that affected the Muslim majority population affected the *dhimmī* minorities that much more. On the other hand, indigenous Christians were not a monolithic group, but were often separated by geography or theology or language. They were thus affected differently and to greater or lesser

¹² Swanson, Mark N., *The Coptic Papacy in Islamic Egypt, 641-1517* (Cairo, 2010), 97-106; David Wilmshurst, *The Martyred Church: A History of the Church of the East* (Leiden, 2011), 234-87. On the Copts, cf. Kurt Werthmuller, *Coptic Identity and Ayyubid Politics in Egypt, 1218-1250* (Cairo, 2011).

¹³ Teule, Herman, et al, eds., *The Syriac Renaissance* (Leuven, 2010); Bayarsaikhan Dashdondog, *The Mongols and the Armenians (1220-1335)* (Leiden, 2011). With regard to the Armenians, I have tried to limit my study to their relevance or influence vis-à-vis Christians within the Mamlūk Sultanate or the Il-Khānate, although inclusion of the Kingdom of Cilicia is to some degree inevitable.

extent depending upon where they were centered and who their friends – or enemies – were. For example, the Copts were much more directly affected by the Seventh Crusade than were the Assyrian Christians, who in turn were the most directly affected by Mongol patronage (or its withdrawal). The Armenians and Maronites, on the other hand, were the most affected by the expulsion of their Frankish allies.

Geographically speaking, the area of this study takes in Egypt and *Bilād al-Shām*, as well as the adjacent Ilkhānid-ruled areas of northern Mesopotamia. In the former, the Copts were certainly the numerically dominant Christian population, but also resident were Melkites, Armenians, Syrian Orthodox, Nubians, and Ethiopians. Nubia and Ethiopia, like Georgia, are for the most part discussed in a monastic context within the area of study. *Bilād al-Shām* refers to ‘Greater Syria’, which according to the classical Arab geographers of the ninth and tenth centuries was bounded by the Mediterranean to the west, the Byzantine Empire to the north, the Euphrates River in the northeast, Aylah¹⁴ and the Arabian desert to the south and southeast, and the frontier with Egypt to the southwest.¹⁵ The late thirteenth-century writer Ibn Shaddād divides his historical topography on *Bilād al-Shām* into three sections: Aleppo and the north, Damascus and the south, and the Jazīrah. This latter section refers to that area to the east of the Euphrates in northwestern Mesopotamia.¹⁶ Another writer from the fifteenth century drew on the Qurʾān and Hadith to describe the boundaries of the

¹⁴ That is, modern Aqaba and/or Eilat.

¹⁵ Lammens, Henri, and C.E. Bosworth, ‘Al-Shām, al-Shaʿm’, *EI* 9:261-76, especially 261 and 268-9.

¹⁶ Antrim, Zayde, ‘Making Syria Mamlūk: Ibn Shaddād’s Al-Aʿlāq al-Khatīrah’, *MSR* 9 (2007), 1-18, at 4-6.

‘Holy Land’, which corresponds nearly exactly with the territory of *Bilād al-Shām*.¹⁷

The Jazīrah and the adjacent areas of northern Mesopotamia were not typically included in geographical descriptions of *Bilād al-Shām*, but during the Middle Ages the cities of this region were vitally linked to Damascus via Aleppo. It was here, in Mosul, after all, that the *jihād* against the Crusaders was first organized. The Kurdish Ayyūbids who came to dominate Syria and Egypt had originated in this region. Indeed, the area stretching northwest from Mosul to Amida¹⁸ and Edessa was a vital and important area for Middle Eastern Christians, particularly Syrian Orthodox, Armenians, and the Assyrian Church of the East, but also, to a lesser extent, Greek Orthodox. Politically and militarily speaking, the Jazīrah fell within the Syrian milieu, if something of a crossroads between Persia, the Caucasus, Anatolia, and Syria.

Within this area, the indigenous Christians were not typically utilized as a military force (with exceptions), but they did form a significant part of the civilian infrastructure. This included the governmental bureaucracy – especially the financial *dīwān*, or administration – as well as in the fields of medicine, the arts and intellectual fields, and in mercantile enterprise. These Christians – along with Jews, Samaritans, and Sabians – were *dhimmīs*, so called ‘People of the Book’ whose official position in society was as second-class citizens, but nonetheless had an established place within *Dār al-Islām* with protection and rights theoretically guaranteed by the state. In

¹⁷ Peters, F.E., *Jerusalem: The Holy City in the Eyes of Chroniclers, Visitors, Pilgrims, and Prophets from the Days of Abraham to the Beginnings of Modern Times* (Princeton, NJ, 1985), 339.

¹⁸ Or Amid; modern Diyarbakir.

practice, of course, the Islamic state's interest in supporting its non-Muslim population varied by ruler and geography and period.¹⁹ When the armies of the Prophet completed their first wave of Conquest in the seventh century, fully one-half of the world's Christians were left under Muslim rule.²⁰ Even at the time of the First Crusade in 1098, Christians in the Near East were still in the overall majority, if by a small percentage and varying from region to region.²¹ Regarding Egypt, Michael Brett has argued that Egypt's population was always relatively small and rural and at least from the Muslim Conquest dependent upon Arab immigration to maintain or increase its demographics. Thus, mass conversion to Islam by its native Coptic population was less a factor in the Islamisation of Egypt than the settlement of Muslim Arab tribes.²² Tamar el-Leithy, amongst others, has challenged conventional wisdom and argued that the Coptic population in Egypt may well have remained a majority up until the middle

¹⁹ On *dhimmi*s, see: Mark R. Cohen, 'What was the Pact of 'Umar? A Literary-Historical Study', *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 23 (1999), 100-57; Antoine Fattal, *Le Statut Légal des non-Musulmans en pays d'Islam* (Beirut, 1958), 71-84; E. Strauss, 'The Social Isolation of the Ahl adh-Dhimma', in ed. O. Komlos, *Etudes Orientales à la Mémoire de Paul Hirschler* (Budapest, 1950), 73-94.

²⁰ Griffith, *Church in the Shadow*, 11.

²¹ Hitti, Philip K., 'The Impact of the Crusades on Moslem Lands', *HC* 5:33-58, at 49-50. Dimitri Korobeinikov has amply demonstrated that Christians – particularly Greeks, Armenians, and Suriani – formed the majority of the population in Antatolia until the mid-fourteenth century. See his: 'Orthodox Communities in Eastern Anatolia in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries. Part 1: The Two Patriarchates: Constantinople and Antioch', *al-Masāq* 15 (2003), 197-214.

²² Brett, Michael, 'The Islamisation of Egypt and North Africa'. The First Annual Levztion Lecture, delivered 12 January 2005 (Jerusalem, 2006), available at: [http://www.hum.huji.ac.il/upload/\(FILE\)1228661697.pdf](http://www.hum.huji.ac.il/upload/(FILE)1228661697.pdf) (accessed 15 August 2012), 10-14. Cf. *ibid.*, *The Rise of the Fatimids: The World of the Mediterranean and the Middle East in the Fourth Century of the Hijra, Tenth Century CE* (Leiden, 2001), 285-6

of the fourteenth century.²³ By the sixteenth century, in contrast, the Christian population of these areas had shrunk to a mere seven percent. Under Ottoman rule -- in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, in particular -- a revival took place with demographics increasing to about twenty-five percent, though in Egypt it remained at about eight percent.²⁴

So what, one might ask, happened? When the Ayyūbid military slaves -- the Mamlūks -- rebelled against the new Sultan Tūrānshāh in 1250, they ushered in a new era in Syro-Egyptian society on many levels. A fundamental difference between the Mamlūks and their predecessors was that the former were largely Turkic and Mongol captive slaves indoctrinated into the Islamic religion but without the multi-religious cultural history that the Arab and Kurdish rulers would have experienced as natives of *Bilād al-Shām* and Mesopotamia. Furthermore, the Mamlūks -- as their very name signifies -- were of slave origin and required an avenue to gain legitimacy in the Muslim world that their ancestral bloodlines were unable to offer. Heavily patronizing the

²³ The popularly repeated understanding of the ninth century as a time of great Coptic conversion to Islam originated with Gaston Wiet's mistranslation of a phrase from al-Maqrīzī in which 'Muslims once again controlled the villages and collected the poll-tax' became 'Muslims became numerically superior'. The argument followed that the Coptic population then dropped to about forty percent of the population and thirty-four percent at the beginning of the fourteenth century. El-Leithy rejects this calculation as lacking adequate documentation and seems thus to suggest that Coptic numbers could well have been even greater. See el-Leithy's discussion of this interesting topic: Tamer el-Leithy, 'Coptic Culture and Conversion in Medieval Cairo, 1293-1524 A.D.', PhD Thesis, Princeton University, 2005, 19-20 and 25-6. Cf. Brett, 'The Islamisation of Egypt', 12-4.

²⁴ Courbage, Youssef, and Philippe Fargues, *Christians and Jews Under Islam* (London, 1997), 57-89, especially 58-61. Their sources are Ottoman-era census surveys.

increasingly anti-Christian Islamic ‘*ulamā*’ (scholarly religious class),²⁵ the Mamlūks prosecuted *jihād* zealously without their borders, whilst internally they sought to advance Sunni Islam to the detriment of schismatic Muslims and Christians alike. Once the external threats were extinguished (largely by 1300), the indigenous Christians became an increasingly demoralized scapegoat to placate popular anger. Mamlūk propaganda instigated rumours of Christian collusion with the Frankish enemies of Islam, leading to brooding resentment against perceived Coptic prosperity.²⁶ Carl Petry

²⁵ For a discussion of the term ‘*ulamā*’ and its historic relations with rulers, see: Yaacov Lev, ‘Symbiotic Relations: Ulama and the Mamluk Sultans’, *MSR* 13 (2009), 1-26, at 1-10. At the beginning of the Mamlūk period, the Shāfi‘ite legal school dominated the other three – the Ḥanafite, Mālakite, and Ḥanbalite. Only they had a chief *qāḍī*, and the other schools resented this. A chief Mamlūk innovative reform in 1264-5 (under Baybars) was to set up an official organisation for each school, and each with its own chief *qāḍī* in Cairo and Damascus. This equality was, in turn, resented by the Shāfi‘ites. The legal schools differed in their interpretation of the Qur’ān and Islamic law. In the context of this thesis, they were not uniform in their view of *dhimmīs*, although clearly none of them were sympathetic. The career of the Ibn Taymiya – beginning in the 1290s – increased the popularity and prestige of the rigid Ḥanbalite school. Reflecting this trend, by the end of the Bahri Mamlūk period the schools of legal jurisprudence were decidedly negative to Christians, although there were still varied rulings. See: W. Montgomery Watt, *Islamic Philosophy and Theology*, (Edinburgh, 1985), 142-6; Sherman A. Jackson, *Islamic Law and the State: The Constitutional Jurisprudence of Shihāb al-Dīn al-Qarāfi* (Leiden, 1996), 53-68. For an example of an intense legal debate between the four schools in regards to repairs of *dhimmī* religious buildings, see: Donald S. Richards, ‘Dhimmi Problems in Fifteenth-Century Cairo: Reconsideration of a Court Document’, in ed. Ronald L. Nettler, *Studies in Muslim-Jewish Relations* (Chur, Switzerland, 1993), 127-63. In the end, the influence of the ‘*ulamā*’ upon the sultan was limited to the latter’s disposition, unless, of course, they could bring external pressure (e.g. the ‘*amma*) to bear, as I argue. See: Leonor Fernandes, ‘Between Qadis and Muftis: To Whom Does the Mamluk Sultan Listen?’, *MSR* 6 (2002), 95-108. On Sufism during the Mamlūk period, a phenomenon transcending the legal schools, see: Richard McGregor, ‘The Problem of Sufism’, *MSR* 13 (2009), 69-82.

²⁶ As Carol Hillenbrand has noted, one must read Mamlūk sources referring to Christians with discernment, for ‘Mamlūk chroniclers often betray a strong anti-Christian bias and their attacks are directed particularly at the Coptic Christian administrators who played such an important role in the Mamlūk bureaucracy... Envy of the Copts’ administrative skills and high government positions was

argues that the Mamlūks themselves possibly encouraged anti-Christian sentiment so as to make the *dhimmīs* that much more reliant upon them.²⁷ When the Ottomans conquered Egypt in 1517, they largely left the Mamlūk infrastructure intact, and it is likely that this is why the Coptic population did not recover significantly as did the Christian populations of the Fertile Crescent.

Robert Irwin has argued that the legitimacy of the Mamlūks could not be based upon their expulsion of the Frankish Crusaders (despite Mamlūk propaganda to this effect), but rather it was their crushing defeat of the supposedly invincible Mongol army – the scourge of the Islamic world – at the Battle of ‘Ayn Jālūt (near Nazareth) in 1260.²⁸ When we apply this argument to the alteration of the indigenous Christian situation in the thirteenth century, it would suggest that decline in Christian fortunes was ultimately not due to Crusader intervention, but rather from the initial prosperity brought on by Mongol patronage. Unlike in Mongol-ruled territory, indigenous

common.’ A good example is provided by Reuven Amitai-Preiss regarding the Muslim writer Ghāzī ibn al-Wāsiṭī. The latter was a contemporary Damascene writing in the period after the Mamlūk ascendancy in Syria from 1260. He reports that Baybars received word that numerous Christians – including Ghāzī’s personal Christian enemies as well as Georgians, Armenians, and others – were spying for the Mongols. These events are not corroborated, however, and it seems that ‘Ghāzī may have taken real events and attached to them information about Mongol spies, in order to defame Christians generally or individually.’ Ghāzī was purposefully writing an anti-Christian polemic, but this was not an isolated event. Rather, under Mamlūk patronage, this intolerant perspective would become the normative style of writing, as demonstrated in the writings of al-‘Umari, al-Maqrīzī, and, especially, the polemicist Ibn Taymiya. See: Carole Hillenbrand, *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives* (Edinburgh, 1999), 416-7; Reuven Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamlūks: The Mamlūk-IlKhānid War, 1260-1281* (Cambridge, 1995), 153-54.

²⁷ Petry, Carl F., ‘Copts in Late Medieval Egypt’, *CE*, 2:618-35, at 618-9.

²⁸ Irwin, *Middle East*, 23.

Christians seldom held any positions of secular authority in the Crusader kingdoms and were not identified with it.²⁹ That is not to say that indigenous Christians did not suffer retaliation for Crusader attacks, whether successful or not. But that was adamantly true in earlier centuries, especially in the second period of Byzantine expansion.³⁰ In addition, while indigenous Christians might garner favour from their Frankish overlords, on a number of occasions they were indiscriminately killed alongside their Muslim neighbours.³¹ The Mongol armies included Armenian and Georgian contingents and when the Mongol invasions resulted in great destruction and havoc, the Christians were blamed equally with the Mongols. Additionally, episodes of Christian rejoicing and perceived disrespect towards Islam during the short Mongol rule in Damascus were viewed as collusion and repaid with great violence after the Mongol withdrawal. The foundation for Muslim resentment against indigenous Christians may have been established by the Crusades, but it was following the Mongol destruction of the Caliphate and their periodic invasions of Syria that anti-Christian policy became an established norm.³²

²⁹ For rare exceptions, see: MacEvitt, *Rough Tolerance*, 149-56.

³⁰ Kennedy, Hugh, 'Antioch: From Byzantium to Islam and Back Again', in ed. J. Rich, *The City in Late Antiquity* (London, 1992), 333-55, reprint in *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East* (Aldershot, 2006), VII. Cf. Jean-Claude Cheynet, 'The Duchy of Antioch during the Second Period of Byzantine Rule', in eds. K. Ciggaar and M. Metcalf, *East and West in the Medieval Eastern Mediterranean*, Vol. 1 (Leuven, 2006), 1-16, at 8.

³¹ Such as at Nablus in 1242. See: *HPEC* 4.2:268-9.

³² Other contributing factors were a hardening of Sunni religious sentiment and policy and an increased intolerance towards visibly prosperous Copts in Egypt.

The thirteenth century was continuously an era of great instability in Asia, Eastern Europe, and the Middle East, and much of the blame can be laid at the feet of the devastating Mongol expansion, which at one point extended from the Sea of China to the Mediterranean Sea. An effect of their westward surge was to push other Turkic tribes ahead of them. One of these was the Khwarazmian Turks, who in 1244 descended upon newly reinstated Frankish Jerusalem to brutal effect. Fanatical Muslims (at least in name), they did not differentiate between the various Christian Confessions, but their brutality affected them all and, in some ways, it was a foretelling of events to come. In the greater context of Mongol expansion, however, different Christian groups had different experiences and, indeed, not all of them were negative. In fact, the first half of the thirteenth century (extending from the twelfth century) is often considered a cultural 'Golden Age' or 'Renaissance' for Armenians, Syrian Orthodox 'Jacobites', Assyrian Church of the East (so-called 'Nestorians'), Georgians, Maronites, Byzantine Greek Orthodox, as well as the Coptic Orthodox of Egypt.

But these promising designations can be understood only in context and are only valid within a limited scope. All must be viewed vis-à-vis the external and greater influences of the Ayyūbids and Mamlūks, Mongols, Seljūk Turks, and Latins – and even inter-communally between each *dhimmi* confession. Lesser Armenia (Cilicia) and Georgia were at the height of their powers in the early decades of the thirteenth century, while the limited Byzantine political and cultural revival only took off with the reconquest of Constantinople from the Latins in 1261. The Maronites were busy cementing their ties with Rome, which would ultimately help them in the coming

decades. The Assyrian Church of the East would truly enjoy its greatest era of hope and influence (stretching from Syria to China) under Mongol patronage – until, that is, the conversion of the Mongol-Persian Il-Khānate to a particularly hostile Islam in the final years of the thirteenth century. As to the Copts – like the Syrian Orthodox – their ‘Golden Age’ was generally limited to a brilliant foray into the arts, particularly scholarship and wall painting, though this would likely not have been possible without some semblance of general prosperity. Under the Mamlūks, however, their hopeful situation would drastically diminish. This high period for Non-Chalcedonian Christians is generally limited by scholars to the area of literary productivity – mostly in Arabic, though significantly in Syriac, as well – and artistic developments, but in some instances political advancement was also a distinct characteristic.³³

In contrast to the Sunni Islam promulgated by the Mamlūks, the seemingly invincible Mongols appeared to carry the banner of a resurgent Christianity for many indigenous Christians of the Middle East. While a number of influential Mongols were indeed Assyrian Christian, their very basic religious policy was one of freedom of religious practice – provided that one acknowledged Mongol overlordship, of course. For Muslims, this meant the denigration of Islam from its exalted status to become equal with the *dhimmīs*. For Christians and other *dhimmīs*, on the other hand, this change in policy was a stark reversal after six hundred years of living as second-class citizens where state policy restricted many aspects of their religious practice.

³³ See Otto F.A. Meinardus, *Two Thousand Years of Coptic Christianity* (Cairo, 1999), 65; Griffith, *Church in the Shadow*, 65.

Nonetheless, plenty of Christians suffered and lost their lives under the Mongols, though not through any systematic policy. In the end, the first of the great Bahrī Mamlūk Sultans, Baybars, would prove triumphant, and would devote the remainder of his days to consolidating his rule throughout Syria, confronting and punishing the Latins, Armenians, Seljūk Turks, as well as the Mongols. While there was never a ‘Golden Age’ of Muslim tolerance for Christians within *Dār al-Islām*, the experience of Christians and other *dhimmīs* within the Mamlūk Sultanate would progressively become intolerable.³⁴

BACKGROUND

To understand the change in the situations of the indigenous Christians in the thirteenth century, it is necessary first to trace the complex sequence of events taking place at the time. The Near East was and is an incredibly diverse area, and its vast array of people groups are drawn into its political discussion. But perhaps at no time was the situation more complex and uncertain as in the middle part of the thirteenth century. And for all its diversity, it was also highly integrated. The politico-military powers included amongst the Christians the Crusader states along the Syrian coast

³⁴ Christians generally prospered during the Faṭimid period, but experienced a mixed policy under the Ayyūbids. Under the earlier Umayyads and ‘Abbāsids, periods of peace and prosperity were not infrequently interspersed with persecution. See: Samuel Hugh Moffett, *A History of Christianity in Asia*, 2 Vols. (Maryknoll, 1998-2005), 324-95.

along with their ally the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia. Byzantium³⁵ and Georgia were also influential, but their territory was outside of *Bilād al-Shām*, as were those of Nubia and Ethiopia. The Muslim powers for our area of concern were the Ayyūbids and Mamlūks in Egypt and Syria, in particular, to a much lesser degree the Seljūks in Anatolia and, until 1258, the ‘Abbāsīd Caliphate in Baghdad. The third major significant contender was the Mongol confederation which often favoured the indigenous Christians, but specifically dictated a policy of religious tolerance. Non-military entities within *Bilād al-Shām* and Egypt were essentially the *dhimmīs*, which included Melkites, Maronites, Syrian Orthodox, Assyrian Church of the East, and Copts. None of these can be understood in isolation as they were all connected in various ways, according to geographic area at a given point in time. To understand the situation of the indigenous Christians, however, we must first examine the larger context in which they were often forced to react to the actions of the larger political-military powers.

The Crusader States, for example, fit very nicely into the age of Ayyūbid princelings in *Bilād al-Shām* and Egypt. Indeed, Frankish princes and the military orders were as often in league with Ayyūbid rulers as at war with them. They were themselves, however, greatly divided between the major centres of Antioch and Tripoli in the north, and the much-reduced Kingdom of Jerusalem based at Acre in the south. The latter was ruled (in practice if not in name) by a council of barons, Roman Catholic

³⁵ At Nicaea until the reconquest of Constantinople in 1261.

Church legates, Italian maritime representatives, and by lords of the military orders. But factions within these parties often led to infighting and even outright civil war, though cooperation was sometimes achieved.³⁶ Antioch – whose ruler, Prince Bohemond V (1233-52), also ruled Tripoli – was at great odds with its northern neighbour of Lesser Armenia (i.e. Cilicia), which was arguably the most stable of the Christian states in Syria at this time. The mediation of Louis IX would soon lead to a marriage alliance between these two states, however, and their pro-Mongol foreign policy would run counter to that of Acre.³⁷ The Lusignans of Cyprus had intermarried with the rulers of Acre, Antioch, and Cilicia, and would play an important role in supporting all three over the next decades.³⁸ In all of these lands, indigenous Christians of all Confessions were present, though their diversity and numbers varied from one territory to the next.

The Ayyūbid heirs of Saladin were not so different from the Franks in that their wars were as often fratricidal as against external threats. This is certainly true amongst the chief centres of power in Cairo, Damascus, Aleppo, Karak, Ḥimş,³⁹ and Ḥamāh, but even the more minor *amirs* such as at Banias or Ba‘albakk often raided one another.

³⁶ Marshall, Christopher, *Warfare in the Latin East, 1192-1291* (Cambridge, 1992), 37-44.

³⁷ Richard, Jean, *Saint Louis: Crusader King of France*, ed. Simon Lloyd, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge, 1992), 139 and 288-89.

³⁸ Edbury, Peter W., *The Kingdom of Cyprus and the Crusades, 1191-1374* (Cambridge, 1991), 30; Ghazarian, Jacob G., *The Armenian Kingdom in Cilicia during the Crusades: the Integration of Cilician Armenians with the Latins, 1080-1393* (Richmond, Surrey, 2000), 131-56; Natasha Hodgson, ‘Conflict and Cohabitation: Marriage and diplomacy between Latins and Cilician Armenians, c. 1097-1258’, in ed. Conor Kostick, *The Crusades and the Near East* (London, 2011), 83-106, at 97 .

³⁹ Homs or Emesa.

Ayyūbid and Mamlūk Cairo was usually opposed to the Syrian Ayyūbids, while the lord of Transjordan (based at Karak Castle) usually – if unreliably – sided with his Syrian kinsmen.⁴⁰ All of these rulers leaned heavily upon imported slaves (*mamlūks*) largely of Turkic and Mongol origin – but also of Georgian, Armenian, Greek, Slavic, and other extraction – for their elite military units.⁴¹ Eventually, these (manumitted) slaves would seize control from their masters. Important minorities in Syria (in terms of political and military power) were especially to be found in the Lebanese mountains. These included Shi‘ite sects such as the Isma‘ilis (the ‘Assassins’) in the northern Lebanese mountains, who paid tribute variously to the Latin religious military orders (the Templars and Hospitallers), but were willing allies of none; the Nuṣayrīs (modern ‘Alawis), who believed that the Caliph Ali was the highest divine emanation, and were also in the northern Lebanese mountains; and the Druze (also called Ḥākimiyya or Tayāmina), followers of the deified Caliph al-Ḥākim (996-1021) and prominent east of

⁴⁰ Holt, P.M., *The Age of the Crusades: The Near East from the Eleventh Century to 1517* (London, 1986), 60-67.

⁴¹ Marshall, *Warfare in the Latin East*, 33. The Georgians were especially important to the Mamlūks as a source for mamlūk slaves, if perhaps not in the same way as the primary party in the slave trade, the city-state of Genoa, which thrived on shipping slaves from the Crimea. Their fellow Italian city-state of Venice, and to a lesser extent Aragon, maintained a very profitable trade with Mamlūk Egypt in timber and metal. The Sultanate was very accommodating to these parties to ensure the continuance of these vital people and materials. Thus, in a very real sense, the weapons of war utilized by the Mamlūks for the destruction of Frankish Outremer were largely supplied by these Italian parties. See: Eliyahu Ashtor, *Levant Trade in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton, NJ, 1983), 10-14; David Jacoby, ‘The Supply of War Materials to Egypt in the Crusader Period’, *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 25 (Jerusalem, 2001), 102-32; reprint: David Jacoby, *Commercial Exchange Across the Mediterranean* (Aldershot, 2005), II.

Sidon as far as Mount Hermon.⁴² Additionally, the Maronite Christians, fierce allies of the Latins, were based near Tripoli.⁴³ Other indigenous Christians, whether Melkite, Syrian Orthodox, or other, were generally disenfranchised as a political unit and disbarred from service in the armies regardless, due to their *dhimmī* status.⁴⁴

In northern Syria, to the north and east of Armenian Cilicia, lay the lands of the Seljūk Turks. Though largely separated by mountains, important cities such as ‘Ainteb, Edessa, Amida, Mardin and the Tūr Abdin region, as well as Hakkari, were all part of the Syrian political and cultural milieu. Many of these strongholds were conquered by Saladin and brought into the Ayyūbid sphere.⁴⁵ Ayyūb’s heir, Tūrānshāh, was exiled at ‘Ainteb guarding the northern frontier against the Seljūks when he was recalled at Ayyūb’s death during the Seventh Crusade.⁴⁶ In the Middle Ages, as today, these areas were largely Arab and Kurdish areas, though in modern Turkey. Less than a century ago, they contained significantly large Armenian, Syrian Orthodox, and Assyrian

⁴² Daftary, Farhad, *The Ismā‘īlīs: their history and doctrines* (Cambridge, 1990), 324-448; Charles Melville, ‘Sometimes by the sword, sometimes by the dagger’: The role of the Ismā‘īlīs in Mamlūk-Mongol relations in the 8th/14th century’, in ed. Farhad Daftary, *Medieval Ismā‘īlī History and Thought* (Cambridge, 1996), 247-64; Bernard Lewis, ‘The Sources for the History of the Syrian Assassins’, *Speculum* 27 (1952), 475-89; Heinz Halm, *Shi‘ism*, trans. Janet Watson (Edinburgh, 1991), 156-8 (on Nuṣayrīs); Henri Lammens, ‘Les Nosairis dans le Liban’, *Revue de L’Orient Chrétien* 7 (1902), 452-77; René Dussaud, *Histoire et religion des Noseirīs* (Paris, 1900); Nejla M. Abu-Izzeddin, *The Druzes: A New Study in their History, Faith and Society* (Leiden, 1993), 152-64; Philip K. Hitti, *The Origins of the Druze People and Religion* (New York, 1928), 26-7.

⁴³ Praver, Joshua, ‘Social Classes in the Crusader States: the Minorities’, *HC* 5:59-116, at 91.

⁴⁴ Holt, *Age of the Crusades*, 7.

⁴⁵ Al-Maqrīzī, Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī, *A History of the Ayyūbid Sultans of Egypt*, trans. R.J.C. Broadhurst (Boston, 1980), 69.

⁴⁶ Al-Maqrīzī, *Ayyūbid Sultans*, 299.

Church of the East populations. Just as in the mountains of Lebanon, so, too, did Christian minorities find refuge in the remote, mountainous border regions between modern Turkey, Syria, and Iraq. The Assyrians were based north of Mosul at Hakkari and Nisibis, the Syrian Orthodox between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers at Edessa, Amid, Mardin, and the Tūr Abdin, while the Armenians ranged from their ancient capitals of Van and Ani and intermittently on towards their new stronghold since the eleventh century in Cilicia.⁴⁷ As was also the case in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Turkish and Kurdish tribes often raided into Armenian Cilicia and northern Syria. They also controlled Mosul, which although under the sway of the ʿAbbāsid Caliphate in Baghdad, was certainly a contributing player in the Syrian milieu. The Atabeg Zengi and Nur al-Din were certainly not the least to utilize the support of Mosul in their campaigns.⁴⁸

The Mongol armies first began infringing into West Asian and even European lands in the second decade of the thirteenth century. These were, in fact, a conglomerate of many different groups originally melded together under the ruthless leadership of the famous Genghis Khān. Already by 1243, they had defeated numerous armies and sacked huge swathes of territory from Korea to Hungary, and were an ever-present fear in the minds of many, Franks, Arabs, and others. The very real and

⁴⁷ For more on the collapse of the Christian presence in their ancient strongholds of southeastern Turkey, see: John Joseph, *Muslim-Christian Relations and Inter-Christian Rivalries in the Middle East: The Case of the Jacobites in an Age of Transition* (Albany, NY, 1983), 18-24; Christoph Baumer, *The Church of the East: An Illustrated History of Assyrian Christianity* (London, 2006), 252-63; Moffett, *History of Christianity in Asia*, 2:403-10.

⁴⁸ Holt, *Age of the Crusades*, 40 and 64.

significant presence of the Assyrian Church of the East in their midst and their seemingly favourable disposition towards Christianity, however, brought hope of liberation to the hearts and minds of many Christians in the East.⁴⁹ Amongst Latins, persistent rumours of their affiliation with the legendary king-priest Prester John initially convinced many of their beneficence.⁵⁰ Those who had real experience with them, however, knew better. These included the Georgians, whose lands were ravaged from the 1220s, and, indeed, many thousands of Syrian Orthodox and Assyrian Christians were slaughtered indiscriminately in Central Asia.⁵¹ One scholar suggests the incredible figure of some six million in total killed by the Mongols, and of these some five percent, or three hundred thousand, were Christians.⁵²

Byzantium, though on the periphery and in no capacity to attempt military adventures, largely played a diplomatic role in Levantine relations, still maintaining the prestige of their ancient and noble heritage despite their greatly diminished power. When Michael VIII Palaiologos re-conquered Constantinople in 1261, he sent word to Sultan Baybars in Cairo promising him friendship and assistance. He also personally gave a tour of his capital city to the Mamlūk envoy, the Amīr Fāris al-Dīn, pointedly showing him a mosque that he was restoring. His efforts were rewarded and the position of the Byzantine emperor as protector of the Chalcedonian Christians within

⁴⁹ Moffett, *History of Christianity in Asia*, 1:401 and 422.

⁵⁰ Hamilton, Bernard, *The Christian World of the Middle Ages* (Stroud, 2003), 196.

⁵¹ Baum, Wilhelm and Dietmar W. Winkler, *The Church of the East: A Concise History*, trans. Miranda G. Henry (London 2003), 87.

⁵² Baumer, *Church of the East*, 211.

Dār al-Islām was restored. But Michael's position was difficult and diplomatic relations at times suffered, for on his eastern borders he was trying to play off the Mongol rivals Berke Khān of the Golden Horde and the Il-Khān of Persia, Hūlegū.⁵³ This rivalry was exacerbated by Baybars, who upon hearing that Berke Khān had converted to Islam, went on the diplomatic offensive and sent a letter to him 'inciting him against Hūlegū and sowing enmity and hatred between them' in an attempt to provoke him to fight 'a holy war' against the Mongols. He argued that Hūlegū was a patron of 'the religion of the Cross' on behalf of his wife Doquz Khātūn, and it was therefore Berke's duty as a Muslim to call the *jihad*.⁵⁴

While the situation was certainly more complex than Baybars argued, it was certainly a common perception of Muslims and Christians, if not necessarily Mongols. The Armenian historian Grigor of Akanc', for example, wrote that when envoys arrived from the Great Khān Mēngko appointing Hūlegū as Il-Khān in the western Mongol domains, there was great rejoicing. Hūlegū Khān 'was very good, loving Christians, the church, and priests. Likewise his blessed wife [Doquz Khātūn], who was good in every way, and was compassionate to the poor and needy. She very much loved all Christians, Armenians, and Syrians, so that her tent was a church, and a sounder travelled with her, and many Armenian and Syrian priests.'⁵⁵ Furthermore, he reports

⁵³ Holt, P.M., *Early Mamlūk Diplomacy (1260-1290)* (Leiden, 1995), 118-28; Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamlūks*, 91-4.

⁵⁴ Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *Sīrat al-Malik al-Zāhir*, ed. and trans. Syedah F. Sadeque (Dacca, 1956), 113.

⁵⁵ Grigor of Akanc', 'History of the Nation of the Archers', ed. and trans. Robert P. Blake and Richard N. Frye, in *HJAS* 12 (1949), 269-399, at 341. On Hūlegū's relations with Christians in general, see: Asad

that Hūlegū, ‘a great shedder of blood’ (but only of the wicked), ‘loved the Christian folk more than the infidels. He liked the Christians so much that he took pigs for the one yearly tribute from the Armenians – 100,000 shoats, and he sent two thousand pigs to every Arab [Muslim] city, and ordered Arab swineherds appointed to wash them every Saturday with a piece of soap [and feed them]...Every Arab man, were he great or small, who did not eat the flesh of swine was decapitated.’ Grigor also records that Hūlegū so admired the ‘extreme bravery’ of the Georgian and Armenian forces that he chose out the ‘handsome and youthful sons of the great Armenian and Georgian princes and appointed them his [palace] guards.’⁵⁶ Thus from Grigor’s testimony, we see that many indigenous Christians definitely viewed the Mongols under Hūlegū Khān as a beneficial force. Whether or not the Il-Khān himself was as specifically pro-Christian as he is portrayed – or reflected the clout of his chief Christian wife Doquz Khātūn – his policies often could be interpreted in this manner.

NINE CHRISTIAN CONFESSIONS

There are nine Christian Confessions treated in this thesis indigenous to the Near East. Who are they, and why are there nine? Before the Roman Emperor Constantine the Great (d. 337) declared a policy of toleration towards Christianity in 313, there had been numerous heresies against which orthodoxy had eventually prevailed. But it was

J. Rustum, *Kanīsat madīnat Allāh Anṭākīya al-‘uẓmā (The Church of the City of God Great Antioch)*, 3 vols. (Beirut, 1988), II: 329-34.

⁵⁶ Grigor of Akanc’, ‘History’, 343-45.

from the fifth century that major divisions within the Church were to become hardened and eventually permanent. These breaks were a combination of theological disagreement, geography, and politics. The parties in question can be divided into three groups: Chalcedonians, non-Chalcedonians, and the Assyrian Church of the East. The Assyrians opposed especially the Council of Ephesus (431), while those opposed to the Council of Chalcedon (451) included the so-called Monophysites – Armenians, Copts, Nubians, and Ethiopians. Those who favoured the rulings of Chalcedon were primarily Romans (i.e. Latins, Byzantines, and Melkites) and Georgians. The doctrinal disagreement was Christological in nature, on the Trinity and especially on the nature of Christ. Adherents to the Council of Chalcedon ('diophysites') affirmed a hypostatic union in Christ 'perfect in Godhead, perfect in humanity...consubstantial with the Father according to the Godhead, consubstantial with us according to the humanity, like us in everything except sin...' In contrast, adherents of the Assyrian Church of the East argued a theology of the 'indwelling Logos' in which God entered a man. Non-Chalcedonians, in direct reaction to the doctrines espoused by Nestorius and to some degree embraced by the Assyrian Church of the East, emphasized the unity in Christ of both a fully human nature and a fully divine nature. It is for this reason that they are often called 'monophysites', although this is improper as they did not truly argue that Christ possessed but one nature.⁵⁷ Indeed, politics came to play at this junction

⁵⁷ On christological development and its place amongst the different Confessions, see: Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of Development and Doctrine*, 5 Vols. (Chicago, 1971-89), 1:260-77, and 2:37-90. Cf. 'Monophysite' in eds. Ken Parry et al, *The Blackwell Dictionary of Eastern Christianity* (Oxford, 1999), 325-6; Sebastian Brock, 'The Christology of the Church of the East', in ed.

between the patriarchs of Alexandria, Rome, and Constantinople, as the former's elevated status in the East was usurped by the latter. As Egyptians (i.e. Copts) felt their ecclesiastical leaders attacked and resentment against Constantinople increased, so a national Church consciousness began to form.⁵⁸ A fourth relevant category of theological division is that of Monothelitism, which maintained that Christ possessed but a single will. The Emperor Heraclius (d. 641) intended this doctrine to be a means of unifying the Chalcedonians and non-Chalcedonians. This doctrine was soon condemned at the Third Council of Constantinople in 680-1, but not before it was adopted by the Maronites.⁵⁹

Of all the minorities of the Levant, perhaps none acted more as a bridge between peoples and lands than did the **Armenians** (*al-Armīni*).⁶⁰ Greater Armenia had lost its independence after the Byzantine annexation of Ani in 1045 and had subsequently been ruled by the Byzantines, the Seljūks, and, finally, the Mongols. But the Armenian diaspora spread westwards into Cappadocia, the Taurus Mountains, and into Cilicia, thence into northern Syria especially, but also into Palestine and Egypt. In the eleventh century, thousands served in Byzantine armies and many joined the Byzantine (Chalcedonian) Church. At the same time, many found favour in Fāṭimid Egypt under their kinsman Badr al-Jamālī, successfully serving in his triumphant armies, while some

D.Afinogenov and A. Muraviev, *Traditions and Heritage of the Christian East* (Moscow, 1996), 159-79; reprint, *Fire from Heaven: studies in Syriac theology and liturgy* (Aldershot, 2006), III.

⁵⁸ Atiya, Aziz S., *A History of Eastern Christianity* (London, 1968), 56-9.

⁵⁹ 'Maronite Church' and 'Monothelitism', in *Blackwell Dictionary*, 305-8 and 326.

⁶⁰ Canard, M., 'Armīniya', *EI* 1:634-50.

converted to Islam. Just as thousands of Greeks in the Near East flocked to Antioch upon its Byzantine reconquest in 969, so, too, did most of the Armenians in Egypt flee Ayyūbid persecution in the latter twelfth century.⁶¹ Many of these settled in Cilicia, which had formally become an independent kingdom in 1198, and it was about this time that Muslim writers began to refer to Cilicia as both *Bilād al-Armān* (the land of the Armenians) and *Bilād Sīs* (the land of Sīs, the capital).⁶² In the thirteenth century, many of the nobility in Cilicia joined with the Roman Catholic Church, and at least one king resigned and became a Franciscan monk. Likewise, the Armenians of Cilicia were amongst the very few to submit to the Mongols of their own accord and thus to gain great favour (if but temporarily beneficial). In 1244, and even until the 1260s, Lesser Armenia was the strongest of the Christian territories in the Near East, despite troubles with the Seljūk Turks to the north. Nonetheless, minor lords and barons were abundant, the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church was strong in its monasteries, and there was yet travel and communication between Greater and Lesser Armenia.⁶³

The Assyrian Church of the East was the great mission-minded Christian Confession to the East (as their name implies). In Arabic, they are usually referred to

⁶¹ Dadoyan, Seta B., 'The Armenian Intermezzo in *Bilād al-Shām* between the Fourth/Tenth and Sixth/Twelfth Centuries', in ed. David Thomas, *Syrian Christians Under Islam: The First Thousand Years* (Leiden, 2001), 159-84, at 161-63 and 183; Michael Brett, 'Badr al-Ġamali and the Fatimid Renaissance', in eds. U. Vermeulen and J. Van Steenbergen, *Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras*, Vol. 4 (Leuven, 2005), 61-78.

⁶² Buchner, V.F., 'Sīs', *EI* 9:678-9.

⁶³ Boase, T.S.R., 'The History of the Kingdom', in ed. T.S.R. Boase, *The Cilician Kingdom of Armenia* (Edinburgh, 1978), 1-33, at 25-6; Sirarpie Der Nersessian, 'The Kingdom of Cilician Armenia', *HC* 2:630-60, at 652-3.

as *al-Nasṭūriyyūn* (singular *al-Nasṭūrī*), that is, the Nestorians.⁶⁴ This title, however, though oft-repeated in European tongues, is properly incorrect and rejected by modern adherents, as Sebastian Brock has amply demonstrated.⁶⁵ David Wilmshurst, on the other hand, thinks this is ultimately misguided, if historically correct from a certain perspective. Assyrians did embrace the term ‘Nestorian’ in the Middle Ages, but their historical memory of Nestorius was not the same as that of the Christians in the former Roman Empire. He furthermore argues that the very term ‘Assyrian’ – embraced by many modern members – is a product of twentieth century nationalism and should be dropped.⁶⁶ Nonetheless, to help with coherence and intelligibility the ‘Assyrian Church of the East’ is most commonly used in this thesis.⁶⁷

Although Nisibis on the Syrian frontier with Anatolia was a great theological centre from the fourth and fifth centuries, the Church of the East was truly focused east and south from the territory of the old Sassanian Empire, rival to Rome in Late Antiquity. Their missionaries spread south into Arabia and east along the Great Silk Route into Central Asia. The Assyrian Church was established in Afghanistan, Tibet, and China in the seventh century, and had success converting portions, at least, of

⁶⁴ Holmberg, B., ‘Nasṭūriyyūn’, *EI* 7:1030-3.

⁶⁵ Brock, S.P., ‘The “Nestorian” Church: A Lamentable Misnomer’, *BJRL*, 78 (1996), 23-36; cf. Baumer, *Church of the East*, 7-8. Mar ‘Abdisho’ bar Brikha, writing in 1298, accepted the designation ‘Nestorian’, but argued that Nestorius was innocent of the charges of heresy made against him. See: Mar ‘Abdisho’ bar Brikha (Mar ‘Abd Yeshua bar Bērīkhā), *Margianītha (The Jewel)*, trans. George Percy Badger, in Badger, *The Nestorians and their Rituals*, Vol. 2 (London, 1852), 380-422, at 400; Wilmshurst, *Martyred Church*, 274. See

⁶⁶ Wilmshurst, *Martyred Church*, 462-3.

⁶⁷ They are also sometimes called ‘East Syrians’ or ‘East Syriacs’.

various tribes that would in time make up the Mongol confederation.⁶⁸ With their expansion along the trade routes, they also disseminated the Syriac language, which is ultimately the Edessan dialect of New Testament Aramaic and would, until sometime after the rise of Islam, become the *lingua franca* of the Near East. Indeed, the written script of the Mongols was based on that of Uighur, which in turn was developed from Syriac. Even Greek words such as *archaigos* (*archon*, or ‘chief’) filtered their way via Syriac as far as China, where it became the term for all Christians (*Yelikewen*, phonetically from the Mongol *Ärkä’ün*).⁶⁹ The Church of the East long had a presence in *Bilād al-Shām* and Egypt, but it was never very large with the exception of the mountainous area north of Mosul. But with the Mongol expansion westwards, Assyrian influence and presence followed with them. Many Mongols were themselves adherents, and this is indeed often considered the final great flourishing of the Church of the East, even a latter Golden Age.⁷⁰

The **Copts** were the indigenous Christians of Egypt and, indeed, the original inhabitants prior to the Arab Conquest in 640-2 A.D. The Arabic form *al-Qibṭ* derives from the Greek *Aigyptos*.⁷¹ The Copts were relatively stable under the Fāṭimids and

⁶⁸ Baumer, *Church of the East*, 169-210.

⁶⁹ Baumer, *Church of the East*, 205-6 and 219.

⁷⁰ Baumer, *Church of the East*, 216.

⁷¹ Atiya, A.S., ‘Qibṭ’, *EI* 5:90-5. For a general overview of the Copts throughout the medieval period, see: Terry G. Wilfong, ‘The non-Muslim communities: Christian communities’, in ed. Carl F. Petry, *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, 2 Vols. (Cambridge, 1998), Vol. 1, 175-97. He discusses the term *Qibṭ* at 179.

Ayyūbids (with notable exceptions, such as under al-Ḥākīm).⁷² As Egypt in general enjoyed great wealth, this prosperity trickled down to the Coptic Church. Thus with its own revenues increasing, the Church was able to construct or restore numerous churches and monasteries and to sponsor the production of high quality wall paintings.⁷³ Indeed, a substantial rebuilding effort occurred in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, including in 1259 and 1268-71.⁷⁴ It is very likely that this was facilitated by contributions from Coptic secretaries.⁷⁵ The Church itself, however, also owned substantial tracts of land. The wealth and food produced by these lands helped it to support the poorer Copts, either from their position in society, or from specific persecutions or famines. So long as the Patriarchate had access to these properties, the Coptic Church could maintain its status – such as it was – within Egyptian society. The Coptic Church was, obviously, the cornerstone of Coptic identity in a Muslim society

⁷² On the Fāṭimid Caliph al-Ḥākīm and his relations with Christians and other minorities, see: Sadik A. Assaad, *The Reign of al-Hakim bi Amr Allah (386/996-411/1021): A Political Study* (Beirut, 1974), 40-4 and 93-107; Maryann M. Shenoda, 'Displacing Dhimmī, Maintaining Hope: Unthinkable Coptic Representations of Fatimid Egypt', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 39 (2007), 587-606, at 592-3. Cf. Abu-Izzeddin, *Druzes*, 74-86.

⁷³ Lyster, William, 'Reflections of the Temporal World: Secular Elements in Theodore's Program', in ed. Elizabeth S. Bolman, *Monastic Visions: Wall Paintings in the Monastery of St. Antony at the Red Sea* (London, 2002), 103-26, at 104.

⁷⁴ Meinardus, *Two Thousand Years*, 157, 229, and 259.

⁷⁵ Coptic secretaries (*katib* or, plural, *kuttab*: scribes or administrators) worked either in the various *dīwāns* (especially the financial or army *dīwāns*) of the Sultan's government, or for individual amīrs. They had excelled in this position since the Arab Conquest. Many Coptic secretaries were quite wealthy and powerful, a status often beneficial to the Coptic Church and community, but also one increasingly resented by many Muslims. See: D.S. Richards, 'The Coptic Bureaucracy under the Mamlūks', in ed. Andrée Assabgui, *Colloque International sur l'Histoire du Caire* (Graefenhainichen, 1972), 373-81; Petry, 'Copts in Late Medieval Egypt', 2:618-35.

that presented such enormous pressure to convert to the religion of the military and political class.

The Copts may very well have remained an ultimate majority within Egypt up through most of the Bahri Mamluk period, particularly in Upper Egypt. The popularly repeated understanding of the ninth century as a time of great Coptic conversion to Islam originated with Gaston Wiet's mistranslation of a phrase from al-Maqrizi in which 'Muslims once again controlled the villages and collected the poll-tax' became 'Muslims became numerically superior'. The argument followed that the Coptic population then dropped to about forty percent of the population and thirty-fourty percent at the beginning of the fourteenth century. El-Leithy rejects this calculation as lacking adequate documentation and thus suggests that Coptic numbers could well have been even greater.⁷⁶ Both perspectives are to large measure speculation, of course, but Brett argues that while there were only two periods of mass conversion (the early eleventh century and the fourteenth century), the islamisation of Egypt was still less the result of conversions than of Muslim Arab immigration.⁷⁷ The settlement of Arab tribes into Upper Egypt and large-scale conversions – especially after 1354 – would greatly reduce Coptic numbers and were, in effect, the beginning of a 'dark age' lasting roughly until the eighteenth century.

⁷⁶ El-Leithy, 'Coptic Culture and Conversion', 19-20 and 25-6.

⁷⁷ Brett, 'Islamisation of Egypt', 9-14.

The **Nubians** (*al-Nūba*) lived in what is today the Sudan. Although in previous centuries they had acted at times as protector of the Coptic Christians and even invaded Muslim Egypt, by the Mamlūk period external and internal pressures had so weakened the northern Nubian kingdom of Makuria (or *al-Maḡurra*), in particular, that it was essentially annexed by the Mamlūk Sultanate. Nubian Christians looked to the Coptic Patriarch as the head of their Church, but the influx of Arab Bedouin tribes, the repeated destructive invasions of Mamlūk armies and the tribute and taxes they demanded, and the repeated appeal of Muslim royal scions to Cairo led to the demise of the Christian Church in Makuria, although it survived further south at least into the sixteenth century. There was, however, a Nubian monastic presence in Egypt and Palestine.⁷⁸

Like the Nubians and the Georgians, the **Ethiopian** presence in Egypt and *Bilād al-Shām* was largely a monastic one. Ethiopians were usually called Abyssinians (from Abyssinia) by medieval Latin writers. Arabic historians usually referred to the country as *Ḥabasha*, and geographers – Arabic as well as Latin – often were vague in its specific geographical limits.⁷⁹ The Ethiopian Church was under the authority of the Coptic patriarch (or ‘pope’) in Alexandria, who appointed a Metropolitan (or, *Abūna*) to oversee the Ethiopian Church. The Coptic patriarch was a conduit between the sultan and the Ethiopian *negus* and when the Mamlūk sultan sought to apply pressure against the Ethiopians, he might often do this by imprisoning or threatening the Coptic pope.

⁷⁸ Al-Shahi, Ahmed, ‘Nūba’, *EI* 8:88-93.

⁷⁹ Ullendorff, E., and J.S. Trimingham, ‘Ḥabash, Ḥabasha’, *EI* 3:2-6.

The Ethiopians, on the other hand, might threaten to move the Nile River or to persecute Muslims within their territory upon learning of persecution of their Coptic brethren.

The **Georgians** were often called ‘Iberians’ by medieval writers, and *al-Kūrdj* by Arabic writers.⁸⁰ Although they did have military and diplomatic relations with the Ayyūbids along the Anatolian frontier in the early thirteenth century, this changed with the Khwarazmian and Mongol invasions.⁸¹ Thereafter – for nearly a century – the Georgians were forced to serve in the armies of the Il-Khāns, often in invasions of Syria. Naturally, this complicated their largely monastic position in the lands of the Mamlūk Sultanate. Although there were isolated cases elsewhere, Georgian monks were resident at Saint Katherine’s Monastery in the Sinai and, especially, at the Monastery of the Holy Cross⁸² in Jerusalem. The Georgians were generally treated with interest by the Mamlūk authorities as the Caucasus was a key transit point for the importation of slaves (*mamlūks*), the basis for the Mamlūk armies.

The **Maronites** (*al-Mārūniyya*) trace their founding to the teachings of Mārō of Cyrrus (d. 433) and originated along the Orontes valley near Ḥamāh in Syria. The reestablishment of Byzantine authority in Antioch and its hinterland in the tenth century led to the immigration of the Maronites to the areas of Mount Lebanon

⁸⁰ Minorsky, V., and C.E. Bosworth, ‘Al-Kurdj’, *EI* 5:486-97.

⁸¹ Minorsky, Vladimir, *Studies in Caucasian History* (London, 1953), 148-56; Korobeinikov, ‘Orthodox Communities’, 197-8.

⁸² Dayr al-Muṣallaba, referring to the tree used for the cross of Christ.

(Kisrawan, in particular), between Beirut and Tripoli. Although they were considered heterodox, they were keen allies of the Crusaders and as a result a substantial portion of them became united with the Roman Catholic Church after about 1180 and were eager proponents of the Frankish presence. With the latter's defeat by the Baḥrī Mamlūks, the Maronites along with their Shī'ite neighbours entered a period of decline until the Baḥrīs were themselves succeeded by the Circassian (or Burjī) Mamlūks in 1382.⁸³

Prior to the eighteenth century, the term 'Melkite' designated those Christians in the Middle East who followed the Faith of the Byzantine emperor ('Greek Orthodox'). Thus, 'Melkite' is from the Syriac and Arabic 'al-Malik', meaning 'king'. In the eighteenth century, extensive numbers of Melkites in *Bilād al-Shām* answered the call of Roman Catholic missionaries, and carried the designation of 'Melkite' with them, hence leading to some confusion from a historical perspective. In Arabic, the historic Melkites are called *al-Rūm*⁸⁴, a term interchangeable with the Byzantines and Romans.⁸⁵ In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Melkites were small in numbers in Egypt, but the most significant in Palestine and parts of Syria, particularly around Antioch. They were also found in large numbers in Cilicia and along the frontier regions

⁸³ Salibi, Kamal, 'Mārūniyya', *EI* 12:602-3; idem, 'The Maronite Church in the Middle Ages and its Union with Rome', *OC* 42 (1958), 92-104, at 93-100.

⁸⁴ From Greek *ρωμαίοι*.

⁸⁵ Serikoff, Nikolai, 'Rūmī and Yūnānī: Towards the Understanding of the Greek Language in the Medieval Muslim World', in eds. Krijnie Ciggaar, Adelbert Davids, and Herman Teule, *East and West in the Crusader States I* (Leuven, 1996), 169-94, at 172-6; Nadia El Cheikh and C.E. Bosworth, 'Rūm', *EI* 8:601-6.

between Syria and Anatolia. Those in Antioch and Cilicia were more likely to be Greek-speaking, whilst those in the interior of Syria and Palestine were more likely to be Arabic-speaking and thus more properly designated 'Melkites'. There does not seem to have been any division between those who were culturally Greek or Arabic at this time, at least not based upon these two factors.⁸⁶

One of the difficulties in understanding medieval Latin references to Middle Eastern Christians is their use of terminology. Thus, Burchard of Mount Sion, writing about 1280, differentiates between Syrians, Greeks, and 'Jacobites'. Although Syrian Orthodox are sometimes referred to as Syrians or *Suriani* (or *Sīryānī*), in this context 'Syrians' must refer to Arabic-speaking Greek Orthodox, or *al-Rūm*. Burchard writes of the 'Syrians' that '[t]he whole land is full of these', for the most part 'servants' of the Saracens. They dress much like the Muslims and, uniquely for him, he has really nothing good at all to say about them. The 'Greeks', on the other hand, he somewhat surprisingly describes as 'exceedingly devout' and praises their prelates for their 'exceeding austerity of life and wondrous virtue'.⁸⁷ Given the general hostility felt by Latins towards Greeks progressively from the First Crusade, this is no small praise. Of course, Burchard's perspective is in the light of decades old papal policy directed at unifying the Eastern Christian Confessions under papal supremacy. Burchard even

⁸⁶ Griffith discusses the Melkite designation vis-à-vis Greek Orthodoxy in his *Church in the Shadow*, 137-9. In this thesis, 'Melkite' shall be differentiated from 'Byzantine', but 'Greek Orthodox' can be either, according to context. In general, however, I have attempted to avoid the use of 'Orthodox' independently, as Non-Chalcedonians and Chalcedonians alike would embrace this term.

⁸⁷ Burchard of Mount Sion, 'A Description of the Holy Land', trans. Aubrey Stewart, *PPTS*, Vol. 12 (London, 1896), 103-4.

quotes a Greek Orthodox patriarch to the effect that if he was treated respectfully and as a brother-patriarch to the pope – not an inferior servant – then he would be willing to unify with Rome.⁸⁸ Burchard wrote soon after the Council of Lyons (1274), which sought to reunify the (Chalcedonian) Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches. Its impact in the three Oriental Patriarchates was likely minimal, as the only Eastern representatives were personal appointees of the Emperor, Michael VIII (1261-82).⁸⁹ Nonetheless, from the Roman Catholic perspective, this may well have impacted the viewpoint of those mendicants and Church authorities then present in the Near East.

The **Syrian Orthodox** were often referred to as ‘Jacobites’ by medieval writers, after its founder, the monk Jacob Baradaeus (or Burd‘ānā). Indeed, in Arabic they are called *al-Ya‘qūbiyyūn* (singular *al-Ya‘qūbiyya*). This can be confusing, however, as Copts were also called Jacobites. As these two Churches were in complete communion (albeit having a separate hierarchy and maintaining different liturgical languages [Syriac and Coptic]), so this view is not necessarily incorrect. The term ‘Suriani’ is also prevalent, especially in contemporary accounts, while ‘West Syrian’, ‘West Syriac’, or ‘Syrian Orthodox’ are the preferred modern designations.⁹⁰ As a rule, I use the last

⁸⁸ He does not say which patriarch, but quotes him as saying: ‘Some Archbishops and Bishops wish to make me a Patriarch, kiss their feet, and do them personal service, which I do not hold myself bound to do, albeit I would willingly do so for the Pope, but for no one else.’ Burchard of Mount Sion, ‘Description’, 104. On the general Latin opinion towards the Greeks, see: Hamilton, *Latin Church*, 159-87.

⁸⁹ Papadakis, Aristeides, and John Meyendorff, *The Christian East and the Rise of the Papacy* (Crestwood, NY, 1994), 222 and, more generally, 220-7.

⁹⁰ Teule, H.G.B., ‘Ya‘qūbiyyūn’, *EI* 11:258-62. Cf. Joseph, *Muslim-Christian Relations*, 7.

title, albeit not exclusively. They experienced a great flowering of Syriac literature and artistry during the thirteenth century, and this period has therefore often been referred to as a Syriac Renaissance.⁹¹

⁹¹ Leroy, Jules, 'La renaissance de l'église syriaque au XIIe-XIIIe siècles', *Cahiers de la civilisation médiévale* 14 (1971), 131-48 and 239-55.

Chapter 1: The Indigenous Christians in a Time of Three Invasions: the Friends of Franks and Mongols? (1244-60)

The three major events most affecting *Bilād al-Shām* and Egypt in the period between 1244 and 1260 are: (1) the westward invasion across the Islamic world of the Mongols, pushing other Turkic tribes before them; (2) the Seventh Crusade (1249-50), led by King Louis IX of France (1214-70); and (3) the rise to power of the Bahṛī Mamlūks at the expense of the Ayyūbids, and marked especially by their decisive defeat of the Mongols at the Battle of ‘Ain Jālūt in 1260. The significance of this period to the indigenous Christians was the arrival of a seemingly invincible army with apparently pro-Christian sympathies and thus potentially ending the Christian’s secondary status. This pro-Christian promise of the Mongols was never relevant to Egypt as it was in Greater Syria, whereas the Seventh Crusade in Egypt coupled with rumours of a great Christian king in the East (i.e. Prester John) further increased Muslim suspicion and hostility towards the indigenous Christians. The Mamlūk need for legitimacy became enshrined in a spirit of defending Sunni Islam both externally and internally, and developed into a powerful patronage towards the influential Islamic ‘*ulamā*’. This chapter will examine these events and then look at how they affected the nine indigenous Christian Confessions.

THE KHWARAZMIAN SACK OF JERUSALEM (1244)

On 11 July 1244 A.D., the Khwarazmians – a Turkic people originally from Central Asia – sacked the holy city of Jerusalem. Having been forced from their territory in northern Persia in the wake of the Mongol advance, in the 1220s they were led by the capable Jalāl al-Din Khwarazmshāh Mengübirni (d.1231) into the Caucasus and eastern Anatolia. They spent some years terrorizing Georgia and Greater Armenia, fighting the Seljūks and, following Jalāl al-Din's death, eventually entering the service of the Seljūk Sultan Kaykubād.⁹² A decade later, they were recruited by the Ayyūbid Sultan al-Malik al-Şāliḥ Ayyūb (1240-9) to assist him in his attempt to gain hegemony over fragmented Muslim Syria. They did help him, but they were also impossible to control, as he discovered and ultimately turned on them.⁹³ By that time, however, they had already plundered Jerusalem.

⁹² Bosworth, C.E., 'Jalāl-al-Din K̅vārazmšāh (I) Mengübirni', *Encyclopædia Iranica*, 16 Vols (London, 1982-), 14:404-5; an updated version is available online at <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/jalal-al-din-kvarazmsahi-mengbirni> (accessed online on 15 August 2012); Beatrice Forbes Manz, 'The rule of the infidels: the Mongols and the Islamic World', in eds. David O. Morgan and Anthony Reid, *The New Cambridge History of Islam*, 6 Vols (Cambridge, 2009-11), Vol. 3, *The Eastern Islamic World Eleventh to Eighteenth Centuries*, 128-68, at 135 and 139; Sara Nur Yildiz, 'Reconceptualizing the Seljuk-Cilician Frontier: Armenians, Latins, and Turks in Conflict and Alliance during the Early Thirteenth Century', in ed. Florin Curta, *Borders, Barriers, and Ethnogenesis: Frontiers in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Turnhout, 2005), 91-122, at 110-11.

⁹³ Ibn al-Furāt, *Ayyubids, Mamlūks, and Crusaders: Selections from the Tārīkh al-Duwal wa'l-Mulūk of Ibn al-Furāt*, trans. U. and M.C. Lyons, ed. J.S.C. Riley-Smith, Vol. 2 (Cambridge, 1971), 61-63; 'A Letter of Robert, Patriarch of Jerusalem', in Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora*, ed. H.R. Luard, RS 57, Vol. 4 (London, 1877), 337-44, at 340-41. Cf. Irwin, *Middle East*, 13-14 and 19; Donald P. Little, 'Jerusalem under the Ayyūbids and Mamlūks 1187-1516 AD', in ed. K.J. Asali, *Jerusalem in History* (New York, 2000), 177-99, at 182-86.

In the later twelfth century, Jerusalem was estimated to have had a population of between twenty and thirty thousand. In the nearly thirty years since the Fifth Crusade (1216-18), the unstable and defenceless situation of the city had caused the majority of the population to leave.⁹⁴ Jerusalem again came under Frankish control according to the terms of the Treaty of Jaffa in 1229, and so it remained except for a brief period in 1239-41 when it was annexed by the sultan of Karak.⁹⁵ In 1244, some six thousand Christians (presumably mostly Latins) were reported to have attempted to flee in the wake of the Khwarazmian invasion, but they were set upon by local Muslims and then by the Khwarazmians so that only about three hundred actually survived to arrive in Frankish territory.⁹⁶ As for those Christians who had remained behind in Jerusalem, most of them sought refuge in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.⁹⁷ The invaders apparently had a particular hatred for Christians and destroyed as much as they possibly could. They ‘brutally disembowelled’ them all, decapitating the priests at the altars, and exclaiming, ‘Here we pour out the blood of the Christian people...’⁹⁸ Al-Maqrīzī records that: ‘The Khwārizmians fell upon Jerusalem, and made strenuous use

⁹⁴ Hawari, Mahmoud K., *Ayyubid Jerusalem (1187-1250): An Architectural and Archaeological Study* (Oxford, 2007), 16-18.

⁹⁵ Hamilton, *Latin Church*, 262-3.

⁹⁶ Rothelin, *Continuation de Guillaume de Tyr de 1229 à 1261, Dite du Manuscrit de Rothelin*, in *RHC Occ.*, 2:483-639, at 562-3; Janet Shirley, trans., *Crusader Syria in the Thirteenth Century, Crusade Texts in Translation*, 5 (Aldershot, 1999), 64.

⁹⁷ In the Christian East, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is called the Church of the *Anastasis*, or ‘Resurrection’, which encloses the Holy Sepulchre of Christ proper. I have, however, retained usage of the more familiar version of Church of the Holy Sepulchre. For an overview of this episode, see: Denys Pringle, *Churches of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem*, 4 Vols. (1993-2009), 3:32.

⁹⁸ ‘A Letter of Robert, Patriarch of Jerusalem’, 340.

of the sword upon the Christians within the city. They exterminated the men, led away captive the women and children, destroyed the structures in the Church of the Resurrection [Holy Sepulchre], and ransacked the graves of the Christians and burned their bones.⁹⁹ They also destroyed the kings' tombs and sent the carved marble columns that had stood in front of the Holy Sepulchre to Mecca, the holiest site in Islam.¹⁰⁰

Indigenous Christians did, of course, suffer at the hands of the Khwarazmians as well. Ibn al-Furāt describes the sack of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, but he does seem to distinguish between 'Franks' and 'Christians', thus suggesting that a number of Eastern Christians were killed as well.¹⁰¹ The Greek Orthodox Patriarch, Athanasios II (ca. 1231-44), was killed whilst in the church, and it can be expected that he was far from alone.¹⁰² The Khwarazmians also sacked the

⁹⁹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Ayyūbid Sultans*, 273.

¹⁰⁰ Rothelin, 563; Shirley, *Crusader Syria*, 64.

¹⁰¹ Ibn al-Furāt, *Ayyubids, Mamlūks, and Crusaders*, 2-3.

¹⁰² Al-Makīn Ibn Al-'Amīd, *Chronique des Ayyoubides*, trans. Anne-Marie Eddé and Françoise Micheau (Paris, 1994), 76, who says that the patriarch was killed and a large number of Christians burned within the church; Johannes Pahlitzsch, 'Athanasios II, a Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem (c. 1231-1244)', in ed. Michel Balard, *Autour de la première Croisade* (Paris, 1996), 465-74; idem, 'Georgians and Greeks in Jerusalem (1099-1310)', in ed. K. Ciggaar and H.G.B. Teule, *East and West in the Crusader States III* (Leuven, 2003), 35-51, at 40. His source is the diptychs of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem. Grumel emphatically agrees with him, whilst Baldwin (without providing the source) says that Athanasios II was still around in 1247, when he was negotiating with Rome. See V. Grumel, 'La chronologie des patriarches grecs de Jérusalem au XIIIe siècle' in *Revue des Études Byzantines* 20 (1962), 197-201, at 199; Marshall W. Baldwin, 'Missions to the East in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries', in *HC* 5:452-518, at 466; cf. Giorgio Fedalto, *Hierarchia Ecclesiastica Orientalis*, 3 Vols. (Padua, 1988-2006), Vol. 2, 1003. The *vita* of Saint Sava of Serbia (ca.1175-1235) records Sava's visit with Athanasios on both of his pilgrimages to the Holy Land in 1229 and 1234.

Armenian Cathedral of Saint James, killing many priests and laity.¹⁰³ A long-term effect of the devastation wreaked by the Khwarazmians was the abandonment of many churches and monasteries belonging to various Christian Confessions, including Latins, Serbs, Melkites, and Syrian Orthodox.¹⁰⁴ When the Khwarazmians were finally defeated two years later, a Frankish knight summed up what must have been popular sentiment: ‘God has cleansed the Holy Land of the wicked [Khwarazmians] and has destroyed and utterly annihilated them from beneath the heavens.’¹⁰⁵ The sack of Jerusalem by the Khwarazmians set the tone for the city and its few inhabitants for the next twenty years, when its ownership changed hands some ten times.¹⁰⁶

THE SEVENTH CRUSADE AND THE RISE OF THE BAĤRĪ MAMLŪKS (1248-50)

The sack and loss of Jerusalem in 1244 caused an uproar and great mourning across Catholic Europe. In France, Louis IX arose from his near-deathbed and took the oath of the Crusader to recover the patrimony of Christ. He and the armies of the

According to the *vita*, he also visited Alexandria, Antioch, Sinai, Armenia, and even Baghdad. See: Nicholai D. Velimirovich, *The Life of St. Sava* (Libertyville, IL, 1951), 190 and 192-207. Pahlitzsch, however, using other sources, has convincingly demonstrated that Athanasios’ reign began about 1231 and that the dates attributed to Sava’s pilgrimages should be re-evaluated. See: ‘Athanasios’, 469-71.

¹⁰³ Pringle, *Churches of the Crusader Kingdom*, 3:170.

¹⁰⁴ Pringle, *Churches of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem*, 3:97, 211-12, 268, 293, and 367.

¹⁰⁵ Guy, a household knight of the Viscount of Melun [late in 1249], to Master B. de Chartres, in Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora*, 6:155-162, at 162, trans. in Peter Jackson, *The Seventh Crusade, 1244-1254: Sources and Documents* (Aldershot, 2007), 91.

¹⁰⁶ Ibn al-Furāt, *Ayyubids, Mamlūks, and Crusaders*, 62-63.

Seventh Crusade arrived well prepared in Cyprus in 1248, a reputation as the greatest of the kings of the West preceding him.¹⁰⁷ In the spring of 1249, his army captured the Egyptian coastal city of Damietta with very little effort. The Franks (at least, some in the leadership) definitely perceived their role in Egypt as ‘liberating’ the country from Muslim infidel rule and restoring Christian rule; that is, ‘to return the entire country to Christian worship.’¹⁰⁸ This is certainly not to say that they viewed the indigenous Christians as the natural ‘Christian’ rulers of Egypt, but it does seem that they had a semblance of understanding of the Coptic and Melkite presence in Egypt. After all, King Amalric I (1162-74), a century earlier, had sought to gain the goodwill of the Copts prior to his attempts to conquer Egypt.¹⁰⁹

In the year 1249, the armies of the Seventh Crusade under King Louis IX of France first set eyes upon the coast of Egypt and advanced upon a remarkably swift conquest of the Egyptian port city of Damietta. By the time they entered into the city, all of the Muslims are reported to have fled, but at least some of the Egyptian Christians had stayed. During the Fifth Crusade in 1218, Copts had suffered at the hands of the Crusaders due to their role in defending Damietta alongside the Muslim residents.¹¹⁰ This time, as the Frankish army entered the town, the Copts [‘Suriens Crestiensz’] carried crosses prominently to save themselves and their property, which

¹⁰⁷ Jean de Joinville, *Histoire de Saint Louis*, ed. Natalis de Wailly (Paris, 1868), 49-61.

¹⁰⁸ William de Sonnac, Master of the Order of the Temple, to Robert de Sandford, Preceptor of the Temple in England [1249] in Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora*, ed. Henry R. Luard, RS, Vol. 6: *Additamenta* (London, 1882), 162, trans. Jackson, *Seventh Crusade*, 90

¹⁰⁹ Hamilton, *Christian World*, 114.

¹¹⁰ Hillenbrand, *Crusades: Islamic Perspectives*, 414.

was granted to them.¹¹¹ One wonders if they were integrated with either the Egyptian Muslims or the Franks in Damietta, or rather segregated into a special quarter? What we do know is that there was – at least before the Crusade – a sizable community of Copts in Damietta, as indicated by the presence of an archbishop for the city in 1235.¹¹²

Indigenous Christians elsewhere in Egypt and Syria suffered Muslim anger following the arrival of the Seventh Crusade. Although Syria had only been consolidated in 1245, the sultan's garrison in Damascus sallied forth and sacked Sidon of the Franks in the summer of 1249.¹¹³ We know that Melkite Christians, at least, also resided in the area of Sidon, and likely others. When news arrived a year later of the surrender and humiliation of the Franks, Abū Shāma 'heard' or 'was informed' that the Christians of Ba'albakk [between Beirut and Damascus] dirtied and blackened with soot the faces of the icons in their churches 'in their grief at what had befallen the Franks. When the governor heard of this, he fined them heavily and ordered the Jews to 'strike and abuse them'.¹¹⁴ In Damascus itself, we learn that 'the Muslims entered the Church of Mary [the ancient Melkite cathedral]...rejoicing at the losses which the Franks...had suffered in killed and captured at al-Mansūra and elsewhere in Egypt. They had singers and musicians with them and their idea was to destroy the church.'¹¹⁵

¹¹¹ Jean Sarrasin, *Lettres Françaises Du XIIIe Siècle: Jean Sarrasin, Lettre á Nicolas Arrode*, ed. Alfred A. Foulet (Paris, 1924), 1-9, at 7; *Rothelin*, 592; Shirley, *Crusader Syria*, 87.

¹¹² *HPEC* 4.1:145.

¹¹³ Al-Maqrīzī, *Ayyubid Sultans*, 292.

¹¹⁴ Abū Shāma, al-Dhayl 'ala'l-Rawdatayn, *Tarājim rijāl al-qarnayn al-sādis wa'l-sābi'*, ed. M.Z. al-Kawtharī (Cairo, 1947), 184.

¹¹⁵ Ibn al-Furāt, *Ayyubids, Mamlūks, and Crusaders*, 31.

Abū Shāma, to whom it is likely that Ibn al-Furāt is referencing, adds that the Muslims ‘set about wrecking the church.’¹¹⁶ It should be emphasized that this was far from the first time that Christians within the *Dār al-Islām* suffered reprisals for the actions of external powers. One need only look at the revival of Byzantine fortunes and expansion in the ninth to eleventh centuries, for instance, to see examples of massive anti-Christian riots.¹¹⁷

A few months after the invasion – before the tides of fortune had shifted in favour of the Muslim armies – the last great Ayyūbid sultan lay dying in his camp at al-Mansūra in Lower Egypt, between Cairo and the advancing Frankish army of the Seventh Crusade from coastal Damietta. Shortly before his death, Sultan al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb is purported to have written his *Testament* to his son and heir, Tūrānshāh (1249-50), then in exile at ‘Ainteb in northern Syria. Amongst many other issues, Ayyūb admonished his son to consider the indigenous Christians of his realm with these thoughts:

I have heard that they [the Christians of Egypt] wrote to the Frankish kings of the Sahil [the Levantine coastline] and the islands, saying to them: ‘Do not fight the Muslims. We ourselves are fighting them night and day, we are taking their possessions and attacking their women, we are ruining their country and

¹¹⁶ Abū Shāma, *Tarājim*, 184.

¹¹⁷ See, for example, Hugh Kennedy, ‘Antioch: From Byzantium to Islam and Back Again’, in ed. J. Rich, *The City in Late Antiquity* (London, 1992), 333-55, reprint in *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East* (Aldershot, 2006), VII.

weakening their soldiers. Come, take possession of it! There is no obstacle left for you!' The enemy is near you, in your state; it is the Christians...¹¹⁸

Al-Şāliḥ Ayyūb continued in this vein, blaming the Christians for all the ills besetting the Muslims of his kingdom (though affecting the *dhimmīs* as well) in the face of a seemingly successful military offensive by the formers' co-religionists. Yet despite this harsh rhetoric, life for the indigenous Christians of Egypt was not completely hopeless at this stage in history, though, in truth, it was beginning to turn much darker. The fact that many doubt the authenticity of the *Testament* as actually originating from its purported author makes little difference. If, in fact, it was written by Ayyūb's Mamlūk successors, it simply demonstrates the direction that Egyptian policy was soon to turn.¹¹⁹

Ibn al-Athīr reports that the 'entire Muslim world, men and territories, seemed likely at this moment to be lost to the East on the one hand [to the Mongols] and the West on the other...Egypt and Syria was on the point of collapse and everyone was terrified of the invaders and went in anticipation of disaster night and day.'¹²⁰ Sultan al-Şāliḥ Ayyūb seems to have shared this view and reportedly offered to trade Damietta to the Franks in return for Jerusalem and all of Palestine west of the Jordan.¹²¹ The

¹¹⁸ Cahen, Claude, and I. Chabbouh, eds. and trans., 'Le testament d'al-Malik as-Salih Ayyub' in *Bulletin d'Etudes Orientales de l'Institut Français de Damas* 29 (1977), 97-114; trans. in Hillenbrand, *Crusades: Islamic Perspectives*, 417.

¹¹⁹ Hillenbrand, *Crusades: Islamic Perspectives*, 414-19.

¹²⁰ Ibn al-Athīr, 'Izz al-Dīn, *Kamil al-Tawarikh*, Vol. 12 (Leiden, 1864), 213-16, trans. in Francesco Gabrieli, *Arab Historians of the Crusades*, trans. E.J. Costello (NY, 1969), 259-64, at 260.

¹²¹ Richard, *Saint Louis*, 122.

reasoning by both Muslims and Franks was heavily influenced by reports coming from the East, of the decimation of Islamic civilization in the wake of the Mongol advance. Rumours suggested that the Mongols were Christians, leading an interest by the Franks to an alliance with them, while the Ayyūbid rulers of Egypt and *Bilād al-Shām* feared this possibility the most.¹²² In any event, the Crusader campaign did not continue as expected and Louis' army was defeated at the Battle of al-Mansūra in 1249. The small remainder of his army (those not in Egyptian prisons) left for Acre. As a Hospitaller knight noted, '...the whole territory on this side of the sea which is inhabited by Christians...is now in a worse state than we have ever known it.'¹²³

The Seventh Crusade greatly influenced the future of the indigenous Christians of Egypt and Syria, albeit indirectly. The event in question is the displacement of the Ayyūbid Sultanate by a Bahṛī Mamlūk one with their inherent understanding of and views of indigenous Christians. Early in the Crusade, the Frankish opponent was Sultan al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb. He was ill during the war and eventually died, appointing his exiled

¹²² Rumours of Prester John, the legendary great Christian emperor of the East, had circulated in Frankish circles since at least the Fifth Crusade. A book of Christian Arabic prophecy (a variant of the *Book of Clement*) came to the attention of the papal legate in 1221 in Damietta. It prophesied that 'two kings...one from the East and one from the West' were to meet at Jerusalem in 'that year when Easter will be on the third of April' (1222) and Islam defeated. See: Oliver of Paderborn, 'The Capture of Damietta', in ed. Edward Peters, *Christian Society and the Crusades 1198-1229*, (Philadelphia, 1971), 49-139, at 90 and 113; cf. David Morgan, 'Prester John and the Mongols', in eds. Charles F. Beckingham and Bernard Hamilton, *Prester John, the Mongols and the Ten Lost Tribes* (Aldershot, 1996), 159-70. Rothelin mentions another contemporary prophecy, likely written by an Assyrian Christian in Damietta. See: Shirley, *Crusader Syria*, 29-30.

¹²³ Joseph de Clancy, Hospitaller, to Walter de St. Martin, 6 May 1252, in Paris, *Chronica Majora*, 6:205-07, at 206, trans. in Jackson, *Seventh Crusade*, 213.

son al-Muʿazzam Tūrānshāh in his place. Upon his arrival, however, the latter rather typically sought to displace those Mamlūk warrior-slaves of his father's household with his own, thus consolidating his power.¹²⁴ Those already in place unsurprisingly resented this approach, rising up and killing the Sultan (the future Sultan Baybars purportedly being the murderer). Al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb's favourite wife, Shajar al-Durr (1250), became Sultana, but whether alone or married to the Mamlūk Amīr al-Muʿizz Aybeg (1250-7), her rule was unpopular with most *amīrs*, particularly those in Syria (which was still fragmented).¹²⁵ Although power was effectively in Mamlūk hands, they were still viewed as illegitimate slaves and forced to rule behind Ayyūbid puppet sultans. Later Mamlūk propaganda would have us believe that Baḥrī Mamlūk legitimacy dates from their victory at al-Mansūra over the Franks, but they did not truly gain this legitimacy until their great victory over the Mongols at ʿAyn Jālūt in 1260.¹²⁶ Ayyūbid rule in Egypt and Syria was based on the restoration of Sunnism by established (Kurdish) princes. The previous Fāṭimid sultans ruled by conquest, but also in their status as Shīʿite caliphs. The Mamlūks, on the other hand, had only their military strength as their justification for ruling. Like their Ayyūbid predecessors, the Mamlūks were mired in a struggle for supremacy between Egypt and Syria and they needed something else to both more firmly establish themselves and also to justify their

¹²⁴ It was al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb who initially established the Baḥrī Mamlūks in Egypt. See: al-Maqrīzī, *Ayyūbid Sultans*, 294, and 310-12 on Tūrānshāh's struggle with the Mamlūks.

¹²⁵ Ammann, L., 'Shadjar al-Durr', *EI*, 9:176; Holt, *Age of the Crusades*, 84-5.

¹²⁶ Irwin, *Middle East*, 23.

rule in the eyes of the *amīrs* and the *‘āmma*.¹²⁷ They would find this with the invasion of the supposedly ‘pro-Christian’ Mongols.

THE COMING OF THE MONGOLS AND THE BATTLE OF ‘AYN JĀLŪT (1260)

Aptin Khānbaghi entitled his chapter on non-Muslims in Iran under the Mongols as ‘New Hope and Bitter Deception’.¹²⁸ This is truly an apt description. Indigenous Christians of the *Dār al-Islām* had lived as second-class citizens for over six hundred years and the possibility of legal equality and the end of discrimination was bound to be appealing. Rumours suggested that many Mongols, or *Mo’al*, were Christian and had a pro-Christian religious policy. The Franciscan Friar William of Rubruck, who journeyed to the Mongol imperial capital of Karakorum in 1253-55, reported the presence of peoples of many different religious confessions, including Christian ones such as Armenians, Greeks, Syrian Orthodox, Russians, and Georgians, as well as Buddhists, Jews, and various Muslim sects. But perhaps the most significant of all were the honoured and numerous members of the Assyrian Church of the East, established in Central Asia at the beginning of the third century and in China and the Far East by the seventh century.¹²⁹

¹²⁷ The *‘āmma* were the common people, the urban poor.

¹²⁸ Khānbaghi, Aptin, *The Fire, the Star, and the Cross: Minority Religions in Medieval and Early Modern Iran* (London, 2006), 52-87.

¹²⁹ William of Rubruck, *The Mission of William of Rubruck, His journey to the court of the Great Khān Mongke 1253-1255*, trans. Peter Jackson (London, 1990), 59; cf. Girolamo Golubovich, ed., *Biblioteca*

William of Rubruck was the first Latin to report on the life and doctrine of the Church of the East in Central Asia.¹³⁰ Many of the core peoples of the vast Mongol Empire from the East identified themselves as part of the Assyrian Church of the East either in full or in part. These included the Kerait, Naiman, Merkit, Ongut, and Uigher tribes. Prominent Assyrian Christians in the bureaucracy at the Mongol Court included: Chinqai, minister to the early Khāns Ogodei and Guyuk; his colleague Qadaq; and Bulghar, the chief secretary to Möngke Khān with whom Rubruck engaged.¹³¹ The Syrian-born Assyrian Ai Xieh was a physician and astronomer who headed Kublai Khān's (1260-94) office for Western astronomy and medicine in China.¹³² Additionally, many top-ranking Mongol women were Assyrian Christians, such as Sorqaqtani-Beki (d. 1252), the mother to Möngke Khān (1251-9), Kublai Khān, and Hūlegū Khān (d. 1265).¹³³ Hūlegū Khān's chief wife, Doquz Khātūn was a devout Assyrian Christian and patroness of Christians, instrumental in lifting the Islamic discriminatory measures against them and often interceding for Christians during attacks on cities (such as at Baghdad in 1258). According to Rashīd al-Dīn, Hūlegū did nothing without first seeking Doquz Khātūn's advice.¹³⁴ The Syrian Orthodox historian Bar Hebraeus says of

Bio-Bibliografica della Terra Santa e Dell'Oriente Francese, 5 Vols. (Quaracchi, 1906-27), 1:229-30. King Louis' envoy Andrew of Longjumeau also reported the presence of many Eastern and Oriental Christians. See: Jean de Joinville, *Histoire de Saint Louis*, 168-75. For the account of the expansion of the Church of the East along the Silk Road, see: Baumer, *Church of the East*, 169-186.

¹³⁰ Baum and Winkler, *Church of the East*, 91.

¹³¹ William of Rubruck, *Mission of William of Rubruck*, 23.

¹³² Baumer, *Church of the East*, 219.

¹³³ Baumer, *Church of the East*, 216.

¹³⁴ Baum and Winkler, *Church of the East*, 85.

her: ‘And she raised high the horn of the Christians in all the earth’ – high praise indeed.¹³⁵

The Armenian king’s brother, the Constable Smpad, sent a letter to his brother-in-law, King Henry I of Cyprus (1218-53), recording his own journey to the Mongol capital of Karakorum in 1247. Writing from Samarkand, he told how his party had come across many Christians in the East. These – persecuted by the Turkic peoples – had appealed to the Mongol Khān Genghis, who had issued his universal protection. ‘Consequently, the Saracens, who used to inspire them with fear, now receive back what they did [them] twice over.’ He also noted that the Three Wise Men had originated in Tanghat, and, because of this connection, ‘the whole land of Chata [northern China] believes in the Three Kings’ and are thus Christians.¹³⁶ The impact of such experiences and missives would only strengthen the belief amongst many that the Mongols truly were the hope of the Christians and the scourge of the Muslims. In one slightly later account, for example, from 1254, the ‘King of the Tartars’ had become a Christian along with all of his household and fifty thousand Tartars due to an

¹³⁵ Bar Hebraeus, *The Chronography of Gregory Abū’l Faraj*, trans. Ernest A. Wallis Budge, 2 Vols. (London, 1932), 1:419.

¹³⁶ Quoted by Constable Smbat in Eudes de Châteauroux, Cardinal-bishop of Tusculum and papal legate, to Pope Innocent IV, 31 March 1249, in *Spicilegium sive collectio veterum Aliquot scriptorum qui in Galliae Bibliothecis Delituerant*, ed. Luc d’Achéry, new edition by Étienne Baluze and L.F.J. de la Barre (Paris, 1723), 3:624-28, trans. in Jackson, *Seventh Crusade*, 79.

‘outstanding miracle’ in which his son was healed of a grave illness by the prayers of the Armenians and other Christians.¹³⁷

As the Assyrian Christians were generally fairly highly educated, the Mongols often favoured them for diplomatic missions.¹³⁸ For example, two Assyrian envoys were sent by Aljishidai, the Mongol governor of Mosul, to King Louis IX whilst the latter was in Cyprus on the Seventh Crusade. The area of Mosul, in Nineveh province, was a centre for adherents of the Assyrian Church of the East as well as the Syrian Orthodox Church. These envoys – Sabeldin Mousfat David and Markus, explained to Louis that the Sultan of Mosul was the son of a Christian mother and privately favoured Christians. He kept their festivals and, furthermore, ‘It is believed that if he had the opportunity, he would willingly become a Christian.’ Such statements as this – coupled with the letter of the Constable Smpad – would readily play into the popular Frankish imagination already captivated by the mythic Christian king of the East, Prester John, and seeking allies against their dread foe the Saracen. These envoys also made an ecumenical plea to King Louis, stating in the name of their master that: ‘In the Law of God, let there be no distinction between Latin, Greek, Armenian, Nestorian, Jacobite, and all who worship the Cross, for they are all as one among us.’¹³⁹ This statement is a further example of the predominant policy of the Mongols (or that which they portrayed) towards religious freedom.

¹³⁷ Bernard Gui, *Vita Eiusdem Innocentii Papae IV*, 39 (*De nuntiis Regis Tartarorum*), *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, ed. Ludovicus A. Muratorius (Milan, 1723), 3.2:592á-592ξ, at 592μ and 592ν.

¹³⁸ Baumer, *Church of the East*, 216.

¹³⁹ Eudes de Châteauroux, trans. Jackson, *Seventh Crusade*, 77 and 80.

To what extent was the Church of the East successful in converting the Mongols? William of Rubruck often declared to the inquisitive Mongols that his central purpose in journeying into Mongol lands was to see Sartaq, the son of the famous Baatu. Rumours held that Sartaq was himself a Christian, as also noted in other sources.¹⁴⁰ Sartaq's Assyrian chief secretary, Coiac, however, advised Rubruck: "Do not say that our master is a Christian, He is not a Christian, he is a Mo'al [Mongol]." For they regard the term Christendom as the name of a people.¹⁴¹ Thus, it is difficult to say if Sartach held Assyrian Christian religious beliefs or not, but his identity first and foremost was definitely that of a Mongol. Indeed, at the core of Mongol identity was the strict set of traditional Mongol laws called the *Yāsa*. These were not religious in nature and, indeed, religious toleration was enshrined within them.¹⁴² Upon Rubruck's arrival at the Mongol royal court in Karakorum, he found that the chief secretary was an Assyrian Christian and that there were many Assyrian clergy at court. He himself was placed into the companionship of an Armenian monk named Sarkis (Sergius) from Jerusalem, who had his own chapel. Rubruck, who had been trained in the skills of rhetoric and biblical exegesis in the best tradition of his Dominican order, had little patience and less respect for most of the other Christian clergy whom he met at Karakorum, who – it must be added – did not have the formal institutions available as

¹⁴⁰ Boyle, John A., 'The Journey of Het'um I, King of Little Armenia, to the Court of the Great Khān Mongke', (The Hague, 1964); reprint *The Mongol World Empire 1206-1370* (Aldershot, 1977), 10, 180.

¹⁴¹ William of Rubruck, *Mission of William of Rubruck*, 120.

¹⁴² Lane, George, *Ghenghis Khan and Mongol Rule* (Indianapolis, 2004), 35-7; David Ayalon, 'The Great Yāsa of Chingiz Khān. A Reexamination (Part A)', *Studia Islamica*, 33 (1971), 97-140.

did Rubruck.¹⁴³ Nonetheless, he was convinced that the Mongol chiefs, on formal religious matters, largely did whatever their soothsayers and Assyrian priests told them to. At court and throughout their conquered lands, they largely allowed for freedom of religion – so long as the tribute kept coming in. Just before he left Karakorum, Rubruck participated in a religious debate sponsored by Möngke Khān in which he debated alongside Assyrian priests against Muslims and shamans. While Rubruck’s description is of his side’s victory in the debate, he also notes with hopelessness that most everyone present ended the occasion with heavy drinking.¹⁴⁴ In his final audience with the Great Khān, Rubruck was told that the Mongol belief is that ‘just as God has given the hand several fingers, so he has given mankind several paths.’¹⁴⁵ George Lane has written that the ‘Mongols generally differentiated only between faithful servants and rebels or traitors. It often mattered to them little what religious mantle these slaves garbed themselves in and their only interest in religious disputes was in what way they might manipulate them to serve their own greater cause.’¹⁴⁶ Nonetheless, it cannot be denied that Christians in general and Assyrian Christians in particular greatly benefited under Mongol rule. If they were not raised above Muslims and others, they were, at least, placed on an even level for the first time in six hundred years, a policy much resented by the Muslim populace, as has been amply demonstrated.

¹⁴³ William of Rubruck, *Mission of William of Rubruck*, 163.

¹⁴⁴ William of Rubruck, *Mission of William of Rubruck*, 229-35.

¹⁴⁵ William of Rubruck, *Mission of William of Rubruck*, 236.

¹⁴⁶ Lane, George, *Early Mongol Rule in Thirteenth Century Iran: A Persian Renaissance* (London, 2003), 155.

As the Mongols advanced westwards, they destroyed all powers in their path. Christian Greater Armenia and Georgia were both included in the Mongol conquest and suffered greatly for it. Although intensely resenting Mongol domination, large numbers of Georgian and Armenian cavalry served in the Mongol armies (a common feature of conquered peoples under the Mongols), playing a significant role, for example, in the sack of Baghdad in 1258. As there were many prominent Christians amongst the Mongols, and as they were largely attacking Muslim lands, they were viewed as champions of a resurgent Christianity in the Middle East against the previously dominant ‘unbelievers’ of Islam, especially by Assyrian Christians, Syrian Orthodox, and Armenians.¹⁴⁷ But for a balanced understanding, we should consider that even Hūlegū Khān, commander of the Mongol armies in Persia and the Caucuses and himself greatly influenced by a number of Christians (including his mother and favourite wife), was brutal with those Christians who defied him or put a wrong step. For example, according to the Dominican Ricoldo, many Christians were killed at the express order of Hūlegū for sheltering Muslims from Mongols, while both Bar Hebraeus and Rashīd al-Dīn recorded how the entire Christian populations of various towns in Central Asia were killed en masse.¹⁴⁸ Earlier, in the 1220s, cities with large Christian populations, such as Samarqand, Bukhara, and Merv (a metropolitan seat) were devastated, their churches and Christian population nearly wiped out.¹⁴⁹ The truth, as Peter

¹⁴⁷ Baum and Winkler, *Church of the East*, 85.

¹⁴⁸ Lane, *Early Mongol Rule in Thirteenth Century Iran*, 152.

¹⁴⁹ Baum and Winkler, *Church of the East*, 87; Manz, ‘Rule of the infidels’, 133-4 and 139, where she discusses Mongol customs when taking a defiant city, Samarqand in this case. A Chinese visitor to

Jackson has enumerated in great detail, is that that while individual Mongols may have had Christian sympathies, most were pantheist adherents of shamanism who valued loyalty and tribute above all else.¹⁵⁰

In 1255, the Great Khān Möngke sent his brother, Hülegū, to subdue Persia and the Levant. Having eradicated the Isma‘īli ‘Assassin’ fortress of Alamūt, Hülegū next turned his attention upon the seat of the ‘Abbāsīd Caliphate, Baghdad.¹⁵¹ With the Assyrian Christian Kitbughā Noyon¹⁵² leading the vanguard and with various tributaries present (including Georgian and Armenian cavalry), Hülegū arrived before the gates of Baghdad on 19 January 1258 with an army of two hundred thousand tested soldiers. In one final bout of desperation, the Caliph of Sunni Islam, al-Musta‘sim, sent the Assyrian Patriarch Mar Makkīkhā II (1257-65) and other envoys in an attempt to placate the Mongols, but to no avail.¹⁵³ The fabled city of Baghdad was then sacked over seven days, with almost all of its inhabitants massacred.¹⁵⁴ The exception – thanks to the intercession of Mar Makkīkhā and perhaps Hülegū’s favourite wife Doqūz Khātūn

Samarqand in 1221 recorded that the population had been reduced to one-fourth of its pre-Mongol conquest number.

¹⁵⁰ Jackson, Peter, ‘Hülegū Khān and the Christians: the making of a myth’, in Peter Edbury and Jonathan Phillips, *The Experience of Crusading, Vol. 2: Defining the Crusader Kingdom* (Cambridge, 2003), 196-213.

¹⁵¹ The Isma‘īli presence, however, continued in the area. See: Shafique N. Virani, *The Ismailis in the Middle Ages: A History of Survival, a Search for Salvation* (Oxford, 2007), 30ff.

¹⁵² On Kitbughā’s Christianity, see: Peter Jackson, ‘The crisis in the Holy Land in 1260’, in *The English Historical Review* 95 (1980), 481-513, at 493.

¹⁵³ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 1:430; Wilmshurst, *Martyred Church*, 241.

¹⁵⁴ Manz, ‘Rule of the infidels’, 143.

– were the Christian *dhimmīs* and those who found shelter either with them or the Shīʿite vizier, Ibn al-ʿAlqamī, plus a few rich merchants who bought their way out.¹⁵⁵

Next on Hūlegū’s agenda was Syria via Mesopotamia. Mosul, the Caucasus, the Sultanate of Rum, Cilicia and Antioch had already submitted to Mongol rule. Aleppo had begun paying tribute already in 1247 following Mongol raids out of Seljūk territory, though this would avail them but little a decade later.¹⁵⁶ Thus, Hūlegū had little need to direct his attention anywhere but into Syria. Indeed, nearly the entirety of the Islamic world outside of Arabia itself and North Africa had fallen to the encroaching Mongols. Led by the Kitbughā Noyon, they captured various cities in their path, including Harran and Edessa, and before long had besieged and taken Aleppo on 25 January 1260. King Hetʿum I (1226-69) and Armenian forces from both Lesser and Greater Armenia joined the huge Mongol army in the siege of Aleppo. Countless numbers were killed indiscriminately – including Christians. Bar Hebraeus was then metropolitan of the city and was present during the attack. His church half destroyed and his flock (refugees from Baʿalbakk) gathered in an ecumenical setting in a Greek Orthodox basilica, he sought out the Il-Khān to offer fealty and gain protection for the Christians of Aleppo. For his pains, he was made a prisoner while those gathered in the church were attacked by the Mongols and many killed. Many others were taken

¹⁵⁵ Ibn Al-ʿAmīd, *Chronique des Ayyoubides*, 102-3; Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 1:430-1, where he says that the Syrian Orthodox Catholicos had collected all of the Christians together in the church of the Third Bazaar, where they were protected. Cf. J.-M. Fiey, ‘Les Diocèses du <<Maphrianat>> Syrien 629-1860’, *PDO* 5 (1974), 133-64 and 331-93; 8 (1977-8), 347-78, at 8:356-8; Jackson, ‘Hūlegū Khān and the Christians’, 202.

¹⁵⁶ Simon of Saint-Quentin, *Histoire des Tartars*, ed. Jean Richard (Paris, 1965), 112.

prisoner, however, and an Armenian monk named T'oros beseeched the Il-Khān and was granted an official letter bestowing authority to seek out Christians and liberate them.¹⁵⁷ Ibn al-Furāt reports that over a hundred thousand women and children were captured and most of them sold into slavery in Frankish and Armenian lands.¹⁵⁸ The dominant Ayyūbid prince in Syria and the main rival to the Mamlūks in Cairo, al-Nāṣir Yūsuf (1236-60), attempted a modicum of resistance, but soon fled southwards. When Damascus surrendered the next month, three Christian princes – the Mongol General Kitbughā, Prince Bohemond VI of Antioch and Tripoli (1251-75), and King Het'um – entered this, the former capital of the Islamic Caliphate.¹⁵⁹ At the same time, however, hearing of the Mongol advance and fearing the worse, a large number of indigenous Christians (including the Coptic historian al-Makīn Ibn al-'Amīd) fled Damascus with the sultan's permission and headed for Frankish Tyre, where they remained for some five months before returning to Damascus.¹⁶⁰

In the meantime, in Karakorum, Möngke Khān had died. Thus, a new council to elect the next Great Khān was called and Hülegū Khān withdrew most of his forces

¹⁵⁷ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 1:436. Constable Smpad rather mistakenly says that 'the faithful' were not killed, but 'only' plundered, though (doubtfully) perhaps he refers narrowly to Armenians only. See: Constable Smpad, 'The Armenian Chronicle of the Constable Smpad or of the "Royal Historian"', ed. and trans. Sirarpie der Nersessian, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 13 (1959), 141-68, at 160.

¹⁵⁸ Ibn al-Furāt, *Ayyubids, Mamlūks, and Crusaders*, 41. Cf. May, 'Mongol Presence', 137.

¹⁵⁹ *Les Gestes des Chiprois*, in *RHC Arm*, 2:651-872, at 751; Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamlūks*, 31, where he considers the account probably accurate, if embellished. Jackson, however, is more skeptical: 'Crisis in the Holy Land', 486-7. On al-Nāṣir's position, see: May, 'Mongol Presence', 138-40.

¹⁶⁰ Ibn al-'Amīd, *Chronique des Ayyoubides*, 114; Anne-Marie Eddé, 'Chrétiens d'Alep et de Syrie du Nord à l'Époque des Croisades: Crises et Mutations', in ed. Pierre Canivet and Jean-Paul Rey-Coquais, *Mémorial Monseigneur Joseph Nasrallah (Damascus, 2006)*, 153-80, at 173.

back to the Caucasus. He left for the Mongol heartland, leaving a greatly reduced army of perhaps ten thousand with Kitbughā Noyon and orders to pacify the rest of Syria and Palestine and to guard against Egypt.¹⁶¹ When word had come of the earlier advance of the Mongols, the Mamlūk Qutuz (1259-60) deposed the current puppet-sultan (al-Manṣūr Nūr al-Dīn ‘Alī, 1257-9) and took authority into his own hands.¹⁶² Not long after, the exiled Mamlūk Baybars negotiated his (and his Baḥrī Mamlūks’) return to Cairo. Mongol envoys arrived bearing a letter commanding the sultan’s submission. Qutuz – with the support of Baybars and the other *amīrs* – had the unfortunate envoys beheaded as an act of defiance.¹⁶³ Perhaps he was aware that with Hūlegū departed, the odds would be much more in his favour. There is little doubt, however, that he viewed the upcoming battle as a holy war.

As for the Christians in the Near East, what was their stake in the fortune or misfortune of the upcoming battle between the champions of Islam and the invaders from the East? Generally, one can agree with Baumer that the indigenous Christians thought of the Mongol General Kitbughā as a historic Saint George and greeted him and Hūlegū Khān ‘as liberators sent by God to free them from six hundred years of

¹⁶¹ Jackson, ‘Crisis in the Holy Land’, 492-3. Grigor of Akanc’ records that after the capitulation of Damascus, Hūlegū personally led a force against Jerusalem, which was shortly captured. He then ‘himself entered the church of the Holy Resurrection and prostrated himself before the Holy Sepulchre. Leaving a force on the spot he himself returned in peace to the eastern country.’ If this event happened at all, it is much more likely that Kitbughā Noyon, a Christian, worshipped in Jerusalem, and not Hūlegū. See: Grigor of Akanc’, ‘History’, 348-9.

¹⁶² Holt, *Age of the Crusades*, 87.

¹⁶³ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, 1.2:427-8.

Muslim bondage.¹⁶⁴ The situation was, however, perhaps a bit more complex. The Assyrian Christians were obviously firmly in the Mongol camp. Although many Georgians and Armenians fought in the Mongol army, they were also itching for independence and revolts were in the works. Cilicia and Antioch (where King Het‘um’s son-in-law Bohemond VI ruled) desperately needed allies against their Muslim enemies in Iconium and Mamlūk Egypt. The Syrian Orthodox, with a heavy presence in Mesopotamia and Syria, were generally in favour of the Mongols. Melkites, despite speaking Arabic and being in many ways of the same culture as Arab Muslims, were also hesitantly in favour of the Mongols. In essence, Eastern Christians knew what their status was as *dhimmis* under Islam: second class citizens living under institutionalized discriminatory measures in which their religion and community were inherently limited and at a disadvantage, and forced to pay a religious poll tax, the *jizya*. This is not to say that they were necessarily treated better under the Byzantines or Franks, but experience under the Mongols was that they generally placed all religions and sects as equal under the law.¹⁶⁵ The Mongols’ main concern was for the maintenance of order and financial tribute, while also at times demonstrably

¹⁶⁴ Baumer, *Church of the East*, 216-17; cf. Jackson, ‘Hülegü Khān and the Christians’, 199; May, ‘Mongol Presence’, 136. Several icons of Saints Constantine and Helen (the legalizers and champions of Christianity in the Roman Empire) were produced at this time with Syriac inscriptions. The two figures have Mongol features and it has been suggested that the later icons are representative of Hülegü Khān and Doquz Khātūn. See: Jules Leroy, *Les Manuscrits Syriaques à Peintures* (Paris, 1964), 297 and 310; Lucy-Anne Hunt, ‘Eastern Christian Art and Culture in the Ayyubid and Early Mamluk Periods: Cultural Convergence between Jerusalem, Greater Syria and Egypt’, in ed. Robert Hillenbrand, et al, *Ayyubid Jerusalem* (London, 2009), 327-47, at 338-40.

¹⁶⁵ Jackson, ‘Crisis in the Holy Land’, 493.

sympathetic and protective of Christians, as demonstrated at the sack of Baghdad. The Franks in the Latin Kingdom of Acre, on the other hand, remembered all too clearly the utter destruction of Hungary just over twenty-five years previously. It is impossible to know what the Copts felt in their inner hearts, but one can surmise that at this early stage in Mamlūk history their position was no worse than under the Ayyūbids and they had a vested interest in the continuation of the status quo in Cairo.

The Mongols had been joined at the siege of Aleppo by their Christian allies, King Het'um of Cilician Armenia and Prince Bohemond VI of Antioch and Tripoli. When Damascus surrendered the next month, the forces of three Christian princes entered this, the earliest capital of Islam. It is little wonder, therefore, that the local Christians rejoiced at their new special protector. The Mamlūk polemicist Ghāzī ibn al-Wāsiṭī may have been seeking to implicate his enemy al-Makīn ibn al-'Amīd in colluding with the Mongols, but he does provide an account of the *dhimmī* position (briefly) under the Mongols.¹⁶⁶ Ghāzī's specific target was Ibn al-'Amīd, a contemporary historian, the chief army clerk (*kātib al-jaysh*) in Damascus, and also a Christian.¹⁶⁷ Ghāzī accuses him of traveling into Mongol territory in 1259 with gifts from the 'rich Christians in Damascus' and presenting them to Hūlegū Khān, thereby obtaining a decree for throughout Mongol domains that 'every religious sect could proclaim its faith openly' and that 'the members of one religious body should not

¹⁶⁶ Amitai-Preiss does emphasize, however, that the account is somewhat suspect as it is embedded in anti-Christian polemic.

¹⁶⁷ Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamlūks*, 154.

oppose those of another'. Ghāzī is particularly scornful of this concept of complete religious freedom within the *Dār al-Islām*. A second point of this decree was the seizure of one-third of Muslim religious income on the pretext that collusion amongst Muslim religious officials led, in effect, to tax fraud. Al-'Amīd stopped by the Monastery of Our Lady of Ṣaydnāyā¹⁶⁸ en route to Damascus, where he 'entered the city...in open daylight, with drums and trumpets, cymbals, silver-inlaid censers...raising cries in a loud voice, carried by this large multitude [proclaiming] "the Messiah Jesus son of Mary!" and "the Holy Cross!" Whenever they passed by a mosque or a madrasa, they halted there and sprinkled upon the doors [of these buildings] wine from the residue in the flasks out of which they had drunk, loudly wishing "long life" to the dynasty of [Hūlegū].'¹⁶⁹ The polemical purpose of Ghāzī as propaganda should again be emphasized, but there is nonetheless likely some truth in his description.

Ghāzī reports that Baybars had Ibn al-'Amīd seized and imprisoned for eleven years. At his release, 'it was considered proper by Moslems to seize the property of Christians, their wives and their very lives.' His statement that in the end, 'not a single Christian [or] Jew remained in the land' is an obvious exaggeration, but it is very likely that many fled to secluded regions for safety.¹⁷⁰ As long as Mongol forces were

¹⁶⁸ *Dayr Sayida Ṣaydnāyā* (الدير السيدة صيدنايا) was (and is) a Byzantine monastery located north of Damascus, founded in the sixth century.

¹⁶⁹ Ghāzī b. al-Wāsiṭī, 'An Answer to the Dhimmīs', 446-47 and 449. Cf. Browne, *Eclipse of Christianity in Asia*, 150.

¹⁷⁰ Ghāzī b. al-Wāsiṭī, 'An Answer to the Dhimmīs', 450.

victorious, Christians by and large fared well under them. As the setbacks mounted, however, indigenous Christians were punished for their breach of the *dhimmi* code.

After Damascus surrendered, Mongol detachments had raided Hebron, Nablus, and Gaza, leaving a small garrison in Gaza. But it was not the ‘Saracens’ who alone suffered, as the Mongols (after provocative Latin raids) ‘destroyed the city of Sidon, in which they slew numerous Christians.’¹⁷¹ On 26 March 1260, Qutuz marched with all the (reluctant) hosts of Egypt towards the Mongol front. Though like most Mamlūks of Turkic origin and thus of the same background as many in the Mongol armies, he very much portrayed this campaign as a *jihad* in defence of Sunni Islam. Baybars, in the vanguard, soon sent the Mongol garrison at Gaza packing. Outside of Acre, Qutuz consulted with the Franks and obtained their promise to stay neutral during the coming battle.¹⁷² Battle was joined between the vanguard – again commanded by Baybars – and the advance forces of the Mongols at ‘Ayn Jālūt – the “Spring [or ‘Fountain’] of Goliath.” When Kitbughā heard of this, he immediately set out from Damascus with the main bulk of his army. However, a revolt in this city caused him to return and spend invaluable time in pacifying it. Several days later, the greatly out-numbered Mongol army with its Armenian, Georgian, and Antiochian auxiliaries marched for battle against the enemy in Palestine. This, in turn, gave Qutuz time to lay a trap – a

¹⁷¹ *Chronicle of Mengko*, ch. 9.2, ed. Ludewicus Weiland, in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptorum*, Vol. 23, ed. Georg H. Pertz (Hannover, 1874), 523-61, at 549; May, ‘Mongol Presence’, 141-2.

¹⁷² Jackson suggests that the silence in the Muslim sources over these negotiations indicate that the Sultan asked for Frankish military assistance, but they refused. Promoting himself as the defender of Islam, however, he could ill afford to be seen as seeking ‘infidel’ help. See: Jackson, ‘Crisis in the Holy Land’, 503.

typical Mongol ploy of feigned retreat whilst outflanking the enemy. When the armies met, on 3 September 1260, General Kitbughā fell for the bait and was, eventually, defeated.¹⁷³

When word came to the Muslims of Damascus that the Mongol army had been defeated, they immediately sought vengeance against any and all who were perceived to have been sympathizers. Chief amongst their targets were indigenous Christians and Jews – who were resented for having broken the *dhimmī* covenant – but also fellow Muslims.¹⁷⁴ It has been estimated that the population of Damascus during this period was about one hundred thousand – second only to Cairo. A late twelfth century traveller gives the Jewish population at about three thousand, along with two hundred Samaritans.¹⁷⁵ Although we can be certain that the various Christians (Melkites, Syrian Orthodox, Armenians, and Assyrians) together numbered more than the Jews, they were still a minority in the midst of the Muslim Arabs, Turks, Kurds, and Mamlūks. Additionally, as they were primarily located in their traditional quarter in the southeastern part of the city called Bāb Tūmā,¹⁷⁶ they were easily found by the vengeful mobs. As al-Maqrīzī reports:

¹⁷³ May, 'Mongol Presence', 142-8; Thorau, *Lion of Egypt*, 75-8; Irwin, *Middle East*, 33-4. Both Constable Smpad and Grigor of Akanc' blame Kitbughā for not following his directions and maintaining a defensive posture as opposed to going on the offensive. See: Smpad, 'Armenian Chronicle', 160; Grigor of Akanc', 'History', 348-9.

¹⁷⁴ Thorau, *Lion of Egypt*, 78.

¹⁷⁵ Ziadeh, Nicola A., *Damascus under the Mamlūks* (Norman, OK, 1964), 60-61.

¹⁷⁶ From Saint Thomas Gate, along the 'street called straight' and ending at Bāb Sharqī.

On that particular Sunday, the Sultan went to Tabriya and he rode to Damascus teaching people about the wars of God (regarding the Islamic Conquest) and how the Tatars had deceived him. So when the letter arrived, the people were greatly happy with it. And they went to the Christian houses and destroyed whatever they could. And they destroyed the Church of the Jacobites and the Church of Mary. And they burned it until it became ashes. And they killed many Christians. Many hid. The cause of this was that during the Mongol occupation they [the Christians] tried to damage the mosques and the minarets that were around their churches. And they called for the ringing of [church] bells and they raised [the Cross] and they took wine through the streets and threw wine on the Muslims.¹⁷⁷

The Jews were plundered of their goods and a number of Muslims who had helped the Mongols were killed outright. Mamlūk soldiers prevented the angry masses from destroying the Jewish synagogues and eventually restored order, but until then the situation was incredibly dangerous for any viewed as having pro-Mongol sympathies.

A consequence of the Mongol incursion into Syria was the collapse of Ayyūbid independence and the creation of a vacuum of power.¹⁷⁸ Thus, following the Battle of ‘Ayn Jālūt, Qutuz was able to consolidate Mamlūk control centralized from Cairo. He

¹⁷⁷ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, 1.2:432. Cf. Quṭb al-Dīn Mūsā al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl Mir’āt al-Zamān*, 4 Vols. (Hyderabad, 1954-61), 1:362-3; Ibn Shākir al-Kutubī, *Uyūn al-tawārikh*, Vol. 20 (Baghdad, 1980), 227-8.

¹⁷⁸ Jackson, ‘Crisis in the Holy Land’, 505.

was wary of granting ambitious *amīrs* potential independent power bases in Syria, and thus soon commanded the majority to return with him to Egypt. The Amīr Baybars urged Qutuz to attack the Frankish city of Acre whilst he had the army mobilized, so winning a victory over the Christians as he had over the Tartars. But the sultan wanted to keep faith with the Christians and did not agree to the amīr's proposal, for which reason [Baybars] rose against his sultan and lord and slew him, usurping the kingship for himself.¹⁷⁹

In true Turkic-Mongol tradition, Baybars (1260-77), as the lead conspirator who murdered Qutuz, was recognized as Sultan. Thus began the beginning of the end of the last Frankish outposts in Outremer. Although Mamlūk historians emphasized the Bahri Mamlūk role in the victory of Islam over the Christian Franks in 1250 as the basis for their legitimacy, this latter was truly gained in the role of champions of Sunni Islam against the seemingly invincible tide of the heathen Mongols.¹⁸⁰ As Anne Broadbridge has amply described the situation: '[G]iven both their own lack of lineage and the awesome challenge of Mongol prestige...the early Mamlūk sultans and the scholars around the throne turned to an ideology of legitimacy that was defined simultaneously by religion and military action.'¹⁸¹ The Mamlūks defined 'Ayn Jālūt as part of a religious war – not just a single battle – and thereafter extended the theatre of war to

¹⁷⁹ William of Tripoli, 'De statu Sarracenorum', in Hans Prutz, *Kulturgeschichte Kreuzzüge* (Berlin, 1883), 586.

¹⁸⁰ Irwin, *Middle East*, 23.

¹⁸¹ Broadbridge, Anne F., 'Mamlūk Legitimacy and the Mongols: The Reigns of Baybars and Qalawun,' *MSR* 5 (2001), 91-118, at 94.

include both schismatic Muslims and those who were not Muslim at all. Although native Christians in Syria and Egypt had occasionally suffered at the hands of Muslims in revenge against Frankish aggression (as earlier following the Byzantine re-conquest of Antioch in 969 A.D.), only after the rise of the Mamlūks did this become a fixture. Indeed, attacks and even massacres of Christians in the 1260s became a not uncommon occurrence in Syria and Egypt, encouraged ‘by the bigotry of preachers, by the intransigence of the *‘ulamā’*, and by anxiety in the face of Mongol aggression.’¹⁸² The harsh persecution and strict enforcement of the *dhimmī* sumptuary laws endemic to the fourteenth century were not yet universal, however, and Baybars understood the difference between indigenous Arabic-speaking Christians and those of Latin extraction.¹⁸³ Nonetheless, the early Mamlūks were heavily dependent upon the Islamic religious scholars to support them both ideologically and practically amongst the populace, and thus at times they gave in to their demands for the harsh enforcement of the sumptuary laws with the *ahl al-dhimma* despite their reliance on the Copts for running the empire.

Following the sack of Baghdad, thousands of refugees – Christians, Jews, and Muslims – had fled across the frontier with Syria and to Egypt. Of these, there were

¹⁸² Micheau, Françoise, ‘Eastern Christianities (eleventh to fourteenth century): Copts, Melkites, Nestorians and Jacobites’, in ed. Michael Angold, *The Cambridge History of Christianity* (Cambridge, 2006), 373-403, at 388.

¹⁸³ This savvy sultan, for example, offered amnesty to the large contingent of indigenous Christian soldiers during the siege of the Templar castle of Safed in upper Galilee in 1266. Many soon deserted and the castle capitulated, and the Templars were executed. See: Marshall, *Warfare in the Latin East*, 235.

several who claimed ‘Abbāsīd blood and the right to be called caliph. Although the Caliphate was initially re-established in Aleppo, before long Baybars installed the caliph in Cairo. The Sultan was thus the protector of the Muslim Caliphate, further strengthening his claim to legitimacy.¹⁸⁴ As Holt explains, “The Mamlūk regime, which had begun in the resistance to the French Crusaders, presented itself as embodying the spirit of the *jihād* as its public pronouncements, made through the mouth of the caliph, bore witness.”¹⁸⁵ Thus defining itself as the champion of Sunni Islam against all heretics and schismatics, it became perhaps inevitable that all non-Sunnis within the empire would eventually suffer once there were no external ‘infidel’ threats.

¹⁸⁴ Heidemann, Stefan, *Das Aleppiner Kalifat (A.D. 1261): vom Ende des Kalifates in Bagdad über Aleppo zu den Restaurationen in Kairo* (Leiden, 1994), 163-82. The investiture ceremony was intentionally elaborate, strengthening Baybars’ and the Mamlūks’ portrayal as defenders of Islam. Cf. Lev, ‘Symbiotic Relations’, 10-14.

¹⁸⁵ Holt, *Age of the Crusades*, 95.

NINE CHRISTIAN CONFESSIONS

ARMENIANS

The events of 1244-60 had a vital impact upon the Armenians in Cilicia as well as those living throughout Greater Syria. The Armenians were unique amongst the indigenous Christians in that they had a politico-military state on the very borders of *Bilād al-Shām*. Sandwiched between hostile Muslim powers and faced with a Latin Kingdom in decline, the seemingly Christian-friendly Mongols were apparently the great protector that the Armenian Kingdom desperately needed. The Seventh Crusade, on the other hand, did not have a direct impact upon Cilicia. Any impact was due to the presence of King Louis IX of France, whose intercession ended the feud between Antioch and Sīs, leaving the Frankish territory in a stronger state, as well. Finally, the collapse of the Ayyūbid principalities and the rise of a unified Mamlūk state created an ultimately impossible situation for the small kingdom. By tying the Armenian's fate to that of the Mongol invaders, King Het'um traded short-term gain for long-term decline, as Cilicia would suffer endless raids and invasions from the Mamlūks over the next century.

In the year 1243, the Mongols under Baijū defeated the Seljūk sultan, Kay-Khusraw II (1237-46), at Köse Dagh in Anatolia.¹⁸⁶ Large numbers of Georgians and Armenians fought alongside the Mongols versus the Seljūk forces, which itself included two thousand Frankish mercenaries, many likely fortune-seekers from Louis IX's

¹⁸⁶ Holt, *Age of the Crusades*, 173; Thorau, *Lion of Egypt*, 59.

army.¹⁸⁷ Kay-Khusraw's wife and children sought asylum with his vassal King Het'um I of Cilician Armenia, but he – seeing the potential of Mongol friendship – handed them over to the Mongols. In a foreshadowing of events to come, when the Mongols departed back to their stronghold in the Caucasus, Seljūk forces invaded the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia in revenge for this breach of the code of hospitality. Only fierce storms – and a large contingent of Frankish mercenaries – helped to turn them back.¹⁸⁸ Seeing the fierce devastation and slaughter inflicted by the Mongols, King Het'um with his counsellors decided to submit to them and pay tribute to keep them out of their own country. Thus, the Constable Smpad, the king's brother, was dispatched to the Mongol capital of Karakorum in 1247 to formally seek the friendship and support of the Mongols against his Muslim enemies. The Armenian historian Grigor of Akanc' records that the Great Khān was so pleased with Smpad's offer of submission that he granted him a 'real Tat'ar [Mongol] queen with a crown' and, more importantly, an exemption from taxes of 'our land and our monasteries, and of all Christians.'¹⁸⁹

A new challenge that arose in the thirteenth century for the indigenous Christians of the Near East was the increasing emphasis within the Papacy on a feudal

¹⁸⁷ May, Timothy M., 'The Mongol Presence and Impact in the Lands of the Eastern Mediterranean', in eds. Donald J. Kagay and L.J. Andrew Villalon, *Crusaders, Condottieri, and Cannon: Medieval Warfare in Societies Around the Mediterranean* (Leiden, 2003), 133-56, at 134. It is likely that the multi-ethnic Seljūk army included Greeks, Armenians, Georgians, and Turkomāns as it had throughout the 1230s. See: Yildiz, 'Reconceptualizing the Seljuk-Cilician Frontier', 111-2.

¹⁸⁸ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 1:410. Het'um was forced to submit to the Seljūk sultan in 1226 and even minted bilingual coins up until 1245. See: Yildiz, 'Reconceptualizing the Seljuk-Cilician Frontier', 111.

¹⁸⁹ Grigor of Akanc', 'History', 313 and 315; May, 'Mongol Presence', 135-6.

primacy across the Christian world and a new missionary impetus spearheaded by the newly-founded mendicant orders. Many of the nobility and higher clergy reacted positively towards this outreach, such as King Het'um of Cilicia and the Catholicos Konstantin I Bartzraberdtsi (1221-67). Many others, however, especially monks and the common people, were quite hostile. At a meeting at Acre in 1262 with the papal legate, the Armenian envoy Mëkhithar de Daschir (representing Catholicos Konstantin) declared that the Armenian Catholicosate was as apostolic as that of Rome. The pope had no authority, he said, to make judgment against other sees and yet remain above trial himself.¹⁹⁰ Not all indigenous Christians were as hostile, of course, but then many who were friendly had limited or no experience in dealing with Rome. Indeed, even though Latin missions were to be found in Baghdad and further east, their largest concentration was in the heavily Christian areas of Georgia, Greater Armenia, and northern Persia.¹⁹¹ For example, in response to the Georgian Queen Rusudan's (1223-45) plea for military aid in 1239, Pope Gregory IX (1227-41) sent her Dominican friars. Thirteenth-century popes recognized the benefit of establishing native clergy, and amongst its most important was that of the Armenian Brotherhoods, who though initiated in the Kingdom of Cilicia, were greatly active in the Armenian heartland in

¹⁹⁰ 'Relation de la Conférence tenue entre le Docteur Mëkhithar de Daschir Envoyé du Catholicos Constantine Ier et le Légat du Pape à st-Jean-d'Acre, en 1262', in *RHC Arm.*, 1:691-8, at 697; Seta B. Dadoyan, *The Armenian Catholicosate from Cilicia to Antelias: An Introduction* (Antelias, Lebanon, 2003), 112.

¹⁹¹ Gillman, Ian, and Hans-Joachim Klimkeit, *Christians in Asia Before 1500* (Ann Arbor, 1999), 142.

eastern Anatolia.¹⁹² The Cilician Armenian royalty – integrated as it was with Frankish aristocracy – encouraged a Latinizing policy within the Armenian Church, and formal union was initiated on several occasions in the thirteenth century.¹⁹³ While some in the Church accepted various amounts of reform along Latin policy, most opposed it (especially in Greater Armenia) and the vast majority of the laity were actively hostile to the concept. Indeed, the *Vardapets* (divines) of Greater Armenia were perpetually discontented with the failure of the ‘western’ Armenians to adhere to historic orthodoxy of the Armenian Apostolic Church, and repercussions would follow in the early fourteenth century.¹⁹⁴

Even in this period of great upheaval, scholarship and the arts flourished in Cilicia, and the Latin influence was also notable in certain specific areas. Following the successful conquest of Jerusalem in 1099 in the First Crusade, a significant period of Armenian literary activity was initiated by the newly established Armenian nobility (notably several queens). Wandering monks and scribes from Greater Armenia and the Armenian diaspora often went on pilgrimage to Jerusalem and many of them stayed on for a period of time.¹⁹⁵ At the time of Saladin’s conquest, the Armenian community in Jerusalem numbered about 1,500 and were centred in the southwestern corner of the

¹⁹² Richard, Jean, *La Papauté et les missions d’Orient au moyen age (XIIIe-XVe siècles)* (Paris, 1977), 200-26. See below, 309ff.

¹⁹³ Baldwin, ‘Missions to the East’, 469. The later King Het’um II (1289-96, 1299-1301) actually renounced the throne and became a Franciscan monk. See: Dadoyan, *Armenian Catholicosate*, 43.

¹⁹⁴ Dadoyan, *Armenian Catholicosate*, 24 and 30.

¹⁹⁵ Terian, Abraham, ‘Armenian Writers in Medieval Jerusalem’, in ed. Thomas Hummel, Kevork Hintlian, and Ulf Carmesund, *Patterns of the Past, Prospects for the Future: The Christian Heritage in the Holy Land* (London, 1999), 135-56, at 144.

city around the Cathedral of Saint James the Less (formerly the grounds of a Georgian church) near Mount Zion.¹⁹⁶ Armenian clergy were second only to the Greek Orthodox clergy in pre-eminence in the Holy Places, and also possessed countless relics and religious items. Following the destruction of Jerusalem by the Khwarazmians in 1244, for a contemporary example, the Armenians salvaged a piece of the stone (smashed by the Khwarazmians) that had been rolled away from the door of the Tomb of Christ.¹⁹⁷ Pilgrim accommodation was organized by the monastic Brotherhood of Saint James, which also functioned as the guardian of the Armenian-controlled Holy Places.¹⁹⁸ During their stay, pilgrim monks composed, copied, and translated numerous theological and sacred texts and then disseminated them wherever there were Armenian communities.¹⁹⁹ One of the greatest theologians of the Armenian Church, Vardan Vardapet Arewelts'i (d. 1271), discovered on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem in 1240 two apocryphal texts on the martyrdom of the Apostle James that were not known outside of the local community. He copied and translated the manuscripts and sent several copies to Armenia and Cilicia.²⁰⁰ Later, Arewelts'i was invited by the Catholicos Konstantin to stay at his fortress-seat of Hromklay Qal'at al-Rūm, where, at King Het'um's request, he wrote a grammar. Returning to Armenia, he continued to write

¹⁹⁶ Azarya, Victor, *The Armenian Quarter of Jerusalem* (Jerusalem, 1987), 59-60.

¹⁹⁷ Hintlian, Kevork, *History of the Armenians in the Holy Land* (Jerusalem, 1976), 60.

¹⁹⁸ Azarya, *Armenian Quarter*, 60.

¹⁹⁹ For example, in 1279, King Levon sent as a royal gift an illuminated manuscript to the Armenian Monastery of Saint Matthew of Perugia in Italy. See: Sirarpie Der Nersessian, *Miniature Painting in the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia from the Twelfth to the Fourteenth Century*, 2 Vols. (Washington, DC, 1993), 1:93.

²⁰⁰ Terian, 'Armenian Writers', 142.

biblical commentaries, hymns, and other treatises, which his pilgrimage to Jerusalem certainly influenced.²⁰¹

Interestingly, about the time of the loss of Jerusalem by the Franks, the Armenian territory of Cilicia became a proper kingdom and its rulers conferred much wealth upon its numerous monasteries. As such, a rich and vibrant period of manuscript production began and would continue despite waning political fortunes in the latter thirteenth century. Indeed, not unlike Byzantium's cultural flourishing in its final century despite increasing political insignificance, so, too, did the Kingdom of Cilicia have an outpouring of artistic and literary output in the latter thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries despite constant invasions by Seljūk and then Mamlūk armies bent on rampant destruction.²⁰² Luxury manuscripts were produced chiefly under the patronage of various church hierarchs until the reign of Het'um I (1226-69), when princely patronage began to supersede that of the Church. The chief scriptoria were those of the patriarchal see and the important monasteries of Drazark, Skevra, and Grner. Fine manuscripts were given as royal gifts to monasteries throughout Cilicia, Greater Armenia, and the Armenian diaspora.²⁰³ Besides royal and aristocratic patronage – which was quite significant – monasteries worked hard to build up monastic libraries. The Monastery of Grner (east of the Cilician Gates), for example, reached its height after 1259 when a younger brother of Het'um, John Baldwin, was

²⁰¹ Terian, 'Armenian Writers', 148-49.

²⁰² Nersessian, *Miniature Painting*, 1:77.

²⁰³ Nersessian, *Miniature Painting*, 1:93.

consecrated as bishop of the surrounding region. Besides a central scriptorium at Grner, he maintained lesser ones at smaller monasteries (many quite remote) and worked through a network of other Cilician monasteries to borrow new manuscripts for copying. As with others of the royal family, Bishop John desired finely illustrated manuscripts either for his library or to give as gifts.²⁰⁴

The literary culture of Cilicia was not, it is true, completely focused on the sacred. In the legal sphere, for example, the Constable Smpad Sparapet translated the *Assizes of Antioch* into Armenian around 1250. Later, in 1265, he adapted the *Law Code* of Mxit'ar Goš (codified in Greater Armenia in 1184) to infuse Western feudal concepts. Cilician Armenia was thus a feudal society based upon the Western model, unlike Greater Armenia where earlier traditions continued more along a Persian model. Beyond legal treatises, there existed within Cilicia popular literature akin to that patronized by the aristocracy in France. New literary genres included metered history, lyrical poetry, and the lamentation. Many women read and wrote, while there were also professional Armenian wandering singers, called *asugh*, not unlike French troubadours. Three of the latter reportedly sang for King Louis in 1248 en route to Jerusalem for pilgrimage. One of the most popular songs regarding the Cilician era is the elegy for Levon, the son of Het'um, which laments his captivity in Mamlūk Egypt from 1266-68. While the wealthier classes generally embraced Frankish culture and even imported large quantities of material goods, the greater mass of the Armenian

²⁰⁴ Nersessian, *Miniature Painting*, 1:77-78.

populace rejected this orientation and looked to their spiritual homeland in Greater Armenia. Much of the internal friction at this time was with the higher echelons' efforts to Latinize the Armenian Church, a policy rejected by the common people and vocalized by the Vardapets of the monasteries in Greater Armenia.²⁰⁵

ASSYRIAN CHURCH OF THE EAST

Although the great population centres of the Church of the East were always in Mesopotamia and eastward, in the mid-thirteenth century there were Assyrian communities in *Bilād al-Shām*. Most significantly, the region of the Tūr Abdin between Edessa, Nisibis, and Hakkari was still a significant area of interaction between Assyrians and Syrian Orthodox as well as Greek Orthodox and Armenians.²⁰⁶ Elsewhere in *Bilād al-Shām* they were fewer in number, but still present. Bar Hebraeus, for example, though Syrian Orthodox, studied under the tutelage of an Assyrian Christian in Tripoli.²⁰⁷ Their presence would increase, if temporarily, during the Mongol expansion westwards.

Although the Mongols valued the Assyrians for their high level of education, few Roman Catholic missionaries appreciated this fact. Indeed, Franciscan and Dominican

²⁰⁵ Weitenberg, J.J.S., 'Literary Contacts in Cilician Armenia', in eds. Krijnie Ciggaar, Adelbert Davids, and Herman Teule, *East and West in the Crusader States I* (Leuven, 1996), 63-72. Het'um built a church in Jerusalem in memory of his son T'oros, who was killed in the same battle when Levon was captured. See: Pringle, *Churches of the Crusader Kingdom*, 3:385.

²⁰⁶ Joseph, *Muslim-Christian Relations*, 18-22. Tūr 'Ab[i]Din means 'the Mountain of Worshippers'.

²⁰⁷ Gillman and Klimkeit, *Christians in Asia Before 1500*, 143.

mendicants typically condemned their ignorance. Perhaps one should allow for cultural differences and bias in the two descriptions. One of the very first meetings between an Assyrian Christian with a Latin mendicant was that between the monk Simeon Rabbanata and that intrepid traveller Andrew of Longjumeau in late 1246 in Tabriz, home to a significant Assyrian community. Simeon was formerly the advisor to the Kerait ruler and Assyrian Christian Toghril Khān²⁰⁸ (d. 1203) and thence the official Mongol representative for Christian affairs in Greater Armenia and Azerbaijan, where he also served as vicar of the Orient for the Assyrian Church.²⁰⁹ He built a number of churches around Muslim-dominated Tabriz and sought dialogue on union with Rome, then in the papacy of Innocent IV (1243-54). He also related accounts of Prester John, a king of India allegedly slain by Genghis Khān.²¹⁰ Of course, this ultimately led to nothing, as the Dominicans condemned Simeon as a magician and heretic. Perhaps his support of Frederick II (1220-50) (often at odds with the papacy) as the Protector of the Holy Places had something to do with this.²¹¹ It is also fascinating, however, that an Assyrian in distant Tabriz would be so well informed of the political situation in the

²⁰⁸ Also called Wang Khān.

²⁰⁹ Baumer, *Church of the East*, 219.

²¹⁰ Rachewiltz, Igor de, *Papal Envoys to the Great Khāns* (London, 1971), 113-14. According to the Dominican Jordan Catalani of Sévérac, who returned to Europe in 1328, the Roman Catholic mission in Sultaniyeh – founded in 1318 by Pope John XXII – numbered about five hundred and nearly a thousand Eastern Christians had converted at both Tabriz and Marāghā. Given the demographic makeup of Tabriz, these converts were most likely Assyrian Christians, Syrian Orthodox, or perhaps Armenians. See: Raymond J. Loenertz, *La Société des Frères pègrinants* (Rome, 1937), 153, 162, and 165; Baldwin, 'Missions to the East', 495 and 508; J.-M. Fiey, *Chrétiens Syriaques sous Les Mongols* (Leuven, 1975), 80-1; Richard, *Papauté et les missions*, 180-92; and Baumer, *Church of the East*, 232.

²¹¹ Baum and Winkler, *Church of the East*, 90.

Palestine. A short while later, the bishop of Nisibis, Ishu-Yab ibn Malkun (d. 1256), sent a doctrinal creed to Rome for analysis of its orthodoxy. The general tolerance ascribed to by both the Mongols and the Assyrians is reflected in the bishop's teaching:

The Gospel calls to love. And love includes the believer and unbeliever, the near and the far, the friend and the enemy. And this love is like unto the love of the Most High Creator in its characteristics, for He makes His sun to rise and sends down His rain upon the good and the wicked. And the Gospel incites both enemies and friends to good works, and urges enemies and friends to love, in the same way.²¹²

This worldview corresponds well with the account presented to King Louis IX of France in the letter by Mongol envoys whilst in Acre, and, perhaps reflecting the realities of a centuries-long minority status, was in stark contrast to the political authorities of surrounding lands.

Interaction with King Louis and the further strengthening of rumours and promises for an East-West alliance to crush the remaining Muslim power in the Near East was about the extent of the impact of the Seventh Crusade upon the Assyrian Christians. Their small communities west of Mesopotamia could only have been negatively affected by the advance of the Mongol armies with so many Assyrian Christians in its ranks (or, at least, in positions of authority). The exception would have been those communities of the Church of the East residing in Frankish territory, such as Tyre, which may have been numerically strengthened by refugees fleeing the advancing violence. Overall, however, Assyrian Christians seemed to be in the

²¹² Translated in L.E. Browne, *The Eclipse of Christianity in Asia* (Cambridge, 1933), 66.

ascendency with each victory of the Mongols under Hūlegū Khān, heavily influenced by his Assyrian Christian wife. Nonetheless, this important patronage should not be over-emphasized, as in the end the Mongols maintained a policy of religious tolerance under allegiance to the state.

COPTS

As noted previously, a significant reason for Muslim resentment against the Copts was their high profile in forming the core of the financial administration, or *dīwān*. Not unlike the significant role of Jews in medieval Europe in the financial sector, so, too, Copts in Egypt became associated with the financial *dīwāns* as they were excluded from the military, state-sponsored religion (i.e. Islam), and other visible roles in society. Civilian administrators (the scribal class) were referred to as ‘men of the turban’ because the turban indicated their social status and scribes of all religions thus wore these.²¹³ However, the majority of scribes, or administrators, at this time were still Copts, and they were essential to the functioning of the Egyptian government. Their related financial success allowed them to support both the Coptic Church (which was so often squeezed by the Muslim sultans for funds) and their poorer religious kindred. On the other hand, their perceived elite status caused much resentment amongst the poorer Egyptian Muslims, a sentiment encouraged by the Islamic religious authorities (the *‘ulamā*) in the coming decades.

²¹³ Lyster, ‘Reflections of the Temporal World’, 106.

Another position that filled many Muslim jurists with resentment was that of the medical profession. Although there is an oft-repeated perception that the medical ignorance of the Franks was remedied by Muslim physicians, the truth is that medical doctors encountered in the Near East would just as likely have been Christian, Jewish, or Samaritan. The Mamlūk writer Ibn al-Ukhuwwa, for example, decries that ‘[m]any a town has no physician who is not a *dhimmī* belonging to a people whose evidence about physicians is not accepted [in the courts] where the laws of medicine are concerned. No [Muslim] occupies himself with it; everyone repairs to the study of the law...’²¹⁴ Though *dhimmī* physicians were generally very well received throughout the Ayyūbid period, at least by the middle of the thirteenth century, efforts would be made by the Mamlūk authorities to disenfranchise them, as Muslims were forbidden to visit non-Muslim medical practitioners.²¹⁵ To what degree this was enforced, of course, is uncertain.

At the beginning of our period of investigation, the Coptic Church was in a rather poor state due to the scandalous simony and corruption associated with the Patriarch Cyril ibn Laqlaq (1235-43). Following his death, the patriarchal throne was vacant until 1250. The Coptic patriarchs, or popes, were not immune to the financial pressures of their Muslim overlords, and like the other Christian confessions, were

²¹⁴ Ibn al-Ukhuwwa, *Ma‘ālim al-qurba fī ahkām al-ḥisba*, ed. and trans. Reuben Levy (London, 1938), 56-7. He continues: ‘and...the town is full of legists occupied with granting *fatwās* and giving replies to legal queries...[seeking to] claim superiority over rivals and to acquire authority over enemies...’

²¹⁵ On Melkite physicians during the Ayyūbid period, see: Joseph Nasrallah, ‘Médecins Melchites de l’Époque Ayyubide’, *PDO* 5 (1974), 189-99.

expected to provide enormous financial sums to secure their position of authority. Cyril, mentioned above, had to pay twelve thousand dinars. In turn, all bishops under his authority were forced to pay for their positions. According to the *History of the Coptic Patriarchs of Alexandria*, all bishops were forced to enter into simony except the Archbishop of Damietta, al-ʿAmīd ibn al-Duhairī, an old friend of the new Patriarch’s from his time at the Monastery of the Nestorians (as it was known from its historic associations). Al-Duhairī was actually a ‘Syrian’ by birth, and thus most certainly of the Syrian Orthodox Church.²¹⁶ It is most likely that Damietta retained its Coptic archbishop at the time of the Seventh Crusade in 1249-50, and as Damietta was a major trading port, Coptic merchants and administrators were doubtlessly present as well.

Up until Patriarch Cyril, relations between the Coptic Church and the Syrian Orthodox Church were brotherly and in full communion. Several generations earlier, in 1187, Saladin (d. 1193) had first granted Copts privileges in Jerusalem, including reapportioning shrines and service schedules at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and elsewhere that had been denied to them during the Frankish occupation. During Cyril’s tenure it was learned that the Syrians had confiscated some properties belonging to the Copts. Thus, in ca. 1236, he appointed a Coptic archbishop for Jerusalem, Anba Basil I, who continued in this role until his death in 1260. Conversely, from the Syrian Orthodox perspective, Copts had always fallen under their ecclesial jurisdiction in

²¹⁶ *HPEC*, 4.1:145. Al-ʿAmīd ibn al-Duhairī was his pre-monastic name.

Jerusalem and Cyril's decision was a divisive action. In retaliation, therefore, the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch, Ignatios II (1222-52), consecrated an Ethiopian monk named Thomas as the *Abūna* of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church at the latter's request to have as the head of their church someone of their own language and custom. This authority, however, had since the fourth century been a prerogative of the Coptic patriarchs. As Jerusalem was then under Frankish rule at the goodwill of the Ayyūbids, this was a very sensitive matter for a great many parties. At any rate, the matter was smoothed over, though we do not know what ever happened to the would-be Abūna Thomas.²¹⁷ It is, however, a further demonstration of the existence of an Ethiopian presence in Jerusalem, though perhaps only as pilgrims at this time and not an established monastery.²¹⁸

Perhaps unsurprisingly, those who often persecuted the Copts (and other *dhimmi*s) the most were those who recently converted to Islam. One example early in our period occurred during the rule of Shajar al-Durr and Aybeg, her Mamlūk husband, about 1251. Aybeg's son and heir was under the care of one Sharīf al-Dīn, who was, in

²¹⁷ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, 3 Vols., ed. and trans. Joannes Baptista Abbeloos and Thomas Josephus Lamy (Paris, 1872-7), 2:654-64; Anthony O'Mahony, 'Between Islam and Christendom: The Ethiopian Community in Jerusalem before 1517', *Medieval Encounters* 2 (1996), 140-54; Hamilton, *Latin Church*, 350-51; Otto Meinardus, 'The Syrian Jacobites in the Holy City', *Orientalia Suecana* 12 (1963), 60-82, at 66-7; idem, *Two Thousand Years*, 137-8; Richard B. Rose, 'The Native Christians of Jerusalem, 1187-1260', in ed. Benjamin Z. Kedar, *The Horns of Hattin* (Jerusalem, 1992), 239-49, at 245.

²¹⁸ Van Donzel, E., 'Were there Ethiopians in Jerusalem at the time of Saladin's conquest of 1187?', in eds. Krijnie Ciggaar and Herman Teule, *East and West in the Crusader States II* (Leuven, 1999), 125-30; O'Mahony, 'Between Islam and Christendom', 144-6.

effect, prime minister to the boy-sultan after his father's murder (a common occurrence in the Mamlūk era). One of his first acts was to levy a double tax on the Christians, whom he despised. However, when the son was overthrown, Sharīf al-Dīn was imprisoned and crucified at the citadel gate.²¹⁹ Unfortunately for those who sought to increase their influence by conversion to Islam – or even those who did so at the point of a sword – they were still suspected by Muslims as being insincere in their conversion and, in many ways, they were detested even more. They were called by a special, deprecating category of *musālīma*, a status consonant throughout the Mamlūk period.²²⁰

When the Mamlūks seized power in Egypt in the 1250s, Coptic culture was in the midst of what has been called a 'Golden Age'. Although persecutions and pogroms were intermittent in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries,²²¹ the Coptic Church, Coptic secretaries, and Coptic literary and artistic circles largely thrived. It was in the twelfth century that the Coptic language finally faded into a largely liturgical language and was replaced by Arabic in all facets of Coptic culture. One of the last non-liturgical books written in Coptic is that of the martyrdom of John of Phanijōit dating from the

²¹⁹ Tagher, Jacques, *Christians in Muslim Egypt: An Historical Study of the Relations between Copts and Muslims 640-1922*, trans. Ragai N. Makar (Altenberge, 1988), 143.

²²⁰ Little, Donald P., 'Coptic Converts to Islam During the Bahrī Mamlūk Period', in eds. Michael Gervers and R.J. Bikhazi, *Conversion and Continuity: Indigenous Christian Communities in Islamic Lands, Eighth to Eighteenth Centuries* (Toronto, 1990), 263-88, at 264.

²²¹ Such as during the siege of Damietta in 1219, and at al-Fuṣṭāṭ in 1242, though the sumptuary laws were at times strictly enforced by Saladin early in his reign in the 1180s. See Hillenbrand, *Crusades: Islamic Perspectives*, 414.

first decade of the thirteenth century.²²² This was the exception (both in form and language), for the thirteenth century is considered to be ‘the age of Coptic theology and Coptic dogmatics’²²³ and ‘a golden age in Christian Arabic literature.’²²⁴

The Arabic language became not only identified as a Muslim language, but also a Christian language. Important Coptic theologians during this period included Wagih Yuhanna al-Qalyūbi, Ibn Katīb Qaysar, as well as the Armenian monk Būtrus al-Sadamanti al-Armīni. None were as significant and influential, however, as the three brothers – al-Safī, Hibatallāh, and al-Mu‘taman – collectively called the Awlād al-‘Assāl. They worked in the fields of manuscript discovery, copying, translating, and also composed original Christian theology in Arabic. Notably, they rather ecumenically utilized non-Coptic sources, especially Greek-Melkite and Syriac.²²⁵ Elsewhere in Egypt, monks of the Monastery of Saint Antony busied themselves with translations from Syriac, Armenian, Coptic, and Greek and into Coptic, Arabic, and Ethiopic (Ge‘ez).²²⁶ The Coptic ‘renaissance’ was not limited to literature, however, but also

²²² Zaborowski, Jason, *The Coptic Martyrdom of John of Phanijōit: Assimilation and Conversion to Islam in Thirteenth-Century Egypt* (Leiden, 2005), 3.

²²³ Meinardus, Otto F.A., *Christian Egypt: Faith and Life* (Cairo, 1970), 205.

²²⁴ Griffith, *Church in the Shadow*, 65.

²²⁵ Griffith, *Church in the Shadow*, 65; Meinardus, *Two Thousand Years*, 59. For a detailed discussion of the literary output of the Awlād al-‘Assāl, see: Georg Graf, *Geschichte der Christlichen Arabischen Literatur* (Rome, 1947), 387-414. Regarding al-‘Assāl influence in Damascus, see: Ghāzī b. al-Wāsiṭī, ‘An Answer to the Dhimmis’, ed. and trans. Richard Gottheil, *JAOS* 41, (1921), 383-457, at 447-49.

²²⁶ Vivian, Tim, ‘St. Antony the Great and the Monastery of St. Antony at the Red Sea, ca. A.D. 251 to 1232/33’, in Bolman, *Monastic Visions*, 3-20, at 15-16; Gabra Gawdat, ‘Perspectives on the Monastery of St. Antony: Medieval and later Inhabitants and Visitors’, in Bolman, *Monastic Visions*, 173-83, at 173; Daniel Baraz, ‘Coptic-Arabic Collections of Western Marian Legends’, in *Acts of the Fifth*

incorporated the artistic realm. Indeed, Saint Antony's experienced a 'golden age of art' in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Iconography and wall paintings both there, in Cairo, and elsewhere in Egypt are noted by modern art historians for the varied influences discernible, very often ultimately Byzantine, but filtered via Crusader, Armenian, and Syriac sources.²²⁷ Although Copts lived in the *Dār al-Islām*, they were not cut off from the currents in the greater Christian world.

Coptic culture was quite vibrant during this period, despite the enormity of the concurrent military-political events. The Seventh Crusade was essentially an invasion of Egypt and, as such, Copts were bound to have been significantly affected. We have seen this in Damietta, of course, but elsewhere Copts were affected with heavier taxes and perhaps greater discrimination. Less affected would have been Copts in Upper Egypt, far from the Nile Delta. The transition from the Ayyūbids to the Mamlūks was very likely neutral in most ways, if only initially. Many Coptic secretaries were employed by Mamlūk *amīrs*, for example, while the farmers still had to pay the poll tax. Likewise, some Coptic secretaries and medical physicians most probably accompanied the Mamlūk army when it left Cairo to face the Mongol advance at 'Ayn Jālūt. The effect of all three major events was likely limited to higher taxes, for the most part,

International Congress of Coptic Studies, Vol. 2, ed. David W. Johnson (Rome, 1993), 23-32, at 24-25 and 30.

²²⁷ Hunt, Lucy-Anne, *The Illustration of a Thirteenth-Century New Testament Manuscript from Cairo*, PhD Thesis, Courtauld Institute, London, 1981, 114-17; idem, 'Churches of Old Cairo and Mosques of Al-Qāhira: A Case of Christian-Muslim Interchange', in *Byzantium, Eastern Christendom, and Islam: Art at the Crossroads of the Medieval Mediterranean*, 2 Vols. (London, 1998), 1:319-44, at 331-32; Gabra, 'Perspectives on the Monastery of St. Antony', 173; Elizabeth S. Bolman, 'Theodore's Program in Context: Egypt and the Mediterranean Region', in Bolman, *Monastic Visions*, 91-102, at 101.

allowing the Copts to continue with their great flowering of linguistic and artistic production.

NUBIANS

The region of Nubia, south of Aswan, Egypt, along the Nile, consisted of three kingdoms in the thirteenth century: Makuria, Alwa,²²⁸ and Dotawo²²⁹. It was the northern-most kingdom of Makuria that was of greatest significance in relation to Bahṛī Mamlūk Egypt. It had been converted by Melkite missionaries, while the other two kingdoms had been evangelised by the Coptic Church. After the Muslim Conquest, however, Makuria, too, looked to the Coptic Patriarch for consecration of its bishops. The Makurian capital of Dongola had an archbishopric and the kingdom as a whole had seven bishoprics in the early thirteenth century and presumably early in our period of interest. After the Muslim Conquest and especially during the ‘Abbāsīd period, it was the Nubians who became the external protectors of their Coptic brethren to the north.²³⁰ More recently, during the Ayyūbīd period, after the Nubian king had militarily supported efforts to restore the Fāṭīmid Caliphate, Saladin had sent his brother Shāms al-Dawla Tūrānshāh to punish his southern neighbour in 1174. Not fifty

²²⁸ Alodia or, later, al-Abwab.

²²⁹ Nobatia was an earlier kingdom in this region.

²³⁰ Abū Salih the Armenian, *The Churches and Monasteries of Egypt and Some Neighbouring Countries*, trans. B.T.A Evetts (Oxford, 1895), 261, 265, 267-8, and 272; Atiya, *History of Eastern Christianity*, 50 and 436-8.

years later, in 1220, a tribal force from the interior called the Damādīm ransacked Nubia to such a degree that the Arab chroniclers compared it to the near-contemporary Mongol destruction wrought in Muslim lands.²³¹ As the kingdom entered a period of decline, financial support for the Church and for monasticism doubtless suffered as well, putting Christianity in a defensive position in the wake of the attacks by the Muslim Ayyūbids and the pagan Damādīm. Unfriendly relations with Egypt led to the Sultan al-Kāmil (1218-38) preventing a newly consecrated bishop from leaving to take up his duties in Nubia. From the reign of the Coptic Pope Cyril III ibn Laqlaq, the Nubian Church was left to its own devices without pastoral oversight. As a result, there was significant discord between the clergy and the state, resulting in a further weakening of the Church.²³² Despite these discouraging events, the majority of Nubians remained Christians at this time.

ETHIOPIANS

In contrast to the weakened and even unstable situation of Makuria and its lack of Coptic clergy, the kingdom of Ethiopia received a number of Coptic monks during this period who dedicated themselves to building up the Church. They translated a number of liturgical and theological books into Ge'ez from Arabic and Coptic.²³³ The

²³¹ Vantini, Giovanni, *Christianity in the Sudan* (Bologna, 1981), 159-62. The Damādīm were called the 'Tartars of the Blacks' (162).

²³² Meinardus, *Christian Egypt*, 420; Vantini, *Christianity in the Sudan*, 163.

²³³ Meinardus, *Christian Egypt*, 380-1.

Church in Ethiopia had been connected to the Coptic Church since its foundation in the fourth century. Thus, the Coptic patriarch appointed and consecrated the *Abūna*, the head of the Ethiopian Church. His position could be complicated at times given the political implications of the Coptic pope as a subject of a Muslim nation whilst simultaneously being the spiritual head of a nearby Christian country. Thus did the future Sultan Baybars exhort the Coptic patriarch to be wary of intrigue with Nubia and Ethiopia: ‘let him not even smell the breezes from the south.’²³⁴ Indeed, both Ethiopia and Nubia had since the Muslim Conquest acted as external guardians to their Coptic brethren, occasionally threatening military action or even to cut off the essential Nile from its flow to Egypt.

Conversely, there were also a number of Ethiopian monks living in Egypt and the Holy Land. Around the year 1000 AD, a Jewish queen had taken the throne of Ethiopia and set about a persecution against Christian monastics. The result was a large-scale exodus northwards into Egypt and even Lebanon.²³⁵ These monks were notably present at the Monastery of Saint Elias in the Desert of Scetis and at the *Lavra* of Saint John the Short, two miles from the Monastery of the Syrians in the Wādi

²³⁴ Bosworth, C. E., ‘Christian and Jewish Religious Dignitaries in Mamluk Egypt and Syria: Qalqashandi’s Information on Their Hierarchy, Titulature, and Appointment (II)’, *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 3 (1972), 199-216, at 202 and 207, translating Ibn Faḍlallāh al-‘Umārī, in Samir M.A. al-Droubi, *A Critical Edition of and Study on Ibn Faḍl Allāh’s Manual of Secretaryship ‘al-Ta‘rīf bi’-muṣṭalaḥ al-sharīf’*, 2 Vols., PhD Thesis, University of Manchester (1988), 2:39. Also, al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-a‘shā fī ṣinā‘at al-inshā’*, 13 Vols. (Cairo, 1913-18), 11:404-5, and 12:424-7. Likewise, the Melkite patriarch was warned to be careful in his relations with Constantinople and thus ‘to avoid the ocean, and let him take care not to rush blindly into it, for he will be drowned.’

²³⁵ Cruikshank Dodd, Erica, *Medieval Paintings in the Lebanon* (Wiesbaden, 2004), 11.

Natrūn in Lower Egypt.²³⁶ More surprising, perhaps, is the active presence of Ethiopian monks in *Bilād al-Shām* at this time. Ethiopians and Nubians were both active in the Holy Places in Jerusalem and Palestine, returning with the Copts after the expulsion of the Latins in 1187. As noted above, the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch Ignatios II – in an inter-ecclesiastical rift with the Coptic Patriarch Cyril ibn Laqlaq – did consecrate an Ethiopian monk as *Abūna* (the metropolitan) named Thomas of the Ethiopian Church, but we do not know what became of him. There is record, however, of the appointment of one Zara Yakob as ‘Nicodemus’, the prior of the Ethiopian monastery in Jerusalem in the thirteenth century. In the Lebanon, until the late fifteenth century they were particularly to be found in the remote Qadisha valley and in the monasteries of Saint George (Mar Jirjis) and Saint James (Mar Yaqūb) near to Ehden. Such was the prevalence of Ethiopian monks that Dayr Mar Jirjis became known as Dayr al-Habāsh – the Monastery of the Abyssinians.²³⁷

GEORGIANS

At first glance, it might seem surprising to include the Georgians in a discussion of Near Eastern Christians, but their presence has been recorded in the Holy Land from at least the fifth century and their importance was never greater than from the twelfth

²³⁶ Fowler, Montague, *Christian Egypt: Past, Present, and Future* (London, 1901), 428-30. An ecumenical agreement had been worked out in 1088 between resident monks of Coptic, Armenian, Syrian, Nubian, and Ethiopian backgrounds.

²³⁷ Cruikshank Dodd, *Medieval Paintings*, 11-12.

to the fifteenth centuries. Indeed, the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries are often considered the Golden Age of the Kingdom of Georgia, when it experienced significant expansion across the Caucasus, great wealth, and regional prestige. Perhaps the greatest of Georgian rulers, Queen Tamar (1184-1212), enjoyed good relations with Saladin and increased the Georgian presence in Palestine. With the death of the great Melkite patron the Byzantine Emperor Manuel Komnenos I (1143-80) and the subsequent implosion and demise of the Byzantine Empire in the Fourth Crusade, Queen Tamar not only assisted in the establishment of the Byzantine Empire of Trebizond, but also effectively became the new patroness and protector of the Chalcedonian Christians within Ayyūbid territories. The Mongol invasions would effectively limit if not destroy Georgian autonomy, but their significance in the Near Eastern context would continue and belie their size well into the Mamlūk period.

Though one imagines Georgia as far distant from *Bilād al-Shām*, a Georgian army was actually repulsed following an attack on Ayyūbid positions along the northeastern frontier with Syria in 1209-10. Thereafter a thirty-year truce was agreed, far longer than the ten years authorized by the Qurʾān or what the Franks in Outremer received.²³⁸ In general, excepting when the Mongols forced the Georgians to join them in invading Syria, Georgian relations with the Ayyūbids and Mamlūks was in the context of pilgrimage and their monastic presence in Palestine. Pilgrimage to the Holy Land had been a facet of Georgian piety since the fifth century, and, from the time of

²³⁸ Minorsky, *Studies in Caucasian History*, 148-56. Cf. Korobeinikov, 'Orthodox Communities in Eastern Anatolia', 198.

Saladin, Georgian pilgrims had special privileges for Christians entering Jerusalem, described in further detail below.

Just over a decade after the Georgian-Ayyūbid encounter, the Khwarazmians, driven westward by the Mongol advance, briefly ruled western Persia and Azerbaijan and rampaged through Christian Georgia and Armenia beginning in 1222. With the Mongols soon following, the Georgian ‘Golden Age’ of the long twelfth century was effectively ended – in political terms, if not ecclesiastically and artistically.²³⁹ In 1239, Queen Rusudan of Georgia sent a letter to Pope Gregory IX apologizing for not assisting in the Fifth Crusade and requesting military assistance, to which he responded that the distance was too great.²⁴⁰ Four years later, however, in 1243, she formally entered into Mongol vassalage, and henceforth Georgian cavalry would be a significant contributor (albeit still a minority) within the Mongol armies.²⁴¹ Bar Hebraeus, for example, specifically notes the fearsome role of Georgian cavalry in the Mongol invasions of Persia and Syria. At the sack of Baghdad in 1258, ‘the Iberians [Georgians] especially effected a great slaughter.’²⁴²

Of all Eastern Christians during the Mamlūk period, the Georgians were treated with the greatest esteem by the Muslim authorities due to their importance in the

²³⁹ Allen, W.E.D., *A History of the Georgian People* (London, 1932), 110-12; Marie-Felicite Brosset, *Histoire de la Géorgie depuis l'antiquité jusqu'au XIX siècle*, 2 Vols. (Saint Petersburg, 1849), 1:496-507; Rachewiltz, *Papal Envoys to the Great Khāns*, 63; Manz, ‘Rule of the infidels’, 139, dating these events to 1225; Hamilton, *Christian World*, 135-37.

²⁴⁰ Gillman and Klimkeit, *Christians in Asia Before 1500*, 103.

²⁴¹ Holt, *Age of the Crusades*, 172-73.

²⁴² Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 1:431.

importation of *mamlūks* ('slaves') from the Caucasus. In this regard, whereas all other Christians whether foreign or indigenous had to pay the *jizya* tax or entry fees and live according to the sumptuary laws, the Georgians were allowed to enter Jerusalem mounted on horseback, with their swords and banners, without impediment.²⁴³ It was to their benefit, of course, that they were rather numerically few in the Holy Land and thus not a demographic threat, consisting as they did almost entirely of monastics spread out in a dozen monasteries owned outrightly, plus chapels at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the Monastery of Mar Saba, and solitary hermits or monks in various communities. Monks were also present at Saint Katherine's Monastery in Sinai. Their most important location was, of course, the Monastery of the Holy Cross located to the west of Jerusalem and built according to tradition by Peter the Iberian in the fifth century and rebuilt in 1038.²⁴⁴

As mentioned above, good relations were first established between Queen Tamar of Georgia and Saladin shortly after the Battle of Hattin in 1187. Although the Byzantine Emperor Isaac II Angelos (1185-95) negotiated with Saladin and his heirs for the restoration of Greek clerical rights in Jerusalem, it was largely the Georgians who provided the main support for the indigenous Melkite Christians following the death of

²⁴³ Pahlitzsch, 'Georgians and Greeks in Jerusalem', 35-8; Prawer, 'Social Classes in the Crusader States: the Minorities,' 88.

²⁴⁴ Peradze, Gregory, 'An Account of the Georgian Monks and Monasteries in Palestine As Revealed in the Writings of Non-Georgian Pilgrims', in *Georgica* 1 (1937), 181-238, at 212, 221, and 230-31. But perhaps it was first built in the eleventh century. See: Christian Müller and Johannes Pahlitzsch, 'Sultan Baybars I and the Georgians: In the Light of New Documents Related to the Monastery of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem', *Arabica* 51 (2004), 258-90, at 259.

Manuel Komnenos and the ascendancy of the Angeli. As the Georgians were Chalcedonian Orthodox in full communion with the Greek Orthodox Church, they generally were comfortable accepting the latter's ecclesiastical hierarchy. Thus, if not formally, on a practical level, the Georgians took the place of Byzantium as the protector of the Chalcedonian Christians of the Holy Land from the reign of Queen Tamar until the Mongol invasions abruptly ended this Georgian 'Golden Age'. Towards the end of the thirteenth century, however, the Georgian kings regained a degree of this status, which waxed and waned until the creation of the Greek Orthodox millet within the Ottoman Empire after 1453. Georgian princes were generally in a stronger position than the Byzantines to intercede for their co-religionists in Ayyūbid and Mamlūk territory, at least from the time of Saladin. In addition to good relations and the significant funds poured into the Holy Land with the correspondingly growing number of Georgian pilgrims, the greater influence of the Georgians also greatly benefited from the increasing importance of Mamlūks in Ayyūbid lands. Although conversion to Islam was an inherent part of their identity, many were of Georgian background and continued to patronize their kinsmen.²⁴⁵

Two of the three major events of this period had a direct impact on the Georgians. The Seventh Crusade had no impact other than likely making life somewhat more dangerous for the Georgian (and other Christian) monks in Palestine. The Mongol invasion – pushing the Khwarazmians before it – directly ended the Georgian

²⁴⁵ Rose, 'Native Christians of Jerusalem', 239, 243-44, and 248-49.

‘Golden Age’. Henceforth, the Georgians (particularly East Georgia) were effectively annexed for a century, fought over in the struggle between the Persian Il-Khānate and the Golden Horde, and forced to fight in the Mongol armies. They were thus fighting directly against the Mamlūks in Syria, which would obviously create animosity until the heavy Mongol dominance could be tempered, if not lifted.

MARONITES

The presence of Latin mendicants in the Christian East originated in the early thirteenth century largely due to the initiative and centralizing ambitions of Pope Innocent III (1198-1216). He asserted that all temporal powers of Christendom were subordinate to the spiritual authority of the Papacy, whether in Europe or to the far reaches of the known world. Besides this shift in policy, he also approved the formal establishment of the Order of Friars Minor (Franciscans) and, within months of his death, the Order of Preachers (Dominicans) was also founded. Up until this period, there seems to have been but very little interest in the differences between the Christian Confessions in the Latin East, or in converting the native Muslim population. Rather, Frankish landowners were more interested in the revenue earned by the poll tax on non-Christians – a policy not so different than that followed by the first Islamic dynasty, the Umayyads, in the seventh century. In fact, the very first Latin analysis (and far from friendly) of the differences between the various Christian sects in Outremer was by the hand of the Archbishop of Acre, Jacques de Vitry (1216-28), in

the decade after Pope Innocent.²⁴⁶ The one exception was a Council of Jerusalem in 1141 in which the papal legate Alberic of Ostia held talks with the Armenian Catholicos Gregorios III (1113-66) and the Syrian Orthodox Bishop of Jerusalem Ignatios. This discussion, however, was initiated by Rome with little local Frankish involvement and the issues under discussion owed their origins to the reunification efforts of the Byzantine Emperor Manuel I Komnenos with the Non-Chalcedonian Christians.²⁴⁷

In 1245, the year after the sack of Jerusalem by the Khwarazmians, Pope Innocent IV (1243-54) sent missionaries to the Mongols, partly on the advice of a visiting Russian Metropolitan named Peter.²⁴⁸ Latin mendicants were increasingly to be found across the Near East and even into Central and East Asia, where they were often surprised to find established communities of not only Assyrian Christians, but also Armenians and Syrian Orthodox living harmoniously.²⁴⁹ In the wake of the Mongol invasions, these missionaries often had fact-finding orders, as well as diplomatic roles. Papal correspondence to Muslim rulers requesting permission for the presence of Latin friars to minister to the needs of local Latin merchants or prisoners was not uncommon. For example, letters exist to this effect for the rulers of Damascus, Aleppo, Hims, Karak,

²⁴⁶ MacEvitt, *Rough Tolerance*, 140-41, referencing Jacques de Vitry, 'Historia Hierosolimitana', in ed. Jacques Bongars, *Gesta dei per Francos* (Hanover, 1611).

²⁴⁷ MacEvitt, *Rough Tolerance*, 162-63.

²⁴⁸ Gillman and Klimkeit, *Christians in Asia Before 1500*, 243. For more on Innocent IV's efforts in the Christian East, see: Wilhelm De Vries, 'Innozenz IV (1243-54) und der Christliche Orient', *Ostkirchlichen Studien*, 12 (1963), 113-31.

²⁴⁹ Gillman and Klimkeit, *Christians in Asia Before 1500*, 242.

and Egypt, and papal correspondence with the Caliph in Baghdad is also evident.²⁵⁰

The Franciscans received a *firmān* from the sultan of Ḥimş, al-Mansūr, in 1254, allowing the friars to minister to all Christians in his territories. The Dominican chapter-general, however, in 1256 received word of two of its members receiving martyrdom in the Holy Land.²⁵¹

The greatest papal victory in ‘re-unifying’ indigenous Eastern Christians was, of course, with the Maronites of Lebanon, to whom King Louis of France sent a letter in appreciation of their military support for his campaigns, and rejoicing in their fidelity to Rome.²⁵² The Maronite patriarchal seat was located at Meyfouk, just north of Beirut near Jbāyl, from 1120 until the late fifteenth century.²⁵³ The Maronite Patriarch Simon (1245-77) at this time received numerous papal letters, including the reissue of the Papal Bull of Innocent III (*Quia Divinae Sapientiae*, initially issued in 1215), which

²⁵⁰ Baldwin, ‘Missions to the East’, 460-61.

²⁵¹ Golubovich, *Biblioteca*, 2:337-9; Andrew Jotischky, ‘The Mendicants as missionaries and travelers in the Near East in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries’ in Rosamund Allen, ed., *Eastward Bound: Travel and Travelers, 1050-1550* (Manchester, 2005), 88-106, at 90. They both refer to a firman of Sultan Manşūr of Ḥimş (Emesa), but possibly have the name incorrect. Al-Ashraf Musa (d. 1263) was the sultan of Ḥimş at this time, preceded by al-Manşūr Ibrahim (d. 1246). The then-current Sultan of Ḥamāh, on the other hand, was named al-Manşūr Muḥammad (1244-84). Ḥimş had a not-insignificant Melkite population, as is testified by the presence of a bishop, Symeon (d. 1355). See: Fedalto, *Hierarchia Ecclesiastica Orientalis*, 2:736.

²⁵² El-Hāyek, Elias, ‘Struggle for Survival: The Maronites in the Middle Ages’, in eds. Michael Gervers and R.J. Bikhazi, *Conversion and Continuity: Indigenous Christian Communities in Islamic Lands, 8th-18th Centuries* (Toronto, 1990), 407-21, at 418.

²⁵³ Cruikshank Dodd, *Medieval Paintings*, 9.

affirmed Simon's authority and granted his *pallium*.²⁵⁴ It was during his reign that the Franciscans, in 1246, first entered into formal relations with the Maronites.²⁵⁵ Despite this apparent gravitation towards Rome, a significant minority of Maronites in the remote mountains refused to accept the Latinization of their Syriac rite and their traditional doctrines for some while, even electing a rival patriarch at one point.²⁵⁶ In fact, although closely allied with the Papacy from the early Crusader period, the entire Maronite Church did not officially join with Rome until 1736.²⁵⁷

The impact on the Maronites of the Khwarazmian invasion, Seventh Crusade, and Mamlūk-Mongol conflict was minimal, at least in the short term. The Mongols were too temporarily within Syria and with easier targets than the mountainous Maronite region. Only at the turn of the century would the Mamlūks turn their attention to the independent tribes around Mount Lebanon (focused mostly on Shī'ite minorities, however), having by then effectively dealt with their external enemies. The Seventh Crusade did not have a direct impact upon the Maronites, but as they were firmly in the Frankish sphere around Tripoli, they were likely impacted by a withdrawal of manpower for the Crusade, as well as possibly benefiting from the efforts of Louis IX to shore up the Crusader defences.

²⁵⁴ Dib, Pierre, *History of the Maronite Church*, trans. S. Beggiani (Beirut, 1971), 45. Assemani, however, reports that 'Simeon' reigned as Patriarch from 1244-65, being recognized by Pope Alexander IV in 1256. See: Joseph Simon Assemani, *Series Chronologica: Patriarcharum Antiochia, Syro-Maronitam* (Rome, 1881), 37.

²⁵⁵ Dib, *History of the Maronite Church*, 62.

²⁵⁶ Papadakis and Meyendorff, *Christian East*, 121.

²⁵⁷ Cruikshank Dodd, *Medieval Paintings*, 9.

MELKITES

The Greek Orthodox Patriarchs of Antioch had by and large resided in exile in Constantinople during the Latin domination of the ancient See, with exceptions. During our period of enquiry, the Patriarch David I (ca.1245-ca.1258) reigned in exile, to be succeeded by Euthymios I (ca.1258-ca.1274). In another apparent demonstration of Mongol support for the indigenous Christians, Hūlegū Khān insisted that his vassal Bohemond of Antioch formally instate Euthymios as the official Chalcedonian Patriarch of Antioch against his Latin rival, Opizo Fieschi.²⁵⁸

The other Patriarchal See with a strong Melkite presence was that of Jerusalem. A decade prior to the murder of the Melkite Patriarch Athanasios II by the Khwarazmian Turks in 1244, the situation of the Melkites was apparently strong and prosperous. Their primary church was the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, shared, of course, with other Confessions and under Latin control for most of 1229-44. The *Life* of Saint Sava of Serbia records Greek Orthodox priests and monks in numerous monasteries in Palestine and, indeed, he founded several more himself in consultation

²⁵⁸ Hamilton, *Latin Church*, 374. I have followed Hamilton's dates, but see Grumel, who lists Simeon II as Patriarch for 1206-35, followed by David (unknown dates) and then Euthymius (1258-74). Baldwin lists David (ca.1245-ca.1260) succeeded by Euthymius (ca.1260-?), while Fedalto records David's dates as ca. 1242-after 1247, followed by Euthymius (before 1258-1273). Nasrallah's dates are: David I (ca. 1242-after 1247) and Euthymius (ca. 1258-73). See: V. Grumel, *La Chronologie* (Paris, 1958), 448; Baldwin, 'Missions to the East', 467; Fedalto, *Hierarchia Ecclesiastica Orientalis*, 2:685; Joseph Nasrallah, 'Euthyme I^{er}', *DHGE*, 16:51-3.

with the hegumen (abbot) of Mar Saba, Nikolaos. By the end of the decade, however, the city of Jerusalem, and presumably its hinterland, was in a dire state in light of the political instability and lack of security after changing hands several times after 1239. The Melkite community was maltreated by both the Latins and the Muslims, and presumably those who could depart the city for a safer village might well have done so.²⁵⁹

Relations with Rome and its Latin representatives continued to be a challenge, especially as the Papacy became more concerned with the issue of Christian unity under its own authority. In 1242, the Pope of Rome recognized as Patriarch of Antioch – of both Melkites and Latins – an indigenous Christian named Dā’ūd al-Khūrī (1242-47). This was part of a new policy of recognizing indigenous leaders for the local churches, albeit continuing within the understanding of Roman Catholic ecclesiastical and doctrinal claims. It included an agreement in 1247 in Jerusalem – hastily renounced by Rome – in which Melkites were to remain independent of the Latin patriarch while being in communion with Rome.²⁶⁰

The third of the Oriental Patriarchates, Alexandria, was also represented by a Greek Orthodox Patriarch, but the Melkite presence was much smaller amongst the Christians than the majority Copts. Although a minority of a minority in Egypt, Melkites nonetheless maintained a generally significant status belying their numbers.

²⁵⁹ Pahlitzsch, ‘Athanasios’, 470-2. Athanasios’ successor was Sophronios III (dates uncertain, between 1244 and 1274). See: Grumel, ‘Chronologie des patriarches grecs’, 199.

²⁶⁰ Rose, ‘Native Christians of Jerusalem’, 247.

In times of persecution, they often depended upon the helpful intervention of the Byzantine emperor. They maintained two monasteries in Egypt: the Monastery of al-Qusair and one of Saint John the Baptist (Dayr Mār Ḥanna or Yūḥannā).²⁶¹ The Melkite Patriarch of Alexandria at this time was Gregorios I (1243-63). Like most Greek Orthodox Alexandrine Patriarchs of this era, he most likely spent considerable time in Constantinople, either for diplomatic reasons or seeking refuge.²⁶²

The Melkite Greek Orthodox Christians in Jerusalem worshipped at the Church of Saint Chariton, where they celebrated the liturgy in their ancestral language of Syriac. In Antioch, they had the Church of Saint Mary, with liturgy in Greek or Syriac according to the needs of the community.²⁶³ Aramaic (or Syriac²⁶⁴) was largely only a liturgical language by this time, but it was still spoken as a first language in some remote locations such as Maḥlūla and surrounding villages, north of Damascus, and in the mountain regions north of Mosul. Although the Byzantine hierarchy at Constantinople attempted to pressure their spiritual brethren in Syria and Palestine to exclusively follow the Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom, the three Oriental Melkite Patriarchates continued to use the much older Liturgy of Saint James the Less (the first

²⁶¹ Nasrallah, Joseph, *Histoire du Mouvement Littéraire dans L'église Melchite du Ve au XXe Siècle*, Vol. 3 (Leuven, 1981), 82.

²⁶² Grumel, *Chronologie*, 444. Fowler, however, maintains that Nicholas II became Patriarch in 1250. See: Fowler, *Christian Egypt*, 100.

²⁶³ Hamilton, *Latin Church*, 163.

²⁶⁴ Syriac is the dialect of Aramaic developed in Edessa that spread throughout the Middle East until the rise of Islam and Arabic.

bishop of Jerusalem).²⁶⁵ Even when new Byzantine texts were introduced, they were often translated into Syriac, such was the Melkites' attachment to the language.²⁶⁶ Indeed, the Melkite liturgy in the Lebanon continued to be in Syriac until at least the seventeenth century.²⁶⁷

Melkites were treated differently depending upon their local circumstances. In the Transjordan, the chief fortress of Karak Castle was originally a monastery founded by Christian monks – presumably Melkite – who invited a Frankish military garrison early in the twelfth century due to frequent Bedouin kidnappings and depredations.²⁶⁸ It was from this region that Baldwin I (1100-18) had recruited a large community of Melkite Christians to help repopulate Jerusalem following the massacre by the First Crusade in 1099.²⁶⁹ But the Christian presence was still important in the thirteenth century as is evidenced by the important medical physicians Abū al-Faraj ibn al-Quff and of ʿAlam al-Dīn Tūma ibn Ibrāhīm al-Shawbakī, the latter of whom was also a physician of the Mamlūk Sultan Baybar's.²⁷⁰ Interestingly, Sultan al-Mughīth ʿUmārī, lord of Transjordan, specifically sent a Christian envoy for the purpose of becoming a tributary and ally of the Tartars, thus hopefully securing his position against his

²⁶⁵ The Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom developed from that of Saint Basil, which in turn was a condensed version of the very ancient Liturgy of Saint James.

²⁶⁶ Weltecke, Dorothea, 'The Syriac Orthodox in the Principality of Antioch during the Crusader Period', in K. Ciggaar and M. Metcalf, *East and West in the Medieval Eastern Mediterranean* (Leuven, 2006), 95-124, at 111.

²⁶⁷ Cruikshank Dodd, *Medieval Paintings*, 8.

²⁶⁸ Ibn al-Furāt, *Ayyubids, Mamlūks, and Crusaders*, 51.

²⁶⁹ Hamilton, *Latin Church*, 163.

²⁷⁰ Nasrallah, *Histoire du Mouvement Littéraire*, 108-10.

enemies in Cairo and Damascus. Given the local demographics, the envoy was most likely a Melkite.²⁷¹

Even more pronounced than Karak was the experience of the monks at the sixth-century Greek Orthodox Monastery of Saint Katherine in the Sinai.²⁷² As Aziz Atiya has noted, this monastery actually flourished in the last half of the thirteenth century and into the fourteenth. The number of monks increased greatly during this period due to an influx of monastic refugees from Iraq and elsewhere, fleeing the instability brought on by the Mongol invasions. While many of the monks were Greek-speakers, there were also many working in Arabic, as the high number of Arabic manuscripts produced during this period demonstrates.²⁷³ Perhaps because the monastery possessed a letter of commendation and protection allegedly written by the Prophet Muḥammad himself, the Mamlūks generally (and uniquely) treated the community with respect.²⁷⁴ Despite the isolation of the monastery, its importance to its Mother Church in Constantinople (even in exile in Nicaea) is evidenced in the support given to Saint Katherine's by the Byzantine Emperors John III Vatatzes (1222-54) and Michael VIII Palaiologos (1261-82).²⁷⁵ Additionally, Saint Katherine's and its dependencies in Latin-controlled areas had been under the protection of Rome since at least the time of Pope Honorius III

²⁷¹ William of Rubruck, *The Mission of William of Rubruck*, 247.

²⁷² Called *Dayr Ṭūr Sīnā*, دَيْرُ طُورِ سَيْنَا.

²⁷³ Atiya, Aziz S., *The Arabic Manuscripts of Mount Sinai: A hand-list of the Arabic manuscripts and scrolls microfilmed at the library of the Monastery of St. Catherine, Mount Sinai* (Baltimore, 1955), xxv.

²⁷⁴ Hamilton, *Christian World*, 124.

²⁷⁵ Tomadakis, N., 'Historical Outline', in ed. Konstantinos A. Manafis, *Sinai: Treasures of the Monastery of Saint Catherine* (Athens, 1990), 12-17, at 16.

(1216-27). The monastery maintained properties in Crete, Cyprus, Acre, Latakia, Antioch, and in Latin-controlled Constantinople. Latin clergy and nobility apparently often trampled on the rights of the Sinaiate monks, but the latter were also quick to seek redress from Rome, with whom they had a good relationship.²⁷⁶ Around this time, too, the monastery's abbots commissioned a substantial quantity of icons from workshops in Latin Acre, where they had a church (dedicated to Saint Katherine) and *metochion*. A number of Latin monks – some of them iconographers – resided here as well as in Sinai.²⁷⁷ Saint Katherine's, though a Greek Orthodox monastery, generally had good relations with Non-Chalcedonians, too. They owned lands along the Red Sea coast near to the Coptic Monastery of Saint Antony the Great, and it is most probable that pilgrims travelled between the two. There was also a chapel dedicated to Saint Antony near to the Sinai monastery, and Coptic iconographic influences are to be found in at least one icon of Saint Macarios dating from the thirteenth century.²⁷⁸

In stark contrast to Saint Katherine's, the Monastery of Mar Saba in the Palestinian wilderness was nearer to the theatre of war and suffered for it. This ancient fifth century monastery had been a key centre for theological and liturgical translation

²⁷⁶ Coureas, Nicholas, 'The Orthodox Monastery of Mt. Sinai and Papal Protection of its Cretan and Cypriot Properties', in ed. Michel Balard, *Autour de la première Croisade* (Paris, 1996), 475-84, at 475-80. Saint Katherine's was particularly well-propriated in Venetian Crete (476).

²⁷⁷ Folda, Jaroslav, *Crusader Art in the Holy Land, from the Third Crusade to the Fall of Acre, 1187-1291* (Cambridge, 2005), 275; Hamilton, *Christian World*, 124; Jacqueline Lafontaine-Dosogne, 'Le Monastère du Sinai: creuset de culture chrétienne (Xe-XIIIe siècle)', in eds. Krijnie Ciggaar, Adelbert Davids, and Herman Teule, *East and West in the Crusader States I* (Leuven, 1996), 103-30.

²⁷⁸ Bolman, 'Theodore's Program in Context', 102.

from Greek and Syriac into Arabic in the eighth to tenth centuries.²⁷⁹ During the height of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, Mar Saba thrived with property in the surrounding hills as well as in Jerusalem itself. Its patrons included the Byzantine Emperor Manuel I Komnenos as well as the half-Armenian Frankish Queen Melisande (d. 1161), who actively courted the support of the abbot. Melisande's mother, Queen Morphia of Melitene, was Greek Orthodox though Armenian, and Melisande's two sons also married Byzantine wives, thus creating an important royal base for Melkite support in the twelfth century.²⁸⁰ Indeed, one discovers a complete contrast between the pilgrimage accounts of the Russian Abbot Daniel in 1106-7 and the Byzantine John Phocas in 1185. Whereas the former describes many of the Orthodox churches and monasteries as being in ruins, Phocas notes that at least ten monasteries had been expanded or rebuilt even into Transjordan, while Mar Saba was flourishing.²⁸¹

Following the reduction of Latin territory and the collapse of the Byzantine Empire following the Fourth Crusade, however, Mar Saba suffered, though it was still quite active. The future Saint Sava of Serbia (ca. 1175-1235) visited the monastery in the 1230s, specifically noting Greek, Georgian, and Russian monks.²⁸² He established the Orthodox Monastery of Saint Saba the Great in the pilgrimage-gateway of Acre

²⁷⁹ Griffith, *Church in the Shadow*, 51-52.

²⁸⁰ Hamilton, *Latin Church*, 171.

²⁸¹ Jotischky, Andrew, 'Greek Orthodox and Latin Monasticism around Mar Saba under Crusader Rule', in ed. Joseph Patrich, *The Sabaitic Heritage in the Orthodox Church from the Fifth Century to the Present* (Leuven, 2001), 85-96, at 85.

²⁸² Pahlitzsch, 'Georgians and Greeks in Jerusalem', 39.

following the model of the Latin pilgrim-houses to encourage Orthodox pilgrimage to the Holy Land.²⁸³

It is difficult to determine the number of monastics active in Palestine in the second half of the thirteenth century. Historical accounts tend to present exaggerated figures of twelve or fourteen thousand monks and nuns – a figure more akin to the situation prior to the Persian and Muslim invasions of the sixth and seventh centuries.²⁸⁴ Nonetheless, Komnene patronage had played its part and quite a few other Melkite monasteries in Palestine were still active and variably prosperous. These included the Monastery of Saint Chariton in the Judean Wilderness, the Monastery of Saint Elias between Jerusalem and Bethlehem, and the Monastery of Saint John the Baptist on the bank of the Jordan River. While these were Melkite monasteries, Syrian Orthodox and Latin Christians also visited on the pilgrimage route.²⁸⁵ Eastwards from Jericho towards the Jordan, the Monastery of Our Lady of Kalamon (*Dayr Mar Hanna Hajla*) had some twenty monks in 1106 despite the ceaseless invasions of previous decades. It was restored at a later point in the twelfth century and remained inhabited throughout the thirteenth century. It was about that time, however, that it began to be called after the Monastery of Saint Gerasimos (as it still is), which was, in fact, a ruined

²⁸³ Jacoby, David, 'Three Notes on Crusader Acre', in *Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästina Vereins*, 109 (1993), 83-88. Sava had purchased the Monastery of Saint George – formerly the possession of the Monastery of Saint Saba in Palestine – from the Latins during his first pilgrimage in 1229. He had also purchased the building housing the biblical Upper Room and established the Monastery of Saint John the Evangelist in Jerusalem for Serbian monks. See: Velimirovich, *Life of St. Sava*, 161-4 and 190.

²⁸⁴ Nasrallah, *Histoire du Mouvement Littéraire*, 88.

²⁸⁵ Pringle, *Churches of the Crusader Kingdom*, 2:221-22, 224, and 240-41.

monastery nearby.²⁸⁶ The Monastery of Saint Euthymios, located near to Mar Saba and often used for disobedient monks and others, was active and restored in the twelfth century, but Baybars is thought to have destroyed it at the time of the institution of the Muslim pilgrimage route to Nabī Mūsa.²⁸⁷ He also destroyed the *monasterium* at the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem in 1263. The church had been desecrated by the Khwarazmians in April of 1244, but thereafter the high altar was again restored to the Melkites after the Latins were killed or departed (for a time) to the coast. A Melkite monastery adjoined the Nativity Church basilica from the south, but other indigenous Christian Confessions were also represented, including Armenians (from the fifth century), Syrian Orthodox, Georgians, Maronites, Ethiopians, and Assyrians.²⁸⁸ Along with the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem and the Church of the Annunciation in Nazareth, the Church of the Nativity was the most important Holy Place for Near Eastern Christians and thus it is unsurprisingly that all of the historical Churches were present. In addition, it was also to some degree a place of pilgrimage for Muslims, much as were the Monastery of Saint Katherine at Sinai and Dayr Şaydnāyā due to their devotion to the shared Patriarchs (Moses, in this case) and the Virgin Mary.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁶ Pringle, *Churches of the Crusader Kingdom*, 1:197-98.

²⁸⁷ Pringle, *Churches of the Crusader Kingdom*, 2:229-30.

²⁸⁸ Pringle, *Churches of the Crusader Kingdom*, 1:139.

²⁸⁹ Hamilton, Bernard, 'Our Lady of Şaydnāyā: An Orthodox Shrine Revered by Muslims and Knights Templar at the Time of the Crusades', in ed. R.N. Swanson, *The Holy Land, Holy Lands, and Christian History* (Woodbridge, 2000), 207-15, at 210.

Melkite scriptoria were also active at monasteries in Syria. A notable iconographer very much aware of development in Cypriot painting operated just south of Tripoli. Other Melkite monasteries that were active or even enjoyed a 'golden age' included those at Balamand, Kaftūn, Şaydnāyā, Qaia, Ma'ḷūla, Shuwaiya, Qalamūn, Bterrām, and 'Ammatūra.²⁹⁰

The Monastery of Saint George (al-Hūmayra), located in the Wādi al-Naṣāra ('Valley of the Christians') a few kilometres northwest of Krak des Chevaliers, enjoyed building projects in the thirteenth century, including a chapel still extant.²⁹¹ Overlooking the all-important Christian stronghold of the Qalamūn (Anti-Lebanon) Mountains, the town of Şaydnāyā, some eighteen miles northeast of Damascus was and is home to numerous men's and women's monasteries and churches, mostly of the Melkite Confession.²⁹² Its famous Convent of Our Lady of Şaydnāyā was one of the most important monasteries in *Bilād al-Shām*, not only for Melkites, but also for other indigenous Christians and even Muslims. A Cypriot painter was working here as late as 1265, when freedom of movement for indigenous Christians (and others) became more

²⁹⁰ Hunt, Lucy-Anne, 'Manuscript Production by Christians in Thirteenth to Fourteenth Century Greater Syria and Mesopotamia and Related Areas', *Aram* 9-10 (1997-8), 289-336; reprint in *Byzantium, Eastern Christendom, and Islam: Art at the Crossroads of the Medieval Mediterranean* (London, 2000), 2:153-200, at 184 and 189.

²⁹¹ Burns, Ross, *Monuments of Syria: An Historical Guide* (London, 1999), 214.

²⁹² For a discussion of the various historical monasteries and churches of Şaydnāyā, see: Habīb Zayāt, *Documents Inédits pour servir a l'histoire du Patriarcat Melkite d'Antioche, III: Histoire de Saidanaya (Tārīkh Şaydnāyā)* (Harissa, Lebanon, 1932), 37-69.

restricted with Baybars' numerous military campaigns in western Syria.²⁹³ Founded in the sixth century by the Emperor Justinian (or so attributed), the monastery was dedicated to the Virgin Mary and featured a miracle-working icon of the Theotokos that exuded holy oil and was called by its Aramaic name, 'al-Shaghūra', meaning 'the Illustrious, Celebrated, or Renowned'.²⁹⁴ Vials of this oil were eagerly sought by pilgrims throughout the thirteenth century despite the instability, and at the Feast Day of the Nativity of the Theotokos on the eighth of September many thousands regularly attended.²⁹⁵ The Templars developed an especial devotion to Our Lady of Şaydnāyā and journeyed there during times of peace, while popularizing the cult throughout Western Europe. Interestingly, in the Templars' account – though not explicitly found in the Arabic tradition – the Shaghūra actually grew flesh.²⁹⁶

Not unlike the function of the Jews in Europe, one niche that *dhimmīs* filled in the medieval Near East was the role of medical physicians. This was true, at least, into the fourteenth century, though Mamlūk sultans from the middle of the century began to issue decrees forbidding Muslims from being treated by non-Muslim doctors. Many prominent physicians of the latter thirteenth century within *Bilād al-Shām* were Melkite

²⁹³ Immerzeel, Matt, 'The Decoration of the Chapel of the Prophet Elijah in Ma'arrat Saydnaya', in eds. Andrea Schmidt and Stephan Westphalen, *Christliche Wandmalereien in Syrien: Qara und das Kloster Mar Yakub* (Wiesbaden, 2005), 155-82, at 181. The bishop of Şaydnāyā in 1264 was named Buṭrus (Peter). See: Zayāt, *Histoire de Saidanaya*, 153.

²⁹⁴ Zayāt, *Histoire de Saidanaya*, 60-9 and 103-51; Ghassan Shahin, *Welcome to Saidnaya* (Damascus, 2006), 27 and 31. Also spelled *al-Chaghoura*.

²⁹⁵ Pringle, *Churches of the Crusader Kingdom*, 2:219-20; Zayāt, *Histoire de Saidanaya*, 70-90. Many still come, as I witnessed in 2007.

²⁹⁶ Hamilton, 'Our Lady of Saidnaya', 211.

Christians. Perhaps reminiscent of the al-‘Assāls of Cairo, the al-Arṣī family, for example, was a prominent family of medical doctors in Damascus from the twelfth-fourteenth centuries that also provided a number of bishops and clergy to the Melkite community.²⁹⁷ ‘Alam al-Dīn Abū Nasr Ğirĝis epitomized a too common problem for the indigenous Christians in the Mamlūk period, as this chief physician of Syria and Egypt converted to Islam. He immigrated to Egypt and was credited with healing Baybars of a serious illness.²⁹⁸ A third example is provided in the prominent position of Nafis al-Dawla ibn Tulaīb, also of Damascus, who sometime after 1258 became the physician of Hülegū, the Mongol Il-Khān.²⁹⁹

The Melkites were concentrated in northern Syria and Palestine, but found also in Egypt and throughout the region. Melkite communities were greatly affected by all three of the major events of the period, from the very beginning with the murder of the Melkite Patriarch of Jerusalem, Athanasios, by the Khwarazmians in 1244 all the way to the aftermath of the Ilkhānid occupation of Damascus and the retaliation that occurred. In Egypt, as well, Melkites were certainly affected by the presence of the Seventh Crusade, at the very least in the form of forced monetary demands from the sultan, albeit much smaller than that demanded from the Copts. This was, then, a very difficult period for the Melkites in the Near East.

²⁹⁷ Nasrallah, *Histoire du Mouvement Littéraire*, 107-8.

²⁹⁸ Nasrallah, *Histoire du Mouvement Littéraire*, 106.

²⁹⁹ Nasrallah, *Histoire du Mouvement Littéraire*, 108.

SYRIAN ORTHODOX

Following the death of Michael the Syrian in 1199, Syrian Orthodox patriarchs did not venture to Palestine in the lower *Bilād al-Shām* until 1236. In this year, Patriarch Ignatios II (1222-52) visited Suriani communities in Antioch, Tripoli, Acre, and thence to Jerusalem. Here he stayed at their Cathedral of Saint Mary Magdalene, where a monastic community of seventy monks flourished.³⁰⁰ He was well-received by the Latin authorities then resident – specifically the Dominican friars – and he took part in a Latin procession and was given a Dominican habit. Following this event, Frankish prisoners of war in Aleppo were officially told that they could make Confession to and receive Communion from Syrian Orthodox priests if there were no Franciscan missionaries present. Ignatios agreed to a verbal formula about doctrine and agreed to administrative autonomy directly from Rome. It may be that this effort on his part was really simply manoeuvring to gain the upper hand in Syrian Orthodox ecclesial politics by garnering Latin support (recalling their favour prior to 1187), for there was at this time a schism within the Syrian Orthodox Church between that in northern Syria and that in Iraq and Palestine. About 1238, Ignatios transferred his see from Mardin to Antioch, where he was later visited by the Arabic-speaking Dominican Friar Andrew of Longjumeau at the behest of Pope Innocent IV to formally negotiate terms of union,

³⁰⁰ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, 2:646.

though this came to naught as far as the overall Syrian Orthodox Church was concerned.³⁰¹

Following Patriarch Ignatios' repose in 1252, only a very small number of Syrian Orthodox (based in Tripoli) remained loyal to union with Rome. With the passing of Ignatios, schism erupted between the Suriani of Syria and those of Mesopotamia. Dionysios VII (1252-61), formerly the bishop of Melitene, was elected in the west, whilst in the east the maphrian was elected, taking the name of John XV (1253-63).³⁰² Despite the distance, the latter made the journey to Antioch in 1253 and was permitted by the Latin authorities to be formally enthroned in Saint Peter's chair in the cathedral. The other patriarch, Dionysios, submitted to Hülegü Khān in 1259, but was assassinated in 1261. John was then left the undisputed head of the Syrian Orthodox Church, but he died two years later in 1263.³⁰³

As previously mentioned, the Syrian Orthodox patriarchs prior to Ignatios II had resided almost permanently in the monasteries around Mardin, Amida, and the Tūr Abdin. This was a key centre for the Suriani community, but one which was traumatized during much of the middle thirteenth century. During the initial Mongol incursions into Anatolia in the 1220s, a smaller Mongol army under Nasawur marched

³⁰¹ Hamilton, *Christian World*, 117-18; Hamilton, *Latin Church*, 350-53.

³⁰² But see Ishaq Saaka, who lists a single patriarch for this period, John XII bar Ma'dani (1252-63). Ishaq Saaka, *Kaniisatii al-Suryaaniyya* (Damascus, 1985). I have been unable to locate this text, but a chronological list based on his work is located at:
<http://sor.cua.edu/Patriarchate/PatriarchsChronList.html> (accessed 15 March 2011).

³⁰³ Hamilton, *Latin Church*, 353-54.

on Maiperkat, Mardin, and Edessa, whilst briefly besieging Aleppo and Melitene. The governors of both were able to buy off the Mongols this time, though the ‘treasury of the great church’ in Melitene was stripped bare along with the rest of the city’s wealth, even the funerary caskets of the Saints. The Mongol policy of burning all crops in the vicinity led to famine and thence to plague. Bar Hebraeus reports that residents became so desperate that they tried to sell their children into slavery, though no one could afford to buy them.³⁰⁴

In 1255, Mongol forces marched against Melitene, then in Turkish hands but with a large Armenian and Syrian Orthodox population. At Melitene the Mongols destroyed the Monastery of Makruna, killing over three hundred monks and also refugees.³⁰⁵ Bandits around Melitene looted the Monasteries of Madik, Mar ‘Asya, and Mar Dimat, whilst a Seljūk commander rebelling against the Mongols burned down the first two monasteries in 1257.³⁰⁶ Famine raged in Melitene and across the land at this time, likely caused by the Mongol policy of burning all crops in the city’s hinterland. A group of Christian youths turned to banditry against any in their net, Christian or Muslim.³⁰⁷

³⁰⁴ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 1:409.

³⁰⁵ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 1:420. The Greek or Melkite population was also significant, demonstrated by the murder in 1258 of a Greek priest Kalawyan, his son, and his brothers, both prominent lawyers. See: Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 1:427; cf. Korobeinikov, ‘Orthodox Communities’, 201-5.

³⁰⁶ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 1:424-27.

³⁰⁷ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 1:424-27.

During the siege of Baghdad in 1258, a number of Muslim merchants had left their wealth with Syrian Orthodox Christians from Tikrīt in the spared ‘Green Church’ in Baghdad. When the Muslims were largely massacred, the Christians were informed upon by a Muslim named Bar Duri for not turning in the wealth to the Mongols. Nearly all the Tikrīti Christians were then executed, while Bar Duri was soon killed, too.³⁰⁸ Such an example clearly debunks the suggestion of absolute Christian favouritism, as the Mongols had more central priorities of absolute submission. The following year, upon the initial Mongol advance into Syria, Bar Hebraeus, then Metropolitan of Ba‘albakk, was seeking refuge in the city of Aleppo with all of his flock in the ‘church of the Greeks’. He was imprisoned when he went to attempt mediation, while the Mongols, in meantime, attacked the church, perhaps mistakenly (although not necessarily). Though many Christians were taken prisoner, an Armenian monk named T‘oros was granted permission to seek out imprisoned Christians and liberate them, as previously noted.³⁰⁹

Reprisals and opportunism followed in the wake of the Battle of ‘Ayn Jālūt later in 1260. From the Nineveh district around Mosul, whose Turkish ruler was sworn to Hūlegū Khān if not with conviction, Christians fled to the remote Monastery of Mar Daniel and others in the hope of finding safety.³¹⁰ As with the other Christian Confessions of the East, monasteries played a very important role in the Syrian

³⁰⁸ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 1:433; Fiey, ‘Diocèses’, 5:144.

³⁰⁹ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 1:436.

³¹⁰ Ignatius Yacoub III, *History of the Monastery of Saint Matthew in Mosul*, trans. Matti Moosa (Piscataway, NJ, 2008), 22.

Orthodox Church. Indeed, uniquely, the patriarch, maphrian, and other bishops of the Church resided more often at monasteries than at cathedral churches in the cities. Patriarch Ignatios II David (1222-52), discussed above, was the first Syrian Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch and All the East to establish himself permanently in Antioch since late Antiquity. Most patriarchs before and after resided in a monastery (typically around Amida), or travelled between the main Syrian Orthodox centres of northern Syria and Cilicia, Mesopotamia, and Jerusalem. While his successors did not maintain themselves in Antioch to the same degree, they did continue with his purposeful choice of patriarchal name: Ignatios. The import of this name was to draw a distinct lineage to the authority and legitimacy of the post-apostolic Saint Ignatios of Antioch (d. 107 AD). Henceforth, nearly all Syrian Orthodox patriarchs would take this name in addition to a second name, a practice that continues to this day.³¹¹

The Patriarch's deputy in the East was called the *Maphrian* (or *Maphryono*), or *Catholicos*, and was the 'Bishop and Metropolitan of the Persian domains'.³¹² Bar Hebraeus held this rank for much of his later ecclesiastical career. Since 1153, the seat of the Maphrian was at the village of Barṭelli between Nineveh and Arbīl on the Tigris River. Bar Hebraeus resided here for seven years (and is buried there), and the Maphrian Dionysios Saliba II died here in 1271. Previously, the Maphriani were located at the town of Tikrīt, to the south of Baghdad, but the Christians were driven

³¹¹ Ignatius Yacoub III, *History of the Monastery of Saint Matthew*, 8-9.

³¹² Ignatius Yacoub III, *History of the Monastery of Saint Matthew*, 50 and 52. Cf. Fiey, 'Diocèses', on the territories of the Maphrian.

out by the Muslim populace in 1089. Although some Suriani were able to return in the early twelfth century, the eastern dioceses of Tikrīt, Mosul, and Nineveh were united into one by 1155 and the seat of the Maphrian moved northwards to Bartelli.³¹³

Syrian Orthodox dioceses in Cilicia and western Syria were known to be in Tarsus, Adana, and Tripoli, where the bishop in 1252 was Yešū' of Tripoli (also known as Bar Parson from Edessa). The best known Syrian Orthodox monastery in this region was that of Dova'ir, which had a theological seminary, but there were about six known in greater Antioch.³¹⁴ Syrian Orthodox manuscript production was known to have been active particularly in the Tūr Abdin at Mardin and Dayr al-Za'pharan, as well as in Damascus.³¹⁵ It is reasonable to assume that manuscript production was also active in Suriani monasteries in Cilicia, where the Armenian literary network was so strong. The great monastic district of the Black Mountain – on the southern periphery of Cilicia with the Principality of Antioch – was plundered by the Turks in 1119, and while the Greek Orthodox, Syrian, Georgian, and Armenian monasteries continued, they no longer produced the Church leadership as they had previously, thus symbolic of their condition.³¹⁶ Indeed, despite Dova'ir, most who wished to pursue education journeyed to Mosul and Baghdad, where the Syrian Orthodox schools were much stronger.³¹⁷

Faced with the Mongol invasions, however, not a few Suriani found refuge in western

³¹³ Ignatius Yacoub III, *History of the Monastery of Saint Matthew*, 77-79 and 82-83; Fiey, 'Diocèses', 5:138-45.

³¹⁴ Weltecke, 'The Syriac Orthodox in the Principality of Antioch', 106-7.

³¹⁵ Hunt, 'Manuscript Production by Christians', 162-63.

³¹⁶ Weltecke, 'The Syriac Orthodox in the Principality of Antioch', 112.

³¹⁷ Weltecke, 'The Syriac Orthodox in the Principality of Antioch', 119-20.

Syria, especially in Tripoli – including Bar Hebraeus’ rival Maphrian Ignatios IV (1253-58).³¹⁸ Others, such as the monk Behnam, from Sigistan in Persia, found refuge at the Monastery of the Syrians in the Wādi Natrūn in Egypt.³¹⁹ Some even travelled to the West, such as Theodore of Antioch, who for a time became a philosopher at the court of Frederick II (1220-50).³²⁰ All in all, this was a multifaceted period for the Syrian Orthodox Church, but one in which they again looked to their mountainous strongholds for safety.

The impact of the Mongol invasion into northern Mesopotamia and *Bilād al-Shām* was drastic for the Syrian Orthodox. The Seventh Crusade and the rise of the Mamlūks in Egypt was of negligible importance to the Suriani at this time, especially given the strength of the Ayyūbid princes in Syria. While they were favoured and protected in some ways by the Mongol nobility, this did not prevent significant numbers of Syrian Orthodox religious and laity from either being slaughtered directly or left destitute in a land of famine and banditry following the passage of Mongol armies. Nonetheless, raiding was not uncommon in a border country between Turks, Kurds, and Arabs, and the Suriani yet had hope that the new world order of the Il-Khāns would mean something brighter for the Christians than previously experienced.

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³¹⁸ Weltecke, ‘The Syriac Orthodox in the Principality of Antioch’, 122.

³¹⁹ White, Hugh G. Evelyn, *The Monasteries of the Wādi ‘N Natrūn*, Part 2 (New York, 1932), 390-1.

³²⁰ Weltecke, ‘The Syriac Orthodox in the Principality of Antioch’, 117.

In this chapter we have discussed the situation of the indigenous Christians within *Bilād al-Shām* and Egypt in the years 1244-77. This was a period of great social and political upheaval in the Near East in which all peoples were affected. The essential point is that the indigenous Christians were not a homogeneous unit affected in the same way across the region, but formed greatly diverse communities that were nonetheless interconnected with each other and with their neighbours and rulers, be they Frankish, Ayyūbid, Mamlūk, Mongol, Seljūk, or even Eastern Christian. Despite great adversity, most of the indigenous Christian communities were able to produce a significant cultural output in the form of literature, theology, and art, and for this reason the early and middle thirteenth century has been often termed a 'Golden Age' for many of them. The clouds were on the horizon, however, and with Mamlūk dominance and the eventual conversion of the Il-Khānate to Islam, the future for the majority of the native Christians was bleak, indeed.

Chapter 2: Mamlūk Consolidation: The Reigns of Baybars and Qalāwūn (1261-91)

The period of 1261-91 was a period of uncertainty and fear for the indigenous Christians of *Bilād al-Shām* and Egypt, to say the least. This was true for civilization as a whole, of course, everywhere along the Mongol-Turkic-Mamlūk frontier, but for Christians (and other non-Muslims and heterodox Muslims) the situation was even more tenuous. For example, if a mosque or religious school was damaged or destroyed, the sultan or wealthy *amīrs* would usually see to its repair (if eventually). For Christians, however, there was no guarantee that the Muslim authorities would allow them to rebuild and, even if they did, that the *‘amma* would permit it.³²¹ Funds would have to be raised from within the community, or from external sources, both of which were being hard-pressed in their own right. The high-ranking Christian officials upon whom much of the community depended were becoming fewer and found it increasingly difficult to remain in their position without converting to Islam, even as the Mamlūk sultans seemed to view the Christian hierarchs as little more than sources for ready income.

Although this chapter will primarily examine the situation in Mamlūk territory and the Copts in particular, it is inevitable that Ilkhānid-Mamlūk relations would impact upon the life of the different Christian Confessions, especially those concentrated along the frontier regions. Life for Christians was theoretically much

³²¹ Bribes were at times effective, but not always. There could also be intense debate between the *qādis* of the four legal schools about the legality of repairs in light of the so-called Covenant of ‘Umar. See, for example, Richards, ‘Dhimmi Problems’, 130-2.

different in firmly controlled areas of the Il-Khānate, at least as a rule for this thirty year span. That spirit of open philosophical discussion that marked Baghdad's scholarly circles in the tenth and eleventh centuries came to bear again to some degree during the Mongol intermezzo, when Christians, Jews, Buddhists, and other minorities – as well as Muslims – were allowed freedom of religion as equal before the law. The Jewish writer Ibn Kammūna, for example, wrote a text in 1284 called *The Inquiries on the Three Faiths*, which was ultimately a polemic comparing the claims of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, and then demonstrating why Jewish claims are correct vis-à-vis the others. By and large, he is very well-informed and even delves into the theological differences between Melkites, Syrian Orthodox, and the Assyrian Church of the East. But the very impiety of someone questioning the claims of Islam led to an attempted stoning by a crowd of *‘amma* in Baghdad. Ibn Kammūna managed to escape, but lost all of his possessions and had to go into hiding elsewhere. Thus, even if Jews and Christians were favoured by the Ilkhānid authorities and equal before the law, this episode demonstrates the power of Muslim popular opinion in the face of this authority. This is reminiscent of the situation in Damascus when al-Mu‘taman al-‘Assāl circulated his book on Christian Trinitarianism in light of the Qur’ān, and the resultant reactions headed up by Ghāzī ibn al-Wāsiṭī. Nonetheless, as in the earlier Baghdad tradition, Ibn Kammūna's work did lead to literary retorts by several Muslims and at least one Syrian Orthodox Christian, Ibn al-Maḥruma, in the early fourteenth century.³²²

³²² Ibn Kammūna, Sa‘d b. Maṣṣūr, *Sa‘d B. Maṣṣūr Ibn Kammūna's Examination of the Inquiries into the*

The years 1261-91 were a period of consolidation for the Mamlūks in Egypt and *Bilād al-Shām*. This thirty year span witnessed the emergence of an ever-increasingly dominant power following the victory over the ‘enemies of Islam’ at the Battle of ‘Ayn Jālūt. This period closes with the final expulsion of the other external threat – the Franks – with the fall of Acre in 1291. While the Mongols were not completely defeated – as, indeed, they would invade on a number of occasions for another twenty years – they were finally proven to not be invincible. Islam was saved, and it was thanks to the Mamlūks, the new rulers of Egypt. The Mamlūk Sultanate used its reputation as defenders of Sunni Islam (against Mongols and Franks) to build up its legitimacy. To strengthen this position as the rightful heirs of the Sunni Ayyūbids and also to win over the support of the ‘*ulamā*’, the early Mamlūk sultans embarked on a building campaign of madrasas and other religious buildings, usually with significant endowments.³²³ Prior to the Mongol invasion, Syria was largely divided into numerous small principalities ruled by various Ayyūbid princes and Mamlūk *amirs*. One effect of

Three Faiths, ed. Moshe Perlmann (Berkeley, CA, 1967), ix-xi. Cf. P. Habib Bacha, ‘Tanqīh al-Abḥāt li-l-milal al-Talāt d’Ibn Kammūna’, *PDO* 2 (1971), 151-62, at 154; Ignatius Aphrem I Barsoum, *The Scattered Pearls: A History of Syriac Literature and Sciences*, ed. & trans. Matti Moosa (Piscataway, NJ, 2003), 485. On the episode in Damascus, see the discussion in chapter one, and Ghāzī ibn al-Wāsiṭī, ‘An Answer to the Dhimmis’, 447-49. Bar Hebraeus provides numerous illustrations where Mongol authority and protection for Christians ultimately proved ineffectual against the Muslim ‘*amma*. See, for example, his *Chronology*, 1:451.

³²³ Lapidus, I.M., ‘Mamluk Patronage and the Arts in Egypt: Concluding Remarks’, *Muqarnas* 2 (1984), 173-81, at 175-7; R. Stephen Humphreys, ‘The Expressive Intent of the Mamluk Architecture of Cairo: A Preliminary Essay’, *Studia Islamica* 35 (1972), 69-119, at 78ff.

the Mongol conquest was to eliminate much of this fragmented state (and its strength) and presented an opportunity for Mamlūk consolidation.³²⁴

In the Mamlūk Sultanate, Christians were often reliant on the intercession of Christian nations. Those foreign powers which comprised potential patrons for the indigenous Christians were still very much formidable and with significant potential to influence the situation within the Mamlūk Sultanate at the beginning of this period, but by the end, they were as a rule much less so. The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem (the Franks collectively) lost their last foothold on the coast, while Cilicia (as a politico-military power) went from a position of relative strength (dependent, that is, upon a regional super-power) to one of weakness, although on occasion it was able to help Armenians and others within *Bilād al-Shām*. The Il-Khānate was the most significant patron of the indigenous Christians, but one to which the latter began to realize their complete unreliability, even more so as it became Islamicized. Nubia in the south ended its position as an independent power capable of interceding for the Christians, and became essentially a vassal state. Ethiopia, on the other hand, was only just coming into its own as a power capable of realistically influencing Mamlūk policy towards their indigenous Christians. Finally, Constantinople was once again in Byzantine hands and its emperors were able on occasion to use diplomacy to help soothe Mamlūk policy towards its indigenous Christians, but only on a limited scale.

³²⁴ Irwin, *Middle East*, 45-7.

So long as their urban centres and monastic communities with their schools and scriptoriums survived, the indigenous Christians of the Near East enjoyed a fairly stable existence with hope for the future (despite occasional persecutions). Mamlūk consolidation did not, at first, bring stability to *Bilād al-Shām*, and certainly not prosperity. What it did do was to eliminate or, at least, to greatly weaken those foreign powers most able to help the indigenous Christians.

POLITICAL CONSOLIDATION IN BILĀD AL-SHĀM AND EGYPT

From the beginning of his reign in 1260, Baybars led expeditions into Syria nearly every year of his rule, either against the few remaining defiant Ayyūbid or Mamlūk pretenders, against the Il-Khānate, Cilicia, the Ismā‘ilis, or the Crusader States.³²⁵ One of his first directives was to order an expedition against the most staunchly Mongol ally in *Bilād al-Shām* – Cilician Armenia. This was to be but the first of a dozen that would cripple the kingdom before its final demise over a century later. In 1266, perhaps antagonized by earlier Armenian raids against Aleppo, Baybars sent his chief lieutenant (and eventual successor) Qalāwūn to invade Cilicia. The result was devastation to the Armenians, as Sis and its other chief cities were sacked and burned, thousands were slaughtered, and many more were taken captive. A small relieving

³²⁵ Irwin, *Middle East*, 42.

Mongol force arrived too late, and Lesser Armenia never fully recovered, henceforth entering a rapid period of decline.³²⁶

In 1263, Baybars finally defeated his most determined Ayyūbid foe – al-Mughīth ‘Umarī, prince of Karak (d. 1264). When Karak capitulated, its predominantly Christian inhabitants were required to swear their allegiance to the sultan on Bibles.³²⁷ Baybars next sent two *amīrs* to raze the cathedral church at Nazareth and to raid around Acre.³²⁸ This destruction of the church at Nazareth was designed to damage Frankish confidence and morale, as it was the holiest Christian site then in Latin hands. Baybars would continue this policy elsewhere.³²⁹ Although this was a Latin structure, there was also a Melkite population at Nazareth and, while their reaction is not recorded, this blatant destruction would most likely have been greatly disturbing to them given the uncertainty of what was to follow.³³⁰ One by one, Frankish cities and castles fell in rapid succession. The culmination of his military expeditions came on 17 May 1268 with the fall of Antioch, in which (records Grigor of Akanc’) wholesale

³²⁶ Smpad, ‘Armenian Chronicle’, 162-4; Claude Mutafian, *La Cilicie au Carrefour des Empires*, 2 Vols. (Paris, 1988), 1:441-3; Boase, ‘History of the Kingdom’, 26; Angus Donal Stewart, *The Armenian Kingdom and the Mamluks* (Leiden, 2001), 47-53. Baybars might also have held a personal grudge against the Armenian King Het’um. He purportedly said to his prisoner, Prince Levon (son of Het’um): ‘Your father called me a slave and would not make peace. Am I the slave now, or you?’ See: Grigor of Akanc’, ‘History’, 354-9.

³²⁷ Thorau, *Lion of Egypt*, 136-8.

³²⁸ Ibn al-Furāt, *Ayyubids, Mamlūks, and Crusaders*, 56-57.

³²⁹ Marshall, *Warfare in the Latin East*, 202.

³³⁰ Burchard of Mount Sion recorded: ‘[At] the end of the city, in Saint Gabriel’s Church, there is a well which is venerated by the inhabitants...’ See: Burchard of Mount Sion, 42; Pringle, *Churches of the Crusader Kingdom*, 2:140-4.

slaughter ensued and the city was ‘destroyed to its foundations’. Mufaḍḍal ibn Abi’l-Faḍā’il records that the city – known for its large indigenous Christian population – at that time had one hundred thousand residents, according to an official Il-Khānate report, not including refugees from the countryside in the wake of the Mamlūk offensive. Although the Armenian Constable and a contingent from Cilicia submitted and were allowed to depart, the garrison refused to surrender and the Muslim army soon breached the walls. All of the male Christian population unable to flee were massacred (forty thousand if one accepts Mufaḍḍal’s sum), the women and children were taken for sale in the slave markets, and all of the churches were destroyed and the city so burned that it never recovered its former glory.³³¹ In addition, the numerous monasteries and hermitages on the Black Mountain west of Antioch were also emptied out and destroyed. The Black Mountain had been famous for its monasteries and hermits since the late Roman and early Byzantine period and featured a variety of nationalities, but especially Greeks, Georgians, and Armenians as well as Syrian Orthodox and, later, Latins. Archaeological excavations suggest that these monasteries were destroyed in 1268, its monks either killed or driven away.³³²

³³¹ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 1:448; Mufaḍḍal ibn Abi al-Faḍā’il, *Kitāb al-nahj al-saḍīd*, ed. and trans. E. Blochet, *Histoire des Sultans Mamlouks*, 2 Vols., *Patrologia Orientalis* 12 and 14 (Paris, 1916-20), 1:508-9 and 513; Eracles, *L’Estoire de Eracles Empereur (Continuation de Guillaume de Tyr)*, in *RHC Occ.*, 2:1-482, at 456-7; Ibn al-Furāt, *Ayyubids, Mamlūks, and Crusaders*, 122; Smpad, ‘Armenian Chronicle’, 165; Grigor of Akanc’, ‘History’, 370-1. Cf. C. Karalevskij, ‘Antioche’, *DHGE*, 3:563-703, at 619-20.

³³² Djobadze, W., *Archeological Investigations in the Region West of Antioch on-the-Orontes* (Stuttgart, 1986), 3, 6, 26, 27, 59, 97, 98, and 117. Cf. Sebastian Brock, ‘Syriac Manuscripts Copied on the Black

Sultan Baybars was less concerned in his reign with the indigenous Christians within his territory than he was with the potential external threats, namely the Mongols and Latins. He was reported to have been a very superstitious man, however, and early on (about 1259) he took on as his spiritual advisor the brutal and virulently anti-Christian Shaykh Khaḍir al-Mihrānī (ca. 1276). Carol Hillenbrand calls him ‘Baybar’s Rasputin’, while Thorau notes that he possessed towards Christians and Jews ‘a hatred that seemed almost morbid’. He knew how to play upon Baybars’ superstitions, and thus was given great leeway.³³³ Before he was finally arrested and imprisoned at the insistence of a coalition of powerful *amīrs* (including the Atabeg Fāris al-Dīn Aqtāy and the future sultan Qalāwūn) in 1271, he managed to vandalize and pillage the principal Melkite cathedral in Alexandria (which allegedly held the head of John the Baptist), converting it into a madrasa called al-Khaḍrā’ (in his own honour). He also sacked the great Jewish synagogue in Damascus, and personally killed the abbot of the Monastery of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem.³³⁴ Although the Christian Churches were thus greatly suffering and hard-pressed during Baybars’ reign, the

Mountain, near Antioch’, in ed. Regine Schulz and Manfred Görg, *Lingua Restituta Orientalis: Festgabe für Julius Assfalg* (Wiesbaden, 1990), 59-67, at 59 and 66-7.

³³³ Hillenbrand, *Crusades: Islamic Perspectives*, 417; Thorau, *Lion of Egypt*, 225-9; cf. Irwin, *Middle East*, 53-5; Holt, *Ages of the Crusades*, 152.

³³⁴ Mufaḍḍal ibn Abī al-Faḍā’il, *Kitāb al-nahj*, 1:459, with a larger account of Shāykh Khaḍir from 455-62; Louis Pouzet, ‘Hadir ibn Abī Bakr al-Mihrānī’, *Bulletin D’Études Orientales* 30 (1978), 173-83, at 178-79. The passage in al-Mufaḍḍal reads: ثم أنه هدم بدمشق كنيسة اليهود وبنّا بها المحاريب وهدم بالقدس كنيسة تعرف بالمصلبة وكانت عظيمة عند النصارى وقتل قسيسها بيده وعملها زاوية لة وهدم بالاسكندرية كنيسة للروم كانت كرسيا من كراسيهم يعقدون فيها البطركية ويزعمون أن رأس يحيى ابن زكريا عليه السلام فيها فصيرها مسجدا وسمّاها المدرسة الخضراء . Cf. P.M. Holt, ‘An Early Source on Shaykh Khaḍir al-Mihrānī’, *BSOAS* 46 (1983), 33-9. Holt corrects a textual error confusing *kanīsat al-fuhūd* (‘church of the panthers’) for *kanīsat al-Yahūd* (‘synagogue of the Jews’).

Coptic Church, at least, still had enough financial resources to enact significant monastic restorations in the reign of Patriarch Gabriel III, between 1268 and 1271.³³⁵

With the death of Sultan Baybars at Damascus in 1277, the Christians of *Bilād al-Shām* and Egypt (including the Franks) might quite understandably have felt relieved and hoped for a turning-back of the clock or, at the least, a respite from the continued Mamlūk onslaught against the various Christian communities.³³⁶ All was perceived as not lost, of course, as the Mongol Il-Khānate was yet strong and friendly towards Christians, though as we shall see the friendship of the Il-Khāns was temporary, ultimately unreliable, and came with a staggering price. The constant infighting within the Crusader states in the face of such a strong and aggressive external threat demonstrated their inherent weakness and imminent demise. In fact, the policies and external relations experienced during the reign of Baybars were to continue over the next eighteen years: the continued erosion of the Crusader states; further repulses of Mongol invasions from Mesopotamia; and the increasing influence of the conservative-trending ‘*ulamā*’ with the Mamlūk regime and the subsequent degradation of the *dhimmī* situation.

In the hope of establishing a lengthy dynasty, Sultan Baybars had appointed his son al-Malik al-Sa‘īd Nāṣir Muḥammad Berke Khān (solo rule: 1277-9) joint sultan in 1264. It was only upon the former's death in 1277, however, that al-Malik al-Sa‘īd

³³⁵ Meinardus, *Two Thousand Years*, 157 and 277.

³³⁶ For an account of Baybars’ death, see: Mufaḍḍal ibn Abī al-Faḍā’il, *Kitāb al-nahj*, 2:440-2.

actually gained independent authority.³³⁷ In 1279, he led his military forces to Damascus from whence he sent an expedition into Cilician Armenia where they wreaked havoc and gained much booty. It was during this time that the rift between the old guard and al-Malik al-Sa'īd's household of Circassian Mamlūks came to a head. One of the commanders of the expedition was Sayf al-Dīn Qalāwūn al-Alfī, al-Malik al-Sa'īd's father-in-law and a former Mamlūk of Sultan al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb's household. Having alienated most of the *Zahīriyya* Mamlūks (from the household of al-Zahīr Baybars), the sultan was forced to abdicate in favour of his half-brother Salāmish, though the latter joined his brother in exile at Karak Castle in Transjordan within a few weeks upon Qalāwūn's usurpation.³³⁸

The new sultan, taking the title of al-Malik al-Mansūr Qalāwūn (1279-90), was a Kipchak Turk like Baybars (and knew little Arabic). It was not until 1286, however, that he was finally able to consolidate power in Syria and Transjordan, however, as he first had to defeat the governor of Damascus (and would be sultan), Sunqur al-Ashqar, in May of 1280, and then the sons of Baybars at Karak in 1286.³³⁹ In 1280, the Mongol Il-Khān Abāghā (1265-82) invaded Syria with a force reportedly of fifty thousand Mongols and thirty thousand Armenians, Georgians, Seljūks, Frankish mercenaries, and others. Al-Mufaḍḍal recorded that the Armenians were responsible for burning down

³³⁷ Mufaḍḍal ibn Abi'l-Faḍā'il, *Kitāb al-nahj*, 2:452.

³³⁸ Northrup, *From Slave to Sultan*, 75-83; Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks*, 180-1.

³³⁹ Northrup, *From Slave to Sultan*, 88-96; Holt, *Age of the Crusades*, 101. The two surviving sons, Salāmish and Khaḍīr (named after Baybars' anti-*dhimmi* soothsayer), were exiled to Constantinople.

the great mosque in Aleppo. Qalāwūn and his army were able – just – to halt and defeat the Mongols at the second Battle of Ḥimṣ in October 1281.³⁴⁰

Accusations that Mongols were Christians and favoured them led Qalāwūn to persecute those Christians within his territory early in his reign. Resentment against Christians by Egyptian Muslims was fuelled by the wealth – or perceived wealth – and influence of certain Copts. Perhaps to curry favour with the disaffected Cairene ‘*ulamā*’ and general populace (the ‘*amma*’), Qalāwūn ordered the complete dismissal of all Christians from the war department and replaced by Muslims. He also ordered the complete destruction in 1279 of the Monastery of al-Khandaq near Bab al-Futūḥ in Cairo.³⁴¹ It would appear that these Christian bureaucrats were later reinstated (as they were dismissed not infrequently with each subsequent persecution), though this is not recorded. Northrup argues that perhaps Qalāwūn was seeking to win the favour of Muslim officials in the army administration and in the *dīwān* which administered the amīr's feudal estates (*iqṭā*’s).³⁴² It should be remembered that even Saladin –

³⁴⁰ Mufaḍḍal ibn Abī al-Faḍā’il, *Kitāb al-nahj*, 2:483 and 488-97; al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, 1.3:691-3; Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamlūks*, 187-201; Northrup, *From Slave to Sultan*, 100-2 and 108-11; Paulina B. Lewicka, *Šāfi‘ Ibn ‘Alī’s Biography of the Mamluk Sultan Qalāwūn* (Warsaw, 2000), 64-5. Bar Hebraeus’ account of this battle records five thousand Georgians and a large Armenian force under King Leon were both present. See: Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 1:464-5.

³⁴¹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Mawā’iz wa’l-i’tibār fī dhikr al-khiṭaṭ wa’l-āthār*, ed. Ayman Fu’ād Sayyid, 5 Vols (London, 2002-4), 4.2:1048; Alberto Elli, *Storia della Chiesa Copta*, 3 Vols. (Cairo, 2003), 2:93. Al-Maqrīzī says that Qalāwūn later restored the monastery.

³⁴² Northrup, Linda, 'Muslim-Christian Relations During the Reign of the Mamluk Sultan al-Mansūr Qalāwūn, AD 1278-1290', in eds. Michael Gervers and R.J. Bikhazi, *Conversion and Continuity: Indigenous Christian Communities in Islamic Lands, Eighth to Eighteenth Centuries* (Toronto, 1990), 253-

considered not unfriendly towards Christians – dismissed all of the Copts from governmental service early in his reign until his consolidation of power allowed him to reinstate them.³⁴³ Dismissals of *dhimmīs* would purposefully be public in order to gain public favour as was their intention. Reinstatement, on the other hand, would have been discreetly carried out after public furore had died down.

Shortly afterward, and just prior to the second Battle of Ḥimṣ in 1281, Qalāwūn ordered that all of the *dhimmīs* employed as accountants and officials in Damascus should be given the choice of conversion or death. A group of them refused to convert until they were actually at the gallows, but eventually relented. After the battle, however, this group asked for a Muslim legal opinion regarding their conversion. In effect, it was ruled that the procedure was improper and the group could become Christians again. It is also recorded that these Christians had to pay a large sum to have their conversion reversed.³⁴⁴

According to al-Maqrīzī, Christians during the reign of Qalāwūn had been publicly over-proud in their dress and disdainful towards Muslims. This is, of course, in the light that they were *dhimmīs* and thus second-class citizens. They were acting above their station, from his perspective. In 1283, records al-Maqrīzī, a Christian scribe named ‘Ayīn al-Ghazal met a Muslim middleman on the streets of Old Cairo and

61, at 254. For a discussion of the Mamlūk landholding system – *iqṭā‘*s, see: Stuart J. Borsch, *The Black Death in Egypt and England* (Austin, TX, 2005), 24-34.

³⁴³ HPEC, 3.2:106-7 and 164-5; Yaacov Lev, *Saladin in Egypt* (Leiden, 1999), 99-100 and 187-93.

³⁴⁴ Al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 4:98-9, cited in Northrup, 'Muslim-Christian Relations', 254-5. I was unable to locate and examine volume 4.

publicly berated him for overdue debts. Al-Ghazal had this middleman tied to his donkey and dragged through the streets. A Muslim crowd gathered and demanded the latter's release and, when the scribe refused, attacked him. He was saved by his (employer) amīr's men, but when the crowd went before the citadel and shouted complaints, Qalāwūn sent for al-Ghazal and even ordered two *amīrs* to bring in all the Christians assembled and to kill them. Although he relented from this last order, he did have town criers sent throughout Cairo and Old Cairo declaring that no Christian or Jew was to be employed by any amīr. He then ordered the *amīrs* to 'invite' the Christians to convert to Islam or be executed. In the meantime, however, the Christian employees escaped. The *'amma* attacked the homes of Christians and Jews, killing some and taking women captive. They also looted the ancient Mu'allāqah Church in Babylon and killed some Christians there. Eventually, Qalāwūn sent in his soldiers to quiet the mob and even arrested some and publicly beat and shamed them. Still, his wrath was against the Christians, as he ordered his *amīrs* to dig a large ditch in the market near to the citadel, throw the scribes in it and burn them. The Amīr Baydara tried to intercede with the sultan, but he refused, disdainful that a Muslim government should employ so many Christians. Baydara, did, however, succeed in convincing him to let those who would convert to Islam stay in their jobs and those who refused be executed. All converted to Islam. Coptic converts to Islam were still suspected, however, and disparagingly called *musālīma*. Al-Maqrīzī accused them of thereafter

becoming haughty and humiliating Muslims under the protecting guise of their own conversion.³⁴⁵

Finally, just shortly before his death and in preparation for the siege of Acre in 1290,³⁴⁶ Qalāwūn again ordered the dismissal of all *dhimmī* employees of the *dīwāns* and forbade their employment. Although it is reported that this order was not actually enforced,³⁴⁷ it does point to a general policy throughout Qalāwūn's reign from beginning to end of hostility to *dhimmīs*. Perhaps it was from a personal vindication of Muslim effrontery that a despised religious minority should be in authority over the Muslims, but it might also be argued that Qalāwūn, like Baybars before him, was pragmatic and simply sought to strengthen his position by playing to the bigotry of the Islamic '*ulamā*', the '*āmma*', and those Muslims who would gain at the expense of the dismissed *dhimmī* officials.³⁴⁸ It is likely that both of these motivations guided the hand of Qalāwūn.

In general during Qalāwūn's reign, Christians seemed to have largely kept a low profile in the face of a hardening of official *dhimmī* policy. The reinstatement of the

³⁴⁵ Tagher, *Christians in Muslim Egypt*, 146-47.

³⁴⁶ The conquest of Acre was conducted by Qalāwūn's son, al-Ashraf Khalil (1290-3). For contemporary responses, see: Bar Hebraeus, *Chronology*, 1:492-3; *Gestes des Chiprois*, 822-8; Ludolph von Suchem, *Description of the Holy Land*, trans. Aubrey Stewart, *PPTS* (London, 1895), 54-61 (who remarks that 'all of the Eastern people sung of its fall in hymns of lamentation...' [60]); Abū al-Fidā', *Tarīkh al-mukhtāṣar fi Ākhhār al-bashar* (*Tiré des Annales de Abou l'Fedā*), *RHC Or.*, 1:1-165, at 163-4.

³⁴⁷ Al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 4:98-9, cited in Northrup, 'Muslim-Christian Relations', 255.

³⁴⁸ Qalāwūn's pragmatism can be found in his financial reforms. On one occasion, he abolished the poll tax paid by *dhimmīs* – at least for a time. See: Lewicka, *Šāfi 'Ibn 'Alī's Biography*, 62.

sumptuary laws was not unusual in and of itself, but it was increasingly strictly enforced during the Bah̄rī Mamlūk period. According to al-Maqrīzī:

Even the most important members of the Christian community rode donkeys [rather than horses], wore the *zunnār* [belt] at their waist, and dared not speak with a Muslim while he was mounted. One rarely saw Christians wearing fine robes or white, and when they did so, it was with humility. [Indeed,] the status of the Christians reached its lowest point.³⁴⁹

Northrup argues that, in fact, Mamlūk policy only changed to a small degree and Qalāwūn's edicts were really intended as propaganda to strengthen support for his government at crucial points. Pressure was brought to bear by Muslim officials (such as Ghāzī ibn al-Wāsiṭī) who resented the Christian presence. Lessening the status of Christian *dīwāni* officials would have gained Qalāwūn support both in the administration whilst also amongst the general Muslim populace. While Northrup argues that the status of the Christian community truly deteriorated only in the fourteenth century, increased official propaganda in the early Bah̄rī Mamlūk period only hastened this end.³⁵⁰

Despite this hardening of both Muslim public opinion and official policy, Christians – especially those not employed in the financial *dīwān* in Cairo – generally had their limited freedoms as determined by the Islamic sumptuary laws. One

³⁴⁹ Translated in Northrup, 'Muslim-Christian Relations', 253.

³⁵⁰ Northrup, 'Muslim-Christian Relations', 258-9.

advantage of Cairene Mamlūk consolidation of Palestine was the stability of the travel routes and thus the increased ability of African Christians to go on pilgrimage to the holy places of Jerusalem. In 1287, for example, al-Mu‘taman ibn al-‘Assāl composed a homily encouraging his fellow Copts to do just this.³⁵¹

The Mongol threat was ended for a time with the death of Abāghā in 1282 and the accession of his brother, the Muslim convert Tegūder (‘Aḥmad’, 1282-4).³⁵² Much of Abāghā's reign had been spent in struggle with the Golden Horde – key Mamlūk allies – to the north of the Caucasus, placing further strain on the region.³⁵³ Indeed, almost immediately upon his own accession, Qalāwūn sent a delegation laden with sixteen loads of gifts to those of any importance at the court of Möngke Temūr (1266-80) of the Golden Horde. The latter's successor, Töde Möngke (1280-7), finally sent envoys back in 1283 along with the news that he had converted to Islam and essentially sought Qalāwūn's mentorship in Islam and the *jihād*. This sense of seniority coupled with continued control of the ‘Abbāsīd caliph played a key basis for Qalāwūn's legitimacy as ruler of the heart and greatest of Muslim lands. Practically speaking, the Mamlūk-Golden Horde alliance was further strengthened against the hostile Il-Khānate, while the key region for the purchase of new Mamlūk slaves was secured.³⁵⁴

³⁵¹ Graf, *Geschichte der Christlichen Arabischen Literatur*, 413.

³⁵² On Tegūder ‘Aḥmad, see: Judith Pfeiffer, ‘Conversion to Islam among the Ilkhans in Muslim narrative traditions: The case of Aḥmad Tegūder’, PhD Thesis, University of Chicago, 2003.

³⁵³ Boyle, J.A., ‘Dynastic and Political History of the Il-Khāns’, in ed. J.A. Boyle, *The Cambridge History of Iran*, Vol. 5 (Cambridge, 1968), 303-421, at 355-68.

³⁵⁴ Broadbridge, ‘Mamluk Legitimacy and the Mongols’, 103-4.

The consolidation of power by Baybars and Qalāwūn in Egypt and *Bilād al-Shām* corresponded with a generally prosperous period for the indigenous Christians in the Ilkhānid area of northern Mesopotamia, albeit a period of increased instability. The Ilkhān Abāghā continued his father's policy of religious tolerance towards Christians and Jews, while also continuing an aggressive policy towards Syria (as described above). He also continued hope for a Frankish alliance, sending envoys to the Council of Lyons in 1274, promising to return Jerusalem to Christian (i.e. Latin) control. The alliance was, however, never realised.³⁵⁵

Upon his death, his brother Tegūder-Aḥmad sent a delegation in 1282 to Sultan Qalāwūn proposing peace with the Mamlūks. He was opposed, however, by the old guard (including Assyrian Christians and Buddhists).³⁵⁶ Of Tegūder, the biographer of Mar Yahballāhā unsurprisingly states that he 'lacked education and knowledge and much persecuted the Christians because of his association with the Hagarenes [i.e. Muslims] toward whose religion he leaned.'³⁵⁷ He destroyed the church of Marāghā and had the Catholicos Yahballāhā III (1281-1317) imprisoned, but Tegūder's mother, a Kerait Christian named Qutui-Khatūn, intervened and saved his life. Bar Hebraeus does not note Tegūder's conversion to Islam, nor his hostility to Christians, but says that he

³⁵⁵ May, 'Mongol Presence', 152-3.

³⁵⁶ Mufaḍḍal ibn Abi al-Faḍā'il, *Kitāb al-nahj*, 2:499-511, and Qalāwūn's response, 511-25; al-Maqrizī, *al-Sulūk*, 1.3:707-8; P.M. Holt, 'The Ilkhān Aḥmad's Embassies to Qalāwūn: Two Contemporary Accounts', in *BSOAS* 49 (1986), 128-32; Manz, 'Rule of the infidels', 148 .

³⁵⁷ *The History of Yaballaha III and of His Vicar Bar Sauma*, trans. James A. Montgomery (New York, 1927), 47.

was deposed for his incompetency.³⁵⁸ Tegūder was succeeded by his brother Arghūn (1284-91), who continued the earlier Il-Khānate policies of general tolerance and political opposition to the Mamlūk-Golden Horde alliance. Throughout the 1280s, civilization across Mesopotamia especially seemed to be breaking down and many suffered at the hands of marauding bands of Kurds and Arabs. Large-scale raids were frequently conducted especially against Christian villages, but even the city of Mosul was looted and numerous Christians (and others) killed or enslaved.³⁵⁹ Bar Hebraeus himself, then at Mar Matti Monastery northeast of Mosul, fled with his brother and other monks in the wake of this desperate situation. Muslims continued to gain greater influence in the administration as the Mongols sought to stabilize the situation, usually to the detriment of Christians and other non-Muslims.³⁶⁰ At one point, however, upon learning of the treachery of a Muslim Persian lawyer who had caused the murder and suffering of many Christians, Arghūn declared that the governor of Baghdad, who was a Jew, should be made the chief of the scribes, and that his governors 'should never, never appoint the Arab to be a scribe, but only the Christian and the Jew. And thus the hatred and the ill-will of the Arabs [that is, the Muslims; towards the Christians] grew stronger.'³⁶¹

³⁵⁸ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 1:467 and 471.

³⁵⁹ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 1:471-84.

³⁶⁰ Bundy, David, 'The Syriac and Armenian Responses to the Islamicization of the Mongols', in ed. John Victor Tolan, *Medieval Christian Perceptions of Islam: A Book of Essays* (London, 1996), 33-54, at 46.

³⁶¹ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 1:484-5.

NINE CHRISTIAN CONFESSIONS

ARMENIANS

The reigns of Sultans Baybars and Qalāwūn impacted directly and devastatingly upon the Armenians. This was most directly realized in the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia, where constant Mamlūk raiding took its toll in destruction, looting, and in the taking of captives. As Armenians were linked to the hated Mongols, Armenian communities within Greater Syria feared for their safety, while royal patronage from Cilicia became less constant. The Armenian kings had gambled the future of their country on the promise of Mongol protection, but, for the time being, at least, this protection was only of minimal worth in the face of Mamlūk attacks.

Writing early in the reign of Qalāwūn, the Latin pilgrim Burchard of Mount Sion, writing about A.D. 1280, noted the presence of a great variety of peoples in the Holy Land besides Latins: Saracens, Syrians, Greeks, Armenians, Georgians, 'Nestorians', Nubians, 'Jacobites', Chaldeans, Medes, Persians, Ethiopians, Egyptians, 'and many other peoples who are Christians. Of those there is an infinite number.'³⁶² In addition to the Muslim Arab presence, he notes the wide ranging of the fierce Bedouins and Turkomān tribesmen, but quite emphatically insists that they are a minority.

Now, it must be noted as a matter of fact...that the whole East beyond the Mediterranean Sea, even unto India and Ethiopia, acknowledges and preaches the name of Christ, save only the Saracens and some Turkomans who dwell in

³⁶² Burchard of Mount Sion, 'Description', 104.

Cappadocia, so that I declare for certain, as I have myself seen and have heard from others who knew, that always and in every place and kingdom, besides Egypt and Arabia, where Saracens and other followers of Mahomet chiefly dwell, you will find thirty Christians and more for one Saracen.³⁶³

While some might say that Burchard was simply exaggerating, it is also possible that this is what he was looking for and this is what he found in certain areas where he travelled. A prime example is his three week experience in Cilicia, where the Armenian Christians (along with numerous Greeks and Syrian Orthodox) truly were dominant, excepting foreign merchants and Mongol tax-collectors. At the Armenian Court, the king's household numbered about two hundred. Burchard firstly notes their piety most approvingly. Although some might follow heretical teachings (he tells his Latin readers), most are 'men of simple and devout life'. When he stayed for a fortnight with the Armenian Catholicos, Burchard was amazed at his exemplary life of holiness and austerity, despite owning many castles and significant revenues, and continuously praises him. He then goes on to describe the duties of Armenian priests and the piety of the nobility, as well as some features of court life and the nature of Armenian liturgical services.³⁶⁴

In reflection on Burchard's description, it is likely that his visit occurred prior to the Mamlūk invasion by Sultan Khalīl and Qalāwūn in 1279. The sense of stability at the royal court in Sīs would otherwise most likely not have existed. Burchard notes as an aside the tributary status of Cilicia under the Mongol Il-Khāns, to whom they allied

³⁶³ Burchard of Mount Sion, 'Description', 106.

³⁶⁴ Burchard of Mount Sion, 'Description', 108-11.

themselves and sought protection against their Mamlūk enemies. Obviously, the piety of the Armenians greatly impressed him, but so, too, did the fact that many of their customs were similar to Latin traditions. In Cilicia, in particular, the nobility and certain sectors of the Armenian Church had adopted Frankish and Latin customs, much to the opposition of the lower classes and the *Vardopets* (wandering monastic teachers).³⁶⁵ Cilicia was increasingly connected to the Lusignan Kingdom of Cyprus politically, militarily, and dynastically, so this cultural affinity is no surprise.³⁶⁶ Additionally, the Cilician kings had bestowed numerous strategic castles to the Military Orders to assist in the defense of the kingdom, further integrating the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia with Frankish Outremer.³⁶⁷

Despite the constant hostility of the Mamlūks and the frequent instability in the region, Armenian monks continued to make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem in the 1280s. As before, they very often returned to Cilicia or to remote Armenian monasteries elsewhere and dedicated themselves to teaching, writing, or copying manuscripts. One such, for example, was Hovhannes Erznkats'i, a well-known grammarian who journeyed to Jerusalem in 1281 and ended his days teaching in Cilicia in 1293.³⁶⁸

³⁶⁵ Hamilton, *Latin Church*, 344-5.

³⁶⁶ Ghazarian, *Armenian Kingdom in Cilicia*, 131-56; Hodgson, 'Conflict and Cohabitation', 97.

³⁶⁷ Riley-Smith, J.S.C., 'The Templars and the Teutonic Knights in Cilician Armenia', in ed. Boase, *Cilician Kingdom*, 92-117; A.T. Luttrell, 'The Hospitallers' Interventions in Cilician Armenia: 1291-1375', in ed. Boase, *Cilician Kingdom*, 118-44.

³⁶⁸ Terian, 'Armenian Writers', 149.

The Armenian nobility gravitated towards the Mongols politically and militarily, while culturally and religiously they oriented to the Latins. Despite these measures linking them to powers of greater strength, they were unable to adequately protect themselves in the face of Mamlūk hostility. Armenian communities within Palestine and elsewhere in Mamlūk territory continued as did the pilgrimage route, but the atmosphere was one of fear and uncertainty.

ASSYRIAN CHURCH OF THE EAST

Of all indigenous Christian Confessions, the Assyrian Church of the East was directly affected the least by Mamlūk consolidation. There were small Assyrian communities living within Greater Syria (including Jerusalem, Damascus, and Aleppo), but the greater numbers were in Frankish Tripoli. Assyrians in northern Mesopotamia – where significant numbers did live – were affected by borderland politics involving Arab and Kurdish *amīrs* rallying to the Mamlūk banner, usually to the Christians' detriment. Conversely, the continued importance of high-ranking Assyrian Christian officials added to the association by Syria and Egyptian Muslims of the Christian with the hated Mongol invaders.

This close association is readily exemplified in the person of an Ongut monk named Marcus, who was elected in 1281 as the Catholicos of the Assyrian Church of the East. He took the name of Yahballāhā III (1281-1317). His companion, Rabban

Bar Sauma (d. 1294), a native of Beijing, became his advisor and a diplomat extraordinaire for the Il-Khāns, especially Arghūn. These two had first met at the Monastery of the Cross in Beijing and decided to go on holy pilgrimage together to Jerusalem. After periods of lengthy travel and introductions to the various Christian-friendly Mongol rulers, they came as far as the Armenian city of Ani and thence to Georgia. They had intended to go by ship to Jerusalem as the Mamlūk-Mongol war prevented land travel. They thus turned back and journeyed to Baghdad.³⁶⁹ The current Assyrian Catholicos, Denḥa I (1265-81) decided to ordain Marcus as bishop of northern China and Bar Sauma as vicar general. Wars in Central Asia prevented their return, however, and upon Mar Denḥa's death in 1281, the Assyrian bishops, perhaps in what they hoped was a politically astute move due to his Mongol origins, elected Yahballāhā as the new Catholicos.³⁷⁰ Though persecuted by Tegūder, he was greatly favoured by Arghūn. In 1287, Arghūn sent Rabban Bar Sauma as his messenger to Europe to seek an alliance against the Mamlūk-Golden Horde alliance and liberate the 'land of the Christians'. This was a high point in the relations of Roman Catholic Church with the Church of the East, if a unique phenomenon, as Rabban Bar Sauma gave an *apology* for the theological position of the East Syrians, as well as celebrating

³⁶⁹ *History of Yaballaha III*, 27-30 and 40. Italian ships, in particular, sailed from the Black Sea ports via Constantinople to Syrian ports. Fiey suggests that they actually made it as far as Nisibis, where they visited many churches and monasteries, before they had to turn back to Baghdad. Cf. J.-M. Fiey, *Nisibe: métropole syriaque orientale et ses suffragants des origines à nos jours* (Leuven, 1977), 108.

³⁷⁰ *History of Yaballaha III*, 40-6; Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, 3:451-3. Bar Hebraeus reports a Mongol amir suggesting to the bishops that Yahballāhā, as a Mongol speaker, would be a wise policy decision. Cf. Baum and Winkler, *Church of the East*, 94-7.

the Divine Liturgy in Rome.³⁷¹ It is likely that another Assyrian Christian named ʿIsa (d. 1308), an envoy of Kublai Khān to Baghdad and future commissioner of his office of Christian Affairs, accompanied Bar Sauma to the European courts. Nothing, of course, ultimately came of this attempt, as events would demonstrate.³⁷² Relations between Yahballāhā and the Il-Khāns generally remained good until the enthronement of the Muslim convert Ghāzān, as shall be discussed in the next chapter.

Although this period was on one hand a geographical high point for the Church of the East – stretching as it did from the Mediterranean to China – its heartland of Persia and Mesopotamia actually experienced contraction. In the ninth century, for example, there were fifty-four dioceses, but by the year after Mar Yahballāhā’s death (that is, in 1318) there were only four dioceses.³⁷³ At the beginning of his reign, on the other hand, the number was most certainly more than four, though also doubtless less than fifty-four. The patronage of the Il-Khāns (particularly Hülegū and Arghūn) brought a short period of prosperity to the Church of the East, while the establishment of Islam as the state religion and the imposition of fierce restrictions coupled with numerous and widespread persecutions and pogroms doubtless led to a loss of numbers and geographical distribution. For example, there were twenty dioceses in central and eastern Persia in the late ninth century, but the last one, in Khorasan, was mentioned

³⁷¹ Of Rabban Bar Sauma’s journey to Europe, see: *History of Yaballaha III*, 51-73; Alexander Toepel, ‘Die nestorianische Kirche und Rom im 13. Jahrhundert’, *OC* 92 (2008), 62-78, at 70-2.

³⁷² Baum and Winkler, *Church of the East*, 86-7. Regarding Ilkhānid diplomacy with Europe, see: Peter Jackson, *The Mongols and the West, 1221-1440* (London, 2005), 168-70.

³⁷³ Wilmshurst, David, *The Ecclesiastical Organisation of the Church of the East, 1318-1913* (Leuven, 2000), 17.

for the final time in 1279.³⁷⁴ Further west, in Mamlūk territory, what was probably the last Assyrian archdiocese then operating outside of Mongol territory existed at least until the consecration of Mar Yahballāhā in 1281, when Metropolitan Abraham of Jerusalem and Tripoli was present in Baghdad. He disappears from the record thereafter, however, and it is very likely, as Wilmshurst suggests, that following the loss of the Crusader territories in 1291 he evacuated with his flock to Cyprus, where a merchant community existed in the fourteenth century.³⁷⁵ Although Metropolitan Abraham was resident in Frankish Tripoli, he had four suffragan bishops in Aleppo, Diyarbakir, Nisibis, and Persia. In addition, the Church of the East managed to maintain four churches in Mamlūk-controlled Jerusalem: Saint Jacob, John the Baptist, the Transfiguration of Christ, and the Assumption of Mary. In the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, they possessed an altar to the left of the Tomb proper.³⁷⁶ Although their numbers were always greatest in the old Sassanid lands and further eastward, it is likely that their numbers increased in Greater Syria during this period, perhaps as

³⁷⁴ Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 344. Wilmshurst has concluded, ‘The disappearance of these dioceses was a slow and apparently peaceful process...and it is probable that the consolidation of Islam in these districts was accompanied by a gradual migration of East Syrian Christians to northern Iraq, whose Christian population was larger and more deeply rooted, not only in the towns but in hundreds of long-established Christian villages.’

³⁷⁵ Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 63.

³⁷⁶ Baum and Winkler, *Church of the East*, 96. Abraham is listed in *The History of Mar Yaballah*, and Montgomery notes his residence in Tripoli (46 and 46 ft. 18). A manuscript was copied at the Monastery of Mar Gīwārgīs outside of Aleppo in 1261. See: Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 65. On the East Syrian presence in Nisibis, see Fiey, *Nisibe*, 108. He also notes that a bishop of Ḥiṣn Kayfa named Emmanuel was present at the consecration for Mar Yahballāhā in 1281 (242). Cf. J.-M. Fiey, ‘Les Insaisissables Nestoriens de Damas’, in ed. C. Laga, et al, *After Chalcedon: studies in Theology and Church History* (Leuven, 1985), 167-80, at 179.

refugees. The account of the monks Marcus (Mar Yahballāhā) and Rabban Bar Sauma indicate that travel for the sake of pilgrimage across frontiers was impractical and highly dangerous, but that the instability of the times led many to seek safety away from the frontiers.

COPTS

Of all the indigenous Christians, the Copts were impacted the most by Mamlūk rule. Unlike the Armenians – viewed as an external military enemy – the Copts were an internal issue. They – that is, the Coptic scribal class, in particular – were viewed as an insult to Muslims due to their high status and a potential collaborator with external enemies.³⁷⁷ This was certainly not a view shared by all Muslims nor by all Mamlūks, but it was a sentiment gaining traction in influential circles. It did not help matters that the Copts were divided within their own community, and there was indeed a rivalry between those in Cairo and those in Babylon. The inability to provide a unified front inevitably weakened the community, and fact that Baybars and Qalāwūn seemed to have viewed the Coptic patriarch as a means to financial ends exploited this split and further encouraged an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty.

³⁷⁷ Such as Nubia, Ethiopia, the Franks, or even Mongols.

Upon the death of the Coptic Pope Athanasios III³⁷⁸ in 1261, his successor was John VII³⁷⁹ (1262-8 and 1271-93). This was, however, a contested election with his rival, Gabriel al-Shāma,³⁸⁰ one of two candidates in the contested election of 1250. The two factions in this election were largely equally divided between Cairo and Babylon (or ‘Miṣr’), and although the latter actually won the sacred drawing of lots, a bribe of five thousand dinars to Sultan Baybars’ vizier, Bahā’ al-Dīn ibn Ḥannā, decided the matter in John’s favour. The *History of the Patriarchs* does nonetheless list Gabriel as the seventy-seventh patriarch, prior to John, likely due to the fact that it was actually his name that was drawn by lot.³⁸¹ Gabriel went into exile to the Monastery of Saint Anthony in the Eastern Desert and then on to the more remote Saint Paul’s. There, reminiscent of his earlier years as a scribe and copyist to the wealthy Archon al-Amjad ibn al-‘Assāl (of the famous literary family Awlad al-‘Assāl), he wrote an Arabic translation of the *Pandektes* of Nikon of the Black Mountain. He also devoted himself to prayer and contemplation, and it is from his sojourn at Saint Paul’s (where there may have been Ethiopian monks, as at Saint Anthony’s) that Gabriel is considered a Saint by the Ethiopian Church.³⁸²

³⁷⁸ Ibn Makārim ibn Khalil.

³⁷⁹ His pre-patriarchal name was Yūnis ibn Wali al-Daūla ibn Sa‘īd ibn Akht.

³⁸⁰ ‘The Syrian’, known as al-Rashīd Faraj Āllah ibn Ākht Buṭrūs.

³⁸¹ *HPEC*, 4.1:228-9; Mufaḍḍal ibn Ab al-Faḍā’il, *Kitāb al-nahj*, 2:447-9.

³⁸² Swanson, Mark N., ‘The Monastery of St. Paul in Historical Context’, in ed. William Lyster, *The Cave Church of Paul the Hermit at the Monastery of St. Paul, Egypt* (New Haven, CT, and London, 2008), 43-60, at 47-8; Leslie S.B. MacCoull, ‘A Note on the Career of Gabriel III, Scribe and Patriarch of Alexandria’, *Arabica* 43 (1996), 357-60; Gawdat, ‘Perspectives’, 176. MacCoull is skeptical of

Even more so than his Ayyūbid predecessors, al-Ẓāhir Baybars pressed his Coptic subjects for all the financial resources that they could muster. Often times, these funds were ostensibly for public works or famine relief, but in reality they were more often to fund his never-ending military campaigns. In 1262, for example, when a major famine struck Egypt, Baybars did open up his own granaries for the public, but he also increased taxes on the Copts to pay for them.³⁸³ The newly elected Coptic patriarch, John VII, was forced to deliver the required funds as the head of his religious community.

A significant event affecting the Copts occurred in 1265. *The History of the Patriarchs* and the Coptic historian Mufaḍḍal ibn Abi'l-Faḍā'il both record that Sultan Baybars returned to Egypt in 1265 and immediately commanded that a great pit be dug and all the Christians gathered therein [Mufaḍḍal includes the Jews, too]. Baybars then sent for the Patriarch and imposed a fine of fifty thousand dinars. He set free the Christians, but they then spent two years collecting the funds.³⁸⁴ Mufaḍḍal relates this account a bit differently, however, saying that the fine was five hundred thousand dinars and that a certain monk named al-Rāhib Būluṣ al-Miṣrī al-Qibtī – formerly a court secretary – called simply *al-Ḥabīs* ('the Hermit') arrived and ransomed them all at five hundred thousand dinars, after which they had to pay fifty thousand dinars per

Gabriel's Syrian origins, noting only that he resided for ten years in al-Amjad ibn al-'Assāl's houses in both Damascus and Cairo. First a monk at Saint Anthony's, Gabriel also served for a time as a priest at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.

³⁸³ Fowler, *Christian Egypt*, 102.

³⁸⁴ *HPEC*, 4:1, 229-30.

year. According to Mufaḍḍal, it was rumoured that al-Ḥabīs had discovered a hidden treasure in a cave belonging to the notorious Fāṭimid Caliph al-Ḥākim. Baybars demanded to know where this wealth was hidden and, having tortured al-Ḥabīs without success, soon killed him. Within the space of two years, however, he had given more than six hundred thousand dinars for the imposed fines, not including money given secretly or for ransoming *dhimmīs* imprisoned or in the Sultan's custody.³⁸⁵

The Muslim historian al-Maqrīzī, writing in the fifteenth century, gives a different account, minus the largesse of al-Ḥabīs. According to him, fires had broken out repeatedly in Cairo and al-Fuṣṭaṭ while the sultan was away – and rumours spread that these were the acts of Christians. This accusation was fairly frequent against Egyptian Christians in the Mamlūk period, but it is more likely that such accusations were only as valid as those against the Jewish minority in Europe at various times of trouble, as an easy scapegoat.³⁸⁶ Al-Ghāzī suggests that Frankish agents from Acre were sent to the Christians of Cairo to set the fires to distract Baybars from this present assaults on Caesarea and Arsuf.³⁸⁷ As a result of these rumours, the sultan ordered the arrest of both Christians and Jews and stated that these incidents had abrogated the so-

³⁸⁵ Mufaḍḍal ibn Abī al-Faḍā'il, *Kitāb al-naḥj*, 1:477-79, and 2:449. Cf. Subhi Yanni Labib, 'Ein koptischer Märtyrer des 13. Jh.: al-Ḥabīs Būlus ar-Rāhib al-Qibtī', in ed. Khalil Samir, *Actes du premier congrès international d'études arabes chrétiennes* (Rome, 1982), 233-240; Theodore Hall Partrick, *Traditional Egyptian Christianity: A History of the Coptic Orthodox Church* (Greensboro, NC, 1996), 96-97. Ibn al-Ṣuqā'ī also records an entry for al-Ḥabīs and provides his name. See: Ibn al-Ṣuqā'ī, *Tālī Kitāb Wafayāt al-A'yān*, ed. and trans. Jacqueline Sublet (Damascus, 1974), 58-60 (No. 89).

³⁸⁶ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, 1.2:535.

³⁸⁷ Ghāzī b. al-Wāsiṭī, 'An Answer to the Dhimmīs', 451.

called Code of ʿUmar and he thus condemned them to death by burning. The commander of the army, however, the Amīr Fāris al-Dīn Aqtāy, mediated their release on condition that they pay for all damages and an annual indemnity of fifty thousand dinars.³⁸⁸

Following on this version of events, when it became evident that Patriarch John was unable to raise the necessary funds, the vizier Bahāʾ al-Dīn had him deposed and sent a delegation to retrieve Gabriel from the Monastery of Saint Paul. Although he at first refused, he eventually came to Cairo where he was consecrated as Pope Gabriel III (1268-71). In effect, he was recalled to give him a chance to raise the enormous tax laid upon the Coptic community, for whom the patriarch was responsible. When he was unable to do this, he, in turn, was deposed, and John VII recalled for his second reign (1272-93).³⁸⁹ As Mark Swanson has noted, Baybars here sets a precedence for the Mamlūk approach to the Coptic patriarchate. Not only is the patriarch the responsible representative for the Coptic community, but he is perceived much more specifically as little more than a ‘point of financial transfer’, and otherwise generally marginalized.³⁹⁰ Occasionally, the Coptic patriarch would be required to mediate with Nubian or Ethiopian monarchs, but otherwise their central use to the new rulers of Egypt was

³⁸⁸ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, 1.2:535.

³⁸⁹ *HPEC*, 4.1:229-30; Mufaḍḍal ibn Abī al-Faḍāʾil, *Kitāb al-nahj*, 2:448-51; Mark N. Swanson, *The Coptic Papacy in Islamic Egypt, 641-1517* (Cairo, 2010), 99-100. Despite this difficult period, the Monastery of the Romans (Baramūs) in the Wādī Natrūn was rebuilt during the reign of Gabriel. An Ethiopian tradition also states that Gabriel had spent time at a monastery in the Wādī Natrūn. See: Otto F.A. Meinardus, *Monks and Monasteries of the Egyptian Desert* (Cairo, 1992), 58.

³⁹⁰ Swanson, *Coptic Papacy*, 99.

financial. From these differing versions, we can determine the core event, but around the central account are spun different details. Rather than arguing the validity of either account, perhaps it is more accurate to suggest that each side developed the details according to their perspective – a martyr hero for the Copts in line with their history of persecution and *dhimmī* status, or suspicion of the potential fifth column within the heart of the *Dār al-Islām*.

During the reigns of Baybars and Qalāwūn, the Copts were made to really feel their *dhimmī* status. Previously, enforcement of the sumptuary laws was haphazard and sporadic, while Coptic secretaries, in particular, wielded quite significant influence within the government. During this thirty year span, however, the Mamlūk sultans were obviously not going to back down from their policy of squeezing the Coptic community of its wealth nor of putting them in their proper place as *dhimmīs*. Given these pressures from above, it is little wonder if too many Coptic patriarchs seemed ineffective and the Church hierarchy at times seemed corrupt.

NUBIANS

Although the Nubians were at best a monastic community within *Bilād al-Shām*, their ecclesial connection to the Copts (and thus the wider non-Chalcedonian world) and territorial presence adjacent to the southern Mamlūk borders inevitably brought them into conflict with Sultans Baybars and Qalāwūn. Although the independent

northern Nubian kingdom of Makuria was quite intact and fairly stable at the beginning of this period, it collapsed virtually overnight. The immigration of destabilizing Bedouin and Berber tribes coupled with periodic Mamlūk invasions and dynastic infighting amongst the Nubian royal family led to the virtual annexation of the kingdom by Mamlūk Egypt.

While Ethiopia continued in strength to intercede on behalf of their Coptic brethren as late as the fourteenth century, the northern Nubian kingdom of Makuria would effectively lose its independence under Baybars.³⁹¹ A Mamlūk raid of the northern Nubian kingdom of Makuria in 1265 was followed the next decade by a Nubian raid on Aswan and Upper Egypt. The Nubian king, David (ca. 1268-76), also attacked Aidhab, far on the Red Sea. Derek Welsby interprets this as an attempt to set back Mamlūk aggression reflected in Baybars' policy of extending Egyptian control further south along the Red Sea and thus isolating the Nubians from Red Sea trade. Arab trade routes had shifted southward following Crusader threats to the usual *hajj* routes.³⁹² In 1275, Baybars was approached by Shekunda, the nephew of King David, asking for Mamlūk intervention in assisting him to take the throne of Makuria. In response, Baybars sent a vast Mamlūk expedition to invade Nubia. They defeated the Makurian forces under King David, killing many and taking a reported ten thousand captives. In their sack of Dongola, they burned down the great church of Sus, and then established Shekunda (ca. 1276) as king. The Mamlūk *amirs* accompanying the

³⁹¹ Atiya, Aziz S., *The Crusade in the Later Middle Ages* (New York, 1965), 273.

³⁹² Welsby, Derek A., *The Medieval Kingdoms of Nubia* (London, 2002), 243-4.

invasion force made Shekunda swear an oath that included a promise to renounce Christianity and to become a Jew if he broke his vows. Not surprisingly, the populace viewed Shekunda as an agent of the Mamlūk sultan, which was evidenced, indeed, when the *jizya* was established and fully one-half of all Makurian revenue was proclaimed as belonging to Egypt. Makuria thus became as a tributary state to Muslim Egypt for the first time, but its demise was certain with the outright annexation of several northern provinces.³⁹³ Additionally, a militant Bedouin tribe was established in the territory and its depredations led to the eventual and rapid disintegration of central authority.³⁹⁴ Thus, the first and, perhaps, most notable Mamlūk sultan led to the expansion of Egyptian territory and influence southwards as well as to the east and the north.

In 1286, Ador, King of Alwa (dates unknown), sent an embassy to Egypt to lodge a complaint against Makuria, its northern Nubian neighbour. Most likely, this complaint was the result of raiding into Alwa in order to pay the extortionate annual *bakt* (tribute) to the Mamlūk state in Cairo. In the end, this resulted in another excuse for Qalāwūn to send an army into Nubia. Though the country was ravaged and a puppet king was temporarily placed on the throne, the rightful Nubian king,

³⁹³ Mufaḍḍal ibn Abi al-Faḍā'il, *Kitāb al-nahj*, 2:398-404; Welsby, *Medieval Kingdoms*, 243-4.

³⁹⁴ Bosworth, Charles E., "The "Protected Peoples" (Christians and Jews) in medieval Egypt and Syria", *BJRL* 62 (1979), 11-36, at 27; reprint in C.E. Bosworth, *The Arabs, Byzantium, and Iran* (Aldershot, 1996), VII.

Shamāmūn (ca. 1286-95), soon returned to his people's acclaim.³⁹⁵ Nevertheless, regular Mamlūk invasions took their toll. As the Muslims were strengthened especially due to external intervention, so Christians were weakened and threatened on every front. The Church was in such a poor state and enduring a shortage of clergy due to the lack of bishops from the Coptic Patriarch that they sent an embassy to Ethiopia, asking for clergy to be sent. Unfortunately, Ethiopia lacked a bishop and was also suffering a shortage of priests and thus none were sent.³⁹⁶ Coupled with endless internal strife and an exodus of most wealth (via the *bakt*, the *jizya*, and raiding), Nubia's future was bleak, indeed.

ETHIOPIANS

The period of 1261-91 was a turning point in the medieval history of Ethiopia. The early Solomonic kings sought to break out of their isolation and did indeed send correspondence and embassies to Cairo and Jerusalem, while internally the Church increased in importance. In 1268, the greatest of medieval Ethiopian Saints, Tāklā Hāymānōt of Shāwa (ca. 1215-ca. 1313), apparently convinced the last Zagwe king, Na'akueto La'ab, to abdicate. A treaty was drawn up with his successor, Yikunno-ʿAmlak, with one of the key articles stipulating that one-third of the kingdom should be

³⁹⁵ Welsby, *Medieval Kingdoms*, 242-6; Northrup, *From Slave to Sultan*, 146-9; Lewicka, *Šāfi ʿIbn ʿAlī's Biography*, 83-5.

³⁹⁶ Sellassie, Sergew Hable, *Ancient and Medieval Ethiopian History to 1270* (Addis Ababa, 1972), 290.

granted in perpetuity to the metropolitan both for his own support as well as that of the clergy, churches, monks, and monasteries. Additionally, the *Abūna* was to always be a Copt appointed by the Coptic patriarch.³⁹⁷ This was a watershed in Ethiopian ecclesiastical history and coincided both with great territorial expansion and consolidation, as well as monastic expansion.

One of the repercussions of Pope Cyril ibn Laqlaq's having consecrated a Coptic bishop of Jerusalem and the retaliatory consecration of the Ethiopian pilgrim Thomas as Metropolitan (or *Abūna*) by the Syrian Orthodox patriarch (Ignatios II) was confusion and factionalism in Ethiopia. Although there is no evidence that this Thomas returned to Ethiopia, some Syrian Orthodox clergy apparently did. Conversely, the Coptic pope never seemed to get around to consecrating a new metropolitan for Ethiopia, or perhaps was prevented by the Muslim authorities.³⁹⁸ Most clergy were therefore elderly and many had died. The Church was in desperate need of restoration, and they required a new *Abūna* to begin this process. In the meantime, in a perfectly

³⁹⁷ Sellassie, *Ancient and Medieval Ethiopian History*, 282-9; Meinardus, *Two Thousand Years*, 132; E.A. Wallis Budge, *A History of Ethiopia, Nubia, and Abyssinia*, 2 Vols. (London, 1928), 1:285-7. Sellassie also credits the Abbot Yesus Mo'a (1206-82) alongside Tāklā Hāymānōt with the 'restoration' of the Solomonic dynasty (283). On Tāklā Hāymānōt, see: 'Tāklā Haymanot', in ed. Siegbert Uhlig, *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*, 4 Vols. (Wiesbaden, 2003-10), 4:831-4; *The Book of the Saints of the Ethiopian Church*, trans. E.A. Wallis Budge, 4 Vols. (Cambridge, 1928), 4:1241-6.

³⁹⁸ Tamrat, Taddesse, *Church and State in Ethiopia, 1270-1527* (Oxford, 1972), 70-1. A certain Abba Qérilos had died sometime between 1269 and 1273.

illegal but desperate action, the clergy elected Tāklā Hāymānōt as a temporary *Abūna*, who then went around the country ordaining priests and deacons.³⁹⁹

Nonetheless, a bishop must possess Apostolic Succession, and thus a legitimately consecrated metropolitan was still needed. The first king of the Solomonic dynasty, Yikunno-ʿAmlak (1270-85), wrote a letter in about 1273 to the Sultan Baybars requesting a new metropolitan.⁴⁰⁰ It is likely he wrote more letters requesting the same during his reign, as his request was unfulfilled. He seems to have maintained a Syrian Orthodox metropolitan at his court in the meantime, though creating discord in the Ethiopian Church as a consequence.⁴⁰¹

Yikunno-ʿAmlak was succeeded by his son, Yagba-Šiyon (1285-93), who understood the discord that the presence of the Syrian Orthodox metropolitan was causing within the Ethiopian Church and thus a threat to the stability of his own reign. As such, he removed the Syrian Orthodox prelate from his position and again wrote to both the Mamlūk court and to the Coptic Pope John VII requesting a new metropolitan

³⁹⁹ Sellassie, *Ancient and Medieval Ethiopian History*, 282.

⁴⁰⁰ Mufaḍḍal ibn Abī al-Faḍāʾil, *Kitāb al-nahj*, 2:383-7. It is also noteworthy that Yikunno-ʿAmlak's letter is conciliatory, requesting that the sultan protect the Copts even as he protects the Muslim minority in Ethiopia. In the fourteenth century, when Ethiopia was at its strongest and after the persecution of the Copts had become a regular occurrence, Ethiopian kings were much more threatening.

⁴⁰¹ Tamrat, *Church and State*, 71. Budge reports that Yikunno-ʿAmlak reportedly was also in correspondence with the Byzantine Emperor Michael VIII (1259-82), sending him a giraffe as a gift. If true, this would be an early example of the Ethiopian kings seeking to end their isolation enforced by the Muslim rulers of Egypt. However, it is rather more likely that Budge has misinterpreted Pachymeres' usage of *Αιθιοπας* when he is clearly referring to Sultan Baybars and the Mamlūk court regarding an embassy in the year 1261. See: Budge, *A History of Ethiopia*, 1:285; Georges Pachymeres, *Relations Historiques*, 5 Vols., ed. and trans. Albert Failler (Paris, 1984-2000), 1:235-9.

for Ethiopia. The king also requested that the sultan protect the Christians of Egypt even as he protected the Muslims in his lands. The sultan was requested to grant free access to the Holy Places in Jerusalem to the poor Ethiopian monastics living there. Following its visit to the Mamlūk court in Cairo, this embassy was to continue on to Jerusalem, as it had brought a hundred candles to light in the churches here.⁴⁰² This is the first official royal message relating to the Ethiopian community in Jerusalem and is a testimony to its growing establishment in Jerusalem and to its increased position in the national consciousness.⁴⁰³

Ethiopian monks continued to have an interest in and presence in Egypt and the Holy Land. For example, a delegation of Ethiopian monks was sent to the Monastery of Abū Macarios in the Wādī Natrūn (where they also possessed the Monastery of Saint Elias, along with the Nubians).⁴⁰⁴ The importance of pilgrimage to the Holy Land to the Ethiopians during this period is demonstrated by its emphasis in the *vita* of Tāklā Hāymānōt of Shāwa. This hagiographical account states that Tāklā was led by the

⁴⁰² Quatremère, E., *Mémoires géographiques et historiques sur l'Égypte*, 2 Vols. (Paris, 1811-2), 2:267-9. A Christian secretary – the vizier of the king and possibly a Copt – named Daud ibn Azz wrote the king's letters in Arabic (271). Cf. Kirsten Stoffregen Pedersen, 'Pilgrims and Ascetics from Africa: The Ethiopian Church and Community of Jerusalem', in ed. Anthony O'Mahony, *The Christian Communities of Jerusalem and the Holy Land: Studies in History, Religion and Politics* (Cardiff, 2003), 130-46, at 136. For the letter to John VII, see: E.L. Butcher, *The Story of the Church of Egypt* (London, 1897), 166-7, although he confuses Greek prelates for Syrian Orthodox.

⁴⁰³ O'Mahony, 'Between Islam and Christendom', 146. On the importance of Jerusalem in Ethiopian ecclesiology as the ideal city, the center of the world, and even 'the house of God', see: Kirsten Stoffregen-Pedersen, 'Jerusalem in the Tergwame Dawit', in eds. Michael Kohlbacher and Markus Lesinski, *Horizonte der Christenheit* (Erlangen, 1994), 72-7.

⁴⁰⁴ Meinardus, *Christian Egypt*, 430.

Archangel Michael (passing over the Red Sea) to visit the holy places of Jerusalem on three occasions, and though he wished to dwell there, the Holy Spirit commanded him to return to Ethiopia.⁴⁰⁵

Marco Polo relates an account in which the Ethiopian king (in 1288 A.D.) was greatly desirous of pilgrimaging to Jerusalem, but was dissuaded by his councillors and sent a bishop to represent him instead. After a successful journey there, this bishop was arrested on the way back by the Muslim sultan of Aden (identified, rather, as Adal, along the Red Sea coast). When the bishop refused to become a Muslim, he was forcibly circumcised, intended particularly as an insult to the king of Ethiopia. When the latter heard of this, he raised a great army and attacked the sultanate, laying it waste to avenge this grievous insult.⁴⁰⁶ Although the Ethiopian kingdom was a not insignificant distance from the Mamlūk centre of power in Cairo, there was still a hope on the Ethiopians' part and a fear on the Mamlūks' part of the Christian Ethiopians attempting a military venture with Latin Christians in the Mediterranean. Although this was a greater feature in the fourteenth century, the Ethiopian attack on Adal proves that their capability as a regional power was in the ascension.

⁴⁰⁵ *Book of the Saints of the Ethiopian Church*, 4:1244-5. Tamrat, however, thinks it unlikely that Tāklā ever left Ethiopia, though acknowledging his desire to go to Jerusalem. See: Tamrat, *Church and State*, 163, ft. 1, and, more generally, 160-70.

⁴⁰⁶ Marco Polo, *The Description of the World*, ed. and trans. A.C. Moule and Paul Pelliot (London, 1938), 436-9.

GEORGIANS

Following in the footsteps of the later Ayyūbid sultans, Baybars depended upon the continued importation of Mamlūk slaves. The majority of these at this time were from the area north of the Crimea and around the Caucasus. As such, it was of the greatest importance for Baybars to be on favourable terms with the surrounding nations. His alliance with the Golden Horde has been mentioned. Georgia was politically weak and divided under Mongol dominance and had lost its brief role as protector of the Chalcedonian Christians in Palestine. In the meantime, Michael Palaiologos had re-established the Byzantine Empire – the traditional protectors – at Constantinople in 1261.⁴⁰⁷ The Georgians, however, were generally the most favoured Christians within Mamlūk territory, and their rights and protection were confirmed in an official letter issued by Baybars in 1266. The relationship between the Georgians and Mamlūks was complicated, however. There were, effectively, two Georgian kingdoms at this time: an eastern one completely under Ilkhānid domination (albeit rebellious) and a western one, sometimes called the kingdom of Abkhazia (from 1259). Baybars began secret negotiations with both kingdoms with the intent of seeking an alliance. Friendly embassies were exchanged between 1265 and 1268, but upon the suppression of Frankish Antioch and the ratification of a peace treaty with Cilicia, it is

⁴⁰⁷ Pahlitzsch, 'Georgians and Greeks in Jerusalem', 49. On a Mamlūk embassy to Constantinople in 1262, see: Mufaḍḍal ibn Abī al-Faḍā'il, *Kitāb al-nahj*, 2:454-5. The embassy, en route to the Golden Horde, was delayed in Constantinople for some time as the Byzantine emperor was struggling to balance political alliances with Il-Khānate, the Mamlūks, and others.

possible that such an alliance became less important to him.⁴⁰⁸ Perhaps with such considerations, Baybars permitted his spiritual guide, Shaykh Khaḍir, to confiscate the chief Georgian monastery in the Holy Land – the Monastery of the Holy Cross, located to the west of Jerusalem, in 1268. Shaykh Khaḍir then personally executed the abbot, Lukas, when he demanded restitution and refused to convert to Islam.⁴⁰⁹ Another account, by the anti-Christian Muslim polemicist al-Ghāzī, reports that the Georgians and Armenians were spies of the ‘un-eyelashed Tartars’ and thus were arrested by Baybars and executed.⁴¹⁰ Fabrication or not, relations were restored within a few decades, as shall be discussed in the next chapter.

MARONITES

This thirty-year period (that is, 1261-91) was very difficult from the Maronite perspective. Regular and highly-devastating Mamlūk attacks left little room for ecclesiastical developments. Baybars invaded the Maronite heartland of Kisrawan and the area around Tripoli in both 1266 and 1268. The second raid, in particular, was the most devastating. The patriarchal seat of al-Ḥadath, a sizeable town, was ravaged and

⁴⁰⁸ Müller and Pahlitzsch, ‘Sultan Baybars I and the Georgians’, 275-8.

⁴⁰⁹ Mufaḍḍal ibn Abī al-Faḍā’il, *Kitāb al-nahj*, 2:459; Pahlitzsch, ‘Georgians and Greeks in Jerusalem’, 40-41; Müller and Pahlitzsch, ‘Sultan Baybars I and the Georgians’, 271-2.

⁴¹⁰ Ghāzī b. al-Wāsiṭī, ‘An Answer to the Dhimmis’, 452. Müeller and Pahlitzsch note that Ghāzī’s accusation is without an offer of proof, while it was also a not-uncommon practice for Georgians – and others – to travel around the Holy Land dressed as monks as secular travelers were, perhaps, more likely to be harassed. See Müeller and Pahlitzsch, ‘Sultan Baybars I and the Georgians’, 272 and 279 ft. 88.

the whole area looted. Captives were decapitated before the sultan himself.⁴¹¹ Maronite independence was not quashed, however (nor that of their *jabalīyūn* ['hillsmen'] neighbours, the Druze and Nuṣayrīs). A treaty of 1281 between Qalāwūn and Bohemond VII of Antioch and Tripoli (1275-87) did not list the Lebanese highlands (Kisrawan and Mount Lebanon) as belonging to either side, as they were really ruled by these independent tribes.⁴¹²

Two years later, in 1283, Qalāwūn sent an army consisting of Turkomāns to invade the area. They captured and sacked at least six villages, burning them and massacring the inhabitants, including Maronites.⁴¹³ The Patriarch, Daniel of Ḥadshīt, had died the year before and two rival patriarchs were consecrated in the meantime. The anti-union Patriarch, Luke of Bnahrān, established himself in the village of al-Ḥadath, east of Tripoli, but was captured by Turkomān troops when the town fell in 1283. It was said that he had become very powerful, ambitious, and rebellious, so that even Bohemond and the local Muslims feared him.⁴¹⁴ Meanwhile, the new pro-union Maronite patriarch was Jeremiah (or Irmīyā, 1282-97), Archbishop of the Monastery of Kaftūn. He had been sent to Rome promptly by Bohemond VII, with the Archbishop Tādrus managing affairs for the Church in Lebanon. Although the Maronites living in

⁴¹¹ Salibi, 'The Maronites of Lebanon', 294-5.

⁴¹² Irwin, Robert, 'The Mamlūk Conquest of the County of Tripoli', in ed. Peter W. Edbury, *Crusade and Settlement* (Cardiff, 1985), 246-50, at 246.

⁴¹³ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, 1.3:566; Mariam de Ghantuz Cubbe, 'Le Temps de Jérémie de Dmalṣā Patriarche des Maronites (1283 environs): Problèmes ouverts et hypothèses', *PDO* 31 (2006), 451-504, at 484-5.

⁴¹⁴ Salibi, 'Maronite Church', 97-8; idem, 'The Maronites of Lebanon', 294-5; Cubbe, 'Temps de Jérémie', 462-6. Anti-union sentiment had existed since the original oath of allegiance to Rome in 1180.

the more mountainous areas were adamantly anti-Frankish and anti-union, their opinion changed once they were living under repressive Mamlūk rule and, indeed, they, too, looked to Latin Europe for protection.⁴¹⁵ The fall of Tripoli in 1289 to Qalāwūn was ominous for the Maronites and other *jabaliyūn*. For now that the Mamlūks had defeated the neighbouring Franks and other local rebel *amīrs*, they were able to focus their policy against the resistance in Kisrawan – albeit not effectively until more than a decade later.⁴¹⁶

MELKITES

The experience of the Melkite Christians was uneven during the period corresponding to the reigns of Baybars and Qalāwūn. On the one hand, the reestablishment of the Byzantine Empire at Constantinople in 1261 increased the latter's prestige and its position of influence at the Mamlūk court as protectors of Chalcedonians in *Bilād al-Shām* and Egypt. Thus, the position of the Melkites theoretically improved in the eyes of the Mamlūk sultans. This may well have been true in Egypt, where they formed a small minority and where the much more significant Coptic community bore the brunt of Muslim hostility. In Cilicia and

⁴¹⁵ Salibi, Kamal S., *Maronite Historians of Medieval Lebanon* (Beirut, 1959), 60-3; idem, 'Maronite Church', 97-8; Cubbe, 'Temps de Jérémie', 451-61. In Assemani's chronology, the Patriarch Jacob succeeded Simeon in 1266 and reigned until 1278. His successor, Daniel (1278-86), would have witnessed the Mamlūk invasion, as would the next patriarch, Luke (1286-97). See: Assemani, *Patriarcharum Antiochiae, Syro-Maronitam*, 37-8.

⁴¹⁶ Irwin, 'Mamlūk Conquest', 249.

northern Mesopotamia, however, where many Greeks and Melkites lived, the situation was much more precarious. Regular Mamlūk invasions took their toll on the population. Those Melkites living in Damascus, Jerusalem, and elsewhere away from the frontier regions, however, seemed rather stable at this time.

Melkite monasteries persisted in the Patriarchate of Antioch, including in Antioch itself, in Kaftūn, Kaftin, Balamand, at the Mother of God of Benehran, of Saint George of Bludan, of Our Lady of Şaydnāyā, and even at Mar Ya‘qūb near Qāra.⁴¹⁷ In November 1264, Bishop Petros of Şaydnāyā ordained a scribe named John to the Diaconate, while the Monastery of Saint Sergius in Ma‘lūlā is noted for having a Syriac *Octoëchos* (*Book of Eight Tones*, a liturgical text), written in 1280.⁴¹⁸ Bar Hebraeus also records Greek monasteries in Cilicia, where there was a significant Greek population, though these monasteries (like those of the Armenians) were repeatedly destroyed by the Mamlūks.⁴¹⁹ The village of Qāra was on the route from Ḥimş to Damascus, and was a completely Christian town. In 1266, Sultan Baybars came through with his army and camped there. A soldier told the Atabeg Farīs al-Dīn about how he had once been imprisoned by two men from the village and sold to the Franks. The Atabeg ordered him to find and arrest these two men. Having done so, they were forced to confess their deed, and they further said that it was a common practice by all in the village. Just as the Greek monks from the Monastery of Saint James (Mar Ya‘qub) were coming

⁴¹⁷ Nasrallah, *Histoire du Mouvement Littéraire*, 80-1.

⁴¹⁸ Todt, Klaus-Peter, ‘Griechisch-Orthodoxe (Melkitische) Christen im Zentralen und Südlichen Syrien’, *Le Muséon* 119 (2006), 33-88, at 75-6.

⁴¹⁹ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 1:453.

to offer him hospitality, Baybars – just being convinced of this account – personally charged the monastery and killed all whom he could find. He then ordered his soldiers to attack the monastery and village and to kill the monks and all men. Some one thousand and seventy women and children were taken prisoner, with the children taken to Egypt to be indoctrinated and trained as Mamlūk soldiers. The Sultan also ordered them to destroy the church, building a mosque in its stead. He also settled a Turkomān tribe in Qāra to dilute the Christian dominance in the area, though the latter seems again to have regained its position by the early fourteenth century.⁴²⁰

The Melkite Patriarchate of Antioch was largely divided between Syria and Armenian Cilicia, with Melkites in Cilicia being Greek and not Arabic-speaking. Consequently, they were much more open to influence from Constantinople. In 1282, a Syriac Lectionary (translated from Greek) was donated to the Church of the Virgin at Ṣaydnāyā by Būṭrus (Peter) ibn Ṣahyun. Previously, it was owned by a recluse Hieromonk named Gabriel in Antioch and then, in 1262, at ‘Saint Dometios’. Originally, however, it was written in the Melkite Monastery of Saint Panteleimon on the Black Mountain⁴²¹ in the year 1041. This monastery – also known as Saint Elias – was instrumental in what Sebastian Brock calls the ‘Constantinopolitanization’ of the Antiochian rite of the Melkite Church following the Byzantine re-conquest of Antioch

⁴²⁰ Mufaḍḍal ibn Abi al-Faḍāʿil, *Kitāb al-nahj*, 2:404-97; Abū al-Fidāʿ, *Tarikh al-mukhtāṣar*, RHC Or., 1:151; Andrea Schmidt, ‘Zur Geschichte des Bistums Qara im Qalamun’, in eds. Andrea Schmidt and Stephan Westphalen, *Christliche Wandmalereien in Syrien: Qara und das Kloster Mar Yakub* (Wiesbaden, 2005), 13-68, at 34-6.

⁴²¹ *Mavron Oros* in Greek, *Jebel Lukkām* in Arabic.

and its' environs in 969. Until the thirteenth century, the Syriac 'rite of the Suryāyē' existed alongside the Byzantine 'rite of the Greeks', but the latter became truly dominant thereafter.⁴²² The fact that the patriarchs and perhaps many of the hierarchs of Antioch spent so much time in exile in Constantinople doubtless led them to attempt to institute the liturgical practices found there in their own Patriarchate. Nonetheless, although the rite was Byzantine, the language was not necessarily Greek. As Charon has argued, Arabic largely displaced Greek as the liturgical language in Antioch precisely at the same time as the Byzantine rite displaced the Antiochene Syriac rite. In Cilicia, Greek does seem to have been the main language for the Greek Orthodox/Melkites there, while Arabic was the primary language in the Syrian interior. Syriac, however, was at the least the liturgical language if not still the primary spoken language in many areas of the Qalamūn mountain range, which would have included the Melkite centres of Ṣaydnāyā, Ma'lūlā, and Qāra.⁴²³

Moving on to the Melkite Patriarchate of Jerusalem, Grumel's chronology for this period is quite uncertain. Sophronios III's dates are uncertain, while his successor,

⁴²² Brock, 'Syriac Manuscripts', 60 and 66-7. The arrangement of the text was adopted from Byzantine usage, not the text itself. Manuscripts were still copied at Saint Panteleimon at least until 1242, and likely somewhat later. Until, that is, the desolation wreaked by Baybars and the Mamlūk conquest of nearby Antioch in 1268.

⁴²³ Charon, Cyrille, 'Le rite byzantine et la liturgie chrysostomienne dans les patriarchats melkites (Alexandrie – Antioche – Jérusalem)', Part 3: 'Pratique du rite byzantine dans les patriarchats melkites', in *XPYΣOCTOMIKA: studi e Ricerche intorno a S. Giovanni Crisostomo* (Rome, 1908), 637-718, at 641-3; Joseph Nasrallah, 'La liturgie des Patriarchats melchites de 969 à 1300', *Oriens Christianus*, 71 (1987), 157-81, at 158; Josephus-Maria Sauget, *Premières Recherches sur l'Origine et les Caractéristiques des Synaxaires Melkites (XI^e-XVII^e Siècles)* (Rome, 1969), 22.

Gregorios I, is suggested to have ruled sometime about 1273-85, followed by Thaddeus, who was ruling at least in 1296 and 1298, but possibly earlier.⁴²⁴ Other than writing a refutation against ‘the three impious laws’ of the Muslims, little is known about Sophronios.⁴²⁵

The Jewish immigrant Nahmanides, in a letter dated 1267, described ‘desolate’ Jerusalem in the decade after ‘Ayn Jālūt. He furthermore recorded that there were only two thousand total inhabitants at that time, and of these, a mere three hundred were Christians ‘who escaped the sword of the Sultan’. There were, furthermore, only two Jews. Nahmanides and his companions helped them to find a suitable building to use as a synagogue, saying that ‘the town is without a master and whoever will take possession of ruins can do so.’ Nonetheless, Jews, and presumably people of all Faiths, journeyed from Damascus, Aleppo, and all over to worship in the Holy Places.⁴²⁶ Jerusalem had been devastated by the thorough attacks of the Khwarazmians, Mongols, and Mamlūks, as, indeed, had much of Palestine. Frequent raiding aside, campaigns by Baybars may have been aimed against the Franks, but indigenous Christians were also bound to have suffered. For example, Baybars attacked Nazareth and Mount Tabor in 1263, destroying the Cathedral of the Annunciation to its very foundations.⁴²⁷

⁴²⁴ Grumel, *Chronologie*, 452; Chrysostomos A. Papadopoulos, *Ἱστορία τῆς Εκκλησίας Ἱεροσολύμων* (Alexandria, 1910), 411-13.

⁴²⁵ Grumel, ‘Chronologie des patriarches grecs’, 199.

⁴²⁶ Kobler, Franz., ed. *Letters of Jews through the Ages*, 2 Vols. (New York, 1978), 1:226.

⁴²⁷ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, 1.2:487.

Although this was a Latin church, a large Melkite community resided there, possessing their own ancient church.

In contrast to the Mamlūk treatment of the Monastery of Saint Katherine in the Sinai, their treatment of the Monastery of Mar Saba, in Palestine, was a disaster. This policy was directly implemented by Sultan Baybars and would, in fact, completely marginalize Mar Saba not long after 1260. The Christian population that lived near to the monastery and supported it retreated during this time to the area south of Bethlehem, most probably due to Mamlūk anti-Christian measures. In a move that would become all too common under the Baḥrī Mamlūks, Baybars annexed all the supporting land around Mar Saba, destroying numerous monastic cells and constructing the Islamic shrine of Moses' Tomb (Nabī Mūsā). It was, as Taragan has observed, Baybars' conscious effort to re-conquer this area between Jerusalem and Jericho for Islam.⁴²⁸ Mujīr al-Dīn (d. 1521) reported that Baybars was greeted with hospitality at Mar Saba during his visit, but then decided that the community was too large. He therefore ordered all of the monastic cells from the Dayr al-Sīq of some three hundred monks to be destroyed in September 1269, supposedly to prevent its use as a Frankish base. Denys Pringle suggests this was Mar Saba and, if so, it was very large, indeed.⁴²⁹ Whether to Islamize the Judean wilderness, to counter the Franks, to marginalize the

⁴²⁸ Taragan, Hana, 'Holy Place in the Making: Maqām al-Nabī Mūsā in the Early Mamlūk Period', *Aram*, 19 (2007), 621-39, at 632; Yehoshu'a Frenkel, 'Mar Saba During the Mamlūk and Ottoman Periods', in Johannes Patrich, ed., *The Sabaite Heritage in the Orthodox Church from the Fifth Century to the Present* (Leuven, 2001), 111-116, at 111-113.

⁴²⁹ Pringle, *Churches of the Crusader Kingdom*, 2:261.

monks and indigenous Christian populace, or all three, all the land in the area was thereafter endowed as a *waqf*, a pious endowment, surrounding Mar Saba. Although the monastery has continued down to the present day, its national makeup changed as the Arab Christian supporting base disappeared. As it was largely neglected by Mamlūk historians, and with but few external Christian pilgrims visiting over the next few centuries, the monastery largely faded from the map.⁴³⁰

The Monastery of Saint Euthymios, located near to Mar Saba and often used for disobedient monks and others, was active and restored in the twelfth century, but Baybars is thought to have destroyed it at the time of the institution of the Muslim pilgrimage route to Nabī Mūsā.⁴³¹ He also destroyed the *monasterium* at the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem in 1263. The church had been desecrated by the Khwarazmians in April of 1244, but thereafter the high altar was again restored to the Melkites after the Latins were killed or departed (temporarily) to the coast.⁴³²

The Melkite Patriarch of Alexandria at the beginning of this period was Gregorios I (1243-63), but at his death, he was succeeded by Nicholas II. Nicholas was in Constantinople at the deposition of Patriarch Arsenios in 1265, and it is most likely that he remained there.⁴³³ The most famous of the Alexandrine Patriarchs at this time,

⁴³⁰ Frenkel, 'Mar Saba during the Mamlūk and Ottoman Periods', 113.

⁴³¹ Pringle, *Churches of the Crusader Kingdom*, 2, 229-30.

⁴³² Pringle, *Churches of the Crusader Kingdom*, 1:139.

⁴³³ Pachymeres, *Relations Historiques*, 2:337; Chrysostomos A. Papadopoulos, *Ιστορία της Εκκλησίας Αλεξανδρείας*, (Alexandria, 1935), 564.

however, was Athanasios II (1276-1316), whose long reign was almost entirely spent in the thick of ecclesial politics in Constantinople.⁴³⁴

In Egypt, where the Melkites were a much smaller community than in *Bilād al-Shām*, the hierarchy was often utilized by the sultans for diplomatic purposes. There was regular diplomatic exchange between Constantinople and Cairo ever since the reestablishment of the Byzantine court in the former city in 1261, and relations were particularly good during the reign of Michael VIII Palaiologos (1261-82).⁴³⁵ Baybars promptly sent an embassy in 1262, while Qalāwūn sent another in 1280-81. The patriarch's purpose was to establish friendly relations with the Byzantine emperor and thus to ensure favourable trade relations in which the continued importation of *mamlūks* (slaves) was of utmost importance.⁴³⁶

Greek and Melkite numbers may have been few in comparison in Egypt, but the Monastery of Saint Katherine continued a relatively prosperous existence. Despite the isolation of the monastery, its importance to the Byzantine authorities (even in exile in

⁴³⁴ Grumel, *Chronologie*, 444; Papadopoulos, *Ιστορία της Εκκλησίας Αλεξανδρείας*, 564-74.

⁴³⁵ Korobeinikov, 'Diplomatic Correspondence between Byzantium and the Mamlūk Sultanate in the Fourteenth Century', *al-Masāq*, 16 (2004), 53-75, at 67.

⁴³⁶ Pachymeres, *Relations Historiques*, 1:235-41; al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, 1.3:680; Marius Canard, 'Un Traité entre Byzance et l'Égypte au XIIIe Siècle et les Relations Diplomatiques de Michel VIII Paléologue avec les Sultans Mamlūks Baibars et Qalā'ūn', in *Mélanges Gaudefroy-Demombynes* (Cairo, 1937), 197-224, reprint, *Byzance et les musulmans du Proche Orient* (London, 1973), IV, at 209-23; Northrup, 'Muslim-Christian Relations', 258. Al-Maqrīzī names the patriarch as Ānbā Siyūs, whom the editor, Ziyada, identifies as John VII. John, however, was the Coptic patriarch. While this is possible, it is highly unusual given that the Melkites and Copts were rivals. The Melkite/Greek Orthodox Patriarch at the time, Athanasios, was resident in Constantinople his entire tenure, and was thus unavailable.

Nicaea) is evidenced in the support given to Saint Katherine's by the Byzantine Emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos (1261-82). Pope Gregory X (1271-76) sent gifts to the monastery, while the monks continued to receive privileges in Crete, including exemption from taxes and the maintenance of their own ship. Despite a papal ban on trade with Mamlūk Egypt, the monks were allowed – perhaps uniquely – to ship items necessary for their subsistence via Alexandria.⁴³⁷ Its population was still diverse, as is evidenced by the reservation of the Chapel of Saint Simeon the Wonder-worker for a Georgian community. In addition, there was a Church dedicated to the Virgin which was in the possession of a Suriani community, perhaps performing services in Syriac. A manuscript dated to 1291 called *Miracles Performed at Mount Sinai* lists five and possibly eight Suriani monks of the monastic community of the Church of the Virgin. Their 'lord bishop' at Saint Katherine's is noted as *Anba Arsenios al-Shubāki*, while the head of the community seems to have been *al-qass* (the 'holy', 'reverend' – thus probably Hieromonk) Yūḥanna al-Syriāni, 'servant of the Holy Mountain', whose nickname was al-Ashqar. The monks were: the Deacon (*al-shammās*) Anba Sim'ān al-Syriāni, Aba Būlos al-Syriāni al-Ḥabis ('the hermit' or 'recluse'), Aba Sim'ān al-Syriāni, Aba Būlos al-Syriāni, Aba Mūsa al-Shawbakī, another Aba Mūsā, and Aba Mūsa al-Ḥabashī.⁴³⁸ Another manuscript lists two of these monks as being from Ṣaydnāyā, in Syria: Yūḥannā ibn Būtros and Būlos ibn Daud, who were monastic scribes of Syro-Melkite liturgical manuscripts. They copied two Gospels in 1266/7 and 1293, and the

⁴³⁷ Tomadakis, 'Historical Outline', 16; Coureas, 'Orthodox Monastery of Mt. Sinai', 482.

⁴³⁸ Nasrallah, 'La liturgie des Patriarcats melchites', 166-7.

Monk Būlos had also copied a Psalter in April 1261.⁴³⁹ The other Syriānī might well have also been from the Qalamūn, while both the bishop and another monk are both from the Christian centre of Shubāk in Transjordan. What is most interesting is the inclusion of *Aba Mūsā al-Ḥabashī* – ‘the Ethiopian’. He would certainly have had to adopt Chalcedonianism to be a member of the community, but even then it is quite remarkable that he would have been part of the Syriānī community. It is possible that he spent time at the Coptic Monastery of Saint Antony – near to which the Siniāite community owned property – learned Arabic and possibly Syriac from Coptic or Syrian Orthodox monks there, and then proceeded to Saint Katherine’s, where he was accepted into the community of the Church of the Virgin.

Around this time, too, the monastery’s abbots commissioned a substantial quantity of icons from workshops in Latin Acre, which were flourishing in the final decades before the Mamlūk conquest in 1291. The icons that have survived testify to the diverse influences present, including Armenian and Syrian Orthodox as well as Byzantine and Latin.⁴⁴⁰

SYRIAN ORTHODOX

Like the Armenians and the Melkites, the Syrian Orthodox had a significant population in the Kingdom of Cilicia. More than any other Confession, however, they

⁴³⁹ Todt, ‘Griechisch-Orthodoxe (Melkitische) Christen’, 75.

⁴⁴⁰ Folda, *Crusader Art*, 435-66.

were concentrated to a very large degree along the frontier regions, heavily bearing the struggle between the Mamlūks and the Il-Khāns. The consolidation of power by Baybars and Qalāwūn further destabilized an area already heavily affected by Turkic, Kurdish, and Mongol raiding. Suriani communities were still present in *Bilād al-Shām*, while great scholars such as Bar Hebraeus proved the epitome of the Syrian Orthodox Renaissance.

Also like the Melkites of Antioch, the Suriani lacked unity and were still in schism at the beginning of this period. Patriarch Dionysios VII submitted to Hūlegū Khān in 1259, but was assassinated in 1261. John XV Bar Ma'dani was then left the undisputed head of the Syrian Orthodox Church, but he died two years later, in 1263. A synod of bishops was then called and met in the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia, where there was a large number of Suriani and a not insignificant Syrian Orthodox monastic presence.⁴⁴¹ For example, the amount of freedom granted by the Armenians can be demonstrated in the career of one 'Isa, 'the physician of Edessa'. Though famous in Melitene, he went into the service of the King of Cilicia and even built a Syrian Orthodox church dedicated to Mar Bar Sauma.⁴⁴² In the end, the abbot of the Monastery of Gavithaca (near Mopsuestia) was elected as patriarch, taking the name of Ignatios III (1263-82). It appears that during his lengthy reign he never left Cilicia, where, apparently, he was in good relations with the king. Constable Smpad, for

⁴⁴¹ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, 2:727-9 and 741-3; Hamilton, *Latin Church*, 353-54; On the Cheynet, 'Duchy of Antioch', 8. On Patriarch John's literary output, see: Barsoum, *Scattered Pearls*, 460-2; William Wright, *A Short History of Syriac Literature* (London, 1894), 263-5.

⁴⁴² Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 1:409-10.

example, records the Catholicos' presence for the baptism of T'oros, son of King Levon in 1272.⁴⁴³ Cilicia, though Armenian-dominated, had sizable numbers of other Christian Confessions, notably Syrian Orthodox and Greeks.

While the Maphrian was the supreme authority in the East, he was often challenged by the monks of the Monastery of Saint Matthew (*Dayr Mar Matti*). This monastery was one of the most important outside the Tūr Abdin region and was located thirty-five kilometres northeast of Mosul.⁴⁴⁴ Like many isolated monasteries in the Near East, Saint Matthew's Monastery was something of a fortress and was thus a place of refuge for Christian villagers in times of persecution. In the wake of the Mamlūk victory at 'Ayn Jālūt, al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ Isma'īl in 1261 made plans to attack and plunder the Christians of Mosul and Nineveh, and then flee to Mamlūk Syria. Word reached the Suriani villagers and those who could do so fled to Arbīl or Saint Matthew's. Al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ, in turn, fearing Mongol reprisals, fled to Syria with a number of *amīrs*. A number of the latter abandoned al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ, however, and returned to Mosul, where they overpowered the local authorities and began a 'great persecution' of the Christians. They 'looted the houses and killed every one who did not become a Muslim. And many elders, and deacons, and gentlefolk, and common folk denied their Faith...' The Kurds heard of this and promptly 'made a great slaughter of the Christians' throughout the province of Ninevah. They sacked a

⁴⁴³ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, 2:743-5, and more generally 743-77; Smpad, 'Armenian Chronicle', 166; Hamilton, *Latin Church*, 354; Grumel, *Chronologie*, 449.

⁴⁴⁴ Ignatius Yacoub III, *History of the Monastery of Saint Matthew*, 8.

women's monastery nearby, killing many of the refugees who had hidden there.⁴⁴⁵ Al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ's brother, Sayf al-Dīn, cast the Christians of Jazīrat ibn 'Umar into prison, demanding two thousand gold dinars. According to a lament of Abū Nāṣr of Barṭelli, no church in the regions of Athur, Nineveh, Rahobot, Banuhadra, or the Jazira were left without being desecrated. 'Those,' he says, 'who did not deny their faith were crowned with martyrdom.'⁴⁴⁶ In the course of this grievous attack, the fortress Monastery of Saint Matthew was soon attacked by a reputed thirty thousand Kurds (Bar Hebraeus says 'thousands' on foot and on horse), who laid siege to the monastery for four months. The monks and refugees vigorously defended the monastery with arrows and Greek fire, until finally negotiating a truce in return for handing over the valuables within the monastery (ultimately worth about one thousand dinars). As a result of this raid, many pious legends arose of the appearance of Saint Matthew and other Saints in defending the monastery, supposedly even corroborated by some Kurds involved with the attack.⁴⁴⁷

Despite periodic attacks, the famous theological school at Saint Matthew's continued its activities from the seventh until at least the end of the thirteenth century. The earlier Metropolitans Mar Severus Jacob (d. 1241) and Mar Gregorios John (d. after 1241), plus the contemporaries Mar Ignatios (d. after 1269), the Archimandrite Abū Nāṣr (d. after 1290), and the famous calligrapher monk 'Aziz – all natives of

⁴⁴⁵ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 1:440-1.

⁴⁴⁶ Ignatius Yacoub III, *History of the Monastery of Saint Matthew*, 96-98.

⁴⁴⁷ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 1:441; Ignatius Yacoub III, *History of the Monastery of Saint Matthew*, 99-100. The Archimandrite, Abū Nāṣr, lost an eye from an arrow in the attack.

Barṭelli – taught at this school and also wrote a number of texts on theology and hymnography.⁴⁴⁸ The famous Maphrian of the East Mar John Gregorios Abū al-Faraj Bar Hebraeus (1226-84) wrote a number of his many works here, as well as translating Avicenna and other works from Arabic into Syriac. Born in Melitene⁴⁴⁹ in 1225/6, tonsured in Antioch, and educated both there and in Tripoli under an Assyrian Christian named Jacob, it was largely due to this prolific author that the twelfth and thirteenth centuries have often been called a Syrian Orthodox Renaissance.⁴⁵⁰ He was ordained Bishop of Gubos (near Melitene) at the mere age of twenty. In 1264, Bar Hebraeus was raised to the position of *Maphrian* and consecrated in the Cilician capital of Sīs, after which he journeyed to the Il-Khān court of Hülegū where he had apparently spent time earlier. He also travelled quite frequently and often great distances, from Cilicia to Tikrīt and Baghdad to Tabriz.⁴⁵¹ He was on friendly relations with many outside of his own Confession, such as the Assyrian Catholicos Denḥa I in

⁴⁴⁸ Ignatius Yacoub III, *History of the Monastery of Saint Matthew*, 93-95, 101, and 106; Barsoum, *Scattered Pearls*, 484-5.

⁴⁴⁹ This important city likely consisted of a majority Syrian Orthodox population, in addition to Muslims, Armenians, and Melkites. The Monastery of Mar Barṣawmā (the patriarchal residence) was nearby). See: Hidemi Takahashi, *Barhebraeus: A Bio-Bibliography* (Piscataway, NJ, 2005), 4-5.

⁴⁵⁰ Takahashi, *Barhebraeus: A Bio-Bibliography*, 3-18; Witold Witakowski, 'Syriac Historiographical Sources', in ed. Mary Whitby, *Byzantines and Crusaders in Non-Greek Sources, 1025-1204* (Oxford, 2007), 253-82, at 266; Wright, *Syriac Literature*, 265-81. The Latinized form of his name (Bar 'Ebroyo) is Bar Hebraeus, but this is misleading and he has often been called 'son of Aaron the Hebrew'. In Arabic he is called Ibn al-'Ibrī and nicknamed Jamāl al-Din. Witakowski argues that his name derives from having been born in 'Ebro (a village near Melitene?), while Barsoum – quoting a line of Bar Hebraeus' poetry) says it comes from being born whilst crossing the river Euphrates (either himself or a forebear). See: Barsoum, *Scattered Pearls*, 463-4 and, more generally 463-81.

⁴⁵¹ Witakowski, 'Syriac Historical Sources', 264-66; Takahashi, *Barhebraeus: A Bio-Bibliography*, 22-3.

Baghdad, with whom he corresponded.⁴⁵² For twenty years he served as the Maphrian of the East, but his enormous influence and legacy extended much beyond this. He was, as Barsoum has written, ‘the most luminous star that ever shone on the firmament of the Syrian nation.’⁴⁵³ Other important Syrian Orthodox during this period include poet and translator Daniel Bar Khaṭṭāb (late thirteenth century);⁴⁵⁴ the wealthy Baghdadi dignitaries Tāj al-Dawla, Fakhr al-Dawla, and Shams al-Dawla of the Thomas family; Dionysios Ṣalība *Ḥaripho* (‘the Intelligent’), bishop of Claudia (d. 1273); and Dioscorus Theodorus, Metropolitan of Ḥiṣn Ziyad (d. ca. 1282), a Syriac calligrapher, transcriber, and illuminator.⁴⁵⁵ It is small wonder, then, with learned men such as these, that Syrian Orthodox members from Frankish and Cilician territory would dare the long journey eastwards for their theological studies.

* * * * *

This period of 1261-91 was largely a time of consolidation by the Mamlūk Sultans, especially during the lengthy reigns of Baybars and Qalāwūn. They effectively, if not completely, met everything with which they were challenged by their two main

⁴⁵² Jullien, Florence, ‘Une question de controverse religieuse: La *Lettre* au Catholicos Nestorien Mār Denḥa I^{er}’, *PDO* 33 (2008), 95-113.

⁴⁵³ Barsoum, *Scattered Pearls*, 463.

⁴⁵⁴ Wright, *Syriac Literature*, 281-2.

⁴⁵⁵ Barsoum, *Scattered Pearls*, 462-3.

external enemies, the Franks and Mongols, and nearly even neutralized them completely. The treatment and position of Christians within the Mamlūk Sultanate was also transitory, as it was neither a time of prosperity nor a time of abject persecution. Indeed the policies of Qalāwūn and the lesser sultans were really simply those established by their predecessors, notably Baybars and, to a degree, al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb. Their policies did, however, contribute to the continued destabilization of the Christians and other *dhimmi*s and their alienation from the greater Muslim populace. What was new from this period, however, was the nearly complete loss of potential Christian patrons and external protectors. The perpetually weakening king of Lesser Armenia aside, the Franks were finally expelled, the Nubian kings destabilized and subjected to Egypt, while the Il-Khāns finally converted to Islam. The Byzantine emperor yet had some political weight for trade considerations, but this was limited. Quite simply, this period was one of many disappointments and great disillusionment. As Bar Hebraeus himself pleaded: 'Wake up then and sleep not, O Lord, and look on the blood of Thy servants which is being poured out without mercy, and be sorry for Thy Church which is being rent in pieces by the persecution.'⁴⁵⁶ Darker days were yet to come.

⁴⁵⁶ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 1:482.

Chapter 3: The Islamisation of the Il-Khānate and Continuing Pressure under the Mamlūks (1292-1317)

For the previous thirty years, the Mongol Il-Khānate had been perceived by some indigenous Christians as a source of hope and protection against Muslim legal discrimination and potential violence. The battle of ‘Ayn Jālūt in 1260 and numerous unsuccessful invasions in the succeeding years, however, had taught both the Christians of *Bilād al-Shām* and the Mamlūk rulers of Egypt that the Mongols were not invincible, nor a dependable source of strength for the Christians. Most of the Il-Khāns were shamanists or Buddhists, but in their antagonism towards Islam were sympathetic to their Christian subjects. The brief rule of the Muslim convert Tegūder (‘Aḥmad’, 1282-4) was but a prelude to the permanent trend established in the 1290s. Perhaps the Mongol rulers came to the realization that if they were to secure their dynasty they had to come to terms with the greater majority of their population – i.e. the Muslims. Regardless, as the Il-Khāns adopted Islam, so, too, did a large number of lesser Mongols. As a result of this policy, the protection given to Christians previously was lifted and they became – all too often – legitimate targets for Muslim retaliation for past Mongol beneficence. This was a soft policy initially, which hardened with each successor. Another important factor was the breakdown of society and security within the Il-Khānate’s borders, due in no small part to earlier depopulation of the region

brought about by the initial Mongol invasions, coupled with the widespread rise in banditry.

THE MONGOL IL-KHĀNATE AND ISLAM (1292-1318)

Upon the death of the Il-Khān Arghūn, in 1291, three contenders to the throne were summoned: Arghūn's brother Gaikhātū, his cousin Bāidū, and his son Ghāzān. In the event, Gaikhātū (1291-5) was proclaimed Il-Khān, but he would be succeeded first by Bāidū (1295) and then Ghāzān (1295-1304). Gaikhātū was something of a weak ruler, though he was favourable enough towards the Christians to participate in ceremonies and to donate significant sums to the Catholicos and for the building of a monastery in Marāghā. The biographer of Mar Yahballāhā recorded that he 'confirmed all the religious Sec[ret]aries each in his status and honoured all the chief dogmas, whether of Christians or Arabs or Jews or Pagans, and showed partiality to none.'⁴⁵⁷ Though Gaikhātū was not a Muslim, two of his wives certainly were. Pādishāh Khātūn established madrasas on her accord, and also wrote pious poetry, while a daughter (Qutlugh-Malik) patronized at least one Ṣūfī Shaykh, Zāhid Ibrāhīm.⁴⁵⁸ It is certainly likely that most if not all of Gaikhātū's children were also Muslim, if only eventually. The Il-Khān's downfall began when he caused his cousin Bāidū to be physically

⁴⁵⁷ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 1:494; *History of Yaballāhā III*, 75-7; Boyle, 'Dynastic and Political History of the Il-Khāns', 372-3. As to the Mamlūks, his interaction was largely manifested in a series of written threats exchanged with Sultan Ashraf Khalīl (1290-3).

⁴⁵⁸ Pfeiffer, Judith, 'Reflections on a 'Double Rapprochement': Conversion to Islam among the Mongol Elite During the Early Ilkhanate', in ed. Linda Komaroff, *Beyond the Legacy of Genghis Khān* (Leiden, 2006), 369-89, at 376, 376 ft. 38, and 379.

assaulted. Unsurprisingly, the latter rose in rebellion, eventually establishing himself as Il-Khān. To increase his support, he reluctantly converted to Islam, but it would seem only nominally. Indeed, Hayton thought Bāidū was a ‘magnas Christianis’,⁴⁵⁹ while the continuator of Bar Hebraeus maintains that he ‘boldly gave himself the name of “Christian”’. Bāidū’s pro-Christian policy apparently was due to the influence of the former Il-Khān Abāghā’s wife, Despoina Khātūn, daughter of the Byzantine Emperor Michael Palaiologos. He even had a church and a ‘beater of the board’ maintained in his camp. Bar Hebraeus records that the Mongols – noble and lesser – had become practicing Muslims by this time and Bāidū was heavily pressured to convert to Islam. Though he wore a cross around his neck for the Christians, he tried to show the Muslims that he, too, was a Muslim (to win their support), but they were suspicious.⁴⁶⁰ As Boyle suggests, Bāidū was most likely an adherent of traditional Mongol religion in which tolerance to all religions was a keystone. In any event, his rule was quickly challenged by Ghāzān, and after only five months he was dead and Ghāzān the new Il-Khān.⁴⁶¹

⁴⁵⁹ That is, *magnus Christianus*.

⁴⁶⁰ Hayton, *La Fleur des Histoires de la Terre d’Orient*, in *RHC Arm.*, 2:111-363, at 189 and 315; Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 1:494 and 505. The author of the *Monks of Kūblāi Khān* authoritatively insists that Baidu was forced to become Il-Khān out of fear of his life, while Ghāzān converted to Islam explicitly to gain Muslim military and political support. *The Monks of Kūblāi Khān, Emperor of China*, trans. E.A. Wallis Budge (London, 1928), 208; cf. *History of Mar Yaballāhā*, 80.

⁴⁶¹ Boyle, ‘Dynastic and Political History of the Il-Khāns’, 376-9.

GHĀZĀN KHĀN (1295-1304) AND ISLAM IN THE IL-KHĀNATE

With the deaths of Gaikhātū and Bāidū, the traditional Mongol policy of religious tolerance came to an end.⁴⁶² Ghāzān himself had been raised a Buddhist, erecting temples in Khorasan, but he converted to Islam (Sunni with Sufi sympathies) in June of 1295 under the name of Maḥmūd. At that time, Ghāzān was in a remote mountain valley en route to his confrontation with Bāidū. He was heavily influenced by several councillors, particularly the Muslim Amīr Naurūz (d. 1297), who told him of a prophecy about a great king who was destined to arise at that very time who would revive Islam.⁴⁶³ He also suggested that if he converted, all Muslims would give him their support.⁴⁶⁴ Given Ghāzān Khān's subsequent behaviour, it is most likely that his conversion was earnest, if perhaps syncretic, but it also certainly gained him the allegiance of many other Muslim *amīrs*. Persian sources maintain that it was only at this point that most Mongol *amīrs* became Muslim – claims of from eighty to two-hundred thousand – while the Arabic sources, based on the testimony of Shaykh Ṣadr al-Dīn (who witnessed the conversion), suggest rather that Ghāzān thought to win the throne by adopting the Islamic faith already held by the majority of his army.⁴⁶⁵

⁴⁶² Baum and Winkler, *Church of the East*, 96-97.

⁴⁶³ Melville, Charles, 'Pādshāh-i Islām: The Conversion of Sultan Maḥmūd Ghāzān Khān', *Pembroke Papers* 1 (1990), 159-77, at 159-60; cf. K.V. Zetterstéen, *Beiträge zur Geschichte Der Mamlükensultane*, (Leiden, 1919), 34-5.

⁴⁶⁴ On Naurūz (or Nawrūz), see: Manz, 'Rule of the infidels', 149-51.

⁴⁶⁵ Melville, 'Pādshāh-i Islām', 160-3, 166, and 171. On the sincerity of Ghāzān's conversion, see Reuven Amitai-Preiss, 'Ghazan, Islam and Mongol Tradition: A View from the Mamlūk Sultanate', *BSOAS* 59 (1996), 1-10.

Regardless, those who were not Muslim by this time became so now, and his army became symbolically the army of Islam in opposition to the Buddhist, shamanist, Christian, and Jewish elements of his opponents (although many were also Muslim). After Bāidū was decisively defeated, many more Mongols followed the prevailing winds and became Muslim. Thus, from the outset, Ghāzān's reign witnessed a tremendous transformation of the Mongol Il-Khānate to Islam.⁴⁶⁶

Like the Mamlūk Sultan Qalāwūn, the Ayyūbid Sultan Saladin and others, Ghāzān began his reign by dismissing all *dhimmīs* from his administration, though also like Qalāwūn, he relented some once he became more secure in his rule.⁴⁶⁷ At the beginning, however, he gave orders that all Buddhist and shamanist temples (including that of his father, Arghūn) should be destroyed, as well as idols, and that all adherents should be forcibly converted to Islam. Bar Hebraeus records that the persecution against the 'pagan priests' and their 'houses of images' was twice again that against the Christians and Jews, even as they had been shown twice the favour in previous years. A large number of these priests became Muslims due to this fierce persecution. Eventually, the Il-Khān ordered that those who did not wish to convert should return to India and Tibet, while the rest should be sincere in their Islamic declaration. Ghāzān Khān also built mosques and religious institutions throughout the Il-Khānate.⁴⁶⁸ This persecution was much more than a doctrinal extension, but was in so many ways a

⁴⁶⁶ Boyle, 'Dynastic and Political History of the Il-Khāns', 378; A. Bausani, 'Religion under the Mongols', in ed. J.A. Boyle, *The Cambridge History of Iran*, Vol. 5 (Cambridge, 1968), 538-49, at 541-2.

⁴⁶⁷ Bundy, 'Syriac and Armenian Christian Responses', 47.

⁴⁶⁸ Bausani, 'Religion under the Mongols', 542; Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 1:507.

time of revenge against those who had subverted Islamic dominance in society and was a return – or worse – to how society was prior to the Mongol establishment in Iran and Mesopotamia.

As to the Christians, Shaykh Ṣadr al-Dīn noted that it was only three or four months after Ghāzān's conversion that the Shaykh was told by witnesses that the Il-Khān had ordered the destruction of all the churches in Tabriz – and destroyed some with his own hands. He also ordered the reinstatement of the *jizya* against the Christians and Jews.⁴⁶⁹ Initial orders were given by Ghāzān's powerful advisor, the anti-Christian Amīr Naurūz, but Ghāzān realized that Muslims would accept his conversion the better if he demonstrated his antagonism towards the non-Muslims (who were so hated for their success during the earlier Il-Khānate). The continuator of Bar Hebraeus echoes the Shaykh, furthermore noting that Ghāzān ordered these measures throughout the Il-Khānate.

The persecutions, and disgrace, and mockings, and ignominy which the Christians suffered at this time, especially in Baghdad, words cannot describe. Behold, according to what people say, 'No Christians dared to appear in the streets (or, market), but the women went out and came in and bought and sold, because they could not be distinguished from the Arab women, and could not be identified as Christians, though those who were recognized as Christians were disgraced, and slapped, and beaten and mocked...'⁴⁷⁰

⁴⁶⁹ Melville, 'Pādshāh-i Islām', 164.

⁴⁷⁰ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 1:507; *Monks of Kūblāi Khān*, 210-34.

The author of *The Monks of Kūblāi Khān* echoes this sentiment: ‘The peoples of the Arabs roused themselves to take vengeance on the Church and its children for the destruction which the father of these kings had inflicted upon them.’⁴⁷¹ The fanatical Muslim Amīr Naurūz, made it his purpose to persecute the non-Muslims. He sent an order across the lands of the Il-Khānate that said, in effect, ‘The churches shall be uprooted and the altars overturned, and the celebrations of the Eucharist shall cease, and the hymns of praise, and the sounds of calls to prayer shall be abolished; and the heads...of the Christians, and the heads of the congregations of the Jews, and the great men among them shall be killed.’⁴⁷² Naurūz made Islam the state religion and promoted the destruction of churches, synagogues, pagodas and fire temples. He implemented the *jizya* and other sumptuary laws. In some cities, such as Mosul, the Christians were wealthy enough to be able to pay off the Muslim authorities and save their churches. But in areas where they were too impoverished, the churches and monasteries were destroyed or confiscated.⁴⁷³ Even in Mosul, however, where there were many of the Syrian Orthodox, in particular, fled the city in times of persecution to

⁴⁷¹ *Monks of Kūblāi Khān*, 209.

⁴⁷² *Monks of Kūblāi Khān*, 210.

⁴⁷³ Khānbaghi, *Fire, the Star and the Cross*, 68-69. In Mosul, the governor was Fakhr al-Dīn ʿĪsā ibn Ibrāhīm, who as a Christian likely was able to placate the Ghāzān’s envoys. Perhaps reflecting Mongol synchronism, an illustrated copy of Balʿamī’s *History* was produced for Fakhr al-Dīn by the Muslim Ibn al-Ṭiqṭaqā about 1302. It contains imagery drawn from Christian, Jewish, Muslim, as well as Mongol sources. Fakhr al-Dīn was, however, detested by the local Muslim populace and Ghāzān had him killed in 1303. See: Teresa Fitzherbert, ‘Religious Diversity under Ilkhanid Rule c. 1300 as Reflected in the Freer Balʿamī’, in ed. Linda Komaroff, *Beyond the Legacy of Genghis Khān* (Leiden, 2006), 390-406, at 404-5.

take refuge in the remote fortress-like Monastery of Mar Mattai.⁴⁷⁴ Bar Hebraeus records that ‘Mongol messengers were sent to every country and town to destroy the churches and to loot the monasteries.’ These messengers were more lenient, however, when given significant bribes. This was the case in Nineveh, but in Arbīl, where everyone looked to his own security and did not offer gold, three churches were destroyed completely.⁴⁷⁵ After a year in power and more firmly established, Ghāzān entered a policy of state consolidation and reconciliation with the Christians. He issued a decree that no one should be compelled to leave their own religion. Upon learning of this, Naurūz spread the false news that the Catholicos had converted to Islam. The result of this rumour was to create riots against the Christians in Marāghā, with even Mongols fighting Mongols.⁴⁷⁶ Naurūz, so essential in creating an avidly anti-Christian policy, eventually fell out of favour with the king. Ghāzān Khān sent soldiers after him and they finally caught up with him in 1297 in Khorasan, where he was executed. Once trouble eased in Arbīl, life for Christians was peaceful for a time, till Ghāzān Khān’s death in 1304.⁴⁷⁷

⁴⁷⁴ Dioscorus Gabriel of Barṭelli, ‘A *Mimro* on Maphrian Gregory Barṣawmo Ṣafī Bar ‘Ebroyo by Dioscorus Gabriel of Barṭelli, Bishop of Gozarto d-Qardu’, ed. and trans. Hidemi Takahashi, in ed. Herman Teule et al, *The Syriac Renaissance* (Leuven, 2010), 151-94, at 190.

⁴⁷⁵ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 1:507-8.

⁴⁷⁶ Khānbaghi, *Fire, the Star and the Cross*, 70-1.

⁴⁷⁷ *Monks of Kūblāi Khān*, 233-4 for the death of Naurūz, 238 for the peace settlement in Arbīl, and 240-54 for the generally positive situation of the Assyrians. Bar Hebraeus describes Naurūz as ‘crafty’, ‘cunning’, and ‘regarded with absolute terror by the Mongol troops’. He asserts that Naurūz intended Ghāzān as a puppet, but the latter was wise and discerning. This was a fairly typical Christian perspective of their great ‘persecutor’. See: Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 2:xxvi. An East Syrian

Ghāzān Khān himself is generally described positively by the Christians:

‘God gave the Christians favour in the eyes of the king, and he knew that they were cruelly oppressed. But although he had turned aside from the way of his fathers, and had inclined to a dogma [which maketh] bitter the soul, he had not changed his good disposition in respect of them.’⁴⁷⁸

On the other hand, he did grant to an *amīr* a royal edict imposing the *jizya* poll-tax and requiring all Christians to ‘tie girdles round themselves when they were walking about in the market-places.’⁴⁷⁹ Ghāzān Khān is also known for his economic reforms that shifted from the traditional Mongol nomadic approach to economic governance to a more structured policy reliant on the indigenous civil bureaucracy.⁴⁸⁰ Upon the Mongol conquest of Iran, Christians and Jews had filled the empty bureaucratic positions in the government, so that many Muslims found themselves under orders of non-Muslims.⁴⁸¹ With Ghāzān Khān’s conversion to Islam, he initially dismissed these *dhimmīs* from government service, but some perhaps regained their employment once this purge was eased; others, doubtless, converted to Islam to retain their positions. This bureaucracy

manuscript colophon dated ca. 1297 records that Naurūz, guilty of ordering the torture of Catholicos Mar Yahballāhā and the destruction of numerous churches and monasteries, was ‘eventually slain by the same dart which killed Julian.’ See: Mār ‘Abdīshō’, ‘Note in Dublin (Chester Beatty) 704’, (ca. 1297), in ‘A List of East Syrian Manuscript Colophons and Inscriptions’, in Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 378-732, at 390.

⁴⁷⁸ *Monks of Kūblāi Khān*, 234.

⁴⁷⁹ *Monks of Kūblāi Khān*, 239.

⁴⁸⁰ Petrushevsky, I.P., ‘The Socio-Economic Condition of Iran under the Il-Khāns’, in ed. J.A. Boyle, *The Cambridge History of Iran*, Vol. 5 (Cambridge, 1968), 483-538, at 494-500.

⁴⁸¹ Khānbaghi, *Fire, the Star and the Cross*, 53.

certainly would have benefited from these reforms, as would the non-Muslim peasantry, as they were the easiest groups to prey upon by the nomadic warrior class.

Christians beyond the immediate borders of the Il-Khānate were naturally greatly alarmed at the large-scale conversion of Mongols to Islam and the new hardline Islamic policy of Ghāzān. Although from the Mamlūk evidence it might appear that Cilicia was firmly supportive of its Mongol overlords, this is far from the truth, at least since the favourable days of the genuinely sympathetic Hūlegū Khān. More than one Armenian source refers to them very negatively as ‘the tyrannical rule of the savage and barbaric nation of archers’ who have imposed a ‘heavy yoke of exorbitant taxes’.⁴⁸² Another source notes how the author and his companions were forced to take ‘flight on account of the marauding Tatars and the destruction of our places, but nowhere did we find solace...’⁴⁸³ On the other hand, many other sources refer very highly about Ghāzān Khān as ‘benevolent and just’ and ‘the guardian of the Armenian nation’.⁴⁸⁴ But of the Mongols (or ‘Tatars’) in general, most sources are very negative. ‘They converted to the false faith of [Muḥammad]...And they coerce everyone into converting to their vain and false hope. They persecute, they molest, and they torment, some by confiscating their possessions, some by tormenting them, some by slandering,

⁴⁸² Trans. Avedis K. Sanjian, *Colophons of Armenian Manuscripts, 1301-1480* (Cambridge, MA, 1969), 45. See Bundy, ‘Syriac and Armenian Christian Responses’, 33-53, for a general overview of the indigenous Christian view to the Islamization of the Il-Khāns.

⁴⁸³ Trans. Sanjian, *Colophons*, 46.

⁴⁸⁴ Trans. Sanjian, *Colophons*, 49.

[and] by insulting the cross and the church; and all of this [came to pass] on account of our sins...⁴⁸⁵

Efforts to strengthen the will of the Christians in such difficult circumstances were taken on several fronts. Bar Hebraeus records that King He'tum II (1289-93; 1295-7; 1299-1307) of Cilicia successfully intervened on behalf of the Christians during a visit in 1295, before Ghāzān had defeated Bāidū. The Il-Khān had issued orders that all non-Muslim religious buildings should be destroyed (i.e. Buddhist, shamanist, Christian, and Jewish houses of worship), but he relented in response to He'tum's pleas, ordering that all churches should be spared.⁴⁸⁶ Of all Christians, those of the Church of the East were the most affected by the Islamisation of the Mongols. The East Syrian Metropolitan of Nisībis and Armenia, Mar 'Abdišō' Bar Briḳā (d. 1318) is considered to have filled much the same position for the Church of the East as did Bar Hebraeus for the Syrian Orthodox Church.⁴⁸⁷ He wrote numerous works in both Syriac and Arabic, and composed his *Margianītha (The Jewel)*, in 1298, at the request of the Catholicos Mar Yahballāhā. His purpose, he explains, is to write 'in proof of the truth and certainty of the Christian faith', elaborating on the history, branches, and beliefs of Christianity.

⁴⁸⁵ Trans. Sanjian, *Colophons*, 50-1.

⁴⁸⁶ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 1:506.

⁴⁸⁷ Younansardaroud, Helen, 'Abdišō' Bar Briḳā's (d. 1318) Book of Paradise: A Literary Renaissance?', in ed. Herman Teule et al, *The Syriac Renaissance* (Leuven, 2010), 195-204, at 195-6; Anton Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur* (Bonn, 1922), 323-5; Wright, *Syriac Literature*, 285-9. Cf. the introduction by Hubert Kaufhold in 'Abdišō' of Nisibis, *The Nomocanon of Metropolitan Abdisho of Nisibis*, ed. István Perczel (Piscataway, NJ, 2005). His name is also spelled 'Abd Yeshua Bar Bēriḳhā, and sometimes called 'Ebedjesus.

While it is highly unlikely that he expected Mongols to read his book, it is no stretch to imagine that it was meant to strengthen the faith of the community of the Church of the East following such an important shift in Il-Khānate religious policy.⁴⁸⁸

SYRIAN POLICY

In late 1299, in response to a Syrian Mamlūk attack on Mardīn and Upper Mesopotamia, Ghāzān Il-Khān led an invasion deep into Syria. He obtained a *fatwā* for *jihād* because a number of mosques were desecrated during the Mamlūk raid.⁴⁸⁹ This area of Mesopotamia was located in a tenuous position along the Syrian Mamlūk-Il-Khānate frontier, and cross-border raids were not unusual. Just two years earlier, in 1297, the *amīr* of Mardīn sent for a large army from Syria to attack the rebellious city of Diyārbakīr, which had a large population of Christians. Twelve thousand captives were taken, and ‘many believers were killed’. Christians were tortured and the great Syrian Orthodox Church of the Mother of God was looted and burnt.⁴⁹⁰ Ghāzān Khān invaded Syria in late 1299, swiftly making his way towards Damascus. In the latter city, a contemporary Muslim source records that on 19 December, the Muslims,

⁴⁸⁸ Mar ‘Abd Yeshua bar Bērikhā, *Margianitha*, 380-1.

⁴⁸⁹ Amitai, Reuven, ‘Whither the Ilkhanid Army? Ghazan’s First Campaign into Syria (1299-1300)’, in ed. Nicola di Cosmo, *Warfare in Inner Asian History (500-1800)* (Leiden, 2002), 221-64; Boyle, ‘Dynastic and Political History of the Il-Khāns’, 387-9; Fitzherbert notes that, during the next campaign in 1302, Ibn Taymiya (then in Damascus) issued a *fatwā* for a Mamlūk *jihād* against the Mongols, disparaging them as synchronistic Muslims. Thus, each side essentially declared *jihād* against each other. See: Fitzherbert, ‘Religious Diversity’, 397.

⁴⁹⁰ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 1:509.

Christians, and Jews all made processions (not, apparently, together) within the city seeking divine intercession, the latter carrying their Torahs and Gospels before them.⁴⁹¹ Ghāzān's army included a significant number of Armenian and Georgian contingents, with the Armenian King Het'um II particularly heavily involved. The Mongol army decisively defeated the Mamlūks, who were driven back into Egypt. In the course of their flight, they were attacked and plundered near Mount Lebanon by Maronite and Druze archers. The Armenians were able to recover territory taken by the Mamlūks in 1298, but this proved temporary as the Mongols withdrew only a few months later, early in 1300.⁴⁹² According to Pachymeres, the Il-Khān was especially pleased with his Georgian contingent. He purportedly attempted to take Jerusalem for their sake, and also sent a cross to them for the war, having heard of their attachment to it.⁴⁹³

King Het'um's contributions to the Mongol war effort were not insubstantial, albeit he was certainly the junior member of the combined forces. His influence amongst the Christians in *Bilād al-Shām*, as noted above, was significant. In addition, an Armenian source recorded:

⁴⁹¹ Somogyi, Joseph, ed. and trans., 'Adh-Dhahabi's Record of the Destruction of Damascus by the Mongols in 699-700/1299-1301', in eds. Samuel Löwinger and Joseph Somogyi, *Ignace Goldziher Memorial Volume*, Part 1 (Budapest, 1948), 353-86, at 361.

⁴⁹² Hayton, *Fleur des Histoires*, 191-9; al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, 1.3:838-9 and 902; Salibi, 'Maronites of Lebanon', 297-9; Amitai, 'Whither the Ilkhanid Army?', 251. But see Abu-Izzeddin, *Druzes*, 160, who argues that the Druze did not attack the retreating Mamlūks, but rather gave them refuge.

⁴⁹³ Pachymeres, *Relations Historiques*, 4:504-5. Perhaps this is a cross-banner or even a portion of the True Cross.

The King of Armenia, back from his tour against the Sultan, went to Jerusalem. He found that all of the enemy had been put to flight or exterminated by the Tartars, who had arrived before him. Entering into Jerusalem, he assembled the Christians, who from fear had been forced to take refuge in caves. During the fortnight he spent in the Holy City, he celebrated with pomp and feasts and ceremonies of Christian worship in the Holy Places. He visited all of the pilgrim stations, which were a great comfort to him. He was still in Jerusalem when he received a diploma from the Khān, who gave him as a gift this city with the surrounding territory. Then he left to join Ghāzān in Damascus and spent the winter with him.⁴⁹⁴

This 'gift' was, of course, very short-lived. As to the indigenous Christians, were they hiding in fear from the Mongol invasion, or from fear of retaliation from the local Mamlūk authorities or the Muslim *‘amma*? Having experienced the predations of both, it is likely that both answers are correct. Nonetheless, according to an Egyptian Coptic source, the Mongols raided both Jerusalem and Hebron in 1299, following their defeat of the Mamlūk army. This must have been shortly before Het‘um’s arrival in Palestine.

⁴⁹⁴ Constable Smpad (anonymous continuator), *Chronique du Royaume de la Petite Arménie*, in *RHC Arm.*, 1:610-72, at 660. This passage is under the heading for 1302, but given the rapid defeat of the Mongol invasion far to the north of Jerusalem, it seems more likely that the earlier invasion is intended. Cf. Al-Dahābi, who also records that Ibn Taymiya saw Het‘um in Ghāzān’s presence at their camp outside of Damascus. See: al-Dahābi, ‘Record’, 377. Bar Hebraeus records that Het‘um spent the winter in friendly service with Ghāzān in Ṣaliḥiah outside of Damascus. Armenian troops are specified as causing great damage to the Syrian Orthodox monasteries there. They were ‘destroyed utterly’ because they were constructed from wood. Presumably, this wood was used for firewood, but it is surprising that Armenians were the cause of this destruction against fellow Christians. Syrian Orthodox and Armenian communities were often found together, e.g. in Cilicia. See: Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 2:xxix. Cf. Hintlian, *History of the Armenians*, 4-5, where he also says that Het‘um financed repairs to Armenian churches and placed an altar in the Tomb of the Virgin Mary. Peradze says that the Georgians were given control of Jerusalem. See: Peradze, ‘Account of the Georgian Monks’, 188. His citation of *AOL* 1 (1881), 75, is incorrect.

They massacred both Christians and Muslims, looted, destroyed, took young men and girls to be sold into slavery, and defiled al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf in Jerusalem (by drinking wine).⁴⁹⁵

As Ghāzān Khān continued the war of his fathers against the Mamlūks, he also made appeals to the Christian powers. Following an unsuccessful delegation of 1299, he vowed in a letter of 12 April 1302 to Pope Boniface VIII, King Edward I of England, and James II of Aragon that he would renounce Islam and be baptized if they would join in an alliance against Mamlūk Egypt. When his forces did invade, however, they were without European support, and were ultimately defeated at Marj al-Ṣuffar near Damascus on 20 April 1303.⁴⁹⁶ In seeking this alliance, he adopted a more tolerant policy towards the Christians, who were able to rebuild to a limited degree.⁴⁹⁷ He also sent a delegation to Constantinople, seeking a prestigious marriage alliance with the Byzantine emperor, Andronikos II, who approved the proposal.⁴⁹⁸ Ghāzān Khān died in 1304, whilst planning yet another invasion of Syria.

⁴⁹⁵ Mufaḍḍal ibn Abī al-Faḍā'il, *Kitāb al-nahj*, 2:667.

⁴⁹⁶ Baumer, *Church of the East*, 228; J.A. Boyle, 'The Il-Khāns of Persia and the Christian West', *History Today* 23 (1973), 554-62, at 562, reprint, *The Mongol World Empire, 1206-1370* (London, 1977), VIII; Holt, *Age of the Crusades*, 111; al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, 1.3:922-3.

⁴⁹⁷ Baumer, *Church of the East*, 231.

⁴⁹⁸ Pachymeres, *Relations Historiques*, 4:441. Per Failler, the bride is thought to have been Irena Palaiologina.

ŌLJEITŪ KHĀN (1304-16)

Ghāzān's successor was his brother Ōljeitū (1304-16), formerly Khar-Banda, who was baptized a Christian in his childhood with the name of Nicholas. In his adult life, he converted first to Buddhism, wavered back and forth between the different schools of Sunni Islam, and finally settled on Shī'ite Islam, then quite informed by Ṣūfī mysticism in Persia.⁴⁹⁹ Despite his Christian upbringing, he was no friend to the Christians. In Cilicia, they finally realized this, and no longer counted on Mongol help against the Mamlūks, particularly after a fierce invasion by the latter in 1304. The small Mongol garrisons in Cilicia were of little protection and seemed mostly intent on collecting taxes.⁵⁰⁰

The year 1307 is remembered as a particularly evil year for Christians in the Il-Khānate, as Ōljeitū Khān, who (according to one Armenian chronicler) 'looked like Antichrist...[and] sought to efface Christianity from Armenia and Georgia.' Christians throughout his domains were forced to wear 'a symbol of opprobrium', and new, heavy

⁴⁹⁹ Boyle, 'Dynastic and Political History of the Il-Khāns', 401-2; Bausani, 'Religion under the Mongols', 543-5. Open quarrels between Ḥanafites and Shāfī'īs at court became so violent that at least some Mongol converts – perhaps including Ōljeitū – rejected Sunnism for Shī'ism and possibly even returned to the Yasa [codified law] of Genghis Khān (544). On the role of Sufis in converting the Mongols, see: Reuven Amitai-Preiss, 'Sufis and Shamans: Some Remarks on the Islamization of the Mongols in the Ilkhanate', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 42 (1999), 27-46; Pfeiffer, 'Reflections on a 'Double Rapprochement'', 376-88; cf. Nehemia Levtzion, 'The Dynamics of Sufi Brotherhoods', in ed. Miriam Hoexter, et al, *The Public Sphere in Muslim Societies* (Albany, NY, 2002), 109-18.

⁵⁰⁰ Dashdondog, Bayarsaikhan, *The Mongols and the Armenians (1220-1335)* (Leiden, 2011), 203-5.

taxes were introduced for the Christian subjections.⁵⁰¹ Life became so intolerable in the reign of Ōljeitū Khān that ‘sons and daughters in our land are being sold to pay excessive and intolerable levies, and numerous villages and monasteries are in ruins and in anguish, and ecclesiastics are seeking refuge abroad; and all of this [came to pass] on account of our sins...’⁵⁰² For the rest of the decade, the Armenians could only speak of the abuses, heavy taxes, and persecution of the Mongols and their helplessness in the face of it.⁵⁰³

Ōljeitū fully intended to carry on the war against the Mamlūks in Syria. As such, he also sent letters dated 5 April 1305 to the Pope (Clement V, 1305-14), to King Edward I of England (1272-1307), and Philip the Fair of France (1285-1314) beseeching a military alliance. Though Clement and Edward II (1307-27), at least, both replied favourably to this design, once again nothing came of it.⁵⁰⁴ Ōljeitū did, nonetheless, invade Syria in the winter of 1312-3, encouraged by dissident Syrian

⁵⁰¹ Trans. Sanjian, *Colophons*, 52. Daniel, in 1307, describes the new conditions and notes the ‘symbol of opprobrium’ is a ‘black linen over the shoulders, so that whoever saw them would recognize that they are Christians and would curse them and they make every effort to efface Christianity from the earth.’ Elsewhere, this symbol is described as ‘a blue sign...sewn on the shoulders of believers’. See trans. Sanjian, *Colophons*, 52-3 and 60.

⁵⁰² Trans. Sanjian, *Colophons*, 55-6.

⁵⁰³ Sanjian, *Colophons*, 57-63.

⁵⁰⁴ Boyle, ‘The IlKhāns of Persia and the Christian West’, 562-3; Baumer, *Church of the East*, 228; Holt, *Age of the Crusades*, 113. A matrimonial alliance was also pursued with Constantinople. See: Pachymeres, *Relations Historiques*, 4:682-3.

amīrs, but soon turned back when the first attack (at Raḥbat al-Shām) suffered heavy casualties. This was the final Mongol incursion in Mamlūk territory.⁵⁰⁵

MAMLŪK POLITICAL HISTORY IN EGYPT AND BILĀD AL-SHĀM

Whilst the Il-Khānate was in the process of transforming into an Islamic state and one more economically viable, the Mamlūk Sultanate was entering an unstable period featuring a number of *coup d'états*. This was an especially difficult period for the Coptic population. Donald P. Little, amongst others, has argued that the Bahrī Mamlūk period from 1293-1354 was particularly devastating to the Coptic community in Egypt. Significant numbers of Copts converted to Islam, though not so much due to Mamlūk initiative. Rather, 'the Muslim masses [the *‘amma*] of Cairo and other cities resented the blatant economic prosperity and government influence which many Copts seemed to enjoy. From time to time this resentment led to violence against the Copts, which threatened the social, even political, equilibrium of the Mamlūk state.'⁵⁰⁶

Sultan al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn was the central Mamlūk figure of this day, though he was truly only politically dominant during his lengthy third reign.⁵⁰⁷ His policy towards the Christians was often forced by the pressures of the *‘ulamā* and the Cairene Muslim lower classes. To head off the brewing violence, the

⁵⁰⁵ Boyle, 'Dynastic and Political History of the Il-Khāns ', 403.

⁵⁰⁶ Little, 'Coptic Converts to Islam during the Bahri Mamlūk Period', 263-88.

⁵⁰⁷ Holt, *Age of the Crusades*, 107, and more generally 107-20. He had three separate reigns: 1293-4, 1299-1309, and 1310-41.

government thoroughly clamped down on the freedoms of its Coptic population (and sometimes the Jewish community, as well). All Coptic employees of the government were expelled, newly built churches (or those accused of being new) were destroyed, and the sumptuary laws – the so-called ‘Code of ‘Umar’ – strictly enforced. Often times the *āmma* and *ḥarāfīsh*⁵⁰⁸ pre-empted the government and rampaged through the streets, destroying churches and attacking Christians in the streets. At times Mamlūk *amīrs* attacked the Muslim mobs in an attempt to restore order; at other times they would sit by and wait out the fury. Only later, in the mid-fourteenth century, did the state take an active role in fomenting oppression of the Copts.

As noted, this oppressive spirit was generated by the Muslim masses. But was this hostility generated simply by envy of certain Copts’ [i.e. the Scribes or Secretaries] privileged position and wealth? In fact, it was because the Copts were supposed to be a secondary, dependent population in a subject-status of humility and humiliation as stated in the Islamic religious texts and by common Islamic jurisprudence. But there had always been wealthy Copts (alongside many more poor Copts), as they had dominated much of the bureaucracy since Roman times. Had something changed? It is debatable whether or not Coptic demographics had changed dramatically at this stage, although individual *dhimmīs* converted not infrequently. The Muslim *‘ulamā* – the religious scholars of jurisprudence – were becoming increasingly influential and

⁵⁰⁸ Plural form of *ḥarfūsh*, ‘vagabond’, a term of the Mamlūk period for the organized groups of professional beggars, street entertainers, and the unemployed. They formed a guild headed by a shaykh, the *‘sultān al-ḥarāfīsh*’, and were both courted and despised by the establishment. See: W.M. Brinner, ‘Ḥarfūsh’, *EI*, 3:206.

puritanical. Indeed, the colleges of Islamic jurisprudence were growing in strength and power. Saladin, founder of the Ayyūbid dynasty and an adherent of the Ash‘āri legal school, had initiated the sponsorship of *madrasas* in Egypt and Sunni Islamic education in an effort to stamp out Fāṭimid Shī‘ism. He sponsored the establishment of law colleges for Shāfi‘ites, Ḥanafites, and Mālakites.⁵⁰⁹ But as Gary Leiser has demonstrated, the effect of these madrasas in the Egyptian context was to both strengthen Sunni Islam against non-Muslims, but also to educate an ever increasing number of rivals to the *dhimmī* dominance of the bureaucracy. The governmental machinery, therefore, became itself more polarized. As non-Muslims became less essential over the thirteenth century, pressure was more forthcoming on them to convert to Islam.⁵¹⁰ In Jerusalem, for example, the Mamlūks embarked upon a great building campaign. They built and endowed *madrasas* and convents across the city, and in a short time it gained a substantial population of Ṣūfī ascetics and Sunni jurists. In fact, whereas before they had been only politically dominant, now they were demographically dominant vis-à-vis the Christian and Jewish populations.⁵¹¹

⁵⁰⁹ Lev, ‘Symbiotic Relations’, 16.

⁵¹⁰ Leiser, Gary, ‘The Madrasa and the Islamization of the Middle East: The Case of Egypt’, *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 22 (1985), 29-47, at 36. Cf. Yehoshu‘a Frenkel, ‘Political and Social Aspects of Islamic Religious Endowments (*awqaf*): Saladin in Cairo (1169–1173) and Jerusalem (1187–1193)’, *BSOAS* 62 (1999), 1-20; Anne-Marie Eddé, *Saladin*, trans. Jane Marie Todd (Cambridge, MA, 2011), 400-4. Saladin followed the example of Nūr al-Dīn, who, in turn, established madrasas on the model of the Seljuk vizier Nizām al-Mulk (d. 1092). One hundred and twenty one madrasas were established in Damascus from 1076-1260. See: Lev, ‘Symbiotic Relations’, 8-9.

⁵¹¹ Luz, Nimrod, ‘Aspects of Islamization of Space and Society in Mamluk Jerusalem and its Hinterland’, *MSR* 6 (2002), 133-54; Peters, *Jerusalem*, 418.

Thus by the reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, over a century later, the *‘ulamā’* were well-established and very influential. The Mamlūks entrusted religious affairs to the chief qāḍī and the religious class, while to themselves they maintained a large degree of Mongol and Turkic tradition.⁵¹² The *‘ulamā’* encouraged ‘movements [that] were fostered with the express purpose of whipping up popular antagonism. Speeches, pamphlets, [and] *fatwas* were used to stir the people in the struggle against the Copts, and in particular those holding office.’⁵¹³ Summing up the views of much of the general Muslim Egyptian temperament of this period, a ‘violent rhymed sermon of the year 700’ (1300 A.D.) decried the Copts: ‘By God, they are the source of all misfortune and treason. It is because of them that strangers beset us. While you are trying to destroy the enemy’s country, they are building here in safety a country of their own. And our major secrets will leak out to the [enemy] through them.’⁵¹⁴ Whether this sermon was original, reflective of contemporary suspicions, or echoing the earlier *Testament* of Sultan Ayyūb, it still provided a very difficult setting for the Copts.

With such hostility at home, relief for the native Christians during this period was at times provided by the intervention of foreign Christian powers, who were interested in trade relations and access to the Christian Holy Places. An embassy from King James II of Aragon (1291-1327), the ‘standard-bearer, Captain and Admiral of the

⁵¹² Ayalon, David, ‘The Great Yāsa of Chingiz Khān: A Reexamination’, *Studia Islamica* 38 (1973), 107-56, at 112.

⁵¹³ Perlmann, Moshe, ‘Notes on Anti-Christian Propaganda in the Mamlūk Empire’, *BSOAS* 10 (1940-2), 843-61, at 843.

⁵¹⁴ Translated in Perlmann, ‘Notes on Anti-Christian Propaganda’, 850.

Roman Church,' is referred to in the year 1300 from a letter of Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. Apparently, James had requested open access to Egyptian markets for Aragonese merchants and also an assurance of security for pilgrims to the Holy Places. These requests were acceded to, also with mention of the recent Mamlūk victory over the Mongols from the Il-Khānate that year.⁵¹⁵ The Aragonese presence in the Eastern Mediterranean was relatively recent, but their strength in the Central Mediterranean (notably Sicily, Malta, and Tunis) lent them an increasing prestige further east.⁵¹⁶ Egypt depended upon Mediterranean trade for a significant part of her wealth and thus the sultan welcomed the Aragonese overtures. The latter's reputation also allowed James at a later date to successfully intercede on behalf of Egypt's indigenous Christians, if with limited success. Finally, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's mention of the recent victory over the Mongols would have enhanced his own reputation and that of his Mamlūk armies to the far west of Europe as well as closer to home.

The Muslim historian Ibn Faḍlallāh al-ʿUmārī (d. 1349) recorded a visit from an envoy of the 'king of the Franks' in about the year 1300 to the court of Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. The king in question was Philip IV of France. Al-Yūnīnī reports that the envoy of the Franks was sent by the emperor of Constantinople and was accompanied

⁵¹⁵ Atiya, Aziz S., *Egypt and Aragon: Embassies and Diplomatic Correspondence between 1300 and 1330 A.D.* (Leipzig 1938), 17-19 and 36, ft. 6. On Aragonese-Egyptian relations, see: Damien Coulon, *Barcelone et Le Grand Commerce d'Orient au Moyen Âge* (Madrid, 2004); Angeles Masià de Ros, *La corona de Aragón y los estados del norte de Africa: política de Jaime II y Alfonso IV en Egipto, Ifriqiya y Tremecén* (Barcelona, 1951).

⁵¹⁶ Shneidman, J. Lee, *The Rise of the Aragonese-Catalan Empire 1200-1350*, 2 Vols (New York, 1970), 2:317, 336, and 386.

by an envoy for the Armenian king of Cilicia.⁵¹⁷ Al-ʿUmarī relates that the envoy came in a very arrogant manner and demanded the return of Jerusalem and a coastal port of either Caesarea or Ascalon. His proposal was that these areas would be jointly ruled, with both Muslim and Latin governors. The king of France would also pay two hundred thousand dinars every year, as well as give numerous gifts. This proposal was welcomed by a number of high-ranking Coptic secretaries (‘who had white turbans and black secrets’), and they worked to convince the sultan to accept it. Al-ʿUmarī’s father (with al-ʿUmarī himself) approached the chief *qāḍī* and prepared to protest the Coptic secretaries’ approval, but found that the sultan himself was outraged at the proposition, condemned the envoys, and dismissed them.⁵¹⁸ Whether or not the Coptic secretaries noted faced immediate or further recriminations is not known. However, to al-ʿUmarī and his readers, this would be but one further indication of the treasonous and greedy nature of the *dhimmīs*.⁵¹⁹ It should also be noted that Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad

⁵¹⁷ Al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 2:20. He says that this event occurred in 1299. The Byzantine emperor would have been Michael IX Palaiologos (ruling jointly with his father, Andronikos II), who was married to Rita, the sister of King Hetʿum of Cilicia. Cooperation between the two is not therefore surprising.

⁵¹⁸ Ibn Faḍlallah al-ʿUmarī, *al-Taʿrīf biʾl-muṣṭalaḥ*, ed. al-Droubi, 2:82; cf. al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-aʿshā*, 8:36-38. The phrase is: العمام البيضاء والسوداء أسرار . It should be noted that al-ʿUmarī was extremely hostile to *dhimmīs*. He was so opposed to a Copt being appointed to a high position in Damascus that he was very nearly executed by the sultan for his vehemence. See: al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, 2.2:465-6; H. Lammens, ‘Correspondances Diplomatiques entre les sultans mamlouks d’Égypte et les puissances chrétiennes’, *Revue de l’Orient Chrétien* 9 (1904), 151-87, at 168-9; D.S. Rice, ‘A Miniature in an Autograph of Shihāb al-Din Ibn Faḍlallāh al-ʿUmarī’, *BSOAS* 13 (1951), 856-67, at 857.

⁵¹⁹ Another episode fomenting suspicion of Coptic secretaries occurred in 1304, when there was a heated controversy between the vizier Aibek al-Bagdadi and Ibn al-Shāyki, the governor of Djizeh, when the latter accused the Copts of siphoning off the revenue of the state. Other officials were brought into

generally had good relations with Latin rulers, such as James II of Aragon, but the latter never had the audacity to request such audacious territorial concessions, either.

In the next year, 1301, another foreign governmental official arrived in Cairo, but this time receiving a much different reception.⁵²⁰ A vizier from the Maghreb arrived in Cairo en route to Mecca on the *hajj*. Whilst near the citadel, he observed a man on horseback with many others on foot around him, abasing themselves to him. When the vizier heard that the one mounted was a Christian, he complained to the *amīrs* about this Christian dressed and mounted as a Muslim who was abusing Muslims.⁵²¹ His eloquence made quite an impression on the *amīrs*, and before long a rescript was issued by the Sultan in which the *qādīs* were enjoined to determine a policy along these lines. They elected a spokesman, who on the Thursday before Easter commanded the patriarch and bishops of the Christians and the chief judge of the Jews to gather and gave a long speech on the new obligations of the *dhimmiīs*. Amongst other conditions, Christians were required to wear blue turbans, Jews yellow turbans,

the debate. Eventually, the argument went against al-Shāyki, but enmity against the Copts was further strengthened. See: Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, 1.3:952.

⁵²⁰ Al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 2:208-10; al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, 1.3:909-15; idem., *al-Khiṭaṭ*, 4.2:1016ff. The Christians and Jews in North Africa were massacred by the Almohads in the twelfth century, having literally been given the choice of conversion to Islam or death. Such was the case, for example, at Tunis in 1159. See al-Tijānī, ‘Voyage du Scheikh et-Tidjani’, trans. Alphonse Rousseau, *Journal Asiatique*, Fifth Series, 1 (1853), 102-68 and 354-425, at 397. He is following Ibn Shaddād. The *History of the Patriarchs* – very brief for this period – simply records for the year 1303 that the ‘wearing of the blue turbans [i.e. the sumptuary laws] and other happenings’ were enforced in 1307. See: *HPEC*, 3.3:230-1.

⁵²¹ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, 1.3:909-101; Al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 2:208.

and they were not allowed to ride horses or mules. The patriarch and chief judge both declared that all their people must thenceforth follow these decrees.⁵²²

These events occurred in March and April 1301. Given that word had reached Damascus of the Mongol retreat from their failed invasion only in February 1302 and with memory of the devastation from the earlier invasion doubtless fresh in their minds, it is not so surprising that the *amīrs* (much less the ‘*ulamā*’ and ‘*amma*’) would be so susceptible to the Maghrebi vizier’s urgings.⁵²³ The high visibility of the Christian Armenians and Georgians in the attack on Damascus and the fact that the Mongols of the Il-Khānate were but recently converted to Islam doubtless left a lasting impression on the minds of the Syrian Muslims and Egyptian Mamlūks in the wake of the destruction and suffering experienced. Syrian Christians do not seem to have collaborated more than Muslims during these invasions and, indeed, seem to have suffered just as much in reality, if not perception. They were, nonetheless, considered by many Muslims to be potential fifth columnists, even more so given the perennial Mongol-Armenian-Georgian invasions.⁵²⁴ Additionally, the vizier from the Maghreb also likely related to his audience numerous accounts of Christian aggression in Spain during the *Reconquista*, stories likely not unfamiliar to them given the regularity of pilgrimage traffic en route to Mecca. These two factors likely heightened the *amīrs*’

⁵²² Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, 1.3:910.

⁵²³ The dates are those of Al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 2:207.

⁵²⁴ Al-Yūnīnī relates that the Armenians and Georgians particularly purchased a large number of Muslim slaves captured during the attack in the Aleppo area. These slaves were sent en masse to Western Europe. See: al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 2:209

anti-*dhimmī* bias at a time when they were also seeking to pacify the common people and religious class.⁵²⁵

Letters were sent across the provinces of Egypt and to Syria. Later that month, all Jews and Christians of al-Qāhira, Miṣr (that is, Babylon, or Old Cairo), and the suburbs assembled to hear the rules read out.⁵²⁶ Jews and Christians both used all of their influence and wealth in an attempt to have these measures reversed, but to no avail. Churches across Cairo were boarded up; those who worked for the government were dismissed. Any caught riding had one of his legs cut off. Under such circumstances, a large number of Christians converted to Islam, not least of all the vizier's assistant, Āmīn al-Mulk. The pronouncement was further sent all the way to Nubia in the south and the Euphrates in the northeast, ordering the enforcement of these regulations against the *dhimmīs*.⁵²⁷

The *ʿamma*, encouraged by these decisions against the *dhimmīs*, seized the main churches of the Christians...and the synagogues of the Jews and demolished them. The *amīrs* sought a legal opinion from the *qāḍīs* about the legality of this action. Although one shaykh argued for the position of the mob as correct and irreversible, the others formed a contrary opinion, stating that before a church or synagogue can be destroyed there must be proof that it was built after the advent of Islam [as it is forbidden to

⁵²⁵ Irwin, *Middle East*, 98.

⁵²⁶ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, 1.3:210-11.

⁵²⁷ Al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 2:208-9; al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, 1.3:211.

build new non-Muslim religious structures in the *Dār al-Islām* after the advent of Muḥammad].⁵²⁸

In Alexandria, when the Muslims heard of the decree of the Sultan, they demolished two churches. They also attacked the houses and shops of the Christians and Jews, sometimes taking them over and moving in. Those *dhimmī* houses higher than Muslim houses had the higher portions destroyed, while Christian shops were made to look less appealing than Muslim shops and signs were put up to specify *dhimmī* shops, all in an effort to marginalize them. In the Fayyūm (south of Cairo), two churches were destroyed.⁵²⁹ Within just a few weeks, messengers arrived in Damascus, and it was soon announced that all non-Muslims were suspended from governmental employment. The sumptuary laws were enforced, with Christians ordered to wear blue turbans, Jews yellow turbans, and Samaritans red turbans.⁵³⁰ When some Christians in Cairo and Miṣr refused to wear blue turbans, the *amīrs* proclaimed that any Christian found without a blue turban would have his house pillaged. The *‘amma* began attacking the Christians and Jews, and it was so dangerous that Christians stayed off the streets, fearing for their lives.⁵³¹ The single exception was at Karak and Shawbak, in Transjordan, where the inhabitants were exempted because the number of Christians

⁵²⁸ Al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 2:209-10; al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, 1.3:912.

⁵²⁹ Al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 2:209; al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, 1.3:912.

⁵³⁰ Al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 2:209; al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, 1.3:912.

⁵³¹ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, 1.3:914-5.

was such a large proportion of the population. Thus, they continued to wear white turbans.⁵³²

It is very telling that the Maghrebi vizier made such an immediate impression upon publicly the Mamlūk *amīrs*. Culturally, they were largely Mongol or Turkic, as, indeed, they are often referred to in the sources.⁵³³ Religiously, they were mostly but relatively recently converted to Islam, though still very much influenced by their Mongol or Turkic cultural heritage. They were trained in the tenets of the religion when they became part of a Mamlūk household, either as purchased slaves or as prisoners of war. The Mamlūks also relied upon the ‘*ulamā*’ for their religious policy, even as they depended upon them to bolster their legitimacy as defenders of Sunni

⁵³² Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, 1.3:912. Abul al-Fidā’ also notes that the majority of inhabitants in Karak and Shawbak were Christians (he writes: *غالب ساكنيه النصارى*). Abū al-Fidā’, *Géographie d’Aboulféda (Kitāb Taqwīm al-Buldān)*, eds. Joseph T. Reinaud and William MacGuckin de Slane (Paris, 1840), 247. Another apparent anomaly is recorded by the geographer al-Dimashqī (d. 1327), who wrote about 1300. He describes the six day festival for Pascha (Easter) celebrated in the city of Ḥāma, in Syria. This was a major event that attracted people from near and far (e.g. Ḥimṣ, Shayzar, and even Aleppo). People would come down to the riverbank of the Orontes where there would be dancing (men and women – al-Dimashqī is quite disapproving), as well as singers in boats. Women would wear their finest dresses and jewelry, as well as dye Easter eggs and prepare cakes and desserts, Muslims even more than Christians! A similar celebration was held at Christmas, with great Muslim participation. See: al-Dimashqī, *Nukhbat al-Dahr fī Ajā’ib al-Barr wa al-Baḥr*, ed. M.A.F. Mehren, (St. Petersburg, 1866), 280-1. For similar Muslim concelebration of Christian holy days in Shayzar, see: Eddé, ‘Chrétiens d’Alep’, 159-61.

⁵³³ In 1296, for example, Sultan Kitbughā (1294-6), himself a Mongol, welcomed the immigration of Mongol refugees (Oirat tribesmen) fleeing from the Il-Khānate and settled them along the Palestinian coastlands as a deterrent against Frankish raiders. A decade later, following the successful Mamlūk invasion of Mount Lebanon in 1305, a Turkomān tribe called the Banu ‘Assaf were settled along the coastal hills to monitor the area and to prevent any potential Frankish efforts at re-conquest. See: Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 1:508; Holt, *Age of the Crusades*, 108; Salibi, *Maronite Historians*, 73.

Islam versus ‘heretics’. It is also telling that Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, early in his second reign and very weak in his position, was so amenable to implementing the sumptuary laws and deferring to the ‘*ulamā*’, the *amīrs*, and the ‘*āmma*. Twenty years later, when he was secure in absolute authority, the sultan repulsed attempts against the Copts [and his own authority] with great effort, until he was finally forced to relent. For the *dhimmīs*, this experience was obviously physically trying and psychologically damaging, and a firm example of the militancy of popular Islamic society then in Mamlūk Egypt and Syria.

The churches not destroyed throughout Egypt remained closed for the space of one year. Envoys from Byzantium and the king of Aragon arrived seeking to intervene for the indigenous Christians and to reopen the great Mu‘allaqah Church in Miṣr (Old Cairo), the Church of Saint Michael, and, at the request of other monarchs, the Church of Saint Nicholas.⁵³⁴ In a letter dated 1 June 1303, James II of Aragon wrote to Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad entreating him to reopen Christian churches in Mamlūk lands even as he, James, would extend freedom of worship to Muslims in Aragon. Although James sought the sultan’s intercession on behalf of Aragonese prisoners and wronged merchants, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad’s reply in 1304 was devoted almost entirely to the status and treatment of Christians in Egypt. He states:

With reference to what he (the King) mentioned in regard to the churches in Egypt and that he had heard that they had been closed and that the Christians were prohibited from saying their prayers therein...as well as his statement

⁵³⁴ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, 1.3:912.

concerning the captives on whose behalf he urged acceptance of his appeal for their liberation, we have taken note of all that he had put forward in these matters. ...And owing to his (the King's) place and his proved amity with us, we have responded to his intercession in regard to the churches and decreed the re-opening of two of them in the city of Cairo, notwithstanding the fact that the subject of churches can (only) be settled in accordance with the religious law, which enacts that none (of these churches) may be left open except those which were in existence at the time of the Covenant of 'Umar. Our law and religion necessitate the closing of all those (churches) which were recently founded after the Covenant. It so happened that numerous churches were newly established; and as the King is aware that as he is bound to abide by his ecclesiastical law and the tenets of his religion, so are we bound to abide by ours....⁵³⁵

As to the captives referred to, there are records of Franciscan friars active in Cairo, in particular, as well as Tripoli and elsewhere, ministering to Latin Christians captured at the fall of Acre and on other occasions. In Cairo there was a captive French soldier named John who was then in military service to the sultan. In 1303, he offered Fr. Angelo di Spoleto and four other Friars Minor hospitality and assistance in working with the prisoners, while the sultan himself offered to help defray their travel expenses.⁵³⁶ These Franciscans had a letter of recommendation from King James of Aragon. He was long a sponsor of mendicants operating in the Levant, and often this patronage would include asking for Christian shrines and churches to be transferred to

⁵³⁵ Atiya, *Egypt and Aragon*, 20-25; cf. al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, 1.3:912-3. The two churches reopened were the Coptic church in Hāret Zuwaila and the Melkite Church of Saint Nicholas in the arbalester's quarter of Cairo. Atiya says that this rather 'confusing story' of al-Maqrīzī's must have occurred as late as 1306, not 1304, when al-Maqrīzī places it. See: Atiya, *Egypt and Aragon*, 33-34, also 22-23, ft. 2.

⁵³⁶ Golubovich, *Biblioteca*, 3:68-72.

them, obviously to the detriment of either Greeks or indigenous Christians who were then in ownership.

James II of Aragon sent another embassy to the Mamlūk court in 1305. This time he had three appeals: protection for Christians resident in Mamlūk domains; liberty of certain prisoners; and the right of Aragonese pilgrims to free access to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and safe conduct free of customs fees. The sultan responded favourably, though it should be noted that his order to the governor of Alexandria was to ensure the security of those Christians of Aragonese extraction.⁵³⁷ It was not until 8 March 1314 that James II of Aragon sent a new delegation and letter to the Mamlūk court. He apparently had been greatly discouraged over relations with Egypt following his envoy's rash seizure of the Mamlūk ambassador eight years previously.⁵³⁸ The king again made three appeals to the sultan: freedom of worship for Christians in Mamlūk domains; safe conduct for Christian pilgrims; and the liberty of Frankish prisoners. In his response in a letter of 17 March 1315, Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad again reacted favourably regarding the prisoners, but he is silent as to the other two requests.⁵³⁹ Indeed, perhaps being discouraged, James's central purpose in another embassy four years later, in 1318, seems to have been the freeing of Frankish –

⁵³⁷ Atiya, *Egypt and Aragon*, 26 and 28.

⁵³⁸ Atiya, *Egypt and Aragon*, 34.

⁵³⁹ Atiya, *Egypt and Aragon*, 35-41.

and Aragonese in particular – prisoners, with no mention of Frankish pilgrims or indigenous Christians.⁵⁴⁰

How effective were foreign rulers in easing the harsh measures enacted against the indigenous Christians of the Mamlūk Sultanate? Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was nothing if not politically savvy and realized that re-opening a few churches was expedient to his Mediterranean trade policy. It was also a rather conventional pattern to ease the sumptuary laws and restrictions on churches once the furore of the *‘amma* had cooled down. Thus, it was clearly a win-win situation for the sultan. As to the indigenous Christians and Jews, it seems that foreign influence might ease governmental restrictions to some degree – such as re-opening a few places of worship – but the effect on the *‘amma* and *‘ulamā’* would have been negative if anything. Linking indigenous Christians with Latin Christian military powers was clearly not difficult in the thinking of either contemporary Islamic scholarship or in popular Muslim sentiment. Restrictions might be eased, but suspicions were only hardened.

NINE CHRISTIAN CONFESSIONS

ARMENIANS

This period began poorly for the Armenians, as the Mamlūks did not sit back and enjoy their military success at Acre. In 1292, they attacked Hromklay, a fortified

⁵⁴⁰ Atiya, *Egypt and Aragon*, 42-3.

stronghold on the Euphrates. It was also long the seat of the Armenian Catholicos, who at this time was Ter-Step'annos (Stephen) IV Hromaets'i⁵⁴¹ (1290-3). An Armenian relieving force, dressed as Mongols, was unable to dislodge the Mamlūk lines, while a Mongol force sent by Gaikhātū arrived too late. Believing the situation hopeless, the Catholicos and his bishops dressed in their robes and with crosses and holy relics before them, went to the Sultan, al-Ashraf, and pleaded with him for mercy. In return, the Catholicos and some thirty thousand Armenian inhabitants were taken into captivity and sold as slaves in Egypt, though first paraded before the sultan on his entry into Damascus. At least one report says that King He'tum paid a ransom for the Catholicos, but, regardless, the next year, in 1293, the new Catholicos, Ter-Grigor VII Anavarzetsi (1293-1307) moved the seat to Sīs.⁵⁴² The sultan planned a new offensive in 1293, but Armenian envoys from Sīs successfully sued for peace – at the price of three significant fortresses.⁵⁴³

Catholicos Grigor was a Latin sympathizer. That is, he favoured closer union with Rome, both politically and ecclesiastically. No doubt, this position was a key reason that he had been elected, under the powerful influence of the king, He'tum. Franciscan missionaries were very active in Cilicia (as in Jerusalem and elsewhere),

⁵⁴¹ Or Hr'omklayetsi.

⁵⁴² Dashdondog, *Mongols and the Armenians*, 186-7, primarily citing the fourteenth century chronicler Nersēs Palients', who gives the sum; Mufaḏḏal ibn Abī al-Faḏā'il, *Kitāb al-nahj*, 2:551-4; Samuel of Ani, *La Chronographie de Samuel d'Ani*, in *RHC Arm.*, 1:447-68, at 463; Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 1:493; Boyle, 'Dynastic and Political History of the Il-Khāns ', 373; Dadoyan, *Armenian Catholicosate*, 112.

⁵⁴³ Mufaḏḏal ibn Abī al-Faḏā'il, *Kitāb al-nahj*, 2:557.

and He‘tum himself eventually became a monk of the Friars Minor, albeit retaining great influence upon court and ecclesial politics. Indeed, many of the elites of the Church and the aristocracy favoured greater union with the Latin West as their only hope in the face of an aggressive Mamlūk policy. The majority of the laity and lesser clergy, however, viewed the Latinizers as betraying their faith and people and destined to punishment. There was thus a great tension within Cilician society, and the country was further weakened by this loss of national unity.⁵⁴⁴

This pro-Latin policy reached its climax in 1307, when Catholicos Grigor called for an ecclesiastical council to be held in Sis. He actually died shortly before the council met, but when it convened on 17 March 1307 at the Cathedral of Sis, four archbishops, thirty-two bishops, a number of Vardapets and abbots, as well as aristocracy were all present. In the end, the council (with dissent) affirmed its union with Roman Catholic dogma. Few were satisfied, however, as Rome was sceptical of Armenian sincerity, zealous Latin sympathizers pushed for closer union, while anti-unionists protested vigorously.⁵⁴⁵

He‘tum, King Levon III, and a number of the aristocracy were massacred by the commander of the Mongol forces in Cilicia, General Būlārgī (a recent convert to Islam), a few months after the event. An unofficial anti-unionist council was held at Sis in 1309 which rejected the previous acquiescence to Roman practice, to which King Ōshīn

⁵⁴⁴ Bundy, David D., ‘The Council of Sis, 1307’, in ed. C. Laga, et al, *After Chalcedon: Studies in Theology and Church History* (Leuven, 1985), 47-56, at 51 and 55; Golubovich, *Biblioteca*, 1:355 and 360.

⁵⁴⁵ Bundy, ‘The Council of Sis’, 52-5.

(1307-22) responded⁵⁴⁶ by imprisoning the Vardapets, killing many of the laity and some of the clergy, and exiling the monks to Cyprus.⁵⁴⁷ Opposition persisted despite these efforts. In 1311, for example, the Catholicos was condemned for having ‘renounced the rules and traditions of our holy fathers and follow[ing] the Franks and Greeks’.⁵⁴⁸ In Jerusalem, meanwhile, the Armenian bishop, Sarkis, although only nominally subject to the Catholicos in Sīs, in 1311 formally rejected the pro-Latin doctrine enumerated by the earlier council and was himself elected as Armenian Catholicos of Jerusalem.⁵⁴⁹ Faced with this opposition, King Ōshīn felt compelled to convene another pro-unionist council in 1316, at Adana.⁵⁵⁰ Thus, the Armenians were further divided during this great period of desperation, of repeated invasions throughout 1292-1318, failure on the part of their supposed Latin and Mongol allies, and the dispersion of Armenian laity and clergy throughout Syria, Egypt, Cyprus, and Greater Armenia.

⁵⁴⁶ With the agreement of the Catholicos, Konstandin III Kesaratsi (1307-22).

⁵⁴⁷ Samuel of Ani, *La Chronographie*, 466-7; Sanjian, *Colophons*, 54. On the assassination, see: Angus Stewart, ‘The Assassination of King Het‘um II: The Conversion of the Ilkhans and the Armenians’, *JRAS*, Third Series, 15 (2005), 45-61; cf. Stewart, *Armenian Kingdom and the Mamluks*, 171-80.

⁵⁴⁸ Pawlos, ‘Gospel’, trans. Sanjian, *Colophons*, 56.

⁵⁴⁹ Dadoyan, *Armenian Catholicosate*, 44-5; Bundy, ‘The Council of Sīs’, 56.

⁵⁵⁰ Bundy, ‘The Council of Sīs’, 56.

ASSYRIAN CHURCH OF THE EAST

In 1295 and 1296, as described earlier, many churches and monasteries were looted and destroyed throughout Mesopotamia and Iran. The Catholicos, Mar Yahballāhā, was even captured and tortured in an effort to make him either convert to Islam or, when this attempt was obviously failing, to reveal (fictitious) hidden treasure. Eventually, his disciples were able to borrow a sum of money and buy off his oppressors, but they continued their campaign of terror. During this time, the King of Cilicia, Het'um II, arrived in the area and through the means of his soldiers and of bribes was able to protect at least one church, and in this one Catholicos Mar Yahballāhā took refuge.⁵⁵¹

When Ghāzān Khān was made aware of the situation and persecution of Mar Yahballāhā and the Christians, he issued a royal decree (a *pukdānā*, in 1296) establishing the Catholicos in his position and guaranteeing the Christians in their rights.⁵⁵² Soon after, however, a Muslim came to Marāghā (the seat of the Catholicos) and pronounced that a royal edict had been issued that anyone who did not abandon Christianity would be killed. The local Muslim populace rose up and plundered the Christians of city. When the governor and *amīrs* realized that this was a fictitious edict, they arrested the man and were going to publicly punish him, but just then the Arab

⁵⁵¹ *The Monks of Kūblāi Khān*, 213-14. See also: Mār 'Abdīshō, Note in Dublin (Chester Beatty) MSS 704 (ca. 1297), in 'A List of East Syrian Manuscript Colophons and Inscriptions', in Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 390, where it says that the Amīr Naurūz struck against the Christians in 1297, destroying many churches and monasteries and even torturing Catholicos Yahballāhā.

⁵⁵² *Monks of Kūblāi Khān*, 221-25.

populace rioted, attacked the *amīrs*, killed many Christians and looted the churches and monasteries once again. Before long, Ghāzān Khān came through the area and sought to correct the situation when he heard of it, but with little effect.⁵⁵³

Under Ōljeitū Khān, the Christians fared even worse. He used to frequently visit the Catholicos with his Christian mother when he was a child. Her influence waned in time, however, and when he became a Muslim many of his advisors encouraged him to reduce or confiscate the Christian churches. He instituted the *jizya* once again, which the Catholicos failed to have repealed in 1306, though it was repealed after an enjoyable sojourn at an Assyrian monastery.⁵⁵⁴ In 1310, a massacre occurred at Arbīl of Christian irregular cavalry by an armed and militant Muslim mob. Many Christian civilians were killed, as well. During the siege of the Christians of Arbīl by the Muslims in 1297, Ghāzān Khān had agreed that they should retain possession of it, as they had been driven from every other city and most of their great churches razed to the ground. But from this year, plans were laid by the Arabs to seize the citadel. Weapons and money for bribes were brought in great quantities. Amīrs sympathetic to the aims of the Muslims fed false information to the Il-Khān, Ōljeitū, against the Christians of Arbīl. Everything came to a head in 1310. The Christians in the citadel were accused of being rebels. The Catholicos was imprisoned on false charges. Christians living in the city of Arbīl were killed on sight. Some had even sought refuge with Muslim neighbours, but informants found them and they were captured. On several occasions,

⁵⁵³ *Monks of Kūblāi Khān*, 226-30.

⁵⁵⁴ *Monks of Kūblāi Khān*, 256-60.

Christians living in the citadel ('Mountaineers' –soldiers – and their wives and children) were led down from the citadel under promises of safe conduct in the name of the Il-Khān, but they were massacred either immediately, or allowed to go to a nearby village, and then massacred, some women and children taken as slaves or concubines. Eventually, all the Christians were killed and the citadel captured.⁵⁵⁵ The only military force of Assyrian Christians in the Il-Khānate was thus destroyed.

In 1310, following the massacre in Arbīl and his wrongful imprisonment, the Catholicos met with the Il-Khān Ōljeitū, but the latter refused to discuss the matter and even had the *jizya* reimposed. Thereafter Mar Yahballāhā quit himself of the court, saying, 'I am wearied (or disgusted) with the service of the Mongols.' Certain *amīrs* and nobles continued to show him honour, and the next seven years were relatively peaceful until his death in 1317.⁵⁵⁶

Whereas at the end of the ninth century there had been fifty-four dioceses within the Church of the East, by 1318 there were only four remaining.⁵⁵⁷ Ironically, the Catholicos Mar Yahballāhā was elected to head the Church of the East due to his cultural kinship with the Mongol rulers. Even though he was not highly educated and spoke neither Syriac nor Arabic, he was chosen perhaps for his own Christian virtues, but certainly also with the thought that this would be pleasing to the Mongol rulers. Sadly, perhaps in some part due to Mar Yahballāhā's limitations (but also certainly

⁵⁵⁵ *Monks of Kūblāi Khān*, 260-302.

⁵⁵⁶ *Monks of Kūblāi Khān*, 303-5.

⁵⁵⁷ Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 17.

there was much beyond his control), the Church of the East suffered a drastic retraction during his lengthy tenure. Ghāzān and Ōljeitū converted to Islam at least in some part to secure their own position amongst an increasingly Muslim-dominant Mongol military population. Whereas their predecessors Gaikhātū and Bāidū had at best paid lip-service to Islam, Ghāzān and Ōljeitū were forced to prove their devotion to their new faith. Initially instigated by the Amīr Naurūz, a harsh interpretation of *shari'a* was enforced which opened the floodgate for Muslim retaliation against Christians, Jews, Buddhists, and pagans who had benefited so much from the traditional Mongol policy of religious tolerance. Thus, while these two rulers were generally pragmatic in their treatment of non-Muslims vis-à-vis their own security (and wealth), the real damage was in the open-ended opportunity given to the Muslim *'amma* to plunder and massacre Christians at will.

COPTS

This period of 1292-1317 was particularly difficult on the Copts, as has been discussed above. The instigator, of course, was the outraged vizier who came not from the Il-Khānate to the East, but rather from the Maghreb. Although persecutions occurred and churches were closed and even destroyed, internally the Coptic Church continued to function. When the Coptic Pope John VII reposed in 1293, he was succeeded by the seventy-ninth patriarch, Theodosius II (1294-1300), known as 'Abd al-Masīh, son of Zūabel the Frank or perhaps Abū Makīn al-'Afāranjī. Why he was

called a Frank is not certain, but perhaps he or a recent ancestor were originally from Latin Syria.⁵⁵⁸ Not much is known about him, though he did consecrate the holy chrism in 1299 at the Church of Saint Mercurius in Old Cairo ('Miṣr').⁵⁵⁹ It seems that he was not very popular, as many Copts continued to commemorate the name of his predecessor rather than his, while he was also known as a 'lover of taking bribes'.⁵⁶⁰

Theodosius' successor, the eightieth Coptic pope, was John VIII, Ben Is'ak, al-Qaddis (1300-20), who was consecrated like his predecessor by the senior cleric of Lower Egypt, Bishop Ḥasaballāh. Pope John also consecrated the holy chrism, though this time at the Monastery of Saint Macarius in the desert. There were eighteen bishops present.⁵⁶¹ He relocated the patriarchal residence from the Church of al-Mu'allaqah in Babylon to Ḥārit Zuwaylah, a highly concentrated Coptic area of Cairo. There was a period of extended persecution during his patriarchate. All the churches throughout Egypt were closed, except the four main monasteries of the Wādi Natrūn. Amongst other difficulties, Copts were forced to wear blue turbans, could ride only on

⁵⁵⁸ Renaudot, Eusebius, *Historia Patriarcharum Alexandrinorum Jacobitarum* (Paris, 1713), 601-2; Mufaḍḍal ibn Abī al-Faḍā'il, *Kitāb al-nahj*, 2:586.

⁵⁵⁹ Lantschoot, A. Van, 'Le MS. Vatican Copte 44 et le livre du chrême (ms. Paris arabe 100)', *Le Muséon* 45 (1932), 181-234, at 214-5 and 224-9, who lists the twelve bishops present. Cf. Otto F.A. Meinardus, 'About the Coction and Consecration of the Holy Myron in the Coptic Church', *Coptic Church Review* 12 (1991), 78-86.

⁵⁶⁰ *HPEC*, 3.3:230-1; White, *Monasteries of the Wādi 'n Natrūn*, Part 2, 394.

⁵⁶¹ Lantschoot, 'Le MS. Vatican Copte 44', 229-30.

mules, and then side-saddle. This latest persecution lasted for nearly two years, until the intervention of the Byzantine ambassador in 1302.⁵⁶²

The Byzantine emperor both considered himself to be and indeed was accepted as protector of the Melkite Christians in the *Dār al-Islām*. As such, it is not surprising that he interceded for the Melkites in Egypt during such a tumultuous period. But he also sought relief for the Copts, and Greek artisans even assisted in the rehabilitation of the al-Mu‘allaqah Church. It has previously been described how Byzantine artistic concepts found their way into Coptic iconography in the thirteenth century. Although there may have been other reasons for this assistance, it is most likely that this was an instance of power politics versus the Latin powers’ determination to spread their influence in Mamlūk lands. Franciscans were present in Cairo, while the Mamlūk sultan was petitioned on numerous occasions to advance both Franciscan and Dominican interests in Jerusalem and elsewhere.⁵⁶³ Writing later in the fourteenth century, the pilgrim Felix Fabri records that, in 1300, one King Rupert⁵⁶⁴ of Apulia, Calabria, Sicily, and Jerusalem, took up the pilgrim’s staff and journeyed to Palestine and Egypt, where he begged the sultan for the church of Mount Sion, the Virgin’s Chapel in the Holy Sepulchre, the tomb of Saint Mary in Jehoshaphat, and the cave of

⁵⁶² HPEC, 3.2:231; White, *Monasteries of the Wādi ʿn Natrūn*, Part 2, 394; Myriam Wissa, ‘Ḥārit Zuwaylah’, *CE*, 4:1207-9; Khalil Samir, ‘Ḥasaballāh’, *CE*, 4:1209-10; Subhi Y. Labib, ‘John VIII’, *CE*, 4:1343-4; Otto Meinardus, *The Copts in Jerusalem* (Cairo, 1960), 81.

⁵⁶³ Hunt, Lucy-Anne, ‘The al-Mu‘allaqah Doors Reconstructed: An Early Fourteenth-Century Sanctuary Screen from Old Cairo’, *Gesta* 28 (1989), 61-77, at 63 and 73-4.

⁵⁶⁴ Fabri is probably meaning Robert of Anjou, ‘the Wise’, King of Naples (1277-1343), who also claimed the title of king of Jerusalem.

Nativity in Bethlehem. Felix Fabri reported that the king paid the sultan thirty-two thousand ducats for this privilege.⁵⁶⁵ It was against this Latin determination as much as a protective stance for the indigenous Christians that the Byzantines petitioned.

In 1303, the Amīr Bibars convinced the Sultan to abolish the annual Coptic Festival of the Martyr. This was an ancient festival (likely pharaonic in its ultimate origins) in which a finger-relic of Saint Mark is dipped in the Nile to bless its waters for harvest. The excuse for suppressing the festival was that large quantities of wine were sold and other ‘vice’. Many Muslims also likely participated in these festivities and thus they could be seen as detrimental to the Muslim community. Nonetheless, a Coptic scribe of an *amīr* managed to have the festival reinstated using the argument that the farmers used the wine income to pay their taxes to the government; if there was no festival, then there would be a significant drop in tax revenue.⁵⁶⁶ This festival would be revisited by the sultan later during his third reign.

Whereas the previous example was of obstruction at a higher level, the following episode again demonstrates the power of the lower class Muslims, the *‘amma*. This event occurred at the very end of this period, in 1318, when the Church of Saint Barbara in the Ḥārat al-Rūm district of Cairo was destroyed. Up to that date, there

⁵⁶⁵ Felix Fabri, *The Book of the Wanderings of Felix Fabri*, trans. A. Stewart, Vol. 2, Part 2, PPTS 10 (London, 1897), 380. In Jerusalem, the Coptic Archbishop from 1271-1306 was Buṭrus I, who was actually resident in Damascus at the Church of the Virgin Mary. He was succeeded by Mikhā‘īl I (1310-24). See: Basilios IV, ‘Jerusalem, Coptic See of’, *CE*, 4:1324-9. Buṭrus was joined by the historian al-Makīn ibn al-‘Amīd.

⁵⁶⁶ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, 1.3:941-2.

were three Coptic churches in Cairo. Al-Maqrīzī relates that the Christians petitioned Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad for permission to rebuild the ruined portion of the church. Approval being granted, they proceeded to rebuild the church better than before. Some Muslims were angered by this and accused them to the sultan of erecting a completely new building next to the church. According to the dictates of the so-called Code of ‘Umar, of course, technically no churches or synagogues built after the Muslim Conquest were permitted. Therefore, if any were found, they were necessarily (if theoretically) destroyed or converted into mosques. The sultan ordered the new building destroyed, but when his official arrived on the scene, he found that the Muslim ‘*amma* had taken matters into its own hands and destroyed the entire site – historical church, included – and converted it into a (make-shift) mosque. The *amīrs* did not interfere from fear of a massive riot. The Copts complained to a high-ranking official who was a Coptic convert to Islam and still sympathetic to them. At the latter’s urging, the sultan ordered the mosque torn down and forbade anything to be built.⁵⁶⁷

The destruction of Saint Barbara’s is an example of a key problem faced by Christians across the *Dār al-Islām*. Namely, there were only so many churches, and if some were destroyed here and there, it required large sums of money to rebuild them and to bribe the proper officials – even if they were allowed to be rebuilt at all. Additionally, there were not as many potential wealthy Christian patrons as there once had been. Thanks to the influence of foreign powers, a few churches were reopened,

⁵⁶⁷ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, 4.2:1062.

but these were still but a small percentage. In this instance, when the government permitted the church to be rebuilt, it was destroyed with indemnity by the *‘amma*. Thus, there were fewer churches as time passed, and the reality of the weakness of governmental connections and authority to restrict the antagonism displayed by those anti-Christian forces in society became baldly evident, further weakening Christian morale.

NUBIANS

In 1304, the king of Makuria, Aīāy (dates uncertain), arrived in Cairo bearing rich gifts and seeking military aid from the Mamlūk sultan. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad readily agreed and a Mamlūk army accompanied Aīāy back to Nubia. The reason for this request and the ultimate result of the campaign is not recorded, but as the army returned in 1306 after having suffered many hardships and a lack of provisions suggests that they were not ultimately successful against the Nubian authorities on this occasion.⁵⁶⁸

A decade later, in 1315, the Nubian king of Makuria – now one Kerenbes (1311-6) – had lost favour with al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, who sought to replace him with a nephew of the Makurian king named ‘Abdallāh Barshanbu (ca. 1316-7), who was a convert to Islam and had long been resident at the sultan’s court. Sultan al-Nāṣir

⁵⁶⁸ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, 2.1:7-8; Welsby, *Medieval Kingdoms*, 246 and 260.

Muḥammad thus sent an army along with his chosen contender, eventually capturing Kerenbes and his brother, Abram. Abdallah Barshanbu was duly installed as king and immediately established Islam as the state religion. Due to his cruel manner and rapid changes of the laws of the state, however, the alienated populace soon rose up under another royal nephew, Kanz al-Dawla (1317-23), also a Muslim, who was eventually crowned king. Although Makuria was not rapidly Islamized at this time, it is from this period that we have the first physical evidence for a mosque in the capital city of Old Dongola. An Arabic inscription in the audience room of the Makurian kingdom's throne hall reads: 'This blessed door for religion (i.e. Islam) was opened by the hands of Sayf al-Dīn 'Abdullāhi al-Nāṣir in the year 717 on the fifteenth of the month of Rabijan the first' (1 June 1317). Ibn Khaldūn reports that it was about this time that Nubia stopped paying the *jizya* tax because they had embraced Islam.⁵⁶⁹

The northern Nubian kingdom of Makuria rapidly collapsed both as an independent kingdom and as a bastion of Christianity in the wake of Mamlūk hostility and endless incursions by Muslim Bedouin and Berber tribes. Ibn Khaldūn records that it was at this time that the 'clans of the Juhayna Arabs spread over [Nubia], settled there, occupied the country and made it a place of pillage and disorder.'⁵⁷⁰ These forces viewed Makuria as little more than a source of slaves and wealth. As the kingdom was reduced, patronage of the Church was greatly reduced. Naturally, once

⁵⁶⁹ Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-ʿIbar wa-dīwān al-mubtadāʾ waʾl-khabar*, 7 Vols. (Cairo, 1867), 5:921-3, cited in Giovanni Vantini, *Oriental Sources Concerning Nubia* (Heidelberg and Warsaw, 1975), 562; Holt, *Age of the Crusades*, 134-6.

⁵⁷⁰ Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-ʿIbar*, 921-3, trans. Vantini, *Oriental Sources*, 562.

the king himself was a Muslim, Christians suffered even more. Although Christianity continued in Nubia as a whole at least into the late fifteenth century, the Christian population was ever more isolated. Pilgrimage traffic to Jerusalem became non-existent, while the Nubian monastic presence in Egypt as well as Palestine lessened. Latin travel accounts make this difficult to determine as they often conflate Nubians and Ethiopians (Abyssinians), and, indeed, sometimes Indians. Nubian monks might well have continued in the Wādi Natrūn and especially at the Monastery of Saint Anthony in the Eastern Desert, perhaps in some ways even as refugees.

ETHIOPIANS

As Nubian influence waned in the face of Mamlūk intrigue and internal feuding, Ethiopian influence conversely rose in importance vis-à-vis relations with Egypt (both Christian and Muslim). Following the death of the Negus Yagba-Şiyon in 1294, his sons struggled for power until Weden Arʿad (1299-1314) established himself in 1299. Not very much is known about this period, and it seems to largely have been uneventful in relation to Egypt and Palestine. An episode recorded by the Syrian Muslim chronicler al-Yūnīnī (d. 1326) does provide a good example of the power of this Christian king of *al-Ḥabash*. During a Muslim uprising in 1299 (by a shaykh claiming to be a prophet), the negus was reportedly able to muster an army of some four hundred thousand soldiers, though he ultimately undermined the rebels via

intrigue and diplomacy.⁵⁷¹ Whether this figure is exaggerated or not, it is an example of the reputation of the Ethiopian Christians amongst Mamlūks as well as Europeans. Furthering this perception, the Negus also sent envoys to meet Pope Clement V (1305-14) in Avignon in ca. 1310 and also interestingly James of Aragon, perhaps seeking a military alliance against Egypt.⁵⁷²

GEORGIANS

Following the death of the Il-Khān Ghāzān in 1304, the Mongol grip over Georgia seems to have weakened, thus allowing for an independent Georgian approach to the Mamlūk court. As such, an embassy from the Georgian king (along with Byzantine envoys) arrived in 1305 to negotiate the return of the Monastery of the Holy Cross to the Georgians. This was finally agreed and this treaty with Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad would form the basis of the Mamlūk-Georgian relationship for the next two centuries. Part of the treaty stipulated that the Georgians would come to the aid of the Mamlūk sultan and be obedient, thus reflecting Georgia's weak position at this time vis-à-vis the Mamlūk Sultanate's vastly superior position.⁵⁷³ Nonetheless, as a country

⁵⁷¹ Al-Yūnīnī, *Early Mamluk Syrian Historiography: Al-Yūnīnī's Dhayl Mir'āt al-zamān*, 2 Vols., ed. and trans. Li Guo, (Leiden, 1998), 2:218-9.

⁵⁷² Beckingham, C.F., 'An Ethiopian Embassy to Europe, c. 1310', *Journal of Semitic Studies* 14 (1989), 337-46, reprint eds. Beckingham and Hamilton, *Prester John, the Mongols, and the Ten Lost Tribes*, 197-206; Atiya, *History of Eastern Christianity*, 149.

⁵⁷³ Abu-Manneh, Butrus, 'The Georgians in Jerusalem in the Mamlūk Period', in eds. A. Cohen and G. Baer, *Egypt and Palestine: a Millennium of Association (868-1948)* (Jerusalem, 1984), 102-112, at 103.

with a very strong monastic tradition, it was very important to the Georgians to re-establish their traditional presence at the Monastery of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem. To the local Muslim *'ulamā*, however, returning a place of worship to non-Muslim control after it had already been confiscated and transformed into a mosque was anathema, and they firmly resented this act. It was, however, in the greater interest of the Mamlūk Empire, and the Sultan, according to *Shari'a* law, was protector of the interests of the *dhimmi*s in his lands.⁵⁷⁴ A few years later, in 1308, the Georgians also gained the chapel at Golgotha.⁵⁷⁵

The murder or execution of Christians in the Near East was certainly not unheard of in Egypt and Syria during the Baḥrī Mamlūk period. Deliberately seeking martyrdom at the hands of Muslims, however, was generally more common with ninth century Spanish Christians, Copts in the early Ayyūbid and Circassian Mamlūk period, and amongst Greeks in the Ottoman period. So it is somewhat unique that a Georgian martyrdom took place on 19 October 1314, when the monk Nicolas Dvali was executed in Damascus. He was first a monk in Georgia and went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Once there, he settled in the Monastery of the Holy Cross, now restored to Georgian control. In his fervour to imitate the *Passion* of Christ, he went before the *Qāḍī* of Jerusalem and spoke insultingly of Islam. Although he was immediately

Al-Maqrīzī says it was in 1306 that ambassadors arrived from Constantinople and from Georgia (al-Kurdj) seeking to recover the Church of the Holy Cross (الكنيسة المصلبة) in Jerusalem. See: al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, 2.1:17.

⁵⁷⁴ Abu-Manneh, 'Georgians in Jerusalem', 105.

⁵⁷⁵ Peradze, 'Account of the Georgian Monks', 188.

tortured, the monks from Holy Cross were able to gain his release and sent him to Cyprus. ‘Athirst for martyrdom’...Nicolas returned to Jerusalem and took counsel of an Elder who suggested that he go to Damascus and seek martyrdom there. Upon his arrival, he entered a mosque, proclaimed his faith while accusing Islam of deception. He was arrested and tortured, and though the Christians of Damascus (most likely Melkites as they were, like the Georgians, Chalcedonian) succeeded in freeing him, he reiterated his confession of faith and was again arrested. He was tortured and taken before the local amīr, who attempted to entice him to convert to Islam. Upon his refusal, he was beheaded on 19 October 1314, uttering (according to the hagiography) these words: “Glory to Thee, O Christ our God, who hast made me worthy to die for Thee!”⁵⁷⁶

Taking into account that this *vita* in its full form is hagiographical, we must still consider that most other near-contemporary self-willed martyrdoms were by those who had converted to Islam (from fear, enticement, or both) and then repented of their deed. Most of these latter were also Copts, notably in the early thirteenth and the later fourteenth centuries.⁵⁷⁷ There were also Latin mendicants in North Africa who knew their fate even as they preached the Christian Gospel. His motivation, of course, can be linked to the early Christian desire to participate in the suffering of Christ, which was

⁵⁷⁶ Machitadze, Zakaria, *Lives of the Georgian Saints*, trans. David and Lauren E. Ninoshvili, ed. Lado Mirianashvili and the St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood (Platina, CA, 2006), 99-101.

⁵⁷⁷ John of Phanijōit, for example, was martyred in the early thirteenth century, while forty-nine Copts (and others) repented of their apostasy in the 1380s, which had followed a significant persecution. See: Zaborowski, *Coptic Martyrdom of John of Phanijōit*, and el-Leithy, ‘Coptic Culture and Conversion’, 101-39.

also a popular theme in later mediaeval Latin Christianity. Beyond the story of Nicholas Dvali itself, other details appear of particular interest. For example, the seemingly ease of travel from Georgia to Jerusalem, and the connections with Cyprus and Damascus is evident. The influence of Georgian monks in Jerusalem in that they were able to free Dvali is telling, and it is also quite interesting that a spiritual elder in Jerusalem – obviously at odds with senior monks at the Monastery of the Holy Cross – advocated martyrdom at all, and that in Damascus. In Damascus, where there was no known Georgian community (unless merchants), it is quite interesting that the indigenous Christians (again, most likely Melkites) would make the attempt to free Dvali – and that they were successful, despite their repeated setbacks as a community in the previous fifty years.

MARONITES

The ninety-sixth Maronite Patriarch, Simeon, succeeded Jeremiah in 1297 and reigned for forty-two years. Early in Simeon's tenure, and following a victory by the Lebanese hill tribes in 1292, a second Mamlūk military expedition was launched in 1300 against the inhabitants of Mount Lebanon (the Kisrawan district, in particular). This attack doubtlessly involved the greater Mamlūk campaign against people considered Muslim heretics, but was also an attempt to crush the independence of the

Druze in their mountain strongholds and secure a strategic area.⁵⁷⁸ Although this was primarily focused against heterodox Muslims – Nuṣayrīs, likely Druzes, and others – the Maronites were unlikely to have escaped attention. Indeed, Druze and Maronite archers had harassed Mamlūk soldiers earlier in 1300 as they retreated from the advancing Mongol forces. In the end, the mountain tribes were forced to sue for peace, relinquishing their booty from 1292 as well as paying a tribute of one hundred thousand dirhams.⁵⁷⁹

A few years later, however, in 1304-5, a revolt broke out against the Mamlūk authorities. The Sunni Ḥanbalite jurist Ibn Taymiya had himself travelled through the area seeking to convert the heterodox Muslims, but, finding no success, encouraged military intervention and wrote letters throughout Egypt and Syria for this purpose. At the end of 1305, the Mamlūk forces invaded and secured the area by January 1306.⁵⁸⁰ According to the contemporary Tāwadūros, Bishop of Ḥamāh, ‘Not a monastery,

⁵⁷⁸ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, 1.3:902-3. See Abu-Izzeddin, *Druzes*, 159, reliant primarily on Ṣāliḥ b. Yaḥyā, who argues that there were no Maronites in Kisrawān until the sixteenth century and also that the Druze tribesmen under Nāṣir al-Dīn Ḥusayn fought for the Mamlūks in 1305 against the Kisrawānis. Ahmad Hoteit agrees that the Maronites – rather than being attacked in the Kisrawāni campaigns – took advantage of its depopulation and in subsequent centuries expanded into this territory. He also states that a result of these campaigns was the conversion of some Nuṣayrīs to Sunni Islam and the recruitment of some Druzes into the regional armies. See: Ahmad Hoteit, ‘Les Expéditions Mamloukes de Kasrawān: Critique de la lettre d’Ibn Taimiya au sultan an-Nāṣir Muhammad bin Qalāwūn’, *Aram* 9-10 (1997-8), 77-84, at 83-4.

⁵⁷⁹ Salibi, ‘The Maronites of Lebanon’, 297-9; Hayton, *Fleur des Histoires*, 195; al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, 1.3:902-3.

⁵⁸⁰ Salibi, ‘Maronites of Lebanon’, 299-301.

church, or tower was left standing’, except for the church of Saint Marcellus.⁵⁸¹ The villages were given as fiefs (or *iqṭāʿ*) to Mamlūk *amīrs* from Damascus, and a Turkomān tribe called the Banu ‘Assaf was settled along the coastal hills to monitor the area and to prevent any potential Frankish efforts at reconquest. It was, as Kamal Salibi has noted, ‘the most serious calamity to befall Maronite Lebanon in the later Middle Ages.’⁵⁸²

The later Maronite Franciscan polemicist Ibn al-Qilāʿī (d.1516) attributed this decision ‘to lay siege in Mount Lebanon’ to heresy.⁵⁸³ As previously noted, many Maronites (particularly those to the east of Jubayl) were opposed to union with Rome. Repressive Mamlūk policies in Syria and Cilicia led many non-Chalcedonian Christians – particularly Syrian Orthodox – to settle in the mountainous areas of Lebanon, particularly in the area of Bsharrī, which had long harboured rebellious tendencies towards the Uniate Maronite patriarchs. Despite the recent Mamlūk attacks, the Lebanese mountains were viewed as one of the safest areas for Christians within *Bilād al-Shām*.⁵⁸⁴ Roman Catholic and Uniate influence was weak in this area, and with the

⁵⁸¹ Tāwadūros (Theodoros) of Hama, *Nakbat Kisrawān wa’Dayr Mār Shallīṭā Maqbīs bi Jusṭā (1194-1307)*, ed. Būlus Qara’lī, *Ḥurūb al-muqaddamīn, 1075-1450* (Bayt Shabāb, Lebanon, 1937), 85-8, at 88. He recorded: ولم خلس في كسروان لا دير ولا كنيسة ولا برج بلا خراب الا كنيسة القديس مار شليطل.

⁵⁸² Salibi, *Maronite Historians*, 73.

⁵⁸³ Ibn al-Qilāʿī, *Madiḥa ‘alā Jabal Lubnān*, ed. Būlus Qara’lī, *Ḥurūb al-muqaddamīn, 1075-1450* (Bayt Shabāb, Lebanon, 1937), 22.

⁵⁸⁴ Tāwadūros of Hama, *Nakbat Kisrawān*, 88; Elias Kattar, ‘Géographie de la Population et Relations entre les Groupes du Liban à l’Époque des Mamlouks’, *Aram* 9 (1997), 63-76 at 73.

surge in the Syrian Orthodox population, many Maronites converted to the Syrian Orthodox faith. This trend was only reversed in 1488.⁵⁸⁵

MELKITES

In the Melkite Patriarchate of Antioch, in 1287, there had been a split election of the new patriarch. In Syria, the bishops met in Tripoli and elected Cyril of Tyre, who was enthroned as Cyril II (or III) on 29 June 1287 (1287-1308). In Cilicia, however, the Melkite bishops elected Metropolitan Dionysios of Pompeiopolis (1287-1316)⁵⁸⁶. Cyril sought to legitimise his election by traveling to Constantinople to be recognised by the Byzantine Emperor, Michael VIII.⁵⁸⁷ Upon his arrival, however, he did not

⁵⁸⁵ Salibi, 'Maronite Church', 102-3.

⁵⁸⁶ Not recognized in Constantinople until 1309.

⁵⁸⁷ Pachymeres, *Relations Historiques*, 3:141; Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos, 'Ecclesiasticae Historiae Tomos XIV', in *Patrologia Graeca*, ed. J.-P. Migne, Vol. 146 (Paris, 1865), 1055-1274, at 1197; Vitalien Laurent, 'Le Patriarche d'Antioche Cyrille II', *Analecta Bollandiana*, Vol. 68 (Brussels, 1950), 312; Joseph Nasrallah, *Chronologie des Patriarches Melchites d'Antioche de 1250 a 1500* (Jerusalem, 1968), 8. According to Constantius, Dionysios of Pompeiopolis was Patriarch of Antioch from 1293-1308, followed by Mark from 1308-42. He also confusingly says that Dionysios 'presided over the church for twenty-five years', beginning in 1293, but then states that Mark is appointed his successor in 1308. Papadopoulos has Arsenios of Tyre as a rival 1285-90, and thence Cyril III alone until 1308, whence Dionysios I ruled 1309-16 and Cyril IV followed for 1316 only. Grumel lists Arsenios as rival patriarch from 1284-6, Cyril III from 29 June 1287-1308, Dionysios I or II as titular patriarch from 1309-16, though not recognized by Constantinople, then Cyril IV of unknown dates. See: Constantius, *Memoirs of the Patriarchs of Antioch*, 177; Chrysostomos A. Papadopoulos, 'Ιστορία τῆς Εκκλησίας Ἀντιοχείας' (Alexandria, 1951), 960-2; Grumel, *Chronologie*, 448. For an overview of the relationship between the patriarchs of Antioch and Constantinople during the Bahri Mamlūk period, see: Klaus-Peter Todt, 'Das ökumenische Patriarchat von Konstantinopel und die griechisch-orthodoxen (melkitischen) Patriarchate unter muslimischer Herrschaft', *Historicum* 95 (2007), 54-61, at 56-9.

receive the welcome he was expecting, as he was not received by the emperor and his status as patriarch not recognized by the hostile Patriarch of Constantinople, Athanasios (1289-93; 1303-9) by placing his name on the diptychs. He was, however, initially given residence in the Monastery of the Panaghia Hodegetria. Cyril was accused of liturgically communicating with 'heretical' Armenians and he was temporarily expelled.⁵⁸⁸ In 1296, however, the new Patriarch of Constantinople, John XII Cosmos (1294-1303), replaced Athanasios and recognized the legitimacy of Patriarch Cyril, placing his name on the diptychs. The latter was given a monastery in the capital, where he seems to have resided, in exile from his See, until his death in 1308.⁵⁸⁹

Meanwhile, his competitor, Dionysios I of Pompeiopolis, was anti-patriarch from 1287-1308, and patriarch from 1309-15. He seems to have kept a low profile till the death of Cyril, after which he sought to be reconciled by the patriarch of Constantinople. In 1310, the latter, Niphon I, together with the emperor, invited Dionysios to Constantinople. There he met Patriarch Athanasios III of Jerusalem (1303-22) and Nicodemos of Serbia, the hegumen of Chilandar on Mount Athos. In a liturgical text of the Grand Lavra in Mount Athos, Patriarch Dionysios is listed

⁵⁸⁸ Todt, Klaus-Peter, 'Zwischen Kaiser und ökumenischem Patriarchen: Die Rolle der griechisch-orthodoxen Patriarchen von Antiocheia in den politischen und kirchlichen Auseinandersetzungen des 11.-13. Jh. in Byzanz', in eds. Michael Grünbart et al, *Zwei Sonnen am Goldenen Horn? Kaiserliche und patriarchale Macht im byzantinischen Mittelalter* (Münster, 2011), 137-76, at 169.

⁵⁸⁹ Laurent, 'Cyrille II', 314-5; Nasrallah, *Chronologie des Patriarches Melchites*, 9.

alongside Patriarchs John Glykys XIII of Constantinople, Gregorios II of Alexandria, and Athanasios of Jerusalem.⁵⁹⁰

In Alexandria, the patriarchs were Athanasios II (1276-1316) and Gregorios II (1316-54).⁵⁹¹ Athanasios spent the vast majority of his tenure in Constantinople, and was a dominant figure in ecclesiastical politics. The patriarch of Constantinople, also called Athanasios, was extremely hostile towards him and considered him a meddler. In a letter to the emperor (before 1305), he demanded that both Athanasios and Cyril, the Patriarch of Antioch, be expelled from Constantinople. The former was forced to depart in 1305, when he left for Crete to live in a *metochion* of Saint Katherine's Monastery, as he had been a Siniante monk before becoming patriarch. As to his flock in Egypt, much less is known.⁵⁹²

In Jerusalem, the patriarchs were Thaddeus (reigned at least in 1296), then Athanasios III, whose first reign (ca. 1303-8) was interrupted by Gabriel Broullas (ca.

⁵⁹⁰ Nasrallah, *Chronologie des Patriarches Melchites*, 9-11; Todt, 'Zwischen Kaiser und ökumenischem Patriarchen', 170; Laurent, 'Cyrille II', 317. Dionysios was followed by Cyril III (ca. 1316) and then Dionysios II (?-1322). Schism was briefly effected by Metropolitan Abū al-Najm al-Archi of Damascus in 1323, again suggesting a division between the Melkites of inner Syria with the coastal Greeks. See: Ibn al-Ṣuqā'ī, *Tālī Kitāb Wafayāt*, 190-1 (No. 342), and Nasrallah, above.

⁵⁹¹ Chrysostomos A. Papadopoulos, *Ἱστορία τῆς Ἐκκλησίας Ἀλεξανδρείας, 62-1934* (Alexandria, 1935), 564-75.

⁵⁹² Laurent, V., ed., *Les Regestes des Actes du Patriarcat de Constantinople*, Vol. I, Part IV (Paris, 1971), 366, 379-80, 403-5, and 426; Athanasios I, *The Correspondence of Athanasius I Patriarch of Constantinople*, ed. and trans. Alice-Mary Maffry Talbot (Washington, DC, 1975), 162-74; Pachymeres, *Relations Historiques*, 4:383, 449-541, 633. The Arsenite schism caused a deep polarization in ecclesial Constantinople during this period.

1308-9).⁵⁹³ Like his Oriental contemporaries, it would seem that Athanasios of Jerusalem also spent considerable time in Constantinople.⁵⁹⁴ The ambitious Broullas was previously bishop of Caesarea Phillipi. He stirred up rumours against Athanasios to the emperor directly and to his ambassadors and managed to have himself appointed patriarch of Jerusalem, albeit only for a short while. Athanasios regained the patriarchal throne about 1309, and ruled thereafter for an indeterminate length of time.⁵⁹⁵

The monks at Saint Katherine's Monastery in the Sinai successfully petitioned the Bureau of the Army in 1314 when the local governor (the *muqta*) of the district of Ṭūr began confiscating their harvest of date palms as part of his *iqṭā'*. The monks appealed to a long precedence of the date palms as belonging to their own *waqf*, as well as noting their service to pilgrims on the *hajj*.⁵⁹⁶ The Monastery rather frequently had to assert its claims to property and person via petitions to the government in Cairo. The latter seems to have generally been supportive, at least legislatively, for they usually responded in favour of the monks and ordered the local governors and officials to support the monks and to protect them. There are successful petitions recorded in 1292, 1310, and 1311. The last one specifically orders protection from raiding

⁵⁹³ Grumel, *Chronologie*, 452; Chrysostomos A. Papadopoulos, *Ἱστορία τῆς Ἐκκλησίας Ἱεροσολύμων* (Alexandria, 1910), 423-4.

⁵⁹⁴ Todt, 'Das ökumenische Patriarchat von Konstantinopel', 59-60.

⁵⁹⁵ Pachymeres, *Relations Historiques*, 4:677-9. Failler suggests that Broullas was patriarch from about 1306/7-9.

⁵⁹⁶ Richards, D.S., 'A Mamlūk Petition and a Report from the "Dīwān al-Jaysh"', *BSOAS* 40 (1977), 1-14, at 1-3.

Bedouins, which seems to have been a not uncommon feature of the fourteenth century.⁵⁹⁷

A Christian, presumably a Melkite (as they were historically most numerous of the Christians in Palestine), rented a shop in 1307 in the village of Bayt ʿAnyā (northwest of Jerusalem) from a Mamlūk officer in service to the supervisor of the Islamic *waqf* of Jerusalem and Hebron. This is notable in demonstrating the interaction between the Christian minority and the Mamlūk authorities in a positive light.⁵⁹⁸ A greater understanding of the role of the state in undermining the support of Christian communities is provided by the next example. Sometime after 1312, when ʿĀla al-Dīn Tankiz became governor of Syria, he established a *madrasa* of Islamic law in Jerusalem (for Ṣūfīs and canon lawyers), funded by his annexation and contribution of the fields and villages of al-Tira and Bayt Ghur, which had earlier been donated to support Mar Saba by Queen Melisande in the twelfth century.⁵⁹⁹

SYRIAN ORTHODOX

As the Syrian Orthodox Church was largely centred along the frontiers between the Mamlūks, Mongols, and Turkoman, it was perhaps inevitable that it contracted at this time, especially with the establishment of Islam as the state religion in the Il-

⁵⁹⁷ Ernst, Hans, *Die mamlukischen Sultansurkunden des Sinai-Klosters* (Wiesbaden, 1960), 40-51.

⁵⁹⁸ Little, Donald P., *A Catalogue of the Islamic Documents from the al-Haram al-Sharif in Jerusalem* (Beirut, 1984), 298.

⁵⁹⁹ Frenkel, 'Mar Saba during the Mamlūk and Ottoman Periods', 113.

Khānate and Muslim attacks were largely unchecked by the authorities. The Church was also in schism, with the Patriarch Michael II (1292-1312) confronted by his rival Konstantin of Melitene (1292-3). Nonetheless, as Barsoum has argued, it was still able to produce a number of notable clerics and scholars. Literary production did not collapse immediately following the death of Bar Hebraeus. So long as monasteries were able to provide some stability and educational institutions continued, then so did Suriani scholarship. After these were destroyed, however, particularly in the fourteenth century, survival became the immediate focus.⁶⁰⁰ Writing in both Arabic and Syriac, Abū al-Ḥasan ibn Maḥrūma (d. ca. 1299) of Mardin wrote a reply to the polemical text of the Baghdadi Jew Ibn Kammūna (*Discourse on the Three Sects*, discussed in the previous chapter) in which he refuted all of the latter's charges. Was Ibn Kammūna's polemic widely dispersed, or perhaps a copy simply came into Suriani hands? Would Ibn Maḥrūma's apology have been read in Jewish and Muslim circles? While this is not known, Ibn Maḥrūma followed his predecessors in the Tūr Abdin in a long tradition of apologetics.⁶⁰¹

Dioscorus Gabriel Bar Yuḥannon of Barṭelli (d. 1300), was consecrated by the Maphrian Bar Hebraeus as Metropolitan of Gozarto d-Qardu. This polymath was an architect and built the Monastery of John Bar Naggore in Barṭelli in 1284, but also

⁶⁰⁰ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, 2:781-9; Barsoum, *Scattered Pearls*, 482-3 and 488.

Orientalists' opinion that there was no literary production after Bar Hebraeus is exaggerated, says Barsoum, as they have been unaware of these remote manuscripts. See, for example, Wright, *Syriac Literature*, 282, where he declares: 'With Daniel ibn Khaṭṭāb we may close our list of Jacobite writers in the literature of Syria.'

⁶⁰¹ Barsoum, *Scattered Pearls*, 485.

authored biographical poems (*mimre*) on the life of Bar Hebraeus and his brother, al-Şafiy, sermons on religious obligations, and even revised the solar calendar.⁶⁰²

Uniquely for later medieval *Bilād al-Shām*, there was a stylite in the Tūr Abdin named Thomas of Ḥaḥ, called the ‘lame’. He was known for his prayers written in rhymed prose.⁶⁰³ The famous Maphrian of the East Bar Hebraeus had a younger brother named Gregorios Barşawmo al-Şafī Bar Hebraeus (d. 1 December 1307). He was a deacon until his brother’s death, when he was elected as Maphrian of the East and consecrated by Patriarch Philoxenus Nemrod (1283-92) on 3 July 1288. He was also an author, continuing his brother’s chronicle, writing a biography of Bar Hebraeus, and other works. Like his brother, Barşawmo made the Monastery of Mar Mattai his residence. Due to the increasing persecutions then occurring in the Il-Khānate, the monastery was overwhelmed with refugees, who strained the monastery’s already poor water supply. The Maphrian had waterworks constructed to lessen the stress on the infrastructure, which were finished by 1294. He died in Barṭelli and was entombed next to his brother in the Monastery of Mar Mattai.⁶⁰⁴ Barşawmo’s contemporary, Yesu‘ ibn Kilo (d. ca. 1309), was born at Ḥaḥ, but later in life entered the Monastery of Mar Ḥananya where he worked on the binding and transcription of manuscripts, as well as authoring in his own right.⁶⁰⁵

⁶⁰² Barsoum, *Scattered Pearls*, 485-6; Dioscorus Gabriel of Barṭelli, trans. Takahashi, ‘*Mimro*’, 156.

⁶⁰³ Barsoum, *Scattered Pearls*, 486.

⁶⁰⁴ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, 2:783-9, and 3:487-93; Dioscorus Gabriel of Barṭelli, trans. Takahashi, ‘*Mimro*’, 185-6, 189-93; Barsoum, *Scattered Pearls*, 487.

⁶⁰⁵ Barsoum, *Scattered Pearls*, 487-8.

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As the above authors demonstrate, the Syrian Orthodox Church – like the other indigenous Christian Confessions – was still quite active during the period of 1292-1318. The conversion of the Mongols in the Il-Khānate to Islam and its establishment as the state religion removed the one viable protector of Christians from the Middle East. Christian political powers were too far on the periphery to have more than occasional influence on either Mongol or Mamlūk religious policy, much less influence the violence-prone *‘amma*. The conversion of the Il-Khāns set a specific course for the Christians of Persia and Mesopotamia. The brief intermezzo of living as *dhimmīs* and being subject to the sumptuary laws had come to an end. On the other side, the end of viable external threats – namely, Franks along the Syro-Palestinian coast and of the Mongols – led the Mamlūks to look internally for potential opposition. Thus, campaigns against the Lebanese Shī‘ites and others also led to a hardening of public opinion against the non-Muslims of all kinds within Mamlūk Egypt and Syria. This position would be exemplified in an extended episode early in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4 – Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and the Power of the ‘*Ulamā* and ‘*Āmma* (1318-1341)

The relatively stable period of the second decade of the fourteenth century was not to last. The indigenous Christians were to suffer many trials and tribulations in this period. In the Mamlūk Empire, Sultan al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn reigned for the third time (1310-41), finally out-smarting ambitious *amīrs* and consolidating his authority.⁶⁰⁶ His third reign was arguably the zenith of the Baḥrī Mamlūk period, but, ironically – as Levanoni argues – the very measures that he instituted which contributed to his success led to the decline of the state. It is worth noting that this corresponds to the decline of the Coptic bureaucratic class and the fortunes of the Coptic community as a whole, although it would be pushing the evidence to suggest a direct correlation.⁶⁰⁷ Regardless, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad’s policy on the *dhimmīs* was, at best, one he was forced into during a direct confrontation with the ‘*ulamā*’-inspired ‘*āmma* at the height of the persecution in 1321.

Although the focus of this chapter is on the Mamlūk Sultanate, it is necessary to examine the deteriorating situation in the Il-Khānate, arguably the central threat to the Mamlūks since the establishment of their rule. The Il-Khānate was already clearly in decline by 1327, and after the death of Abū Sa‘īd (1316-36) in 1336 the situation was

⁶⁰⁶ Al-Harithy, Howayda, ‘The Patronage of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn, 1310-1341’, *MSR* 4 (2000), 219-36, at 223-4.

⁶⁰⁷ Levanoni, *Turning point*, 28-30 and 142-54.

even more unstable.⁶⁰⁸ Jews, the second-largest *dhimmi* group, did not seem to fare as poorly as the Christians. The Jewish traveller Isaac Ben Joseph Ibn Chelo, in 1334, noted that the ‘Jewish community in Jerusalem...is quite numerous. It is composed of fathers of families from all parts of the world, principally from France. They live there in happiness and tranquillity, each according to his condition and fortune, for the royal authority is just and great.’⁶⁰⁹ While this rosy picture of universal ‘happiness and tranquillity’ might have been rather optimistic, their situation in the Mamlūk capital of Cairo was certainly better than that of the Christians. During the great persecution that occurred in 1321 A.D., for example, it was so dangerous for Christians to leave their homes that they borrowed yellow turbans from their Jewish neighbours. On one occasion, a Coptic secretary came by night in disguise to the home of a Jew who owed him four thousand dirhams. The latter’s response to this intrusion was to grab the Christian and shout for help. A large crowd of Muslims appeared and in their hostility to the Christian forced him to forgive (in writing) the debt owed by the Jew.⁶¹⁰ The Christians (Copts, in particular) were at the very least a large minority and, more importantly, the influence of Coptic secretaries was perceived to be very great (and likely was, if exaggerated). These scribes were extremely visible and their influence viewed with hostility by the Muslim *āmma* and ‘*ulamā*. The Jewish community, in contrast, was much smaller and less threatening.

⁶⁰⁸ Melville, Charles, *The Fall of Amir Chupan and the Decline of the Ilkhanate, 1327-37: A decade of discord in Mongol Iran* (Bloomington, IN, 1999), 43-59.

⁶⁰⁹ Ibn Chelo, Isaac ben Joseph, ‘The Roads from Jerusalem’, in ed. Elkan Nathan Adler, *Jewish Travellers* (London, 1930), 130-50, at 133.

⁶¹⁰ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khitāṭ*, 4.2:1075.

In al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's response letter of 1323 to James II of Aragon, he assures the Christian monarch that: 'As to the rest of the Christians, these are safe in our quarters in a way which will please him, for they are our subjects, and by the grace of God every one of our subjects is but amply secured from all harm and safe from what might offend him or disturb him. He (the King) may therefore rest assured on this account.'⁶¹¹ Had this letter originated a few years earlier, it might be believable. In fact, however, throughout not only Egypt but also *Bilād al-Shām*, Christian communities were in decline. The Copts were to suffer greatly during this period, not, as a rule, due to state interference, but largely from attacks by the Muslim population. There was, in fact, an important shift midway through al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's reign in which the government (out of fear for its own preservation) became less a protector of Christians from the 'āmma and 'ulamā', but even an active participant in their demise and exploitation. Armenian Cilicia burned, while those Armenians in Syria and Palestine feared for their lives with the ever-present possibility of retaliatory attacks by Muslim partisans. The Assyrian Church of the East, which just two decades before had extended from the shores of the Mediterranean all the way to China, now retreated to its strongholds in the mountains of northern Mesopotamia and Kurdistan. The Georgian presence in the Holy Land remained stable, and although Eastern Georgia lay ravaged by the Mongols and Turks, the Western Georgian kingdom was able to retain a degree of stability and thus provide some assistance for its monastic community in Palestine. Following the Mamlūk attacks on Mount Lebanon at the beginning of the

⁶¹¹ Atiya, *Egypt and Aragon*, 46-52.

century, the Maronites remained rather quiet during this period. The Melkites in *Bilād al-Shām* suffered political and ecclesiastical fragmentation, while their Greek Orthodox brethren retained their largely monastic presence in the Holy Land. Amongst the Syrian Orthodox, too, there was a period of ecclesiastical fragmentation, as well as poverty and persecution. Overall, then, this was an unhappy era, and those who could, fled to safer areas such as Latin-controlled Cyprus or remote areas. But that is not to say that there was a complete collapse of Christian society in the Near East, as shall be demonstrated.

The Persecution of 1321

Although the Copts suffered persecution on various occasions almost from the beginning of the Arab domination of Egypt, arguably one of the worst episodes occurred a decade into al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's third reign. Insight into the hostile atmosphere in which the Copts found themselves can be found in the *Kitāb Masālik al-Nazar*, composed in 1320 in the Great Mosque of Damascus by Sa'īd ibn Ḥasan of Alexandria, a Jewish convert to Islam. Following a dream in the course of a serious malady, Sa'īd had converted in 1298, eagerly embracing the apocalyptic atmosphere current in Alexandrian Islamic society on the eve of the new century. His *raison d'être* in writing was to prove the Prophet Mohammed's prophetic office and thus the supremacy of Islam at the expense of other religions, particularly Christianity and Judaism. Indeed, he writes, these other religions must be crushed, an idea that he predicted would occur at the end of seven hundred solar years of the Hijra (i.e. 1322

A.D.)⁶¹² His source for his prophetic statements and for his reasoning come from the Old Testament, although he changed the texts and reinterpreted them to advance his thesis. His view of Christianity was very current in Muslim thought: ‘Know...that I have repeatedly studied the four Gospels, but I find in them no mention at all of Mohammed, as he is mentioned in the Torah and in the books of the prophets. This, too, is a proof of their having changed the Gospels which Jesus brought.’ Saʿīd argued that God took away Solomon’s kingdom because of one painted picture in his house, and takes this concept forward to his own day, where he says that the Mongol armies of the Il-Khānate only defeated the Mamlūk armies⁶¹³ after the Il-Khān Ghāzān converted to Islam and ‘laid waste the synagogues of the East’. This was at the end of recorded prophecy – seven hundred lunar years after the Hijra. The Mamlūks (‘the Muslims’) then returned from their defeat and promptly closed up the churches; thereafter, he reasons, God gave them the victory against their adversaries. However, on this occasion, when the Mamlūks returned victoriously, says Saʿīd, they then reopened the churches. His prediction, then, was that a catastrophe would affect ‘the Muslims’ after seven hundred solar years, but he fears that if the churches and synagogues are not again closed, God will take away the kingdom of the Muslims as he did that of Solomon.⁶¹⁴

⁶¹² Saʿīd ibn Ḥasan of Alexandria, ‘The Kitāb Masālik an-Nazar of Saʿīd ibn Ḥasan of Alexandria’, ed. and trans. Sidney Adams Weston, *JAOS* 24 (1903), 312-383, at 312-15 and 379-82.

⁶¹³ At the Battle of Ghabāghib or Shaḫḫab in April 1303.

⁶¹⁴ Saʿīd ibn Ḥasan of Alexandria, ‘Kitāb Masālik an-Nazar’, 370-1 and 382-3.

This prophecy and polemic of Saʿīd is demonstrative of the charged atmosphere that faced the Christians of the Mamlūk Empire during the period under consideration. A great episode of extended violence faced the Copts in particular almost from the outset of the reign of the eighty-first Coptic Pope John (‘Yu’annis’; 1320-27), who succeeded John, known as Ibn al-Qaddīs.⁶¹⁵ The *History of the Patriarchs* briefly describes his reign: ‘many calamities befell the Christians (النصارى); some of them were killed, some of them were burned, some of them were nailed to crosses and paraded on camels, and they caused them to wear the blue turbans; afterwards, He (God) relieved the people through His mercy.’⁶¹⁶ The impetus for this remark occurred in the year 1321, when Christians, their churches, monasteries, villages, and homes were attacked in all parts of Egypt, and to some degree in Mamlūk Syria. Al-Maqrīzī records this account in detail in the final section of his *al-Khiṭaṭ* dealing with the Christian churches and monasteries in Egypt.

In 1321, reports al-Maqrīzī, the Sultan, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, ordered an embankment erected along the Nile. This happened to be adjacent to the Church of al-Zuhrī and several other churches in a heavily Christian area. The workmen dug around the church so that it was, in a sense, hanging elevated in the air, with the intent that it would fall of its own accord and they could not, therefore, be directly blamed for its destruction. They did, nonetheless, ask for repeated permission to destroy it. That

⁶¹⁵ HPEC, 3.3:231. Ibn al-Qaddīs was buried at the Monastery of Shahrān.

⁶¹⁶ HPEC, 3.3:232. John was from the district of Nafiah in the Province of al-Manufiah, and on his death was buried at the Monastery of the Nestorians near Cairo (Miṣr).

Friday, whilst the excavation was suspended for Muslim prayers, a group of commoners – the *āmma* (العامّة) – attacked the church and destroyed it, stealing everything of value from within (including from those Christians present). They next destroyed the Church of Saint Menas and two other churches, taking sixty Christian girls captive and again looting extensively. The *āmma* destroyed two other churches in Cairo and besieged the al-Mu‘allaqah Church.

When the sultan heard of what had happened, he was especially angry that this destruction was undertaken without his permission, but also angry about the disorder in general. He sent a body of soldiers and ordered that all those captured should be slain. The *‘āmma*, however, fled, and only those who were drunk (from wine stolen from the churches) were captured. The crowd besieging al-Mu‘allaqah Church was dispersed, but only after an initial attempt was met with fierce resistance. On at least two occasions, Sufis (رجل مولة ; الفقير) cried out during Friday prayers to destroy the churches, which only helped to arouse the crowds. All told, some twenty-four or more churches were destroyed in a single day from Cairo north to Alexandria and south to Qūs. Al-Maqrīzī says that the *amīrs* were convinced that this destruction was punishment from God against the Christians due to their corruption and pride.⁶¹⁷

⁶¹⁷ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, 4.2:1066-8. Cf. al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, 2.1:219-24; Butcher, *The Story of the Church of Egypt*, 187-200. One of the priests serving at the Church of al-Mu‘allaqah was Shams al-Ri‘āsa Abū al-Barakāt ibn Kabar (d. 1325), one of the greatest medieval Coptic theologians. His *magnum opus* was *The Lamp of Darkness and Exposition of Church Service*, a theological encyclopedia. He was also formerly chief secretary to the Amīr Ruqn al-Dīn Baybars al-Manṣūrī al-Khitayī, but retired when he and all Christians were dismissed from governmental service during the persecution by Sultan al-

About a month later, multiple fires broke out around Cairo. Just as one was extinguished, another started up. According to al-Maqrīzī, suspicion soon fell upon the Christians because fires seemed to appear first in mosques and other Islamic institutions. Before long, two suspicious monks were captured, whom the sultan ordered to be tortured. Another Christian, caught in the act of arson, was also tortured and confessed that a group of fourteen monks and other Christians had banded together to seek revenge against the Muslims for the earlier destruction of their churches. A number of monks were burned at the stake in public, while a Christian *amīr* was attacked by a group of the *āmma*, threatened with the same fate, and on the spot converted to Islam.⁶¹⁸

Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was enraged at the continued outrages committed openly against the Christians, and ordered his soldiers to attack the crowds and capture as many as possible to be tortured and even executed, though most were in the end forced into gang-labour. Before long, a new fire broke out and three more Christians were captured and confessed before the sultan to lighting it. When the sultan rode out to inspect the damage, he was confronted by some twenty-thousand Muslims (الناس), adorned in blue (the colour of the Christians) and with a white cross. They cried to the sultan to help them against the ‘unbelievers’ and to stop protecting the Christians. The

Ashraf in 1292. He must nonetheless have retained good relations with the *amīr*, as he saved his life after Abū al-Barakāt was seized by Mamlūk authorities during the riots of 1321. See: Aziz S. Atiya, ‘Ibn Kabar’, *CE*, 4:1267-8; Meinardus, *Two Thousand Years*, 60; Graf, *Geschichte der Christlichen Arabischen Literatur*, 438-45.

⁶¹⁸ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, 4.2:1070-1.

sultan and his *amīrs* were filled with fear for their own lives, and the anger that had consumed al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was replaced with this fear. He ordered it to be proclaimed that any Muslim who came upon a Christian should demand from him money and blood. Any Christian found wearing a white turban or riding a horse should be killed, his goods seized. Then, traditional sumptuary laws were decreed to be followed: Christians should wear blue turbans; they could only ride donkeys – backwards; they must wear a bell around their necks in the public baths; and that they must wear dress distinctive from the Muslims. All Christians working in civil service were ordered to be dismissed throughout the Sultanate. Christians were obviously thenceforth easy targets, oft-attacked, and while many hid, others converted to Islam.⁶¹⁹

This passage quite vividly describes the problems faced by the Christians during the middle of the Baḥrī Mamlūk period. It also demonstrates the difficulties faced by the ruling hierarchy in protecting its *dhimmī* population in the face of the will of the Muslim *‘ulamā* and the urban populace. Sultan al-Malik al-Nāṣir clearly did not wish to persecute his Coptic subjects, but he came to fear for his own safety if he opposed the

⁶¹⁹ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, 4.2:1075. The sultan’s confrontation with the *āmma* (or, used here, نفس, meaning ‘people’) and shift of approach is described thus: كن السلطان الى الميدان على عادته وجد نحو عشرين ألف نفس من العامة قد صبغوا نحر قا بلون أزرق وعملوا فيها صلبانا بيضا وعند مع راوا السلطان صاحوا بصوت عال وأحد "لا دين اللدن الإسلام نصر الله دين محمد بن أمد الله يا ملك الناصر يا سلطان الإسلام انصرنا على أهل الكفر ولا تنصر النصارى فارتهبت الدنيا من حول اصواتهم وأوقع الله الرعب في قلب السلطان وقلوب الأمراء وسار وهو في فكر زائد حتى نزل باليدان وصراخ العامة لا يبطل فرأى أن الرأي في أستعجال المضاراه و أمر الحاجب إن نخرج دنادي بن ياد من وجاد نصر انيا . فلة مالة ودمى فخرج

mob fury too directly. It is no mistake that Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad is often considered the greatest of the Baḥrī Mamlūk sultans. Both Baybars and Qalāwūn were dominant in their own right, but they were building up the empire in the face of dire external circumstances. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's lengthy third reign was noted for its stability and prosperity.⁶²⁰ His chief concern was the welfare of his state (and his own tenure), and for this he relied heavily upon the Coptic secretaries within his government. The only true threat to this stability came internally from the 'ulamā' and 'āmma. The Mamlūks had long patronized the former in the hope of their reciprocation in a boost for Mamlūk legitimacy. As exemplified in the person of Ibn Taymiya, the Muslim religious class was not to be so easily tamed, and when confrontation finally came, the state bowed in the face of the 'ulamā' and its 'āmma allies. The Sultan also sought to strengthen his position by his architectural patronage. He departed from previous Mamlūk tradition of building madrasas and instead sponsored hypostyle congregational mosques. Not only did his patronage thus reinforce the House of Qalāwūn's royal lineage and de-emphasised its slave origins, but it also established an association with the classical caliphal building traditions.⁶²¹

⁶²⁰ Al-Harithy, 'Patronage of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad', 219-22.

⁶²¹ Ibid., 234-6.

NINE CHRISTIAN CONFESSIONS

ARMENIANS

Failed by their Il-Khān allies and faced with annual Mamlūk invasions, the Armenians desperately sought allies in the Latin West. For some, this meant turning to the Roman Catholic fold. Mendicant missionaries were quite active in Armenian areas, often with significant success. European travellers often met Armenian refugees or captives throughout Mamlūk territory. They also bore witness to repeated if failed Armenian attempts to sue for peace with the Mamlūks.

In 1321, Zacharias, an Armenian bishop resident at the Monastery of Saint Thaddeus at Karakalissa near Maku in Greater Armenia, converted to Roman Catholicism. He became a promoter of union with Rome and protected Franciscans and Dominicans based from Saint Thaddeus.⁶²² A few years later, beginning in 1328, an Armenian abbot named John of Qrna came under the influence and guidance of the Dominican bishop of Marāghā, Bartholomew (d. 1330) and established a new Roman Catholic Armenian community at Qrna in 1330. As abbot, he began to train his monks along Dominican lines, teaching them Latin and Roman Catholic theology.

Dominicans, in turn, resided at Qrna to study the Armenian language. Together, they translated theological works in Armenian – primarily those of Thomas Aquinas and other Dominican works. John of Qrna visited the pope in Avignon and, in 1333, he and his monastic brethren swore their vows to the Roman Catholic bishop of Tiflis,

⁶²² Richard, *Papauté et les missions*, 203-8; Baldwin, 'Missions to the East', 508.

John of Florence. This was the foundation for the new order of *fratres unitores* (of Saint Gregory the Illuminator), which was an Armenian branch of the Dominicans.⁶²³ This is not to say that the Dominicans and Armenians had a perfect relationship. Indeed, the vast majority of Armenians were hostile to Roman Catholic influences (exceptions being the upper classes in Cilicia and some in Greater Armenia) and held the *fratres unitores* to be ‘Latinizers’. From the other perspective, the *unitor* Nersēs Balientz presented a list of 117 theological errors to the pope against the Armenians, though the Armenian Franciscan Daniel of Tabriz rose to their defence in 1341 at Avignon. Earlier, in 1322, a Dominican wrote a chronicle hostile to the Armenians and presented it to King Philip V of France.⁶²⁴

The pilgrim James of Verona, in 1335, lodged at an inn in Damascus with a number of Christians, including ambassadors from the king of Armenian Cilicia. They were in Damascus to try and negotiate a peace treaty with the Mamlūk sultan, but were unsuccessful and it was widely felt that the destruction of Lesser Armenia was eminent. Cilicia was stripped bare of its population, recorded James, with thousands of captives held across Mamlūk territory.⁶²⁵ Unfortunately, this was, indeed, a continuing theme in the fourteenth century for Cilicia. A decade earlier, in 1325, Catholicos Konstantin IV Drazarkeç‘i (or Lambronatsi, 1322-6), though ‘old and frail, he ignored the

⁶²³ Loenertz, *La Société des Frères pègrinants*, 141-3, and on Dominicans in Cilicia and Greater Armenia in general see 186-98; Richard, *Papauté et les missions*, 217-25; Baldwin, ‘Missions to the East’, 509.

⁶²⁴ Golubovich, *Biblioteca*, 3:404-7 and 4:333-62.

⁶²⁵ James of Verona, *Liber peregrinationis Fratris Jacobi da Verona*, ed. R. Röhricht in *ROL*, 3 (1895), 155-303, at, 218 and 293.

strenuousness of the trip and personally journeyed to [Cairo] to see the sultan [al-Nāṣir Muḥammad]; and he succeeded in softening and allaying his harsh and bitter disposition.⁶²⁶ Sanjian notes that a fifteen year treaty was agreed in which the Sultan would withdraw his forces in return for an annual tribute of fifty thousand gold florins and a portion of customs revenues.⁶²⁷ But already in 1327, ‘the pious old man and devout prince, Baron Het‘um Nlrc‘i, journeyed to Egiptos for the purpose of alleviating the condition of the Christians.’⁶²⁸

The Armenian community in Jerusalem still persisted during this period, and likely increased with refugees from Cilicia. In his account of his pilgrimage with twelve Catalan Dominican friars to Egypt and the Holy Land in 1323, G. de Treps twice mentions the Armenian presence in Jerusalem. He notes that Armenian clergy were in possession of one of the three altars at the Church of Saint Saviour in Gethsemane. Elsewhere, he notes the presence of a number of Armenian (monastic?) houses near the Church of the Tears of Saint Peter.⁶²⁹ William of Boldensele, in 1333, noted the

⁶²⁶ Trans. Sanjian, *Colophons*, 66-7; Dadoyan, *Armenian Catholicosate*, 112.

⁶²⁷ Trans. Sanjian, *Colophons*, 67, ft. 14.

⁶²⁸ Trans. Sanjian, *Colophons*, 68.

⁶²⁹ Pijoan, Joseph, ed., ‘Un Nou Viatge a Terra Santa en Catalá,’ *Institut d’Estudis Catalans Anuari* (1907), 370-84., 375 and 381. From Alexandria and Cairo, de Treps’ party traveled to Palestine and the Sinai for seventeen days. They journeyed to Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nazareth, the River Jordan, Carmel, Mount Tabor, and the Sea of Galilee, as well as to the Monastery of Saint Katherine in Sinai. The relevant passage here states: ‘En aquest loc ha .iij. autars e ay .j. iglea fort bela que serveixen erminis.’; 381: ‘Parti de qui entra en la ciutat de Iherusalem tro a.j. treyt de balesta son les cases dels ermenis e foy sen Iacme [lacme?] scapçat.’ To this latter, Pijoan notes (ft. 6): ‘El convent es encara avuy dels armenis y’s diu situate sobre ‘1 mateix’lloch de la sepulture de l’Apòstol.’ Cf. Hintlian, *History of the Armenians*, 31-2.

Armenian church of Saint James, which he suggests is loyal to Rome.⁶³⁰ Ludolph von Suchem echoes this latter sentiment, adding that it is the cathedral of the ‘Archbishop of the Armenians and canons of the Roman obedience.’⁶³¹ James of Verona, in 1335, called the Armenians ‘true Christians’ (*sunt veri cristiani*), and noted their many monasteries across the Holy Land. He venerated at the home of the Virgin Mary and her parents, Zechariah and Elizabeth, which was then an Armenian monastery (though, he says, in an area apparently inhabited completely by Muslims).⁶³² From Cairo en route to Gaza (full of ‘many Christians of the Girdle’⁶³³) and Jerusalem, in 1323, Brother Simon Fitzsimons visited the town of Katieh (‘Cathia’), where he ‘found a certain noble Christian admiral, in word, however, a renegade [i.e. ‘apostate’], by nationality an Armenian, the guardian of the province and the collector of tolls; a pious benefactor of pilgrims and a clement giver of alms.’⁶³⁴ One is reminded that the reviver of the Fāṭimid dynasty in the late eleventh century, Badr al-Jamālī (d. 1094), was an Armenian Muslim, a number of whose followers were also Muslim converts.⁶³⁵ In

⁶³⁰ William of Boldensele, ‘Epistola Guilielmi de Boldensele ad Petrum abbatem Aulae Regiae’, ed. T. Grotefend, *Zeitschrift des historischen Vereins für Niederfachsen* (1855), 209-86, at 264-5. ‘In monte etiam Sion beatus Jacobus major decollatur, ubi pulchra est ecclesia Armenica’.

⁶³¹ Ludolph von Suchem, *Description of the Holy Land*, 103.

⁶³² James of Verona, *Liber peregrinationis*, 218 and 222. He also considered the Armenians loyal to Rome. Hintlian reports that a bishop David was buried in the right-hand pillar of the courtyard at the Cathedral of Saint James in Jerusalem in 1321. Whether his death has any relation to the greater persecution in Egypt of that year is unknown. See: Hintlian, *History of the Armenians*, 51.

⁶³³ Fitzsimons, Simon, ‘Itinerary of Father Simon Fitzsimons’ (1322-23) in ed. Eugene Hoade, *Western Pilgrims (1322-92)* (Jerusalem, 1952), 1-46, at, 43. Cf. Symonis Semeonis, *Itinerarium Symonis Semeonis Ab Hybernia Ad Terram Sanctam*, ed. Mario Esposito (Dublin, 1960).

⁶³⁴ Fitzsimons, ‘Itinerary’, 42.

⁶³⁵ Brett, ‘Badr al-Ġamālī’, 61-78.

addition, thousands of Armenians captured during the Mamlūk invasions of Cilicia were brought back to Egypt.

A few years later, in 1335, the monk Nersēs Krakc‘i lamented the situation for the Christians in Jerusalem:

...This is an evil time, for the dominical holy places [in Jerusalem] are in captivity and are completely destroyed, and it is doubtful that they will be restored. The Christians are being insulted and trodden under the feet of the infidels. Yet, we received the good tidings that the Franks are on the move to save the dominical sanctuaries in the Holy City of Jerusalem. May this come true, so that our despondent hearts may be restored, so that our heads which have fallen to the ground may rise as high up as heaven, so that the Cross may shine, and the church may be adorned.

But, because of my [sinful] deeds which persist, I am doubtful that these shall come to pass. Yes, everything is possible with my Lord God, Jesus.

In these venomous times, when the Armenians were languishing, the lawless Ismaelites marched upon the country of [Cilicia]; they slaughtered everyone, carried off some into captivity to [Egypt] and others to the country of [Karamān].

Oh, brothers, there are so many [reports] that I know not what I am writing; it is said that the inhabitants of Ayas have killed a Tačik [qāḏī].

A thousand woes until me and unto all of us Christians at Jerusalem, for like the [Ninevites] we are scorched by the terror caused by the infidels. We are told that we will be herded like sheep by the evil ones, [and] that they will assemble all the Armenian Christians in one place and slaughter us; for they are barking at us and charging that the Armenians have killed the [qāḏī] and [dānishūmand] at Ayas, and that for all these they will take their revenge from us. We are all trembling; and some have fled to the Horom [Greek] villages; and only God knows what is forthcoming...

Woe, brothers, for the evil [report], for it is said that the sultan's son is advancing upon Sis with numerous forces...⁶³⁶

When one contrasts this description with the position of the Jews recounted by Isaac Ibn Chelo in 1334 (quoted earlier), the Armenian situation was extremely dire. Mamlūk policy towards Armenian Cilicia had been extremely hostile since even before the dynasty was founded when the Armenians allied with the Il-Khānate. Periodically raiding, looting, and taking captives continuously since the reign of Sultan Baybars, the Mamlūks seemed to view Cilicia as an easy source of ready wealth. Armenians elsewhere within *Bilād al-Shām* clearly also felt the repercussions of this Mamlūk anti-Armenian policy, as evidenced by this first-hand account by Nersēs Krakc'i. Corroborating his account is this testimony by James of Verona, then in Cyprus:

In that city [Famagusta] of Cyprus and in the island I saw the novelties which I note here below. The first is that on that day, the last of June, and that very hour when I entered the harbour several large vessels and galleys and *gripparia* came from Armenia, from the city of Logaze, crowded with old men, children, women, orphans and wards more than fifteen hundred in number, who were flying from Armenia because the Soldan had sent hosts, many and mighty, to destroy it, and they burnt all that plain and carried off captive more than twelve thousand persons, over and above those whom they had slain with the sword, and they began to destroy it, as I was told by Venetian merchants who were there, on Ascension Day, which fell on May 25. O Lord God, sad indeed it was to see that multitude in the square of Famagusta, children crying and moaning at their mothers' breasts, old men and starving dogs howling. Hear it, ye Christians who live in your own towns and homes, eating and drinking and

⁶³⁶ Trans. Sanjian, *Colophons*, 74-5.

reared in luxury, who care not to make the Holy Land your own, and to restore it to the Christian Faith!⁶³⁷

For the Armenians of Cilicia and Greater Syria, survival was their basic and immediate priority.

ASSYRIAN CHURCH OF THE EAST

At the death of Mar Yahballāhā III at Marāghā on 13 November 1317, the Assyrian bishops elected Timothy II in February 1318 (reigned 1318-32), formerly metropolitan of the much-ravaged Arbīl.⁶³⁸ He was, apparently, the last catholicos of the Church of the East to be enthroned according to tradition. Eleven bishops were present at the Cathedral of Mar Mari, with one exception all from northern Mesopotamia, including Nisibis and Mosul. The new patriarch held a synod immediately after his consecration in the church of Kōkhe near Baghdad, which was the last synod prior to the nineteenth century whose acts survive. These acts suggest

⁶³⁷ James of Verona, *Liber peregrinationis*, at 177, trans. in Claude Delaval Cobham, *Materials for a History of Cyprus* (Cambridge, 1908), 17.

⁶³⁸ Baumer, *Church of the East*, 232. On Mar Yahballāhā's death, see 'Histoire du patriarche Mar Jabalaha III et du moine Rabban Çauma, traduite du syriaque', trans. J.-B. Chabot, *ROL*, 2 (1894), 72-142, 240-304, and 630-43, at 299 and 304. See also the list of the patriarchs of the Church of the East in Cambridge, MS. Add. 2889, in William Wright, *A Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts Preserved in the Library of the University of Cambridge*, 2 Vols. (Cambridge, 1901), 2:754-792, at 776. Mar Yahballāhā is listed as the eightieth patriarch, of whom seven were deposed, and the list ends with him. Marāghā was formerly the Il-Khān capital, but this was transferred to Tabriz, which was restored and expanded by Ghāzān Khān. For a geography of the Il-Khānate written in 1340, see: Ḥamd-Allah Mustawfī, *Nuzhat al-Kulūb*, partial trans. by Guy Le Strange, *Mesopotamia and Persia under the Mongols in the Fourteenth Century A.D.* (London, 1903), 37 and 41.

that the focus of the synod was on the reform of the clergy, many of whom were apparently either corrupt or illiterate (perhaps not unrelated to the Mar Yahballāhā's lack of Syriac).⁶³⁹ Timothy II was also one of the last scholars of the Church of the East (till modern times), writing a text on the sacraments. 'Abhd-īshō' bar Bērīkhā, a very prolific author, died that same year of 1318.⁶⁴⁰ Exceptions occur, of course, and one such was the priest Ṣelībhā ibn Yōḥannā of Mosul, who in the year 1332 compiled the Arabic historical text called the 'Book of Dates' or the 'Book of Secrets'.⁶⁴¹

Abū Sa'īd (1316-35) was Il-Khān during most of this period, but as he was only twelve years old, power lay with the *Amīr* Choban⁶⁴², the Master of the Dīwān, who protected the Christians of the Il-Khānate until his execution in 1327 by the Il-Khān.⁶⁴³ Thereafter, persecution against Christians began again, and even Mar Yahballāhā's great monastery of Saint John the Baptist in Marāghā was confiscated and converted to a mosque. Timothy II was alive in 1328, but likely died about 1330 or 1331.⁶⁴⁴ Heavy taxes were exorted from the Christians in 1330, while 1333 was a particularly difficult

⁶³⁹ Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 18 and 345. See also: Fiey, *Chrétiens Syriaques*, 80.

⁶⁴⁰ De Vries, Wilhelm, "Timotheus II. (1318-32), Ueber "die sieben Gründe der kirchlichen Geheimnisse", *OCP* 8 (1942), 40-94; Wright, *Syriac Literature*, 285 and 290, citing Assemani, *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, 3:572-80. See also, Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, 323-5.

⁶⁴¹ Cambridge, MS. Add. 2889, in Wright, *Catalogue Cambridge*, 2:754-792, at 754. Add. 2889 was written by an Assyrian Christian in East Syriac in 1730 A.D. and contains a copy of the 'Book of Dates'.

⁶⁴² Also called Chūpān, Tchophan, or Jūbān .

⁶⁴³ On Choban, see: Melville, *Fall of Amir Chupan*, 12-28; Manz, 'Rule of the infidels', 152-3.

⁶⁴⁴ Baumer, *Church of the East*, 232-3; and, Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 18 and 347. Mar Yahballāhā's relics were relocated to the monastery of Mar Mikha'il in Tar'īl, near Arbīl. See Fiey, *Chrétiens Syriaques*, 81.

year for them. In Baghdad, the Islamic sumptuary laws were enforced and Christians were only allowed to wear blue turbans. Many churches were destroyed, and the Church of the Forty Martyrs in Mardin was pillaged. Many Christians converted to Islam.⁶⁴⁵

In 1334, the Jewish traveller Isaac Ibn Chelo witnessed a bidding war in Jerusalem for a Pentateuch by one of the city's skilled artisans, 'and it was only for an excessively high price that the Chief of the Synagogues of Babylon carried it off with him to Bag[h]dad.'⁶⁴⁶ This would suggest that the situation for Jews in the Il-Khānate (at least in 1334 in Baghdad) was not so tenuous. This was not the case for the Christians. It was probably in this year that the Shaykh Safi al-Dīn ordered the destruction of a church of monastery in Marāghā after hearing the sound of *semanterion*.⁶⁴⁷ He also murdered the abbot of the monastery. After the death of Abū Sa'īd, in 1335, a power struggle broke out between the *amīrs* and anarchy reigned. Eight Il-Khāns were crowned between 1335 and 1344, all soon killed. In the subsequent instability, the Christians fell victim to local warlords. This was truly the end of the *Pax Mongolica*, as the next fifty years were largely marked by constant instability.⁶⁴⁸ The governor of Baghdad, 'Alī Pādshāh, rebelled against the nominal Il-Khān, Arpa Ka'ūn, whom he captured and executed. Against the Christians, he ordered

⁶⁴⁵ Fiey, *Chrétien Syriaques*, 81-2.

⁶⁴⁶ Ibn Chelo, 'Roads from Jerusalem', 134.

⁶⁴⁷ A monastic percussion instrument.

⁶⁴⁸ Fiey, *Chrétien Syriaques*, 81-2; and Robert Bedrosian, *The Turco-Mongol Invasions and the Lords of Armenia in the 13-14th Centuries*, PhD thesis, Columbia University, NY, 1979, 143. In general, see Aubrey R. Vine, *The Nestorian Churches* (London, 1937), 157-9.

several churches closed or destroyed, prohibited worship, raised taxes, and imposed the sumptuary laws. His rule was short-lived, however, as he was killed in turn by the Christian *Amīr* Hadj Tadj (or ‘Haggi Togai’) in July 1336. Hadj Tadj restored the churches and ordered that Christians live according to their custom. He also ‘sponsored’ the enthronement of Denḥa II (1336-81) in Baghdad upon the death of the Catholicos Timothy.⁶⁴⁹ The patriarchal see was moved wherever the Catholicos could find safety – between Mosul to the south, Lake Urmiah to the east, and Lake Van in the west. Due to this rather nomadic existence, very few patriarchal documents or records exist from 1350-1550. The desperate Assyrian Christians themselves fled the Euphrates and Tigris river areas of Mesopotamia for mountainous Kurdistan and Iranian Azerbaijan. Perhaps because it was impossible to send out new bishops to the farther Assyrian Christian dioceses in the chaos after 1335, these communities dwindled even further under intense pressure and many converted to Islam.⁶⁵⁰

Just as some Assyrian Christians had sought protection in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem prior to its collapse in 1291, so too now many Assyrian Christians found refuge in Latin Cyprus. William of Boldensele still notes their presence in Jerusalem in 1336, however, while James of Verona observed them in Cyprus in 1335, the same year that the priest Ṣlibā, son of Yōḥannān, of Mosul copied a manuscript in Famagusta. In 1340, under intense pressure from the Latin authorities, the Assyrian

⁶⁴⁹ Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 18, citing a colophon in MS Mingana Syriaque 561C. Also see: Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, 3:502; and, Fiey, *Chrētiens Syriaques*, 83.

⁶⁵⁰ Baumer, *Church of the East*, 232-3; and Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 18 and 346.

Metropolitan Eliyā of Cyprus wrote a Roman Catholic profession of faith, though as in earlier cases, it is unlikely that this profession had a lasting effect.⁶⁵¹

COPTS

Brother Simon Fitzsimons, along with fellow Latin clergymen, encountered some Coptic clergy in Alexandria and had an extensive conversation with them. It is unclear whether he sought them out or his guide arranged the meeting, but it is not unlikely that he met them whilst visiting local churches or shrines. Later in his travels, for example, he encounters a rather ecumenical scene in Matarieh, to the north of Cairo, at a vineyard distilling balsam, where Joseph, the Virgin Mary, and the Christ-child [the Holy Family] were said to have rested. Every Saturday, a vigil was held by Latin pilgrims, Jacobites ‘and other schismatics’, and even Saracens.⁶⁵² Brother Simon seems to have a mixed view of the Copts, expressing both approval and disapproval. As a priest, likely meeting non-Latin Christians for the first time but likely reading or hearing about them previously, it is not surprising that he would have been most interested in theological similarities and differences. He recorded:

The Jacobites, of whom we spoke, admit circumcision and believe and affirm that in Christ there is but one will, which they prove from the Gospel with: ‘my

⁶⁵¹ Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 63, 66, and 67. James of Verona also noted their presence in Jerusalem. The ‘Nestorians’, wrote James, follow the Greek Tradition in many ways – although with Jewish influences – but are not circumcised. See: James of Verona, *Liber peregrinationis*, 218.

⁶⁵² Fitzsimons, ‘Itinerary’, 30-31.

will is not mine, but his who sent me'; also they say children are not given grace in baptism and a child is, therefore, not baptised by them except in danger of death, but only adults, to whom they give communion of the body and blood of Christ, by which grace is infused; and always they make on themselves the sign of the cross with one finger, namely, the index: who, although they err in many ceremonies in regard to the rite which the church of Rome now holds, yet in other essential articles of the faith they in no way err, but they believe well, as they in dispute with us privately and publically confessed: between whom and the Greeks, but also between us, regarding the procession of the Holy Ghost there is ever controversy; whom they consider infidels, in no way consecrating the body of the Lord, for this that they consecrate in leavened bread; hence on the altar on which a Greek celebrates, rarely if ever will the Jacobite celebrate. And their priests, as those of the Greeks, are all married, except the monks who live according to the rule of the Blessed Macarius, who live in the desert in great numbers, leading a strict and almost inhuman life: all of whom, as their other priests, in the solemnities of the Mass devoutly make most long office, which is very different and distant from the rite of the Roman Church, reading the epistles and gospels in two languages, to wit, in the Ethiopian tongue or the Saracen, which is to them what the Latin tongue is to us, and whose elements participate much of the elements and figures of the Greeks, and in the Arabic tongue of the Saracen, which accords much with the tongue of the guttural Hebrews, although the elements are entirely different and in nothing agreeing; and they use bread and wine in great quantity, because in every Mass there are standing around the altar seven or eight, sometimes more sometimes less, and especially on Sundays or festivals, in the midst of whom usually stands the Patriarch, as the type of Christ, or another in his place; who all from his hand receiving eat the living bread and unworthily drink from the chalice of the Lord, and without a doubt take to themselves judgment, since they never confess, for it is written in *James* [chapter] XI 'Confess to one another your sins'. They also marry indifferently in grades by the church forbidden, and they have many other ceremonies, which for the nonce we commend to silence.⁶⁵³

⁶⁵³ Fitzsimons, 'Itinerary', 17.

Although Brother Simon's understanding of Coptic theology may not have been exactly correct and clearly reflects his Latin biases, his observations of Coptic liturgical practice are useful and provide an image of their state in 1322-3.

In Cairo, he has much to say both about some of the famous churches as well as insight into the situation of the Copts a few years later. He first of all lists the 'very beautiful and pleasing' Church of Saint Mary of the Cave, where the Holy Family hid for seven years when they fled from Herod's infanticide in Palestine. It was here that his companion, Brother Hugh, was buried on 22 October 1323 following a five-week bout of 'ague and dysentery'. Interestingly, he died 'in the house of one Saracen', and as one assumes this was a physician, it is possibly a demonstration of Mamlūk efforts to increase the number of Muslim physicians vis-à-vis *dhimmī* physicians, and at the least is an interesting comment on Muslim-Latin Christian relations.

Another church mentioned by Brother Simon is the Church of Saint Barbara. As previously mentioned, this church had been destroyed a few years earlier in 1318, while her relics were of especial interest to the king of Aragon. Brother Simon notes that her body 'is said' to be preserved there, and goes on to say that the church had had no clergy since at least the persecution in 1321. In this same account he records the martyrdom of two Copts – 'as we understood' – in Cairo. One was decapitated, while the 'junior was nailed to the tree of the cross, and he was carried on a camel in a ferocious manner throughout the city to the terror of the Christians.' Everywhere he was taken, goes the account, he preached 'Christ crucified' and condemned Islam. This,

of course, enraged the Muslims, who took him down and cut him in pieces with a sword, later burning him to prevent the collection of his body by the Copts.⁶⁵⁴

He also describes the Patriarchate of the Copts at the Church of Saint Mary of the stairs. One ascends to the church via a stairway from which, according to tradition, the Virgin Mary spoke to a certain 'beloved' Copt on the situation of the Copts during a period of great persecution. It is here that 'a certain Jacobite monk, the patriarch of the Jacobites [John]...extends his hand in alms to the poor and pilgrims from a sense of piety as the aforesaid Patriarch.'⁶⁵⁵

After grieving the death of his traveling companion, Brother Hugh, Brother Simon gained the help of a Genoese merchant, whose four dragomans ('assisting interpreters') are 'although renegades in word, yet in the fullness of the mind they embrace with devout arms Christ the true God.' His definition of 'renegades' is enlightening and broader than one might think. The senior and principal dragoman was of 'Roman rite, and poor by profession, called brother Assedinus, with whom lived a brother called Peter, a soldier of the Templar Order, a renegade and married; likewise the other two, the juniors, are Italians and of the Jacobite rite; all of whom are very courteous and to the poor and pilgrims very beneficent and useful, for they are rich and

⁶⁵⁴ Fitzsimons, 'Itinerary', 34.

⁶⁵⁵ Fitzsimons, 'Itinerary', 35. This is the al-Mu'allaqah Church. See: Charalambia Coquin, 'Church of al-Mu'allaqah', *CE*, 2:557-60; Iris Habib El Masri, trans., *The Church of the Blessed Virgin known as al-Moallakah* (Cairo, 1978).

great lords...⁶⁵⁶ Elsewhere, when one reads of ‘renegades’, one automatically thinks of those Franks such as the former Knights of Rhodes, mentioned above, who became Muslims and very hostile and damaging to Christians. Here, however, we see those described as ‘renegades’ who either consider themselves still of the Latin Church or as converts to the Coptic Church. Perhaps they married Coptic women, or it is also possible that they are either very loose with their religious identification or are even simply telling Fitzsimons what he wants to hear.

The Coptic pope during Brother Simon’s sojourn in Egypt was John IX, mentioned earlier in connection with the events of 1321. His successor, the eighty-second Coptic pope, was Benjamin (1327-39). The *History of the Patriarchs* informs us that he was from al-Dimikarat (or ‘Democrad’) in the Sa’id (i.e. Upper Egypt), and at the time of his election was a monk living at the Mountain of Tūra. During his reign, the new governor was Sharaf al-Dīn al-Nashwa ibn al-Tag. Because of him, ‘there befell him (the patriarch) many adversities. And they insulted the women and their children and the monks and the nuns and the bishops.’ In time, however, al-Nashwa was punished for his evil deeds and died, in ‘retribution from God’, insists the account.⁶⁵⁷

Near the beginning of Pope Benjamin’s reign, in 1328 A.D., the Copts petitioned Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad seeking permission to rebuild the Church of Saint Barbara,

⁶⁵⁶ Fitzsimons, ‘Itinerary’, 39.

⁶⁵⁷ *HPEC*, 3.3:232-3. Cf. Renaudot, *Historia Patriarcharum Alexandrinorum*, 607.

which he permitted. However, according to al-Maqrīzī, they rebuilt it better than it was prior to its destruction. This angered a group of Muslims, who complained to the sultan that the Christians had added a new building. This, of course, is an allusion to the Muslim policy that no new churches were permitted except those present prior to the Islamic Conquest, nearly seven hundred years prior, in this instance. This policy, of course, was much open to abuse. In response to the complaint, the sultan ordered Amīr ‘Alam al-Dīn Sinjir al-Khāzin, the *walī* of Cairo, to demolish any additions to the church. At the church, however, many Muslims were gathered. Al-Khāzin was unable to disperse the crowd and, despite the sultan’s orders, they destroyed the entire church in a short time and built a *miḥrāb* (a pulpit), called for prayer, and read the Qur’ān – essentially confiscating the church as a mosque. The Christians complained to the *musālima* Karīm al-Dīn – the sultan’s confidant – who became very angry and managed to persuade the sultan to demolish the pulpit. For the Muslim al-Maqrīzī, the situation was resolved.⁶⁵⁸ While the sultan’s decision ultimately prevented the church from becoming a mosque, it was not, on the other hand, restored to the Copts, or at least not immediately. This reflects a long-term problem for the Copts, or any persecuted minority, when property is constantly confiscated – or members convert to Islam – and they are not able to be replaced. This problem would be magnified with devastating consequences a decade after al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad’s death. That said, however,

⁶⁵⁸ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, 4.2:1062; Tagher, *Christians in Muslim Egypt*, 160-61; Quatremère, *Mémoires Géographiques*, 2:250-1. Niccolò of Poggibonsi described the church about 1349 as ‘very beautiful’ and confirms the presence of Saint Barbara’s relics. Niccolò of Poggibonsi, *A Voyage Beyond the Seas*, trans. T. Bellorini and E. Hoade (Jerusalem, 1945), 96.

regarding the Church of Saint Barbara and her relics, Ludolph von Suchem, traveling about 1336, records that her entire body was still present for veneration in his time. He notes that ‘many kings and princes begged’ for these relics, but the Sultan never disturbed her relics ‘out of consideration for the comfort of captive Christians’.⁶⁵⁹ He does not, of course, clarify just where her body was located.

Other events during Pope Benjamin’s reign were, perhaps, more positive. He managed to rebuild the Monastery of Saint Abba Beshoi (Pshoi or Ibshai) in Scetis from his own funds.⁶⁶⁰ During his reign, the relics of Saint Menas were translated from Maryūt to Cairo.⁶⁶¹ Athanasios, Bishop of Šuṭb, is noted as having attended the Services of the Concoction of the Chrism by the Patriarch in 1320 and 1330, so it is evident that major liturgical functions were yet operating as normal. Whether this occurred at the patriarchal residence in Cairo or at a monastic retreat, however, is unclear.⁶⁶² There is also evidence of a certain amount of scholarship from this period, as an introduction to the Pentateuch was written in Arabic with the Coptic date (‘After Martyrs’) of 1053-4, which corresponds to A.D. 1337-8. This text has later notations in

⁶⁵⁹ Ludolph von Suchem, *Description of the Holy Land*, 71.

⁶⁶⁰ *HPEC*, 3.3:233.

⁶⁶¹ Meinardus, Otto F.A., ‘The Martyria of Saints: The Wall-Paintings of the Church of St. Antony in the Eastern Desert’, in ed. Sami A. Hanna, *Medieval and Middle Eastern Studies in Honor of Aziz Suryal Atiya* (Leiden, 1972), 311-43, at 330, citing A. Khater, ‘La Translation des Reliques de Saint Menas,’ in *Bulletin de la Société d’Archéologie Copte* 16 (1961-2), 163. Khater’s source, in turn, is MS. 60 of the Coptic Orthodox Patriarchal Library.

⁶⁶² Meinardus, ‘The Martyria of Saints’, at 334, citing H. Munier, *Recueil des Listes Épiscopales de l’Église Copte* (Cairo, 1943), 29; Lantschoot, ‘Le MS. Vatican Copte 44’, 229-30, ft. 2.

Syriac and Kārshūnī, which reinforces Coptic-Syrian Orthodox connections.⁶⁶³ The Patriarch Benjamin died after nearly twelve years in 1339 and was buried at the Monastery of Shahran. His successor, the ‘virtuous’ Peter (Butrus), ‘a chief’ at the Monastery of Shahran, became the eighty-third Coptic patriarch in 1340, ruling till 1348. All that the *History of the Patriarchs* relates is that ‘his days were peaceful’.⁶⁶⁴

Although Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad had cancelled the Coptic ‘Feast of the Martyr’ back in 1303, he reinstated it in 1338. Why did he do this? Apparently, he wished to distract and entertain some friends. At a certain point in 1338, the Amīrs Yalbughā al-Yahyāwī and al-Tanbūgha Mārdīnī asked the Sultan for permission to go hunting and to absent themselves from court for a while. The Sultan, however, who greatly enjoyed their company, could not bring himself to let them go, and so to divert them from their purpose, he announced that he was going to restore the Feast of the Martyr. This ancient Coptic festival, despite its core religious *raison d’être*, apparently attracted many Muslims and was known for excessive vice (at least, according to a pious Muslim historian). The festivities lasted three days and were exceptionally expensive.⁶⁶⁵ Although the Sultan’s motives were, perhaps, selfish, it is almost certainly likely that the Coptic communities reacted with great rejoicing to the reinstatement of

⁶⁶³ Cambridge, MS. Add. 3289, in Wright, *Catalogue Cambridge*, 2:939-43, at 940. Kārshūnī/Garshuni means Arabic words in Syriac script.

⁶⁶⁴ *HPEC*, 3.3:233; Renaudot, *Historia Patriarcharum Alexandrinorum*, 607.

⁶⁶⁵ Bouriant, M.U., *Description topographique et historique de l’Égypte*, Series: *Mémoires Publiés par les Membres de la Mission Archéologique Française au Caire*, Vol. 17 (Paris, 1895), 1:195-6; Tagher, *Christians in Muslim Egypt*, 148. Aziz S. Atiya does not mention this event, attributing the festival’s reinstatement to Sultan al-Nāṣir Ḥasan in 1354. See: Aziz S. Atiya, ‘Martyr, Feast of the’, *CE*, 5:1547-8.

their ancient festival, which he had announced throughout the country. This is especially true given the spate of violent persecutions that had occurred in the previous decades. Whatever the atmosphere at the Mamlūk court, Hitti, though not providing the documentation, argues that ‘...the end of [Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad’s] reign in 1341 may be considered as marking the extinction of an effective Christian presence in the valley of the Nile.’⁶⁶⁶ The pressure on Coptic communities was certainly immense during this period, but their numbers and presence would remain throughout Mamlūk Egypt, especially in urban areas and in Upper Egypt.

NUBIANS

Brother Simon Fitzsimons described the presence of one group of Christian slaves of the Sultan, called Gazani, who have a small chapel near the centre of Cairo, in which the Latin friars at times celebrated Mass.⁶⁶⁷ He notes that there are also many other Christian slaves or captives in the Mamlūk Empire and who, in Brother Simon’s opinion, ‘many of them in regard to the necessaries of life, are better off there than they were in their native land; yet it is for them the height of sorrow, that they cannot return to their fatherland, nor observe the Sundays, because the Saracens observe Friday, as already said, to which they must of necessity conform.’⁶⁶⁸ There are also slaves for sale of every sect, and especially the Indians, Schismatics, and Danubians

⁶⁶⁶ Hitti, ‘Impact of the Crusades on Moslem Lands’, 55.

⁶⁶⁷ Fitzsimons, ‘Itinerary’, 35-6.

⁶⁶⁸ Fitzsimons, ‘Itinerary’, 36.

[Nubians]... because these with the Arabs and Danubians always war, and when they are captured, get off by ransom or sale.⁶⁶⁹ These ‘Danubians’, or Nubians, are distinguished by the long scars on their faces, which they burn with a hot iron ‘believing themselves thus to be baptized by fire...and to be from the filth of sins purged by fire.’ In the cities, they are too numerous to be counted, and if they are converted to Islam are ‘worse to the Christians than the Saracens, as are also the renegade knights of Rhodes’. Apparently, they stoned Brother Simon and his party ‘and youngsters of the Jewish race badly, and in the desert tried to kill us, that day we directed our steps from Kayr towards Jerusalem’.⁶⁷⁰

James of Verona, a decade later, demonstrated some of the geographical confusion common amongst Europeans at that time between Ethiopia, or Abyssinia, Nubia, and India, which they often understood to be identical, or approximate. He noted the presence of ‘Jabeni’ or ‘Jabes’ who were black and of the great province of India, devout, and hold the way of the Nubian. The Nubians were black, from the province of Nubia, near Ethiopia, and controlled one of the four rivers of paradise (the ‘Gyon’). James maintained that they controlled the Nile River and as they could block the Nile’s flow into Egypt, the sultan feared them. Like the ‘Jabeni’, the Nubians have three baptisms: circumcision, the branding of the Cross, and thirdly the baptism of water.⁶⁷¹ Writing at about the same time, Ludolph von Suchem observed from

⁶⁶⁹ Fitzsimons, ‘Itinerary’, 36.

⁶⁷⁰ Fitzsimons, ‘Itinerary’, 37.

⁶⁷¹ James of Verona, *Liber peregrinationis*, 218.

Bethlehem that in his time ‘the Nubians had not as yet any place of their own, but the Soldan had a chapel especially built for them.’⁶⁷² In Jerusalem, he noted that Mount Calvary is ‘formed of exceeding hard rock, and beneath the mount is the chapel of the Nubians, cut out of solid rock.’⁶⁷³ This speaks to the Nubian monastic presence in the Holy Places, of course, but it also leads one to wonder if this sympathetic treatment of the Nubians (as it is reasonable that Ludolph could have grouped Nubians and Ethiopians together) had any relation to diplomatic considerations with Ethiopia. After all, as James of Verona recorded, the Ethiopians supposedly had the power to cut off the Nile, something that the sultan feared. This policy could also, perhaps, be related to Egypt’s eventual annexation of the Nubian kingdom of Makuria.

ETHIOPIANS

Given the long tradition of Nubian and Ethiopian intercession on behalf of the persecuted Copts, it is no surprise to learn that the persecution of 1321 elicited a similar response. In this case, the Ethiopian Negus Amdā-Şiyon purportedly wrote a letter to al-Nāşir Muḥammad in December 1325 threatening to destroy mosques in Ethiopia and to block the flow of the Nile if the sultan did not repair the damaged churches and protect the Copts. The sultan was not, apparently, very impressed, and

⁶⁷² Ludolph von Suchem, *Description of the Holy Land*, 93-7.

⁶⁷³ Ludolph von Suchem, *Description of the Holy Land*, 103.

nothing came of this letter.⁶⁷⁴ Regardless, the situation had eased somewhat for the Copts of Egypt.

Perhaps the central theological debate in the Ethiopian Church at this time was the question of observing the (Jewish) Sabbath as well as Sunday (the Christian day of resurrection).⁶⁷⁵ The central figure in this controversy was a monk named Éwoṣṭatéwos (ca. 1273-1352). In about 1337, in the wake of significant opposition by both the Negus, Amdā-Šiyon (1314-44), and the Church, he and a number of disciples left Ethiopia and journeyed via Nubia to Cairo.⁶⁷⁶ In Egypt, Ethiopian monks mainly resided at the monasteries of Saint George in Ḥārit Zuwaylah in Cairo, Saint John in the Wādi Natrūn, and one in Qesquám.⁶⁷⁷ Here, other Ethiopian pilgrims accused him of his Judaizing beliefs and separatist position and he generally received a hostile reception. The Coptic Patriarch Benjamin, whom he met, encouraged him to be reconciled, but Éwoṣṭatéwos condemned the pope as well for not observing both Saturday and Sunday and went his way. En route to Jerusalem, he and his followers

⁶⁷⁴ Quatremère, *Mémoires géographiques*, 2:275.

⁶⁷⁵ Apparently, the practice of according religious equality to both the Sabbath and Sunday was introduced by a relative of Tāklā Haymanot named Qewstos some decades earlier and was since then a major source of controversy. See: Sellassie, *Ancient and Medieval Ethiopian History*, 280 and 284.

⁶⁷⁶ *Acta Sancti Eustathii*, Latin trans. Boryssus Turaiev, *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, Scriptores Aethiopicæ*, Vol. 21 (Rome, 1906), 43-6; Tamrat, *Church and State*, 206-7; 'Ewoṣṭatewos', in Uhlig, *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*, 2:469-72. The hagiography states that the king of Nubia came out with his army to show honour to Éwoṣṭatéwos.

⁶⁷⁷ Zotenberg, Herman, *Catalogue des Manuscrits Éthiopiens de la Bibliothèque Nationale* (Paris, 1877), 32-6. The Ethiopian monastic presence in Ḥārit Zuwaylah and Qesquám was much more prominent after the fourteenth century and may have been a later development as formal institutions. On Ethiopians at the Monastery of Saint John, see: White, *Monasteries of the Wādi 'N Natrūn*, Part 2, 395-6.

stopped at the monasteries of the Wādi Natrūn, where they were apparently shackled for his outspoken teaching on observance of the Sabbath. Eventually, he arrived in Jerusalem and continued on to Cyprus and finally to Armenia, where he died fourteen years later.⁶⁷⁸ Some of his disciples returned to Ethiopia following his death, accompanied by at least one Armenian monk. They probably brought with them a number of books obtained during their travels, and soon began actively writing in support of their views. This was, says Taddesse Tamrat, ‘a decisive landmark in the cultural renaissance of the whole of the Ethiopian Church.’⁶⁷⁹

GEORGIANS

Shifting back to the Il-Khānate and Mesopotamia, the destabilization that occurred in the Persian lands during the first decades of the fourteenth century of the Il-Khānate allowed for the reestablishment of local and regional authority. Giorgi V (1314-46), king of Georgia and Viceroy of the Il-Khān, began to reassert his authority after 1318 over his fragmented country. He was known as ‘George the Brilliant’, as much for his administrative skills as his military accomplishments. However, following the death of the Christianophile Amīr Choban in 1327, Giorgi became dispossessed of

⁶⁷⁸ *Acta Sancti Eustathii*, 49-66. Amdā-Šiyon is the first Ethiopian king recorded as a benefactor to the Ethiopian monastic library in Jerusalem. See: Tamrat, *Church and State*, 251.

⁶⁷⁹ Tamrat, *Church and State*, 207-10.

Tiflis and Eastern Georgia. He did, however, reunite and stabilize Western Georgia.⁶⁸⁰

The close relationship between Georgia and the powerful Amīr Choban is attested to by al-‘Umārī:

The army of the Georgians is the kernel of the religion of the Cross and a people of courage and valour. They are a support and a reserve for the Hulaguid army, who trust in them and rely on them. Especially the family of Jūbān [Choban] and his sons and the remainder of their descendants, owing to the past kindnesses of Jūbān to them [the Georgians] and the favours he bestowed on them, which were gratefully appreciated.⁶⁸¹

In fact, a stone carving dating between 1319 and 1335 in Ani, the ancient Armenian capital then under Georgian administration, decrees that the crippling taxes which had hitherto been laid upon ‘the city of Ani and other provinces of Georgia’ were lifted during this period, thanks doubtlessly to the efforts of King Giorgi before 1327.⁶⁸² Al-Qalqashandī (d. 1418) argued that the importance of Georgia in the early 1300s was connected both to the friendship of Choban as well as its position on the frontier with the territories of the Golden Horde. Thus, when Ilkhānid rule ended in Persia and their aggression checked, the form of diplomatic address used at the Mamlūk court for the king of Georgia was reduced to a more modest style.⁶⁸³ Nonetheless, Georgia was still important as a transit point for Mamlūk slaves, and coupled with the Georgian

⁶⁸⁰ Lang, D.M., ‘Georgia in the Reign of Giorgi the Brilliant (1314-1346), in *BSOAS* 17 (1955), 74-91, at 75; Allen, *History of the Georgian People*, 121-2; Brosset, *Histoire de la Géorgie*, 1:644-9.

⁶⁸¹ Ibn Faḍlallāh al-‘Umārī, *al-Ta‘rīf bi’l-muṣṭalah*, ed. al-Droubi, 2:70, trans. Lang, ‘Giorgi the Brilliant’, 77. Cf. Brosset, *Histoire de la Géorgie*, 1:646, ft. 1.

⁶⁸² Lang, ‘Giorgi the Brilliant’, 80.

⁶⁸³ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-a‘sha*, 8:29.

reputation for military prowess assisted with gaining and maintaining their monastic privileges in the Holy Land.

Early in this period, a Georgian ambassador was received in Cairo in 1320 for the wedding of Sultan al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to a Mongol princess.⁶⁸⁴ The Georgian monastic presence in Mamlūk Palestine was still strong, as Brother Simon Fitzsimons found them at the Monastery of the Holy Cross when he visited in 1323. From Gaza approaching Jerusalem, he says ‘we came to a monastery, in which abide schismatic monks, the Cumani [Georgians], in whose church beneath the high altar is the place where was cut the most precious wood of the Cross, and which is distant one mile from Jerusalem.’⁶⁸⁵ James of Verona, in 1335, mentions Georgian monks at the Monastery of the Holy Cross, and, just earlier, in 1333, William of Boldensele says that Georgian monks were in possession of the Monastery of the Temptations (Quarentana), just to the west of Jericho.⁶⁸⁶ Ludolph von Suchem, about 1336, echoes William, saying that the Georgians had built a ‘fair hermitage’ there. He also relates that in his time, ‘the King of Gazara caused the road to be broken, so that the monks could not get down nor pilgrims get up, but when the Soldan heard of this he had the road well repaired, and granted leave to the monks to dwell there forever.’⁶⁸⁷ Ludolph does not

⁶⁸⁴ Lang, ‘Giorgi the Brilliant’, 80.

⁶⁸⁵ Fitzsimons, ‘Itinerary’, 43.

⁶⁸⁶ James of Verona, *Liber peregrinationis*, 222. James also stated that the Georgians were from a province in Mongol territory, though their king was powerful. They were devout Christians, but they followed Greek Tradition and did not use unleavened bread in the consecrated host nor elevate the Body of Christ (219). William of Boldensele, ‘Epistola’, 273.

⁶⁸⁷ Ludolph von Suchem, *Description of the Holy Land*, 115.

mention the Georgian Monastery of the Holy Cross per se, but only says that ‘one sees the place where (the wood of) Christ’s cross is believed to have grown’.⁶⁸⁸ He does, however, mention the Georgian presence in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre: ‘[T]here dwell in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre ancient Georgians who have the key of the chapel of the holy sepulchre, and food, alms, candles, and oil for lamps to burn round about the holy sepulchre are given them by pilgrims through a little window in the south door of the church, and if this should fail it remains without any light whatsoever...’⁶⁸⁹

From the Il-Khānate, the Georgians were well aware of the destabilizing consequences when royal authority was not respected. Central authority in the Mamlūk Sultanate, however, was much stronger. In 1329/30, Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad issued an edict stating that Georgian monks ‘complained of interference’ by local officials in Jerusalem and Palestine and that ‘they are not being treated according to the noble edicts in their hand.’ He furthermore directed that ‘care should be taken to treat them kindly and to deal with them according to the [Sultan’s] noble edicts in their hands without deviation from them...’⁶⁹⁰ Jerusalem had taken on a much more Islamic flavour under Mamlūk patronage, and local Muslims had greatly resented when the Monastery of the Holy Cross had been returned to Georgian

⁶⁸⁸ Ludolph von Suchem, *Description of the Holy Land*, 108.

⁶⁸⁹ Ludolph von Suchem, *Description of the Holy Land*, 105.

⁶⁹⁰ Unpublished document, trans. in Abu-Manneh, ‘Georgians in Jerusalem’, 105.

authority during the Sultan's second reign.⁶⁹¹ Therefore, that they were given trouble should be of no surprise. On the other hand, Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's response to their plea reflects his fair, yet pragmatic, reputation.

On another front, King Giorgi V received several letters from Pope John XXII – in 1321 and 1329 – in which the latter sought to bring the Georgian Church into the Roman orbit. The Georgian response was tepid at best, but the Catholic mendicants were allowed to establish themselves in Tiflis. Some Georgians converted to the Roman Catholic Church, as is evidenced by the example of the Franciscan Demetrius of Tiflis, who was martyred in India (Thana) in 1321 with his companions. In 1328, the pope transferred the see of the bishop of Smyrna to Tiflis, having heard of success by the mendicants in Georgia as opposed to repeated failure in Anatolia. The Dominican John of Florence was the first Latin bishop of Tiflis.⁶⁹² The Roman mission in Asia was two-fold: to convert the pagans and Muslims to Christianity, and to convert the Eastern Christians to Roman Catholic Christianity. From the Latin perspective, of course, their intent was to bring all Christians 'back' into papal submission. The issue of papal primacy was one of the most divisive issues between Latin and Eastern Christians, but the two advantages for the Roman Catholic missionaries was their high level of

⁶⁹¹ Indeed, dozens of Muslim religious buildings were erected, restored, or converted and endowed in Jerusalem as well as throughout the Sultanate. See: Lapidus, 'Mamluk Patronage', 179; Luz, 'Aspects of Islamization', 133-54; Michael Hamilton Burgoyne and Donald S. Richards, *Mamluk Jerusalem: An Architectural Study* (London, 1987); Donald S. Little, 'The Ḥaram Documents as Sources for the Arts and Architecture of the Mamluk Period', *Muqarnas* 2 (1984), 61-72, at 65-7.

⁶⁹² Richard, *Papauté et les missions*, 53-5; Michel Tamarati, *L'Église Géorgienne des origines jusqu'à nos jours* (Rome, 1910), 438-45. The papal letters are reproduced in full. Cf. Lang, 'Giorgii the Brilliant', 81.

education, on the one hand, and the uncertain situation faced by many Christians in the East. Desperate people seek allies, and the Pope was viewed – in theory, at least – as a powerful ally, indeed.

MARONITES

Nowhere is this more evident than the Roman Catholic relations with the Maronites. Little, however, is recorded about them during 1318-41. Perhaps they were still recovering from the Mamlūk invasions in the first decade of the fourteenth century. In 1322, John was elected as Maronite Patriarch upon the death of Simeon. He ruled between thirty-five and thirty-eight years. Assemani lists him as the ninety-seventh Maronite patriarch.⁶⁹³ The next decade, in 1336, the German Dominican William von Boldensele noted that there were about twenty thousand Maronites – still known as fierce archers – awaiting Crusader help to throw off the Mamlūk yoke.⁶⁹⁴ James of Verona found that there was little different between the Maronites and the ‘Jacobites’.⁶⁹⁵ Ludolph von Suchem, on the other hand, observed that Mount Lebanon is filled with ‘countless towns and villages, in all of which dwell Christians according to

⁶⁹³ Assemani, *Patriarcharum Antiochiae, Syro-Maronitam*, 53.

⁶⁹⁴ ‘In parte Libani prope Tripolim, quae vulgariter Montanea Nigra dicitur, commorantur circa 20 milia Christiani, ut dicitur, boni sagittarii ac viriles homines, passagium Latinorum plurimum affectantes; a jugo soldani plus quam alii Christiani desiderant relevari.’ William of Boldensele, ‘Epistola’, 285-6. Atiya interprets this to mean that William ‘had received assurances that the Maronites would fight with the Western Christians in the next Crusade against the Mamluks.’ But he may be confusing William with Ludolph von Suchem. See: Atiya, *Crusade in the Later Middle Ages*, 161.

⁶⁹⁵ James of Verona, *Liber peregrinationis*, 218.

the Latin rite, who daily long for the coming of the Christians (on a Crusade), and many of whose bishops I have seen consecrated after the Latin rite.’⁶⁹⁶ Elsewhere he echoes this, saying that at the foot of Mount Lebanon ‘dwells a vast multitude of Christians conforming to the Latin rite and the Church of Rome, many of whose bishops I have seen consecrated by Latin archbishops, and who ever long with singular eagerness for the coming of Crusaders and the recovery of the Holy Land.’⁶⁹⁷

MELKITES

Of the three Oriental Patriarchates of the Melkite/Greek Orthodox Confession, that of Antioch was the most populous. Cyril IV was elected Patriarch in 1316, but it is unknown exactly when he died, nor anything of significance regarding him. Conversely, documents indicate that his successor, Dionysios II died in 1322 in Cilicia, but we do not know exactly when he was enthroned. Dionysios II had been the bishop of Mopsuestia in Cilicia. The bishop of Damascus, Dâ’oud ibn al-Moutrân, enthroned in 1304, died in 1318 or 1319, and was succeeded by Abū al-Najm ibn al-Safī, who, like the patriarch, died in 1322. When the patriarch had died in 1322, another, Sophronios – known as the ‘monk of Tyre’ – was elected in Cilicia. Abū al-Najm, bishop of Damascus, hastily gathered a group of bishops and metropolitans to elect their own patriarch. Sophronios tried to reason with his competitor, but as he was afflicted with

⁶⁹⁶ Ludolph von Suchem, *Description of the Holy Land*, 48.

⁶⁹⁷ Ludolph von Suchem, *Description of the Holy Land*, 135.

various diseases, died in the month of July in 1323. About this time, the line of communication was cut off with Cilicia. Nasrallah argues that Karalevskij's suggestion that a legate of Sophronios was present at the synod held against Barlaam the Calabrian in the summer of 1341 is inaccurate, being based upon the unreliable testimony of Nil of Rhodes. In fact, none of the Melkite patriarchs were present, nor represented. Sophronios was fluent in Syriac, Greek, and Arabic, and while few of his flock understood Greek to any degree (and thus not the services), there were many in his patriarchate adept at Syriac. He therefore translated most liturgical books into Syriac. Sophronios' successor, Joachim, died in 1344, so the former must have died before then, but we do not know exactly when.⁶⁹⁸

Much of what we know from this period can be discerned from pilgrimage literature. In medieval *Bilād al-Shām*, there were few pilgrimage sites as well known as the Melkite Monastery of Our Lady of Şaydnāyā. Some, such as James of Verona in 1335, mention the Greek monastery at the House of Ananias (where the Apostle Paul received his sight and was baptised), while Ludolph von Suchem noted that in 'Damascus there are very many churches, both of Catholics and of heretics, and

⁶⁹⁸ Nasrallah, *Chronologie des Patriarches Melchites*, 10-12. He refers to N. Krasnoseltzev, *Свѣдѣнія о нѣкоторыхъ литургическихъ рукописахъ Ватиканской библиотеки (Notice of some Liturgical Manuscripts in the Vatican Library)* (Kazan, 1885), which I have been unable to locate. Papadopoulos' account of this period is incomplete and slightly conflicting as he lists the beginning of the reign of Ignatios II in 1341. He includes Cyril for 1316, and thereafter lists Dionysios II and Sophronios without their dates. See: Chrysostomos A. Papadopolus, *Ἱστορία τῆς Εκκλησίας Αντιοχείας (History of the Church of Antioch)*, (Alexandria, 1951), 962 and Appendix Χρονολογικος Πιναξ Πατριαρχων Αντιοχείας, μ'.

monasteries full of grace.⁶⁹⁹ Many more, however, sought out Şaydnāyā, despite the additional toil involved. This was true for indigenous Melkite Christians as well as for Western pilgrims. The Aragonese pilgrim G. de Treps, about 1323, gives a lengthy discourse on the famous miracle-working icon of the monastery of Saint Mary of ‘Sardona’, which he mistakenly places between Mount Tabor and Nazareth. As G. de Treps records a number of locations that he certainly did not visit, it is most likely that he is referring to Şaydnāyā.⁷⁰⁰ Although this was and is a Melkite monastery, it had been a well-known place of pilgrimage for many Latins (notably the Knights Templar) in the latter period of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem.⁷⁰¹

William of Boldensele, in 1333, described his time at the Greek Orthodox Monastery of Our Lady of Şaydnāyā, where he speaks of ‘the image of the Blessed Virgin of Sardanii’ (the *Shaghūra*). He describes the monastery as being more of a castle for defence, but with a very beautiful church. As to the image itself, although he is clearly devoted to the Virgin Mary, he is rather sceptical of the antiquity of the icon. He does note the continuous outpouring of ‘tears’ flowing from the icon, which is just enough to provide for all visitors. Both monks and nuns reside there, but William rather disdainfully dismisses them as schismatics from the Roman Church.⁷⁰² James of

⁶⁹⁹ James of Verona, *Liber peregrinationis*, 294; Ludolph von Suchem, *Description of the Holy Land*, 130.

⁷⁰⁰ Pijoan, ‘Un Nou Viatge’, 383.

⁷⁰¹ Hamilton, ‘Our Lady of Saidnaiya’, 207-215; Benjamin Z. Kedar, ‘Convergences of Oriental Christian, Muslim and Frankish Worshippers: The Case of Saydnaya and the Knights Templar’, in eds. Zsolt Hunyadi and József Laszlovszky, *The Crusades and the Military Orders: Expanding the Frontiers of Medieval Latin Christianity* (Budapest, 2001), 89-100.

⁷⁰² William of Boldensele, ‘Epistola’, at 284-5.

Verona, in 1335, also visited Şaydnāyā, which he confirms as in possession of Greek monks. Although he does not mention the indigenous Christians here, he does detail the architecture of the ‘fortress’ monastery and describes the devout reverence he felt as he touched the holy oil that flowed ‘day and night’ from the famous icon of the Virgin Mary.⁷⁰³

A couple of years later, William’s countryman Ludolph von Suchem also visited Şaydnāyā and provides a more sympathetic account. The well-fortified Monastery of Our Lady of ‘Sardenay’, located on ‘Mount Seyr’ according to Ludolph, was inhabited by Greek monks and nuns. Ludolph understood this monastery to have been built at the spot where Abraham offered Isaac up for sacrifice, but also recounts in detail the story of a woman hermit and how the miraculous icon associated with the monastery came to be. This account differs from the more common account of a Greek monk bringing the icon from Jerusalem, but one assumes that Ludolph heard this story via his interpreter, so perhaps it is a variation. Ludolph also has much to say about the *Shaghūra* icon. He describes ‘a figure of the Blessed Mary suckling her child, painted from the waist upwards upon a wooden tablet, and fenced with iron bars; but the painting is so black with age and kisses that one can scarce make out that it was a figure, beyond that a little red colour can still be seen in the clothing. Nevertheless, through this figure God hath wrought many blessings, wonders, and acts of grace... At length this picture plainly sweated oil, and the oil ran down into a little hollow made

⁷⁰³ James of Verona, *Liber peregrinationis*, 294-5.

in front of the picture, and does run into it to this day; but because of the number of pilgrims, the monks now eke it out with other oil and give it to pilgrims. But there is no doubt that the picture does sweat oil, and within a year this oil changes into milk, and the milk afterwards changes into blood, which I have often seen with my own eyes...⁷⁰⁴

In Ludolph's time, the monks and nuns of 'Sardenay' 'were always in especial grace and favour with the Soldan, who did them much good, and in everything protected them like a father. At the foot of the Mount Seyr there is a very great and fair village, wherein dwell Greeks and Syrians.'⁷⁰⁵ These latter two statements are especially interesting as Ludolph points to the Sultan's benevolence towards his Christian subjects (or, at least, certain ones), and also points to Greeks and Syrians dwelling together far removed from the coastal regions where Greeks had historically been more numerous. In reading Latin sources, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish what is meant by 'Syrian', but in this case he almost certainly means Arabic-speaking Greek Orthodox (the *Rumi* or Melkites). One wonders if all of the monastics were Greek and if there were not, indeed, Melkites amongst them? If a minority, it is likely that Ludolph could have overlooked them.

The situation of the Christians in Syria was still one of uncertainty, with instances of persecution. In 1340, a 'framed-up trial' was brought against Christians in

⁷⁰⁴ Ludolph von Suchem, *Description of the Holy Land*, 131-4.

⁷⁰⁵ Ludolph von Suchem, *Description of the Holy Land*, 134.

Damascus, with the charge of arson. According to Asnawī, a series of fires had damaged a minaret of the famous Umayyad mosque and some of its endowments. Under torture, a Christian confessed to the arson and provided the authorities with the materials. The account states that two monks (expert incendiarists) had recently arrived from Byzantium and – in conference with some leading Christians of the administration, prepared seven bombs (naphtha, etc.) and planted them with the expected results.⁷⁰⁶ Ludolph von Suchem records that, in 1341, ‘on Saint George’s Eve, there was a persecution and murder of Christians by the King [i.e. the Sultan of Damascus] and mob of Damascus...but the persecution did not last for more than a month, and by God’s grace was well avenged through the Soldan [of Cairo]...’⁷⁰⁷ The account of the ‘expert incendiarists’ sounds much like the events in Egypt in 1321, but whether these monks were inspired by the Cairene account and this is a reflection of Christian sentiment at this time is difficult to say. It is, indeed, just as possible that these monks did not exist nor advanced a vendetta via arson at all.

Moving on to the Melkites of Alexandria and Jerusalem, the young Andreas Libadēnos travelled to Egypt in either 1325 or 1326 as a secondary secretary (*hypogrammateus*) in a diplomatic embassy for Andronikos II and Andronikos III Palaeologos [ruling jointly]. His company landed at Alexandria and then travelled upon the Sultan’s permission to the Mamlūk court at Cairo, where they were well-

⁷⁰⁶ Perlmann, ‘Notes on Anti-Christian Propaganda’, 844 and 854, citing Zetterstéen, *Beiträge*, 209, and other sources.

⁷⁰⁷ Ludolph von Suchem, *Description of the Holy Land*, 130.

received.⁷⁰⁸ As Oikonomides notes, the central reason for the Byzantine embassies to Cairo – at least till the end of the thirteenth century and most likely also into the fourteenth – was to intercede with the Muslim authorities on behalf of the indigenous Christians.⁷⁰⁹ In any event, as a low-level secretary, Libadēnos was unlikely to be privy to the intricate details of the embassy. From Cairo, with the Sultan’s blessing, his party left for pilgrimage via horseback to the Holy Places in Palestine and the Sinai. They visited Jericho and Gaza, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, the Jordan, and then back to Jerusalem.

It is perhaps instructive to consider contemporary Byzantine piety as indicative of Libadēnos’ appreciation of those Holy Places he encountered. The North African traveller Ibn Baṭṭūṭa was visiting Constantinople in 1331 where he had a conversation with the former Emperor Andronikos II Palaiologos (1259-1332), who was now a monk (from 1328-32). The latter ‘took my hand and said...“I clasp the hand which has entered Jerusalem and the foot which has walked within the Dome of the Rock and the great church of the Holy Sepulchre and Bethlehem,” and he laid his hand upon my feet and passed it over his face. I was astonished at their good opinion of one who, though not of their religion, had entered these places. Then he took my hand and as I walked

⁷⁰⁸ Libadēnos, Andreas, ‘Βίος και Ἔργα’, *Αρχαίον* 1 (1975), 39-55, at 45-6; J. Dimitroukas, ‘Andreas Libadēnos’ travel to Egypt and Palestine and its description (1325 or 1326)’, in eds. Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala, et al, *East and West: Essays on Byzantine and Arab Worlds in the Middle Ages* (Piscataway, NJ, 2009), 277-84, at 278.

⁷⁰⁹ Oikonomides, N., ‘Byzantine diplomacy, A.D. 1204-1453: means and ends’, in eds. Jonathan Shepard and Simon Franklin, *Byzantine Diplomacy: Papers from the Twenty-fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine studies, Cambridge, March 1990* (Aldershot, 1992), 73-88, at 86.

with him asked me about Jerusalem and the Christians who were there, and questioned me at length.⁷¹⁰ This episode says something of Byzantine views of pilgrimage and the Holy Places of the *Terre Sancte*. Andreas Libadēnos and his companions were from a similar background as Andronikos and their interest and approach to the Christian sites in Egypt and Palestine were most certainly similar.

In Jerusalem, Libadēnos and his party were received by the patriarch, possibly Gregorios II (ca. 1322-?), and shown the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and other Holy Places. Near the Jordan, they visited the monasteries and hermits. Although much of Libadēnos' travel account is reflective of the biblical accounts and those of ancient Greek authors, he does complain about the Muslim dominance of Jerusalem and the poor situation of the Christians.⁷¹¹ Ludolph von Suchem, between 1336 and 1341, noted that the 'Lord's Temple' and Solomon's Temple (i.e. the Dome of the Rock) took up a 'great part of the city'. He also related that the 'Saracens suffer no Christian to enter this temple, and if they do enter they must either die or renounce their faith. This came to pass in my time, for some Greeks got in and trampled upon the Saracens' books. As they refused to renounce their faith, they were cut in two.'⁷¹²

A new dynamic in Jerusalem's ecclesiastical tapestry was the foundation of a permanent Latin presence by 1335. Efforts to establish Roman Catholic monastics in

⁷¹⁰ Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, *Travels in Asia and Africa*, 163-4.

⁷¹¹ Libadēnos, *Βίος και Έργα*, 47-9; Dimitroukas, 'Andreas Libadēnos' travel to Egypt and Palestine', 283. Following Athanasios as Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem was Lazarus (1334-68). Cf. Papadopoulos, *Ιστορία τής Εκκλησίας Έεροσολύμων*, 422-34.

⁷¹² Ludolph von Suchem, *Description of the Holy Land*, 98.

the Holy Places had intensified along with the surge in Frankish pilgrimage traffic in the 1320s. King James II of Aragon had again dispatched an ambassador to the Mamlūk court in 1327. Repeating previous requests to free Latin and, especially, Aragonese prisoners, James also asked for the establishment of Aragonese Franciscans at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, as opposed to his support for Dominicans but five years previously. He also sought a special permanent section in the Church for these Friars Minor, and a dwelling place for them nearby.⁷¹³ This petition would be followed up by a scion of Aragon, Sancia of Naples and her husband Robert ‘the Wise’ in negotiations with the Mamlūk court from 1332-6. By 1333 the Franciscans were permanently settled in the Holy Land with special rights in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Their privileges were expanded in 1336 to other churches in the Holy Land.⁷¹⁴ Privileges granted to Latins, of course, almost automatically were to the detriment of Greeks, Georgians, and other indigenous Christian religious, who either lost seniority or were even expelled completely to make room for the newcomers.

⁷¹³ Atiya, *Egypt and Aragon*, 53-60.

⁷¹⁴ Jotischky, ‘Medicants as missionaries and travellers’, 96; Sabino De Sandoli, *The Peaceful Liberation of the Holy Places in the XIV Century* (Cairo, 1990), 39-45 and more broadly, 36-59; Golubovich, *Biblioteca*, 4: 39-52, 225-6, 235-41, and 243; cf. Golubovich, *I Frati Minori nel Possesso de’Luoghi Santi di Gerusalemme (1333) e I Falsi Firmani Posseduti dai Greco-Elleni* (Firenze, 1922); Leonhard Lemmens, *Die Franziskaner im Heilige Lande*, Part I: *Die Franziskaner auf dem Sion (1336-1551)* (Münster, 1919). Sandoli comes across as rather polemical, despite his claims to the contrary, but perhaps this is inevitable. He refers to Sancia of Naples as ‘Sancha of Maiorca’ (39), while Golubovich calls her ‘Regine Sanxe, Aragonum’ (4:43).

A description of Jerusalem as the Franciscans would have found it is provided by the pious Muslim Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, who visited Palestine in the time of Libadēnos' mission (1326). He describes the Christian holy places in Jerusalem, recording:

Among the grace-bestowing sanctuaries of Jerusalem is a building, situated on the farther side of the valley called the valley of Jahannam [Gehanna] to the east of the town, on a high hill. This building is said to mark the place whence Jesus ascended to heaven. In the bottom of the same valley is a church [Tomb of the Virgin] venerated by the Christians, who say that it contains the grave of Mary. In the same place there is another church which the Christians venerate and to which they come on pilgrimage. This is the church [of the Holy Sepulchre] of which they are falsely persuaded to believe that it contains the grave of Jesus. All who come on pilgrimage to visit it pay a stipulated tax to the Muslims, and suffer very unwillingly various humiliations. Thereabouts also is the place of the cradle of Jesus which is visited in order to obtain blessing.⁷¹⁵

This commentary by a Muslim is informative. On the one hand, his scepticism is to be expected given his Muslim perspective. His observations on the key pilgrimage sites and on both the taxes to the benefit of the Muslims (or to the state) and its conversely 'humiliating' effect upon the Christians are also instructive. One wonders, though, just what he considers these other humiliations to be.

Back between 1327 and 1330, Anthony of Cremona, in his rather brief itinerary of his pilgrimage to the *terra sancta*, visited the 'monastery of the Greeks' dedicated to John the Baptist. It was located at the baptismal site of Christ on the bank of the

⁷¹⁵ Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, *Travels in Asia and Africa*, 57. Jotischky discusses pilgrims' payment of tribute to the Muslim authorities and notes that at least on one occasion, a pilgrim had to pay his toll to enter Bethany to Greek Orthodox monks. See: Jotischky, 'Mendicants as missionaries', 91.

Jordan, about four miles from Jericho and six from the Dead Sea. James of Verona, a few years later, expressed some surprise that he (a Latin monk) was greeted with great honour by the Greek monks there resident. He noted a strong Greek presence in Jerusalem and in monastic centres throughout the Holy Land.⁷¹⁶ Ludolph von Suchem also described a 'fair monastery' built in honour of the Baptist and inhabited by Greek monks who claimed to have the arm of the Saint. He recorded the experience of Epiphany (called Theophany in the East) at the site: 'All the Christians of the land, and even pilgrims from far-off lands, gather together at this place on the day of the Lord's Epiphany, and all read there in Latin the Gospel 'When Jesus was born in Bethlehem', etc., bless the water, and baptize the cross. All who have any sickness or disease then leap into the water, and most of them are healed of their infirmities in the sight of all men.' 'Beside the river Jordan there are very many monasteries of Greeks and schismatics, and hermitages full of grace.'⁷¹⁷ If Ludolph is accurate in his description, then Theophany by the Greek Monastery of Saint John the Baptist was quite an ecumenical affair. It seems rather unbelievable, however, that the liturgical service would have been conducted exclusively in Latin outside of an explicit Roman Catholic establishment or unless Latin monks were given precedence by the Sultan. It is more plausible, however, that the Gospel was read in Latin as well as in Greek, Syriac, and

⁷¹⁶ Antonius de Cremona, 'Itinerarium ad sepulcrum domini (1327-30)', ed. R. Röhricht, in ed. Herman Guthe, *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins*, 13 (1890), 153-74, at 159-60; and James of Verona, *Liber peregrinationis*, 214-15 and 218.

⁷¹⁷ Ludolph von Suchem, *Description of the Holy Land*, 119-20.

Arabic, and possibly in all the languages of those present, a common practice in Orthodox churches on certain Feast Days.

Several days journey south of this monastery, to the east and southeast of the Dead Sea, William of Boldensele in 1333 declared that there were about forty thousand Christians in his day living in the vicinity of Shawbak and Karak. He refers to these as *Christianorum scismaticorum* and as this was a Melkite area in the nineteenth century, it was most likely the case then as well. These two castles were, of course, Crusader strongholds for a time, but were now Mamlūk fortresses.⁷¹⁸ Ludolph von Suchem, a short while later, also speaks of the castle of Karak, although he mistakenly refers to it as Shawbak (Montreal). Ludolph says it is ‘the strongest castle in the world’ and a place of refuge for the Sultan, where he keeps his treasure and his son and heir. At the base of the castle is the village of Sabab, where Ludolph says a more modest six thousand Christians live, ‘earnestly looking for the Redeemer of the Holy Land’.⁷¹⁹ One is reminded of the exemption granted to Karak against imposing the sumptuary laws in 1301 due to the high proportion of Christians living in the area.⁷²⁰ An explanation for the different population numbers given by the two travellers is that William’s figure is for a much wider area than Ludolph’s, which is but for the one village.

⁷¹⁸ William of Boldensele, ‘Epistola’, 275. ‘Dicitur, quod sub castro in villa, quae Sobak dicitur, ac in terminis ejus Christianorum scismaticorum circa 40 milia commorentur de illis partibus oriundi.’

⁷¹⁹ Ludolph von Suchem, *Description of the Holy Land*, 119.

⁷²⁰ Al-Maqriṣī, *al-Sulūk*, 1.3:912.

Returning to the Patriarchate of Alexandria, the Anglo-Irish pilgrim Simon Fitzsimons, in Cairo in 1323, described the Greek Orthodox Church of Saint Michael the Archangel ‘where lives the...Patriarch of the Greeks [Gregorios II (1316-54)] who does much good for those going to Mount Sinai, giving advice and information on the way through the desert, and gloriously giving them sometimes letters of recommendation, which are very useful and necessary.’ The Monastery of Saint Katherine, so he has heard, is three days distant and has ‘at least’ a hundred monks. They possess the head of the Saint Katherine, from which ‘drips that life-giving oil even to this day.’⁷²¹

Saint Gregorios of Sinai, though originally from the Gulf of Smyrna, spent at least three years as a monk at the Monastery of Saint Katherine on Sinai (where he was tonsured). Although he ended up departing Sinai, his *vita* provides evidence for contemporary life at Saint Katherine’s. At another time, Gregorios had intended to go to Jerusalem from Lesbos and perhaps live the monastic life for a while, but was warned not to go there by another monk who had just returned from there on account of the difficulties faced by Christians. He spent a brief stint on Mount Lebanon about 1326 or 1327 seeking a suitable location to practice *hesychia*, which again suggests that there were other Christians there than just the Latin-affiliated Maronites. His travels also demonstrate the mobility afforded some Greek monks, at least, throughout the

⁷²¹ Fitzsimons, ‘Itinerary’, 34. On Gregorios II, see: Papadopoulos, *Ίστορία τῆς Εκκλησίας Ἀλεξανδρείας*, 575.

Eastern Mediterranean, as well as in practice the dissemination of information between different monastic communities.⁷²²

Other pilgrims to Mount Sinai and Saint Katherine's included Ludolph von Suchem, in about 1336, who says that his journey from Cairo took twelve days. He says that there is a castle in the Red Sea, guarding 'lest any Latin or man from this side of the sea or born in these parts should pass by it to India, lest they should bring home any tidings of the power and condition of the people in parts beyond the sea, or of Prester John and the Indians...' Nonetheless, Ludolph claims to know 'bishops and lords' who regularly send 'all kinds of news, across the Red Sea to Prester John'. It is fascinating that more than a century after the Franks were looking to the East for military assistance during the Fifth Crusade (1217-21), Latin writers still enthusiastically spoke of the legendary Christian king of the East and his endless resources.

In the Monastery of Saint Katherine, Ludolph says that there are 'more than four hundred Greek, Georgian, and Arab monks, both clerical and lay, who do not always abide in the monastery, but are scattered abroad here and there, working at the business affairs of the monastery. By great toil they get what is needful both for themselves and for pilgrims, and right faithfully distribute the same to pilgrims; they live most devout, strict, and chaste lives, in humble obedience to their Archbishop and

⁷²² Saint Gregorios' time on Mount Lebanon must have occurred after his departure from Thessalonica (1325), but before his arrival in Constantinople, for the Emperor was yet Andronikos II. See David Balfour, 'Saint Gregory of Sinai's Life story and Spiritual Profile', *Theologia* 53 (1982), 30-61, at 52-3 and 53, ft. 88.

prelates, dwelling in all holiness and righteousness in all things... They most devoutly celebrate Divine service daily and nightly according to their rite, and in all things follow the rule of St. Antony.' The relics of the martyr Saint Katherine were solemnly shown to pilgrims, and even 'Saracen guides and camel-drivers and grooms who come with the pilgrims earnestly beg that they, too, may be allowed to see these holy and wondrous bones, and kneel with the greatest devotion by the side of the Christians.' 'Moreover, in the monastery there are very many other venerable relics, yet the monks of the monastery could not exist there save by the especial grace of God, for divers[e] reasons caused by the instigation of the devil. For this cause there never is any jealousy or discord among them, but they are in favour with all who see them, as well with Saracens as with Christians, and especially with the Soldan, who is wont to bestow great alms upon them.'⁷²³ The Monastery, which possessed a precious permit allegedly from the Prophet Muḥammad, had long had generally good relations with the Muslim rulers of the Sinai (although the non-local Bedouin tribes could be quite troublesome). The monks also maintained connections both in Byzantine lands as well as the Latin West, ecclesiastically as well as receiving economic support and trade. Pope John XXII, in particular, maintained the tradition of papal protection to the Monastery and struggled diligently on their behalf against two successive Latin archbishops of Crete and interceded with King Hugh IV of Cyprus. Doubtless on Crete the monks were supported by the local Greek population, but the Venetian rulers also

⁷²³ Ludolph von Suchem, *Description of the Holy Land*, 82-6.

significantly supported the Siniuite *metochion* at Heraklion, and likely elsewhere.⁷²⁴

Byzantine Palaiologan artistic developments also continued to find their way to Saint Katherine's, which continued to have a local school of scribes and artists specializing in miniatures working in various languages at least until the 1330s and likely later.⁷²⁵ In many ways, then, Saint Katherine's was a unique bridge between East and West.

Although Ludolph's estimation of four hundred monks might be inflated, it is certainly possible, as the monastery was yet an oasis of stability in a sea of turmoil experienced by many other Christian monasteries at this time, particularly in Mamlūk Egypt and in the disintegrating Il-Khānate. This helps to explain the presence of (Arabic-speaking) Melkite monks, while the Georgian monks give evidence to the continued high state of Georgian monasticism at this time as well as their generally good relations with the Sultanate.

SYRIAN ORTHODOX

For the Syrian Orthodox, their experience during the period 1318-41 was not dissimilar to that of the Assyrian Church of the East. As the latter had lost (or soon would) most of its vast eastern range, their confinement to northern Mesopotamia was similar to the traditional territory of the Syrian Orthodox. There is not much recorded

⁷²⁴ Atiya, *Arabic Manuscripts of Mount Sinai*, xxv; Coureas, 'Orthodox Monastery of Mt. Sinai', 481-4; Tomadakis, 'Historical Outline', 16.

⁷²⁵ Weitzmann, Kurt, *Illustrated Manuscripts at St. Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai* (Collegeville, MN, 1973), at 26-7.

for the period 1318-41, and most of this comes from the continuator of Bar Hebraeus. The Patriarch at this time was Michael III Yesu (1312-49). In 1317, Rabban Matthew was consecrated as the Maphrian of Tikrīt, Mosul, and all the East at the Monastery of Mar Hananiah. He inherited great debts and after two years travelled to Tabriz where Syrian Orthodox faithful gave him many gifts. He was able to return to Bartelli, paid off his debts, and was thence honoured by the *amīr* and by the inhabitants. About this time, as described above, a great persecution arose against the Christians of the region by the sultan of Mosul, Ali Pasha. The churches were closed and the people suffered. But their restoration came when the sultan was killed in battle by Hadj Tadj ('Haghi Tag'). Also in this period, a dispute arose between the Maphrian Matthew and the Patriarch Ishmael in Mardin. Matthew forbade the proclamation of the patriarch in the East because, at the death of the previous patriarch Ignatios Baderzache (or Barvahib), Ishmael was not enthroned according to custom, which apparently included sending for the Maphrian that he might lay his hand on the patriarch's head in blessing – i.e. not acknowledging the important status of the Maphrian of the East. This disagreement lasted for about four years. The monks of the influential Monastery of Saint Matthew (near Mosul) pressured the Maphrian to be reconciled with the patriarch of Mardin, and the patriarch was again proclaimed in the East.⁷²⁶ Regardless, in the year 1333, Ignatios Baderzache died at the Monastery of Mar Hananiah near Mardin. He had reigned forty years, was educated in the ecclesiastical and philosophical disciplines, as

⁷²⁶ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, 3:498-504.

well as being versed in Syriac and Arabic. He was succeeded by John, son of John, brother of the preceding patriarch.⁷²⁷

There were several other Syrian Orthodox authors from this time. Cyril Simon Alini of Tūr Abdin, bishop of Ḥaḥ, was alive in 1333 and perhaps longer. He wrote a liturgy and several shorter texts.⁷²⁸ Bar Wuhayb, also known as Zakhi or Joseph Badr al-Din, son of Abraham, was a native of Mardin. He became a monk at the Monastery of Mar Ḥananya. Eventually, he became the metropolitan of Mardin (taking the name of Ignatios) and consecrated Patriarch of Mardin in 1293 and dying in 1333. He wrote texts on prayer, Syriac grammar, a liturgy, and a number of church canons.⁷²⁹ The monk Yeshu' Bar Khayrun, born in the village of Ḥaḥ, became a monk at the Monastery of the Virgin near Sidos before 1299. He was ordained a priest and then journeyed with his father, Ṣaliba, to Sayyida, or Qaṭra, Monastery 'in the mountain of Mardin', where he died on 19 August 1335. He wrote many poems, including one on the looting of the Church of the Forty Martyrs in Mardin and the destruction of the churches and monasteries of the East in 1333.⁷³⁰ 'Yeshu's father, Ṣaliba Bar Khayrun, was called as the '*Malphono* [teacher or grammarian] of the East'. He became a monk and priest at the Monastery of the Virgin Mary in Sidos following the death of his wife. He lived there at least until 1323, but also taught literature at the Qaṭra Monastery and

⁷²⁷ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, 2:789-792.

⁷²⁸ Barsoum, *Scattered Pearls*, 488.

⁷²⁹ Barsoum, *Scattered Pearls*, 488-9.

⁷³⁰ Barsoum, *Scattered Pearls*, 489-90; A. Vööbus, 'Īšō' bar Kīrūn. A Supplement to the History of Syriac Literature', *OCP* 38 (1972), 253-5.

transcribed manuscripts until 1340, dying sometime after this. He wrote a number of shorter works, but also revised and updated the calendar of festivals for the year for the Syrian Orthodox Church. Another scholar of this time was the Deacon 'Abd Allah, son of Barṣoum, son of 'Abdo of Barṭelli. He served as a secretary to the Maphryono of the East, Gregory Matthew I (1317-54), and also appended two historical texts that deal, amongst other topics, with the later Il-Khānate-Mamlūk wars.⁷³¹ These authors prove that, despite the devastating circumstances of the time, Syriac monks were still active with scholarship.

* * * * *

The period of 1318-41 was a great period of trial and tribulation for most of the indigenous Christians of the Near East. It was particularly difficult for the Copts in the early 1320s during the widespread outbreak of violence and persecution instigated by the 'ulamā' and 'amma but ultimately sanctioned by Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad out of fear for his own position. Further east, the Assyrian Church of the East became increasingly isolated in the Il-Khānate as all authority and stability collapsed. Nonetheless, Christian society in *Bilād al-Shām* and Egypt continued, as is testified to by the accounts of numerous European diplomats, travellers, and pilgrims.

⁷³¹ Barsoum, *Scattered Pearls*, 491.

CHAPTER 5: A Tale of Three Tragedies (1342-66)

At the death of Sultan al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad on 4 June 1341, the Mamlūk government entered a period of instability with some ten different sultans ruling over the next twenty-five years.⁷³² For the indigenous Christians, the death of the sultan did not immediately result in any significant changes in their situation. In Egypt, the climate continued to be one of hostility towards Copts, although the monasteries of the Wādi Natrūn were initially flourishing both in numbers of monks and in relative material prosperity. Nubian and Ethiopian monks continued to seek holiness and wisdom in monasteries of Egypt, the Holy Land, and Lebanon. The Armenian position continued to worsen as Cilicia was regularly bled of people and wealth by periodic Mamlūk invasions, although monastic communities continued in Jerusalem and elsewhere. Maronites were largely left to themselves in their isolation. Syrian Orthodox and East Syrian Christians generally retreated to their heartland in the Kurdish mountains of northern Mesopotamia as far as Cilicia. Georgians continued to enjoy monastic privileges in Jerusalem (albeit often in the face of local opposition) while the Melkites and Greek Orthodox hierarchy was largely distracted with theological debates in Constantinople. This inward focus was interrupted by three great disasters that would cumulatively reduce their communities by ever increasing numbers: (1) the Black Death of 1347-9; (2) the persecution and rescript of Sultan al-

⁷³² For an overview, see: Holt, *Age of the Crusades*, 120-7.

Şāliḥ Şāliḥ in 1354; and (3) the aftermath of the Crusade of Alexandria in 1365.⁷³³

These three events shall be the initial focus of this chapter, followed by an examination of the respective Christian Confessions.

THE BLACK DEATH (1347-9)

The Black Death first arrived in Egypt in the autumn of 1347 via a Genoese slave ship. Genoese merchants dominated the slave trade in the eastern Mediterranean, transporting them from the Crimea, in the Black Sea, to Egypt, where they were eventually trained in the Mamlūk army.⁷³⁴ Apparently, one of these ships, originally carrying thirty-two merchants and three hundred men, including slaves and sailors, arrived in Alexandria with only four merchants, one slave, and forty sailors still alive. These survivors, however, all died soon after. Egypt was then suffering from famine due to the Nile not rising as normal to flood the agricultural plain, and thus people were more susceptible to disease. The Black Death soon spread throughout Alexandria, onward to Cairo, and before long to Upper Egypt and beyond. It also spread eastwards to Gaza and then up the Syrian coast and into the hinterland.⁷³⁵

⁷³³ Beyond the scope of this thesis are the atrocities carried out by Timur Lang (Tamerlane) from about 1370 till his death in 1405. Although all in his wake suffered miserably, he had an especial hatred towards Christians, and the Syrian Orthodox, East Syrian Church of the East, the Armenians, and the Georgians, in particular, were severely decimated during his invasions. See: Moffett, *History of Christianity in Asia*, 1:480-8.

⁷³⁴ Ashtor, *Levant Trade*, 10-11.

⁷³⁵ Dols, Michael W., *The Black Death in the Middle East* (Princeton, 1977), 57-60; Irwin, *Middle East*, 134-8.

The Emperor John VI Kantakouzenos (co-regent 1347-54; rival 1354-5), whose son Andronikos died from the Black Death, thought that it had originated in amongst the Scythians (i.e. the Golden Horde) north of the Black Sea.⁷³⁶ Bubonic plague rapidly spread along mercantile routes throughout the eastern Mediterranean. In Cyprus, the Black Death struck in 1348, killing first animals and then children, followed by adults. Al-Maqrīzī reported that the Cypriots feared that with so many Christians dying that Muslims might take over. Therefore, they gathered together all of the Muslim slaves and prisoners and devoted an afternoon to executing them. In addition to the panic and dread caused by the plague, an earthquake and resultant tsunami destroyed a fleet of ships and also the olive groves.⁷³⁷ Plague in Cyprus in 1351 resulted in the abandonment of a military operation against the Turks or Mamlūks.⁷³⁸

Regarding population estimates, Ibn Taghribirdī lamented: ‘...I pondered about each epidemic which took place in previous generations and up to our own time [and I concluded that] the figures given were nothing but guesswork and conjecture, and I am ashamed to say, mere speculation’.⁷³⁹ David Ayalon has followed suit when analysing modern studies seeking to determine estimates, which is to say that it is very difficult

⁷³⁶ Kantakouzenos, John, *Eximperatoris Historiarum*, ed. Ludwig Schopen, *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae*, 4 Vols. (Bonn, 1828-32), 3:49; *The History of John Cantacuzenus (Book IV)*, ed. and trans. Timothy S. Miller, PhD Thesis, Catholic University of America, 1975, 86-9 and 185-8; C.S. Bartsocas., ‘Two fourteenth century Greek descriptions of the Black Death’, *Journal of the History of Medicine* 21 (1966), 394-400. He describes in detail the physical and psychological toll upon the populace.

⁷³⁷ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, 2.3:776, cited in Dols, *Black Death*, 58-9.

⁷³⁸ Dols, *Black Death*, 192.

⁷³⁹ Quoted in David Ayalon, ‘Regarding Population Estimates in the Countries of Medieval Islam’, *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 28 (1985), 1-19, at 10.

to know for certain what the population of Egypt and Syria was both before and after the Black Death.⁷⁴⁰ Michael Dols nonetheless relied upon Josiah Russell's population estimates when he estimated that the population of Egypt at the time of the outbreak of the Black Death stood at about 4 million – up from 2.4 million in the century-and-a-half since Saladin.⁷⁴¹ While it is most certainly wisest to refrain from tackling this thorny question, it is fair to estimate the percentage of demographic loss in Syria and Egypt at about one-third, which would be consistent with other areas.⁷⁴² An Armenian colophon, for example, from 1349, records: 'there occurred a severe famine and one-third of the inhabitants of Armenia fell victim to it; and after the famine was lifted, God's wrath again fell upon us, and there occurred a plague in all the land which took away half of the people...'⁷⁴³ Of one thing we can be sure, and that is that the Mamlūk Empire suffered a drastic demographic reversal as a result of the Black Death and subsequent outbreaks of plague. The Damascene writer Ibn Abī Ḥajala (d. 1375) – oft-quoted regarding the Black Death by al-Maqrīzī, Ibn Taghrībirdī, and others – recorded in 1362 (764 A.H.) that he had been reliably informed that between 25 October and 22 December 1348 some nine hundred thousand people had died just in Cairo. To this vast sum it should be noted that from 1347 until the end of the Mamlūk era in 1517

⁷⁴⁰ He has rejected the estimates put forth by A.N. Poliak and J.C. Russell (who are quoted by many others) as based upon ultimately unreliable data. See: Ayalon, 'Regarding Population Estimates', 1-17.

⁷⁴¹ Dols, *Black Death*, 149, citing Josiah C. Russell, 'The Population of Medieval Egypt', *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 5 (1966), 69-82, at 76.

⁷⁴² Irwin, *Middle East*, 135.

⁷⁴³ Trans. Sanjian, *Colophons*, 86-7.

there were 58 years that suffered plague outbreaks in Egypt and Syria. What's more, the Near East, unlike Europe, suffered more often from pneumonic plague, which unlike bubonic plague was nearly always fatal. The lack of manpower due to the plague in rural areas contributed to a decrease in irrigation upkeep and thus hastened a loss of agricultural production whilst simultaneously negatively affecting the flood levels of the Nile. Demographic decline was also caused by this destructive flooding of the Nile in some years, such as 1360, and lack of normal flooding in other years, both of which resulted in malnutrition and famine. Ibn Khaldūn noted as well that the art of medicine 'deteriorated' at this time as the population shrunk, as was also true in the skilled crafts.⁷⁴⁴

The Black Death resulted in the gross depopulation of rural areas and thus in decreased revenue from agricultural taxes. Additionally, agriculture became more difficult with increased Bedouin incursions and raids into the settled areas.⁷⁴⁵ The cities, in turn, declined as they relied upon the countryside both for sustenance as well as for a good measure of their income. At the height of the plague, the streets of Cairo were deserted, and even if there was food to be brought in from the country, there were few labourers to transport them. The caravanserais of Alexandria were forced to close from a lack of clients, including European merchants. Even more than the rural areas, the cities had a high density rate where plague could spread very easily and rapidly. Both Egypt and Syria also experienced urban depopulation as people

⁷⁴⁴ Dols, *Black Death*, 182-3, 223, 226, 231-2, 266-9; Borsch, *Black Death in Egypt*, 40; cf. Ayalon, 'Regarding Population Estimates', 5-6.

⁷⁴⁵ Dols, *Black Death*, 168 and 281.

abandoned the cities for safer areas, although they as often as not simply carried plague with them to their next destination. Al-Fuṣṭāṭ, effectively a suburb of Cairo, and noted for its important Christian population, was particularly hard hit, and large areas of the city were still vacant and falling into ruin in 1364.⁷⁴⁶

The plague was especially devastating to the Mamlūk army. As Ibn Taghrībirdī wrote about a later outbreak: ‘To us there came the pestilence, it suddenly was seen imported, did descend on him who eagerly it sought; For frequency of sinfulness, of wrong that had appeared, the Lord sent it especially on imports [meaning Mamlūk slaves] he had bought.’⁷⁴⁷ Their high mortality influenced the decline of the army, especially the Royal Mamlūks, who were confined to their barracks. Just as the Cypriot offensive of 1351 was cancelled due to plague, so too did the Mamlūks cease major offensives for a decade after the 1347-9 outbreak, so devastating was it.⁷⁴⁸ The Black Death reduced the value of the *iqṭā’s* – the military fiefs – and thus resulted in less income to the *amīrs* and Mamlūks and fewer to work the land. These *amīrs* increased taxes on rural areas and sought to confiscate the *iqṭā’s* of deceased Mamlūks; this, in turn, impoverished the countryside even more. The Sultan supported tax increases and other financial grabs in an effort to increase his support and popularity amongst the

⁷⁴⁶ Dols, *Black Death*, 172, 183, and 277-9. The city of ‘Babylon’ and al-Fuṣṭāṭ both predate al-Qahīra, the former a Persian and Roman fortress, the latter the original Arab fortress. Here, al-Fuṣṭāṭ also incorporated Babylon.

⁷⁴⁷ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *al-Nujūm al-zāhiraḥ fi mulūk Miṣr wa’l-Qāhiraḥ*, ed. and trans. William Popper as *History of Egypt 1382-1469 AD*, Part 6 (Berkeley, CA, 1960), 98.

⁷⁴⁸ Dols, *Black Death*, 192.

Mamlūk *amīrs*.⁷⁴⁹ In summary, the Black Death and subsequent outbreaks of the plague devastated the Mamlūk Empire – as it also affected their European, Turkic, and Mongol neighbours – and the Sultanate was left in a greatly weakened state lacking financial resources and manpower, and looking for any means of recovery.

So what effect did the Black Death have on the indigenous Christians? Surely, they did not suffer any differently than Muslims? Indeed, Michael Dols, in his fascinating study, has concluded that there is no evidence for Christians being more affected, nor for Muslim reprisals against Christians, blaming them for the Black Death (as happened sometimes in Europe against Jews).⁷⁵⁰ Nonetheless, the Black Death was devastating to the Christian communities and, in particular, to the Coptic monasteries in Egypt. The spiritual heart – and often times communal identity – of the Eastern Christian Churches has traditionally been in their monasteries. From Latin pilgrimage accounts, we learn of the rapid decline of many Christian monasteries during this period. For example, if we compare the prosperity observed by Niccolò Poggibonsi⁷⁵¹ from his 1347-49 account to that of Leonardo Frescobaldi in 1384, we find that some monasteries – such as the Monastery of Saint Gabriel near Hebron and the Monastery of the Desert of Saint John – had completely disappeared while others were but a

⁷⁴⁹ Dols, *Black Death*, 185-93, 275; Borsch, *Black Death in Egypt*, 41 and, in general, 40-54; cf. Linda S. Northrup, 'The Bahārī Mamlūk Sultanate, 1250-1390', in *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, Vol. 1, ed. Carl F. Petry (Cambridge, 1998), 242-89, at 262-3. David (Neustadt) Ayalon, 'The Plague and Its Effects upon the Mamlūk Army', *JRAS* 1 (1946), 67-73, is mostly concerned with the later Circassian Mamlūk period.

⁷⁵⁰ Dols, *Black Death*, 296.

⁷⁵¹ Who strangely does not mention the Black Death.

shadow of their former prosperity. In this latter category, the monasteries of the Wādī Natrūn between Cairo and Alexandria suffered terribly, perhaps only properly recovering in the modern period. As Michael Dols has commented: ‘The loss of population caused the abandonment of the Nile irrigation system, on which the life of the monasteries was largely dependent; consequently, severe famines took place in the latter fourteenth century.’⁷⁵² The effect of the Black Death on Coptic monasteries shall be dealt with in greater detail below.

THE RESCRIPT OF AL-ṢĀLIḤ ṢĀLIḤ AND THE PERSECUTION OF 1354

Donald Little regards 1354 as ‘a turning point in Egyptian religious history, as the point in time when the second great transformation of Egyptian religion became virtually complete.’⁷⁵³ The first great transformation was Egypt’s conversion to Christianity in the Late Antiquity, while the second transformation was, of course, the demographic dominance of Islam vis-à-vis Christianity. What has led Little to make such a statement? At the middle of the next decade, in 1354 (755 A.H.), the 17 year

⁷⁵² Dols, *Black Death*, 168.

⁷⁵³ Little, Donald P., ‘Coptic Conversion to Islam under the Bahrī Mamlūks, 602-755/1293-1354’, *BSOAS* 39 (1976), 552-69, at 569. For this section, see in particular: al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-a’shā*, 13:378-87; al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, 3.1:1-16; Urbain Vermeulen, ‘The Rescript of al-Malik aṣ-Ṣāliḥ Ṣāliḥ against the Ḍimmīs (755 A.H./1354 A.D.)’, *Lovaniensia Periodica* 9 (1978), 175-84; Butcher, *Story of the Church of Egypt*, 206-11; Northrup, ‘The Bahrī Mamlūk Sultanate’, 272-3.

old Sultan al-Ṣāliḥ Ṣāliḥ (who usurped the rule of al-Nāṣir Ḥasan from 1351-4) issued a rescript (*marsūm*) ordering the dismissal of all Christians from the government administration unless they forsook their religion and became Muslims. In the introduction to his rescript, he condemned the *dhimmi*s for circumventing the earlier rescript of Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in 1301 and accused them of wearing finery not in accord with the law and of behaving arrogantly above their station – charges which essentially repeat previous issuances. Coptic governmental employees were dismissed, including those who had converted to Islam (the *musālima*), as their conversions were suspected as being only ruses to maintain their positions.⁷⁵⁴ The other most successful role for Christians – that of the medical physician – was also taken from them at this time, as Christians and Jews as well were forbidden to practice medicine. An attempt by the Copts to have this order rescinded failed.⁷⁵⁵ In total, there were some twenty-

⁷⁵⁴ Vermeulen, 'The Rescript of al-Malik as-Salih Salih Against the Dhimmis', 177-9, citing al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-aʿshā*, 13:377-87; Aziz S. Atiya, *A Fourteenth Century Encyclopedist from Alexandria: A Critical and Analytical study of Al-Nuwairy al-Iskandarāni's 'Kitāb al-Ilmām'* (Salt Lake City, 1977), 29; Richards, 'Coptic Bureaucracy under the Mamlūks', 378; Butcher, *Story of the Church of Egypt*, 210. On the *musālima* see: Little, 'Coptic Converts to Islam During the Baḥrī Mamluk Period', 263-88; Perlmann, 'Notes on Anti-Christian Propaganda', 858-60.

⁷⁵⁵ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, 2.3:925, cited by Little, 'Coptic Conversion to Islam under the Baḥrī Mamlūks', 569, ft. 86. I was unable to locate *al-Sulūk*, Vol. 2, Part 3, but Professor Little has kindly re-examined and confirmed his citations.

five stipulations restricting Christians, including the strict enforcement of the *ghiyar*, the law of distinctive dress in which, most noticeably, Christians were forced to wear girdles around their waists and blue turbans.⁷⁵⁶

These restrictions were, for the most part, nothing new. However, one complaint common amongst Muslim writers was that Copts could simply pretend to convert to Islam outwardly, and thenceforth continue as before, if not oppressing ‘real’ Muslims even more under the protective guise of being a Muslim themselves. Under the rescript, however, no *dhimmi*s were to be employed in the government anywhere in Egypt, even if they did convert. And those who did become *musālima* were required to be observant, distance themselves from their Coptic brethren, and regularly visit the mosque.⁷⁵⁷ A central reason behind this measure was the matter of inheritance. In Coptic inheritance law, women were able to inherit up to one hundred percent of their husband’s or father’s property. In Islamic law, on the other hand, women would inherit from one-eighth to one-half. It had been noted amongst Eastern Christian writers (such as Michael the Syrian in the twelfth century) that women tended to convert much less often than did men. In the Coptic context, very often – in ‘single-generation’ conversion cases – men would transfer some or all of their wealth to their wife and children prior to their conversion, thus insuring the transmission of wealth

⁷⁵⁶ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-aʿshā*, 13:378-9; Vermeulen, ‘Rescript of al-Malik as-Salih Salih Against the Dhimmīs’, 177-9.

⁷⁵⁷ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, 2:924-5, cited by Little, ‘Coptic Conversion to Islam under the Bahārī Mamlūks’, 567-8.

both within their own family and within the Coptic community. Sometimes, they would forfeit their claim to property and it would thus revert to their parents and ultimately then directly to the grandchildren. The Rescript of 1354 sought to circumvent this avenue of security by forcing *dhimmīs* to adopt Islamic inheritance practices. Additionally, if a *dhimmī* died, all of his property immediately was claimed by the state and his heirs then had to prove their right to a percentage of the property (per Islamic law). The rest was confiscated by the state. Thus, the Copts were faced with a huge, nearly insurmountable problem that cut off their means of keeping wealth within the community.⁷⁵⁸

These restrictions were not simply an isolated event instigated by the Mamlūk authorities. Rather, the sultan was motivated by seeking to appease the Muslim *‘amma*, who were rioting, destroying churches in Cairo, attacking Christians and Jews (whose *perceived* status they resented), casting them into bonfires if they refused to speak the *shahādatayn* (the words said to become a Muslim), and demanding the government restrict Christians from government. This popular outbreak was, perhaps, in some ways a protest against the government itself with the Christians as both a symbol and an acceptable target. Additionally, the *‘amma’s* anger was riled up by the pamphlets, *fatwās*, and speeches of the *‘ulamā*, who were preaching an ever-increasingly anti-Christian rhetoric.⁷⁵⁹ Another cause of resentment amongst both the *‘ulamā* and the

⁷⁵⁸ El-Leithy, ‘Coptic Culture and Conversion’, 91-7.

⁷⁵⁹ Vermeulen, ‘Rescript of al-Malik as-Salih Salih Against the Dhimmīs’, 182 and 184; Little, ‘Coptic Conversion to Islam under the Baḥrī Mamlūks’, 561 and 567. Donald Little notes that whether or not

‘*amma* was the special status of European merchants and diplomats. By treaty, these Latin Christians were exempt from the usual sumptuary laws and were allowed potentially un-Islamic practices. For example, in 1355, the Venetian ambassador and consul were given authority to remove all beerhouses and rowdy frequenters near to the Venetian *funduq*, suggesting that inebriated European merchants and sailors had become – if not a problem – at the least, quite visible.⁷⁶⁰

The constant bombardment of propaganda by the ‘*ulamā* found a ready example in the figure of ‘Alām al-Dīn ibn Zunbūr (d. 1353), a *musālīma* high in the Mamlūk administration. He had been appointed vizier in 1351 at the end of Sultan al-Nāṣir Ḥasan’s first reign, and, under al-Şāliḥ Şāliḥ, he also took on the posts of overseer of crown property (*nāẓir al-khāṣṣ*) and superintendent of army finances (*nāẓir al-jaysh*), enjoying unprecedented power. He was also fabulously wealthy, owning seven hundred ships, twenty-five sugar factories, and fifty to seventy thousand sheep, with an overall wealth of one million dinars. But his chief rival was the fanatical Amīr Şarḡhitmish al-Nāṣirī, who accused him of misusing state funds and – in conjunction with some of the ‘*ulamā* – charged Ibn Zunbūr with being an insincere convert to Islam and had him (and his family) arrested and tortured. The flames were fanned amongst the *ḥarāfīsh* by Şarḡhitmish and his allies with propaganda about crypto-Christians in

the Copts actually controlled the *dīwāns* is irrelevant, for the ‘*amma* were convinced that they did (561).

⁷⁶⁰ Curatola, Giovanni, ‘Venetian merchants and travellers in Alexandria’, in eds. Anthony Hirst and Michael Silk, *Alexandria: Real and Imagined* (Aldershot, 2004), 189.

the administration coupled with stories of Ibn Zunbūr's immense wealth.⁷⁶¹

Generations of reinforcement coupled with a ready example very likely agitated the common people into rioting and attacking Christians, who were here presented as symbols of the oppressive government even as they were supposedly actively undermining it. Nonetheless, the Mamlūks continued to use advancement in rank as an enticement to convert. For example, in 1360 (761 A.H.), Fakhr al-Dīn Mājid Khaṣīb converted and became the new vizier, taking the name of ‘Abdullāh ibn Amīn al-Dīn. A few years later, in 1364-5 (766 A.H.), Abu’l-Faraj al-Maqṣī converted and became first Accountant of the Royal Mamlūks (*mustawfī al-mamālik al-sulṭāniyya*), then later Accountant in the Bureau of Crown Property (*mustawfī al-khāṣṣ*), and finally vizier and Overseer of the Bureau of Crown Property (*nāẓir al-khāṣṣ*).⁷⁶² The bureaucratic family the Banū al-Kuwayz – originally Melkite Christians from Karak in the Transjordan – converted as a family in 1365 as a result of the Alexandrian Crusade.⁷⁶³ This is not to suggest that all Coptic elites converted. In El-Leithy's study of one hundred-and-twenty convert bureaucrats, the vast majority were lower class provincial *dhimmīs* while only four were Cairene elites.⁷⁶⁴

⁷⁶¹ Irwin, *Middle East*, 141-2.

⁷⁶² Al-Maqṣī, *al-Sulūk*, 3.1:51, 96, and 171; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i' al-Zuhūr fī waqā'i' al-Duhūr*, ed. Mohamed Mostafa, 5 Vols. (Wiesbaden, 1960-75), 1.2:15-16.

⁷⁶³ El-Leithy, 'Coptic Culture and Conversion', 143, citing Bernadette Martel-Thoumian, 'Le converti à travers quelques écrits historiques du IXe/XVe siècle', in eds. Urbain Vermeulen and J.M.F. Van Reeth, *Proceedings of the Eighteenth Congress of the Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants, Law, Christianity and Modernism in Islamic Society* (Leuven, 1998).

⁷⁶⁴ El-Leithy, 'Coptic Culture and Conversion', 79.

The jurist Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (ca. 1292-1350) argued that the imposition of the *jizya* tax and sumptuary laws was actually beneficial to Muslims and *dhimmis* alike. He wrote: ‘By imposing the *jizya* on the People of the Book (mainly Christians and Jews), mutual interest would be achieved. On the one hand, the People of Islam gain money which is important for strengthening Islam, submitting and humiliating the non-believers (i.e. non-Muslims). On the other hand, the interest of *Ahl al-Shirk* (polytheists: Christians and Jews from the Muslims’ point of view) would also be achieved, through their conversion to Islam, and this is more preferable in the sight of God than killing them.’⁷⁶⁵ This opinion was certainly not shared by all, as al-Maqrīzī and others were highly suspicious of the motives of those Christians who did convert to Islam.⁷⁶⁶ The Muslim bureaucrat and author Ibn Faḍlallāh al-‘Umarī (d. 1349) barely missed being executed for insolence, so loudly did he protest to the sultan over the appointment of a *musālima* (a Coptic convert to Islam) to high authority in Damascus.⁷⁶⁷

On this subject, an interesting stipulation of the Rescript much more detailed than previously was the one on Christian inheritances, especially if a family member converted to Islam, and its effect in relation to the confiscation of church property. Sultan al-Şāliḥ Şāliḥ – under the influence of the Amīr Şarghitmish – sought to build support amongst the *amīrs* by redistributing confiscated Christian property to them. In

⁷⁶⁵ Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Aḥkām Ahl al-Dhimma*, ed. Subhi al-Salih (Damascus, 1961), 1:18, trans. in Nabil A. Malek, ‘The Copts: From an Ethnic Majority to a Religious Minority’, in ed. David W. Johnson, *Acts of the Fifth International Congress of Coptic Studies*, 2:299-311, at 305.

⁷⁶⁶ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, 2.3:925, cited in Richards, ‘Coptic Bureaucracy under the Mamlūks’, 378.

⁷⁶⁷ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, 2.2:465-6; Rice, ‘Miniature in an Autograph’, 857.

1354, Şarghitmish received a list of the endowments – essentially *waqfs* – of the Coptic churches and monasteries and was outraged to learn that they consisted of the quite substantial amount of twenty-five thousand *feddans*. Never a friend to the Christians, Şarghitmish reported this news to the sultan, who ordered this property confiscated and donated to the *amīrs*.⁷⁶⁸ Without these *waqf* properties, the Coptic Church and its community were instantaneously much weaker and much less able to support its poorer members.

Understood in context, there were two central motivating forces behind both the rescript and the confiscation of the Christian ‘*waqfs*’, or charitable endowments. First of all, Muslim anger at the supposed beneficial position of the Christians led to rioting in the streets of Cairo, the looting and burning of churches and monasteries, and attacks against Christians. For example, in this same year of 1354, Christians were attacked by the *‘amma* and the Coptic church of al-Shūbra was destroyed.

Governmental collusion is confirmed, however, when we learn that the finger-relic used for the Feast of the Martyr was confiscated and taken to Sultan al-Şāliḥ Şāliḥ and burnt in front of him, its ashes scattered so that they could not be recovered by the

⁷⁶⁸ Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i*, 1.2:544; al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, 2.3: 927; Tagher, *Christians in Muslim Egypt*, 161; Perlmann, ‘Notes on Anti-Christian Propaganda,’ at 855-6; Butcher, *Story of the Church of Egypt*, 208-10. For comparison, a source for 1180 states that the Coptic Church owned some nine hundred-and-fifteen *feddans*, all but nine in Upper Egypt. See: Abū Salih, *Churches and Monasteries*, 15. If both figures are accurate, it is possible that land was given to the Coptic Church for safe-keeping.

Christians.⁷⁶⁹ Undoubtedly, the Muslim common people were stirred up by the anti-Christian propaganda of the *‘ulamā*, but the sultan’s support only emboldened them.

A prime example of an anti-Christian pamphlet is called ‘An earnest appeal on the employment of the *Dhimmīs*’ (الكلمات المهمة في مباشرة أهل الذمة) and was written by Jamāl al-Dīn al-Asnawī (1305-70 / 704-72 A.H.) between 1355 and 1360. Al-Asnawī was the head of the Shāfi‘ite school of Islamic jurisprudence in Egypt at the time.⁷⁷⁰ Like most such pamphlets, his primary target is the Christian secretaries employed in the governmental *dīwāns*. Opening his polemic with Qur’ānic references and then moving on to recent history, he makes three central accusations against the Copts: (1) that they claim the land of Egypt as their own (i.e. the Muslims/Arabs are immigrants); (2) that they have deceived the Muslims in controlling the state; (3) that they have appropriated lands (even Islamic *waqf* lands) for the benefit of the Copts. He also accuses them of being the root cause of moral laxity, such as the drinking of wine and seduction of Muslim women, and behind the ruin of mosques and the building of churches. He even accused Christians of being behind a plot to destroy the tomb of Muḥammad in Medina. Al-Asnawī was particularly hostile towards *musālīma* as being

⁷⁶⁹ Incidentally, this relic was dipped in the Nile every year – till 1354, at least – at the Feast of the Martyr to ensure the proper rising of the Nile. Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, 4.2:1020; Tagher, *Christians in Muslim Egypt*, 148. Ibn Iyās records this incident, but says it occurred in 1358 [760 A.H.]. Ibn Iyās, *Badā‘i*, 1.1:565-6. Donald Little argues that al-Maqrīzī is much more reliable for Bahrī Mamlūk history than is Ibn Iyās. See his *An Introduction to Mamlūk Historiography* (Wiesbaden, 1970), 87-94.

⁷⁷⁰ His full name is Jamāl al-Dīn Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Raḥīm al-Asnawī. The Arabic text is available in: Moshe Perlmann, ‘Asnawī’s Tract Against Christian Officials’, in ed. Samuel Löwinger, et al, *Ignace Goldhizer Memorial Volume* (Jerusalem, 1958), 172-208; Perlmann, ‘Notes on Anti-Christian Propaganda’, 844-5.

but false Muslims at best, and does not hold back from condemning the Mamlūk government. He states: ‘What is this weakness which has affected Islam? Should the enemies of God and of the Apostle be allowed to rule the people? Why do our theologians remain silent on that subject, our rulers inert?’⁷⁷¹

The second observation, as was discussed above in reference to the Black Death, is that the sultan had increased taxes on the devastated rural areas, confiscated and bestowed properties of deceased Mamlūks to other *amīrs* in the hope of currying influence and support. Additionally, the Mamlūk sultans seemed to have viewed the Coptic patriarch, or pope, as little more than a means to additional revenue, as they periodically squeezed him for more under threat of death and persecution to the Coptic community.⁷⁷² In this light, the confiscation of Christian property was simply a means of increasing his support amongst the *amīrs*.⁷⁷³ While it is most likely that many of the stipulations of the rescript went unenforced after a time – especially the employment of Copts in the financial and army departments – the issuance of such decrees surely made Mamlūk society more restrictive for its *dhimmī* citizens. As to the church properties that were confiscated, these were surely not returned. As a result, whereas before in difficult times, Copts were able to seek support from their own confessional community, the Church was hard-pressed to respond hereafter. For this reason, the persecution of 1354 was chiefly significant.

⁷⁷¹ Perlmann, ‘Notes on Anti-Christian Propaganda’, 847, 851-2, 856-9.

⁷⁷² Swanson, *Coptic Papacy*, 99.

⁷⁷³ El-Leithy also argues along these lines. See: el-Leithy, ‘Coptic Culture and Conversion,’ 123.

Al-Maqrīzī concluded that the primary result of this popular persecution coupled with official confiscation of Christian property and strict enforcement of the sumptuary laws was widespread conversion to Islam. He wrote that: ‘Many reports came from both Upper and Lower Egypt of Copts being converted to Islam, frequenting mosques, and memorizing the Qurʾān... In all the provinces of Egypt, both north and south, no church remained that had not been razed; on many of those sites mosques were constructed. For when the Christians’ affliction grew great and their incomes small, they decided to embrace Islam. Thus Islam spread amongst the Christians of Egypt, and in the town of Qalyūb alone, [four hundred-and-fifty] persons were converted to Islam in a single day.’⁷⁷⁴ Little cautions that al-Maqrīzī’s facts may be somewhat exaggerated here, as he was writing some sixty years later, and Copts continued to some degree to be employed in government throughout the Mamlūk period. Nonetheless, as Little astutely observes, we should consider the events of 1354 not as an isolated phenomenon, but rather as one particularly devastating year in the continual erosion of the Coptic community’s cohesion over the previous half-century. The psychological toll of these persistent attacks weakened the community tremendously, even if on balance the Mamlūk authorities maintained an overall policy of toleration.⁷⁷⁵

Al-Maqrīzī continues that this year of 755 A.H. (1354 A.D.) ‘was a momentous event in Egyptian history. From that time on, lineages became mixed in Egypt’ –

⁷⁷⁴ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, 2.3:927, trans. in Little, ‘Coptic Conversion to Islam under the Baḥrī Mamlūks’, 568; cf. Butcher, *Story of the Church of Egypt*, 211.

⁷⁷⁵ Little, ‘Coptic Conversion to Islam under the Baḥrī Mamlūks’, 569.

meaning Coptic and Arab bloodlines. Nonetheless, he notes that many of the *‘amma* attributed this widespread conversion to ‘Christian cunning’ and remained very hostile to the new *musālima*.⁷⁷⁶ It is worth emphasizing that al-Maqrīzī’s enthusiasm for this ‘momentous event’ is unique and suggests that it was from this point that the truly mass conversion of the Copts to Islam began. Opposing a trend in modern scholarship that argued for the first large-scale wave of Coptic conversion in the ninth century, el-Leithy, for one, is quite adamant that there is no evidence for this. Rather, the process of conversion was, he argues, ‘glacially slow.’⁷⁷⁷ In this context, al-Maqrīzī’s novel declaration is of great significance.

THE CRUSADE OF ALEXANDRIA (1365)

The third great tragedy of this period that befell the indigenous Christians was the Crusade of Peter de Lusignan (1359-69), king of Cyprus, to Alexandria in October of 1365. While Christians of Alexandria most certainly suffered during the Crusade itself, it was the aftermath that was the most devastating, far beyond the walls of Alexandria itself. Aziz Atiya, reflecting on the passage from al-Maqrīzī’s *Kitāb al-Sulūk*, opined: ‘If Alexandria had been mutilated by the Christians of the West, it had to be repaired at the cost of the Christians of the East. Indirectly, the Latin warriors of the Cross only plundered the fortunes of their Eastern co-religionists; for, as soon as the

⁷⁷⁶ Little, ‘Coptic Conversion to Islam under the Bahṛī Mamlūks’, 569, citing al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, 2.3, 927.

⁷⁷⁷ See el-Leithy’s discussion of this interesting topic: el-Leithy, ‘Coptic Culture and Conversion’, 19-20 and 25-6.

campaign came to an end, the Sultan issued a decree whereby all the property of the Christians in Egypt and Syria was confiscated and used to pay for the damage done to Alexandria. The Coptic Patriarch was dragged to the court where he and his community were subjected to all kinds of humiliation and exactions.⁷⁷⁸ Atiya was never one to hold back when he felt that his fellow Copts had been wronged by the West, but in this case the evidence fully supports his argument.

As al-Maqrīzī opens his account: ‘The season came for the arrival of the Venetian ships from the Franks.’ On Wednesday the eighth of October 1365, the Egyptian coast guard sighted a surprisingly large number of sailing vessels off the coast of Alexandria. Although they were expecting the seasonal Venetian merchant fleet, this was something else indeed. This flotilla of seventy to eighty galleys and warships was soon in control of the harbour of Alexandria, but did not attack immediately. The Mamlūk governor of Alexandria, although having but recently warned his seniors in Cairo of the need to improve the defences of the city under his charge, was himself on pilgrimage to Mecca. Alexandria was thus left with inexperienced leadership and only an ineffective Bedouin garrison. Although the gates were shut, and some opposing forces were sent to the beach-head, food vendors and civilians ‘went out for their amusement’, reports al-Maqrīzī, coming along to sell their wares and enjoy the spectacle. The last thing they expected was the full-frontal attack on Friday, the ninth of October, directly from the war-galleys, much less that this was planned in

⁷⁷⁸ Atiya, *Crusade in the Later Middle Ages*, 377, alluding to al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, 3.1:105-7.

conjunction with an ambush of Hospitaller Knights on the rear of the disorganized Bedouin troops, Maghrebi volunteers, and citizen militia. In a word, it was a rout.⁷⁷⁹

Even now, however, the Alexandrian population felt safe behind its massive walls. Alexandria was, after all, the most prosperous city in the entire Mediterranean thanks to its pre-imminence in East-West trade. But that was before a section of the defensive wall adjacent to the customs house was found undefended and, what's more, the inner keep was locked, inadvertently but effectively preventing the Egyptians from sending reinforcements to defend it should this very situation arise. Very quickly, the invading force sent a large number of troops across this wall and soon the entire army was in the midst of the city. Chaos ensued. The inhabitants attempted to flee, recorded al-Maqrīzī, and in their desperation burnt down the Rosetta Gate, with countless bodies crushed in this frenzied escape. The Vice-Governor took the treasury and some fifty Frankish merchants whom he had imprisoned and fled the city. The invaders were soon masters of the city, plundering 'everything they found, taking many prisoners and captives, and burning many places' from Friday afternoon till Sunday morning. Guillaume de Machaut recorded that some twenty thousand inhabitants were killed, while another five thousand were made captive and boarded onto the waiting ships. Alexandria burned, its places of wealth looted, its people dead, in exile, or

⁷⁷⁹ Hill, George, *A History of Cyprus*, 4 Vols. (Cambridge, 1972), 2:331 and 334; Atiya, *Crusade in the Later Middle Ages*, 343 and 367-8; Jo Van Steenberghe, 'The Alexandrian Crusade (1365) and the Mamlūk Sources', in eds. Krijnie Ciggaar and Herman Teule, *East and West in the Crusader States III* (Leuven, 2003), 123-36, at 132-3. For the effects of the Crusade on Mamlūk-European trade relations, see: Ashtor, *Levant Trade*, 88-102.

enslaved. After remaining on their ships for several days, the fleet took sail on the eighth day, Thursday, 15 October, loaded with plunder and captives.⁷⁸⁰

Al-Maqrīzī's account contains one passage about the indigenous Christians that is unique among the sources. He states that after the Franks had entered Alexandria on Friday, they 'made proclamation of their religion. They were joined by the Christians of Alexandria, who showed them the dwellings of the rich people. They took what was in them.'⁷⁸¹ It must be debated, however, whether this accusation of collusion by the native Christians was factual or simply typical Mamlūk anti-Christian rhetoric. It is not corroborated by the eye witness al-Nuwairī, despite his tendency towards the dramatic. This is surprising as the latter was an eye-witness and, what's more, was an 'almost fanatic religious Muslim' – or so has concluded Jo Van Steenbergen – and in Mamlūk Egypt this almost certainly would indicate hostility towards indigenous Christians. Al-Maqrīzī does note that the Crusaders killed indigenous Christians as well as Muslims, in addition to enslaving them. It is also possible, of course, that al-Maqrīzī used a different source than al-Nuwairī, but this seems, nonetheless, too familiar of a pattern.⁷⁸²

⁷⁸⁰ For accounts of the sack of Alexandria, see: Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, 3.1:105-7; Guillaume de Machaut, *The Capture of Alexandria*, trans. Janet Shirley (Aldershot, 2001), 62-87; Atiya, *Crusade in the Later Middle Ages*, 348-69; Atiya, *Fourteenth Century Encyclopedist*, 31-5.

⁷⁸¹ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, 3.1:105-7; trans. in Holt, *Age of the Crusades*, 125-6. The passage in question reads: فأعلن الفرنج بدينهم ، وانضم إليهم من كان بالثغر من النصارى ، و دلوهم على دور الأغنياء (*al-Sulūk*, 106).

⁷⁸² Van Steenbergen, 'Alexandrian Crusade (1365) and the Mamlūk Sources', 125 and 133.

King Peter de Lusignan – if not necessarily his European crews – would have been familiar with these many and varied Eastern Christian Confessions, at least to some degree.⁷⁸³ We know from the record of Philip of Mezières (the contemporary chancellor of Cyprus) that they all had communities in Cyprus. In 1362, for example, during an outbreak of plague in which thirty to forty people were dying daily in Famagusta, the papal legate Peter Thomas led a procession through the city in which all the different Confessions followed, barefoot, fasting, and singing in their own languages. Those listed included Greeks, Armenians, East Syrians [‘Nestorians’], Syrian Orthodox [‘Jacobites’], Georgians, Nubians, Indians, Ethiopians, ‘and many other Christians’. Even ‘Saracens, Turks, and Jews’ joined in this procession, so reports the author, Philip of Mezières.⁷⁸⁴ The only group missing (besides the Maronites) is that of the Copts, but if not in the ‘many other Christians’ category, they might have been considered part of the Syrian Orthodox contingent as was the earlier tradition in Jerusalem, though they did have a church and monastery dedicated to Saint Anthony

⁷⁸³ Peter had complained to Pope Urban V (1362-70) ca. 1368 that many Cypriot women professed to be Roman Catholics but actually preferred to visit the Greek, Melkite, Assyrian, or Non-Chalcedonian churches then thriving on the island. See: Nicholas Coureas, ‘Non-Chalcedonian Christians on Latin Cyprus’, in ed. Michel Balard et al, *Dei gesta per Francos : études sur les Croisades dédiées à Jean Richard* (Aldershot, 2001), 348-60, at 353-4.

⁷⁸⁴ Philip of Mezières, *The Life of Saint Peter Thomas*, ed. Joachim Smet (Rome, 1954), 97-100, cited in Chris Schabel, ‘Religion’, *Cyprus: Society and Culture 1191-1374*, eds. Angel Nicolaou-Konnari and Chris Schabel (Leiden, 2005), 157-8. I was unable to review Philip of Mezières, as it is missing from the British Library. Such multi-Confessional processions were still taking place on Cyprus as late as 1580. Cf. Coureas, ‘Non-Chalcedonian Christians’, 360.

from the early fourteenth century.⁷⁸⁵ Although Syrian Melkites were likely the most numerous group in Cyprus after the Greeks and Latins, and Armenians were very important as a military contingent given connections with Cilicia and the ever constant influx of refugees, it is the Syrian Orthodox and East Syrian Christian communities that thrived so very openly in Cyprus in the mid-fourteenth century.⁷⁸⁶ When the chief port of Cilicia – Āyās – was conquered by the Mamlūks in 1346, trade from the interior shifted south to Mamlūk-controlled Beirut.⁷⁸⁷ For some time in the earlier 1300s, Frankish merchant vessels largely ended their eastward journey at Cyprus as there was a papal ban on trading in Mamlūk ports [with the greater aim of regaining Jerusalem and the Holy Places]. As such, many Eastern Christian merchants – such as the Syrian Orthodox Simon of Famagusta – were able to monopolize the trade to the Syrian coast. But this changed as the pope granted more and more merchant waivers, and especially after the Genoese-Cypriot War of 1373.⁷⁸⁸

Peter de Lusignan, just a few decades later, was immortalized in Chaucer's 'The Monk's Tale'. The 'Monk' lauds him, saying: 'O worthy Petro, King of Cypre, also, /That Alisaundre wan by heigh mastrye, /Ful many an hethen wroghtestow ful wo...'⁷⁸⁹

⁷⁸⁵ Schabel, 'Religion', 163. But see Hill, *History of Cyprus*, 3:810, where he argues that the Copts were not present on Cyprus until 1483.

⁷⁸⁶ Schabel, 'Religion', 166-70.

⁷⁸⁷ Fuess, Albrecht, 'Beirut in Mamlūk Times (1291-1516)', *Aram* 9-10 (1997-8), 85-101, at 96.

⁷⁸⁸ Hill, *A History of Cyprus*, 2:369, citing Malipiero, *Ann. Ven.*, 593.

⁷⁸⁹ Chaucer, Geoffrey, *The Canterbury Tales*, ed. Jill Mann (London, 2005), 581. A more intelligible modern translation reads: 'O noble Peter, Cyprus' lord and king, Which Alexander won by mastery, To many a heathen ruin did'st thou bring...' See: 'The Monk's Tale', Chapter 22, lines 410-2, available at [Http://www.canterburytales.org](http://www.canterburytales.org) (accessed 15 March 2011).

The trouble was, however, that Peter was officially in command, but he was not always in control, and although it was not his design to loot the city and abandon it, he was over-ruled by those who only had that very design in mind. King Peter's allied troops – in their lust for plunder – indiscriminately looted and burned, including the European merchant *funduqs* of the Catalans, Venetians, Genoese, and Marseillais.⁷⁹⁰ They also robbed and killed indigenous Christians. One Coptic woman – a crippled daughter of the priest Girgis ibn Faḍā'el – was forced to relinquish all of her personal wealth to save the nearby church from arson as well as to forfeit the silver liturgical vessels. Of the five thousand captives taken, many were Christian and Jewish, as well as Muslim; these were taken back to Europe and disseminated to various rulers, often as gifts.⁷⁹¹ These Crusaders were clearly off the mark when one recalls that Pope Urban's original plea for the First Crusade included the chief aim of freeing the Eastern Christians from the Turkic Muslim yoke. As described above, King Peter was certainly familiar with the indigenous Christians, as they made up a substantial percentage of the Cypriot population; his recruits from Europe, however, were less likely to know, or to care.

A contemporary to these events was the Muslim al-Nuwairī al-Iskandarānī (d. 1372), a copyist of manuscripts by trade, who called the sack 'the greatest catastrophe in the annals of Alexandria.' He set forth seven causes for the attack on Alexandria by King Peter of Cyprus and the Crusader fleet: (1) Ironically, given the outcome of the Crusade, he lists the first cause being the persecution of the Christians – indigenous and

⁷⁹⁰ Ashtor, *Levant Trade*, 90-1; Atiya, *Crusade in the Later Middle Ages*, 366.

⁷⁹¹ Atiya, *Crusade in the Later Middle Ages*, 366; Atiya, *Fourteenth Century Encyclopedist*, 34.

foreign – in 1354 during the reign of Sultan Şaliḥ ibn al-Nāşir Muḥammad ibn al-Manşūr Qalāwūn (1351-54); (2) due to the contemptuous rejection by the Sultan [al-Nāşir Ḥasan (1347-51; 1354-61)] of King Peter’s request to visit Tyre for his coronation (in 1359) according to a Cypriot tradition; (3) in 1354, a Frankish pirate ship harassed Muslim ships in Alexandrian waters and the report reached King Peter that the city was poorly defended; (4) another successful raid by Frankish pirates near Rosetta encouraged Peter about the poorly defended Egyptian coastland; (5) a third raid providing further support for a Cypriot raid occurred in 1363 when three Frankish galleys came ashore near Alexandria and took captive a number of Muslim civilians who were later ransomed in Sidon; (6) A fourth raid by six galleys was turned back both near Alexandria and at Rosetta, and this defeat had to be avenged; (7) and, finally, a massacre of Venetian residents of Alexandria brought Venice into alliance with Cyprus and – with the encouragement of the pope – a plan to make war on Mamlūk Egypt.⁷⁹²

From al-Nuwairī’s explanation for the motives of King Peter, we can see that there were many possibilities. Even to this day, the aim of the Crusade is a matter of contention. Modern scholars have generally shied away from religious conviction as portrayed in the medieval sources and pointed to economic motivations for Peter’s expedition. Peter Edbury has reasonably argued that Peter’s *casus belli* was essentially economic in nature, and not necessarily spiritual nor chivalric. Peter’s Famagusta was

⁷⁹² Atiya, *Fourteenth Century Encyclopedist*, 29-30.

in an early stage of economic decline.⁷⁹³ Venetian merchants, for example, had begun to bypass Cyprus and trade directly (with papal permission) with Alexandria since 1344. This was the result of their having lost their trade position in Tana in the Black Sea, and in their search for new markets for European silver. By trading directly with Mamlūk Alexandria, their voyages were quicker, they bypassed Cypriot transaction costs, and they also received an especially low tariff on silver and gold exchange.⁷⁹⁴

The sultan, al-Ṣāliḥ Ismāʿīl (1342-5), for his part, most likely gave such generous trade terms as he was in dire straits for funds following an eighth expedition against his elder brother and previous sultan, al-Nāṣir Aḥmad (1342), who was holed up in Karak Castle in Transjordan and defended, it would seem, largely by the majority population Arab Christians (most probably Melkites).⁷⁹⁵ Cyprus also experienced a contraction in trade as a result of the Black Death and subsequent outbreaks of plague as there were fewer

⁷⁹³ Edbury, Peter, 'The Crusading Policy of King Peter I of Cyprus, 1359-1369', in ed. P.M. Holt, *The Eastern Mediterranean Lands in the Periods of the Crusades* (Warminster, 1977), 90-105, at 90; reprint in Edbury, *Kingdoms of the Crusaders* (Aldergate, 1999), XII. Norman Housley is somewhat skeptical of this argument, saying that Peter Lusignan would not have been so naïve as to expect the Mamlūks to give up their most important port without a massive fight. Rather, perhaps he hoped to reopen Latin-Muslim hostilities to such an extent as to hasten a new Crusade. See: Norman Housley, *The Later Crusades* (Oxford, 1992), 42. Irwin also argues that Peter's motivations are ultimately unclear, defining the relevant factors as Christian and Muslim commercial and piratical rivalry, support for Cilicia versus Mamlūk-backed Turkomān emirates, and Peter's Crusading ambitions. See: Irwin, *Middle East*, 145-6; cf. Atiya, *Crusade in the Later Middle Ages*, 323-4.

⁷⁹⁴ Lane, Frederic C., 'The Venetian Galleys to Alexandria, 1344', in ed. Jürgen Schneider, *Wirtschaftskräfte und Wirtschaftswege: Festschrift für Hermann Kellenbenz*, Vol. 1 (Stuttgart, 1978), 431-440, especially 435. For a thorough account of Venetian-Mamlūk trade relations at this time, see Ashtor, *Levant Trade*, 64-70.

⁷⁹⁵ Irwin, *Middle East*, 129-31.

producers and fewer consumers.⁷⁹⁶ It is reasonable, therefore, that Peter sought to either annex or destroy its rival ports, of which Alexandria was chief. Already in 1361, he had captured the port of Satalia (Antalya) in Asia Minor and had taken over defence of Gorhigos, one of the few remaining independent Armenian ports in Cilicia.⁷⁹⁷

The immediate effects of the Crusade upon the indigenous Christians were most obvious in Alexandria with the destruction of the city and of Christian property and the resulting impoverishment of the community.⁷⁹⁸ The Franks did not differentiate between Muslim, Christian or Jew when they took away some five thousand captives, and al-Nuwaīri reported that the relieving Mamlūk army stumbled over the corpses of Muslims, Jews, and Christians alike.⁷⁹⁹ Externally to Alexandria, al-Maqrīzī reported that the Christian population was immediately heavily taxed by the Sultan to ransom Muslim captives, pay for damages resulting from the Crusade, and to help finance an avenging fleet. Additionally, churches were closed across the land, including the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.⁸⁰⁰

⁷⁹⁶ On this and the other Cypriot economic points above, see: Peter Edbury, 'Christians and Muslims in the Eastern Mediterranean', in ed. Michael Jones, *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, Vol. 6 (Cambridge, 2000), 864-884, at 877-80.

⁷⁹⁷ Edbury, 'Crusading Policy', 94 and 97.

⁷⁹⁸ If the Cairo *Geniza* documents dealing with Jewish merchant networks are any indication, it is most probable that these Confessional communities were well connected to their co-religionists and kinsmen on the Egyptian and Syrian mainland. Although the indigenous Christians in Cyprus were not immediately and directly affected by the Crusade of 1365, those in Mamlūk territories most certainly were. See: S.D. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, 5 Vols. (Berkeley, CA, 1967-88), 1:59-70.

⁷⁹⁹ Atiya, *Crusade in the Later Middle Ages*, 366; Atiya, *Fourteenth Century Encyclopedist*, 35.

⁸⁰⁰ The sultan reportedly threatened to destroy the Church of the Holy Sepulchre when the first Latin embassies in 1366 requested its reopening. It was not reopened until after a comprehensive treaty was signed in 1370 between the Sultanate and the Frankish powers. See: Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*,

Retaliatory Mamlūk policy turned against the indigenous Christians, the repercussions of which were felt far beyond Alexandria and Cairo. The *Life* of the Coptic Saint Marqus al-Antuni (ca. 1296-1386) states: ‘It happened that groups of Franks attacked the city of Alexandria, pillaged it, took its women captive, then left it and went away. Because of them, great suffering came upon the Christians of Egypt at the hands of the Amīr Yalbugha. He sent his men to all the monasteries, seeking their money...’⁸⁰¹ Further afield, in Jerusalem, an Armenian monk named Vardan Lrimec’i⁸⁰² recorded in 1366 that: ‘In this year the Franks carried off captives from [Alexandria];

و سألوا تجديد الصلح ، و أن يمكن تجار هم من قدوم الثغر ، و أن تفتح كنيسة القيامة 3.1:119 and 191. (119) بالقدس ، و كانت قد غلقت بعد واقعة الإسكندرية . فأجابهم ، بأنه لا بد من غزو قبرس ، و تخريبها

Guillaume de Machaut (ca. 1300-77) recorded that the sultan, upon learning of the sack of Alexandria, ‘at once he ordered every Christian now in his land to be arrested, locked in prison, harshly treated, ransomed high.’ This most likely refers not to indigenous Christians (as Luttrell has suggested), but to Latins, as, in context, the author notes that there were Venetians living in Alexandria and then goes on to describe Venetian efforts to free them. See: Machaut, *The Capture of Alexandria*, 91; Anthony Luttrell, ‘Englishwomen as Pilgrims to Jerusalem: Isolda Parewastell, 1365’, in ed. Julia Bolton Holloway, et al, *Women in the Middle Ages* (New York, 1990), 184-97, at 188. Bertrandon de la Broquière, in 1432, reported meeting an agent of the French Duke of Berry named Pietre of Naples whilst in Constantinople. The latter had recently been in Ethiopia and, according to him, an account existed in Ethiopia of the Crusade, too. The Negus in 1365, Sāyfā-Ar’ad, upon learning of the Cypriot occupation of Alexandria, had gathered together his people and set off towards Jerusalem. When he reached the Nile River, however, he received word that Peter had abandoned Alexandria. He also discovered that some two million of his three million followers had perished in the desert heat. As such, he decided to turn back. These numbers are doubtless inflated, but the possibility that the Negus embarked on this journey is certainly possible, given the great importance they placed on Jerusalem and their then current aggressive territorial policies. See: Bertrandon de la Broquière, *Le Voyage d’Outremer de Bertrandon de la Broquière*, ed. Charles Schefer (Paris, 1892), 142-3 and 148.

⁸⁰¹ Gawdat, Gabra, ‘New Research from the Library of the Monastery of St. Paul’, in ed. William Lyster, *The Cave Church of Paul the Hermit at the Monastery of St. Paul, Egypt* (New Haven, CT, and London, 2008), 95-105, at 97. This is an unpublished manuscript copied in 1699/1700 A.D.

⁸⁰² Lrimec’i .

hence, whatever Christians there were in this country they [the Mamlūks] seized and carried off; and whatever bishop and [monk] and priest there were they cast them in prison; and whatever churches there were they shut them all down. They killed our [ra'īs (community elders)]; they also killed numerous other priests and churchmen. And many became [Turks (meaning Muslims)] because of their bitter suffering. And those of us who were in [Jerusalem] spent the greater part of the year in prison, and, for the sake of Christ, we suffered much grief and torture, which I cannot describe in writing...I copied this under much anguish and fear; and day in and day out we expected to be tortured or killed...⁸⁰³

Persecution occurred in Syria, too. Ibn Kathīr reported that Melkite Christians, often in the employ of Genoese and Venetian merchants, suffered greatly from Muslim anger at the attack. The Mamlūk *nā'ib* (the governor) of Damascus demanded that the Melkite patriarch write to both Peter de Lusignan and to the Byzantine emperor about the terrible situation of the Christians. The Byzantine Emperor John V Palaiologos (1341-91) did indeed intervene for the Christians in Syria, but a Russian chronicle recorded that the patriarch, Pachomios, was himself killed as a result of the persecution. Furthermore, the request from 1364 to transfer the patriarchal residence from Antioch to the Syrian capital of Damascus was delayed by the Mamlūk bureaucracy as a result of the persecution and Mamlūk anger, although it was later

⁸⁰³ Trans. Sanjian, *Colophons*, 94-5. This report of persecution in Jerusalem is repeated by one Grigor Aknerc'i in a manuscript of 1367: '...we were afflicted with manifold grief; we were imprisoned and put in chains; we were dragged before the judges every day, by reason of the fact that the Franks had occupied Skandār [Alexandria] and had killed numerous and countless Tačiks and had carried off men and women as captives to the island of Kipros [Cyprus].' See Sanjian, 90.

granted under his successor Michael I ibn Bishara about June 1366, as confirmed by the Muslim historian Ibn Kathīr.⁸⁰⁴

Nor were Latin Christians immune from these adversities following the Crusade. Merchants, of course, were imprisoned immediately following the sack of Alexandria.⁸⁰⁵ Pilgrims unfortunate enough to be visiting the Near East at this time also found themselves in dire straits, despite the inherent lucrative nature of the pilgrimage route to the Mamlūk state. A petition of 15 January 1366 to Pope Urban V at Avignon by the Englishwoman Isolda Parewastell of Bridgwater records her trials in October 1365 after a three year sojourn in the Holy Land. Once word of the Crusade reached Jerusalem, she was made captive, stripped bare, and was ‘hung on the rack head to the ground and sustained very hard beatings [but] miraculously escaped from the hands of the Saracens’.⁸⁰⁶ Although the patronage of Western European powers usually benefited Latin monks in the Holy Land, these connections likely only exacerbated the monks’ position following the Crusade. In Jerusalem, Franciscan monks, who had been ensconced since 1330 at the Convent of Saint Mary on Mount Zion, were arrested and – depending on the account – were either taken to Damascus and executed or imprisoned

⁸⁰⁴ Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa’l-Nihāyah fī al-Tārikh*, 14 Vols. (Cairo, 1932-39), 14:319-20; Johannes Pahlitzsch, ‘Mediators between East and West: Christians Under Mamluk Rule’, *MSR* 9 (2005), 31-48, at 39-41; cf. Todt, ‘Griechisch-Orthodoxe (Melkitische) Christen’, 86-7; idem., ‘Zwischen Kaiser und ökumenischem Patriarchen’171; Nasrallah, *Chronologie des Patriarches Melchites*, 19-20 (although Nasrallah’s dates differ somewhat).

⁸⁰⁵ Machaut, *Capture of Alexandria*, 91-3.

⁸⁰⁶ Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Reg. Supp. 45, fol. 55-55^v, trans. in Luttrell, ‘Englishwomen as Pilgrims’, 191.

in Cairo for three years.⁸⁰⁷ Latin monks as a rule were treated well by the Mamlūk authorities in light of their position vis-à-vis foreign relations with the Latin powers. Nonetheless, there were instances of harassment, persecution, and even martyrdom as was the fate of two Franciscan friars in Cairo in 1345, another in Damascus in 1347, two more in Cairo about 1359, another in Gaza in 1364, and sixteen in Damascus between 1365 and 1370.⁸⁰⁸

NINE CHRISTIAN CONFESSIONS

ARMENIANS

The Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia was in a continued downward spiral during this period of study. Peter de Lusignan had garrisoned an Armenian port, and had also been offered the crown of Cilicia. In the end, what was left of the kingdom formally was subsumed by the Mamlūks in 1375. Elsewhere in the Near East, Niccolò of Poggibonsi (who, like many Latin pilgrims, believed that the Armenians were in full communion with the papacy), saw them in Cairo in 1349, and recorded (from his stay in 1347) that they were in possession of many churches around Jerusalem. He also noted that they had an archbishop in charge of their community in Jerusalem, who

⁸⁰⁷ Little, Donald P., 'Christians in Mamluk Jerusalem', in eds. Yvonne Yazeck Haddad and Wadi Zaidan Haddad, *Christian-Muslim Encounters* (Gainesville, FL, 1995), 210-20, at 213; Ludolph von Suchem, *Description of the Holy Land*, 101-2.

⁸⁰⁸ Golubovich, *Biblioteca*, 4:390-4, and 5:29, 76, 109, and 113-15.

played a very prominent role.⁸⁰⁹ The frequent Mamlūk raids in Cilicia inevitably brought back many captives, either sold as slaves or held for ransom. Apparently there was an Armenian ghetto in Cairo, for al-Maqrīzī reported that the Mamlūks raided it in 1343 (744 A.H) on the pretext that Armenian prisoners of war had set up a very prosperous trade in making and selling wine, raising pigs, and in prostitution.⁸¹⁰

ASSYRIAN CHURCH OF THE EAST

Like the Armenians, the Church of the East continued to rapidly lose ground during the mid-fourteenth century. In 1330, John de Cori recorded that there were more than thirty thousand ‘Nestorians’ in Beijing who received special privileges from the Mongol Yuan Khānate. When the xenophobic Ming dynasty came to power in 1368, however, they lost this base of support and were expelled. Many relocated to remote mountains of northern Mesopotamia (Kurdistan). The Persian Il-Khānate had been in chaos at least since the murder of Abū Saʿīd in 1335, and arguably several decades prior. The East Syrian Christian writer Amr b. Matta wrote *The Book of the Tower* about 1350, compiling the history of the East Syrian patriarchs through Timotheos II (d. 1332). He listed twenty-seven metropolitan provinces across the Middle East and Asia, but while this was most likely the reality fifty years prior, it was not the case at the middle of the century. Unable to send out bishops to the further

⁸⁰⁹ Niccolò of Poggibonsi, *Voyage*, 22-4, 27, 29, 89, 125. The Church of Saint James, says Niccolò, ‘is an archbishopric, held by the Armenians, subject to the church of Rome’ (29). ‘In place of the Pope...they have one they call the Catholicos’ (125).

⁸¹⁰ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, 2.3:640, cited in Little, ‘Coptic Conversion to Islam under the Bahṛī Mamlūks’, 565.

dioceses, East Syrian Christian communities across Central and East Asia disappeared, many killed or converted to Islam, while others retreated to the more dense East Syriac heartland in the mountains of northern Mesopotamia where the Catholicos Denḥa II (1332-81) was consecrated in Baghdad and resided at Karamles (near Mosul) until his death in 1381.⁸¹¹ Although isolated, the continuator of Bar Hebraeus records that the Catholicos did have contact with leaders of the Syrian Orthodox Church on three occasions between 1358 and 1364.⁸¹² In the East, only those in India continued on, while pockets continued in the Eastern Mediterranean, notably in Jerusalem,⁸¹³ and merchant communities in port cities such as Damietta, Alexandria, and Famagusta in Cyprus.⁸¹⁴

In the latter, Famagusta, the Assyrian Christian Metropolitan, Eliyā of Cyprus, made a Roman Catholic profession of faith in 1340 following an extensive period of intense pressure from the Latin authorities. His flock did not follow, however, as a distinct East Syrian community continued at least until the Ottoman Conquest in 1571.

⁸¹¹ Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 18-19, 343-44, 346-48; Baum and Winkler, *Church of the East*, 104. Baum says that the Catholicos Denḥa II ruled at Karamles and died in 1364. He lists the successor as Shimun II, resident at Mosul, but calls this the 'Dark Age' of the East Syrian Church with no other details available. See 104-5 and 174. Cf. J.-M. Vosté, 'Mar Denḥa II Catholicos Nestorien', *OCP* 12 (1946), 208-10, who gives his death after 1380.

⁸¹² Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, 3:508, 512, and 524.

⁸¹³ East Syrians were mentioned in Jerusalem by Ludolph von Suchem (who wrote about 1348, but travelled in the latter 1330s), by Philippe de Mezières (1384), and by Niccolò of Poggibonsi (in 1346 or 1348), who gives details about their position at the Holy Sepulchre. See: Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 67.

⁸¹⁴ Baum and Winkler, *Church of the East*, 101; Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 18-19, 343-46. Niccolò of Poggibonsi, in 1349, mentions the Church of Saint Mary (Mart Maryam) adjacent to the Greek Orthodox Church of Saint George (containing a 'chapel of the Franks') and implies a small East Syrian Orthodox merchant community. See: *Voyage*, 122.

In the mid-fourteenth century, the East Syrians in Cyprus were quite prosperous. Two brothers, Francis and Nicholas Lakhas (or Lachanopoulo), were extremely wealthy and noted for their lavish gifts upon King Peter and his court. They also founded a church in Famagusta, probably either Saint George Xorinos or Saints Peter and Paul. Later, they became abjectly poor upon the Genoese domination in 1373, and two sons, George and Joseph, were forced to earn a living as a bell-ringer and a sweetmeat peddler, respectively.⁸¹⁵ Nonetheless, the Assyrian Christian merchant community continued in Cyprus for at least another two centuries.⁸¹⁶

COPTS

Continuing a trend from the mid-thirteenth century, the *History of the Patriarchs* has little to say about the Coptic popes during this period. For the eighty-third patriarch, Peter V (1340-48), Mark IV (1348-63), and John X (1363-69), little is said beyond the briefest of biographical sketches.⁸¹⁷ The major exception to this papal obscurity is a proper *Vita* for Patriarch Matthew I ‘the Poor’ (1378-1409), who is considered a Saint by the Coptic Church and the greatest of the later medieval Coptic popes. A decade before his enthronement, he witnessed first-hand the persecution the Mamlūks inflicted upon the Christians in Egypt as a result of the Crusade of Alexandria

⁸¹⁵ Hill, *History of Cyprus*, 2:369.

⁸¹⁶ Coureas, ‘Non-Chalcedonian Christians’, 358-60. Cf. Nicholas Coureas, *The Latin Church in Cyprus, 1313-1378* (Nicosia, 2010).

⁸¹⁷ *HPEC*, 3.3:233-34; Swanson, *Coptic Papacy*, 100-3. John X was a native of Damascus and thus very likely Syrian Orthodox by background.

in 1365.⁸¹⁸ The sultan had sent soldiers to ‘inflict punishment’ on the monks at the Monastery of Saint Antony and to ‘require from them’ the liturgical vessels (i.e. anything of monetary worth). ‘And when the soldiers took hold of this father [Matthew], they inflicted on him heavy punishment, until the heart of the Blessed Mark was pained for him, saying to him: “Dost thou not fear God, for thou hearest the youth adjuring thee for the sake of God through the suffering of the beating, and thou dost not have mercy upon him and accept it for the sake of God.” Thus, the soldiers freed Matthew and instead beat the elder Mark, finally placing them in chains to take them to Cairo. En route through the desert, when the soldiers refused to give them water, Mark rebuked them and prayed, with the immediate result that a heavy rain began to fall. As they all took shelter, a messenger arrived from the sultan ordering the monks released and returned to their monastery.’⁸¹⁹

Despite the serious afflictions suffered by the Coptic Church during this period, it did not disappear. If many common people and some elites converted to Islam, not all did. Scholarship was not completely dead, although it reflected the significant decline following the Black Death and subsequent epidemics. Al-Mufaḍḍal ibn Abī al-Faḍā’il (d. after 1358) wrote a continuation of the history of Ibn al-‘Amīd, who may have been his great-uncle. Al-Mufaḍḍal’s history is called *The Correct Path and the Unique Gem of what succeeds the History of Ibn al-‘Amīd* and covers the period from the

⁸¹⁸ This account is repeated in an unpublished Arabic account of the life of Saint Marqus al-Antuni. See: Gawdat, ‘New Research’, at 97.

⁸¹⁹ *HPEC*, 3.3:238-9.

accession of Sultan Baybars in 1259-60 and ends with the death of Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in 1341.⁸²⁰

In general, however, the Copts found renewed strength especially in their monasteries and in a small group of holy monks, including the Mark mentioned above. The geographical centre of the Church had, however, in some ways shifted. The Monasteries of the Wādī Natrūn had since Late Antiquity played an important role in the life of the Coptic Church both politically and spiritually.⁸²¹ They were at times rather reactionary compared to the urban Coptic ecclesial centres. But the key point is that they were flourishing in the 1340s, until the records go silent after 1346. Patriarch Peter V visited the Monastery of Saint Macarius in 1340 and in 1346. There he consecrated the *Holy Chrism*, celebrated Easter, and, on the former visit consecrated a small chapel which was, despite its size, beautifully decorated with icons and murals of the Bible and the Church Fathers. Many other ruined buildings were renovated and there were numerous processions. The monks of the neighbouring Monastery of Saint John the Little visited him and requested the ordination of eleven deacons and eighteen priests. This is highly telling of the prosperity of this monastery as it is the rule amongst the Eastern monasteries that only a small minority of monks are ordained, while most are lay monks. A number of Ethiopian monks dwelled in the many dependent cells of the Monastery of Saint John the Little. Ludolph von Suchem,

⁸²⁰ Mufaḍḍal ibn Abī al-Faḍā'il, *Kitāb al-nahj*; Johannes Den Heijer, 'Coptic Historiography in the Fāṭimid, Ayyūbid and Early Mamlūk Periods', *Medieval Encounters*, 2 (1996), 67-98, at 88-95; idem., 'Al-Mufaḍḍal b. Abi 'l-Faḍā'il', *EI*, 7:305.

⁸²¹ Note that Syrians, Armenians, and Ethiopians were also present within the monasteries of the Wādī Natrūn.

visiting about 1340, also mentioned Syrians, Nubians, and Indians as resident in the Wādi Natrūn. The Monastery of the Armenians is not mentioned at this time, however, and was already dissolved, perhaps reflecting the poverty of the Armenian motherland in Cilicia and eastern Anatolia. The Monastery of the Syrians was yet prosperous at this time, despite the increasingly dire situation of their heartland in northern Mesopotamia, but once the monastery was wiped out by the Black Death, there was neither the population nor the finances to repopulate it. This is true as well of the majority Coptic population of these monasteries. As Hugh Evelyn White has observed, ‘the decimated population could not spare men to refill the monasteries’. With no one to work the land or tend to the irrigation works, with the wealth of private patrons or the revenues of bishoprics collapsing, there was no one to support the monasteries even if they were populated. With no one to fill these monasteries, there were then fewer educated in the ways of the Church, which would subsequently affect the non-monastic communities as well. It was, in fact, only in the late fifteenth century that these monasteries began to recover, if slowly.⁸²²

Yet despite this abrupt collapse of the mostly Coptic monasteries of the Wādi Natrūn, Coptic monasticism did not fail completely. Although the Copts were hard-pressed at this time and the Coptic patriarchs were largely ineffective whether their fault or not, there were still highly regarded holy men during this period. Other monasteries at this time became major centres of ‘spiritual energy’ – to borrow Mark Swanson’s term – in the Coptic Church. Indeed, even as the Monasteries of the Wādi

⁸²² White, *Monasteries of the Wādi 'N Natrūn*, Part 2, 397-402; Dols, *Black Death*, 167-8.

Natrūn practically collapsed presumably at the time of the Black Death, the three Antonine monasteries (Saint Antony-on-the-Nile, Saint Antony-in-the-desert, and Saint Paul) flourished. The latter, Saint Paul's, played a supporting role to Saint Antony-in-the-desert, and was largely populated by older, experienced ascetics.⁸²³

Four monks of this period are commemorated to this day by the Coptic Church in the *majma' al-qiddisin*, the Assembly of the Saints. These are the future Patriarch Matthew (1336-1408, reigned from 1378), Anba Ruways (1334-1404), the Abbot Ibrahim al-Fani (1321-96), and the spiritual father Marqus al-Antuni (ca. 1296-1386). Unlike the others, Anba Ruways was based in Cairo.⁸²⁴ Although they were important during the latter point of our focus (as indicated by the account above of Matthew and Mark), their most influential period lies beyond the scope of this study.

Besides the major accounts of persecution and conversion related above due to the Rescript of 1354 and the aftermath of the Crusade of Alexandria in 1365, there were other accounts of difficulties for the Coptic lay community. In 1365, following an outbreak of plague in Cairo and the Delta, the sultan accused a Cairene Copt of casting a spell on his wife and killing her, and ordered the Copt's crucifixion.⁸²⁵ Earlier, in 1353, a Christian clerk from the town of al-Tūr journeyed to Cairo expressly to publicly

⁸²³ Swanson, *Coptic Papacy*, 112-3; Swanson, 'Monastery of St. Paul in Historical Context', 49-50.

Swanson remarks that there were over one hundred monks at the Monastery of Saint Antony in 1386, according to the *Life of Saint Marqus al-Antuni* (50).

⁸²⁴ Swanson, Mark N., "Our Father Abba Mark": Marqus al-Antūni and the Construction of Sainthood in Fourteenth-Century Egypt', in ed. Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala, *Eastern Crossroads: Essays on Medieval Christian Legacy* (Piscataway, NJ, 2007), 217-28, at 217 and 221-2; cf. Swanson, *Coptic Papacy*, 104-15.

⁸²⁵ El-Leithy, 'Coptic Culture and Conversion', 107.

preach the Christian faith and to condemn the Islamic religion. When arrested and brought before the *qāḍī*, he stated, ‘My goal is to gain the honour of martyrdom.’ The judge eventually gave him his desire.⁸²⁶ This is an early example of public martyrdom that would become a much more significant feature of Coptic life in the late fourteenth century, and also hearkens back to the Cordoba martyrs in ninth century Spain.⁸²⁷

Al-Maqrīzī recorded another event of 1353 with far greater consequences. A Copt of the township of al-Naḥrīriyya in Lower Egypt was denounced as being grandson of a man who had made profession of Islam. The *qāḍī* decided that this Copt ought to embrace Islam, and to compel him to do, put him in prison. The Coptic community petitioned the Mamlūk governor, who freed the man (under cover of darkness). The next day, when the *‘amma* found out, they closed shops and threatened to stone the governor. The latter, in turn, ordered his soldiers to charge the crowds, but was overwhelmed and fled the city. The *‘amma* then destroyed the church, burning everything within it and constructing a mosque on its grounds. They also opened the Christian graves and burned all of the remains. The governor then wrote to the vizier and the *amīrs* complaining that the mindless actions of the *qāḍī* had caused a riot and cost the sultan five hundred thousand dirhems in destroyed property and lost revenue. The Christians also besought the influence of an *amīr* to force the *qāḍī* to repay the building expenses for the destroyed church. Both the *qāḍī* and the governor were summoned to Cairo to a special council of the vizier, four *qāḍīs* and several Mamlūk

⁸²⁶ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sūlūk*, Vol. 2.3, “MS. 673, fol. 4 vers”, trans. Quatremere, *Mémoires géographiques*, 2:251.

⁸²⁷ Swanson, *Coptic Papacy*, 115-7.

officers. Although the Mamlūk governor and others condemned the actions of the qāḍī, the former was rebuked in Turkish for siding with the Christians and withdrew his support. The *amīr* favourable to the Christians was then publicly condemned for this support and accused of renouncing Islam. Finally, an investigation into the matter decided that both the governor and the qāḍī were equally guilty and both were dismissed.⁸²⁸ No restitution was made for the church nor to the Christian community, and this was the greater threat to the Christian community as an institution, for isolated destruction and confiscation of property over time continually weakened the community.

NUBIANS AND ETHIOPIANS

There were also Nubians and Ethiopians – who fell under the spiritual oversight of the Coptic patriarch – present at monasteries in Egypt (especially in the Wādi Natrūn and at Saint Antony’s in the Eastern Desert), Lebanon, and at the holy places in Jerusalem and Palestine. Niccolò of Poggibonsi noted that the Church of ‘Saint Mary of the Fright’ in Nazareth was ‘in the hands of the black Nubian Christians’.⁸²⁹ Niccolò also reported seeing many Ethiopians around Cairo. In Jerusalem, he witnessed Ethiopian monastics at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. He noted that Ethiopians were allowed to travel to Egypt and the Holy Land without paying tribute as the Mamlūk sultan was afraid of the great power of the Ethiopian ruler, an account also

⁸²⁸ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sūlūk*, 2.3:900-1, cited in el-Leithy, ‘Coptic Culture and Conversion’, 67-73. The account about al-Naḥrīriyya is at 69-70.

⁸²⁹ Niccolò of Poggibonsi, *Voyage*, 64.

recorded by John Kantakouzenos.⁸³⁰ Although the Nubian Church, in particular, was in dire straits by this period, the monastic community was still alive, while the Ethiopian monarchy had inherited Nubia's protective role of the Copts. They were generally too far distant to have significant influence, but they did play in the Mamlūk imagination. Ibn Faḍlallāh al-'Umārī, writing in the early 1340s, recorded that: 'The Ethiopians claim they were the guardians of the Nile. They say they allow it to flow only out of respect to the sultan.'⁸³¹

The Ethiopian Negus Sāyfā-Ar'ad (1344-77), who succeeded his father Amdā-Şiyon, traded threats with the Mamlūk sultan al-Nāşir Ḥasan and likely maltreated Muslims within his domain in retaliation to persecution of Copts in Egypt.⁸³² During his reign, reports of the Ethiopian monastic presence in Jerusalem also became regular. By this time, the Ethiopians were firmly in control of northern Ethiopia and the pilgrim routes via Egypt to the Holy Land, and the Negus sought to strengthen contacts both with the Coptic Patriarchate as well as with the wider Christian world.⁸³³ Conversely, the Mamlūks made it standard policy to keep the Ethiopians separated from the Latin

⁸³⁰ Niccolò of Poggibonsi, *Voyage*, 22, 27, 89, 126; Kantakouzenos, *Eximperatoris Historiarum*, 3:99-100; trans. Miller, 139 and 231, who states that the Mamlūks did not mistreat the 'Jacobites' from fear that the Ethiopians would block the Nile in retaliation.

⁸³¹ Erlich, Haggai, *The Cross and the River: Ethiopia, Egypt, and the Nile* (London, 2002), 43.

⁸³² Erlich, *Cross and the River*, 43. Ethiopia was surrounded by Muslim sultanates, and had been invaded by Haqq al-Dīn of Ifat in 1328, who was defeated. In 1381, The Ethiopian emperor Dawit (1380-1412) invaded (likely a raid) Upper Egypt and inflicted 'heavy blows on the Muslims' – the only incident of actually direct Ethiopian-Mamlūk military conflict in the medieval period. According to Ethiopian tradition, Dawit also managed to block the Nile when he heard that the Coptic patriarch had been imprisoned.

⁸³³ Tamrat, *Church and State*, 251.

Christians outside of Palestine. As Niccolò of Poggibonsi recorded, the Ethiopians love ‘us Christian Franks more than any other generation, and willingly would unite with us Latins; but the [Mamlūk] Sultan of Babylon never allows a Latin to them, lest they negotiate war against him.’⁸³⁴ Two separate traditions exist of an Egyptian delegation sent to the Ethiopian king during the reign of the Coptic Pope Mark (1348-63). In the first case, it is recorded that Mark was imprisoned by the sultan, but was able to send a message to the negus seeking help. The latter organized an enormous army, which proceeded to march northwards towards Cairo. In a panic, the sultan released the patriarch and sent a delegation with a request from the patriarch for the negus to depart from Egypt with his army. The other tradition records that the Egyptian delegation was sent in response to the persecution of Muslims in Ethiopia. Tamrat argues that both of these accounts might well be related.⁸³⁵

GEORGIANS

A Georgian community was very much active in Jerusalem in the mid-fourteenth century, especially at their famous Monastery of the Holy Cross. This monastery had been restored to them by Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad at the beginning of the fourteenth century, but though sanctioned by the sultan, the Georgian monks yet faced local opposition. The Mamlūks continued to seek good relations with the Georgians as the Caucuses were a major source and conduit for the military slaves (or *mamlūks*) upon

⁸³⁴ Niccolò of Poggibonsi, *Voyage*, 126.

⁸³⁵ Tamrat, *Church and State*, 253-4.

which the Sultanate was so dependent. For this reason, Georgians usually had special privileges – for non-Muslims – in regards to Jerusalem and the Christian Holy Places. In 1346, Sultan al-Muzaffar Ḥajjī (1346-7) issued an edict very similar to one issued by his father, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, placing Georgian property and personal security under the sultan's *amān* – his personal protection in accordance with Islamic law. The Sultan's decree was a result of Georgian complaints of harassment from the local Muslim community in Jerusalem, and he specifically ordered that their endowments should be kept from harm. Likely harking back to accusations of Georgian collusion with Mamlūk enemies during the height of the Il-Khānate, he explicitly stated that 'no one of them [the Georgian monks] is accused of disloyalty.' The Sultan noted as well that the Georgian king 'had done beforehand (certain) services to our gracious predecessor', and he attempted to mollify the Jerusalem *'ulamā* and create a stable environment.⁸³⁶

A decade later, in 1358, the governor of Gaza (Sayf al-Dīn) ordered an inspection of the Georgian community's property. The Abbot of the Monastery of the Holy Cross – named Ioane – represented the community and provided documents from Sultan al-Nāṣir Ḥasan (1347-51 and 1354-61) confirming the rights of Georgian monks and priests to their churches, monasteries, and charitable foundations. Unlike other *dhimmi*s (non-Muslims), the Georgians were exempted from the practice of the *dīwān* of inheritances (*al-mawarīt*) in confiscating the inheritance of those who died without

⁸³⁶ Abu-Manneh, 'Georgians in Jerusalem', 105.

heirs.⁸³⁷ Less than a year later, however, the monks filed a petition complaining about the confiscation of a thousand dirhams by the governor of Jerusalem. With unusual privilege, the Georgian emissaries presented their case in a public audience before Sultan al-Nāṣir Ḥasan himself. The latter, in his response, ordered the return of the amount confiscated.⁸³⁸

Beyond this evidence of their unique position for non-Muslims in the Mamlūk empire, Johannes Pahlitzsch points out that the Georgian monks also worked hard to maintain this position: learning to read and speak Arabic, carefully preserving documents in their Monastery archives, and learning the procedures of the Islamic law courts so as to best preserve their rights.⁸³⁹ The experience of the Georgians vis-à-vis official policy versus localized reality exemplified the situation of Christian communities in the Mamlūk Empire in general. In consideration of the events of 1354, however, the Georgians – a largely monastic community, it must be remembered – retained official good will. The evidence is not clear of their experience in the aftermath of the Crusade of Alexandria, but it is most likely that they were not ungrateful for the monastery's fortress-like demeanour. The Black Death affected

⁸³⁷ Pahlitzsch, Johannes, 'Documents on Intercultural Communication in Mamlūk Jerusalem: The Georgians under Sultan an-Nāṣir Ḥasan in 759 (1358)', eds. Alexander Beihammer, et al, *Diplomatics in the Eastern Mediterranean 1000-1500* (Leiden, 2008), 373-94, at 373-5. The earlier decrees (مراسيم) state that the Georgians in Jerusalem should keep their customs, that nothing should be unjustly taken from them, and that they should be cared for (380-2).

⁸³⁸ Pahlitzsch, 'Documents on Intercultural Communication', 376-8 and 383-5, where the thousand dirhams is ordered returned: *و مهما اخذ منهم فيعاد عليهم جميع ذلك*.

⁸³⁹ Pahlitzsch, 'Documents on Intercultural Communication', 379.

Georgia as it did its neighbours, but the monastic community in Jerusalem seems to have not been especially affected.

MARONITES

Maronite areas around Kisrawan and northern Mount Lebanon continued to be rather quiet under the Mamlūk agents, the Banū ‘Assāf clan. The area was prosperous enough that many Syrian Orthodox and other Christians emigrated there, apparently converting many Maronites.⁸⁴⁰ Thanks to their relatively small numbers, living in the shadow of the Druze and Shī‘ite ‘heretics’, and especially due to the difficult remoteness of their mountainous area, the Maronites were largely left alone by the Mamlūk authorities and the *dhimmī* laws were not enforced to the stringency experienced by Christians elsewhere within the empire.⁸⁴¹

The Maronites’ relative prosperity changed, however, following the Crusade of Alexandria in 1365, which resulted in widespread persecution. On 1 April 1367, the Maronite Patriarch Gabriel (Jibrā’īl) of Ḥajūlā (ca. 1357-67) – who had succeeded Yūḥannā (ca. 1339-57) – was burned at the stake in the village of Ṭīlān, near Tripoli. A colophon written by Archbishop Jacob of Ihdin recorded that: ‘In this date [1365] the King of Cyprus went out to Alexandria and looted it, killing its men and taking its young captive. So the sultan of the Moslems was angered with the Christians and took their chief clergymen and imprisoned them in Damascus. Then I, the humble Jacob,

⁸⁴⁰ Salibi, *Maronite Historians*, 85-6; Iskandar Bcheiry, ‘L’attività siro-ortodossa nel Monte Libano nella seconda metà del secolo XV’, *PDO* 28 (2003), 609-58, at 614-5.

⁸⁴¹ Kattar, ‘Géographie’, 64, who notes rare exceptions.

Archbishop [of Ihdin], ran away and left them, and the Lord Christ helped me; and I copied [these Gospels] while I was in hiding.⁸⁴² Like nearly all of the indigenous Christians of the Near East, the Maronites, too, suffered at the hands of misplaced Mamlūk vengeance.

MELKITES

Not unlike the Georgians, the Melkite Christians preserved a measure of leverage with the Mamlūk authorities under the consideration of foreign policy. Thanks to the flourishing trade routes in the eastern Mediterranean, the Greek Orthodox-Melkite prelates were well aware of the ecclesiastical and political currents in the Byzantine Empire and were often themselves involved. They were, after all, *Melkites*, those Christians loyal to the Chalcedonian Faith of the emperor. During the 1340s and 1350s, the Palamite controversy – on the subject of mystical *hesychasm* – was raging in Constantinople. But it also reached throughout the Greek Orthodox and Melkite communities of the Near East, at least amongst the hierarchy.⁸⁴³ Agathangelos, a friend of Nikephoras Gregoras who travelled in the Middle East in 1347, reported that the

⁸⁴² Al-Duwayhī, Iṣṭifān, *Ta'riḫ al-tā'ifa al-mārūniyya* (Beirut, 1890), 386-7. Cf. Assemani, *Patriarcharum Antiochia, Syro-Maronitam*, 38; Salibi, *Maronite Historians*, 75-77 and 145-7; and El-Hāyek, 'Struggle for Survival', 419.

⁸⁴³ Meyendorff, John, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, trans. George Lawrence (London, 1964), 74-5 and 94-101; J.M. Hussey, *The Orthodox Church in the Byzantine Empire* (Oxford, 1986), 257-60.

Patriarchs Ignatios II of Antioch (1344-64), Gerasimos of Jerusalem (1342-9), and Gregorios of Alexandria (ca. 1354-66) were all outspokenly anti-Palamites.⁸⁴⁴

Ignatios II of Antioch – an Armenian by background and a convert to Greek Orthodoxy – was in Constantinople in late 1344 to obtain confirmation of his patriarchal election. He quickly became an avid supporter of the anti-Palamite camp, countersigning a letter deposing the pro-Palamite Isidore, bishop-elect of Monemvasia and, according to Gregorios Akindynos, was present at the synod convoked when the Palamites were opposing the former's ordination. He also wrote a lengthy *Tome* that circulated widely amongst those debating the Palamite position.⁸⁴⁵ Ignatios' entourage included the avidly anti-Palamite Arsenios, Metropolitan of Tyre. When Emperor John Kantakouzenos called a new Council beginning on 28 May 1351, it was Arsenios who represented Ignatios and Antioch. Arsenios joined Nikephoras Gregoras and others as leading voices opposing Palamism, but he left before the second session (30 May) had even finished. He was possibly forced out under threat by the synod of excommunicating his Patriarch, Ignatios. Nonetheless, Arsenios continued his struggle and later published a number of texts against Palamism in 1360 and 1370, complicating relations between Antioch and Constantinople as well as within the

⁸⁴⁴ Gregoras, Nikephoros, *Historia Byzantina*, ed. I. Bekker and L. Schopen, *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae*, 3 Vols. (Bonn, 1829-55), 2:893; 3:23.

⁸⁴⁵ Akindynos, Gregory, *The Letters of Gregory Akindynos*, Letters 47 and 50, trans. and ed. Angela Constantinides Hero (Washington, DC, 1983), 203, 215, 394; Giovanni Mercati, *Notizie di Procoro e Demetrio Cidone Manuele Caleca e Teodoro Meliteniota* (Vatican City, 1931), 199-200, 203, 205, and 223. Ignatios showed a copy of his *tome* to the Byzantine traveler Agathangelos upon the latter's sojourn in Antioch, especially noting that it was countersigned by all of his bishops and priests. See: Gregoras, *Byzantina Historia*, 3:24.

Patriarchate of Antioch itself. Ignatios seems to have recognized the results of the Council of 1351 (expressed in a *Tome*) by 1352. Sometime after 1365, Arsenios was elected anti-Patriarch of Antioch in opposition to the pro-Palamite Pachomios (1365). As a result, he was finally deposed, at least officially.⁸⁴⁶ Ignatios himself was forced to go into exile in Cyprus in 1359, which he chose as it had a large Melkite community, and he was also welcomed by the King, Hugh IV (1324-59).⁸⁴⁷ His date and place of death are debated, but he is thought to have lived at least until 1361 and possibly 1364.⁸⁴⁸

At least into the early decades of the fourteenth century, the Byzantine emperor regularly sent diplomatic envoys to the Mamlūk court to intercede on the behalf of the indigenous Christians. In this, Constantinople's historic reputation and prestige played a large part in its diplomatic relations in both the West and the East.⁸⁴⁹ In addition, as

⁸⁴⁶ Gregoras, *Byzantina Historia*, 2:991; Meyendorff, *Gregory Palamas*, 94-8; Nasrallah, *Chronologie des Patriarches Melchites*, 14-6 and 43; cf. a letter to Nikephoros Gregoras, ca. 1350, *Correspondance de Nicéphore Grégoras*, ed. and trans. R. Guiland (Paris, 1927), 282-3; Todt, 'Zwischen Kaiser und ökumenischem Patriarchen', 170-1. Meyendorff states that Arsenios 'preferred to go away to avoid further complicating his relations with the Church of Constantinople' (96). Regarding Palamism and its relations between Antioch and Constantinople between 1359 and 1365, see: Otto Kresten, *Die Beziehungen zwischen den Patriarchaten von Konstantinopel und Antiocheia unter Kallistos I. und Philotheos Kokkinos im Spiegel des Patriarchatsregisters von Konstantinopel* (Mainz and Stuttgart, 2000), 23-39.

⁸⁴⁷ Schabel, 'Religion', 181; Nasrallah, *Chronologie des Patriarches Melchites d'Antioche*, 15-16.

⁸⁴⁸ See: Akindynos, *Letters*, 394, for the discussion, and below.

⁸⁴⁹ Korobeinikov, D.A., 'Raiders and neighbours: the Turks (1040-1304)', in ed. Jonathan Shepard, *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire, ca. 500-1492* (Cambridge, 2008), 692-730, at 722; idem, 'Diplomatic Correspondence', 65; Oikonomides, 'Byzantine diplomacy', 86; Kantakouzenos, *Eximperatoris Historiarum*, 3:96-7; trans. Miller, 136 and 229, provides a contemporary example of the emperor's intercession for indigenous Christians.

Constantinople played an important transit route for the slave (*mamlūk*) ships, relations were recognised as important by both sides.⁸⁵⁰ As such, correspondence was maintained throughout this period.

On 30 October 1349, Sultan al-Nāṣir Ḥasan sent a letter to the Byzantine Emperor John VI Kantakouzenos in response to the latter's correspondence. In his reply, al-Nāṣir Ḥasan agreed to reinstate Lazaros (1341 and 1349-ca. 1368/9) as the Melkite Patriarch of Jerusalem. Lazaros was elected about 1341 and confirmed by the Sultan's *tauqī*. A monk named Gerasimos objected to Lazaros' elevation, however, and the latter was deposed. When civil war erupted in the Byzantine Empire following the death of Andronikos III Palaiologos (1328-41) in 1341, these two contenders were supported by the two factions. Lazaros was then in Constantinople either as a diplomatic envoy, for confirmation as patriarch, or both, and had attached himself to John VI Kantakouzenos early on (having also crowned the latter in Adrianople in 1346). Consequently, the regents for John V Palaiologos (then in his minority) declared Lazaros deposed and supported Gerasimos, who was then approved by the Sultan al-Nāṣir Aḥmad (reigned 1342) in 1342. But when John VI ultimately won the war, he successfully petitioned Sultan al-Nāṣir Ḥasan in 1349 for the reinstatement of Lazaros.⁸⁵¹ The Mamlūk sultan had no reason to support the losing side in the civil war, and in his response letter dated 30 October 1349 (Sha'bān 15, 750 A.H.) to the

⁸⁵⁰ Ashtor, *Levant Trade*, 10.

⁸⁵¹ Kantakouzenos, *Eximperatoris Historiarum*, 3:90-99; trans. Miller, 129-39 and 223-31; Marius Canard, 'Une lettre du Sultan Malik Nāṣir Ḥasan', *Annales de l'Institut d'Études Orientales* 3 (1937), 27-52, at 29-30 and 50 ft. 3. Cf. Pahlitzsch, 'Mediators between East and West', 36-38. John's regents were the Empress Mother Anne of Savoy and the Patriarch Kalekas. See Hussey, *Orthodox Church*, 258.

Byzantine emperor (John VI), he acknowledged the latter's concerns and – besides reinstating Lazaros – promised to place under his personal protection all of the Christian churches, monasteries, and indigenous Christian population (*οἱ τοπικοί*) of Jerusalem, to guarantee freedom from harassment for pilgrims visiting the Church of the Holy Sepulchre⁸⁵² in Jerusalem (including the Byzantine ambassador), to continue to grant freedom of access for Byzantine merchants across Mamlūk territory, to exchange Greek slaves, and to permit the rebuilding of the ancient Melkite Church of Saint George (located in the district of Ḥārat al-Rūm in Cairo).⁸⁵³

Byzantium was again engrossed in civil war when Gregorios III (1354-66), the Patriarch of Alexandria, approached Constantinople to receive imperial recognition of his enthronement. Gregorios – whose predecessor was confusingly also named Gregorios⁸⁵⁴ -- had sailed with his embassy in mid-1352, but bided his time on Cyprus, Crete, and Mount Athos whilst awaiting the outcome of the civil war. When John V Palaiologos' successfully extended his authority throughout Byzantine domains, he heard of the embassy of Gregorios III and eagerly met him on Lemnos most probably in

⁸⁵² Niccolò of Poggibonsi reported that the Greek Orthodox patriarchal residence in Jerusalem was within the Church of Saint Mary Magdalen, some sixteen paces from Mount Calvary. The patriarch presided at the high altar of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Niccolò, very concerned with indulgences, reported a plenary indulgence of seven years and forty days for visiting, effectively, the Greek Orthodox patriarchal residence. See: Niccolò of Poggibonsi, *Voyage*, 22 and 26-7.

⁸⁵³ Kantakouzenos, *Eximperatoris Historiarum*, 3:96-7; trans. Miller, 135-8 and 227-31; Canard, 'Une lettre du Sultan Malik Nāṣir Hasan', 48-51. Niccolò of Poggibonsi lamented the large numbers of Greek slaves – 'as if they were beasts' – he witnessed for sale in Cairo. He referred to the Greeks as 'Griffins', apparently Frankish derogatory slang from the earlier Crusader period. See: Niccolò of Poggibonsi, *Voyage*, 124 and ft. 1.

⁸⁵⁴ Gregorios II (1316-54).

early 1353. John was ‘eager’ as by formally recognizing Gregorios as the new patriarch, he further expanded his authority and gained added foreign recognition as sole emperor.⁸⁵⁵

In 1357, Patriarch Lazaros of Jerusalem may have regretted his position when the Amīr Shāḥūn⁸⁵⁶ in Jerusalem began to violently persecute the local Christians. Many were killed, while others converted to Islam. The *amīr* tortured Lazaros in an attempt to make him renounce his Christian faith and thus provide an example to other Christians. When the patriarch refused, he was initially sentenced to death, but the sultan al-Nāṣir Ḥasan intervened and commuted this sentence to five hundred lashes. When the *amīr* died in 1357, it was interestingly the Coptic patriarch – so often the rival to the Melkites – who petitioned the sultan for Lazaros’ release. The Sultan ended the active persecution, but continued to enforce the *ghiyar* regulations.⁸⁵⁷ Before long, Lazaros was dispatched as a Mamlūk envoy to Constantinople. Thus, as Pahlitzsch notes, Lazaros (also like Gregorios III of Alexandria) clearly demonstrates the double function of Melkite clergy as both leaders of the indigenous Melkite Christian

⁸⁵⁵ Gregoras, *Byzantina Historia*, 3:182-3; cf. Peter Schreiner, ‘Bemerkungen zu vier melkitischen Patriarchen des 14. Jahrhunderts’, *OCP* 45 (1979), 387-96, at 388-91.

⁸⁵⁶ Σειχούv.

⁸⁵⁷ Canard, ‘Une lettre du Sultan Malik Nāṣir Hasan’, 31-33; Kantakouzenos, *Eximperatoris Historiarum*, 3:100-3, trans. Miller, 140-3 and 232-5, who also states that the sultan had not sanctioned the persecution. A document dated 1344 refers to the taxation of Christians for the explicit purpose of supporting the Dome of the Rock and al-Masjid al-Aqṣā. These Christians were from the village of Majdal Fādil. See: Little, *Catalogue of the Islamic Documents*, 256.

community as well as intermediaries in Mamlūk-Byzantine relations.⁸⁵⁸ He also continued to play an important part in inter-Church affairs, writing a joint letter in May 1367 with Patriarch Philotheos I Kokkinos of Constantinople (1353-54 and 1364-76) and Niphon (1366-85), Melkite Patriarch of Alexandria, to Pope Urban V in Rome on the subject of the union of the Churches.⁸⁵⁹

A few years later, however, in 1365, following the sack of Alexandria, Lazaros fled to Constantinople rather than face the intense persecution that broke out across Mamlūk territory.⁸⁶⁰ He was not alone, however, as several sixteenth century Russian chronicles report that Mark, Archbishop of Saint Katherine's Monastery, Germanos, a Metropolitan of Jerusalem, and others fled to Russian territory due to the persecution.

⁸⁵⁸ Kantakouzenos, *Eximperatoris Historiarum*, 3:104; trans. Miller, 144 and 235; Pahlitzsch, 'Mediators between East and West', 38-39. Based upon the testimony of Paul Tagaris, Miller has hypothesized a later chronology, which Schreiner has corrected from other sources. See: Peter Schreiner, 'Bemerkungen zu vier melkitischen Patriarchen des 14. Jahrhunderts', *OCP* 45 (1979), 387-96, at 392-95; Timothy S. Miller 'A New Chronology of Patriarch Lazarus' Persecution by the Mamluks (1349-67)', *OCP* 41 (1975), 474-78; Cf. Papadopoulos, *Ιστορία της Εκκλησίας Αλεξανδρείας*, 575-7; Donald M. Nicol, 'The Confessions of a Bogus Patriarch: Paul Tagaris Palaiologos, Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem and Catholic Patriarch of Constantinople in the fourteenth century', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 21 (1970), 289-99, at 291; Todt, 'Das ökumenische Patriarchat von Konstantinopel', 60. According to Tagaris' Confession, he was ordained a deacon by Lazaros in Jerusalem sometime after July 1363, but, after Lazaros fled to Constantinople, Tagaris angered Damianos, the administrator (and representative of the Alexandrine Patriarchate) and himself departed for Damascus at the beginning of the reign of Michael I of Antioch in 1368.

⁸⁵⁹ Darrouzès, Jean, et al, *Les Regestes des actes du Patriarcat de Constantinople*, 1 Vols., 7 Fasc. (Paris, 1971-91), 1.5:441 (No. 2526); Alfred von Gutschmid, *Kleine Schriften*, 5 Vols. (Leipzig, 1890), 2:491; Mercati, *Notizie*, 289; Schreiner, 'Bemerkungen', 394-5. Niphon succeeded Gregory III in 1366. He was in Constantinople with Lazaros in April 1368. See: Peter Schreiner, 'Byzanz und die Mamluken in der 2. Hälfte des 14. Jahrhunderts', in ed. Bertold Spuler, *Der Islam: Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Kultur des Islamischen Orients* (Berlin, 1979), 296-304, at 302; Papadopoulos, *Ιστορία της Εκκλησίας Αλεξανδρείας*, 577.

⁸⁶⁰ Todt, 'Das ökumenische Patriarchat von Konstantinopel', 59.

The chronicles report that the Mamlūk sultan sent an army to Palestine and Syria, plundering Saint Katherine’s Monastery and many other churches and monasteries, imprisoning, torturing, and even killing many priests, monks, and prelates. Only the intervention of the Byzantine emperor eased the situation and restored the status quo, excepting for a penalty of equating to twenty-thousand rubles placed upon the Christians.⁸⁶¹

Regarding this persecution, Ibn Kathīr records that the governor of Syria ordered the Melkite Patriarch of Antioch, Michael I ibn Bishara (June 1366-August 1373), to write to both Peter and to the Byzantine emperor to relate the intense persecution upon the indigenous Christians caused by the Cypriot attack. The patriarch had been spared death for this specific purpose.⁸⁶² Cyprus at this time had both a majority Greek population as well as a very large Arabic-speaking Melkite population. In Famagusta, the Melkites and Syrian Orthodox may have been in the majority, and Arabic was the second most spoken language on Cyprus after Greek. Many of these Syrians had fled to Cyprus in the waning days of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem and in subsequent decades. They did, however, maintain relations with the Syrian coast, both mercantile

⁸⁶¹ The chronicles are *Letopisec Rogoŝskij*, PSRL (Polnoe Sobranie Rusakich Letopisej) 15 (Leningrad, 1922), 81-2; *Patriaršaja ili Nikonovskaja letopis*, PSRL 11 (St. Petersburg, 1922), 7; and *Stepennaja Kniga*, PSRL 21 (St. Petersburg, 1908), 359-60. Translated in Schreiner, ‘Byzanz und die Mamluken’, at 298-9 and 302. Also listed is Germanos, ‘Metropolitan’ of Jerusalem.

⁸⁶² Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa’l-Nihāyah fī al-Tārīkh*, 14:320. The Arabic reads: لكن اعتذر بأنة في الحقيقة هو عن انطاكية ، وانما إذن لة في المقام بالشام الشريف لاجل أنة امرة نائب السلطنة إن يكتب عنة وعن أهل ملتهم إلى صاحب قبرص ، يذكر لة ما هل بهم من الخزي والنكال والجنایة بسبب عدوان صاحب قبرص على مدينة السكندري ، وأحفر لى الكتب الية وإلى ملك اسطنبول وقرأها على من لفظة لعنة الله ولعن المكتوب اليهم أيضا Cf. Pahlitzsch, ‘Mediators between East and West’, 39-41; Nasrallah, *Chronologie des Patriarches Melchites*, 19; Schreiner, ‘Bemerkungen’, 391-2.

and religious.⁸⁶³ Ignatios, the Patriarch of Antioch, had lived there in exile for six years prior to the attack and had good relations with King Hugh IV and his son Peter I.⁸⁶⁴ Although the Mamlūk governor may have misunderstood Byzantine-Cypriot relations at the time (as there were none), his intention was likely to use the Byzantine emperor's influence with the Greek population of Cyprus to force the hand of King Peter to sue for peace and cease hostilities.⁸⁶⁵

The Holy Synod of the Patriarchate of Antioch sent a letter to Patriarch Philotheos I Kokkinos in Constantinople in early 1365 informing him that they had elected Metropolitan Pachomios of Damascus as the new patriarch following the repose of Ignatios II in late 1364. They also asked for his name to be placed on the diptychs in recognition of this. The letter was signed by the Synod's members, ten metropolitans and the Catholicos Germanos Romagyris, Exarch over Georgia ['Iberia']. Patriarch Pachomios I ruled only a short time, however (late 1364 or early 1365 to late 1365 or early 1366), and already a new Patriarch was elected in 1366 – Michael ibn Bishara.⁸⁶⁶ Despite Pachomios' short reign, it was during his tenure that the patriarchal residence – facing reality in that Antioch was now something of a backwater – was relocated to Damascus, probably in 1364. Nonetheless, this was not recognized by the Mamlūk

⁸⁶³ Richard, Jean, 'Le peuplement latin et syrien en Chypre au XIIIe siècle', *Byzantinische Forschungen* 7, (1979), 157-73, at 166-71; Pahlitzsch, 'Mediators between East and West', 40-41.

⁸⁶⁴ Schabel, 'Religion', 181.

⁸⁶⁵ Pahlitzsch, 'Mediators between East and West', 40-41.

⁸⁶⁶ According to a Russian chronicle, it was the patriarch Michael ibn Bishara who was crucified in the course of the widespread persecution that afflicted Syria and Egypt following the Crusade of Alexandria in 1365, but the chronology is mistaken. See: *Letopiseć Rogožskij* in Schreiner, 'Byzanz und die Mamluken', 299.

bureaucracy until after June 1366 due to the intervening persecution following the Crusade. Henceforth, as well, the office of the Metropolitan of Damascus was combined with that of the patriarch.⁸⁶⁷ In the letter of confirmation, the *tauqī*, given by the sultan in recognition of Patriarch Michael's position, the latter was warned to remember carefully the *dhimmīs*' position: 'Let him be careful not to allow the Christians in their churches to bang the wooden clappers (*ndqus*) [unduly violently] nor to raise their voices in a loud clamour, and especially not at the times of the summons to the Muslim worship. Furthermore, let him enjoin all the Christians to adhere firmly to the distinctive dress regulations and to the stipulations of 'Umar's covenant.'⁸⁶⁸

Turning now to Melkite monastic and ecclesiastical centres, the Monastery of Saint Katherine in the Sinai – which included Arabic-speaking Melkites and Georgians in addition to Greeks – continued to be highly esteemed throughout the Christian world, despite its isolation. The archbishops maintained correspondence with other ecclesiastical leaders, such as a letter dated 16 December 1360 from Archbishop Mark to Pope Urban VI confirming the latter's various concessions to the monastery.⁸⁶⁹ More immediately, the monks suffered many troubles during this time, notably from Bedouin raiders. Although this in and of itself was nothing new, the frequency of their depredations is testified to by a series of petitions to the Mamlūk court in Cairo begging protection and recognition of their property rights. Petitions were answered in 1347

⁸⁶⁷ Todt, 'Griechisch-Orthodoxe (Melkitische) Christen', 86-7.

⁸⁶⁸ Bosworth, C. E., 'Christian and Jewish Religious Dignitaries', 203. On the *tauqī*, see 199, ft.1.

⁸⁶⁹ Rey, Emmanuel G., *Recherches Géographiques et Historiques sur la Domination des Latins en Orient* (Paris, 1877), 16.

under Sultan Hāggī (1346-7); 1348 and twice in 1349 under Sultan Ḥasan (1347-51 and 1354-61); and in 1352 and 1354 under Sultan al-Ṣāliḥ Ṣāliḥ (1351-54).⁸⁷⁰

A typical petition by the monks reads as this one of 1348: ‘The slaves, the monks of the monastery of Mount Sinai in the desert...report that they...are weak and poor persons staying in the distant desert and looking after the pilgrims who come back from the noble Hijaz [i.e. the *hajj* to Mecca]. The Bedouins of the desert overpowered them and took to entering the monastery, plundering the belongings of the monks both inside and outside the monastery, and beating and molesting the monks.’⁸⁷¹ In each case, the reigning sultan (or his bureaucratic representatives) responded favorably to the monks and issued a decree commanding their protection. The decree of Sultan Ḥasan in 1349, for example, commanded that the Bedouin ‘be prevented from harassing the monks; that care be taken to deal with the monks in accordance with the demands of justice and equity.’⁸⁷² This was done even by sultans associated with harsh oppression of Christians (Copts, in particular) in Cairo, such as al-Ṣāliḥ Ṣāliḥ in 1352

⁸⁷⁰ Ernst, *Mamlukischen Sultansurkunden des Sinai-Klosters*, 56-81. S.M. Stern has corrected Ernst’s interpretation of the three petitions for 1348 and 1349. See: ‘Petitions from the Mamlūk Period (Notes on the Mamlūk Documents from Sinai)’, *BSOAS* 29 (1966), 233-76, at 249-62. There were no petitions from the death of Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in 1341 until 1348, and the first after 1354 was not until 1375 under Sultan al-Ashraf Sha‘bān (1363-77).

⁸⁷¹ The second sentence reads: *العرب عرب البرية وصارو يدخلو الدير و ينهبوا جميع ما الرهبان جوا الدير و يراه و يضربو الرهبان*. See: Stern, ‘Petitions from the Mamlūk Period’, at 250.

⁸⁷² The Arabic reads: *و يمنعوا من التعرض اليهم و الوصيّة بهم حملا على حكم العدل و الإنصاف*. See Stern, ‘Petitions from the Mamlūk Period’, 261-2.

and 1354.⁸⁷³ Nonetheless, given the frequent repetition of the petitions, one must question the effectiveness of the sultan's writ in Sinai at this time.

With this last point in mind, we must question the effects of the Black Death upon the monastic community, the Bedouin, and the Mamlūk authorities. Though it is impossible to say for sure, one must question the stability of the monastery at this time, the desperation of the Bedouins, and the effectiveness of the depleted Mamlūk forces to deal with the situation. Robert Irwin has reasonably suggested that the high mortality amongst the settled rural population as a result of the Black Death altered the demographic balance in favour of the Bedouin.⁸⁷⁴ Regardless, it is telling – hearkening back to the savvy of the Georgian monks in Jerusalem – that the Melkite monks at Saint Katherine's were well aware about the legal procedures of the Mamlūk government and worked diligently to protect their isolated community.

The Monastery of Saint Katherine had a long history of iconography and manuscript production. Although the mid-fourteenth century was much less prolific than in the previous century, production did not cease. For example, an amulet roll, written in Greek, was produced at Saint Katherine's in 1363, possibly by the scribe Philippos ibn Katīb or Suleiman ibn Sāra (or both); the names, date, and location were written in Arabic on the reverse, suggesting that the scribe were bilingual. Most of the scroll is dedicated to the account of King Abgar of Edessa and the Mandylion of Christ, while the illustrations are most likely copied from thirteenth century Syrian Melkite

⁸⁷³ Ernst, *Mamlukischen Sultansurkunden des Sinai-Klosters*, 71-77.

⁸⁷⁴ Irwin, *Middle East*, 137.

icons at the monastery. The story of the Mandylion was first popularized in Byzantium in the eleventh century, but it had long been known in the Near East.⁸⁷⁵ The fact that it was chosen as the theme for this amulet roll in 1363 – an era when artistic and scholarly endeavours by Christians in the *Dar al-Islām* were greatly reduced – strongly suggests its continued importance. It also demonstrates the continued importance of the Monastery of Saint Katherine not only to Greek monks, but also to the Melkite Christian population of *Bilād al-Shām* and Egypt.

Other Melkite monasteries that had continued importance in the fourteenth century included those of Ṣaydnāyā, Qāra, Maʿlūla, Shuwaiya, Qalamūn, Bterrām, ʿAmmatūra, and others in Syria near Damascus, Tripoli, and Lattakia.⁸⁷⁶ To many the Monastery of Our Lady of Ṣaydnāyā's importance was third only to Jerusalem and Bethlehem. According to Ibn Faḍlallāh al-ʿUmarī, writing in the 1340s, 'all pilgrims from all over the earth came, by land and sea, to the Resurrection Church in Jerusalem, and to Bethlehem Church where Jesus, peace be upon him, was born, and to Ṣaydnāyā Church by the land of Damascus, and Tyr Church; some of their kings would not be allowed to take kingship unless they prayed for God's blessing therein. Similarly with regard to Saint John Church in Alexandria which was the Jacobins' [Jacobites, that is,

⁸⁷⁵ Hunt, 'Manuscript Production by Christians', 305-8 and 330-4. Regarding the Mandylion story in Byzantium, see: Mark Guscini, *The Image of Edessa* (Leiden and Boston, 2009); Kurt Weitzmann, 'The Mandylion and Constantine Porphyrogenitos,' in ed. Herbert L. Kessler, *Studies in Classical and Byzantine Manuscript Illumination* (Chicago, 1971), 233-6.

⁸⁷⁶ Hunt, 'Manuscript Production', 305.

Copts] worship place.⁸⁷⁷ Niccolò of Poggibonsi was one of these foreigners who journeyed to the ‘city of Saint Mary of Sardinale’, which he recorded was in the possession of ‘Syrian nuns’. He noted that ‘only Christians usually live’ in Şaydnāyā, since those [non-Christians] who do all die within one year.⁸⁷⁸ The appeal of the monastery for pilgrims continued to be the wonder-working icon called *al-Shaghūra*. Many Latin pilgrims described this icon, noting in particular the holy oil that secreted from it. Al-‘Umarī, albeit a Muslim, says that the Melkite Christians called it ‘power energy’ (الحيلى), referring to the power of recovery.⁸⁷⁹ Niccolò of Poggibonsi took some of the holy oil from the ‘flesh-like’ icon of *al-Shaghūra*, saying that it was ‘good against every infirmity and every peril of the sea’.⁸⁸⁰

Elsewhere, the Monastery of Saint Euthymios in Jerusalem had an active scriptorium, as a document by the monk Gerasimos from the year 1343 testifies.⁸⁸¹ Niccolò of Poggibonsi reported the Church of Saint John the Evangelist in Jerusalem in the possession of ‘Syrian Sisters’; the Church of Saint Michael in Babylon ‘in the hands

⁸⁷⁷ Trans. in Gaby Abou Samra, ‘The Pilgrimage between Saydnaya and Jerusalem according to a Manuscript from Bcharree (Lebanon)’, *Aram* 18-19 (2006-7), 641-72, at 666-7.

⁸⁷⁸ Niccolò of Poggibonsi, *Voyage*, 78.

⁸⁷⁹ Abou Samra, ‘Pilgrimage between Saydnaya and Jerusalem,’ at 668-9.

⁸⁸⁰ Niccolò of Poggibonsi, *Voyage*, 78. John Mandeville also describes *al-Shaghūra*: ‘In this church, behind the High Altar on the wall, is a wooden panel on which a portrait of Our Lady was once painted, which often became flesh; but that picture is now seen but little. Nevertheless that panel constantly oozes oil, like olive oil; there is a marble vessel under the panel to catch it. They give some to pilgrims, for it heals many of their illnesses; and it is said that if it is kept well for seven years, it afterwards turns into flesh and blood.’ Mandeville’s *Travels* appeared about 1354, but whether he actually himself travelled is suspect. See: *The Travels of John Mandeville*, trans. C.W.R.D. Moseley (New York, 1983), 99-100.

⁸⁸¹ Papadopoulos-Kerameos, Athanasios, *Αναλεκτα Ιεροσολυμιτικής Σταχυολογίας*, 5 Vols. (Brussels, 1963), 2:255-7.

of Greek Christians and Syrians'; and the Monastery of Saint Arsenios a few miles outside of Babylon.⁸⁸² He also recorded the presence of Greek Christians (probably monastics) on 'a hill' three miles east of Damascus, where there was a church in remembrance of where Christ appeared to the Apostle Paul.⁸⁸³ Greek monks were noted at a 'beautiful monastery' dedicated to Saint George in the village of Lydda, one mile from 'Rama' (Ramallah), and ten miles inland from Jaffa on the road to Jerusalem.⁸⁸⁴ They also possessed several churches and monasteries dedicated to Saint John the Baptist: a church on the way from Hebron to the Dead Sea; another church just outside (a 'bowshot') from Sebaste; a monastery at Jericho with relics.⁸⁸⁵ On the north shore of the Dead Sea (east of Jericho), Niccolò found the Greek Orthodox Monastery of Saint Gerasimos with many relics and much alms-giving (of bread). Above Jericho he recorded the Monastery of the Temptations ('at the fort of the Quarantine'), in which Niccolò described the Greek paintings.⁸⁸⁶

SYRIAN ORTHODOX

During this period, the Syrian Orthodox were largely protected by their isolation from the Rescript of 1354 and the repercussions of the Crusade of Alexandria, except for those in Cilicia and urban centres in Mamlūk areas. The Black Death, of course, affected northern Mesopotamia as elsewhere and the instability of being so near the

⁸⁸² Niccolò of Poggibonsi, *Voyage*, 28, 95, and 97. He incorrectly calls the monastery Saint Anselm's.

⁸⁸³ Niccolò of Poggibonsi, *Voyage*, 79.

⁸⁸⁴ Niccolò of Poggibonsi, *Voyage*, 6-7.

⁸⁸⁵ Niccolò of Poggibonsi, *Voyage*, 60, 62, 72.

⁸⁸⁶ Niccolò of Poggibonsi, *Voyage*, 74-5.

lawless frontiers was a constant danger. At the same time, the Syrian Orthodox Church suffered from internal division. In 1364, a bishop named Basilios Saba of Salah (in the Tūr Abdin, south of Amida) was slandered by a monk to Patriarch Ismāʿil of Mardin, then resident in Sīs in Cilicia. The latter rashly excommunicated the bishop, who shortly came to seek reconciliation. The patriarch refused to see him, and later, when Ismaʿil had come to the Zāʿfaran Monastery,⁸⁸⁷ Saba again came with supporters to seek reconciliation. When the patriarch constantly refused to see him, Bishop Saba left with his supporters, including Bishop Yuhanna Yeshuʿ of Mor Gabriel Monastery (‘Qartmīn’), Bishop Philoxenus of Ḥaḥ, and others. These latter shortly proclaimed Bishop Saba as patriarch in his own right, and before long he had won official recognition from the local Ayyūbid lord of Ḥisn Kayfa. He took the name of Ignatios as his patriarchal name and ruled over five dioceses in Tūr Abdin from 1364 until his death in 1389. Patriarch Ismaʿil greatly regretted his actions, losing to his authority as it did Tūr Abdin with its twenty-five monasteries and some thirty-three churches.⁸⁸⁸ Early in this period, the Maphrian of the East was Gregory Matthew I (1317-45), whose secretary was Deacon ‘Abd Allah of Barṭelli.⁸⁸⁹ However, at the maphrian’s death, there was great difficulty in having a new maphrian of the East appointed by Patriarch Ismaʿil. He planned to

⁸⁸⁷ The ‘Saffron Monastery’, also called Mor Hananyo.

⁸⁸⁸ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, 2:799-803; Ignatius Aphram I Barsoum, *The History of Tūr Abdin*, trans. Matti Moosa (Piscataway, NJ, 2008), 95-6. See 17-20 for a list of monasteries and churches. Ishaq Saaka lists the patriarchs of the Syrian Orthodox Church during this period as Michael III Yeshu (1312-49) and Baselius III Gabriel (1349-87). Ishaq Saaka, *Kaniisatii al-Suryaaniyya* (Damascus, 1985). <http://sor.cua.edu/Patriarchate/PatriarchsChronList.html> (accessed 15 March 2011).

⁸⁸⁹ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, 3:505-8; Barsoum, *Scattered Pearls*, 491.

appoint his nephew, until the latter died, but in general was in conflict with the monks of the East. Under the authority of the new Patriarch of Tūr Abdin, Ignatios, however, the monks of the Monastery of Mar Matthew (near Mosul) – having already waited for twenty years – elected their own maphrian in 1365 – an unprecedented event and one condemned by the continuator of Bar Hebraeus not so much for the particular election as for the consecration of the maphrian by the monks, which would not have the benefit of a bishop's apostolic succession.⁸⁹⁰

The rather isolated area of Tūr Abdin and northern Mesopotamia was the most significant area for the Syrian Orthodox at this time, as is evidenced by the literary output. Abū al-Wafa, though born in Ḥiṣn Kayfa, was consecrated metropolitan of several dioceses in Tūr Abdin. He composed liturgical texts, if not as prolifically as did Joseph Bar Gharīb (Dionysios; d. ca. 1374), Metropolitan of Amida, writing about 1360. The monk Abraham of Mardin (ca. 1365) wrote a short history dealing with the Monastery of Mar Barṣoum and the church of Arzenjān, as well as mentioning the Monastery of the Syrians in the Wādi Natrūn in Egypt. None of these were as proficient as the monk Daniel of Mardin (Ibn ʿIsa, d. ca. 1382). He was fluent in Syriac and journeyed to Egypt to study Arabic literature, dialectics, and philosophy, remaining there for seventeen years before returning to the Tūr Abdin. By request, Daniel abridged in Arabic a number of books by Bar Hebraeus, and also composed one called *The Book of the Fundamentals of Religion* (*Kitab ʿUṣūl al-Dīn*), for which he was

⁸⁹⁰ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, 3:505-20.

persecuted in 1382 by the local ruler.⁸⁹¹ Bar Hebraeus was justifiably popular, and his works along with other texts were compiled in a manuscript of 1364 by Barsauma ibn David, a monk of the Monastery of Mor Gabriel.⁸⁹² Additionally, a scribe named ʿIsa – location unknown – wrote a manuscript in Syriac of a collection of anaphoras in 1347.⁸⁹³ This literary output demonstrates the continuity of Syriac scholarship, albeit in a much reduced state from previous centuries.

Elsewhere in *Bilād al-Shām*, the Syrian Orthodox were still present, if in fewer numbers than before. As mentioned earlier, some Syrian Orthodox immigrated to Maronite areas of Lebanon in pursuit of some measure of security. Niccolò of Poggibonsi recorded that the bishop of the ‘Jacobites’ in Jerusalem (presumably the Syrian Orthodox, but possibly the Copts) dwelled in houses (along with other ‘Jacobites’) above the Church of Saint Michael the Archangel.⁸⁹⁴ He also noted that the Church and Monastery of Saint Mary Magdalene – long the archepiscopal residence – was then a mosque. This confiscation by the Muslim authorities must have occurred between 1320 and 1335, as Latin pilgrims record it as a church in the former but as a ‘mosque’ – the Madrasa al-Maimūniya – by the latter date. The archepiscopal residence

⁸⁹¹ Barsoum, *Scattered Pearls*, 492-4.

⁸⁹² British Library, London, MS. Orient. 1017; Wright, *A Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum*, 2 Vols. (London, 1870-1), 2:890-901, at 892. Mor Gabriel in Syriac is ʿKartamīn or Qartmīn.

⁸⁹³ British Library, London, MS. Add. 14,692, folios 25-99; Wright, *Catalogue British Museum*, 1:211-12. This manuscript is dated 1658 Anno Graeciae.

⁸⁹⁴ Niccolò of Poggibonsi, *Voyage*, 27. A plenary indulgence of seven years and seventy days was awarded for Latin pilgrims to this church.

was relocated about this time (at least by 1354) to the Church of Saint Thomas, on Mount Zion.⁸⁹⁵

⁸⁹⁵ Pahlitzsch, Johannes, 'St. Maria Magdalena, St. Thomas und St. Markus. Tradition und Geschichte dreier syrisch-orthodoxer Kirchen in Jerusalem', *OC* 81 (1997), 82-106, at 91-2 and 97; Pringle, *Churches of the Crusader Kingdom*, 3:329; Meinardus, 'Syrian Jacobites', 67. Cf. Andrew Palmer, 'The History of the Syrian Orthodox in Jerusalem', *Oriens Christianus* 75 (1991), 16-43; 76 (1992), 74-94. The Church of Saint Thomas came under Syrian Orthodox control in 1244.

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I have demonstrated the diversity and significance of the nine indigenous Christian communities living within *Bilād al-Shām* and Egypt in the years 1244-1366. These were the Armenians, adherents of the Assyrian Church of the East, Copts, Nubians, Ethiopians, Maronites, Georgians, Melkites, and Syrian Orthodox. This was a period of instability and significant turmoil characterized by: (1) the latter Crusades and Counter-Crusades; (2) the invasion of *Dār al-Islām* by the Mongol confederation during its westward expansion; and (3) the rise of the Mamlūks in Egypt and Greater Syria and the end of the Ayyūbid Sultanate. The ascendancy of the Mamlūks coincided with a hardening of Muslim public opinion towards the indigenous Christians as epitomized in the attitude of the *‘ulamā’* and *‘amma* towards the Coptic secretaries serving in the governmental *dīwāns*. While Sultans Baybars and Qalāwūn were often pragmatic towards their Christian subjects, they also patronized the *‘ulamā’* and largely viewed the *dhimmīs* as a source for much-needed revenue. Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad eventually turned from protector of the Christian population to an active participant in their exploitation. Persecution reached its climax in 1354 with the *Rescript* of Sultan al-Ṣāliḥ Ṣāliḥ, after which the Coptic Community became permanently weaker and poorer.

The situation of the indigenous Christians varied according to Confession and location. In *Bilād al-Shām* and northern Mesopotamia, Christians largely had high hopes in the arrival of the apparently Christian-friendly Mongols. This patronage

proved an illusion, however, but the consequences for seeking their protection against Muslim powers was to prove devastating for the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia, in particular. Within Mamlūk territory, moreover, the suspicions generated in society by the ‘*ulamā*’ against the *dhimmīs* was reinforced by the public display of pro-Mongol sympathies and anti-Muslim prejudices demonstrated by some indigenous Christians. Added to a foundation of bias inherent within Islam against non-Muslims and further strengthened by the hostilities engendered by the Frankish invasion in the Crusades, the situation of the indigenous Christians continued to deteriorate. This condition was further worsened in those areas where the governmental authority was weak – notably northern Syria and the failed-state of the Il-Khānate as well as Upper Egypt and Makuria.

Despite this nearly universal pressure upon the indigenous Christian Communities, they long continued to prosper and even to thrive throughout much of the thirteenth century. Indeed, for many of them, it was a period of literary and artistic renaissance. Christians and Jews greatly benefited from Mongol patronage, but upon the conversion of the Il-Khāns and most of their Mongol contingent to Islam, their communities became open to retribution from hostile Muslims and opportunistic Kurds. The breakdown of stable society in the wake of the Mongol invasions and later in the dissolution of the Il-Khānate created an often desperate atmosphere of famine and banditry in northern Mesopotamia and northern Syria. In the Mamlūk Sultanate – the ‘defender’ of Sunni Islam – the situation of the Christians within society quickly deteriorated after the elimination of external threats to the state and the turn to an

increasingly internal focus against *dhimmīs* and non-Sunni Muslim dissidents – fuelled by the increasingly powerful and influential ‘*ulamā*’. Nonetheless, the experience of each Christian Confession differed from time and place, according to the whims of the local ruler as well as popular sentiment. In the end, however, most of the indigenous Christian Confessions of the Near East entered something of a Dark Age by the end of this study, not truly prospering again until the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries.

APPENDICES:

- I. A NOTE ON THE SOURCES**

- II. THREE PILGRIMAGE ACCOUNTS (1322-41)**
 - A. Simon Fitzsimons**
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- III. DYNASTIC AND ECCLESIASTICAL TABLES (ca. 1244-1366)**
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 - J. Catholici of the Assyrian Church of the East**
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 - L. Syrian Orthodox Catholici**

M. Maronite Patriarchs

IV. MAPS

A. Bilād al-Shām and Mesopotamia

B. Egypt

I. A NOTE ON THE SOURCES

Primary sources by and about the indigenous Christians of Greater Syria and Egypt are relatively plentiful until about 1300. Afterwards, however, they are rather sparse. One must, therefore, rely on shorter accounts in Arabic chronologies and also the observations of Latin pilgrims such as Burchard of Mt Sion, Simon Fitzsimons, James of Verona, Ludolph von Suchem, and Niccolo of Poggibonsi. These are particularly helpful for their commentary and passing references about indigenous Christians in Palestine, but also to a lesser degree in Egypt.

Armenian historians were quite active in the thirteenth century, perhaps in reflection to the great number of monasteries throughout Greater Armenia, Cilicia, and Palestine. Some, such as Grigor of Akanc', are particularly useful in regard to the Mongols. Constable Smbat also falls into this category, although as brother of the king he also had greater insight into relations with the Franks and other neighbours. The later writer Hayton (Het'um) can also be useful, but as his chronicle was written purposefully to elicit a new Crusade, it should be used with caution. Sanjian's collection of Armenian colophons from throughout this period can also be quite illuminating. Other references in Arabic chronologies about the Armenians are found in Mufaḍḍal ibn Abi'l-Faḍā'il and al-Maqrīzī (his *Kitāb al-Sulūk*) and others, not infrequently as Mamlūk invasions of Cilicia increased from the 1260s onwards.

Like the Armenians, sources for the Assyrian Church of the East are quite helpful up through the turn of the century. The two most important works are the biographical *History of Mar Yaballaha* and the *Monks of Kūblāi Khān*. Additionally, Bar Hebraeus, though himself Syrian Orthodox, wrote much about the Church of the East. As Maphrian of the East (based between Baghdad and Kurdistan), he was in an ideal location to learn about the events involving the Church of the East. Latin writers – such as William of Rubruck – are again important for the Assyrians, though perhaps generally more for Central Asia.

The Coptic also experienced a literary and artistic ‘renaissance’ in the thirteenth century, though by the Mamlūk period it was much more limited and in decline. Most that was written, however, was not historically related. The *History of the Patriarchs of the Egyptian Church* (or of the *Church of Alexandria*) loses its detailed nature just at the beginning of this study, though there are, at times, illuminating details to be found. The later Muslim historian al-Maqrīzī is particularly helpful both in his chronology (*Kitāb al-Sulūk*), but also in the final section of his *Kitāb al-Mawā’iz wa’l-i’tibār fī dhikr al-khiṭaṭ wa’l-āthār* (commonly called *al-Khiṭaṭ*) he devotes to a history of the Christians of Egypt, particularly the Copts. Like the twelfth century compilation of churches and monasteries attributed to Abu Salih the Armenian, al-Maqrīzī lists and describes with historical detail all of the known churches and monasteries in Egypt. Mufaḍḍal ibn Abi’l-Faḍā’il was a Coptic historian writing into the late 1320s. Much if not most of his chronology is typical of Muslim histories, but interspersed are valuable passages

dedicated to the Coptic Church. Finally, Latin accounts such as Simon Fitzsimons are again often illuminating.

There is much less in the way of primary sources for the Nubians at this time, in this era of political collapse. For their history we are largely dependent upon Arabic chroniclers and writers such as al-Maqrīzī and Ibn Khaldun. This is to a lesser degree true of the Ethiopians, although as an ascending power there is more available. Mufaḍḍal ibn Abi'l-Faḍā'il included several passages dealing with the Ethiopians, while Latin pilgrims provide observations to their presence in Palestine. Additionally, hagiographies of Saint Tāklā Hāymānōt and of the Monk Éwosṭatéwos provide interesting insights, although they should, of course, be used with caution.

Regarding the Maronites, references by Latin writers are more prevalent in the twelfth century, but there are still occasional passages, especially in the light of union with Rome. There are passing references in Arabic chronologies, but one is often dependent upon later Maronite writers, such as Ibn al-Qilā'ī and al-Duwayhī. Although they can be helpful, they also must be used with caution given their nationalist tendencies.

The Golden Age of Georgia ended with the arrival of the Mongols on the scene. As their lands were repeatedly ravaged, dedicated primary sources are practically non-existent. One therefore must rely on the Arabic writers such as al-Maqrīzī, Ibn Faḍl

Allāh al-ʿUmarī, and al-Qalqashandī, in addition to examining the papal registers and mendicant documents.

The sources for the Melkites is not insubstantial for this period, but often must be sifted together for a larger picture to emerge. Besides the quite helpful passages in Pachymeres and Nikephoras Gregoras (primarily on Byzantine relations), there is much to be found in Bar Hebraeus about them. References in al-Maqrīzī (both *Kitāb al-Sulūk* and *Khīṭaṭ*), Ibn Kathīr, and Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-ʿUmarī are particularly useful, while the court petitions compiled by Ernst and later commented upon by Stern are illuminating towards the Monastery of Saint Katherine in the Sinai, in particular.

For the Syrian Orthodox, there is no reference as helpful as that of Bar Hebraeus. His *Chronicon Syriacum* ('*Chronology*') and *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum* are essential not only for his own Confession, but also for many of the others as well as providing an observant political history in its own right. As described above, it was largely due to Bar Hebraeus' remarkable efforts that his era has been called a Syrian Orthodox Renaissance. There are also references to the Syrian Orthodox in Latin and Arabic histories.

II. THREE PILGRIMAGE ACCOUNTS (1322-41)

Much of the wealth experienced in Acre prior to its destruction in 1291 was due to pilgrimage traffic. Pilgrims traveling from the Latin West would also sail via Cyprus to Alexandria and then continue their journeys overland. While there apparently was an understandable drop in pilgrimage traffic in the first few decades following the collapse of the Crusader principalities, by the 1320s this traffic had again increased. Additionally, these pilgrims increasingly recorded their journeys. Although some continue the tradition of relating every location via its sacred biblical reference, others provide detailed information of the environment they encountered. Indeed, they often provide interesting insight into the situation of the contemporary indigenous Christians. Three pilgrims who left detailed accounts of their travels between 1322 and 1341 are Simon Fitzsimons, James of Verona, and Ludolph of Suchem. Their contemporary observations bear witness to the difficult circumstances then experienced by the indigenous Christians of the Near East.

The Anglo-Irish friar Simon Fitzsimons' pilgrimage to Egypt and the Holy Land occurred in 1322-23. Brother Simon recorded his account in detail, particularly commenting on the Copts in Egypt. Upon his arrival in Alexandria, he experienced some of the hostility that had so plagued the indigenous Christians. 'For the name of Jesus', he says, 'we were spat upon, struck with stones, and saturated with other insults and reproaches from morning until the sixth hour...'⁸⁹⁶ Finding refuge and gaining some insight into Alexandrian society, Brother Simon records that Muslims ('ribalds')

⁸⁹⁶ Fitzsimons, 'Itinerary', 12.

call all western Christians ‘Fransy’ (*al-frānj*), Greeks ‘Rumi’ (*al-rūm*), Jacobites (meaning the Copts) the ‘Christians of the Girdle’, as ‘Nasrani’, or ‘Nazarenes’ (*al-nasrāni*), and ‘all religious of any order Ruhban’ (from *al-rāhab*, ‘monk’); Jews are usually called ‘Yahud’ (*al-yahūd*) and also ‘Kelb’ (‘dogs’).⁸⁹⁷

In his further observations of the people of Alexandria, Brother Simon says the inhabitants of Alexandria -- ‘Saracens, Christians, Greeks, schismatics, perfidious Jews’ are ‘all in appearance and gait are alike’ – except the Franks – and are distinguished only by their turbans and girdles. Indeed, the only way of distinguishing the different sects is by the ‘mere colour of the cloth which they bind around the head in many folds, and the belt or girdle which is used by the Christians of the Girdle, who are Greeks and Jacobites...’ Saracen dress, he notes, is very similar to Franciscan dress. The Jews bind their heads with a ‘bluish-grey or scarlet cloth’ whilst the Christians use ‘a yellow or red colour and are bound exteriorly with a girdle made of silk or linen, from which they are called “of the Girdle”’.⁸⁹⁸ Women of both the indigenous Christians and the Jews dress exactly as do Muslim women: fully veiled [‘eyes covered

⁸⁹⁷ Fitzsimons, ‘Itinerary’, 16.

⁸⁹⁸ Fitzsimons, ‘Itinerary’, 18. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad had reinstated these laws. See 18-19, ft. 2 for a brief discussion of the history of the enforcement of the girdle. James of Verona also notes the difficulty in differentiating the Christians from the Muslims. Combining the Copts with the Syrian Orthodox, he wrote that they wore white but were in appearance very much like the Saracens. There were many in Cairo and Egypt, but they were also found throughout Syria and the Holy Land. He mistakenly recorded that they liturgically followed the Greek usage, but compared to the Latin Mass, the Eastern Liturgies share much more kinship in form and might well be confusing to one not experienced with them. See: James of Verona, *Liber peregrinationis*, 218.

by silk gauze'] with long mantle, short tunic, breeches, but 'black-top boots' versus red-topped as their only distinction.⁸⁹⁹

Regarding the situation recently experienced by the indigenous Christians, Brother Simon has this to say:

It should be known that this glorious church [of Saint Mary of the Cave] was given by the Sultan to the Christians for service at the instance of Lord William Bonnesmains, a citizen of Montpellier on the feast of the Nativity of the glorious Virgin, A.D. 1323; which formerly, that is for three years, while the Sultan raged with hate against Christ, and raised the sword in slaughter of the Christians of the Girdle, it was not officiated; in which also through fear of death many of the Jacobites denying orally Christ to be God and to have suffered, did not abhor from affirming... Muḥammad to be the messenger of God and his prophet. At the same time was destroyed at the hands of the sons of Belial the monastery of the nuns living according to the rule of Blessed Macarius the Abbot, which had been built almost midway between the two said cities beside the road in honour of the Blessed Martin, bishop and confessor.⁹⁰⁰

⁸⁹⁹ Fitzsimons, 'Itinerary', 22.

⁹⁰⁰ Fitzsimons, 'Itinerary', 33. Guillaume de Bonnesmains was an envoy of King Charles IV le Bel (1322-28) of France, who – with the support of Pope John XXII (1316-34) – journeyed to the Mamlūk Court in 1327 to mediate on behalf of the indigenous Christians. Along the way, he met and journeyed with the Aragonese ambassador, Pero de Mijavilla. Although the Sultan purportedly had been willing to grant Jerusalem itself to the French king, Mijavilla sabotaged Bonnesmains' embassy by spreading rumours himself that France was using this embassy as subterfuge even as it prepared a fleet of three hundred ships to invade Egypt. Needless to say, the Sultan's favour turned cold to the French envoy. Per Fitzsimons, Bonnesmains was present in Cairo in 1323, perhaps again as an ambassador. See: Henri Lot, 'Essai d'intervention de Charles le Bel en faveur des chrétiens d'Orient tenté avec le concours du pape Jean XXII', in *Bibliothèque de l'école des chartes*, 36 (1875), 588-600, especially at 595. Cf. Atiya, *Egypt and Aragon*, 53-60.

Although Brother Simon seems certain that the violence was directly the result of ‘the Sultan...[raising] the sword in slaughter of the Christians’, this is, of course, only part of the story. His comments on the successful intercession of William Bonnesmains, the destruction of the women’s Monastery of Saint Macarius, and his testimony to the mass conversion to Islam are all important given the dearth of Coptic commentary for this period. Brother Simon also celebrated mass at the Church of the Virgin of the Cave, which suggests that Latin-Coptic relations were positive at this time. Unfortunately, the manuscript of Brother Simon’s narrative breaks off not long after he leaves Egypt.

Twelve years later, however, in 1335, James of Verona travelled throughout the greater Holy Land, visiting on pilgrimage Palestine, Sinai, Egypt, and Syria. He journeyed from Jerusalem to Bethlehem for the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary at the Church of the Holy Nativity, where he noted that there were five thousand Christians present from various ‘nations’. Unlike some of his more bigoted contemporaries, James was fairly ecumenical towards the indigenous Christians of the Near East and describes them in detail, albeit giving Latins seniority in his description.⁹⁰¹ Each Confession celebrated their liturgical service at a different altar. The ‘Greeks’ (including Melkites?) had the great altar, whilst the hundred or so Frankish Christians present worshiped at another altar served by two Franciscan clergy underneath the great altar, at the site of the manger of the Holy Nativity. On the left side of the church were three altars served by clergy of the Indian (‘Jabeni’), Nubian,

⁹⁰¹ James of Verona, *Liber peregrinationis*, 217-19.

and Assyrian ('Nestorian') Confessions. To the right side of the church, where twenty-four martyrs were buried, were three more altars, served by Syrian Orthodox, Georgian, and Maronite clergy. Following the liturgical services at the very full Church of the Nativity – standing till evening – all the different Confessions made their way first to Mount Sion and then to the Virgin's Tomb in the Valley of Josaphat.⁹⁰² James rather ecstatically describes his ecumenical experience:

'O God, what joy it was to hear so much noise in praise of God and the glorious Virgin. The whole church was full of people, and there we stayed until almost Vespers, before going to Mount Sion. There too I celebrated Mass on the vigil of the glorious Virgin, in the place where she ascended [to Heaven]. Later in the evening everyone went to the Tomb of the Virgin in the valley of Josaphat, and there I sang a solemn Mass on the feast of the Assumption, along with people of all other nations. Never have I known such joy as in those three days, God be blessed!'⁹⁰³

A decade earlier, in 1326, the traveller Ibn Baṭṭūṭa – himself a pious Muslim – noted the Church of the Nativity and recorded that 'the Christians regard it with intense veneration and hospitably entertain all who alight at it.'⁹⁰⁴ James of Verona, amongst others, certainly experienced these sentiments.

⁹⁰² James of Verona, *Liber peregrinationis*, 219. Anthony of Cremona, a few years earlier, describes the church and the different altars, but not their confessional associations. See: Antonius de Cremona, 'Itinerarium', 160. William of Boldensele simply notes that most of the Christians in Bethlehem are 'schismatics' ['habitatores ejus sunt communiter Christiani, quam vis scismatici']. See: William of Boldensele, 'Epistola', 260.

⁹⁰³ James of Verona, *Liber Peregrinationis*, 219, trans. in Jotischky, 'Mendicants as missionaries', 101.

⁹⁰⁴ Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, *Travels in Asia and Africa, 1325-1354*, trans. and ed. H.A.R. Gibb (London, 1929), 55.

Very soon on the heels of James of Verona, the German Ludolph von Suchem travelled the Eastern Mediterranean from 1336-41.⁹⁰⁵ In Egypt, he noted that there was still a ‘Christian Patriarch’ in Alexandria, although he may have meant this figuratively, as the Coptic patriarchal seat had moved to Babylon in the eleventh century and thence to the Ḥārit Zuwaylah district in Cairo in 1303, and Brother Fitzsimons had mentioned being helped in Cairo by the Greek Orthodox patriarch only a decade earlier. Ludolph describes ‘a great and exceeding beauteous church, adorned in divers fashions with mosaic work and marble, wherein at the request of the Venetians Divine service is celebrated every day.’ There are also many other churches still containing the relics of many Saints.⁹⁰⁶ The influence of foreign powers – in particular Aragonese, French, Italian, Byzantine, and Georgian – during this power to the benefit or detriment of the indigenous Christians cannot be understated. Usually, the Mamlūk Sultanate would act if it was in its own best interest, and these considerations were usually in the cause of economic concerns. Both sides used this to their advantage.

⁹⁰⁵ Another contemporary German pilgrim, William of Boldensele, journeyed with a priest and several servants to Jerusalem via Rome, arriving in the Holy Land on 5 May 1333. He was one of a number of German pilgrims in recent years, as the Margrave Waldemar of Brandenburg in 1319 and Count Friedrich of Hohenzollern in 1320 (who died on the return trip) were recent predecessors. From Jaffa on the Palestinian coast, he traveled to Tyre and on to Acre, Gaza, Cairo (where he met the sultan), Damascus, and also visited Maronites in Lebanon. In Jerusalem, he recorded the presence of many ‘heretics’ and ‘schismatics’: Greeks, Armenians, Syrians [Melkites], ‘Nestorians’, ‘Jacobites’, Nubians, Ethiopians, Indians (who follow ‘the faith of Prester John’), Georgians, and also ‘Christiani Crueturani’ or ‘Decentuani’. See: William of Boldensele, ‘Epistola’, 264-5; Reinhold Röhrich and Heinrich Meisner, *Deutsche Pilgerreisen nach dem Heiligen Lande* (Berlin, 1880), 465-6.

⁹⁰⁶ Ludolph von Suchem, *Description of the Holy Land*, 46; Wissa, ‘Ḥārit Zuwaylah’, 1207-9, at 1205; Fitzsimons, ‘Itinerary’, 34.

Traveling next to Cairo, Ludolph declared that it is larger than Babylon, and seven times the size of Paris.⁹⁰⁷ He also maintained that there were four thousand Christian captives in Cairo and Babylon, discounting children. One assumes he is referring to Frankish prisoners, though he then goes on to say that ‘these men have there a Patriarch, priests, churches, and very many venerable relics of the Saints...’ Ludolph also noted that in Babylon is the entire body of Saint Barbara, of which he notes that ‘many kings and princes begged’, but the Sultan never disturbed her relics ‘out of consideration for the comfort of captive Christians’.⁹⁰⁸ In this light, it is not unlikely that these were either Armenians or Greeks, as there were many Armenians captive from Cilicia while other travellers mention numerous Greek slaves in Cairo. Both of these groups had long-established ecclesiastical hierarchies in Cairo. Was the Latin ecclesiastical establishment in Cairo so great as to have a patriarch, priests, etc.? Clearly, this is not the case. There were some mendicants, but not a stable, established presence. It is also possible that he is referring the Frankish prisoners to the care of the Coptic or Melkite clergy – which is not unprecedented – but this seems unlikely from his description.

Ludolph concludes his description of Christian Egypt by discussing its monastic life. In Egypt, he records, there are many cloisters and monasteries, churches and hermitages that are ‘standing entire, but deserted, and excellently painted’, albeit ‘in

⁹⁰⁷ Ludolph von Suchem, *Description of the Holy Land*, 67. Babylon refers to the oldest part of modern Cairo (as opposed to al-Fūstat or al-Qahira). It was a centre of Coptic Christians, in particular, but also of Melkites, Jews, and, later, Muslims. See: Peter Grossman, ‘Babylon’, *CE*, 2:317-23.

⁹⁰⁸ Ludolph von Suchem, *Description of the Holy Land*, 71.

many ways spoiled by the Saracens'. 'Likewise in the Egyptian deserts there stand at this day so many cells and hermitages of holy fathers, that in some places, I believe, for two or three (German) miles there is one at every bow-shot. At the present day very many of them are inhabited by Indians, Nubians, and Syrians, living under the rule of Saint Antony and Saint Macarius.'⁹⁰⁹ The monasteries in question are undoubtedly those in the Wādi Natrūn and perhaps at Saint Anthony's and Saint Paul's in the Eastern desert. As mentioned earlier, Latin writers often confused Ethiopia, Nubia, and India, but at the least there was a long-established presence of Syrians, Nubians, and Ethiopians living in these monastic centres. The Syrian Orthodox were of the same rite as the Copts, while the Nubians and Ethiopians both fell under the authority of the Coptic pope.

Traveling next to the Syrian coast, Ludolph notes that in Beirut there is a 'fair' church of Saint Nicholas 'held in especial reverence by Christians'.⁹¹⁰ The 'fair city' of Ramallah ['Ruma' and 'Bael'], says Ludolph, is inhabited completely by Christians alone. He was told that no 'Jew or Saracen could live or dwell therein for more than a year'. It is also the origin for all the wine consumed in Jerusalem. In Lydda, there remained in his day an 'exceeding fair church, well adorned with mosaic work and marble', where is shown the place of the beheading of Saint George.⁹¹¹

Near Hebron, Ludolph recounts the double cave of the three patriarchs. Though he calls the building over the cave a church, it is in the possession of Muslims who

⁹⁰⁹ Ludolph von Suchem, *Description of the Holy Land*, 80.

⁹¹⁰ Ludolph von Suchem, *Description of the Holy Land*, 48.

⁹¹¹ Ludolph von Suchem, *Description of the Holy Land*, 65.

refused all Christians entry. Christians can pray at the door, and even go inside for viewing only. Jews can enter for prayer, but for a fee. Also at Hebron, Ludolph found ‘three renegades’: Germans who had become Muslims. They were menial labourers. Asked why they had converted to Islam, they said that they had ‘hoped that their lord would obtain riches and honour.’ The latter had, however, disappointed them, and they said they would gladly leave if they could. Ludolph informs us that these three had also met the knight William of Boldensele.⁹¹²

Like James of Verona, Ludolph also speaks of Bethlehem’s Christian and ecumenical nature. It is, he says, an ‘exceeding fair and pleasant village...and almost entirely inhabited by Christians.’ He describes the architecture and decoration of the Church of the Nativity, calling it ‘beyond...any other church under the sun’. ‘On the night of the Nativity [i.e. Christmas Eve] all nations under heaven assemble there, as is very right, and each nation has a particular place in this church set apart for itself for ever wherein to celebrate Divine service according to its own rite. The Latins have now the place wherein God was made man, and in like manner each separate nation has its own separate place.’ In the adjacent monastery, a Muslim now dwelt who received the entrance fee of one Venetian penny. Not far from Bethlehem, Ludolph notes the Church of the Shepherd’s Field (which he calls *Gloria in excelsis*), and all around ‘there are and have been’ many monastic cells, churches, caves, monasteries,

⁹¹² Ludolph von Suchem, *Description of the Holy Land*, 92-3.

and Christian tombs.⁹¹³ In Jerusalem, Ludolph relates that there ‘are many churches of schismatics and heretics, and very many other holy places and gracious oratories.’⁹¹⁴

Ludolph informs us that twice a year – from Good Friday to Easter Monday and the day before and after the Feast of the Invention of the True Cross – Christians dwelling locally are permitted into the Church of the Holy Sepulchre for free and locked in. Little shops are set up selling food and other items. ‘Each several nation has its own special place for holding Divine service according to its own rite, of whom the Latins have the place where Christ appeared to Mary Magdalene in the likeness of a gardener.’⁹¹⁵ Ludolph also mentions the Tomb of the Virgin in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, but does not mention under whose ownership it was.⁹¹⁶

The situation for Christians in Nazareth seems to have been quite poor. Ludolph states that there was a beautiful church there, but that ‘Saracens’ have blocked up the fountain and use the church to throw dead animal carcasses. It also seems to have been in the control of ‘most evil Saracens’ called ‘Dehes’, who ‘take scarcely any heed of the Soldan, but to enter the city one needs their passport and safe-conduct beyond everything else.’⁹¹⁷ Perhaps these were Druze, or else a local Muslim tribe. Elsewhere, on a number of occasions, Ludolph mentions churches that are being used as stables by Muslims. In Bethphage, for example, there were three churches, but all were closed

⁹¹³ Ludolph von Suchem, *Description of the Holy Land*, 93-7.

⁹¹⁴ Ludolph von Suchem, *Description of the Holy Land*, 103.

⁹¹⁵ Ludolph von Suchem, *Description of the Holy Land*, 106.

⁹¹⁶ Ludolph von Suchem, *Description of the Holy Land*, 109.

⁹¹⁷ Ludolph von Suchem, *Description of the Holy Land*, 124-5.

and used as such.⁹¹⁸ This was not so unusual in the *Dār al-Islām*, nor the conversion of churches to mosques. Whether this was from confiscation or abandonment, recent or ancient, Ludolph does not say.

⁹¹⁸ Ludolph von Suchem, *Description of the Holy Land*, 114; cf. 109.

I. Ayyūbid and Baḥrī Mamlūk Sultans of Egypt and *Bilād al-Shām*

1. Al- Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb (1240-49)
2. Al-Mu‘azzam Tūrānshāh (1249-50)
3. Shajar al-Durr (1250)
4. Al-Mu‘izz Aybak (Aybeg) al-Turkmānī (1250-7)
5. Al-Manṣūr ‘Alī ibn Aybak (Aybeg) (1257-9)
6. Al-Muzaffar Qutuz (1259-60)
7. Al-Ẓāhir Baybars al-Bunduqdārī (1260-77)
8. Al-Sa‘īd Berke Khan ibn Baybars (1277-9)
9. Al-‘Ādil Salāmish ibn Baybars (1279)
10. Al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn ibn Alfī (1279-90)
11. Al-Ashraf Khalīl ibn Qalāwūn (1290-3)
12. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn (1293-4 – first reign)
13. Al-‘Ādil Kitbughā (1294-6)
14. Al-Manṣūr Lāchīn (1296-9)
15. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn (1298-1308 – second reign)
16. Al-Muzaffar Baybars II al-Jāshnakīr (1308-10)
17. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn (1310-41 – third reign)
18. Al-Manṣūr Abū Bakr (1341-2)
19. Al-Ashraf Kuchuk (1342)
20. Al-Nāṣir Aḥmad (1342-5)
21. Al- Ṣāliḥ Ismā‘īl (1345-6)
22. Al-Kāmil Sha‘bān (1346-7)
23. Al-Muzaffar Ḥājjī (1347-51)
24. Al-Nāṣir Ḥasan (1351-4 – first reign)
25. Al- Ṣāliḥ Ṣāliḥ (1351-4)
26. Al-Nāṣir Ḥasan (1354-61 – second reign)
27. Al-Manṣūr Muḥammad (1361-3)
28. Al-Ashraf Sha‘bān (1363-77)

II. Mongol Khāns and Persian Il-Khāns (1227-1335)

Great Khans

1. Genghis Khān (d. 1227)
2. Ögedei (1229-41)
3. Güyük (1246-8)
4. Möngke (1251-9)
5. Kublai (1260-94)

Il-Khāns of Persia

1. Hülegū (d. 1265)
2. Abāghā (1265-82)
3. Tegūder Aḥmad (1282-4)
4. Arghūn (1284-91)
5. Geikhatu (1291-5)
6. Baidū (1295)
7. Ghāzān (1295-1304)
8. Ōljeitū (1304-16)
9. Abū Saʿīd (1316-35)

III. Byzantine Emperors

At Nicaea

1. John III Doukas Vatatzes (1222-54)
2. Theodore II Laskaris (1254-58)
3. John IV Doukas (1258-61)
4. Michael VIII Palaiologos (1259-61)

At Constantinople

1. Michael VIII Palaiologos (1261-82)
2. Andronikos II Palaiologos (1282-1328)
3. Andronikos III Palaiologos (1328-41)
4. John V Palaiologos (1341-7)
5. John VI Kantakouzenos (1347-54)
6. John V Palaiologos (1354-91)

IV. Kings of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem

1. Conrad II Hohenstauffen (1228-54; non-resident)
2. Conrad III (Conradin) Hohenstauffen (1254-68; non-resident)

Kings of Cyprus and Jerusalem (Lusignan)

3. Hugh I (III) (1269-84; king of Cyprus, 1267-84)
4. John II (I) (1284-5)
5. Henry I (II) (1285-1324 – titular after 1291)
6. Hugh (IV) (1324-59)
7. Peter I (I) (1359-69)

Rival Claim by House of Anjou-Sicily (Angevins, at Naples; titular)

8. Charles I of Sicily (1277-85 – from Mary of Antioch in 1277, papal blessing)
9. Charles II of Naples (1285-1309)
10. Robert of Naples (1309-43)
11. Joan I of Naples (1343-82)

V. Rulers of the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia (1198-1375)

1. Leon II (baron 1187-1198; crowned first king 1198-1219)
2. Zabel (Isabel) (1219-52),
3. → m. Philip (1223-5)
4. → m. Het'um I (1226-70)
5. Leon III (1270-89)
6. Het'um II (1289-93; first reign)
7. T'oros III (1293-8)
8. Het'um II (1294-7; second reign)
9. Smpad (1297-9)
10. Constantine III (1299)
11. Het'um II (1299-1307; third reign)
12. Leon IV (1301-7; joint rule)
13. Oshin (1307-20)
14. Leon V (1320-41)
15. Constantine IV (coronation name of Guy de Lusignan, 1342-4)
16. Constantine V (1344-62)
17. Leon VI (1363-4)
18. Constantine VI (1367-73)
19. (Peter I de Lusignan of Cyprus, 1367/8-9)
20. Leon VI (1374-5)

VI. Roman Catholic Popes

1. Innocent IV (1243-54)
2. Alexander IV (1254-61)
3. Urban IV (1261-4)
4. Clement IV (1265-8)
5. Gregory X (1271-6)
6. Innocent V (1276)
7. Hadrian V (1276)
8. John XXI (1276-7)
9. Nicholas III (1277-80)
10. Martin IV (1281-5)
11. Honorius IV (1285-7)
12. Nicholas IV (1288-92)
13. Celestine V (1294)
14. Boniface VIII (1294-1303)
15. Benedict XI (1303-4)
16. Clement V (1305-14)
17. John XXII (1316-34)
18. (Nicolas V: 1328-30)
19. Benedict XII (1334-42)
20. Clement VI (1342-52)
21. Innocent VI (1352-62)
22. Urban V (1362-70)

VII. Patriarchs of Constantinople

1. Manuel II (1244-54)
2. Arsenios Autorianos (1255-9 – first reign)
3. Nicephoras II (1260)
4. Arsenius Autorianos (1261-5 – second reign)
5. German III (1265-6)
6. Joseph I (1266-75 – first reign)
7. John XI Bekkos (1275-82)
8. Joseph I (1282-3 – second reign)
9. Gregorios III Kyprios (1283-9)
10. Athanasius I (1289-93 – first reign)
11. John XII Kosmas (1294-1303)
12. Athanasius I (1303-9 – second reign)
13. Niphon I (1310-14)
14. John XIII Glykys (1315-9)
15. Gerasimos I (1320-1)
16. Isaiah (1323-32)
17. John XIV Kalekas (1334-47)
18. Isidore I (1347-50)
19. Callistos I (1350-3 – first reign)
20. Philotheos Kokkinos (1353-5)
21. Callistos I (1355-63 – second reign)
22. Philotheos Kokkinos (1364-76 – second reign)

VIII. Melkite Patriarchs of Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem

Alexandria

1. Gregorios I (1243-63)
2. Nicholas II (1263-76)
3. Athanasios II (1276-1316)
4. Gregorios II (ca.1316-ca.1354)
5. Gregorios III (ca. 1354-ca.1366)
6. Niphon (ca.1366-ca.1385)

Antioch

1. Simeon II (1206-ca.1239)
2. David (ca. 1245-ca. 1258)
3. Euthymios I (ca. 1258-ca. 1274)
4. Theodosios V of Villehardouin (1278-83/4)
5. Arsenios (1283/4-6)
6. Cyril III (1287-1308)
7. Dionysios I (1287-1316; recognized in Constantinople after 1309)
8. Cyril IV (dates uncertain)
9. Dionysios II (dates uncertain)
10. Sophronios (dates uncertain)
11. Ignatios II (1344-59)
12. Pachomios I (1359-68 – first reign)

Jerusalem

1. Athanasios II (before 1234-1244)
2. Sophronios III (dates uncertain)
3. Gregorios I (?-1273 and 1285-?)
4. Thaddaeus (ca. 1296)
5. Athanasios III (ca. 1303-8 – first reign)
6. Gabriel Vroulas (1308-9)
7. Athanasios III (1309-ca. 1322?– second reign)
8. Gregorios II (ca.1322?)
9. Lazaros (dates uncertain – first reign)
10. Gerasimos (?-1341)
11. Lazaros (1341-ca. 1367 – second reign)

IX. Coptic Popes

1. Cyril III ibn Laqlaq (1235-43)
2. Athanasius III (1250-61)
3. John VII (1262-8 – first reign)
4. Gabriel III (1268-71)
5. John VII (1271-93 – second reign)
6. Theodosios II (‘Abd al-masih, son of the Frank, or Abū Makīn al-Afaranjī, 1294-1300)
7. John VIII (Ben Is’ak, al-Qaddīs, 1300-20)
8. John IX (1320-7)
9. Benjamin II (1327-39)
10. Peter V (1340-8)
11. Mark IV (1348-63)
12. John X (1363-9)

X. Catholici of the Assyrian Church of the East

Resident in Baghdad (since 780):

1. Sabrisho' V (1226-56)
2. Makkikha II (1257-65)

Resident in Arbīl and Eshnuq

3. Denḥa I (1265-81)

Resident in Marāghā:

4. Yahballāhā III (1281-1317)

Resident in Arbīl (Monastery of Mar Mikha'il of Tar'il):

5. Timothy II (1318-ca.1332)

Resident in Karamlish:

6. Denḥa II (ca. 1332-1381/2)

XI. Armenian Catholicici

1. Konstantin I Bartzraberdtsi (1221-67)
2. Hakob I or II Klayetsi (1267/8-86)
3. Konstantin II Katuketsi (1286-9)
4. Step'anos (Stephen) IV Hr'omklayetsi (1290-3)
5. Grigor VII Anavarzetsi (1293-1307)
6. Konstantin III Kesaratsi (1307-22)
7. Konstantin IV Drazarkec'i (or Lambronatsi) (1322-6)
8. Hakobos II Anavarzetsi (1327-41 – first reign)
9. Mekhit'ar I Guer'netsi (1341-55)
10. Hakobos II Anavarzetsi (1355-9 – second reign)
11. Mesrop I Artazetsi (1359-72)

XII. Syrian Orthodox Patriarchs

1. Ignatios II (1222-52)
2. Dionysios VII (1252-61)
3. John XV (or John XII bar Ma'dani) (rival, 1252-63)
4. Ignatios III Yeshu (1264-82)
5. Ignatios IV Philoxenos Nemrud (1283-92)

SCHISM – Patriarchs in Cilicia and Syria:

6. Konstantin of Melitene (1292-3)
7. Ignatios Michael II Barsumas (rival, 1292-1312)
8. Michael III Joshua Barsusan (1312-49)
9. Basil III Gabriel (1349-87)

Patriarchs in Mesopotamia (Mardin):

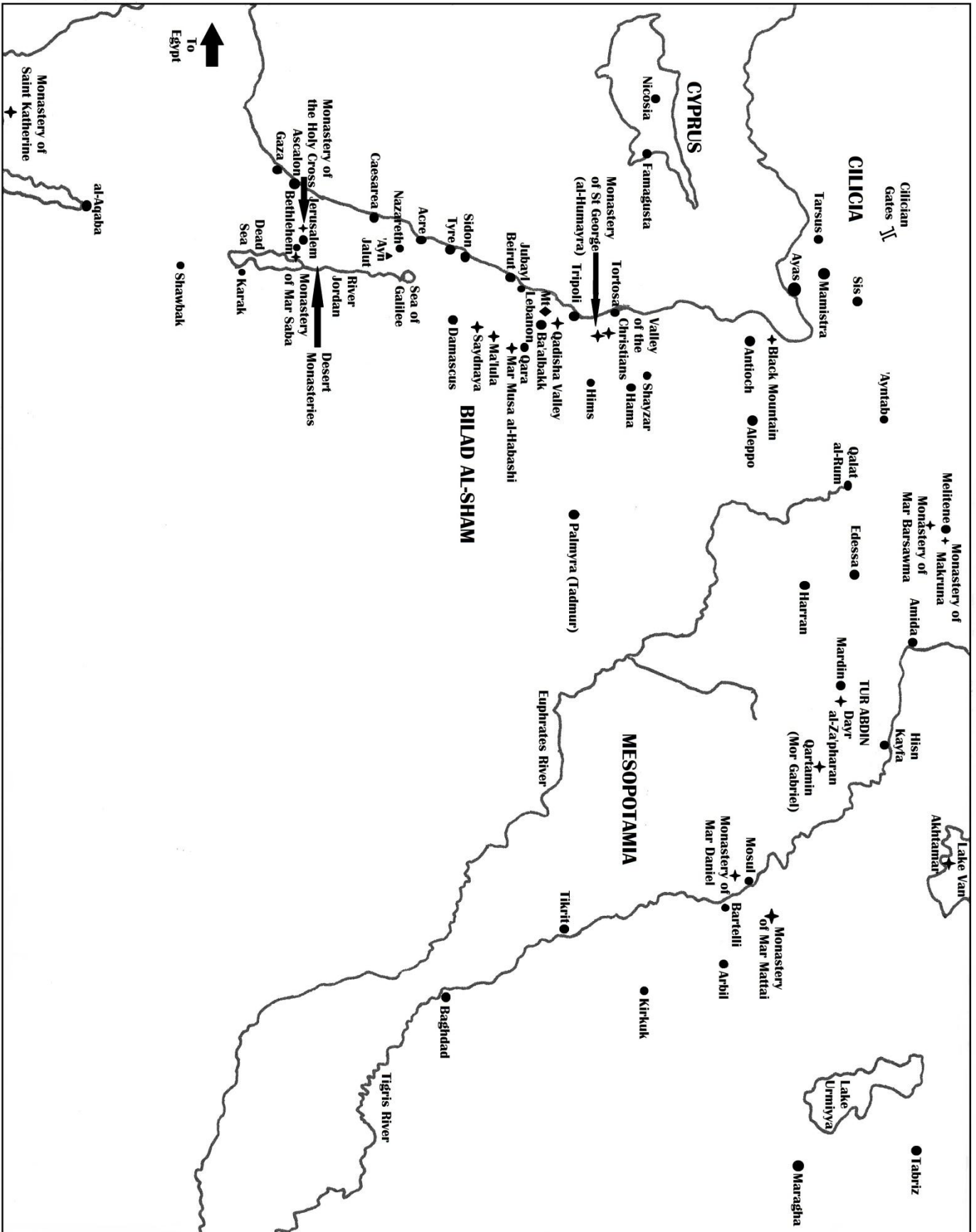
10. Ignatios V Bar Vahib (1293-1332)
11. Ignatios VI Ishmael Almaged (1332-65)
12. Ignatios VII Shahab (1365-81)

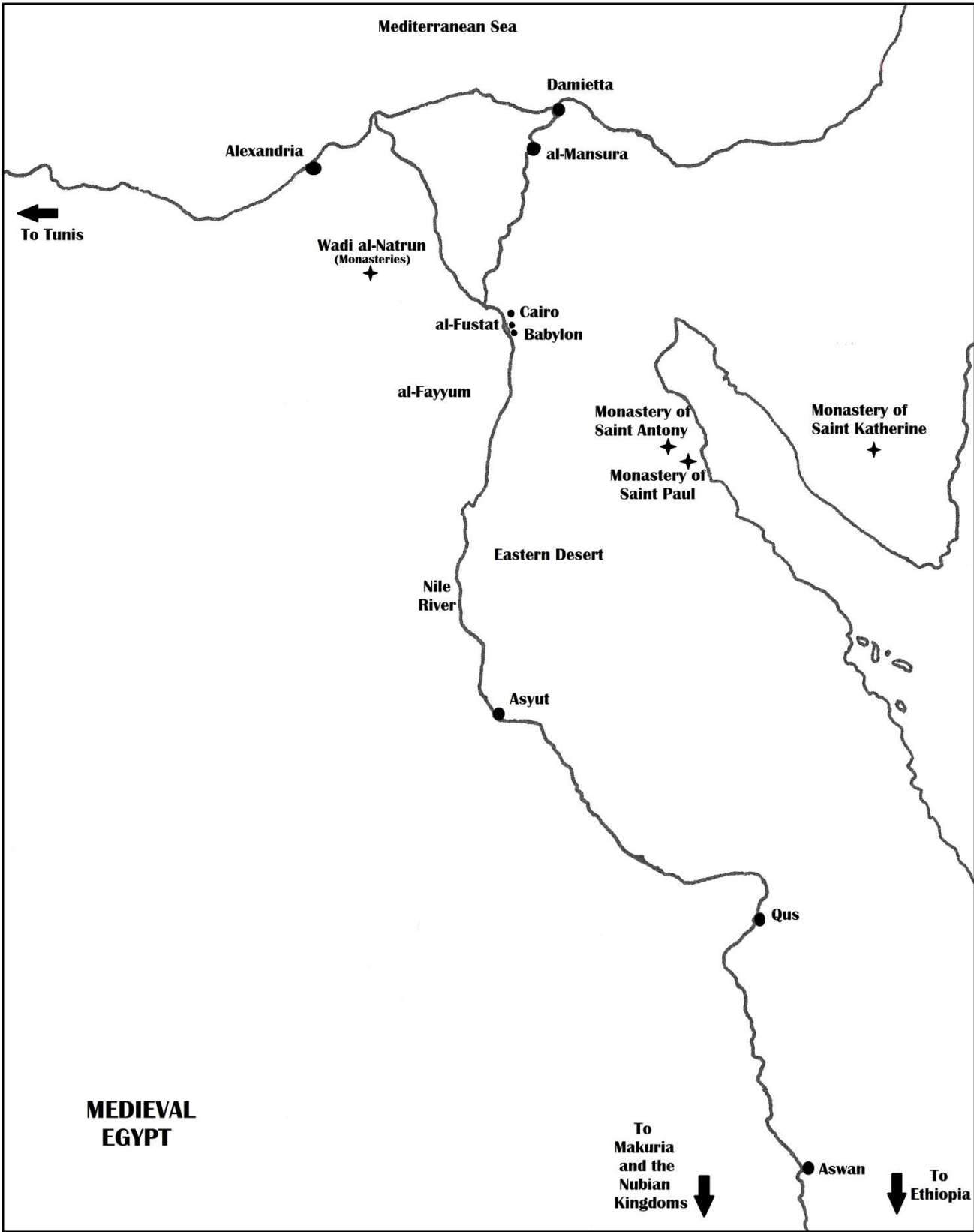
SCHISM II – Tūr Abdin:

13. Ignatios I Saba of Salacha (1364-90)

XIII. Maronite Patriarchs

1. John VI (or Yuḥanna, 1239-44)
2. Simeon IV (Simon or Sham'un, 1245-66)
3. Jacob II (or Ya'qub, 1266-78)
4. Daniel II of Ḥadshīt (1278-82)
5. Jeremiah III (Irmiyā or Urmia, 1283-97)
→ Luke I of Bnahrān (or Luqa, 1282-3?; anti-union rival)
6. Simeon V (Simon or Sham'un, 1297-1339)
7. John VII (Yuḥanna, 1339-57)
8. Gabriel II (1357-67)





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