



Cilicia: Armenian Fortress at Anamur

XIV

ZENGI AND THE FALL OF EDESSA

With the establishment of the county of Tripoli, a rough balance of power was struck in Syria between crusaders and Moslems. Jerusalem faced Damascus, Antioch faced Aleppo, and Tripoli faced the group of lesser cities in the upper Orontes valley. Although Aleppo lay between Antioch and Edessa, they, too, lay between Aleppo and the Moslem principalities to east and north, as Jerusalem lay between Damascus and Egypt. The dynasties in the crusading states were, unconsciously but effectively, absorbed into the system of Syrian politics, with its shifting play of alliances and counter-alliances, temporary treaties, sudden realignments, and petty gains and losses.

The point of balance of the whole system was Aleppo. Its effective absorption by Damascus, or Mosul, or the northern crusaders, would involve a major regrouping of the forces on either side. But the local strength of Aleppo lay in its alliance with the Assassins, and when, after the death of Ridvan in 1113, the zeal of a new governor, Lu'lu', regent for Ridvan's son, led to a breach with the Assassins, it became too weak to stand by itself and was forced to seek external support. But support was one thing, in the eyes both of its governors and of its Shi'ite population, and absorption quite another. The main thread in the history of Moslem Syria during the next decade was the conflict which

The principal contemporary sources for the history of Moslem Syria to the death of Nūr-ad-Dīn are the history of Damascus of Ibn-al-Qalānisi (ed. H. F. Amedroz, Leyden, 1908; partial translation by H. A. R. Gibb, *The Damascus Chronicle of the Crusades*, London, 1932); the "memoirs" of Usāmah Ibn-Munqidh (ed. P. K. Hitti, Princeton, 1930; tr. Hitti, *An Arab-Syrian Gentleman in the Period of the Crusades*, Columbia University, Records of Civilization, New York, 1929); the citations from 'Imād-ad-Dīn and other lost Syrian sources in abū-Shāmah, *Ar-raudatāin* (Cairo, 1870-1871; partial translation in *RHC, Or.*, IV-V); the Syriac chronicle of Michael (vol. III, ed. and tr. J. B. Chabot, Paris, 1910); and for Mesopotāmia, the history of Maiyafariqin by Ibn-al-Azraq al-Fāriqi (partially published in notes to Ibn-al-Qalānisi). For northern Syria the data from these and other fragmentary sources are coördinated by C. Cahen, *La Syrie du nord à l'époque des croisades* (Paris, 1940), and for Mesopotāmia by C. Cahen, "Le Diyār Bakr au temps des premiers Urtuqides," *Journal Asiatique*, CCXXVII (1935), 219-276. For the history of Egypt, see G. Wiet, *L'Égypte arabe* (Paris, 1938).

raged round Aleppo, as it oscillated between its more powerful neighbors, now appealing for their help and now playing them off against one another.

The first to be approached was Tughtigin at Damascus. But he, realizing after a personal inspection that the defense of Aleppo in its disorganized and unstable condition would be a liability so serious as to overstrain his forces, returned to Damascus. By renewing his treaty with Baldwin, however, he kept his hands free for eventualities. Lu'lu' then murdered his sovereign, broke with Tughtigin, and appealed to the Selchükid sultan of Iraq, who dispatched the governor of Hamadan, Bursuk ibn-Bursuk, to "restore order in Syria and engage the Franks." Scarcely had Bursuk set out in June 1115 than Lu'lu' formed an alliance with Tughtigin and the Artukid chief İl-Ghāzī, at the time a refugee in Syria; Roger of Antioch also, fearing the surrender of Aleppo, joined in the coalition and brought both Baldwin and Pons of Tripoli into it as well. The unexpected junction of the Moslem and Christian princes against Selchükid intervention, and the subsequent destruction of Bursuk's army at Dānīth by Roger, left uneasy feelings on the Moslem side. Tughtigin, after a brush with Pons, found it advisable to repair in person to Baghdad to reinsure himself with the sultan, and returned to Damascus laden with honors and the grant of full legal powers over his principality.¹

The isolation of Aleppo and the confusion which followed the assassination of Lu'lu' in 1117 led Tughtigin to support an attempt by Aksungur al-Bursukī, a former governor of Mosul now established at Rahba, to occupy the city. Its commander appealed both to Roger and to İl-Ghāzī, once more established at Mardin; the former, on payment of tribute, forced the withdrawal of Aksungur, so that İl-Ghāzī, on his arrival, was coldly received and withdrew to await events.

During Tughtigin's engagements in the north Baldwin had consolidated his hold on the Transjordan, but avoided direct hostilities with Damascus. After Baldwin I's death in 1118, however, Tughtigin entered into an alliance with the Egyptians, which detained him in the south. As Aksungur was simultaneously engaged in the conflicts in Iraq which followed the death of sultan Muḥammad in the same month, Roger seized the opportunity to open an attack on Aleppo on his own account. The citizens urgently recalled İl-Ghāzī, who bought a truce with Roger and made arrangements with Tughtigin for a combined campaign in the

¹ For further details on Frankish policy, see above chapter XII, pp. 404-405.

following year. In June 1119 the two allies prepared to take the field. ʿIl-Ghāzī, arriving first with a motley host of Turkomans and volunteers, began to raid the valley of Rugia, and Roger, apparently unaware of the alliance and imagining that he had to deal only with the usual haphazard incursions, marched out in haste, to anticipate an attack on al-Athārib. ʿIl-Ghāzī wished to await the disciplined forces of Damascus, but was overborne by the impatient Turkomans, whose mobility enabled them to take Roger unawares in the rock-strewn region of Darb Sarmadā (June 28, 1119).²

The *ager sanguinis*, as the Franks called Roger's defeat, relieved the Frankish threat to Aleppo only for the time being, but committed ʿIl-Ghāzī to the onerous responsibility of defending the city. The Artukids, as has been shown in an earlier chapter, were the chiefs of an important group of Turkomans, who were associated with the Selchūkids in their conquest of Syria, but had moved up into the highlands of Mesopotamia after the opening of the First Crusade.³ There the two brothers ʿIl-Ghāzī and Sokman had constituted around their main castles of Mardin and Ḥiṣn Kaifā respectively principalities which they maintained by means of continual raids upon their neighbors. With the governors of Mosul, whose principal task it was to keep them under some sort of control, they were, of course, at perpetual feud; during Zengi's governorship, as will be seen, he devoted far more time and energy to warfare with them than with the Franks of Syria, and at later moments in the careers of both Nūr-ad-Dīn and Saladin (Ṣalāḥ-ad-Dīn) they played a decisive part against Mosul. As the chiefs of the largest Turkoman groups in the region, they were a valuable source of auxiliary troops. On the other hand, they were frequently divided by military and political rivalries, not only between but also within the two branches, and their Turkomans and Kurdish irregulars, though highly mobile, lacked the discipline and the stability of the organized Turkish regiments. Though hardy fighters, the main object of the Turkomans in warfare was booty, and they were quickly discouraged by a long and unsuccessful campaign. It was difficult, therefore, for their chiefs to keep them in the field, and this fact, together with their divisions, made it impossible for the Artukids to build up stable political organizations.

The Artukid connection thus gave a very imperfect shelter to Aleppo from the steady pressure and encroachments of Baldwin

² On Roger see above, chapter XII, p. 404, and chapter XIII, p. 413.

³ See above, chapter V, pp. 170-171.

from Antioch and Joscelin from Edessa (Urfa). ʾIl-Ghāzī gained few additional resources from his new possession, and was compelled in any case to devote most of his attention to his Mesopotamian holdings, where he was shortly afterwards engaged in a disastrous conflict with the Georgians. But when his son Sulaimān, whom he had left as his representative at Aleppo, revolted in the summer of 1121, he returned to Aleppo, cemented the alliance with the Selchūkids by marrying Rīdvan's daughter, and prepared to resume the offensive against the Franks.

ʾIl-Ghāzī's death in November 1122 left Aleppo still more isolated, until his nephew Nūr-ad-Daulah Belek, after capturing Baldwin, occupied it in June 1123 and began energetically to reestablish its security. His death while besieging Manbij on May 6, 1124, was the climax of the city's misfortunes, since it was now reduced to dependence on ʾIl-Ghāzī's indolent son and successor at Mardin, Timurtash. At this juncture a fresh claimant appeared in the person of the Arab chief Dubais ibn-Ṣadaqah, formerly prince of Hilla in Iraq, who had been driven out by the combined forces of the caliph and Aksungur al-Bursukī, now governor of Mosul again, and had fled to his fellow-countryman, the ʿUqailid prince of Qalʿat Jaʿbar. With his assistance, Dubais opened negotiations with the Franks and the Shīʿite citizens of Aleppo, on whose support he, as a Shīʿite, counted against the Sunnite Turks and Turkomans. In June 1124, accordingly, Timurtash released Baldwin, on his undertaking to surrender ʿAzāz and other fortresses, to pay a ransom of 80,000 gold pieces, and to have no dealings with Dubais. So far from honoring his word, Baldwin, once free, refused to surrender the fortresses and formed a league with Dubais. Timurtash, giving up all hope of holding Aleppo, retired to Mesopotamia, leaving the city to be defended by five hundred horsemen and the citizens.

The long struggle for Aleppo had, however, brought into play a new factor in the conflict. Ever since the *ager sanguinis* the feeling between Moslem and Christian had grown more hostile, and the ferocity displayed by Joscelin in his raids in 1123, after his escape from Kharput, had roused the bitterness of the population of Aleppo to an intense degree. When, therefore, Baldwin and Joscelin commenced the siege of the city on October 6, 1124, with their Moslem allies, including not only Dubais and the Arab chief of Qalʿat Jaʿbar, but also a son of Rīdvan and a minor Artukid, they were met by a vigorous and unflinching resistance. After vain appeals to Timurtash, the citizens, in desperation, were forced to

beg for what they had so long and so tenaciously resisted, the protection of Mosul. Aksungur al-Bursukī acted at once, and advanced with such speed and secrecy that the besiegers, taken by surprise on the night of January 29, 1125, withdrew without a combat.⁴

Although Aleppo had thus by a chain of accidents become a dependency of Mosul it was not thereby reabsorbed into the Selchūkid state. Whatever its formal status may have been, Aksungur, like Zengi after him, saw it rather as a means by which to establish an independent and hereditary principality. For this purpose Mosul alone, owing to its proximity to the centers of Selchūkid power, was insufficient. The possession of Aleppo gave depth to his holding, and might, once he regained control of its territories, provide additional material and financial support. In a tactical sense it was even more valuable, for by its position as an outpost of Islam against the Franks its possession invested the governor of Mosul with the character of a champion of the faith against the "infidel", and the strength of Moslem feeling would make it difficult for the sultan to take vigorous action against him.

Although the union with Mosul removed from Aleppo the immediate menace of a Frankish conquest, there was an active party among the citizens to whom it came as a severe blow. These were the Assassins, who had by favor of the Artukids recovered their strength during the troubled decade. The occupation of Aleppo by an "easterner" boded them no good, and the all-but-inevitable consequence followed when Aksungur, after some minor operations in conjunction with Tughtigin during 1125 and 1126, was struck down in the great mosque of Mosul in November 1126.⁵

His son Mas'ūd received at once the allegiance of Aleppo and the sultan's confirmation of his governorship of the two cities. But a growing party of the citizens, among them it may be suspected the Assassins, showed some resistance; and Mas'ūd, on his way to seize Hamah from Tughtigin, died suddenly while besieging Rahba in May 1127. Although his nominee Kutlug Abeh succeeded in occupying Aleppo, the citizens rebelled, proclaimed allegiance to an Artukid prince, and besieged the garrison in the citadel. Joscelin seized the opportunity to make a fresh attack, but was bought off, and was afterwards prevented from further aggression by hostilities with Bohemond II of Antioch.

⁴ Cf., above, chapter XIII, pp. 424-425, for a discussion of Aksungur's policies in relation to the Latin states.

⁵ See above, chapter IV, p. 115.

Meanwhile a deputation of notables from Mosul to Baghdad had been persuaded to ask sultan Maḥmūd to appoint as their governor ‘Imād-ad-Dīn Zengi, the son of an earlier Aksungur, al-Ḥājib, who had been appointed governor of Aleppo by sultan Malik-Shāh in 1086 and executed by Tutush in 1094. He had succeeded Aksungur al-Bursukī of Mosul as military governor of Iraq in 1126. In consideration of “a handsome contribution” to the treasury, the sultan granted the diploma for Mosul to Zengi, in the capacity of atabeg or regent for his son, the *malik* Alp Arslan. Zengi took over Mosul in September 1127 without opposition, set about reducing its outlying dependencies, and in January 1128 sent a detachment to occupy Aleppo. The general Ṣalāḥ-ad-Dīn al-Yaghīsīyānī (or al-Ghīsīyānī) was nominated as its governor, and shortly afterwards Zengi himself marched into Syria and entered the city on June 18. In thus restoring the union between Mosul and Aleppo, however, Zengi had gone beyond the terms of his appointment. When he presented himself at the court some months later he found the sultan unwilling, not without reason, to endow so ambitious an officer with such extensive domains, and only on the intercession of the caliph did he consent to grant him the diploma for Aleppo also.

The first effects of the altered balance of Moslem power in the north were felt by Damascus. Baldwin I had directed the brunt of his attacks on Egypt and the Egyptian possessions in Asia, and endeavored to maintain the neutrality of Damascus. Baldwin II, on the other hand, on all occasions when he was free to take the initiative, directed his attacks towards Damascus.⁶ The disaster at the *ager sanguinis*, however, by involving Baldwin in the north, freed Tughtigin not only to join in the campaigns in the north but also to negotiate with Egypt. There in December 1121, the powerful vizir al-Afḍal had been assassinated and replaced by al-Ma’mūn, who gave immediate evidence of his intention to adopt a more active policy in Palestine and Syria, and took measures to build up the Egyptian fleet. Hoping for support from Tughtigin after Belek’s capture of Baldwin, he dispatched a force by sea to Jaffa in May 1123, but the expected assistance from Damascus failed to arrive. The Egyptians were defeated on land near Ibelin (Yabnâ) by the constable Eustace Garnier, and on sea by the Venetians under the doge Domenico Michiel. The double defeat made it impossible to send relief to Tyre when it was besieged in the following year, and Tughtigin could do no more than negotiate

⁶ For a discussion of Baldwin II’s policies see above, chapter XIII, pp. 411 ff., 426.

the terms of surrender of the city, no doubt ensuring that satisfactory arrangements were made for commercial relations with Damascus.

In his negotiations with Egypt, Tughtigin had associated Aksungur with himself, and these continued even after Aksungur's occupation of Aleppo. In all probability, it was this tentative movement towards closer relations among Egypt, Damascus, and Aleppo which explains Baldwin's attack on Ascalon in November 1125, followed by an invasion of Damascus territory in January 1126. The defeat inflicted on the army of Damascus by this reconnaissance in force accomplished the object, if such it was, of forestalling any concerted action, and prepared the way for the invasion three years later.

It is in connection with this battle that the coöperation of the Assassins with the army of Damascus is mentioned for the first time. That the Assassins, discouraged by the union of Aleppo with Mosul, had decided to try their fortunes at Damascus seems clear, and it is equally clear that this was done with the consent of Tughtigin. In this policy is to be seen his reaction to the new situation in the north. The union of Aleppo with Mosul had the effect of placing Damascus in the precariously isolated position from which Aleppo had just escaped, at the price of its independence. Alliance with the Franks was out of the question, in view of the hostile attitude of Baldwin II, and equally so any effective alliance with Egypt. The only course open to Tughtigin was to mobilize in its support all the strength which could be gained from local Syrian forces, and even their enemies did not deny the courage and gallantry of the Assassins. It is certainly the fact that, after his defeat by Baldwin, Tughtigin openly acknowledged the alliance by assigning the frontier castle of Banyas to the leader of the Assassins in November 1126.⁷

A month after Zengi's occupation of Aleppo, Tughtigin died (February 1128) after a prolonged illness. He was succeeded by his son Böri, who proved himself to be equal to the successive dangers to which Damascus was exposed. On Tughtigin's death the Assassins at Banyas resumed their terrorist activities, under the shelter of the vizir at Damascus. Fortunately for Böri, they were severely worsted in a conflict with the Druzes of Wādi-t-Taim, and he seized the opportunity to root them out of the city (September 1129), but at the cost of Banyas, which they surrendered

⁷ Cf. above, chapter IV, p. 116. For Baldwin's expeditions into the areas of Ascalon and Damascus, see chapter XIII, p. 426.

to the Franks. Two months later Baldwin, reinforced by the arrival of Fulk of Anjou and the troops of the northern principalities, marched on Damascus. Böri, forewarned, had enlisted in its defense some thousands of Turkomans and Arabs, who threw a cordon round the crusading army, and dispatched a strong force to waylay a foraging expedition to the Hauran under William of Bures. The defeat suffered by the latter and the consequent retreat of the crusaders was recognized on both sides as an event that put an end, for many years, to Baldwin's policy of attack on Damascus, and shortly afterwards a treaty was negotiated to regulate their political and commercial relations.⁸

The third, and still greater, threat to Böri's principality followed in the spring or early summer of 1130, when Zengi returned to Syria and called for the coöperation of Damascus "to prosecute the holy war". With natural suspicion, Böri swore him to good faith before dispatching a strong contingent and instructing his son Sevinj, at Hamah, to join it with his own forces. He had already suffered a serious loss in the defection of Sevar, one of the ablest Turkish generals of his age, who joined Zengi at Aleppo and was rewarded with its governorship. On their arrival at Zengi's camp Sevinj and the Damascene officers were seized and placed in confinement at Aleppo; at the same time Zengi occupied the now undefended stronghold of Hamah and marched on Homs, notwithstanding his engagements towards its prince, Kir-Khan, who, with his forces, was actually serving in his army. But the garrison and citizens of Homs refused to surrender and after a fruitless siege Zengi returned to Mosul, taking his prisoners with him. The capture of Dubais ibn-Şadaqah by Böri's Arab auxiliaries in the following year enabled him to negotiate the release of Sevinj and his officers in return for the surrender of Dubais to Zengi; but the whole episode had given clear warning that the first objective of Zengi's "holy war" in Syria was none other than Damascus.

It was some years, however, before the attempt was renewed. The death of sultan Maḥmūd in September 1131 was followed by a struggle between his brothers for the succession to the sultanate of Iraq, into which Zengi was inevitably drawn as a partisan of sultan Mas'ūd. At the height of the struggle he, in association with Dubais, attempted even to seize Baghdad, but was defeated by the forces of the caliph al-Mustarshid, who retaliated a few months later by besieging Mosul (August–October 1133). Warned by this experience to abstain from further adventures in Iraq for

⁸ On Frankish policy, see above, chapter XIII, pp. 430–431.

the time being, Zengi turned his attention to the Artukid principalities in Mesopotamia. Profiting by the rivalry between Timur-tash, the son of Il-Ghāzī, and his cousin Dā'ūd ibn-Sokman of Ḥiṣn Kaifā, he made an alliance with the former and in 1134 seized and transferred to him many of Dā'ūd's northern fortresses, but failed in an attempt to subdue the independent fortress of Amida (Diyarbakır). In the midst of these operations, an unexpected invitation to take possession of Damascus brought him back in haste to Syria in February 1135.

In June 1132 Bōri had died as the result of wounds inflicted by Assassins, and was succeeded by his son, Shams-al-Mulūk Ismā'īl.⁹ After a successful start with the recapture of Banyas (December 1132) and of Hamah (August 1133), followed by a devastating raid on the county of Galilee in retaliation for a Frankish raid on the Hauran (September 1134), he alienated by his tyrannical conduct both his troops and his subjects. Realizing, apparently, their growing exasperation, he wrote secretly to Zengi urging him to come with all speed to receive the surrender of Damascus, and threatening to deliver it up to the Franks if he should delay.

Whatever their grievances against Shams-al-Mulūk Ismā'īl, the army and the citizens were equally resolute in their hostility to Zengi, "knowing as they did," in the words of the Damascus chronicler, "what the conduct of Zengi would be if he should capture the city."¹⁰ Ismā'īl having been disposed of by the palace guards and his brother Maḥmūd proclaimed in his place, the population under the command of the general Mu'īn-ad-Dīn Unur (or Önör) effectually prevented Zengi from pressing his siege. An opportune command from the caliph to withdraw from Damascus and to take over the government of Iraq gave him an opening for negotiations, and he marched north on March 15. But not at once to Iraq, for after regaining Hamah on the way he opened a lightning campaign against the unsuspecting Franks.

During the intervening years Sevar had engaged in minor hostilities with Antioch and Tell Bashir, but little change had been made in the general situation of Aleppo, which was still under close surveillance from the castles held by the Franks to north and west. Within a few weeks Zengi cleared the whole of its western

⁹ For the assassination of Bōri see above, chapter IV, pp. 117-118.

¹⁰ All contemporary sources bear witness to Zengi's ferocity. His namesake, the secretary 'Imād-ad-Dīn, describes him as a "tyrant, striking at random, and a raging blast of calamities, tigerish in nature, lionlike in malevolence, ignorant of no severity and acquainted with no gentleness, feared for his violence, shunned for his roughness, inordinate in conduct and pride, the death of his enemies and of his subjects." Cf. the abridgement by al-Bundāri (Houtsma, *Textes relatifs à l'histoire des Seldjoucides*, II, Leyden, 1888), p. 205.

and southwestern approaches, by the capture of al-Athārib, Zardānā, Ma'arrat-an-Nu'mān, and other fortresses, while Sevar moved against 'Azāz and Aintab (Gaziantep). Then, after vainly besieging Homs again, Zengi returned to Mosul, leaving Sevar to follow up his offensive with the aid of the Turkoman irregulars, who were at this time moving into Syria in increasing numbers. As soon as he had gone, the sons of Kīr-Khan negotiated the surrender of Homs to Damascus; it was given in fief to Unur, and had immediately to sustain incursions by Sevar, until an armistice was signed. The Turkomans were compensated by an extensive and profitable raid on the district of Latakia in April 1136.

Zengi's second intervention in Iraq was little more successful than the first. In the autumn of 1135 the caliph al-Mustarshid had attempted to organize a coalition against sultan Mas'ūd, and Zengi, accompanying the Selchūkid *malik* Dā'ūd ibn-Maḥmūd, moved up to Baghdad to join in the alliance. Al-Mustarshid had in the meantime marched out against the sultan, but was deserted by his Turkish troops, defeated, captured, and killed by Assassins. Dā'ūd and Zengi then proclaimed his son ar-Rāshid caliph and swore to support his cause, but no sooner did sultan Mas'ūd move on Baghdad than they both fled. Ar-Rāshid followed Zengi to Mosul, but Zengi, having sent an envoy to the sultan and obtained from him additional fiefs and honors, refused to receive the fugitive caliph, who was forced to take refuge with Dā'ūd in Azerbaijan, and was subsequently killed by Assassins while besieging Isfahan.

In the spring of 1137 Zengi returned to Syria and renewed his attack on Homs, but again failed to overcome Unur's resistance. Concluding an armistice with Damascus, he turned northwards on July 11 to attack Ba'rīn, and had the good fortune to surprise Fulk, who threw himself into the castle. The advance of a relieving army from Antioch and Edessa, together with the news of the approach of John Comnenus to Antioch, forced him to allow the garrison to evacuate the castle on payment of ransom. He withdrew to Aleppo and set the population to work on its fortifications against a Greek attack, until he was relieved by the temporary withdrawal of the emperor and an exchange of embassies with him, when he led his forces back into Damascus territories, and captured 'Ainjar and Banyas. He then returned to his attack on Homs, and was still besieging it when the Greek offensive took him by surprise at the beginning of April 1138.¹¹

¹¹ On Frankish policy and the Greek intervention, see above chapter XIII, pp. 438-439.

The short delay of the Greek army at Buzā'ah (April 3-9) was just long enough to give warning to the garrison of Aleppo and to allow of their reinforcement by detachments from Zengi's squadrons. The emperor halted outside Aleppo for two days only (April 18-20), and marched on Ma'arrat-an-Nu'mān and Kafartāb, while a detachment occupied al-Athārib. Zengi hastily withdrew the rest of his forces to Salamyah, sent his baggage-train to Raqqa, and himself with his light-armed cavalry remained on guard. At the end of April the emperor laid siege to Shaizar. Zengi's cavalry could only harass his flanks until a force of Turkomans, sent by Dā'ūd of Ḥiṣn Kaifā, and a detachment from Damascus came up to reinforce him; at the same time news of the attacks upon his lines of communications by the Dānismendids and Selchūkids decided John Comnenus to raise the siege after twenty-three days, and he withdrew to Antioch.

The effect of this futile Greek campaign was only to enhance Zengi's reputation. Scarcely were the Greeks gone before he negotiated an agreement with Damascus, and received Homs (in exchange for Ba'rīn) as dowry on his marriage with the queen-mother (June 1138). Kafartāb, al-Athārib, and Buzā'ah were rapidly reoccupied and the territories of Edessa were overrun by the Turkomans of Timurtash and Dā'ūd. Leaving Sevar once more in command of his Syrian possessions, Zengi returned to Mosul, and in the following year took Dara and Ra's al-'Ain from Timurtash as dowry for another marriage, with the daughter of Timurtash.

Again Zengi was recalled to Damascus, this time at the invitation of his wife, the queen-mother, who was indignant at the murder of the prince Maḥmūd and his replacement by his brother Muḥammad, formerly governor of Baalbek (June 23, 1139). Baalbek was besieged and captured, and its garrison crucified notwithstanding his oath of security. After refortifying it Zengi withdrew to the Biqā' valley and tried to negotiate the surrender of Damascus. On the rejection of his demands, he blockaded the city from December until the following May, without result. During the siege the prince Muḥammad fell ill and died, and Unur set up his young son Abak in his place without opposition. Despite the determination of both troops and population to resist Zengi, however, Unur realized that in its isolated situation the city could not hold out indefinitely, and fell back on the only remaining source of external support. A formal alliance was negotiated with the kingdom of Jerusalem against the common enemy, and in return for the assistance of the crusaders Unur undertook to pay 20,000 pieces

of gold per month for their expenses, to give hostages, and to restore Banyas to them after Zengi's withdrawal.¹²

When the crusaders began to assemble at Tiberias, Zengi retired to the Hauran (May 4), before the Franks and Damascenes could join forces. In his absence the allies besieged Banyas; Zengi remained strangely inactive, and the governor, at the end of a month, surrendered to Unur on terms. Unur delivered the castle up to Fulk, but before he could return to Damascus Zengi reappeared in the Ghūṭah and devastated it for three days. He retired northwards, but a week later attempted a sudden *coup de main* at dawn, and when it failed finally withdrew with an immense booty.

Five years passed before he returned to Syria, if ever, and during this time little but border raids are recorded between the Moslems and the Franks. The treaty between Damascus and Jerusalem was apparently maintained in force, and the Greek expedition of 1142 involved no Moslem troops in action. One small but influential new political force had, however, established itself between the Moslem and Latin principalities during the preceding years. This was the Assassins who, beginning with the purchase of al-Qadmūs in 1132-1133, after their expulsion from Banyas, had gradually acquired other strongholds in the Nuṣairī mountains (Jabal Anṣārīyah), and in 1140-1141 seized Maṣyāf as their headquarters.

From his base at Mosul Zengi was actively engaged for the next three years in operations directed mainly against the Artukid Dā'ūd and the small Kurdish baronies to the north. He began also to feel his way cautiously back into Iraq, and in 1143 captured Hadithah and 'Ānah on the Euphrates. Sultan Mas'ūd was at the time occupied in dealing with rebellions in various quarters, which he ascribed, with some justice, to Zengi's intrigues in order to prevent him from intervening. Having at length restored order, the sultan assembled his forces at Baghdad and prepared to settle his account with Zengi, at the same time investing his own brother Dā'ūd with the command of the holy war in Syria. Zengi, in extreme alarm, made his submission, and the sultan, for reasons not specified, found it advisable to reach a reconciliation with him.

The chronology of these and the following events, and the relation between them, is still uncertain in detail. In August 1144 Dā'ūd ibn-Sokman died and was succeeded by a younger son, Kara Arslan. Zengi immediately overran most of his territories and then, since Kara Arslan had, apparently, begun to negotiate with Joscelin, occupied the eastern fortresses of the county in

¹² Cf., above, chapter XIII, p. 442.

Shabakhtan, on the headwaters of the Khabur river, in order to cut communication between them. On Zengi's return to renew his assault on Amida, Kara Arslan offered to surrender to Joscelin the fortress of Bibol, north of Gargar, in return for his assistance. Joscelin at once set out towards the west, taking with him a strong contingent of his forces, whereupon Zengi, informed of the temporary weakness of the garrison at Edessa, advanced by forced marches and encircled it (November 24). Before Joscelin and his outnumbered army could intervene, Zengi, calling up all his available vassals and auxiliaries, smothered the defense and broke into the city on December 24. The citadel fell two days later, and Zengi, first killing all the Franks and destroying their churches, but sparing the native Christians and their churches to the best of his ability, gave the city in fief to the commander of his guard, Zain-ad-Dīn 'Alī Kūchūk.¹³

The reactions to this event were almost as widespread in the east as in the west. By his fortunate conquest Zengi acquired the reputation of a "defender of the faith", which went far to atone for his defects of character and grasping policies. The caliph showered on him presents and titles, including that of *al-malik al-manṣūr*, "the victorious king," and the contemporary chronicles bear witness to the resounding fame of his exploit throughout the Moslem world. For himself, he energetically prosecuted the advantage he had gained, cleared Sarūj and other strongholds, and besieged Bira (Birejik), which guarded the Euphrates crossing to Tell Bashir (March 1145).

At this juncture one of the Selchūkid princes in his care, Farrukh-Shāh ibn-Maḥmūd, seized the occasion of his absence to murder the governor of Mosul (May 1145) and to proclaim himself ruler. Though the revolt was put down with ease by the garrison troops, the incident reawakened all his fears. Hastily ordering 'Alī Kūchūk to proceed to Mosul, he himself made first for Aleppo in order to forestall possible repercussions there.¹⁴ On his return to Mosul, he brought the other Selchūkid prince, Alp Arslan, out

¹³ Cf., above, chapter XIII, pp. 446-447.

¹⁴ See *Anonymous Syriac Chronicle* (in the *Corpus scriptorum Christianorum orientaliū, Scriptores Syri*, ser. III, vol. XV, ed. J.-B. Chabot, Paris, 1916), tr. A. S. Tritton and H. A. R. Gibb, "The First and Second Crusades from an Anonymous Syriac Chronicle," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1933, p. 287. Zengi had stored two-thirds of his treasure at Aleppo and Sinjar against the eventuality of a Selchūkid coup at Mosul. Cf. Ibn-al-Athīr, *Aṭābeḳs* (*RHC, Or.*, II), p. 143. Apparently after Zengi lifted the siege of Bira, its citizens voluntarily submitted to Artukid suzerainty to forestall any resumption, but as this was one of the towns ceded by Beatrice to Manuel in 1150 (cf. below, chapter XVII, p. 534), this suzerainty must have been merely nominal.

of confinement and thereafter carried him with him on his expeditions.

Late in the same year he began to make preparations for a decisive attack on Damascus and had actually set out when, early in 1146, an Armenian plot to restore Edessa to Joscelin changed his plans. Probably moved by suspicions of an understanding between Joscelin and his former ally, the Artukid Timurtash, he turned against the latter, seized Tall ash-Shaikh, and after further operations moved southwards to reduce another ally of the Franks, the 'Uqailid Arab prince of Dausar, or Qal'at Ja'bar, at the eastward bend of the Euphrates. Here, on the night of September 14, 1146, he was assassinated by one of his slaves.

The first reactions of the troops on the report of Zengi's death showed that his fears of a Selchükid revolution in Mosul had not been without foundation. An eye-witness account describes their demonstrations against Zengi's officers and vizir in favor of the Selchükid *malik* Alp Arslan. But before he could seize the opportunity, 'Alī Küchük, who had been left in command at Mosul, in agreement with the vizir Jamāl-ad-Dīn, summoned Zengi's eldest son, Saif-ad-Dīn Ghāzī, from his fief at Shahrazūr and installed him. On his advance towards the city Alp Arslan was seized, imprisoned, and never seen again. While the issue at Mosul was still in doubt the governors of Hamah and Aleppo, al-Yaghisiyanī and Sevar, led back the Syrian contingents accompanied by Zengi's second son Nūr-ad-Dīn Maḥmūd, and set him up in his father's place at Aleppo. The era of Moslem expansion which had begun under Zengi was to continue with almost unabated success under Nūr-ad-Dīn.