

EXTRACTS FROM AN ARABIAN MANUSCRIPT

ENTITLED

ESSULOOK LI MARISET IL DUVEL IL MULOUK; *that is to say, "The Road to Knowledge of the Reigns of Kings."* It is the History of *the Sultans CURDES-EIOUBITES, of the race of Saladin, and of the two Dynasties that have reigned in Egypt; the one of Turkish slaves, known under the name of MAMELUKES-BAHARITES, the other of Circassians. This Work was composed by MAKRISI, who was born in the 769th year of the Hegira, or one hundred and twenty years after the expedition St. Louis.*

THE sultan Melikul-Kamil died at Damascus the 21st of the moon Regeb, in the 635th year of the Hegira (March 10, A.D. 1238). Melikul-Adil-Scifeddin, one of his two sons, was proclaimed on the morrow, in the same town, sultan of Syria, and of Egypt. He was the seventh king of the posterity of the Eioubités, who descended from Saladin.

On the 17th day of the moon Ramadan, there arrived an ambassador from the caliph of Bagdad, who was the bearer of a standard and rich robe for the sultan, weak remnants of the vast authority the caliphs who succeeded Mahommed* formerly enjoyed, and of which the sultans had not thought it worth their while to deprive them.

Melikul-Adil, when scarcely on the throne, instead of attending to the government of his kingdoms, gave himself up to all sorts of debauchery. The grandees of the state, who might have reproached him for the dissipated life he led, were banished under various pretexts, and replaced by more complaisant ministers. He believed he could have nothing to fear, if the troops were attached to him; and, in order to gain them, he made them great presents, which, added to those his pleasures required, exhausted the treasures his father had amassed with so much difficulty.

* The caliphs, successors to Mahommed, were formerly masters of Syria, Egypt, and in general of all the conquests made by the Mahommedans. Corrupted by luxury and indolence, they suffered Egypt and Syria to be taken from them by the Fatimites, at the time of the expedition of St. Louis, and they retained Irak-Arabia. They, however, still preserved a shadow of power over the provinces captured from them. The sultans of Egypt submitted to a sort of inauguration on their part, which consisted in the investiture of a dress which the caliphs sent them. This custom is not yet abolished: the grand seignior sends a similar dress to the hispodars of Moldavia and Walachia, when he nominates them to these principalities.