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BAHATTIN AKŞIT

İNāl al-Ajrūd, al-Malik al-Ashraf

Al-Malik al-Ashraf Sayf al-Dīn Abū l-Naṣr **İNāl** b. ‘Abdallāh al-‘Alā’ī al-Zāhirī al-Nāşirī (b. c.784/1382, d. 15 Jumādā I 865/26 February 1461), known

as **al-Ajrūd** (“the beardless”), was sultan of Mamlūk Egypt and Syria (r. 1 Rabī’ I 857–14 Jumādā I 865/12 March 1453–25 February 1461), following a long career of military slavery and leadership, court service, and family entrepreneurship, in Egypt (Cairo) and in Syria (Gaza, Safed), southeastern Anatolia (Edessa), and the eastern Mediterranean (Cyprus, Rhodes).

Enslaved in unknown circumstances in his Circassian homeland, the adolescent İnāl—Arabised from the Turkic *inal* (trustworthy), occasionally rendered incorrectly as Aynāl—is said to have been part of a batch of military slaves (*mamlūks*) sold in Egypt in about 799/1397 to Sulṭān al-Zāhir Barqūq (r. 784–801/1382–99). He was trained in the martial arts of horsemanship, taught the basics of Islam, and socialised into the sultanate’s norms, values, and rules of behaviour in the royal barracks of the Cairo citadel, until Sulṭān al-Nāşir Faraj (r. 801–15/1399–1412) manumitted him and selected him for service in the royal private retinue (*khāṣṣakiyya*). İnāl rose to military rank, income, and status in the 820s/1420s, when he was first made a “commander of ten [*mamlūks*]” (*amūr ‘ashara*) (824–5/1421–2) and then a “commander of forty” (*amūr ṭablakhānāh*) (825–31/1422–8). In this capacity, İnāl participated in the sultanate’s invasion, plundering, and subordination of Lusignan Cyprus in 829/1426. Eventually, he was sent to Syria as a local governor (*nā’ib*), in Gaza (831–6/1428–33) and later in Safed (840–3/1437–9). In 836/1433 Sulṭān al-Ashraf Barsbāy (r. 825–42/1422–38) appointed İnāl over the town of Edessa (al-Ruhā) in southeastern Anatolia (836–40/1433–6), in order to represent the sultan’s interests in this frontier zone with the rising Turkmen power of the Aq Qoyunlu (Akkoyunlu).

Sultān al-Zāhir Jaqmaq (r. 842–57/1438–53) invited Īnāl back to his court in Cairo, first as one of the dozen of his commanders of one hundred *mamlūks* (*amūr mi'a*) (843–57/1439–53), later also as the sultan's senior secretary (*dawādār kabīr*) (846–9/1442–5), and eventually as the court's senior member (*amūr kabīr*) and chief commander of the armies (*atābak al-ʿasākīr*) (849–57/1445–53). In these capacities, Īnāl was assigned a leading role in various military campaigns, policing operations, and punitive expeditions, such as those against the island of Rhodes (846/1442–3, 848/1444), against local Arab elites in upper and lower Egypt (844/1441, 853/1449), and against unruly elements, including *mamlūk* recruits (*julbān*), in Cairo (848/1444, 854/1450). These court posts also provided Īnāl with considerable control over and access to resources; this may have contributed to his gradual creation of a substantial personal fortune and his active participation in real-estate investment, both eventually culminating in the creation of two well-funded religious endowments (*waqf*s), for which original documents, dating to 862–3/1458–9 and 865/1460–1, have survived.

In 857/1453 the combination of resources and experience catapulted Īnāl at the age of seventy-three to royal status. This happened when political opponents and financially dissatisfied *mamlūks* of Sultān al-Manṣūr ʿUthmān b. Jaqmaq (r. 857/1453) closed ranks behind Īnāl's leadership and violently enforced his rights to the throne. Sultān al-Ashraf Īnāl's subsequent reign was remembered primarily for its more or less constructive—an assessment that varies across the handful of detailed contemporary chronicle reports (see bibliography)—engagements

with practices of coercion wielding and resource management. The latter practices resulted in the stimulation and appropriation of regular flows of taxation, forced payment, confiscation, and gift giving; the imposition of reforms in gold, silver, and copper coinage (861/1457, 862/1458, 863/1459); and investment in *mamlūk* manpower and urban development—including a building complex in Cairo's Northern Cemetery (al-Saḥrā'), which comprises Īnāl's family mausoleum and of which impressive traces remain today [Illustration 1]. Īnāl's coercion wielding manifested itself first and foremost at the many frontiers of his royal authority. The fluidity of these frontiers was regularly illustrated by marauding royal *mamlūk* recruits, groups of whom continued to prove keen to maximise, whenever possible, their access to cash and kind by spreading terror in Cairo. In upper and lower Egypt, local Arab elites similarly tended to test and challenge the sultan's reach, especially in the Buḥayra region (859/1455) and the Ṣaʿīd (864–5/1460). On the remote peripheries of Īnāl's sultanate, the Qarāmānid leadership of Konya followed similar local strategies, provoking a successful military deployment of Īnāl's commanders in southern Anatolia (860–2/1456–8). Less successful attempts to intervene directly in a succession dispute amongst the ruling elites of Lusignan Cyprus (863–5/1459–61) marked Cairo's waning influence in the eastern Mediterranean. One of the powers on the rise in that region was the Ottoman sultan, Mehmed (Meḥmed) II (r. 848–50/1444–6, 855–886/1451–81), whose conquest of Constantinople in 857/1453 was welcomed in Īnāl's Cairo with much diplomatic pomp and circumstance. Meanwhile, another regional power on



Illustration 1. Īnāl al-Ajrūd's funerary complex in Cairo's Northern Cemetery (al-Saḥrā'), including the family mausoleum (*turba*), a Šūfī convent (*khānqah*), and a mosque. Photograph courtesy of Jo Van Steenberg and Maya Termonia.

the rise, the Aq Qoyunlu leader Uzun Ḥasan (r. 865–82/1461–78), continued to situate the rapid expansion of his eastern Anatolian leadership at least symbolically within the orbit of Īnāl's sovereignty.

The relatively successful regional formation of Sulṭān al-Ashraf Īnāl's state through the aggregation of a variety of economic, military, and political actions was the achievement of a new collective leadership in Cairo. Two clusters of courtiers have been identified as being connected by and appearing at the forefront of Īnāl's leadership and authority. The first, predating and facilitating Īnāl's enthronement, crystallised in often tense and conflict-ridden ways around the resources, practices, and skills of long-standing financial experts such as the majordomo (*ustādār*) Zayn al-Dīn Yaḥyā (d. 874/1469) and the army and privy-purse supervisor (*nāẓir al-jaysh wa-l-khāṣṣ*) Jamāl al-Dīn Yūsuf (d. 862/1458). The second, increasingly pre-eminent after Īnāl's empowerment, was formed around the relationships, wealth, and charisma of the sultan's family, including his only wife for many decades, Zaynab bt. Ḥasan b. Khāṣṣ Bak (d. 884/1479), their son Aḥmad (b. 835/1432, d. 893/1488), and the husbands of their daughters, the senior secretary (*dawādār kabīr*) Yūnus al-Aqbāʾī (d. 865/1461) and the second secretary (*dawādār thānī*) Birdibak al-Qubrusī (d. 868/1464). It has been established that the royal scene in Cairo had been set for this latter cluster to continue to dominate the court and sultanate after Īnāl's death, but this reproductive strategy proved only partly successful, when Īnāl died of illness and old age in 865/1461. The succession of his son al-Muʾayyad Aḥmad (r. 865/1461) was surprisingly quickly undone by opponents rallying around

the future sultan, al-Zāhir Khushqadam (r. 865–72/1461–7). Īnāl's legacy was restored to some prominence when, from the early 870s/late 1460s onwards, family members returned to the court, where control over the endowed family assets was returned to them and remained in their hands until at least the early tenth/sixteenth century.

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Īnālids

The **Īnālids** (Īnaloğulları, Yınaloğulları, r. 488–579/1095–1183) were one of the many petty Turkish dynasties that became established in Anatolia in the decades following the Saljūq victory over the Byzantines at the battle of Malazgirt (Manzikert) in 463/1071, which resulted in the opening of that region to permanent Turkish domination. The dynasty was centred on the town of Amid (Āmid, modern Diyarbakır), and lasted from around 488/1095 until it was ended by Salāḥ al-Dīn's (Saladin's, 532–89/1138–93) capture of the capital in 579/1183.

Little scholarly research has been carried out on the Īnālids, and there are only fleeting references to the dynasty in the