



Palestine in the Islamic history

The Abbasid Caliphate was established in the East; the Fatimid Caliphate in Egypt, parts of North Africa and Syria, and the Umayyad Caliphate in Andalus. The Crusades took place under these circumstances.

The political map of the region before the Crusades

Forty years before the Crusades, the Turkish Saljuks had succeeded in dominating Baghdad and took over the rule under the nominal Abbasid Caliphate. The Saljuks had managed to dominate over larger parts of Persia, northern Iraq, Armenia and Asia Minor around 1040 CE. The Saljuk ruler, Toghrol Bic, dominated over Bain 1055 CE.

The Saljuks spread their rule over the Byzantines in Asia Minor. On 19 August 1071 CE, the Malathkard battle, under the command of the Saljuk ruler Alb Arsalan, took place, and a catastrophe befell the Byzantines till the end of the eleventh century CE.

In 1071 CE, the Saljuks seized most of Palestine except for Arsout, and dismissed the Fatimid dominion from it. The Saljuks expanded their dominion to include most of Syria.

In 1092 CE (485 H [Hijra]), the Saljuk Sultan Malikshah passed away, thereby breaking down the Saljuks' dominion and launching many long and severe battles among them over the dominion and power. In 1096 CE, their rule was divided into five kingdoms: Sultanate of Persia (under the ruler Birkiyarouq), Kingdom of Khurasan and beyond the River (under the ruler Singer), Kingdom



of Aleppo (under the ruler Radwan), Kingdom of Damascus (under the ruler Daqaq) and the Roman Saljuks Sultanate (under the ruler Qalj Arsalan). Most of the regions in Palestine were subjected to the Damascus regime, and during the weakness of the two rulers of Syria (Radwan and Daqaq), a lot of private rulers emerged, none of which dominated more than one city.

The Crusaders commenced their military campaign of 1098 CE (491 H) while Muslim regions in Syria, Iraq and others were torn apart because of their differences and bloody conflicts. The two brothers, Radwan and Daqaq, sons of Titish, launched a war against each other in 490 H. Many battles broke out between Mohammed Ibn Malikshah Birkiyarouq because of their conflict over the power in which they exchanged victories and sermons in the Caliphate court during the period 492-497 H.

First Crusader military campaign and its results

During Pope Urban the Second's time (1088-1099 CE), the Europeans focused on the Holy Land. The Pope called on the Claremont Council on 26 November 1095 CE to restore the Holy Land by taking it back from the Muslims.

Many councils were held in Limoux, Angariz, Man, Tours, Bouwatieeh, Bordeaux, Toulouse and Neim, in which he called for launching the Crusades during the period 1095-1096 CE. He promised that any volunteer who would participate in the Crusades would be forgiven his sins. He also promised that any crusader's property would be kept under the auspices of the Church during their absence. He required that each warrior should wear a cloth cross on his tunic.



The Crusades were launched as public campaigns or callers' campaigns. They were poor in arms and in order. One of these campaigns was the campaign of Peter the Hermit, who was an eloquent person known for riding on a lame donkey barefoot and with tattered clothes. He gathered about 15,000 volunteers in France. En route to their destination, they committed the massacre of 4,000 individuals because of a dispute over rations. The bands of Walter the Penniless assembled with them in Constantinople, and they all entered the Asian seashore. A battle with the Saljuks took place and the Saljuks defeated them and killed 22,000 Crusaders. Only 3,000 Crusaders survived. As to the Volkmar and Ameikh campaigns, they began by massacring the Jews along their route. Thereafter, the two campaigns perished in Hungary!

The first Crusade campaign took place in which professional European barons and knights participated. The campaign started to overcome the Muslim regions beginning in the summer of the year 1097 CE. In March 1098 CE, the Crusades formed Al-Raha State under the leadership of the Pole Baldwin. The Crusaders besieged Antioch for nine months. The ruler of Antioch, Baggissian, had shown courage, good opinion and took precautions more than anyone else. Thus, the Crusades perished. However, if their crowds had survived, they would have dominated over the Muslim countries. One of the Armenians who was guarding the walls of the city contacted the Crusaders. They gave him money and property for opening the door of the tower he was guarding. Because of this, the Crusaders occupied the city and formed their second State on 3 June 1098 CE (491 H) under Bohemond of Normandy.

While the Saljuks were defending themselves against the Crusaders along the north of Syria, the Fatimids took the opportunity to invade and occupy Tyre in 1097 CE. They dominated over Jerusalem in



February 1098 CE, while the Crusaders were besieging Antioch. In Tripoli, the Judge Ibn Ammar, one of the followers of the Fatimids, declared his independence. The Fatimids sent to the Crusaders, during their besieging of Antioch, a mission so as to join in alliance. They proposed to fight against the Saljuks provided that they should capture Palestine while the northern region (Syria) would be under the dominion of the Crusaders. The Crusaders sent a delegation to Egypt to manifest their "good intention".

While the Saljuks were engaged with the Crusades, the Fatimids were engaged in expanding their dominion in Palestine over the Saljuk's State till their borders reached Al-Kalb River north of the Jordan River in the east!

Treacheries and betrayals of the States of the cities, which were so eager to gain the Crusaders' friendship during their expansion, were manifested. This happened when the ruler of the Sheezar region contacted the Crusaders and agreed not to encounter them and to provide them with what they needed, such as food and rations. He even sent two guides with them to help them find the right routes. The city of Homos also gave them gifts. The city of Mosyaf concluded a treaty with them. Tripoli paid to them taxes and provided them with guides. Beirut paid them money and proposed to be subjugated to them in case they managed to seize Jerusalem.

Raymond of Toulouse (Prince of Province and Toulouse in France) continued to lead the rest of the Crusaders' march to Jerusalem. Their number was only 1,000 knights and 5,000 infantry. In the springtime of the year 1099 CE, they entered Palestine. They passed by Acre, whose ruler provided the Crusaders with supplies, then by Qeisarya and Arsouf. After that, they captured Al-Ramleh, Lod and Bethlehem. On 7 June 1099 CE, the siege of Jerusalem started.



Iftikhar Al-Dawalah, who was appointed by the Fatimids, ruled it. The city was captured on 15 July 1099 (23 Sha'aban 492 H). The Crusaders continued killing the Muslims for one week. They killed more than 70,000 inside Al-Aqsa Mosque, including many groups of Muslim chiefs, scholars and worshippers. Both the Fatimid and the Abbasid States did not do anything to help but rather kept silent regarding these events. Jerusalem was ruled by the leader of the Crusades, Godfry of Bouillon, who was called humbly the "Jerusalem defender". Nablus and Hebron surrendered to the Crusaders.

It is narrated that only 300 knights and 2,000 infantry of the Crusaders remained for this reason--they could not expand their dominion over more territories because most of them returned home after Jerusalem was conquered. Therefore, the kingdoms of the Crusaders became like islands surrounded by enemies. Nevertheless, these kingdoms continued to survive for 200 years whereafter the last one perished because of lack of supplies and expeditions. The Muslims were weak because they split into groups, making their numbers very small. They did not take advantage of the opportunity to overcome the Crusaders during their periods of spreading out over large areas in limited numbers. The Muslims lagged till it was too late. The Crusaders became strong during the Muslim period of weakness and it was no longer an easy task to drive the Crusaders out.

The Crusaders continued to capture more cities in Palestine. Jaffa was captured during the besieging of Jerusalem by Genoan ships (in the Mediterranean Sea) on 15 June 1099 CE. They also captured the eastern area of Lake Tiberias (Al-Sawad area) in May of 1100 CE. The Crusaders also captured Haifa by force during the month of Shawwal 94 H (August 1100 CE) with the help of a great fleet from



Venice. They dominated over Arsouq peacefully and drove its inhabitants out. They captured Qeisarya by force on 17 May 1109 CE. They killed its inhabitants and robbed their property on 17 May 1101 CE. Thus, the Crusaders imposed their dominion over Palestine except Ashkelon owing to the Egyptians (the Fatimid) supplying it with ammunition, men and funds every year. Although the Crusaders used to besiege Ashkelon every year, they failed to capture it until the year 1153 CE (548 H). In that year, Ashkelon's inhabitants managed to drive the Crusaders back. But, when they got desperate and were about to retreat, they received tidings that Ashkelon's people were in dispute. So, the Crusaders waited with patience. The reason for the dispute between the parties of Ashkelon was because of a power struggle; each party alleged that they alone achieved the victory. However, the dispute increased in size till one person from one of the two parties was killed. This led to a much worse situation and, consequently, war broke out between them and many of them were killed. The Crusaders were hoping for this window of opportunity and shortly thereafter, they advanced to Ashkelon and easily occupied it.

Although the Crusaders were small in number, they managed to maintain great control by building fortified castles that were built like islands in many areas in Sham. And as the struggle continued between the Muslims themselves, some of them resorted to getting help from the Crusaders to overpower their foes. The Muslims at large were weaker, and the Crusaders became more powerful and dominant, to such a degree that they played the role of a guardian policing the region.

The struggle between Baktash and Tagatken over Damascus continued, and Baktash sought help from the king of the Crusaders in 498 H and from all those "who wanted corruption." However, the



king's only help was to push Baktash for further corruption, which ultimately led to his downfall and the triumph of Tagatken. At the battle between the Fatimids and the Crusaders in 498 H, in an area between Ashkelon and Jaffa, the Fatimids were supported by a force of more than 300 knights from Damascus, and the Crusaders were helped by a group of Muslims led by Baktash Bin Tatash. When the Sultan's army, under the leadership of Barsaq Bin Barsaq, came from Iraq in 509 H to Damascus for the sake of fighting the Crusaders, the rulers of Halab and Damascus feared for their own interests and power. They collaborated, under the leadership of Tagatken, with the Antakya Crusader troops to oppose the Sultan's army. Tagatken fought the Crusaders of Bayt Al-Maqdis and won back the city of Rafnya after the Crusaders captured it.

Generally, however, the Muslim struggle (Jihad) against the Crusaders continued, though it actually lacked a strategic plan or organization. Some of the other reasons for the continuation of the struggle include the fact that there were many Muslim leaders, who appeared and disappeared frequently, which led to a lack of stable leadership. Also, the conflict with the Crusaders was distributed on many fronts simultaneously in Belad El-Sham. Furthermore, Muslims did not have a powerful centre that could be used as a launching base for their assaults on the Crusaders. More often than not, the battles were mainly in the form of a single Muslim city or castle trying to defend itself, or expand, against the Crusaders.

The wars continued between the Muslims and the Crusaders. Sometimes the Muslims triumphed, and in other times the Crusaders achieved the victory. It was not difficult for Muslims to get into the middle of Palestine and fight the Crusaders at Ramleh or Jaffa, for instance, but the Crusaders continued to have great control over the areas they occupied.



As a result, many new Muslim leaders appeared, but they were not strong enough to unite the Muslim forces for the fight against the Crusaders. Nonetheless, these leaders kept the spirit of resisting the Crusaders alive, and they inflicted them with many casualties and damages. They deprived the Crusaders from the security they were after, and managed to kill and capture many of their prominent leaders. For example, when Mu'een Al-Dawlah Saqman was fighting a war with Shams Al-Dawlah Jakramesh, and Harran was surrounded by the Crusader forces in 497 H, they started to contact each other and pledged a solemn oath for sacrificing themselves for the sake of God and His retribution. They gathered near Al-Khabour area in an army composed of more than 10,000 men from various nationalities, among who were Turks, Arabs and Kurds. They met with the Crusaders at Al-Bleekh River and defeated them. The Muslims captured the Crusader leader Burdawel and traded him for 35 dinars. They were also able to reclaim 160 Muslim prisoners of war that had previously been captured by the Crusaders. In this battle, however, more than 12,000 Crusader soldiers were killed.

Imad El-Deen Zanki carries Al-Jihad banner

The long era of Al-Jihad against the Crusaders entered a new phase with the appearance of Imad El-Deen Zanki Bin Aqснаqr, who founded the Zanki State at Mousel and Halab. Zanki was appointed as a ruler of Mousel in 521 H after he had shown great skill and efficiency in ruling the States of Basra and Waset in Iraq. During the holy month of Muharram in the year 522 H, he managed to gain control over Halab. Zanki started to fight the Crusaders, and he defeated them in many battles.

Zanki's efforts for uniting the Moslems against the Crusaders were relentless. He recaptured the cities of Hama, Hams, Ba'albek, Sarji,



Dara, Ma'rra, Kafr Taleb, Al-Akrad, Shahrazour, Al-Hadeetha and many other cities, as well as Al-Soor castle in the Abu Bakr area, Al-Hameediya castle, Ba'reen's castle and Al-Ashhab's castle from the Hakarian Kurds.

In the year 534 H, Zanki tried to capture Damascus twice, but his effort was in vain. Damascus was really the key to getting Palestine back. Unfortunately, Mu'een El-Deen Anz, the ruler at the time, contacted the Crusaders and made an alliance with them against Zanki and promised them the city of Banias and they agreed. But Zanki went after them before they came to Damascus and they decided to back off. Nonetheless, Mu'een El-Deen kept his promise of giving up Banias, not to the Crusaders, but to the Muslims!

The most famous triumph ever made by Zanki, however, is his conquering the city of Al-Raha, and his destroying the kingdom of the Crusaders that was established there. He besieged the city for four weeks, and opened it perforce on the sixth of Jamadi Al Akhera in the year 539 H. He also captured all the cities that were under the province of the previous kingdom in the Peninsula. He also liberated the city of Surooj, and all the cities that were captured by the Crusaders adjacent to the east side of the Euphrates, except the city of Beerah.

After a life of Jihad that lasted for 20 years, Imad El-Deen Zanki was martyred in the middle of September in the year 1146 CE (5 Rabee' El-Awal 541 H). This was accomplished by an act of treason by some of his followers while he was besieging Ja'beer's castle at the age of 60 or so. According to Ibn El-Katheer, Zanki was an able politician and was highly respected and esteemed by his military and civil subordinates. Before he came to power, the country was a wasteland full of corruption and alliances with the Crusaders by the



previous rulers. When he came into power, all of that was changed, and he set the country right and brought its prosperity back to it. "Zanki was the best of kings in form and manners. He was courageous and powerful and managed to take control over all the other kings at the time. He was very kind with women, and very generous with all his subordinates." After his untimely death, Zanki was later known as the Martyr.

Zanki worked in the most difficult circumstances of conflict between the rulers and princes of the Salajiq dynasty on the one hand, and between them and the Abbasid dynasty on the other. In addition to that, he suffered from the atmosphere imposed by the inheritance ruling traditions and the greed of princes and rulers to obtain any city or a castle that they could reach. Moreover, the Crusaders were very powerful and strong during his time. Despite that, he managed to substantiate a firm base of Jihad against the Crusaders to the north of Iran and Syria. He also defeated the Crusaders and humiliated them more than once. Zanki made it possible to fight for regaining the lost land, and he was a model leader under the banner of Islam who brought back the hope of liberating the occupied holy grounds of the Muslims all over the world.

After he passed away, his State was divided between his two sons according to the inheritance tradition; Nour El-Deen Mahmoud took the State of Halab and its subordinates, and Sayf El-Deen Ghazi took the State of Mousel and its subordinates.

Nour El-Deen Mahmoud was born 20 years after the fall of Jerusalem at the hands of the Crusaders on 17 Shawwal in 511 H (February 1118 CE). He was tall, good-looking with dark



complexion and a light beard. He married the daughter of Mu'een El-Deen Anz in the year 541 H and had a girl and two sons.

Under his rule, a new great phase for Jihad started in Belad El-Sham. During his reign, which lasted for 28 years, Nour El-Deen Mahmoud had one goal--uniting Muslims and liberating their occupied lands.

He left no stone unturned for the sake of uniting Muslims and elevating them in all the aspects of life within an integrated Islamic pattern to regain the Islamic glory and expel the unjust occupation of the Crusaders.

To accomplish this purpose, Nour El-Deen Mahmoud initiated an Islamic renaissance that stressed the need for the Islamic solution. Ibn El-Katheer describes him, saying, "Of all the kings I read about in pre-Islamic periods, and in the Islamic period as well, I never saw a king more just and kind to his subordinates among the Rashideen caliphs and Umar Bin Abdul Aziz than Nour El-Deen Mahmoud. He was very clever and witty, and was well aware of his time." He never valued men for their social status and wealth. He only esteemed those who were honest and hard working.

He was also known for his piety and love of God. He was very keen to perform all the prayers and celebrate the ceremonies of Islam. He performed the Isha' prayer (the evening prayer), and then after midnight would awake to start praying till it was time for the dawn prayer. He also fasted a lot.

He was known for his sound erudite knowledge. He was well versed with the Hanafiah tenet and was given license to relate the Prophet's talks and speeches. He wrote a book on the concept of Jihad. He was a sedate person and was bestowed with a great deal of charisma.



"He was fearful though lenient and merciful. And in his court there was only science and religion and consulting on Jihad. In all his life he never uttered a bad word in anger or pleasure. He was a grave, silent man."

He was disinterested and modest "to such a degree that his expenses were not different from the poorest and neediest of his subordinates." When his wife complained from the hardships of the difficult life he put her in, he gave her three shops he owned in Hams city and told her, "That is all that I have. And do not expect me to lay a finger on the money of the Muslims I am entrusted with because I fear the wrath of God."

The grave Sheik Al-Naysabouri told him once: "I beg you, do not jeopardize yourself and Islam. If you were killed in a battle, the Muslims will all be killed."

The continuation of Jihad against the Crusaders

The Crusaders whose cities and castles were conquered gathered in the city of Sour. Salah El-Deen Al-Ayoubi was very lenient with them and allowed them to go to that city freely. So they started to send calls for help and received back up and support till they were strong again. Furthermore, Salah El-Deen Al-Ayoubi set free the king Jae in the year 584 H on the condition that he should go to France. Rather, Jae headed to Sour and took the leadership of the Crusaders with the help of the fleet of Biza the Italian. On that occasion, Ibn El-Katheer says, "It was all done because of the mistake by Salah El-Deen to let all those he captured go free. Thereafter, he was full of remorse for what he had done."

The Crusaders attacked the city of Akka from Sour in the year 585 H (1189 CE), and they waited there till they got the support they



needed from the third campaign of the Crusaders, which was called upon by Pope Urban the Second to regain Jerusalem. Three European kings led the campaign--the Emperor of Germany Fredrik Barbarosa, whose most men died on the trip, Richard "the Lionhearted" king of England, who came by sea, and Philip Augustas, the king of France. King Richard was a remarkable man. He "had the evil of the Crusaders and their hatred for Muslims. He was courageous, smart and patient. He was a great source of trouble for Muslims." These three forces besieged the city of Akka (on Rabee' El-Thani-Jamadi El-Aoula 587 H [June 1191 CE]), and it fell into their hands on 17 Jamadi El-Aoula 587 (12 July 1191 CE). With this occupation, the Crusaders managed to create a base for themselves in Palestine again. The Muslims hit back, and there were many battles between both sides. However, the Crusaders continued their march and expanded their territories on the south coast by occupying the cities of Haifa and Jaffa.

It is important to note that the struggle was a bitter and bloody one between the two sides. Ibn El-Katheer noted that Salah El-Deen defended Akka very bravely, and he and his forces fought for it for 37 months and killed more than 50,000 soldiers from the Crusaders. The third campaign of the Crusaders ended when Salah El-Deen made the Ramleh treaty with Richard the Lionhearted on 21 Sha'aban 588 H (1 September 1192 CE). The treaty was held for three years and three months, during which time the Crusaders took control of the coast from Jaffa to Akka and were allowed to visit Jerusalem and to carry out their commercial activities with either of the two sides. It is of extreme importance to elaborate here on some of the clauses of the treaty, which, unfortunately, some of those defeatists who live among us now take against Salah El-Deen as a man who wasted the rights of Islam and Muslims and turned to making up with the Jews:



1. Salah El-Deen was not in favour of the treaty. When he gathered the consulting princes to discuss the issue, his opinion was to refuse the treaty. According to Al-Imad Al-Asfahani, Salah El-Deen said, "Thanks to God we are great in force, and our victory is approaching. We are used to Jihad, so it is difficult for us to live without it, and we have nothing to do more than fighting the Crusaders. I see that I should leave everything regarding the treaty behind. We should opt for Jihad instead, and God is with us, and upon His Grace and Care we depend." However, his counselors agreed to the treaty on the pretext that the country was about to be totally destroyed; the soldiers were very tired and fatigued, and food supplies were scarce. If there were no treaty, the Crusaders would insist on fighting, which would be very bad for the Muslims. If there was a treaty, the country would take a rest and restore its prosperity, and the soldiers would rest as well and be able to prepare for retaliation. They all agreed that the Crusaders were not of the kind that abide by their word of promise, so they advised Salah El-Deen to make the treaty so that the forces of the Crusaders would dismantle and divert. They kept pushing and pressuring him till he finally agreed to the treaty.

2. This treaty was a short, temporary truce. It was not intended to last as a permanent solution. The Islamic shariah (the Muslim code of religious law) authorizes the making of temporary truces with the enemy for the general good of the Muslims. The history of Islam is full of such treaties. However, the battles continued immediately after the treaty.

3. This treaty did not contain any admittance on the part of the Muslims for the Crusaders to have any legal right in Palestine. The treaty simply stated that there should be no fighting over the lands they had occupied for a certain period of time.



What a great difference there is between this treaty, of which Muslims had made many over their history, and the peace agreement made now with the Zionist entity in our contemporary time.

Salah El-Deen died shortly afterward, mayGod rest his soul, on 27 Safar 589 H (4 March 1193 CE), i.e., only six months after the treaty.

The Ayoubis and their struggle with the Crusaders

After his death, Salah El-Deen's successors were fiercely fighting each other--a thing that weakened the Muslims and strengthened the kingdom of the Crusaders in Akka, which was expanding at the expense of the Muslims. The love of power and pleasure, even at the expense of principles and values, was the basic characteristic of some of the Sultans of the Ayoubi State. They made alliances more than once with the Crusaders to help them against their rivals. Sometimes they even offered Jerusalem city to the Crusaders in exchange for help against the Sultan of Sham or Egypt and vice versa!

The Crusaders were very happy with the role they played, but their greed was centred on everyone and everything. But their spring did not last very long.

The fourth campaign sent by the Crusaders to the west in 601 H (1204 CE) ended in Constantinople and did not reach as far as Sham or Egypt. As to the fifth campaign, it was launched from Akka under the leadership of its own king, Johanna Bareen, to the city of Demiat in Egypt between 615-618 H (1218-1221 CE). When the Ayoubian Sultan Al-Kamel Mohammed Bin Mohammed Bin Ayoub realized the gravity of the situation, he offered peace to the



Crusaders in exchange for the surrender of Jerusalem and most of Salah El-Deen's liberated cities. They refused and asked for the southeast of Jordan, too, i.e. the cities of Karak and Shoubak. As a result, the great king Issa Bin Ahmed Bin Ayoub, the ruler of Damascus, ruined and sabotaged the walls of Jerusalem in 616 H (1219 CE) so that they could be of no use to the Crusaders should they invade the Holy City. But the Ayoubis finally gathered their forces and managed to defeat the Crusaders, who returned, humiliated, to Akka after they had missed a great opportunity.

The discord between Al-Kamel Mohammed and the great Issa led to the former going to seek help from Fredrik the Second, the emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, who became regent on the throne of the kingdom of the Crusaders in Akka. Al-Kamel promised the emperor the city of Jerusalem if he helped him against his brother the great Issa. Fredrik the Second led the sixth campaign of the Crusaders and reached Akka in the year 625 H (1228 CE). Even though the great Issa died and his brothers Al-Kamel and Al-Ashraf took his State and gave his son Al-Nassir Dawoud the cities of Karak, Balqa, Agwar, Salt and Shoubak, and Al-Kamel was not in need for Fredrik the Second any more, he gave him Jerusalem just to fulfill the promise he made to him! Fredrik, at the time, did not have the power to force Muslims to surrender Jerusalem. He even begged, at certain stages of his negotiation with Al-Kamel, for it. Fredrik was quoted as saying to Al-Kamel, "I am your subordinate and faithful slave. If your Highness granted me the honour to take the country, it would be a great gift that would make me proud of myself amongst all the kings of the sea." Al-Kamel responded, and made the Jaffa treaty with Fredrik in 626 H (18 February 1229 CE). The treaty was meant to last for 10 years. It stated that the Crusaders would take the Holy City of Jerusalem, Bayt Laham, Tabneen, Honeen, Sayda and a strip of Jerusalem land that went through Al-Lad and ended at



Jaffa, in addition to the cities of Nassira and the west of Al-Jaleel. The treaty also stated that the holy shrine of Al-Sakhra dome and its mosque should be left to the Muslims.

Thereafter, Jerusalem was returned to the control of the Crusaders. "The Muslim people were very saddened by the loss of Jerusalem; they were crying and performing obsequies everywhere. The scholars and preachers repeatedly said that this incident was a shame on the Muslim kings, and the people of Damascus started to hate Al-Kamel and resent him for what he did." And Ibn Katheer is quoted as saying, "It was a great shock for Muslims, and the whole nation was weakened and self disappointed (131)."

The struggle between the successors of Salah El-Deen continued. Al Nassir Dawoud, the monarch of Jordan, seized the opportunity of the termination of the Jaffa treaty and the fortification of Jerusalem by the Crusaders. In violation of the stipulations of the treaty, he took back Jerusalem and expelled the Crusaders from it on 6 Jamadi El Aoula 637 H (7 December 1239 CE). However, Al-Salah Isma'il, the monarch of Damascus, gave it back to the Crusaders in the year 638 H (1240 CE)! He did it in exchange for their help to him against the ruler of Egypt, Al Salah Najm El-Deen Ayoub. Not only that, but he also gave them the cities of Ashkelon, Sayda, Tabarriyya and the rest of the coastal cities, as well as Alshaqeef castle, Al-Mojeb river, Safad castle and Amel mountain. This behaviour increased the resentment and malcontent of the Muslims, "who were very angry at Al-Saleh Isma'il." Once again, Jerusalem was in the hands of the Crusaders.

When Al-Salah Isma'il mobilized his forces to join the Crusaders against Al-Salah Ayoub in Gaza, most of his soldiers refused to join the Crusaders against their fellow Muslims. Instead, they took the



side of the Egyptian soldiers and defeated the Crusaders bitterly. But Al-Salah Ayoub made another treaty with the Crusaders in 638 H (1240 CE), and they regained their control over Jerusalem and the other territories under their rule.

Again, the Ayoubis started to fight amongst themselves for power, and Jerusalem was the prize, manipulated to achieve their greed for power and control. Al-Salah Isma'il once again offered the Crusaders an alliance in Akka in exchange for permanent control over Jerusalem and the holy places, including the Dome of the Rock and the Al Aqsa Mosque. Al-Nassir Dawoud joined him with this proposal. Meanwhile, Al Salah Najm El-Deen Ayoub, the monarch of Egypt, offered the Crusaders the same thing.

The Crusaders chose Al-Salah Isma'il for the alliance. He invaded Egypt with the assistance of Al-Nassir Dawoud, and Al-Mansour Ibrahim, the king of Hams. On the other hand, Najm El-Deen sought help from the Khawarezmia, who came to him with an army comprised of more than 10,000 soldiers, and occupied Tabbariya and Nablus. These forces entered Jerusalem on 17 July 642 H (1244 CE) and restored the city entirely to the Muslims. With that, Jerusalem was finally under control by the Muslims. They kept its Islamic identity until 10 December 1917 CE, when the English occupied it.

Then the Khawarezmia helped Al-Salah Ayoub against Al-Salah Isma'il and his allies, and the second Gaza battle took place (near the city of Gaza in a place called Herbia) in 642 H (1244 CE). Al-Salah Isma'il and the Crusaders were severely defeated, and the casualties of the Crusaders were estimated to be more than 30,000 soldiers and more than 800 prisoners were taken to Egypt. This battle was the strongest blow to the Crusaders after the battle of



Hitteen and is considered one of the most crucial battles in the history of Palestine because the Crusaders never were able to regain their strength even though they tried to keep what they already had.

Then Al-Salah Ayoub took control over the cities Jerusalem, Hebron, Bayt Jabreen, Al-Agwar and Damascus in the year 642 H (1245 CE). He punished the Crusaders and occupied Tabbariya castle and Ashkelon. Because of this, the kingdom of the Crusaders was limited to the gates of Jaffa in the year 644 H (1247 CE). Egypt was later attacked by the seventh campaign by the Crusaders, headed by Louise the Ninth, the king of France, in the year 646 H (1249 CE). The campaign failed, and the king was taken prisoner and later was set free to go to Akka. One year later the Ayoubi dynasty was terminated in Egypt, and the Mamaleek dynasty took over in the year 647 H (1250 CE). Thereafter, a new phase of Jihad against the Mongolians and the Crusaders began.

Al-Mamaleek and their confrontation with the Tatars

In the seventh expatriation century, the thirteenth century, the Mongolian (Tartarian) threat to the Islamic State started to emerge. The Mongolian tribes were all united under the leadership of Jenkis Khan and started a huge campaign of expansion. They controlled Manchuria, China and Korea, and they destroyed the army of the Khwarezmia Muslim State in 1221 CE. The Khwarezmia army was the strongest hurdle against the Mongolian expansion to the Islamic world, which had previously triumphed over the Mongolians more than once.

Jenkis Khan died in the year 624 H (1227 CE), but the Mongolians continued their march and entered Middle Asia and Russia and controlled Moscow and the Ukraine. They attacked Poland and defeated the German and Scandinavian armies and went deeply into



Europe. They also headed to the Islamic world and took Turkestan, Afghanistan, India and Persia.

The Mongolians were very ruthless and merciless with the countries they occupied. The whole world was afraid of their savagery and barbarism. They were winning the battles not only by their force and efficiency, but also by the psychological fear they inflicted in the minds of their opponents. The Mongolians invested the thunderbolt tactics in their wars, which were dependent upon swift movement. They also depended on the psychological war tactics by letting their opponents know about their horrible austerities before they even met them.

The Muslim State at the time was suffering from disjunction and weakness, so it was easy for the Mongolians to sweep entire Islamic armies and take over their kingdoms. The Muslim leaders were so weak then that one of them sent a pair of slippers on which his face was drawn so that the feet of Holako could honour him if he wore the slippers!

Thereafter, the Mongolians took Iraq. They besieged Baghdad, the capital of the Abbasid dynasty, which was suffering from great weakness, the cause of which was the conspiracy of the minister Ibn Al-Alqami with the Mongolians to topple the Caliph. In addition, he demobilized the majority of the official army, which was once composed of more than 100,000 soldiers; it was reduced to only 10,000. Baghdad fell at the hands of the Mongolians in the year of 656 H (1258 CE). For 40 days, the Mongolians massacred the people of Baghdad. Ibn Katheer states that there were more than 800,000 dead and some say as many as 2,000,000. It is said that the Caliph Al-Mu'tassem Bi'llah was put in a bag and killed by kicking.



The Mongolians invaded the rest of the cities and took over Harran, Al Raha and Deyar Bakr, then they crossed the Euphrates and took Halab in the year 658 H (1260 CE). The Ayoubi rulers in Sham were very coward and defeatists; Al-Nassir Yousef Al-Ayoubi, the ruler of Halab, announced his submission to the Mongolians who, despite that, entered Halab and massacred the citizens to the degree that there were streams of Muslim blood throughout the city. Al-Mansour Bin Al-Modhaffar, the ruler of Hama, took his sons and women and escaped to Egypt, leaving Hama and its people behind him to meet there doomed fate. Al-Nassir Yousef went from Damascus to Gaza so that he could go to Egypt. He deserted Damascus and its people. Thus the Ayoubi dynasty was terminated in Belad El-Sham very quickly.

The Mongolians reached Damascus and took it without force in the year 1260 CE, and then betrayed its people. During the spring, they occupied Nablus and Karak and headed to Gaza without facing any resistance whatsoever. Thus, Palestine was divided between the kingdom of Akka ruled by the Crusaders and the Tartarian Mongolians. Palestine was once more under the onus of the blasphemers.

The Crusaders and the Tatars

Europe was very happy with the Mongolian invasion of the Islamic State and tried to coordinate with them against their common enemy. They also tried to spread Christianity amongst the Tartarians themselves. They partially succeeded at first, for it was known that the Mongolian leader Holako had an inclination towards the Nastorian Christians, and his court was full of many of them. His wife was a Christian, too. She played a major role, of which the Church was very proud, in diverting the Mongolian march from



Europe. Instead, the march was directed at the Islamic State. Moreover, the Mongolian leader of the Ayn Jalout battle, Katbaga, was a Christian. The Christian influence was so great on the Mongolians that one priest described the Tartarian invasion as "a Crusader campaign in the full sense of the word--a full Nestorian Christianity." The West even hoped that Holako and his leader Katbaga would eliminate the Muslims entirely. Hatoon the First, the king of Armenia, and Bohemond the Sixth, the prince of Tripoli, along with the Crusader princes in Sour, Akka and Cyprus, made an alliance with the Mongolians that stressed the elimination of Muslims in Asia and the return of Jerusalem to the Crusaders.

At that time, Egypt, under the Mamaleek dynasty, was ruled by the Sultan Al-Modhaffar Qutz in 657 H (1259 CE). He was a leader known for his piety and love of God and Islam. He was the student of the greatest scholar at the time, Al-Aziz Bin Abdul Salaam. Ibn Katheer said that Qutz was "a courageous hero who loved doing the good and following Islam; people loved him very much and kept making invocations for him."

After a few months of his ascension to power, he faced the problem of the Tartarian invasion and received a threatening letter from Holako, before he left Syria, telling him to surrender Egypt. The letter read, "Look what we have done with the others and take a lesson from them; surrender, because we show no mercy to begging or crying. Where do you think you could escape from us? Who can protect you from our swords? Neither your forts nor men nor invocation can save you from us."

But Qutz, the Muslim leader who only feared God, knew that victory comes from God, and if he prepared well for the battle and made everything connected to God, victory would be achieved. He



decided to announce the holy Jihad and to confront the Crusader invasion. After reading the letter, he gave orders to kill the messengers and divide them into two halves, and their heads were to be hung over one of the gates of Cairo (The Gate of Zuweela), as a sign of an unflinching determination to fight and challenge the Tartarian invasion.

Furthermore, Qutz decided to seize the initiative and attack the Tartarian forces to boost the morale of the Muslims and to emphasize the spirit of Jihad that fosters the concept of martyrdom for the sake of God. Further, he would be defending the Muslim land of Egypt and would liberate the occupied Muslim land in Belad El-Sham, including Palestine and the holy Al Aqsa Mosque. This would send the Tartarians a message that he was a new kind of man they had never encountered before, because the best way to defend is to attack.

In the holy month of Ramadhan in the year 658 H (1260 CE), the Muslim army, under the leadership of Qutz, crossed the borders and liberated Gaza, where he stayed for one day. Then they headed north to meet the Tartarian forces. The two armies met at the Ayn Jalout area to the northeast of Palestine.

Ayn Jalout Battle

Ayn Jalout witnessed one of the most crucial battles in history on Friday, 25 Ramadhan 658 H (6 September 1260 CE). The Tartars had the logistic and scientific potential to win the fight against the Muslim army. Their advantages included:

- Efficiency and experience gained from the great number of wars they witnessed.



- High morale because they were never defeated.
- They had a large number of fighters and more weaponry.
- The efficiency of their cavalry who knew many advanced fighting techniques such as the thunderbolt method, which was a distinctive feature of the Tartarians.
- They were able to manage well because they were close to the bases of their supplies and support.
- The strategic locations of their army were better than those of the Muslim army.

Despite the overwhelming superiority of the Tartarian army, the Muslim army scored a momentous, exceptional victory. The Qutz army was characterized by the fact that it was an "Islamic" army aimed at consolidating Islam and protecting its Holy Land. The great scholars and religious men of Egypt joined this army making it was a sacred army constructed and built for the sake of prioritizing the word of God and supporting its religion, Islam, in the land. Moreover, the army was further characterized by having a faithful leadership who cherished a true "will to fight", the crucial factor in winning any battle.

Qutz told his army to wait until they finished the Friday prayers: "Do not fight them till it is sunset and the shadows appear and the winds stir, and the preachers and people start to implore God for us in their prayers", and thereafter the fighting began.

Jullanar, the wife of Qutz, was killed during the battle. He rushed towards her saying, "Oh my beloved one". She told him while uttering her last breath, "Do not say that, and care more for Islam."



Her soul ascended to God after telling her husband that the Jihad for the sake of God and Islam is more important than love and personal relations. Qutz stood up saying "Islamah...Islamah". The whole army repeated that word after him until they achieved their victory.

During the battle, the horse of Qutz was also killed, and he stepped down and started to fight on the ground till they brought him another horse. He refused taking the horse of the other princes who volunteered their horses to him saying that he did not want to impede them from their holy duty, rescuing himself instead. He was asked why he did not ride on a horse and why he jeopardized himself and Islam. He answered, "If I was killed, I would have gone to Heaven, and as to Islam, Almighty God is well capable of protecting it." After the battle was over and the victory was achieved for the Muslims, Qutz stepped down from his horse and smeared his face with the dust of the battleground and kneeled to God in thankfulness and gratitude.

The Muslims immediately started to chase the Mongolians, and Qutz entered Damascus five days after Ayn Jalout battle. The chase continued to Halab, and when the Mongolians felt the approach of the Muslims, they left behind the Muslim prisoners, and suffered a great deal. In one month's time, the Muslims were able to restore Belad El-Sham entirely from the hands of the Tartars and the Mongolians.

This battle is considered to be one of the greatest battles in history in which the Mongolian invasion was put to an end. It was the beginning of the end of the Mongolians, who were forced to retreat. This liberated Belad El-Sham from their occupation. As for the Mongolians who stayed in the Muslim State, they embraced Islam



in great numbers and that was another victory for the religion of God.

Al-Mamaleek and their elimination of the Crusaders

Although the Tartarian Mongolians were expelled from Palestine and the Muslims crushed them at Ayn Jalout, the kingdom of the Crusaders in Akka kept its control over the coastal area that stretched from Jaffa to Akka. The Sultans of the Mamaleek dynasty took the responsibility of liberating the rest of Palestine till they managed to expel the last Crusader from the Holy Land 30 years after the Ayn Jalout battle.

Al-Dhaher Bebars succeeded the Sultan Qutz, whose reign lasted for about one year. Bebars played a major role in fighting the Crusaders in Belad El-Sham, for he was constantly assaulting their bases there. Sometimes he resorted to making treaties with them if he felt there was a need. The custom was that the treaty should last for 10 years and 10 months and 10 days and 10 hours. After finishing with the internal problems in his State, he turned to fight the Crusaders. In the year 662 H (1263 CE), he went to Palestine. When he arrived at Akka, the Crusaders came to ask him for renewing the treaty saying that they would release the Muslim prisoners and keep the promises they made. But Bebars did not consider their demands and went on to attack their various bases, especially Akka, so that he would know their level of strength and exhaust their resources and strike them at the right time and place.

He once again headed to Palestine in the year 664 H (1265 CE) and took control over Qaysarryat El-Mahsana and destroyed its walls. A part of his army attacked Akka and Haifa. He conquered Arsouf in the same year.



The next year, he went to Palestine again and besieged the city of Safad and conquered it. He then came back to Palestine in the year 666 H (1267 CE), and the Crusaders asked him for a treaty. He used to follow the policy of divide-and-rule with the Crusaders so that their forces would not be united against him all at once. This policy helped him conquer the city of Antakya in the year 667 H (1268 CE). This is considered the greatest victory the Muslims ever achieved over the Crusaders since Salah El-Deen liberated Jerusalem in the year 583 H (1187 CE). Bebars agreed, after conquering Antakya, to make a treaty with Akka that lasted for 10 years on the condition that he should rule half of Akka, and he should control the heights surrounding Sayda.

The Sultan Al-Mansour Sayf El-Deen Qalawoun continued liberating Belad El-Sham from the Crusaders after Al-Dhaher Bebars died. At his time an alliance against the Muslims was formed among the Crusaders, the Tartarians and Sanqur Al-Ashqar, the deputy of Damascus, who turned on the Moslems. But their alliance failed and Qalawoun started to tighten his grip on the Crusaders and occupied Al-Marqab Fort in the year 684 H (1285 CE). He conquered Al-Ladeqyya in the year 686 H (1287 CE) and Tripoli in the year 688 H (1289 CE). Qalawoun took advantage of the unstable state of the Crusaders in Akka in particular and in Belad El-Sham in general because of the ongoing struggle over power. He was very strong and powerful and could eliminate the presence of the Crusaders in the eastern Arabic region. On the Shami coast, the Crusaders were in control of only Akka, Sour, Sayda and Etleet.

Qalawoun found that it was time for the total elimination of the Crusaders in Palestine. He used the incidence of the Crusaders attacking and killing some Muslim pilgrims as an excuse to



announce Jihad against the Crusaders. He summoned his forces from Egypt and Sham. He stayed out of Cairo waiting for the arrival of the assistance forces, but he suddenly fell ill and died in the year 689 H (1290 CE). His son Ashraf Salah El-Deen Khaleel succeeded him. The Crusaders wanted to take advantage of the situation and offered Ashraf another treaty, but he refused and took his forces and besieged Akka and liberated it in the year 1291 CE. The king of Akka, Henry the Second, escaped to Cyprus. After conquering Akka, Ashraf took Sayda , Sour, Haifa and Etleet. He gave orders to destroy all the fortifications in those cities. Thus, the last base of the Crusaders was destroyed at the hands of Al-Mamaleek dynasty, and the existence of the Crusaders in Palestine and Sham was finally terminated after two centuries (492 - 690 H [1099-1291]). With this accomplishment, Palestine was back under Islamic rule again till the British forces occupied it.