CHAPTER 6

The secret war

The Sultans of the Saracens had many spies, who desired to know all of the deeds of the Christians, not only in nearby regions, but also in remote regions.

Fidenzio de Padua[1]

In order to combat better the Mongol danger, Baybars established an intelligence service, which was based on secret operatives and informants in enemy territory. The information thus obtained was vital for the timely adoption of proper measures for the defence of the Sultanate. Baybars, however, did not stop at the mere gathering of information, but initiated assorted covert activities to weaken the Mongols, including assassination, disinformation to discredit opponents, and the cultivation of contacts with indigenous Muslim princes, officers and officials in the Īlkhānid state. This was in addition to the activities described in previous chapters which could also be placed under the rubric of "secret war," such as the raids across the border, the burning of grasslands and the dispatch of Muslim rulers to reestablish their "kingdoms" (the Caliph al-Mustanṣir, al-Ṣāliḥ of Mosul and the "lord" of Irbil). Baybars's successors continued these activities until the end of the Mamluk–Īlkhānid war in 720/1320 and even after. As is to be expected, the sultans also used espionage and subterfuge against the Franks in Syria.[2]

The Īlkhāns also tried their hand at both espionage and "dirty tricks." In general, however, their efforts were not crowned with success, at least, according to the Mamluk sources, who probably only knew of such Mongol activities when they failed or those involved were caught. We have no

[1] *Liber recuperationis Terrae Sanctae*, in G. Golubovich, *Biblioteca Bio-Bibliografica della Terra Santa et dell' Oriento Francescano* (Quaracchi, 1906–23), 2:33, cited in J.R. Alban and C.T. Allmand, "Spies and Spying in the Fourteenth Century," in C.T. Allman (ed.), *War, Literature and Politics in the Later Middle Ages* (Liverpool, 1976), 73.

[2] For preliminary and brief discussions on Mamluk espionage, see: Cahen, *Syrie*, 714; Blochet's comments in Mufaḍḍal, 719 n. 2; Khowaiter, *Baibars*, 39–42. For Mamluk espionage against the Franks and after Baybars, see: R. Amitai, "Mamluk Espionage among Mongols and Franks," *AAS* 22 (1988):173–81. Espionage during Baybars's reign is briefly discussed there. This present chapter is an expansion of that discussion.

knowledge regarding successful Mongol efforts in the secret war, if any actually existed. The pro-Mongol sources, in Persian and other languages, are silent on the subject.

Mamluk espionage

There is information regarding the use of spies by some Syrian Ayyūbids against their Frankish neighbors.[3] It is unclear, however, if these princes ran a regular, ongoing intelligence service. Yet even without Ayyūbid antecedents, it is easy to understand the nature and extent of Baybars's espionage service: confronted by the Mongol, Frankish and Armenian enemies and having set up a centralized state, Baybars was both motivated and able to establish a regular intelligence service. In a sense, Baybars was continuing in the path already established by Qutuz: after ʿAyn Jālūt, the latter had appointed al-Malik al-Saʿīd ʿAlā' al-Dīn b. Badr al-Dīn Lu'lu' as governor of Aleppo, so he could communicate with his brothers, still in the Jazīra, and thus learn about the Mongols.[4]

It is clear that Baybars ran a regular, professional intelligence service. On several occasions, Baybars is praised by his biographer, Ibn ʿAbd al-Ẓāhir, who wrote of the Sultan's concern for the gathering of information and how this led to early warnings of impending attacks (by the Mongols and Armenians) and to the uncovering of enemy spies.[5] It is legitimate to wonder if such fulsome praise is mere panegyric, of which many examples are found in *al-Rawḍ al-zāhir*. In this case, however, we can trust the author. Ibn ʿAbd al-Ẓāhir was Baybars's *kātib al-sirr* (privy secretary), and thus would have had at least some knowledge of such activities. More importantly, as will be seen, his evidence is corroborated by other sources.

The linchpin of Baybars's intelligence operation was the *quṣṣād* (sing. *qāṣid*). This term has the basic meaning of envoy or messenger, a meaning also concurrently found in the Mamluk sources. But in many cases it is clear that these sources use the word as a technical term to denote intelligence operatives employed by the Sultan to go back and forth from enemy (Mongol, Armenian and Frankish) territory. The preferred translation in such cases is secret courier or agent. A particularly enlightening passage for the meaning and function of the *quṣṣād* is found in Ibn ʿAbd al-Ẓāhir's *Rawḍ*:

> The Sultan did not cease to take interest in the affairs of the enemy. He was on guard against their tricks and resolute in all regarding them. His *quṣṣād* did not stop coming from Baghdad, Khilāṭ [= Akhlāṭ] and other places in the eastern country [*bilād al-sharq*] and Persia [*al-ʿajam*]. [The Sultan] spent on them much money, because whoever travels for this matter and plays loosely with his life, there is no choice but that he

[3] Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī, 8:646–7; C. Marshall, *Warfare in the Latin East, 1192–1291* (Cambridge, 1992), 264–6. [4] See ch. 2, p. 46.

[5] *Rawḍ*, 192, 195, 423. For Baybars's concern for internal surveillance, see Yūnīnī, 3:255.

should take his blood money [*diya*]. Without this, who would risk his life? When Allāh showed the Sultan this good policy, the *quṣṣād* went back and forth, and they recognized [in the Mongol countries] those who could inform them of the [Mongol] secrets.[6]

The official responsible for the activities of the *quṣṣād* was the amir Sayf al-Dīn Balaban al-Dawādār al-Rūmī, a trusted personal mamluk of the Sultan. Al-Ṣafadī writes that the Sultan had him convey his secrets to the *quṣṣād*.[7] Ibn al-Ṣuqāʿī provides more details of Balaban's activities and the workings of the intelligence service: "[He] alone spoke with the *quṣṣād* who went back and forth [engaged] in the secret activities (*al-ashghāl al-sirriyya*), and he paid their salaries and grants. Their names were not written in the *dīwān* (registry) and their condition was not revealed to the military class (*al-nās*). If one came during the day, they were veiled so as not to be identified."[8]

More information on Balaban's activities is found in his obituary in al-Yūnīnī's work: this amir was party to Baybars's secrets and the administration of matters relating to *quṣṣād*, spies (*jawāsīs*) and correspondents (*mukātibūn*; see below). Except for another amir, Ḥusām al-Dīn Lachin al-Aydemürī al-Darfīl (who was replaced on his death in 672/1273–4 by ʿIzz al-Dīn Aydemür al-Dawādār al-Ẓāhirī), Balaban had no associates in these matters, neither the wazir nor the *nāʾib* (vice-sultan).[9]

It remains unclear whether or not the responsibility for the *quṣṣād* was connected to Balaban being a *dawādār* ("inkwell holder"). Already in Baybars's period, this position gained in importance, and its holder exercised a certain supervisory function over the *barīd* and chancery.[10] It is possible, however, that this double responsibility was a coincidence, and was due only to the trust Baybars put in his mamluk, who happened to be a *dawādār*. On the other hand, Balaban's second associate – Aydemür al-Ẓāhirī – was also a *dawādār*, which strengthens the suggestion that supervision of the *quṣṣād* indeed fell within the purview of the *dawādār*. It would appear that Balaban was not directly responsible for the specific missions of all the operatives. Some of this may have been in the hands of forward commanders: the governor of al-Raḥba is reported to have dispatched *quṣṣād* into enemy territory.[11]

The above use of *jawāsīs* (pl. of *jāsūs*) for Mamluk spies or secret operatives

[6] *Rawḍ*, 135; whence Ibn al-Furāt, MS. Vienna, fol. 6a. [7] Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, 10:282.
[8] Ibn al-Ṣuqāʿī, 53.
[9] Yūnīnī, 4:106–7; cited in Ibn Taghrī Birdī, 7:332–3. Balaban was also an expert on relations with the Franks, and conducted negotiations with Tripoli; P.M. Holt, "Mamluk-Frankish Diplomatic Relations in the Reign of Qalāwūn (678–89/1279–90)," *JRAS* 1989:281–2. He was killed at the battle of Homs in 680/1281.
[10] Both Irwin, *Middle East*, 39, and P.M. Holt, *Memoirs of a Syrian Prince* (Wiesbaden, 1983), 6, suggest that espionage was among the responsibilities of the *dawādār*. ʿUmarī, ed. Sayyid, 58, only vaguely refers to the secret activities of the *dawādār* in his description of the position; see also D. Ayalon, "Dawādār," *EI*², 2:172. [11] Yūnīnī, 4:109; Ibn al-Furāt, 7:74.

is not common. I have found only two other unambiguous examples in the Mamluk sources for this usage.[12] The distinction between *jāsūs* and *qāṣid*, if there was one, is not clear. *Jāsūs* was sometimes applied by the Mamluk writers to Mongol agents, as will be seen below. Given the several instances of the use of *jāsūs/jawāsīs* by Mamluk writers for Mamluk agents, I must revise my earlier suggestion that this was a term of disparagement.[13]

Shāfiʿ b. ʿAlī's biography of Qalawun provides further confirmation of the connection of *quṣṣād* with intelligence work: in 678/1279–80, information about an impending Mongol attack is confirmed in letters from the Sultan's correspondents (*mukātibūn*, see below) and *quṣṣād akhbārihi* who were always sending information.[14] *Quṣṣād akhbārihi* can be translated as "the agents [who provided] his intelligence"; the second word may have been added in this case to emphasize that these *quṣṣād* were engaged in espionage and were not just mere couriers.

Additional proof for the application of *quṣṣād* to those engaged in spy work comes from Mongol espionage. Ibn ʿAbd al-Ẓāhir uses the terms *jāsūs* and *qāṣid* for the same two Mongol agents in 662/1263–4.[15] As will be seen below, these agents were subsequently arrested upon their arrival in the Sultanate. These two terms were used interchangeably because in the author's mind *qāṣid* was associated with espionage.

As said before, during the period that *qāṣid/quṣṣād* was used as a technical term, it was also employed by the same sources in its simple meaning of Mamluk envoys or couriers.[16] The Mamluk writers also used *quṣṣād* for couriers sent by Hülegü to Mārdīn in 658 and 659/1259–61.[17] The term was also applied to secret couriers, although not connected to espionage, from Mamluk amirs or the Sultan.[18] Secret envoys sent to the Sultan by important personages in enemy territory were also known as *quṣṣād* (see below). In spite of the many shades of meaning for this word, it is clear from the context that, in many cases, *quṣṣād* refers specifically to Mamluk intelligence operatives, and this appears to have been the technical term by which they were known.[19]

[12] Ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥīm, in Ibn Wāṣil, fol. 185b (s.a. 673/1274–5); *Ḥusn*, 138 (ca. 689/1290). See also: Amitai, "Espionage," n. 12.

[13] Cf. Amitai, "Espionage," 175.

[14] *Faḍl*, fol. 28b; the continuation of this passage tells of how widespread was Qalawun's intelligence service. This may be patterned on the above cited passage from *Rawḍ* cited in n. 6.

[15] *Rawḍ*, 195; whence, Ibn al-Furāt, MS. Vienna, fol. 43a.

[16] *Rawḍ*, 95, 296; Kutubī, 20:301 (= Ibn Taghrī Birdī, 7:143); *Zubda*, fols. 60a, 124a; *Tuḥfa*, 71; Maqrīzī, 1:511 (cf. Ibn al-Furāt, MS. Vienna, fol. 43a, who does not mention *quṣṣād*).

[17] Yūnīnī, 1:379, 2:112; Ibn al-Dawādārī, 8:66.

[18] *Rawḍ*, 169–70 (= Ibn al-Furāt, MS. Vienna, fol. 28b); *Zubda*, fols. 91b, 104a; *Faḍl*, fol. 36a. Qalqashandī, 1:126–7, describes *quṣṣād* in his own time as secret couriers (but not intelligence agents *per se*), particularly to foreign lands.

[19] Cf. Alban and Allmand, "Spies," 75: "To the mind of the fourteenth century [in Europe, R.A.] the distinction between the spy and the messenger was a fine one ... it appears that the term messenger could be employed as a synonym for spy." Alban and Allmand's discussion of espionage in Western Europe has many parallels to that of the Mamluk Sultanate in the thirteenth–fourteenth centuries.

Ibn Shaddād[20] relates that one of Balaban al-Rūmī's men or followers (*aṣḥāb*) was called ʿAlā' al-Dīn ʿAlī b. ʿAbdallāh al-Baghdādī, and from the context it is clear that he was an intelligence agent, probably a *qāṣid*. The identity of the other *quṣṣād* during Baybars's and Qalawun's reigns is unknown. We do, however, have the names of several of these agents from the post-Qalawun period. None of these men were mamluks, since they did not have Turkish names, but rather Arabic-Muslim ones. This makes sense, since native Arabic or Persian speakers would attract less attention moving about in enemy territory than Turks trying to speak the local patois. It can be tentatively assumed that during the times of Baybars and Qalawun, the same kind of men served as *quṣṣād*.[21] There is, however, one indication of an Armenian *qāṣid*.[22] Perhaps those at the *ordo* (see below) may have been of steppe origin. As would be expected, *quṣṣād* on a mission were constantly in danger: their lives were threatened not only by the Mongols, but by Armenians and bedouins not loyal to the Sultan.[23]

One of the main functions of the *quṣṣād* was to relay information from the informants in enemy territory. These were known as *munāṣiḥūn*; *nuṣaḥā'*, *nāṣiḥūn* and *nuṣṣāḥ* (sing. *nāṣiḥ*); *mutanaṣṣiḥūn*; *mukātibūn* ("correspondents"); *arbāb al-akhbār* ("possessors of intelligence"); and, *ʿuyūn* ("eyes", sing. *ʿayn*).[24] The terms based on the root *n-ṣ-ḥ* are by far the most common, and can be literally translated as "honest friends" or "givers of good or true advice." It is clear that these terms have positive connotations and show the appreciation with which the Mamluks held these informants. Unlike the *quṣṣād*, the informants seem to have been volunteers, local Muslims (at least those in Mongol territory), who were motivated by a religious feeling to help the Muslim Sultan against the infidel Mongols. As seen in the above cited passage of Ibn ʿAbd al-Ẓāhir, the *quṣṣād* were commissioned to take the initiative to identify those locals who could be of use and provide information.

Two examples will help to demonstrate the relationship between *quṣṣād* and *nuṣaḥā'*, etc. Both are taken from Shāfiʿ b. ʿAlī's biography of Qalawun, and relate to the events before the Mongol invasion of Syria in 680/1281:(1) "The information from the *nuṣaḥā'* was verified and the *quṣṣād* from and to [Qalawun] went back and forth"; (2) "The *mukātibūn*, by sending the *quṣṣād*,

[20] Cited in Ibn al-Dawādārī, 8:92. [21] See Amitai, "Espionage," *passim*.

[22] See below, p. 149.

[23] Armenians at Kaynūk: *Rawḍ*, 417; see ch. 5, p. 132. Zāmil b. ʿAlī, who intercepted *quṣṣād* going to Shīrāz: see ch. 3, pp. 167–8.

[24] The following also includes examples of informants in Frankish territory. *Munāṣiḥūn*: *Zubda*, fol. 110a; *Tuḥfa*, 78; Nuwayrī, MS. 2m, fol. 168a (cf. his source, *Rawḍ*, 195, who only mentions *quṣṣād*); *Faḍl*, fols. 43b–44a. *Nuṣaḥā'*: *Rawḍ*, 382; whence, Ibn al-Furāt, MS. Vienna,fol. 192b (= ed. Lyons, 1:189; cf. trans., 2:149: "advisors"); *Rawḍ*, 428; *Faḍl*, fols. 29b, 40b. *Nāṣiḥūn*: Nuwayrī, MS. 2n, fol. 20b; Ghāzī b. al-Wāsiṭī, 410. *Nuṣṣāḥ*: ʿUmarī, *Taʿrīf*, 200. *Mutanaṣṣiḥūn*: Ghāzī b. al-Wāsiṭī, 411. *Mukātibūn*: *Ḥusn*, 150; *Faḍl*, fols. 28b, 29b, 41a, 43b–44a, 48b–49a, 59b–60a. *Arbāb*: *Rawḍ*, 195. *ʿUyūn*: Yūnīnī, 3:299 (= Ibn al-Ṣuqāʿī, 12). These last two terms may refer to another type of Mamluk agent. On the use of all these terms after AH 680, see Amitai, "Espionage," n. 5. According to Canard, "Djāsūs," *EI*², 2:487, *ʿAyn* was virtually a synonym for *jāsūs*.

exerted themselves to inform us as best they could."[25] It is clear, then, that the job of the *qāṣid* was to convey the information collected by the local contacts.

The investment of resources and energy in the establishment and maintenance of an espionage system was soon to pay dividends. First, Baybars received timely warning of Mongol offensive preparations, as in 660/1262, and thus took the necessary measures to meet this challenge, until it became clear that this offensive was directed elsewhere.[26] Likewise, Qalawun was to receive critical information on Mongol plans and the strength of their forces before the Mongol invasion of Syria in 680/1281.[27] Because of the efforts devoted to intelligence gathering, Baybars gained advance information of an Armenian raid in 662/1263–4, and dispatched forces to deal with it.[28] Mamluk agents also obtained information on Mongol espionage efforts, and thus Baybars could catch the Mongol spies and their local contacts.[29] We can assume that at least some of the information on Īlkhānid–Frankish contacts and the attempts at concerted action against the Mamluks was gained through the intelligence system, be it among the Mongols or the Franks.

This is not to say that *quṣṣād* and *nuṣaḥā'* were the only ways for the Sultan to obtain information on happenings in the enemy camp. Intelligence was surely gleaned from *wāfidiyya*, Mongol and otherwise, pilgrims on the way to the *ḥajj*, scouts (*kashshāfa*), the bedouin of north Syria and Iraq, and merchants – especially from Lesser Armenia and the Frankish ports in the Levant and Europe, although those from Mongol territory should not be discounted (see chapter 9). Important as this information may have been, it was of a fortuitous nature and could not replace the intelligence gathered by the ongoing, organized activities of the *quṣṣād* service.

Besides cultivating contacts with local informants and conveying their information to the Sultan, the *quṣṣād* had an additional task of maintaining contact with indigenous, generally Muslim, lords and rulers in Īlkhānid controlled territory. There were several reasons for these contacts: to receive intelligence, to encourage the rulers to rebel and to urge them to flee with their troops to the Sulṭan. Among these lords were the ruler of Shīrāz, the Ayyūbid lord of Ḥiṣn Kayfā, the lord of Shumayṣāṭ, the King of Georgia, and the amirs of Seljuq Rūm, including the Pervāne. These contacts will be discussed below, except for Seljuq Rūm, which will be examined in chapter 8.

Baybars received important assistance in intelligence activities from the bedouins of Iraq, primarily the Khafāja tribe. The reason for this assistance may well have been Muslim solidarity against infidels, although traditional bedouin opposition to central authority (the Īlkhāns and their governors) was probably also a factor. Iraqi bedouin had been instrumental in assisting both Caliphal pretenders, al-Mustanṣir and al-Ḥākim, from escaping from Bagh-

[25] *Faḍl*, fols. 40b–41a. [26] *Rawḍ*, 135–68. For another example s.a. 668/1269, see *Ḥusn*, 150.
[27] See ch. 8, pp. 187–9.
[28] *Rawḍ*, 192. Mamluk spies (*jawāsīs*) were found in the entourage of the Armenian King in 673/1275; Ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥīm, in Ibn Wāṣil, MS. 1703, fol. 185b (s.a. 673/1274–5); ch. 5, p. 136.
[29] See below for the two examples.

dad and making their way to Syria (see chapter 3). In 660/1261–2, Baybars warmly received the chiefs (*shuyūkh*) of the Khafāja and ʿAbbāda tribes, who were located in the regions around Hīt, al-Anbār, al-Hilla and al-Kūfa. He commanded these tribes to keep an eye on the Mongols for him.[30] Not all of the Khafāja were ready to side with the Sultan. The same year, tribesmen from this tribe and the Ghāziya tribe raided Wādī al-Rabīʿa, between Homs and Qārā, and waylaid caravans. Some, at least, were caught and hanged by al-Ashraf Mūsā of Homs.[31]

While Baybars was at Gaza the following year (ca. early spring 1262), he wrote to the Khafāja (as well as the lord of Shīrāz and the chiefs of the Lur, an Iranian mountain people) and called upon them to mobilize against the Mongols. As an encouragement to them, Baybars described the defeat of Hülegü's army by Berke's forces.[32] These exhortations may not have occasioned a general uprising against the Mongols, but they perhaps helped to predispose the Iraqi bedouin to help the Mamluks in other ways. Evidently later this year, a group of Khafāja chiefs (*umarāʾ*) came to Baybars. He gave them a warm welcome, and sent them back with coats of honor for the chiefs (*kubarāʾ*) who had remained in Iraq, together with an envoy – ʿIzz al-Dīn Aydemür al-Atābakī – to the lord of Shīrāz. Letters to Shīrāz and elsewhere were also sent to encourage resistance to the Mongols.[33]

During 662/1263–4, the Khafāja appear several times. In early spring of that year (1264), a group of Khafāja bedouin came with letters from those who remained in Iraq. The bedouin told of how they had raided up to the gates of Baṣra and Baghdad. They also related news from Shīrāz, including that its lord had defeated a Mongol force which had come his way. Baybars wrote to encourage the ruler of Shīrāz. He also wrote to Aydemür al-Atābakī, who was still in Iraq, to set out for Shīrāz along with Khafāja amirs.[34] In Rajab 662 (May 1264), *wāfidiyya* from Shīrāz arrived, together with a number of Khafāja amirs. The Khafajī leader was Ḥusām al-Dīn Ḥusayn b. Milāḥ (?),[35] who was given an *iqṭāʿ* of a village in Syria. Along with another chief, he also received a commission in the Mamluk army. The Khafajīs were then sent back to their country.[36] Towards the close of this year (which ended on 4 November 1264), the Sultan ordered the Khafāja bedouins to assist the *wāfidī* Jalāl al-Dīn Yashkar, then making his way from Baghdad to Syria.[37]

[30] Maqrīzī, 1:476; the parallel folio(s) in Ibn al-Furāt, MS. Vienna (between fols. 8 and 9), is missing. [31] Ibn al-Ṣuqāʿī, 135.

[32] *Rawḍ*, 149; Ibn al-Furāt, MS. Vienna, fol. 13a; Maqrīzī, 1:481.

[33] *Rawḍ*, 182; Nuwayrī, MS. 2m, fol. 166a; Ibn al-Furāt, MS. Vienna, fol. 35b; Maqrīzī, 1:501–2.

[34] *Rawḍ*, 194; Ibn al-Furāt, MS. Vienna, fols. 42b–43a; Maqrīzī, 1:511. It would seem that the mamluk of the Atabeg Aqtay al-Mustaʿrib, who was caught by the renegade bedouin leader Zāmil b. ʿAlī (see ch. 3, pp. 67–8) can be identified with this individual. If so, it is no wonder that he did not complete his mission.

[35] In another context, his name is found in Yūnīnī, 1:484, as Ḥusayn b. Fallāḥ.

[36] *Rawḍ*, 198; Nuwayrī, MS. 2m, fols. 168b–169a; Ibn al-Furāt, MS. Vienna, fols. 44a–45a, who arranges differently the information from *Rawḍ*; Maqrīzī, 1:511–12; see ch. 5, pp. 67–8.

[37] *Rawḍ*, 209–10; Ibn al-Furāt, MS. Vienna, fol. 50b; Maqrīzī, 1:516; see ch. 5, pp. 109–10.

The news brought by the Khafāja about events in Shīrāz roughly fits in with our knowledge of the events in that city. The Salghurid rulers had long submitted to the Mongols, and kept a modicum of independence. It would seem that the ruler of Shīrāz referred to above was Seljuq-Shāh b. Salghur-Shāh, who came to rule after his brother Muḥammad-Shāh was removed from the throne, seemingly some time in 661/1262–3. Seljuq-Shāh is known to have killed Mongol *basqaqs*, i.e. *shaḥnas*. Hülegü then sent an army whose commander sought to reconcile Seljuq-Shāh. The latter refused and was defeated in 662/1263–4. The reports brought to Baybars by the Khafāja in the spring of 1264 would fit this chronology, although they wrongly stated that the ruler of Shīrāz was victorious. The Mongol victory would have thus led to the Shīrāzī *wāfidiyya*, who arrived in Rajab 662 (May 1264).[38]

At this point, the Khafāja disappear from the chronicles. The next mention of them is in 672/1274, when the *amīr al-ʿurbān* of the Syrian bedouin, ʿĪsā b. Muhannā, launched a raid to al-Anbār. There he fought a group of Khafajīs. Nothing, however, came of this engagement.[39] In 675/1277, ʿĪsā – together with the governor of Aleppo – bested a group of Khafajī tribesmen at the Euphrates.[40] It is unclear whether this was a faction of the Khafāja tribe which was never pro-Baybars, or reflected a change in the orientation of the tribe's leaders. Given the lack of evidence of Khafāja–Mamluk relations in the previous years, we can only tentatively conclude that the latter supposition is more likely. We see here that the loyalty of the Iraqi bedouin was far from a foregone conclusion. Like many of the Syrian bedouin leaders, the Khafāja chiefs alternately – or even concurrently – served both the Mamluks or Mongols, depending on what was in their best interest at a given time or which of the two powers was capable of exerting the most influence.

Only Mamluk sources have been used in the above discussion, since the pro-Mongol writers say little on the topic of Mamluk espionage in the Īlkhānid kingdom. Bar Hebraeus refers to the subject several times, albeit not always explicitly. First, in 1263 (= AH 661–2), envoys were caught from the former ruler of Jazīrat Ibn ʿUmar, al-Mujāhid Sayf al-Dīn b. Badr al-Dīn Lu'lu', then in Syria, to its present governor. The local Mongol commander, Samdaghu, referred to these envoys as spies.[41] In September 1268 (early 667), an Egyptian lawyer (*faqīh* ?), "ʿAlam al-Riyīsa" in Mosul was seized and put to death,[42] perhaps for spying. Around 1275 (= AH 673–4), 30 *faqīrs* (Muslim mendicants) came from Syria to Cilicia to visit the tomb of the Caliph Ma'mun at Ṭarsūs (Tarse). It was suspected that Baybars himself, in disguise, was among them. King Leon had the group arrested; the many envoys who came to gain their release only strengthened his suspicions that Baybars was among them.[43]

It may be surprising that Leon, who had become acquainted with Baybars

[38] A.K.S. Lambton, "Mongol Fiscal Administration in Persia," *SI* 65 (1987):103; cf. Spuler, *Iran*, 119–20. [39] *Rawḍ*, 426; Ibn al-Furāt, 7:6; Maqrīzī, 1:611; see ch. 5, p. 109.
[40] See ch. 7, p. 168. [41] Bar Hebraeus, 444. [42] *Ibid.*, 447. [43] *Ibid.*, 452.

during his captivity in Egypt and Syria, had difficulty ascertaining the presence of the Sultan among the *faqīrs*. It is clear from whence sprang this apocryphal aspect of the story. Baybars's mobility and secretiveness must have been well known,[44] and perhaps information of his intelligence service was beginning to filter through to Mongol controlled territory.

In a similar vein, Waṣṣāf relates how Baybars, having developed a desire to gain control of Rūm, travelled there in disguise, along with two or three associates, on a spying mission. He learnt the roads of the country and the strength of its forces. Having returned to his kingdom, he then wrote to Abagha, informing of how he had gone to Rūm and traversed it from end to end. As proof of this, he had left his ring in a shop. The Sultan then requested the Khan to send the ring back to him. Abagha wrote to the Pervāne, who obtained the ring and dispatched it to him. Thereupon, the Khan forwarded it to Baybars.[45] The fantastic nature of this story and the lack of any corroborating evidence in the Mamluk sources leads to the rejection of this account. It may indicate, however, that the Mongols had a hint of the extent to which Mamluk agents had crossed the border. What Waṣṣāf had done, intentionally or not, was to identify this phenomenon with the already legendary personality of Sultan Baybars.

One slightly later example will serve to show how the Mongols perceived Mamluk espionage. In 681/1282–3, the Īlkhān Aḥmad Tegüder (680–3/1281–4) wrote to Qalawun, and expressed his desire for peace. In his letter, he complained that a Mamluk spy (*jāsūs*), dressed as a *faqīr*, had been captured by the Mongol road patrol (*qaraghul*). Normally he would have been killed, but instead he was sent back to the Sultan, as a gesture of goodwill. Many other spies like this had been uncovered in the past, and the result was that the army had killed many *faqīrs*, having suspected them of being spies.[46] Qalawun does not deny this accusation in his answer, but only counters by accusing the Mongols with employing the same tactic (see below). It would seem then that *quṣṣād* or other Mamluk agents did cross the border and travel in Īlkhānid territory disguised as mendicants. Leon's suspicions of the *faqīr*s may well have been justified, even if Baybars was not among them.

Baybars's use of subterfuge

In order to weaken both the morale and the military capabilities of the Mongols, Baybars employed to great success artifices which today would be called "dirty tricks." These included assassination, the spreading of disinformation both to discredit opponents and to "convince" friends to desert to the Mamluks, and the cultivation of contacts among prominent figures in Īlkhānid territory. One result, perhaps not deliberate, of these activities was to strengthen the atmosphere of distrust among the Mongols of their Muslim

[44] See the comments in ch. 5, p. 174 and n. 75. [45] Waṣṣāf, 85–6.
[46] *Zubda*, fol. 132b; published as appendix to Maqrīzī, 1:979.

officials and officers. In such an atmosphere these office holders could easily be falsely accused of aiding the Mamluks.

The simplest form of subterfuge seems to have been assassination. Baybars employed assassins twice against Frankish adversaries: Philip of Montfort (successfully) and Prince Edward of England (unsuccessfully).[47] Baybars is reported to have twice used the services of assassins against personalities in the Īlkhānid kingdom. The first, interestingly enough, was against a Frank living there, and evidently it was not successful. The would-be victim was Bartholomew, the lord of Maraqiyya (Maraclea), who had fled to the Mongols after the Mamluk conquest of Ḥiṣn al-Akrād (668/1270). In a letter sent from Syria to the amirs in Egypt in 670/1271, Baybars wrote that Bartholomew had gone to the Mongols to ask for assistance, but he had sent assassins (*fidāwiyya*, i.e., the Ismāʿīlīs from Syria) after him. One of them had fallen upon Bartholomew and killed him. The truth, however, was that this character was alive and well, and returned to Syria several years later.[48]

Qirtay al-Khaznadārī relates a story s.a. 661/662–3 about three Kurds who came from Mongol territory. They managed to penetrate the Sultan's tent before they were apprehended. Because of their courage and honesty, Baybars rewarded them and sent them back across the border to murder three Mongol princes. They succeeded in their task but were then killed by the Mongols.[49] No hint of this story is found in either the Mamluk or Persian sources, and taken together with the many unbelievable details, it would seem justified to cast serious doubts on its veracity.

Baybars must have decided that a more efficient, if much more complicated, method to rid himself of obnoxious personalities on the other side was the intentional use of wrong information, disinformation in modern parlance, in order to discredit them in the eyes of the Īlkhān. Baybars first used this technique against al-Zayn al-Ḥāfiẓī (Zayn al-Dīn Sulaymān b. al-Muʾayyad al-ʿAqrabānī), who had been the wazir of the last Ayyūbid ruler of Syria, al-Nāṣir Yūsuf. Long before Hülegü's invasion of Syria, al-Zayn had been secretly loyal to the Mongols and had acted to undermine al-Nāṣir's regime and his will to resist the Mongols. He fled with the Mongols after the defeat at ʿAyn Jālūt and became a Mongol official. Baybars had found himself at odds with him in the final months of al-Nāṣir's reign, and it was this old score to be settled rather than al-Zayn's danger as an Īlkhānid official which probably motivated Baybars to have him eliminated.[50] In 662/1263–4, Baybars started the process of discrediting al-Zayn, by sending false messages to him, in which the impression was given that he was in secret league with the Sultan. Al-Zayn himself showed these letters to Hülegü, who believed his disclaimers, and permitted him to try his hand at a similar trick among the Mamluks. Not only was that trick unsuccessful, but Baybars sent another, even more incriminat-

[47] Runciman, *Crusades*, 3:332–3, 338; Thorau, *Baybars*, 204, 222.
[48] *Rawḍ*, 395; Irwin, "County of Tripoli," 248. [49] Qirtay, fols. 76b–78a.
[50] See above, pp. 23, 30, 43.

ing, letter with *quṣṣād*, and made sure it reached Hülegü. The Īlkhān would hear no excuses. Al-Zayn's fate was sealed, and he and his family were executed.[51]

It is reported that some ten years later (672/1273–4), Baybars used the same technique to bring about the demise of the Catholicos (*jathalīq*) in Baghdad, who had a great deal of influence with Abagha, and had been making life difficult for the local Muslims. The Sultan had composed an incriminating letter, which included *inter alia* gratitude for providing secret information about the Mongols (*akhbār al-mughul al-bāṭiniyya*). An interesting stratagem was devised to have the "secret letter" (*mulaṭṭaf*) come to Abagha's notice. An Armenian (called a *qāṣid*) was sent from al-Bīra to carry the message. At Baybars's orders, however, the governor of al-Bīra wrote to the lord of Shumayṣāṭ/Sumaysāṭ, Shams al-Dīn Bahādur. This lord had been for some time in secret communication with the Sultan and had sent information about the Mongols. Bahādur was to intercept the Armenian, and bring him and the letter to Abagha. This was done and resulted – it is implied – in the execution of the Catholicos. At some point after this, however, the Mongols began to suspect Bahādur for his pro-Mamluk activities. He was arrested and brought to the *ordo*, but managed to escape and make his way to al-Bīra. Bahādur's mamluks and entourage, supposedly numbering about 1000, had already fled to Syria, and he himself was well received by the Sultan.[52]

If we are to remain faithful to the chronology of the Mamluk sources, it might appear that the story is referring to the Nestorian Catholicos Mar Denha. He had replaced Mar Makika, who had died in 1265.[53] But Mar Denha lived until 1281, so he is not a possibility. Assuming that there is a chronological problem in the Mamluk sources, Mar Makika could be a candidate, but the pro-Mongol sources which mention him – such as Bar Hebraeus and Ibn al-Fuwaṭī – do not report that he suffered such a demise, a fact which does cast some doubt on the ultimate success of this stratagem.

Baybars was not beyond using such tactics to convince potential friends that it was in their interest to flee to the Sultanate. In 660/1261–2, the Sultan was in contact with Salār al-Baghdādī, who had been an officer in the ʿAbbāsid government and was now serving the Mongols. Salār promised Baybars that he would desert to his side, but kept postponing his setting out. The Sultan then forced his hand. He sent two *qāṣids* with a message to Salār. One of the

[51] Yūnīnī, 2:334–6; Kutubī, 20:297–300; Ibn al-Dawādārī, 8:104–5, who cites Ibn Shaddād's biography of Baybars as his source; Ibn al-Ṣuqāʿī, 78–9. Another reason for al-Zayn's execution was that he had accepted a bribe during the siege of Mosul, where he had been ordered to inspect conditions in the Mongol camp.

[52] *Rawḍ*, 421–3; *Tuḥfa*, 78; Nuwayrī, MS. 2m, fol. 208a–b; Ibn al-Furāt, MS. Vienna, fol. 219b; 7:4–5; see ch. 5, p. 132.

[53] E.A.W. Budge, *The Monks of Ḳûblâi Khân Emperor of China* (rpt., New York, 1973 of Manchester, 1928), 58–9; J.B. Chabot, "Histoire du patriarche Mar Jabalaha III et du moine Rabban Çauma," *ROL* 1 (1893):593 n. 2; 2 (1884):301. On the *jathalīq*'s high status with the Mongols, see ʿUmarī, ed. Lech, 92; see Spuler, *Iran*, 170–9, for the condition of the Nestorians under the first Īlkhāns.

qāṣids, however, had secret orders to kill the other and leave the body in a place where the Mongols would find it and the letter. The unfortunate Salār, discovering that his secret had become known to the Mongols, had no choice but to flee. In spite of Salār's original diffidence in coming to the Sultanate, he was welcomed warmly by Baybars.[54]

Baybars's contact with a subject ruler could, of course, be discovered by the Mongols. Around 665/1266–7, the Sultan was corresponding with the Ayyūbid ruler of Ḥiṣn Kayfā, al-Malik al-Muwaḥḥid (al-Awḥad) b. al-Muʿaẓẓam Tūrānshāh b. al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb, encouraging him to abandon the Mongols and make his way to Syria. Under the influence of two of his eunuchs, al-Muwaḥḥid agreed. But the *quṣṣād* carrying his answer were caught by the local Mongol commander, and the letters brought to Abagha. The two eunuchs were executed, but al-Muwaḥḥid's life was spared, although he had to reside at the *ordo*; seven years later he was allowed to return to Ḥiṣn Kayfā, where he "ruled" until his death in 682/1283.[55]

Contact was also maintained with the Christian kings of Georgia, which was under Mongol domination. As early as 663/1264–5, envoys came from Georgia in response to the *quṣṣād* which Baybars had earlier sent to the princes of the small countries (*mulūk al-ṭawā'if*). These princes included one of the two kings of Georgia, David the son of Rusudani (Dāwūd b. Sūdān), known as David Narin ("the clever"). A letter came back from this prince, in which he expressed friendship for the Sultan and enmity towards the Sultan's enemies, and told of his contacts with Berke.[56] In 666/1268, Baybars's envoy (*rasūl*) returned with letters from both "the King of al-Abkhāz" and Ulu[gh] ("big") David of Tiflis, David Narin's ostensible co-sovereign. In their letters, they professed their loyalty to the Sultan and spurned the Mongols.[57] The "King of Abkhāz" must be a reference to David Narin, who had fled Tiflis to Abkhazia in the late 1250s in order to escape the Mongols.[58] The Mongols certainly had some idea of these contacts early on: at some date before Hülegü's death (663/1265), envoys (*quṣṣād*) of Baybars returning from Georgia with gifts were captured when their ship was blown off course into Tripoli, whose ruler (Bohemond VI) then sent them on to Hülegü.[59]

Nothing came of these negotiations. An indication of this is seen in 672/1273–4, when Baybars arrested a Georgian prince who had entered Palestine

[54] Nuwayrī, MS. 2m, fol. 153a–b. For Salār's arrival and reception, see ch. 5, p. 109.

[55] Nuwayrī, MS. 2m, fol. 110a–b. It is doubtful that Baybars intended to make al-Muwaḥḥid ruler of Egypt, as the source claims; this may have been a ploy to pique al-Muwaḥḥid's interest.

[56] Ibn al-Furāt, MS. Vienna, fol. 77a; ʿAynī, fol. 93b; Maqrīzī, 1:537; *Ḥusn*, 101; Thorau, *Baybars*, 163.

[57] *Rawḍ*, 299; Ibn al-Furāt, MS. Vienna, fol. 131a; Thorau, *Baybars*, 219–20. *Rawḍ* writes *abjār*, which in Ibn al-Furāt is written *abkhār*. This is al-Abkhāz (Abkhazia), a region in western Caucasia on the Black Sea; Yāqūt, 1:78; *EI*², 1:1006. On the relations of the Georgians with the Mongols, and the careers of the two Davids, see W.E.D. Allen, *A History of the Georgian People* (London, 1932), 112–18.

[58] Kirakos, *History of the Armenians*, tr. R. Bedrosian (New York, 1986), 265, 325.

[59] *Rawḍ*, 300; Ibn al-Furāt, MS. Vienna, fol. 134a (= ed. Lyons, 1:146).

incognito, so as to perform the pilgrimage to Jerusalem.[60] For all their talk, the Georgians were too firmly under Mongol domination to assert their independence. Georgian troops fought with the Mongols at the battles of Abulustayn (675/1277) and Homs (680/1281). It is doubtful whether Baybars harbored any illusions about the prospects of drawing the Georgians from the Mongol camp and their enlistment in his struggle against the Īlkhāns. But, even if the Sultan was only successful in stirring up some trouble in the Mongols' backyard, at little cost or danger to himself, he stood to profit from the cultivation of contacts with the Georgian rulers. Certainly, the Mongols, having discovered the existence of such contacts, would have been nonplussed and that much more distrustful of these "allies."

The Mongol rulers harbored a certain distrust towards the Muslim lords, officials and officers who served them. The Mongols knew that the existence of a strong Muslim state, which furthermore enjoyed the support of the Caliph, exerted a powerful attraction on this indigenous elite.[61] These suspicions were surely strengthened by the desertion of Muslim military elements from the Mongols to the Mamluks, along with revelations of the infiltration of Mamluk agents and contacts between the Sultan and various Muslim local rulers and others. Because of such an atmosphere of distrust, Baybars's stratagems of disinformation against al-Zayn al-Ḥāfiẓī and the Catholicos were successful (or at least as reported in the Mamluk sources). For all their suspicions, however, the Mongols were unable to dispense with the services of the Muslim bureaucrats and soldiers who served them, as they needed them to run their empire.

Accusations of pro-Mamluk feelings, contacts with the Sultan, or plans to flee to Syria were banded about quite frequently in the Īlkhānid kingdom. In 659/1261–2, Hülegü ostensibly suspected the Artuqid lord of Mārdīn, al-Muẓaffar Qara Arslan, of contemplating fleeing to the Mamluks. While this may have been merely an excuse for Hülegü to gain firmer control over this ruler and his city, the fact that it was given as a pretext shows that it was considered a real possibility.[62] Around this same time the Pervāne, in a letter to Hülegü, accused ʿIzz al-Dīn Kaykāwūs, one of the Seljuq co-sultans, of corresponding with Baybars; at this point, there is no evidence that ʿIzz al-Dīn had already written to Baybars.[63] For the next seventeen years, the Pervāne was often to use this tactic of accusing his enemies of secret pro-Mamluk

[60] The Sultan received word of this noble's imminent arrival because of the concern he devoted to intelligence gathering (*istiṭlāʿ al-sulṭān li'l-akhbār*); *Rawḍ*, 423; Ibn al-Furāt, 7:5; *Zubda*, fol. 81a; Brosset, *Histoire de la Géorgie*, 1:596, n. 4; Howorth, *Mongols*, 3:311. In 675/1276–7, a Georgian envoy arrived to free this nobleman; Ibn Shaddād, *Taʾrīkh*, 168–9. In 681/1282–3, another Georgian nobleman was caught in Jerusalem, again because of an intelligence tip; *Zubda*, fol. 139a; Nuwayrī, MS. 2n, fols. 23b–24b; Maqrīzī, 1:710. This may perhaps be the same incident told twice.

[61] A comment to this effect is made by Abel-Remusat, "Mémoires," 7:336.

[62] Yūnīnī, 1:457–8, 2:112–13; Ibn al-Dawādārī, 8:83.

[63] Ibn Bībī, 295 (= tr. Duda, 282); Cahen, *Pre-Ottoman Turkey*, 279. See ch. 7, pp. 158–9.

sympathies and actions. In 664/1265–6 and again in 666/1267–8, he accused the (now singular) Seljuq sultan Rukn al-Dīn Qilich Arslan of such activities, and thus obtained permission from Abagha to kill him.[64] Again, in 666/1267–8, the Pervāne and Hetʿum of Cilicia were both at Abagha's court and accused each other of corresponding with the Sultan of Egypt.[65] The Pervāne was not beyond charging members of the Mongol royal family with pro-Baybars feelings. Twice in the early 670s (1270s), he accused Abagha's brother Ejei, who was the Mongol commander in Rūm, of secretly communicating with Baybars.[66] All of these denunciations are ironic, since during at least part of this time it was the Pervāne himself who was maintaining secret contact with Baybars, a subject that will be discussed in chapter 7.

Even trusted servants of the Mongols, such as the *ṣāḥib-dīwān* (first minister) Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Juwaynī and his brother ʿAlā' al-Dīn ʿAṭā Malik (the governor of Baghdad and famous historian), were not exempt from accusations of having contacts with the Mamluks. These vicissitudes in the career of the Juwaynīs should be seen against the backdrop of intrigues among the high officials serving the Mongols. Early in Abagha's reign, ʿAṭā Malik was accused by the *shaḥna* of Baghdad of planning to flee to Syria.[67] In 677/1278–9 and 678/80, both brothers were accused of being in league with the Mamluks. In all cases, the charges were eventually dropped.[68] Some of the Mamluk writers have an inkling of these accusations against ʿAṭā Malik and imply that he died in prison (680/1281–2).[69] There is no indication in the Mamluk sources that either of the Juwaynīs had actually had any kind of contact with the Mamluks.

Mongol efforts at espionage

The Mongols also tried their hand at secret activities, but if we are to judge from the evidence in the Mamluk sources, their attempts were not rewarded with success. The pro-Mongol sources have no information whatsoever on Mongol espionage among the Mamluks, although occasionally they make some mention of spying between different Mongol states.[70]

The Mamluk sources often use the term *qāṣid/quṣṣād* for Mongol agents or secret couriers, employing the terminology used for Mamluk agents for their Mongol counterparts. In addition, the term *jāsūs/jawāsīs* is at times applied to Mongol agents. The mention of Mongol agents, and the knowledge that Chinggis Khan already attributed importance to intelligence gathering,[71]

[64] Yūnīnī, 2:347, 388, 404–5; Kutubī, 20:364–5.

[65] Yūnīnī, 2:388. Hetʿum had been, of course, negotiating with the Sultan to get his son back; see ch. 5, pp. 118–20. [66] Yūnīnī, 3:33–4, 113. [67] Ibn al-ʿIbrī, 498; cf. Bar Hebraeus, 497–8.

[68] Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. ʿAlīzādah, 3:156–61; cf. Boyle, "Īl-Khāns," 362; Spuler, *Iran*, 68–9. See also the two articles on the Juwaynī brothers in *EI*², 2:606–7, by W. Bartold-[J.A. Boyle] and B. Spuler.

[69] Abū 'l-Fidā', 4:16; Maqrīzī, 1:705–6. *Zubda*, fols. 126b–127a, 128a, 129b, reports that the Juwaynī brothers were indeed involved in a plot to poison Abagha.

[70] Mustawfī, 590–1; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. ʿAlīzādah, 3:89.

[71] S. Jagchid and P. Hyer, *Mongolia's Culture and Society* (Boulder and Folkestone, 1979), 264.

leads to the tentative conclusion that the Īlkhāns had some type of regular intelligence service, even if there is no explicit evidence to that effect.

Īlkhānid attempts at subterfuge appear early on, and thus do not seem to have been imitations of Mamluk activities but an independently initiated policy. In 660/1262, Mongol *quṣṣād* came to al-Manṣūr of Hama, with a *farmān* (official letter or order), evidently from Hülegü, to woo him over to his side. Instead, al-Manṣūr arrested the couriers and sent them and the letter to Baybars.[72] The following year (661/1263), two Mongol spies (*jāsūsayn li'l-tatar*) were caught at Damietta, as a result of information received from Baybars's agents in the Mongol *ordo*, Lesser Armenia and Acre. These Mongol spies carried a *farmān* to Fāris al-Dīn Aqtay al-Mustaʿrib, the *atabeg*. Baybars knew, however, that this was a Mongol trick and did not doubt the loyalty of this senior amir.[73]

In 661/1263, al-Mughīth ʿUmar, the Ayyūbid ruler of Karak, who had hitherto maintained his independence, came out of his fortress and submitted to Baybars at Mt. Tabor. In spite of pledges of good conduct, al-Mughīth was arrested (and subsequently executed). This breaking of a pledge caused some murmuring among the amirs. According to Ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥīm (and whence, it would seem, al-Yūnīnī and al-Kutubī), Baybars then produced letters from al-Mughīth to the Mongols encouraging them to come to Syria, and a letter from Hülegü thanking him, recognizing his rule over the territory from Bosra to Gaza and promising him 20,000 troops to conquer Egypt. Ibn ʿAbd al-Ẓāhir, as would be expected, does not mention the amirs' doubts, but only that Baybars produced letters from the Mongols to al-Mughīth. Al-Yūnīnī and al-Kutubī question the veracity of these claims and letters, but elsewhere al-Yūnīnī gives evidence which indicates that al-Mughīth had been in contact with Hülegü for some time. As early as 659/1261, Syrian bedouins had stumbled across envoys (*quṣṣād*) going from al-Mughīth to the Mongols carrying letters stating that he was still loyal to the Mongols. At another point, the Sultan had heard of the arrival of a Mongol envoy (*rasūl*) at Karak and sent an emissary to al-Mughīth to demand that he be handed over. Eventually, al-Mughīth gave in. The Mongol envoy was brought to Baybars, and finally confessed that Hülegü had sent him.[74]

Evidently early in Baybars's reign, Aq Sunqur al-Fāriqānī was on a reconnaissance mission in the Jazīra, and caught a Mongol spy (*jāsūs*) carrying letters. This spy was presumably a secret Mongol courier with messages for contacts or sympathizers in Mamluk territory. His fate is not indicated.[75]

More evidence on Mongol spying in Hülegü's reign is related by Ghāzī b. al-Wāsiṭī, a contemporary Damascene. The information, interesting as it is, is

[72] *Rawḍ*, 128; *Zubda*, fol. 3b; Ibn al-Furāt, MS. Vienna, fol. 3b; Maqrīzī, 1:471.

[73] *Rawḍ*, 195.

[74] *Rawḍ*, 150; Ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥīm, in Ibn Wāṣil, MS. 1702, fol. 413b; Yūnīnī, 2:107, 193–4, 299; Kutubī, 20:288–9, 309; Ibn al-Dawādārī, 8:96; Ibn al-Furāt, MS. Vienna, fols. 15a–b, 51a; Maqrīzī, 1:482. See Amitai-Preiss, "Karak," forthcoming. Cf. Thorau, *Baybars*, 134–41.

[75] Yūnīnī, 3:299 (= Ibn al-Ṣuqāʿī, 12), who tells how this amir later met with Mamluk informants/agents (*ʿuyūn*) in the area.

somewhat suspect, since it was embedded in an anti-Christian polemic, and several of the author's Christian enemies are specifically mentioned. According to Ghāzī, Baybars received word from "informants of the Muslims" (*nāṣiḥū al-muslimīn*) in the Mongol countries that the Christian al-Makīn b. al-ʿAmīd, the well known historian and *kātib al-jaysh* (chief army clerk) in Damascus, was corresponding with Hülegü, on the numbers of the army in Egypt, the *ḥalqa* and the amirs. Baybars had him arrested and wanted to execute him, but because of Christian influence Ibn al-ʿAmīd was imprisoned for eleven years and eventually released.[76] Ibn al-Ṣuqāʿī tells the story of al-Makīn's arrest differently. This was in the aftermath of the arrest of the governor of Damascus, Taybars al-Wazīrī (660/1262), for improprieties connected to the *dīwān al-jaysh* (army registry office).[77]

Ghāzī relates that at some subsequent unknown date (but during Baybars's reign), it was discovered that a group of local Christians, Armenians and Georgians living in the vicinity of the Church of the Cross (*al-kanīsa al-muṣallaba* [*sic*, should be *kanīsat al-maṣlaba*]) in Jerusalem were in fact Mongol spies (*jawāsīs*). These spies sent information about the amirs, and the army and its movements. News of this was brought to the Mongols by Christian pilgrims to Jerusalem. It was ordered then that those involved be killed and that the church be turned into a mosque.[78]

This information is not found anywhere else, which is surprising given that it would seem to be such a newsworthy event. This does not mean that it must be rejected out of hand, but it does call its credibility into question. Even more important, we know that the Church of the Cross was expropriated by the powerful Sufi shaykh Khaḍir b. Abū Bakr al-Mihrānī. His motives were ostensibly religious and no mention is made of Mongol spies.[79] It seems, then, that Ghāzī may have taken real events and attached to them information about Mongol spies, in order to defame Christians generally or individually. Yet, even if Ghāzī's information is a partial fabrication, it does indirectly show that some perception of Mongol espionage evidently existed in the Mamluk Sultanate. Ghāzī's attempt to besmirch Christians in this way only makes sense if real Mongol spies and informants existed and were uncovered.

We do have information that certain individuals, not only Christians, were known for their pro-Mongol sentiments. In 660/1261–2, when rumors of a Mongol offensive reached Damascus, those men who had cooperated with the Mongols during the occupation of Damascus were rounded up and sent to Egypt.[80] In 663/1264–5, it is reported that two men were in prison for having written to the Mongols and assisted them. The Sultan, who reviewed their case in the Dār al-ʿAdl ("hall of [administrative] justice"), refused to reconsider their punishment.[81] This same year, the qāḍī of al-Bīra was hanged for writing to the ruler of Lesser Armenia offering to sell him the castle.[82]

[76] Ghāzī b. al-Wāsiṭī, 410.
[77] Ibn al-Ṣuqāʿī, 110–1. Ibn al-ʿAmīd's work is extensively cited in chapters 1–3.
[78] Ghāzī b. al-Wāsiṭī, 411–12. [79] Yūnīnī, 3:267–8. On Khaḍir, see Thorau, *Baybars*, 225–9.
[80] Abū Shāma, 219; Yūnīnī, 1:487. [81] Ḥusn, 100–1. [82] Dhahabī, MS. Laud 279, fol 3b.

During Abagha's reign, additional Mongol clandestine activities were uncovered. In 664/1266, Baybars learned that Jalāl al-Dīn Yashkar, the son of the Lesser Dawādār in pre-Mongol Baghdad, who had come over as a *wāfidī* only two years before, was in secret communication with his former masters via Mongol *quṣṣād*. At al-Bīra, one of these *quṣṣād*, a Persian named al-Qazwīnī, was caught. He was brought to the Sultan, forced to confess and hanged.[83] In 673/1274–5, the Sultan learnt that a group of amirs, mostly Mongol *wāfidīs* who had sought refuge in the Sultanate in the early 660s, were in correspondence with the Mongols. First evidence of this case was brought by a bedouin who chanced to learn of this correspondence. Then the *wālī* (governor) of Gaza caught three men, one of whom was a bedouin, carrying letters to the Mongols from these amirs. The amirs were arrested and admitted their guilt, claiming they had been inspired by the feeling that their interests had been ignored. They were subsequently executed.[84]

According to Ibn al-Dawādārī, in 675/1277, while Baybars was with his army in Rūm (see chapter 7), he announced his plans to march to Sīwās. Mongol agents, called *quṣṣād*, set off to convey this news to Abagha. By the time Abagha reached Sīwās, Baybars was back in Syria. It turned out that this had been a deliberate ploy to mislead the Īlkhān.[85] This evidence may well be a fabrication, since it does not appear in the parallel passage in Ibn Shaddād's biography of Baybars, upon which Ibn al-Dawādārī based most of the account of the expedition to Rūm. Even so, it does show that the author picked the term *quṣṣād* to designate Mongol agents.

As a final piece of evidence, slightly later than the period dealt with here, there was the exchange of letters between Qalawun and Aḥmad Tegüder, referred to above. Qalawun, answering Aḥmad's charges that the Mamluks disguised their spies as *faqīrs*, countered that the Mamluks had caught many Mongol spies (*jawāsīs*) dressed like *faqīrs*.[86] It is difficult, however, to ascertain the truth of this claim, as it was part of a polemical exchange and may have been no more than propaganda.

On the basis of the Mamluk sources, who provide virtually all our information on the Mamluk–Īlkhānid secret war, it would seem that here – as in the border war – the Mamluks bested their Mongol adversaries. This is said with the reservation that perhaps the Mongols had been more successful than the Mamluk writers knew. Mamluk success may perhaps have been due to the greater attention paid by the Sultan to his intelligence service as compared to the Mongols. As has already been suggested in chapter 5, the Mamluks seemingly took the conflict more seriously than the Mongols, as they realized that even a minor setback might have fateful implications. Likewise, the Mamluks apparently devoted more attention to the secret aspect of the war.

[83] *Rawḍ*, 273; *Ḥusn*, 117 (s.a. 665); see ch. 5, p. 110.
[84] Ibn Shaddād, *Ta'rīkh*, 104–5; Yūnīnī, 3:87–8; Nuwayrī, MS. 2m, 221a; Ibn Kathīr, 13:268.
[85] Ibn al-Dawādārī, 8:202; cf. Ibn Shaddād, *Ta'rīkh*, 177.
[86] *Zubda*, fol. 135b; in appendix to Maqrīzī, 1:983.

The Mamluks had another advantage over the Mongols because of the great deal of sympathy they enjoyed among the Muslim population in Mongol controlled territory. This sympathy was found among both the indigenous civilian inhabitants and the remnants of the pre-Mongol military class, and was exploited by Baybars and his successors. The Mongols were aware of the potentially divided loyalties of the indigenous Muslim bureaucrats and members of the local military class who served them, but could not do without their services. It is true that the Mongols were also able to find people willing to cooperate with them in the Mamluk Sultanate, either for "religious" (i.e. anti-Muslim) or material reasons, but it seems that this support did not come close to the extent of pro-Mamluk feeling in the east.

The Armenian historian Het'um, writing at the beginning of the fourteenth century, offers another reason for Mamluk successes in the war in general, and by implication in the secret war: the Muslims (Sarazins) kept their plans relatively secret, while the Mongols, who each year met in a council and publicly discussed their campaigns, revealed their designs.[87] What Het'um is essentially saying is that the Mamluks knew how to keep a secret better than the Mongols. Whether the Mongol leaders actually planned their strategy together is unclear, but it has been seen that Baybars at least knew how to keep his own counsel, and succeeded in maintaining a cloak of secrecy around his own movements and those of his army.

[87] Het'um, 2:251–2; cited in Howorth, *Mongols*, 579; Sinor, "Mongol Strategy," 240. On the Mongol council (*quriltai*), see *ibid.*