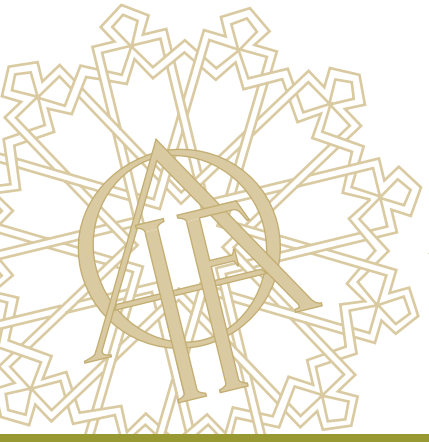
MINISTÈRE DE L'ÉDUCATION NATIONALE, DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT SUPÉRIEUR ET DE LA RECHERCHE



ANNALES ISLAMOLOGIQUES

en ligne en ligne en ligne en ligne en ligne en ligne en ligne en ligne en ligne en ligne

AnIsl 55 (2021), p. 63-88

Mehdi Berriah

ʿAyn Ǧālūt (658/1260): Re-evaluating a So-called Decisive Battle

Conditions d'utilisation

L'utilisation du contenu de ce site est limitée à un usage personnel et non commercial. Toute autre utilisation du site et de son contenu est soumise à une autorisation préalable de l'éditeur (contact AT ifao.egnet.net). Le copyright est conservé par l'éditeur (Ifao).

Conditions of Use

You may use content in this website only for your personal, noncommercial use. Any further use of this website and its content is forbidden, unless you have obtained prior permission from the publisher (contact AT ifao.egnet.net). The copyright is retained by the publisher (Ifao).

Dernières publications

9782724711264	*La chapelle d'Osiris Ounnefer Neb-djefaou*	Laurent Coulon
9782724711752	*Guide du Caire Islamique*	Hadrien Collet
9782724711660	*Mélanges de l'Institut dominicain d'études orientales 41*	Adrien Candiard (éd.)
9782724711745	*Bulletin archéologique des Écoles françaises à l'étranger (BAEFE)*	
9782724711271	*Du côté de chez Zeus*	Emmanuel Botte (éd.), Hélène Cuvigny (éd.), Michel Reddé (éd.)
9782724711677	*La Description de l'Égypte*	Paul-Marie Grinevald
9782724711714	*La pensée et la pratique pharmacologiques d'Avicenne*	Sylvie Ayari
9782724711899	*BCAI 40*	

© Institut français d'archéologie orientale - Le Caire

MEHDI BERRIAH*

ʿAyn Ǧālūt (658/1260)

Re-evaluating a So-called Decisive Battle

◆ ABSTRACT

The Mamluk victory at ʿAyn Ǧālūt on 25 Ramaḍān 658/3 September 1260 is certainly one of the most famous events in the history of the Mamluk-Ilkhanid war. It has been the subject of numerous works and fueled a rich debate among scholars. Although the facts overall are fairly well-known, there remain several grey areas and some important questions are still unanswered. By comparing Arabic, Latin, Armenian, Persian and Syriac chronicles, this article attempts to shed light on various questions concerning the battle of ʿAyn Ǧālūt and the events that led up to it. It will thus be possible to take a new look at one of the most important battles in history.

Keywords: army, Mamluks, Mongols, strategy, tactic, warfare

◆ RÉSUMÉ

ʿAyn Ǧālūt (658/1260). Réexamen d'une bataille dite décisive

La victoire mamelouke à ʿAyn Ǧālūt, le 25 ramaḍān 658/3 septembre 1260, est certainement un des affrontements les plus célèbres de l'histoire du conflit Mamelouks-Ilkhanides, lequel a fait l'objet de nombreux travaux et des débats entre les chercheurs. Bien que les faits soient assez bien connus de manière générale, plusieurs zones d'ombres subsistent et des questions

* Mehdi Berriah, Vrije Universiteit (VU) Amsterdam, m.berriah@vu.nl

AnIsl 55 (2021), p. 63-88 Mehdi Berriah
ʿAyn Ǧālūt (658/1260): Re-evaluating a So-called Decisive Battle
© IFAO 2026 AnIsl en ligne https://www.ifao.egnet.net

importantes n'ont pas encore été tranchées. Cet article confronte des chroniques arabes, latines, arméniennes, persanes et syriaques, afin de tenter de faire la lumière d'une part sur certaines questions relatives à la bataille de ʿAyn Ğālūt et d'autre part sur les évènements l'ayant précédé. De cette manière, il sera possible de porter un nouveau regard sur l'un des plus importants affrontements de l'histoire.

Mots-clés : armée, Mamelouks, Mongols, stratégie, tactique, guerre

ملخص

عين جالوت (١٢٦٠/٦٥٨): إعادة تقييم ما يسمى بمعركة حاسمة

إن انتصار المماليك في عين جالوت في ٢٥ رمضان ٣/٦٥٨ سبتمبر ١٢٦٠ يعد بالتأكيد بين الأحداث الأكثر شهرة التي شهدتها الحرب المملوكية-الإيلخانية. كما أنها كانت موضوع العديد من الدراسات وأثارت نقاشًا ثريًا بين الباحثين. ورغم أن الوقائع معروفة جيدًا بشكل عام، الا أنه لا زالت هناك جملة من المناطق الرمادية، فضلًا عن بعض القضايا المفتوحة في شأنها التي لم يتم حلها بعد. وعلى ضوء تحليل مصادر عربية لاتينية وأرمينية وفارسية وسريانية أَرّخَت تلك الوقائع، يسعى هذا المقال لتسليط الضوء على بعض النقاط الجوهرية الخاصة بمعركة عين جالوت من ناحية وعلى بعض الأحداث التي سبقتها من ناحية أخرى. وبهذه الطريقة سيكون من الممكن طرح منظور جديد لمعركة من أهم المعارك التي شهدها التاريخ.

الكلمات المفتاحية: جيش، مماليك، مغول، استراتيجية، تكتيك، حرب

* * *

Introduction

The victory of ʿAyn Ğālūt is certainly one of the most famous events in the history of Islam and history in general.[1] Yet, although the son and successor of ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Muḥammad (d. 617/1220) ruler of the Ḫwārazm, Ğalāl al-Dīn Mankubirtī (d. 628/1231), defeated the armies of Genghis Khan at Bīrwān in 618/1221, his victory did not contain the Mongol advance.[2] The first to halt the Mongol conquests significantly were the Mamluks in a confrontation that was only the prelude to a conflict that lasted over six decades (658/1260–723/1323).

1. Runciman, 1989, vol. 3, p. 313.
2. Al-Nasawī, *Sīrat Ğalāl al-Dīn*, pp. 154–159.

© IFAO 2026 AnIsl en ligne https://www.ifao.egnet.net

During this period, the Mamluk Sultanate and the Ilkhanate, together with their respective allies, clashed in various battles such as Homs in 680/1281, Wādī al-Ḫāzindār in 699/1299[3] or Šaqḥab in 702/1303.[4] The Mongols, whose imperial ideology advocated the subjugation of all peoples and the elimination of rebels, saw ʿAyn Ǧālūt and the other defeats inflicted on them by the Mamluks as an affront. The Mamluks refused to submit to the Mongols, fought them and stood up to them for over sixty years.[5]

Sometimes referred to as "the eternal battle"[6] that saved both the Muslim world and Christian Europe from the Mongol threat,[7] this battle has been considered to be a "paradigmatic historical event."[8] It occupies a prominent place in the Mamluk chronicles of the 7th/13th–9th/15th centuries. Magnified by Muslim authors and scholars on the one hand and instrumentalized by the Mamluks—for obvious political reasons—on the other, ʿAyn Ǧālūt is considered to be a proof of their commitment to the cause of Islam and even constituted, according to Amalia Levanoni, the foundation of their power structure.[9] The importance and strong symbolism of the victory of ʿAyn Ǧālūt were such that Baybars ordered the construction of a memorial on the site of the battle, of which no material trace remained.[10]

The impact of ʿAyn Ǧālūt is still palpable. In 1961, the Egyptian film *Wa-Islāmāh*, directed by Enrico Bomba and Andrew Marton, was released; it traces the history of the Mongol invasions, the rise of the Mamluk Sultanate and ends with the Battle of ʿAyn Ǧālūt. In 1998, an Arabic and English-language cartoon entitled *Asad ʿAyn Ǧālūt* (Lion of ʿAyn Ǧālūt) hit the screens.[11] An episode of the Syrian television series al-Ẓāhir Baybars, broadcast in 2005, was devoted to the battle of ʿAyn Ǧālūt.[12] Considered an Egyptian victory,[13] ʿAyn Ǧālūt seems to be part of the Egyptian nationalistic sentiment given the considerable number of books published in Egypt on this subject.[14] But even beyond the Egyptian context, the event regularly arouses a great deal of interest and even passion, as evidenced by the multitude of lectures given by Muslim historians, ulemas and preachers alike, which are easily accessible

3. Röhricht, 1881; Amitai, 2006, pp. 25–42; 1990, pp. 157–201. In the latter, Reuven Amitai also analyses the battle of Abulustayn.
4. Berriah, 2018, pp. 431–469.
5. For more details on Mongol imperial ideology see Amitai, 1998, pp. 57–72.
6. Al-Ṣallābī, 2009b, p. 285.
7. Al-Ġāmidī, 1986, pp. 130–131:
«[...] وعليه يمكن القول أن ذلك الانتصار العظيم الذي حققه المماليك في عين جالوت، وما أعقبه طرد المغول نهائيا من بلاد الشام، يعتبر بحق من الأحداث الحاسمة ليس في تاريخ مصر والشام فحسب ولا في تاريخ الأمم الإسلامية بمفردها، وإنما في تاريخ العالم بأسره، إذ أن ذلك الانتصار لم ينقذ العالم الإسلامي وحده، بل أنقذ العالم الأوروبي، والمدنية الأوروبية من شر لم يكن لأحد من ملوك أوروبا وقتئذ قبل بدفعه.»
8. Levanoni, 2014, p. 6.
9. Levanoni, 2014, p. 14.
10. Ibn ʿAbd al-Ẓāhir, *al-Rawḍ al-zāhir*, p. 91; Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdat al-fikra*, pp. 70–71.
11. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9d64HLtAPKY.
12. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xBR4VBpuIH4; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eTp7ymsm3rQ.
13. Al-Šāʿir, 1995, p. 4; Yūsuf, 1998.
14. Among them, ʿAlī Ḥamd Allāh aimed at a young audience. Ḥamd Allāh, 1984.

© IFAO 2026 AnIsl en ligne https://www.ifao.egnet.net

on the internet.[15] This is because ʿAyn Ǧālūt is a symbol *par excellence* of triumph against the Mongol invasions which, according to contemporary authors like Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328), threatened the very existence of Islam.[16]

We wish to reopen the ʿAyn Ǧālūt case not to propose yet another narrative of the battle, which has been widely documented by historiography, but to try to shed light on some questions that have been discussed by scholars and for which there remain some grey areas: which of the two armies attacked first? Did the Mamluks ask for help from the Franks during their passage through the Acre territories or, were they offered military and/or logistical support by the Franks? Did the battle take place in one or more sequences? In different places? What is the estimated number of troops on both sides? Were the reasons for the Mamluk victory solely military or were there a number of other equally important factors to be considered? In order to answer these questions, I will draw on the rich corpus of Arabic, Latin, Persian, Armenian and Syriac chronicles from the 7th/13th and 8th/14th centuries.

1. Historiographic Overview

Before we turn to the battle itself, we must discuss its historiography, which is recent and very rich. Indeed, ʿAyn Ǧālūt has been the subject of many works that turn it into one of the major confrontations because of which, according to John Joseph Saunders, "a new era of world history begins".[17] It seems that in the West as well as in the Arab world, the first works

15. Here are some links: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v4TF3S8k7iA ; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hdi-M-nPRwU; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I7zVv-PIMlU; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vlxjcaEng9A; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JrXY_goQ8a8; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ySWg02fBTVI. Levanoni considers that Arab historians give it a contemporary interpretation by comparing the Mongols to Zionism and Western imperialism. Levanoni, 2014, p. 6. While the phenomenon exists, one must be careful not to generalize about it. Reuven Amitai, 2021b, pp. 242–246 (an article whose reviewers I thank for pointing it out to me) comes to much the same conclusion in showing the resonance of ʿAyn Ǧālūt today, especially in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Amitai, 2021b, pp. 242–246, especially pp. 244–246.

16. Ibn Taymiyya, *al-Ǧihād*, II, pp. 142–143 (fatwa on jihad against the Mongols):

«[...] لو استولى هؤلاء المحاربون لله ورسوله، المحادّون الله ورسوله المعادون لله ورسوله، على أرض الشام ومصر في مثل هذا الوقت، لأفضى ذلك إلى زوال دين الإسلام ودروس شرائعه.»

"[...] If these enemies of God and His Prophet (the Mongols), were to take over the land of Syria and Egypt as they did at that time, it would result in the disappearance of the religion of Islam and the extinction of its precepts."

Ibn Taymiyya, *al-Ǧihād*, II, p. 98:

«فإن هذه الحادثة كان فيها أمور عظيمة جازت حد القياس، وخرجت عن سنن العادة.»

"This cataclysm (the Mongol invasions) caused events of extreme gravity to occur, which are beyond all comprehension, which are unique and without any antecedent." See also Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdat al-fikra*, pp. 51–52; Ibn Aybak al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, IX, pp. 312–313; Ibn al-Ǧazarī, *Ḥawādiṯ al-zamān*, I, p. 156; al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-šāfiʿiyya*, VIII, p. 212, note 3. Ibn Ḫaldūn, *Muqaddima*, V, p. 418; Talbi, 2012, pp. 385–397.

17. Saunders, 1977, p. 76.

© IFAO 2026 AnIsl en ligne https://www.ifao.egnet.net

that resolutely address the battle date from the early 1980s.[18] In his doctoral thesis on the Mamluk jihad, defended in 1986 at Umm al-Qurra University in Mecca, ʿAbd Allāh Saʿīd Muḥammad Sāfir al-Ġāmidī dedicates a chapter to ʿAyn Ǧālūt.[19] The 1990s marked an important turning point, notably with Reuven Amitai's *Mongols and Mamluks: The Mamluk-Īlkhānid War 1260–1281*, in which he devoted a chapter to the battle,[20] before offering a further detailed study two years later.[21] During the same decade, a number of works on the battle were published in the Arab world, notably in Egypt.[22] The 2000s confirmed the dynamic that began in the previous decade with a flourishing of works, particularly in the Arab world, that focused on ʿAyn Ǧālūt.[23] Noteworthy studies in the West were carried out by Charles Halperin, Timothy May and Amalia Levanoni.[24] Most recently, Reuven Amitai has published a new study on ʿAyn Ǧālūt in which he brings new elements to the forefront but which do not change his understanding of the battle and its impact.[25] Almost all of these works attempt to explain the causes of the Mamluk victory and analyze its consequences.[26] They neglect the Arabic production for three main reasons: the language barrier; access to documentation; and, sometimes, intellectual prejudices regarding analyses that are considered apologetic.

2. ʿAyn Ǧālūt: Mongol or Mamluk Initiative?

Having just conquered Syria, Hulagu (d. 663/1265), informed of the death of his brother and Great Khan Möngke (d. 657/1259), was forced to return to Mongolia with the bulk of his troops in order to participate in the *kuriltai*, the council that was to decide on the appointment of the next Great Khan. Hulagu left his loyal and experienced commander Kitbuġā (d. 658/1260) in Syria with troops. Did Hulagu instruct Kitbuġā to attack Egypt during his absence or only to defend Syria against any attempt to attack the sultanate? This is the question that has sparked debate among scholars.

Stephen Humphreys notes that faced with the need to place a military force in southern Syria as soon as possible, Hulagu ordered his commander Kitbuġā to move there with troops.[27] Unlike Peter Jackson,[28] Reuven Amitai considers the assumption of Kitbuġā's willingness to

18. Herde, 1982, pp. 83–94; al-Amīn, 1983, Smith, 1984, pp. 307–345; Ḥamd Allāh, 1984; Thorau, 1985, pp. 236–241; al-ʿAsalī, 1986.
19. Al-Ġāmidī, 1986, pp. 103–148.
20. Amitai, 1990, pp. 26–48.
21. Reprinted in 2007. Amitai, 1992, pp. 119–150.
22. Al-Šāʿir, 1995; Ṭalīmāt, 1996; Qāsim, 1998; Yūsuf, 1998; Āl Waṣfī, 1998.
23. Šihāb al-Dīn, 2000; al-Qāḍī, 2000; al-Ǧabālī, 2006; al-Sarǧānī, 2006, pp. 243–360; al-Ṣallābī, 2009b, pp. 285–353; al-Qūnī, 2009; ʿAbd al-Karīm, 2012.
24. Halperin, 2000, pp. 229–245; May, 2002, pp. 139–144; Levanoni, 2014, pp. 1–26.
25. Amitai, 2021b, pp. 225–254. Voir aussi Amitai, 2021a.
26. Other works deal with the battle of ʿAyn Ǧālūt: Prawer, 1969–1970, vol. 2, pp. 421–436; Glubb, 1973, pp. 60–63; Waterson, 2007, pp. 75–87.
27. Humphreys, 1977a, p. 353.
28. Jackson, 1980, p. 501.

© IFAO 2026 AnIsl en ligne https://www.ifao.egnet.net

attack Egypt to be poorly established and that his mission was to hold the Mongol positions in Syria until Hulagu returned with larger forces.[29] Timothy May is of the opinion that Kitbuġā did not intend to conquer Egypt for several reasons: the Frankish presence on the coast; the obstacle posed by the Sinai desert; the lack of water and fodder for Mongol horses in Syria; doubts about the loyalty of some local fighters incorporated into Kitbuġā's troops; the lack of military troops; and, the reinforcement of the Mamluk Sultanate's army with the arrival of a significant number of refugee fighters.[30]

Clearly, Hulagu was planning to conquer Egypt after he had made himself master of Syria. There are several pieces of evidence to support this idea. According to Rašīd al-Dīn (d. 718/1318), a pro-Mongol author, the Ilkhan intended to conquer Egypt long before he arrived in Syria:

> This prince (Hulagu), in giving an account of the manner in which he had carried out the conquest of Iran, announced his design to march against Syria and Egypt.[31]

Also, according to Rašīd al-Dīn, Hulagu, then in Iraq, is said to have said to Badr al-Dīn Luʾluʾ (d. 657/1259), Amir of Mosul:

> As your age exceeds ninety, we dispense with your coming with us; but it is fitting that you send away your son Malik Ṣāliḥ, so that he may accompany our victorious flags to the conquest of Egypt and Syria.[32]

When al-Nāṣir Yūsuf (d. 658/1260) went to Hulagu, the latter promised him the following:

> When I am master of Egypt, I will give you the sovereignty of Syria.[33]

These three extracts clearly indicate Hulagu's desire to conquer Egypt. But this observation leads us to another question: did Hulagu instruct his commander Kitbuġā to accomplish this task before returning to Mongolia to settle the succession of Möngke Khan? On this question, the sources differ. In particular, the Constable of Smbat (d. 674/1276) and Rašīd al-Dīn state that Hulagu left troops in Kitbuġā to hold Syria.[34] We can therefore assume that Hulagu ordered Kitbuġā to wait until he returned from Mongolia with his army before carrying out

29. Amitai, 1987, p. 239; 1990, p. 34; 2021b, pp. 237–238.
30. May, 2002, pp. 142–144.
31. "Ce prince (Hulagu), en rendant compte de la manière dont il avait effectué la conquête de l'Iran, annonçait son dessein de marcher contre la Syrie et l'Égypte." Rašīd al-Dīn, *Ǧāmiʿ al-tawārīḫ*, p. 319.
32. "Comme ton âge dépasse quatre-vingt-dix ans, nous te dispensons de venir avec nous ; mais il convient que tu fasses partir ton fils Malik Ṣāliḥ, afin qu'il accompagne nos drapeaux victorieux à la conquête de l'Égypte et de la Syrie." Rašīd al-Dīn, *Ǧāmiʿ al-tawārīḫ*, p. 327.
33. "Lorsque je serai maître de l'Égypte, je te donnerai la souveraineté de la Syrie." Rašīd al-Dīn, *Ǧāmiʿ al-tawārīḫ*, p. 341.
34. Smbat, *La chronique*, p. 106; Rašīd al-Dīn, *Ǧāmiʿ al-tawārīḫ*, p. 341.

© IFAO 2026 AnIsl en ligne https://www.ifao.egnet.net

the conquest of Egypt himself. Yet, the information outlined below suggests that Kitbuġā decided to attack the sultanate without respecting Hulagu's orders. Indeed, after learning of Hulagu's departure for the capital of the Mongol empire Karakorum, Quṭuz (d. 658/1260) and the emirs doubted Kitbuġā's intentions, fearing that he would attack the sultanate:

> But he [Hulagu] has left Kitbugha-Nuyan in our neighborhood, who, like a terrible lion, a furious snake, stands in ambush. If he undertakes an expedition against Egypt, no one will be able to oppose him.[35]

Other accounts support the hypothesis that Hulagu left it to Kitbuġā to attack the sultanate. Baybars al-Manṣūrī (d. 725/1325) reports a discussion between Hulagu and al-Nāṣir Yūsuf in which the former asked the latter for an estimate of the size of the Egyptian army and the numbers needed to confront it. Al-Nāṣir Yūsuf told him that the Egyptian numbers were small and that only a few troops would do. Hulagu took this advice and left 12,000 men in Kitbuġā before setting off.[36] Were these soldiers to be used to conquer Egypt or to defend Syria in case of a Mamluk attack? For the Constable of Smbat, Kitbuġā decided to attack the Mamluk Sultanate against Hulagu's advice.[37] According to Gregory of Akner (d. 735/1335), Kitbuġā set out with his troops at a distance of ten days' journey beyond Jerusalem, in the direction of Egypt, and Quṭuz set out to meet him only after he was informed of the Mongols' approach.[38] All the evidence I have just reported tend to show that Kitbuġā wished to attack Egypt without Hulagu's approval.

Nevertheless, these pieces of information must be considered with caution since other authors suggest a different version of the events that preceded the battle. Indeed, according to al-Yūnīnī (d. 726/1326), Kitbuġā, informed that Quṭuz had left Egypt with his army, conferred with al-Malik al-Ašraf and the great cadi Muḥī al-Dīn with whom he discussed the following question: should he go to meet Quṭuz's army while waiting for Hulagu's reinforcements to arrive? At the end of the discussion, Kitbuġā reportedly decided to prepare his troops and move towards the Egyptian army.[39] For Ibn Kaṯīr (d. 774/1373), Kitbuġā refused to listen to the advice of al-Ašraf and the cadi who advised him to wait for reinforcements from Hulagu before engaging the Cairo army.[40] These two accounts indicate that Kitbuġā wanted to attack the Mamluk sultanate only after he knew that Quṭuz's army was on the move. Therefore, according to this version, Quṭuz took the initiative to go and fight the Mongols in Syria.

35. "Mais il [Hulagu] a laissé dans notre voisinage Kitbugha-Nuyan qui, semblable à un lion terrible, à un serpent furieux, se tient en embuscade. S'il entreprend une expédition contre l'Égypte, personne ne pourra s'opposer à lui." Rašīd al-Dīn, *Ǧāmiʿ al-tawārīḫ*, p. 345.
36. Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdat al-fikra*, p. 49.
37. Smbat, *La chronique*, p. 106.
38. Grégoire d'Akner, *The History*, p. 15.
39. Al-Yūnīnī, *Ḏayl mirʾāt al-zamān*, I, p. 360.
40. Ibn Kaṯīr, *al-Bidāya*, XVII, p. 401.

© IFAO 2026 AnIsl en ligne https://www.ifao.egnet.net

Several hypotheses can be formulated. The fact that Hulagu asked, as reported by Baybars al-Manṣūrī, for information about Egypt's military strength in order to know how many troops were sufficient to overcome it, all the while knowing that he would return east, suggests that Egypt, with or without Hulagu, was planned to be conquered or at least attacked. Moreover, it is not unthinkable that the energetic Kitbuġā "inflamed with zeal, set forth, like a river of fire, full of confidence in his strength and courage"[41] to achieve this conquest on behalf of his master Hulagu, even though it seems that the latter asked him, above all, to guard and defend his positions in Syria.

The hypothesis that Kitbuġā may have considered attacking Egypt does not invalidate the idea that Quṭuz left Cairo to fight the Mongols in prevention of any attack, which was inevitable after the execution of Hulagu's envoys. Moreover, the departure of Hulagu, with the majority of his troops, most certainly prompted Quṭuz to take the initiative to move towards Kitbuġā, which he most likely knew had reduced numbers. Quṭuz was fully aware of the opportunity that Hulagu's departure represented. Without his leader and with limited numbers, the Mongol army in Syria was considerably weakened. This was the opportunity of a lifetime for Quṭuz to strike a blow.

3. A Request for Help from the Mamluks or an Offer of Assistance from the Franks?

On 15 Šaʿbān 658/26 July 1260, Quṭuz and his army marched out of Cairo and headed for al-Ṣāliḥiyya in the Sinai. At Gaza, Baybars, who commanded the first Mamluk lines, encountered Baydarā's Mongol vanguard and forced it to retreat.[42] The actual confrontation consisted in skirmishes between the two vanguards, which probably involved no more than a few hundred fighters on either side. Nevertheless, it was the first victory of the Sultanate over the Mongols, a military one, but also, and above all, a psychological win that put an end to the myth of the Mongol army's invincibility.[43]

Subsequently, Quṭuz and his army arrived not far from Acre where the Franks allowed them to cross their territory. Muslim and Christian authors differ on the course and nature of the discussions. For the author of the Chronicle of the Templar of Tyre, the Mamluks requested permission to cross Frankish territory to fight the Mongols. Similarly threatened by the Mongol presence in the region, the Franks allowed the army of Quṭuz to cross their territories. A few months earlier, the Mongols had attacked and ravaged Sidon in retaliation for an attack by Julien Grenier (d. 673/1275), lord of the city.[44] The Franks were therefore also preparing to face the Mongol threat, as Thomas Agni de Lentin, papal legate and bishop

41. "[…] Enflammé de zèle, se mit en marche, semblable à un fleuve de feu, plein de confiance dans sa force et son courage […]." Rašīd al-Dīn, *Ǧāmiʿ al-tawārīḫ*, p. 349.
42. *Les Gestes des Chiprois*, p. 165; Rašīd al-Dīn, *Ǧāmiʿ al-tawārīḫ*, p. 347.
43. ʿAbd al-Karīm, 2012, p. 177.
44. *Les Gestes des Chiprois*, p. 164.

© IFAO 2026 AnIsl en ligne https://www.ifao.egnet.net

of Bethlehem, wrote in his letter to the rulers and princes of the West.[45] The same is true of the continuator of the chronicle of William of Tyre.[46]

The army of Quṭuz camped on the plain of Acre. Meanwhile, some Mamluk emirs, including Baybars, entered the city before the Franks could expel them out of fear of treachery.[47] The author of the so-called Rothelin manuscript states that the Mamluks asked the Franks for military support. The Franks consulted each other on the matter, but the fear of being betrayed by the Mamluks put an end to the discussion. The Hospitallers feared that once the Mongols were defeated, the Muslims would take the opportunity to kill the Franks, exhausted on the battlefield, before attacking all the Christian territories in Syria, thus ending the Frankish presence.[48] Far from being affected by the Franks' negative response, Quṭuz is said to have reasoned that it would be preferable not to fight beside him, given that he had enough fighters.[49] Although the Franks refused to take part in the battle, they did undertake to supply the Mamluk army with food.[50] The silence of Arab authors, and in particular Ibn ʿAbd al-Ẓāhir, made Peter Jackson think that Quṭuz might have asked the Franks for help, who refused, preferring to remain neutral.[51] Other historians, particularly from the Arab world, rely in part on an account by al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1442)[52] to defend the idea that the Franks offered help to Quṭuz, who politely declined.[53] For Reuven Amitai, the Franks pursued a policy of neutrality between the Mongol and Mamluk dangers, and decided to supply Quṭuz's troops.[54]

We are thus in the presence of two accounts, one from a Christian author, the other written by a Muslim, in total divergence. While it is certain that by letting Quṭuz's army through and supplying it, the Franks showed pragmatism in view of the situation,[55] one is entitled to doubt the very existence of a request or a proposal for military alliance from one camp to the other. Certainly, military alliances between Franks and Muslims were not a new phenomenon in the Near East since they dated back to the arrival of the first crusaders. It is also true that the common danger that the Mongol presence in Syria represented for both

45. *Letters from the East*, pp. 155–156.
46. *Crusader Syria in the Thirteenth Century*, p. 118.
47. *Les Gestes des Chiprois*, p. 164.
48. *Recueil des historiens des croisades, Hist. occ.*, II, p. 637.
49. "Quant li soudant ouirent ce, il si acorderent bien, il distrent adonc que pour ce ne demorroit il mie que il ne se combatissent car il avoient assez genz", *Recueil des historiens des croisades*, II, p. 637.
50. *Recueil des historiens des croisades, Hist. occ.*, II, p. 637.
51. Jackson, 1980, p. 503.
52. Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-sulūk*, I, pp. 515–516.
53. Al-Ġāmidī, 1986, p. 108, 120; al-Sarǧānī, 2006, pp. 311–312; al-Qūnī, 2009, p. 66; al-Ṣallābī, 2009b, pp. 292–297. After initially offering military aid, the Franks of Acre reversed their decision. Nevertheless, they supplied Quṭuz's army and allowed it to cross their territories. Qāsim, 1998, p. 115. Manṣūr ʿAbd al-Karīm refers to a truce without providing details of the conditions. Later, he relates that a Mamluk emir is said to have urged Quṭuz to attack a weakened Acre, which was no longer on its guard after signing the truce. Quṭuz is said to have refused on ethical-religious grounds. The problem with this account is that no sources are cited to support it and it has a strong apologetic character. ʿAbd al-Karīm, 2012, p. 178.
54. Amitai, 1992, pp. 121–122; 2021b, p. 227.
55. Jackson, 1980, p. 507.

© IFAO 2026 AnIsl en ligne https://www.ifao.egnet.net

camps could have encouraged one or the other to propose this alternative. Nevertheless, none of these explanations seems satisfactory. They underestimate the degree of distrust between Christians and Muslims at the time, as attested by the Christian sources cited above. Muslims and Franks lived side by side and had known each other for more than a century, but they remained enemies: the former wanted to expel the latter from Syria and recover lost territories; the latter wanted to establish themselves firmly and definitively in the region with the aim of retaking Jerusalem. The religious, cultural and political divides were strong. It must be acknowledged that, despite their wealth, the sources do not allow us to settle this issue conclusively.

4. Manpower

The question of the strength of the Mamluk and Mongol armies at ʿAyn Ğālūt is extensively discussed by historians.[56] Despite some differences, a consensus emerges that the Mamluk army was the largest.[57]

I will begin my analysis with the Mongolian force, on which the chroniclers are the most prolix. In the interview in which Hulagu asked al-Nāṣir Yūsuf for advice on the number of

56. One of the first historians to take an interest in this battle, John Masson Smith, refutes two ideas: that of a Mamluk army of 120,000 men proposed by some historians, a figure that would be due to an error in translation or in the transmission of information; and al-Maqrīzī's information according to which Sultan Quṭuz went out to fight the Mongols with the entire military force of Egypt. For John Masson Smith, the Mongol army consisted of two *tümen*s while the strength of the Mamluk army would have been very close to that of the army of the late Ayyubid sultanate in Egypt, i.e. about 12,000 men. See Smith, 1984, pp. 308, 311–313; Smith, 1998, p. 55. On the overall strength of the Mamluk army, John Masson Smith agrees in some ways with Ayalon, 1977, pp. 70–72. Edmond Schütz has the same opinion as John Masson Smith on the Mongolian strength. Schütz, 1991, pp. 5–6. Peter Thorau estimates that the strength of the Mamluk and Mongol armies at this battle could not have been more than 20,000 men. Thorau, 1985, p. 236. Erik Hildinger agrees with John Masson Smith on the Mamluk strength, while acknowledging that Bedouin, Kurdish and Turkoman auxiliary troops must be added. He suggests a figure of 10,000 for the Mongol army, to which Armenian and Ayyubid troops from Syria should be added, but argues that in any case the total was smaller than the Mamluk army. Hildinger, 2001, pp. 161–162. Timothy May estimates the Mongol strength at around 15,000 men, 20,000 at the most. May, 2002, pp. 139–140. Stephen Humphreys does not give a figure but speaks of an "extremely large" army, which seems a bit exaggerated. Humphreys, 1977a, p. 358. Reuven Amitai does not agree with John Masson Smith's idea of a Mongol army of two *tümen*s; he limits it to one *tümen*. As for the Mamluk strength, he says that it is impossible to estimate precisely; the figure of 12,000 men that John Masson Smith puts forward cannot be reliable since it is reported only by Ibn Waṣṣāf. Amitai, 1992, pp. 123, 127. On the question of numbers in general see pp. 123–129. The question of manpower has attracted little attention from scholars in the Arab world. See al-Šāʿir, 1995, p. 50; al-Qūnī, 2009, p. 71. Al-Ṣallābī argues that Quṭuz was aware of the numerical superiority of his army, which would have encouraged him to ambush: «[...] وكان قطز يعرف جيداً تفوق جيشه في العدد على العدو، ولذا أخفى قواته الرئيسية في التلال القريبة ولم يعرض للعدو إلا المقدمة التي قادها بيبرس».

Al-Ṣallābī, 2009b, p. 313.

57. Only Scott (2009, p. 40) is convinced that the Mongol army was superior in numbers to the Mamluk army. However, he seems to be a little confused as he cites Waterson (2007, p. 78) to corroborate his point when the latter clearly states the opposite.

© IFAO 2026 AnIsl en ligne https://www.ifao.egnet.net

troops needed to defeat the Egyptian army, the latter is said to have assured him that a few troops would suffice. Hulagu would therefore have decided to leave 12,000 horsemen in Kitbuġā before leaving for Mongolia.[58] Marino Sanudo (d. 738/1338) cites the latter figure in the *Liber Secretorum Fidelium Crucis*.[59] Bar Hebraeus (d. 685/1286) puts the figure at 10,000 horsemen, while the Armenian authors Kirakos of Gandzak (d. 669–670/1271) and Vardan Arevelts'i (d. 669–670/1271) mention twice that number.[60] In any case, the Mongol army does not seem to have been large.[61]

Let us continue with the examination of other accounts. According to Ibn ʿAbd al-Ẓāhir (d. 692/1293), when the Mamluks arrived in the vicinity of the Mongols, the scouts informed Quṭuz of their reduced numbers and urged him to take this opportunity to attack:

> ورحل الملك المظفّر والعسكر ولا علم عندهم بقرب العدو حتى وردت رسل الملك الظاهر ينذر الناس ويعلمهم بقرب العدو، وينبه على عورات العدو، ويقللهم في أعينهم ويجسرهم على انتهاز الفرصة، وكان ذلك أحد أسباب النصر [...].
>
> Al-Malik al-Muẓaffar and the army set out without knowing that the enemy was near until messengers from al-Malik al-Ẓāhir [who commanded the vanguard] arrived and warned the army by informing them of the proximity of the enemy. They drew their attention to the enemy's positions, mentioned their small numbers, and urged them to take advantage of the opportunity [to attack them]. And this was one of the causes of the victory.[62]

Quoting the words of Amīr Mubāriz al-Dīn, who was in the service of al-Malik al-Manṣūr of Hama, Ibn Wāṣil (d. 697/1298) reports that the descendants of the Mongols were more numerous at the Battle of Homs on 5 Muḥarram 659/10 December 1260—three months after ʿAyn Ǧālūt—than those who fought at ʿAyn Ǧālūt[63] (let's recall that Arabic authors mention 6,000 Mongols who took part in the Battle of Homs).[64] It would therefore seem correct to estimate the number of Mongols who fought at ʿAyn Ǧālūt at roughly that of a tümen, *i.e.* about 10,000 men.

The gaps in the sources make it impossible to know the precise size of the Mamluk force. The number of 12,000 troops reported by Ibn Waṣṣāf (d. 729/1329) should be taken with caution

58. Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdat al-fikra*, p. 49.
59. "Then, leaving Guiboga [Kitbuġā] with 12,000 Tartars to guard the kingdom of Syria, he [Hulagu] returned eastward." Marino Sanudo Torsello, *The Book of the Secrets*, p. 380.
60. Bar Hebraeus, *The Chronography*, II, p. 436; Kirakos de Gandzak, *History of the Armenians*, p. 325; Vardan Arevelts'i, *The Historical compilation*, p. 92.
61. For an estimate of Mongol numbers see Amitai, 1992, pp. 123–126; 2021b, pp. 227, 230, 232–233, 237.
62. Ibn ʿAbd al-Ẓāhir, *al-Rawḍ al-zāhir*, p. 64.
63. Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarriǧ al-kurūb*, p. 224.
64. Ibn Aybak al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, VIII, p. 68; Ibn Kaṯīr, *al-Bidāya*, XVII, p. 422; al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-sulūk*, I, p. 525.

© IFAO 2026 AnIsl en ligne https://www.ifao.egnet.net

since he is the only one to cite this number.[65] However, by analyzing and cross-checking all the scattered information one can offer a general estimate of the Mamluk forces. I take as my starting point Stephen Humpheys' quite acceptable estimate of the total strength of the Ayyubid army in the last years of the sultanate as between 22,000 and 25,000 men.[66] In addition to this, it is necessary to take into consideration the changes that occurred in the early years of the Mamluk Sultanate, which certainly had an impact on the number of troops, but without drastically reducing them. Indeed, with an army that was too small, the new sultanate would have been unable to impose its authority from the outset in Egypt in the face of political disputes and demands, particularly those of the Bedouins of Upper Egypt.[67]

The political upheavals of the Mongol invasions in the Near East probably had a much greater impact on the strength of the Mamluk army than is generally believed. Built on the remnants of the Ayyubid army of Egypt, Quṭuz's army benefited, shortly before ʿAyn Ǧālūt, from the influx of soldiers and emirs from the army of al-Nāṣir Yūsuf, Bedouin, Kurdish and Turkoman elements. Quṭuz also received valuable reinforcement from the experienced Baḥriyya warlord, Baybars al-Bunduqdārī (d. 676/1277). He incorporated all of these men into his army and thus strengthened it substantially.[68] These reinforcements seem to have been so numerous that Ibn Wāṣil, who describes their arrival in Syria and their junction with the forces of al-Nāṣir Yūsuf concentrated at Bariza, was convinced that such an army could have prevented the Mongols from taking Aleppo.[69] Several Arab authors report on the "huge" gathering of Bedouins, Kurds, Turkomans and other groups of fighters around Quṭuz at the time he left Cairo to fight the Mongols.[70] All this data is supported by the author of the so-called Rothelin manuscript, according to whom Quṭuz's army possessed a strength that allowed him to fight Kitbuġā's troops without further reinforcements.

According to the same author, the refusal of the Franks of Acre to provide military aid to the Mamluk army had no impact, since Quṭuz believed that he had sufficient warriors to fight the Mongols:

65. Amitai, 1992, p. 127.

66. Humphreys, 1977b, p. 76.

67. Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-sulūk*, I, pp. 466, 480.

68. Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrīǧ al-kurūb*, p. 191. In addition to these important military reinforcements, the leading role played by the *ʿulamāʾ* should be mentioned. They took up the cause of Quṭuz, whom they presented as the figurehead of the jihad. The most important and active of these *ʿulamāʾ* was the famous Šāfiʿī ʿIzz al-Dīn b. ʿAbd al-Salām, who was nicknamed *šayḫ al-Islām*, *sulṭān al-ʿulamāʾ* or *bāʾiʿ al-mulūk*. This support from the men of religion considerably strengthened the foundation of the young Mamluk sultanate and its legitimacy, which, to be complete, was only waiting for a victory against the threat posed by the pagan Mongols. Al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-šāfiʿiyya*, VIII, p. 209; al-Hilālī, n.d., p. 12.

69. Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarriǧ al-kurūb*, p. 195.

70. Ibn ʿAbd al-Ẓāhir, *al-Rawḍ al-zāhir*, p. 62; Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdat al-fikra*, pp. 50–51; Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarriǧ al-kurūb*, pp. 199–200; al-Makīn b. al-ʿAmīd, *Chronique des Ayyoubides*, pp. 119–120.

© IFAO 2026 AnIsl en ligne https://www.ifao.egnet.net

> Quant li soudan ouirent ce, il si acorderent bien, il distrent adonc que pour ce ne demorroit il mie que il ne se combatissent car il avoient assez genz.[71]

Therefore, it does not seem exaggerated to estimate the motley army commanded by Quṭuz to about 20,000 men. If it was no longer Ayyubid, it was still far from being Mamluk. It was a transitional army, an army in the process of Mamlukization.

5. One or More Clashes?

For the most part, the accounts of the narrative agree on the following scenario:[72] Kitbuġā and his troops took the initiative to attack and charged the army of Quṭuz,[73] which resisted the offensive with immense difficulty. Badly battered, it was at this point that, in a last-ditch effort, the fighters of the Sultanate's army sounded the charge of the counter-attack with Quṭuz in the lead, who threw off his helmet and shouted a formula, "*wa-islāmāh*",[74] that would go down in history.[75] The Mongols were pushed back and unable to resist, the majority of them were massacred, although some of their soldiers managed to escape.[76]

The circumstances of the battle remain controversial. The location of the battle has been the subject of much debate based on the few geographical details provided in the sources. Ibn Duqmāq (d. 809/1407), echoed by al-Maqrīzī, mentions a second clash not far from ʿAyn Ǧālūt in a place called Baysān.[77] Western[78] and recent Arabic historiography[79] favours al-Maqrīzī's account for reasons that escape me. There are two problems with the latter's version of a second clash at Baysān. The first is that al-Maqrīzī is a late historian writing nearly a century and a half after the event. The second problem is the contradiction of an essential part of the narrative when al-Maqrīzī writes that at Baysān, "the Mongols formed larger ranks than in the first confrontation."[80] Yet a few lines earlier, al-Maqrīzī refers to the

71. *Recueil des historiens des croisades, Hist. occ.*, II, p. 637.
72. To my knowledge, only Rašīd al-Dīn mentions an ambush by the Mamluk army. Rašīd al-Dīn, *Ǧāmiʿ al-tawārīḫ*, p. 349.
73. For the author of the so-called Rothelin manuscript, it was the Mamluk army that took the initiative to charge. *Recueil des historiens des croisades*, II, p. 638.
74. Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-sulūk*, I, p. 516.
75. See the famous film *Wa-Islāmāh*, about the battle of ʿAyn Ǧālūt, made in 1961 by Enrico Bomba and Andrew Marton.
76. *Recueil des historiens des croisades*, II, *Hist. occ.*, p. 638; *Les Gestes des Chiprois*, p. 165. On the course of the battle see Smith, 1984, pp. 307–345; Amitai, 1992, pp. 120–149.
77. Ibn Duqmāq, *Nuzhat al-anām*, pp. 263–265; al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-sulūk*, I, p. 517.
78. "His work, *Kitāb al-sulūk* is perhaps the most consulted account of the battle." Amitai, 1992, p. 130.
79. Al-Šāʿir, 1995, p. 63; Qāsim, 1998, p. 131; al-Sarǧānī, 2006, pp. 328–329; al-Qūnī, 2009, p. 74. For al-Ġāmidī and al-Ṣallābī, a third confrontation took place, after that of Baysān, where the Mongols were completely defeated. See al-Ġāmidī, 1986, pp. 123–124; al-Ṣallābī, 2009b, p. 313. Manṣūr ʿAbd al-Karīm was one of the few who did not mention a second confrontation at Baysān.
80. Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-sulūk*, I, p. 517. See al-Šāʿir, 1995, p. 63; al-Sarǧānī (2006, pp. 328–329) who repeat this account.

© IFAO 2026 AnIsl en ligne https://www.ifao.egnet.net

loss of many Mongol fighters killed or captured in the first battle at ʿAyn Ǧālūt. The phrase "*maṣāfan āʿẓam*" can only refer to numbers. But then, how could the Mongols, with fewer men, have formed larger ranks?

Rāġib al-Sarǧānī asserts that all historians are unanimous that the fight at Baysān was the most difficult.[81] Such an assertion does not fail to surprise when one considers that authors contemporary with the event such as Abū Šāma (d. 665/1267), al-Yūnīnī, Baybars al-Mansūrī, al-Nuwayrī (d. 733/1333) and even, later, al-Ḏahabī (d. 748/1348) or Ibn Kaṯīr, do not refer anywhere to a second battle having taken place at Baysān.[82] At most the pursuit of the fugitives by Baybars is mentioned by some authors. Ibn ʿAbd al-Ẓāhir, who is one of the most reliable authors, reports that after their defeat, the Mongols tried to take refuge in the mountains while being pursued by a detachment of the Mamluk army commanded by Baybars. The latter caught up with them and killed or captured the Mongol fighters. Still pursued by Baybars and his troops, some managed to escape. The remnants of the Mongol army gathered at Afāmiyya (Apamea)[83] before being attacked and routed by Baybars.[84] Ibn ʿAbd al-Zāhir's account describes it more as a chase than a second pitched battle as related by al-Maqrīzī.[85] Ibn ʿAbd al-Ẓāhir's version ought to be cross-referenced with the account of Baybars al-Manṣūrī quoted above.[86] The version of the continuator of William of Tyre's chronicle according to whom the battle between the Mamluks and Mongols took place over three days and in three different places is, *a posteriori*, the most likely to be refuted.[87]

6. Causes of the Mamluk Victory

Was the victory achieved thanks to a deliberate strategy or was it a combination of factors (psychological, size of the force, etc.) in favour of the Mamluks? This is the question that has aroused the interest of researchers. In the following lines, I propose to take up the main points of the debate and to discuss them in the light of new data that allow certain opinions and hypotheses to be corroborated, relativised or refuted.

81. «وَأَجْمَعَ المؤرخون على أنها أصعب من الأولى [...]». Al-Sarǧānī, 2006, p. 329.

82. Abū Šāma, *Kitāb al-rawḍatayn*, V, pp. 317–318; al-Yūnīnī, *Ḏayl mirʾāt al-zamān*, I, pp. 365–366; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, XXIX, p. 303; Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdat al-fikra*, p. 51; al-Ḏahabī, *Tāriḫ al-Islām*, XLVIII, pp. 60–61; Ibn Kaṯīr, *al-Bidāya*, XVII, pp. 415–416.

83. Locality located 55 km northwest of Hama, where the fortress of Qalʿat al-Maḍīq is located.

84. Ibn ʿAbd al-Ẓāhir, *al-Rawḍ al-zāhir*, pp. 64–65.

85. Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-sulūk*, I, p. 517.

86. See note 132.

87. "En la fin furent vaincu et desconfit li Tartarin; et einsint se combatirent il par .III. jourz et en .III. pieces de terrez, et a toutes les .III. foiz il furent desconfist." *Recueil des historiens des croisades*, II, p. 638.

© IFAO 2026 AnIsl en ligne https://www.ifao.egnet.net

6.1. *Leadership and Numerical Superiority*

For Reuven Amitai, Muḥammad Fatḥī al-Šāʿir and ʿAlī Muḥammad al-Ṣallābī, the Mamluk victory at ʿAyn Ǧālūt can be explained firstly by the leadership of Quṭuz and Baybars.[88] ʿAlī Muḥammad al-Ṣallābī and Rāġib al-Sarǧāni differed on the ranking of the different causes, the latter favouring spiritual reasons.[89] According to Reuven Amitai, the desertion of Amir al-Ašraf from the Mongol camp during the battle was as a decisive element, as was the Mamluk army's superiority in numbers.[90] This numerical superiority would have been a consequence of the "win or die" mentality of the Mamluks prior to the battle, which would have prompted them to gather large numbers of troops for the confrontation.[91] In addition, the Mamluks would have had another advantage: the composition of their army was similar to that of the Mongols, especially their mounted archers. It is mainly this feature of the Mamluk army, in addition to the other elements mentioned, that would have led the Mamluks to victory.[92]

The idea that the numerical superiority of the Mamluk army was a crucial advantage is implicitly confirmed by Baybars al-Manṣūrī, who acknowledges that the death of Möngke Khan and the departure of Hulagu and most of his army, was one of the causes of the triumph of Islam at ʿAyn Ǧālūt:

> وفيها قدر الله تعالى بجميل تقديره ولطيف تدبيره بهلك منكوقان ملك التتار فمات بمقام نهر الطای من بلاد ايغور وهو قاصد غزو الخطا وكان فيما يقال بمذهب النصرانية ويميل إليها فمات عليها وكان موته فتحًا للإسلام ولطفًا لا تدرك كنهه الأوهام لأنه أوجب عود هولاكو عن ديار الشام وبذلك تمت للمسلمين النصرة وطمت المشركين الكسرة [...].
>
> And in this year [658/1260], God the Most High decreed, by His Wisdom in establishing predestination and His impeccability in directing affairs, the death of Möngke the king of the Tatars. He died near the river of al-Ṭāy from the land of Īġūr as he was about to attack al-Ḫiṭā [China]. According to what is said, he converted to Christianity, loved that religion and died a Christian. His death was a victory for Islam and a boon that minds cannot fathom since his death forced Hulagu to leave Syria and by this the Muslims won the victory [of ʿAyn Ǧālūt] and the associators suffered defeat [...].[93]

88. Amitai, 1992, pp. 144–145; al-Šāʿir, 1995, p. 52; al-Ṣallābī, 2009b, pp. 226–230.
89. ʿAlī Muḥammad al-Ṣallābī relied heavily on the work of Rāġib al-Sarǧāni. Of the ten reasons for the Mamluk victory according to al-Sarǧāni, the first two are, in order, the faith in God and the spirit of jihad that animated the Muslim army. The leadership of Quṭuz is in fifth place. Al-Sarǧānī, 2006, pp. 353–354.
90. Amitai, 1992, pp. 145–146. In his last article (Amitai, 2021b, p. 228), Reuven Amitai seems to no longer consider al-Ašraf's desertion as a decisive element in the Mamluk victory, although it is of some importance.
91. Amitai, 1992, p. 145.
92. Amitai, 1992, p. 146.
93. Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdat al-fikra*, p. 55.

© IFAO 2026 AnIsl en ligne https://www.ifao.egnet.net

According to Rašīd al-Dīn, Quṭuz confessed in a council with his emirs that if Hulagu had not returned to Mongolia, the latter would have conquered Egypt:

> Hulagou-Khan, at the head of a large army, left Turan and headed for the provinces of Iran. None of the khalifes, sultans or kings could resist him; he has subdued all these regions by force of arms. Already he is master of Damascus; and if he had not received the news of his brother's death, Egypt would have shared the same fate as the other provinces.[94]

According to medieval Muslim writers, Hulagu became enraged when he learned that the military strength of the sultanate's army was actually much greater than that indicated to him by al-Nāṣir Yūsuf and that he had not left enough fighters in Kitbuġā.[95]

While the numerical superiority of the Mamluk army was certainly an important factor, it should not, however, in my opinion, be considered the sole element explaining the Mamluk victory. Indeed, it should not be forgotten that in their first confrontations against the armies of the Ḫwārazm Šāh, China and the Russian principalities, the Mongols were outnumbered, which did not prevent them from achieving many resounding successes.[96] The fact that the Mongol troops in Syria fought the numerically superior troops of the sultanate was not, in view of their previous exploits, such a great challenge. If fighting the outnumbered army of Quṭuz had been too great a risk, Kitbuġā, with his experience of warfare, would certainly have sought to avoid the confrontation. At best, he would have feigned retreat in order to draw Quṭuz's troops away from Egypt. However, Kitbuġā did not do this. On the contrary, he took the initiative of attacking at the beginning of the battle, proof that he thought, on the one hand, that the strength of the Mamluk army did not seem disproportionate to his own and, on the other hand, that his troops were capable of winning. As for the desertion of Amir al-Ašraf from the Mongol camp during the battle, although it is true that it may have offered some psychological advantage to the Mamluks and had a detrimental one on the Mongols,[97] it should not be considered to be a decisive factor.

6.2. *Strategic and Tactical Factors*

John Masson Smith considers that the Mongol army's strategy was flawed at ʿAyn Ǧālūt and that Quṭuz's army was militarily superior.[98] Peter Thorau and other scholars are of the opinion that the Mamluk army succeeded in encircling the Mongol army not by ambush as

94. "Houlagou-Khan, à la tête d'une armée nombreuse, a quitté le Touran et s'est dirigé vers les provinces de l'Iran. Aucun des khalifes, des sultans, des rois, n'a pu lui résister ; il a soumis toutes ces contrées par la force des armes. Déjà il est maître de Damas ; et s'il n'avait reçu la nouvelle de la mort de son frère, l'Égypte eût partagé le même sort des autres provinces." Rašīd al-Dīn, *Ǧāmiʿ al-tawārīḫ*, p. 345.
95. Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdat al-fikra*, p. 49.
96. May, 2007, 100–106; 2012, pp. 42–43; Morgan, 1986, p. 69; Barthold, 1958, pp. 404–405.
97. Amitai, 1992, pp. 144–145.
98. Smith, 1984, pp. 329–331.

© IFAO 2026 AnIsl en ligne https://www.ifao.egnet.net

Rašīd al-Dīn reports in his *Ǧāmiʿ al-tawārīḫ*,[99] but by overrunning its left and right wings.[100] Other scholars suggest there was an ambush followed by a Mamluk encirclement that defeated the Mongols.[101] This position is probably based on Rašīd al-Dīn's account.[102] For other scholars, if there was an encirclement, it did not destroy the Mongol army.[103]

This encirclement manoeuvre can be seen at first sight as a sign of tactical and strategic intelligence of the Mamluk army.[104] Nevertheless, the hypothesis of an encirclement at ʿAyn Ǧālūt is unlikely for several reasons.[105] It is true that the Mamluks were known to be masters in the art of preparing ambushes, but not until the reign of Baybars. Indeed, the measures that Baybars took to reform the Mamluk army in depth and, above all, the multiple expeditions that he led in different theatres of operation against the Mongols, Franks and Armenians, allowed the Mamluk army to become more experienced and to reach its military peak. However, by 658/1260, the army commanded by Quṭuz had undergone many changes and formed a rather heterogeneous group. The massive influx of foreign fighters who had fled the Mongol advance complicated matters; the Bedouins had their own ways of fighting as did the Turkomans and the Kurds. To complete the picture, it may be added that, apart from the minor clashes against the Ayyubid princes of Syria, who brought relatively small numbers, the army of the Mamluk sultanate had little collective combat experience before ʿAyn Ǧālūt. Yet this was essential for an army to develop an *esprit de corps* and master such complex tactics as ambush and encirclement.

Moreover, it is difficult to imagine that an army composed in part of seasoned Mongol fighters and commanded by such an experienced warlord as Kitbuġā would fall into an ambush as easily as the later medieval chroniclers describe. The Mongols had demonstrated, in the course of their wars of conquest, their excellence in the practice of ambush and other tactics such as feigned flight and encirclement.[106] Aware of the formidable effectiveness of these tactics, the Mongols were wary of their enemies, especially other horsemen from the steppe, such as the Seljuk Turks. After the Seljuk troops fled after the battle of Köse Dağ on 6 Muḥarram 641/26 June 1243, the Mongols did not approach the enemy camp fearing that the flight was only a simulation to better counterattack later.[107]

Already, two years before ʿAyn Ǧālūt, the Mongol horsemen had twice proved their expertise in mastering these tactics. In 656/1258, the Abbasid Caliphate troops, commanded by the general Muǧāhid al-Dīn Aybak, went out in the daytime to fight the Mongols

99. Thorau, 1985, p. 239.
100. Thorau, 1985, p. 239.
101. Smith, 1984, pp. 308–313, 326–327; al-Šāʿir, 1995, p. 62; Qāsim, 1998, p. 132; Nettles, 2001, pp. 67–68; Muḥammad, 2008, pp. 195–196; al-Qūnī, 2009, pp. 72–74; Rāfiʿ, 2009a, p. 119; ʿAbd al-Karīm, 2012, pp. 181–184.
102. Rašīd al-Dīn, *Ǧāmiʿ al-tawārīḫ*, p. 349.
103. Al-Sarǧānī, 2006, pp. 320–326; al-Ṣallābī, 2009b, p. 313.
104. Thorau, 1985, p. 239.
105. Amitai, 1992, pp. 138–139, 146; 2021b, p. 228.
106. Berriah, 2019, pp. 189–197; May, 2007, pp. 69–85, in particular pp. 71–82.
107. Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdat al-fikra*, p. 22.

© IFAO 2026 AnIsl en ligne https://www.ifao.egnet.net

near Baghdad. After some fighting, the latter withdrew, leaving the Abbasid army to believe that they were fleeing, defeated. As soon as night fell, they returned and attacked by surprise.[108] The same thing happened during the siege of Aleppo in 657/1259: a troop of Aleppine fighters and volunteers came out of the city to fight the Mongols; the latter pretended to flee and after having drawn the Aleppines away from the city, they executed a sudden about-face and charged the Aleppines who, surprised by the manoeuvre, fled in their turn. Exhausted by the efforts of their pursuit, most of them failed to reach the city and were massacred.[109]

In view of these few examples, to which others could be added,[110] it is difficult to imagine Kitbuġā, an experienced warlord who was aware of his limited numbers, throwing all his forces into battle without taking care to send out scouts, a fundamental step in the art of warfare that was rigorously implemented by the Mongols prior to confrontation with the enemy.[111]

Despite his numerical superiority, Quṭuz did not take the initiative to attack, perhaps for fear of poor coordination and understanding between the different army corps in the face of enemies who excelled in this area. Faced with a Mongol army that had until then been considered invincible and against which the slightest mistake could be fatal, the Mamluk army preferred to opt for a defensive and wait-and-see posture. These two elements would later be among the main features of the sultanate's strategy throughout its war against the Ilkhanids.[112] For Reuven Amitai, the presence of mounted archers was the other great advantage that enabled the Mamluk army to win at ʿAyn Ǧālūt.[113]

6.3. *Mamluk Superiority in Close Combat?*

Apart from unexpected and unpredictable events that could change the course of the confrontation at any moment, close combat, hand-to-hand, in the heart of the melee, was a fateful moment in most battles in the ancient and medieval periods, both in the West and in the East. Paradoxically, hand-to-hand combat has not attracted scholarly interest, even though it

108. Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdat al-fikra*, p. 36.

109. Abū al-Fidāʾ, *al-Muḫtaṣar*, II, 4, p. 200.

110. A year after ʿAyn Ǧālūt, during 659/1261, the Mongols again demonstrated their mastery of ambush twice: the first time against the Ayyubid amir Šams al-Dīn Aqqūš al-Barlī al-ʿAzīzī near Sanǧar; the second time against the troops of the caliph al-Mustanṣir (d. 659/1261) during his expedition to retake Baghdad. See Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdat al-fikra*, p. 70; Ibn ʿAbd al-Ẓāhir, *al-Rawḍ al-zāhir*, pp. 110–112; Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *al-Tuḥfa al-mulūkiyya*, pp. 47–48; Ibn Aybak al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, VIII, pp. 83–84.

111. Arab and Byzantine war manuals stress the importance of monitoring the enemy's movements. See, for example, Nicéphore Phocas, *Traité de guérilla*, pp. 20–22; *Maurice's Strategikon*, pp. 30, 65–66; al-Harṭamī, *Muḫtaṣar fī siyāsat al-ḥurūb*, p. 28; al-Harawī, *al-Taḏkira al-harawiyya*, p. 19; al-Rašīdī, *Tafrīǧ al-kurūb fī tadbīr al-ḥurūb*, 1995, pp. 69–71; al-Aqṣarāʾī, *Nihāyat al-suʾl wa-l-umniyya*, 2009, pp. 368, 377, 386, 404. Jean de Plancarpin, who was not a military man by training, stresses the importance of scouts and surveillance especially in fighting the Mongols. Jean de Plancarpin, *Dans l'Empire mongol*, p. 112.

112. Berriah, 2017, pp. 136–140; 2018, pp. 450–452. On the articulation of wait-and-see/defense and offensive/mobility see Zouache, 2015, pp. 70–74.

113. Amitai, 1992, p. 146. Erik Hildinger largely echoes the same ideas. Hildinger, 2001, pp. 165–166.

© IFAO 2026 AnIsl en ligne https://www.ifao.egnet.net

is essential to the analysis and understanding of combat in the medieval period.[114] Reuven Amitai does not mention Mamluk superiority over the Mongols in hand-to-hand combat as one of the main reasons for the Mamluk victory at ʿAyn Ǧālūt. It seems that, for him, the similarity of the fighting tactics and techniques of the Mamluks and Mongols, due to the common ethnic origin, was more decisive.[115]

Clearly, close combat was decisive at ʿAyn Ǧālūt, especially when the Mamluks counterattacked and charged the Mongol cavalry, who were unable to resist. Successive waves of horsemen were the best use of cavalry in a charge and it is true that at this particular moment the numerical superiority of the Mamluk army was a key element. With this in mind, several observations are in order.

The military training of the Mamluk fighters, which can be described as professional for some of them, with their training, the practice of *furūsiyya* but also their equipment, seems to have often made the difference against the Mongols. As John Masson Smith and Timothy May have noted, the Mongol fighter, while an excellent warrior, was no match for the better trained Mamluk fighter.[116]

Reuven Amitai disagrees on this point. According to him, only the royal Mamluks had the best training.[117] Yet, it does not imply that the other army corps did not train rigorously. At ʿAyn Ǧālūt, the fact that the fighters of the Mamluk army succeeded in pushing back the Mongols after they had barely resisted the Mongol charge, and then launched a general counter-attack, attests to their quality in hand-to-hand combat. This was also the case in the majority of subsequent battles against the Mongols.[118] It should also be noted that in order to achieve this absorption of the shock followed by a counter-attack, the Mamluk army had to possess an extreme defensive solidity that only a high level of training in close combat could provide.[119] In fact, it seems that the Mamluk fighters, or at least some of them, were superior to the Ilkhanid Mongols in hand-to-hand combat during their multiple confrontations.[120]

7. Total or Partial Destruction of the Mongol Army?

Some Arab authors refer to the complete destruction of the Mongol army at the end of the battle, without any combatant having managed to escape.[121] According to Baybars al-Manṣūrī, Hulagu sent a troop to reinforce Kitbuġā, which is said to have encountered survivors of ʿAyn Ǧālūt at Homs in a deplorable state. Elements of the Mamluk army, who had been

114. Zouache, 2015, pp. 78–84.
115. Amitai, 1992, pp. 145–146.
116. Smith, 1984, p. 313; May, 2020, p. 136.
117. Amitai, 1990, p. 217.
118. Berriah, 2017, pp. 141–142; 2018, p. 452.
119. May, 2020, p. 136.
120. Berriah, 2017, pp. 141–142; 2018, pp. 451–453.
121. Ibn Aybak al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, VIII, p. 60.

© IFAO 2026 AnIsl en ligne https://www.ifao.egnet.net

pursuing them, arrived shortly afterwards and annihilated him.[122] This last piece of information should be viewed with some prudence. It seems to have been stated in order to make the Muslim victory seem even more total. Indeed, as the examination of the corpus shows, some Mongol fighters managed to escape. Al-Yūnīnī reports that the Mongol army that fought at the Battle of Homs on 5 Muḥarram 659/10 December 1260, was partly composed of fighters who had been present at ʿAyn Ǧālūt three months earlier.[123] The Latin and Armenian sources also provide some information. The author of the so-called Rothelin manuscript cites the figure of 900 dead on the Mongol side[124]—not 1,500 as read by Reuven Amitai.[125] Hethum of Korikos (d. *ca.* 708–710/1308–1310) and the anonymous author of the Chronicle of the Templar of Tyre report that Mongols managed to find refuge in the kingdom of Armenia, an Ilkhanid ally.[126] Rašīd al-Dīn also mentions the pursuit of Mongols throughout Syria and the capture of Mongol women and children.[127] Finally, the recently edited and translated *Aḫbār-i Muġūlān* by Quṭb al-Dīn al-Širāzī (d. 711/1311) does confirm the flight of Mongol army fighters.[128]

Conclusion

To conclude, it should first be emphasized that the consequences of ʿAyn Ǧālūt were mainly psychological.[129] The destroyed army represented only a tiny fraction of the Ilkhanid military potential, and the Mongol threat was far from being definitively removed. Indeed, three months later, on 5 Muḥarram 659/10 December 1260 several thousand Mongol horsemen launched a raid on northern Syria; they were defeated again, near Homs.

On deciding whom took the initiative to move towards the other, it seems that both sides decided to do so for different reasons: on the Mamluk side, Hulagu's departure with his army for Mongolia was an opportunity for Quṭuz to go and fight the small Mongol forces remaining in Syria with a chance of victory; for the Mongol side, the analysis of the different sources suggests that Kitbuġā may have been instructed by Hulagu to attack the sultanate, unless he decided to attack it on his own initiative. How does one explain Kitbuġā's decision? Was he convinced that the Mamluk forces were limited? Was he driven by an excess of zeal and/or confidence or by the will to act well on behalf of his master Hulagu? Answering these questions is not easy. Only hypotheses can be put forward. The sources do not allow us to propose definitive answers.

122. Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdat al-fikra*, p. 51. See also al-Sarǧānī, 2006, p. 330.
123. Al-Yūnīnī, *Ḏayl mirʾāt al-zamān*, II, p. 89.
124. "L'en esma qu'il ot bien ocis en ces .III. batailles. C.M. Tartarinz." *Recueil des historiens des croisades, Hist. occ.*, II, p. 638.
125. Amitai, 1990, p. 43; 1992, p. 143.
126. *Recueil des historiens des croisades, Documents arméniens*, II, p. 175; *Les Gestes des Chiprois*, p. 165.
127. Rašīd al-Dīn, *Ǧāmiʿ al-tawārīḫ*, pp. 351, 353.
128. Amitai, 2021b, p. 231.
129. Amitai, 2005, p. 359; 1999, p. 131.

© IFAO 2026 AnIsl en ligne https://www.ifao.egnet.net

It is true that the Mongols represented a common danger for both the Franks and the Mamluk Sultanate, but the hypothesis that Quṭuz requested assistance from the Franks of Acre seems poorly established. The mutual distrust and the Frankish fear of betrayal by the Mamluks is perceptible in the accounts of both Muslim and Christian authors of the time.

How can the Mamluk victory be explained? There are several answers. The first factor is undoubtedly the spirit of jihad that animated Quṭuz, Baybars and other emirs who in turn knew how to motivate and lead their troops into battle; a particular spirit of jihad, that of the last hope in the face of the greatest threat that the Muslim Near East and the *Dār al-islām* in general had known. Added to this was the charisma and leadership of the warrior sultan Quṭuz, which most certainly influenced the mood of the army.[130] The desertion of al-Ašraf is of some importance but is not in itself a decisive factor.[131]

Numerical superiority is an undeniable military advantage, but it does not guarantee victory on the battlefield. Military history is full of examples of armies being defeated by other smaller forces. The Mongols very often fought outnumbered, especially in the first decades of their conquests, but this did not prevent them from being almost systematically victorious. The numerical superiority of the Mamluk Sultanate army does not seem to have been a major factor in the Mamluk victory, as has often been claimed. In addition to numbers and weapons, the outcome of a battle depended on morale, individual prowess and luck.[132]

At ʿAyn Ǧālūt, the superiority of the fighters of Quṭuz's army in close combat, especially that of the Mamluk warriors who were the majority and the pillar of the army, seems to have been decisive especially at the moment of the clash: the Mamluk lines underwent the Mongol charge, absorbed, albeit with difficulty, their offensive, and then succeeded in launching a counter-attack which the Mongols were unable to resist. The military training of the Mamluk warrior, which can be described as complete and professional, made him a superior fighter to the Mongols especially in close combat.

The victories won by the Mamluk army after ʿAyn Ǧālūt against the Mongols, Franks and Armenians, attest to the excellent training of its fighters. These victories in different theatres of operations against different enemies leave no doubt about the Mamluk fighters' military superiority. However, the Mamluk army was not invincible. It was sometimes defeated. An analysis of the Mamluk fighter's art of close combat in the light of chronicles and *furūsiyya* manuals would further highlight this Mamluk military superiority. Faced with the number of fighters that the Ilkhanate was able to field on the battlefield, the Mamluks relied on the quality of their fighters.

130. Abū Šāma, *Kitāb al-rawḍatayn*, V, p. 321; Rašīd al-Dīn, *Ǧāmiʿ al-tawārīḫ*, p. 349.
131. Amitai, 1990, pp. 44–45; 1992, pp. 144–146.
132. Smail, 1956, p. 13.

© IFAO 2026 AnIsl en ligne https://www.ifao.egnet.net

Of servile origin, the Mamluks succeeded where the Abbasids, the Ḫwārazm Šāh, the Seljuks or even the Ayyubids had failed. ʿAyn Ǧālūt symbolised the revival (*taǧdīd*) of Islam that the Mamluk sultanate embodied according to Ibn Taymiyya who was a supporter of the latter.[133] The Mamluks then made jihad their leitmotiv and *raison d'être* for over two centuries.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Arabic Sources

Abū al-Fidāʾ, al-Malik al-Muʾayyad ʿImād al-Dīn Ismāʿīl b. ʿAlī b. Maḥmūd, *al-Muḫtaṣar fī aḫbār al-bašar*, 2 vols., Maktabat al-Mutanabbī, Cairo, s.d.

Abū Šāma, Šihāb al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Ismāʿīl al-Maqdisī, *Kitāb al-rawḍatayn fī aḫbār al-dawlatayn*, 5 vols., Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, Beirut, 2002.

al-Aqṣarāʾī al-Ḥanafī, Muḥammad b. ʿĪsā, *Nihāyat al-suʾl wa-l-umniyya fī taʿallum aʿmāl al-furūsiyya*, Ḫālid Aḥmad al-Suwaydī (ed.), Dār Kinān, Damascus, 2009.

al-ʿAynī, Abū Muḥammad Badr al-Dīn Maḥmūd b. Aḥmad, *ʿIqd al-ǧumān fī tārīḫ ahl al-zamān*, 5 vols., Muḥammad Muḥammad Amīn (ed.), Dār al-Kutub wa-l-Waṯāʾiq al-Qawmiyya, Cairo, 2010.

133. «فقد صدق الله وعده، ونصر عبده، وأعز جنده، وهزم الأحزاب وحده. وأنعم الله على السلطان، وعلى المؤمنين في دولته نعمًا لم تعهد في القرون الخالية. وجدد الإسلام في أيامه تجديدًا بانت فضيلته على الدول الماضيّة. وتحقق في ولايته خبر الصادق المصدوق، أفضل الأولين والآخرين، الذي أخبر فيه عن تجديد الدين في رؤوس المئين. والله تعالى يوزعه والمسلمين شكر هذه النعم العظيمة في الدنيا والدين، ويتمها بتمام النصر على سائر الأعداء المارقين.»

"God fulfilled his promise, made victorious his servant, fortified his armies, and defeated the allied ones alone. And God has filled the sultan and the believers with his generosity, which has not happened in past ages. God has renewed Islam under his rule (Muḥammad al-Nāṣir), evidence of his merit over earlier Muslim states. The word of the Truthful (the Prophet), the best of the first and last, about the renewal of religion (*taǧdīd al-dīn*) every century, was realized under his reign. And God the Most High inspires the sultan and the Muslims with their gratitude and thanks to these enormous benefits in the life of this world and for religion. God will complete these blessings with complete victory over all enemies of religion."
Ibn Taymiyya, *al-Ǧihād*, II, p. 50.

«[…] جنود الله المؤيدة وعساكره المنصورة المستقرة بالديار الشامية والمصرية مازالت منصورة على من ناوأها، مظفرة على من عاداها […] والإسلام في عز متزايد، وخير مترافد، فإن النبي ﷺ قد قال: "إن الله يبعث لهذه الأمة في رأس كل مائة سنة من يجدد لها أمر دينها. وهذا الدين في إقبال وتجديد […]"».

"[…] The soldiers of God strengthened, his armies made victorious [by God] and implanted solidly in Syria and Egypt are still victorious against those who fight against them, triumphing against those who attack them […] and Islam knows a growing glory and a good succeeding one another. The Prophet, may God's prayer and salvation be upon him, said: 'Certainly God sends someone to the community at the beginning of every century to renew the affairs of his religion.' And this religion is doing well, growing and renewing itself."
Ibn Taymiyya, *al-Risāla al-Qubruṣiyya*, pp. 26–27. For more information on Ibn Taymiyya as a supporter of the Mamluk Sultanate, see Berriah, 2020.

© IFAO 2026 AnIsl en ligne https://www.ifao.egnet.net

Bar Hebraeus, Gregory Abulfaraj, *The Chronography of Bar Hebraeus*, 2 vols., Ernest A. Wallis Budge (ed. and trans.), Oxford University Press, London, 1932.

Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Kitāb al-tuḥfa al-mulūkiyya fī al-dawla al-turkiyya*, ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Ṣāliḥ Ḥamdān (ed.), al-Dār al-Miṣriyya al-Lubnāniyya, Cairo, 1987.

Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdat al-fikra fī tārīḫ al-hiǧra*, Donald Richards (ed.), Das Arabische Buch, Berlin, 1998.

al-Ḏahabī, Šams al-Dīn Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad, *Tārīḫ al-Islām*, 53 vols., ʿUmar ʿAbd al-Salām Tadmurī (ed.), Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, Beirut, 1990–2000.

al-Harawī, Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Abī Bakr, *al-Taḏkira al-harawiyya fī al-ḥiyal al-ḥarbiyya*, Maktabat al-Ṯaqāfa al-Dīniyya, Cairo, s.d.

al-Harṭamī, Abū Saʿīd al-Šaʿrānī, *Muḫtaṣar fī siyāsat al-ḥurūb*, ʿĀrif Aḥmad ʿAbd al-Ġānī (ed.), Dār Kinān, Damascus, 1995.

Ibn ʿAbd al-Ẓāhir, Abū al-Faḍl Muḥī al-Dīn ʿAbd Allāh, *al-Rawḍ al-zāhir fī sīrat al-Malik al-Ẓāhir*, ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Ḫuwayṭir (ed.), Muʾassasat Fuʾād, Riyadh, 1976.

Ibn Aybak al-Dawādārī, Abū Bakr b. ʿAbd Allāh, *Kanz al-durar wa-ǧāmiʿ al-ġurar*, 9 vols., Bernd Radtke et al. (eds.), al-Maʿhad al-Almānī li-l-Āṯār bi-l-Qāhira, Cairo, 1960–1994.

Ibn Duqmāq, Ṣārim al-Dīn Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. Aydamur, *Nuzhat al-anām fī tārīḫ al-Islām*, Samīr Ṭabbāra (ed.), al-Maktaba al-ʿAṣriyya, Beirut, 1999.

Ibn al-Ǧazarī, *Tārīḫ ḥawādiṯ al-zamān wa-anbāʾihi wa-wafayāt al-akābir wa-l-aʿyān min abnāʾihi*, 2 vols., ʿUmar ʿAbd al-Salām Tadmurī (ed.), al-Maktaba al-ʿAṣriyya, Beirut, 1998.

Ibn Ḫaldūn, *Muqaddima*, Muṣṭafā Šayḫ Muṣṭafā (ed.), Muʾassasat al-Risāla, Beirut, Damascus, 2012.

Ibn Kaṯīr, Abū al-Fidāʾ ʿImād al-Dīn Ismāʿīl b. ʿUmar, *al-Iǧtihād fī ṭalab al-ǧihād. Arbaʿa kutub al-ǧihād min ʿaṣr al-ḥurūb al-ṣalibiyya*, Suhayl Zakkār (ed.), al-Takwīn, Damascus, 2007.

Ibn Kaṯīr, Abū al-Fidāʾ ʿImād al-Dīn Ismāʿīl b. ʿUmar, *al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya*, 21 vols., ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Turkī (ed.), Dār Hağr, Giza, 1998.

Ibn Taymiyya, Abū al-ʿAbbās Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-Ḥalīm, *al-Risāla al-Qubruṣiyya*, Qaṣī Muḥibb al-Dīn (ed.), Dār al-Maṭbaʿa al-Salafiyya, Cairo, 1974.

Ibn Taymiyya, Abū al-ʿAbbās Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-Ḥalīm, *al-Ǧihād*, 2 vols., ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ʿUmayra (ed.), Dār al-Ǧayl, Beirut, 1997.

Ibn Wāṣil, Abū ʿAbd Allāh Ǧamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Sālim, *Mufarriǧ al-kurūb fī aḫbār Banī Ayyūb*, Mohamed Rahim (ed.), *Die Chronik des ibn Wāṣil. Ǧamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn Wāṣil. Mufarriǧ al-kurūb fī akhbār Banī Ayyūb. Kritische Edition des letzten Teils (646-1248-659/1261) mit Kommentar. Untergang des Ayyubiden und Benginn des Mamlukenherrschaft*, Harrassowitz Verlag, Wiesbaden, 2010.

al-Makīn b. al-ʿAmīd, Ǧirǧis, *Kitāb al-maǧmūʿ al-mubārak*, Françoise Micheau & Anne-Marie Eddé (eds. And trans.), *Chronique des Ayyoubides (602–658/1205-6–1259-60)*, L'académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, Paris, 1994.

al-Maqrīzī, Abū Muḥammad Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad b. ʿAlī, *Kitāb al-sulūk li-maʿrifat duwal al-mulūk*, 8 vols., Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Qādir ʿAṭā (ed.), Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, Beirut, 1997.

al-Nasawī, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad, *Sīrat Ǧalāl al-Dīn al-Mankubirtī*, Ḥāfiẓ Aḥmad Ḥamdī (ed.), Dār al-Fikr al-ʿArabī, Cairo, 1953.

al-Nuwayrī, Šihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb b. Muḥammad, *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab*, 33 vols., Naǧīb Musṭafā Fawāz et al. (eds.), Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, Beirut, 2004.

al-Rašīdī, Muḥammad, *Tafrīǧ al-kurūb fī tadbīr al-ḥurūb*, ʿĀrif Aḥmad ʿAbd al-Ġanī (ed.), Dār Kinān, Damascus, 1995.

al-Subkī, Taǧ al-Dīn Abū Naṣr ʿAbd al-Wahhāb b. ʿAlī, *Ṭabaqāt al-šāfiʿiyya al-kubrā*, 10 vols., Maḥmūd Muḥammad al-Ṭannāḥī & ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ Muḥammad al-Ḥāw (eds.), Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Kutub al-ʿArabiyya, Cairo, 1964

al-Yūnīnī, Quṭb al-Dīn Abū al-Fatḥ Mūsā b. Muḥammad, *Ḏayl mirʾāt al-zamān*, 4 vols., Dāʾirat al-Maʿārif al-ʿUṯmāniyya, Hyderabad, 1961.

© IFAO 2026 AnIsl en ligne https://www.ifao.egnet.net

✦ Latin Sources

Recueil des historiens des croisades. Historiens occidentaux, Imprimerie royale, Paris, 1859.

Recueil des historiens des croisades, documents arméniens, Imprimerie nationale, Paris, 1906.

Crusader Syria in the Thirteenth Century. The Rothelin Continuation of the History of William of Tyre with part of the Eracles or Acre text, Janet Shirley (trans.), Ashgate, Aldershot, 1999.

Grégoire d'Akner, *The History of the Nation of the Archers*, Robert Bedrosian (ed.), Long Branch, New Jersey, 2003.

Jean de Plancarpin, *Dans l'Empire mongol*, Thomas Tanase (ed. and trans.), Anacharsis, Toulouse, 2014.

Les Gestes des Chiprois, Philippe de Navarre & Gérard de Montréal (eds.), Imprimerie Jules-Guillaume Fick, Genève, 1887.

Letters from the East. Crusaders, Pilgrims and Settlers in the 12th-13th Centuries, Malcom Barber & Keith Bate (eds. and trans.), Ashgate, Burlington, 2010.

Marino Sanudo Torsello, *Liber Secretorum Fidelium Crucis, The Book of the Secrets of the Faithful of the Cross*, Peter Lock (trans.), Ashgate, Burlington, 2011.

✦ Other Primary Sources

Kirakos de Gandzak, *History of the Armenians*, Robert Bedrosian (ed. and trans.), Sources of the Armenian Tradition, New York, 1986.

Maurice's Strategikon, Handbook of Byzantine Military Strategy, George T. Dennis (trans.), University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1984.

Nicéphore Phocas, *Traité de guérilla*, Gilbert Dagron & Haralambie Mihăescu (eds.), Gilbert Dagron (trans.), CNRS Éditions, Paris, 2011.

Rašīd al-Dīn Faḍl Allāh, Abū al-Ḫayr, *Ǧāmiʿ al-tawārīḫ (Histoire des Mongols de Perse)*, Marc-Etienne Quatremère (trans.), Imprimerie royale, Paris, 1836.

Smbat, *La chronique attribuée au connétable Smbat*, Gérard Dédéyan (ed. and trans.), Paul Geuthner, Paris, 1980.

Vardan Arevelts'i, *The Historical compilation*, Robert Bedrosian (ed.), Long Branch, New Jersey, 2007.

Secondary Sources

ʿAbd al-Karīm, Manṣūr, *al-Sulṭān Sayf al-Dīn Quṭuz baṭal ʿAyn Ǧālūt wa-qāhir al-Maġūl*, Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, Cairo, Damascus, 2012.

Aigle, Denise, "La parole et l'écrit. Baybars et le califat abbasside au Caire", in M. F. Auzépy & G. Saint-Guillain (eds.), *Oralité et lien social au Moyen Âge (Occident, Byzance, Islam): parole donnée, foi jurée, serment*, ACHCByz, Paris, 2009, pp. 123–136.

Āl Waṣfī, Waṣfī, *Maǧmūʿat rāyāt al-islām fī ʿAyn Ǧālūt*, Dār al-Maʿārif, Cairo, 1998.

al-Amīn, Ḥasan, *Ǧinkīz wa-Hūlākū: al-ġazw al-maġūlī li-l-bilād al-islāmiyya min Baġdād ilā ʿAyn Ǧālūt*, Dār al-Nahār, Algeria, 1983.

Amitai, Reuven, "Mongol Raids into Palestine (A.D. 1260 and 1300)", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 2, 1987, pp. 236–255.

Amitai, Reuven, *Mongols and Mamluks: The Mamluk-Īlkhānid War, 1260–1281*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1990.

Amitai, Reuven, "'Ayn Jālūt Revisited", *Tārīḫ*, vol. 2, 1992, pp. 119–150.

Amitai, Reuven, "Mongol Imperial Ideology and the Ilkhanid War Against the Mamluks", in Reuven Amitai-Preiss & David Morgan (eds.), *The Mongol Empire and its legacy*, Brill, Leyde, 1998, pp. 57–72.

Amitai, Reuven, "Northern Syria Between the Mongols and the Mamluks: Political Boundary, Military Frontier, and Ethnic Affinities", in Naomi Standen & Daniel Power (eds.), *Frontiers in Question: Eurasian Borderlands c. 700–1700*, Macmillan Press, London, 1999, pp. 128–152.

Amitai, Reuven, "The Resolution of the Mongol-Mamluk War", in Reuven Amitai & Michal Biran (eds.), *Mongols, Turks and others. Eurasian Nomads and the Sedentary World*, Brill, Leyde, 2005, pp. 359–390.

© IFAO 2026 AnIsl en ligne https://www.ifao.egnet.net

Amitai, Reuven, "The Logistics of the Mongol-Mamlūk War, with Special Reference to the Battle of Wādī 'l-Khaznadār, 1299 C.E.", in John H. Pryor (ed.), *Logistics of Warfare in the Age of the Crusades. Proceedings of a Workshop at the Centre for Medieval Studies, University of Sydney, 30 September to 4 October 2002*, Ashgate, Aldershot, 2006, pp. 25–42.

Amitai, Reuven, "ʿAyn Jālūt", *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 3rd edition online, 2021a, Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE — Brill (brillonline.com).

Amitai, Reuven, "Back to ʿAyn Jālūt, Again", *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 50, 2021b, pp. 225–254.

al-ʿAsalī, Bassām, *al-Muẓaffar Quṭuz wa-maʿrakat ʿAyn Ǧālūt*, Dār al-Nafāʾis, Beirut, 1986.

Ayalon, David, "Studies on the Structure of the Mamluk Army", *Studies on the Mamlūks of Egypt (1250–1517)*, Variorum, London, 1977, pp. 57–90.

Barthold, Vladimir, *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion*, Luzac, London, 1958.

Berriah, Mehdi, "La conduite de la guerre des Mamelouks au cours de leurs affrontements majeurs face aux Mongols ilkhanides (XIII^{e}-XIV^{e} siècles)", in L. A. Boudreau, P.-A. Doré et al. (eds.), *Actes du 16^{e} colloque international étudiant du département des sciences historiques de l'université de Laval*, Presses de l'université de Laval, Québec, 2017, pp. 131–154.

Berriah, Mehdi, "Un aspect de l'art de la guerre de l'armée mamelouke : la pratique de la "fausse ouverture" à la bataille de Šaqḥab (702/1303)", *Arabica* 65, 2018, pp. 431–469.

Berriah, Mehdi, *Les Mamelouks et la guerre : stratégie, tactique et idéologie (1250-1375)*, thesis, University of Paris Panthéon Sorbonne, Paris, 2019.

Berriah, Mehdi, "The Mamluk Sultanate and the Mamluks Seen by Ibn Taymiyya: Between Praise and Criticism", *Arabian Humanities* 14, 2020 [online DOI: https://doi.org/10.4000/cy.6491]

al-Ǧabālī, Maǧd, *Yawm ʿAyn Ǧālūt*, Dār al-Hudā, Riyadh, 2006.

al-Ġāmidī, ʿAbd Allāh Saʿīd Muḥammad Sāfir, *Ǧihād al-Mamālīk ḍid al-Maġūl wa-l-ṣalibiyyīn*, thesis, Umm al-Qurra University, Mecca, 1986.

Glubb, John, *Soldiers of Fortune: The Story of the Mamlukes*, Stein and Day, New York, 1973.

Halperin, Charles, "The Kipchak Connection: The Ilkhans, the Mamluks and ʿAyn Ǧālūt", *BSOAS* 63, 2000, pp. 229–245.

Ḥamd Allāh, ʿAlī, *Maʿrakat ʿAyn Ǧālūt*, Dār al-Fikr, Dār al-Fikr al-Muʿāṣir, Damascus, Beirut, 1984.

Hartog, Leo de, *Genghis Khan: Conqueror of the World*, Taurisparke Paperbacks, New York, 2004.

Herde, Peter, "Taktiken muslimischer Heere von ersten Kreuzzug bis ʿAyn Djalut (1260) und ihre Einwirkung auf die Schlacht bei Tagliacozzo (1268)", in W. Fischer & J. Schneider (eds.), *Das Heilige Land in Mittelalter*, Neustadt an der Aisch, Erlangen, Nuremberg, 1982, pp. 83–94.

al-Hilālī, Salīm b. ʿUbayd, *Ṣafaḥāt maṭwiyya min sulṭān al ʿulamāʾ al-ʿIzz b. ʿAbd al-Salām*, Dār Ibn al-Ǧawzī, al-Dammān, n.d.

Hildinger, Erik, *Warriors of the Steppe. A Military History of Central Asia 500 B.C. to 1700 A.D.*, Da Capo Press, Cambridge, 2001.

Humphreys, Stephen, *From Saladin to the Mongols. The Ayyubids of Damascus 1193–1260*, Albany, New York, 1977a.

Humphreys, Stephen, "The Emergence of the Mamluk Army", *StudIsl* 45, 1977b, pp. 65–99.

Jackson, Peter, "The Crisis in the Holy Land in 1260", *The English Historical Review* 95, 376, 1980, pp. 481–513.

Levanoni, Amalia, "The Battle of ʿAyn Jālūt: A Paradigmatic Historical Event in Mamlūk Historical Narratives", in Stephan Conermann (ed.), *Ulrich Haarmann memorial lecture* 11, EB Verlag, Berlin, 2014, pp. 1–26.

Martin, H. Desmond, "The Mongol Army", *JRAS* 1, 1943, pp. 46–85.

Martinez, A. P., "Some Notes on the Īl-Xānid Army", *Archivum Eruasiae Medii Aevi* 6, 1986, pp. 129–242.

May, Timothy, "The Mongol Presence and Impact in the Lands of the Eastern Mediterranean", in Andrew Villalon & Donald J. Kagay (eds.), *Crusaders, Condottieri and Cannon: Medieval Warfare in Societies around the Mediterranean*, Brill, Leiden, Boston, 2002, pp. 133–156.

May, Timothy, *The Mongol Art of War. Chinggis Khan and the Mongol Military System*, Westholme, Yardley, 2007.

May, Timothy, *The Mongol Conquests in World History*, Reaktion Books Ltd, London, 2012.

May, Timothy, "The Mongol Body at War", in Mathieu Eychenne, Stéphane Pradines & Abbès Zouache (eds.), *Guerre et Paix dans le Proche-Orient médiéval (x^{e}-xv^{e} siècle)*, Ifao, Cairo, 2020, pp. 129–138.

© IFAO 2026 AnIsl en ligne https://www.ifao.egnet.net

Morgan, David, *The Mongols*, B. Blackwell, New York, 1986.
Muḥammad, Hišām, *Dawlat al-Tatār al-šurūq wa-l-ġurūb*, Dār Mašāriq, Cairo, 2008.
Nettles, Isolde Betty, *Mamluk Cavalry Practices: Evolution and Influence*, thesis, University of Arizona, 2001.
Prawer, Joshua, *Histoire du royaume latin de Jérusalem*, 2 vols., Gérard Nahon (fr. trans.), Éditions du CNRS, Paris, 1969–1970.
al-Qāḍī, Muḥammad Maḥmūd, *Sayf al-Dīn Quṭuz qāʾid ʿAyn Ǧālūt wa-ḥāzim al-Tatār*, Dār al-Tawzīʿ wa-l-Našr al-Islāmiyya, Cairo, 2000.
Qāsim, ʿAbduh Qāsim, *al-Sulṭān al-muẓaffar Sayf al-Dīn Quṭuz baṭal maʿrakat ʿAyn Ǧālūt*, Dār al-Qalam, Dār al-Šāmiyya, Damascus, 1998.
al-Qūnī, Fawzī Maḥmūd, *ʿAyn Ǧālūt wa-fann al-ḥarb ʿinda al-Mamālīk*, Bustān al-Maʿrifa, Alexandria, 2009.
Rāfiʿ, Sāhir, *Quṭuz qāhir al-Tatār*, Dār Mašāriq, Cairo, 2009a.
Rāfiʿ, Sāhir, *al-Ẓāhir Baybars*, Dār Mašāriq, Cairo, 2009b.
Reid, Robert W., "Mongolian Weaponry in the Secret History of the Mongols", *Mongolian Studies* 15, 1992, pp. 85–96.
Röhricht, Reinhold, "Les batailles de Hims (1281 et 1299)", *Archives de l'Orient latin* 1, 1881 (reprint 1964), pp. 633–652.
Runciman, Steven, *A History of the Crusades*, 3 vols., Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989.
al-Šāʿir, Muḥammad Fatḥī, *Miṣr qāhirat al-maġūl fi ʿAyn Ǧālūt*, Dār al-Maʿārif, Cairo, 1995.
al-Ṣallābī, ʿAlī Muḥammad, *al-Tatār bayna al-intišār wa-l-inkisār*, Dār Ibn al-Ǧawzī, Cairo, 2009a.
al-Ṣallābī, ʿAlī Muḥammad, *al-Sulṭān Sayf al-Dīn Quṭuz wa-maʿrakat ʿAyn Ǧālūt fī ʿahd al-Mamālīk*, al-Andalus al-Ǧadīda, Cairo, 2009b.
al-Sarǧānī, Rāġib, *Qiṣṣat al-Tatār mina al-bidāya ilā ʿAyn Ǧālūt*, Muʾassasat Iqraʾ, Cairo, 2006.
Saunders, John Joseph, "The Mongol Defeat at Ain Jalut and the Restoration of the Greek Empire", in G. W. Rice (ed.), *Muslims and Mongols. Essays on Medieval Asia*, Whitcoulls, Christchurch, 1977, pp. 67–76.
Schütz, Edmond, "The Decisive Motives of Tatar Failure in the Ilkhanid-Mamluk Fights in the Holy Land", *AcOr (B)* 45, 1, 1991, pp. 3–22.
Scott, A. Shaw, *Technology, Concepts, and Tactics and the Islamic Way of War*, Master, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, 2009.
Šihāb al-Dīn, Fatḥī, *ʿAyn Ǧālūt*, Dār al-Bašīr li-l-Ṭaqāfa wa-l-ʿUlūm, Cairo, 2000.
Smail, Raymond Charles, *Crusading Warfare (1097–1193)*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1956.
Smith, John Masson, "'Ayn Jālūt: Mamlūk Success or Mongol Failure?", *HJAS* 44, 1984, pp. 307–345.
Smith, John Masson, "Nomads on Ponies *vs.* Slaves on Horses", *JAOS* 118, 1, 1998, pp. 54–62.
Talbi, Alaa, "L'impact de la présence mongole dans l'imaginaire de la population syrienne. Essai sur la typologie de la peur", in Denise Aigle (ed.), *Le Bilād al-Šām face aux mondes extérieurs. La perception de l'Autre et la représentation du Souverain*, Presses de l'Ifpo, Damascus, Beirut, 2012, pp. 385–397.
Ṭalīmāt, Ġāzī Muḫtar, *ʿAyn Ǧālūt: masraḥiyya šiʿriyya tārīḫiyya*, Dār Ṭalās, Damascus, 1996.
Thorau, Peter, "The Battle of ʿAyn Ǧālūt: A Re-Examination", in Peter Edbury (ed.), *Crusade and Settlement*, University College Cardiff Press, Cardiff, 1985, pp. 236–241.
Thorau, Peter, *The Lion of Egypt: Sultan Baybars I and the Near East in the Thirteenth Century*, Longman, London, New York, 1992.
Waterson, James, *The Knights of Islam. The Wars of the Mamluks*, Greenhill Book, London, 2007.
Yūsuf, ʿAbd al-Tawwāb, *Min kulli balad ʿArabī qiṣa: al-ṭarīq ilā ʿAyn Ǧālūt. Qiṣat Miṣr*, Maktabat Miṣr, Cairo, 1998.
Zouache, Abbès, "Théorie militaire, stratégie, tactique et combat au Proche-Orient (v^e-vii^e/xi^e-xiii^e siècle). Bilan et perspectives", in Abbès Zouache & Mathieu Eychenne (dir.), *La guerre dans le Proche-Orient médiéval. État de la question, lieux communs, nouvelles approches*, Ifao, Ifpo, Cairo, 2015, pp. 59–88.

© IFAO 2026 AnIsl en ligne https://www.ifao.egnet.net