

## THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE REGIONAL CAPITALS THAT WERE THE CENTER OF THE MAMLUK SULTANATE SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THEIR MUSLIM ERA

ALI AHMED EL-SAYED  
Damanhur University

This chapter aims at presenting a comprehensive overview of the main cities and provinces of the Mediterranean Sea during the Middle Ages. Thus, to be consistent with the thematic unity of such historical structure, the Mamluk Era (1250-1517 AD/648-923 H<sup>1</sup>) has been chosen as the best period that represents these main cities and provinces, in addition to the fact that the administrative system of this era, in particular, has greatly affected the civilizational development of these areas which this chapter outlines.

### 1. Introduction

Once the early Muslims have opened Damascus and the rest of the inner cities of the Levant, Yazid ibn Abi Sufyan headed to open the coastal cities as well. After Yazid has died, his brother Muawiyah took over the ruling of these cities. He went on fortifying the coastal cities and increasing the number of the soldiers in accordance with the recommendations of the Muslims Caliph Umar ibn Al-Khattab. However, this was not enough. Accordingly, since 646 AD/25 H, he started establishing a maritime fleet like the Byzantines,<sup>2</sup> and managed to spread his control over the ports of the Eastern Mediterranean Sea.<sup>3</sup> Damascus was the capital of the Umayyad Caliphate, until the Abbasid State was established 750 AD/132 H, back then the Levant was divided into small independent entities upon which the Seljuks and the Fatimids were fighting. Then the Crusaders invaded the coast of the Levant and took it over from the Fatimids by the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century AD/ the 5<sup>th</sup> century H. Thus, the importance of the territory beyond the Jordan River (*Transjordan*), with its main city Kerak, increased dramatically, and so does the importance of the whole coast of the Levant, until there were no more Crusaders in the Levant by 1291 AD/ 690 H.

1. H = Hijra, Muslim year

2. Abo al-Abbas Ahmad ibn Yahya AL-BALADHURI, *Futuh al-Buldan*, ed. Abdullah Anis al-Tabbaa and Omar Anis al-Tabbaa, Cairo, without publisher, 1956, p.150.

3. Ahmed ibn Abi Yaakoub ibn Wadeh AL-YAAKOURI, *Ketab al-Buldan*, ed. Michael Jan de Goeje, Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1891, p. 337.

### 2. The establishment of the mamluk state

Thanks to the Sultan *al-Malik al-Salih Najm al-Din Ayyub* (1240-1249 AD/638-647 H), the early Mamluk State was established. The Mamluks supported him until he became their first ruler, and he in return allowed them to stay in a castle, in Rawdah Island in the Nile River, as their residence palace, hence the name The Bahri dynasty or Bahriyya Mamluks [i.e. those who live in the river]. After *al-Malik al-Salih* has died, the Mamluks got rid of his son *Turan Shah* due to his ill-treatment towards them, and the Mamluk State was established May 1250 AD/Shaaban 648 H by *Shajar al-Durr* widow of *al-Malik al-Salih* then wife of *al-Malik Izz al-Din Aybak*.

After the Mongols have captured Bagdad 1258 AD/656 H, their leader *Hulagu Khan* headed towards the Levant, and entered Aleppo 1260 AD/ 658 H; after destroying it, he went to Hama, and then proceeded towards Damascus and expanded his control all over the Levant. Back then, the Ayyubid Dynasty no longer got the upper hand any more, as they were either defeated or escaped. As for the Mamluks, they had to stand against the Mongols in order to legitimize enrooting their existence in Egypt and the Levant alike. Undoubtedly, their victory in the battle of Ain Jalut has showed them as the sole defending power of the whole region.

### 3. Central mamluk government in Egypt

Cairo was the headquarters of the Mamluk Sultanate, and it was composed of four main centers: the Fatimid Cairo surrounded with the walls of the old Fatimid city; the ancient city in the same location of the ancient *al-Fustat*; Boulaq which was once an island in the river then became a part of Cairo especially after establishing an important trading port for merchants, and The City of the Dead, or Cairo Necropolis, surrounding The Saladin Citadel of Cairo. Accordingly, the Cairian territories were expanded during this period more than the previous eras,<sup>4</sup> and it was full of various

4. Gaston WIET, *Cairo: City of Art and Commerce*, trans. Mostafa El-Abbadi, New York, Franklin for Publishing and Distribution 1968, p. 99-100.

constructions; such as, the Great Mosque which was built during the rule of the second Mamluk Sultan, *al-Malik al-Zahir Rukn al-Din Baibars* (1260-1277 AD/658-676 H), on the space of 700 meters north-west *al-Futuh Gate* of the city, and a New Canal which was built in 1325 AD/725 H, during the rule of the Mamluk Sultan *al-Malik al-Nasir Muhammad ibn Qalawun*, hence the name of this canal *al-Nasir Bay*, which was 1200 meters to the West of the old canal. Both canals got their running waters from the Nile River.<sup>5</sup> In fact, many of the Mamluk structures are remaining until today.

The Mamluks also succeeded in attracting the trade of Eastern Mediterranean Sea to Egypt that became a main center of goods transportation, especially between India and Europe; this led to increase the wealth of the Cairians during this period. Thus, Cairo was able to overcome different sorts of inner conflicts and disputes. It was a vivid city full of vibrant lifestyles that were not easily affected by devastating plagues or natural disasters.<sup>6</sup>

Despite the great civilizational role of the Mamluks in history throughout 267 years, their era was full of political instability whether during the period of The *Bahri* dynasty or the following *Burji* dynasty as well. This instability came as a result of the influencing political concepts that allowed anyone to claim the Egyptian Throne, which lead to the unavoidable competition among the Mamluk leaders who believed the throne should be for the most powerful one of them.

From time to time, some Mamluk leaders, aspirant to the throne, translated their ambitions into military works within Cairo streets. Rebellious acts by the leaders of affiliated provinces in the Levant were repeated aiming at their independence.<sup>7</sup> However, the ruling system of the Mamluk Sultanate guaranteed the continuance of the *State* itself irrespective of the ruling Sultan. Indeed, it represented what we call today *a state of institutions*.

The ruling system of the Mamluk State is based on a certain administrative structure: the *Sultan*, who is on the top of the structure, and the one who has a total control over the whole Sultanate; the *Abbasid Caliph* that *Baibars* moved his headquarters to Cairo; the *Deputy of the Sultan* who was also known as '*al-Kafil*' i.e. the responsible of the Islamic Provinces;<sup>8</sup> the *Vizier*

who was also known as '*al-Sahib*' i.e. the minister who supervised all civilian aspects of the state; the *Military Atabek* who is the general commander of the army responsible for all military aspects of the state; '*al-Dawadar*' i.e. the inkwell holder who was responsible for writing the official documents and letters of the Sultanate, and who played a very important role during the Mamluk era, in addition to many employees who held less important positions in the state. Other than those public jobs, there were a number of jobs closely related to the Sultan himself; such as, the concierge, and '*ras al-nawba*', i.e. the one responsible for training the Mamluks of the Sultan, not to mention many other important jobs.<sup>9</sup>

According to the vast space of the Mamluk lands, it was necessary to divide it administratively into two major sectors: Egypt and the Levant; and, in turn, divide these two major sectors into '*Niyaba(s)*', i.e. state(s), then divide these *Niyabas* into divisions. As for the Egyptian sector, it was ruled from Cairo, and it was divided into the '*Bahri Niyaba*', i.e. near the sea, that was ruled from *Damanhour*, at *al-Behaira*, which controlled the near cities and villages; except for Alexandria which had its own ruling staff due to the importance of its location and the important economic role it played since it was the main port of the Mamluk Sultanate over the Mediterranean Sea;<sup>10</sup> and the '*Quebli Niyaba*', i.e. near upper Egypt, that was ruled from *Axyut* which controlled the near cities and villages till Aswan. Whereas Cairo had its own *Wally*, i.e. governor, the Saladin Citadel had its own *Wally* who took care of its fortifications and supervised the traffic into and out of its walls.<sup>11</sup>

#### 4. The levant niyabas

As for the second major sector of the Sultanate, i.e. the Levant, it has been under the rule of the Deputy of the Sultan since the *Seljuks*, and Saladin used this position as well. He divided his Ayyubid State into six independent kingdoms.<sup>12</sup> When Hulagu Khan captured

5. André RAYMOND, *Cairo: City of history*, trans. Latif Farag, Cairo, Dar Al-Fikr Publishing House, 1994, p. 115.

6. Oleg VOLKOFF, *Le Caire 969-1969 : histoire de la ville des «Mille et une nuits»*, trans. Ahmed Seliha, Cairo, General Egyptian Book Organization, 1986, p. 96.

7. Qasem Abdou QASSEM, *Age of the Mamluk Sultans*, Cairo, Dar al-Shrouk, 1994, p. 71-73.

8. Shihāb al-Dīn Abū al-'Abbās ibn Faḍl Allah al-'UMARĪ, *Masālik al-abṣār fī mamālik al-amṣār: Dawlat al-mamālik al-ūla*, ed. Dorothea Krawulsky, Beirut, al-Markaz al-Islāmī lil-Būhūth 1986, p. 116.

9. Abu al-Abas Ahmed Ibn Ali Ibn Abdullah AL-QALQASHANDI, *ṣūbh Al-'Aasha fee Sen'aat Al-Enshaa*, vol. XIII, Cairo, 1914, p. 118-122; Said ASHOUR, *The Mamluk Period in Egypt and the Levant*, vol. IV, Cairo, Dar Al-Nahda, 1976, p. 171-172.

10. Obadiah Jara DA BERTINORO, «Itinerary of Obadiah 1487-1490 AD», in Elkan Nathan ADLER (ed.), *Jewish Travellers*, London, George Routledge and sons, LTD., 1930, p. 209-215, 218-219; Abu al-Abas Ahmed Ibn Ali Ibn Abdullah AL-QALQASHANDI, *ṣūbh Al-'Aasha fee Sen'aat -ak-Enshaa*, vol. XIII, 1914, p.172.

11. Abu al-Abas Ahmed Ibn Ali Ibn Abdullah AL-QALQASHANDI, *ṣūbh Al-'Aasha fee Sen'aat -ak-Enshaa*, vol. XIII, 1914, p.173.

12. Leila ABDULGAWAD, «The Mamluk Deputy in Cairo during the Bahri Dynasty», *Egyptian Historian Magazine* (Cairo), vol. 1 (1988), p. 159-160.

Aleppo, he appointed a Deputy.<sup>13</sup> However, during the Mamluk era, the Levant had been divided into six *Niyabas* at first, with a Deputy of the Mamluk Sultan as the governing head of each one of them, after an appointing decree was issued. These six *Niyabas* were known as the main ones, with many affiliated subdivisions and municipalities.

Sultan *Baibars* is known to be the real founder of the *Niyabas* system in the Levant;<sup>14</sup> during his period, four main *Niyabas* were established over two subsequent phases: Damascus and Aleppo, then Safed and Kerak.<sup>15</sup> However, many parts remained within the hands of the Crusaders until Tripoli was regained, then another *Niyaba* was established during the period of *al-Mansour Qalawun* (1279-1290 AD/679-689 H); finally, the *Niyaba* of Hama was established which made it the sixth main *Niyaba* of the Levant.<sup>16</sup>

Each *Niyaba* had its own *Kafil*, i.e. Deputy of the Sultan, who ruled on his behalf in accordance with the known traditions and the Sultan decrees. Each Deputy knew what belongs to his *Niyaba*, and he had the right to march his soldiers without obtaining prior permission from the Sultan. He also had the right to appoint the trusted men to the important positions in the *Niyaba*.<sup>17</sup>

#### 4.1. The Niyaba of Damascus

*Al-Malik al-Muzaffar Saif al-Din Qutuz* entered Damascus 1260 AD/658 H as a victorious leader; since then, it became directly under the Mamluk rule for the first time. *Qutuz* appointed *Alam al-Din Sinjar al-Halabi* as the first Deputy of the Mamluk Sultan in Damascus. The total number of Damascus Deputies during the Mamluk era reached thirty-one. It was the most prominent *Niyaba* in the Levant, and was sometimes referred to as a Kingdom. Its Deputy held the title of al-Kafil of the *Niyabas* of the Levant.<sup>18</sup>

Later, *Alam al-Din Sinjar al-Halabi* found an opportunity to change the ruling regime in Cairo, and

planned for a coup d'état, on the pretext that *Baibars* had killed *Qutuz* and took over the throne without obtaining a prior consent from the rest of the Mamluks. Thus, *Sinjar al-Halabi* coronated himself as the Sultan of Damascus. *Baibars* failed to solve the situation through peaceful means, had to crush *Sinjar al-Halabi's* rebellion by force, captured him 1261 AD/659 H, and imprisoned him in Cairo. Later on, *Baibars* exempted him. *Sinjar al-Halabi* was respected until *al-Mansour Qalawun* imprisoned him since he was afraid of the former's increasing power. However, *al-Ashraf Khalil*, *Qalawun's* son exempted *Sinjar al-Halabi*, and he was respected once again until he died 1293 AD/693 H.

In 1280 AD/678 H, a rebellious movement under the leadership of *Sonqor al-Ashqar*, and some other Mamluk leaders, erupted against *Sultan Qalawun*. *al-Ashqar* insinuated the idea of the rebellion into the minds of the people of Damascus, and called them to disobey *Sultan Qalawun*. In April 1280 AD/Zulqeadā 678 H, he named himself *Sultan al-Kamil*. However, *Sultan Qalawun* sent an army under the leadership of *Alam al-Din Sinjar al-Halabi* who defeated *al-Ashqar*. Yet, *al-Ashqar* could collect his own army once again by the help of the near villages. He was confronted with the same army and was defeated once again. Thus, he had to make a conciliation with *Sultan Qalawun*, and his movement came to an end through peaceful means at last.<sup>19</sup> In fact, rebellious movements were repeated against the Mamluk Sultans, and Damascus was usually the leader of such movements since it has been always the chief *Niyaba* that longed for independence.

Indeed, Damascus played an important role defending the Mamluk State: through military acts, and through supporting the Sultan with the necessary money to incur the expenses of fighting against the Crusaders and the Mongols, not to mention the assistance of the tribes of the area supporting the Mamluk Army in different wars.

#### 4.2. The Niyaba of Aleppo

After the battle of Ain Jalut, the Mongols retreated to Aleppo, and wanted to reassure their control over it. However, the people of Aleppo resisted them, and *Sultan Baibars* sent an army to support them, which triumphed in 1261 AD/659 H.<sup>20</sup> Aleppo played an important role during that period, and sometimes its

13. Abo Bākr Abdullah ibn Ayyāk AL-DWĀDĀRĪ, *Kānz al-Dorār w Gāme'a al-Ghorār*, vol. VIII, ed. Ulrich Haarmann, Cairo, Dār 'lhyā' 'al-Kutub 'al-'Arabīyah, 1971, p. 47.

14. Saïd ASHOUR, *al-Dhāhīr Baibārs*, Cairo, General Egyptian Book Organization, 2001, p. 106-107.

15. Abu al-Abas Ahmed Ibn Ali Ibn Abdullah AL-QALQASHANDI, *ṣūbh Al-'Aasha fee Sen'aat -ak-Enshaa*, vol. IV, 1914, p. 174, 176.

16. Abu al-Abas Ahmed Ibn Ali Ibn Abdullah AL-QALQASHANDI, *ṣūbh Al-'Aasha fee Sen'aat -ak-Enshaa*, vol. IV, 1914, p. 238.

17. Shihāb al-Dīn Abū al-'Abbās ibn Faḍl Allah AL-'UMARĪ, *at-Tārīf bi-al-muṣṭalah ash-sharīf*, Cairo, Miṣr Maṭba'at al-'Āṣima, 1899, p. 65; Abu al-Abas Ahmed Ibn Ali Ibn Abdullah AL-QALQASHANDI, *ṣūbh Al-'Aasha fee Sen'aat -ak-Enshaa*, vol. IV, 1914, p. 16-17.

18. Shihāb al-Dīn Abū al-'Abbās ibn Faḍl Allah AL-'UMARĪ, *Masālik al-absār fī mamālik al-amṣār: Daulat al-mamālik al-ūla*, 1986, p. 116.

19. Mohamed ibn 'Ali ibn TŪLŪN, *i'lām al-warā bi-man wul-liya nā'iban min al-Atrāk bi-Dimashq al-Shām al-Kubrā*, ed. Abdulazim Hamid Khattab, Cairo, Gāmi'at 'Ain Šams, 1973, p. 5.

20. Abo Bākr Abdullah ibn Ayyāk AL-DWĀDĀRĪ, *Kānz al-Dorār w Gāme'a al-Ghorār*, vol. VIII, 1971, p. 71.



importance came right after Cairo.<sup>21</sup> It had so many affiliated subdivisions and territories, which enabled it to play such a pivotal political role during the Mamluk era. Its lands extended from the coast of the Mediterranean Sea to Euphrates in the East, and from Armenia to the borders of Damascus Suburbs in the South. Among its affiliated subdivisions are Edessa, Kerker, Behseni, Eintab, Beghras, Quensereen, Shizer, Harem, Kafr Tab, Affameih, Azzaz, Tel Basher, Menbeg, and Antioch, in addition to the coastal towns like: Ayas, Tarsous, Azenah...<sup>22</sup>

The Deputy in Aleppo was appointed directly by the Sultan like any other main *Niyaba*<sup>23</sup> since it was the guardian of the Northern Gate of the Mamluk State. Indeed, it played such an important role that made its Deputy as same eminent as the Deputy in Damascus.<sup>24</sup>

Then Aleppo attacked the Mongols and the skirmishes between them continued until 1265 AD/663H when the role of the near Arab tribes increased; such as the tribe of *Al Fadl ibn Rabea* with its two major families: *Al Eissa ibn Mehanna* and *Al Ali ibn Hodaitha*, who greatly supported Aleppo after the recommendation of the Mamluk Sultan, who used their competition over the title of the *Amir*, i.e. the Prince of the Arabs, giving it to the tribe that is more loyal to him.<sup>25</sup>

In spite of the sudden attacks led by *Sultan Baibars*, not a year passed without Aleppo being under attack by the Mongols and their supporting Seljuks. In fact, this situation remained until the succeeding *Sultan Qalawun* led a great Mamluk army towards the Levant, and defeated them near *Hims* in 1282 AD/681 H.<sup>26</sup> Thus, they lost any hope in recapturing Aleppo.

*Nicholas Tekuder Khan* was baptized in his childhood as a Nestorian Christian. However, Tekuder later converted to Islam and changed his name to Ahmed in 1282 AD/681 H. This was a turning point in the policy of the Mongols towards the Mamluks.<sup>27</sup> Although

Islam had not been the dominant religion of Mongols in West Asia (Iran, Iraq, Anatolia and Trans-Caucassia) until Ghazan Khan made a political conversion to Islam in 1295 AD/694 H, when he took the throne, and changed his name into Mahmoud, still he decided to attack Aleppo. The Mongol Army confronted the Mamluk Army in the Battle of *Wadi al-Khazandar*, also known as the Battle of *Majmaa al-Moroj*, between Hims and Hama in 1299 AD/699 H, in which the Mongols were victorious. The Mongols had the upper hand over the Levant for around 100 Days until the Mamluks defeated them.<sup>28</sup> However, the Mongols continued their attacks against Aleppo and its subdivisions, yet they did not succeed in recapture it once again.

About five-hundred years of stability passed before the Mongol Khan *Timurilang*, also known as *Amir Timur* and *Tamerlane*, attacked the Mamluks in 1387 AD/789 H, and managed to enter Baghdad in 1393 AD/795 H. Nevertheless, *al-Malik al-Zahir Sayf al-Din Barquq* led an army towards the Levant and obliged *Timurilang* to withdraw. However, he recaptured Aleppo once again in 1400 AD/803 H,<sup>29</sup> yet he had to leave the Levant after he had made a reconciliation with Sultan *Faraj* son of *Barquq* in 1401 AD/803 H.<sup>30</sup>

Thus, Aleppo greatly suffered from the attacks of *Ghazan Khan* and *Timurilang*, especially Menbeg and Balis.<sup>31</sup> After *Timurilang* has died, his son, *Shah Rukh*, decided to attack Aleppo once again, but his death made an end of his military attacks; not only against Aleppo. but also against the whole Levant. This was due to the deterioration of the Mongols on the one hand, and the increasing power of the Ottomans on the other hand.<sup>32</sup>

Indeed, Aleppo paid the price of its eminent position in the Mamluk State and it was attacked by Mongols as well as Crusaders until the late thirteenth century AD/ the late seventh century H. The Mamluks decided to uproot the Crusaders Entities in the Levant

21. Müzzammil Mühammad HASSANEIN, *Niyābāt al-Shām fi 'abd daulāt al-mamālik al-oulā*, Alexandria, al-Da'awa for Publishing and Distribution, 1953, p. 111.

22. Adel Abdulhafiz HAMZA, *Niyābāt Halab fi 'assr salātin al-mamālik*, vol. 1, Cairo, General Egyptian Book Organization, 2000, p. 96-99.

23. 'Imad al-Dīn Ismail Abu al-Fida IBN KATHĪR, *al-Bidāya wal-Nihāya*, vol. XIII, ed. Abdulkh Al-Turky Riyadh, Dar Alam al-Kotob, 2002, p. 274; Abu al-Abas Ahmed Ibn Ali Ibn Abdullah AL-QALQASHANDI, *ṣūbh Al-'Aasha fee Sen'aat Al-Enshaa*, vol. IV, 1914, p. 180.

24. Adel Abdulhafiz HAMZA, *Niyābāt Halab fi 'assr salātin al-mamālik*, vol. II, 2000, p. 6-12.

25. Qūtb al-Dīn Mūsā bin Mūhammād AL-YŪNINĪ, *kitāb 'dhail mir'āt al-Zamān*, vol. II, Hyderabad, Dairatu'l-Ma'arifi'l-Osmania, 1954-1960, p. 318; Taqi al-Dīn Abū al-Abbās Ahmād AL-MAQRIZĪ, *Al-Sulūk li Ma'arifat dūwal al-Mülük*, vol. I, ed. Mōstafa Ziyada, Cairo, Lajnat al-Ta'lif, 1956, p. 541 (ch. 2).

26. Taqi al-Dīn Abū al-Abbās Ahmād AL-MAQRIZĪ, *Al-Sulūk li Ma'arifat dūwal al-Mülük*, vol. I, 1956, p. 698-699 (ch. 3).

27. Mostafa Taha BADR, *Persian Mongols between Christianity and Islam*, Beirut, Dar al-Fikr al-Arabi, 1940, p.12-19.

28. Emir Rūkn al-Dīn Bāibārs AL-DAWĀDĀR, *al-Tūhfah al-Mamlūkiyah fi al-Dawlāh al-Tūrkiyah*, ed. Abdulhamid Saleh Hemdan, Cairo, Dār al-Miṣriyya al-Lubnāniyya, 1987, p. 156-158; Taqi al-Dīn Abū al-Abbās Ahmād al-MAQRIZĪ, *Al-Sulūk li Ma'arifat dūwal al-Mülük*, vol. I, 1956, p. 90 (ch. 3).

29. Shihab al-Din Ahmad IBN ARABSHAH, *'Ajā'ib al-Maqdūr fi Nawā'ib Taimūr*, Cairo, Wadi al-Nil Publishing House, 1868, p. 91-92; Mūhammād ibn Mūhammād IBN AL-SHŪHBA, *Rawdāt al-Manā 'dbir fi 'ilm al-awāil wal-awākhir*, Beirut, Dar al-kotob al-ilmiah, 1997, p. 294; Alī ibn Dāwūd IBN AL-SIRFĪ, *Nozhat al-nūfūs wal-abdān fi tawārikh al-zamān*, vol. II, ed. Hassan Habashy, Cairo, Dar al-Kotob, 1970, p. 76.

30. Jamāl al-Dīn Yusuf IBN TAGHRIBIRDĪ, *Al-Nujūm al-zāhirā fi mülük Misr wal-Qāhirā*, vol. XII, Cairo, Dar al-Kotob, 1930-1972, p. 61.

31. Nicola ZIADEH, *Urban Life in Syria under the Early Mamluks*, Beirut, Beirut American Press, 1953. p. 51-54.

32. Taqui al-Dīn Abū al-Abbās Ahmād AL-MAQRIZĪ, *Al-Sulūk li Ma'arifat dūwal al-Mülük*, vol. II, 1956, p. 117 (ch. 3); Said ASHOUR, *The Mamluk Period in Egypt and the Levant*, vol. IV, 1976, p. 167.

starting from Aleppo in order for the Crusaders to be in a continuous state of instability so that they could not cooperate with the Mongols once again.<sup>33</sup> Sultan *Baibars* decided to crush the Crusader's County of Antioch since they coordinated with the Mongols several attacks against the Mamluks, and he managed to do so in 1268 AD/666 H.

Accordingly, the territories of Aleppo were extended towards the West. It became responsible for carrying out the Mamluk political plans against Armenia. Although the Crusader's County of Antioch was defeated, the Crusaders attacked the Mamluks several times with the help of Armenia Minor, which appeared to be the successor of the Crusaders in the Northern areas of the Levant.<sup>34</sup> The Crusaders continued their attacks on the coasts of the Levant from Cyprus and Rhodes until *al-Ashraf Sayf al-Din Barsbay*, the ninth Burji Mamluk Sultan of Egypt (1422-1437 AD/825-841 H), had to attack the Crusaders camps at Cyprus in 1426 AD/829 H.<sup>35</sup>

The *Niyaba* of Aleppo managed to be the safety belt of the Mamluk Sultanate in the Northern and Eastern borders. In addition to its important role against the Mongols and the Crusaders, it played another important role defeating Armenia Minor in 1375 AD/776 H. Aleppo also stood against *Turkmen Beyliks*, i.e. the small Turkish principalities in Anatolia governed by *Beys*; both those disobeying the Mamluk Sultan and the independent ones that formed a threat because of their looting raids, in addition to playing a significant role against the Ottoman attempts of expansion as they numerously tried to turn the Turkmen tribes against the Mamluks.<sup>36</sup>

#### 4.3. The *Niyaba* of Tripoli

The city of Tripoli in the Levant is located in the middle of the Eastern coast of Mediterranean Sea with a number of small rocky isles in front of its main port protecting it from the South-West winds, and *Qadisha River* runs through it. Sultan *Qalawun* regained it from the hands of the Crusaders on the 26<sup>th</sup> of April

1289 AD/the 1<sup>st</sup> of Rabea al-Akhar 688 H, after besieging it for thirty-eight days. The city was destroyed; therefore, Sultan *Qalawun* rebuilt it and made it one of the most important cities in the Levant during the Mamluk era.

*Dar al-Saada*, i.e. the house of happiness, was built near the Castle of Raymond of Saint-Gilles<sup>37</sup> and the Deputy, *Saif al-Din Belban al-Tabbakhy al-Mansouri*, who held this position until 1292 AD/691 H lived in it. The subsequent Deputies contributed greatly to the development of the city till Tripoli had become one of the major cities in the region by the half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century AD/the 8<sup>th</sup> century H, and its monuments remained till today as a witness of such great development. Tripoli also flourished economically, and it was famous for its various markets and vast trades, until it became a minor copy of Cairo the capital of the Mamluk Sultanate.

In terms of *Niyaba* importance, Tripoli held the third position, and its Deputy was entitled *al-Ganab al-Aali*, i.e. the higher chief.<sup>38</sup> Its castle had no independent Deputy, and the Deputy in the *Niyaba* was in charge of all aspects: whether military or civilian. Tripoli had six subdivisions and affiliated municipalities.

Tripoli witnessed many internal and external events that shaped its historical role during the Mamluk period. Internally, there was a constant state of instability due to the repeated attempts of independence, or because of some inner conflicts among its leaders. Sometimes, such conflicts would not come to an end until the Mamluk Sultan interfered; other times, they would end after the interference of *al-Kafil*, i.e. the Deputy in Damascus, in addition to the plagues that were widespread during that period of time; such as, the *Black Death* (1343-1350 AD/743-751 H).<sup>39</sup>

Externally, the conflict between the Muslims and the Crusaders did not end up totally when the Mamluk troops entered Acre in May 1291/Jomada al-Awal 690 H, since the Crusaders used Cyprus and Rhodes as two major military camps from which they re-attacked the coasts of Egypt and the Levant alike. In fact, Tripoli was one of the cities that were dramatically affected by such avenging raids. In 1298 AD/698 H, the

33. Taqui al-Din Abū al-Abbās Ahmād AL-MAQRIZĪ, *Al-Sulūk li Ma'arifat dūwal al-Mülūk*, vol. I, 1956, p. 462 (ch. 2).

34. Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn 'Abd AL-ZĀHIR, *al-Rawd al-Zāhir fi Sirat al-Malik al-Zāhir*, Riyadh, without publisher, 1976, p. 417; *Tashrif al-Ayam wal-'osir fi sirat al-malik al-Mansūr*, ed. Morad Kamil, Cairo, Wizārat at-Ṭaqāfa wa-'l-Iršād al-Qaumī, 1961, p. 67; Abū al-Faraj ibn AL-'IBRĪ, *Tarikh al-Zamān*, Beirut, Dar el-Machreq, 1991, p. 331-332.

35. Sālih ibn Yāhyā AT-TNŪKHY, *Tarikh Bayrūt wa akhbār al-'ūmarā' al-būhtūrīn min banī al-ḡarb*, Beirut, Matbaa al-Katulikīyya, 1927, p. 56; Ahmed DARRAG, *al-Mamālik wal-Frinj*, Cairo, Dar al-Fikr al-Arabi, 1961, p. 22.

36. Adel Abdulhafiz HAMZA, *Niyābāt Halab fi 'assr salātīn al-mamālik*, vol. II, 2000, p. 77-92.

37. The castle is named after the Crusaders leader Reymond of Saint-Gilles who ordered its erection on a strategic location above Tel Abū Samrā on the left bank of Qādishā River to control Tripoli. However, he died before the fall of Tripoli in 1109AD/502H; see El-Sayed Abdulaziz SALEM, *Trāblūs al-Shām fi al-Tarikh al-Islāmī*, Alexandria, Dār al-Na'ārif, 1967, p. 119, 305.

38. Abu al-Abas Ahmed Ibn Ali Ibn Abdullah AL-QALQAS-HANDI, *ṣūbh Al-'Aasha fee Sen'aat -al-Enshaa*, vol. XII, 1914, p. 176; El-Sayed Abdulaziz SALEM, *Trāblūs al-Shām*, p. 307.

39. Jasmāl al-Dīn Yusuf IBN TAGHRIBIRDĪ, *Al-Nujūm al-zāhirā fi mülūk Mīsr wal-Qāhirā*, vol. X, 1930-1972, p. 195; Taqi al-Dīn Abū al-Abbās Ahmād AL-MAQRIZĪ, *Al-Sulūk li Ma'arifat dūwal al-Mülūk*, vol. II, 1956, p. 772 (ch. 3).

Hospitallers attacked Tripoli.<sup>40</sup> Between 1363 AD/765 H and 1367 AD/769 H, Peter I King of Cyprus, or *Pierre I de Lusignan*, used to attack both Tripoli and Lattakia.<sup>[41]</sup> Military troops from Genoa also attacked Tripoli in 1378 AD/780 H and 1401 AD/803 H, which enforced the Mamluk Sultan to establish a maritime fleet in order to defend the coasts from the Crusaders repeated attacks.<sup>42</sup>

Due to the Crusaders' recurrent raids, Tripoli and its subdivisions were severely destroyed; however, they regained their flourishing status during the period of the Burji dynasty (1382-1517 AD/784-922 H). New schools, mosques, markets, public baths, walls, and citadels were built. Some taxes were dropped off some crafts. Nonetheless, when the Ottomans began to appear as a serious competition, and the trade roads were transferred to The Cape of Good Hope, the financial troubles of the Mamluk Sultan *al-Ashraf Qansub al-Ghauri* increased dramatically; this forced him to double the taxes and manipulate the value of the currency, which turned the people against him. This paved the way for the Ottomans to have the upper hand over the Levant in 1516 AD/922 H.<sup>43</sup>

#### 4.4. The Niyaba of Hama

Hama remained loyal for the Ayyubids for long. In 1287 AD/685 H, Sultan *Qalawun* appointed Amir *Alam al-Din Abou Khars* as his Deputy in Hama.<sup>44</sup> By the end of that century, the Mamluk Amir *Qura Sonquor* held the position of the Deputy there, and he managed to put an end for the Ayyubid influence there. However, when *Mohamed* son of *Qalawun* appointed *Ismael Abou al-Fidaa* there,<sup>45</sup> who was succeeded by his son *Mohamed*, the Ayyubids looked forward to regain their powers in Hama once again.

40. Shihāb al-Dīn Ahmad AL-NŪWAYRI, *Nihayat al-arab fi funūn al-adab*, vol. xxx, Cairo, Dar al-Kotob, 2002, p. 4; Ismā'il ibn 'ali ibn Mahmūd Abū AL-FIDĀ, *al-Mukhtasar fi Akhbār al-Bashar*, vol. vii, Beirut, Dar al-kotob al-ilmiyah, 1997, p. 57; Jamāl al-Dīn Yusuf IBN TAGHRIBIRDĪ, *Al-Nujūm al-zāhirā fi mulūk Misr wal-Qābirā*, vol. viii, 1930-1972, p. 156.

41. Aziz Suryal ATIYA, *Le texte de Nuwairi sur l'attaque d'Alexandrie par Pietre de Lusignan*, vol. iii, Alexandria, Imprèmerie du Commerce, 1946, p. 99-110.

42. Said ASHOUR, *The Mamluk Period in Egypt and the Levant*, vol. iv, 1976, p. 169, 177.

43. Zayn al-Abedīn Muhammad IBN 'IYĀS, *Badā'i'a al-zubūr fi wakā'i'a al-dubūr*, vol. v, Cairo General Egyptian Book Organization, 2007, p. 152.

44. Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Raḥīm ibn AL-FŪRĀT, *Tārīkh ibn al-Fūrāt*, vol. viii, ed. Qustanṭīn Zurayq and Naḡlā' 'Izz al-Dīn, Beirut, Al-Maṭba'a al-amīrikāniyya, 1939, p. 40; Taqī al-Dīn Abū al-Abbās Ahmād AL-MAQRIZĪ, *Al-Sulūk li Ma'arifāt dūwal al-Mülūk*, vol. ii, 1956, p. 194 (ch. 3).

45. Ismā'il ibn 'ali ibn Mahmūd Abū AL-FIDĀ, *al-Mukhtasar, fi Aklbār al-Bashar*, vol. iv, 1997, p. 42, 51, 58.

Yet, in 1341 AD/745 H, *Mohamed* was deposed, and *Qutuz al-Hamawi* held the position of the Deputy of the Mamluk Sultan in Hama.<sup>46</sup> Thus, the Mamluks got the upper hand over Hama finally. The ruling periods of the Deputies in Hama were relatively short; most of them did not last for two years except in some occasions. This was out of the repeated dismissal of Deputies, which led to a constant state of instability.<sup>47</sup>

The *Niyaba* of Hama is between the two *Niyabas* Aleppo and Damascus; it is considered the fourth main *Niyaba* in the Levant. It is known for the high fertility of its lands, its different terrains, and the Orontes River, also known as *al-Asi*.<sup>48</sup> Although it had no subdivisions as the case of the other three main *Niyabas*, it had some affiliated municipalities such as *Baarin*, *Maarat al-Nuamaan*, and *Burha*. All Mamluk *Niyabas* had the same administrative structure, and Hama was no exception. Accordingly, the Deputy in Hama was in charge of both the military and civilian aspects of life inside the *Niyaba*, and he could appoint whomever he believed to be suitable and trustworthy.<sup>49</sup>

Hama, under the rule of the Ayyubids and the Mamluks as well, along with Aleppo and Damascus, stood against the Mongols attacks, especially those under the leadership of Ghazan Khan. The raid of 1299 AD/699 H is considered the most brutal one because of its destructive effects.<sup>[50]</sup> Hama also helped Aleppo when the latter was attacked by the troops of Timurilang in 1400 AD/803 H. When the Mongols captured Damascus, they destroyed the citadels of the region, and the ones in Hama faced the same fate.<sup>51</sup> Nevertheless, Timurilang had to end his military movements finally.<sup>52</sup>

46. Abū Ḥafs Zayn al-Dīn 'Umar ibn al-Muzaffar ibn AL-WARDĪ, *Tatemat al-mukhtasar fi tārikh al-bashar (tārīkh ibn al-wardi)*, vol. ii, Cairo, without publisher, 1868, p. 322; Jamāl al-Dīn Yusuf IBN TAGHRIBIRDĪ, *Al-Nujūm al-zāhirā fi mulūk Misr wal-Qābirā*, vol. x, 1930-1972, p. 75-76.

47. Imān Abdulhalim AL-TURKSTĀNĪ, *Niyabat Hama fi 'Asr al-Salātīn al-Mamālik (698-922H/1299-1516AD)*, MA Thesis, Mecca, Um al-Qura University, 2000, p. 81.

48. Shihāb al-Dīn Abū al-'Abbās ibn Faḍl Allah AL-'UMARĪ, *Masālik al-abṣār fi mamālik al-amṣār: Dawlat al-mamālik al-ūla*, 1986, p. 197; Shams al-Dīn Muhammad al-Ansāri AL-DEMASHQĪ, *Nukhbat al-dabr fi 'ajā'ib al-bar wal-babr*, Saint Petersburg, Maṭba'at al-Akādamiyah al-Imbaratūriyah, 1866, p. 274.

49. Abu al-Abas Ahmed Ibn Ali Ibn Abdullah AL-QALAQSHANDI, *ṣiḥḥ Al-'Aasha fee Sen'aat -Al-Enshaa*, vol. iv, 1914, p. 141, 238.

50. Emir Rūkn al-Dīn Bāibārs AL-DAWĀDĀR, *Zubdat al-fikra fi tariikh al-hijra*, Beirut and Berlin, Dar an-Naṣr, al-kitāb al-'arabī, 1998, p. 330; 'imad al-Dīn Isma'il Abu al-Fida IBN KATHĪR, *al-Bidāya wal-Nihāya*, vol. xiv, 2002, p. 413-414.

51. Taqī al-Dīn Abū al-Abbās Ahmād AL-MAQRIZĪ, *Al-Sulūk li Ma'arifāt dūwal al-Mülūk*, vol. ii, 1956, p. 43, (ch. 1); Jamāl al-Dīn Yusuf IBN TAGHRIBIRDĪ, *al-Manhal al-Sāfi wal-Mustawfi ba'ad al-Wāfi*, vol. iv, ed. Mohamed Moahmed Amin and Said Ashur, Cairo, General Egyptian Book Organization, 1984, p. 121.

52. Ibrāhīm ibn Muhammad IBN DŪQMĀQ, *al-Nafha al-Miskīya fi al-Daula al-Türkīya*, Beirut, al-Maktabah al-'Asriyah, 1999, p. 320.



Troops from Hama participated in the Mamluk avenging assaults against Armenia Minor in 1301 AD/720 H, 1304 AD/703 H, 1320 AD/720 H, 1322 AD/722 H, and 1343 AD/744 H which was the last time until its fall in 1375 AD/776 H.<sup>53</sup>

Although Hama has no port on the coast, it helped Tripoli, the coastal city, in its resistance against the Crusaders raids launched from Cyprus and Rhodes in 1366 AD/769 H.<sup>54</sup> Moreover, the troops from Hama participated in the battles against Cyprus in 1424 AD/825 H for they attacked Damietta two years earlier.<sup>55</sup> In addition, Hama took part in the confrontations against the disobeying Turkmen cities on the borders between the Mamluks and the Ottomans in 1381 AD/783 H for instance.<sup>56</sup> While the armed troops of Hama were indulged in crushing a rebellion in the Aleppo in 1404 AD/807 H, the civilians bravely managed to stand against a Turkmen attack on Hama and prevented the assaulters from entering the city.<sup>57</sup>

The people of Hama repeatedly raged against the Deputy of the Sultan due to his abuse of authority and imposing unfair taxes, which led to the intervention of the Mamluk Sultan himself to end the recurrent protests.<sup>58</sup> Because of the excellent location of Hama between Damascus and Aleppo, rebellious Deputies of other *Niyabas* were keen to strengthen their relationship with the Deputy in Hama who remained loyal for the Sultan during the Ayyubid era yet turned against the Sultan during the Mamluk era.

Despite the frequent rebellious movements, Hama could not attain its independence from the Mamluk Sultanate. However, these incidents along with other political and military events affected the Mamluk state

53. Taqī al-Dīn Abū al-Abbās Ahmād AL-MAQRIZĪ, *Al-Sulūk li Ma'arūfat dūwal al-Mūlūk*, vol. II, 1956, p. 248, 348 (ch.1) - Taqī al-Dīn Abū al-Abbās Ahmād AL-MAQRIZĪ, *Al-Sulūk li Ma'arūfat dūwal al-Mūlūk*, vol. III, 1956, p. 402, 504 (ch. 2).

54. Muhammad ibn al-Qāsim al-Nuweirī AL-ISKANDARĀNĪ, *al-ilmām bel-ʿalām fīmā jarat bihi al-abkām*, vol. V, ed. Aziz Suryal Atiya, Hyderabad, Dāʾirat al-maʾārif al-ʿuṣmāniyyat, 1970, p. 84-85; Jamāl al-Dīn Yusuf IBN TAGHRIBIRDĪ, *Al-Nujūm al-zāhirā fīmūlūr Misr waʿl-Qāhirā*, vol. XI, 1930-1972, p. 53.

55. Taqī al-Dīn Abū al-Abbās Ahmād AL-MAQRIZĪ, *Al-Sulūk li Ma'arūfat dūwal al-Mūlūk*, vol. III, 1956, p. 118, 157 (ch. 1); Khalil Ibn Shāhīn Ghars al-Dīn AL-MAṢRĪ, *Zubdat kashf al-mamālik fi bayān al-toroq wal-masālik*, Beirut, Dar al-kotob al-ilmīyah; 1997, p. 190.

56. Ibrāhīm ibn Muhammad IBN DŪQMĀQ, *Al-Jawhar al-thamīn fi siyar al-kholafāʾ wal-mulūk wal-salātīn*, Mecca, Um al-Qura University, 1982, p. 445; Jasmāl al-Dīn Yusuf IBN TAGHRIBIRDĪ, *al-Manhal al-Sāfi wal-Nustawfi baʿad al-Wāfi*, vol. III, 1984, p. 191-192.

57. Taqī al-Dīn Abū al-Abbās Ahmād AL-MAQRIZĪ, *Al-Sulūk li Ma'arūfat dūwal al-Mūlūk*, vol. III, 1956, p. 113 (ch. 1); Zayn al-ʿAbedīn Muhammad IBN ʿIYĀS, *Badāʾiʾa al-zuhūr*, vol. I, 2007, p. 749.

58. Jamāl al-Dīn Yusuf IBN TAGHRIBIRDĪ, *Al-Nujūm al-zāhirā fi mulūk Misr waʿl-Qāhira*, vol. XV, 1930-1972, p. 363-364.

intensely, which made it easy for the Ottomans to rule the Levant in 1516 AD/922 H.<sup>59</sup>

#### 4.5. The Niyaba of Safed

Once Sultan *Baibars* managed to regain Safed from the Crusaders in August 1266 AD/Shawal 664 H, it was announced a Mamluk *Niyaba*. He appointed a Deputy and it was the first *Niyaba* in Palestine and the sixth in the Levant. He ordered its homes and other structures to be repaired, then sent many soldiers and arms to form a launching base to trace the remaining Crusaders in the coast of the Levant.<sup>60</sup>

Because of the importance of Safed, the sultan used to appoint a Deputy there like the other important main *Niyabas*.<sup>61</sup> Thus, the Deputies were keen to expand the territories of the *Niyaba*, especially on the account of the Crusaders lands till reaching the valleys of *Zahrani River* and the gardens of *Oioon* in the North, and the lands of *ibn Amer* in the South. Eastward, it extended from the gardens of *Oioon* till *al-Sannabra Bridge*.<sup>62</sup> Consequently, the *Niyaba* had eleven subdivisions such as Nazareth, Tiberias, Tebnine, Ethleth, and Acre.

In addition to the fortified castle, Safed had natural fortifications due to its different topology for it had coastal valleys, high mountains, and vast gardens due to its various water supplies of springs, rivulets, and small lakes.<sup>63</sup>

Safed played an important military role; its troops, of Arabs and Turkmen alike, participated in the resistance against the Crusaders in the Levant generally, and in Tripoli particularly in 1290 AD/689 H. Due to its location, it stood against the Crusaders attacks launched from Cyprus and Rhodes.<sup>64</sup> On the other hand, Safed Deputies sometimes participated in the rebellious movements against the Mamluk Sultan in Cairo.<sup>65</sup>

Safed enjoyed a wide variety in its demographic structure. In addition to the Arabs who formed the

59. Imān Abdulhalīm AL-TURKSTĀNĪ, *Niyabat Hama fi ʿAṣr al-Salātīn al-Mamālik (689-922H/1299-1516AD)*, 2000, p. 203-204.

60. Taha Thalji AL-TARAWNA, *Safed during the Mamluk Period*, Beirut, Dār al-ʿĀfāq al-Jadīdah, 1982, p. 48-53.

61. Abu al-ʿAbas Ahmed Ibn Ali Ibn Abdullah AL-QALAQSHANDI, *ṣūbh Al-ʿAasha fee Senʿaat -al-Enshaa*, vol. IV, 1914, p. 150.

62. Taha Thalji AL-TARAWNA, *Safed during the Mamluk Period*, 1982, p. 108.

63. Khalil ʿATHAMINA, *Palestine During the Rule of the Ayyubids and the Mamluks*, Beirut, Institute for Palestinian Studies, 2004, p. 310-315.

64. Ismail ibn Ali ABULFIDA, *Taqwīm al-Buldān*, Paris, À l'Imprimerie Nationale, 1850, p. 194-195.

65. Taha Thalji AL-TARAWNA, *Safed during the Mamluk Period*, 1982, p. 191-229.

majority, some Turkmen, Kurds, Mongols, and Turkish minorities lived there as well. Although they were mainly Muslims, some 1965 Jews lived there side by side.<sup>66</sup> Besides, there were 125 Christians out of 32200 according to 1526 AD census.<sup>67</sup>

In fact, the scientific life of the Muslim community in the *Niyaba* of Safed did not flourish due to the little number of educational institutions in relation to the other *Niyabas* in the Levant. Muslims there knew nothing but the principles of reading, writing, and some teachings of Islam doctrines.<sup>68</sup> Whereas, the Jewish communities managed to render Safed into a pivotal center of their studies under the sponsorship of the Mamluk authorities. Jews from overseas came to study there, not to mention those from the local and near villages as well. Such practices had been possible thanks to the spirit of peaceful coexistence that prevailed this *Niyaba*. Indeed, Safed had been considered the central city where the Jewish communities—after heading to Constantinople—gathered in relatively large numbers after they had been banished from Spain in 1492 AD/897 H.<sup>69</sup>

#### 4.6. The Niyaba of Gaza

Gaza enjoyed an excellent location; historians at that time described it as ‘the defending gate of Egypt and the Levant...’<sup>70</sup> because it played an important role defending the Egyptian lands that were always the real target of the attacks of both the Mongols and the Crusaders alike. In fact, Gaza was a subdivision of Damascus at first,<sup>71</sup> then in 1311 AD/711 H it became an independent *Niyaba* by the decree of Sultan *al-Nasir Mohamed* son of *Qalawun*. Unlike what the famous historian *al-Qalqashandi* said about Gaza that it is only a municipality affiliated to Damascus, its Deputy hold the title of the ‘*top Amir*’,<sup>72</sup> and it enjoyed all the priv-

ileges of the other *Niyabas* on the administrative levels and the military ones as well.<sup>73</sup>

The *Niyaba* of Gaza encompassed the lands extending from *Ascalon* to *al-Arish* on the coast, and the lands from *Sinai* to *Jerusalem* inward. Hence, its main cities include *Yaffa*, *Qaysaria*, *Arsuf*, and *al-Darum*; sometimes, *Nablus*, *Ramla*, *Lydda*, *Jerusalem*, and *Hebron* were part of the *Niyaba* of Gaza.<sup>74</sup> In 1483 AD/888 H, the famous traveler, Felix Fabri, said that Gaza is a bigger city than Jerusalem.

The demographic structure of Gaza entailed a wide variety of rurals and urbans. Jews, Christians, and Muslims lived there side by side. Christians living in Gaza sometimes outnumbered those of Jerusalem.<sup>75</sup> Such demographic structure greatly changed than it was during the Crusaders era, which clearly indicates the level of tolerance that prevailed the Muslim communities.<sup>76</sup>

Accordingly, the *Niyaba* of Gaza comes in the sixth position among the Mamluk *Niyabas* in the Levant.<sup>77</sup> In fact, the administrative structure of this *Niyaba*, in particular, differs from the rest of the *Niyabas*; the Deputy of the Mamluk Sultan came on the head of the governing hierarchy, followed by *four Judges*, one for each main Sunni school of jurisprudence, then the Emirs, and finally the Military leaders.<sup>78</sup>

The Mamluk *Niyaba* of Gaza had been deeply affected by the Crusaders existence in the twelfth century AD/the sixth century H; economically, Gaza welcomed the European Pilgrims who were closely attached to the Holy Lands even after the end of the Crusades in 1291 AD/690 H. For instance, the Catholics resumed their visits to Saint Catherine Monastery. The Arab tribes in Gaza guarded the pilgrims during their visits to the Holy Lands, and the leaders of those tribes priced their services.<sup>79</sup>

73. Shams al-Dīn Muhammad al-Ansārī AL-DEMASHQI, *Nukhbat al-dahr fi ‘ajā’ib al-barwal-bahr*, 1866, p. 281; Shihāb al-Dīn Abū al-‘Abbās ibn Faḍl Allah AL-‘UMARĪ, *Masālik al-abṣār fi mamālik al-amṣār: Daulat al-mamālik al-ūla*, 1986, p. 216; Khalīl Ibn Shāhin Ghars al-Dīn AL-MAṢRĪ, *Zubdat kashf al-mamālik fi bayān al-toroq wal-masālik*, 1997, p. 134.

74. Shams al-Dīn Muhammad al-Ansārī AL-DEMASHQI, *Nukhbat al-dahr fi ‘ajā’ib al-barwal-bahr*, 1866, p. 213.

75. Felix FABRI, *Le Voyage en Egypte, 1483*, vol. I, trans. Jacques Masson S. J., Cairo, Institut Français d’Archéologie orientale, 1975, p.12; Felix FABRI, *Le Voyage en Egypte, 1483*, vol. III, 1975, p. 801.

76. Obadiāh Jora DA BERTINORO, «Itinerary of Obadiāh 1487-1490 AD», p. 223; Ali Ahmed EL-SAYED, *Jews in the East of the Mediterranean Sea*, 2006, p. 141.

77. Shams al-Dīn Muhammad al-Ansārī AL-DEMASHQI, *Nukhbat al-dahr fi ‘ajā’ib al-barwal-bahr*, 1866, p. 214.

78. Mahmoud Ali Khalil ATALLA, *Gaza During the Mamluk Period*, MA Thesis, Amman, University of Jordan, 1979, p. 61-65.

79. Felix FABRI, *Le Voyage en Egypte, 1483*, vol. III, 1975, p. 801; Abu al-Yaman Abdel Rahman ibn Mojiruddīn AL-OLIMĪ, *al-Anas al-Galil be Tarikh al-Quds wa al-Khalil*, vol. II, Beirut, without publisher, 1973, p. 249.

66. Ali Ahmed EL-SAYED, *Jews in the East of the Mediterranean Sea*, Cairo, Ein for Human and Social Studies, 2006, p. 171.

67. Taha Thalji AL-TARAWNA, *Safed during the Mamluk Period*, 1982, p. 140-146.

68. Taha Thalji AL-TARAWNA, *Safed during the Mamluk Period*, 1982, p. 258-269.

69. A student’s letter, written in 1495 A.D. in: Obadiāh BERTINORO, *Pathway to Jerusalem, the travel letters of Rabbi Ovadiāh of Bartenura, written between 1488 and 1490, during his journey to the Holy land*, ed. Arrohom Marmorstein, trans. Yaacov David Shulman, New York, CIS Publishers, 1992, p. 78, 82-84.

70. Abu al-Fadl Gaafar ibn Ali AL-DIMASHQI, *al-ishara ila mahāsīn al-tijara*, Cairo, Maṭba‘at al-Mu‘ayyad, 1900, p. 213.

71. Abu al-Abas Ahmed Ibn Ali Ibn Abdullah AL-QALQASHANDI, *ṣūbh Al-‘Aasha fee Sen‘aat Al-Enshaa*, vol. XII, 1914, p. 193.

72. Jamāl al-Dīn Yūsuf Ibn TAGHRIBIRDĪ, *Al-Nujūm al-zāhirā fi mülūk Misr wal-Qāhira*, vol. IX, 1930-1972, p. 193.



Due to its location on the coast, Gaza was attacked by the Crusades launched from Cyprus and Rhodes. One of the deadly attacks was in 1480 AD/ 885 H, which left a serious impact on the community of the whole *Niyaba*.<sup>80</sup>

Among the important events that Gaza witnessed during this period were the recurrent visits of the Mamluk Sultans, (for example, the visit of Sultan *Baibars* and appointing the mission of guarding the mail officially to the Arab tribes of the region, and providing the necessary horses for the mail stations throughout the whole sultanate that were under the supervision of the *Mail Lieutenant-colonel*).<sup>81</sup> After *Baibars*, Sultans of both the *Babri Dynasty* and the *Burji Dynasty* visited Gaza frequently and gave it much attention.<sup>82</sup>

Because of its location, Gaza played an important role in defending Cairo against the rebellious movements led by the Deputies in Damascus. For instance, in the years of 1278 AD/679 H, 1361 AD/762 H, and 1399 AD/801 H, there were repeated attempts of independence that ended in failure.<sup>83</sup>

Whenever the Mamluk Sultan was engaged in defending the Sultanate against an external threat like the attacks of the Mongols and the Crusaders, or when the natural disasters like the Black Death or the Drought hit the countries, the leaders of the Arab tribes would seize the chance and trigger some skirmishes within the lands of Gaza. In addition to the inner conflicts among the leaders of Gaza, in which some of them found each other, they had to ally with the leaders of the Arab tribes of the region. Accordingly, the leaders of such tribes had been usually taken into consideration when the Mamluk Sultans issued decrees regarding the administrative organization of the *Niyaba*.<sup>84</sup>

In fact, Gaza faced many natural disasters during the Mamluk era, like the earthquake in 1293 AD/692 H that led to the destruction of its lighthouse and other important structures.<sup>85</sup> In 1342 AD/743 H, it encountered waves of locusts that ruined the corps.<sup>86</sup> In addition, it was hit by the Black Death in 1348 AD/749 H that reaped the souls of twenty-two thousands within one month; the markets were closed, and the Deputy fled away. The same thing was repeated in the years of 1363 AD/764 H, 1388 AD/790 H,<sup>87</sup> and 1393 AD/795 H.<sup>88</sup> In the early beginnings of the next century, the whole Levant was attacked by massive waves of locusts that blocked the sun, and the lands of Gaza was hit by drought due to the lack of rain water in 1422 AD/825 H. In the next year, the Black Death attacked once again, everyday about a hundred had died, and a total of twelve thousand souls approximately had passed away in 1438 AD/841 H. By the end of that century, Gaza was hit once again by the Black Death in 1492 AD/879 H reaping the souls of four hundreds every day.<sup>89</sup> There is no doubt that all these factors had led to the inevitable deterioration of the *Niyaba*.

It is important, however, to refer to Gaza's famous sights; most of them are related to the Prophet's Companions and Pious Worshippers: in *Ashdod*, for example, the shrine of the Sufi Sheikh *Ibrahim al-Matbuli* (died 1472 AD/877 H) is still there with its dome,<sup>90</sup> in addition to the shrine of the companion *Salman al-Faresi* (died 556 AD/36 H) that was erected by a decree issued by the Sultan *Baibars*;<sup>91</sup> in *Ascalon*, the tomb of the head of *al-Hussein* son of *Ali*, the fourth Caliph, within a great building of marble pillars that was built during the Fatimid era. However, the head was transported to Cairo during the Crusaders inva-

80. Meshullam BEN R. MENAHEM OF VOLTERRA, «Itinerary of Rabbi Meshullam Ben R. Maratiem, 1481 AD.» in Elkan Nathan ADLER (ed.), *Jewish Travellers*, London, George Routledgs and sons, LTD., 1930, p. 179.

81. Muḥyi al-Dīn ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *al-Rawd al-Zāhir fi Si-rat al-Malaki al-Zāhir*, 1976, p. 148-151; Khalil Ibn Shāhīn Ghars al-Dīn al-MAṢRĪ, *Zubdat kashf al-mamālik fi bayān al-toroq wal-masālik*, 1997, p. 135; Ismā'il ibn 'ali ibn Mahmūd Abū al-FIDĀ, *al-Mūkhhtasar fi Akhbār al-Bashar*, vol. III, 1997, p. 216.

82. Mahmoud Ali Khalil ATALLA, *Gaza During the Mamluk Period*, 1979, p. 144-152.

83. Jasmāl al-Dīn Yusuf IBN TAGHRIBIRDĪ, *Al-Nujūm al-zāharā fi mülūk Misr wal-Qāhirā*, vol. VII, 1930-1972, p. 295-297 — Jamāl al-Dīn Yusuf IBN TAGHRIBIRDĪ, *Al-Nujūm al-zāhirā fi mütuk Misr wal-Qāhirā*, vol. XI, 1930-1972, p. 4-5 — Jamāl al-Dīn Yusuf IBN TAGHRIBIRDĪ, *Al-Nujūm al-zāhirā fi mütuk Misr wal-Qāhirā*, vol. XII, 1930-1972, p. 190.

84. Abu al-Abas Ahmed Ibn Ali Ibn Abdullah AL-MAQRIZĪ, *Al-Sulūk šubh Al-'Aasha fee Sen'aat -Al-Enshaa*, vol. II, 1956, p. 764 (ch.3); Anselm ADORNO, *Itinéraire d'Anselme Adorno en Terre-Sainte 1470-1471*, trans. Jacques Heers and Georgette de Groër, Paris, Edition du centre nationale de recherche scientifique, 1978, p. 244-251; Meshullam BEN R. MENAHEM OF VOLTERRA, «Itinerary of Rabbi Meshullam Ben R. Maratiem, 1481 AD.» p. 187.

85. Nāšir al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Rahīm ibn AL-FÜRĀT, *Tārikh ibn al-Fūrāt*, vol. VIII, 1939, p. 154.

86. Abu al-Abas Ahmed Ibn Ali Ibn Abdullah AL-MAQRIZĪ, *Al-Sulūk šubh Al-'Aasha fee Sen'aat -Al-Enshaa*, vol. II, 1956, p. 662-663 (ch. 2).

87. Abu al-Abas Ahmed Ibn Ali Ibn Abdullah AL-MAQRIZĪ, *Al-Sulūk šubh Al-'Aasha fee Sen'aat -Al-Enshaa*, vol. II, 1956, p. 775 (ch. 3) — Abu al-Abas Ahmed Ibn Ali Ibn Abdullah AL-MAQRIZĪ, *Al-Sulūk šubh Al-'Aasha fee Sen'aat -Al-Enshaa*, vol. III, 1956, p. 82 (ch. 1).

88. Thaghr al-Dīn ibn Qādī SHUHBA, *Tārikh ibn Qādī Shubbā*, vol. I, ed. Adnan Darwish, Damascus, Institut Français de Damas, 1977, p. 243, 467, 468.

89. Abu al-Abas Ahmed Ibn Ali Ibn Abdullah AL-MAQRIZĪ, *Al-Sulūk šubh Al-'Aasha fee Sen'aat -Al-Enshaa*, vol. III, 1956, p. 1064 (ch. 3) — Abu al-Abas Ahmed Ibn Ali Ibn Abdullah AL-MAQRIZĪ, *Al-Sulūk šubh Al-'Aasha fee Sen'aat -Al-Enshaa*, vol. IV, 1956, p. 609, 635-639 (ch. 2).

90. Mahmoud Ali Khalil ATALLA, *Gaza During the Mamluk Period*, 1979, Maktabat Işiq, undated, p. 169.

91. Abdulghani AL-NĀBULSĪ, *al-haqīqa wal-majāz fi rehlat bilad al-shām wa meşr wa al-bijāz*, Istanbul, Maktabat Işiq, 1974, p. 26-A.

sion of *Ascalon*.<sup>92</sup> The tomb of *al-Awzaei* is in the same city.<sup>93</sup> The tomb of Sheikh *Mohamed bin Tarif al-Ghezzi* (died 1313 AD/ 713 H), one of the Hadith Narrators, is in the same city, in addition to the shrine of *Hashim bin Abd Manaf*, the grandfather of Prophet Muhammad.<sup>94</sup> Between *Ascalon* and *Bayt Jibrin* lies the valley of the ants, where the ant talked to Prophet Solomon son of Prophet David.<sup>95</sup>

The big number of such sights reflects the importance of Gaza, and the great attention of the Mamluk Sultans, who were keen to strengthen their relationship with the people of Gaza using their religious spirits. Being the defending gate of Egypt, it was necessary to pay much attention to it. Hence, Gaza was funded by the yields of the *Islamic Waqf* devoted by rich people and leaders.

#### 4.7. The Niyaba of Kerak

This *Niyaba* is located to the East of The Dead Sea, until Aqaba in the South, and from Balqa' in the East until the desert of Sinai in the West. Thus, it contained four main divisions: *Zoghar*, *Ma'an*, *Shoubak*, and *Kerak*. Demographically, Christians gathered in relatively large numbers in Kerak since it was the main town in the *Niyaba*, followed by Shoubak.<sup>96</sup>

In 1263 AD/661 H, *Mogheith al-Din al-Ayyubi*, the Ayyubid governor of Kerak, was arrested after he was accused of cooperating with the Mongols. He was murdered, and *al-Malik al-Nasir Youssef* accused *al-Dhahir Baibars*, and tried to arrest him in Kerak. However, the Ayyubid governor of Kerak was replaced by *Badr al-Din al-Shamsy*, a Deputy of the Mamluk Sultan. Thus, Kerak became under the total control of the Mamluks.<sup>97</sup>

Nonetheless, in 1275 AD/674 H, some leaders of the Kerak Castle, which was built by the Crusaders in

1141 AD/536 H,<sup>98</sup> attempted to disobey the Mamluk Sultan, and managed to kill the Deputy of the Sultan in Kerak. Due to its important location, Sultan *Baibars* rushed to it and defeated those leaders. During his ruling period, Kerak became one of the most prominent *Niyabas* in the Levant.

The *Military Atabek* who is the general commander of the army was the governor of the *Niyaba* of Kerak, or someone of a similar rank, while the Kerak Castle had its own Deputy who came at the top of an administrative structure, which is a minor copy of the same administrative system of the Mamluk Sultanate in Egypt.<sup>99</sup> In fact, the Kerak Castle was used many times as an exile for the state opponents like *al-Nasir Mohamed* son of *Qalawun*, and *al-Dhahir Saif al-Din Barqouq*.<sup>100</sup>

Economically, the *Niyaba* of Kerak played an important role supporting the economy of the Mamluk State since it was a necessary stop on the Land road of trade among Egypt, the Levant, and *al-Hijaz*, i.e. the region in the west of present-day Saudi Arabia, in addition to the Sea road of trade coming from India and China. Thus, the *Niyaba* provided an alternative for the Land road whenever it was affected by the recurrent military events in the region.<sup>101</sup>

It is worth mentioning that the Deputies in the *Niyaba* of Kerak used to protect the pilgrims coming from Asia Minor and the Levant aiming at visiting the Holy Lands in Mecca.<sup>102</sup>

#### 4.8. The Niyaba of Hims

The Mamluks included Hims into their state in 1264 AD/662 H, after its Ayyubid governor *al-Ashraf Moussa* had passed away.<sup>103</sup> First, it was a municipality affiliated to the *Niyaba* of Damascus; then it became the eighth independent Mamluk *Niyaba* in the Levant. It included four main divisions: *Hims Town*, *Salamiyah*, *Qara*, and *Palmyra*, as well as other four affiliated territories.<sup>104</sup>

92. Abu Abdullah Zakriyah ibn Muhammad AL-QAZWĪNĪ, *Athār al-bilād wa akhbār al-ibād*, Beirut, Dar Sadir, 2010, p. 222; Abu al-Yaman Abdel Raman ibn Mojiruddin AL-OLIMĪ, *al-Anas al-Galil be Tarikh al-Qudswa al-Khalil*, vol. II, 1973, p. 74.

93. Abdulghani AL-NĀBULSĪ, *al-haqiqa wal-majāz fi rehlat bilad al-shām wa mesr wa al-hijāz*, 1974, p. 122-B.

94. Abu al-Qāsim Muhammad IBN HAWQAL, *ṣūrat al-Ard*, Leiden, Brill, 1938, p. 159; Abu al-Hassan Ali ibn Abi Bakr AL-HIRAWĪ, *al-isharāt lima'arefat al-ziyarāt*, Damascus, Institut Français de Damas, 1953, p. 33; Ismail ibn Ali ABULFIDA, *Taqwim al-Buldān*, 1850, p. 328.

95. Abu al-Hassan Ali ibn Abi Bakr AL-HIRAWĪ, *al-isharāt lima'arefat al-ziyarāt*, 1953, p. 32; Abu Abdullah Muhammad IBN BATŪTA, *Rihlat ibn Batūtah, tuhfat al-nuzzār fi ḡarā'ib al-amṣār wa 'ajā'ib al-asfār*, Beirut, Dār lhyā' al-'Ulūm, 1987, p. 60.

96. Abu al-Abas Ahmed Ibn Ali Ibn Abdullah AL-QALAQSHANDI, *ṣūbh Al-'Aasha fee Sen'aat Al-Enshaa*, vol. IV, 1914, p. 157, 242.

97. Kha'il Ibn Shāhīn Ghars al-Dīn AL-MAṢRĪ, *Zubdat kashf al-mamālik fi bayān al-toroq wal-masālik*, 1997, p. 132.

98. Paul DESCHAMPS, *Les châteaux des Croisés en Terre Sainte*, vol. II, Paris, Geuthner, 1939, p.11, 38-39.

99. Khalil Ibn Shāhīn Ghars al-Dīn AL-MAṢRĪ, *Zubdat kashf al-mamālik fi bayān al-toroq wal-masālik*, 1997, p. 132.

100. Abu al-Abas Ahmed Ibn Ali Ibn Abdullah AL-MAQRIZĪ, *Al-Sulūk ṣūbh Al-'Aasha fee Sen'aat -Al-Enshaa*, vol. II, 1956, p. 282 (ch. 1); Peter Malcolm HOLT, *The Age of the Crusades: the Near East from the eleventh century to 1517*, London, Longman, 1986, p.128.

101. Yusuf Hassan Darwish GHAWANMA, *Kerak: an Ayyubid Emirate*, Amman, Dār al-Fikr, 1934, p. 54.

102. Shihāb al-Dīn Abū al-'Abbās ibn Faḍl Allah AL-'UMARĪ, *Masālik al-abṣār fi mamālik al-amṣār: Daulat al-mamālik al-ūla*, 1986, p. 213.

103. Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn 'Abd AL-ZĀHIR, *al-Rawd al-Zāhir fi Sirat al-Malik al-Zāhir*, 1976, p. 117-119; Ismā'il ibn 'ali ibn Mahmūd Abū AL-FIDĀ, *al-Mukhtasar fi Akhbār al-Bashar*, vol. III, 1997, p. 218.

104. Shams al-Dīn Muhammad al-Ansārī AL-DEMASHQĪ, *Nukhbat al-dabr fi 'ajā'ib al-bar wal-bahr*, 1866, p. 202.

The *Niyaba* of Hims is located between Aleppo and Hama in the North, Damascus in the South, and Tripoli in the West; the Orontes River, also known as *al-Asi*, runs through its lands, and the *Niyaba* is connected to the Mediterranean Sea through Tripoli.<sup>105</sup> Because its location in the middle of the *Niyabas* in the Levant, it was a connecting link and a significant base of distributing the mail through its three major types: the *Traditional Mail* that used camels, horses, and donkeys; the *Air Mail* that used carrier-pigeons; and the *Minarets Mail* that used fire at night and smoke at daylight. The *Niyaba* of Hims had the same administrative structure known in the rest of the Mamluk *Niyabas*.

Under the leadership of *al-Ashraf Khalil*, the *Niyaba* of Hims stood against the Mongol attacks for decades after the battle of Ain Jalut, in addition to its participation in the wars against Armenia Minor until its defeat.<sup>106</sup> The troops of the *Niyaba* also resisted the repeated assaults of the Crusaders starting from the attacks of Bohemond VI governor of Antioch and Tripoli (1252-1275 AD/650-673 H) in the years of 1266 AD/664 H in which the troops of Hims had won.<sup>107</sup>

Some Deputies of Hims attempted to disobey the Mamluk Sultan, and usually supported the rebellious movements of the Deputies of Aleppo and Damascus. The Arab tribes were a key player in such events; such as the tribe of *Al Fadl ibn Rabea* with its two major families: *Al Eissa ibn Mehanna* and *Al Ali ibn Hodaittha*.<sup>108</sup> The competition among the Arab tribes had a serious impact on Hims. Accordingly, the demographic structure varied greatly including bedouins and urbans. In addition, Jews, Christians, and Muslims lived there side by side.

#### 4.9. The *Niyaba* of Jerusalem

Undoubtedly, Jews, Christians, and Muslims greatly respect Jerusalem for its religious, civilizational, and historical importance. Starting from *Umar ibn Al-Khattab*, the second Caliph, Muslims paid the Holy

City great attention; accordingly, the intellectual life flourished immensely. Then the city was conquered by the Crusaders in 1099 AD/492 H, and the life style was altered all together and the city was rendered into a typical military barrack where no sign of intellectual life was left at all. The city remained in this state until 1187 AD/583 H, when Saladin regained it once again. He restored the life style it once had decades ago. He even transformed the military buildings in the city to houses for studying different arts and science, and he added further cultural and intellectual activities. His successors followed his footsteps until the Holy City regained its impulse once again.

There are different views regarding the exact date in which the municipality of Jerusalem turned into the Third Mamluk *Niyaba* in Palestine after the first two *Niyabas* Safed and Gaza.<sup>109</sup> Yet, it is sure that in the year 1393 AD/796 H,<sup>110</sup> the city had become a Mamluk *Niyaba* with an eminent Deputy appointed by a decree at the head of its administrative hierarchy. The Deputy's residence was in a perfect location beside *al-Ghawanma Minaret* in *al-Aqsa Mosque*. Because of the importance of the new *Niyaba*, the Mamluk Sultans devoted the yields of many near villages and territories to it. Since this *Niyaba* contained many Holy Places, its Deputy hold the title of '*Nazir al-Haramein*' i.e. the supervisor of the two holy mosques, as he supervised both *al-Aqsa Mosque* in Jerusalem and the *Sanctuary of Abraham* in Hebron. Sometimes, he was referred to as the Deputy of the Mamluk Sultan in Jerusalem and Hebron, which indicates the administrative independence of the *Niyaba*. The main reason of appointing an independent Deputy in this *Niyaba* was to take care of the Holy Places in this region, and protecting it from internal and/or external threats. The *Niyaba* encompassed three main divisions: *Hebron*, *Nablus*, and *Ramla*.<sup>111</sup>

The Mamluk Sultans paid great attention to Jerusalem, and they made it one of the most important scientific centers in the whole Sultanate. They devoted many properties for charity works; such as, paying the life expenses of both the knowledge seekers and the scholars as well. There were many administrative positions in the *Niyaba* to facilitate the managerial procedures like *Nazir al-Haramein*, and the *Headmaster* of Saladin School who was appointed by a sultan decree

105. Shihāb al-Dīn Abu Abdullah Yāqut AL-HAMAWĪ, *Mu'ajam Al-Buldān*, vol. I, Beirut, Dar šadr, 1995, p. 352.

106. Mubarak AL-TARAWNA, *Himş during the Mamluk Period*, MA Thesis, Mu'ta, Mu'ta University, 1996, p. 81-87.

107. Muhyī al-Dīn ibn 'Abd al-ZĀHIR, *al-Rawd al-Zābir fi Sirat al-Malik al-Zābir*, 1976, p. 245; Abu al-Abas Ahmed Ibn Ali Ibn Abdullah AL-MAQRIZĪ, *Al-Sulūk šūbh Al-'Aasha fee Sen'aat -Al-Enshaa*, vol. I, 1956, p. 543 (ch. 2); Hussein ATTĪYA, *Antioch and the Muslims*, Alexandria, Dār al-Ma'rifah al-Jamī'iyah, 1989, p. 210.

108. Nāšir al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Raḥīm ibn AL-FŪRĀT, *Tārīkh ibn al-Fūrāt*, vol. IX, 1939, p. 217-222; Jasmāl al-Dīn Yusuf IBN TAGHRIBIRDĪ, *Al-Nujūm al-zāhirā fi mülūl Misr wāl-Qāharā*, vol. XI, 1930-1972, p. 15-16.

109. Khalil 'ATHAMINA, *How Jerusalem Became An Independent Niyaba?*, vol. IV, Beirut, Institute for Palestinian Studies, 2004, p. 28.

110. Huda LUTFI, *Al-Quds Al-Mamlūkiyya, A History of Mamlūk Jerusalem Based on the Haram Documents*, Berlin, Schwarz, 1985, p. 154.

111. Abu al-Yaman Abdel Rahman ibn Mojiruddīn AL-OLIMĪ, *al-Anas al-Galil be Tārīkh al-Quds wa al-Khalil*, vol. II, 1973, p. 274-275; Yusuf Hassan Darwish GHAWANMA, *History of Jerusalem During Mamluk Period*, Damascus, Manshūrāt al-Ha'yah al-'Āmmah al-Sūriyah lil-Kitāb, Wizārat al-Thaqāfah, 2009, p. 19-22.



to supervise its work, in addition to the *Chief Judge* who was to be in charge of the *Niyaba* in case the position of the Deputy was vacant.<sup>112</sup>

Sultan *Baibars*, for instance, visited Jerusalem for inspection many times. First, in 1236 AD/661 H, when he assigned 5000 Dirhams to be paid for al-Aqsa Mosque each year.<sup>113</sup> He ordered a hotel to be built as an *Islamic Waqf*, to welcome students and knowledge seekers coming from different nations. His successor, Sultan *Qalawun*, took care of the scholars and ordered a residence to be built for them.<sup>114</sup> He also ordered a new mosque to be built that carried his name. His son, Sultan *Mohamed*, took care of al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock. He ordered many schools to be built, many projects to provide the city with water supplies, markets, and shelters for homeless women. His sons and grandsons followed his steps, and took care of spreading different kinds of arts and science. The *Burji Dynasty* was no exception, they continued the efforts exerted by their ancestors, and paid great attention to the *Niyaba* of Jerusalem.<sup>115</sup>

Thus, students and knowledge seekers found the perfect atmosphere; since their basic needs were met, they were focusing only on studying. They could easily choose the institution they want to study at, and the scholar sessions they want to attend. According to such fertile scientific momentum, the resulting fruits were many eminent scholars; such as, *Badr al-Din Ibrahim ibn Saadullah* (died 1333 AD/733 H) who was a Historian and a Hadith Narrator, and *Abu al-Yaman al-Olimi al-Hanbali* (died 1522 AD/928 H).

112. Abu al-Yaman Abdel Rahman ibn Majiruddin AL-OLIMĪ, *al-Anas al-Galil be Tarikh al-Qudsq wa al-Khalil*, vol. II, 1973, p. 293; Aref AL-AREF, *Detailed History of Jerusalem*, Alexandria, Dar al-Ma'arif, 1970, p. 220.

113. Abu al-Abas Ahmed Ibn Ali Ibn Abdullah AL-MAQRIZĪ, *Al-Sulūk šubh Al-'Aasha fee Sen'aat Al-Enshaa*, vol. I, 1956, p. 551 (ch. 2).

114. Abu al-Yaman Abdel Rahan ibn Majiruddin AL-OLIMĪ, *al-Anas al-Galil be Tarikh al-Qudsq wa al-Khalil*, vol. II, 1973, p. 43, 151.

115. Mohamed Zare'a Ahmed AL-ASTAL, *Intellectual and Cultural Life in the Mamluk Jerusalem*, MA Thesis, Gaza, Islamic University, 2014, p. 39-56.

Thus, we notice the reason why the *Niyaba* of Jerusalem had its own Deputy. Since it played no significant military role, the responsibilities of its Deputy were focused on taking care of the Holy Lands and the two Holy Mosques.<sup>116</sup>

## 5. Conclusion

From the paragraphs mentioned above, we see how much the Mamluk Sultans were keen to divide their Sultanate in Egypt and the Levant into *Niyabas*; each *Niyaba* had its own Deputy who acted like the Sultan of his *Niyaba*. Accordingly, Deputies competed with one another to develop their respective *Niyabas* on both administrative and military levels alike. Until the *Niyabas* in the Levant became like hard rocks upon which the attacks of the Mongols and the Crusaders were crushed.

Nothing could bring these *Niyabas* down except for the inner conflicts that coincided with the expansion of the increasing new powers of the Ottomans and the Portuguese. This finally led to the fall of the Mamluk State in Egypt and the Levant between the years 1516-1517AD/922-923H. In fact, the study tried to shed light on the geographical, administrative, and political qualifications of each *Niyaba*, which affected the role it played. Egypt was the head of the state, while Aleppo and Damascus confronted the attacks of the Mongols, Armenia Minor, and the Ottomans. Tripoli that is on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea played a greater role in facing the attacks of the Crusaders from overseas. The *Niyaba* of Kerak defended the trade roads in the deserts of the Levant, and the *Niyaba* of Safed monitored the movements of the near Crusaders till taking their last castles down. The *Niyaba* of Gaza was the connecting link between the two major sectors of the Mamluk State: Egypt and the Levant. Whereas, the Deputies of the *Niyaba* of Jerusalem were focusing on developing the intellectual and spiritual life, for the *Niyaba* is, indeed, blessed with many Holy Places.

116. Mohamed Zare'a Ahmed AL-ASTAL, *Intellectual and Cultural Life in the Mamluk Jerusalem*, 2014, p. 163-164.



FIGURE 1. Map showing the Niayabas and main towns in the Mamluk Sultanate (Cartography: Ali Ahmed El-Sayed).